

TEXTBOOK

TAFSIR

QUR'ANIC EXEGESIS



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TAFSIR

QUR'ANIC EXEGESIS

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TEXTBOOK

TAFSİR

QUR'ANIC EXEGESIS

A TEXTBOOK FOR IMAM KHATİB HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Eba Müslim Yaşaroğlu - İhsan Erkul - Nihat Morgül



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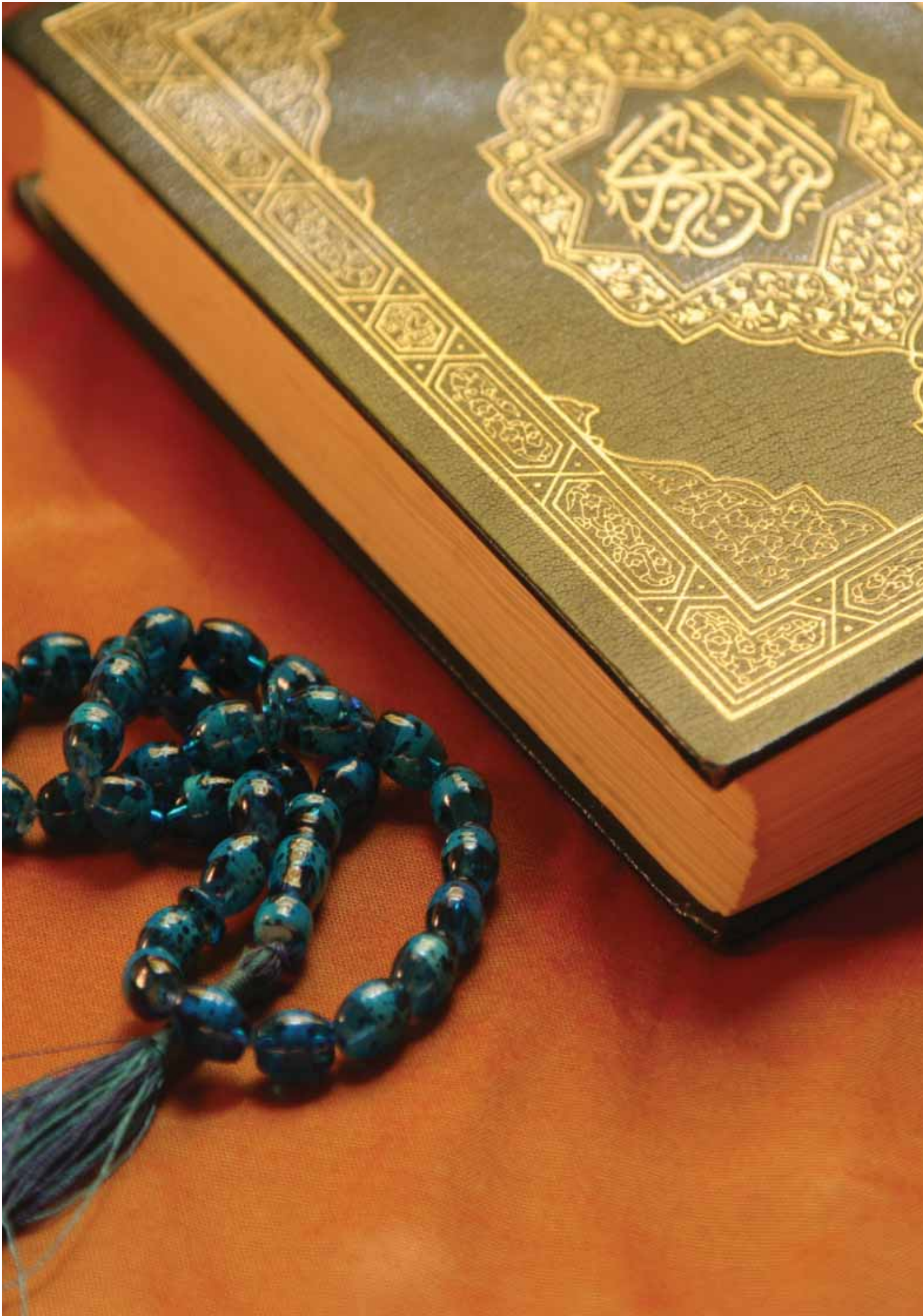
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CHAPTER II

LET'S GET TO KNOW THE QUR'AN

CONTENTS OF THE CHAPTER

- ▶ DEFINITION OF THE QUR'AN AND ITS CHARACTERISTICS
- ▶ OTHER NAMES OF THE QUR'AN
- ▶ OBJECTIVES AND MAJOR THEMES OF THE QUR'AN
- ▶ EXPRESSIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE QUR'AN
- ▶ FORMAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE QUR'AN

PREPARATORY WORKS

- ▶ Discuss what you know about the Noble Qur'an with your friends
- ▶ When and how was the Noble Qur'an revealed? Research.
- ▶ Are there any other names of the Qur'an? Research.
- ▶ Are there any holy books other than the Noble Qur'an? Share your information with your friends.

1. DEFINITION OF THE QUR'AN AND ITS CHARACTERISTICS

Qur'an is name of the book which gathers the revelation sent down to the Prophet Muhammed (pbuh). This name is also used in the Qur'an.

“...this is no less than a Message and a Qur'an making things clear.”¹

The word “Qur'an” lexically means a thing that is repeatedly recited. In its terminological definition, the word “Qur'an” refers the words of Allah revealed to the Prophet (pbuh), written in sheets, transmitted us by many people, having characteristics peculiar to itself and whose recitation is considered as an act of worship.

On the basis of this definition, we can specify certain characteristics of the Qur'an as such:

1. **The Noble Qur'an is the divine word revealed to the Prophet (pbuh).** By this expression, it is emphasized that no human word is mixed in it.

تَنْزِيلٌ مِّنَ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

“A revelation (the Qur'an) from the Beneficent, the Merciful.”²

وَكَذَلِكَ أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ فَالَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ

“And thus We have revealed the Book to you (O Messenger!). So, those to whom We gave the Scripture believe in it.”³

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

“And if you are in doubt about what We have sent down upon Our Servant (Muhammad) then produce a chapter like it and call on your witnesses besides Allah if you are truthful.”⁴

وَلَقَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ آيَاتٍ بَيِّنَاتٍ وَمَا يَكْفُرُ بِهَا إِلَّا الْفَاسِقُونَ

1. Ya-Sin, 36: 69
2. Fussilat, 41: 2
3. Al-Ankabut, 29: 47
4. Al-Baqarah, 2: 23

“And We have certainly revealed to you (O Muhammad!) clear proofs and no one would deny them except the disobedient.”⁵

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْقُرْآنَ تَنْزِيلًا

“Indeed, it is We who have sent down to you, (O Muhammad!), the Qur'an, we have sent down.”⁶

The first revelation was revealed to the Prophet (pbuh) when he was 40 years old and then the revelation continued for 23 years; 13 years of which was in Mecca and 10 years of which was in Medina.

DO YOU KNOW?

Our Prophet's (pbuh) approach to the Qur'an was as follows:

- To memorize the verses as soon as they revealed
- To convey them to the people (**Tabligh**)
- To explain unclear points and to interpret them (**Tabyin**)
- To practice and apply the rulings consisted in the verses in his own life (**Tamthil**)

2. Recitation of the Qur'an is an act of worship. Acceptance of the recitation of the Qur'an as an act of worship has made great contribution to the efforts of Muslims everywhere in the world to recite the Qur'an from its text and learn how to recite it. However, it should not be forgotten that one should not just endeavor to recite it by heart or read from its text but also try to understand its meaning and learn it as well. Moreover, reciting the Noble Qur'an during qiyam (standing during the ritual prayer) is one of the obligatory parts of prayer.

It is stated in a hadith:

وعن ابن مسعود رضي الله عنه قال : قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم : مَنْ قَرَأَ حَرْفًا مِنْ كِتَابِ اللَّهِ فَلَهُ حَسَنَةٌ ، وَالْحَسَنَةُ بِعَشْرِ أَمْثَالِهَا لَا أَقُولُ : الم حَرْفٌ ، وَلَكِنْ : أَلِفٌ حَرْفٌ ، وَلَا م حَرْفٌ ، وَمِمْ حَرْفٌ « رواه الترمذي وقال : حديث حسن صحيح .

Narrated by Abdullah bin Mas'ud (r. a.) that the Messenger of Allah peace be upon him said:

“Whoever recites a letter from Allah's Book, then he receives the reward for it, and the reward of ten the like of it. I do not say that Alif Lam Mim is a letter, but Alif is a letter, Lam is a letter and Mim is a letter.”⁷

5. Al-Baqarah, 2: 99

6. al-Insan, 76: 23

7. Al-Tirmidhi, Fada'il al-Qur'an: 16

HOW SHALL WE RECITE THE QUR'AN?

Prepare your mind and heart for the Qur'an before beginning its recitation. If your mind and heart, your feelings and thoughts are not ready for the divine word you should first put them in order and make them suitable for the addressing of the divine word.

When you sit for recitation feel yourself as you sit in the spiritual presence of Allah. Act with the awareness that Allah speaks to you.

Recite the Qur'an as if it was sent down to you. Take its addressing personally. Put yourself in the place of the figures mentioned in the parables of the Qur'an.

Keep your heart always turned to Allah while reciting the Qur'an and pray saying that "O Allah! Open my heart to the Qur'an and open the Qur'an to me".

If you have a family, make reciting and understanding a piece from the Qur'an with the members of your family together every day as a habit and part of your life. Introduce the Qur'an to them.

Tell the children the parables of the Qur'anic figures such as Abraham, Ismael, Moses, Jesus, and Mary. Have the Qur'anic figures enter into their world.

Memorize some verses from separate chapters of the Qur'an. Understand their meanings and recite them in your prayers.

3. The Qur'an is written in sheets. The Qur'an was not collected in the form of a book during the lifetime of the Prophet since the revelation was still being sent down. Right after his demise, the Qur'an was collected in the form of a book at the time of the first caliph Abu Bakr upon the suggestion of Umar. The book form of the Qur'an is called "*Mushaf*." The Qur'an is only what was collected in the *mushaf*. Even though the source of the sayings of the Prophet (pbuh) is also revelation, they are not considered as part of the Qur'an.

4. The Language of the Qur'an is Arabic. Translations of the Qur'an into other languages are not the Qur'an itself. No translation can substitute for its original.

As a matter of fact, Allah the Almighty says in a verse:

وَكَذَلِكَ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا وَصَرَّفْنَا فِيهِ مِنَ الْوَعِيدِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ أَوْ يُحْدِثُ لَهُمْ ذِكْرًا

"(O Messenger!) Thus We have sent this down as an arabic Qur'an and explained therein in detail some of the warnings that they may guard (against sin) or that it may produce a reminder for them."⁸

5. The Qur'an has been transmitted by the way of *tawatur* (by many people without any interruption). The Noble Qur'an has been transmitted by many people without any change

8. Ta-Ha, 20: 113

since the day when it started to be revealed to the Prophet (pbuh). This is the other proof that the Qur'an is the word of Allah and has never been altered.

6. The Qur'an is protected by Allah and there have not been (will not be) any changes in it. Millions of the copies of the Qur'an all over the world have been protected in its original form just as it came from Allah, because Allah Himself has undertaken its protection.

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ

“Indeed, it is We who sent down the Qur'an and indeed, We will be its guardian.”⁹

LET'S NOTE

The Qur'an is protected by Allah. Some other reasons for the protection of the Qur'an and its immutability are as follows:

- Each revealed verse used to be written by some private officers among the companions. These officers who used to write the Qur'an by the instruction of the Prophet (pbuh) were called “**katib al-wahy** (the scribe of the revelation)”.
- Qur'anic verses used to be memorized immediately by several companions.
- All the verses revealed until that time used to be reciprocally recited by the Prophet (pbuh) and Gabriel every year in the month of Ramadan. This was called “**ard**”.
- After the Prophet's (pbuh) demise, the Qur'an was collected in **Mushaf** (book) in accordance with the instruction of Abu Bakr in order to avoid the different styles of recitation.
- Transmission of a word by many people who are unlikely to lie together is called “**tawatur**”. The Qur'an was being transmitted from generation to generation by the way of *tawatur*. The Qur'an was known by many people and transmitted to others insomuch that it was not possible for any evil-minded person to make any addition to or deletion from it.

2. OTHER NAMES OF THE NOBLE QUR'AN

The Noble Qur'an has many names. Some of the names mentioned in the verses are as follows:

a) al-Kitab (the Book): This name mentioned in many verses of the Noble Qur'an is used for the Qur'an itself. For example;

9. al-Hijr, 15: 9

ذَلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ.

“This is the Book about which there is no doubt, a guidance for *muttaqun* (pious ones).”¹⁰

The word “al-Kitab” mentioned in this verse refers to the Qur'an.

b) al-Furqan: This name of the Qur'an means “something that distinguishes the right from the wrong, the true from the false in certainty. This name which is given to the Qur'an, because it separates the right from the wrong, the true from the false, and the lawful from the unlawful, is mentioned in some verses. One of the verses that mentions this name is the following:

تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي نَزَّلَ الْفُرْقَانَ عَلَى عَبْدِهِ لِيَكُونَ لِلْعَالَمِينَ نَذِيرًا

“Blessed is He Who sent down the *Furqan* upon His servant (Muhammad) that he may be a warner to the nations.”¹¹

c) al-Huda: The Qur'an is a guide which directs its followers to the right path. Allah names the Noble Qur'an as:

هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ.

“(It is) a guide for *muttaqun* (those who guard against evil).”¹² The word al-Huda which points this characteristic of the Quran and refers to that it is “a guide for the right path, a guiding light” has become a name for the Qur'an.

d) al-Dhikr: The Qur'an gives advice to people on many issues. For this reason, the word al-Dhikr which means “advice” is used as a name for the Qur'an in some verses. For instance;

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ.

The verse “Indeed, it is We who sent down the Qur'an and indeed, We will be its guardian”¹³ is one of the verses in which the word al-Dhikr is used for the Qur'an.

INFORMATION BOX

Some other names of the Qur'an are these:

al-Kalam (the word of Allah), al-Nur (the illuminator), al-Shifa' (the healer), al-Rahmah (the source of mercy), al-Hikmah (wisdom, knowledge of the truth, the divine purpose), Ahsan al-hadith (the best of speeches), Hablu'l Allah (the firm rope of Allah), al-Fasl (explainer of the right and the wrong), Tanzil (sent down from Allah), Wahy (revealed from the presence of Allah), Bayan (explanation), al-Haqq (unchangeable reality, truth), Tadhkirah (advise), Adl (justice), Sidq (truth), Bushra (good tidings), Aziz (honorable), Bashir (giver of good tidings), Balagh (literally matured)...

10. al-Baqarah, 2: 2

11. Al-Furqan, 25:1

12. Al-Baqarah, 2:2

13. Al-Hijr, 15: 9

LET'S WRITE

Write other names of the Qur'an by finding the translations of the verses given below.



3. OBJECTIVES AND MAJOR THEMES OF THE QUR'AN

3.1. Its Objectives

Just like all other divine books, *hidayah* (guidance) to the straight path is the object of the Qur'an. Guidance means saving people from infidelity, paganism, and deviances and directing them to the enlightened path of Islam. In this sense, the objective of the Qur'an is to ensure the happiness of people both in this world and in the hereafter and to direct them to the right path.

Allah the Almighty mentions this objective in very beginnings of the Qur'an in this way:

ذَٰلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ

"This is the Book about which there is no doubt, a guidance for muttaqun (those who guard against evil).¹⁴

14. Al-Baqarah, 2: 2

LET'S MAKE INFERENCES

1. *"This (Qur'an) is a clear statement for all people, and a guidance and an admonition to those who guard (against evil)."*¹

2. *"This (Qur'an) is enlightenment for mankind and guidance and mercy for the people who are certain (in faith)."*²

3. *"And this is a Book which We have sent down, blessed and confirming what was before it, that you may warn the Mother of Cities (Mecca) and those around it. Those who believe in the Hereafter believe in it as well, and they are maintaining their prayers."*³

4. *"Or lest you say, 'If the Book had been revealed to us, we would certainly have been better guided than they' (We have sent down the Qur'an), so indeed there has come to you clear proof from your Lord, and guidance and mercy. Then who is more unjust than one who denies the verses of Allah and turns away from them? We will reward those who turn away from Our verses with the worst of punishment because they turned away."*⁴

5. *"Say, (O Muhammad), 'The Holy Spirit (Gabriel) has brought it down from your Lord in truth to make firm those who believe and as guidance and good tidings to the Muslims.'"*⁵

6. *"O mankind, there has to come to you (the Qur'an) an admonition from your Lord and healing for what is in the breasts and guidance and mercy for the believers."*⁶

Write some objectives of the Qur'an below based on the verses given above:

- The Qur'an directs people to the straight path.

.....

.....

.....

1. Al Imran, 3: 138
2. Al-Jathiyah, 45: 20
3. Al-An'am, 6: 92
4. Al-An'am, 6: 157
5. Al-Nahl, 16: 102
6. Yunus, 10: 57

3.2. Major Themes of the Qur'an

In the light of objectives of the Qur'an It can be said that everything that saves people from evil and rebellion and gives them happiness in this world and the Hereafter is one of the major themes of the Qur'an.

We can make a list of the major themes of the Qur'an under the following titles:

3.2.1. Belief

The Qur'an primarily deals with the correct belief. Two main elements of true belief are belief in Allah and belief in the Hereafter. In the setting of revelation, although the existence of Allah was generally accepted, His oneness and His uniqueness in His essence, attributes and acts were not accepted. For this reason, the Qur'an lays stress on oneness of Allah more than His existence.

The most important belief revealed by the Qur'an is **the belief of tawhid** (oneness), which refers to the Oneness and Uniqueness of Allah in His existence, attributes and acts.

In the meantime, belief of tawhid requires believing in the existence of a connection among creatures and their relation with their Creator. According to this belief, no being exists by itself.

Some of the verses regulating and determining the scope of the subject of belief in the Noble Qur'an are these:

قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ * اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ * لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ * وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ

"Say: He is Allah (who is) the One. Allah, the Eternal Refuge. He neither begets nor is born, nor is there to Him any equivalent."¹⁵

هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ عَالِمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ هُوَ الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ * هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمَلِكُ الْقُدُّوسُ السَّلَامُ الْمُؤْمِنُ الْمُهِيمُنُ الْعَزِيزُ الْجَبَّارُ الْمُتَكَبِّرُ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ

"He is God; there is no god but He. He is the knower of the Unseen and the Visible; He is the All-merciful, the All-compassionate. He is God; there is no god but He. He is the King, the All-holy, the All-peaceable, the All-faithful, the All-preserver, the All-mighty, the All-compeller, the All-sublime. Glory be to God, above that they associate!"¹⁶

وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ عِزَّى ابْنُ اللَّهِ وَقَالَتِ النَّصَارَى الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ اللَّهِ ذَلِكَ قَوْلُهُمْ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ يُضَاهَوْنَ قَوْلَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ قَاتَلَهُمُ اللَّهُ أَنَّى يُؤْفَكُونَ

"The Jews say, 'Ezra is the Son of God'; the Christians say, 'The Messiah is the Son of God.' That is the utterance of their mouths, conforming with the unbelievers before them. God assail them! How they are perverted!"¹⁷

إِنَّمَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أَوْثَانًا وَتَخْلُقُونَ إِفْكًا إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ لَا يَمْلِكُونَ لَكُمْ رِزْقًا فَابْتَغُوا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الرِّزْقَ وَاعْبُدُوهُ وَاشْكُرُوا لَهُ إِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ

15. Al-Ikhlās, 112: 1-4

16. Al-Hashr, 59: 22-23

17. At-Tawba, 9: 30

“You only serve, apart from God, idols and you create a calumny; those you serve, apart from God, have no power to provide for you. So seek after your provision with God, and serve Him, and be thankful to Him; to Him you will be returned.”¹⁸

The principles of belief which constitute the ground of Islam are mentioned in a verse in the Noble Qur'an:

آمَنَ الرَّسُولُ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ رَبِّهِ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ كُلٌّ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَكُتُبِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ لَا نُفَرِّقُ
بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِنْ رُسُلِهِ وَقَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا غُفْرَانَكَ رَبَّنَا وَإِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيرُ

“The Messenger believes in what was sent down to him from his Lord, and the believers; each one believes in God and His angels, and in His Books and His Messengers; we make no division between any one of His Messengers. They say, ‘We hear, and obey. Our Lord, grant us Your forgiveness; to You is the final destination.’”¹⁹

In sum, the Qur'an gives correct answers to the basic questions of people which are related to belief, such as “Where did I come from? What am I? Where am I going to?” Questions like “Who is the Sustainer of universe? What is the meaning and purpose of life?” are people's most essential ontological questions. The correct answers given to these questions ensure people's happiness.

3.2.2. Acts of Worship

Another basic theme dealt with in the Noble Qur'an is *ibadat* (acts of worship). Acts of worship are human behaviors manifested with the intention of showing his love, respect and obedience to Allah and gaining His pleasure.

The purpose of human creation is mentioned in a verse as to perform acts of worship:

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ

“I have not created jinn and mankind except to worship Me.”²⁰

In another verse, it is emphasized that we are required to worship only Allah:

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ

“You only we serve; to You alone we pray for help.”²¹

Belief is the inner aspect of religion and acts of worship are its exterior surface. In another words, belief is the soul while acts of worship are the body. Belief is spirit and acts of worship are matter. Belief is seed of the fruit and its essence while acts of worship are the rind that protects it. Belief is light of a candle, while acts of worship are the glass bell protecting its light from

18. Al-Ankabut, 29: 17

19. Al-Baqarah, 2: 285

20. Al-Dhariyat, 51: 56

21. Al-Fatihah, 1: 5

extinguishing. In this respect, it is not possible to separate belief and acts of worship from each other. Just as imagining acts of worship without belief is not possible, belief cannot be protected without acts of worship. It would weaken in time and even disappear.

Acts of worship preserve the connection between Allah and His servants and keep people away from evil by keeping his love and respect for Allah alive. For this reason, it is mentioned in a verse that acts of worship must be performed only for the sake of Allah:

قُلْ إِنَّ صَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ *
لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَبِذَلِكَ أُمِرْتُ وَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ

Say: "Truly, my prayer and my rites of sacrifice, my life and my death, are (all) for Allah, the Lord of the Worlds. He has no partner. And this I have been commanded, and I am the first of the Muslims."²²

On the one hand, the Qur'an corrects the people's false belief and creeds, on the other hand, it regulates their ritual life one more time and in a correct way. Because people and humanity have been worshipping many gods beside Allah, some of them had forgotten practicing acts of worship, and others fabricated new ones. Christians started to worship the statues of Jesus (pbuh). Among many Jews, acts of worship have been serving for personal benefits of rabbis (religious functionaries). Many people started to worship idols, statues, spirit, stars and fire instead of worshipping Allah. However, none of these complies with the Islamic belief of tawhid grounded on the principle of Oneness of Allah.

The Qur'an invites people to believe in One God, Allah, and informs them regarding the correct forms of the acts of worship and their main principles.

LET'S MAKE INFERENCES

اتْلُ مَا أُوحِيَ إِلَيْكَ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَى
عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَلَذِكْرُ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَصْنَعُونَ

"Recite (O Muhammed) that which has been revealed to you of the Book and keep up prayer; surely prayer keeps (one) away from indecency and evil, and certainly the remembrance of Allah is the greatest (ibadah), and Allah knows what you do."²³

وَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ أُمَّةً يَهْدُونَ بِأَمْرِنَا وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْهِمْ فِعْلَ الْخَيْرَاتِ
وَإِقَامَ الصَّلَاةِ وَإِيتَاءَ الزَّكَاةِ وَكَانُوا لَنَا عَابِدِينَ

22. Al-An'am, 6: 162-163

23. Al-Ankabut, 29: 45

*"And We made them leaders guiding by Our command. And We inspired to them the doing of good deeds, keeping up of prayer, and giving of zakah; and they were worshippers of Us."*²⁴

وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَمَا تُقَدِّمُوا لِأَنفُسِكُمْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ
تَجِدُوهُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ

*"And keep up prayer and pay zakah and whatever good you put forward for yourselves, you will find it with Allah; surely Allah sees what you do."*²⁵

قَوْلٌ مَّعْرُوفٌ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ صَدَقَةٍ يَتْبَعُهَا أَذًى وَاللَّهُ غَنِيٌّ حَلِيمٌ

*"Kind speech and forgiveness are better than charity followed by injury. And Allah is Free of need and Forbearing."*²⁶

فَأَمَّا الْيَتِيمَ فَلَا تَقْهَرْ

*"So as for the orphan, do not oppress (him)."*²⁷

Write the kinds of acts of worship below as mentioned above.

- To protect the rights of orphan.

.....

.....

.....

3.2.3. Moral Teachings

Another theme that is dealt with in the Qur'an is good morality. Our Prophet (pbuh) is praised for his morality and presented as an example for Muslims.

وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ

*"Surely you are upon a mighty morality."*²⁸

Our Prophet (pbuh) both practiced good morality in his life and encouraged believers to behave in that way. *"The most perfect believer in faith is the one who is best in moral character. The best of you are those who are the best to their family in manners."*²⁹

24. Al-Anbiya, 21: 73

25. Al-Baqarah, 2: 110

26. Al-Baqarah, 2: 263

27. Ad-Duhaa, 93: 9

28. Al-Qalam, 68: 4

29. At-Tirmidhi, Rad 11, (1162); Abu Dawud, Sunnah 16, (4682)

The Muslims who organized their lives in accordance with the principles of the Qur'an have established a civilization with high morality in their both personal and social lives.

Some of the moral behaviors encouraged by the Qur'an are as follows:

The Qur'an encourages thinking of the others, forgiving and being a good person;

الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ فِي السَّرَّاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَالْكَاطِمِينَ الْغَيْظَ
وَالْعَافِينَ عَنِ النَّاسِ وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

“(They are) those who expend (in the cause of Allah) during prosperity and adversity, and restrain their rage, and pardon the people; and God loves the good-doers.”³⁰

The Qur'an recommends being careful about trusts and not favoring certain people;

The Quran prohibits uncovering other people's deficiencies and humiliating them;

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الظَّنِّ إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ وَلَا تَجَسَّسُوا وَلَا يَغْتَبِ بَعْضُكُم بَعْضًا أَيُحِبُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَن يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ مَيْتًا فَكَرِهْتُمُوهُ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَوَّابٌ رَّحِيمٌ

“O believers, avoid much suspicion; some suspicion is a sin. And do not spy, neither back-bite one another; would any of you like to eat the flesh of his brother dead? You would detest it. And fear God; indeed Allah is Accepting of repentance and He is All-compassionate.”³¹

The Qur'an encourages good behaviors which are to make human “a good person” in every field of life, like human's being purified of bad habits such as arrogance, disdain and jealousy; and his respect the rights of all other people around him especially of his family.

LET'S FIND SOME PRINCIPLES

Deduce some moral principles from the verses below.

“Take the (way of) forgiveness and enjoin good and turn aside from the ignorant.”³²

“Not equal are the good deed and the evil deed. Repel [evil] by that [deed] which is better, he between whom and you there is enmity will be as if he were a loyal friend.”³³

“But surely he who bears patiently and is forgiving -- surely that is true constancy.”³⁴

“And walk not in the earth exultingly; certainly you will never tear the earth open, nor attain the mountains in height.”³⁵

30. Ali Imran, 2: 134

31. Al-Hujurat, 49: 12

32. Al-A'raf, 7: 199

33. Al-Fussilat, 41: 34

34. Al-Shuraa, 42: 43

35. Al-Isra', 17: 37

“O believers, let not any people ridicule another people who may be better than they; neither let women ridicule women who may be better than themselves. And find not fault with one another, neither revile one another by nicknames. Fusuq (disobedience) is a bad name after belief. And whoever does not repent, then it is those who are the evildoers.”³⁶

“And if you find not anyone therein, enter it not until permission is given to you. And if you are told, ‘Return,’ return; that is purer for you; and Allah knows the things you do.”³⁷

- Forgiveness is good.

.....

.....

.....

3.2.4. Law

Another major theme examined in the Qur'an is the principles that regulate social relations (*mu'amalat*). These principles regulate relations between person and another person, between person and community and between communities with each other. There are many verses related to this theme in the Noble Qur'an. In one of these verses, it is mentioned:

وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا مَالَ الْيَتِيمِ إِلَّا بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ حَتَّىٰ يَبْلُغَ أَشُدَّهُ وَأَوْفُوا الْكَيْلَ وَالْمِيزَانَ بِالْقِسْطِ

“And do not approach the orphan's property except in a way that is best until he reaches maturity. And give full measure and weight in justice...”³⁸

Some other subjects like familial relations, commerce and taking and giving loan are also found in the Qur'an. For instance, in the 282nd verse of Chapter al-Baqarah which is the longest verse of the Quran, writing of any loan is recommended.

Another major theme of the Qur'an is to provide justice in human relations. Allah has said in one verse:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تُؤَدُّوا الْأَمَانَاتِ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهَا وَإِذَا حَكَمْتُمْ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ أَنْ تَحْكُمُوا بِالْعَدْلِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ نِعِمَّا يَعِظُكُمْ بِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ سَمِيعًا بَصِيرًا

“Indeed, Allah commands you to render trusts to whom they are due and when you judge between people to judge with justice. Excellent is that which Allah instructs you. Indeed, Allah is ever Hearing and Seeing.”³⁹

36. Al-Hujurat, 49: 11

37. Al-Nur, 24: 28

38. Al-An'am, 6: 152

39. Al-Nisa, 4: 58

Moreover, in various verses, people have been asked to respect fundamental rights and liberties of others.

Major themes of the Qur'an and their scopes



4. EXPRESSIVE FEATURES OF THE QUR'AN

4.1. Linguistic Superiority of the Qur'an

Allah the Almighty has supported all His prophets with a miracle, which incapacitated people in the most favorite science, art and profession of the time. Literature was prevalent and in fashion at the time of our Prophet (pbuh). The Qur'an is at the top of the miracles given to the Prophet (pbuh). When the Qur'an was sent down, even the greatest experts of literature remained silent before its language and wording and accepted its superiority.

The Qur'an is a book in Arabic. This is indicated in various verses of the Qur'an: **"And thus We have revealed to you an Arabic Qur'an..."**⁴⁰ **"Indeed, We have made it an Arabic Qur'an that you might contemplate."**⁴¹

Its revelation in Arabic language is very normal. Because the environment of the audience of the Prophet was Arabia and the Qur'an was sent down at first to those people living in that environment. Each prophet has been given a book in language of his people (community). It is commanded in a verse:

40. Al-Shu'ra, 42: 7

41. Al-Zukhruf, 43: 3

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ رَّسُولٍ إِلَّا بِلِسَانٍ قَوْمِهِ لِيُبَيِّنَ لَهُمْ...

“And We did not send any messenger except in the language of his people to state clearly for them.”⁴²

Furthermore, if prophets had not been given books in their own language, there would have also appeared a problem of language in understanding them, so that a new problem would have been added to the existing problems between the prophet and his community; and situation would have taken a more difficult shape.

In this regard, the Noble Qur'an uses all literary characteristics of Arabic language in the way that no one can produce the same. For example, it is mentioned in one verse:

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ

“Indeed, it is We who sent down the Qur'an and indeed, We will be its guardian.”⁴³ Accordingly, the Noble Qur'an never wears off by being recited continuously and repeatedly; and its advices and lessons never come to an end. Because it was sent down by Allah as a miracle.

While the verse mentions the Qur'an certainly as the word of Allah, it also proves its divinity—not human made- in terms of language. Because in this a half-line long verse, there is a ten-fold intensification (emphasis). To strengthen the meaning by tenfold emphasis in a meaningful sentence is an affair beyond human capacity.

EVALUATE

Evaluate the verse given below in terms of the intensification in its meaning with your friends.



42. Ibrahim, 14: 4

43. Al-Hijr, 15: 9

Expressions of the Qur'an are not complicated or incomprehensible. Since it addresses to whole humanity, each person who recites it gets information from it—to the extent of his/her capacity and knowledge permits.

The Qur'an sometimes addresses to people's reason, sometimes to his heart and sometimes to his emotions. It explains a subject by some methods like suggestion, repetition, exemplification, description, narrative, and impersonation. This verse is one of these examples for this subject:

وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمُ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ وَالنُّجُومَ
مُسَخَّرَاتٌ بِأَمْرِهِ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ

“He has made the Night and the Day, the sun and the moon in your service; and the stars are in service by His Command: verily in this are Signs for men who are wise.”⁴⁴

4.2. Addressings in the Qur'an

Style of speech is important in terms of its effect on the addressee. Addressings draw addressee's attention to the subject and prepare his mind for speech.

Addressings used by the Qur'an differ from each other according to the characteristics of its addressee.

O prophet; يا أيها النبي !

O believers; يا أيها الذين آمنوا !

O unbelievers; يا أيها الذين كفروا !

O human being; يَا أَيُّهَا الْإِنْسَانُ !

My child (son); يَا بُنَيَّ !

In addition to these addressings given above, there are also addressings to angels, jinns, animals and inanimate beings in the Qur'an.

O nafs (self); يا أيها النفس !

O fire; يا نار !

O sky; يا سماء !

O ants; يا أيها النمل !

Addressings in the Qur'an contain various meanings such as praise, rebuke and advice.

4.3. Oaths

Allah the Almighty occasionally gives oath on some of His creation in the Noble Qur'an in the first verses of some chapters or in the other verses. There are seventeen chapters in the Noble

44. An-Nakhl, 16: 12

Qur'an in which the oath is given in the first verse. Some of these oaths and the wisdom behind them are as such:

وَالصَّافَّاتِ صَفًّا * فَالزَّاجِرَاتِ زَجْرًا * فَالتَّالِيَاتِ ذِكْرًا * إِنَّ إِلَهَكُمْ لَوَاحِدٌ

“By those who range themselves in ranks, and those who gather and drive (the clouds), and those who recite remembrance, indeed, your God is One.”⁴⁵

وَالكِتَابِ الْمُبِينِ

“By the clear Book...”⁴⁶

وَالذَّارِيَاتِ ذُرُوءًا * فَالْحَامِلَاتِ وِقْرًا * فَالْجَارِيَاتِ يُسْرًا *
فَالْمُقَسَّمَاتِ أَمْرًا * إِنَّمَا تُوعَدُونَ لَصَادِقٌ

“By those (winds) scattering (dust) dispersing, and those (clouds) carrying a load (of water), then those (ships) gliding easily, and those (angels) apportioning matter, indeed, what you are promised is true.”⁴⁷

وَالَّتَيْنِ وَالزَّيْتُونِ * وَطُورِ سِينِينَ * وَهَذَا الْبَلَدِ الْأَمِينِ

“By the fig and the olive, and the Mount of Sinai, and this City of security...”⁴⁸

وَالْعَصْرِ

“By *asr* (time)...”⁴⁹

وَالسَّمَاءِ وَالطَّارِقِ

“By the sky and *Tariq* (the morning star)...”⁵⁰

Some of the wisdom in the oaths given on some creations in the Qur'an can be listed as follows:

1. To draw attention to that creation.
2. To glorify that being.
3. To strengthen the meaning.

45. As-Saffat, 37: 1-4

46. Az-Zukhruf, 43: 2

47. Adh-Dhariyat, 51: 1-5

48. At-Tin, 95: 1-3

49. Al-Asr, 103: 1

50. At-Tariq, 86: 1

4. To indicate significance of that being for human.

4.4. Repetitions in the Qur'an

It is seen that some verses and words are repeated in the Qur'an. In addition to make an emphasis, the reason of having such repetitions in the Qur'an is to apply one of the subtleties of Arabic literature such as making (the addressee) amazed and terrified, threatening, warning and descriptive impersonation.

For example, the repetition of the word "*al-qari'ah*" (the striking calamity) in Chapter Al-Qari'ah (101) is to make the addressee feel profoundly the terrifying scene of the Day of Judgment.

The verse

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

"So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?" is repeated thirty one times in Chapter al-Rahman (55).

This sentence, which comes after the statements in which the favors created for people and jinn, are mentioned in Chapter al-Rahman, lifts the veil of heedlessness of Allah's servant and reminds him the duty of gratitude with confession of the favors.

Also in chapter Al-Mursalat (77), the verse

وَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ

"Woe, that Day, to the deniers" is repeated ten times. This verse comes after the verses in which many divine realities are mentioned. It informs that those who deny them will be frustrated and severely punished. Hence, exegetes, considering the each meaning that comes before this verse, say that the verses emphasize different meanings even if they have the same meaning. Thereby, these repetitions are not redundant. Each repeated verse has a different function.

The most repeated themes in the Qur'an are belief, tawhid (the principle of Oneness of Allah), Hereafter and stories of former prophets and their communities.

There are some reasons behind repetition of some subjects and words. We can state some of these reasons as such:

The Qur'an is a book of call. A call has effect and becomes prevalent as much as it is continuous.

Repetition is very important to place basic principles of Islam in the hearts of people and to convince them mentally. As long as a drop of water continuously drops in the same place it pierces the marble in time, which means that repetition has a strong effect.

It can be said that continuously repeating a statement is very important in terms of strengthening its effect. In so far as any of repetitions in the Qur'an does not create any boredom in human, while repetition in human speech is boring.

4.5. Parables in the Qur'an

The Qur'an sometimes conveys its message to people not directly but by telling a real story or giving an example about a topic familiar to the addressee. Because, regardless the cultural level or situation of readers or listeners, parables have a strong effect on them.

While reading a Qur'anic story, people find themselves in it and get benefit and joy from it. They gain experience from the events filling inside of his thought and heart.

People sometimes find the solutions of their problems that incapacitate them while standing in front of them for a long time is whispered to them in the story.

They may sometimes find some clues about the solution of their mountainous problems in the story. They may also find examples of their lost values and bring them to fruition.

In the story, sometimes there are points that inspire people for patience and give them more power.

There are lessons for those who fear Allah, are heedful and wise. This is mentioned in the verse given below:

“Certainly were there in them (Joseph and his brothers) signs for those who are wise.”⁵¹

Benefit and aims of the parables

Surely, there are some objects and benefits in mentioning the parables in the Qur'an and these should be known. These are briefly as follows:

a) They prove the validity of prophethood of the Prophet (pbuh). Because he was an *ummi* (illiterate person). He did not get educated in school. There was no possibility or opportunity for him to live with the scholars of *ahl al-kitab* (people of the book/Christians and Jews). Then, how could he know the parables of previous communities and how was it possible that he narrated these stories in detail up to the mark?

b) They reveal that the message of all prophets is same.

c) The Qur'an establishes the notion that a believer may face (come up against) the people who go astray from the way of guidance and the straight path.

d) Another object of the stories is to reveal that the religion transmitted by the Prophet (pbuh) and the religion transmitted by other prophets are same.

e) Another aim of the stories is to declare that Allah helps His prophets and destroys the liars at the end point.

f) The stories give confidence, tranquility and patience to the believers and warn the deniers illustrating that struggle of delivering the message of Islam did not begin today and will survive forever and its supporter is Allah the Almighty.

51. Yusuf, 12: 7

LET'S READ AND UNDERSTAND

Parables in the Qur'an sometimes reflect an event in the depths of history such as the creation story of Adam and Eve. They sometimes are about a prophet and his community and sometimes a good character (such as Luqman) or a bad one (such as Qarun) who lived in the history.

Another point is that; place and time dimensions are not at the forefront in the stories. By these stories, the Qur'an tells to its addressees that "regardless the place and time, you may experience such a situation. Do not worry. Such situations were experienced before you as well. You can understand which manner you will adopt using the examples."

4.6. Al-Huruf al-Muqatta'ah

a. Definition of *al-Huruf al-Muqatta'* and its numbers

Al-Huruf al-muqatta'ah lexically means "the cut letters". What is intended by this is syllabic letters of Arabic language. *Al-Huruf al-muqatta'ah* technically means the letters that are found at the beginning of some chapters and comprise of one or more letters.

Number of *al-huruf al-muqatta'ah* is –taking the same ones one- fourteen. Some of these letters and the chapters in which they are mentioned are as follows:

	Al-Huruf al-muqatta'ah	The Chapters
1	الم	Al-Baqarah, Ali Imran, Al-Ankabut and Al-Rum
2	الر	Hud, Yusuf
3	المص	Al-Araf
4	كهيعص	Maryam
5	طسم	Al-Qasas and Ash-Shu'ara
6	يس	Ya-Sin
7	عسق	Ash-Shura
8	المر	Ar-Ra'd
9	ق	Al-Qaf
10	حم	Al-Ahkaf, Al-Jathiyah, Ad-Dukhan, Az-Zukhruf and Ash-Shura
11	طه	Ta-Ha
12	ص	As-Sad
13	طس	An-Naml
14	ن	Al-Qalam

b. Opinions about the meanings of *al-huruf al-muqatta'ah*

There is no information found in the Noble Qur'an and sayings of the Prophet about the meanings of *al-huruf al-muqatta'ah*, which is considered mutashabih (allegorical expressions).

However, some opinions have been presented on this subject by Islamic scholars. The views of the scholars are gathered in two main groups:

1. *Al-Huruf al-muqatta'ah* is one of the secrets of the Qur'an. Their meanings are known only by Allah. For this reason, howsoever a person thinks about meanings of these letters, he cannot reach a conclusion. The opinions presented on this subject can be nothing but the personal comments of the interpreter.

2. There is no explanatory information about *al-huruf al-muqatta'ah* in the Qur'an and sayings of the Prophet. However, those who reached a high level in knowledge are able to find out the meanings of these letters.

The scholars who adopt the latter opinion have different interpretations about *al-huruf al-muqatta'ah*:

a) Each of these letters signifies the attributes and names of Allah. For example, according to an opinion attributed to Ibn Abbas, the letters "Kaf-Ha-Ya-Ayn-Sad" signify the names "al-Karim, al-Hadi, al-Hakim, as-Sadiq" of Allah. The letters "Alif-Lam-Mim" means "I am Allah, I know better." It is possible to give more examples in this respect.

b) These letters indicate that the Qur'an is a miracle and nothing similar to it can be produced.

c) According to another opinion, these are letters for warning. The purpose of using these letters is to draw the addressees' attention.

Many other opinions have been reflected apart from these. However, many of these opinions have no sound base.

There is no doubt that *al-huruf al-muqatta'ah* is the word of Allah as any other verses. Yet, since Allah the Almighty and His Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) did not give information about the meaning of these letters, it is not right to dwell on meanings of these letters. The most proper thing to do is to say "These are the word of Allah and a part from the Qur'an. Their meanings are known best by Allah and His Prophet (pbuh).

5. FORMAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE QUR'AN

5.1. Surah

5.1.1. Definition of Surah

The word *surah* lexically means rank, honor, position, sign, symbol, wall, fortress, high building or departments and floors of the building.

According to the terminology of the science of tafsir, the term *surah* refers to each chapter of the Qur'an. This word is mentioned in some of the verses of the Qur'an as follows,

قُلْ فَأْتُوا بِسُورَةٍ مِّثْلِهِ وَادْعُوا مَنِ اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

“Say, “Then bring forth a *surah* like it and call upon (for assistance) whomever you can besides Allah, if you should be truthful.””⁵²

5.1.2. Number of Chapters, Their Order, Longness and Shortness

The Noble Qur'an comprises of 114 chapters.

Many scholars have the view that the chapters of the Qur'an are *tawkifi* (divinely determined) in other words they were put in an order by the command of the Prophet (pbuh).

The Noble Qur'an was completely written and memorized at the time of the Prophet (pbuh). However, it was not put in the order that we have today. The commission, which collected and put the Qur'an in writing, put it in the order that the Prophet (pbuh) determined. They arranged the places and orders of verses and chapters of the Qur'an upon his instructions. Otherwise, the companions did not do it by themselves. They studied the Prophet's order and arranged the Qur'an in accordance with this order.

The whole Noble Qur'an was sent down from “*al-Lawh al-Mahfudh* (lit. the Protected Tablet)” to the world's sky at once in this order. Then, it was revealed to the Prophet (pbuh) in pieces. At the same time, every year the Prophet (pbuh) used to recite the Qur'an in the presence of Gabriel in the month of Ramadan. They did this practice twice in the year of the Prophet's demise. All these were done in accordance with an order and arrangement.

All these show that order of verses and chapters of the Qur'an is based on the divine revelation. Verses of the Qur'an are organized in the best and most sound way in the chapters just as its chapters are organized in the Qur'anic unity. The Qur'an is the word of Allah who is the One who has provided its harmony and order.

Some of the chapters of the Qur'an are long; some of them are short in terms of the number of their verses.

Names of the Chapters: Chapters take their names from a word mentioned in the chapter or from their (stated) meanings. Some chapters have more than one name. For example, Chapter al-Fatiha (1) is given more than twenty names such as *Fatihah al-Kitab*, *Fatihah al-Qur'an*, *Umm al-Kitab* and *Umm al-Qur'an*.

Sometimes a common name is given to two or more chapters. For instance, Chapter al-Baqarah and Chapter Al-i Imran are named as “al-Zahrawan,” Chapter al-Falaq and Chapter al-Nas are named as “al-Mu'awwidhatayn”.

The chapters in which the stories of the prophets are told took the names of these prophets such as the chapters of Nuh, Hud, Ibrahim, Yunus, Yusuf and Muhammad. Likewise, the chapters that speak about various nations, beings and people with different characters are named after them such as al-Jinn, al-Munafiqun and al-Mutaffifin. However, not all chapters are named in accordance with their contents. For example, none of the chapters of Ta-Ha, al-Qasas or al-A'raf that speaks about the Prophet Moses is named as Surat Musa.

52. Yunus, 10: 38

5.1.3. The Chapters Revealed in Mecca and Medina

The chapters revealed before Hijrah (the Migration) are called the chapters revealed in Mecca. The chapters revealed after Hijrah are called the chapters revealed in Medina.

This classification has been made based on the revelation time. The period before Hijrah lasted approximately thirteen years. All chapters revealed during this period are called ***al-Surah al-Makkiyah*** (Meccan Chapters). Number of the chapters revealed in Mecca is generally accepted as eighty six, while the remaining twenty eight chapters were revealed in Medina. These chapters are called ***al-Surah al-Madaniyyah*** (Medinan Chapter).

As some Medinan verses are found within the chapters revealed in Mecca, there are some Meccan verses in Medinan chapters. Their qualification as Meccan or Medinan is mentioned in the beginning of chapters.

There are various benefits in knowing the time of the revelation of chapters. To know where and when a verse was revealed makes comprehending the Qur'an easier and understanding the wisdom behind the revelation in fragments.

LET'S NOTE

Main characteristics of the verses revealed in Mecca are as follows:

They are shorter and more laconic.

Words and statements are more enthusiastic and effective in terms of their sound.

They deal with the principles of faith and the issue of worshiping only Allah.

They present vicious beliefs and deviant thoughts of *mushriks* (those who associate beings with Allah); and describe Paradise, Hell, and scenes from the Day of Judgment.

LET'S NOTE

Main characteristics of the verses revealed in Medina are as follows:

They are longer and their toning is softer than Meccan ones.

Legal principles of Islamic state, (limited) punishments, inheritance, individual and social relations take place.

Permission for Jihad and its rulings are explained.

They speak about the states of *munafiqs* (hypocrites), Jews, and Christians; their deviant thoughts, their violations of religious laws; and reflect their distortions in their Holy Books.

5.2. Ayah

5.2.1. Definition of Ayah

The word *ayah* lexically means sign, mark, evidence, and lesson.

Plural form of *ayah* comes as *aay* or *ayaat*. Anything that points to the existence of Allah and His oneness is also called *ayah*. Creation of skies and earth, the circulation of night and day follow-

ing each other, the moon, the sun, stars, trees and flowers, all are evidences revealing the existence of Allah. The miracles which prove that the prophets were sent by Allah are also called ayah.

The word ayah is used in the Qur'an in different meanings such as evidence⁵³, sign⁵⁴, miracle⁵⁵, lesson⁵⁶ and extraordinary action⁵⁷.

According to the discipline of tafsir, *ayah* is a revelation that is composed of one or more sentences. Separating the verses from each other is not rule based. Order of the verses is divinely decreed. Beginning and end of the verses are determined by the order of the Prophet (pbuh). This is why (المص) and (الم) are accepted as separate verses, while (ال) is not a separate verse but a part of following one.

There are some verses consisting more than one ruling and sentence, as well as, there are some others that consist of one or two words and do not reflect any ruling by themselves. For example; the 282nd verse of Chapter al-Baqarah is one page long verse whereas the verse (مُدَّهَا مَتَانٍ) in Chapter al-Rahman consists of only one word.

The word found at the end of a verse that separates it from the following verse is called *fasilah*.

5.2.2. Number of Verses

There are different opinions on the exact number of verses that are found in the Qur'an, however, these are relative differences. They are not related to the essence. Since the numbers of the verses were written later, it is natural to reach different figures in this respect. After all, while the verses do not change, increase or decrease, their numbers may increase or decrease. In fact, some scholars consider *basmalah* and some of *al-huruf al-muqatta'ah* found at the beginning of chapters as separate verses. And since some of them consider certain verses separated from each other with a half-stop as two separate ones, the number of verses change.

According to common numbering system that Muslims use in the world, there are 6236 verses in the Qur'an. In another numbering system, the number of verses reaches up to 6666.

5.2.3. Order of Verses in Surah

The order of verses is divinely decreed, which means they have been arranged by the command of the Prophet (pbuh). When The Prophet (pbuh) received a revelation, he used to have his revelation scribes write it to its appropriate place in the chapters of the Qur'an. Gabriel used to show the places of the verses to the Prophet (pbuh) and then the Prophet (pbuh) used to inform his revelation scribes. In this respect, there is a consensus among Muslim scholars.

The Prophet (pbuh) used to recite verses during prayer in accordance with a certain order. The companions used to memorize and recite them in the same order, which was observed during the compilation of the Qur'an during the time of Abu Bakr and its copying during the time of Uthman. There has been no change in this respect.

53. Ar-Rum, 30: 22

54. Al-Baqarah, 2: 248

55. Al-Baqarah, 2: 211

56. Al-Hijr, 15: 77

57. Al-Mu'minun, 23: 50

READING TEXT

ABDULLAH IBN MAS'UD

The first companion who recited the Noble Qur'an openly

Abdullah ibn Mas'ud is one of the famous companions and the earliest people who embraced Islam.

Abdullah ibn Mas'ud is the first companion who recited the Noble Qur'an openly in Mecca.

One day, the companions were conversing somewhere in Mecca. One of them said:

- No one after the Prophet (pbuh) could recite the Noble Qur'an openly to the polytheists. Isn't there anyone who will do this?

Ibn Mas'ud immediately stood up and said:

- I will recite it.

- We do not want you to get hurt. Someone from whose tribe the polytheists fear should recite it.

- Let me go! Pray for me! Allah the Almighty protects me!

Next day, he went to *Maqam Ibrahim*. A group of polytheists had gathered there. Ibn Mas'ud said bismillah and started to recite chapter al-Rahman (55).

All polytheists walked up to him and started to beat him. He was wounded and bleeding. However, he continued to recite the Noble Qur'an as if nothing was happening. After he finished recitation, he went to the companions and they said:

- Our fears came true. Do not go there and recite near them anymore.

- No, I will go and do it again. This was the first time that I saw the polytheists in such a miserable situation. Their helplessness makes me happy. I do not feel the pain of the tortures.

Next day, he went there and recited again. They assaulted him again. They even lay him on hot sands and tortured him. He again continued his recitation without paying attention to them. In the end, polytheists found no way out.

Meccan polytheists severely tortured Abdullah ibn Mas'ud as they did to other Muslims. When their tortures reached to unbearable degrees, he got permission from the Prophet (pbuh) and migrated to Abyssinia two times. After the Prophet (pbuh) migrated to



Medina, he moved from Abyssinia to Medina. Firstly, he stayed in the house of Mu'adh ibn Jabal as his guest. Later on, he built a house near Masjid an-Nabi and moved there.

The Prophet (pbuh) used to list his name among the teachers of the Noble Qur'an and say **"Learn the Noble Qur'an from Ibn Mas'ud, Salim, Ubayy b. Qa'b and Mu'adh ibn Jabal."** He memorized 70 chapters directly hearing from the Prophet (pbuh). The chains of qira'ah (recitation) of famous imams like Asim, Hamza, Kisa'i, Halaf and A'mash goes back to Ibn Mas'ud.

The Prophet (pbuh) liked very much to listen to the Qur'an from him.

One day, our Prophet (pbuh) said to him:

- **Recite chapter an-Nisa (4) and we will listen.** Ibn Mas'ud said:

- The Noble Qur'an was sent down to you. We recited and learnt it from you. Thereupon, the Prophet (pbuh) said:

- **Yes, this is true but I like to listen it from others.**

Ibn Mas'ud started to recite. When he came to the verse **"So how will it be when We bring from every nation a witness and we bring you (O Muhammad) against these people as a witness?"** (al-Nisa 4: 41) the Prophet (pbuh) burst into tears.



EVALUATION QUESTIONS

A. ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

1. Write the characteristics of the Qur'an.
2. Write five of the names of the Qur'an and explain their meanings.
3. What are the major themes and subjects dealt with in the Qur'an? Explain briefly.
4. Explain briefly the wisdom and the reasons for the repetitions of some subjects and words in the Qur'an.
5. Write the benefits and aims of mentioning the parables in the Qur'an.
6. What does *al-huruf al-muqatta'ah* mean? Give brief information.
7. Give information about number of the chapters in the Qur'an, their naming and order.
8. Write the main characteristics of the Meccan chapters.
9. Write the main characteristics of the Medinan chapters.
10. Give information about the term *ayah*.

B. MARK THE CORRECT ANSWERS TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Which one of the following names is not one of the names of the Qur'an? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Ghufuran b) Furqan c) Qur'an d) Dhikr e) Huda 2. Which one of the following characteristics does not belong to the Qur'an? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) It was sent down to the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). b) It is written on papers. c) It has been transmitted through tawatur. d) Its recitation is an act of worship. e) It is protected by Islamic scholars. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. What is the main reason for the revelation of the Qur'an? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) To give information b) To Guide to the straight path c) To prove superiority of Arabic language d) To inform about the news from the future e) To be recited |
|---|---|

4. Which one of the following statements cannot be one of the reasons of the usage of oaths in the Qur'an?
 - a) To draw attention to the being upon which oath is given
 - b) To glorify the being upon which oath is given
 - c) To strengthen the given meaning
 - d) To emphasize holiness of the being upon which oath is given
 - e) To reflect value of that being for human
5. One of the aims of the repetitions in the Qur'an is to emphasize one of the subtleties of Arabic language. Which of the following choices cannot be one of these aims?
 - a) To emphasize
 - b) To frighten
 - c) To ease
 - d) To amaze
 - e) To warn
6. Which of the following answers cannot be one of the purposes of the usage of the parables in the Qur'an?
 - a) To prove authenticity of the prophethood of Muhammad (pbuh)
 - b) To reveal that the message of all the prophets is same
 - c) To reveal that the religion transmitted by our Prophet (pbuh) and the religion transmitted by other prophets are the same
 - d) To explain that Allah helps His prophets and destroys the liars
 - e) To make its recitation easier
7. *al-Huruf al-muqatta'ah* are the letters which consist of one or more letters and are found at the beginnings of chapters. What does *al-huruf al-muqatta'ah* lexically mean?
 - a) The important letters
 - b) The ciphered letters
 - c) The extended letters
 - d) The beginning letters
 - e) The cut letters
8. Which of the following answers cannot be one of the characteristics of Meccan chapters?
 - a) Importance of acts of worship is emphasized.
 - b) Verses are shorter and more laconic.
 - c) Words and statements are more exciting and effective in terms of sound.
 - d) The principles of faith are emphasized and the belief of tawhid is dealt.
 - e) Paradise, Hell and the scenes of the Day of Judgement are described.
9. Which of the following statements cannot be one of the characteristics of Medinan chapters?
 - a) Verses are longer and tone is softer than Meccan chapters.
 - b) Legal principles of Islamic state, punishments, inheritance, person and public relations take place.
 - c) Acts of worship are emphasized and rulings of jihad are explained.
 - d) Situations of Hypocrites, Christians and Jews and their deviant thoughts are reflected.
 - e) They are at higher level than Meccan chapters in a literary sense.

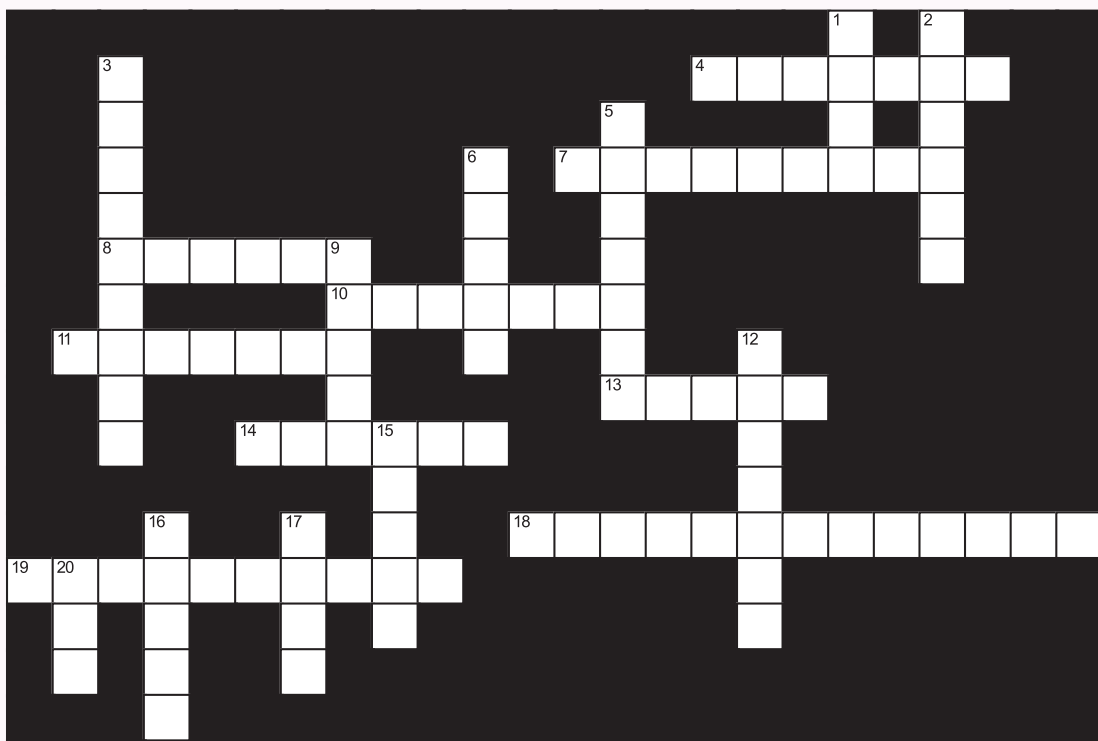
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|---|--|
| <p>10. Which of the following words is not one of the meanings of the term ayah?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Signb) Evidencec) Lessond) Marke) Promise | <p>11. Which of the following choices cannot be one of the major themes of the Qur'an?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Act of worshipb) Tradec) Faithd) Good mannere) Law |
|---|--|

C. FILL IN THE BLANKS IN THE FOLLOWING SENTENCES WITH THE MOST SUITABLE WORD FROM THOSE GIVEN BELOW.

(tawkifi, mu'awwidhatayn, mushaf, morality, makkiyyah)

1. The book form of the Qur'an is called
2. "Indeed, you are upon a great"
3. Common name for Surat al-Falaq and Surat an-Nas is
4. The chapters of the Qur'an revealed before the Migration are called al-surah
5. Order of verses is in other words, they were arranged by the command of the Prophet (pbuh).

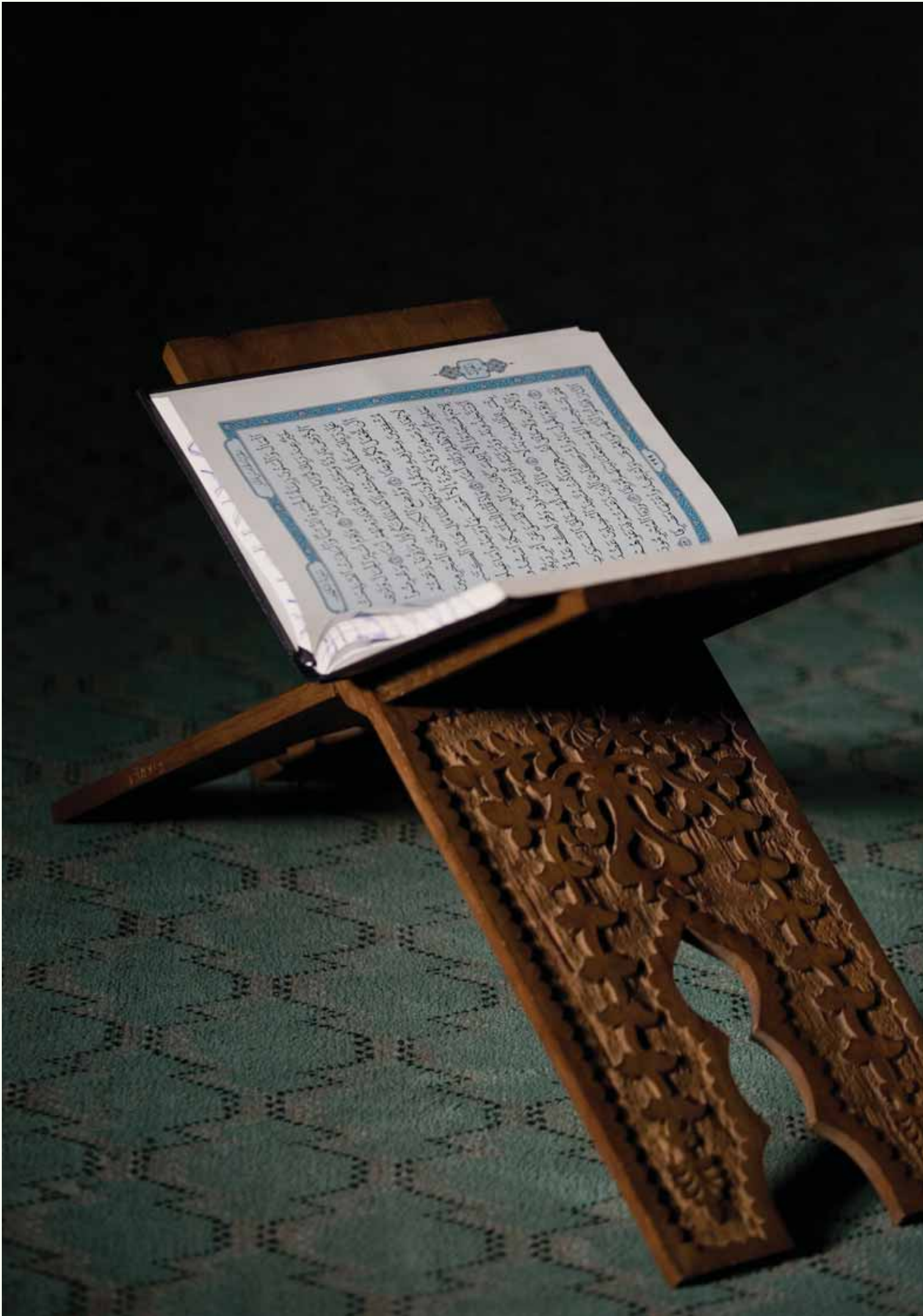
CROSSWORD PUZZLE



4. Transmission of the Qur'an by so many people that is impossible to lie together.
7. The term used for the chapters of the Qur'an revealed before the Migration to Medina.
8. One of the Islamic beliefs that is based on the oneness and unity of Allah.
10. Salvation of human from disbelief and associating partners with Allah and entering the straight path of Islam.
11. The term that means the order of the Qur'an was arranged by the Prophet (pbuh). Divinely determined
13. The name of the cave in which the first revelation came to the Prophet (pbuh).
14. One of the names of the Qur'an which means "distinguishing the truth from the false and the right from the wrong".
18. The common name used for Surat al-Falaq and Surat an-Nas together
19. The term used for the chapters of the Qur'an revealed after the Migration to Medina.



1. The divine message sent down to the Prophet (pbuh) by Allah, the Qur'an.
2. The book form of the Qur'an.
3. A word which means "the cut letters". "Al-huruf"
5. The name of the first chapter of the Qur'an.
6. The term used for each chapter of the Qur'an.
9. One of the names of the Qur'an which means advice.
12. Delivering the message of Islam to people by the Prophet (pbuh).
15. The holy book which was sent down to the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).
16. The companions who are responsible for writing the Qur'an. "..... al-Wahy".
17. The term used for a revelation of the Qur'an which consists of one or a couple of sentences.
20. The Prophet's recitation of the Qur'an every year in the month of Ramadan in the presence of Gabriel.



CHAPTER

II

HISTORY OF THE QUR'AN

CONTENTS OF THE CHAPTER

- ▶ REVELATION OF THE QUR'AN
- ▶ COMPILATION OF THE QUR'AN

PREPARATORY WORKS

- ▶ Research the terminological meaning of wahy in dictionaries.
- ▶ There is some information about time of revelation (Meccan-Medinan) in the explanation parts at the beginning of the chapters. Look at these explanation sections, find three chapters revealed in both Mecca and Medina and write their names.
- ▶ What is the reason for revelation of the Noble Qur'an in pieces in 23 years? Think about it.
- ▶ Think about the reasons why there is no change in the Noble Qur'an although many years have passed since its revelation.

1. REVELATION OF THE QUR'AN

1.1. Definition of Wahy

The Noble Qur'an was sent down to the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) through *wahy*. The term *wahy* lexically means secret talk, whisper, inspiration, command, signal, call, hurry and revelation.⁵⁸

فَخَرَجَ عَلَى قَوْمِهِ مِنَ الْمِحْرَابِ فَأَوْحَىٰ إِلَيْهِمْ أَنْ سَبِّحُوا بُكْرَةً وَعَشِيًّا

“So he (Zachary) came out to his people from the prayer chamber and signaled to them to remember Allah in the morning and afternoon.”⁵⁹

Here in this verse *wahy* means Zachary's (pbuh) **implication and signal** to his community.

وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ أُمِّ مُوسَىٰ أَنْ أَرْضِعِيهِ

“And We inspired to the mother of Moses, “Suckle him...”⁶⁰

It is seen that the word *wahy* here means **inspiration**.

وَأَوْحَىٰ رَبُّكَ إِلَى النَّحْلِ أَنْ اتَّخِذِي مِنَ الْجِبَالِ بُيُوتًا وَمِنَ الشَّجَرِ وَمِمَّا يَعْرِشُونَ

“And your Lord inspired to the bee, “Make hives in the mountains and in the trees and in what they build.”⁶¹

In this verse, *wahy* denotes the meaning of **instinct** given by Allah to honeybee.

إِذْ يُوحِي رَبُّكَ إِلَى الْمَلَائِكَةِ أَنِّي مَعَكُمْ

“Your Lord revealed to the angels: I am with you...”⁶²

The word *wahy* refers to the **command** of Allah to the angels.

58. Ibn Manzur, Lisan al-Arab, XV, 379-381

59. Maryam, 19: 11

60. Al-Qasas, 28: 7

61. An-Nahl, 16: 68

62. Al-Anfal, 8: 12

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَا لِكُلِّ نَبِيٍّ عَدُوًّا شَيَاطِينَ الْإِنْسِ وَالْجِنِّ يُوحِي بَعْضُهُمْ إِلَى بَعْضٍ زُخْرُفَ الْقَوْلِ غُرُورًا

“And thus We have made for every prophet an enemy - devils from mankind and jinn, inspiring to one another decorative speech in delusion.”⁶³

Here the term *wahy* means **delusions** given by jinns and Satan.

As is seen in the abovementioned verses, the word *wahy* has various meanings. However, *wahy*, in religious terminology, means Allah's conveyance His commands and prohibitions to his prophets.

TAKE A NOTE

Various lexical meanings of the word *wahy*:



1.2. Wahy and the Ways of Wahy

As informed by the Noble Qur'an, Allah the Almighty communicates people in three ways. Either Allah puts His word in His servant's heart or speaks to him behind a cover or via an angel. This point is explained in the Noble Qur'an as such:

وَمَا كَانَ لِنَبِيٍّ أَنْ يَكَلِّمَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَّا وَحْيًا أَوْ مِنْ وَرَاءِ حِجَابٍ أَوْ يُرْسِلَ رَسُولًا فَيُوحِيَ بَأْذَنِهِ مَا يَشَاءُ

“And it is not for any human being that Allah should speak to him except by revelation or from behind a partition or that He sends a messenger to reveal, by His permission, what He wills...”⁶⁴

Wahy has been granted to prophets generally in one of the above-mentioned ways. Now, let's try to explain them in detail.

1. The first way of sending *wahy* is true dream.

2. The **inspiration** of the word of Allah by the angel to the heart of the Prophet. It was the most difficult way of revelation for the Prophet (pbuh). He was hearing a sound like a ringing bell. After the sound stopped, the Prophet (pbuh) would comprehend what was revealed. The verses that deal with the principles of tawhid and warning were mostly revealed in this way.

63. Al-An'am, 6: 112

64. Ash-Shuraa, 42: 51

3. **Appearance of Gabriel in the form of an angel.** Gabriel appeared in his real form two times. The first time He appeared in the cave of Hirah when the prophethood came to the Prophet (pbuh) at first time and the second time was at the night of the Ascension (Mi'raj) at al-Sidrat al-Muntaha.

4. **Appearance of Gabriel in the form of a human being.** Gabriel mostly came in the appearance of Dihyah from the companions.

5. While the Prophet (pbuh) is **awake**, *wahy* was inspired to his heart without seeing the angel.

6. The Prophet's **directly** hearing the word of Allah while he is awake. The Prophet (pbuh) was honored with this type of *wahy* at the night of the Ascension. The revelation about the command of daily prayers came in this way.

7. While the Prophet (pbuh) is **asleep**, the angel brought *wahy*.

LET'S FILL IN THE BLANKS

Write the types of conveyance of wahy in the blanks on the diagram given below.



1.3. Moods of the Prophet (pbuh) During Wahy

To receive the word of Allah the Almighty was not a comfortable or easy thing for a human. Receiving the revelation from an angel as a human being is considerably difficult. For this reason, during revelation, the Prophet (pbuh) sometimes experienced such depressed moments that he (pbuh) would sweat even on the coldest days because of excitement and awe. While he was breathing, sounds like snoring and wailing would be heard. Especially, the type of *wahy* which came as the sound of a ringing bell outweighed the Prophet (pbuh).

Revelation had a spiritual weight. If it came while the Prophet (pbuh) was riding camel, camel could not bear its weight would kneel down and the Prophet (pbuh) would get off it. One

day, revelation came while Zaid ibn Thabit's knee was touching the Prophet's knee. Zaid felt the great weight of revelation during this incident.⁶⁵

People around the Prophet (pbuh) also felt the arrival of revelation. First, the Prophet (pbuh) would start sweating and his blessed face would turn pale. Meanwhile certain sounds like a bee bumble would be heard. And the people around him would cover him. When he was uncovered, heaviness or lightness of the revealed verses would be understood from his state.

1.4. The First Revealed Verses

When the Prophet reached at forty years old, he started to go into seclusion. From time to time, he used to go to the Cave of Hira and worship Allah. Eventually, one night when he was in the Cave of Hira, the first revelation came to him. It is specified by some of the verses of the Qur'an that the revelation of the Qur'an began at the Night of Qadr in the month of Ramadan. The angel came to the Prophet (pbuh) and said:

إِقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ * خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ *
اِقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ * الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ * عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ

“Read: In the Name of your Lord Who created. He created man from a clot. Read: And your Lord is The Most Generous, Who taught by the pen, He taught man what he did not know.”⁶⁶

These verses are the first ones revealed to the Prophet (pbuh). By these verses, he was informed that he was selected as a prophet; however, he was not given the order to deliver the message of Islam to others (*tabligh*) yet. After the revelation of these verses, it stopped for a while. This period is called *fatrat al-wahy*. It is narrated that this period lasted for three years. After this period, revelation started again and continued. The first verses revealed after the period of *fatrat al-wahy* are as follows:

يَا أَيُّهَا الْمُدَّثِّرُ * قُمْ فَأَنْذِرْ * وَرَبَّكَ فَكَبِّرْ * وَثِيَابَكَ فَطَهِّرْ *
وَالرُّجْزَ فَاهْجُرْ * وَلَا تَمْنُنْ تَسْتَكْثِرُ * وَلِرَبِّكَ فَاصْبِرْ

“O you who covers himself (My messenger), Rise up and warn (people)! And your Lord glorify, and your clothes purify, and the evil avoid, and do not begrudge your favor, but for your Lord be patient”⁶⁷

Nubuwwah (prophethood) of the Prophet (pbuh) started after the first five verses of Surat al-Alaq came, his mission to deliver the message of Islam started after the period of *fatrat al-wahy* passed with the first seven verses of chapter al-Muddaththir (74).

65. Abu Dawud, Sunan, II, 11

66. Al-Alaq, 96: 1-5

67. Al-Muddaththir, 74: 1-7

1.5. The Last Revealed Verses

It is recorded in the sources that the last revealed verses are these:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَذَرُّوا مَا بَقِيَ مِنَ الرِّبَا إِن كُنتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ

“O you who believe, fear Allah and give up what remains from interest, if you are believers.”⁶⁸

وَاتَّقُوا يَوْمًا تُرْجَعُونَ فِيهِ إِلَى اللَّهِ ثُمَّ تُوَفَّى كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَا كَسَبَتْ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ

“And fear a Day when you will be returned to Allah. Then every soul will be compensated for what it earned, and they will not be treated unjustly.”⁶⁹

الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتَمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا

“This day I have perfected for you your religion and completed My favor upon you and have approved for you Islam as religion.”⁷⁰

1.6. Sabab an-Nuzul (Occasion or Reason of Revelation) and Its Importance

As mentioned before, the whole Qur'an was revealed to bring people out of darkness into the light and to direct them to the straight path. Besides, it is possible to see that some verses and chapters were sent upon an incident or a question. This is called *sabab an-nuzul* (occasion or reason of revelation) and its plural form is *asbab an-nuzul*.

To know *sabab an-nuzul* is very important for the correct interpretation of the verses. As follows:

If the occasion of the revelation of a verse is known meaning of the verse can be understood better.

Wisdom of the religious commands and prohibitions identified by the verses can be known more clearly and easily.

Doubts are removed and mistakes are prevented.

This topic will be dealt with in detail in the following chapters.

INFORMATION BOX

The sections of hadith books related to Qur'anic exegesis mostly explain *asbab an-nuzul* of the verses. There is extensive information on this subject both in the introduction parts of the books of exegesis and in the works of *usul at-tafsir* (methodology of exegesis). Moreover, there are many substantial works written in this field. *Asbab an-Nuzul* of al-Wahidi (d. 468/1075) and *Lubab an-Nuqul fi Esbab an-Nuzul* of as-Suyuti (d. 911/1505) are the famous ones among them.

68. Al-Baqarah, 2: 278

69. Al-Baqarah, 2: 281

70. Al-Ma'idah, 5: 3

1.7. Reasons and Wisdom of the Gradual Revelation of the Qur'an

The Noble Qur'an tried to make people adopt its divine principles *tadrijan* (step by step approach). It followed a gradual method to prohibit the bad habits and to establish necessary tasks in accordance with the principles of *tawhid*. It pays attention to lead Muslims attain the level of maturity in order to bear such responsibilities. Because the Noble Qur'an has the level of perfection that encompasses the most subtle aspects of human nature.

Abandoning the bad habits left from the Age of Jahiliyya (Ignorance) might be regarded hard by human nature. The realization of such aims would only be possible through a lenient and gradual course of achievement. For this reason the Noble Qur'an was not revealed all at once, rather it was revealed verse by verse and chapter by chapter and was completed in twenty three years.

The wisdom in revelation of the Qur'an in pieces is explained in a verse as such:

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

“And those who disbelieve say, “Why was the Qur'an not revealed to him all at once?” Thus, it is that We may strengthen thereby your heart and We have spaced it distinctly.”⁷¹

So, the reason of revelation of the Qur'an in pieces and at different times is clearly expressed in this and other similar verses. Whenever the verses were revealed the companions used to memorize them and think about their meanings. They would also apply the rulings expressed in those verses in their lives. If the Qur'an had been revealed all at once, understanding and practicing it would have been very difficult. Thus, its gradual and piece-by-piece revelation made both understanding and practicing it easier.

It is stated in a saying of the Prophet narrated by Aisha (r. anha):

“...(Be informed) that the first thing that was revealed thereof was a Surah from Al-Mufasssal, and in it was mentioned Paradise and the Fire. When the people embraced Islam, the Verses regarding legal and illegal things were revealed. If the first thing to be revealed was: ‘Do not drink alcoholic drinks.’ people would have said, ‘We will never leave alcoholic drinks...’”⁷²

Moreover whenever a revelation came, the Prophet and his companions would feel great joy and excitement from it. They used to console themselves and get strong against hatred and oppression of the enemies. New questions asked by both Muslims and their enemies would be answered by the verses.

71. Al-Furqan, 25: 32

72. Al-Bukhari, Sahih, Fada'il al-Qur'an, 6.

TAKE A NOTE

Write down the reasons of revelation of the Qur'an gradually in pieces.

To ensure the people abandon their bad habits

.....

.....

1.8. Settings in which the Qur'an was Revealed

There were very sound and strong ties between the designation of the Prophet (pbuh) and the customs, traditions, beliefs, thoughts and habits of the community and the era in which he grew up. The Prophet (pbuh) was a member of that community and aware of everything existing in that community.

Most of the Arabs had been in great astray before the emergence of Islam. They were worshipping statues made of stone, wood and bronze. They were far away from certain merits like justice, benevolence and grace. The Qur'an deals with their such false beliefs.

For example, they used to consider entering their homes from the back door during pilgrimage season a righteousness,⁷³ which was one of such false behaviors. The Prophet (pbuh) was in such a community and he surely did not approve such actions and behaviors.

Before the revelation of the Qur'an, there were people of different beliefs in and around Mecca. There were pagans who worshipped idols, Jews and Christians (*Ahl al-Kitab* or People of the Book), Sabeans who worshipped stars, and Magians who worshipped fire. This is stated in the Qur'an as follows:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَالصَّابِئِينَ وَالنَّصَارَى وَالْمَجُوسَ
وَالَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَفْصِلُ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ

“Indeed, those who believe and those who were Jews and the Sabeans and the Christians and the Magians and those who associated with Allah - Allah will judge between them on the Day of Resurrection. Indeed Allah is, over all things, Witness.”⁷⁴

As stated in the Qur'an, Judaism and Christianity had lost their originality and purity. For example, in the following verse, it is mentioned that Jews and Christians accepted Jesus the son of Mary and Ezra as Allah which were against the belief of tawhid, in other words the Absolute Oneness of Allah and stated:

73. al-Baqara, 2: 189

74. Al-Hajj, 22: 17

“The Jews say, ‘Ezra is the son of Allah’; and the Christians say, ‘The Messiah is the son of Allah.’ That is their statement from their mouths; they imitate the saying of those who disbelieved before them. May Allah destroy them; how are they deluded?”⁷⁵

As understood from this verse, Judaism and Christianity became altered religions that had lost their essence that had been revealed to Moses and Jesus.

The religion of Hanif, which can be described as turning to Allah by staying away from *shirk* (association with Allah) and *kufr* (disbelief), was also known in both Mecca and Medina. This was among the divine religions sent to the prophets since the first one Adam to the last one Muhammad (peace be upon them) and was especially known as the religion of Abraham.

The Noble Qur'an, which was sent down in such an environment, surely met with reactions. These reactions continued to make themselves felt more each passing day. The Qur'an explains the situation of those people who were against it:

وَقَالُوا أَأَسَاطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ اكْتَتَبَهَا فَهِيَ تُمْلَى عَلَيْهِ بُكْرَةً وَأَصِيلًا

“And they say, ‘Legends of the former peoples which he has written down, and they are dictated to him morning and afternoon.’⁷⁶ This opposition continued during the periods of both Mecca and Medina. It is stated in a verse revealed in Medinan period that:

“And when it is said to them, ‘Follow what Allah has revealed,’ they say, ‘Rather, we will follow that which we found our fathers doing.’ Even though their fathers understood nothing, nor were they guided?”⁷⁷

1.9. The Books Revealed Before the Qur'an

Allah sent down four books: the Torah, the Psalm, the Gospel, and the Noble Qur'an. These four books are commonly known as the Divine Books. However, the first three of these books could not preserve their original forms and were altered in time. For this reason, the first three books are called *al-kutub al-muharrafah* (the falsified books).

Now, let's examine these books and their characteristics respectively;

1.9.1. The Torah

The Torah is the first of four holy books revealed by Allah. Torah means law, code, and statue. It was sent to Moses (pbuh). In Jewish custom today, it is a title given to the collection of certain books named *al-Ahd al-Atiq* (the Old Testament).

According to the Jews, the Torah is the word of Allah and has an important place in the acts of worship. Torah manuscripts wrapped in brocaded and silk covers are preserved in a cabinet called *mihrab* in Jewish temples and synagogues.

75. At-Tawbah, 9: 30

76. Al-Furqan, 25: 5

77. Al-Baqarah, 2: 170

When a Jewish person goes to a temple or a synagogue first watches the cabinet or the chest in which Torah scrolls are kept and if possible, he touches and kisses them. These actions have symbolic meanings and are practiced in an indistinct manner.

According to Jewish belief, one must cover his head while reciting the Torah no matter where he recites it. Nobody can enter the temple or recite the Torah without his head covered first. Moreover, he must perform a type of ablution in accordance with its rules in order to be purified.

The first five books of the Old Testament, which is also called as the Torah, are as follows:

a. Genesis: Creation of the world, the early history of human generation, the Adam and Eve's violation of Allah's command, Cain and Abel, Noah and the flood, the tower of Babel are dealt with in this book.

b. Exodus: this book narrates the exodus of the sons of Israel from Egypt.

c. Leviticus: This book consists of the rulings related to the acts of worship and rites. Main idea of this book is holiness of Allah and the ways of worshipping Him.

d. Numbers: This book examines certain incidents which occurred during the approximately forty year-long period from the departure of the Jews from the Mount of Sinai until their entrance to the land of Canaan –Palestine-.

e. Deuteronomy: The main idea of this book is that the sons of Israel are required to remember Allah who saved them from slavery and abasement, and that they are required to love Allah and obey Him.

1.9.2. The Psalm

The Psalm, the second one of the divine books, was sent down to David (pbuh) by Allah. This is also called the book of *mazaamir* (psalter, psalms, songs). *Mazmuur* (psalm), which lexically means "a hymn song by accompanied with playing pipe and a written book" refers to "each chapter of the Psalm revealed to David (pbuh)."

The Psalm generally consists of prayers and hymns of David to Allah. The Psalm is among the earliest books of the divine religions based on the principle of Oneness of Allah (tawhid). It was sent down to show the straight path of Allah to the Jews who had abandoned the straight path, sunk in evil and sins, and had no longer recognized the moral principles.

It is not possible to say that there is an original text of the Psalm today. Even though there is no community around the world who follow the Psalm today, both Jews and Christians recite some parts of the Psalm during their rituals and rites. One of the main pillars of faith in Islam, i.e. the principle of "belief in the books of Allah," makes it necessary for Muslims to believe in the Psalm in addition to other divine books. However, Islam specifically states that the Psalm we have today has been altered and falsified and is not the one that was revealed to Prophet David.

1.9.3. The Gospel

The Gospel is the holy book revealed to Jesus by Allah. This is one of the four divine books. In Greek, "evangelion" means good news and good tidings. The Gospel is also called *al-Ahd al-Jadid* (the New Testament).

As it was in the case of the previous prophets, the Gospel was not gathered in the form of a book during the life of Jesus (pbuh). Because the time that Jesus (pbuh) had to deliver the message of Allah was very short and the conditions of his time did not make the compilation of Gospels possible. The earliest Gospel text was written down in 70s after Jesus. Hence, the truth delivered by Jesus could not be recorded immediately, human words mixed in the divine text of Gospels and thus, the original text of the book was altered.

Today, there are four Gospels officially recognized by the Christian church: Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

According to Christian belief, the Gospels maintain their nature of being written by the Gospel scribes without any error under the guidance of God. The disciples of Jesus and the writers of Gospel spoke and wrote completely in accordance with the God's will.

According to the Islamic sources, just as certain books had been sent down to the prophets via revelation, the Gospel was sent down to Jesus via revelation during his lifetime. In Islamic belief, Jesus is a prophet and the Gospel is the book revealed to him. There is only one Gospel and Jesus delivered its messages to people throughout his life.

2. THE PROCESS OF WRITING DOWN THE HOLY QUR'AN

2.1. Revelation of the Qur'an and Its Oral and Written Preservation

The Noble Qur'an was sent down at the Night of Qadr in the month of Ramadan. The first revelation came to the Prophet (pbuh) in 610 while he was in seclusion in the Cave of Hirah. The first verses revealed to the Prophet (pbuh) are the first five verses of chapter al-Alaq (96).

The Noble Qur'an was sent down gradually in twenty three-year long period. This not only made it easier for the believers to apply the revealed verses into their lives but also gave Muslims strength before various incidents.

The Noble Qur'an was preserved verbally and in writing during the lifetime of the Prophet (pbuh).

The Prophet (pbuh) used to memorize the revelation exactly as it came from Allah. So, the Prophet (pbuh) himself became the first hafiz (memorizer) of the Qur'an.

After the first days of Islam, the Prophet (pbuh) designated some of the companions as *katib al-wahy* (the scribes of revelation) and had them written the revealed verses and chapters on animal skins, rags, wooden tablets, camel scapula, soft white stones, broad branches and peels of palm trees which were the available materials at the time.

When a revelation came to the Prophet (pbuh), he used to call one of these revelation scribes, have them write the revelation and inform them about where the new revelation should be placed.

As it is clearly mentioned in the reports, after the verses were written, the Prophet (pbuh) used to order the revelation scribes to recite what they wrote in order to double check the pos-

sible errors of dictation. Moreover, after informing men about the revelation, he would also inform Muslim women about it.

The Prophet (pbuh) used to recite the verses that he received through revelation during and after the ritual prayers. He would also explain the rulings and wisdom expressed in those verses. He and Archangel Gabriel used to recite all verses revealed until that time to each other (*muqabalah*) in the month of Ramadan. This is called *ard*. They did this *muqabalah* twice in the month of Ramadan in year that the Prophet (pbuh) passed away.

The companions would also attach great importance to learn, recite and memorize the Qur'an. Their superiority over each other would be measured in the extent of their knowledge of the Noble Qur'an. When the Prophet (pbuh) was alive, most of the companions memorized either the whole Qur'an or at least a part of it.

It is known that there were many huffaz of the Qur'an among the companions. It is narrated that approximately seventy hafiz companions were martyred during the Incident of Bi'r M'aunah (the Well of Ma'unah) and many companions were martyred during the Battle of Yamamah as well. This shows that many companions had memorized the Qur'an during lifetime of the Prophet (pbuh) and after him.

LET'S TAKE A NOTE

It is known that there were about of forty scribes of revelation among the Companions. Some companions such as Zaid ibn Thabit, Ubayy ibn Qa'b, Abdullah ibn Sa'd, Mu'adh ibn Jabal and Abdullah ibn Arkam were prominent ones among them.

DO YOU KNOW?

It is possible to mention Zaid ibn Thabit, Abdullah ibn Mas'ud, Mu'adh ibn Jabal, Ubayy ibn Qa'b, Saalim the emancipated slave of Abu Huzayfah, Abu Zaid al-Ansari, Abu ad-Darda and Abu Musa al-Ash'ari as well as the Four rightly guided Caliphs among the hafiz companions.

2.2. Compilation of the Qur'an in the form of a Book

The whole Noble Qur'an was preserved orally and in writing during the lifetime of the Prophet (pbuh); however, all written verses and chapters had not been compiled in the form of a book. This task had not been carried out during the Prophet's lifetime because he (pbuh) was alive and revelation was still coming. There also were very short time between the completion of revelation and the demise of the Prophet (pbuh). After all, the companions did not need such a work.

After the Prophet passed away, Abu Bakr was elected as caliph. Meanwhile, some false prophets emerged and created and spread mischief and apostasy among Muslims.

In order to put an end such disorder, Caliph Abu Bakr sent his army against them. There were many hafiz companions among the martyrs who were killed during the battle against the false prophet Musaylimah and his army.

This situation alarmed Umar and he thought that the same result would be gotten after new battles and the decrease in the number of huffaz of the Qur'an would lead to some damages to the Holy Qur'an. Then, he consulted the caliph and suggested compilation of the Qur'an into the form of a book. Caliph Abu Bakr established a committee under the chairmanship of Zaid ibn Thabit, who had been the Prophet's (pbuh) head revelation scribe, and ordered them to compile the Qur'an in the form of a book.

Muslims were asked to deliver all texts of the Qur'an that they had. However, the following conditions were required in order to accept the verses and chapters brought to the committee.

1. They had to be memorized by those who brought them.
2. They had to be written in the presence of the Prophet (pbuh).
3. This had to be testified by at least two witnesses.

After about a year-long meticulous work, the compilation of the Qur'an was completed and this compiled text was called al-Mushaf.

As it is understood from the conditions mentioned above, the task of compilation of the Qur'an was just collection of the verses written in the presence of the Prophet (pbuh). After approval of the companions, al-Mushaf was delivered to Caliph Abu Bakr. After his demise, it was entrusted to the second caliph Umar; and after the demise of Umar, it was given to his daughter and the Prophet's (pbuh) wife Hafsa in accordance with Umar's (may Allah be pleased with them) will.

2.3. Duplication of the Qur'an

During the conquests carried out in the periods of Umar and Uthman (may Allah be pleased with them), Islam spread over new lands and people from different cultures converted to Islam. After the increase in the number of Muslims, some differences which started to be seen in the recitation of the Qur'an became a matter of controversy and complaint.

Commander Hudhayfah ibn al-Yaman, who had witnessed such incidents in his army, went to caliph Uthman and asked him to take measures against these controversies and complaints.

Thereupon, Uthman –after making necessary consultations- established a commission under the chairmanship of Zaid ibn Thabit and asked them to duplicate the Qur'an texts based on al-Mushaf, which was compiled during the caliphate of Abu Bakr and maintained in the hands of Hafsa.

After a meticulous work, the committee completed the task. The original copy was delivered back to Hafsa (r. anha). One of the written copies was left in Medina and it was called al-Mushaf al-Imam (the Leader Mushaf). The others were sent to Mecca, Kufa, Basra, Damascus, Yemen and Bahrain.

In addition to these copies, an instructor of the Qur'an was sent to those cities. Muslims corrected the mistakes in the texts that they had based on these copies and some texts whose correction was not possible were destroyed. Many new copies were duplicated based on these copies. Thus, the Qur'an has been preserved in its original form.

WRITE

Do you remember the names of the Islamic cities where the duplicated copies of the Qur'an were sent to?

Mecca



READING TEXT

**UBAY IBN KA'B: THE COMPANION FAMOUS BY HIS
RECITATION OF THE QUR'AN**

One day, the Prophet (pbuh) asked Ubay ibn Ka'b, one of his companions:

O Ubay! Which one is the greatest verse in the book of Allah?

Ubay ibn Ka'b answered:

Allah and His Messenger know better.

The Prophet (pbuh) repeated his question three times. After the third question, Ubay said:

O Messenger of Allah! The greatest verse in the book of Allah is Ayat al-Kursi (al-Baqara, 2: 255).

Upon this answer, the Prophet (pbuh) put his hand on Ubay's chest and said:

May your knowledge be blessed to you!

Let them learn from these four Muslims

One day the Prophet (pbuh) said:

Let those who desire to learn the Qur'an learn it from the following four Muslims and mentioned their names.

Ubay (r.a.) was also among those four wise men.

Ubay (r.a.) participated in all battles with the Prophet (pbuh). He was wounded with an arrow in the battle of Uhud. The Prophet (pbuh) sent him a doctor. He cauterized his wound and thus he recovered.

Did He mention my name in person?

He did great services for the recitation of the Noble Qur'an and its compilation. The Prophet (pbuh) said:

The best among you in recitation of the Qur'an is Ubay ibn Ka'b.

One day the Prophet said to him:

O Ubay! Allah the Almighty ordered me to recite chapter al-Bayyinah (98) on you.

O Messenger of Allah! Did my Lord mention my name in person to you?

When the Prophet (pbuh) answered his question affirmatively, Ubay's eyes started to shed tears out of joy.

The Prophet (pbuh) gave him the patronymic of Abu Mundhir (the father of Mundhir) and added **Sayyid al-Ansar (the master of the helpers)** to his name as a nickname.

He was among the unique Muslims who taught the Noble Qur'an during lifetime of the Prophet (pbuh). He gave great services in Hadith, Islamic law and Qur'anic exegesis, in other words almost in all Islamic sciences.

He spent his entire life in service to the Noble Qur'an. He said:

A believer has four characteristics. If he is afflicted by any misfortune, he remains patient and steadfast. If he is given anything, he is grateful. If he speaks, he speaks the truth. If he passes a judgment on any issue, he is just. A believer walks back and forth among five lights. Statement of Allah the Almighty "light upon light" is a sign for this. His words are light, his knowledge is light, the places where he enters and exits are lights and his destination on the Day of Judgment is light.

By the command of Umar, Ubay was the first companion who led the Muslims in tarawih prayer. His nicknames were Sayyid al-Qurra' (master of the reciters), Sayyid al-Ansar (master of the helpers) and Sayyid al-Muslimin (master of Muslims). These honorable and exalted nicknames are enough to show his position. He belongs to the tribe of Najjar from Hazraj.



EVALUATION QUESTIONS

D. ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

1. Write down the lexical and terminological meaning of the word *wahy*.
2. Talk about the states of the Prophet (pbuh) while receiving revelation.
3. What are the benefits of knowledge about *sabab an-nuzul* in the field of Qur'anic interpretation? Write down.
4. Write down the reasons and wisdom of gradual revelation of the Qur'an?
5. Speak of the revelation process of the Qur'an briefly.
6. Give information about oral and written preservation of the Qur'an.
7. Give information about the duplication of the Qur'an.

B. MARK THE RIGHT ANSWERS TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Which of the following choices does not correspond one of the lexical meanings of the term <i>wahy</i>? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) To whisper b) To inspire c) To give information d) To call e) To reveal 13. The word <i>wahy</i> is used in certain meanings in the verses of the Qur'an. Which of the following choices does not correspond one of these meanings? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Suspicion b) Implication and signal c) Instinct d) Inspiration e) Order | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 14. Which of the following choices cannot be one of the ways of receiving <i>wahy</i>? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Directly from Allah b) Behind a curtain c) Via angel d) Having the scribes of <i>wahy</i> write it e) Through true dreams 15. In which chapter are the first revealed verses found in the Qur'an? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) al-Fatihah (1) b) Ya-Sin (36) c) al-Adiyat (100) d) al-Alaq (96) e) al-Ikhlās (112) |
|---|---|

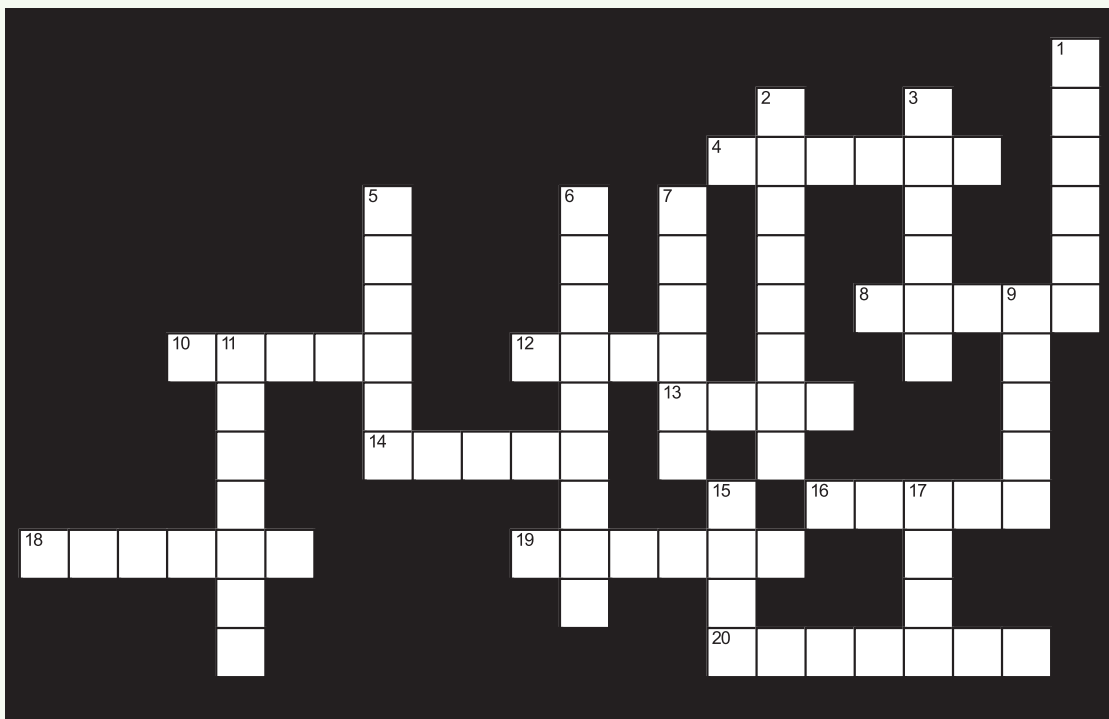
16. Some verses and chapters of the Qur'an were sometimes sent upon an incident or as a response to a question. What are these incidents called in the study of tafsir?
- Qasas al-Qur'an
 - Fatrat al-wahy
 - Masa'il al-Qur'an
 - Sabab al-wurud
 - Asbab an-nuzul
17. What is the name of the belief of those who would never worship idols and never do evil and would try to live upon the religion of Abraham in Mecca at the time of revelation of the Qur'an?
- The religion of Sabeen
 - Christianity
 - Paganism
 - The religion of Hanif
 - Judaism
18. Which of the following is an incorrect match of the holy book and the prophet that it was revealed?
- The Torah - Moses (pbuh)
 - The Psalm - Solomon (pbuh)
 - The Gospel - Jesus (pbuh)
 - The Qur'an - Muhammad (pbuh)
 - The Psalm - David (pbuh)
19. Which of the following choices is not one of the four different Gospels officially recognized by Christians?
- Mark
 - Matthew
 - Barnabas
 - Luke
 - John
20. Caliph Abu Bakr established a commission and ordered them to compile the Qur'an in the form of a book. Who was the chairmanship of this commission?
- Zaid ibn Thabit
 - Zaid ibn Harithah
 - Abdullah ibn Mas'ud
 - Abdullah ibn Abbas
 - Usamah ibn Zaid
21. One of the copies of the Qur'an duplicated by the command of Uthman was left in Medina. Others were sent to different cities. Which of the following cities is not one of them?
- Kufa
 - Basra
 - Damascus
 - Baghdad
 - Bahrain

C. FILL IN THE BLANKS IN THE FOLLOWING SENTENCES WITH MOST SUITABLE WORD FROM THOSE GIVEN BELOW.

(katib al-wahy, ard, nubuwwah, mushaf, fatrat al-wahy, risalah)

1. The period during which revelation did not come is called
2. With the revelation of the first five verses of chapter al-Alaq (96), of the Prophet (pbuh) started; with the revelation of the first seven verses of chapter al-Muddaththir after the period of *fatrat al-wahy* of the Prophet (pbuh) started.
3. The Prophet (pbuh) designated some of the companions to write the revelation as
4. The Prophet (pbuh) used to recite all the verses revealed by that time in the presence of Gabriel in the month of Ramadan. This is called
5. The book form of the Qur'an is called

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



4. A person who worships stars and is mentioned in the Qur'an.

8. Those who adhered to the religion of Abraham at the time of revelation of the Qur'an.

10. The Arabic name used for the holy book revealed to David (pbuh).

12. A word that means to talk secretly, whisper, and inspire.

13. The name of the chapter of the Qur'an in which the first revealed verses are found.

14. The name of the wife of the Prophet (pbuh), mother of the believers and daughter of caliph Umar who was entrusted the first written Mushaf after caliph Umar died.

16. The term which means the occasion of revelation, "sabab al-....".

18. The caliph who ordered the establishment of a committee to duplicate the Qur'an and sent the copies to major cities of the Muslim land.

19. A term used for the period during which revelation stopped for a while "..... al-wahy".



1. The term used for the book form of the Qur'an.

2. Gradual revelation of the Qur'an.

3. A person who worships fire and whose belief was widespread especially in Iran at the time of revelation of the Qur'an.

5. The Arabic name used for the holy book revealed to Moses (pbuh), or al-Ahd al-Atik (The Old Testament).

6. The recitation of the Qur'an by the Prophet (pbuh) and Archangel Gabriel to each other on each month of Ramadan.

7. The name of the companion in whose appearance Archangel Gabriel would sometimes bring revelation.

9. The Arabic name used for the holy book revealed to Jesus (pbuh), al-Ahd al-Jadid (The New Testament).

11. The caliph who ordered compilation of the Qur'an in the form of a book.

15. The name of the night when the Qur'an was revealed.

TAFSIR

CONTENTS OF THE CHAPTER

- ▶ THE SCIENCE OF TAFSIR, ITS DEFINITION, SUBJECT AND AIM
- ▶ TYPES OF TAFSIR AND THEIR CHARACTERISTICS
- ▶ BASIC CONCEPTS OF THE SCIENCE OF TAFSIR

PREPARATORY WORKS

- ▶ Tell what you know about the necessity of interpreting the Qur'an.
- ▶ Have you ever read a book of tafsir? If so, share your opinions about this work with your friends.
- ▶ Research about the recently written tafsir works and share the names of those books and the names of their authors in the classroom.
- ▶ Have you ever been in a circle of tafsir where the Qur'an was interpreted? Share your opinions with your classmates.
- ▶ Bring a tafsir book to the classroom and examine it with your classmates.

1. DEFINITION OF TAFSIR, ITS SUBJECT, AIM AND TYPES

1.1. The Definition of Tafsir

The term *tafsir* lexically means “to determine the meaning of a thing and to reveal, to explain, to explore, and to uncover it”.

Its terminological meaning is “interpretation of the Qur’anic verses by scholars in accordance with certain methods and rules”.

The science of tafsir is on the other hand the name of the science which explains and reveals the Qur’anic verses in a way that people can understand. It is the science that interprets the ambiguous points of the verses.

1.2. Subject of Tafsir

Since tafsir is the science which explains the Qur’an, the subject of this science is the whole Qur’an. The science of tafsir deals with the whole Qur’an verse by verse, the verses of the Qur’an word by word, and analyses them in accordance with certain methods and rules. In this way, it explains the meanings of the verses in detail. It is essential that all information given in such analyses, explanations, and interpretations of the verses should be in accordance with the meanings included in verses. For this reason, while interpreting the verses, the whole Qur’an is taken into consideration, and sayings of the Prophet (pbuh) and the words of the companions related to the subject are consulted. In this respect, ahadith of the Prophet (pbuh) take place in the science of tafsir as an auxiliary factor.

LET’S SHARE

“(This is) a blessed Book which We have revealed to you that they might reflect upon its verses and that those of understanding would be reminded.” (Sad, 38: 29)

“Then do they not reflect upon the Qur’an, or are there locks upon their hearts?” (Muhammad, 47: 24)

Read translations of the verses given above and share your opinions about the importance of learning the science of tafsir with your friends.

1.3. The Aim of Tafsir

The object of tafsir as a religious science is to give people happiness both in this world and in the Hereafter. It is to understand and explain the Noble Qur’an which is the word of Allah in

accordance with the object and will of Allah the Almighty and to help people achieve ability to deduce rulings from the Noble Qur'an.

Our Holy Book, the Noble Qur'an, consists of all worldly and other worldly principles which people need. Every person and community benefits from this endless source and satisfies their needs within the extent of their opportunities and abilities. Since the Noble Qur'an is a book solves all problems and heals all kinds of illnesses, it must be known and understood well. This is object of the science of tafsir.

2. THE TYPES OF TAFSIR AND THEIR CHARACTERISTICS

At the time of Prophet (pbuh), the science of tafsir was not systematized yet and there was not any book written in this field. The Prophet (pbuh) used to make necessary explanations to his companions whenever a verse was revealed. He would teach them the points that were not explained in detail in the verses. When the companions wanted to get more information about certain matters of the verses, they would ask the Prophet (pbuh) to make more explanation about them and the Prophet (pbuh) would make the necessary explanations for them.

Some companions interpreted various verses of the Qur'an at the time of the companions as well. Beginning from the 2nd year of Hijrah, the scholars of Islam started to interpret the Qur'an by determining the occasions of the revelation of the verses and chapters and by taking the sayings of the Prophet (pbuh) and words of the companions into consideration. Such studies developed and improved in the upcoming centuries and tafsir books that explain the Qur'anic verses in detail started to be written.

There are two kinds of tafsirs; tafsir bi al-riwayah (tafsir on the basis of narrated texts) and tafsir bi al-dirayah (tafsir on the basis of individual understanding).

2.1. Tafsir bi al-riwayah and its Characteristics

Tafsir bi al-riwayah is the type of tafsir that explains the verses of the Noble Qur'an using other verses of the Qur'an or the sayings of the Prophet (pbuh) and the sayings of the companions.

Tafsir bi al-riwayah is the soundest and most reliable type of tafsir. Since it is based on the Qur'an and Sunnah, the opinions of the authors namely those who make the interpretation are rarely found in that type of books.

Some of the most well-known tafsir bi al-riwayah books are as follows:

Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari: **Jami' al-Bayan an Ta'wil al-Qur'an**

Ibn Kathir: **Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Azim**

Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti: **al-Durr al-Mansur fi Tafsir al-Ma'thur**

Abu al-Layth al-Samarqandi: **Bahr al-'Ulum**

Abu Muhammad al-Husayn al-Baghawi: **Ma'alim al-Tanzil**

LET'S READ AND LEARN

AL-DURR AL-MANSUR

An example of *tafsir bi al-riwayah* is “**ad-Durr al-Mansur**” of as-Suyuti (d. 911/1505).

Its full title is *al-Durr al-Mansur fi at-Tafsir bi al-Ma'thur*. It does not contain any explanation other than narrations related to exegesis of the verses of the Qur'an. According to some scholars, it is the most famous and *mufasssal* (detailed) work in the type of *tafsir bi al-riwayah*. While Tafsir of at-Tabari, which is another sample for *tafsir bi al-riwayah*, contains numerous elements of *dirayah* (individual understanding), this book contains only a few introductory sentences besides the narrations.

As it is stated in its short introduction, the author collected the narrations related to coming from the Prophet (pbuh) and the companions with their sources and sanads (chain of transmission) in his work named *Tarjuman al-Qur'an*. Then, since it was too voluminous, he produced *al-Durr al-Mansur* taking the chains of transmission and different variants out of this work. In this new work, only the main source and the first companion or successor narrators of the narration are mentioned.

In the book, besides the famous sources of hadith, the works of over 100 authors are used as its source. A considerable part of these reference books are not available today. **Al-Durr al-Mansur** increases in value for it hands down the new generations the narrations that had been recorded by those lost sources.

The only goal of as-Suyuti in this work is to gather the narrations related to tafsir. For this reason, he did not evaluate any narration taken from unreliable sources. This is why he was severely criticized by some scholars. Nevertheless, the work has always been famous since the time it was written and many mufasssirs have referred to it in *tafsir bi al-riwayah*.

(Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi, v. 10, p. 39)

It is essential to pay attention to the authenticity of the narrations attributed to the Prophet (pbuh) and sayings of the companions in tafsirs. Since some books of *tafsir bi al-riwayah* do not pay necessary attention at this point, it is possible to come across some fabricated sayings and some groundless reports called *israiliyyat*.

INFORMATION BOX

What is Israiliyyat?

Israiliyyat is the term used for unreal narrations that entered into Islamic culture from Jewish, Christian and other cultures and are found especially in certain tafsir books. For example, the reports about the kind of prohibited fruit that Adam and Eve ate in paradise are among the narrations of Israiliyyat.

Characteristics of tafsir bi al-riwayah are as follows:

a. Tafsir of the Qur'an with the Qur'an

Some verses of the Noble Qur'an are explained by other verses of the Qur'an. This is called *tafsir al-Qur'an bi al-Qur'an* (interpretation of the Qur'an by the Qur'an) and the soundest way in tafsir is to follow this method.

It is seen in many passages of the Noble Qur'an that the verses interpret other verses. For example; the straight path mentioned in the 6th verse of chapter al-Fatiha (1) ("**Guide us to the straight path**") is explained by the following verse which is the 7th verse of the same chapter:

عَلَيْهِمْ رَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ

"The path of those upon whom You have bestowed favor..."

Those upon whom Allah the Almighty has bestowed favor are mentioned in the 69th verse of chapter al-Nisa (4):

وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ فَأُولَئِكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمُ النَّبِيِّينَ
وَالصِّدِّيقِينَ وَالشُّهَدَاءَ وَالصَّالِحِينَ وَحَسُنَ أُولَئِكَ رَفِيقًا

*"And whoever obeys Allah and the Messenger - those will be with the ones upon whom Allah has bestowed favor; the prophets, the steadfast affirmers of truth, the martyrs and the righteous. And excellent are those as companions."*⁷⁸

The Qur'an explains "the straight path" as "the path of those upon whom Allah has bestowed favor"; and "those upon whom Allah has bestowed favor" as "the prophets, the steadfast affirmers of truth, the martyrs and the righteous." As in this example, some verses of the Qur'an interpret some others.

b. Tafsir of the Qur'an with Sunnah of the Prophet

The best among people in understanding the Qur'an was indeed the Prophet (pbuh). As a requirement of his mission, he delivered and taught the word of Allah to people, explained it and practiced the divine rulings in his life. In this respect, the sayings of the Prophet (pbuh) are an auxiliary source in the exegesis of the Noble Qur'an.

The following is an example for the interpretation of the Qur'an with Sunnah. It is stated in the 238th verse of chapter al-Baqarah (2):

"Maintain with care the prayers and the middle prayer..." The Prophet explained that "the middle prayer" mentioned in this verse is "the late afternoon prayer (*salat al-asr*)."⁷⁹

It is emphasized in the last verse of chapter al-Fatiha that *"Muslims should take refuge in Allah from following those who have evoked His anger and of those who are astray."*

78. al-Nisa, 4: 69

79. al-Tirmidhi, *Sunan*, Salah, 19; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *Musnad*, V, 12, 13, 22

“Guide us to the path of those upon whom You have bestowed favor, not of those who have evoked Your anger or of those who went astray.” The Prophet (pbuh) explained that **“those who evoked the anger”** are the Jews and **“those who went astray”** are the Christians.⁸⁰

c. Tafsir of the Qur'an with Sayings of the Companions

The companions exerted their efforts to learn the Noble Qur'an and to understand it well and got information from the Prophet (pbuh) on this point. As a result of their endeavor, the companions who learned the Qur'an and understood it well made great contributions in understanding and spread of the Qur'an. Explanatory sayings of the companions are found in the books of tafsir.

Examples of interpretation of the Qur'an with the sayings of the companions are as follows. It is stated in 28th and 29th verses of chapter Ibrahim (14):

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ بَدَّلُوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ كُفْرًا وَأَحَلُّوا قَوْمَهُمْ دَارَ الْبَوَارِ * جَهَنَّمَ يَصْلَوْنَهَا وَبِئْسَ الْقَرَارُ

“Have you not seen those who exchanged the favor of Allah for ungratefulness and settled their people in the home of ruin? (It is) Hell, which they will (enter to) burn, and wretched is the settlement.”

Abdullah ibn Abbas explained this verse as follows: “Those who exchanged the favor of Allah for ungratefulness” are the disbelievers of the tribe of Quraish. “The favor” which they exchanged for ungratefulness is the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). “The home of ruin” refers to the day of Badr. Because, many of them were killed during that battle and wafted to Hell.⁸¹

All mufasssirs have narrated the words of the companions in their tafsir works. Some mufasssirs have narrated the words of their successors as well.

2.2. Tafsir bi al-Dirayah and Its Characteristics

The word *dirayah* lexically means understanding and comprehension. **Tafsir bi al-dirayah** is the type of tafsir which is based upon language, literature and various kinds of information in addition to the narrations attributed to the Prophet (pbuh) and the companions.

The scholar who uses the method of *dirayah* benefits from certain sciences like linguistics, grammar, literature, hadith, fiqh and philosophy and use a rational method in tafsir; namely, they make a legal reasoning (ijtihad). For this reason, such tafsirs are called *tafsir bi al-dirayah*.

The most important characteristic of tafsir bi al-dirayah is that the mufasssir explains a verse, which is not explained clearly by the Qur'an, Sunnah or the sayings of the companions, by using his rational and scientific abilities and by revealing his independent opinion namely his ra'y.

As in the *tafsir bi al-riwayah*, a mufasssir (exegete) who applies the method of *tafsir bi al-dirayah* tries to explain a verse by referring the Qur'an, Sunnah and words of the companions respectively. If this is not possible, he explains it by depending upon his own opinion. An exegete of the Qur'an who applies the method of *tafsir bi al-dirayah* must have knowledge in *tafsir bi*

80. al-Tirmidhi, *Sunan*, Tafsir al-Qur'an, 3129

81. al-Bukhari, *Sahih*, al-Maghazi, 7

al-riwayah as well. His opinions and explanations must be in accordance with the Qur'an and Sunnah.

Since the Noble Qur'an is the word of Allah and consists of the rulings for people related to this world and the Hereafter, it is necessary to be very careful and to give the best attention while translating and interpreting it. While explaining the meanings of the verses and their rulings, the whole Qur'an must be taken into consideration. First, the interpretation of a verse by other verses and then its interpretation by the sayings of the Prophet (pbuh) and the words of the companions must be taken into consideration. If the exegete needs to express his own opinions, they must not be contradictory to the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet.

Some of the most well-known books written by the method of *tafsir bi al-dirayah* are these:

Al-Zamakhshari: *al-Kashshaf an Haqaiq al-Tanzil*

Qadi Baydawi: *Anwar al-Tanzil wa Asrar al-Ta'wil*

Al-Nasafi: *Madarik al-Tanzil wa Haqaiq al-Ta'wil*

Fakhr al-Din al-Razi: *Mafatih al-Ghayb*

LET'S READ AND THINK

The Prophet (pbuh) said, "Whoever says (something) about the Qur'an according to his own opinion commits a mistake even if he is correct."⁸² Scholars of Islam who evaluate this hadith of the Prophet (pbuh) say that one should not interpret the Qur'an by only relying on his own opinion without referring the Qur'an and Sunnah. For this reason, no one should interpret the Noble Qur'an merely relying on his own opinion, he should base his interpretation on the Qur'an, sayings of the Prophet and the words of the companions as well.

3. BASIC CONCEPTS OF THE SCIENCE OF TAFSIR

The terms "*tafsir*", "*ta'wil*", "*tarjamah*" and "*ma'al*" are some of the basic concepts of the science of *tafsir*. We had already mentioned the meaning of the term *tafsir*. Now let's briefly explain the meanings of other three concepts.

***Ta'wil*:** It lexically means "the conversion of a thing to its origin and its source." It also means "explanation." It terminologically means "selecting one possible meaning of a word and reaching the essential meaning about that word."⁸² The person who is engaged in this science is called *mufassir*.

Mufassir, while making interpretation of the Qur'an, selects one of the possible meanings of the verse. While doing this, he follows certain methods and rules to reach the essential meaning. However, while selecting one of the relevant interpretations, he reveals his personal preference

82. Ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-Arab*, XI, 32-33

in the end. Tafsir and ta'wil were used in the same meaning in early times; but, in the course of time, they have become two concepts in different meanings.⁸³

Is there any difference between the concepts of Tafsir and Ta'wil?

There are some scholars who use these two concepts as synonyms, while there are some others who define them in different meanings. According to al-Maturidi, tafsir is to determine the will of Allah based on His words and to speak for Allah by saying "Allah has willed and intended this meaning" and to testify this. As to ta'wil, it means to prefer one of the possible meanings of the word without any absolute explanation and testimony.

Although lexical and terminological meanings of tafsir and *ta'wil* found in the books are such, their widespread definitions are as follows:

Tafsir is explanations of the Noble Qur'an in Arabic or in any other language. Ta'wil is to understand a statement and to interpret it based on a secondary meaning which is relatively ambiguous instead of its clear meaning given in the verse by revealing the valid reasons.

Tarjamah: It lexically means "translating a word from one language into another language, transmission." The person who is engaged in *tarjamah* is called *mutarjim* (translator).

Tarjamah terminologically means "to find equivalent of a word in another language and to transmit its meaning into that language." As to tarjamah of the Qur'an, it means "to express the meaning of the Qur'an in another language." There are two methods in tarjamah:

"Al-Tarjamah al-Lafziyyah (Literal Translation)" refers to literal translation of a text together with its all characteristics into another language. Equivalent of each word in the text is found in other language.

"Al-Tarjamah al-Manawiyyah (Constructive Translation)." Only the meaning of the original text is transmitted into the other language. Meaning of the words is expressed in another language disregarding the wording and the order. Since the main goal is to express the meaning well, its practice is easy.

For example, if the verse **"Indeed, We have made it an Arabic Qur'an that you might understand"**⁸⁴ is wanted to be literally translated (al-tarjamah al-lafziyyah), the equivalent of every word of this verse should be translated, and the meaning and order of every word should be taken into consideration.

If it is translated constructively (*al-tarjamah al-manawiyyah*), the whole meaning of the verse is translated disregarding the meaning of each and every word and their order.

Is it possible to translate the Noble Qur'an?

Scholars have different opinions on this matter. However, they have a consensus that the Qur'an cannot be translated literally (word by word). Instead, they permit *al-tarjamah al-manawiyyah*. Because this kind of *tarjamah* expresses the meaning of the statement with the

83. İsmail Cerrahoğlu, *Tefsir Usulü*, p. 214-215

84. Al-Zukhruf, 43: 3

words as comprehensive as possible. However, it should be known that the translation cannot replace the text of the Qur'an and cannot be regarded same as the Qur'an.⁸⁵

Ma'al: It is used in the meaning of the aim of a thing and its result.⁸⁶ The term *ma'al* is to present the rough meaning of a word. It terminologically denotes to the translation of the Noble Qur'an in another language together with some short explanations.

It is not possible to translate the Noble Qur'an with its all artistic characteristics and all intentions. For this reason, the translation of the Qur'an should be supported with some explanations. That is why the translation of the Qur'an into another language is not called "*tarjamah*" but is called "*ma'al*".

Any person might not have the opportunity to understand the Qur'an in its original language or to make deep researches from tafsir books. In this case, reading *ma'al* is a step to understand the Qur'an.

Ma'al is not the Qur'an itself, rather it is what the translator understood from it. For this reason, there might be some differences in *ma'als*. These differences are not contradictions, but differences in interpretation that are in accordance with the origin of the Qur'an.

LET'S READ AND UNDERSTAND

While reading *ma'al* of the Noble Qur'an, the following points should be observed:

Before anything else, the reader should be conscious of the meaning and importance of reading *ma'al*, since being an object of the word of Allah and trying to understand it are very important matters.

To understand what is intended in some verses of the Qur'an requires expertise. For this reason, while reading such verses, the reader should refer the relevant tafsir books or experts of the subject.

The Qur'an has a special style of wording. All verses on the same subject are not given together in general. For this reason, the reader should take notes about the verses, make some comparisons and evaluate all verses on the same subject as a whole.

85. Cerrahoğlu, p. 217-218; Ali Turgut, *Tefsir Usulü ve Kaynakları*, p. 222-223

86. Ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-Arab*, XI, 32

READING TEXT

QARUN (CROESUS)

Qarun was from the people of Moses. Allah bestowed upon him many property and made him rich. Unfortunately, however, Qarun started to boast about his wealth, act arrogantly and go astray among his people and became a ruthless man. It is stated in a verse:

“Indeed, Qarun was from the people of Moses, but he tyrannized them. And We gave him of treasures whose keys would burden a band of strong men; thereupon his people said to him, “Do not exult. Indeed, Allah does not like the exultant.”⁸⁷

Qarun did not pay heed to these advices and said: “I suppose that you do not want me to spend my money as I like.” Thereupon they said:

“But seek, through that which Allah has given you, the home of the Hereafter; and yet, do not forget your share of the world. And do good (to people) as Allah has done good to you. And desire not corruption on the earth. Indeed, Allah does not like corrupters.”⁸⁸

Qarun was angry with those who asked him to give charity out of his wealth and help the poor and sick people. He remarked that nobody had right to question him and to request something from him and said:

“I was only given it (wealth) because of knowledge I have.” Did he not know that Allah had destroyed before him of generations those who were greater than him in power and greater in accumulation (of wealth)? But the criminals, about their sins, will not be asked.”⁸⁹

The righteous people who gave him advice saw that he would not listen them left him alone and went away.

Qarun would wear his most beautiful clothes which was brocaded of gold and embellished with jewels, get on his fantastic cart which was towed by strong horses and appear among the people to show off. People would enviously admire him. It is stated in the Qur'an:

“So he came out before his people in his adornment. Those who desired the worldly life said, “Oh, would that we had like what was given to Qarun. Indeed, he is one of great fortune.”

87. Al-Qasas, 28: 76

88. Al-Qasas, 28: 77

89. Al-Qasas, 28: 78



But those who had been given knowledge said, “Woe to you! The reward of Allah is better for he who believes and does righteousness. And none are granted it except the patient.”

And We caused the earth to swallow him and his home. And there was for him no company to aid him other than Allah, nor was he of those who could defend themselves.”⁹⁰

Qarun was destroyed because of his propensity for worldly (desires) and his grudge against others. End of those who have grudge is nothing but desperation.

The people who saw that Qarun and his wealth were destroyed regretted for feeling envy for his wealth. They praised and thanked Allah for they were not like Qarun.

“And those who had wished for his position the previous day began to say, “Oh, how Allah extends provision to whom He wills of His servants and restricts it! If not that Allah had conferred favor on us, He would have caused it to swallow us. Oh, how the disbelievers do not succeed!”⁹¹



90. Al-Qasas, 28: 79-81

91. Al-Qasas, 28: 82

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

A. ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

1. Make the definition of the science of tafsir.
2. What is the aim and subject of tafsir? Explain.
3. What are the types of tafsir? Explain briefly.
4. What is the most apparent features that distinguishes *tafsir bi al-dirayah* from *tafsir bi al-riwayah*?
5. What is the difference between the terms of tafsir and ta'wil? Specify.

B. CHOOSE THE RIGHT ANSWERS OF THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

1. Which of the following choices is not one of the *tafsir bi al-riwayah* books?
 - a) Jami' al-Bayan an Ta'wil al-Qur'an
 - b) Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Azim
 - c) Anwar al-Tanzil wa Asrar al-Ta'wil
 - d) al-Durr al-Mansur fi Tafsir al-Ma'thur
 - e) Bahr al-'Ulum
2. Whose work can be given as an example for the *tafsir bi al-dirayah* books?
 - a) Ibn Kathir
 - b) Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari
 - c) Abu al-Layth al-Samarqandi
 - d) Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti
 - e) Fakhr al-Din al-Razi
3. Who is the author of "al-Kashshaf an-Haqa'iq at-Tanzil"?
 - a) Qadi Baydawi
 - b) Al-Zamakhshari
 - c) Al-Nasafi
 - d) Fakhr al-Din al-Razi
 - e) Sayyid Qutub
4. There are two terms which were used in the same meaning at first but they eventually started to be used in different meanings. One of these terms is "tafsir." What is the other one?
 - a) Tarjamah
 - b) Ta'wil
 - c) Ma'al
 - d) Interpretation
 - e) Hadith

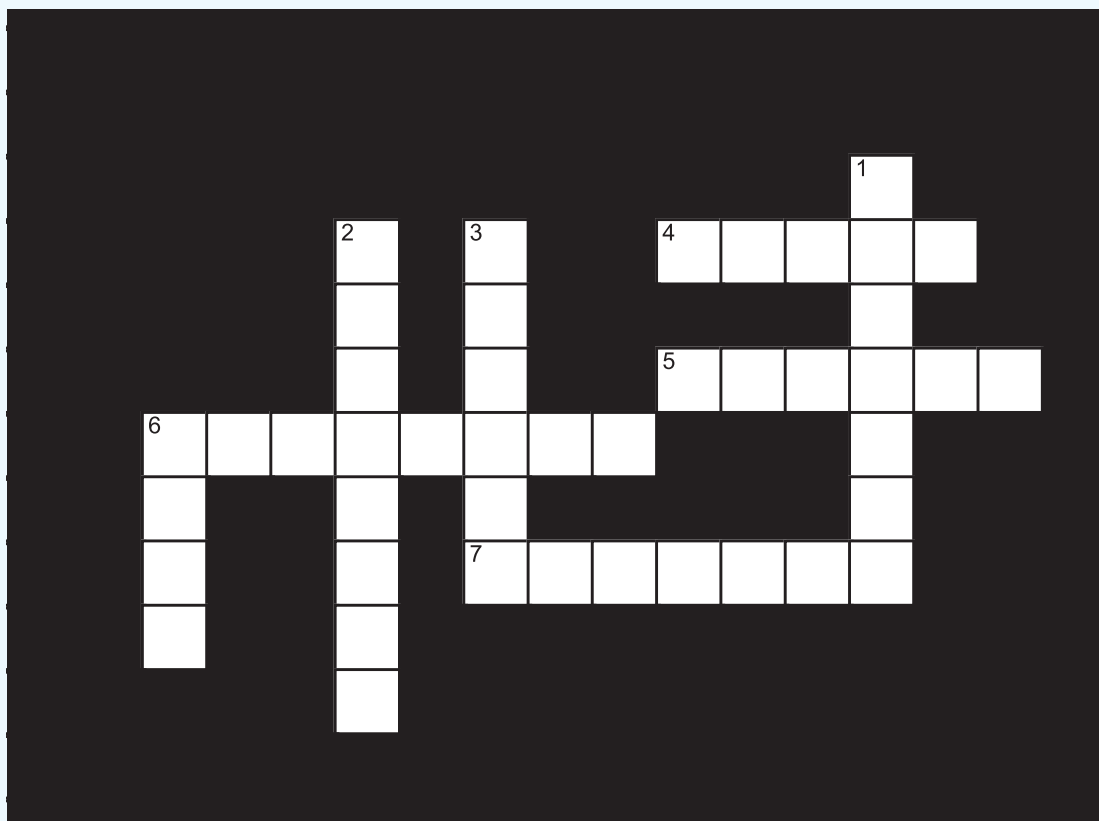
5. Which of the following choices is not one of the basic concepts related to the science of tafsir?
- Tafsir
 - Ta'wil
 - Tarjamah
 - Matn
 - Ma'al
6. It is stated in a verse “*Maintain with care the prayers and the middle prayer...*” and the Prophet (pbuh) explained the statement “the middle prayer” mentioned in this verse is “the late afternoon or asr prayer.”
- To which of the following choice can the explanation given above be a sample?**
- Tafsir of the Qur'an with words of the companions
 - Tafsir of the Qur'an with Sunnah
 - Tafsir of the Qur'an with the Qur'an
 - Tafsir bi al-Dirayah
 - Tafsir of the Qur'an with words of the successors

C. FILL IN THE BLANKS IN THE FOLLOWING SENTENCES WITH MOST SUITABLE WORD FROM THOSE GIVEN BELOW.

(Ma'al, the Qur'an, al-Dirayah, al-Riwayah, Sahaba (The Companions), al-Lafziyyah)

- Tafsir bi is the type of tafsir that explains the verses of the Noble Qur'an with other the verses of the Qur'an or sayings of the Prophet (pbuh) and the words of the companions.
- is the term used for the translation of the Noble Qur'an into another language together with some short explanations.
- The most important characteristic of tafsir bi is that if a mufassir is not able to explain a verse by referring the Qur'an, Sunnah and the words of the Companions, he/she explains it by his ijtihad relying on his own rational and scientific ability namely his ra'y.
- Translation of a text into another language together with its all features is called al-tarjamah
- Some verses of the Qur'an are explained in the light of other verse. This is called tafsir of the Qur'an with
- All of the mufassirs have mentioned the words of in their tafsir books.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



4. A word that lexically means “conversion or return of a thing to its origin and its source”.
5. Author of *Madarik at-Tanzil wa Haqa’iq at-Ta’wil*.
6. A person who is engaged in interpretation of the Qur’an. Exegete
7. A type of interpretation that explains the verses and chapters of the Noble Qur’an with other verses of the Qur’an or sayings of the Prophet (pbuh) and the words of the companions.



1. A type of interpretation that uses language, literature and various other types of information in addition to the narrations coming from the Prophet (pbuh) and the Companions.
2. The Arabic term meaning translator.
3. Explanation of the Qur’anic verses by scholars in accordance with certain methods and rules. Exegesis
6. Translation of the Noble Qur’an into another language along with providing some short explanations.

الْقَوْلِ وَهَدُوا إِلَى صِرَاطِ الْحَمِيدِ
يَصُدُّونَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَالْمَسْجِدِ
نَذِقَهُ مِنْ عَذَابِ أَلِيمٍ
نَبِّئْ أَنْ لَا تَشْرِكُ بِهِ
بِشَيْءٍ مِنَ الرُّسُلِ

سَفَاءَ لِلَّهِ غَيْرَ مُشْرِكِينَ بِهِ وَمَنْ
سَمَاءً فَتَخْطُفُهُ الطَّيْرُ أَوْ تَهْوِي
ذَلِكَ وَمَنْ يُعْظِمَ شَعْبِيرَ اللَّهِ فَإِنَّ
لَكُمْ فِيهَا مَنْفَعًا إِلَى أَجَلٍ مُسَمًّى
وَلِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ جَعَلْنَا مَنْسَبًا
لَهُمْ فِيهَا مِنْ عَمَلِهِمْ الْأَنْفَعِ فَأَلْهَمَ

HISTORY OF TAFSIR

CONTENTS OF THE CHAPTER

- ▶ THE EMERGENCE OF THE SCIENCE OF TAFSIR
- ▶ THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE SCIENCE OF TAFSIR WITH THE SCIENCE OF HADITH
- ▶ THE FORMATION OF TAFSIR AS A SCIENCE
- ▶ TAFSIR DURING THE TIME OF THE PROPHET (PBUH)
- ▶ TAFSIR STUDIES DURING THE TIME OF THE COMPANIONS (SAHABA)
- ▶ TAFSIR STUDIES DURING THE TIME OF THE SUCCESSORS (TABI'IN)
- ▶ TAFSIR STUDIES DURING THE TIME OF THE SUCCESSORS OF THE SUCCESSORS (TABA AL-TABI'IN)
- ▶ TAFSIR STUDIES AFTER THE PERIOD OF THE SUCCESSORS OF THE SUCCESSORS
- ▶ CONTEMPORARY TAFSIR STUDIES

ETUDES PRÉPARATOIRES

- ▶ What are the benefits of interpretation of the Qur'an? Share your opinions with your friends.
- ▶ Who is the most reliable exegete of the Qur'an in your opinion? Discuss.
- ▶ Can everybody interpret the Noble Qur'an? Discuss.
- ▶ Have you ever read a book of exegesis of the Qur'an? If so, share the title of the book and the name of its author with your classmates.

1. THE EMERGENCE OF THE SCIENCE OF TAFSIR

Allah the Almighty sent prophets and holy books as a guidance to people. Holy books consist of the decisions of Allah the Almighty, his commands, prohibitions and advices to people. The Noble Qur'an is the last of these books.

The Qur'an was sent not just to a certain community but rather to the whole humanity. Its rulings will be valid until the Day of Judgment. A person who would like to fulfill properly his duty of servanthood to Allah must accept all principles of the Noble Qur'an and regulate his life in accordance with these principles. Allah the Almighty states in a verse:

وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ
وَمُهَيِّمًا عَلَيْهِ فَاحْكُم بَيْنَهُمْ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ

“And We have revealed to you (O Muhammad), the Book in truth, confirming that which preceded it of the Scripture and as a criterion over it. So judge between them by what Allah has revealed...”⁹²

Allah the Almighty says in another verse:

هَذَا بَلَاغٌ لِلنَّاسِ وَلِيُنذَرُوا بِهِ وَلِيَعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا هُوَ إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ وَلِيَذْكُرُوا الْأَبَابِ

“This (Qur'an) is notification for the people that they may be warned thereby and that they may know that He is but one God and that those of understanding will be reminded.”⁹³

Following the requirements of such divine commands depends on learning the Holy Qur'an. And, in order to learn the rulings of the Qur'an and to understand them in detail, it is necessary to interpret or make tafsir (exegesis) of the Qur'an. Based on this necessity, the Noble Qur'an started to be interpreted during the time of the Prophet (pbuh).

Verses of the Noble Qur'an do not consists of only one meaning, but rather they sometimes refer to more than one meaning. This is because the Qur'an has the characteristic of solving and overcoming the problems of all humanity at any time until the Day of Judgment. Understanding such different meanings in a correct way depends on exegesis of these verses, because detailed explanations can be presented in the books of tafsirs.

Just like the lineages and languages of all people are different from each other, their understanding levels also differs. Moreover, although most of the Qur'anic verses are *muhkam* (verses

92. Al-Ma'idah, 5: 48

93. Ibrahim, 14: 52

with clear meanings), some of them are *mutashabih* (verses with allegorical meanings). This is mentioned in the following verse:

مِنْهُ آيَاتٌ مُحْكَمَاتٌ هُنَّ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ وَأُخَرُ مُتَشَابِهَاتٌ

“...in it (the Qur'an) are verses (that are) precise - they are the foundation of the Book - and others are allegorical ...”⁹⁴

For this reason, the Noble Qur'an must be interpreted by those with high level of knowledge. Besides, there are some terms in the Noble Qur'an that are not possible to be literally translated into another language. For this reason, tafsir is also needed along with translation.

The companions sometimes needed explanation of some verses and consulted the Prophet (pbuh). The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) interpreted the Qur'an when he felt it necessary and upon the questions of his Companions.

During the time of the Prophet (pbuh), activities of interpretation would merely consist of the explanation of the Qur'an with the Qur'an or with the Sunnah of the Prophet.

The primary reasons of this were

1. The Prophet (pbuh) provided the necessary explanations to his Companions.
2. The companions were very careful in explaining the Qur'an out of their concern to make mistakes.
3. The companions avoided interpretation of the *mutashabih* verses.

When the companions needed an explanation, they would easily ask the Prophet (pbuh) and get sufficient information from him. For this reason, the companions did not need much to interpret the verses of the Holy Qur'an.

LET'S MAKE A LIST

Why do we need to make interpretation of the Qur'an?

1. In order to live in accordance with the principles of Islam, we need to learn the Qur'an and understand its rulings.
2.
3.

2. THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE SCIENCE OF TAFSIR WITH THE SCIENCE OF HADITH

Sayings of the Prophet (pbuh) are important in the exegesis of the Qur'an particularly for two reasons:

94. Al Imran, 3: 7

First: Many of the divine orders in the Noble Qur'an are not given in detail. For example, in the Noble Qur'an, it is stated that "*prayer has been decreed upon the believers a decree of specified times.*"⁹⁵ However, the Qur'an has not specified the identification of the times of prayer, the specific rules of their performance and the numbers of their cycles. Such issues are explained by the Prophet (pbuh) and he taught Muslims how to perform their prayers. After he taught the performance of the prayer, he said, "Pray as you have seen me praying"⁹⁶.

In other words, sayings of the Prophet (pbuh) explain and shed light on unclear and concise parts of the Noble Qur'an.

Second: Moreover, the sayings of the Prophet condition and limit some absolute rulings of the Qur'an and make the general statements of the verses more specific.

For example, after explaining the women to whom marriage is prohibited, the Qur'an states:

وَأَحْلَلَّ لَكُمْ مَّا وَرَاءَ ذَلِكَ

"...and lawful to you are (all others) beyond these..."⁹⁷

The Prophet (pbuh) has limited the general ruling of the Qur'an with his following saying "A woman must not be combined in marriage with her father's sister, nor with her mother's sister, not daughter of his brother or daughter of his sister."⁹⁸

The Prophet (pbuh) is surely the best person in understanding the Holy Qur'an. The Prophet (pbuh) has been charged with transmitting the Noble Qur'an and teaching it to people. For the sake of this duty, he delivered and taught the word of Allah to people and practiced the divine principles in his life. In this respect, the sayings of the Prophet (pbuh) plays an auxiliary role in interpretation and understanding the message of the Qur'an.

3. THE FORMATION OF TAFSIR AS A SCIENCE

As mentioned before, when the companions needed to get information about the meaning of the verses, they would ask it from the Prophet (pbuh) and the Prophet (pbuh) would respond their questions. Nonetheless, exegesis was not in the form of a science yet. After the Prophet's (pbuh) demise, some companions continued to interpret the verses of the Qur'an; however, these efforts were not enough to form tafsir as an independent science.

When the borders of the Muslim state expanded and various communities embraced Islam in time, the exegesis of the Qur'an and written studies in this field were needed. Because new Muslims did not know asbab an-nuzul of the verses (occasions of their revelation). Moreover, since they did not have the chance to meet the Prophet (pbuh), they had no chance to get information from him. For this reason, they were not able to fully understand the Qur'an. While

95. Al-Nisa, 4: 103

96. Al-Bukhari, Sahih, al-Adhan, 18

97. An-Nisa, 4: 24

98. Al-Bukhari, Sahih, an-Nikah, 27; Muslim, Sahih, an-Nikah, 37, 39

making the interpretation of the verses, some people would insert groundless and unreal narrations called *israiliyyat* in their interpretations.⁹⁹ In parallel with the changing conditions of time and place, in time some other problems also appeared. Thus, *tafsir* of the Noble Qur'an became a necessity.

Muslim scholars, who spent effort to identify *asbab an-nuzul* of the verses and chapters beginning from the 2nd century of Hijrah, began to make the exegesis of the Qur'an by referring ahadith of the Prophet (pbuh) and the words of the companions. The studies on *tafsir* that started to produce their most fruitful works during the 4th century of Hijrah lived their golden age in the following centuries.

These studies of *tafsir* have improved more in the upcoming centuries. And a systematic science of *tafsir*, which explains verses of the Qur'an in detail, and the books written in this field have emerged.

4. TAFSIR DURING THE TIME OF THE PROPHET (PBUH)

People have been created to worship Allah. They must know the rulings and principles expressed in the Noble Qur'an and follow them in order to fulfill this duty and to reach happiness both in this world and in the Hereafter. Learning and understanding the Qur'an and following its principles depend on knowledge of sayings and traditions of the Prophet (pbuh), because the Prophet (pbuh) is the best one in knowledge and understanding of the Qur'an and following its principles. He is the best exemplar and a guide for us to follow. The following verse points out to this matter,

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَن كَانَ يَرْجُو اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا

***“There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allah an excellent pattern for anyone whose hope is in Allah and the Last Day and (who) remembers Allah often.”*¹⁰⁰**

In order to understand the place of the Prophet (pbuh) in tafsir, it is essential for one to know the following points,

1. The Holy Qur'an itself is the first source in its interpretation. The second source is the sayings and traditions of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh). It is necessary to have sufficient knowledge in the Qur'an and ahadith of the Prophet (pbuh) in order to make *tafsir* of the Noble Qur'an. *Tafsir* of the Qur'an is not possible without enough knowledge and reference in these two sources. The Prophet (pbuh) says on this matter:

***“Whoever says (something) about the Qur'an without knowledge (of the Qur'an and Sunnah), then let him take his seat in the Fire.”*¹⁰¹**

99. Ibn Khaldun, *Muqaddimah*, II, 505-506

100. Al-Ahzab, 33: 21

101. Al-Tirmidhi, Sunan, Tafsir al-Qur'an, 2951

LET'S INTERPRET

وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

"...We revealed to you the message that you may make clear to the people what was sent down to them and that they might give thought." (Al-Nahl, 16: 44)

Interpret the verse given above together with your classmates by taking the role of the Prophet (pbuh) in tafsir of the Qur'an in consideration.

Allah the Almighty states:

وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ * إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحَىٰ

"He does not speak from (his own) inclination. It is not but a revelation revealed"¹⁰² which indicates that the words of the Prophet (pbuh) are also a product of revelation and his explanations are very important in the exegesis of the Qur'an.

2. The Prophet (pbuh) was responsible to deliver the divine rulings of the Noble Qur'an and to explain them to people.

Allah the Almighty mentions that he was responsible for the explanation of the Qur'an in the following verse:

وَمَا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ إِلَّا لِتُبَيِّنَ لَهُمُ الَّذِي اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ

"And We have not revealed to you the Book, (O Muhammad), except for you to make clear to them that wherein they have differed and as guidance and mercy for a people who believe."¹⁰³

Allah the Almighty says in another verse:

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ رَّسُولٍ إِلَّا بِلِسَانٍ قَوْمِهِ لِتُبَيِّنَ لَهُمُ

"And We did not send any messenger except (speaking) in the language of his people to state clearly for them."¹⁰⁴

We understand from this verse that explaining the message of Allah was the duty upon all prophets. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) fulfilled this duty in the best way. Then, it is necessary for us to base the interpretation of the Qur'an on the sayings of the Prophet (pbuh).

Allah the Almighty expresses in another verse,

102. Al-Najm, 53: 3-4

103. Al-Nahl, 16: 64

104. Ibrahim, 14: 4

يَا أَيُّهَا الرَّسُولُ بَلِّغْ مَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ وَإِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلْ فَمَا بَلَغْتَ رِسَالَتَهُ
وَاللَّهُ يَعْصِمُكَ مِنَ النَّاسِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ

“O Messenger, announce that which has been revealed to you from your Lord, and if you do not, then you have not conveyed His message. And Allah will protect you from the people. Indeed, Allah does not guide the disbelieving people.”¹⁰⁵ The Prophet (pbuh) delivered to his followers all the rulings and principles revealed to him and -if needed- explained the verses of the Qur'an in accordance with this verse.

The following sayings of the Prophet are samples for his interpretation of the Holy Qur'an:

1. Allah the Almighty states in the Qur'an:

الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَلَمْ يَلْبِسُوا إِيمَانَهُمْ بِظُلْمٍ أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمُ الْأَمْنُ وَهُمْ مُهْتَدُونَ

“They who believe and do not mix their belief with injustice - those will have security, and they are (rightly) guided.”¹⁰⁶

When this verse was revealed the companions said, “Who would not be unjust against his/her self?” meaning that “each person is more or less unjust against his/her self, it is not possible to avoid this.” Thereupon the Prophet (pbuh) said, “Did you not hear the word (of Luqman) **“O my son, do not associate anything with Allah. Indeed, association with him is great injustice.”**¹⁰⁷ With this statement, the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) explained the meaning of the word *zulm* as *shirk* (association partners with Allah).

2. Allah the Almighty says regarding the Day of Judgment:

يَوْمَ يَأْتِي بَعْضُ آيَاتِ رَبِّكَ لَا يَنْفَعُ نَفْسًا إِيمَانُهَا لَمْ تَكُنْ
آمَنَتْ مِنْ قَبْلُ أَوْ كَسَبَتْ فِي إِيمَانِهَا خَيْرًا

“...The Day that some of the signs of your Lord will come no soul will benefit from its faith as long as it had not believed before or had earned through its faith some good...”¹⁰⁸

The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) explained the signs mentioned in the verse as follows:

“When three things appear faith will not benefit one who has not previously believed or has derived no good from his faith; the rising of the sun in its place of setting, the Dajjal, and the beast of the earth.”¹⁰⁹

105. Al-Ma'idah, 5: 67

106. Al-An'am, 6: 82

107. Luqman, 31: 13

108. Al-An'am, 6: 158

109. Muslim, *Sahih*, al-Iman, 249; At-Tirmidhi, *Sunan*, Tafsir al-Qur'an, 3074

The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) provided sufficient explanations about the verses and made the ambiguous issues clear for his followers. The companions narrated his exegesis of the Qur'an to each other.

5. TAFSIR STUDIES DURING THE TIME OF THE COMPANIONS (SAHABA)

The Companions of the Prophet have great importance for the interpretation of the Qur'an as they do for the other Islamic sciences, because they got their knowledge directly from the Prophet (pbuh) and transmitted it to the following generations. This chosen generation, who were the lovers of the Prophet (pbuh), spent great effort to learn the religion of Allah in a better way and to preserve the tradition of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh). They asked questions to the Prophet (pbuh) when they needed.

The Companions did not always have the chance to be with the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) because of their daily responsibilities and occupations. For this reason, they were with the Prophet (pbuh) in turns in order to learn the information given by the Prophet (pbuh). The companions who were with the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) transmitted what they learned from the Prophet (pbuh) to the others. The Companions made daily meetings in order to imprint what they had learned on that day to their minds.

INFORMATION BOX

What Does the word Sahaba mean?

Sahaba is the plural form of **sahabi** that means friends, mates and those who stand together. The word **ashab** that is used in the same meaning is the plural form of "**sahib**" (friend, mate).

Sahaba in Islamic terminology is a term referring to those who saw the Prophet (pbuh) during his prophethood, met and talked to him, believed in him and died as Muslims.

The Companions continued such meetings and discourses after the Prophet's (pbuh) demise. Even they made many journeys to various centers of knowledge for this cause. The main purpose of these journeys were to learn about the issues which they had not known from the scholar Companions who migrated and resided there, to research about the matters upon which they had not been sure, and to acquire certain knowledge on these matters.

Since the Companions of the Prophet lived during the time of revelation of the Qur'an, they knew *asbab an-nuzul* of the verses. Thus, while making interpretation of the verses, they did not have problems in determining the connection between the meaning of the verses and the reason of the rulings expressed in the verses.

Many people embraced Islam and became Muslim in the process of time. This situation necessitated teaching Islamic rulings and principles to the new Muslims and interpretation of the Noble Qur'an for this reason. After the Prophet (pbuh) died, the companions who had been the students of the Prophet (pbuh), took on this task and tried to fulfill it in the best way possible.

The Companions, while interpreting the verses, based it on primarily the sayings and tradition of the Prophet (pbuh) and expressed their own opinions when needed.

For example, it is stated in chapter al-Baqarah (2):

وَقَاتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّى لَا تَكُونَ فِتْنَةٌ وَيَكُونَ الدِّينُ لِلَّهِ

“Fight them until there is no more fitnah and until worship is acknowledged to be for Allah...”¹¹⁰ Abdullah ibn Umar (r. anhuma) interpreted the word “*fitnah*” as disbelief and association partners with Allah. Another companion Abdullah ibn Abbas (r. anhuma) supported this interpretation of Abdullah ibn Umar.

All Companions did not have the same level of understanding the Qur'an, knowledge of the tradition and sayings of the Prophet. Because each one of them had different abilities. Some of them attended the lessons of the Prophet (pbuh) less than the others. Some of them forgot what they had learned from the Messenger of Allah (pbuh). For this reason, some of the companions avoided interpretation of the Qur'an and asked the matters which they did not know to other companions.

Well-known Companions in the field of tafsir are as follows:

The four Rightly Guided Caliphs (Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, and Ali) being in the first place, the prominent companions in the field of tafsir are as follows:

Abdullah ibn Mas'ud

Abdullah ibn Abbas

Ubayy ibn Qa'b

Zaid ibn Thabit

Abdullah ibn Umar

Abdullah ibn Zaid

Abu Musa al-Ash'ari

LET'S LEARN

Ibn Mas'ud who was called “mufasssir (the exegete) of the Qur'an” by the Prophet (pbuh) and Abdullah ibn Abbas for whom the Prophet (pbuh) prayed personally and called “tarjuman (translator) of the Qur'an” have a special place in the science of tafsir.

110. Al-Baqarah, 2: 193

6. TAFSIR STUDIES DURING THE TIME OF THE SUCCESSORS (TABI'IN)

The Companions who had the honor of meeting the Prophet (pbuh), attending his classes and serving in the path of Islam as the first Muslims have a great place in the presence of Allah. Tabi'un (the successors of the Companions) who were the following generation after the sahaba and devoted themselves to the service of Islam like the Companions are virtuous people who gained the contentedness of Allah.

Sahaba had been educated by the Prophet (pbuh), as to the tabi'in, they were the students of Sahaba. They learned Islam and its two main sources, i.e. the Qur'an and sunnah from them.

INFORMATION BOX

What Does Tabi'i Mean?

Any Muslim who met anyone from the Companions and talked to him is called tabi'i. Its plural form is tabi'un.

The Noble Qur'an and ahadith, which were recorded after the beginning of the revelation, were carefully preserved by the companions who were the friends and assistants of the Prophet (pbuh). And then, these sources were transmitted to the generation of tabi'un. Tabi'un tried to preserve the purity of these two main sources which they learned, received from their companion teachers, and applied in their lives as a way and a method to live in accordance with the principles of Islam.

The activities of fabrication of hadith, and going away from the path of the Qur'an and sunnah urged the Successors to hold on to the Qur'an and sunnah more. In addition to this, they increased the activities of interpretation of the Qur'an to teach and explain the principles of the book of Allah to the Muslims whose numbers were increasing day by day. In this way, they devoted themselves to preserve Islam by their knowledge and deeds. Many Islamic sciences such as tafsir (Qur'anic exegesis), hadith, fiqh (Islamic Law), and aqa'id (Islamic creed) began to be systematized during their period.

The most important characteristic of the period of the Successors in respect to the science of tafsir is the spread of the reports of *israiliyyat*, since new Muslims who converted from Judaism and Christianity brought with them in Islam the forged reports which belong to their previous beliefs and thinking. *Israiliyyat* began to get mixed in tafsir towards the end of the period of the Companions and increased in the period of tabi'un. Prominent tabi'un endeavored on the one hand to compile (tadwin) the statements of sahaba regarding tafsir on the other hand to prevent *israiliyyat* to get mixed in tafsir.

LET'S TAKE A NOTE

The most important activities of tabi'un in tafsir were

1. To compile (tadwin) the statements of the Companions related to the interpretation of the Qur'an.
2. To determine the reports of *israiliyyat* and to prevent them get mixed in tafsir.

The method of tabi'un in the science of tafsir was:

To base their interpretation of the Qur'an first on the Qur'an and sunnah of the Prophet,

To benefit from the views of the Companions as well.

To take the historical incidents and the religiously valid customs of their community into consideration

And to express their own opinions.

LET'S SHARE

Analyze the verse given below in terms of the method of exegesis of the scholars of Successors.

It is stated in chapter Al Imran:

وَلِلّٰهِ عَلَى النَّاسِ حِجُّ الْبَيْتِ مَنِ اسْتَطَاعَ اِلَيْهِ سَبِيْلًا

“...and due to Allah from the people is a pilgrimage to the House - for whoever is able to find thereto a way...” (Ali Imran, 3: 97)

While interpreting this verse, Said ibn Jubayr from the generation of Successors expressed his opinion as follows:

“ ‘A person who is able to find a way’ refers to a person who has a mount and food sufficient enough to go and come back from pilgrimage. Hence the pilgrimage becomes obligatory upon that person.” (al-Tabari, *Jami' al-Bayan an Ta'wil Ay al-Qur'an*, IV, 16.)

Some of well-known exegetes of the are these:

Said ibn Jubair

Mujahid

Ikrimah

Ata ibn Abi Rabah

Alqama ibn Qays

Ibrahim an-Nakha'i

Muhammad ibn Sirin

Hasan al-Basri

Qatadah

LISONS-APPRENONS

QATADAH IBN DĪ'AMAH AND HIS PLACE IN THE SCIENCE OF TAFSIR

Qatadah was one of the prominent scholars of hadith and exegesis from the generation of the Successors. Even though it is not certain, he was born in 680 or 681 as a blind person. He came from to a bedouin family. Qatadah, who had a big desire to learn, was educated by Hasan al-Basri for twelve years and benefited from him in the studies of *qira'ah* (recitation), tafsir, hadith, and other Islamic sciences. He received narrations of *qira'ah* from Anas ibn Malik, Hasan al-Basri and Ibn Sirin. Qatadah is known with his taqwa (piousness). He died during a plague in 735.

His retentive memory became a proverb among people. He stayed with Said ibn Musayyib for eight days and memorized all what he heard from him. Then, Said ibn Musayyib said to him "You may leave now because you have learned all that I have".

Qatadah studied all famous religious and social sciences of his time, specialized especially in tafsir and became a prominent scholar in many Islamic sciences.

Qatadah said, "there is no verse in the Qur'an about which I have not heard anything". As other exegetes of the generation of tabi'in, Qatadah refers the Qur'an itself, sayings of the Prophet, the statements of the companions and successors, Arabic language and poetry, Arabic customs and his own views, though a little, in his interpretation of the Qur'an. In exegesis of a verse by another verse, he tries to reveal the meaning and gives evidence from other verses for *balaghah* (rhetoric), *uslub* (method) and *alfaz* (words) in it.

He dealt with the relationship among the verses. Thanks to his knowledge in Arabic language and literature, Qatadah had no difficulty in finding synonymous words and idioms while explaining ambiguous words and gave examples for different usages of various districts and tribes. While choosing a suitable meaning, he preferred revealing historical background of his choice to dealing with grammatical subtleties.

It is not known whether his book *Kitab at-Tafsir* has reached to our day or not.

(*Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, v. 25, p. 22-23)

7. TAFSIR STUDIES DURING THE TIME OF THE SUCCESSORS OF THE SUCCESSORS (TABA AL-TABI'IN)

Taba' al-tabi'in is the name of the generation that came after the Successors. The generation of taba' al-tabi'in is the third one in tafsir.

The method of taba' al-tabi'in in tafsir was as follows:

1. *Interpretation of the Qur'an with the Qur'an*: Some verses of the Noble Qur'an are explained by other verses. This is called tafsir of the Qur'an with the Qur'an. The soundest way in tafsir is to follow this method. Examples for this type of interpretation has already been given.

2. *Interpretation of the Qur'an with Sunnah*: The sayings of the Prophet reported in the chapters of the hadith books that are related to exegesis constitute the Prophet's (pbuh) exegesis of the Qur'an.

3. *Interpretation of the Qur'an with the statements of the Companions*: All exegetes of this period take the statements of the Companions into consideration in their interpretation of the Qur'an. Some exegetes also mention the statements of the Successors in their tafsirs. They give their own view if they feel it necessary.

LET'S INTERPRET

Read the verses given below and share your opinions about the explanatory characteristic of one verse about the other as an example of interpretation of the Qur'an with the Qur'an.

اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ

“Guide us to the straight path” (Al-Fatihah, 1: 6)

صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ

“The path of those upon whom You have bestowed favor, not of those who have evoked (Your) anger or of those who are astray.” (Al-Fatihah, 1: 7)

وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ فَأُولَئِكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ وَالصِّدِّيقِينَ وَالشُّهَدَاءِ وَالصَّالِحِينَ وَحَسُنَ أُولَئِكَ رَفِيقًا

“And whoever obeys Allah and the Messenger - those will be with the ones upon whom Allah has bestowed favor of the prophets, the steadfast affirmers of truth, the martyrs and the righteous. And excellent are those as companions” (Al-Nisa, 4: 69)

8. TAFSIR STUDIES AFTER THE PERIOD OF THE SUCCESSORS OF THE SUCCESSORS

The most important characteristic of tafsir in this period is that exegetes explained the verses with the Qur'an, Sunnah and the statements of the Companions at first. If that was not possible, they explained the verses relying on their own rational and scientific ability of ijtihad or ra'y (independent reasoning).

The method of tafsir in this period was as follows:

1. Interpretation of the Qur'an with the Qur'an: Interpretation of the Qur'an with the Qur'an is an essential principle in the science of tafsir. There are two ways in tafsir of the Qur'an with the Qur'an:

First: While explaining a verse or deducing a ruling from it, first the verse in question is taken into consideration. If meaning of the verse and the rulings in it are clear and do not need for any other interpretations, rulings are directly taken from the verse. For example;

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ سَنُدْخِلُهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ
خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقًّا وَمَنْ أَصْدَقُ مِنَ اللَّهِ قِيلًا

“But the ones who believe and do righteous deeds - We will admit them to gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide forever. (It is) the promise of Allah, (which is) truth, and who is more truthful than Allah in statement.”¹¹¹

It is clearly understood from this verse that the ones who believe and do righteous deeds will be allowed to enter paradise by Allah the Almighty. Allah clearly states that this is His promise and this is the truth.

Second: A ruling is taken from a verse by comparing it to other verses. For example; it is stated in the 110th verse of chapter al-Baqarah (2) “... **give zakah**...” however, it is not explained to whom it should be given. To find out those whom zakah can be given, it is necessary to check the other verses of the Qur'an. It is mentioned in this following verse:

إِنَّمَا الصَّدَقَاتُ لِلْفُقَرَاءِ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَالْعَامِلِينَ عَلَيْهَا وَالْمُؤَلَّفَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ
وَالْغَارِمِينَ وَفِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ فَرِيضَةً مِنَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ

“Zakah expenditures are only for the poor and for the needy and for those employed to collect (zakah) and for bringing hearts together (for Islam) and for freeing captives (or slaves) and for those in debt and for the cause of Allah and for the (stranded) traveler - an obligation (imposed) by Allah. And Allah is Knowing and Wise.”¹¹²

111. Al-Nisa, 4: 122

112. Al-Tawbah, 9: 60

2. Interpretation of the Qur'an with Sunnah: The second source in explaining the verses is the sunnah of the Messenger of Allah. If a verse is not explained by another verse or a clear ruling about the matter cannot be deduced from the Qur'an, then one needs to refer the sunnah. For example, the prescribed times of the prayer, how to perform them, and the amount of zakah are specified by sunnah.

3. Interpretation of the Qur'an with the Statements of the Companions: The third method is the interpretation of the Qur'an with the statements of the Companions. If a ruling cannot be deduced from the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet (pbuh), then one needs to refer to the statements of the Companions. Because the Companions were trained by the Prophet (pbuh) and they were great characters who knew the Noble Qur'an well. For this reason, the statements of the Companions are the third source in the science of tafsir.

4. Interpretation of the Qur'an with the independent reasoning of the exegetes: The fourth method is the interpretation of the Qur'an with ra'y or ijtihad of the exegete, which constitutes the most significant characteristic of this period. However, this is the last method to follow. Mufasssir, first, tries to explain any verse or its rulings in the light of other verses. If he cannot find any clear explanation or ruling, he refers the Sunnah of the Prophet. If he cannot anything in the Sunnah, he refers to the explanations of the Companions. If he cannot find any sufficient explanation in the explanations of the Companions either, he then tries to explain it by his own reasoning. However, his explanations must be in accordance with the essential principles of the Qur'an and Sunnah.

For example, it is stated in the 201st verse of chapter al-Baqarah (2):

وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ يَقُولُ رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ حَسَنَةً وَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ

“But among them is he who says, “Our Lord, give us in this world (that which is) good and in the Hereafter (that which is) good and protect us from the punishment of the Fire.””¹¹³

Sufyan ibn Said al-Thawri says that **“Give us good in the Hereafter”** means “Send us to the paradise.”¹¹⁴ Although this explanation of the mufasssir is not clearly mentioned in the Qur'an and Sunnah, such an explanation is not contrary to the Qur'an and Sunnah because, the paradise is among the blessings (goodness) which will be bestowed to the believers in the Hereafter.

Some of the books written in accordance with the method of *tafsir bi al-riwayah* in this period are as follows:

Jami al-Bayan an Ta'wil al-Qur'an of Ibn Jarir al-Tabari

Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Azim of Ibn Kathir

Al-Durr al-Mansur fi Tafsir al-Ma'thur of Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti

Some of the books written in accordance with the method of *tafsir bi al-dirayah* in this period are as follows:

113. Al-Baqarah, 2: 201

114. İsmail Cerrahoğlu, Tefsir Tarihi, I, 237

Anwar al-Tanzil wa Asrar al-Ta'wil of **Qadi Baydawi**

Madarik al-Tanzil wa Haqa'iq al-Ta'wil of **Al-Nasafi**

Mafatih al-Ghayb of **Fakhr al-Din al-Razi**

Tafsir bi al-Dirayah Books	Tafsir bi al-Riwayah Books
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Qadi Baydawi: <i>Anwar al-Tanzil wa Asrar at-Ta'wil</i>• Al-Nasafi: <i>Madarik al-Tanzil wa Haqa'iq al-Ta'wil</i>• Fakhr al-Din al-Razi: <i>Mafatih al-Ghayb</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ibn Jarir al-Tabari: <i>Jami al-Bayan an Ta'wil al-Qur'an</i>• Ibn Kathir: <i>Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Azim</i>• Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti: <i>Al-Durr al-Mansur fi Tafsir al-Ma'thur</i>

9. CONTEMPORARY TAFSIR STUDIES OF

It is possible to summarize the Muslim exegetes' activities related to interpretation of the Qur'an until modern times as follows:

Beginning from the 3rd century of Hijra (9th century CE), Muslim exegetes worked on cleaning the reports of israiliyyat from the books of exegesis. They examined the sayings of the Prophet (pbuh) and the statements of the Companions along with their *asanid* (chains of transmission), separated the authentic narrations from the forged ones and put only the authentic ones in tafsir works.

In that century, linguistic tafsir (*al-tafsir al-lughawi*) and the books of sufi of mystical exegesis (*al-tafsir al-ishari*) started to be written. In linguistic tafsir, Qur'anic words were analyzed in terms of Arabic language and literature and their meanings were introduced. In sufi tafsir, esoteric meanings of the verses were emphasized more than their apparent meanings.

"*Ma'ani al-Qur'an*" of Abu Zakariyya Yahya al-Farra is an example of **linguistic tafsir**¹¹⁵

While "*Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Azim*" of Sahi ibn Abdullah al-Tustari is an example of **sufi tafsir**¹¹⁶

In the 4th century of Hijra (10th century CE), i'jaz (inimitability) of the Noble Qur'an was dealt with by the exegetes and miraculous aspects of the Qur'anic verses were explained in the books of exegesis. For example;

The information about the earlier prophets and their people in the Noble Qur'an, the fact that the Qur'anic rulings are valid in all ages and in all places, and the fluency and perfectness of the statements of the Qur'an are some of the inimitable aspects of the Qur'an mentioned in the Qur'an.

In that century, tafsir books related to jurisprudential matters (*tafsir al-ahkam*) were also written. The tafsir books related to jurisprudential matters continued to be written in the following centuries.

115. As-Suyuti, *el-Itqan fi Ulum al-Qur'an*, I, 149

116. Az-Zahabi, *at-Tafseer wa al-Mufasssirun*, II, 380

“*Dala'il al-I'jaz*” of Abd al-Kahir al-Jurjani is an example of **at-tafsir al-i'jazi**.

“*Ahkam al-Qur'an*” of Abu Bakr Ahmed al-Jassas is an example of **al-tafsir al-ahkam** (The tafsir books related to jurisprudential matters)¹¹⁷

In the 5th and 6th centuries of Hijra (11th-12th centuries CE), philosophical interpretations of the verses started to be written. Besides, rhetorical (*balagha*) aspects of the verses were studied in the light of the aspects of inimitability of the Qur'an.

Al-Zamakhshari's exegesis titled “*Al-Kashshaf an Haqa'iq at-Tanzil*” is very famous in this respect.

In the 7th century of Hijra (13th century CE), Fakhr ad-Din ar-Razi and Qadi Baydawi studied the wisdom (reasons) behind the rulings stated in the verses, rhetorical aspects of the Qur'an, and matters related to inimitability of the Qur'an in their tafsir books.

Fakhr ad-Din ar-Razi dealt with various matters and included his discussions with other Muslim scholars in his tafsir “*Mafatih al-Ghayb*.”

Qadi Baydawi combined the method of al-Zamakhshari and al-Razi in his tafsir “*Anwar al-Tanzil wa Asrar al-Ta'wil*.”¹¹⁸

Studies related to Qur'anic exegesis continued in the 8th and 9th centuries of Hijra (14th and 15th centuries CE).

“*al-Haqa'iq al-Rabbaniyyah*” of Abu al-Sana al-Isfahani is one of the most important tafsir books written in the 8th century.

“*Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Azim*” of Ibn Kathir Abu al-Fida Ismail ibn Umar is another important work written in this period. Ibn Kathir grouped the verses in his tafsir and wrote a special chapter about the virtues of the Noble Qur'an at the end of this book.

Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti lived in the 9th century, and became famous with his tafsir “*al-Durr al-Mansur*.”¹¹⁹

One of the most famous mufasssirs of the 10th century of Hijra (15th century) is Abu al-Su'ud Effendi who was Shaykh al-Islam of Ottoman State.

The title of Abu al-Su'ud Efendi's tafsir is “*Irshad al-Aql al-Salim*” and “*Mazaya al-Qur'an al-Karim*”. Abu as-Su'ud Effendi dealt with the semantic links among the verses. There are some scholars who consider his tafsir superior to al-Zamakhshari and Qadi Baydawi's exegesis books.⁴⁷

117. Ali Turgut, *Tefsir Usulü ve Kaynakları*, p. 295

118. İsmail Cerrahoğlu, *Tefsir Usulü*, pp. 291-292

119. Ali Turgut, *Tefsir Usulü ve Kaynakları*, p. 244.

LET'S TAKE A NOTE

Studies related to interpreting the Noble Qur'an, which is the word of Allah the Almighty and consists of the principles for people that is related both to the life in this world and to the life in the Hereafter continued in the 21st century as well. Especially "*Hak Dini Kur'an Dili*" of Elmalılı Hamdi Yazır is an important tafsir book written in Turkish.

DO YOU KNOW?

"*Mu'jamu Musannafat al-Qur'an al-Karim*" which was written by Ali Shawwah and published in 1984 in Beirut in four volumes gathers the primary books written about *i'rab* (case endings) of the Noble Qur'an, its tafsir, *tarjamah*, *i'jaz*, *tajwid* (proper recitation) and other Qur'anic sciences.

In this work, 3281 book titles about the exegesis of the Qur'an, its translation and other sciences are mentioned. 1047 of these books are about exegesis of the Qur'an. (Süleyman Ateş, *Yüce Kur'an'ın Çağdaş Tefsiri*, I, 56)



READING TEXT

THE BEST EXAMPLE

Our Prophet (pbuh) is a model character who is introduced as an exemplar to people and whose morality is praised in the Noble Qur'an. As the Qur'an informs us, he is mercy upon the worlds and lived upon a good morality. Exemplary character of our Prophet (pbuh) with his good attributes will continue until the Day of Judgment.

We leave the stage to someone who expresses the wonderful qualities of the Prophet (pbuh) and whose heart is filled with love for the Prophet's (pbuh):

If you are a rich person with wealth, think of humbleness and generosity of the great Prophet who ruled over the whole Arabia and subdued noble Arab people with love.

If you are someone from among the weak, take example from the life of the Prophet who lived in Mecca under the ruling and governance of cruel and usurper polytheists.

If you are a victorious conqueror, draw a lesson from the life of the Prophet of courage and devotion who defeated his enemy in the battles of Badr and Hunayn.

May Allah forbid, if you are defeated, remember the Prophet who put his trust in Allah while walking among his martyred and wounded companions with bravery and courage.

If you are a teacher, think about the Prophet who taught the divine commands in his mosque to Ashab al-Suffa by inoculating them with the beauty and sensitivity of his heart.

If you are a student, imagine the Prophet who sat before Jibril Amin (Archangel Gabriel) who brought revelation to him.

If you are a preacher and a reliable guide advising people goodness and beauty, listen to the Prophet who spread wisdom upon his Companions in al-Masjid al-Nabawi. Listen carefully and set your heart on his silky voice.

If you desire to defend, to convey, and to uplift the truth but have nobody to support you in your case, examine the life of the Prophet who declared the truth to the oppressors and invited them to the straight path while he was deprived of any assistance in Mecca.

If you defeat the enemy, break their blowing their obstinacy, and overcome them, if you ruin the falsehood and declare the truth, then imagine the Prophet who entered Mecca humbly bowing down on his camel although he was a victorious commander on the day of conquest.

If you have a farm and desire to run its affairs, take an example from the Prophet who put in charge some people who were able to manage the fields in the best way after he conquered the lands of Bani Nadir, fields of Haybar and Fadak.

If you are alone and have no one in this life, think about Amina's and Abdullah's beloved, and innocent orphan.

If you are a young person, pay attention to the life of the young man who shepherded his uncle Abu Talib's herd in Mecca although he was the candidate for the prophethood.

If you are a young person desiring to start a spiritually strong family, pay attention to the family life of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) and his advises. Prefer piety so that you can attain happiness in both worlds.

If you are a tradesman who goes on commercial journeys, think about the conditions of the noblest person (pbuh) in the trade caravan going back and forth from Syria to Busra.

If you are a judge, think about his (pbuh) just and wise resolution about placing al-Hajar al-Aswad (the black stone) in its proper place in Ka'bah while the nobles of Mecca were about to start on a fight.

And turn your look back to history again and look at the Prophet who decided justly among the people and treated equally both the poor who lived in hardship and the rich who had wealth in his presence in al-Masjid an-Nabawi in Medina.

If you are a husband, pay attention to pure life of the blessed person who was the husband of Khadija and Aisha, his deep feelings and mercy and his just treatment among all his wives.

If you are a father, learn how this noble person (pbuh) who was the father of Fatima al-Zahra and grandfather of Hasan and Husain treated them.

Whatever your qualifications are, in whatever situation you are, you can always find the best and perfect guide and exemplar for yourself in the life of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

He is such a guide that you can correct all the wrong in your life via his sunnah. You can correct the matters that are out of control. You would be saved from the handicaps of life by means of his light and guidance and find true happiness!¹²⁰



120. Osman Nuri Topbaş, Nebiler Silsilesi, IV

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

A. ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

1. Give some information about emergence of the science of tafsir.
2. Explain the relationship between the science of tafsir and hadith.
3. Explain the place and importance of the Prophet (pbuh) in the science of tafsir.
4. Briefly explain the role of the Companions in the interpretation of the Qur'an.
5. Give some information about the activities of tafsir carried out during the period of tabi'in.
6. Give some information about the tafsir studies during the fourth generation.

B. MARK THE CORRECT ANSWERS OF THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>1. Which of the following names is not one of the famous mufasssirs of the generation of the Companions?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Abdullah ibn Abbas b) Zaid ibn Thabit c) Abdullah ibn Umar d) Abu Hurairah e) Abdullah ibn Mas'ud | <p>2. Which of the following choices is not one of methods of tafsir followed by the generation of tabi'in?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) They have primarily based their interpretation of the verses of the Qur'an on the Qur'an itself and Sunnah of the Prophet b) They have benefited from the views of the Companions. c) They have never expressed their personal opinions regarding the interpretation of the verses. d) They took historical events into consideration. e) They have paid attention to the customs of the place where they lived provided that they were in accordance with the basic principles of Islam. |
|--|--|

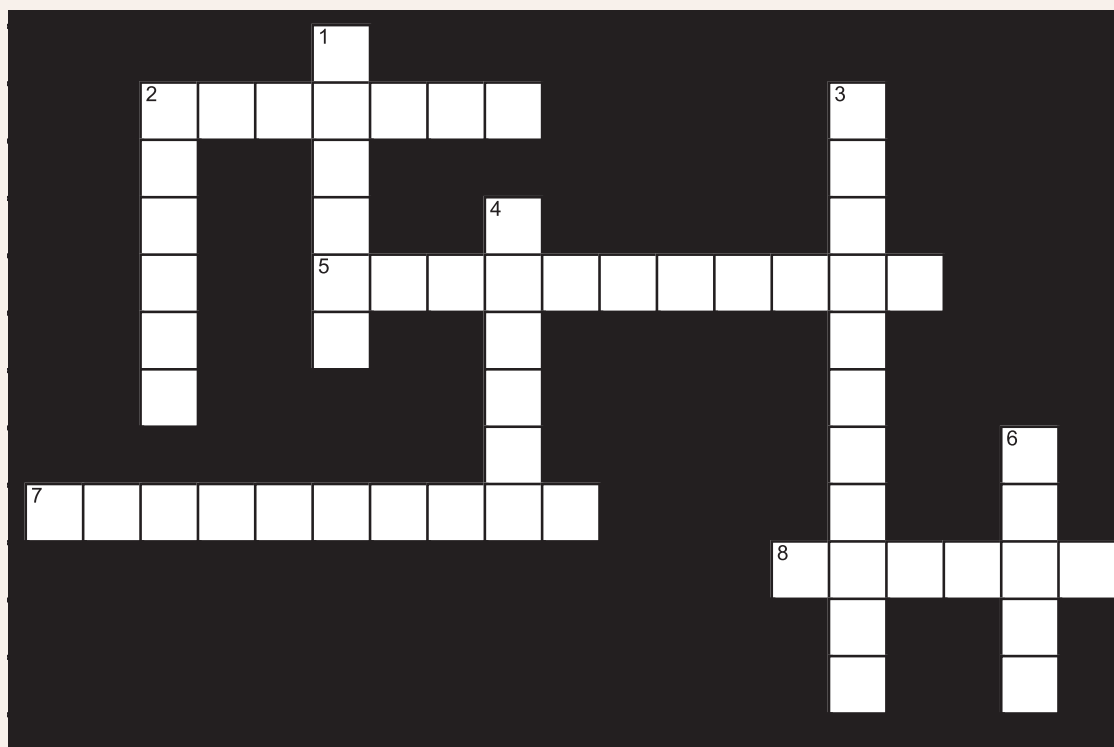
3. Which of the following names is not one of the famous mufasssirs of the generation of tabi'un?
 - a) Hasan al-Basri
 - b) Ahmed ibn Hanbal
 - c) Said ibn Jubair
 - d) Mujahid
 - e) Ikrimah
4. Which of the following match between the book and its author is incorrect?
 - a) Abu Bakr Ahmed al-Jassas: "**Ahkam al-Qur'an**"
 - b) Al-Zamakhshari: "**al-Kashshaf an Haqa'iq at-Tanzil**"
 - c) Qadi Baydawi: "**Anwar al-Tanzil wa Asrar al-Ta'wil**"
 - d) Ibn Kathir: "**Mafatih al-Ghayb**"
 - e) Jalal ad-Din as-Suyuti: "**al-Durr al-Mansur**"
5. One of the well-known mufasssirs of the 10th century of Hijra (15th century CE) is Shaykh al-Islam of Ottoman State Abu as-Su'ud Effendi. What is the title of his work in which he mentions the semantic links among verses?
 - a) Irshad al-Aql al-Salim
 - b) al-Haqa'iq al-Rabbaniyyah
 - c) Mafatih al-Ghayb
 - d) al-Kashshaf an Haqa'iq at-Tanzil
 - e) Ahkam al-Qur'an

C. FILL IN THE BLANKS IN THE FOLLOWING SENTENCES WITH MOST SUITABLE WORD FROM THOSE GIVEN BELOW.

(Israiliyyat - Abu al-Su'ud Effendi - Tabi'un - Sufi - Ahkam al-Qur'an - the fourth)

1. One of the well-known mufasssirs of the 10th century of Hijra is shaykh al-Islam of Ottoman State.
2. Abu Bakr Ahmed al-Jassas' book of exegesis titled can be given as an example of tafsir books related to jurisprudential matters.
3. In the 3rd century of Hijra, linguistic tafsir books and tafsir books were written.
4. Some mufasssirs included in their interpretations the reports of which are groundless and false reports.
5. Studies in tafsir and Qur'anic sciences started to give the most fruitful works in century and they lived the golden age in following centuries.
6. Sahaba were educated and trained by the Prophet (pbuh), while the generation of were the students of sahaba.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



2. The name of a well-known mufassir from the generation of tabi'in.
5. The term that refers to the false narrations reported by new Muslims converted from Judaism and Christianity who had such thoughts left from their previous beliefs.
7. Ambiguous verses whose meanings cannot be easily understood.
8. Plural form of the word the Arabic word "sahabi".



1. Compiling and collecting the statements related to the interpretation of the Qur'an.
2. Unambiguous verses whose meanings are clear.
3. The author of "*al-Kashshaf an Haqa'iq at-Tanzil*".
4. The author of "*Jami al-Bayan an Ta'wil al-Qur'an*".
6. The Arabic term used for any Muslim who met and talked to a sahabi.



QURANIC SCIENCES

CONTENTS OF THE CHAPTER

- ▶ I'JAZ AND MU'JIZAH (INIMITABILITY AND MIRACLE)
- ▶ MUHKAM (CLEAR) AND MUTASHABIH (ALLEGORICAL)
- ▶ VIEWS OF MUSLIM SCHOLARS ABOUT MUHKAM AND MUTASHABIH
- ▶ IMPORTANCE OF THE CONCEPTS OF MUHKAM AND MUTASHABIH IN TERMS OF INTERPRETATION OF THE QUR'AN
- ▶ ASBAB AL-NUZUL (OCCASSIONS OF REVELATION)
- ▶ NASKH (ABROGATION) IN THE QUR'AN
- ▶ HAQIQAH (REAL MEANING) AND MAJAZ (METAPHOR)
- ▶ MUBHAMAT (AMBIGUOUS EXPRESSIONS)
- ▶ WUJUH AND NAZA'IR (Heteronyms and Synonyms)
- ▶ GHARIB AL-QUR'AN (FOREIGN WORDS USED IN THE QUR'AN)

PREPARATORY WORKS

- ▶ Find and learn a verse from the Qur'an that indicates that the Qur'an is the greatest miracle.
- ▶ Research about how the Caliph Umar (r.a.) embraced Islam by listening to the Qur'anic verses and evaluate this incident with your friends.
- ▶ Research about the importance of knowledge of sabab an-nuzul (occasions of revelation) in the interpretation of the Qur'an.
- ▶ What is the importance of muhkam and mutashabih in terms of tafseer of the Qur'an? Make a research.

1. I'JAZ AND MU'JIZAH (INIMITABILITY AND MIRACLE)

I'jaz means to astonish and to incapacitate anyone in making or doing the like of a thing. **Mu'jizah** means an act that exceeds beyond the limits of human capacity and a thing that incapacitates anyone in making/doing the like of a thing. **Mu'jizah**, as a term, means extraordinary abilities and events that are beyond the human capacity and that were bestowed upon the prophets by Allah.

LET'S TAKE A NOTE

It is important to know the following points about mu'jizah:

Mu'jizah occurs by the will of Allah and Allah is its real doer.

Mu'jizah is given only to the prophets.

Since mu'jizah is beyond the human capacity, no one can do something similar to them other than the prophets. The prophets can manifest mu'jizah by the permission and will of Allah.

As He bestowed upon other prophets, Allah the Almighty bestowed some miraculous abilities and incidents (mu'jizahs) upon the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). The most important mu'jizah bestowed upon our Prophet (pbuh) is the Noble Qur'an which is valid until the Day of Judgment. The Qur'an is the greatest mu'jizah and nothing like it was given to any prophet before him.

The Prophet (pbuh) stated this fact as follows, "*The greatest miracle bestowed upon him was the revelation of the Qur'an.*"¹²¹

Even the pagans of Mecca who were authority in literature admitted the superiority of the Qur'an and its inimitability. They did not want to believe that the Noble Qur'an, which is unique in wording, was the word of Allah. So they presented various excuses not to believe in it. Some of them argued that the Qur'an was the word of the Prophet; some of them called the Qur'an a piece of poetry and some others made other claims. However, they were not able to desist from listening to the Qur'an when they heard its captivating recitation.

The Noble Qur'an has a special style in constructing the expressions and using the words. It is a sacred book which consists in itself of the high qualities of both poetry and prose. Euphony

121. Al-Bukhari, Sahih, VI, 97

of the Qur'an is like a music enthralling the soul. The harmony in its meaning and expressions is perfect; there is neither any shortage nor excess in expressing the meaning intended to be given.

The Noble Qur'an presents its literal supremacy as a proof for its being the word of Allah:

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

“And if you are in doubt about what We have sent down upon Our Servant (Muhammad), then produce a surah the like thereof and call upon your witnesses other than Allah, if you should be truthful.”¹²²

Although the Qur'an called all people to write the like of it, nobody has been able to produce something similar to it. As the Qur'an informs us, nobody will be able to produce the like of the Qur'an in the future, either.

قُلْ لِّئِنْ اجْتَمَعَتِ الْإِنْسُ وَالْجِنُّ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَأْتُوا بِمِثْلِ هَذَا
الْقُرْآنِ لَا يَأْتُونَ بِمِثْلِهِ وَلَوْ كَانَ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ ظَهِيرًا.

“Say, “If mankind and the jinn gathered in order to produce the like of this Qur'an, they could not produce the like of it, even if they were to each other assistants.”¹²³

Even one chapter similar to a chapter of the Qur'an could not be written today. This shows the miraculous aspect of the Qur'an.

The Miraculous Aspects of the Noble Qur'an can be listed as follows:

a. I'jaz of the Qur'an in Terms of Its Giving Information related to the World of Ghayb (the Unperceivable World)

The Noble Qur'an consists of the reports of the past and the future. Previous prophets and their people are mentioned in the Qur'an, which indicates that the Qur'an is a miracle coming from Allah. It is not possible for an illiterate prophet who had no education to give true information which is in accordance with the historical facts about certain people who had lived ages before him and certain events that had happened ages before him. The following verse states that such information was revealed to the Prophet by Allah:

تِلْكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ الْغَيْبِ نُوحِيهَا إِلَيْكَ مَا كُنْتَ تَعْلَمُهَا أَنْتَ وَلَا قَوْمُكَ مِنْ قَبْلِ هَذَا

“That is from the news of the unseen which We reveal to you, (O Muhammad). You knew it not, neither you nor your people, before this...”¹²⁴ Then, the Noble Qur'an which consists of such information is the word of Allah.

122. Al-Baqarah, 2: 23

123. Al-Isra', 17: 88

124. Hud, 11: 49

The news reported by the Qur'an regarding the events that will happen in the future have come true in due course and continue to happen. The following event is an example which shows that the news reported by the Qur'an about the future comes true:

"The Byzantines, who were among the people of the Book (Ahl al-Kitab), had been defeated by Zoroastrian Persians. Pagan Meccan rejoiced with this and mocked at Muslims saying "If Allah were the sole Victor, He would help Byzantines overcome (the others)." Thereupon, the following verse was revealed:

غُلِبَتِ الرُّومُ * فِي أَدْنَى الْأَرْضِ وَهُمْ مِّنْ بَعْدِ غَلِبِهِمْ سَيَغْلِبُونَ *
فِي بَضْعِ سِنِينَ * لِلَّهِ الْأَمْرُ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَمِنْ بَعْدُ

"The Byzantines have been defeated. In the nearest land. But they, after their defeat, will overcome. Within three to nine years. To Allah belongs the command before and after..."¹²⁵ So indeed, the news given by this verse came true in 624 when the Byzantines defeated the Persians. the verses continue as follows:

وَيَوْمَئِذٍ يَفْرَحُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ * بِنَصْرِ اللَّهِ يَنْصُرُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ

"And that day the believers will rejoice. In the victory of Allah. He gives victory to whom He wills..."¹²⁶ The news given by the Qur'an came true as well and Muslims won the Battle of Badr in the same year when the Byzantines defeated the Persians.

This news of the Qur'an came true as well and the Qur'an proved once again that it is the word of Allah and a miracle.

b. P'jaz of the Qur'an in Terms of Its Being Valid for All Times and for All Places

The rulings and principles of the Qur'an are valid for all times and for all places. It meets the needs of people and solves their problems. All rulings and principles of the Qur'an are in order to bring people endless happiness in this world and the Hereafter. They are valid not only for the people who lived at the time of revelation of the Qur'an, but also for all people who live now and will live until the end of this world.

The Qur'an had given people peace, trust, happiness, justice, knowledge, and wisdom by this quality. The great change which took place in Arab society in a short span of time is the best example that manifests this feature of the Qur'an.

LET'S LEARN

Some of the transformations realized by the Qur'an are as follows:

It has saved people from primitive idol worshipping and introduced them to become servants of Allah who is the Lord of the worlds and taught them how to worship Him.

125. Ar-Rum, 30: 2-4

126. Ar-Rum, 30: 4-5

It has transformed the people, who were cruel enough to bury their own children alive, into people merciful enough to pay attention not to hurt even the ants on their paths.

It has wiped out the bad habits and traditions which hurt the individuals, their families and the whole community such as alcohol, gambling, adultery and usury.

It has ended discrimination as rich and poor or master and slave.

It has prohibited feuds, grudge, lying and cheating others.

It has made solidarity, helping each other, mutual trust and respect and human right dominant throughout the community.

It has replaced the false with the truth; oppression with justice; racism with equality and enmity with peace and brotherhood.

It has protected the women's rights, chastity and honor.

Only a book that addresses all people contains the messages and decisions encompassing all times and takes those who follows it in any time and any place to happiness both in this world and in the Hereafter can be the word of Allah. Today, many people embrace Islam just by reading the Qur'an. This is another aspect of miraculous feature of the Qur'an.

c. I'jaz of the Qur'an in Terms of Expression

The Noble Qur'an has a special style in its verses in respect to its expression and choice of vocabulary.

The Qur'an sometimes addresses human mind, sometimes addresses human heart or his feelings. It explains its subject matters by the way of talqin (suggestion), repetition, exemplification, description, narration, and personification etc. The following can be given as examples in this respect:

وَهُوَ الَّذِي سَخَّرَ الْبَحْرَ لِتَأْكُلُوا مِنْهُ لَحْمًا طَرِيًّا وَتَسْتَخْرِجُوا مِنْهُ حِلْيَةً تَلْبَسُونَهَا
وَتَرَى الْفُلْكَ مَوَاجِرَ فِيهِ وَلِتَبْتَغُوا مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ * وَالْقَى فِي
الْأَرْضِ رَوَاسِيَ أَنْ تَمِيدَ بِكُمْ وَأَنْهَارًا وَسُبُلًا لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ * وَعَلَامَاتٍ
وَبِالنَّجْمِ هُمْ يَهْتَدُونَ * أَفَمَنْ يَخْلُقُ كَمَنْ لَا يَخْلُقُ أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ.

“And it is He who subjected the sea for you to eat from it tender meat and to extract from it ornaments which you wear. And you see the ships plowing through it, and (He subjected it) that you may seek of His bounty; and perhaps you will be grateful. And He has cast into the earth firmly set mountains, lest it shift with you, and (made) rivers and roads, that you may be guided, and landmarks. And by the stars they are (also) guided. Then is He who creates like one who does not create? So will you not be reminded?”¹²⁷

127. Al-Nahl, 16: 14-17

إِذَا الشَّمْسُ كُوِّرَتْ * وَإِذَا النُّجُومُ انْكَدَرَتْ * وَإِذَا الْجِبَالُ سُيِّرَتْ * وَإِذَا الْعِشَارُ عُطِّلَتْ *
وَإِذَا الْوُحُوشُ حُشِرَتْ * وَإِذَا الْبِحَارُ سُجِّرَتْ * وَإِذَا النُّفُوسُ زُوِّجَتْ *
وَإِذَا الْمَوْؤُودَةُ سُئِلَتْ * بِأَيِّ ذَنْبٍ قُتِلَتْ * وَإِذَا الصُّحُفُ نُشِرَتْ * وَإِذَا السَّمَاءُ كُشِطَتْ *
وَإِذَا الْجَحِيمُ سُعِّرَتْ * وَإِذَا الْجَنَّةُ أُزْلِفَتْ * عَلِمَتْ نَفْسٌ مَّا أُخْضِرَتْ.

“When the sun is wrapped up (in darkness); and when the stars fall, dispersing; and when the mountains are removed; and when full-term she-camels are neglected; and when the wild beasts are gathered; and when the seas are filled with flame; and when the souls are paired; and when the girl (who was) buried alive is asked for what sin she was killed; and when the pages are made public; and when the sky is stripped away; and when Hellfire is set ablaze; and when Paradise is brought near, a soul will (then) know what it has brought (with it).”¹²⁸

d. I'jaz of the Qur'an in Terms of its Music (Phonetic)

The natural music in the statements of the Noble Qur'an can be especially observed in two ways:

1. Although the Qur'an is not a poetry, a phonetic harmony can be clearly seen in many of its verses:

وَالشَّمْسِ وَضُحَاهَا * وَالْقَمَرِ إِذَا تَلَاهَا * وَالنَّهَارِ إِذَا جَلَاهَا * وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا يَغْشَاهَا * وَالسَّمَاءِ وَمَا بَنَاهَا *
وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا طَحَاهَا. وَنَفْسٍ وَمَا سَوَّاهَا فَالْهَمَّهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا

“By the sun and its brightness; and (by) the moon when it follows it; and (by) the day when it displays it; and (by) the night when it covers it; and (by) the sky and He who constructed it; and (by) the earth and He who spread it.”¹²⁹

فَلَا أُقْسِمُ بِالشَّفَقِ * وَاللَّيْلِ وَمَا وَسَقَ * وَالْقَمَرِ إِذَا اتَّسَقَ * لَتَرْكَبَنَّ طَبَقًا عَن طَبَقٍ.

“So I swear by the twilight glow; and (by) the night and what it envelops; and (by) the moon when it becomes full that you will surely experience state after state.”¹³⁰

Words sound either hard or soft in accordance with the subject expressed in the second verse. The tone of certain verses that are about Allah's mercy, blessings, and paradise is soft in accordance with the features of the content of the verse.

فِي جَنَّاتِ النَّعِيمِ * عَلَى سُرُرٍ مُتَقَابِلِينَ *
يُطَافُ عَلَيْهِمْ بِكَأْسٍ مِّن مَّعِينٍ * بَيْنَضَاءٍ لَّدَى لِّلشَّارِبِينَ.

128. Al-Takwir, 81: 1-14

129. Al-Shams, 91: 1-6

130. Al-Inshiqaq, 84: 16-19

“In gardens of pleasure, on thrones facing one another. There will be circulated among them a cup (of wine) from a flowing spring, white and delicious to the drinkers.”¹³¹

There is a strong tone in the verses that are about difficulties, threats, punishment, and Hell.

كَلَّا إِذَا بَلَغَتِ التَّرَاقِي * وَقِيلَ مَنْ رَاقٍ * وَظَنَّ أَنَّهُ الْفِرَاقُ *
وَالْتَقَّتِ السَّاقُ بِالسَّاقِ * إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ يَوْمَئِذٍ الْمَسَاقُ

“No! When the soul has reached the collar bones; and it is said, “Who will cure (him)?”; and the dying one is certain that it is the (time of) separation; and the leg is wound about the leg, to your Lord, that Day, will be the procession.”¹³²

The difficulty and weight of the scene of the Day of Judgment can be felt in the verses that mention the Day of Judgment.

إِذَا السَّمَاءُ انْفَطَرَتْ * وَإِذَا الْكَوَاكِبُ انْتَشَرَتْ * وَإِذَا الْبِحَارُ فُجِّرَتْ *
وَإِذَا الْقُبُورُ بُعْثِرَتْ * عَلِمَتْ نَفْسٌ مَّا قَدَّمَتْ وَأَخَّرَتْ

“When the sky breaks apart; and when the stars fall, scattering; and when the seas are erupted; and when the (contents of) graves are scattered, a soul will (then) know what it has put forth and kept back.”¹³³

e. I'jaz of the Qur'an in Terms of Ta'lif (Formation and Structure)

The Noble Qur'an was sent down in verses and chapters during twenty-three year long period. The Prophet (pbuh) personally determined the places of the revealed verses and chapters and placed each verse in its proper place in each chapter in accordance with the command of Allah. Chapters of the Qur'an have a connection with each other and also with other verses. If this connection is analyzed, a great harmony can be observed. It is certain that the Messenger of Allah, as a human being, cannot know future events and the verses revealed about them. Thus, it is obvious that construction and arrangement of the Qur'an were made by the command of Allah.

f. I'jaz of the Qur'an in Terms of its Scholarly Content

The Noble Qur'an consist of many scholarly topics. There is nothing against reason and science among the scholarly matters mentioned in the Qur'an as in its other subjects. Scientists have approved and affirmed that the scientific principles introduced by the Qur'an are correct.

Moreover, the easiness in the memorization of the Qur'an, the spiritual delight in its recitation, its being a source of relief and blessing for the hearts and the feature of resting the souls of its reciters are evidences of its supremacy and miraculous characteristic. Moreover, people reached salvation thanks to the Qur'an. They have attained happiness, peace, trust, truth, reality,

131. Al-Saffat, 37: 43-46

132. Al-Qiyamah, 75: 26-30

133. Al-Infitar, 82: 1-5

concept of brotherhood, solidarity and helping each other by means of it. It has enlightened the ages and become a source for the world of science and technique. It provided a source of inspiration for the scholars and intellectuals. Those who have followed it have found the right path and those who have left it have gone astray.

LET'S SHARE

Statements of the scholars about uniqueness of the Qur'an:

Many scholars, regardless of their religion, have spoken praising the uniqueness and supremacy of the Noble Qur'an. We can mention some of them as examples:

"The Qur'an is a miracle. Because the Qur'an chooses the most perceivable words and arranges them in the best manner and expresses the meanings in the most proper way. It informs about the existence of Allah, His oneness and attributes; and explains (the concept of) ibadah (worship), du'a (prayer), haram (unlawful), halal (lawful), mubah (permissible) and other types of rulings. It describes good morality and gives advices; it clearly expresses its subject matters. As it gives information about the past ages, it also gives information about the future as well. It combines claim and evidence; and case and proof in such a best way that it is not possible to see a better and stronger way than that."

Jalal ad-Din as-Suyuti, *Mujtarak al-Akran fi I'jaz al-Qur'an*

"Words have three sounds: Soul hears one of them; reason comprehends the second sound and makes it infuse in the soul. The third sound involves the feeling and the soul. The name and spirit of i'jaz of the Qur'an is the latter one. Words in the Qur'an gain the most rhetorical and melodious harmony. It is miraculous and unique. The strongest and most fluent poets and speakers of Arabs acknowledge its supremacy."

Mustafa Sadiq ar-Rafi'i, *I'jaz al-Qur'an*

"Some people who learn Arabic language attempt to belittle the Qur'an. If they were to comprehend the clear, nice and straight method of the Qur'an, listen to its recitation which impresses the audience, and hear the perfect language which the Prophet used while explaining the Qur'an to his Companions, they would prostrate in the presence of Allah. All of them would say: "O Messenger of Allah! Hold our hands and do not deprive us from the honor of being among your people."

Johann Jacob Reisig/ Con Yakop Reys

2. MUHKAM (CLEAR) AND MUTASHABIH (ALLEGORICAL)

Muhkam and *mutashabih* are two terms used for the verses of the Qur'an. Lexical meanings of the words *muhkam* and *mutashabih* refers to the soundness of the Qur'anic statements and

their meanings, their perfectness, and beauty.¹³⁴ Verses of the Qur'an are classified into *muhkam* and *mutashabih* in terms of their terminological meanings.

Allah the Almighty states that some of the Qur'anic verses are *muhkam* and the others are *mutashabih*:

هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ مِنْهُ آيَاتٌ مُحْكَمَاتٌ هُنَّ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ وَأُخَرُ مُتَشَابِهَاتٌ

“He it is who has bestowed upon thee from on high this divine writ, containing messages that are clear in and by themselves (*muhkam*) - and these are the essence of the divine writ - as well as others that are allegorical (*mutashabih*)...”¹³⁵

a. *Muhkam* Verses

Muhkam lexically means strong, fully fortified, strengthened and free of doubt.¹³⁶ In accordance with this meaning of the word *muhkam*, each and every one of the verses of the Qur'an are accepted as *muhkam*. Because all verses of the Qur'an are free from any kind of flaws, deficiencies, defects and doubts and they will have this characteristic until the Day of Judgment.

Muhkam, as a term, denotes to the clear expressions of the Noble Qur'an that can be easily understood.

In *muhkam* verses, various subjects related to acts of worship, lawful, unlawful and deeds are dealt with. These verses give information about the matters which we see, experience, feel, count and reason about. Meanings of such verses are certain.

Examples of *muhkam* verses:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِنَّمَا الْخَمْرُ وَالْمَيْسِرُ وَالْأَنْصَابُ
وَالْأَزْلَامُ رَجْسٌ مِنْ عَمَلِ الشَّيْطَانِ فَاجْتَنِبُوهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ

“O you who believe! Intoxicants and gambling, (dedication of) stones, and (divination by) arrows, are an abomination,- of Satan's handwork: eschew such (abomination), that ye may prosper!”¹³⁷

This verse expresses the unlawfulness of drinking alcohol, gambling, worshiping idols and divining by arrows in a clear and certain way. Hence, this verse is a *muhkam* one.

b. *Mutashabih* Verses

Mutashabih lexically means the things that bear a striking resemblance to each other in all aspects.¹³⁸ Its plural form comes as *mutashabihat*.

134. Hud, 11: 1; Yunus, 10: 1; Al-Zukhruf, 43: 4; Al-Zumar, 39: 23

135. Al 'Imran, 3: 7

136. Raghīb al-Isfahani, *al-Mufradat fi Gharib al-Qur'an*, p. 254

137. Al-Ma'idah, 5: 90

138. Raghīb al-Isfahani, *al-Mufradat fi Gharib al-Qur'an*, p. 254

Mutashabih, as a term, is a verse that can have more than one meaning and an evidence is needed in order to prefer one of these meanings.

Mutashabih verses are generally related to the matters of the unperceivable world like the essence and attributes of Allah, faith, and the Hereafter. *Mutashabihat* verses explain these and other similar concepts of the unperceivable world not directly but by means of the concepts in our life that resemble them. Because this unknown world can be explained to people only by means of the objects that they know and perceive. For instance, Allah's rule and dominance over everything is expressed with His names *Rabb* and *Malik*. Likewise, paradise is described by comparing them to the beauties of this world while hell is described by likening it to fire in order for human reason to grasp them.

Mutashabih verses are divided into three categories; *mutashabih* in wording, *mutashabih* in meaning and *mutashabih* in both wording and meaning.

1. The Verses that are *Mutashabih* in Wording:

These are the verses in which a *mutashabih* word is used.

Example 1:

The word بِالْيَمِين in the verse فَرَاغَ عَلَيْهِمْ ضَرْبًا بِالْيَمِينِ “And he turned upon them a blow with (his) right hand” has three different meaning as “right hand, oath, power.” It is possible to give each of these three meanings to the aforementioned word. For this reason, this word is considered *mutashabih*.

2. The Verses that are *Mutashabih* in Meaning:

These verses mention certain matters that cannot be grasped by human mind such as some acts and attributes of Allah, conditions of the Day of Judgment, paradise and hell.

Some examples for the Qur'anic verses in *mutashabih* matters can be given as follows:

الرَّحْمَنُ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ اسْتَوَى

“The Most Merciful is firmly established (*istiwa*) on the throne.”¹³⁹

وَنُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ فَإِذَا هُمْ مِنَ الْأَجْدَاثِ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يَنْسِلُونَ

“And the Horn (*sur*) will be blown; and at once from the graves to their Lord they will hasten.”¹⁴⁰

Since we are not able to know and understand exactly the meaning of the expressions like “*istiwa* and *sur*” by our feelings and thoughts and to comprehend what they are, the verses which deal these matters are accepted as *mutashabih*.

139. Ta-Ha, 20: 5

140. Ya-Sin, 36: 51

3. The Verses that are *Mutashabih* in Both Wording and Meaning

These verses can be understood by interpreting their meanings and by explaining them through *muhkam* verses and authentic sayings of the Prophet (pbuh) or by analyzing them from various aspects.

Example:

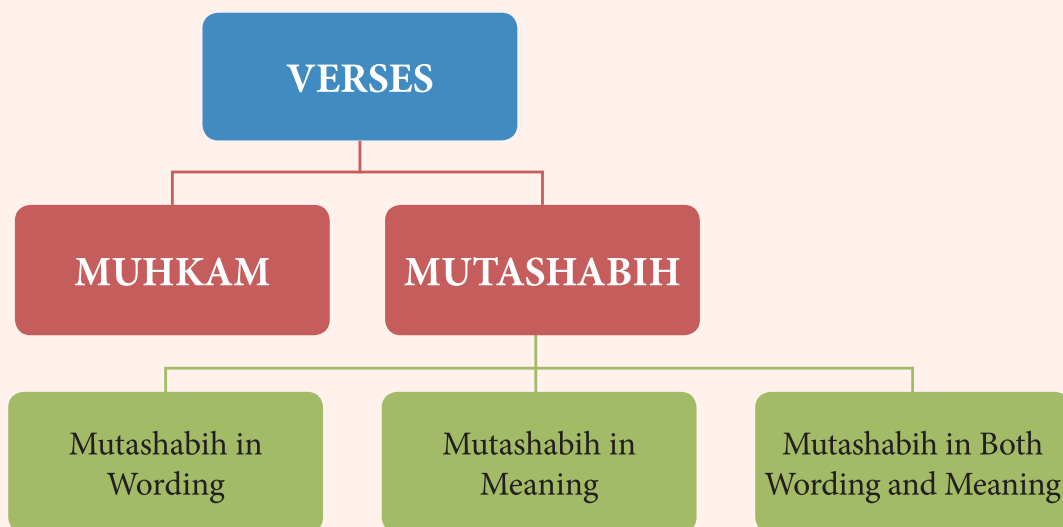
... وَلَيْسَ الْبِرُّ بِأَنْ تَأْتُوا الْبُيُوتَ مِنْ ظُهُورِهَا

“...And it is not righteousness to enter houses from the back...”¹⁴¹

Whenever Arabs put ihram on for pilgrimage, they would not enter their houses through the door but they would enter from a hole that they made on the wall and go out from this hole. They used to believe that this was a good and necessary deed for themselves. Allah the Almighty informs that such act is neither good nor something rewarding for them.

The aforementioned verse is *mutashabih* in wording because of the shortness of its expressions. Because the act of “entering houses from the back,” which is not considered goodness by Allah, is limited to the act done by the Arabs when they wore ihram for pilgrimage. In other words, Allah the Almighty states that especially “entering houses from the back while in the state of ihram” is not goodness, because Arabs would consider this act as goodness only when they are in the state of *ihram*. However, the verse was revealed as “entering houses from the back” not as “entering houses from the back while wearing ihram”. Hence, the statement is shortened and for this reason, the verse is considered *mutashabih* in wording.

The verse is *mutashabih* in meaning as well. Because those who do not know the aforementioned custom of Arabs can neither understand what the verse means nor can they know that Arabs did this act while they were in the state of *ihram*. This is why, because there is an ambiguity in its meaning, this verse is accepted as *mutashabih* in meaning as well.



141. Al-Baqarah, 2: 189

3. VIEWS OF MUSLIM SCHOLARS ABOUT MUHKAM AND MUTASHABIH

Scholars generally have two different opinions about *mutashabih* verses:

1. Madhhab as-Salaf (Predecessor Scholars): The predecessor scholars of Ahl as-Sunnah have said about *mutashabihat*: “Only Allah knows their meaning. We accept them as are and believe them as such. We do not interpret them.”

2. Madhhab al-Khalaf (Successor Scholars): The scholars who came later and who are called *khalaf* did not make interpretation about muqatta’a letters that are accepted as *mutashabih* in wording, but they interpreted and explained the verses *mutashabih* in meaning in accordance with the Qur’an and Sunnah.

The Qur’an warns believers about *mutashabih* verses:

هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ مِنْهُ آيَاتٌ مُحْكَمَاتٌ هُنَّ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ
وَأُخَرُ مُتَشَابِهَاتٌ فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ زَيْغٌ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ مَا تَشَابَهَ مِنْهُ ابْتِغَاءَ
الْفِتْنَةِ وَابْتِغَاءَ تَأْوِيلِهِ وَمَا يَعْلَمُ تَأْوِيلَهُ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَالرَّاسِخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ يَقُولُونَ
آمَنَّا بِهِ كُلٌّ مِنْ عِنْدِ رَبِّنَا وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ إِلَّا أُولُوا الْأَلْبَابِ

“He it is who has bestowed upon you from on high this divine writ, containing messages that are clear in and by themselves - and these are the essence of the divine writ - as well as others that are allegorical. Now those whose hearts are given to swerving from the truth go after that part of the divine writ which has been expressed in allegory, seeking out [what is bound to create] confusion, and seeking [to arrive at] its final meaning [in an arbitrary manner]; but none save God knows its final meaning. Hence, those who are deeply rooted in knowledge say: “We believe in it; the whole [of the divine writ] is from our Sustainer - albeit none takes this to heart save those who are endowed with insight.”¹⁴²

We do not have certain information about clear meanings of *mutashabih* verses. It is not possible for us to have information about this matter other than explanations provided by the Qur’an and the Prophet (pbuh). Therewithal, if a person goes after different meanings and considers the information provided us about understanding and explaining the *mutashabih* verses not enough, it may make that person go astray. As the Qur’an warns us, our responsibility is to believe that *mutashabih* verses are revealed by Allah and to feel ourselves satisfied with the information given us by other verses or sayings of the Prophet about them.

142. Al Imran, 3: 7

LET'S TAKE A NOTE

Raghib al-Isfahani says:

“There are three kinds of *mutashabih*. The first one is *mutashabihat* the meanings of which are unknown; like the time of the Day of Judgment and Dabbat al-Ard (Beast of the Earth). The second one is *mutashabihat* that can be learned by people through research; like *gharib* (foreign) words and unclear rulings. The third one is *mutashabihat* that are between the abovementioned two and can be known by only those who gained a high position in knowledge.” (Al-Suyuti, *al-Itqan fi Ulum al-Qur'an*)

LET'S MAKE INFERENCES

Fill in the blanks with the words “*muhkam*” or “*mutashabih*” according to the characteristics of the verses given below.

“...The hand of Allah is over their hands...” (Al-Fath, 48: 10) [.....]

“And those who accuse chaste women and then do not produce four witnesses - lash them with eighty lashes and do not accept from them testimony ever after. And those are the defiantly disobedient.” (Al-Nur, 24: 4) [.....]

4. IMPORTANCE OF THE CONCEPTS OF MUHKAM AND MUTASHABIH IN TERMS OF INTERPRETATION OF THE QUR'AN

Tafsir is the interpretations made by the scholars about unclear and ambiguous expressions of the Qur'an in accordance with certain methods and rules. In their interpretation, their ability to research, their background and knowledge, and their ability of reasoning play a significant role. *Mutashabih* verses have contributed to the improvement of reasoning ability of the mufasssirs who strived for understanding them, as well as, they urged mufasssirs to research. So, the mufasssirs whose knowledge has increased by studying *mutashabih* verses became more successful in the science of tafsir of the Qur'an. On the other hand, since the meanings of *mutashabih* verses are not clear, they have led the scholars, who have tried to explain them, to behave cautiously.

Muhkamat, or *muhkam* verses, are also taken into consideration in the explanation of *mutashabihat* and they are compared with each other. This conduces to the construction of a sound link among verses.

In conclusion, people of any level are informed about the religion and absolute truth through *muhkam* and *mutashabih* verses. Muslims have needed to turn to the rational sciences and research in order to understand *mutashabihat* and thus abstract thought has developed. Moreover, *mutashabihat* have halped in revealing the literal supremacy of the Qur'an.

Mark the features related to *muhkam* with a (+) sign and the ones related to *mutashabih* with a (*) sign.

FEATURES	MUHKAM	MUTASHABIH
They may have more than one meaning.		
They are clear expressions which can be easily understood.		
They deal with certain matters that are impossible to be known like the essence and attributes of Allah, faith and the Hereafter.		
They reveal the basic principles about acts of worship, lawful, unlawful and the deeds and their meanings are clear.		
They deal with certain matters related to the unperceivable world.		

5. ASBAB AL-NUZUL (OCCASSIONS OF REVELATION)

The phrase *Asbab al-nuzul* refers to the incidents that caused the revelation of the verses. Most of the Noble Qur'an was revealed neither upon a question nor upon a cause, while some of it was sent upon specific causes.

For example:

When pagans captured Awf ibn Malik's son, he went to the Prophet (pbuh), complained about the pagans and asked him what to do. Thereupon, the Prophet (pbuh) said:

*"Fear Allah and be patient. And I also command you and your wife to recite the statement "la hawla wa la quwwata illa billah (there is no power and no strength except with Allah) much." Awf ibn Malik went home and narrated what had happened to his wife. They have continued to say "la hawla wa la quwwata illa billah." Not long after, by taking advantage of a moment of heedlessness of the pagans Awf ibn Malik's son took pagans' four thousand sheep and returned to his father. Thereupon, the following verses were revealed:"*¹⁴³

*"...And whoever fears Allah - He will make for him a way out. And will provide for him from where he does not expect. And whoever relies upon Allah - then He is sufficient for him..."*¹⁴⁴

Another example:

One day, Ubayy ibn Khalaf came to the Prophet (pbuh) crumbling some decayed bones in his hand and said, "Do you claim that Allah will resurrect these bones after they decayed like this?" Allah's Messenger (pbuh) answered, "Yes, He will also resurrect you and put you in fire." Thereupon, the following verses were revealed:

143. Al-Wahidi, *Asbab al-Nuzul*, pp. 289-290

144. Al-Tahrim, 65: 2-3

وَضَرَبَ لَنَا مَثَلًا وَنَسِيَ خَلْقَهُ قَالَ مَنْ يُحْيِي الْعِظَامَ وَهِيَ رَمِيمٌ*
قُلْ يُحْيِيهَا الَّذِي أَنْشَأَهَا أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ خَلْقٍ عَلِيمٌ

“And he presents for Us an example and forgets his own creation. He says, “Who will give life to bones while they are disintegrated?” Say, “He will give them life who produced them the first time; and He is, of all creation, Knowing.”¹⁴⁵

As can be seen in these examples, the incident or the question that led to the revelation of certain verses and chapters of the Qur'an is called *sabab al-nuzul* (occasion of revelation) and its plural form comes as *asbab al-nuzul*. However, not all verses have a *sabab al-nuzul*.

Knowing *sabab an-nuzul* has great importance in the interpretation of the verses. If the occasion for the revelation of a verse is known, then the meaning of that verse can be understood well. Wisdom of orders and prohibitions expressed in the verses become clear. Doubts can be eliminated and falling into errors in understanding the verses can be prevented. Speaking without knowledge of *sabab an-nuzul* leads the reader to fall into error in understanding the verses.

The verses that were revealed upon an incident or a question sometimes aim to educate their addressees. For example, the time of the Day of Judgment was asked to the Prophet (pbuh) both by those who warm-heartedly wonder its time and by those who desire to test him. Allah the Almighty gave the necessary answer to both groups in the following verse **“...Say,” Knowledge of it is only with Allah. And what may make you perceive? Perhaps the Hour is near.”**¹⁴⁶

Sometimes the verses that were revealed to answer a personal questions or a problem also consist of rulings related to whole community.

For example, when Jabir from the Companions got seriously ill and realized that he was going to die soon asked the Prophet (pbuh) what to do with his inheritance. The 11th and 12th verses of chapter al-Nisa (which are related to inheritance rulings) were revealed upon this question. These verses give detailed information in respect to how, among whom, and with what proportions the inheritance should be distributed.

Knowing *sabab al-nuzul* raises the audience's interest in listening to the verses and chapters of the Qur'an and helps them understand better the explanations provided by those verses and chapters. Reading the verse “Your Lord has not taken leave of you, nor has He detested you”¹⁴⁷ raises curiosity of the readers and brings several questions to their mind such as ‘I wonder, what happened and Allah made such a statement.’ In the early years of Islam, when the revelation of the verses stopped for a while, pagans said, “His Lord left Muhammad alone and offended him.” This verse was revealed to stop this rumor. Therefore, knowledge of *sabab al-nuzul* made the meaning of the verse clearer by satisfying the readers' curiosity.

145. Ya-Sin, 36: 78-79

146. Al-Ahzab, 33: 63

147. Al-Duha, 93: 3

6. NASKH (ABROGATION) IN THE QUR'AN

a. Definition of Naskh

The term *naskh* lexically means removal, elimination, annihilation, change, conversion, transformation, and transmission. In the terminology of Islamic sciences, *Naskh* means the abrogation of the ruling expressed in a *nass* (textual source) by a *nass* that comes later.¹⁴⁸ The verse the ruling of which is abrogated is called *Mansukh*, while the verse that abrogates the earlier ruling is called *nasikh*.

The word *naskh* is used in many verses with similar meanings. One of these verses reads as follows:

مَا نَنْسَخْ مِنْ آيَةٍ أَوْ نُنسِهَا نَأْتِ بِخَيْرٍ مِّنْهَا أَوْ مِثْلَهَا أَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

*“We do not abrogate a verse or cause it to be forgotten except that We bring forth one better than it or similar to it. Do you not know that Allah is over all things competent?”*¹⁴⁹

The word *naskh* mentioned in this verse can be understood either as the abrogation of the rulings of the previous divine religions by the rulings of final religion Islam or it can also be interpreted as occurrences of abrogation in Islam itself.

b. Wisdom of Naskh

While constructing a new community, the Noble Qur'an did not erase the past entirely, but approved its proper customs, corrected some of its false traditions, and gradually abrogated some of the false ones by establishing new rulings in their place. This might be both abrogation of ruling of the former religions and abrogation in the same religion. Because people cannot easily give up their customs and traditions. They can accept changes as long as they comprehend the spirit of the new religion and supremacy of its principles. *Naskh* is an easiness to make people adopt the new rulings. God forbid, *naskh* is never about the deficiency in Allah's knowledge. On the contrary, it is related to the people's psychological state and the needs of the community. Allah has issued rulings in accordance with the conditions of the community by means of *naskh* and used it as the best method for the establishment of sound morality.

Naskh is one of the necessary tools to understand the Noble Qur'an and to deduce rulings from it. It is not possible for a person who does not know *naskh* to understand the Noble Qur'an fully.

Although there are some disagreements among Muslim scholars regarding *naskh*, most of them accept the occurrence of *naskh* in the main Islamic sources.

Opinions of the scholars who accept the occurrence of *naskh* in the Noble Qur'an can be listed as follows:¹⁵⁰

148. İsmail Cerrahoğlu, p. 122

149. Al-Baqarah, 2: 106

150. Badr al-Din al-Zarkashi, *al-Burhan fi Ulum al-Qur'an*, II, 42

It is not possible to make people who are addicted to bad habits give them up in a short time. Allah the Almighty, the Creator of human beings, is the One who knows this characteristic of people best. This is why He has gradually prepared people to the happiness both in this world and the Hereafter. We can give the prohibition of drinking alcohol as an example in this respect:

Consumption of alcoholic drinks was very common among the pagan Arabs. The Noble Qur'an did not abrogate this bad habit by a strict immediate command, rather, it preferred educating the community and abrogating it gradually. The first verse revealed as a first step of the prohibition of intoxicants is as follows:

“They will ask you about intoxicants and games of chance. Say: “In both there is great evil as well as some benefit for man; but the evil which they cause is greater than the benefit which they bring.”¹⁵¹ In this verse, the greatness of evil in consumption of alcohol is emphasized; however, it is also stated that it has some benefits.

The verse that was revealed as a second step in this matter is the following one: **“O you who have attained to faith! Do not attempt to pray while you are in a state of drunkenness, [but wait] until you know what you are saying”**¹⁵² After this verse was revealed, Muslims who used to drink alcohol stopped drinking before prayers and the consumption of alcohol decreased more.

At the last step, this habit was conclusively prohibited

“O YOU who have attained to faith! Intoxicants, and games of chance, and idolatrous practices, and the divining of the future are but a loathsome evil of Satan’s doing;’ shun it, then, so that you might attain to a happy state! By means of intoxicants and games of chance Satan seeks only to sow enmity and hatred among you, and to turn you away from the remembrance of God and from prayer. Will you not, then, desist?”¹⁵³

After these verses were revealed, Muslims completely stopped drinking alcohol and destroyed all their wines by pouring them out in the streets.

As it can be understood in the example given above, *naskh* is very important in the interpretation of the Qur'an.

7. HAQIQAH (REAL MEANING) AND MAJAZ (METAPHOR)

The Noble Qur'an uses various literary arts in its expressions. Sometimes the words are used in their real meanings in the Qur'an, while some other times they are also used in metaphorical meanings. In fact, metaphorical usage i.e. *majaz*, which means using the words not in their real meanings but to refer to some other meaning due to a similarity, is an essential tool of expression in all languages. Most of the scholars of Islam accept the usage of *majaz* in the Qur'an.

151. Al-Baqarah, 2: 219

152. Al-Nisa, 4: 43

153. Al-Ma'idah, 5: 90-91

إِنَّ شَرَّ الدَّوَابِّ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الصُّمُّ الْبُكْمُ الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ

“Verily, the vilest of all creatures in the sight of God are those deaf, those dumb ones who do not use their reason.”¹⁵⁴

It is stated in the verse given above that the worst among living creatures are the deaf and dumb ones that do not think. Since these are characteristics of human beings, there is a metaphorical implication to human beings. They are the people who do not listen to the Qur'an and pretend not to have heard of it. For this reason, they are likened to deaf people by using a metaphor. It is not possible to take this expression in its real meaning in the Qur'an. Otherwise, it would mean that all deaf and blind people are bad, but it contradicts with the basic teachings of the Qur'an. The disbelievers are the ones that are meant by deaf and blind people mentioned in this verse.

LET'S RESEARCH AND LEARN

Find the 16th verse of chapter al-Baqarah (2). Think about whether the word “*tijarah* (trade)” is used in its real meaning or metaphorical meaning.

Research about whether the expression of “to kindle the fire” in the 64th verse of chapter al-Ma'idah (5) is used in its real meaning or metaphorical meaning.

8. MUBHAMAT (AMBIGUOUS EXPRESSIONS)

The Noble Qur'an sometimes does not openly give the names of the persons or the places mentioned in it. Instead, it refers to the persons, the places, and the dates by using pronouns and demonstrative pronouns. This is a common method that we practice when we speak and write. When this method is used, it might not be understood to whom the verse refers or what it really means. Such expressions are called *mubhamat* in Qur'anic sciences. As an example, we can give the translation of the 55th verse of chapter Ta-Ha (20):

“Out of this [earth] have We created you, and into it shall We return you, and out of it shall We bring you forth once again.”

In this verse, the name of the place out of which people were created, to which they will return and from which they will be resurrected is not clearly mentioned. This place is indicated by the Arabic pronoun “*ha*”. However, we can learn from other verses that this place is earth. Such difficulties can be overcome by approaching the Qur'an within its own entirety or by improving our knowledge in other aspects. Indeed, it is stated in the 67th verse of chapter al-Mu'min (40) that human was created out of earth; it is stated in the 25th verse of chapter al-Rum (30) that people will be resurrected from the earth.

154. Al-Anfal, 8: 22

Another example can be given from chapter al-Fatihah (1). It is not clear to whom the expression of “those upon whom We have bestowed favor” mentioned in its seventh verse exactly refers. However, it can be said that these people are the believers in general by considering the usage of this expression within the entirety of the Qur'an. We can introduce more precise explanations about the meaning of this verse with the assistance of other verses. For example, in the 69th verse of chapter al-Nisa (4), these people are mentioned as “the prophets, and those who never deviated from the truth, and those who [with their lives] bore witness to the truth, and the righteous ones.”

As it is seen in the above-mentioned verses, there are *mubhamat* used in the Noble Qur'an. The Qur'an does not narrate the incidents by mentioning their people and places. Its aim is not to report the incidents as historical records, but rather it aims to give a good lesson to humanity and to invite people to think about those incidents.

Initially, the following question may come to mind. What is the reason of the usage of *mubhamat* in the Noble Qur'an? Scholars of Islam mentioned many reasons in this respect. Let's confine ourselves by mentioning the following two reasons:

→ **To achieve literal richness by repeating the *mubham* issue and making it clear in another part of the Qur'an.** For example, what is the meaning of “those upon whom favor has been bestowed”¹⁵⁵? The meaning of this verse is explained by “And whoever obeys Allah and the Messenger - those will be with the ones upon whom Allah has bestowed favor of the prophets, the steadfast affirmers of truth, the martyrs and the righteous.”¹⁵⁶

→ **To make the *mubham* issue significant and well-known.** For example, in a verse it is stated “O Adam, dwell, you and your wife, in Paradise.”¹⁵⁷ It is not called “Eve” but “his wife” to emphasize and attract the attention to Adam (pbuh).

LET'S THINK

Think about other reasons of usage of *mubhamat* in the Qur'an together with your friends.

9. WUJUH AND NAZA'IR (Heteronyms and Synonyms)

To understand the Qur'an and to know it better, another important issue that needs to be known in the science of tafsir is undoubtedly the issue of “*Wujuh* and *Naza'ir*.”

As in all languages, there are some words in Arabic language that are spelled and written in the same form but with different meanings. Usage of the same word with different meanings in different verses in the Noble Qur'an is called *wujuh*. The opposite of *wujuh*, in other words different words with the same meaning, is called *naza'ir*.

155. Al-Fatihah, 1: 7

156. An-Nisa, 4: 69

157. Al-Baqarah, 2: 35

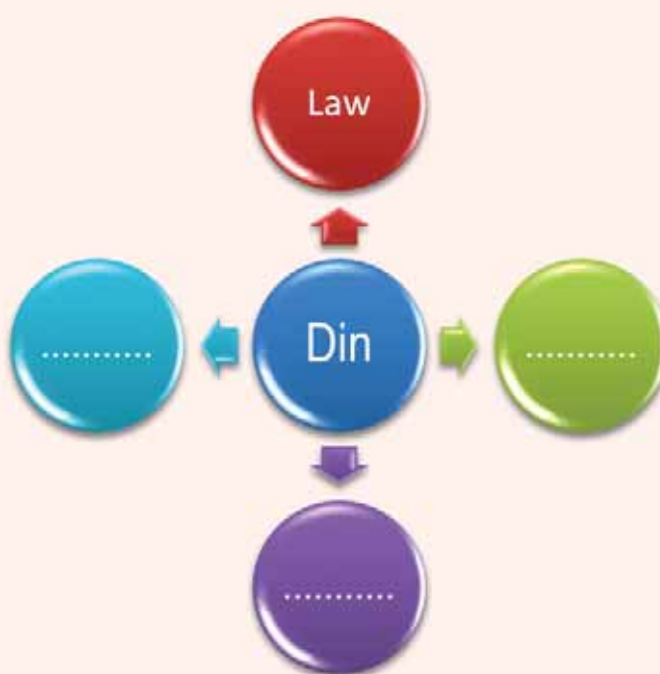
Let's give some examples of heteronym words called **wujuh** in Qur'anic sciences:

The word "**kitab**" has several meanings such as "revelation," "The Torah," "The Gospel," and "the book of deeds" as well as "the Holy Qur'an."

Likewise, the word "**ayah**" has meanings such as "sign," "miracle," and "verses of Qur'anic chapters."

The word "**ajal**" has meanings such as "the time for the payment or deadline for the payment of a debt," "lifespan," and "the time determined for the Hereafter."

Look up different meanings of the Arabic word "*din*" and write them down in the blanks:



There are also various words in the Qur'an with the same meaning. We call them *naza'ir* or synonym words.

Such words are also found in the Noble Qur'an.

For Example:

"**Jannah**" and "**Firdaws**" are in the same meaning in the Noble Qur'an.

"**Shaytan**" and "**iblis**" are in the same meaning as well.

Write other meanings of the Arabic word '*naar*' in the blanks:



LET'S READ AND UNDERSTAND

Wujuh and *Naza'ir* have great importance in understanding the Qur'an. Many words repeated in various verses and chapters have a different meaning in each place where they are mentioned in the Qur'an. This semantic richness brings expressional richness in explaining the verses. Ignoring *wujuh* and *naza'ir* causes misunderstandings or deficient understandings in the interpretation of verses of the Qur'an.

10. GHARIB AL-QUR'AN (FOREIGN WORDS USED IN THE QUR'AN)

The word *gharib* lexically has several meanings such as "a person away from his country; unique and rare; unknown, indefinite and unclear." The Noble Qur'an was revealed in the dialect of the tribe of Quraish; however, it also consists of some words used in different Arabic dialects or certain Arabized words adopted from other languages. Moreover, there are some words in the Qur'an the meanings of which are not commonly known due to their little use. Explanation of such words constitutes the subject of the science of Gharib al-Qur'an in the science of tafsir. It is narrated that the Prophet (pbuh) said, "research about the *ghara'ib* of the Qur'an" and it is suggested that those who do not know *ghara'ib* of the Noble Qur'an should stay away from the interpretation of the word of Allah. For this reason, gharib al-Qur'an has occupied an important place in the science of tafsir and become a separate discipline among the Qur'anic sciences after the 2nd century of Hijrah.

The Prophet (pbuh) who spoke fluent Arabic and knew characteristics of various Arabic tribal dialects explained the parts of the Holy Qur'an that his Companions could not understand. Thus the Prophet (pbuh) became the first exegete (*mufasssir*) of the Noble Qur'an. However, the Prophet (pbuh) explained the rulings established in the verses and emphasized the principles of good morality in general instead of giving semantic information. Some of the Companions stated that there were some words which they could not understand during the first periods of Islam. For example, Umar (r.a.) stated that he did not know the meaning of the word "*abban*" which is mentioned in chapter Abasa (80: 31). Ibn Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them) also stated that he did not know the word "*fatir*" which is mentioned in six verses and learnt it from two Arabic peasants who used this word while discussing near a well.

It is clear that determining the meanings of *gharib* words in the verses started during the time of the Companions and Arabic poetry was referred to that end. It is narrated that Ibn Abbas who had extensive knowledge of Arabic poetry was the first representative of this activity.

We can make the following table from some of these words:

<i>Safih</i> (Al-Baqarah, 2/13)	Dialect of Kinanah	Ignorant
<i>Baghy</i> (Al-Baqarah, 2/90)	Dialect of Tamim	Jealousy, grudge
<i>Yamin</i> (Al-A'raf, 7/136)	Dialect of Qibt	Sea
<i>Ara'iq</i> (Ya-Sin, 36/56)	Abyssinian language	Seats
<i>Asbat</i> (Al-Baqarah, 2/236)	Hebrew language	Tribes
<i>Raqim</i> (Al-Kahf, 18/9)	Roman language	Tablet
<i>Sijil</i> (Al-Humazah, 104/4)	Persian language	Baked petrified mud
<i>Asfar</i> (Al-Jumu'ah, 62/5)	Syriac language	Books

INFORMATION BOX

Since the science of tafsir primarily deals with lexical meanings of words, it is important for exegetes to determine the meanings of *gharib* words in accordance with their usage at the time of revelation. Otherwise, understanding and interpreting the Qur'an correctly would become difficult.

LET'S READ AND LEARN

No Gender Discrimination

Gender discrimination and preference among children are not allowed in Islam, because Allah is the One who gives both daughters and sons to human. Servants of Allah has no role in this respect. It is stated in the Noble Qur'an:

“God’s alone is the dominion over the heavens and the earth. He creates whatever He wills: He bestows the gift of female offspring on whomever He wills, and the gift of male offspring on whomever He wills; or He gives both male and female [to whomever He wills], and causes to be barren whomever He wills: for, verily, He is all-knowing, infinite in His power.”

[*Al-Shuraa*, 42: 49-50] No Muslim should be proud of having a son (because of his gender) nor would he feel sad about having a daughter. Because the important point is not having “daughter or son” but having “a good child”. [*Aysel Zeynep Tozduman, İslam’da Kadının Hakları*, p. 39]

The custom of burying the daughters alive that was common in Arabia before Islam was completely abrogated by Islam. The Noble Qur’an strictly prohibited killing the daughters: **“Hence, do not kill your children for fear of poverty: it is We who shall provide sustenance for them as well as for you. Verily, killing them is a great sin.”** [*Al-‘Isra’*, 17: 31; *Al-An‘am*, 6: 140] Moreover, while describing the horror of the Day of Judgment, it is stated in the Noble Qur’an: **“and when the girl-child that was buried alive is made to ask for what crime she had been slain.”** [*Al-Takwir*, 81: 8-9]

The Prophet (pbuh) also stated in a hadith:

“Your children are gifts to you given by Allah. He grants daughters to whom He wills and grants sons to whom He wills.” [*Al-Hakim, al-Mustadrak*, II, 284]

Then, we should be grateful for the blessing of Allah and bring up our children in the best way who are entrusted to us by Allah.

Islam commands parents to treat their children equally without making gender discrimination among them.

Our Prophet (pbuh) states that:

“Whoever has a daughter born to him, and does not bury her alive or humiliate her, and does not prefer his son over her, Allah will admit him to Paradise because of her.” [*Ibn Hajar, al-Matalib al-Aliyyah*, II, 382]

In a hadith narrated from Abu Hurayrah (r.a.):

“Twelve mercies came down from heavens upon the house in which daughters (born to a parent) are found. Angels do not stop visiting that house. They record the reward of one year act of worship for their parents in every day and night.” [*Sadik Dana, Aile Saadeti*, p. 40]

Narrated by Anas (r.a.):

“A man was sitting near the Prophet (pbuh). One of his sons came to him. The man took him and sat him down on his knee and kissed him. After a while his daughter came. However, the man did not kiss her, but just had her sit before him. Hereupon, the Prophet (pbuh) warned him saying:

‘Do you not treat them equally? [*Haythami, Majma’ al-Zawa’id*, VIII,156]

Our Prophet (pbuh) would attach great importance to equal treatment among the children. By making such warnings, he eliminated such mentality that prefers sons over daughters and belittles the daughters. [*Osman Ersan, “İslam’da Kadının Değeri ve Hakları”, Altınoluk Magazine*]

READING TEXT

ISLAM REFUSES RACISM

As Islam prohibits all other beliefs and thoughts that cause oppression and exploitation, it also prohibits racism. The Qur'an states that all races came from the same origin and manifested that any claim of superiority is groundless. All people and nations were created from Adam and his wife Eve. Division of human community into races and tribes aims to help people know each other and cooperate with each other. There is no place in Islam for thoughts of genetic superiority that causes oppression and exploitation. Goodness and superiority of people and communities are merely related to their beliefs and life styles. Their superiority is based on their fear from Allah (*taqwa*) in obedience the commands of Allah and in avoidance of His prohibitions. **"O men! Behold, We have created you all out of a male and a female, and have made you into nations and tribes, so that you might come to know one another. Verily, the noblest of you in the sight of God is the one who is most deeply conscious of Him. Behold, God is all-knowing, all-aware."** (Al-Hujurat, 49: 13)

The factor of race neither brings natural superiority to human nor is it the basic factor in construction of a civilized community. A civilized community does not constituted from the people who live with their instincts like animals; rather, it is formed from the people who gather around the beliefs and ideals that they choose by their free will. For this reason, Islamic community consists of the people who acknowledge Islam as their religion and as their life order and style. Other material or spiritual factors have no contribution to construction of this community in which belief is the only determinant element. The people who gather around the same faith are brothers even if they do not have any blood relation. The Qur'an states that: **"The believers are but brothers."** (Al-Hujurat, 49: 10) On the contrary, in the case of sharing different beliefs, there is not even a relation between father and son. The Prophet Noah's (pbuh) son who did not believe and did not follow his father's call is not considered from his family (Hud, 11: 46). If fathers or brothers of the believers who share the same faith prefer kufr (disbelief), they cannot take their fathers or brothers as allies. (Al-Tawbah, 9: 23) No believer can have affection for an enemy of Allah and the Prophet (pbuh) even if he is his father, son, brother or any other relative (Al-Mujadila, 58: 22).

The Prophet (pbuh) has also criticized racism that was a custom of the Age of Ignorance and prohibited it. During the Farewell Pilgrimage, in his famous speech which is known as the Farewell Sermon, he announced that an Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab nor a non-Arab has any superiority over an Arab; also a white has no superiority over black nor a black has any superiority over white except by piety (*taqwa*). After the conquest of Mecca, he delivered the following speech after he circumambulated the Ka'bah and expressed the same truth as follows, *"Praise is to Allah who eliminated the disgrace and arro-*





gance of the Age of Ignorance from you. O people! All people are divided into two groups. One of them consists of those who do right and avoid wrong; these are precious in the sight of Allah. The second group consists of sinners and disobedient ones; they are worthless in the sight of Allah. All people are the children of Adam. Allah created Adam from earth.” Groundlessness of the notion of racial superiority is expressed in another hadith: **“All of you are the sons of Adam. Adam was also created out of earth. Let the people give up being proud of their fathers and grandfathers. Because they are more worthless than a small ant in the sight of Allah.”** (At-Tirmidhi, Tafsir, Surah 49)

The Prophet (pbuh) stated that all people came from the same origin and superiority can be measured only by the level of their fear from Allah. Moreover, he insistently emphasized that Allah will not evaluate the people based on their races. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) stated in a hadith, “Allah will not question you about your family. Surely, the best among you in the sight of Allah is he who abstains evil most.” This is mentioned in another hadith: **“Allah does not look at your appearances or your financial status, but He looks at your hearts and your actions.”** (Muslim, Birr, 33; Ibn Majah, Zuhd, 9) Given to this fact and all these prophetic warnings, claiming to be a Muslim by someone who follows racist views is meaningless. The Prophet (pbuh) stated the place of such person in his following saying, **“He is not one of us who calls to racism. He is not one of us who fights for the sake of racism.”** (Muslim, Imarah, 53, 54, 57)

Islam abolished the custom of racism prevailing in the Age of Ignorance by establishing the principle of universal brotherhood in its place. Despite the oppression and pressure of Meccan aristocrats who would think themselves noble and superior, Islam succeeded by the efforts of people such as Suhayb of Roma, Bilal of Abyssinia and Salman of Persia who were humiliated by their society. In this way, Islam established a universal community.¹⁵⁸



158. “İrkçılık” (Racism), Şamil İslam Ansiklopedisi.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

A. ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

1. Make the definition of naskh.
2. Explain the concepts of I'jaz and mu'jizah.
3. Tell a verse about i'jaz of the Qur'an.
4. What was the reason leading the pagans listen to the Qur'an at night? Explain.
5. What kind of supremacy do the metaphorical expressions bring to the Qur'an?
6. Make a list about the miraculous aspects of the Qur'an and explain them briefly.
7. What are the lexical meanings of the terms *muhkam* and *mutashabih*?
8. Explain the reason why *nasikh* and *mansukh* verses are found in the Noble Qur'an by giving an example.
9. What does *mubhamat* mean in the Qur'an? Give an example.
10. What do *wujuh* and *naza'ir* mean in the Qur'anic sciences? Explain each one with an example.
11. What is the greatest miracle bestowed upon our Prophet (pbuh)?

B. MARK THE RIGHT ANSWERS TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

1. Which of the Qur'anic sciences do the verse **"Say: "If all mankind and all invisible beings would come together with a view to producing the like of this Qur'an, they could not produce its like even though they were to exert all their strength in aiding one another!"**¹⁵⁹ refer?
 - a) I'jaz al-Qur'an
 - b) Sabab al-Nuzul
 - c) Naskh
 - d) Gharib al-Qur'an
 - e) Wujud and Naza'ir
2. Which of the following characteristics is not related to the *muhkam* verses?
 - a) Meanings of the verses are certain.
 - b) Meanings of the verses can be easily understood.
 - c) Meanings of the verses are clear.
 - d) they are usually dealt with the subjects of acts of worship, unlawful, lawful, and deeds.
 - e) They deal with the matters related to the unperceivable world like the essence of Allah and His attributes, faith, and the Hereafter.

159. Al-'Isra', 17: 88

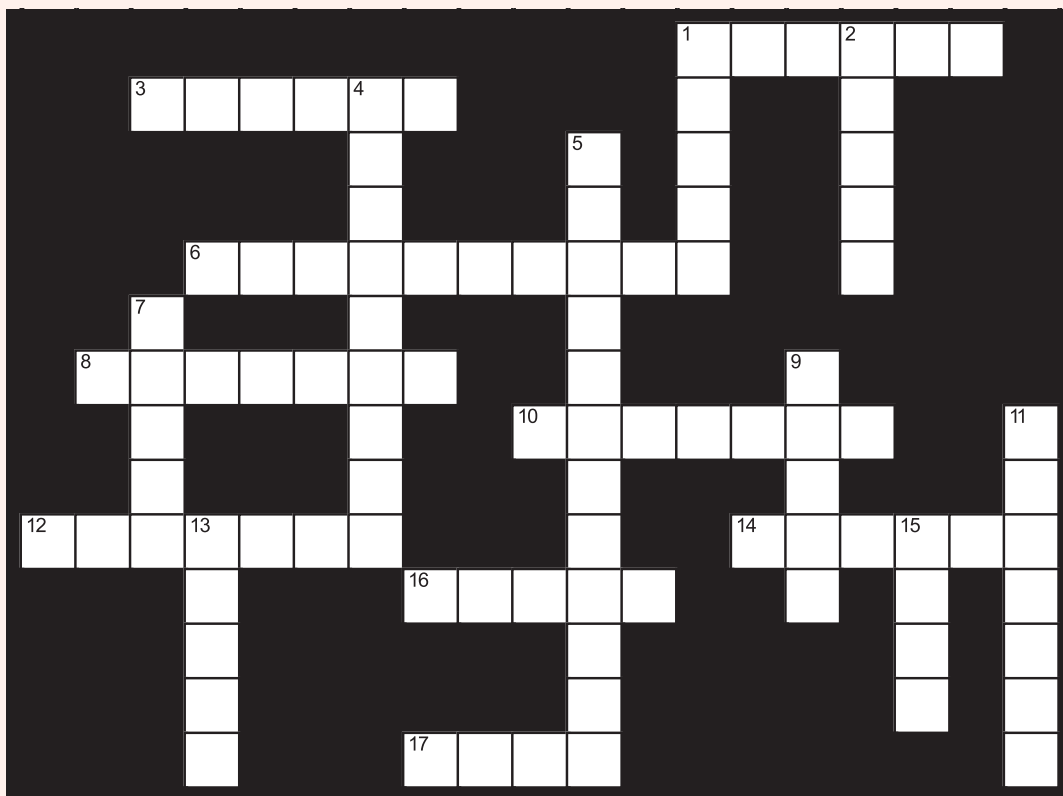
3. Which of the following choices is not one of the changes achieved by the Qur'an?
- a) It saved people from the primitive life of worshipping idols, turned them into servants of Allah the Lord of the worlds, and made them worship Him.
 - b) It abolished the discrimination between the rich and poor and master and slave.
 - c) It established the truth in place of superstition; justice in place of oppression; equality in place of racism, and peace and brotherhood in place of enmity.
 - d) It prohibited blood feud, bearing grudge, lying and cheating others.
 - e) It attached more care to male children (sons) than to female children (daughters).
4. Which of the following choices is not one of the wisdom of knowledge of *asbab al-nuzul*?
- a) It raises feelings of curiosity and desire among the audience to listen to it.
 - b) It helps the reader to understand the chapter or the verse better.
 - c) The wisdom behind the commands and prohibitions expressed in the verses can be clearly and easily known.
 - d) Doubts are eliminated and errors are prevented.
 - e) It provides information whether the verse is *muhkam* or *mutashabih*.
5. The Noble Qur'an uses various literary arts in its expressions. Sometimes the words are used in their real meanings in the Qur'an, while some other times they are also used in metaphorical meanings. What is this called in the science of tafsir?
- a) Mushkil
 - b) Majaz
 - c) Haqiqah
 - d) Mubham
 - e) Muhkam
6. What is the term used for "the usage of the same word in different meanings in different verses of the Noble Qur'an"?
- a) Mutashabih
 - b) Muhkam
 - c) Wujuh
 - d) Naza'ir
 - e) Mubham
7. What is the term used in the meaning of "abrogation of the ruling of a textual source by a later textual source"?
- a) Sabab al-Nuzul
 - b) Naskh
 - c) Gharib al-Qur'an
 - d) Mutashabih
 - e) Naza'ir

**C. FILL IN THE BLANKS IN THE FOLLOWING SENTENCES WITH MOST
SUITABLE WORD FROM THOSE GIVEN BELOW**

**(Mutashabih, Nasikh, Gharib al-Qur'an, Naza'ir (Synonym), Muhkam, Mubhamat, Sa-
bab al-Nuzul)**

1. The verse which abrogates the ruling of an earlier textual source is called
2. The verses that have more than one meaning and need an evidence in order to prefer one of these meanings are called verses.
3. The incidents which led to the revelation of one or more verses are called
4. The verses whose meanings are clear and precise are called verses.
5. The Noble Qur'an sometimes does not openly give the names of the persons or the places mentioned in it. Instead, it refers to the persons, the places, and the dates by using pronouns and demonstrative pronouns. Such expressions are called in Qur'anic sciences.
6. Different words with the same meaning in the Noble Qur'an are called
7. Moreover, there are some words in the Qur'an the meanings of which are not commonly known due to their little use. This type of words used in the Qur'an is called

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



1. The verse which abrogates a previous ruling.
3. Clear expressions of the Noble Qur'an which can be easily understood.
6. Allegorical verses of the Noble Qur'an which need the support of other textual evidences in order to be understood.
8. Extraordinary states, abilities or incidents bestowed upon the prophets by Allah that are beyond the limits of human capabilities.
10. Usage of the words in their real meanings in the Noble Qur'an.
12. The Arabic term used for the verse the ruling of which is abrogated.
14. Usage of various words with different forms but having the same meaning in the Noble Qur'an, synonyms
16. Usage of the same word in different meanings in different parts of the Noble Qur'an, heteronyms



1. Abrogation of the ruling of a textual source by a textual source that comes later.
2. A synonymous word with *Shaytan* (The Devil).
4. The title of the longest chapter of the Noble Qur'an.
5. The phrase used in the meaning of "Occasions of revelation of the verses".
7. The greatest miracle of our Prophet (pbuh).
9. Usage of the words out of their real meanings in the Noble Qur'an, metaphorical meaning
11. A synonymous word with *jannah* (paradise), which is used in the Qur'an. One of the names of paradise.
13. The Arabic term used for each chapter of the Qur'an.
15. the term used for each separate part or sentences of the Qur'anic chapters.



CHAPTER VI

FAMOUS MUFASSIRS AND THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THEIR TAFSIRS

CONTENTS OF THE CHAPTER

- ▶ ABDULLAH IBN ABBAS
- ▶ AL-TABARI
- ▶ AL-ZAMAKHSHARI
- ▶ FAKHR AL-DIN AL-RAZI
- ▶ AL-QURTUBI
- ▶ QADI BAYDAWI
- ▶ IBN KATHIR

PREPARATORY WORKS

- ▶ Tell your friends the names of some important mufassirs.
- ▶ Who is al-Tabari? Write the name of his book of exegesis.
- ▶ Research about the life of mufassir al-Zamakhshari and share your findings with your classmates.

FAMOUS MUFASSIRS AND THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THEIR TAFSIRS

Since the beginning of the revelation of the Qur'an, Muslims have adopted to understand it and apply it in their lives in the best way as a common goal. In order to achieve this goal, numerous studies have been done to understand the Qur'an beginning from the time of the Prophet (pbuh). The most significant one among such efforts is the works of interpretation of the Qur'an. Mufasssirs (exegetes) who have interpreted the Qur'an based on a certain methodology differ from each other depending on the time in which they lived and the place where they lived, their cultural background, their area of specialization, and their level of comprehension. Some of these mufasssirs have used the method of *riwayah*, while some others have used the method of *dirayah*. Consequently, various sources of tafsir have emerged. Since the Noble Qur'an was revealed in Arabic, the first works written in the field of tafsir were also in Arabic. Even though there are many Arabic tafsir books, only some of them have become the reference books in understanding the Qur'an due to their certain characteristics.

1. Abdullah ibn Abbas and His Place in the Science of Tafsir

He is the son of the Prophet's (pbuh) uncle and is considered authority in the sciences of tafsir and Islamic law. He is also among the companions who narrated large number of ahadith and became famous with the name Ibn Abbas. He was born in Mecca three years before the Migration when Muslims were under the blockade of the tribe of Quraish. When he was born, his father took him to the Prophet (pbuh) and he was honored with special prayer of the Prophet (pbuh). Because Maymunah, who was wife of the Prophet (pbuh), was Ibn Abbas's maternal aunt, he was hosted in the Prophet's (pbuh) house at some nights. He gained the Prophet's (pbuh) appreciation because of his love, his loyalty and sincere services for the Prophet (pbuh). He also was honored with the Prophet's (pbuh) prayer "*O Allah, teach him (knowledge of) the book and make him knowledgeable in religion.*"

Ibn Abbas was a 13-year-old boy when the Prophet (pbuh) passed away. He was among the Companions who narrated the largest number of ahadith (mukthirun). He heard some of the 1660 narrations that he reported directly from the Prophet (pbuh) himself. However, he learnt most of these narrations from Umar, Ali, Mu'adh, his father Abbas, Abdurrahman ibn Awf, Abu Sufyan, Abu Dharr, Ubayy ibn Qa'b, Zayd ibn Thabit and other companions. Hadith scholars attach great importance to his narrations.

The supremacy of Ibn Abbas in the science of tafsir for whom the Prophet (pbuh) specially prayed and asked Allah to bless him with understanding and interpretation of the characteristics of the Noble Qur'an has been acknowledged by almost all people beginning from the first days of Islam. His knowledge in *asbab an-nuzul* (occasions of revelation), *nasikh and mansukh* verses

(abrogating and abrogated verses), as well as in Arabic literature was perfect. For this reason, he has become known by various nicknames such as “*Tarjuman al-Qur’an*” (Translator of the Qur’an), “*Bahr*” (Sea - Ocean) and “*Khibr*” (Scholar) beginning from the time of the companions. In fact, despite his young age, Caliph Umar appreciated his views and accepted him to the scholarly assemblies among the members of which were the companions of Badr.

Ibn Abbas did not engage in the political conflicts of the early periods of Islamic history and devoted himself to scholarly works. He trained students and became the founder of the Meccan Tafsir School.

There are many major fuqaha (jurists) among the students of Ibn Abbas. Ikrimah, Mujahid, Ataa, Sa’id ibn Jubair, Tawus, Sa’id ibn al-Musayyib are some of them. Moreover, Ibn Abbas had deep knowledge in the field of Arabic literature in addition to tafsir, fiqh and hadith. He was also a strong speaker. He used to give influential speeches after prayers. If there were non-Arabs among the listeners, he would use a translator in order to help them understand his statements.

LET’S LEARN

The most important works of Ibn Abbas in the field of tafsir are as follows:

1. Tafsir Ibn Abbas: Collection of the texts narrated from him and recorded in various tafsir and hadith books.
2. Gharib al-Qur’an: It explains the verses of the Qur’an by presenting from which Arabic tribal dialect the *gharib* words of the Qur’an were taken.

INFORMATION BOX

Since Ibn Abbas was not prone to politics by his nature, he did not involve much to the political incidents of his time. Nonetheless, we see him in Egypt in the 18th - 20th years of Hijrah, participating the conquests of South Africa in the 27th year of Hijrah, and in the expeditions to Jurjum and Tabaristan in the same year. He also joined to the Jamal and Siffin Incidents on the side of Ali in the 36th-38th years of Hijrah. (İsmail Cerrahoğlu, *Tefsir Tarihi*, Ankara 1988, I, 103)

2. Al-Tabari and His Tafsir (225-310)

Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari was born in the city of Amul in Tabaristan on the south of the Caspian Sea in 225 H. He is among the most prominent scholars of history, fiqh and tafsir of the 3rd year of Hijrah. He engaged in scholarly fields beginning from his young ages. He travelled to Ray, Basra, Kufa, Medina, Syria, and Egypt to get education and then settled in Baghdad. He gave lectures there and taught his own juristic views. Only some of his works have reached to this day. Even these works have importance and richness in bringing light to today’s history and tafsir studies. We know that he was a founder of a school of law; however, his school has not survived to our day. He died in Baghdad in 310 H.

He has various works in the fields of the Qur'an, qira'ah (recitation of the Qur'an), hadith, history, and fiqh. The most famous ones among them are "**Tarikh al-Umam wa al-Muluk**" in the field of history and "**Jami al-Bayan an-Ta'wil Aay al-Qur'an**" in the field of tafsir.

He completed "*Jami al-Bayan an-Ta'wil Aay al-Qur'an*" in 883 CE. There are copies of this work in some libraries; however, it was not published until the end of the 19th century. It was thought that this great work had been lost; but then it was published and presented into the service of the scholars. In the introduction of his work, Al-Tabari deals with the reason why the Qur'an was revealed in Arabic language and whether interpreting the verses is permissible or not. Al-Tabari benefited from the prophetic sayings, statements of the Companions and their Successors, differences of qira'ah, linguistics, poetry, the science of fiqh, history, and theological views. On the other hand, Al-Tabari especially did not interpret some short verses and confined himself with pointing the meaning of verses.

Al-Tabari tried to gather all narrations that would help the explanation of the verses. In this respect, his tafsir became a reference book for the tafsir studies of the following ages. Al-Tabari not only conveyed the narrations but also presented his own opinions to readers. In this respect, his book has the characteristics of both tafsir bi al-Riwayah and tafsir bi al-Dirayah.

3. Al-Zamakhshari and His Tafsir (467-538)

Jarullah Mahmud ibn Umar al-Zamakhshari was born in 467 H. in the town of Zamakhshar in Harizm district which is located within the boundaries of today's Turkmenistan. Al-Zamakhshari lived during the rule of Malikshah the Sultan of Great Seljukid State and the vizier Nizam al-Mulk who attached great importance to scientific developments. After he took lessons from various scholars in Bukhara, Khurasan, Isfahan and Baghdad, he settled in Mecca. He lived in seclusion in Ka'bah and completely dedicated himself to knowledge. He visited Arab tribes living in oases and deserts to improve his linguistic studies. Al-Zamakhshari died in the town of Jurjaniyya in Harizm in 538 H.

Al-Zamakhshari has more than sixty works in the fields of Arabic literature, lughah (language), balaghah (rhetoric), tafsir, hadith and fiqh. His most famous work is "**al-Kashshaf**" in the field of tafsir. Differences of qira'ah are taken into consideration in his tafsir as well as nasikh and mansukh verses are pointed out. He interpreted the seemingly contradictory verses and argued that there is no contradictory verses in the Qur'an. Al-Zamakhshari has been criticized because of his rationalist approaches in the Qur'anic studies. He paid attention to analyze the Qur'an in terms of its language, nahw (grammar), balaghah, and i'jaz. His explanations about the roots of Qur'anic words and phrases are the most important characteristic of his work. Al-Zamakhshari occasionally gives information on qira'ah. His juristic views are closer to Hanafi school of law. For example, while explaining the word *al-Hamd* in chapter al-Fatihah (1), he states that this word is synonym with the word (*madaha*) (to praise, to magnify) and thus is explained as "praising because of the favors." Then, Al-Zamakhshari resents proofs from ancient Arabic poetry to support his explanation. Moreover, Al-Zamakhshari states that *al-hamd* is antonym of *al-dham* (to denigrate). Finally, he provides different pronunciations of the word. Al-Zamakhshari followed theological views of Mu'tazilah. His approach and style of interpreta-

tion reveal his authority in the field of tafsir. His tafsir has essential importance in terms of his linguistic explanations.

LET'S READ AND LEARN

At the time of Al-Zmakhshari;

- Seljukids entered Anatolia and gained strength, while Abbasids weakened.
- The first and the second Crusades took place and the Crusaders captured Jerusalem.

4. Fakhr al-Din al-Razi and His Tafsir (543-606)

Abu Abdillah (Abu al-Fadl) Fakhr al-Din Muhammad ibn Umar ibn Husayin al-Razi al-Tabaristani (d. 606/1219) was an Ash'ari scholar who became famous with his works in the fields of kalam (Islamic theology), philosophy, tafsir and methodology of Islamic jurisprudence. He was born in 543 H. in the city of Ray which is situated on the south of the Caspian Sea. He took his first education from his father who was one of the most prominent scholars of Ray.

Fakhr al-Din al-Razi is one of the important scholars and the greatest thinkers of the 6th century, who is well-known with his high intelligence, retentive memory and effective speech. Even though he left a very important book in the field of tafsir, he also was a sophisticated scholar who was acquainted with almost all sciences of his time like kalam, methodology of fiqh, tafsir, Arabic literature, philosophy, logic, astronomy, medicine and math and he authored several books in these fields. Because of this, he was known by the title “**allamah (exceedingly learned)**.” After he travelled to some cities in Iran, Turkistan, Afghanistan and India, he settled in Herat and lived there until the end of his life. While writing his books, he also trained more than 300 students at the same time. Al-Razi died in Herat on Shawwal 1, 606.

Among the religious sciences, the fields of Qur'anic exegesis and Islamic theology were the ones that He became most prominent. His most important work in the field of tafsir is **Mafatih al-Ghayb** also known as **al-Tafsir al-Kabir**. This book is the most important work of al-Razi in the field of tafsir and was published in thirty two volumes. He successfully followed the method of *dirayah* in his tafsir and it became a reference book for almost all mufasssirs who lived after him. While preparing his Qur'anic exegesis, he benefited from all sciences of his time and became the leader of the scientific tafsir movement. Even though al-Razi mostly uses the method of *dirayah*, he also cites the narrations about the verses of the Qur'an, *asbab an-nuzul* and differences of qira'ah in the verses. However, while preferring one of them, he pays attention to general principles of the verses. According to his understanding, the most correct tafsir is the interpretation of the Qur'an with the Qur'an.

In his tafsir, Fakhr al-Din al-Razi used the knowledge from different branches of science within the limits of his expertise. Because of this, some scholars criticized him. While interpreting the first verse of chapter al-Qadr (97), he stated that seven different issues are found in this verse. Then, he deals with methodological and grammatical issues as well as various views about how the Holy Qur'an was revealed and when the time of the Night of Qadr was.

Fakhr al-Din al-Razi supports the theological views of Ahl al-Sunnah (people of Sunnah) in his tafsir. Scholars of Mu'tazilah benefited from some sciences such as Islamic theology, linguistics and literature and wrote good books based on the method of *tafsir bi al-dirayah* that have also been appreciated by Sunni scholars. Fakhr al-Din al-Razi wrote his tafsir to respond to the views of Mu'tazili mufassirs. He followed the same method that they followed, presented arguments supporting his own views and tried to prove the weakness of their views against his approaches. Al-Razi also deals with juridical matters in his tafsir. He attached importance to asbab an-nuzul as well. In short, Fakhr al-Din al-Razi's exegesis is a very important part of the heritage of Islamic culture.

LET'S READ AND LEARN

In the 6th century when Al-Razi lived, great upheavals and disorder emerged in the political and social life of the Muslim world. Muslims were defeated both by the Crusades and by Mongols. Moreover, many groups, denominations, and schools appeared among Muslims and each of them tried to prove the correctness of their own views and falsity of their opponents based upon the Qur'an.

5. Al-Qurtubi and His Tafsir (...-671)

Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Qurtubi was born in Qurtuba which was one of the centers of science in Andalusia. He travelled to many cities of Islam and received education there. Then, he settled in Egypt and died there in 671 H.

Al-Qurtubi who was a Maliki scholar not only lived a pious and ascetic life, but also stayed away from fanaticism in religious sciences.

Al-Qurtubi named his tafsir *al-Jami' li Ahkam al-Qur'an*. As it is understood from this title, his tafsir paid special attention to explanation of *ahkam* (juridical) verses. In this respect, al-Qurtubi's tafsir is a tafsir of *ahkam* (exegesis of the verses related to legal matters). Even though al-Qurtubi was an adherent of Maliki School, he never showed fanaticism regarding his school. On the contrary, he acknowledged the correct views of other schools as well. For example, those who unintentionally broke their fasting during Ramadan must fast one day after Ramadan to make the broken day up according to Maliki School of law. However, in his interpretations for the 187th verse of chapter al-Baqarah (2), al-Qurtubi preferred the view that "there is no need for a make-up fasting" instead of the view of his own school.

6. Qadi al-Baydawi (586-685)

Nasir al-Din Abu Sa'id Abdullah ibn Umar ibn Muhammad al-Baydawi, who was one of the greatest Muslim exegetes, was born in the town of Bayda near Shiraz. Even though his birthdate is not certain, it is stated in some sources that he was born in 585 H (1189).

Al-Baydawi worked as the head of the judges (chief justice). He also trained many students while working as the chief justice. He was very careful and uncompromising in his verdicts. He quit this job and went to Tabriz. He spent the rest of his life by worshipping and writing books. He died in Tabriz in 685 H (1286 CE).¹⁶⁰

160. Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi, VI, 100.

Some of his works are *Anwar'al-Tanzil wa Asrar al-Ta'wil*, *Minhaj al-Vusul ila Ilm al-Usul* and *Sharh al-Mahsul*.

Qadi al-Baydawi who wrote many books in almost all Islamic sciences and assumed the title of “allamah (exceedingly learned one)” became famous especially by his book in tafsir “*Anwar al-Tazil wa Asrar al-Ta'wil*” which means “Lights of Revelation and Secrets of Interpretation.” Al-Baydawi masterly summarized the major tafsir books written before him in this work. His interpretations about the verses and grammatical explanations indicate that he was a great mufasssir. This book has been published many times in Islamic world and Europe. It has approximately 250 sharh (extensive explanation) and hashiyah (glosses over glosses).

Al-Baydawi benefited from the exegeses of Al-Zamakhshari and Fakhr al-Din al-Razi and Raghib al-Isfahani's *al-Mufradat fi Gharib al-Qur'an* very much while writing this book. Al-Baydawi cited the opinions of previous mufasssirs as well. While he preferred some of them over others, he also regarded some of them as weak.

7. Ibn Kathir (d. 774/1373)

Abu al-Fida Ismail Imad al-Din ibn Umar ibn Kathir al-Dimashqi was born in the village of Majdal located in a close distance from Busra near Sham in 701 H (1301). He migrated to Damascus with his family in 707 H. He memorized the whole Qur'an in 711 H. He took his first education from his elder brother Abd al-Wahhab. Then, he learnt tafsir, hadith and fiqh from well-known scholars of his time including Ibn Taymiyya. He presented his work **Ahkam al-Tanbih** that he wrote at his young age to his master Burhan al-Din al-Fazari and gained his appreciation. Moreover, he took lessons in hadith, history, qira'ah, kalam and fiqh. He was influenced mostly from his master Burhan al-Din al-Fazari, his father-in-law Yusuf al-Mizzi, al-Dhahabi and Ibn Taymiyya. Ibn Kathir started to write books at his young age and gave lectures at madrasas (colleges) in Damascus. Ibn Kathir lost his eyesight towards the end of his life. He died in Sham in 774 H (1373).

Ibn Kathir has also become famous with the title “*al-Hafiz al-Muhaddith*.” Al-Dhahabi praised him for the works he wrote in various fields of the science of hadith and called him “al-Fakih al-Mufti”.

Although he was a follower of Shafi School of law, he was open to the views of other schools as well. He adopted Hanbali views in Islamic theology under the influence of Ibn Taymiyya.

Ibn Kathir was a reliable person in the presence of rulers, presidents, scholars and general community. They consulted him in important religious and political matters and his decisions were applied in life.

The most important work of Ibn Kathir, who wrote many books in the fields of fiqh, hadith, kalam and tafsir, is “*Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Azim*” in the field of tafsir. It is the second most important book written based on the method of *tafsir bi al-riwayah* after Tabari's. *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Azim* includes narrations of great mufasssirs like al-Tabari, Ibn Abi Hatim and Ibn Atiyya.

READING TEXT

ABDULLAH IBN ABBAS

Amir al-Mu'minin Umar ibn al-Khattab used to invite Ibn Abbas to his meetings and accept his views. Muhajirun (the Migrants) said: Why did you not invite our children as you invite Ibn Abbas? He said: He is an experienced person and young of the elders. He has a tongue that asks many questions and a heart that comprehends and reasons well. Later on, he invited them to his presence. He also invited Ibn Abbas with them to prove his qualities. Umar asked, What is your opinion about this chapter of Allah "When comes the Help of Allah and the conquest..." (Al-Nasr, 110: 1)? Some of them said, "Allah the Almighty commands us to praise Him and to ask His forgiveness if He blesses us with the conquest of Mecca." Some of them kept silent. Then, Umar asked Ibn Abbas: "Will you say the same?" Ibn Abbas said: "No." Umar asked: "Well, what will you say?" Ibn Abbas responded, "The issue here is the Prophet's (pbuh) time of death. Allah the Almighty informed him that the help of Allah and the conquest which is the conquest of Mecca were signs of his death. Thereupon, "Exalt Him with praise of your Lord and ask forgiveness of Him. Indeed, He is ever Accepting of repentance." Umar said, "What I know about this issue is not different from the things that you know."



EVALUATION QUESTIONS

A. ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

1. What is the role of Abdullah ibn Abbas in the science of tafsir?
2. What are the distinctive characteristics of tafsir of Qadi al-Baydawi?
3. To which issues did al-Tabari pay attention in his tafsir?
4. State the characteristics of Fakhr al-Din al-Razi's tafsir.
5. To which field did al-Qurtubi pay more attention in his tafsir?

B. MARK THE RIGHT ANSWERS TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

1. Which of the following choices is a book written based on the method of *tafsir bi al-Riwayah*?
 - a) Tafsir of al-Tabari
 - b) Tafsir of al-Razi
 - c) Tafsir of al-Zamakhshari
 - d) Tafsir of al-Qurtubi
 - e) Tafsir of al-Baydawi
2. Who is the famous mufasssir for whom the Prophet (pbuh) specially prayed and asked from Allah to bless him with understanding and interpretation of the features of the Noble Qur'an? He was also known by the nickname "*Tarjuman al-Qur'an*" after the time of the Companions.
 - a) Abdullah ibn Abbas
 - b) Fakhr al-Din al-Razi
 - c) Al-Zamakhshari
 - d) Ibn Kathir
 - e) Al-Tabari

3. It deals with i'jaz of the Qur'an in all its aspects and examines the roots of the Qur'anic words and phrases. These are among the important characteristics of this work. What is the name of this book and who is its author?
 - a) Al-Tabari - *Jami' al-Bayan an Ta'wil Aay al-Qur'an*
 - b) Fakhr al-Din al-Razi - *Mafatih al-Ghayb*
 - c) Al-Zamakhshari - *Al-Kashshaf*
 - d) Ibn Kathir - *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Azim*
 - e) Al-Qurtubi - *Al Jami' li Ahkam al-Qur'an*
4. "Although the mufassir was an adherent of Maliki school, he never showed fanaticism regarding the views of his school. On the contrary, he acknowledged the correct opinions of other schools as well. He paid special attention to the explanation of the verses related to legal matters. In this respect, his work is an example of tafsir of ahkam." Who is this mufassir?
 - a) Al-Qurtubi
 - b) Fakhr al-Din al-Razi
 - c) Al-Zamakhshari
 - d) Ibn Kathir
 - e) Abdullah ibn Abbas

**C. FILL IN THE BLANKS IN THE FOLLOWING SENTENCES WITH MOST
SUITABLE WORD FROM THOSE GIVEN BELOW**

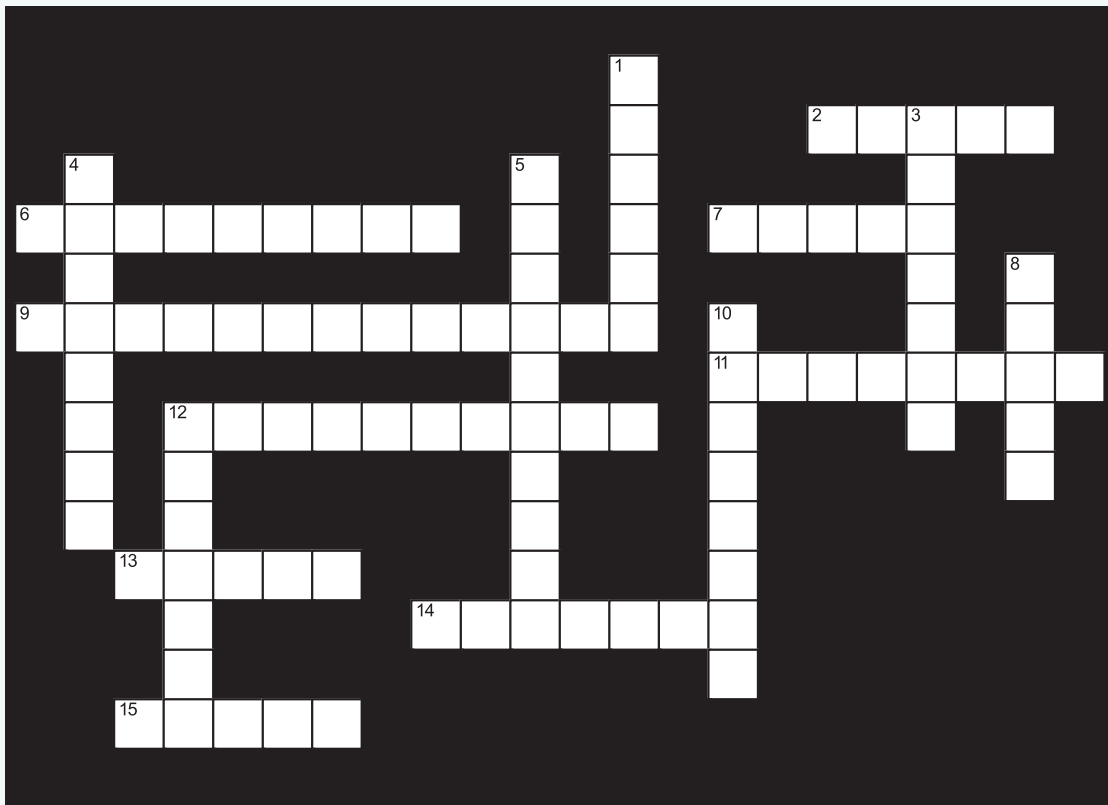
(Fakhr al-Din al-Razi, Ibn Kathir, Ibn Abbas, Qadi al-Baydawi, al-Tafsir al-Kabir)

1. The mufassir who wrote many books in almost all Islamic sciences and assumed the title of "allamah" is
2. The name of the mufassir who is famous with the titles "**al-Hafiz al-Muhaddith**" and "**al-Fakih al-Mufti**" is
3. "**Anwar al-Tanzil wa Asrar al-Ta'wil** which means **Lights of Revelation and Secrets of Interpretation** is the work of
4. ***Mafatih al-Ghayb*** of **Fakhr al-Din al-Razi** is also called
5. The sahabi who is the son of the Prophet's (pbuh) uncle, who has been considered an authority in the fields of tafsir and fiqh and among the ones who narrated the largest number of ahadith is

**D. MATCH THE NAMES OF MUFASSIRS WITH THE TITLE
OF THEIR TAFSIR BOOKS GIVEN BELOW**

	The Name of Mufassir		Title of His Book
	Abdullah ibn Abbas	1	Al-Jami' li Ahkam al-Qur'an
	Jarullah Umar al-Zamakhshari	2	Jami' al-Bayan an Ta'wil Aay al-Qur'an
	Fakhr al-Din al-Razi	3	Al-Kashshaf
	Muhammad al-Baydawi	4	Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Azim
	Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Qurtubi	5	Anwar al-Tanzil wa Asrar al-Ta'wil
	Ibn Kathir	6	Mafatih al-Ghayb
	Muhammad Jarir al-Tabari	7	Tafsir Ibn Abbas

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



2. The Arabic term used for the scholar of fiqh.
6. The Arabic term used for the scholar of hadith.
7. Plural form of the Arabic word “nur” (light).
9. The famous mufasssir who is the author of “*Anwar al-Tanzil Asrar al-Ta’wil*”.
11. The name of the author of *Jami’ al-Bayan an Ta’wil Aay al-Qur’an*.
12. The title of al-Zamakhshari’s famous tafsir.
13. Birthplace of al-Baydawi.
14. A Center of science in Andalusia.
15. A kind of tafsir that explains the verses related to legal matters



1. The school of law which was followed by al-Qurtubi.
3. It means one who was born in Qurtuba.
4. The Arabic term used for the scholar who interprets the Qur’an.
5. The name of the town where al-Zamakhshari was born.
8. Plural form of the Arabic word “sirr” (secret).
10. Name of the Wife of the Prophet (pbuh) who also was the maternal aunt of Abdullah Ibn Abbas.
12. The title given to Fakhr al-Din al-Razi.



CHAPTER VII

SUBJECT BASED SELECTIONS FROM THE TEXTS OF EXEGESIS

CONTENTS OF THE CHAPTER

- ▶ KNOWLEDGE (al-Zumar, 39: 8-9) CAN THEY WHO KNOW AND THEY WHO DO NOT KNOW BE DEEMED EQUAL?
- ▶ FAITH AND WORSHIP (Al-Baqara, 2: 3-5)
- ▶ MANNERS AND GOOD MORALITY (Al-i Imran, 3: 133-136)
- ▶ BROTHERHOOD-UKHUWWAH (al-Hujurat, 49: 10)
- ▶ SPENDING FOR THE SAKE OF ALLAH AND CHARITY (Al-Baqara, 2: 261-266)
- ▶ ACTS OF WORSHIP (FASTING: Al-Baqara, 2:183-187)
- ▶ STRIVING FOR THE SAKE OF ALLAH (JIHAD) (Al-Tawbah, 9 111-112)
- ▶ PATIENCE AND TESTING (Al-Baqara, 2: 153-157)
- ▶ LAWFUL SUSTENANCE (Al-Baqara, 2: 172-173)
- ▶ CONTEMPLATION (Al-i Imran, 3: 190-194)
- ▶ DEATH AND GETTING READY FOR DEATH (Al-Waqia, 56: 83-95)
- ▶ INVOCATION (al-A'raf, 7: 55-56)
- ▶ DHIKR (REMEMBRANCE OF ALLAH) (al-A'raf, 7: 205-206)
- ▶ PIETY (Al-Hujurat, 49: 13)
- ▶ DELIVERING THE MESSAGE OF ISLAM AND GUIDANCE (Al-Maidah, 5: 67)
- ▶ THE PROPHET: BEST EXEMPLARY MAN (UTHWA HASANA) (al-Ahzab, 33: 21)

1. KNOWLEDGE (al-Zumar, 39: 8-9) CAN THEY WHO KNOW AND THEY WHO DO NOT KNOW BE DEEMED EQUAL?

وَإِذَا مَسَّ الْإِنْسَانَ ضُرٌّ دَعَا رَبَّهُ مُنِيبًا إِلَيْهِ ثُمَّ إِذَا خَوَّلَهُ نِعْمَةً مِنْهُ نَسِيَ مَا كَانَ يَدْعُوا إِلَيْهِ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَجَعَلَ لِلَّهِ أَنْدَادًا لِيُضِلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ قُلْ تَمَتَّعْ بِكُفْرِكَ قَلِيلًا إِنَّكَ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ النَّارِ ﴿٨﴾ أَمْ مَنْ هُوَ قَانِتٌ آنَاءَ اللَّيْلِ سَاجِدًا وَقَائِمًا يَحْذَرُ الْآخِرَةَ وَيَرْجُوا رَحْمَةَ رَبِّهِ قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ إِنَّمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ أُولُوا الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿٩﴾

TRANSLATION:

8. NOW [thus it is:] when affliction befalls man, he is likely to cry out to his Sustainer, turning unto Him [for help]; but as soon as He has bestowed upon him a boon by His grace, he forgets Him whom he invoked before, and claims that there are other powers that could rival God - and thus leads [others] astray from His path. Say [unto him who sins in this way]: “Enjoy thyself for a while in this your denial of the truth; [yet,] verily, you are of those who are destined for the fire!”

9. Or [do you deem yourself equal to] one who devoutly worships [God] throughout the night, prostrating himself or standing [in prayer], ever- mindful of the life to come, and hoping for his Sustainer’s grace?” Say: “Can they who know and they who do not know be deemed equal?” [But] only they who are endowed with insight keep this in mind!” (al-Zumar, 39: 8-9)

COMMENTARY:

8th - 9th Verses: In these two verses, it is explained the personal characteristics of those who know and those who do not as well as those who can comprehend the truth and those who cannot. Two different pictures that are completely opposing each other are drawn:

In the first part of the first picture, it is spoken about a person. This person is subjected to some hardships such as sickness, famine, and death. It is seen that the person is sieged by hardships from all sides. He feels suffocated and depressed. In such situations, he immediately turns to his Lord, opens his hands, and prays. He turns only to Allah and is aware that no one but Allah can save him from his spiritual suffocation and depression. In the second part of the same picture, we see the same person. However, this time, his hardships are disappeared and he has reached abundance and comfort in place of the hardships. Fear leaves its place to safety, hunger to satisfaction, and difficulty to relief. We observe that the state of the person in the picture changes according to changing circumstances. We see in this picture that the man who reflects

his innate state when he is subjected to hardships turns away when he reaches the comfort. Residues cover over his natural state. He forgets to turn to his Lord, to pray to Him, to be His servant, and nobody but Him can ward off the hardships. The person in the picture forgets everything and starts to associate partners with Allah.

In the ninth verse, the opposite of the first picture and a true believer's character is drawn. This person is someone who is filled with reverence and fear of Allah, who continuously remembers Allah, who never forgets Allah neither under difficult circumstances nor in comfort, who spends his nights by prostration and worship, who lives his life in this world with concerns about the afterlife, and who wants to reach the mercy and blessings of his Lord.

This is a person of heart with constant connection with Allah who enables him/her to understand the realities of existence and creates healthy knowledge. This is a picture that mobilizes the clear and deep emotions of people. This picture is the complete opposite of the ugly and indistinct picture drawn in the previous verse.

Allah the Almighty compares those two picture saying **“Say: “Can they who know and they who do not know be deemed equal?”** (al-Zumar, 39: 9) and places them face to face. Because the true knowledge is gnosis and recognition of the truth. Such knowledge opens the eyes of the people's heart and enables them to establish a strong connection with the unchanging laws existing in the universe. In other words, such knowledge takes a person from the product to its producer. If a field of knowledge takes a person to Allah, the Absolute Ruler, it can be considered as true knowledge. Otherwise, it should not be dispersed fragments of information that fills the mind but does not deliver a person to the essence of things. According to the statements of the Qur'an in this respect, the way to reach the true knowledge and gnosis goes through obedience and worshipping to Allah the Exalted, the sensitivity of heart, recognition of fear of the Hereafter, expecting to get Allah's mercy and beneficence, and keeping in mind that Allah always sees and hears His servants. True knowledge and gnosis can be realized only by this way (see *Fi Zilal*, VII, (23rd section of the Qur'an), 17-18). Only those who have “common sense” can think about and comprehend those realities. This can be known by only the fortunate ones who are intelligent, conscientious, prudent, able to comprehend the essence of things, able to benefit from the things that they see and know, able to remember Allah from everything that they see and touch; by those who do not forget Allah and the day that they will come to the presence of Allah.

It is similar to deal with the laws of nature in universe and positive sciences. They should serve as the means to take people to gnosis. Otherwise, they can be nothing but curtains. If the apparent knowledge of a person seems to increase, but no improvement is observed in his/her spiritual state, it means that there is a dangerous situation. Whereas, the more one's knowledge increases the more his/her piety, respect, and reverence to Allah should increase. True scholars knows Allah the Almighty however it is necessary to know Him. They carry feelings of endless respect and love for Allah in their hearts. It is stated in a verse:

“Of all His servants, only such as are endowed with [innate] knowledge stand [truly] in awe of God” (al-Fatir, 35: 28).

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) points out the same fact in his following saying:

“By Allah, I am the most God conscious among you and I fear Him most among you” (Bukhari, Nikah 1; Muslim, Siyam 74).

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) visited a young man who was about to die and asked him:

“- How do you feel?” When the young man replied:

“- By Allah! O Messenger of Allah! Indeed I hope in Allah and I fear from my sins.” Allah's Messenger (pbuh) said:

“- These two (hope and fear) will not be gathered in a worshipper's heart at a time such as this, except that Allah will grant him what he hopes and make him safe from what he fears.” (Tirmidhi, Janaiz 11; Ibn Majah, Zuhd 31)

One day, Zunnun al-Misri (q.s) said, “for the gnostic, there is neither continuous sadness nor constant joy” and continues:

“The state of the gnostic resembles to someone who sits in his throne wearing the crown of miracles. However, even in such state, he trembles before two fearful scenes. In those scenes, a sword is hanging over his head tied by a single hair. There are two predatory animals waiting in front of the door... He, on the one hand, is happy to see his crown of miracles and the throne in which he is sitting; on the other hand, he trembles in fear thinking the predatory animals waiting at the door and the sword hanging over his head... Think about who that gnostic becomes happy and how he is filled with fear?”

Zunnun then continues as follows:

“The sword hanging over his head is the entirety of the religious rulings. The two predatory animals at his door are the divine commands and prohibitions.” (*Veliler Ansiklopedisi*, I, 233-234)

2. FAITH AND WORSHIP (Al-Baqara, 2: 3-5)

Main characteristics of the God-fearing servants who truly benefit from the guidance of the Qur'an are informed in the following verses:

الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ ﴿٣﴾

TRANSLATION:

3. Who believe in [the existence of] that which is beyond the reach of human perception, and are constant in prayer, and spend on others out of what We provide for them as sustenance.

COMMENTARY:

3rd Verse: The first characteristic of the pious believers is their faith in the unseen. Faith means to attest, or to accept the rightfulness of something by heart and to profess this by tongue. Without acceptance, there can be no faith. Existence of acceptance along with actions and behaviors contradicting and inconsistent with it is considered a sign of the weakness of faith. With

such faith, it is difficult not only to live Islam in a proper manner but also to reach the eternal salvation promised by Islam. According to Islamic understanding, those who do not accept the principles of faith by heart and profess them by tongue become a nonbeliever. Those who do not accept them by heart but profess them by tongue are regarded as hypocrites and those who both accept them by heart and profess them by tongue but do not put them into practice are considered as believers but sinners. True faith is the only requirement to be saved from Hell and enter Paradise in the Hereafter. The Holy Qur'an emphasizes this matter in several verses.

The word “*ghayb*” literally refers to things that exist but cannot be seen. As for the term “*ghayb* (unperceivable beings)” used in the above mentioned verse, it refers to the beings and incidents informed by Allah and His Messenger which exist or will come to existence in the future and which cannot be perceived by senses, but are required to be believed. These are beings and incidents such as Allah, angels, destiny, judgment day, the afterlife, Paradise, and Hell. In his definition of faith, Allah's Messenger (pbuh) stated that faith is “*that you affirm your faith in Allah, His angels, His books, His messengers, and the last day. Likewise it is that you affirm your belief in destiny in its entire entirety with its goodness and evil.*” (Muslim, Iman 1, 5) All of the things mentioned in this hadith are part of the world of *ghayb*.

The part of the verse that is translated as “believe in [the existence of] that which is beyond the reach of human perception is also understood by some exegetes as “also believe in when they are beyond the reach of human perception.” In other words, the believers continue to express their faith and live accordingly when they are not in public just as they do when they are among people. Because continuity is essential in faith. Whereas the state of the hypocrites is not like the believers. Because “**when they meet those who have attained to faith, they assert, “We believe [as you believe]”; but when they find themselves alone with their- evil impulses, they say, “Verily, we are with you; we were only mocking!”**” (Al-Baqara, 2: 14)

Even though it is not possible to draw borders for the world of *ghayb*, however it is possible to speak about two types of *ghayb* in general. First type is the absolute *ghayb* that Allah the Exalted has not disclosed to any being, but are known only by Him: “**with Him are the keys to the things that are beyond the reach of a created being's perception: none knows them but He.**” (Al-An'am, 6: 59) The other type of *ghayb* is the relative one. Allah the Almighty has disclosed this type of *ghayb* to whomever He wishes and as much as He wishes and kept it unperceivable for the rest of His creation. According to this, the scope of *ghayb* is different for every beings. However, belief in the matters that are informed in the Qur'an and Sunnah but are beyond perception of human beings is a condition to become a believer. The verse in question points out to this type of *ghayb*.

Even though Allah the Almighty is the Evident and the Immanent by His dispositions and manifestations (al-Hadid, 57: 3), is nearer to His servants than their jugular vein (al-Qaf, 50: 16), comes in between His servants and their heart (Al-Anfal, 8: 24), in sum encompasses them from all aspects (al-Isra, 17: 60), accepting His as *ghayb* is because no vision can grasp Him (Al-An'am 6: 103). In fact, the Gnostics say, “Allah the Almighty is so Evident that He is unperceivable because of the intensity of His Evidence.”

Beings that cannot be seen or unperceived are many more compared to the ones that we can see and perceive. Those who acknowledge this reality will reach faith in Allah and thus at-

tain belief in that there is a deeper meaning and purpose in life. Notions and systems that see nothing but material beings and think that nothing exist other than the ones they can see limit human imagination and thinking and deprive it of opening wide horizons. In this respect, faith in the unperceivable world is like the elixir of freedom that removes the obstacles before human imagination and thinking. The fact that the principles of faith are in the scope of “ghayb” opens an endless dimension to the believer’s depth of faith. This is why the Holy Qur’an specifically mentions ghayb among the requirements of faith. Because faith in *ghayb* has a significant effect on servants’ acceptance the Prophet’s call and obedience to Allah’s commands. Those who do not believe in the existence of another world beyond the physical world turn away from believing in Allah and the Hereafter.

The second characteristics of the God-fearing servants is that they perform their prayers properly. This is stated in the verse with the phrase “*iqamat al-salah*.” The word “*salah*” is used in the Qur’an in the meaning of ritual prayer as well as supplication, praise, recitation, and mercy. Ritual prayer consists of almost all those meanings. In fact, there is recitation from the Qur’an while standing in ritual prayer, supplication and praises while sitting, and there is mercy in the end for the person who performs it.

“*Iqamat*” means to keep something standing and to put it into standing position. As for the construct “*Iqamat al-salah*,” it means to perform ritual prayer properly. In other words, it means to perform it in accordance with the way that the Prophet (pbuh) taught us, by observing its rules and manners, on time, constantly, and by showing the proper respect to it. It means to perform it not only by observing its formal requirements but also its spiritual aspects such as pious reverence and respect. The phrase “*Iqamat al-salah*” also points out to the significance of congregational prayer and the necessity of the preparation of the conditions for congregational prayer.

Even though ritual prayer had been ordained since the beginning of Islam, it was made obligatory upon believers as five daily prayers in the Night of Ascension (see Muslim, Iman 259).

Ritual prayer constitutes the backbone of the religious life. Prayer, which is an essential principle for shaping the individual’s mental, spiritual and daily life in accordance with the commands of Allah and His Messenger, also signifies the same degree of importance in building and restoration of social life. By pointing out to this aspect of prayer, Allah’s Messenger says, “*Prayer is the pillar of religion*.” (Tirmidhi, Iman 8)

The third characteristic of the God-fearing believers is that they spend on others out of what Allah provide for them as sustenance. In accordance with Allah’s command, they spend for the benefit of others out of all kinds of blessing that Allah has bestowed upon them. The word “*rizq*” refers to all kinds of blessings from which living beings meet their spiritual and material needs. Not only the physical blessings and means such as food, drinks, clothes, riches, and all others are called as *rizq*, but also the spiritual blessings such as knowledge, faith, and morality are considered within the scope of *rizq*.

The term “*infaq*” means believers’ spending out of the blessings bestowed upon them to their family, relatives, other people, and even to all other living beings in order to reach Allah’s consent. One of the contexts that the term *infaq* is used in the Qur’an is “*fi sabili’llah*” which means all kinds of spending made to protect, spread, and exalt Allah’s religion.

What is meant by *infaq* in the above-mentioned verse is both prescribed and voluntary spending. Obligatory spending are almsgiving (zakat) and the necessary expenditures for the needs of one's family. All other spending made with the intention of charity are classified under the voluntary ones.

In respect to spiritual blessings, *infaq* means to let others benefit from the divine blessings someone has such as knowledge, manners, and morality. Allah's Messenger (pbuh) says, "*Knowledge that is not benefited by others is like a treasure that is not spent for the path of Allah*" (Ahmed, *Musnad*, II, 499; Haythami, I, 184). Based on this meaning, Sufis say that the above-mentioned verse also commands the God-fearing believers to spend out of the spiritual states, knowledge, and the lights of spiritual knowledge (*ma'rifah*) bestowed upon them.

In fact, the verses of the Qur'an contain rich meanings in short sentences. For example, some of the subtle points in the part of the verse we examine وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ (spend on others out of what We provide for them as sustenance) are listed as follows:

1. People should spend not all of their earnings but the excess part left after they meet their own needs. The preposition مِنْ (*min*) which has the meaning of *ba'ziyah* or partiality refers to this subtlety.

2. Infaq should be done out of one's own wealth not out of other's. This condition is expressed by the phrase رَزَقْنَاهُمْ (what We provide for them as sustenance). In this phrase, there is also an indication to spending for the sake of Allah and not rubbing it in. As if it is said in the verse, "we are the ones who have provided you with blessings. In reality, you are our deputies. Therefore, it is not appropriate to rub it in when spending to our servants out of the blessings that we have provided to you."

3. Using the verb يُنْفِقُونَ (spend) in simple present tense points out spending constantly and making it a habit of the servant. This verb also means to do the spending to those who are eligible for charity in order to meet their urgent needs. Otherwise, it is not permissible to give the charity to those who will spend it in unlawful or unnecessary ways, because the word "*infaq*" is used in the meaning of spending done to proper places and to meet the essential needs. (*Isharat al-I'jaz*, p. 47)

As is seen, the scope of infaq commanded and advised in the verse is very comprehensible. This is why Sufi scholars have made some explanations regarding *infaqs* of people at different levels. Some of them are as follows:

The rich give charity out of their wealth and do not begrudge the recipients of charity. The devout servants spend out of their self and do not hold themselves back from serving others. Gnostics' infaq is done out of the heart and they never leave the seekers of Truth deprived of the divine favors bestowed upon them. As for the infaq of the lovers of the Truth, it is different. In fact, Mawlana Jalaladdin Rumi (q.s) states this in the following lines:

It beseems the generous man thus to give money,

(But) verily the generosity of the lover is the surrender of his soul (life).

There are certain terms in Arabic denoting different levels of infaq. The first stage is expressed by the term "*saha*." Those who spend some of their wealth and keep the rest for them-

selves are called people of *sahawah*. The second is the stage of “*jud*.” Those who spend most of their wealth and leave the lesser part for themselves are called the people of *jud*. The highest level of infaq is called “*isar*.” Those who just meet the urgent needs of their lives and give even the things they need as charity are called the people of *isar* or people who think others more than themselves.

The Qur’an’s command of *infaq* is very important for both individual and community. In order to keep the social life in order and establish justice in society, there should not be any gaps between the layers of society in terms of financial means and welfare. Affluent ones should not be too far away from the poor to break the relationship between them. The only means that keep the link between the social layers is all kinds of charitable deeds especially almsgiving (*zakat*). If one does not pay attention to the wisdom why almsgiving is prescribed and charging interest is prohibited in society and strictly follow them, the link between the layers of society will be broken. Lower layers of society start to feel rebellious, jealous, hateful, and antagonistic to the higher layers instead of feeling respect, obedience, and love. Likewise, people at higher layers start to be oppressive, cruel, and offensive towards the people at lower layers instead of showing them mercy, helping, and being generous to them. In sum, achieving peace and tranquility between the layers of society depends on strict application of *zakat*, charity, and other aids by everyone in society.

وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا أُنْزِلَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ وَبِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ يُوقِنُونَ ﴿٤﴾

TRANSLATION:

4. And who believe in that which has been bestowed from on high upon you, [O Prophet,] as well as in that which was bestowed before your time: for it is they who in their innermost are certain of the life to come!

COMMENTARY:

4th Verse: The forth characteristic of the God-fearing believers is that they believe in both the Holy Qur’an and the divine books revealed before it. Because all prophets from Adam to the last Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon them) delivered the same message to humanity and the revelation in the form of books and pages that they received contained the principles of same religion. Throughout historical flow, divine mission and revelation did not come separate from each other, but rather confirming and verifying each other. With the development of human life, culture, and civilization, Allah the Almighty sent new messengers and new religions, and renewed some of the practical rulings that had been prescribed to meet the needs of previous nations. Finally, as the only religion left, Islam has been completed by taking its final form with our Prophet and the Holy Qur’an. In this respect, we believe in all of them in accordance with the Qur’anic principle “**We make no distinction (they say) between one and another of His messengers**” (al-Baqara, 2: 285).

What is meant by “that which has been bestowed from on high upon you” was the whole Qur’an including the parts that had been revealed until the revelation of this verse as well as the parts that were going to be revealed after it. It also refers to the Sunnah of the Prophet (pbuh) which is the interpreter of the Qur’an. Believers must believe in them with all of their details,

learn their commands and prohibitions, and live in accordance with them. What is meant by “that which was bestowed before your time” is the divine books and revelations sent to the previous prophets. It is also obligatory upon believers to believe in those books as a whole. Because Allah the Almighty does not hold us responsible from the rulings of the earlier books, we do not have to know them in detail.

One of the important issues pointed out in this verse is that the knowledge based on revelation is a necessary for people to learn and live the right way of life. This knowledge was not revealed to each and every one of the individuals but only to the prophets chosen by Allah among the people. Thus, the way to live a life on the straight path can be learned only from the books revealed to those prophets. Since there is no divine book that could come to this day without being altered other than the Noble Qur'an, it is the only book that can be referred to learn such a way of life. Therefore, those who would like to find the straight path must believe in and follow the principles of the Noble Qur'an.

The fifth characteristic of the God-fearing believers is that they believe in the afterlife with certainty or without any doubt. They believe in that this mortal world will end one day, people will be resurrected in order to be held accountable what they did in this world, and will enter Paradise or Hell in accordance with their deeds.

The word “*akhirah*” in Arabic literally means, “the one comes after the first.” The first life is the one in this world and the life in *akhirah* will come after it. The word “*akhirah*” in the following verse “**the life in the hereafter is indeed the only [true] life**” (Al-Ankabut, 29: 64) is used as an adjective of the world where people will stay in perpetuity. It also has the meaning “the last day” without a following day.

The words “*yaqin* and *iyqan*” means to know something with certainty. It means absolute belief based on research and necessary proofs without having any kind of doubt, possibility, or hesitation. There are three degrees of *yaqin* as to know, to see, and to attain the truth. For example, knowing that we will enter Paradise is “*ilm al-yaqin*,” seeing Paradise is “*ayn al-yaqin*,” and entering Paradise with the permission of Allah and enjoying its benefits is “*haqq al-yaqin*” (Raghib, *Mufradat*, s.v. “*yaqin*”).

Faith in the Hereafter requires preparing for it. Absolute faith in judgment day, rewards, and punishments directs people try to protect themselves from punishment and sorrowful end and to do good deeds that will help to attain blessings. It directs people to avoid spending their very short lives in vain but rather utilizing it in the most fruitful and meaningful ways. Faith in the Hereafter is one of the important factors that help people to live piously and establish a healthy world order. This world is temporary, while the Hereafter is eternal. It is useless to look for constant happiness and joy in this world. The real happiness is the happiness in the endless Hereafter. Allah's servants should try to find ways to attain that happiness. They should not be deceived by this temporary world and its vain hopes.

3. MANNERS AND GOOD MORALITY (Al-i Imran, 3: 133-136)

وَسَارِعُوا إِلَىٰ مَغْفِرَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَجَنَّةٍ عَرْضُهَا السَّمُوتُ وَالْأَرْضُ أُعِدَّتْ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿133﴾
الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ فِي السَّرَّاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَالْكَاطِمِينَ الْغَيْظَ وَالْعَافِينَ عَنِ النَّاسِ وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ
الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿134﴾ وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا فَعَلُوا فَاحِشَةً أَوْ ظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ ذَكَرُوا اللَّهَ فَاسْتَغْفَرُوا لِذُنُوبِهِمْ
وَمَنْ يَغْفِرِ الذُّنُوبَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَلَمْ يُصِرُّوا عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلُوا وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿135﴾ أُولَٰئِكَ جَزَاءُهُمْ
مَغْفِرَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَجَنَّاتٌ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَنِعْمَ أَجْرُ الْعَامِلِينَ ﴿136﴾

TRANSLATION:

133. Be quick in the race for forgiveness from your Lord, and for a Garden whose width is that (of the whole) of the heavens and of the earth, prepared for the righteous,

134. Those who spend (freely), whether in prosperity, or in adversity; who restrain anger, and pardon (all) men; for Allah loves those who do good;

135. And those who, having done something to be ashamed of, or wronged their own souls, earnestly bring Allah to mind, and ask for forgiveness for their sins,- and who can forgive sins except Allah? And are never obstinate in persisting knowingly in (the wrong) they have done.

136. For such the reward is forgiveness from their Lord, and Gardens with rivers flowing underneath, an eternal dwelling: How excellent a recompense for those who work (and strive)! (Al-i Imran, 3: 133-136)

COMMENTARY:

133rd Verse: “Be quick in the race for forgiveness from Allah, and for the Paradise” means to run to the good deeds that will ensure the believer to be forgiven and enter Paradise. They are to repent for the sins, to do Allah’s commands, and stay away from His prohibitions. The phrase “a Garden whose width is that (of the whole) of the heavens and of the earth” describes the width and largeness of Paradise through figurative expressions. In fact, in the 21st verse of chapter al-Hadid (57), it is clarified as “a Garden (of Bliss), the width whereof is as the width of heaven and earth.” According to narrations, when Heraclius’s emissary asked our Prophet (pbuh) “you invite us to a Paradise whose width is that of the heavens and of the earth. If so, where is the Hell?” Allah Messenger (pbuh) said, “*Fa subhanallah, when the day rises, where the night goes?*” (Ahmad, *Musnad*, IV, 75)

The following incident presents a nice example for how the Companions of the Prophet used to run towards the Paradise: At the Battle of Badr, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) encouraged his Companions to fight and reminded them the Paradise. When the enemy came very close, he said,

“– Get up to enter Paradise which is equal in width to the heavens and the earth!” Upon this, Umair b. al- Humam al-Ansari (r.a.) said:

“– O Messenger of Allah! Is Paradise equal in extent to the heavens and the earth?” He (pbuh) replied:

“– Yes” Umair:

“– My goodness!” Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) asked:

“– *What prompted you to utter these words (i. e. my goodness! ‘)?*” He said:

“– O Messenger of Allah, nothing but the desire that I be among its residents.” Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) told him:

“– *You are (surely) among its residents.*” In order to be strong in the battle, Umair took out some dates from his bag and began to eat them. But then he could not wait and said:

“If I were to live until I have eaten all these dates of mine, it would be a long life.” (The narrator said): He threw away all the dates he had with him. Then he fought the enemies until he was killed and became a martyr. (see Bukhari, Maghazi 17; Muslim, Ijarah 145; *Muwatta’*, Jihad 42)

Allah the Exalted invites His servants to a Paradise whose greatness cannot be comprehended by human reason and informs us that the Paradise is prepared for the pious or the people of *taqwa*. Piety or *taqwa* means to fear from Allah and to be aware of that He constantly watches His servants. Only a strong sense of *taqwa* may save people, who intrinsically keen on stinginess and accumulation of wealth, from such blameworthy attributes and direct them to spend in the path of Allah. Because *taqwa* is a gracious and deep state of consciousness that cleanses the souls from stains, brightens it, and saves it from the chains of the ties and chains of everything other than Allah. This is why Allah the Exalted has granted the Paradise to nobody but His pious servants.

134th Verse: The word “*sarra*” means things and situations that give happiness and joy, while the word “*darra*” means things and situations that gives harm and cause problem. “*Ghayz*” means the anger that people feel towards the things that they do not like. As for the “*kazim al-ghayz*,” it means to restrain anger, not to give unpleasant response or not to take revenge from those who gave harm even when someone is powerful enough to take revenge, but rather show patience. (Tabari, IV, 124)

Here attention is drawn to three important characteristics of pious people of Paradise:

a. They constantly give charity whether in prosperity, or in adversity, whether in happiness or sorrow. Neither do prosperity and the state of happiness spoil and make them selfish, nor do the hardships and adversity cause them forget giving charity. They are always generous and benevolent. The following example is enough to show us how generous the Prophet (pbuh) was even when he was under very difficult conditions:

One day someone came to the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) and asked for something. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) told him:

“– *I do not have anything with me to give you, go and buy something on my behalf. When my goods come, I will pay it.*” Umar, who was not content with putting Allah’s Messenger into hardship, said:

“– O Messenger of Allah! If you have something with you, then you can give it in charity. Allah has not made you responsible for something you cannot afford.” The signs of discontentment from Umar’s words could be seen in the face of Allah’s Messenger (pbuh). Upon this, a companion from Ansar said:

“– May my mother and father be sacrificed for you O Messenger of Allah! Give. Do not be afraid for the owner of the universe would reduce His blessings.” Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) was pleased to hear these words, smiled and said:

“– *I have been ordered to do so*” (Haythami, X, 242).

It is possible see in the following example that generosity is not an attribute related to prosperity, poverty, or wealth but rather related to generosity of heart.

On October 8, 2005, a big earthquake shook Pakistan. More than seventy thousand people passed away. The survivors faced hunger and poverty. On November 24, a young Muslim in Turkey donated half of his wealth to his Muslim brothers and sisters in Pakistan along with the following letter:

“I am the son of a poor family. I have lost my father and my mother is sick. We have two Turkish Liras to buy bread and I am sending one of them to you. Because I have found bread in the trash and this evening, we will break our fast with it. With this one Lira, buy some bread for the children suffered in the quake. This money is earned by lawful ways. I apologize that I could not send all my money, because I need to pay the stamp.”

In fact, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) states the significance of generosity in deserving to enter the Paradise:

“*Generosity is close to Allah, close to Paradise, close to the people and far from the Fire. Stinginess is far from Allah, far from Paradise, far from the people and close to the Fire. The ignorant generous person is more beloved to Allah than the worshipping stingy person.*” (Tirmidhi, Birr 40)

b. They restrain their anger. With the strength they gain from piety, they ascend to a stage higher than the necessary desires of their selves. Thus, they gain a strong spiritual power and succeed to restrain their anger. Our Prophet (pbuh) says in respect to the merits of being able to manage anger:

“*The strong is not the one who overcomes the people by his strength, but the strong is the one who controls himself while in anger.*” (Bukhari, Adab 76; Muslim, Birr 107).

“*On the Day of Judgment, Allah the Almighty will bring forward those who control their anger when they have the power to exercise their anger, and let them choose anyone from the houris*” (Abu Dawud, Adab 3; Tirmidhi, Birr 74).

The poet expresses the psychological aspect of this state with the following lines:

“*Keep your pains in your heart, do not disclose to anyone*

For remembering pain is another pain.” (Ferit Kam)

The following advices of Sheyh Edebali to Osman Gazi is like the reflection of the above and similar verses:

“O my son! Now you are the ruler! From now on, wrath is for us; for you, calmness! For us to be offended; for you to please! For us to accuse; for you to endure! For us, helplessness and error; for you, tolerance! For us, quarrel; for you, justice! For us, envy, rumor, slander; for you, forgiveness!”

O my son!

From now on, it is for us to divide; for you to unite! For us, sloth; for you, warning and encouragement!...”

However, restraining anger is the first step and it is now enough by itself. People may sometimes control their anger just to begrudge or to increase their anger more. In such cases, a momentary anger may turn into a terrible revenge and the anger manifested externally may turn into a hidden internal grudge. Whereas anger and fury are purer and more innocent compared to grudge. This is why the verse in question shows the consequences of the restrained anger in the spirits of the God-fearing believers and states that these consequences are forgiveness and tolerance:

c. They treat everybody with mercy and tolerance even those who harm them. When anger is controlled, it turns into a weight on soul, a fire burning the heart, and a smoke covering the conscience. However, if people can take one more step and forgive, their heart will be expanded and their soul will be saved from its weight and find ways to open new horizons. The heart is saved from the burning effects of the fire and finds peace, tranquility, and relief. By showing compassion and forgiveness, they also help those who hurt them find the straight path.

According to a report, Jafar al-Sadiq (may Allah have mercy on his soul) had a slave, who used to take care of his services. One day, this slave accidentally poured a bowl of soup on Jafar al-Sadiq. Jafar (may Allah have mercy on his soul), who was covered with soup, look at the slave in anger. Upon this, the slave said,

“– My master! **Those who control their anger** are praised in the Qur'an.” Then, Jafar al-Sadiq said

“– I controlled my anger!” Then the slave said,

“– In the same place of the Qur'an, **those who forgive people's mistakes** are also praised.” Jafar al-Sadiq said,

“– I forgive you!..” This time the slave said,

“– At the end of the verse, it is stated “**Allah loves those who do good!**” (Al-i Imran, 3: 134).” Upon this, Jafar al-Sadiq said,

“– Go ahead! You are free. I emancipate you for the sake of Allah!..”

In fact, how remarkable and praiseworthy the following example is.

A student of the late Mahmud Sami Ramazanoğlu -may Allah sanctify his secret-, suffering from depression, had a lapse in judgment and arrived at the door of his master, drunk. The person who happened to open the door reproached him saying

“– Look at you!” he said. “Do you know to whose door you have just come?”

“– Yes, I do” the helpless and forlorn student then replied. “But is there any other door that can give a warm hug?” Sami Effendi -may Allah sanctify his secret-, hearing the entire conversation, quickly came to the door and took his emotionally hurt student inside, ushering him to the palace of his heart. He revived his desolate heart with love, mercy and compassion. Privileged to receive such sensitive treatment, the student, in no time, abandoned his bad ways and joined the ranks of the righteous.

135th - 136th Verses: after stating the characteristics of one group of God-fearing believers in the previous verse, in these verses the characteristics of another group of God-fearing believers are mentioned. They are believers who commit sins due to human weaknesses, but then repent for their sins. The word “*fahishah*” mentioned in the verse denotes to really shameful deeds, while the phrase “wronged their own souls” refers to all kinds of minor and major sins. When some of the pious believers commit a sin or do something wrong due to human nature, they immediately remember Allah and ask forgiveness for their sins out of their modesty. Indeed, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh): *“There is no man who commits a sin, then stands for purification, then performs Salat, then seeks forgiveness from Allah, except that Allah forgives him”* (Tirmidhi, Tafsir 3/3006). They do not knowingly insist on their sins. They regret for what they did and ask for forgiveness both by their tongue and by their heart. They rush to do good deeds that may cover their sins. In this way, they strive to attain the forgiveness of Allah. Because they know that only Oft-forgiving and All-Merciful Allah may actually forgive the sins and no other being has that authority. There is no being more powerful in forgiveness than Allah who loves those who forgive and do good to others. Therefore, Allah the Almighty forgives those who sincerely repent their sins and bestows them with abundant blessings. He will place them in His Paradise where they will stay forever as if they did not commit any sin.

4. BROTHERHOOD-UKHUWWAH (al-Hujurat, 49: 10)

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ أَخَوَيْكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ ﴿١٠﴾

TRANSLATION:

10. All believers are but brethren. Hence, [whenever they are at odds,] make peace between your two brethren, and remain conscious of God, so that you might be graced with His mercy. (al-Hujurat, 49: 10)

COMMENTARY:

10th Verse: Faith is the most important link that makes all believers brothers. They are brothers and sisters in religion and in protection of their rights even though not all of them are related by blood or lineage. In this respect, brotherhood in religion is stronger than brotherhood in lineage. Because the blood relationship is cut when it is not also linked by brotherhood in religion, whereas the latter does not cut off because of the differences of lineage. When two Muslim individuals or communities have a quarrel, they should immediately make peace as a requirement of their brotherhood in faith. In this context, it is necessary to fear Allah, to follow

His commands, and to fear from making mistakes and receiving His punishment in respect to fulfilling the requirements of brotherhood, not quarrelling with brothers and sisters, and finding ways to make peace between them. This way, it would become possible to reach divine mercy.

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) say in regards to the importance and the rights of brotherhood in faith,

"The believers as regards their being merciful among themselves and showing love among themselves and being kind, resembling one body, so that, if any part of the body is not well then the whole body shares the sleeplessness (insomnia) and fever with it." (Bukhari, Adab 27; Muslim, Birr 66)

How remarkable and noteworthy the following example is:

One day, Sari al-Saqati (q.s) was explaining the Prophet's saying

"Those who do not care about the pains and hardships of believers are not among them" (Hakim, IV, 352; Haythami, I, 87) to his students, one of his students excitedly entered the room:

"– My master! The whole street was burned down except your house." Sari al-Saqati said "Alhamdulillah!.." Thirty years after this incident, he said one of his friends:

"– By saying "Alhamdulillah!.." on that day, I thought just myself even for a moment and did not think about the pains of those who had lost their houses. For the last thirty years, I have been repenting for my heedlessness of that moment!.."

Another noteworthy example is as follows:

Yaman Dede, who had previously been an Orthodox Christian, found the guidance in Maw-lana Jalaladdin Rumi's *Mathnawi* and became a lover of the Prophet Muhammad. He adorned his morals as the morality of the Prophet and His Companions. The following incident is enough to show his this state:

One day one of his students asked during a lesson:

"– My master! Which one would you prefer: committing a major sin or being infected with leprosy?"

Yaman Dede responded saying:

"– Instead of being away from the spiritual world of the friends of Allah even for a moment, I prefer getting burned and turning into ashes."

This is how vast the horizons of self-sacrifice, mercy, and love attained by those who embraced Islam is.

Our Prophet (pbuh) says:

"A Muslim is a brother of another Muslim, so he should not oppress him, nor should he hand him over to an oppressor. Whoever fulfilled the needs of his brother, Allah will fulfill his needs; whoever brought his (Muslim) brother out of a discomfort, Allah will bring him out of the discomforts of the Day of Resurrection, and whoever screened a Muslim, Allah will screen him on the Day of Resurrection." (Bukhari, Mazalim, 3; Muslim, Birr, 58)

“Don’t nurse grudge and don’t bid him out for raising the price and don’t nurse aversion or enmity and don’t enter into a transaction when the others have entered into that transaction and be as fellow-brothers and servants of Allah. A Muslim is the brother of a Muslim. He neither oppresses him nor humiliates him nor looks down upon him. The piety is here, (and while saying so) he pointed towards his chest thrice. It is a serious evil for a Muslim that he should look down upon his brother Muslim. All things of a Muslim are inviolable for his brother in faith: his blood, his wealth and his honor.” (Muslim, Birr 32)

5. SPENDING FOR THE SAKE OF ALLAH AND CHARITY (Al-Baqara, 2: 261-266)

The best way to cleanse the self from blameworthy attributes, attain a sound heart, and become a perfect human being, and thus to watch the divine flows in the universe as Allah’s creating, resurrecting, and ending lives is to spending for the sake of Allah. The following verses express this issue through some representations:

مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ حَبَّةٍ أَنْبَتَتْ سَبْعَ سَنَابِلٍ فِي كُلِّ
سُنْبُلَةٍ مِائَةٌ حَبَّةٌ وَاللَّهُ يُضَاعِفُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿261﴾

TRANSLATION:

261. The parable of those who spend their possessions for the sake of God is that of a grain out of which grow seven ears, in every ear a hundred grains: for God grants manifold increase unto whom He wills; and God is infinite, all-knowing. (Al-Baqara, 2: 261)

COMMENTARY:

261st Verse: This verse draws a picture of nature that exhilarates the emotions, deeply affects the consciences, and describes the state of believers’ spendings for the sake of Allah. A man who is ready to plant his field and has only one grain in his hands. He plants the grain in his field. A root sprouts on the ground. Then, seven ears come out of that root. There are seven hundred grains in each one of the ears. It is even possible to get more products from one grain with the permission of Allah. Because Allah is Wasi’. His blessings and provisions to His servants never become scanty or stops. He is Alim. He knows even the intentions and thoughts hidden in the depths of heart and as a result, He gives His blessings multiple times. Believers’ charity given for the sake of Allah resembles to the natural event described in this picture. In other words, the state of those who spend their wealth for the sake of Allah is like the farmer who plants his grain and gets seven hundred or more grains in return.

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) explains the increase in the charity given for the path of Allah by means of the following comparison: *“No one gives a date as charity out of his honest earning, but Allah accepts it with His Right Hand, and then fosters it as one of you fosters the colt or a young she-camel, till it becomes like a mountain or even greater.”* (Bukhari, Zakat 8; Muslim, Zakat 63)

What is aimed with such depictions is that how blessed and rewarding are those who strive and spend on the path of Allah even as small as a grain. Therefore, believers should not belittle even grain particles, waste them, and be jealous of anything from Allah. They should spend whatever they have, even if it is as small as a grain particle, for the sake of Allah and should not hold themselves from giving charity. As a grain planted to earth with Allah's order of wisdom and His secrets behind the resurrection sprouts and produces seven hundred grains, people will be resurrected after death and their deeds done in this world will be blessed, increased, and measured on the divine balance. This depiction also presents a good news about that one can harvest seven hundred grains out of a single grain provided that the science of agriculture is improved and applied. Thanks to the modern technical improvements in the science of agriculture, it is experienced to produce two thousand grains from one grain by planting the sods separately as seedlings after applying some crossing processes.

الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ لَا يُتْبِعُونَ مَا أَنْفَقُوا مَنًّا وَلَا أَذًى لَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿262﴾ قَوْلٌ مَعْرُوفٌ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ خَيْرٌ مِنْ صَدَقَةٍ يَتْبَعُهَا أَذًى وَاللَّهُ غَنِيٌّ حَلِيمٌ ﴿263﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تُبْطِلُوا صَدَقَاتِكُمْ بِالْمَنِّ وَالْأَذَى كَالَّذِي يُنْفِقُ مَالَهُ رِثَاءَ النَّاسِ وَلَا يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَمَثَلُهُ كَمَثَلِ صَفْوَانٍ عَلَيْهِ تُرَابٌ فَأَصَابَهُ وَابِلٌ فَتَرَكَهُ صَلْدًا لَا يَقْدِرُونَ عَلَى شَيْءٍ مِمَّا كَسَبُوا وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿264﴾

TRANSLATION:

262. They who spend their possessions for the sake of God and do not thereafter mar their spending by stressing their own benevolence and hurting [the feelings of the needy] shall have their reward with 'their Sustainer, and no fear need they have, and neither shall they grieve.

263. A kind word and the veiling of another's want is better than a charitable deed followed by hurt; and God is self-sufficient, forbearing.

264. O you who have attained to faith! Do not deprive your charitable deeds of all worth by stressing your own benevolence and hurting [the feelings of the needy], as does he who spends his wealth only to be seen and praised by men, and believes not in God and the Last Day: for his parable is that of a smooth rock with [a little] earth upon it - and then a rain-storm smites it and leaves it hard and bare. Such as these shall have no gain whatever from all their [good] works: for God does not guide people who refuse to acknowledge the truth.

COMMENTARY:

262nd Verse: In order to receive the multiple rewards heralded in the previous verses for spending on the path and for the sake of Allah, one should protect them from the calamities that may destroy their rewards and turn them into useless deeds. "Hurting the feelings of the needy" and "tormenting them" comes at the top of the list of such calamities.

The term "*mann*" mentioned in the verse means that the giver of the charity says to its receiver "I did such and such goodness for you," reminds him/her the good deed he/she did, brags

about it. By doing this, the giver make the receiver feel that he/she owes to the giver. Such a behavior hurts the feelings of the needy, reduces or even completely destroys the value of charity. “Aza” means to repel and to hurt. Complaining about the mistakes and deficiencies of the needy, talking against him/her, and reminding the goodness done to them are all accepted as *aza* (hurting). Telling the needy words such as “how many times I give you charity, but you have not even thank me,” “How many times you come and ask help from me, aren’t you ashamed?” or “You are always coming to tell your needs. May Allah save me from you and keep you away from me” can be given as examples of insensitive statements. If those who spend for the sake of Allah avoid such wrong behaviors, carefully protect their charities, and expect the return for their ties only from Allah, then Allah the Almighty gives their rewards in the best way. There will be no fear for them in the Hereafter and they will not be sad for the loss of their spiritual rewards.

According to the reports, this verse was revealed about Uthman and Abdurrahman ibn Awf (may Allah be pleased with them). Abdurrahman ibn Awf (r.a) donated four thousand dirhams that was half of his wealth and said, “I have eight thousand dirhams. I have kept four-thousand of them for myself and for my family and given the rest to my Sustainer as a good loan.” Upon this, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) said, “*May Allah bless both what you kept for yourself and what you give as charity.*” Uthman (r.a.) donated one thousand camels and one thousand gold dinars at the Battle of Tabuk. He bought Well of Ruma and endowed it for the benefit of Muslims. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) raised his hands and prayed, “*O Allah! I am content with him, please, You too, be content with him!*” (Wahidi, p. 89)

263rd Verse: There is no need to remind the charity and hurt the feelings of the poor, after giving charity for the sake of Allah. Because it is not an obligatory act, but rather a voluntary one. Servants give charity just to be able to earn spiritual rewards and gain the divine contentedness. If they do not want it, they do not have to do it. Because speaking nicely to those who need help or ask help, forgiving the mistakes, if any, is better than giving charity by hurting the people’s feelings. There is no need to suffer pain in vain. In this context, Allah the Almighty gives us the following advice:

“And if you [must] turn aside from those [that are in want, because you yourself are] seeking to obtain your Lord’s grace and hoping for it, at least speak unto them with gentle speech!” (al-Isra, 17: 28)

Aziz Mahmud Hudayi (q.s) says, “turning a beggar by saying him nice words is better than the charity of a person who hurts the dignity of the needy. Because nice words, even if they are said to turn the needy back empty handed, lighten the needy people’s heart and cheer their soul. Charity gives benefit to people not only by providing them material help but also by making the heart happy. One cannot achieve full benefit when something that benefits the body is united with something that hurts the soul. Of course, something that lightens the soul is better than the things that benefit the body. Because human spirituality is at a more exalted and honorable level than human body created from dust.”

When Abdullah b. Zubair’s son Amir wanted to give charity to the needy, he would prefer the following method not to hurt their feelings.

He would put the money sac next to the shoes of the needy when they were doing prostration and leave. When he was asked,

“– why do not you send someone to deliver you charity?” he responded,

“– I just do not want them to look down when the person I helped see me or the person with whom I send the charity. This is why I prefer this method.” (Ibn al-Jawzi, *Sifat al-Safwa*, II, 411)

The following story is also noteworthy.

An Indian dervish accompanied a merchant from Nishapur in a journey. The dervish was walking on bare foot and did not protect his feet from stones and thorns. The merchant felt sorry for him and gave him his shoes. Indian dervish prayed for him and ardently continued to walk. The merchant from Nishapur constantly tried to dominate him saying:

“– Walk this way or that way; step on the stones this way or that way. Watch your feet from the thorns!” The Indian was tired of merchant’s commands, took off the shoes and placed before the merchant and said,

“– Take them. I do not need your conditional help. I have been walking bare foot for thirty years without any condition. I cannot restrain myself now and put myself under someone’s obligation and command just for a pair of shoes!” (Ahmet Eflaki, *Âriflerin Menkıbeleri*, I, 414)

Of course, Allah is the Rich. He does not need the charity and the goodness done by His servants. He is Mighty enough to provide abundant sustenance to the needy and the helpless, and to turn the rich into poor and needy. Likewise, Allah is the Forbearing. He does not punish immediately those who commit sins. He gives time to repent to those who hurt the feelings of needy by reminding them the charity.

264th Verse: Using the remarkable depiction mentioned in the verse, Allah the Almighty makes evident that the charities given for His sake should be purified from reminding them and from all kinds of hurting acts and should not be devoid of rewards.

In the first part of the verse, those who give charities by reminding it and hurting the feelings of the needy are compared to those who spend their wealth only to be seen and praised by others, but believe neither in Allah nor in the Last Day. And the charity given with reminders and hurting the needy is likened to unacceptable charity given by those who do not believe in Allah and the Hereafter. Thus, it is stated that just like hypocrisy and vanity cancel the charity, reminding and hurting the feelings of the needy also cancel its rewards. Because both of them are the kinds of charities that are not given for the sake of Allah.

In the next part of the verse, the state of those who spend their wealth only to be seen and praised by others and do not expect any reward from Allah in the Hereafter are explained by means of following example:

There is a smooth rock with [a little] earth upon it - and then a rainstorm smites it and leaves no trace of earth on the rock. Only the rock remains without any earth on it.

This example depicts very hard hearts of those who do not believe in Allah and the Hereafter, but spend their wealth to be praised by people. Their hearts do not understand and are unaware of the peace and tranquility blessed by faith. However, they want to cover the hardness of their heart by a shell covert by vanity. This heart covered by a shell of vanity is depicted by a smooth rock with lots of earth on it. It is a hard rock with no plant on it. In order to soften its hardness, its face is covered with some earth, just as vanity covers the hearts devoid of the light

of faith. Just as a strong rainstorm will smite that hard rock, swipe the earth over it, and leaves no traces of plants, the hearts that give charity just to be praised and seen by other neither bear fruit nor bring rewards in the Hereafter (*Fi Zilal*, I, (3rd section of the Qur'an) 56).

This depiction can be interpreted as follows: Those who remind their charity hurt the feelings of the needy, and hypocrites are like the hard rock; their charities are like the earth on that rock, and the Judgment Day is like the strong rainstorm. When the Judgment Day comes, all their charities will go away like the earth on the hard rock swiped by strong rainstorm. Because on that day, it will become evident that they did not give those charities for the sake of Allah. Those who give charity, even though they do not believe in Allah, just to be seen by people and those who give charity and constantly remind it and hurt the dignity of the needy will get no benefit from their deeds on that day. Because Allah the Almighty does not let the unbelievers to perform deeds that will benefit them in the Hereafter. In this context, believers should also be careful when they are giving charity and be scared that their charities might be in vain if they do not pay attention.

Third meaning can be this: when a seed is planted to the little amount of earth on a hard smooth rock and strong rainstorm smites that rock, the earth is swiped and the seed remains alone. Even the seed might be swiped away. The person who plants the seed is left empty handed and finds nothing when he needs his plants.

The following divine statements about the desperate situation in the Hereafter of the unbelievers, hypocrites, and those who do not perform their deeds for the sake of Allah are very admonitory:

“Say: “Shall we tell you who are the greatest losers in whatever they may do? “[It is] they whose labor has gone astray in [the pursuit of no more than] this world’s life, and who none the less think that they are doing good works.” (Al-Kahf, 18: 103-104)

“We shall have turned towards all the [supposedly good] deeds they ever wrought, and shall have transformed them into scattered dust.” (al-Furqan, 25: 23)

In this respect, Allah's Messenger (pbuh) said, *“Verily, what I fear most for you is the hidden shirk (lesser idolatry).”* The Companions asked, “O Messenger of Allah! What is hidden shirk?” Allah's Messenger (pbuh) answered: *“It is showing off”*, and continued, *“Allah the Exalted will say to them (who show off), on the Day of Resurrection when the people are being rewarded for their deeds: Go to those whom you wished to show off in the world and look for your reward with them.”* (Ahmad, *Musnad*, V, 428-429)

Likewise, the information given by our Prophet (pbuh) regarding the first people who will be called before him on the Judgment Day will be a man who memorized the Qur'an, and a man who was killed in Allah's cause, and a wealthy man is very alarming. All of those men fail at their questioning and are sent to Hell because they did their deeds not for the sake of Allah but to show off and to be praised by people (see Tirmidhi, *Zuhd* 48).

As for the pious who sincerely spend their wealth for the sake of Allah, their state in the Hereafter is explained in the following verses:

وَمَثَلُ الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ ابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِ اللَّهِ وَتَثْبِيًا مِنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ كَمَثَلِ
جَنَّةٍ بَرْنُورَةٍ أَصَابَهَا وَابِلٌ فَآتَتْ أُكُلَهَا ضِعْفَيْنِ فَإِنْ لَمْ يُصِبْهَا وَابِلٌ فَطُلَّ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ
بَصِيرٌ ﴿265﴾ أَيَوَدُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَنْ تَكُونَ لَهُ جَنَّةٌ مِنْ نَخِيلٍ وَأَعْنَابٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا
الْأَنْهَارُ لَهُ فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ وَأَصَابَهُ الْكِبَرُ وَلَهُ ذُرِّيَّةٌ ضُعَفَاءُ فَأَصَابَهَا إِعْصَارٌ فِيهِ نَارٌ
فَاخْتَرَقَتْ كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ الْآيَاتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿266﴾

TRANSLATION:

265. And the parable of those who spend their possessions out of a longing to please God, and out of their own inner certainty, is that of a garden on high, fertile ground: a rain-storm smites it, and thereupon it brings forth its fruit twofold; and if no rainstorm smites it, soft rain [falls upon it]. And God sees all that you do.

266. Would any of you like to have a garden of date-palms and vines, through which running waters flow, and have all manner of fruit therein - and then be overtaken by old age, with only weak children to [look after] him-and then [see] it smitten by a fiery whirlwind and utterly scorched? In this way, God makes clear His messages unto you, so that you might take thought.

COMMENTARY:

265th Verse: In this verse, the state of those who generously spend their wealth for the sake of Allah in order to strengthen their faith and establish a perfect Muslim society is presented through a depiction of a garden similar to the above-mentioned ones. There is a garden that gets enough rain, sun light, and wind to grow the plants in the most productive way. A good rain hits that garden, wind blows from the best directions, and sun reflects its light on it in the most beneficial way. As a result, this garden gives twice as much fruits and vegetables. For example, the garden that produces one thousand kilogram fruits and vegetables is now giving two thousand kilograms thanks to the rain. This garden, which usually gives seven hundred grains for a grain, is now giving one thousand four hundred grains for a grain. This garden is such a productive one that even if it does not receive a good amount of rain, a light rain, a small amount of sprinkles, or mist becomes enough for it to give its products.

This depiction explains the state of those who spend their wealth for the path of Allah. The situation of this garden is like the state of those who spend their wealth in order to gain the pleasure of Allah, and in this way to protect themselves, their wealth, their deeds, and their Muslim brothers and sisters from the destructive tendencies and all kinds of tremors, to keep them on the straight path, to make doing goodness and giving charity their habits, and to perform all the other good deeds and acts of worship easily. It is the state of those who sincerely spend their wealth on the needy in accordance with the manners and rules of giving charity in order to get the most from the seed they plant. (Razi, VII, 55; Elmalılı, II, 902)

According to another interpretation, this depiction draws the picture of a believing heart. A heart that is shaped by faith and a face that is beautified by smiles spends only to gain the con-

tentedness of Allah. It gives the charity by believing with heart and soul that it is a good thing to give for the sake of Allah. Its spending comes out of its faith and finds its roots in the depths of its conscience. (Fi Zilal, I, (3rd section of the Qur'an), 56) This believing heart is likened to a productive garden that has lots of earth in it, gets green with the strong rains, and has many plants growing in it. As this rain causes many crops grow in the garden, believers' charities for the sake of Allah purify their hearts and improve their relationship with Allah the Almighty. Such charities cleanse and increase their wealth as much as Allah wishes. They also help to improve and restore the life of Muslim society in general, as the garden gets better together with all its produce thanks to the rain.

Even if that garden does not receive much rain, a small amount of sprinkles would be enough for it to give its regular produce. Likewise, even a small amount of charity would be enough for a believer that is not very rich, but is ready to spend for the sake of Allah. It would be enough for him to feel the excitement of giving charity, to recognize himself/herself as a brother/sister of all believers, to feel the pains and share the happiness of Muslim society, and to become an inseparable part of that society. Because never does their flesh reach Allah, and neither their blood: it is only the believers' God-consciousness, good intentions, and sincerity that reaches Him (al-Hajj, 22: 37).

266th Verse: With the following depiction, Allah the Exalted explains the sorrowful end of those who give charity not in accordance with His contentedness but to show off. In this depiction, there is a man who has a garden that contains date grooves and vineyards. It is a very nice and perfect garden with streams flowing through it. It is harvest season and trees and vines are ready to be harvested. There are all kinds of fruits and vegetables in the garden. The atmosphere is filled with happiness, joy, comfort, and goodness. However, this beautiful state does not go forever, and things begins to change. First, the man gets too old to work and starts to need other people's help. He also has children who are weak and miserable. The man is also responsible from their care and living. Therefore, he is in utmost need, distress, and misery. When he is such a bad state, a strong storm hits his beautiful garden and destroys everything. Who would want to be in that man's shoes? One should try to imagine how great this man's sadness and sorrow under such circumstances would be. His problems and troubles manifest themselves with the destruction of his garden and all of its crops. He is also too old and too weak to work. He is hopeless to get help from people even though he needs it. His sorrow and pain increases by some other people's, i.e. his family members, need for his care and requests for food and drinks.

Just as depicted in this story, in respect to hoping Paradise in the Hereafter, those who give for the sake of Allah are like the man whose only support is the garden. However, when they remind their goodness and hurt the feelings of the needy, their state turns into the garden that is destroyed by a storm. This is followed by regret, confusion, and misery. When the wealth, which can also be source of misery, is not spent in accordance with its proper manners and rules as a preparation for the Judgement Day, the owner of wealth will find nothing on the Judgment Day when he needs the rewards of his spendings most. Thus, he will face the greatest of miseries and sorrows (Razi, VII, 58).

The rewards of the good deeds done with faith will be the Paradise, whereas the bad deeds such as unbelief, show off, hurting other's feelings by constantly reminding the good deed, which

prevent doing such good deeds with sincerity and for the sake of Allah, are like the destructive storm. It burns down all good deeds and destroys the possibility to benefit from their rewards when they are needed most. Therefore, believers should hurry and do the right thing. They should be careful not to let the destructive storm destroy their fruitful garden. This is why Allah the Almighty explains His verses for us to understand and act in accordance with their meanings.

6. ACTS OF WORSHIP (FASTING: Al-Baqara, 2:183-187)

Following the commands and prohibitions ordained by Allah the Exalted can only be possible by a thorough purification of heart and self-discipline. Such a discipline can be realized by patience, avoiding the desires of self, effective performance of the acts of worship, physical and spiritual ascetic discipline. Fasting comes at the top of the list of the acts of worship that will realize this discipline. This is explained in the following verses:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ﴿183﴾
 أَيَّامًا مَعْدُودَاتٍ فَمَنْ كَانَ مِنْكُمْ مَرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ وَعَلَى الَّذِينَ يُطِيقُونَهُ
 فِدْيَةٌ طَعَامُ مِسْكِينٍ فَمَنْ تَطَوَّعَ خَيْرًا فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَهُ وَأَنْ تَصُومُوا خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ
 ﴿184﴾ شَهْرَ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنْزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ هُدًى لِلنَّاسِ وَبَيِّنَاتٍ مِنَ الْهُدَى وَالْفُرْقَانِ فَمَنْ
 شَهِدَ مِنْكُمُ الشَّهْرَ فَلْيَصُمْهُ وَمَنْ كَانَ مَرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمُ
 الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ وَلِتُكْمِلُوا الْعِدَّةَ وَلِتُكَبِّرُوا اللَّهَ عَلَى مَا هَدَيْكُم وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ
 ﴿185﴾ وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لِي
 وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا بِي لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشُدُونَ ﴿186﴾ أَحَلَّ لَكُمْ لَيْلَةَ الصِّيَامِ الرَّفَثُ إِلَى نِسَائِكُمْ هُنَّ لِبَاسٌ
 لَكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لِبَاسٌ لَهُنَّ عَلِمَ اللَّهُ أَنَّكُمْ كُنْتُمْ تَخْتَانُونَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ فَتَابَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَعَفَا عَنْكُمْ فَالْآنَ
 بَاشِرُوهُنَّ وَابْتَغُوا مَا كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَكُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا حَتَّى يَتَبَيَّنَ لَكُمُ الْخَيْطُ الْأَبْيَضُ مِنَ الْخَيْطِ
 الْأَسْوَدِ مِنَ الْفَجْرِ ثُمَّ أَتُمُوا الصِّيَامَ إِلَى اللَّيْلِ وَلَا تُبَاشِرُوهُنَّ وَأَنْتُمْ عَاكِفُونَ فِي الْمَسَاجِدِ تِلْكَ
 حُدُودُ اللَّهِ فَلَا تَقْرَبُوهَا كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ آيَاتِهِ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ ﴿187﴾

TRANSLATION:

183. O YOU who have attained to faith! Fasting is ordained for you as it was ordained for those before you, so that you might remain conscious of God.

184. [fasting] during a certain number of days. But whoever of you is ill, or on a journey, [shall fast instead for the same] number of other days; and [in such cases] it is incumbent upon those who can afford it to make sacrifice by feeding a needy person. And whoever does

more good than he is bound to do does good unto himself thereby; for to fast is to do good unto yourselves - if you but knew it.

185. It was the month of Ramadan in which the Qur'an was [first] bestowed from on high as a guidance unto man and a self-evident proof of that guidance, and as the standard by which to discern the true from the false. Hence, whoever of you lives to see this month shall fast throughout it; but he that is ill, or on a journey, [shall fast instead for the same] number of other days. God wills that you shall have ease, and does not will you to suffer hardship; but [He desires] that you complete the number [of days required], and that you extol God for His having guided you aright, and that you render your thanks [unto Him].

186. and if My servants ask you about Me - behold, I am near; I respond to the call of him who calls, whenever he calls unto Me: let them, then, respond unto Me, and believe in Me, so that they might follow the right way.

187. It is lawful for you to go in unto your wives during the night preceding the [day's] fast: they are as a garment for you, and you are as a garment for them. God is aware that you would have deprived yourselves of this right, and so He has turned unto you in His mercy and removed this hardship from you. Now, then, you may lie with them skin to skin, and avail yourselves of that which God has ordained for you, and eat and drink until you can discern the white streak of dawn against the blackness of night, and then resume fasting until nightfall; but do not lie with them skin to skin when you are about to abide in meditation in houses of worship. These are the bounds set by God: do not, then, offend against them - [for] it is thus that God makes clear His messages unto mankind, so that they might remain conscious of Him.

COMMENTARY:

183rd Verse: The word "*sawm*" mentioned in the verse literally means to hold oneself from actions such as eating, speaking, walking, and to stay still. In Islamic terminology, "*sawm*" means to hold oneself from eating, drinking, and sexual relations from dawn to sunset with the intention to worship Allah. Since *sawm* or fasting is an act of worship performed physically, it is an individual obligation (*fard ayni*) upon every Muslim who has the necessary conditions.

However, the nature of people's fasting changes according to their spiritual levels. For example, holding oneself just from eating, drinking, and sexual desires is the common people's fasting. The spiritually elite (*hawas*) people's fasting is to stay away from all kinds of prohibitions. The fasting of the more elite (*hawas al-hawas*) people's fasting is to avoid all kinds of thoughts other than Allah the Almighty. In this respect, in order to reach the real meaning of fasting, not only the stomach but also the heart along with the entire body should observe fasting. The heart should contemplate about the value of the blessings given by Allah and permeate deep into the spiritual meaning of fasting.

The phrase "**as it was ordained for those before you**" (Al-Baqara, 2: 183) consists of the following subtleties:

- To pay utmost attention to fasting. Allah the Almighty has prescribed fasting to Muslim ummah as He ordained it to earlier societies. It shows how effective fasting is in restoring the

self and how abundant its rewards are. It also shows that humanity significantly needs this act of worship to ensure order and discipline and they get endless benefits from its performance.

- To encourage Muslims to observe this act of worship not to fall behind previous nations. Because Muslims compete in acts of worship. They especially liked to be superior in this completion to the people of the Book (*ahl al-kitab*). They wanted to prevent them saying “we are the people of Sharia” and to brag about themselves.

- To prevent the believers thinking and suffering from the idea that the hardship of fasting is prescribed only upon them and to inform them it has been a divine law practiced for a long time. Because when a hardship is shared by more people, it becomes easier to bear it.

- To encourage Muslims' devoutness, to prevent their laxity in this matter, and to ensure them to perform this act of worship with more efforts than the earlier nations. (Ibn Ashur, *Tahrir*, II, 156-157)

Sawn or fasting is one of the greatest pillars of Islam. Fasting per se is a fight against inner self. It holds an important place in disciplining and purifying the inner self. The ambitions for harmful things are calmed down by means of fasting. Fasting is an act of consciousness and heart. It is a beautiful act to feel the taste of life and understand the value of free will. However, it seems to be the most difficult and heaviest one upon the inner self from among the divine commands. Based on this wisdom, first ritual prayer that is the lightest one of the religious orders was ordained. Almsgiving was the second and fasting, which the hardest one among them, was commanded as the third among the divine commands. In this way, the method of gradualism is followed in the ordination of divine commands and thus the believers are accustomed to them. (Elmalılı, I, 627-628)

There is no easiness in the characteristic of fasting, on the contrary human nature resists and opposes it. This is why the most obvious aspect of fasting is sincerity and it is not possible to mix it with show off. In fact, it is expressed in one of the sayings of the Prophet (pbuh):

“Every (good) deed of the son of Adam would be multiplied. A good deed is multiplied at least ten times, which may go up to seven hundredfold reward. Allah, the Exalted and Majestic, has said: “With the exception of fasting, for it is done for Me and I will give a reward for it, for one abandons his passion and food for My sake. There are two occasions of joy for one who fasts, joy when he breaks fasting, and joy when he meets his Lord, and the breath (of an observer of fast) is sweeter to Allah than the fragrance of musk.” (Muslim, *Siyam* 164)

Fasting also supports the person psychologically and ensures the balance between body and soul. It strengthens human will power. Addicts who cannot bear even an hour being away from their addiction in other days of the year become very patient when they are fasting. Fasting leaves positive effects on fears and anxieties, disorders of consciousness, nervous breakdowns, and strengthens the endurance of the nerves against heavy psychological depressions. Thus, it helps psychological therapy. Fasting weakens the sexual desires and defeats the passions of inner self. Fasting also contains a physical discipline which has certain health and medical benefits by giving the stomach and the body a chance to rest. Fasting enables our stomach and our digestive organs that work eleven months without a break take a rest and refresh. It increases our body's resistance against diseases. From social perspective, fasting removes the imbalance between the

rich and the poor and thus helps to establish spiritual, economical, and social balance between them. It makes the rich feel what hunger and lack of means is. Thus, it helps them to understand the state of the poor and treat them leniently.

By keeping sexual desires under control, fasting prevents the illegal relations that destroys lineages and society. It makes people see how insignificant the desires of this world and the love for worldly ranks and positions are. In this way, it strengthens the loyalty of the heart to Allah and gives it the purity of angles. Those who fast manage to control all kinds of their desires. They know how to use and satisfy the desires of inner self through lawful channels. In this context, our Prophet (pbuh) says:

“O young men, those among you who can support a wife should marry, for it restrains eyes from casting (evil glances). And preserves one from immorality; but those who cannot should devote themselves to fasting for it is a means of controlling sexual desire.” (Bukhari, Sawm 20; Muslim, Nikah 1, 3).

Despite all these benefits of fasting, its real wisdom is to obey Allah’s command and feel the joy of servitude, to purify the soul from the stains of showing off and thus strengthen the sincerity, to take shelter under the protection of Allah and fight with inner self, and to reach the level of piety and fear of Allah.

184th Verse: What is meant by “certain number of days” is the month of Ramadan when fasting is obligatory upon believers. These days are limited and a few compared to the rest of the year. There is no need to be scared and frightened before this divine command, because Allah the Exalted has prescribed fasting upon believers by paying attention to the special circumstances of His servants and in a way that would not become a danger for their health and use up all their energy. It is not obligatory to fast in the month of Ramadan for those who are sick and on a journey. They fast a day for a day after their situation goes back to normal, in other words when the sick gets well and the traveler goes back to his/her hometown. As for those who have difficulty in fasting such as the old, nursing and pregnant women, they do not have to fast either. If there is a possibility that they can fast in the future, they wait and fast a day for a day when they are able to fast. Otherwise, they need to give monetary compensation (*fidya*) for each day they could not fast. The monetary compensation that needs to be paid for one day is equal to the daily food of a poor. Fidyah can be paid in the form of wheat, barley, and date as well as any food item that fit the needs of the poor in accordance with time and place. To be generous when paying fidya and to pay as much as possible will be a reason to receive many blessings both in this world and in the Hereafter. However, it is a fact that being able to fast, no matter under which circumstances, i.e. despite being on a journey, being old or sickness, etc., is very beneficial for Muslims. It will bring forth great blessings and goodness both in this world and in the Hereafter.

One of the two conditions in order for the acts of worship to be acceptable is believing in Allah and the other one is sincerity. It means to perform the acts for the sake of Allah by expecting its reward only from Allah and avoiding showing off. In the following hadith, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) informs us how the former sins of those who observe Ramadan fasting by believing in that it is obligatory, and has many merits and benefits will be forgiven:

“Whoever fasts in the month of Ramadan out of sincere faith, and hoping for a reward from Allah, and then all his previous sins will be forgiven.” (Bukhari, Sawm 6; Muslim, Siyam, 203)

185th Verse: The month of Ramadan¹⁶¹ when fasting is obligatory upon believers is also the month in which the revelation of the Qur'an began. The Noble Qur'an started to be revealed at the Night of Power (Laylat al-Qadr) in Ramadan and its revelation continued piece-by-piece throughout the twenty-three-year long prophethood life of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh). This process was completed short time before the demise of our Prophet. The Holy Qur'an is a guidance showing the straight path to humanity. It is a truthful and trustworthy book of guidance. It consists of clear proof that invites to the straight path and miraculous statements that destroys the arguments of disbelief. The Qur'an is also Furqan, i.e. it distinguishes the truth and the falsity, right and wrong, beautiful and ugly, good and bad from each other. It advises to follow the truth and avoid the falsehood. This is why the month of Ramadan is a very blessed and honorable time of the year. Those who reach this month and have the necessary conditions to fast should observe their fasting in this month. Those who are sick or on a journey do not have to fast and they may perform their fasting later when they are able to do it. Not only in respect to fasting but also in all other aspects of life, Allah the Almighty who is All-Merciful to His servants always asks from His servants to do the easy acts that are manageable and comfortably performed. He has not prescribed any ruling that force or are beyond their capabilities. Therefore, there is no room in Islam for "*taklif ma la yutaq*," which means requirement of things that are beyond human abilities.

Therefore, believers with strong faith and mind should correctly understand Allah's commands and obey them as necessary. Since fasting is the subject of the above-mentioned verses, one should perform it completely in the amount of its days. One should acknowledge and confirm the Oneness, Unity, and Greatness of Allah by saying "Allahu Akbar, i.e. Allah is the Greatest" in daily prayers, festival prayer, and festival sermon. Because Allah has bestowed upon people the guidance and shown the straight path as a blessing for them. Believers' most important task is to thank Allah for the blessings that He gave. Believers should know that none of their deeds is in vain and they will receive their rewards. Because Allah the Almighty is very close to His servants.

186th Verse: Regarding the occasion of the revelation of this verse, the following incident is narrated. A bedouin came to the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) and said, "If our Lord is very close to us, then let's pray to Him silently in our hearts. If He is far away from us, then let's pray to Him out loud." Upon this, Allah the Exalted revealed this verse to inform His servants that He is very close to them and responds their prayers in a very fast way. (Tabari, II, 215)

When the Companions came to valley on their way to conquer Haybar, they started to pronounce *takbir* in a loud voice saying "*Allahu akbar Allahu akbar la ilaha illallah*". Allah's Messenger (pbuh) warned them saying, "*O people, show mercy to yourselves for you are not calling*

161. It is possible that the word "Ramadan" may come from various meanings: 1. this word might be derived from the word "*ramda*" which means the rain that rains at the beginning of fall and cleanses the earth from dust. As it washes and cleanses the earth, fasting washes the believers' sins away and purifies their hearts. 2. This word might be coming from the root "*ramad*" which means the extreme warmth of the rocks under the burning heat of the sun. This name is given to this month because fasting causes discomfort to believers due to hunger and thirst and thus removes their sins. 3. It is also argued that this word is one of the beautiful names of Allah the Almighty. (Elmalili, I, 643-644)

One who is deaf or absent. Verily, you are calling One who is All-Hearing (and) Near to you and is with you.” (Bukhari, Maghazi, 38; Muslim, Dhikr 44)

In other verses of the Noble Qur’an, the closeness of Allah the Exalted to His servants is expressed as follows:

“Now, verily, it is We who have created man, and We know what his innermost self whispers within him: for We are closer to him than his neck-vein.” (al-Qaf, 50: 16)

“and know that God intervenes between man and [the desires of] his heart.” (Al-Anfal 8: 24)

The closeness of Allah to His servant is not about closeness in place, but rather related to knowledge and encompassment. He knows every one of His creation in the best way. The most important issue here is the servants’ awareness of this reality, living in accordance with the consciousness of this closeness, and feeling it in the depths of their souls. The greatest obstacles before servants’ awareness of this closeness are love for this world, eating, drinking, and other pursuits of this world. Fasting that are observed by following its proper rules, supplications, and other sincerely performed acts of worship will become means to overcome such obstacles and to feel the divine closeness. This is why Allah the Almighty calls His servants to say prayers, follow His commands, and believe in Him. Because this is the way for the believers to discover the best way to organize their relationship with their Lord, with things, and with everything that is related to them.

Our Lord gives us the glad tidings that He will immediately respond His servants’ prayers. This good news is valid for all prayers that are sincerely said. Whenever a servant says “Dear Lord,” Allah the Almighty responds saying “Here I am, O My servant.” He carries out the things that is requested by the servants in the best way, best time, and best manner for them. Therefore, it might sometimes be necessary to be patient after the prayer. In this context, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) makes the following warning:

“You will be answered as long as you are not impatient and say, “I have made a dua and I have not been answered .”” (Muwatta’, Qur’an 29)

“No-one says a supplication without one of three things happening. Either it is answered, or it is stored up for him, or wrong actions are atoned for by it.” (Muwatta’, Qur’an 36)

187th Verse: In this verse, some important issues related to fasting are explained. The occasion for the revelation of the verse is narrated as follows:

In the early days that fasting was prescribed upon believers, they had been allowed to eat and sleep with their spouses between the evening prayer and night prayer or until they went to bed at night. In other words, they were starting to fast right after the night prayer or after when they fell asleep. One day Umar (r.a.) slept with his wife after performing the night prayer. He deeply regretted what he had done and told his situation to the Prophet (pbuh). When some of the Companions who were present there at the time confessed that they had done the same mistake, the afore-mentioned verse was revealed. (Tabari, II, 223-224)

By this verse, believers are allowed to sleep with their spouses on the nights of Ramadan. After the time of breaking the fast, eating, drinking, and having sexual relations are permissible

until the time of dawn. This is a blessing and easiness from Allah the Almighty to His servants. Women are garments for men and the men are garments for women. On the one hand, they embrace and hug each other like clothes; on the other hand, they cover each other's deficiencies as the clothes cover the people's private parts and protect them against warm and cold. Our Lord, who knows best the affection of spouses to each other and that they might not show patience and commit a sin, has provided them some easiness in this respect. He accepts their repentances for their possible sins. He gives the glad tidings of that He will forgive their sins and permits the spouses to be together on the nights of Ramadan with the intention to have auspicious offsprings.

The time in which lawful acts such as eating, drinking, and having sexual relations are permitted starts with sunset (i.e. the beginning time of evening prayer) and continues until dawn breaks like a white thread. This time is called "*fajr al-sadiq*." The statement of "the white thread shows clearly to you from the black thread at the dawn" explains this meaning with a descriptive expression. The time of fasting starts with the time of *fajr al-sadiq* or dawn break and continues until the beginning of the time of evening prayer or sunset. Between these two times, one should observe fasting according to its rules and conditions.

As for those who are in retreat in the mosques must not sleep with their wives neither at night nor during the day. The word "*i'tikaf*" means to retreat in a mosque with the intention of worshipping and doing deeds of devotion and not to leave the mosque except for essential needs such as going to bathroom. Staying in mosque with the intention of worship even for a very short time is considered *i'tikaf*. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) used to retreat in mosque for *i'tikaf* in the last ten days of Ramadan. He never skip this devotion in his life, on the contrary he retreated in the mosque for twenty days in the last Ramadan before his death. (see Bukhari, *I'tikaf* 1-6; Muslim, *I'tikaf* 1-6) Therefore, *i'tikaf* is an important tradition of the Prophet (pbuh).

7. STRIVING FOR THE SAKE OF ALLAH (JIHAD) (Al-Tawbah, 9 111-112)

Believers who sacrifice their lives and possessions will be rewarded with indescribable tranquility of soul which would not be exchanged with no bounties of this world and will enter eternal Paradise in the Hereafter:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ اشْتَرَى مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ بِأَنْ لَهُمُ الْجَنَّةَ يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَيَقْتُلُونَ وَيُقْتَلُونَ وَعْدًا عَلَيْهِ حَقٌّ فِي التَّوْرَةِ وَالْإِنْجِيلِ وَالْقُرْآنِ وَمَنْ أَوْفَى بِعَهْدِهِ مِنَ اللَّهِ فَاسْتَبْشِرُوا بِبَيْعِكُمُ الَّذِي بَايَعْتُمْ بِهِ وَذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ﴿111﴾ التَّائِبُونَ الْعَابِدُونَ الْحَامِدُونَ السَّائِحُونَ الرَّاكِعُونَ السَّاجِدُونَ الْآمِرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَالنَّاهُونَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَالْحَافِظُونَ لِحُدُودِ اللَّهِ وَبَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿112﴾

TRANSLATION:

111. Behold, God has bought of the believers their lives and their possessions, promising them paradise in return, [and so] they fight in God's cause, and slay, and are slain: a promise which in truth He has willed upon Himself in [the words of] the Torah, and the Gospel, and the Qur'an. And who could be more faithful to his covenant than God? Rejoice, then, in the bargain which you have made with Him: for this, this is the triumph supreme!

112. [It is a triumph of] those who turn [unto God] in repentance [whenever they have sinned], and who worship and praise [Him], and go on and on [seeking His goodly acceptance], and bow down [before Him] and prostrate themselves in adoration, and enjoin the doing of what is right and forbid the doing of what is wrong, and keep to the bounds set by God. And give you [O Prophet] the glad tidings [of God's promise] to all believers!

COMMENTARY:

111th - 112th Verses: When the Prophet (pbuh) took allegiance from seventy some Medinan believers on the night of the second allegiance of aqaba, Abdullah bin Rawaha (r.a) told the Messenger of Allah (pbuh):

“– Ask as a condition whatever you want for yourself and for your Lord,” He (pbuh) replied:

“– *For my Lord, I ask from you to worship Him and not to associate any partners with Allah; for myself, I ask you to protect me from whatever you protect your lives and property.*” those who were present there asked:

“– If we do this, what is in it for us?” Our Prophet (pbuh) replied:

“– *Paradise.*” And they said:

“– A profitable trade. We neither break this trade agreement nor want it to be broken.” Upon this incident, these verses were revealed (Tabari, XI, 49; Qurtubi, VIII, 267).

The famous poet Fuzuli says:

“Cânı cânân dilemiş vermemek olmaz ey dil!

Ne nizâ' eyleyeyim ol ne senindir, ne benim.”

Meaning: “The most beloved Allah the Almighty asks this life entrusted in this body. Since He asks this life back, it would not be appropriate not to give it. Because there is no need to debate. This life is neither yours not mine. It belongs to Allah who entrusted it to us.”

In these verses, Allah the Almighty explains the characteristics of perfect believer who would fight for the sake of Allah with their possessions and lives, not hesitate to make any sacrifice, and sacrifice this world in order. These characteristics are as follows:

1. To sell the life and wealth in return for Paradise,
2. To fight on the path of Allah and to become a martyr,

3. To believe in that this is Allah the Almighty's true promise mentioned in the Torah, the Gospels, and the Noble Qur'an. To believe in that Allah the Almighty is the most trustworthy one in keeping His promises,

4. To be happy by conducting this profitable trade.

In this context, the following saying of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) which expresses sacrificing the wealth and life as the two most important conditions of entering Paradise is very noteworthy:

Bashir bin Hasasiyyah (r.a) narrates:

I came to give pledge to the Messenger of Allah (pbuh). He asked me to bear witness that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger, to perform prayer, to pay the obligatory alms, to perform pilgrimage as a believer, to observe fasting in Ramadan, and to fight for the sake of Allah. I told him:

“– O Messenger of Allah! By Allah, I cannot do two these, which are to fight for the sake of Allah and to pay alms. People say that Allah will punish those who avoid fighting for His sake, whereas I am afraid that the fear of death may overcome my heart and I may run away from the battlefield. As for the payment of alms, all I have is a small sheep herd and ten camels, which are just enough to meet my livelihood and use as mounts.”

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) held my hand, shook, and asked:

“– *Without fighting for the sake of Allah and paying alms, how are you going to enter Paradise?*” Upon this, I said:

“– O Messenger of Allah! I pledge my allegiance” and accepted all the conditions of the Messenger of Allah. (Ahmad, V, 224)

Other characteristics continue as follows:

5. To be in constant state of repentance,

6. To be constant in observing the acts of worship,

7. To express thankfulness,

8. To fast. The word “*saihun*” has meanings like to travel for knowledge, jihad, and contemplate and to migrate in order to live the rules of religion freely. When the Prophet (pbuh) was asked about the meaning of this word, he said “*those who fast*” (Hakim, *Mustadrak*, II, 365)

9. To bow down in prayer,

10. To prostrate; to perform prayer by paying attention to bowing down, prostrating and rest of the essential acts of prayer,

11. To encourage and spread goodness, righteousness, and beauty. To try to stop all kind of evil, wrong acts, and ugliness,

12. To protect the borders determined by Allah the Almighty and carefully follow the limits of lawful and unlawful.

8. PATIENCE AND TESTING (Al-Baqara, 2: 153-157)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿153﴾
وَلَا تَقُولُوا لِمَنْ يُقْتَلُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمْوَاتٌ بَلْ أَحْيَاءٌ وَلَكِنْ لَا تَشْعُرُونَ ﴿154﴾ وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ
بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَالثَّمَرَاتِ وَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿155﴾
الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمْ مُصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ ﴿156﴾ أُولَئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ صَلَوَاتٌ مِّنْ
رَّبِّهِمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُهْتَدُونَ ﴿157﴾

TRANSLATION:

153. O you who have attained to faith! Seek aid in steadfast patience and prayer: for, behold, God is with those who are patient in adversity.

154. And say not of those who are slain in God's cause, "They are dead": nay, they are alive, but you perceive it not.

155. And most certainly shall We try you by means of danger, and hunger, and loss of worldly goods, of lives and of [labor's] fruits. But give glad tidings unto those who are patient in adversity!

156. who, when calamity befalls them, say, "Verily, unto God do we belong and, verily, unto Him we shall return."

157. It is they upon whom their Sustainer's blessings and grace are bestowed, and it is they, they who are on the right path!

COMMENTARY:

153rd Verse: Patience is the foundation of moral beauties. It is the only medicine to control the passions of inner self, to stay away from sins, and to bear all kinds of hardships and tribulations. Patience is the beginning of the path that needs to be followed after faith. It is the essence of morality, knowledge, practice, in short the essence of all successes. People should discipline their inner selves both spiritually and physically. They should get accustomed to be determined and strong by means of patience and endurance. In this way, they will attain one of the means to receive Allah's help. Otherwise, certain moral weaknesses will appear such as being scared before the smallest hardship and pain, complaining, losing hope, and sinking into pessimism. Patience has two aspects. First is to endure the pains of the unpleasant situations and to expect their good consequences. This is similar to be treated by distasteful medicines. We use them even though we do not like them. The second aspect is to stay away from pleasant desires and passions and thus to avoid their sad consequences. This resembles to stay away from eating poisoned sweets.

As is mentioned, patience is the most important one of the spiritual acts, while prayer is the most important and most difficult one of the manifest acts. It is the ascension of the believers. It is the most important instruments of attracting divine help. This is why our Almighty Lord commands all believers to ask for help from his endless power by using these two instruments.

When Allah's Messenger (pbuh) faced a difficult situation, he used to perform prayer and ask for help from Allah the Exalted by reciting the above-mentioned. (*Ruh al-Bayan*, I, 257)

Without a doubt, Allah is with those who show patience and ask His help by prayer and patience by answering their invocations and sending His assistance to them. This togetherness is a supervision and control depending on patience and prayer. Because there are many verses stating the significance and other virtues of prayer, this verse emphasizes on patience. Moreover, since being constant on prayer is a matter of patience, there is no doubt that Allah the Almighty who is with the patient believers is also with those who perform their prayers. It should also be mentioned, the emphasis on patience in this verse establishes a connection between this and following verses. This verse invites to be patient in order to become successful in the tests mentioned in those verses.

154th Verse: In addition to fighting the desires of inner self, this verse also prepares Muslims to fight against the enemies of religion who are determined to annihilate Islam. It prepares them to be patient and strong against the hardships they cause. It even encourages willingly sacrificing life and becoming a martyr.¹⁶² Because dying as a martyr on the path of Allah is not like a common way of death. This is why this verse prohibits calling those who die on the path of Allah as "dead." They continue to live in a life the nature of which neither we know nor do we feel. Allah the Almighty bless them and have them live in a tranquil life. In the battle of Badr, eight Medinan and six Meccan Muslims died as martyrs. People were talking about those who had been died on the path of Allah saying, "so and so died and become devoid of the blessings and tastes of this world." Upon this occasion, this verse was revealed. The following verses explain the nice state of martyrs in detail: **"But do not think of those that have been slain in God's cause as dead. Nay, they are alive! With their Sustainer have they their sustenance, exulting in that [martyrdom] which God has bestowed upon them out of His bounty. And they rejoice in the glad tidings given to those [of their brethren] who have been left behind and have not yet joined them, that no fear need they have, and neither shall they grieve: they rejoice in the glad tidings of God's blessings and bounty, and [in the promise] that God will not fail to requite the believers."** (Al-i Imran, 3: 169-171)

One day, Salman al-Farisi (r.a) was told:

"- Give us an advice." He gave the following advice:

"- When you die, die in one of the following states:

1. on the way to pilgrimage,
2. While fighting for the sake of Allah,
3. Or while repairing a mosque of Allah the Almighty ...

If you are able to do one of these, then do it!" (*al-Hadaiq al-Wardiyya*, p. 409)

162. A man came to the Prophet (pbuh) and said: Messenger of Allah, one man fights for the spoils of war; another fights that he may be remembered, and another fights that he may see his (high) position (achieved as a result of his valor in fighting). Which of these is fighting in the cause of God? The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said: "*Who fights so that the word of Allah is exalted is fighting in the way of Allah.*" (Bukhari, Ilm 45; Muslim, Imarah 150-151)

155th - 157th Verses: This world is the abode of hardships, pains, and afflictions. It is a place of difficult test. It is necessary to regard this aspect of this world and to be ready in accordance with this understanding. There will certainly be incidents in the world that will test people. People are frequently tested by hunger, fear, and decrease in wealth, life, and crops. In this way, our Lord distinguishes those who show patience before the hardships and those who do not. Because hardships are very important measures to distinguish between the good and the bad and determine people's values. Those who show patience will pass the test and those cannot will fail it. This is why it is stated at the end of the verse "give glad tidings to those who patiently persevere!" They are the ones with common sense who are aware of the fact that they came from Allah and will go back to Him and know that all beings belong to Allah. There are great tidings for them. Allah Messenger (pbuh) says:

"No calamity befalls a Muslim but that Allah expiates some of his sins because of it, even though it were the prick he receives from a thorn." (Bukhari, Marda 1)

There are many benefits and wisdom in saying **"verily, unto God do we belong and, verily, unto Him we shall return"** (Al-Baqara, 2: 156) by those who are inflicted by a calamity. Keeping oneself busy with saying these words prevents a person to speak some inappropriate words. The heart of the person who has been inflicted with a trouble finds solace and his/her pain decreases. Satan's desire to have that person to say some inappropriate words stops. Those who hears these words follow them by repeating the same words. The hearts of those who verbally repeat them are filled with nice thoughts and desire to surrender to Allah's fate and destiny. It is stated in a saying of the Prophet (pbuh):

"If any Muslim who suffers some calamity says, what Allah has commanded him, "We belong to Allah and to Him shall we return; O Allah, reward me for my affliction and give me something better than it in exchange for it," Allah will give him something better than it in exchange." (Muslim, Janaiz, 4)

This is why Aziz Mahmut Hudayi, a friend of Allah, says:

*"You are the One who takes, who gives, who makes
We have whatever you give, what else do we have!"*

The last verse informs about the divine bounties, blessings, and mercy heralded for those who show patience. They receive abundant mercy, forgiveness, praises, and commendations from their Lord. The usage of the word "*salawat*" in plural form refers to these meanings. Likewise, they will be rewarded by great and continuous mercy from their Lord. Allah will bestow upon them beneficial and pleasing blessings both in this world and in the Hereafter. He will protect them from all kinds of harms especially in the Hereafter. They are the ones who have reached guidance. They have found the straight path by surrendering themselves to Allah and showing contentedness to fate and destiny.

How nicely the poet expresses this point in the following lines:

*"İztırâb-ı hâl bâdî-î sükûnet olduğu
Tifl iken mâlûmum oldu cünbüs-î gehvâreden."* (Arif)

Which means, “People should not start immediately complaining about painful situation. Because such situations may sometimes provide the means that could comfort the heart. I understood this when I still was a little baby who was rocked in the cradle. Initially rocking the cradle made my head a little dizzy, but then I cannot deny that I fell deep and peaceful sleep.”

9. LAWFUL SUSTENANCE (Al-Baqara, 2: 172-173)

It should not be forgotten that the consumption of lawful sustenance is very important for the people's spiritual revival, motivation of their hearts, and hear divine truths. The following verses deals with this reality:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُلُوا مِن طَيِّبَاتِ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ وَاشْكُرُوا لِلَّهِ إِن كُنتُمْ إِيَّاهُ تَعْبُدُونَ ﴿١٧٢﴾
 إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَيْتَةَ وَالدَّمَ وَلَحْمَ الْخِنْزِيرِ وَمَا أُهْلَ بِهِ لِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ فَمَن اضْطُرَّ
 غَيْرَ بَاغٍ وَلَا عَادٍ فَلَا إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٧٣﴾

TRANSLATION:

172. O you who have attained to faith! Eat of the good things that We have provided for you, and be grateful to Allah, if it is [truly] Him that you worship!

173. He has forbidden to you only carrion, and blood, and the flesh of swine, and that over which any name other than God's has been invoked; but if one is driven by necessity - neither coveting it nor exceeding his immediate need - no sin shall be upon him: for, behold, God is much-forgiving, a dispenser of grace.

COMMENTARY:

172nd - 173rd Verses: In the 168th verse, all people are addressed and commanded to consume from lawful and pure blessings, while this verse begins with an addressing to the believers and asks them:

- to eat the clean and lawful ones of the bestowed food and to avoid the bad and unlawful ones,

- to thank only Allah with consciousness of being the servants of Allah the Almighty.

Because of the reality that the blessings given by Allah the Almighty are tests and the existence of certain balances in life, it is natural to have lawful as well as unlawful, or pure as well as impure of the blessings. Therefore, one should consume out of the pure blessings earned through lawful ways without violating anybody's rights. As is required to be moderate in eating, one should not regard the lawful, nice, and clean blessing as unlawful.

Even though the command “eat of the good things” mentioned in the verse refers to “permissibility” in an absolute sense, it does not mean that some kinds of eating are not obligatory. As there are types of eating which are permissible, there are some others that are obligatory. For example, eating at least as much as to survive is obligatory. If a person does not eat enough

to survive while he/she has the means, and dies out of hunger, he/she is considered committed suicide and becomes a sinner. It is recommended to eat more than the necessary amount to live in order to gain strength for the acts of worship. Eating as much as to feel full is permissible, while eating more than that is unlawful. The command “eat of the good things” refers to all these meanings. (Razi, V, 9) Therefore, believers earn their sustenance out of lawful and pure blessings and thank Allah the Almighty who has bestowed all those blessings. They employ all the blessings bestowed upon them, their body nourished by lawful and pure foods, and their limbs in accordance with the purpose of their creation. Because a proper expression of gratitude can be carried out only by showing respect to the one who has given the blessing.

Our beloved Prophet (pbuh) emphasizes the importance of paying attention to consume lawful food in order for the acceptance of the prayers as follows:

“O people, Allah is Good and He therefore, accepts only that which is good. And Allah commanded the believers as He commanded the Messengers by saying:

“O you messengers! Enjoy (all) things good and pure, and work righteousness: for I am well-acquainted with (all) that you do.” (al-Mu'minun, 23: 51) *And He said to the believers:*

“O you who have attained to faith! Partake of the good things which We have provided for you as sustenance!” (Al-Baqara, 2: 172) *He then made a mention of a person who travels widely, his hair disheveled and covered with dust. He lifts his hand towards the sky (and thus makes the supplication): “O Lord, O Lord,” whereas his diet is unlawful, his drink is unlawful, and his clothes are unlawful and his nourishment is unlawful. How can then his supplication be accepted?”* (Muslim, Zakat 65)

In regards to eating lawful sustenance, Seyyid Nur Muhammed Badwani (q.s)’s the following exemplary effort is noteworthy:

“He would do everything he could to avoid eating unlawful food. He would find the wheat for his flour, grind the wheat, make flour, knead the dough, and bake his own bread. He would dry his bread, leave it to somewhere, and pick it up when he feel hungry. He would not eat much, but just a few bites to satisfy his hunger. He would then go back to the state of contemplation. When his bread finished, he would again bake his own bread and eat it as he did before. He would then continue his worship, devotion, and contemplation. The state of his contemplation was so much that his back was bent like a bow.” (al-Hadaïq al-Wardiyya, p. 808)

Because our Almighty Lord attaches great importance to people’s material and spiritual life and their happiness both in this world and in the Hereafter, He personally explains us what is lawful and what is not. Because it is mostly not possible to figure out these completely by human mind. In this verse, four of the unlawful foods are mentioned:

1. Carrion: the meat of the animals that die by themselves or that are not slaughtered according to proper Islamic rules is prohibited. In order to be lawful, an animal should be alive during slaughtering and die in consequence of slaughtering.

2. Blood: Even if it is an animal that is lawful to consume, the flowing blood of both live and dead animal is prohibited. The phrase “blood poured forth” mentioned in the 145th verse of

chapter al-An'ām explains this rule. According to this rule, the blood that remains in the meat, liver, and spleen is regarded like meat and so it is permissible.

3. Flesh of swine: The flesh of swine is absolutely prohibited in Islam.

4. The meat of the animals on which any other name has been invoked besides that of Allah is also prohibited. In this section of the verse, it is especially meant the animals which are offered as sacrifice in the name of idols. Because polytheists used to raise their voices when they were sacrificing animals for their idols and say “in the name of Lat or in the name of Uzza.” There are discussions among Muslim jurists whether it is allowed to eat the meat of an animal slaughtered by a Muslim or someone from the people of the book who knowingly or by mistake forgets to utter the name of Allah while slaughtering the animal. According to Hanafi jurists, only the meat of the animals slaughtered intentionally without mentioning the name of Allah.

Allah the Almighty makes an exception and explains how to act under necessity. When there is nothing lawful to eat, there is no sin in consuming enough to live from the things prohibited by Allah under extreme hunger or compulsion that threatens life or endangers the limbs of the body. However, one needs to pay attention two conditions: First, the person who is under such circumstances would not violate the rights of other person who is under similar circumstances. For example, it is prohibited for a person to eat alone in order to satisfy his hunger from the carrion possessed by someone who is under necessity and to cause the other person starve due to lack of food. The second condition is that someone who is forced to eat something unlawful should eat only enough to survive and should not eat more than that. Allah is Much-Forgiving. He forgives His servants' all kinds of sins, especially the sin of eating unlawful things under necessity. He is Exceedingly Merciful. His mercy is endless. He especially shows His mercy by providing some conciliations to those who are under difficult circumstances.

10. CONTEMPLATION (Al-i Imran, 3: 190-194)

وَلِلَّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿189﴾
 إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ لَآيَاتٍ لِّأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿190﴾
 الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَامًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَى جُنُوبِهِمْ وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ رَبَّنَا
 مَا خَلَقْتَ هَذَا بَاطِلًا سُبْحَانَكَ فَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ ﴿191﴾

TRANSLATION:

189. And unto God belongs the dominion over the heavens and the earth: and God has the power to will anything.

190. Verily, in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and in the succession of night and day, there are indeed messages for all who are endowed with insight.

191. [and] who remember God when they stand, and when they sit, and when they lie down to sleep, and [thus] reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth: “O our Sus-

tainer! You hast not created [aught of] this without meaning and purpose. Limitless art You in Your glory! Keep us safe, then, from suffering through fire!

COMMENTARY:

189th Verse: Allah is the owner and governor of all beings on earth and in heavens, i.e. the whole creation. He is the Dominant and Omnipotent. His powerful enough to do everything. This is why unbelievers should not think that they could escape from His torment. He does whatever He wishes. Those who live in Allah's domain must live in accordance with His commands. Those who intend to violate Allah's commands will be subject to punishment.

190th Verse: In order for us to comprehend Allah's unique reign and power, it is enough for us to observe the manifestations of His power in the universe and take heed from them. The most obvious ones of these manifestations is the creation of magnificent heavens and earth as well as the day and night coming one after another in a wonderful order. We observe that the harmony and balance created by Allah in this universe is impeccable and it has not deviated from its course not for even a second since it was created. In the verse, we are asked to contemplate about the entire existence within the context of time and space. Allah the Almighty denigrates those who are heedless in this respect and says:

“But [then] -how many a sign is there in the heavens and on earth which they pass by [unthinkingly], and on which they turn their backs!” (Yusuf, 12: 105)

Aisha (r.anha) narrates:

“One night the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said to me:

“– O Aisha! If you allow me I want to spend this night in worship of my Lord.” I responded:

“– By Allah! I love to be together with you; but I love what pleases you more than that.”

Then he rose, took his ablution and stood to pray. He was crying... He was crying so much that his robe, his blessed beard and even the place of his prostration was soaking wet due to his tears. While he was in this state, Bilal came and called him to prayer. When he saw him crying, he said:

“– O Messenger of Allah. Why are you crying when Allah Most High has forgiven your past and future sins?”

The Prophet (pbuh) replied:

“– Shall I then not be a slave who praises Him much? I swear by Allah that such verses have been revealed to me that it is woe to the one who reads them and does not reflect on them” Then he read the following verses from the Qur'an:

“In the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of night and day, there are Signs for people with intelligence: those who remember Allah, standing, sitting and lying on their sides, and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth: ‘Our Lord, You have not created this for nothing. Glory be to You! So safeguard us from the punishment of the Fire’ (Al-i Imran, 3: 190-191) (Ibn-i Hibban, II, 386)

When Ibn-i Abbas (r.a) was a child about ten years old, he stayed overnight at the house of his aunt Maimuna while the Prophet (pbuh) was with her to see how was the night prayer of Allah's Messenger. He narrates the rest of the event as follows:

"Allah's Messenger (pbuh) talked to his wife for a while and then slept. When it was the last third of the night (or part of it), the Prophet (pbuh) got up and looked towards the sky and recited the Verse: "Verily! In the creation of the Heavens and the Earth. There are indeed signs for the men of understanding." (3.190)..." (Bukhari, Tafsir 3: 17, 18; Tawhid 27).

Another narration reads as follows:

"...Allah's Messenger (pbuh) slept till the middle of the night, either a bit before or a bit after it, and then woke up rubbing the traces of sleep off his face with his hands and then he recited the last ten verses of chapter al-Imran, got up and went to a hanging water skin. He then performed the ablution from it, and it was perfect ablution, and then stood up to offer the prayer. ..." (Bukhari, Tafsir 3/19; Ahmed, *Musnad*, I/242)

Our Prophet's tradition to recite these verses in the middle of the night shows that pre-dawn is the best time for contemplation.

The aim of the Noble Qur'an is to save hearts from everything other than Allah and have them attain gnosis. In the previous verses, certain rules are explained and answers are given to the people of the wrong path. In this and the following verses, the hearts are enlightened by the divine attributes of Allah. On the other hand, the chapters and subject of the Qur'an usually end with verses that give advices or teach lessons. (Ibn Ashur, IV, 196) The following verses draw attention to noteworthy matters and summarize the chapter.

191st Verse: After stating the proofs of Allah the Almighty's divinity, power, and wisdom, the subject turns to the issues of servanthood after this verse. The pervious verse expresses the perfection of divinity, while this one shows the perfection of servanthood. Because people reach the state of a believer with common sense if they are in remembrance, contemplation and worship to Allah while standing, sitting, lying, working, resting, in short in all of their states by their heart, mind, tongue, and all of their limbs.

There are some scholars who argue that ritual prayer is what is meant by remembrance here in this verse. In other words, believers are encouraged to perform prayer while standing until they get too tired to stand, and then while sitting until they get too tired to sit. They are encouraged to perform their prayers while lying in their beds when they are too sick to stand or sit. In other words, believers are encouraged to perform prayer under any circumstances.

Contemplating deeply the creation of the heavens and earth in wonderful harmony and strong structure and trying to understand the wisdom and secrets in them are very important to attain the consciousness of servanthood. Those who are deep in contemplation begin to understand the greatness and power of Allah the Almighty. They realize that Allah did not create heavens and earth and everything between them in vain, without order and purpose, in mere idle play (see Al-Anbiya 21: 16; Sad, 38: 27; al-Duhan, 44: 38), but rather with a real meaning and an inner truth (see al-Hijr, 15: 85; al-Ahqaf, 46: 3). People who start to understand the greatness of Divine Power by contemplating about the creation of Allah turn immediately to Allah and organize their lives in accordance with the Hereafter and start to prepare for it.

How nicely Ziya Pasha expresses this point:

*“Bin ders-i maârif okunur her varakında
Yâ Rab ne güzel mekteb olur mekteb-i âlem.”*

Which means, “On every page of the book of universe and on every leaf of billions of trees, there are thousands of lessons of divine gnosis. Dear Lord! What a nice school that the school of universe becomes for those who have the reason, discernment, and comprehension to understand the lessons taught in that school.”

Abu Sulaiman Darani says:

“When I go out my home, I see the blessings of Allah in everywhere I look at. I, at least, take heed and learn a lesson from them.”

Hasan Basri says,

“Contemplating for a moment is better than performing acts of worship throughout the night without contemplation.”

“Contemplation is a mirror, which shows you your good and bad deeds.”

Jesus (pbuh) says,

“Glad tidings to those whose words are advice, whose silence is contemplation, and whose glance is a lesson!”

Umar bin Abdulaziz says,

“Speaking by remembering Allah the Almighty is a good act. Contemplating about the bounties of Allah is the most virtuous of the acts of worship.”

Some wise people say,

“Those who look at this world without taking lessons from it lose their insight in the extent of their heedlessness.”

Bishr bin Harith al-Khafi says,

“If people contemplate about the Greatness of Allah the Almighty, they could not disobey Him and commit sins.”

Amir bin Abdi Qays says:

“I heard from not one, or two, or three but many people from the companions of the Prophet (pbuh) saying, “the light of faith is contemplation.”” (For these words, see Ibn al-Kathir, I, 447).

Believers who contemplate about the heavens and earth and admire the Divine Majesty continue their worship in deep reverence by adding their contemplation supplications and invocations.

The phrase “subhanaka” means confirmation and acknowledgment of the weakness of human mind to comprehend completely Allah’s wisdom in creation of heavens and earth. Allah the Almighty have not created them in vain, but rather created them with profound wisdom and secrets even though we cannot comprehend them. In the word “subhan,” there is also the mean-

ing of “the being that is incessantly praised by all of His creation.” Because many verses inform that everything on earth and in heavens continuously and without interruption extols Him (see al-Isra, 17: 44; al-Hadid, 57: 1; Saff 61: 1; al-Jum’a, 62: 1; al-Taghabun, 64: 1).

As stated in the verse, the person who would like to pray first should attain pious reverence by contemplation and remembrance and then should praise Allah the Almighty and finally tell his/her demands.

The characteristics of pure and sane people are mentioned in this verse. The more a person is in a state of remembrance, contemplation, taking refuge in Allah, and takes heed from the wonders of divine art, the more he/she becomes a person with common sense.

This verse not only directs believers to contemplate about the creation but also encourages them to research in natural sciences such as physics, astronomy, and chemistry. It also gives a great lesson to those who research in these sciences.

In order to be saved from Hell, intelligent believers who beg Allah continue their prayers and invocations saying:

رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ مَنْ تَدْخِلِ النَّارَ فَقَدْ أَخْرَيْتَهُ وَمَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ أَنْصَارٍ ﴿192﴾
رَبَّنَا إِنَّا سَمِعْنَا مُنَادِيًا يُنَادِي لِلْإِيمَانِ أَنْ آمِنُوا بِرَبِّكُمْ فَآمَنَّا رَبَّنَا فَاغْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَا
وَكَفِّرْ عَنَّا سَيِّئَاتِنَا وَتَوَفَّنَا مَعَ الْأَبْرَارِ ﴿193﴾ رَبَّنَا وَآتِنَا مَا وَعَدْتَنَا عَلَى رُسُلِكَ
وَلَا تُخْزِنَا يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ إِنَّكَ لَا تُخْلِفُ الْمِيعَادَ ﴿194﴾

192. “O our Sustainer! Whomsoever You shall commit to the fire, him, verily, wilt You have brought to disgrace [in this world]; and such evildoers will have none to succor them.”

193. “O our Sustainer! Behold, we heard a voice call [us] unto faith, ‘Believe in your Sustainer!’ - and so we came to believe. O our Sustainer! Forgive us, then, our sins, and efface our bad deeds; and let us die the death of the truly virtuous!”

194. “And, O our Sustainer, grant us that which You hast promised us through Your apostles, and disgrace us not on Resurrection Day! Verily, You never failest to fulfil Your promise!”

COMMENTARY:

192nd Verse: The peak of the bounties bestowed upon the believers is to be saved from Hell and attain Paradise. The Hell where Allah’s wrath and anger manifest itself is the place for physical and spiritual torments. The bodies will be subjected to pain there, but the spiritual pain inflicted upon the souls will be much harsher and greater. In fact, by stating in the verse that those who enter Hell will be extremely disgraced there, it is implied that shame and disgrace on Judgment Day will be one of the greatest afflictions of the Hereafter. In this verse, the believers with common sense take refuge in Allah from the torments of Hell. However, as understood from their invocations, what they really want is to be saved from being ashamed on Judgment Day. Because standing guilty and ashamed before Allah the Almighty who has all the perfect attributes and being punished by Him in Hell is a great cause of shame. Can there be a greater

torment for those with sensible hearts? This is the real annihilation. This is why the 194th verse teaches us how to pray our Lord not to become ashamed before Him on Judgment Day. The Prophet Abraham (pbuh) also prayed Allah not to be put to shame on the Day all shall be raised from death. (al-Shu'ara, 26: 87)

On that day, all judgment will belong to Allah. There is no one to help to those who torture themselves by continuing to disbelieve.

193rd Verse: The only thing to do by the intelligent people who would like to be saved from the spiritual pain of being disgraced in the divine presence and by those who do not want to be alone without an assistant on Judgment Day is to obey the Prophet who invited to faith by saying “believe in your Lord” and presented convincing evidences in this regard. What they also need to do is also to follow the rulings of the Noble Qur'an. The first thing that needs to be done after declaring faith is to stay away from sins and mistakes and try to be cleansed from them.

As understood from the verse, believers may ask forgiveness from Allah by presenting their faith and obedience to our Prophet (pbuh) as a reason to be forgiven. After begging for forgiveness, they should be obedient and righteous servants and try to give their last breath on that state. In other words, the believers should live as servants from who Allah is pleased and should become friends with people like them. They should pray to be raised from death in the Hereafter with people like them. It should not be forgotten that people die as they live and they will be resurrected as they die (al-Munawi, *Fayz*, V, 663; al-Zamahshari, V, 247).

Allah the Almighty says,

“Now as for those who indulge in sinful doings - do they think that We place them, both in their life and their death, on an equal footing with those who have attained to faith and do righteous deeds? Bad, indeed, is their judgment!” (Al-Jasiyah, 45: 21)

In this context, Allah's Messenger (pbuh) says,

“Every servant will be resurrected in the state they die.” (Muslim, Jannah 83)

As understood from the last section of the verse, the believers who contemplate wish to meet with Allah in the end. According to a saying of the Prophet (pbuh), it is stated:

“Whoever loves to meet Allah, Allah loves to meet him.” (Bukhari, Riqaq 41; Muslim, Dhikr 14-17)

194th Verse: Believers whose whole fear is to meet Allah the Almighty in a disgraced state beg Allah in their prayers saying “disgrace us not on Resurrection Day!” When making this request, they are based on the following promise of Allah,

“...on a Day on which God will not shame the Prophet and those who share his faith...”
(al-Tahrim, 66: 8)

The believers say to Allah “since You promise that You will not shame the Prophet and the believers, we believe in You and so Dear Lord, disgrace us not on Resurrection Day.” In this way, they express their trust in Allah and reveal their good thoughts about Allah. As done by the following baker,

Once, there was a weird baker. Even if he were paid by fake money, he would accept it. Although he knew that the money was fake, he would not say anything to the buyer and just

give him the bread. Everybody was amazed by his state and did not understand why he did that. When he was about to die, he raised his hands and started to pray Allah saying,

“O Allah! You know people gave me fake dirhams for years and I did not tell this to their faces. O Allah! Now I am coming to Your presence with fake devotions. Please do not tell them to my face.”

As expressed in many verses, Allah the Almighty has promised rewards, assistance, happiness to the pious, and torture and punishment to the sinners. Therefore, one of the meaning that can be deduced from this verse is as follows:

“O Allah! Enable us to carry out the deeds that would help us gain the rewards You have promised and protect us from carrying out the deeds that would cause Your punishment!” Amin!

One day, Jafar al-Sadiq (q.s) said,

“– If a person who faces a grievous and dangerous thing says sincerely “O Our Lord” five times, Allah protects him/her from the thing that he/she is afraid of and help him/her attain what he/she desires.” He was asked,

“– How will be possible?”

“– You may read the 191st to 194th verses from chapter Al-i Imran, if you want.” (Qurtubi, IV, 318)

11. DEATH AND GETTING READY FOR DEATH (Al-Waqia, 56: 83-95)

فَلَوْلَا إِذَا بَلَغَتِ الْحُلُقُومَ ﴿٨٣﴾ وَأَنْتُمْ حِينِيذٍ تَنْظُرُونَ ﴿٨٤﴾
وَنَحْنُ أَقْرَبُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْكُمْ وَلَكِنْ لَا تُبْصِرُونَ ﴿٨٥﴾ فَلَوْلَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ غَيْرَ مَدِينِينَ ﴿٨٦﴾
تَرْجِعُونَهَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٨٧﴾ فَأَمَّا إِنْ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُقَرَّبِينَ ﴿٨٨﴾ فَرَوْحٌ وَرَيْحَانٌ وَجَنَّتْ
نَعِيمٌ ﴿٨٩﴾ وَأَمَّا إِنْ كَانَ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ الْيَمِينِ ﴿٩٠﴾ فَسَلَامٌ لَكَ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ الْيَمِينِ ﴿٩١﴾
وَأَمَّا إِنْ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُكَذِّبِينَ الضَّالِّينَ ﴿٩٢﴾ فَنَزُلُ مِنْ حَمِيمٍ ﴿٩٣﴾ وَتَصْلِيَةٌ جَهِيمٍ ﴿٩٤﴾
إِنْ هَذَا لَهُوَ حَقُّ الْيَقِينِ ﴿٩٥﴾ فَسَبِّحْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٩٦﴾

TRANSLATION:

83. Why, then, when [the last breath] comes up to the throat [of a dying man],

84. the while you are [helplessly] looking on.

85. and while We are closer to him than you, although you see [Us] not:

86. why, then, if [you think that] you are not truly dependent [on Us];

87. can you not cause that [ebbing life] to return - if what you claim is true?

88. [All of you are destined to die.] Now if one happens to be of those who are drawn close unto God,

89. happiness [awaits him in the life to come], and inner fulfillment, and a garden of bliss.

90. And if one happens to be of those who have attained to righteousness,

91. [he, too, will be welcomed into paradise with the words,] “Peace be unto you [that art] of those who have attained to righteousness!”

92. But if one happens to be of those who are wont to call the truth a lie, and [thus] go astray,

93. a welcome of burning despair [awaits him in the life to come,]

94. and the heat of a blazing fire!

95. Verily, this is indeed the truth of truths!

96. Extol, then, the limitless glory of your Sustainer’s mighty name!

COMMENTARY:

83rd - 87th Verses: Everybody is essentially free to choose how to act and behave, but when the time of death comes, this freedom will end, freewill will be taken away, and a new spiritual walk under Divine will towards a forced direction will start. Nobody will have the power to get the life back and stop this involuntary going. Thus, Allah the Almighty calls those who deny resurrection after death to think about the reality of death, accept His absolute power and dominion over His servants. By inviting them to do something they could not do, He gives them a chance to recognize their weakness and realize the truth so that they can attain eternal salvation.

Death does not have a certain age. From a newborn baby to a hundred years old man, everybody is a candidate for death. If we get time, visit the children cemetery in our city for a couple of hours, and watch how many children’s corpse are brought to be buried, the scene we watch will help us clearly understand the reality. Babies who were just born, or who were three months, six months, one year, tow years old lay down in their graves and begin their afterlife journey, while leaving their heartbroken and sad mothers and fathers standing next to their graves...

The following memory presents a sad scene that reminds us the pain of death and turns our eyes and hearts to the Hereafter from this mortal world:

Mathnawi commentator Tahir al-Mawlawi (may Allah have mercy on his soul) became very sad to see the tragic death of a mother and her twin children at childbirth. He searched for and found her relatives. He told them,

“– I would like to write an epitaph to express my condolences for the death of these three people!” and wrote the following lines nicely manifesting the mercy and compassion of a mother’s heart,

An epitaph on a gravestone:

*“Dünyada der-âğûşa ecel vermedi imkân,
Etti beni hem-makber iki yavrucuğumla.
Artık tutarak dest-i yetîmânelerinden,
Geldim sana Rabb'im, iki öksüz çocuğumla...”*

Which means, “By putting me with my two little babies into the grave, death did not let me hug them in this life as much as I wanted. Dear Lord! I came to you holding the hands of my two orphans...”

The bottom line is that it will be more beneficial for us to take the inescapable end and become very careful to live in accordance with guidance of the Noble Qur'an, while we are still alive and have the chance.

88th - 95th Verses: As explained in detail at the beginning of this chapter of the Qur'an, people will be divided into three classes in the Hereafter according to their fatih and deeds in this world.

1. The class of “*muqarrabun*” is the most superior and eminent one. The blessings awaiting for them can be listed as follows:

- Rawh: Eternal comfort, mercy, relief, and endless life.
- Rayhan: blessings with nice fragrance.
- Paradise of Naim: The Paradise with no sorrow, but filled with blessings and happiness.

Our Prophet (pbuh) says,

“The believer’s soul is a bird that eats from the trees of Paradise, until it will be returned to his body on the Day when he is resurrected.” (Nasai, Janaiz 117; Ibn Majah, Zuhd 32)

2. “Ashab al-Yamin” is the second class and they will too, enter Paradise. They will live free from all kinds troubles and sorrow in Paradise. They will greet each other and angels will greet them.

3. Then comes the third group known as “*ashab al-shimal*.” The people who “deny the truths and heretics” will enter Hell, burn in its roasting fire, and drink from its boiling water.

All these are serious facts that will certainly take place.

96th Verse: Even though the disbelievers do not believe in, this is the reality. Therefore, believers should not pay attention to their belief or disbelief and continue to praise the name of Almighty Lord.

When the verse “**Extol, then, the limitless glory of your Sustainer’s mighty name!**” (al-Waqia, 56: 96) was revealed, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) “*say this verse when you are bowing down in prayer.*” When the verse “**Extol the limitless glory of your Sustainer’s name: [the glory of] the Al-Highest,**” (al-A’la, 87: 1) was revealed, he (pbuh) said, “*say this verse when you prostrate in prayer.*” (Abu Dawud, Salat 146-147: 869)

In regards to praising our Lord’s name, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) gives the following advices:

“There are two expressions which are very easy for the tongue to say, but they are very heavy in the balance and are very dear to The Beneficent (Allah), and they are, ‘Subhan Allah Al- ‘Azim and ‘Subhan Allah wa bihamdihi.”” (Bukhari, Daawat 19; Muslim, Daawat 31)

“Whoever says, “Subhan Allah wa bihamdihi,” one hundred times a day, will be forgiven all his sins even if they were as much as the foam of the sea.” (Bukhari, Daawat 64, 65; Muslim, Dhikr 28)

12. INVOCATION (al-A’raf, 7: 55-56)

أَدْعُوا رَبَّكُمْ تَضَرُّعًا وَخُفْيَةً إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ ﴿٥٥﴾ وَلَا تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ بَعْدَ إِصْلَاحِهَا وَادْعُوهُ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا إِنَّ رَحْمَتَ اللَّهِ قَرِيبٌ مِّنَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٥٦﴾

TRANSLATION:

55. Call unto your Sustainer humbly, and in the secrecy of your hearts. Verily, He loves not those who transgress the bounds of what is right.

56. Hence, do not spread corruption on earth after it has been so well ordered. And call unto Him with fear and longing: verily, God’s grace is ever near unto the doers of good!

COMMENTARY:

55th - 56th Verses: Dua or invocation means that a servant asks his/her needs from his/her Lord by paying attention to certain manners. It is the believers’ relying place and the essence of servanthood. All invocations presented to the divine presence are responded and accepted one by one. Because our Lord says, **“Call unto Me, [and] I shall respond to you”** (al-Mu’min 40: 60). However, in order for the invocation to be responded, it should be said in a state of sincerity, humbleness and supplication which is the way that pleases Allah. Yelling, making a lot of noise, and asking like giving an order is not an appropriate way of praying. This is why we are commanded in this verse to pray to our Lord earnestly, secretly, sincerely, by fearing from His punishment, and hoping His mercy. Believers are warned that Allah does not like those who exaggerate in this respect, while those who do good deeds, do well everything they do, always pursue goodness, and avoid mischief are given the good news that they will receive Allah’s mercy.

The following incident reported by Abu Musa al-Ash’ari shows us the manners that one needs to be applied while saying prayers:

We were with the Prophet (pbuh) on a journey, and whenever we ascended a high place, we used to say, “Allahu Akbar.” The Prophet (pbuh) said:

“Don’t trouble yourselves too much! You are not calling a deaf or an absent person, but you are calling One Who Hears, Sees, and is very near.”” (Bukhari, Tawhid 9; Muslim, Dhikr 44-45)

The command expressed in the 56th verse as **“do not spread corruption on earth after it has been so well ordered”** can be interpreted in the following meanings: Allah the Almighty created earth, established its order, and offered it with all of its blessings to the service of Human beings. He also sent prophets and holy books to show His servants how to be a good servant. He

gave the people the task to use the blessings given them in a way pleasing Allah and to protect the order established on earth. In order to successfully fulfill this task, one should understand well the divine command “**do not spread corruption**” and do what it necessitates. In other words, people are given the task of not to corrupt anything with order existing on earth. In this context, harms given to people by killing, injuring, usurpation, and stealing; harms given to religion by disbelief and innovation in religion; harms given to human honor, chastity, and family by adultery, sodomy, false accusations of incontinence; and harms given to mind by intoxicants are within the scope of this command. Because there are five basic rights and subject of benefits of people in life of this world: Life, property, lineage, religion, and intellect. The command “do not spread corruption” requires protecting all these rights, benefits, and other things related to them. When they are not protected and when the necessary precautions are not taken to protect them, it would not be possible to prevent the emergence of conflicts and disorder on earth.

13. DHIKR (REMEMBRANCE OF ALLAH) (al-A'raf, 7: 205-206)

The most important way of servanthood to Allah is to instill remembrance of Allah to the heart and to remember Allah continuously as described in the following verses:

وَاذْكُرْ رَبَّكَ فِي نَفْسِكَ تَضَرُّعًا وَخِيفَةً وَدُونَ الْجَهْرِ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ بِالْغُدُوِّ
وَالْآصَالِ وَلَا تَكُنْ مِنَ الْغَافِلِينَ ﴿205﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ لَا يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ
عَنْ عِبَادَتِهِ وَيُسَبِّحُونَهُ وَلَهُ يَسْجُدُونَ ﴿206﴾

TRANSLATION:

205. And remember your Lord within yourself humbly and fearing and in a voice not loud in the morning and the evening and be not of the heedless ones.

206. Surely those who are with your Lord are not too proud to serve Him, and they declare His glory and prostrate in humility before Him.

COMMENTARY:

205th Verse: This verse commands remembering Allah (dhikr) in heart without raising the voice and teaches its manners and principles. This type of *dhikr* is carried out by heart, inner world, and soul. It is done in a state of supplication and prayer, begging and feeling, by heart and mind. It is done with words not very loud, or a little bit louder than thinking by heart just enough to be heard by the person who recites them. It is done day and night, in other words at all times without giving a break. When this is done, heedlessness goes away, heart becomes awake at all times, and the person continues to remember Allah with the consciousness of being with his/her Lord and feeling the greatest of love for his/her Lord. The remembrance of Allah done in accordance with these principles is the most useful of the acts of worship and helps believer improve his/her spirituality and morality.

An allegorical interpretation is made as follows:

“Remember your Lord within yourself”: Remember Allah within yourself by actions, morality, and essence by changing your actions by means of the actions commanded by Allah and your morality by means of the morality commanded by Allah and by annihilating yourself in Allah. In fact, in a sacred sayings of the Prophet (hadith qudsi), it is stated that *“Allah says: ‘I am just as My slave thinks I am, (i.e. I am able to do for him what he thinks I can do for him) and I am with him if He remembers Me. If he remembers Me in himself, I too, remember him in Myself...’”* (Bukhari, Tawhid 15, 43; Muslim, Dhikr 18-19). This saying expresses the meaning of the verse **“Therefore remember Me, I will remember you”** (Al-Baqara, 2: 152). It is similar to when butterfly annihilates its being in the candle’s being by remembering it, the candle remembers the butterfly by making it eternal in its own eternity. However, Allah is free from equals and examples.

“Remember your Lord within yourself humbly and fearing and in a voice not loud”: There is a compulsion in begging. There are some difficulties at the beginning of remembering Allah because it necessitates changing the actions of self with the actions required by religion. The middle of remembering Allah is done secretly and internally by adorning oneself with the morality commanded by Allah and manners required by Sufi order. The final stage of remembering Allah can be realized by annihilating oneself in the essence of Allah by means of the lights of truth. Those who ascend to this stage are proscribed to remember Allah by saying words out loud.

“Remember your Lord in the morning and the evening”: “morning” refers to the morning of the pre-eternity, and “evening” refers to the evening of eternity. Because true remembrance and the remembered one is the true remembering one. The remembering and the remembered is actually the Eternal Allah. Because Allah the Almighty said in pre-eternity **“remember Me, I will remember you”** (Al-Baqara 2: 152). Allah’s remembrance of His servants in pre-eternity happened when He addressed them. In reality, He is both the remembering and the remembered one. Therefore, nobody except Allah Himself can remember Him in real sense. This is why Allah the Almighty says **“be not of the heedless ones”** who do not know that in reality Allah is the remembering and the remembered one. (*Ruh al-Bayan*, III, 393)

- The following example is noteworthy to explain the significance of keeping the heart continuously busy with remembrance of Allah and not being heedless from remembering Him not even a single moment:

According to narrations, the prophet Jesus (upon whom be peace) once encountered a sick man with piebald skin and with both his temples drawn. The man was virtually unaware of his sickness and kept saying to himself:

“– O my Lord! Endless praise and thanks be to you that you have freed me from the worries that befall much of mankind...”

In order to determine the degree of this man’s perception and his spiritual perfection, Jesus asked him:

“– O man. Which worry has Allah freed you from?” The sick man replied:

“– O spirit of Allah! The most disastrous of sickness and misfortunes is for the heart to be heedless and deprived of Allah. Thank God that I am in a state of pleasure of being together

with Almighty Allah. It is as if I am completely unaware of the sicknesses of my body...” (Topbaş, Faziletler Medeniyeti-1, p. 384)

206th Verse: What is meant by “those who are with your Lord” are the angel called muqarrabun mentioned in the verse **“And you shall see the angels going round about the throne glorifying the praise of their Lord...”** (Al-Zumar, 39: 75). They are also called “*Mala al-A’la*.” They never are too proud to serve Allah the Almighty and stay away from worshipping Allah not even a single moment. They always praise Allah the Almighty and prostrate before Him. Another verse related to this matter reads as follows:

“To Him belong all (creatures) in the heavens and on earth: Even those who are in His (very) Presence are not too proud to serve Him, nor are they (ever) weary (of His service): They celebrate His praises night and day, nor do they ever flag or intermit.” (Al-Anbiya, 21: 19-20)

As expressed in the verses, since even the angels very close to Allah do not stop servitude to Allah not for a single moment and continue to worship Him by praising and prostrating Him, it is obvious that people who may always commit sins need worshipping Allah more. According to this, people who have been created to worship are asked to regard servanthood to Allah highest honor, to praise Him by heart and tongue, to prostrate humbly before Him, to keep the contentedness of Allah superior to their own desires, and thus to reach the consciousness and life of servanthood of the angels that are presented in the verse as examples.

When this verse is recited, the one who recites it and those who listen to it must make a prostration of recitation. Our Prophet (pbuh) says in respect to the prostration of recitation:

“when, the son of Adam recites the verse of Sajdah (prostration) and then falls down in prostration, the Satan goes into seclusion, weeps, and says: ‘Alas, Woe unto me, the son of Adam was commanded to prostrate, and he prostrated and Paradise was entitled to him and I was commanded to prostrate, but I refused and am doomed to Hell.’” (Muslim, İman 133)

14. PIETY (Al-Hujurat, 49: 13)

NEITHER THE WHITE IS SUPERIOR TO THE BLACK, NOR IS ARAB SUPERIOR TO NON-ARAB; ONLY SUPERIORITY IS BASED ON PIETY.

Islam protects people's all kinds of rights and gives them greatest value. It calls whole humanity to adopt and live according to its lofty values and ascend the peak of piety:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ
لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَىٰكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ ﴿١٣﴾

TRANSLATION:

13. O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know each other (not that you may despise (each

other). Verily the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things).

COMMENTARY:

13th Verse: In the previous verses, it is addressed to believers, while in this verse it is addressed to entire humanity. Because the message of this verse does not interest only Muslims but the whole humanity. The Almighty Allah explains that people are equal in their creation, and their merit is not based on their tribe, lineage or race, their wealth and property, but rather the strength of their righteousness and moral virtues earned by their free will.

Allah the Almighty first created Adam and Eve. He then created and reproduced in uninterrupted chain the whole humanity from them. He divided them into nations, races, clans, tribes, and groups. Every nation started to speak in a different language. They developed their own customs and traditions. However, Allah the Almighty did not do this to give them a reason to brag about, but rather to give them a chance to know each other, to exchange cultures and civilization, to construct this world together, and to benefit from the means of this world together. Nobody has the right to brag about his/her family, tribe, nation, or ethnicity. Because the whole humanity was created from a man and woman. Nobody has given the right to choose his or her parents. In this respect, it is not right to be proud of or criticized for something that is not someone's choice. Therefore, the value of people in the presence of Allah is not based on something that is not their choice such as lineage and ethnicity, but rather on their righteousness and piety earned by their own choice, intention, and effort. In other words, He values them based on their obedience to His commands, avoidance of His prohibitions, and moral virtues. In fact, according to Abu Hurairah (r.a.) narration, one day, Allah's Messenger (pbuh) told his companions:

“Who will take these statements from me, so that he may act upon them, or teach one who will act upon them?” I (Abu Hurairah) said:

“I shall O Messenger of Allah!”

So he (pbuh) took my hand and enumerated five (things), he said:

“Be on guard against the unlawful and you shall be the most worshipping among the people!

- be satisfied with what Allah has allotted for you and you shall be the richest of the people!

- Be kind to your neighbor and you shall be a believer.

- Love for the people what you love for yourself and you shall be a Muslim!

- And do not laugh too much, for indeed increased laughter kills the heart.” (Tirmidhi, Zuhd 2: 2305; Ibn Majah, Zuhd 24)

It is a historical fact that being proud of one's tribe and clan seeing oneself superior to others because of tribal affiliation was very strong during the days of the revelation of the Noble Qur'an. When Islam declared the equality of people, some people had difficulty to accept this. Some respected families did not want to marry their daughters to the sons of the tribes that they did not like, or to the poor and freed slaves. Allah's Messenger (pbuh) fought with such conceptions and tried patiently to discipline them. Indeed, he (pbuh) said:

"Allah the Almighty has abolished the custom of the pride of the age of ignorance and boasting about the ancestors. People are of two kinds: One is pious, righteous, and worthy in the presence of Allah. The other is sinner, disobedient, and unworthy in the presence of Allah. People are the sons of Adam. Adam was created from dirt. A society should give up boasting about their ancestors; otherwise they will be less worthy in the presence of Allah than a bug roll excrement by its nose." (Ahmed, *Musnad*, II, 361)

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) addressed people in his famous farewell sermon saying:

"O people! Indeed, your Lord is one and your father is one. Indeed, there is no superiority of an Arab over a non-Arab, nor of a non-Arab over an Arab, nor of a white over a black, nor a black over a white, except by taqwa. Have I conveyed the message?" They replied, "You have conveyed it, Messenger of Allah!" He (pbuh) said, "Let whomever is present tell whomever is absent (Ahmed, *Musnad*, V, 411)

Piety is the measure of value in Islam and the only way to get close to Allah and His Messenger. It means that the respect and fear from Allah fills the heart and instills through its depths. It permeates into most sensitive and gracious sides of soul. In this way, under the influence of the feeling of piety the servant gives up all thoughts, words, actions, and behaviors that would not be against Allah's contentedness. Instead, he/she spends all his/her power and run to carry out all good intentions, words, actions, and behaviors that would please Allah the Almighty. The following hadith narrated by Muadh ibn Jabal (r.a.) whom our Prophet (pbuh) loved very much and to whose manners he paid special attention is remarkable:

"When Allah's Messenger (pbuh) was sending me to Yemen as governor, he came to outside Medina to bid farewell to me. I was on a mount, while he was on foot. After he gave me some advice, he said

"– O Muadh! Maybe you would not see me after this year! It is possible that you may visit my mosque and grave."

When I heard these words, I started to cry out of sorrow for being separated from the friend, i.e. Allah's Messenger. He (pbuh) said:

"– O Muadh! Do not cry!" and turned his face to Medina and said:

"– Those who are closest to me among the people are the pious ones who fear Allah wherever and whoever they are." (Ahmed, *Musnad*, V, 235)

Likewise, our beloved Prophet (pbuh) said:

"Certainly my friends are the ones whose hearts are filled with reverence to and fear from Allah and who avoid disobeying Him most." (Abu Dawud, *Fitan*, 1/4242)

Those who know religious realities should teach those who do not know. It is not easy for a person to reach the truth of faith and Islam and ascend to the level of a mature believer. In order to achieve this level, one needs knowledge, manners, discipline, purification, sacrifice, sincere works, and efforts.

15. DELIVERING THE MESSAGE OF ISLAM AND GUIDANCE (Al-Maidah, 5: 67)

يَا أَيُّهَا الرَّسُولُ بَلِّغْ مَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ وَإِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلْ فَمَا بَلَّغْتَ رِسَالَتَهُ
وَاللَّهُ يَعْصِمُكَ مِنَ النَّاسِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿67﴾

67. O Messenger! Announce all that has been bestowed from on high upon you by your Lord: for unless you does it fully, you will not have delivered His message [at all]. And God will protect you from [unbelieving] men: behold, God does not guide people who refuse to acknowledge the truth.

COMMENTARY:

67th Verse: Prophets who say “**but we are not bound to do more than clearly deliver the message [entrusted to us]**” (see Yasin, 36: 17) have the responsibility to deliver all the commands they receive from Allah to people without hiding them or making any changes on them. Thus, this verse seriously warns first the prophets and then the scholars who will continue to carry out the task of delivering all knowledge related to religion without hiding or changing any of that knowledge after the prophets even under the most difficult circumstances. Aisha (r.anha) says, “Whoever tells you that the Prophet (pbuh) concealed something of the Divine revelation, do not believe him, for Allah said: **“O Messenger! Announce all that has been bestowed from on high upon you by your Sustainer: for unless you do it fully, you will not have delivered His message [at all]”** (Al-Maidah, 5: 67).” (Bukhari, Tawhid 46; Muslim, Iman 287)

Negligence in the task of delivering the religious knowledge will cause a person face many troubles and problems both in this world and in the Hereafter. In this respect, Abu Hurairah (r.a) says:

“We always heard the following fact among the Companions:

On the Judgment Day, a man will be hold by another man whom the first one has not met before. The first man gets surprised and says:

“– What do you want from me? You do not know me at all!”

The second man responds,

“– You saw me making mistakes and doing wrong deeds in the world, but you did not warn me and stop me doing those deeds” and complains about him.” (Munziri, *at-Tarhib wa al-tarhib*, Beirut 1417, III, 164/3506)

Fudayl b. Iyad (may Allah have mercy on his soul) says:

“Those who recite the Noble Qur’an and understand its meaning will be responsible to deliver the messages that the prophets of Allah were responsible to deliver. Because they are considered the heirs of the prophets.” (*Veliler Ansiklopedisi*, I, 226)

The statement expressed in the verse **“And Allah will protect you from [unbelieving] men”** (Al-Maidah, 5: 67) informs us that our Prophet’s (pbuh) life was under the protection of

Allah. From that time on, Allah was going to protect him from the people, especially from the enemies of Islam. Therefore, there was nothing for him to be scared and worried. In fact, the following narration helps us to understand this matter more easily:

The Prophet (pbuh) was vigilant one night and when he reached Medina, he said, *"Would that a pious man from my companions guard me tonight!"* Aisha (r. anha) says, "Suddenly we heard the clatter of arms." The Prophet (pbuh) said, "Who is that?" He (The new comer) replied, "I am Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas." When Allah's Messenger (pbuh) asked him why he came, he replied, "I was afraid that something bad might happen to you so I have come to guard you." So, the Prophet (pbuh) prayed for him and slept (that night). (Bukhari, Jihad 70; Muslim, Fadail al-Sahabah 39-40) Aisha (r. anha) says, "until the verse **"And God will protect you from [unbelieving] men"** (Al-Maidah, 5: 67) Allah's Messenger (pbuh) was protected by guards. When this verse was revealed, he came out of his tent and said *"O people! You may go now. Because Allah protects me"* (Tirmidhi, Tafsir 5/4).

16. THE PROPHET: BEST EXEMPLARY MAN (UTHWA HASANA) (al-Ahzab, 33: 21)

If people take the Prophet (pbuh) as an exemplar for themselves, i.e. in war and peace, in servanthood and morality, in short in every aspect of life, they can be saved from falling into sad situations, live an honorable life, and ascend to the rank of a valuable servant:

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَن كَانَ
يَرْجُوا اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا ﴿٢١﴾

TRANSLATION:

21. Ye have indeed in the Messenger of Allah a beautiful pattern (of conduct) for any one whose hope is in Allah and the Final Day, and who engages much in the Praise of Allah.

COMMENTARY:

21st Verse: Allah's Messenger (pbuh) became the best exemplar and greatest model of virtues in every aspect of life and for the people from all levels of society. He not only delivered theoretically religious rules and regulations, but also practiced, defined, and explained them in his personal life. Allah's Messenger (pbuh) is our role model in faith, practice, daily life, morality, and manners. He is an exemplar in war and peace, in hardships and comfort, in prosperity and poverty. He (pbuh) became in every aspect of life as a guide in spirituality, a scholar and teacher, best exemplar in morality, a trainer, a head of the state, a commander, a diplomat, a husband, a father, a friend, a neighbor, and an individual in society. Therefore, Muslims must accept Allah's Messenger (pbuh) as their exemplar in every aspect of their lives and shape their character based on his words, acts, and behaviors

However, we are informed in this verse about the distinguishing characteristics of those who feel obliged to take the Prophet as their exemplar, which are:

1. To believe in Allah; to have the fear to go into His presence and to be held accountable from the deeds done in this world. Those who do not believe in Allah, love Allah, and fear from Allah cannot take the Prophet as their exemplar.

2. To believe in the Hereafter; to know with certainty that everything that one does in this world will be measured by a very precise balance and to know that one will see the good or bad consequences of his/her actions in the Hereafter. According to this, those who lose hope from Allah, do not believe in the Judgment Day, and direct all their attention to the life and pleasures in this world cannot and would not take the Prophet as their exemplar.

3. To remember Allah frequently. Therefore, those who are heedless of Allah cannot take the Prophet as their exemplar.

Khatam al-Asam (q.s), one of the friends of Allah, says:

“There are three things and without adding three more things, it is in vain to expect anything to get them. Those who claim that they can get something from them are liars. These things are:

- One who says he/she fears from Allah, but does not avoid prohibited things let alone the suspicious ones, is nothing but a liar in respect to his/her claim about fearing Allah.

- One who claims to desire Paradise, but do not spend for the sake of Allah is a liar.

- One who claims to love the Messenger of Allah (pbuh), but does not like the state of poverty is a liar.” (Veliler Ansiklopedisi, I, 263-264)

Therefore, those who on the one hand believe in Allah, hope to receive Allah’s mercy and blessings, on the other hand know with certainty that the final decision about them will be based on their words, actions, behaviors in this world as well as on how much they resemble to the examples manifested in the life of the Prophet in faith, daily life, morality, and manners, character and personality strived to follow the model of this best example. They know that the Judgment Day will come and live between hope and fear, always remember Allah by their heart, mind and tongue. They look for the path to eternal salvation in the model of the Prophet.

Al-Tawbah, 9: 128-129

لَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ عَزِيزٌ عَلَيْهِ مَا عَنِتُّمْ حَرِيصٌ
عَلَيْكُمْ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَؤُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿128﴾ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَقُلْ حَسْبِيَ
اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَهُوَ رَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿129﴾

TRANSLATION:

128. Indeed, there has come unto you [O mankind] a Messenger from among yourselves: heavily weighs -upon him [the thought] that you might suffer [in the life to come]; full of concern for you [is he, and] full of compassion and mercy towards the believers.

129. But if those [who are bent on denying the truth] turn away, say: “Allah is enough for me! There is no- deity save Him. In Him have I placed my trust, for He the Lord of the Throne (of Glory) Supreme.”

COMMENTARY:

128th Verse: This verse describes five important characteristics of our Prophet:

a. He is a Messenger from among us: Like all the other prophets (peace be upon them) sent to humanity, the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was also human being. In many verses, Allah the Almighty advises to His Messenger to: **“Say [O Prophet]: “I am but a mortal man like all of you. It has been revealed unto me that your God is the One and Only God.”** (see Al-Kahf 18: 110). If the Prophet were an angel, it would be more difficult for people. (see An'am, 6: 9). Allah's Messenger was also an Arab, because the Noble Qur'an was first addressed to the Arabs and presented its messages to whole humanity through them. Therefore, with this verse, Allah the Almighty encourages the Arabs to help and to serve the Prophet. In a way, Allah says to the Arabs, “all power, honor, and respect gained by the Prophet will also be a source of pride for you. Because he comes from your lineage.” (Razi, XVI, 236)

b. Aziz: By these characteristics, it is expressed that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) is a prophet with honor, esteem, and excellence. The life of the Messenger of Allah is filled with numerous examples of excellence and honor. He used to get his greatest honor from sincerely worshipping his Lord. He did not have the slightest thing that would stain his honor and esteem.

c. He does not like to see that we have difficulty: the word “*anat*” in this verse means, “to be in difficult situation that would be hard to be escaped and cause the person to fear from being destroyed.” It also means “tiredness and hardship.” Our hardships, being in a bad situation, sadness, and misery make the Prophet sad and are heavy and difficult to bear for the Prophet. This honorable and excellent Prophet (pbuh) would not become pleased to see his fellow human beings to be in hardships. He feels the sorrow and pain of others deep in his heart because he is also a human being and a great person. The Poet Kemalzade Ekrem's following lines explains this characteristic of our Prophet (pbuh):

*“Her duyduğum terâneyi ruhumla dinledim,
Her bülbülüñ enîni ile ben de inledim.”*

Which means “I listened all the sounds I heard by my soul. I grieved with the howls of every single nightingale.”

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) would especially become very sad for the people's disbelief to whom he was sent as a mercy. This is why Allah the Almighty consoled him by sending him verses such as **“But would you, perhaps, torment yourself to death with grief over them if they are not willing to believe in this message?”** (Al-Kahf, 18: 6) Because of his exalted morality, he had utmost mercy, compassion, and softness to his people. He warned them about the torment they might face in this world and in the Hereafter. He especially tried to protect them from doing things that deserve Allah's wrath. Because of this characteristic of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh), he will intercede on the Judgment Day for those who deserve to be interceded. He will help them finish their questioning fast and enter Paradise. It is stated that the religion he brought has come in accordance with his morality, which does not consists of any hardship and difficulty. (Al-Baqara, 2: 185)

d. He was very keen to his followers: greed (*hirs*) means the excessive desire felt to acquire or possess something. Those who have this attribute are called greedy (*haris*). The exaggerated

form of the expression used in the verse shows the strength of the desire, passion, and want. Because the Prophet (pbuh) was very eager to see his people to finding the straight path, happiness both in this world and in the Hereafter, and their goodness and benefits. He strived all his efforts to not only protect them from mistakes but also take them to the highest levels of happiness, salvation, and Paradise. (Elmahli, IV, 2653) Our Prophet of mercy never forgets his people due to his great passion for them and waits for them in Paradise by the river of Kawthar. He gave the glad tidings that he saved his greatest prayer for the Hereafter to ask Allah forgive the believers.

e. He is very merciful towards the believers: The word *ra'fah* means compassion and deep mercy. This attribute mostly refers to removing harmful things, problems and troubles of the person for whom mercy is felt. The word *rauf* on the other hand is used for the person with strong attribute of *ra'fah*. *Rahmah* means “the grace and compassion that necessitates treating the person for whom mercy is felt with goodness.” The word *rahim* is on the other hand a term used with the feeling of strong mercy and compassion. Our Prophet (pbuh) was named with two of the beautiful names of Allah, i.e. “*rauf*” and “*rahim*.” Allah the Almighty did not give to any of His prophets two of His beautiful names together however, He called our Prophet (pbuh) as “*rauf* and *rahim*.” He said about Himself, “**behold, Allah is most compassionate towards man, a dispenser of grace.**” (Al-Baqara, 2: 143) This shows the high status and honor of our Prophet in the presence of Allah. In several verses of the Noble Qur'an, Allah the Almighty commanded to our Prophet to be merciful towards the believers, to treat them with leniency, and to protect them. (See Al-Hijr, 15: 88; Al-Shu'ara, 26: 215)

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) who felt and knew the deep meanings of all-divine addressing took care of his believers with mercy more than the passion of a compassionate mother to her children. Throughout his entire life, he prayed and begged Allah saying “Ummati (my people), ummati (my people) ...” In fact, in one of his sayings Allah's Messenger (pbuh) addresses to His Companions as follows:

“Behold! I am a reason for your safety as long as I am in life. When I pass away, I will say “Dear Lord! Ummati (my people)...” in my grave until the first Trumpet was blown...” (Kanz al-Ummal, XIV, 414)

In fact, he passed away and met his most beloved friend while saying Ummati (my people), ummati (my people) ...” In his last breath, he expressed his mercy, love and compassion for us by saying “I will be waiting for you by the pool of kawthar...”

How magnificent the manifestation of love and mercy towards the believers in one of the friends of Allah Ahmad al-Rufai:

His servant Yaqub (may Allah show mercy on his soul) narrates:

“My master Ahmad al-Rufai got sick. He was in the deathbed. I felt that and told him:

“- It is time for *arus*¹⁶³...” He said,

“- yes, it seems so.” I asked him the wisdom in this and he continued saying:

163. Arus literally means the night of wedding. Here it is allegorically used for “death,” because death for the friends of Allah is a kind of wedding in which the lover meets his/her beloved by his/her spiritual love.

“- Some incidents took place and we bought them by giving souls.” then he explained what those incidents were:

“- A great affliction was coming upon the people. I bought it in return for the rest of my life. I sacrificed myself.”

After that, he started to rub his face on the ground. When he raised his head, his face and beard were all covered with dirt. He was crying and saying:

“Forgiveness... forgiveness ... O Allah! Make me a ceiling for the afflictions coming to the people and let it come to me.” (*Veliler Ansiklopedisi*, II, 517)

It should be mentioned that those who deliver the message of Islam should try to have the abovementioned characteristics of the Prophet as much as possible. Because these distinguished attributes unite with Islam and play a key role in attracting people's hearts to this great religion. The secret of success is hidden in this moral perfection.

129th Verse: This verse consoles not only the Prophet (pbuh) but also the distinguished believers who follow his footsteps in delivering the message of Islam. Because, as there will be those who accept the truth, there will also be those deny it. What is important is to do whatever is necessary as well as possible. Allah will suffice to those who determinedly and eagerly spend effort on this path, trust in, and rely on Allah. He will protect them from harms and take them to success. Because He is the Lord of Supreme Throne and everything is under only His authority and disposition.



ANSWERS

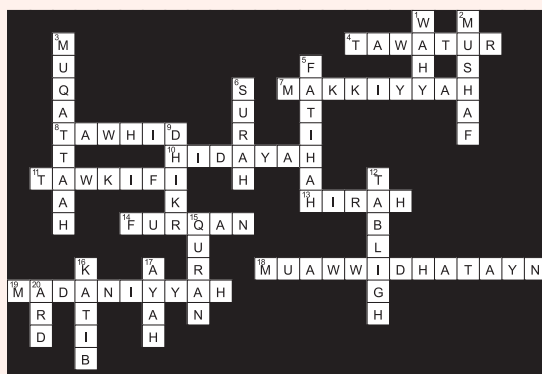
CHAPTER I

B. MARK THE CORRECT ANSWERS TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

1. a 2. e 3. b 4. d 5. c 6. e
 7. e 8. a 9. e 10. e 11. b

C. FILL IN THE BLANKS IN THE FOLLOWING SENTENCES WITH THE MOST SUITABLE WORD FROM THOSE GIVEN BELOW

1. mushaf 2. morality
 3. mu'awwidhatayn 4. makkiyyah
 5. tawkifi

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

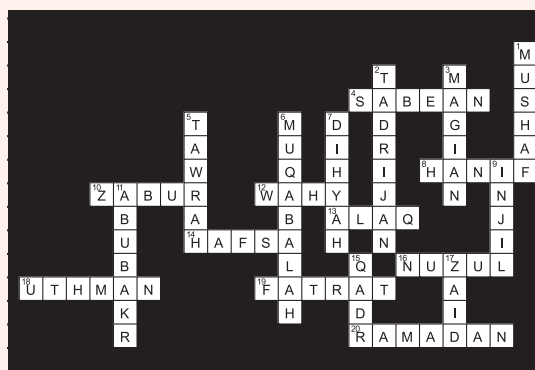
CHAPTER II

B. MARK THE CORRECT ANSWERS TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

1. c 2. a 3. d 4. d 5. e 6. d
 7. b 8. c 9. a 10. d

C. FILL IN THE BLANKS IN THE FOLLOWING SENTENCES WITH THE MOST SUITABLE WORD FROM THOSE GIVEN BELOW

1. fatrat al-wahy 2. nubuwwah – risalah
 3. katib al-wahy 4. ard
 5. mushaf

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

CHAPTER III

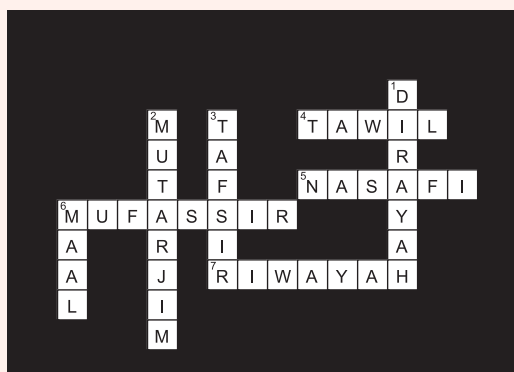
B. MARK THE CORRECT ANSWERS TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

1. c 2. e 3. b 4. b 5. d 6. b

C. FILL IN THE BLANKS IN THE FOLLOWING SENTENCES WITH THE MOST SUITABLE WORD FROM THOSE GIVEN BELOW

1. al-Riwayah 2. Ma'al 3. al-Dirayah
 4. al-Lafziyyah 5. the Qur'an
 6. Sahaba (The Companions)

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



CHAPTER IV

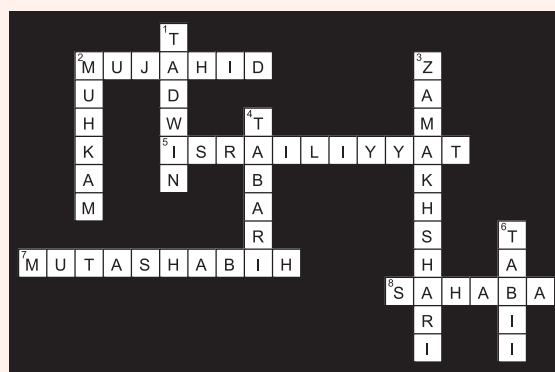
B. MARK THE CORRECT ANSWERS TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

1. d 2. c 3. b 4. d 5. a

C. FILL IN THE BLANKS IN THE FOLLOWING SENTENCES WITH THE MOST SUITABLE WORD FROM THOSE GIVEN BELOW

1. Abu al-Su'ud Effendi
 2. Ahkam al-Qur'an
 3. Sufi
 4. Israiliyyat
 5. The fourth
 6. Tabi'un

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



CHAPTER V

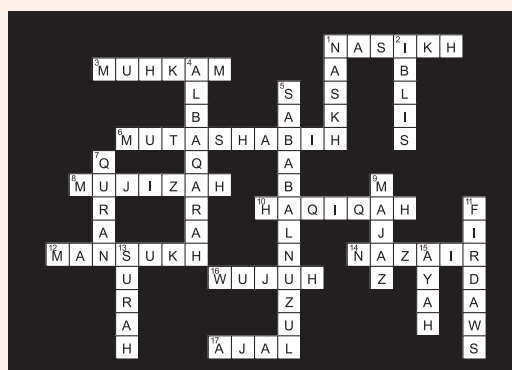
B. MARK THE CORRECT ANSWERS TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

1. a 2. e 3. e 4. e 5. b
6. c 7. b

C. FILL IN THE BLANKS IN THE FOLLOWING SENTENCES WITH THE MOST SUITABLE WORD FROM THOSE GIVEN BELOW

1. Nasikh 2. Mutashabih
3. Sabab al- Nuzul 4. Muhkam
5. Mubhamat 6. Naza'ir (Synonym)
7. Gharib al-Qur'an

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



CHAPTER VI

B. MARK THE CORRECT ANSWERS TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

1. a 2. a 3. c 4. a

C. FILL IN THE BLANKS IN THE FOLLOWING SENTENCES WITH THE MOST SUITABLE WORD FROM THOSE GIVEN BELOW

1. Qadi al-Baydawi and Fakhr al-Din al-Razi
2. Ibn Kathir,
3. Fakhr al-Din al-Razi
4. al-Tafsir al-Kabir
5. Ibn Abbas

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



**D. MATCH THE NAMES OF MUFASSIRS WITH THE TITLE
OF THEIR TAFSIR BOOKS GIVEN BELOW**

N	The Name of Mufassir		Title of His Book
7	Abdullah ibn Abbas	1	Al-Jami' li Ahkam al-Qur'an
3	Jarullah Umar al-Zamakhshari	2	Jami' al-Bayan an Ta'wil Aay al-Qur'an
6	Fakhr al-Din al-Razi	3	Al-Kashshaf
5	Muhammad al-Baydawi	4	Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Azim
1	Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Qurtubi	5	Anwar al-Tanzil wa Asrar al-Ta'wil
4	Ibn Kathir	6	Mafatih al-Ghayb
2	Muhammad Jarir al-Tabari	7	Tafsir Ibn Abbas

..... NOTES

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Meskhetian Turkish - Malaysian - Romanian - Mongolian - Mooré - Turkmen - Tigrinya - Swahili - Tajik
Amharic - Traditional Chinese - Twi - Ukrainian - Uighur - Uzbek - Wolof - Zarma - Slovene - Urdu - Kurdish
N'ko - Polish - Japanese

