

A TEXTBOOK FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS



TAFSIR

QUR'ANIC EXEGESIS



PUBLICATIONS OF THE PRESIDENCY OF RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS



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Chapter

THE HISTORY OF THE NOBLE QUR'AN



THE HISTORY OF THE NOBLE QUR'AN

LET'S GET READY FOR THE CHAPTER

1. Which religions existed in the Arabian Peninsula before Islam? Research.
2. Find the meaning of the word “*wahy*” from the dictionary and learn it.
3. Research the materials on which the Qur'an was written during the time of the Prophet (saw”).
4. Obtain information about the "Qur'an of Uthman".
5. Read the meaning of the 1st verse of Surah al-Furqan, the 138th verse of Surah Al-i Imran and the 57th verse of Surah Yunus from translations of the Qur'an.

1. The Setting of the Revelation of the Noble Qur'an and the Reason it was Revealed

With the revelation of the Qur'an, fundamental changes took place in the history of humanity. In order to properly comprehend these changes, it is important to know about the cultural, religious, and social life of the Arabian Peninsula.

The Arabian Peninsula, where the Qur'an was revealed, is situated in southwest Asia. This peninsula is surrounded by the Sea of Oman and the Persian Gulf to the east, the Red Sea to the west, the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean to the south.

In the Arabian Peninsula, nomads made up part of the population, while the rest were settled. The nomads primarily lived on animal husbandry while the



The general appearance of the Arabian Peninsula during the early years of Islam

* Sallallahu Alayhi wa Sallam: Peace be upon him (from now on it will be abbreviated as saw).

settled peoples were engaged in agriculture and trade. Tribes would often fight each other because of feuds and boundary conflicts.

In the pre-Islamic Arabian Peninsula, polytheists were the most populous among various religious groups. People would worship handmade idols and offer sacrifices to them. Polytheists believed that idols would bring them closer to Allah and that He would help them. Their creed is mentioned in the Qur'an as follows: **"...We only worship them that they may bring us nearer to Allah in position."**¹

In addition to polytheist Arabs, there were Jews, Christians, Zoroastrians, Sabians, and Hanifs on the Arabian Peninsula. Hanifs were those who carried on the religious traditions of Abraham (pbuh) and adopted the belief in the Oneness of Allah (*tawhid*).

Mecca's commercial, social, and political significance was the result of its housing the Ka'bah, the first temple in the world built to worship Allah. As mentioned in the Qur'an, Abraham and his son Ishmael had built the Ka'bah in Mecca following Allah (jj)'s command.^{**} Afterwards, the community gradually forgot "the Faith in the Oneness of Allah" and the original purpose behind the construction of the Ka'bah, resulting in its being filled with idols. Thus, Mecca was turned into a center for polytheism. Tribes in the Arabian Peninsula considered the Ka'bah and its surroundings as sacred places. They would bring their idols there and visit them on certain days of the year. Those who came to visit the Ka'bah would also carry out trade in the fairs. For this reason, Meccan society became rich by means of trade and acquired a privileged status in Arabia.

The art of poetry and eloquence (rhetoric) was at an advanced stage among the Arabs. Poetry contests would be arranged in fairs and the winners' names would be displayed on the walls of the Ka'bah. Although tradition of oral literature was common, literacy was low in Arab society.

Prior to Islam, the Arab community had a poor sense of ethics, justice, and freedom. This period in which the Qur'an was revealed was called the "age of ignorance(*jahiliyyah*)". In the age of ignorance, people were divided into two groups as free people and slaves. The slaves, the poor, and the powerless were oppressed and their rights and honor had no value. Women seldom had the

¹ Zumar, 39: 3

^{**} Jalla Jalaaluhu: May His Majesty be exalted.

right to speak out in the community, and they were often deprived of their inheritance. Moreover, women who gave birth to a baby girl were despised. Fathers who had a daughter even considered it a shame, and some would bury their baby daughters alive. The general characteristics of the age of ignorance are mentioned in the Qur'an as follows: **“And when one of them is informed of [the birth of] a female, his face becomes dark, and he suppresses grief. He hides himself from the people because of the ill of which he has been informed. Should he keep it in humiliation or bury it in the ground? Unquestionably, evil is what they decide!”**² Harmful habits such as alcohol consumption, gambling, stealing, and usury were widespread, and any sense of justice in the community had disappeared. In spite of all these negative characteristics, certain virtues such as generosity, hospitality, courage, keeping promises, and protecting those who asked for refuge were also widespread among the Arabs.

SETTINGS IN WHICH THE QUR'AN WAS REVEALED			
SOCIAL SETTING	ECONOMIC SETTING	CULTURAL SETTING	RELIGIOUS SETTING
Tribal society and blood feuds	Trade	Sophisticated poetry	Idolatry
Stratified society	Caravan trading	Low literacy	Christianity Judaism
Widespread alcohol consumption and gambling	Animal husbandry	Primacy of oral literature	Magianism
Violation of human rights	Agriculture		Sabianism Hanifism

² Nahl, 16: 58;59

The Noble Qur'an aimed to educate those people who possessed negative traits through revelation and creating responsible, knowledgeable, righteous, honest, and just individuals. In this respect, during the first period the Qur'an called for social and economic justice within the community. In the early verses, some ethical principles such as helping each other, sense of responsibility, truthfulness, and justice were revealed.³ However, the main emphasis in these verses was on faith in the Oneness of Allah and the Hereafter, and on rejecting idolatry.

Therefore, the objective of revelation was to correct people's faith, reform their ethics, regulate their lives, and thus help them attain eternal happiness.

LET'S FIND SOME PRINCIPLES

1. "Indeed, this Qur'an guides to that which is most suitable and gives good tidings to the believers who do righteous deeds that they will have a great reward." (Isra, 17: 9)
2. "...[This is] a Book which We have revealed to you, [O Muhammad], that you might bring mankind out of the darkness into the light by permission of their Lord – to the path of the Exalted in Might, the Praiseworthy." (Ibrahim, 14: 1)
3. "Say, [O Muhammad], 'The Holy Spirit has brought it down from your Lord in truth to make firm those who believe and as guidance and good tidings to the Muslims.'" (Nahl, 16: 102)
4. "O mankind, there has to come to you instruction from your Lord and healing for what is in the hearts and guidance and mercy for the believers." (Yunus, 10: 57)
5. "...O you of understanding who have believed. Allah has sent down to you the Qur'an." (Talaq, 65: 10)
6. "And thus We have revealed to you an Arabic Qur'an that you may warn the Mother of Cities [Meccah] and those around it and warn of the Day of Assembly, about which there is no doubt. A party will be in Paradise and a party in the Blaze." (Shura, 42: 7)

Using the verses mentioned above, find the principles indicating the purposes of the revelation of the Qur'an.

PRINCIPLES

1. The Qur'an directs people to the straight path.
2.
3.
4.
5.

³ Mehmet Pacaci, *Kuran'a Giriş* (Introduction to the Qur'an), p. 35, 36.

2. The First Wahy and Types of Wahy

Wahy is derived from the root “وحي / w-h-y” in Arabic. Lexically, it has various meanings like speaking secretly, whispering, inspiring, commanding, implying, signaling, addressing, hurrying, exposing, writing a letter, and sending a messenger. Terminologically, it means the revelation of Allah’s messages, which He wants to transmit to people through His prophets.

The word *wahy* is used in its lexical meaning in many places in the Qur’an. For example, in the verse, **“So Zechariah came out to his people from the prayer chamber and signaled to them to exalt [Allah] in the morning and afternoon.”**⁴ *wahy* is used to mean implying and signaling. In the verse **“And thus We have made for every prophet an enemy – devils from mankind and jinn, whispering to one another decorative speech in delusion. But if your Lord had willed, they would not have done it, so leave them and that which they invent.”**⁵ the *wahy* of devils to each other refers to whispering, speaking secretly, and misgiving. In the 68th verse of Surah al-Nahl, **“And your Lord inspired the bee, ‘Take for yourself among the mountains, houses, and among the trees and [in] that which they construct.’”**, *wahy* means inspiration and instinct.

Allah sent *wahy* to His prophets via Jibreel, the Angel of Revelation, and nobody interfered with this relationship between Allah, the Angel of Revelation, and the prophets. Prophets conveyed *wahy* to people without making any alterations. This fact is mentioned in the Noble Qur’an as follows: **“And if Muhammad had made up about Us some [false] sayings, We would have seized him by the right hand; Then We would have cut from him the aorta, and there is no one of you who could prevent [Us] from him.”**⁶

The relationship of *wahy* occurred very secretly and very quickly. It also occurred even when the Prophet (saw) was sitting with his Companions and family. They would understand that the *wahy* had come, but they were not able to comprehend the details of what was happening, because it was impossible to see the Angel of Revelation in his angel form or to hear his voice. Nobody, other than the prophets, was created with the extraordinary ability to be able to engage in such a communication.⁷

LET’S REMARK

Remark in which meanings the term *wahy* is used in the verses mentioned below.

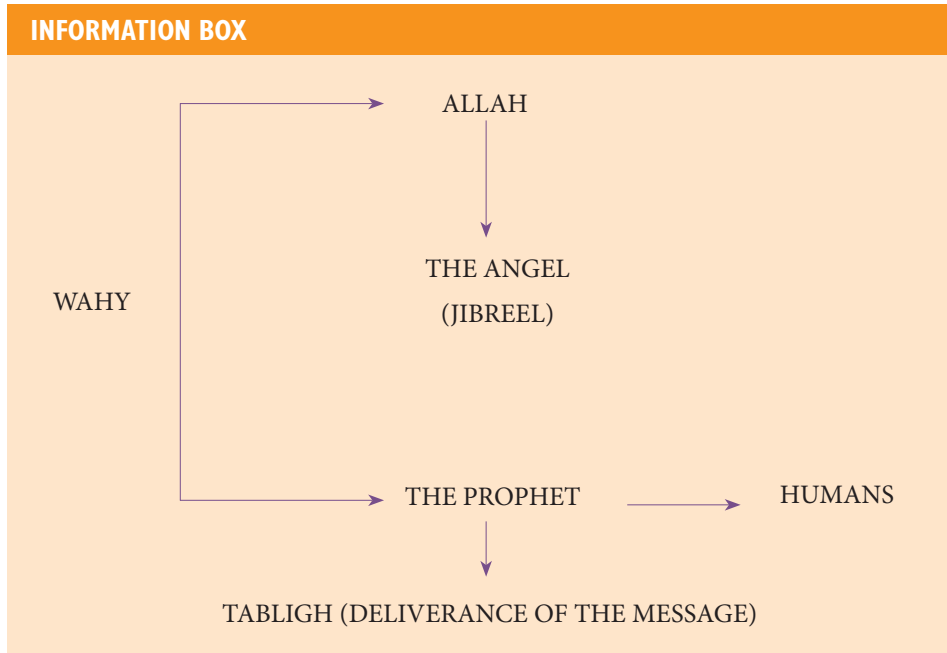
An’am, 6: 112;
Fussilat, 41: 12;
Zilzal, 99: 5;
Ma’idah, 5: 111;
Qasas, 28: 7; Ta-Ha, 20: 38.

⁴ Maryam, 19: 11

⁵ An’am, 6: 112

⁶ Haqqah, 69:44-47

⁷ Muhsin Demirci, *Tefsir Usulü*, p. 55.



Allah is the One who sends the *wahy*, its addressees are the common people through prophets, and the relationship between them is provided by the Angel Jibreel. In this case, *wahy* is a form of communication that took place between Allah – the Angel – the Prophet – humans. Wahy is a one-way communication, for a prophet is only a recipient of what Allah communicates. The Noble Qur’an states that Allah sent *wahy* to the prophets in three ways.

“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. Indeed, He is Most High and Wise.”⁸

As the verse explains, Allah’s speaking to people through *wahy* means revealing the knowledge that He wants to send to the human/the prophet, and placing it in that individual’s heart. This type of *wahy* occurred when the angel inspired Allah’s word in the heart of the Prophet without being seen.

The second type of revelation, mentioned in the verse above, is Allah speaking to the prophets from behind a veil as in the example of Prophet Moses who spoke with Allah from behind a tree. The third type is Allah’s sending a messenger (angel). As a matter of fact, the first *wahy* was sent down to the Prophet Muhammad via the angel. The prevailing injustices, tyranny, and ethical

⁸ Shura, 42:51

corruption in Arab society in which the Prophet (saw) was born influenced him deeply. The Prophet, feeling the pain caused by inequities that he witnessed, would go to the Cave of Hira on the Mountain of Nur near Mecca. He would take food with him, in order to stay away from that troubled environment, and contemplate there.

When the Prophet was in the Cave of Hira during the Night of al-Qadr in the month of Ramadan, the Angel of Revelation, Jibreel, descended and addressed him saying “Recite!” Our Prophet replied: “I do not know how to recite.” Jibreel repeated: “Recite!” and the Prophet answered, “I do not know how to recite.” When Jibreel made the same request for a third time, the Prophet’s answer was again “I do not know how to recite.” Thereupon, Jibreel recited the following first five verses of Surah al-Alaq to him:

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

“Recite in the name of your Lord who created – Created man from a clinging substance. Recite and your Lord is the most Generous – Who taught by the pen – Taught man that which he knew not.”⁹

The Prophet Muhammad repeated these verses. Then he returned to his home hurriedly and in fear where he immediately laid down and asked his wife, Khadijah, to cover him. When he calmed down, he recounted his experiences to her. After that, Khadijah stood by him and said, “You are always openhanded and generous, do favors; assist the needy and the poor, entertain guests. Does Allah abandon such a person?”¹⁰ Therefore, with these verses that were sent down to the Prophet, the 23-year process of *wahy* began.

3. Writing down the Wahy and Its Preservation

On the one hand, the Prophet (saw) delivered the messages revealed to him, and, on the other, he had his *wahy* scribes memorize them. For a society in which a written culture had not yet developed and in which an oral culture dominated, memorizing the verses was considered more practical and reliable than writing them down. However, the Prophet was not content with just memorizing, so

LET'S SHARE

Read the meanings of the verses from 30 to 35 of Surah al-Qasas and verses 1 to 18 of Surah al-Najm. Share what you learned with your friends.

⁹ Alaq, 96: 1-5

¹⁰ Bukhari, Bad'ul Wahy, 3; Muslim, Iman, 57



The Mountain of Nur in Mecca where the first revelation came.

DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know that the number of *wahy* scribes reached 40? The first *wahy* scribe was Abdullah b. Sa'id in Mecca; Ubay b. Qa'b in Madinah, and then, Zaid b. Thabit took on this duty continuously?

when he received a revelation he had his literate Companions write it down, and then he had them record the verse by saying, “Place this verse in such and such a chapter.”¹¹ These Companions, who were known as *wahy* scribes in Islamic history, served to help preserve the Noble Qur'an as a written text.

To check the accuracy, the *wahy* scribe would read back to the Prophet what he had written. If there were any omissions, additions, or other kinds of mistakes, the Prophet would correct them. The verses, corrected by the Prophet, would then be copied at his command and distributed to the Muslims. The original copy of the written verses and chapters was preserved by *wahy* scribes in the Prophet's house.¹²

Wahy scribes recorded the verses on materials suitable for writing, such as thin leather, shucked palm branches, white and flag stones, and shoulder blades of animal bones. In addition, vellum papers called “qirtas” were used, although rarely. Later on, specially processed animal skin came to be used more frequently because it was both strong and easily available in those times, especially after the Hijrah. In this way, under the supervision of the Prophet, the Noble Qur'an was transmitted to later generations unaltered.

One way of maintaining the accuracy of the Qur'anic text at the time of the Prophet was a method called “*ardh*”. Every year in the Month of Ramadan, the Prophet and the Angel of Revelation, Jibreel, recited to each other all the chapters and verses revealed up until that time. In the year before the Prophet's death, this mutual recitation was done twice, and, it was called “the last *muqabalah*”, which means the final dictation. In a way, this method was the final control of the text recorded through memorizing and writing. Thus, *muqabalah* was of great significance in the preservation of the Qur'an.

4. The Compilation of the Noble Qur'an into Book Form

In the time of the Prophet, the whole Qur'an was written and memorized, but it was not yet compiled into a book form. When the Prophet was still alive, the *wahy* continued to descend. With his death, the *wahy* stopped and the Book of Allah was left in the hands of Muslims. It remained preserved as recorded on various materials and in the memories of the Companions who had memorized it. This posed a risk for the authentic transmission of the Qur'an to subsequent generations because these materials could wear down or

¹¹ Ahmad b. Hanbal, *Musnad*, I, 57

¹² Muhsin Demirci, *Tefsir Usulu*, p. 79-83

get destroyed, and the Companions who memorized it would die. Therefore, the martyrdom of many Companions who knew the Qur'an by heart during the "Yamama War", which was fought against the false prophet Musaylama in 633, worried Umar and other Companions. So, he explained the gravity of the situation to the Caliph Abu Bakr and convinced him of the necessity to collect the Qur'an into a single book. Thereupon, Abu Bakr appointed a prominent *wahy* scribe, Zaid b. Thabit, for the task of compiling the Qur'an into a book form.

Zaid, who took on the work of compiling the Qur'an, followed a very diligent method. He only accepted the verses brought to him by two witnesses as they had been recited and written by the Prophet.¹³ In this way, the Noble Qur'an was written and compiled without any defect in accordance with the arrangement of the verses in the last *muqabalah*. Then it was delivered to Abu Bakr. After Abu Bakr, this copy was transferred to Umar, and after his death to his daughter Hafsa, the wife of the Prophet. The compilation of the Qur'an between two covers is called "*mushaf*".

The Qur'an, compiled at the order of Abu Bakr, was approved by all of the Companions, including Umar and Ali, with no objections.

LET'S EVALUATE

"Indeed, it is We who sent down the Qur'an and indeed, We will be its guardian."
(Hijr, 15: 9)

Read the message given in the verse, and evaluate it with your friends.

LET'S DISCUSS

Why was collecting the Qur'an into a book form necessary?

Discuss.

LET'S READ – EVALUATE

The Prophet's scribe for the revelation, Zaid b. Thabit, narrated:

"Abu Bakr As-Siddiq called me when the people of Yamama had been killed (i.e., a number of the Prophet's Companions who fought against Musaylama). (I went to him) and found 'Umar bin Al-Khattab sitting with him. Abu Bakr then said (to me), 'Umar has come to me and said: "The casualties were heavy among the Qurra' of the Qur'an (i.e. those who knew the Qur'an by heart) on the day of the Battle of Yamama, and I am afraid that casualties may increase among the Qurra' on other battles whereby a large part of the Qur'an may be lost. Therefore I suggest, you (Abu Bakr) order that the Qur'an be collected.'" I said to 'Umar, 'How can you do something which Allah's Messenger did not do?' Umar said, 'By Allah! That is a good undertaking.' Umar kept on urging me to accept his proposal until Allah had me inclined to it and I began to realize the good in the idea which 'Umar had proposed.

"Then Abu Bakr said (to me). 'You are a wise young man and we do not have any doubts about you, and you used to write the wahy for the Messenger of Allah. So you should search for (the fragmentary scripts of) the Qur'an and collect it in one book.'

¹³ Muhsin Demirci, Kur'an Tarihi, p.122

By Allah, if they had ordered me to shift one of the mountains, it would not have been heavier (i.e. more difficult) for me than ordering me to collect the Qur'an. Then I said to Abu Bakr, 'How will you do something which Allah's Messenger did not do?'

"Abu Bakr replied, 'By Allah! It is a good undertaking.'

"Abu Bakr kept on urging me to accept his idea until Allah had my heart inclined towards that which He had the hearts of Abu Bakr and 'Umar inclined. So, I started to look for the Qur'an and collect it from (what it had been written on) palmed stalks, thin white stones, and also from the men who knew it by heart..."

(Bukhari, Fadha'il al-Qur'an, 3)

Read the text above with regard to the collection of the Qur'an into book form and evaluate.

5. Copying the Qur'an

Muslim territories, which started to expand during the time of Umar as a result of increasing conquests, grew more during the time of Uthman. The Companions, who knew the Qur'an well, traveled to the conquered lands and taught new converts the Qur'anic text that they possessed or that they had in memory. Certain differences in meanings in their personal copies and recitations could not be fully understood by the new converts, and this caused significant controversies. Later, these controversies started to turn into serious discussions.

Hudhaifa b. Yaman, the commander of the army, who witnessed disagreements of recitation among the Companions participating in campaigns to Azerbaijan and Armenia in 25 H (646 CE), became worried. He came to the Caliph Uthman and offered to find a solution to the problem saying, "O Commander of the believers! Come to help this community before they fall into dispute about the Qur'an as Jews and Christians did."¹⁴

Uthman paid attention to the differences in recitation and decided to make copies of the Qur'an from the main copy, which was under Hafsa's protection, and then to send these copies to the main centers of Muslim lands. He appointed a committee headed by Zaid b. Thabit. Other members were Abdullah b. Zubair, Sa'id b. As, Abdurrahman b. Haris b. Hisham. Uthman ordered them to base their copies on the accent of Quraysh, in which the Qur'an had been revealed, whenever they fell into a disagreement when writing it down. The committee successfully completed their task in 25-30 H (646-651 CE) and returned the

¹⁴ Bukhari, Fadha'il al-Qur'an, 3

original Qur'anic text to Hafsa. In this compilation, special notes regarding commentary or explanation were not included in the main text.

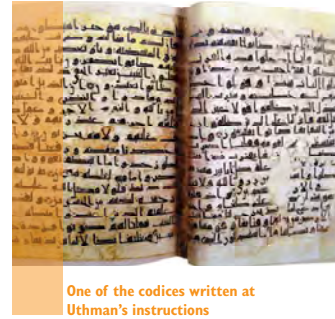
One of the seven copies of the Qur'an was left in Madinah. The others were sent to Mecca, Kufa, Basra, Damascus, Yemen, and Bahrain along with a teacher. Uthman ordered that all the pages of the Qur'an and personal codices, except for these seven copies, be destroyed to prevent disagreement among Muslims and to establish unity within the community.¹⁵

6. The Placing of the Qur'an's Diacritical Marks and Vowelings

The codices, which were copied in Uthman's time, were written without any dots, diacritical marks, or vowels. No diacritical marks were written to distinguish the Arabic letters, which are similar to each other because different letters were written similarly. Nevertheless, the Companions could read the Qur'an correctly without any marks and vowels because they had heard it from the Prophet himself. The increasing number of non-Arabs that joined the Muslim community after the conquests, however, created a new problem: They had difficulty in reading the Qur'an correctly without diacritical marks and vowels.

The first person to take action to solve this problem was the governor of Iraq, Ziyad b. Sumayya (d. 53/673). Ziyad asked Abu al-Aswad al-Du'ali (d. 69/688) for help to prevent erroneous recitation. Aswad initially did not accept the offer, but when he witnessed that a person mistakenly read the phrase "*wa rasuluhu*" as "*wa rasulihi*" in the third verse of Surah al-Tawbah, and changed the original meaning from "Allah and His Prophet are disassociated from the disbelievers" to "Allah is disassociated from both the disbelievers and His Prophet," he realized the seriousness of the situation. Then he accepted the task and began the work of vowelization.

Abu al-Aswad al-Du'ali finished the vowelizing of the whole text of the Qur'an and placed a dot for the *fathah* over the letter; a dot for the *kasrah* under the letter; a dot for the *dammah* before the letter using red ink, and he used two points for the *tanween*. Although vowelizing of the Qur'an facilitated recitation, mistakes could not be completely prevented because new learners of the Qur'an continued to have difficulty in distinguishing between certain letters. The governor of Iraq, Hajjaj b. Yusuf (d. 95/713), appointed Yahya b. Ya'mar (d.129/746) and Nasr b. Asim (d. 89/707) to solve this problem, and they applied the punctuation process, which they had learned from their teacher



INFORMATION BOX

Muhammad b. Tayfur al-Sajaawandi (d. 560/1165), in his book *Waqf wa Ibtida* invented diacritical symbols for proper recitation of the Qur'an. These symbols, still in use in today's codices, are called "sajaawand" in honor of their inventor.

(Ismail Karacam, *Kuran-i Kerim'in Faziletleri ve Okuma Kaideleri*, p. 60)

¹⁵ Bukhari, *Fadha'il al-Qur'an*, 3



Abu al-Aswad, to the whole Qur'an. In this punctuation, black ink was used for diacritical marks, and colored ink was preferred for vowels. The task of placing diacritical marks in the Qur'an spread from Madinah to other regions. Khalil b. Ahmad (d. 175/791) improved the vowels and other diacritical signs, which are used today, and finalized this work.¹⁶

THE PROCESS OF TRANSFORMING THE QUR'AN INTO A BOOK					
610-632 CE Revela- tion to the Prophet (Memoriza- tion, writing, and <i>ardh</i>)	632-634 CE Abu Bakr, compilation of the Qur'an into a book form under the direction of Zaid b. Thabit	644- 656 CE Uthman, copying of the codices	Ziyad b. Sumayya's (675) letting Abu al Aswad al-Duwali (688) place vowel points in the Qur'an	Hajjaj b. Yusuf's (714) letting Yahya b. Ya'mar (746) and Nasr b. Asim (707) put diacritical marks in the Qur'an	Khalil b. Ahmad's (751) finalizing vowelings and diacritical marks

7. Other Names of the Qur'an

The Qur'an is in the Arabic language, revealed to the last Prophet via Jibreel. Its recitation is an act of worship, and its likeness cannot be reproduced by others.

Although there are different opinions about the root from which the word "Qur'an" derives, according to the majority opinion, it is a noun derived from the verb "qa-ra-a", which means "to read / recite". When taking into consideration that the revelation started with the command "iqra" (read / recite), and the Qur'an is a book recommended to be frequently read, it seems more appropriate to accept that the word Qur'an was derived from the verb "qa-ra-a". The Qur'an itself uses the word to denote the same meaning: **"Indeed, upon Us is its collection [in your heart] and [to make possible] its recitation. So when We have recited it [through Jibreel], then follow its recitation."**¹⁷

The name of the Qur'an was given by Allah the Almighty, which is indicated

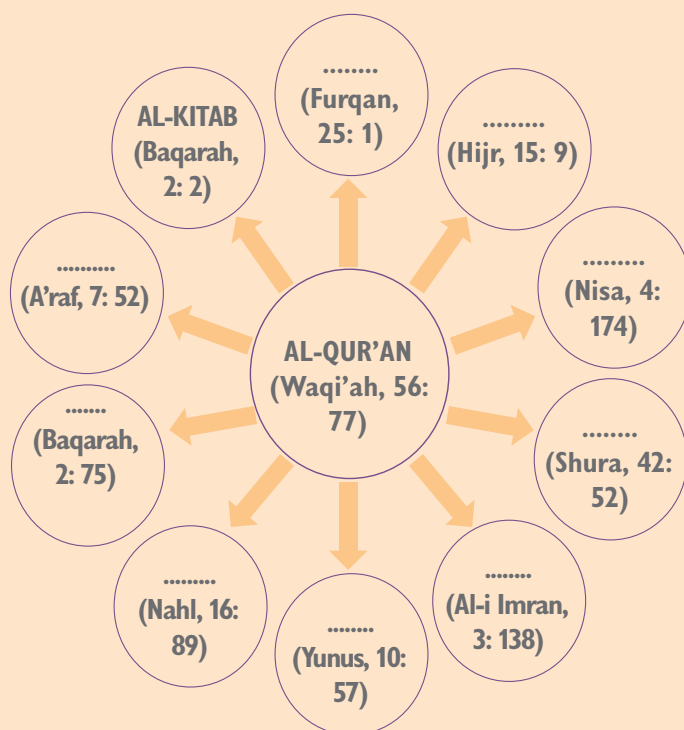
¹⁶ Abdulhamit Birisik, *Kıraat İlmi ve Tarihi*, p. 48-49
¹⁷ Qiyamah, 75: 17-18

by many verses including: “Indeed, it is a noble Qur’an.”¹⁸, “Indeed, it is We who have sent down to you, [O Muhammad], the Qur’an progressively.”¹⁹, and “So when the Qur’an is recited, then listen to it and pay attention that you may receive mercy.”²⁰

In addition to the word “Qur’an”, there are other names for the Noble Book. Some of them are used as nouns while others are used as adjectives. The most common ones are:

Al-Kitab (written by pen), *al-Furqan* (distinguisher of right from wrong; and the lawful from the unlawful), *al-Dhikr* (reminder and introducer of Allah), *al-Nur* (obvious enlightener), *al-Ruh* (resurrecting the hearts), *al-Maw’izah* (adviser and recommender), *al-Shifa* (the healer), *al-Huda* (guide to the right path), *al-Bayan* (explaining everything), *al-Kalam* (the word of Allah), *al-Rahmah* (mercy to the whole of humanity).

LET’S WRITE



Find the verses from the Qur’an mentioned on the concept map above, and write the verses in which other names of the Noble Qur’an are mentioned.

¹⁸ Waqi’ah, 56: 77

¹⁹ Insan, 76: 23

²⁰ A’raf, 7: 204

LET'S EVALUATE THE CHAPTER

A. Answer the following open-ended questions.

1. Explain the technical meaning of *wahy*.
2. Give information about the ways to preserve the Noble Qur'an.
3. List the purposes of revelation of the Noble Qur'an.
4. Give information about the reason for collecting the Noble Qur'an into a book form.
5. When and where did the first *wahy* come to the Prophet? Explain.
6. Give information about the religious, political, and cultural setting of Arabia before Islam.
7. Why was it necessary to compile the Noble Qur'an into a book form? Remark.

B. Choose the correct answers to the following multiple-choice questions.

1. Under the direction of which Companion was the Noble Qur'an first compiled into a book form?

- A. Abu Bakr B. Zaid b. Thabit C. Umar
D. Ali E. Uthman

2. What is the name of the Noble Qur'an that means "distinguisher of right from wrong"?

- A) Al-Furqan
B) Al-Dhikr
C) Al-Kitab
D) Al-Maw'izah
E) Al-Huda

3. Who vowelised the Noble Qur'an?

- A) Ziyad b. Sumayya
B) Yahya b. Ya'mar
C) Nasr b. Asim
D) Abu al Aswad al-Du'ali
E) Khalil b. Ahmad

C. Fill in the blanks in the following sentences with the most suitable word from those given below.

(*muqaabalah*, Quraysh, Kirtas)

1. The Prophet and Jibreel's recitation of the Qur'an to each other every Ramadan was called
2. When the scribes fell into dispute while compiling the Qur'an, they were required to base their writing on the dialect of



Chapter

THE SCIENCE OF TAFSIR AND ITS BASIC CONCEPTS

THE SCIENCE OF TAFSIR AND ITS BASIC CONCEPTS

LET'S GET READY FOR THE CHAPTER

1. Research the meanings of the words “*tafsir*, *ta’wil*, *tarjamah*, and *ma’al*.”
2. What may the reason be for the Qur’an descending in the language of the community to which it was sent? Reflect.
3. What is the benefit of interpreting (*tafsir*) the verses of the Qur’an? Research.
4. Look through the subject index of a translation (*ma’al*) of the Qur’an. Practice finding verses about the subject you have determined.
5. Which lessons may help us better understand the verses of the Noble Qur’an? Research.

1. Definition and Basic Concepts of the Science of Tafsir

The Noble Qur’an is a book sent down by Allah¹ as advice and a cure for the whole of humanity;² and as guidance and a source of mercy for the believers.

The Noble Qur’an is the principal source of religion for Muslims to learn the meaning and purpose of life. The Qur’an is a reference to judge what is good and bad, right and wrong, and beautiful and ugly. It guides Muslims in shaping their words and behavior. A proper understanding of the Qur’an requires explanation and commentary, which led to the development of the discipline of Tafsir.

The first interpreter (*mufassir*) of the Qur’an was the Prophet (saw). He delivered the *wahy* to people and explained it to their understanding. This duty of the Prophet is explained in the following verse:

¹ Yunus, 10: 57.

² Shu’ara, 26: 192.

LET'S
INTERPRET

Interpret the verse mentioned below in relation to the Noble Qur'an's meaning and its importance for people. "O mankind, there has to come to you instruction from your Lord and healing for what is in the breasts and guidance and mercy for the believers." (Yunus, 10: 57)

بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالزُّبُرِ وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

"[We sent them] with clear proofs and written ordinances. And 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."³

The science of *tafsir* has some specific terminology, as does every branch of science. "*Tafsir*", "*ta'wil*", "*tarjamah*" and "*ma'al*" are some of the basic terms of the discipline of *tafsir*.

Tafsir is a branch of science that concerns the study and interpretation of the Qur'an from the first day of its revelation until today within a certain discipline of understanding. The science of *tafsir* tries to explain the book of Allah in accordance with its objectives.

LET'S INTERPRET

What does *ta'wil* mean in the following verse?

"It is He who has sent down to you, [O Muhammad], the Book; in it are verses [that are] precise – they are the foundation of the Book – and others unspecified. As for those in whose hearts is deviation [from the truth], they will follow that of it which is unspecified, seeking discord and seeking an interpretation [suitable to them]. And no one knows its [true] *ta'wil* except Allah. But those firm in knowledge say, 'We believe in it. All [of it] is from our Lord.' And no one will be reminded except those of understanding."

(Al-i Imran, 3: 7)

Tafsir is a word derived from the root "fa-sa-ra". It is used lexically for several meanings like "to explore, to open a covered thing, and to enlighten."⁴ As a branch of science, *tafsir* analyzes the recitation of the phrases of the Qur'an, their meanings, and the rulings that they indicate.⁵ Its objective is to explain the meanings and purposes of the verses of the Qur'an.

Ta'wil is a word derived from the root "*awl*". It lexically means "to make a thing return to its essence and source." It technically means "to reach the essential meaning about a word choosing one of the possible meanings of this word."⁶ The person who deals with this science is called a *mufasssir*. When interpreting, a *mufasssir* prefers one of the few possible meanings of the verse.

³ Nahl, 16: 44.

⁴ Ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-Arab*, IV, p. 367; V, p. 55.

⁵ Elmalılı M. Hamdi Yazır, *Hak Dini Kuran Dili*, I, p. 20, 21.

⁶ Ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-Arab*, XI, p.32, 33.

At the same time, the *mufasssir* follows certain methods and rules to reach the essential meaning. However, while he prefers one of the interpretations of the verse, he makes a personal preference in the end. While *tafsir* and *ta'wil* were used for the same meaning on behalf of each other, they gradually turned into two different words with different meanings.⁷

Tarjamah lexically means “to translate a word from a language into another language, to transform.” He who translates is called a “*mutarjim*”.⁸ *Tarjamah* means, terminologically, to find the counterpart of a word in another language and to transfer its meaning to that language. Transferring a text with all of its features into another language is called “*lafzi / harfi tarjamah* (literal translation).” Transferring just the meaning of the main text into another language is called “*ma'nawi / tafsiri tarjamah* (interpretive translation).”

LET'S EVALUATE

Evaluate the statement below from the perspective of the difficulty of translating the Qur'an into another language.

The English translator of the Qur'an Marmaduke Pickthall:

“The Qur'an resembles a polyphonic symphonic melody. The situation of trying to play a musical piece, which was composed for a great orchestra, by only one reed, is the same situation that you try to translate the Qur'an into another language. For this reason, this *ma'al* in your hand is not for introducing the magnificence of the Qur'an; rather, it only gives you an idea about it.”

(Emin Isik, “Kuran'ın Tercüme ve Tefsiri Meselesi,” *Kuran'ı Anlamaya Doğru, Sempozyum*, p. 198.)

LET'S NOTE

Preconditions in a translation:

1. A translator must know the characteristics of both languages.
2. The meaning and purpose of the original text must be preserved.

Ma'al is a word derived from the Arabic root “*awl*”, which means “the purpose of a thing and its result.”⁹ *Ma'al* is to give an approximate meaning of a word. In practice, it means to translate the Noble Qur'an into another language by short explanations.

Translating the Qur'an, with its whole beauty, meaning, and purpose into another language is not possible. For this reason, translation of the Qur'an should be supported by commentary. That is why translation of the Qur'an is called “*ma'al*” as opposed to “*tarjamah*”.

Every person may not have the opportunity to understand the Qur'an in its original language and to investigate thoroughly by using the commentaries (tafsirs). In this situation, reading *ma'al* serves as a step to understand the Qur'an.

⁷ Ismail Cerrahoglu, *Tefsir Usulu*, p. 214, 215.

⁸ Ibid., p. 215, 216.

⁹ Ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-Arab*, XI, 32.

Ma'al is not the Qur'an itself; rather, it is what the interpreter understands from the Qur'an. For this reason, it is possible to see some differences among ma'als. These differences are not contradictions; rather, they are the interpretation of differences proper to the Qur'an's essence.

The reasons for the differences among ma'als are as follows:

1. Words in the Qur'an's verses may not have any direct equivalent in other languages. In this situation, the meaning of the verse is given in words that are close in meaning from the language it is being translated into. So, this causes some differences in ma'als.
2. Translators' being brought up in different social and cultural structures cause some differences in their understanding and expression of the verses.
3. People's level of perception and power of expression are different. This difference is also true for those who translate the Qur'an into another language. This is one of the reasons for the differences seen in ma'als.
4. Because of the variety and depth of the meaning, translators sometimes have to prefer one of the meanings. This is one of the causes of the differences in ma'als.

LET'S INTERPRET

The meaning of the second verse of Surah al-Baqarah is given from three different ma'als of the Qur'an. Compare the differences, and interpret their reasons.

1. "This is the Scripture whereof there is no doubt, a guidance unto those who ward off (evil)."

(Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall, *The Meaning of the Glorious Koran: An Explanatory Translation*)

2. "That is the Book, wherein is no doubt, a guidance to the godfearing."

(Arthur John Arberry, *The Koran Interpreted*)

3. "This is the Book; in it is guidance sure, without doubt, to those who fear Allah."

(Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Qur'an*)

While reading the translations of the Qur'an, one should pay due attention. First of all, a person should be conscious of the meaning and the importance of reading the Qur'an, for being addressed by the word of Allah and trying to understand it properly is very important.

Understanding the purposes of some verses require expertise. For this reason, while the reader is trying to understand these verses, he or she should consult the relevant commentaries or experts of that subject.

The Qur'an has a style of expression specific to itself. Generally, verses related to the same topic are not given together. For this reason, it is important for the reader to take notes about the verses, make comparisons, and evaluate the verses about the same topic as a whole.



1. Alif, Lam, Meem
2. That Book (the Qur'an) whereof there is no doubt. That is a guidance for muttaqun (those who avoid and desire to be purified).
3. Who believe in the unseen, establish prayer, and spend out of what We have provided for them.
4. And who believe in what has been revealed to you, [O Muhammad], and what was revealed before you, and of the Hereafter they are certain [in faith].
- 5 Those are upon [right] guidance from their Lord, and it is those who are the successful.

1. In the name of Allah, the Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful
2. [All] praise is [due] to Allah, Lord of the worlds -
3. The Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful,
4. Sovereign of the Day of Recompense.
5. It is You we worship and You we ask for help.
6. Guide us to the straight path –
7. The path of those upon whom You have bestowed favor, not of those who have evoked [Your] anger or of those who are astray.

LET'S FIND A TITLE

Read the following texts and find suitable titles for them.

.....

When translating a verse, the aim is to find out its real meaning by paying attention to the time when it was revealed. In order to figure out this meaning, it is necessary to evaluate other related verses as a whole. For this reason, an exegete (mufassir) does not limit himself to the interpretations that were attributed to the verse later on. Rather, he tries to reach the first and the real meaning. In order to reach it, the verse is first evaluated together with other relevant verses as a whole because the Qur'an is a book that interprets itself. It is then necessary to consult with the sunnah of the Prophet, who is the first and most reliable mufassir of the Qur'an. However, the point to take into consideration here is to determine whether the consulted narrations really belong to the Prophet or not. It should not be forgotten that, while interpreting a verse, making completely personal interpretations without depending on any knowledge is not correct.

As for *ta'wil*, it is mostly related to the parts of the verses that are open to interpretation. *Ta'wil* necessitates preferring one of the possible meanings of the verse. Sometimes, it is possible to leave its apparent meaning and prefer a different meaning, which cannot be perceived at first sight due to a compelling reason. Here the interpretation of the mufassir is what determines the outcome. For this reason, one cannot claim that "this is certainly Allah's purpose" while making *ta'wil*.

.....

While translating a word into another language, the goal is to reflect the meaning of the main word, its literal beauty, and artistic value in compliance with the original text. However, this is generally not possible in translations. It is not always possible to find the direct counterparts of the words of the original text in the other language. Explanations are not included in translations.

Since the holy Qur'an is a unique book in respect of its wording and meaning and because it is the word of Allah, it is not possible to translate the Qur'an into another language. For this reason, in order to render the meaning of the verses correctly, some short explanations need to be included without being content with translation. That's why translating the Qur'an into another language is called "ma'al" and not "tarjamah".

2. The Aim of the Science of Tafsir and Its Importance in Understanding the Qur'an

The primary characteristic of human beings that distinguishes them from other beings, is that they have been addressed by the revelation. People have

the ability to think about and evaluate what they perceive. In other words, they are rational beings. That's why Allah the Almighty selected humans out of the limitless universe and revealed His messages to them.

The Qur'an guides and directs people to the right path. However, this guidance depends on its being understood correctly and establishing its relation correctly with modern times. For this reason, one needs to comprehend the role of the Qur'an in human life, and establish a healthy and living relationship between the Qur'an and one's self. In this respect, tafsir is a branch of science that helps to achieve this aim.

LET'S SHARE

Interpret the meanings of the following verses with regard to the reason the Qur'an was sent down and share your opinions with your friends.

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

(Ibrahim, 14:4)

"[This is] a blessed Book which We have revealed to you, [O Muhammad], that they might reflect upon its verses and that those of understanding would be reminded."

(Sad, 38: 29)

Ever since the Qur'an was revealed, it has been continuously read and interpreted. Sometimes the verses of the Noble Qur'an, the most interpreted book in human history,¹⁰ have been falsely interpreted. This is because people are different in their perception, comprehension, and level of knowledge. For this reason, in order to understand it correctly, Muslims need to properly explain and interpret the verses of the Holy Qur'an. The science of Qur'anic exegesis (tafsir) has emerged as an endeavor to fill this need.

Every person may not have the means to read and understand the Book of Allah in its original language. For this reason, the Qur'an has been translated into various languages for those who do not know Arabic. While these renderings are an important step in understanding the Qur'an, they alone are not enough for the Qur'an is unique in its wording and depth of meaning. In order to convey its meaning and reflect its literal beauty in the translation, it should be interpreted (tafsir).

LET'S INTERPRET

"Say, 'If the sea were ink for [writing] the words of my Lord, the sea would be exhausted before the words of my Lord were exhausted, even if We brought the like of it as a supplement.'"

(Kahf, 18: 109)

Interpret the meaning of the verse given above.

¹⁰ Muhammed Hamidullah, *Kuran-i Kerim Tarihi*, p. 23

Many verses of the Qur'an invite us to reflect on the words of Allah.¹¹ The multiplicity of such verses clearly indicates that the Qur'an is a book that should be explained and interpreted. For this reason, the act of tafsir, started by the first and the most competent mufassir of the Qur'an, the Prophet, continued after his death and turned into one of the principal branches of Islamic sciences.

The first Muslims were easily able to understand the Qur'an because it was revealed in their own language. Moreover, they knew the events and incidents that led to the revelation of the verses. Sometimes, when they could not understand a part in the verses, they would go to the Prophet to inquire and learn from him.

After the Prophet's death, the need for tafsir of Qur'anic verses became more keenly felt because Islam was spreading quickly, and new Muslim communities did not know the original language of the Qur'an. Moreover, they had to know the settings and the reasons for the revelation of the verses. In time, the science of exegesis became a comprehensive branch of science that requires expertise and methodology.

LET'S TALK

Talk about the message conveyed in the hadith mentioned below.

The Prophet Muhammad (saw) said:

"The people do not meet to discuss and talk about the book of Allah but that they are surrounded by angels and covered in Allah's Mercy, and there descends upon them tranquility as they remember Allah, and Allah makes mention of them to those who are near Him."

(Muslim, Dhikr, 38.)

The importance of the science of tafsir in understanding the Qur'an can be seen through the principles and methods that this science has established. Adhering to these principles and methods in exegesis of the Qur'an is very important in order to obtain the real meanings of the verses corresponding to the purpose of their revelation.

¹¹ Muhammad, 47: 24

By means of its sub-disciplines, the science of tafsir thoroughly examines the Qur'an and explains the characteristics of the Qur'an's literary structure. It identifies the real, metaphorical, and indirect meanings, signs, and indications of the words and phrases. It classifies the wordings of the Qur'an according to their level of understandability and analyzes them. It clarifies the meanings of ambiguous vocabulary and gives information about parables and events. It analyzes non-Arabic vocabulary, heteronym, and synonym expressions in the Qur'an. It explains the reasons behind the revelation of each verse or group of verses, and *nasikh* (the abrogating) and *mansukh* (the abrogated) verses. Thus tafsir has become indispensable for a proper understanding of the Qur'an.

3. The Relationship between the Science of Tafsir and Other Sciences

Studies about understanding and interpreting the Qur'an have taken place since the time of the Prophet, and various branches of sciences have emerged for this purpose. Each of these sciences analyzed the Qur'an from a different angle and offered results for the benefit of the people.

Tafsir is a science that investigates the Noble Qur'an in its entirety, and it is an indispensable source for the rest of the Islamic Sciences. The science of tafsir, in explaining and interpreting the Qur'an, benefits from the data provided by other relevant Islamic Sciences. This is because each of these sciences deals with the verses of the Qur'an related to creed (*i'tiqad*), daily transactions (*mu'amalat*), and ethics (*akhlaq*). Therefore, those who interpret the Qur'an must benefit from other Islamic Sciences. For example, "the science of hadith" investigates reports related to the words and practices of the Prophet from the aspect of their chain of transmission (*sanad*) and text (*matn*). It works to distinguish the authentic ones from forged and weak ones. Therefore, it examines the words and practices of the first and the most reliable mufasssir of the Qur'an, i.e. the Prophet. Moreover, the science of hadith highlights the times when the Qur'an was sent down and sheds light on the reasons why the verses were revealed. By means of such studies, the science of hadith introduces the Sunnah, the primary source for understanding the Qur'an, and thus becomes a source for the science of tafsir.

"The methodology of Fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence)" establishes the ways and methods for deducing the rulings from the verses and sayings of the Prophet. "The science of fiqh" extracts the judgments about daily actions and acts of worship using these methods. The methodology of Islamic jurisprudence and the science of fiqh, from the aspect of both their methods and deductive rulings, especially

when interpreting verses related to legal matters, become one of the sources of tafsir.

The science of Kalam analyzes the verses related to creed and ethics in the Qur'an. For this reason, while interpreting the verses related to such subjects, the science of tafsir benefits from the data produced by the science of *kalam*.

Another science, which the science of tafsir constantly benefits from, is "the science of *qira'ah* (recitation)." This branch of science demonstrates the beauty of the Qur'anic recitation. Meanings of the verses of the Qur'an are closely connected to pronunciation of their words. For this reason, the science of *qira'ah* has a great importance for the correct understanding of the verses.

One of the important things to do while interpreting the verses of the Qur'an is to determine the context of time and place in which they were revealed. The historical context helps us understand the characteristics of the society in which the Qur'an was sent down and what changes the Qur'an brought about in that society. Thus, it helps us to comprehend correctly the messages embedded in these verses.¹² This necessitates that the science of tafsir constantly benefits from sciences like "the history of Islam" and "*siyar* (the life of the Prophet Muhammad)."

LET'S EVALUATE

Evaluate the importance of knowing the reason why the verses were revealed while interpreting it in the light of the example given below.

"And it is not righteousness to enter houses from the back, but righteousness is [in] one who fears Allah. And enter houses from their doors. And fear Allah that you may succeed."

(Baqarah, 2: 189)

Before Islam, when people wore ihram, they would not use the regular door to enter their houses; rather they would use another entrance that they opened at the back of their houses. The 189th verse of Surah al-Baqarah points to this custom from the age of ignorance and abolished it.

(Tabari, *Jami al-Bayan*, vol. 2, p. 188)

Likewise, in order to understand some verses of the Noble Qur'an correctly, it is important to obtain information about the centuries that preceded the Qur'an because much of the Qur'anic text relates stories about the experiences

¹² Halis Albayrak, "Kuran'ın Anlaşılmasında Yöntem," *Din Öğretiminde Yeni Yaklaşımlar*, p. 22-23

of previous prophets and nations. The Qur'an aims to give messages and lessons to its audience via these stories. However, perceiving these messages correctly depends on comprehending their meanings accurately. For this reason, the science of tafsir appeals to general historical knowledge and data provided by "anthropology", which analyzes the origin of humans and their cultural progress.

While explaining the verses of the Qur'an, tafsir also benefits from linguistics. A *mufasssir* analyzes the sentences of the Qur'an from a linguistic perspective. He works to identify the original meanings of the Qur'anic vocabulary as they were understood at the time they were revealed. This requires that other meanings this vocabulary acquired in subsequent Islamic culture are properly distinguished from the originals. For this reason, a *mufasssir* must be fully versed in Arabic grammar and literature.

The Qur'an calls the verbal messages of divine revelation "*ayah*" (literally meaning sign). In the same vein, it names the creations of Allah "*ayah*".¹³ In other words, while the Qur'an consists of the verbal *ayahs* of Allah, the universe consists of His existential *ayahs*. In explaining the verses related to creation and cosmology as well as causes and effects of social events, the science of tafsir benefits from some other sciences such as physics, chemistry, astronomy, medicine, biology, psychology, and anthropology because science provides information that contributes to the correct understanding of Qur'anic verses related to their subject matters.

There is a mutual relationship between the science of tafsir and the physical and social sciences. The Noble Qur'an talks about the subjects related to the physical and social sciences. However, it does not delve into the details of these subjects. The objective of the Qur'an in mentioning these subjects is to attract our attention to the order and harmony in creation, to make people think about these subjects, and thus to help them comprehend Allah's existence and power. A further objective is to direct people to search and learn and thus, encourage them to do scientific research that helps them comprehend the mysteries of the creation.

From the physical sciences; "physics" deals with issues related to matter and physical laws which these issues are related to, whereas chemistry analyzes the structure of substances and their atomic order. Allah the Almighty makes

LET'S RESEARCH

"Have those who disbelieved not considered that the heavens and the earth were a joined entity, and We separated them and made from water every living thing? Then will they not believe?"

(Anbiya, 21: 30)

"By the sky which returns."

(Tariq, 86: 11)

Research the verses given above by benefiting from the knowledge of the physical sciences.

¹³ Shura, 42: 29

mention of the creation of the universe, how it works as well as the physical and chemical structures of beings. He gives some concrete information in the Qur'an about these subjects. Here, for a correct understanding of the verses providing such information, data from the sciences of physics and chemistry must be used. For example, in the following verse it is stated that: **“Exalted is He who created all pairs – from what the earth grows and from themselves and from that which they do not know.”**¹⁴ When we look into the data provided by the sciences of physics and chemistry, we understand more what it means to be created in pairs in terms of non-living beings. Because, according to the conclusions reached by these sciences, every entity, even energy, exists with an opposite.¹⁵

LET'S SHARE

Think about the verse and its interpretation given below. Then find an example on this subject and share it with your friends.

“Do you not see that Allah sends down rain from the sky, and We produce thereby fruits of varying colors? And in the mountains are tracts, white and red of varying shades and [some] extremely black. And among people and moving creatures and grazing livestock are various colors similarly. Only those fear Allah, from among His servants, who have knowledge. Indeed, Allah is Exalted in Might and Forgiving.”

(Fatir, 35: 27-28)

“It is required to be a geologist in order to know about the geological structure of a place by the cliff edges that originated from the abrasion of roads or rivers in ravines, and to understand to what kind of mines and minerals the colored stones refer. The topics indicated in this and other similar verses are included in certain branches of the sciences, such as geography, astronomy, meteorology, geology, physics, botany, sociology, even genetics. The beauties in nature can closely be observed just by the scientists who have made serious observations and done research on these topics. Their observations make them face the divine power.”

(Emin Işık, “Kuran’ın Tercüme ve Tefsiri Meselesi,” *Sempozyum*, p. 189.)

Astronomy is the science that analyzes the sky and all kinds of celestial bodies. There are many verses related to astronomy in the Qur'an. It frequently mentions the creation of the heavens and earth and systematic movements of limitless entities in the sky, and gives concrete information about them. Information provided by the science of astronomy should be used to understand

¹⁴ Ya-Sin, 36: 36

¹⁵ Yılmaz Muslu, *Yaşayan Gezegen*, p. 47-49

this information correctly. For example, it is stated in a verse: **“The sun and the moon [move] by precise calculation.”**¹⁶ We understand better the perfection of order referred to by the expression of calculation (*hasab*) by means of the information provided by astronomy.¹⁷

The science of biology, which deals with birth, growth, pollination, and the insemination of plants and animals, as well as the science of medicine, which runs studies about remedies and methods of prevention of diseases, is also important for the interpretation of the verses of the Qur'an. For example, it is stated in a verse that: **“...He creates you in the wombs of your mothers, creation after creation, within three darknesses...”**¹⁸ Thanks to the information provided by medicine and biology, we can understand that the expression of “three darknesses” in the verse refers to the three stages that a sperm passes through in the womb and what these stages are.¹⁹

The same is true for psychology, which analyzes humans from their spiritual side and sociology, which deals with social life. In several verses, the Qur'an talks about the subjects in which these branches of science are interested. Types of people based on their emotions, ideas, and beliefs, and their psychological analysis as well as the stories about previous nations occupy an important place in the Qur'an. In interpreting verses related to such topics, benefiting from the data of these branches of science is helpful in understanding these verses correctly.

¹⁶ Rahman, 55: 5

¹⁷ Taşkın Tuna, *Güneş Sistemi*, p. 37-41

¹⁸ Zumar, 39: 6

¹⁹ İlhami Kızıroğlu, *Genel Biyoloji*, p. 254, 255

LET'S EVALUATE THE CHAPTER

A. Answer the following open-ended questions.

1. Define the science of tafsir and explain what its objectives are.
2. Describe the primary differences between *tafsir* and *ta'wil*.
3. List the different characteristics of *tarjamah* and *ma'al*.
4. Mention some of the reasons for the differences seen in *ma'als*.
5. Is it possible to make an exact translation of the Qur'an? Explain.

B. Choose the correct answers to the following multiple-choice questions.

1. Which is the correct branch of science consulted in tafsir in order to determine the time and place of revelation?

- A. *Kalam* B. *Fiqh* C. *Tarjamah*
D. *Ma'al* E. Linguistic Sciences

2. What is "the translation of the Qur'an into another language with short explanations" called?

- A. *Tafsir* B. *Ta'wil* C. History of Islam
D. *Qira'ah* E. Commentary

3. From which branches of science does tafsir benefit when analyzing the verses of the Qur'an related to the creation of beings and their order?

- A. Psychology B. History C. Linguistic Sciences
D. Physical Sciences E. *Kalam*

4. Which is the branch of science that provides the methods for deducing rulings from verses which should be used by all branches of the Islamic sciences including tafsir?

- A. *Hadith* B. *Qira'ah* C. Linguistic Sciences
D. Methodology of Islamic jurisprudence E. *Siyar*

5. What is "the literal translation of a text into another language without any explanation" called?

- A. *Ma'al* B. *Tafsir* C. *Tarjamah*
D. *Ta'wil* E. Comment

C. Fill in the blanks in the following sentences with the most suitable word from the list below.

(The Prophet, *ta'wil*, the science of hadith, language sciences, Islamic history and *siyar*, *Tarjamah*)

1. Preference for one of the possible meanings of a verse and interpreting it in order to ascertain its main meaning is called
2. The first mufassir of the Qur'an was.....
3. The branch of science which analyzes the Prophet's words and behavior in order to explain the verses of the Qur'an is called
4. The science of tafsir benefits from to explain the meanings and usages of the wording of the Qur'an.
5. The science of tafsir benefits from and in order to ensure a correct understanding of the historical information given in the stories which occupy a great part of the Qur'an.

Chapter

THE HISTORY OF TAFSIR



THE HISTORY OF TAFSIR

LET'S GET READY FOR THE CHAPTER

1. Research the role of the Prophet in delivering and explaining the Qur'an to people.
2. What kind of advantages did the Companions have in understanding the Qur'an as compared with the following generations? Research.
3. Look up the meanings of the terms "*riwayah* and *dirayah*" from dictionaries.
4. Mention some tafsir books that you know.

1. Tafsir in the Time of the Prophet

LET'S DISCUSS

"O Messenger, deliver that which has been revealed to you from your Lord ..."
(Ma'idah, 5: 67)

"...And 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."
(Nahl, 16: 44)

"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."
(Nahl, 16: 64)

"And We did not send any messenger except [speaking] in the language of his people to state clearly to them"
(Ibrahim, 14: 4)

Which of the Prophet's duties is emphasized in the above-mentioned verses?
Discuss with your friends.

The Noble Qur'an sent down in Arabic was understood by the Prophet and conveyed to the Companions. Our Prophet occasionally explained revealed verses in order to help them be understood. Some of the reasons for these explanations can be listed as follows: the Qur'an attributed new meanings to some words which had been used in the past, parables are succinctly given in some verses, and some commands and prohibitions are implicit.

The two main duties of the Prophet related to his mission of prophethood were delivering the message (*tabligh*), which was revealed to him, and explaining (*tabyin*) it to people. For this reason, exegesis of the Qur'an started with the Prophet, because he is the first addressee (*mukhatab*, which also means interlocutor, listener, or audience) of the Qur'an. The Prophet knew the best and the most accurate explanation of the Qur'an because it was sent down to him.

The next addressees of the Qur'an, i.e. the Companions of the Prophet, occasionally needed the Prophet's tafsir to comprehend the verses well and to implement them correctly. The Prophet interpreted the verses whenever he deemed necessary to make sure that the Qur'an was understood and practiced properly. Through his actions and behavior he showed how to practice the contents of the verses correctly.

We can give prayer (*salah*) as an example of the above. Prayer is commanded in the Noble Qur'an, but the times of *salah*, the number of its cycles (*rak'ah*), and other details were all explained by the Prophet. Similarly, *hajj* (pilgrimage) is commanded in the Qur'an, but it was the Prophet who showed in practice how it was to be performed. Accordingly, the Prophet's exegesis of the Qur'an was not confined to verbal explanation. His actions and behavior also reflect his tafsir of the Qur'an.

LET'S TALK

ONE VERSE ONE HADITH

"And [mention] when We made the House a place of return for the people and [a place of] security. And take, [O believers], from the standing place of Abraham a place of prayer. And We charged Abraham and Ishmael, [saying], 'Purify My House for those who perform tawaf and those who are staying [there] for worship and those who bow and prostrate [in prayer].'"

(Baqarah, 2: 125)

Jabir b. Abdullah described a part from the Prophet's hajj as follows: "When the Messenger of Allah (saw) came to Mecca, he entered the masjid, first he made istilam (saluted with his hand) to the Hajar al-Aswad (the Black Stone). Then he kept the Ka'bah on his left side, and completed tawaf (circumambulation) by walking quickly three times and four times normally. Then, coming to Maqam al-Ibrahim (Station of Abraham) he recited the verse "...And take, [O believers], from the standing place of Abraham a place of prayer..." (Baqarah, 2: 125). Keeping the Maqam between the Ka'bah and himself, he performed two cycles of prayer. After the two-cycle prayer, he came to Hajar al-Aswad and saluted it with his hand. Then he climbed up the Hill of Safa, recited the verse, "Indeed, al-Safa and al-Marwah are among the symbols of Allah..." (Baqarah, 2: 158).

(Tirmidhi, Hajj, 33.)

Talk about how the Prophet interpreted the verse given above.

Because the divine message corresponds to the competence and understanding of the community to which it was revealed, there was not much need to explain the verses thoroughly. For this reason, the Prophet's being a *muballigh* (the deliverer of the message) becomes more evident than his being a *mufassir* (an interpreter). However, it should not be forgotten that when there was a need, he solved the questions and problems that originated from differences in understanding. For example, our Prophet sometimes explained the meanings of words and verses directly, sometimes in response to a question, and sometimes replying to a question that he had personally asked. Moreover, the Prophet's exegesis of the Qur'an was not a systematic and detailed one through the use of sciences like *lughah* (language) and *balaghah* (rhetoric). Rather, he made explanations to provide a better understanding of the divine purpose of the verses, encourage people to worship, and guide them morally.

EXAMPLES OF TAFSIR FROM OUR PROPHET

	The verse to be interpreted	Tafsir	The method used for Tafsir
1	<p>حَافِظُوا عَلَى الصَّلَوَاتِ وَالصَّلَاةِ الْوُسْطَىٰ وَقُومُوا لِلَّهِ قَانِتِينَ</p> <p>“Maintain with care the [obligatory] prayers and [in particular] the middle prayer and stand before Allah, devoutly obedient.” (Baqarah, 2: 238)</p>	<p>قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ (ص): صَلَاةُ الْوُسْطَى صَلَاةُ الْعَصْرِ</p> <p>“The Prophet of Allah said: ‘The middle Salat is Salat Al-`Asr (late afternoon prayer).’” (Tirmidhi, Tafsir, 3)</p>	Our Prophet explained an ambiguous (mubham) expression.
2	<p>وَأَذَانٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ إِلَى النَّاسِ يَوْمَ الْحَجِّ الْأَكْبَرِ أَنَّ اللَّهَ بَرِيءٌ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ وَرَسُولُهُ</p> <p>“And [it is] an announcement from Allah and His Messenger to the people on the day of the greater pilgrimage that Allah is disassociated from the disbelievers, and [so is] His Messenger...” (Tawbah, 9: 3)</p>	<p>Ali asked the Prophet about يَوْمَ الْحَجِّ الْأَكْبَرِ “the day of al-Hajj al-Akbar” in the verse. The Prophet (saw) said that it is the first day of the Feast of Sacrifice. (Tirmidhi, Tafsir, 10.)</p>	In response to some questions, the Prophet explained the meaning of some words and verses.

3	<p>فِيهِ آيَاتٌ بَيِّنَاتٌ مَّقَامُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمَنْ دَخَلَهُ كَانَ آمِنًا وَلِلَّهِ عَلَى النَّاسِ حِجُّ الْبَيْتِ مَنِ اسْتَطَاعَ إِلَيْهِ سَبِيلًا وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَنِيٌّ عَنِ الْعَالَمِينَ</p> <p>“In it are clear signs [such as] the standing place of Abraham. And whoever enters it shall be safe. And [due] to Allah from the people is a pilgrimage to the House – for whoever is able to find thereto a way. But whoever disbelieves — then indeed, Allah is free from need of the worlds.” (Al-i Imran, 3: 97)</p>	<p>Our Prophet interpreted the word سَبِيلًا “way” as</p> <p>الرَّزَادُ وَالرَّاحِلَةُ :</p> <p>“Food and saddle beast”. (Tirmidhi, Tafsir, 4.)</p>	<p>The Prophet (saw) interpreted <i>mujmal</i> verses (unclear verses that needed to be explained).</p>
4	<p>... يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ</p> <p>“O you who have believed! ... And cooperate in goodness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is severe in penalty.” (Ma'idah, 5: 2)</p>	<p>When a question was posed to the Prophet about الْبِرُّ “goodness” in this verse or in other verses he answered:</p> <p>أَلْخُلُقِ الْبِرُّ حُسْنُ</p> <p>“Goodness is good manners.” (Muslim, Birr, 14.)</p>	<p>The Prophet sometimes interpreted verses by explaining a concept.</p>

5	<p>وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا</p> <p>“And thus we have made you a middle community that you will be witnesses over the people and the Messenger will be a witness over you.”</p> <p>(Baqarah, 2: 143)</p>	<p>Our Prophet said اَلْوَسْطُ اَلْعَدْلُ “middle is justice” and interpreted the word وَسَطًا “middle” as اَلْعَدْلُ “justice”. (Tirmidhi, Tafsir, 3.)</p>	<p>The Prophet explained the literal meaning of a word (al-bayan al-lughavi).</p>
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2. Tafsir in the Time of the Companions (Ashab)

LET’S THINK – LET’S REMARK

“As regards tafsir, know that the Qur’an was sent down in accordance with the methodology and rhetoric of the Arabic language. When it was sent down, all Arabs understood the Qur’an and knew the meanings of its words and phrases. In order to explain the Oneness of Allah and religious obligations in accordance with the events, the Qur’an was revealed sentence by sentence, verse by verse. ... The Messenger (saw) explained the ambiguous (*mujmal*) verses, distinguishing the abrogating and abrogated (*nasikh, mansukh*) verses, and taught them to the Companions who learned them. Moreover, the Companions learned the reasons for the revelation of verses and the consequences of their revelation.” (Ibn Khaldun, Muqaddimah, VI, p. 553, 554.)

Which characteristics of the Companions related to tafsir did Ibn Khaldun point out? Remark.

LET'S INTERPRET

Ali said: "By Allah, I know where and about what all the verses were revealed. Surely, my Lord bestowed on me a heart which understands well and a tongue which asks so much."

"... Ask me about the Book of Allah. By Allah, I know whether in the morning or at night; on a plain or on a mountain each verse was revealed."

(Husain al-Zahabi, *al-Tafsir wa al-Mufasssirun*, VI, p. 89-90)

Which of his and the other Companions' characteristics related to the exegesis of the Qur'an did Ali emphasize with these words?

Interpret.

The Qur'an was sent down gradually in the language of the Companions and to the environment in which they lived. For this reason, most of the Companions knew which verse was revealed where, when, why, and on what occasion. They were even a part of the events that caused the verses to be revealed. For example, the Companions witnessed the revelation of the verses during the step-by-step prohibition of alcohol, and they personally practiced these steps. They, as the first receivers of the Qur'anic message, attended all activities carried out by the Prophet through recitation, memorization, writing, explanation, understanding, and living in accordance with the Qur'an. Since they asked the Prophet directly about verses they could not understand and heard him answer in person, they learned the real meaning of the verses from the primary source of knowledge.

In addition to paying attention to the coherence of the Qur'an and other verses related to the subject while interpreting, the Companions also benefited from the words and practices of the Prophet. Thus, by reporting reasons for the revelation of the verses and by sharing other kinds of knowledge that the Prophet taught them, they laid the foundations for the science of tafsir. Since the Qur'an was sent down in the language that the Companions spoke, their explanations about the meanings of the words and phrases in the verses are of significance. Even if they did not hear them directly from the Prophet, the Companions' judicial opinions, based on their own personal judgment when there was not enough explanation about the issue in question, are also

important for they show how the first addressees of the Qur'an understood the sacred book.

INFORMATION BOX

Some of the characteristic features of the Companions' tafsir:

- The Qur'an was not interpreted from the beginning to the end during the time of the Companions.
- The Companions restricted themselves to only giving the general meanings of the verses and did not delve into the details.
- At the time of the Companions, few judicial decisions were deduced from the verses of ahkam (verses related to legal matters).
- Exegeses made during the time of the Companions were not compiled during that period.

Their pure belief and absolute loyalty to Allah and His Messenger is another point that makes the Companions' tafsir binding. This is why sectarian conflicts and clashes driven by political interest among later generations did not have a detrimental effect on their exegesis.

The knowledge and ability of each and every Companion in tafsir of the Qur'an were not the same because they had differences in their knowledge of the Qur'an, command of the Arabic language, and proximity to the Prophet. For this reason, while some Companions abstained from interpreting the Qur'an for fear of making mistakes, others endeavored to explain it.

Some Companions, especially Ali ibn Abi Talib, Abdullah ibn Mas'ud, Abdullah ibn Abbas, and Ubayy ibn Qa'b were prominent in tafsir. Abdullah b. Abbas (d. 68/687) who is called "Tarjuman Al-Qur'an" (translator of the Qur'an), was one of the Companions who had many narrations related to the exegesis of the Qur'an. Ibn Abbas is considered to be the founder of the Meccan School of Exegesis via his students. Ibn Abbas' interpretation of the word "*kawthar*" as "khayr, goodness" can be given as one of the examples of his narrations regarding tafsir.

Among the Companions, Abdullah b. Mas'ud (d. 32/652), excelled in his knowledge of the Qur'an and its interpretation. Ibn Mas'ud, who is considered to be the founder of the Kufan School of Exegesis, preferred interpreting the *mutashabih* verses (obscure in meaning) by using his personal opinion (*ra'y*) and independent reasoning (*ijtihad*). Afterwards, his School of Exegesis based on *ra'y* and *ijtihad* influenced the birth of the Hanafi School of Law.

For example, Ibn Mas’ud interpreted the verse regarding the atonement for an oath, “...But whoever cannot find [or afford it] – then a fast of three days [is required]...”¹, with the expression مُتَتَابِعَات: “consecutively”. For this reason, according to the Hanafi School of Law, those who want to fast as atonement for their oaths should fast three consecutive days.

LET’S COMPARE

Elmalılı Hamdi Yazır, while writing his tafsir book “*Hak Dini Kur’an Dili*”, carried out research about many topics. As for the Companions, they did not need to do any research about the subjects. What were the reasons for the Companions’ lack of need to do any research, and why was their tafsir different from the following generations? Compare and write.

WHY THE COMPANIONS WERE ABLE TO UNDERSTAND THE VERSES BETTER THAN THE FOLLOWING GENERATIONS	ELMALILI HAMDI YAZIR’S RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS IN ORDER TO UNDERSTAND THE QUR’AN
The Companions were witnesses to the reasons for the revelation of verses and chapters, and saw and heard them.	He searched for the reasons of revelation of some verses and chapters from the relevant sources. (See the tafsir of Surah al-Lahab (111) and 3rd verse of Surah al-Kawthar (108))
	In order to learn the meaning of some words during the time of the Prophet, he looked at the poetry of the age of ignorance (see the tafsir of the 1st verse of Surah Yusuf (12) and 42nd verse of Surah al-Qalam (68).) and looked up the meanings of the words used for them at that time from the dictionaries. (See the tafsir of the 20th verse of Surah al-Shura(42).)

¹ Ma’idah, 5: 89

	Since he could not ask the Prophet directly what was meant by the verse, he consulted the reports that came from the Prophet and the Companions. (See the tafsir of the 1st verse of Surah al-Baqarah (2).)
	He searched the written sources for how the Prophet practiced some verses. (see the tafsir of 158th verse of Surah al-Baqarah (2).)
	He researched the customary practices of the age of ignorance criticized by some verses (see the tafsir of the 9th verse of Surah al-Najm (53), 8-9th verses of Surah al-Takwir (81).)

3. Tafsir in the Time of the Successors (Tabi'in)

Islam, which reached to the furthest frontiers of the Arabian Peninsula during the time of the Prophet, continued to spread quickly after his death. The conquests of Egypt, Syria, Iraq, and Iran created the need for new administrators, judges, and teachers for those regions. The Companions, who taught the Qur'an and the traditions of the Prophet in the regions to which they went, made contributions towards the establishment and development of scholarly activities in cities such as Kufa and Damascus as well as Madinah and Mecca. Thus Ibn Abbas' students, the prominent mufasssirs from the generation of Successors such as Sa'id b. Jubair, Mujahid, and Ikrimah, established the "Meccan School of Exegesis", which based its exegesis on a method that depended on the narrations, *riwayah*; and, the students of Ubayy ibn Qa'b, the prominent mufasssir from the generation of Successors such as Zaid ibn Aslam and Muhammad b. Qa'b Al-Qurazi founded the "Madinan School of Exegesis". Ibn Mas'ud's students such as Ibrahim Al-Nakha'i, Muhammad ibn Sirin, and Hasan Al-Basri founded the "Kufan School of Exegesis", which was based on a method called *dirayah* (sagacity), meaning a method depending on *ra'y* (personal opinion) as well as narrations.

Since the mufasssirs from the generation of Successors did not meet the Prophet himself and did not witness the revelation of the Qur'an, they needed to give more explanations while interpreting the verses. Similarly, while the number of verses interpreted during the time of the Companions was limited, the interpretation of the entire Qur'an started during the time of the Successors. Although all of its methods were not fully established, tafsir stayed on course to be an independent discipline during this period.

LET'S SHARE

About 30 years after the death of the Prophet, Muslims conquered the lands of Iran, Egypt, Syria, Jerusalem, and Iraq, which had been a part of the Byzantine Empire. As a result of these conquests, some of the Jews, Christians, Zoroastrians, and Sabeans living there converted to Islam.

What kind of cultural effects might new converts coming from different cultures have had on the people who were already Muslim? Share your opinions with your friends.

Although tafsir was largely confined to oral interpretation and transmission during the time of the Companions, it came to be gradually written down during the time of the Successors. In addition to their interpretations on the primary usages of the vocabulary of the Qur'an, the Successors benefited from linguistic sciences such as *lughah* (lexicology), *sarf* (etymology), *nahw* (syntax), *balaghah* (rhetoric), and semantics. Further, they applied the principles of historical and social sciences in their exegeses. The use of *ra'y* and *ijtihad* (judicial opinion) in the interpretation of the verses led to the emergence of various views.

Muslims meeting with different cultures led to the emergence of differences in understanding. Non-Arab Muslims' (*mawali*) increasing interest in dealing with tafsir enabled their culture to spread among other Muslims. Some Muslims used the traditions of Ahl al-Kitab (People of the Book), i.e. Christians and Jews, while interpreting the parables mentioned in the Qur'an. Thus, the reports named *Israiliyyat* started to appear in tafsir. Such reports, especially ones about the lives of the prophets commonly mentioned in the Torah, Gospel, and the Qur'an, were used beginning from the time of the Successors. As a result of an extensive engagement in tafsir during the Successors' era, all of the verses of the Qur'an were interpreted by benefiting from various Islamic sciences.

Thus, tafsir started to become a separate branch of science. Moreover, the Successors who followed some of the Companions’ tafsir methods established the Meccan, Madinan, and Kufan schools of exegesis, which used either the method of *riwayah* or *dirayah*.

LET’S COMPARE

Some characteristics of tafsir at the time of the Companions and Successors are given below. Place a (√) for the correct statements and an (X) for the false ones.

CHARACTERISTICS	TAFSIR DURING THE TIME OF THE COMPANIONS	TAFSIR DURING THE TIME OF THE SUCCESSORS
All the verses of the Qur’an were interpreted.		
Living in the environment in which the verses of the Qur’an were revealed was a characteristic of their tafsirs.		
People from non-Arabic origins (mawali) started to take part more in tafsir movements.		
The Meccan and Kufan Schools of tafsir started to be formed.		
Reports of Israiliyyat became widespread in the interpretations of verses related to creation and parables.		
As a consequence of meeting with other cultures, various understandings of tafsir, which became the basis of different views, became widespread.		
They have transmitted what they saw and heard directly from the sunnah of the Prophet in their interpretation of verses.		

4. The Period of Tadwin of Tafsir

Tadwin, which literally means collecting, recording, and writing, technically refers to the compilation of words and texts related to tafsir that are found in various written materials or transmitted through oral tradition from one memory to another. It also refers to writing these compiled materials in an orderly manner and compiling the books of exegesis. So, the *tadwin* of tafsir refers to collecting the reports related to Qur'anic exegesis in an orderly manner in book form.

The activity of tafsir went through various phases until it reached the period of *tadwin*. The first of these phases was during the time of the Prophet and Companions. During the time of the Prophet, in which oral culture was more common, nothing was usually recorded other than the Qur'an because of the possibility of mixing it with the Qur'an.

In the second phase, a few booklets of hadith written during the time of the Prophet and the ahadith memorized by hadith scholars started to be compiled. Since some parts of these tractates are related to the exegesis of the verses, they are named "*Kitab al-tafsir* (the book of tafsir)" in the books of hadith. As a result, tafsir reports started to occupy independent sections in the books of hadith. Similarly during this period, studies focused on the vocabulary of the Qur'an, the foreign words found in it, synonyms, and heteronyms. Some of them were written, and this period was named the period of *kitabah* of tafsir (writing tafsir).

The third phase is the period of *tadwin* that started at the end of the Successors' age. During this period, tafsir reports got differentiated from hadith collections and independent studies of tafsir interpreting the entire Qur'an started to be compiled as separate books. The first written book that interpreted the whole Qur'an was "*Kitab al-Tafsir al-Kabir*" of Muqatil ibn Sulaiman (d. 150/767). Apart from his tafsir, his two other books about heteronyms, synonyms, and the interpretation of verses related to legal issues (verses of *ahkam*) are the first written tafsir documents that survived. In Muqatil's tafsir, different meanings of words and differences in recitation of the Qur'an in the first period are provided. It also frequently mentions *sabab al-nuzul* (occasions of revelation), historical information, and the narration of the names of individuals. For example; Muqatil interpreted the verse "وَاجْتَنِبُوا قَوْلَ الزُّورِ" "... and avoid



The cover page of the Turkish translation of Muqatil ibn Sulaiman's *Kitab al-Tafsir al-Kabir*

false statement”² as “وَاتَّقُوا قَوْلَ الْكُذِّبِ وَهُوَ الشِّرْكَ” “Fear from false statement which is polytheism.”³

In addition to these, the earliest tafsir documents include:

The tafsir treatise of Ali ibn Abi Talha (d. 143/760): Various narratives from this compilation are quoted in Bukhari’s hadith book and Tabari’s tafsir.

Sufyan al-Thawri’s book (d. 161/778), *Kitab al-Tafsir*, which explains the verses based on the philological rules of the Arabic language and *sabab al-nuzul*, is one of the first written tafsir books. However, this book does not interpret all of the verses of the Qur’an.

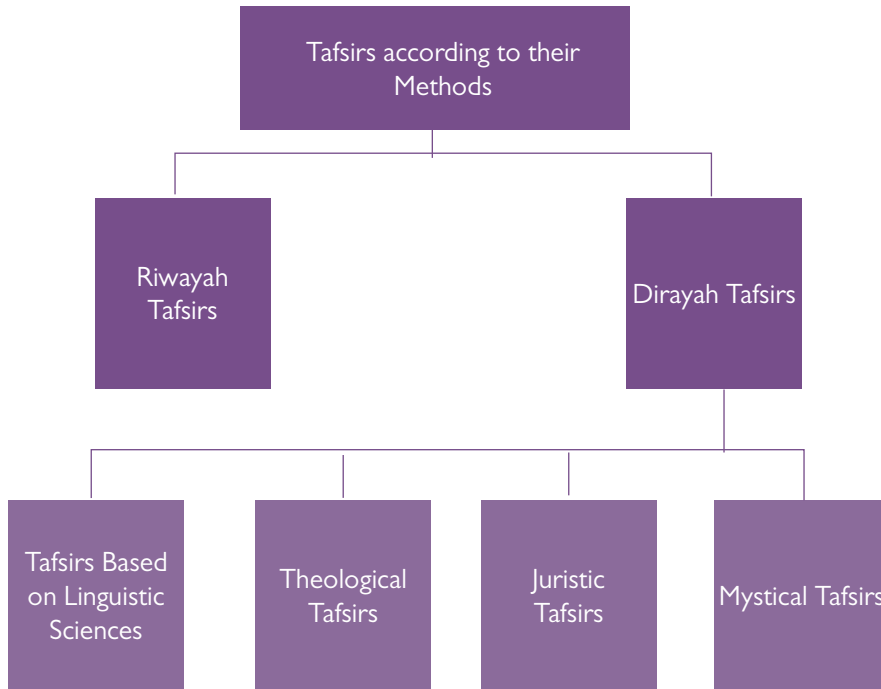
5. Types of Tafsir in terms of Source and Method

The primary sources of tafsir are the Qur’an, sayings of the Prophet, the statements of the Companions and Successors. The tafsirs based on these sources are called exegesis of *riwayah*. In addition to these sources, later mufassirs started to make use of the instruments of the Arabic language and literature in developing their reasoning and opinions. Thus, reason and sciences became merged with the sources of tafsir. Interpretations of the Qur’an based on these sources are called *dirayah tafsirs*.

Mufassirs used two different methods in their tafsir of the Qur’an. First, interpretations based exclusively on the narration of reports from earlier authorities without the mufassir’s own opinions are called “riwayah tafsirs”. The second, interpretations based on linguistics and other auxiliary sciences as well as the mufassir’s own reasoning, are called “dirayah tafsirs”. However, these two methods cannot be completely separated from each other because mufassirs from riwayah or dirayah schools used reports from each other’s findings. Therefore, according to the characteristics of the method, the works on exegeses are divided into riwayah and dirayah tafsirs according to their sources and methods.

² Hajj, 22: 30.

³ Muqatil b. Sulaiman, *Tafsir-u Muqatil b. Sulaiman*, v. 3, p. 123; *Tafsir al-Kabir*, v. 3, p. 97.

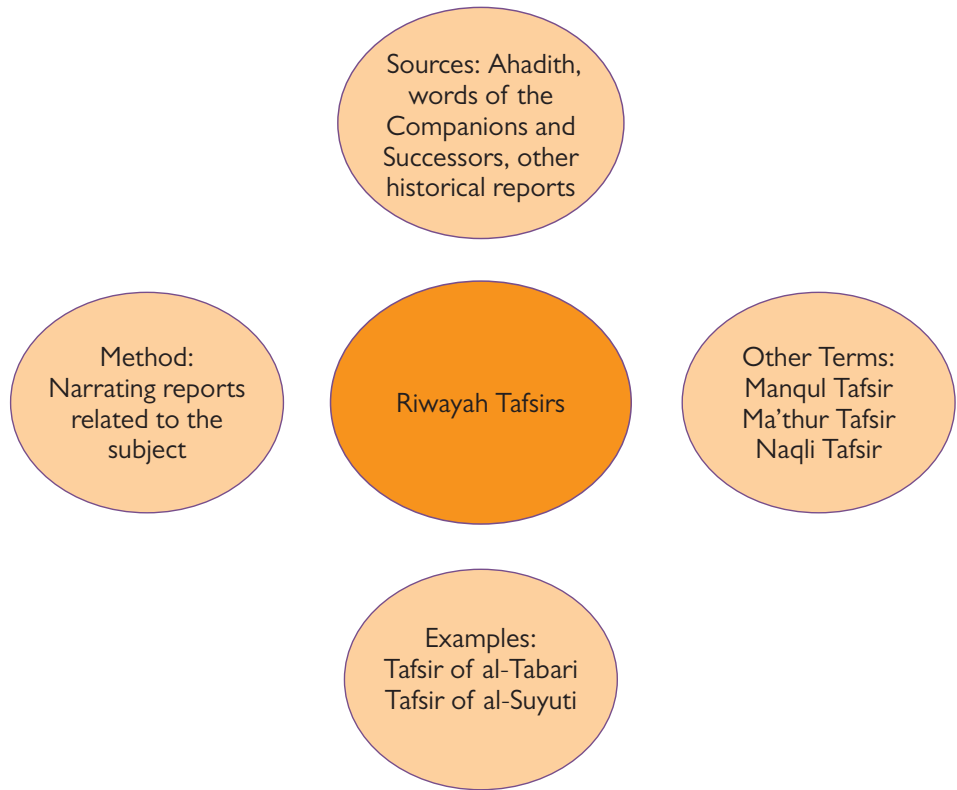


5.1. Riwayah Tafsirs

During the early periods of Islam, tafsir only consisted of the word of the Prophet and his Companions as reported. Mufasssirs of the first period made interpretations by using the words that came from the Prophet and Companions, and they did not include their own views. These types of tafsirs are called *riwayah tafsirs*, which are also called *ma'thur*, *manqul*, or *naqli*.

In the riwayah method, the first thing to do when interpreting a verse is to take into consideration other related verses. After this, examples from the Sunnah of the Prophet and the ahadith related to the subject are taken into account. Then, the statements and interpretations of the Companions and sometimes the words of the Successors related to the subject are narrated.

Riwayah tafsirs are important in terms of reporting how the Prophet and Companions understood and practiced Qur'anic rulings. On the other hand, while using these tafsirs, one should be very careful about fabricated reports attributed to the Prophet, Companions, and Successors.



Among the riwayat tafsirs, *Jami al-Bayan an Ta'wil al-Ay al-Qur'an* of Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari has a special place in terms of its narration among the earliest tafsir works. In addition, the following can be mentioned among the prominent books of riwayat tafsirs:

Abu al-Laith Al-Samarqandi (d. 375/985): *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Azim*

Abu Muhammad al-Husain al-Baghawi (d. 516/1122): *Ma'alim al-Tanzil*

Ibn Kathir (d. 774/1373): *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Azim*

Abu Tahir al-Firuzabadi (d. 816/1413): *Tanwir al-Miqbas min Tafsir Ibn Abbas*

Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti (d. 911/1505): *al-Durr al-Mansur*

LET'S FIND

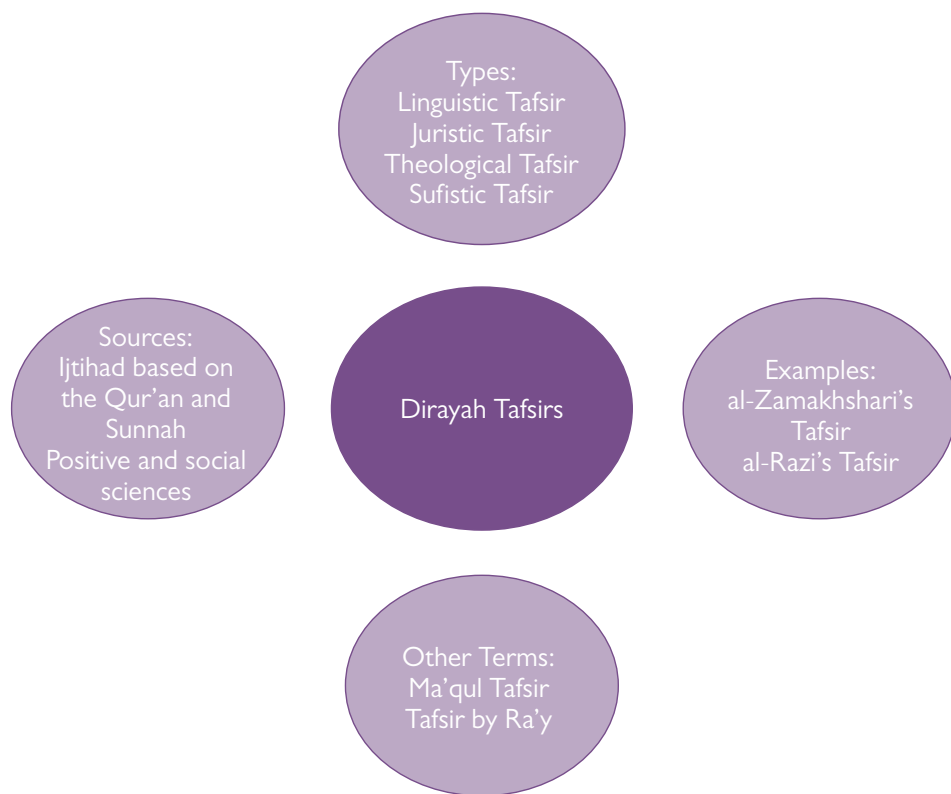
“... In order to check the progress of the science of tafsir, some scientific instruments had to be improved. For this reason, the principle was accepted that not just Arabic but also the usage of Arabic phrases during the time of the Prophet must be known in order to understand the Qur'an correctly. As a result, Arabic grammar, the science of lughah, and Arabic literature were studied profoundly. Then the reasons for the revelation of the Qur'anic verses, which is called *illat al-wahy*, was recorded as a necessary aid in determining the correct meaning of Kalam Allah (the Word of Allah). Third, historical reports, which included statements about how people who encountered the Qur'an for the first time understood its commands and phrases, were focused on a lot. After these requirements were fulfilled, a field in which human reason can act freely, opened...”

(Fazl al-Rahman, *Islam*, p. 56)

Based on the text given above, find the established principles related to tafsir movements.

5.2. Dirayah Tafsirs

Dirayah lexically means understanding, realization, and comprehension. In the beginning, mufasssirs only transmitted the sayings of the Prophet and the statements of the Companions and Successors. As the Muslim community expanded and various sciences developed, *mufasssirs* no longer felt content with just reporting textual sources. Thus, they appealed to personal opinion (*ra'y*) and independent reasoning (*ijtihad*) based on the Qur'an and Sunnah, in addition to textual materials. This new method, based on transmitting the personal opinions and views of mufasssirs, in addition to the reports from the Prophet and his Companions, is called “the method of dirayah”, also called “*ma'qul* (rational)” and “*ra'y* (personal opinion).”



Mufasssirs who use the *dirayah* method have made extensive use of linguistic sciences such as lexicology, grammar, and literature in their exegesis. They have also used philosophical and positive sciences in addition to the other basic Islamic studies such as *hadith*, *fiqh* (jurisprudence), and *kalam* (theology) in *tafsir*.

In their exegesis, mufasssirs interpreted their views and approaches by developing them around linguistics, *fiqh*, *kalam*, and other religious sciences. Linguistic, juristic, theological, and sufistic *tafsirs* emerged as sub-divisions of *dirayah tafsirs*.

Linguistic (*lughawi*) Tafsir: Our Prophet explained the meaning of words that the Companions had difficulty understanding. Also, the first works on *tafsir* were the books of *Ma'ani al-Qur'an*, which analyze the vocabulary of the *Qur'an*. The works analyzing meanings of words that are difficult to understand and words of foreign origin were compiled into books titled *Gharib al-Qur'an*; the works that analyze heteronym and synonym words in the *Qur'an* were gathered in books titled "*al-Wujuh wa al-Naza'ir*." In the meantime, meanings

of the words and concepts of the Qur'an at the time of the Prophet needed to be established and interpreted. For this reason, mufasssirs resorted to the poetry of the age of ignorance. This way, they also made a contribution to the development of the literary arts, such as poetry and rhetoric. So, the first activities of exegesis carried out by the *dirayah* method were based on linguistic studies.

New converts to Islam from various nations and their desire to understand the Qur'an favored linguistic tafsirs because they did not know Arabic and wanted to understand the Qur'an. The studies for analyzing the grammatical structure of the Qur'an, determination of *sarf* (morphology), and *nahw* (syntax) rules of Arabic were formed under the influence of these factors. This led to the emergence of such linguists as Khalil b. Ahmad (d. 175/791) and Sibawaih (d. 180/796) who contributed to the explanation of the Qur'an and the development of linguistics by means of this method.

Al-Farra (d. 207/822) is the leading figure among those who interpreted the Noble Qur'an based on the linguistic method. His book "*Ma'ani al-Qur'an*" is one of the first works that interpreted some of the vocabulary in the Qur'an from a linguistic (*lughawi*) perspective. Again, "*Majaz al-Qur'an*" of Abu Ubaidah (d. 210/825), "*Ta'wil Mushkil al-Qur'an*" of Ibn Kutaibah (d. 276/889), and "*al-Kashshaf*" of al-Zamahshari are some important works written using this method. "*al-Mufradat fi Gharib al-Qur'an*" of Ragib al-Isfahani has the characteristic of a dictionary consisting of the vocabulary of the Qur'an and its meanings.

LET'S RESEARCH

Al-Zamakhshari and al-Razi interpreted “سُورَةٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهَا...” the first verse of Surah al-Nur (24) as follows:

Most of the imams of recitation recite the word “سُورَةٌ” as nominative (with raf’). Those who recite this word with raf’ support their opinions as such: An indefinite

noun (*nakra*) cannot be the subject (*mubtada*) in a sentence. In this case, “سُورَةٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهَا” is a predicate (*khbar*) consisting of a *sifah* (adjective) and a *mawsuf* (substantive). Its *mubtada* was hidden. So, the meaning of the verse is “This is a

chapter which We have sent down” or the expression “سُورَةٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهَا” is a *mubtada* consisting of a *sifah* and *mawsuf*. Its *khbar* was hidden. So, the meaning of the verse is “This chapter, which We have sent down, is found among what we have revealed to you.” Ahfash said, “*Nakrah* can also be a *mubtada* and so “سُورَةٌ” is the subject of the sentence, and “أَنْزَلْنَاهَا” is its predicate.”

(al-Zamakhshari, *al-Kashshaf*, V. 3, p.46; al-Razi, *Tafsir Kabir*, V. 23, translated with some editions from p. 130)

1. In the interpretation of this verse, which science was used the most?
2. To which kind of tafsir can this text be given as an example? Research.

Theological (Kalami) Tafsir: The main factor influencing the emergence of theological tafsirs was the need for an interpretation of verses related to principles of faith. In the Noble Qur’an, there are many verses related to the oneness of Allah, angels, divine books, prophets, the hereafter, and predestination. Understanding and interpreting these verses, building Muslims’ faith on solid foundations, and defending its principles are basic objectives of theological tafsirs.

The Muslims’ interaction with new cultures and religions was effective in the birth of theological tafsirs. As a result of these meetings, different problems arose related to faith among Muslims, and various theological schools came forth to solve these problems, leading to the compilation of theological tafsirs that deal with theological subjects.

Mu’tazila was the first school to use the theological tafsir method in the history of tafsir. Al-Zamakhshari (d. 538/ 1143) made interpretations supporting the opinions of Mu’tazila in his tafsir titled “*al-Kashshaf*”, while Fakhr al-Din al-Razi (d. 606/1210) made interpretations supporting the Ash’ariyya theological school in his tafsir titled “*Mafatih al-Ghaib*” and criticized the view of Mu’tazila.

Shiite mufasssirs gave precedence to the love of Ali and Ahl al-Bayt (People of the House), the belief in the 12 imams and Mahdi in their tafsirs. “*Al-Mizan fi Tafsir al-Qur’an*” of Muhammad Husain Tabataba’i can be given as an example of this type of exegesis. One of the important theological tafsirs is “*Fath al-Qadir*” of al-Shawkani, who was a member of the Zaydiyya School.

Juristic (*Fihi*) Tafsir: Another type of tafsir, which is also called tafsir bi al-dirayah, is juristic tafsir. Fiqh means to know the practical rulings of Islam related to individual and social life and the branch of science that analyzes these subjects. There are some verses dealing with acts of worship, such as prayer, fasting, pilgrimage, and various social relationships in the Qur’an, along with verses related to faith and commendable behavior. Understanding, interpreting these verses, explaining how Muslims practice acts of worship, and explaining how various social relationships (transactions – *mu’amalat*) are carried out are the main purposes of juristic tafsirs. For this reason, interpreting the verses related to legal rulings (ahkam), including the acts of worship and transactions, is the most important characteristic of juristic tafsirs.

The views of Muslim scholars that have changed depending on the factors of time and place, have led in time to the emergence of juristic schools. In this context, every mufasssir who is a member of one of the Hanafi, Shafii, Maliki, or Hanbali schools, which interpreted the verses of ahkam, has reflected the view of his own school in his exegesis.

Juristic tafsirs, which explain the verses of ahkam in the Qur’an, are generally named “*Ahkam al-Qur’an*”. “*Tafsir al-Khams Mi’ah Ayah min al-Qur’an*” of Muqatil b. Sulaiman (d. 150/767) is accepted as the first written juristic tafsir. “*Ahkam al-Qur’an*” of Imam al-Shafi’i (d. 204/819), “*Ahkam al-Qur’an*” of Hanafi scholar al-Jassas (d. 370/981), “*Ahkam al-Qur’an*” of Abu Bakr Ibn al-Arabi (d.543/1148), a scholar of the Maliki school; and “*al-Jami li Ahkam al-Qur’an*” of al-Qurtubi, another Maliki scholar from Andulus can be given as examples of juristic tafsirs.

Sufistic (*Tasawwufi*) Tafsir: Another type of tafsir, which is listed in the category of *tafsir bi al-dirayah*, is sufistic tafsirs. Sufistic tafsirs emerged among Muslims as a result of the development of the understanding of an ethical life and the purification of the heart and as a reaction against worldliness. In this regard, mystical tafsirs placed emphasis upon the righteous human being and the interpretation of Qur’anic verses relating to moral matters.

Sufistic tafsirs occasionally neglected various rules set forth by the general tafsir method and remarked that there are esoteric (batini) meanings of verses

besides their exoteric (zahiri) meanings. For this reason, verses have generally been interpreted by finding the hidden meanings and information achieved by inspiration instead of investigating the apparent meanings of the verses and their reasons of revelation. However, these tafsirs have concentrated on different meanings in accordance with the mufasssirs' own views such as the meanings that are considered to be symbolized by words or letters, in addition to the meaning understood from the language. Hence, sufistic tafsir is also called "*al-Tafsir al-Ish'ari*".

INFORMATION BOX

In order to accept the sufistic tafsir, scholars of exegesis put forward some conditions established to protect the correct meaning of the verses.

"Four conditions are required for the esoteric meaning to be accepted:

1. The esoteric meaning must not contradict the apparent meaning of the word.
2. There must be proof of the accuracy of the meaning in another place.
3. There must not be any religious or rational contradiction to the meaning.
4. It must not be claimed that the esoteric meaning is the sole meaning."

(Süleyman Ateş, *Sülemi ve Tasavvufi Tefsiri*, edited from p. 25)

LET'S NOTE

The author of the first mystical tafsir; Sahl b. Abdullah al-Tustari interpreted the expression "بِسْمِ اللَّهِ" "In the name of Allah (Bismillah)" in his "*Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Azim*" as such:

”الْبَاءُ بِهَاءُ اللَّهِ وَالسَّيْنُ سَنَاءُ اللَّهِ وَالْمِيمُ مَجْدُ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ هُوَ الْإِسْمُ الْأَعْظَمُ“

The letter of "ba" is beauty of Allah (baha); the letter of "sin" is supremacy of Allah (thana); the letter of "mim" is glory of Allah (majd); the word of "Allah" is the highest name of Him (al-Ism al-A'zam).

(İsmail Cerrahoğlu, *Tafsir Tarihi*, V. 2, p. 17.)

This interpretation of al-Tustari has no relation to the literal meaning of "Bismillah"; "With the name of Allah." Here, al-Tustari wants to indicate some attributes of Allah starting from the letters. For this reason, these interpretations are called "*al-Tafsir al-Ish'ari*" (esoteric or indicative tafsir).

The first mystical tafsir is “*Tafsir al-Qur’an al-Azim*” of Sahl b. Abdullah al-Tustari (d. 283/986).

The most important sufistic tafsirs are the following:

“*Haqa’iq al-Tafsir*” of Abu Abdurrahman al-Sulami (d. 412/1021)

“*Lata’if al-Isharat bi Tafsir al-Qur’an*” of Kushairi (d. 465/1072)

“*Ruh al-Bayan*” of Ismail Hakkı Bursawi.

LET’S FIND AND WRITE

Some short explanations related to Basmala taken from the tafsirs are given below. To which one of the methods of tafsir – dirayah, linguistic, juristic, theological, or sufistic methods – do these explanations belong? Find their counterparts and write them.

The word of “Allah” in the Basmala is the proper name of the Essence of Allah; Rahman and Rahim are two of the best names that express His mercy.

In the Basmala there is a predicate like “... (I am) reading, starting, doing, eating” which is not mentioned but intended according to the act of the person who pronounces the Basmala.

Because, according to Abu Hanifa, every Basmala in the beginning of Qur’anic chapters is a separate verse, it is silently recited only before Fatiha during the prayer but not before the additional chapters recited after the Fatihah.

The letter of “ba” indicates Allah’s beauty; the letter of “sin” indicates His supremacy; and the letter of “mim” indicates His glory.

Our Prophet said the following about Basmala: “Every act started without Basmala is infertile and deficient.” (Ajluni, *Kashf al-Khafa*, v. 2, p. 174, H. No: 1964.)

6. Primary Sources of Tafsir

From the moment that the Qur'an was revealed, Muslims have accepted as a common goal understanding and practicing it in the optimum way. Various studies have been carried out to understand the Qur'an, beginning from the time of the Prophet. Efforts in Qur'anic exegesis come at the top of such works. Mufasssirs who interpreted the Qur'an within a certain method differed from each other according to the time and place in which they lived, their cultural backgrounds, the branches of science in which they were experts, and their understandings. Some of these mufasssirs used the method of riwayat, while others used the method of dirayah. As a result, various sources of tafsir developed.

6.1. Arabic Tafsirs

Since the Noble Qur'an was sent down in Arabic, the first written works about its commentary were in Arabic. Although there are many tafsirs written in Arabic, only some of them have the characteristic of being a reference work.

Among the commonly known tafsir works are the tafsir of al-Tabari; they transmit the hadith of the Prophet, as well as interpretations of the Companions and Successors regarding verses. Tafsir of al-Zamakhshari examines the roots of words and phrases mentioned in the Qur'an. al-Razi's tafsir provides an encyclopedic information, tafsir of al-Baydawi gives summary explanations, tafsir of al-Qurtubi explains verses related to legal matters (*ahkam*), tafsir of Jalalain gives the meanings of the words and verses, and tafsir of al-Maturidi presents interpretations from the perspective of ahl al-sunnah.

Tafsir of al-Tabari: al-Tabari is one of the most important mufasssirs in the history of tafsir. He gathered scattered reports for his tafsir and ensured their transmission to us. Hence, he gave his book the name "*Jami al-Bayan an Ta'wil Aay al-Qur'an*", which can be described as "an encyclopedia of the explanations concerning the interpretation of the Qur'an." This tafsir has been published many times since the 19th century.

In the introduction of his tafsir, al-Tabari explains the reasons why the Qur'an was sent down in Arabic and whether or not interpretation of the verses is permitted. Al-Tabari availed himself of the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, statements of his Companions and their Successors, the differences in

recitation of the Qur'an, linguistics, poetry, Islamic jurisprudence, history, and theological views. Al-Tabari, however, did not interpret some short verses and was content instead with pointing out the meanings of those verses.

WHO IS AL-TABARI?

Muhammad b. Jarir al-Tabari was born in 225/839 in Tabaristan, the city of Aamul located south of the Caspian Sea. To seek knowledge, he traveled to some distant cities and countries such as Ra'y, Basra, Kufa, Madinah, Syria, and Egypt, and finally settled in Baghdad. He gave lectures there and taught his juristic views. He died in Baghdad in 310/923.

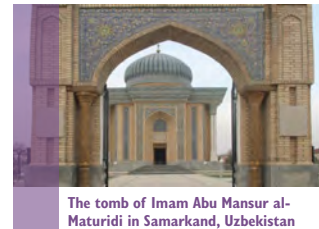
He has various works in the field of the Noble Qur'an, recitation, hadith, history and jurisprudence. The most famous ones include "*Tarih al-Umam wa al-Muluk*" in the field of history and "*Jami al-Bayan an Ta'wil Aay al-Qur'an*" in the field of tafsir.

(Taberi, *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, v. 7, quoted by some editions from p. 340, 341.)

Tafsir of al-Maturidi: Al-Maturidi's work in the field of tafsir is "*Ta'wilat al-Qur'an*", which means "Interpretations of the Qur'an" and is also known as "*Ta'wilat Ahl al-Sunnah*". Al-Maturidi was a mufassir who interpreted the Noble Qur'an based on the method of *dirayah* and resorted to reason in his interpretation of the divine sources (main textual sources, i.e. the Qur'an and the Sunnah).

Imam al-Maturidi, who is the founder of the theological sect known as Maturidiyya, gave precedence to theological issues in his tafsir and criticized the views of the Mutazilah. He analyzed the verses related to legal matters and adopted Abu Hanifa's views.

Ta'wilat al-Qur'an was written by the method of *dirayah*. On the other hand, the verses in the book were primarily interpreted with the help of relevant verses; ahadith, statements of the Companions, and views of other mufassirs were also mentioned. Interpretation of the verses was based upon linguistics and how the Arabs used the word while poetry was rarely used. Al-Maturidi also gave place to the differences in Qur'anic recitation (qiraah) in his tafsir.



The tomb of Imam Abu Mansur al-Maturidi in Samarkand, Uzbekistan

WHO IS AL-MATURIDI?

Abu Mansur al-Maturidi was born in the village of Maturid in Samarqand, which is found within the borders of Uzbekistan today. While his birth date is not definitely known, he lived for about a century. He mastered various subjects such as theology, the history of Islamic schools, the methodology of Islamic jurisprudence, and Qur'anic exegesis. He wrote various books and treatises to defend the belief of ahl al-sunnah. He is the founder of the Maturidiyyah school in the field of faith. His works that have reached us are "*Kitab al-Tawhid*" about Islamic theology and his tafsir "*Ta'wilat al-Qur'an*".

Imam al-Maturidi died in Samarqand in 333/944.

(Maturidi, *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, v. 28, quoted by some editions from p. 146-149.)

Tafsir of al-Zamakhshari: The exact title of the tafsir of al-Zamakhshari is "*al-Kashshaf an Haqa'iq Ghawamiz al-Tanzil wa Uyun al-Aqaawil fi Wujuh al-Ta'wil*", which means "the explainer of the realities of secrets and essences of the opinions about the methods of interpretation." Hadiths and statements of the Companions were also used in interpreting the verses, determining the reasons why the verses were revealed (*asbab al-nuzul*), and the virtues of the chapters of the Qur'an.

At the beginning of his tafsir, al-Zamakhshari points out the difficulty of interpreting the Qur'an. According to him, the mufassir who interprets the Qur'an must have a profound knowledge of the Arabic language and literature as well as other sciences, and his mental abilities and perception must be strong.⁴

Verses in al-Kashshaf are interpreted primarily based on the rules of language and rhetoric and ancient Arabic poetry in light of the principles of reason. Figurative meanings are explored by means of precise analyses. Recitation differences are taken into account in tafsir; abrogating and abrogated verses are noted. The verses that seem to be contradicted are interpreted (*ta'wil*), and it is stated that there is no contradicting information in the Qur'an. Hanafi views are preferred in the interpretation of verses related to legal matters, while Mutazili opinions are preferred in subjects related to creed.

Al-Zamakhshari, who is criticized because of his rationalism, attached great importance to analyzing the Qur'an in terms of *lughah* (lexicology), syntax, rhetoric, and its laconic aspect. Owing to this characteristic, mufassirs who

⁴ Al-Zamakhshari, *al-Kashshaf*, v. 1, p. 15, 16.

came after him had to pay attention to al-Kashshaf, while analyzing the Qur'an in terms of linguistics. More than 50 commentaries (sharh, hashiya, ta'liq) were written on al-Kashshaf in order to show the sources ahadith used in the tafsir, weeding out Mutazili views, grammatical analysis of the sentences, and collecting poetry.

WHO IS AL-ZAMAKHSHARI?

Jarullah Mahmud b. Umar al-Zamakhshari was born in the town of Zamakhshar in the region of Khwarezm, which is within the borders of Turkmenistan today. Al-Zamakhshari was born in 467/1075 and lived during the ruling years of the Great Seljuk Sultan Malikshah. He attained his knowledge by traveling to various cities like Bukhara, Khurasan, Isfahan, Baghdad, Damascus, Mecca, and Yemen. He visited Arab tribes living in oasis and deserts in order to improve his linguistic studies.

The most famous work of al-Zamakhshari, who wrote more than 60 works in the fields of Arabic literature, lughah (linguistics), rhetoric, tafsir, hadith, and jurisprudence, is his tafsir entitled "al-Kashshaf".

Al-Zamakhshari died in the town of Jurjaniyya in Khwarezm in 538/1143.

(Zemahşeri, *Şamil İslam Ansiklopedisi*, v. 8, edited from p. 340-342.)

The Tafsir of al-Razi: Fakhr al-Din al-Razi was a scholar who specialized in theology, jurisprudence, philosophy, medicine, and mathematics in addition to tafsir. This characteristic of his can be observed in his work "*Mafatih al-Ghayb*", which means "keys of the unseen" and is also known as "*al-Tafsir al-Kabir*." From this point of view, *Mafatih al-Ghayb*, besides having the characteristics of a tafsir, also has the features of an encyclopedic work that brings together information from various scientific disciplines. For example, in the one-volume-long tafsir of Surah al-Fatiha (1), al-Razi benefited from the linguistic sciences such as lexicology, morphology, syntax, rhetoric, literature; and religious sciences such as jurisprudence, hadith, theology, and the history of Islamic schools. Similarly, in the commentary on Fatiha, al-Razi provided long narratives from the philosophical sciences of his time like logic, physics, astronomy, math, metaphysics, ethics, and politics as well as magic, astrology, and Sufism. For this reason, some scholars called attention to its encyclopedic style saying that it is possible to find everything in addition to tafsir in "*Mafatih al-Ghayb*."

Al-Razi interpreted the Qur'an with the help of verses and ahadith. Moreover, he demonstrated the harmony among verses and chapters and tried to prove religious facts by using reason as well. Al-Razi gave a place to *asbab al-nuzul* (occasions of revelation) in his tafsir, touched upon legal subjects, defended sunni views, and criticized Mutazila using both textual and rational evidence.

“*Maḥfātih al-Ghayb*”, which is one of the greatest works of exegesis, has been published many times and has been translated into Turkish as well.

WHO IS FAKHR AL-DIN AL-RAZI?

Fakhr al-Din al-Razi was born in the city of Ray located south of the Caspian Sea in 543/1149. He received his first education from his father who was a prominent scholar in Ray. He studied philosophy, theology, jurisprudence, literature, medicine, and other sciences of the time. He traveled to cities such as Maragha, Bukhara, Samarqand, Ghazna, Herat, Harizm, and Hind; gave lectures and sermons; and attended scientific discussions there.

He wrote about a hundred books in various fields, primarily in tafsir, jurisprudence, logic, and philosophy; and some others in the history of Islamic sects, medicine, magic, and astronomy. Al-Razi died in Herat in 606/1210.

(Fahr. Razi, *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, v. 12, quoted by some editions from p. 89-91.)

The Tafsir of al-Baydawi: The title of al-Baydawi's tafsir is “*Anwar al-Tanzil wa Asrar al-Ta'wil*”, which means “lights of revelation and secrets of interpretation.” Al-Baydawi's principal sources of tafsir are Zamakhshari's and al-Razi's tafsirs and Raghib al-Isfahani's book titled “*al-Mufradat*”. Since it was a work in the form of a compilation and summary of the above-mentioned works, it was widely adopted as a textbook. It was taught in madrasas and hundreds of commentaries and glosses have been written on it. It has been published many times in Europe and in the Muslim world.

Al-Baydawi used the method of *dirayah* in his tafsir and made interpretations based upon figurative expressions. While interpreting the verses, first he emphasized the title of a chapter and the occasion of its revelation. He compendiously benefited from linguistics, theology, history, and recitation (of the Qur'an) while interpreting the verses of the Qur'an. He interpreted them by giving a summary of the tafsirs of earlier periods without going into detail. At the end of the surah, he narrated the reports related to the virtues of that surah. Al-Baydawi has been criticized because of the ambiguity of his dense

style of summary and some forged reports he narrated concerning the virtues of suras.

WHO IS AL-BAYDAWI?

Abdullah b. Umar b. Muhammad al-Baydawi was born in Bayda near the city of Shiraz, which today is found within the borders of Iran. We do not have much information about his family and education. He became the head qadi (judge) of Shiraz, and because of this, he became famous as Qadi al-Baydawi.

Qadi al-Baydawi qualified in tafsir, jurisprudence, theology, logic, syntax, and rhetoric and produced works in these fields. His most famous works are “*Tawali al-Anwar*” concerning theology and his aforementioned tafsir book.

Al-Baydawi died in Tabriz where he had settled at the end of his life in 685/1286.

(Beyzavi, *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, V. 6, quoted by some editions from p. 100-102.)

LET'S THINK

It is as if Al-Baydawi makes an effort to squeeze an ocean into a pitcher in his tafsir.”

(İsmail Cerrahoğlu, *Tefsir Tarihi*, v. 2, p.

Which aspect of al-Baydawi's tafsir is indicated by the statement above?

The Tafsir of al-Qurtubi: Al-Qurtubi, who dealt with ahkam verses of the Qur'an, entitled his tafsir, according to its subject, as “*al-Jami li Ahkam al-Qur'an*.” Ibn al-Arabi's Tafsir “*Ahkam al-Qur'an*” is one of the primary sources of Qurtubi's tafsir. The introduction to his tafsir is divided into sections called “*Ulum al-Qur'an*”. In this section, al-Qurtubi dealt with such topics as virtues of the Qur'an, rules of its recitation, memorization, orthography, compilation, its order, tafsir, vowelizing, and its laconic aspects.

WHO IS AL-QURTUBI?

Muhammad b. Ahmad al-Qurtubi was born in Cordoba, which was one of the centers of learning in Andalusia. After he improved his knowledge by traveling to many Muslim cities, he settled in Egypt and died there in 671/1273.

As a follower of the Maliki school, Al-Qurtubi was a scholar who lived an ascetic (*zahid*) and pious (*taqwa*) life and avoided fanaticism in the religious sciences.

(Kurtubi, *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, v. 26, quoted by some editions from p. 455)

LET'S TALK

In the introduction to his book, Al-Qurtubi explains the method he applied in his tafsir as such:

"... I have been busy with the Book of Allah during my whole life and exerted all my energy in it. I wrote the results of my endeavors including the subtleties of the sciences of tafsir, *lughah*, *i'rab*, and the recitation of the Qur'an. Again, I concisely wrote ahadith, which rejects those who are on the wrong path and which are related to the revelation, the verses about legal matters, and other ahadith that explain the verses. I also wrote the statements of predecessors (*salaf*) and those who followed them. ... I referred the statements to those who said them and the ahadith to their *musannifs* (those who classified them). ... I left most of the stories without commentary. Instead of this, I wrote the subjects, which consisted of the explanations of ahkam verses. Related to these matters, I explained occasions of revelation (*asbab al-nuzul*), interpretation, foreign words, and rulings of each verse related to legal matters. If the verse does not include a ruling, I just mentioned its *tafsir* and *ta'wil*."

(al-Qurtubi, *al-Jami li Ahkam al-Qur'an*, v. 1, translated from p. 3.)

Talk with your friends about the method followed by al-Qurtubi in his tafsir.

The Tafsir of al-Jalalayn: Jalal al-Din al-Mahalli interpreted the Noble Qur'an word-by-word beginning from Surah al-Baqarah (2) to the end of Surah al-Isra (17). After his death, his student Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti completed the work beginning from Surah al-Kahf (18) to the end of the Qur'an.⁵ For this reason, this tafsir is called "Tafsir al-Jalalayn", which means "tafsir of two Jalals".

The tafsir of al-Jalalayn interprets the Qur'an word-by-word, sentence-by-sentence. It indicates the meanings of the words, the words that complete the sentences, references, and abbreviations and points out the possible meanings of some words in accordance with their place in the sentence. Regarding *huruf al-muqata'a*,^{***} he stated that "Allah knows best what He meant by these letters." Numerous commentaries, in the form of sharh and hashiyah, were written on the *tafsir of al-Jalalayn*, which is a tafsir that can be easily read by whoever wants to learn tafsir.

⁵ *Tafsir al-Jalalayn*, v. 1, p. 237, 238.

^{***} Letters at the beginning of some chapters of the Qur'an.

WHO IS JALAL AL-DIN AL-MAHALLI?

Jalal al-Din al Mahalli was born and lived in Cairo in 791/1389. He advanced himself in logic, linguistics, and the religious sciences; and gave lectures in Islamic jurisprudence in madrasas. He died in Cairo in 864/1460.

(Mahalli, *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, v. 27, quoted by some editions from p. 326-327)

WHO IS JALAL AL-DIN AL-SUYUTI?

Abd al-Rahman b. Abu Bakr b. Muhammad b. al-Suyuti was born in Cairo in 849/1445. He advanced himself in hadith, tafsir, lughah, and the sciences of methodology. He became famous for his hadith memorization. He attended the lectures of Jalal al-Din al-Mahalli and various other scholars. After al-Mahalli's death, he completed the tafsir that had been left incomplete by his teacher al-Mahalli. Al-Suyuti, who has many works, died in 911/1505.

(Suyuti, *İslam Alimleri Ansiklopedisi*, V. 14, quoted by some editions from p. 356-359.)

INFORMATION BOX

Here are two examples showing the method of tafsir of al-Jalalayn:
(They are deaf) of the truth, hence, they do not hear to accept it. (They are dumb) of the good, hence, they do not speak the good. (They are blind) of the way of guidance, hence, they do not see it. (For this reason, they do not return) from deviance. (Baqarah, 2: 18)

(O people), i.e. the people of Makkah, (worship your Lord) and declare His oneness who brought you forth, while you were nothing, (created you and) created (those who before you). (That) (you would be protected) from His torment by means of worshipping Him. Here, **لعل** is actually for hope, but in the word of Allah the Almighty, it is for verification. (Baqarah, 2: 21.)

(*Tafsir al-Jalalayn*, v. 1, p. 4)

LET'S NOTE

Tafsir of al-Tabari	al-Tabari's tafsir is characterized by its narrations of the ahadith of the Prophet, words of the Companions and Successors related to tafsir of the verses.
Tafsir of al-Maturidi	al-Maturidi's tafsir is distinguished by its inclusion of commentaries of <i>ahl al-sunnah</i> while interpreting the verses.
Tafsir of al-Zamakhshari	al-Zamakhshari's tafsir is best known for its approach to the Qur'an in terms of all laconic and linguistic aspects of the Qur'an.
Tafsir of al-Razi	al-Razi's tafsir is best recognized as an encyclopedic work of Qur'anic commentary that includes all information about interpretation of the verses.
Tafsir of al-Baydawi	al-Baydawi's tafsir is widely adopted for its summaries of previous tafsirs compendiously.
Tafsir of al-Qurtubi	al-Qurtubi's tafsir is well-known for its interpretation of the verses related to legal matters and explanations of the juristic rulings that can be deduced from them.
Tafsir of al-Jalalayn	al-Jalalayn excels in its explanations of the words and verses found in the Qur'an in a short and simple way.

6.2. Turkish Tafsirs

The Qur'an has been sent down in Arabic. However, the feature of its messages addressing all peoples required that these messages be expressed in other languages as well. In this context, in addition to Turkish interpretations of some chapters of the Qur'an, some works interpreting the whole Qur'an were written in Turkish. The most important ones are "*Hulasat al-Bayan*," "*Hak Dini Kuran Dili*," and "*Kuran-ı Kerimin Türkçe Meali Alisi ve Tefsiri*".

Hulasat al-Bayan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an: *Hulasat al-Bayan*, which means "essence/summary of the explanation about the exegesis of the Qur'an", is a Turkish tafsir that Mehmet Vehbi Efendi wrote in the final days of his life. In this tafsir, written with the *dirayah* method, first the verses and their literal meanings (*ma'âl*) are given and then their exegesis follow. Various meanings of the words and literary arts in expressions are indicated; and it is emphasized that the Qur'an is a unique book. Ahadith related to the subject, some explanations concerning Islamic jurisprudence, theology, history, and ethics are quoted from various tafsirs. In

matters related to faith, views of ahl al-sunnah are defended and other opinions are criticized. A summary of the tafsir is presented at the end of the verse.

One of the most important characteristics of *Hulasat al-Bayan* is that it contains quite a number of ahadith. Ahadith reported from al-Bukhari, Muslim, and other sources occupy an important place in presenting the occasions of revelation and interpreting the verses. Some other sources of this work are exegeses of al-Tabari, al-Razi, al-Baydawi, and Abu al-Suud Effendi. Although *Hulasat al-Bayan* was criticized in terms of the difficulty of its language and the methodology it used, it was greatly regarded and embraced by the community.

“*Hulasat al-Bayan*” was published in 15 volumes between the years 1911 and 1915 in two intervals; and its first publication in the Latin alphabet was carried out between the years 1966 and 1969.

WHO IS MEHMET VEHBI EFENDİ?

Mehmet Vehbi Efendi was born in the village of Kongul in the town of Hadım in Konya in 1862. He learned the Qur'an, its rules of recitation, Arabic, and fiqh. He worked as a lecturer and judge. After the declaration of the 2nd Mashrutiyya (the constitutional monarchy), he was elected deputy of Konya. He wrote his tafsir after *majlis al-mabusan* (the assembly of deputies) was abolished.

He gave sermons in support of Kuvay-i Milliyya (the national resistance movement) during the Turkish War of Independence. He then became the governor of Konya in the first TBMM (Grand National Assembly of Turkey) and served as deputy of Konya and president of the assembly. He was then appointed as the chairman of Awqaf and Shariyya (endowments and religious affairs). He died in Konya in 1949.

(Mehmet Vehbi Efendi, *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ans.*, v. 28, quoted by some editions from p. 590.)

Hak Dini Kuran Dili: Upon a request from the Grand National Assembly of the Republic of Turkey, the Presidency of Religious Affairs decided to have someone write a Turkish tafsir in order to ensure that the Qur'an was correctly understood by Turkish readers and to respond to contemporary questions. For that purpose, the tafsir written by Muhammed Hamdi Yazır in 12 years (1926-1938), was published in 9 volumes by the Presidency of Religious Affairs between the years 1955 and 1959.

In the introduction to his book, M. Hamdi Yazır explained the differences between ta'wil and tafsir and narrated the principles that he was going to follow in his tafsir and their sources. He explained some concepts such as *ayah* and

surah, and dealt with the virtues of the Qur'an. In writing his tafsir, he benefited from the exegeses of al-Tabari, al-Jassas, al-Zamakhshari, al-Razi, al-Baydawi, Abu al-Suud, and the six canonical compilations of hadith (Kutub al-Sittah).

WHO IS MUHAMMED HAMDI YAZIR?

Muhammed Hamdi was born in the town of Elmalı in Antalya in 1878 to a learned family. He completed his primary and secondary education there and memorized the whole Qur'an. He then studied the religious sciences, literature, philosophy, and music in Istanbul.

He became a lecturer at Süleymaniye and gave lectures on logic, fiqh, and *usul al fiqh* (method of jurisprudence) in madrasas. He also gave lectures on the law of endowments in Maktab-i Mulkiya (Faculty of Political Science).

Elmalı Muhammed Hamdi became a deputy of Antalya and Minister of Endowments (*awqaf*) after the declaration of the 2nd Mashrutiyya (the constitutional monarchy). He devoted himself to scholarship after the proclamation of the Turkish Republic. His book *Metalib ve Mezahib* and his aforementioned tafsir are the products of this period.

Elmalı died in 1942 and was buried in Sahra-i Cedid cemetery in Istanbul.

(M. Hamdi Yazır, *Diyanet İslam Ans.*, v. 11, quoted by some editions from p. 57-60.)

INFORMATION BOX

While writing tafsir, Mumammed Hamdi Yazır took into account the principles mentioned below. These principles also show the provisions of the protocol signed between the Presidency of Religious Affairs and M. Hamdi Yazır:

1. Connections among the verses will be shown.
2. Occasions of revelation will be recorded.
3. Information about the rules of recitations will be given, provided that it does not exceed the *qiraat asharah* (the 10 recitations).
4. When necessary, linguistic explanations of the words and the phrases will be given.
5. Religious, shar'i, juristic, social, and ethical rulings conveyed in verses will be explained, provided that the explanations are based on the views of ahl-al sunnah in matters of creed and the views of the Hanafi school in matters of practice. Information about scientific and ethical topics pointed out and indicated in the verses will be presented. Especially the verses, which consist of the subject of *tawhid* (the oneness of Allah) and which give lessons and advice, will be explained in detail. Events in the history of Islam that have had a direct or indirect relation with the subject will be narrated.
6. Necessary explanations that call the readers' attention to the subjects about which western authors made mistakes will be given.
7. A muqaddimah (preface), which explains the truth of the Qur'an and important topics related to the Qur'an, will be presented at the beginning of the work.

(Muhammed Hamdi Yazır, *Hak Dini Kuran Dili*, v. 1, p. 19, 20.)

Kuran-ı Kerimin Türkçe Meali Alisi ve Tefsiri: “*Kuran-ı Kerimin Türkçe Meali Alisi ve Tefsiri*”, written by Ömer Nasuhi Bilmen, includes both *ma’al* (approximate rendering) and tafsir of the Qur’an. Exegesis of the chapters starts by giving the place of revelation, its time, and names of the chapter, its contents, and its number of verses. First, Arabic origins of verses and Turkish ma’als are given, and then the tafsir of verses is given under the title of *izah* (explanation).

Ömer Nasuhi Bilmen briefly presents the interpretation of the verses and explains the words and concepts in the verses. He gives brief information about individuals and beings. He sometimes mentions contemporary issues, writes poems related to the subject at the end of the *izah* (explanation) parts, and quotes poems from other poets. He gives topics in order of their page number at the end of every volume under the title of “*mundarajat*” (contents) in order to provide easy access for the readers.

Sources of this tafsir, which was published in eight volumes in Istanbul between the years 1964 and 1966, are the tafsirs of al-Baydawi and Abu al-Suud.

WHO IS ÖMER NASUHI BİLMEN?

Ömer Nasuhi Bilmen was born in Erzurum in 1882. After his primary education, he completed legal studies in Istanbul. He learned Arabic, Persian, and French.

He gave lectures on the methodology of jurisprudence and theology in madrasas, Istanbul Imam Khatib High School, and High Islamic Institute (Faculty of Theology).

He gave lectures on ethics for approximately 20 years in Dar al-Shafaqa High School (Ottoman school for orphans). He worked as mufti of Istanbul and head of the Presidency of Religious Affairs. After he retired, he wrote his tafsir. He died in Istanbul in 1971. He was buried in Edirnekapi cemetery.

While he had many works in the fields of literature and religious sciences, Bilmen became famous for his “*Büyük İslam İlmihali*” (The Grand Book of Islamic Catechism), which provides answers for practical religious needs of Muslims. Among many other works, he wrote “*Hukuk-i İslamiyye ve Istılahat-ı Fıkhiyye Kamusu*” (Dictionary of Islamic Law and Juristic Terminology) and “*Büyük Tefsir Tarihi*” (Grand History of Qur’anic Exegesis).

(Ömer Nasuhi Bilmen, *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, V. 6, edited from p. 162, 163)

Kuran Yolu Türkçe Meal ve Tefsir: As a result of increasing demands by the public for a modern tafsir, the Presidency of Religious Affairs decided to prepare a tafsir in 1998. The tafsir, written by a committee, which was formed based on this decision, was approved by the Religious Affairs Supreme Council and was published under the title of “Kuran Yolu Türkçe Meal ve Tefsir” in 2004.

At the beginning of the tafsir, subjects of the revelation, memorization, writing, compilation, recitation, compilation, and duplication of the Qur'an are explained. In the interpretation of the chapters, places and occasions of revelation, names of the chapters, the number of their verses, their subjects and virtues are presented. Then, the verses are classified in a way to form a meaningful whole; their translation and then their commentaries are given.

The purpose of this tafsir was determined by the committee to be a practical contribution to the Islamic faith, thought, and life within the frame of the recitation and understanding of the Qur'an. For this reason, simple language was used and the general need of people to learn the religion, even though they had varying cultural levels, was taken into consideration. Previous tafsirs were reviewed and selections were quoted in accordance with contemporary needs, while technical details were not included. Some concepts like *Basmala*, *hamd*, *shukr* were especially emphasized. The original meanings of the Qur'an, as understood at the time of its revelation, were given special emphasis. For this purpose, their culture, language, world view, and social construction were taken into account. Moreover, because of the universality of the message of the Qur'an, general principles were also given. Other verses, ahadith, religious sciences, history, and scientific works were used to explain a given verse. In regards to sections of the Qur'an that relate to pre-Islamic communities, information from the Bible is used, provided that it does not contradict the Islamic faith.⁶

7. Turkish Ma'al Works

The Qur'an is a book sent down to lead people on the straight path and, because of this, it must be easy to read and easy for people to understand. The Qur'an was sent down in Arabic – the language of its first recipients – so they were able to understand the message. In this regard, it is stated in the Qur'an:

LET'S INTERPRET

“... And 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.”

(Nahl, 16: 28)

“And We have not sent you except comprehensively to mankind as a bringer of good tidings and a warner...”

(Saba, 34: 28)

Which topics are mentioned in the verses given above? Interpret.

⁶ Kuran Yolu Türkçe Meal ve Tefsir, v. 1, p. 11, 12.

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ رَّسُولٍ إِلَّا بِلِسَانٍ قَوْمِهِ لِيُبَيِّنَ لَهُمْ فَيُضِلُّ اللَّهُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ
وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿١٤﴾

“And We did not send any messenger except [speaking] in the language of his people to state clearly for them, and Allah sends astray [thereby] whom He wills and guides whom He wills. And He is the Exalted in Might, the Wise.”⁷

The Qur'an was not sent to a certain community or a region but to the whole of humanity. The universality of its message made its translation into other languages necessary in order for readers to understand it. In this context, many scholars have worked to translate the Qur'an into Turkish since the conversion of the Turks to Islam. The most widely used translations among them are the *ma'al* written by Hasan Basri Çantay and the *ma'als* written by commissions formed by the Presidency of Religious Affairs and the Foundation of Religious Affairs.

INFORMATION BOX

The Noble Qur'an was translated into most of the languages in the world. After the Turks converted to Islam and learned Arabic, they began to translate the Qur'an into Turkish. The first partial translations were carried out in the Uyghur alphabet. The earliest Turkish translation of the Noble Qur'an was written in the Oghuz dialect by Mehmet the son of Shirazlı Hacı Devlet Shah in 734/1334. Works on the Qur'anic translations continued during the Seljuk and Ottoman periods.

Kuran-ı Hakim ve Meal-i Kerim: This *ma'al* written by Hasan Basri Çantay was first published in 1953 in three volumes. The general subject index was given at the end of the first volume, and an index of proper names was added at the end of each volume.

Hasan Basri Çantay talks about the earlier translations at the beginning of his *ma'al* and states that he would like to write a *ma'al* purified from superstition and written in a simple language.⁸ Two pages of the Noble Qur'an are usually placed side-by-side and their translations are given underneath and on the following page. Explanatory notes that did not come from the source text are

⁷ Ibrahim, 14: 4

⁸ Hasan Basri Çantay, *Kuran-ı Hakim ve Meal-i Kerim*, v. 1, p. 8, 9.

put into brackets, and issues that required further explanation are presented in the footnotes. Since the explanations provided in the footnotes differ in length, in some places they are very short; in others, very long. In certain respects, this ma'al can be regarded as a tafsir. The explanations provided in the footnotes are mostly taken from classical tafsir books such as al-Baydawi and al-Jalalayn, from hadith books like al-Bukhari, and from other books related to the subject in question.

WHO IS HASAN BASRİ ÇANTAY?

Hasan Basri Çantay was born in the city of Balıkesir in 1887. After his primary education, he learned Arabic and Persian and took lessons in literature, philosophy, law, economics, and finance.

He wrote for the *Balıkesir* and *Nasihât* newspapers; and published the *Yıldırım* and *Kerasi* newspapers. He taught at various high schools. He organized a society during the National Resistance by publishing *Ses* newspaper. He became the deputy of Balıkesir in the 1st National Assembly and became a very close friend of Mehmet Akif Ersoy. He undertook the management of a high school that provided education for children of the martyrs.

Çantay, on the one hand, was involved with agriculture and trade in later life, and on the other, he devoted himself to scientific studies. He died in Istanbul in 1964 and was buried in Edirnekapi cemetery.

(Hasan Basri Çantay, *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, v. 8, edited from p. 218, 219.)

Kuran-ı Kerim Meali: This ma'al, which was compiled by the Supreme Council of Religious Affairs on behalf of the Presidency of Religious Affairs, was published by the Presidency of Religious Affairs in Ankara in 2003. In the introduction, the history of the Qur'an, its laconic aspect, the differences between tarjamah (exact literal translation) and ma'al (interpretive literal translation) were briefly underlined. Moreover, an alphabetical subject index and an index of the chapters of the Qur'an were added. The aim of the ma'al was to provide ease of usage.

In this ma'al, which was framed around the original Arabic text, simple language was used to make it easier for contemporary readers to understand. Information about the title of the chapter, the number of verses, and the place of its revelation are given briefly. The contents of the chapters are briefly introduced. Some expressions, which are not from the source text, are given in parentheses to make the meaning clearer.

One of the most important aspects of this *ma'al* is the explanations given in the footnotes. Words and concepts found in verses are explained briefly in the footnotes and brief explanations are made about the subject, which makes understanding the meaning easier. Other verses related to the subject are quoted; thus attention is focused on the coherence between the verses. Another aspect of the footnotes is related to varying translations of verses. Instead of the *ma'al* found in the text, it is said: "This verse can also be translated as" and thus another possible meaning of the verse is given.

For example; the word "al-Sa'ihun" in the 112th verse of Surah al-Tawbah is translated as "those who fast", but it is noted in the footnote that it could be translated as "those who travel (for Allah's sake)" as well.⁹

Kuran-ı Kerim ve Açıklamalı Meali: This translation was undertaken by a committee¹⁰ before it was published for the first time in 1993 by the Foundation of Religious Affairs of Turkey. In the introduction, some brief information about the history of the Qur'an and *ma'al* was presented. Subject and chapter indexes were provided to make the usage of the *ma'al* easier.

In the beginning of the chapters, brief information was given about the name of the chapter, occasions of revelation, and the number of the verses. After giving the meanings of verses, some short explanations of the terms and phrases were added in smaller fonts in parentheses in order to help the readers understand the meaning better. Similarly, concise information was given about the historical setting of the revelation and historical events expressed in the verse. In this way, it was intended to make the reader better understand what was stated in the verse.

⁹ Presidency of Religious Affairs, *Kuran-ı Kerim Meali*, p. 204

¹⁰ Committee, Ali Öztürk, Hayrettin Karaman, Mustafa Çağrıncı, Ali Turgut, Saadetin Gümüş

LET'S SHARE

Form study groups to find information about scientific tafsir, literary tafsir, sociological tafsir, and historical tafsir. Share your findings with your friends.

LET'S COMPARE

The exact meaning of the Surah al-Nasr from the ma'als of Hasan Basri Çantay, Presidency of Religious Affairs and Religious Affairs Foundation, are given below. Let's compare them and speak about the differences.

Kuran-ı Hakim ve Meal-i Kerim (Ma'al of Hasan Basri Çantay):

"1. Allah'ın nusreti ve fetih gelince, 2. sen de insaların fevc fevc Allah'ın dinine gireceklerini görünce, 3.hemen Rabb'ini, hamt ile tesbih (ve tenzih) et. Onun yarlıgamasını iste. Şüphesiz ki o tevbeleri çok kabul edendir."

"1. When the help of Allah has come and the conquest, 2. And you see the people entering into the religion of Allah in companies, 3. Immediately exalt your Lord with praise (and tanzih) and ask forgiveness of Him. Indeed, He is ever accepting of repentance." (Nasr, 110: 1-3)

Kuran-ı Kerim Meali (Ma'al of Presidency of Religious Affairs) :

"1,2,3 Allah'ın yardımı ve fetih (Mekke fethi) geldiğinde ve insanların bölük bölük Allah'ın dinine girdiğini gördüğünde, Rabb'ine hamt ederek tespihte bulun ve ondan bağışlama dile. Çünkü o tövbeleri çok kabul edendir."

"1, 2, 3 When the help of Allah has come and the conquest (conquest of Makkah) and you have seen the people entering into the religion of Allah in troops, so exalt your Lord with praise and glorify Him and ask forgiveness of Him. Because He is ever accepting of repentance." (Nasr, 110: 1-3)

Kuran-ı Kerim ve Açıklamalı Meali (Ma'al of Religious Affairs Foundation):

"(1-3) Allah'ın yardımı ve zaferi gelip de insanların bölük bölük Allah'ın dinine girmekte olduklarını gördüğün vakit Rabb'ine hamdederek onu tesbih et ve ondan mağfiret dile. Çünkü o, tevbeleri çok kabul edendir."

"(1- 3) When the help of Allah has come and His victory and you have seen the people entering into the religion of Allah in troops, exalt your Lord with praise and glorify Him and ask forgiveness from Him. Because He is ever accepting of repentance." (Nasr, 110: 1- 3)

8. New Approaches in Tafsir

Due to social and political reasons, new problems appeared in the last two centuries; and new developments in science provided the basis for the emergence of new approaches to tafsir studies among Muslims. As a result, some tafsirs written in accordance with these new approaches benefited from information regarding new developments in science; some of them investigated solutions to social problems; and others wanted to reevaluate the historical background for practical reasons.

Scientific Tafsir: Scientific tafsir is a discipline that attempts to interpret the Qur'an in light of scientific data. Ghazali in his work "*Jawahir al-Qur'an*" and Fakhr al-Din al-Razi in his tafsir "*Mafatih al-Ghayb*" give place to some interpretations,

which can be called scientific tafsir, with reference to the sciences of their own times. However, the type of scientific tafsir that argues that verses of the Qur'an contain scientific inventions has developed over the last two centuries.

According to the scientific approach to tafsir, all sciences can be found in the Qur'an. It claims that there has been no conflict between scientific findings and the Qur'an. The Qur'an even became a resource for some sciences and scientific inventions. One of the earliest works in the field of scientific tafsir is "*Kashf al-Asrar al-Nuraniyya*" of al-Iskandarani (d. 1888), and the other one is "*Sara'ir al-Qur'an*" of Ghazi Ahmed Mukhtar Pasha (d. 1918). Tantawi al-Jawhari (d. 1940) is the most famous representative of scientific tafsir.

Al-Jawhari remarks that the previous mufasssirs generally interpreted verses related to legal matters and neglected ones related to cosmic issues, which are more numerous in the Qur'an. For this reason, the work "*al-Jawahir fi Tafsir al-Qur'an*", written by him, is like a scientific encyclopedia rather than a tafsir work. In this work, scientific articles belonging to such branches of science as astronomy, medicine, chemistry, biology, and physics, included pictures, diagrams, and statistics.

The approach of scientific tafsir has been criticized for being based on science, whose theories may change over time, for its understanding of revelation and its interpretation, and for attributing new meanings to the words found in the Qur'an. Amin al-Huli, one of the most important critics of the approach of scientific tafsir, proposed a new method called literary tafsir, in contrast to the scientific method.

Literary Tafsir: Amin al-Huli (d. 1966) who based his views on his criticism of scientific tafsir, developed the method of literary tafsir. The main principle of literary tafsir was based on understanding the Qur'an in the same way that the first audience of the Qur'an understood its words and phrases.

Amin al-Huli, who developed the method of literary tafsir, did not write any tafsir, but his wife Aisha Abd al-Rahman's tafsir, "*al-Tafsir al-Bayan li al-Qur'an al-Karim*," was written in accordance with this method.

Studies undertaken to interpret the Qur'an in accordance with the method of literary tafsir can be shown as follows:

PREPARATION
STUDIES
SUBSIDIARY
STUDIES

- Criticizing the approaches of previous tafsirs.
- Making subject based on interpretations of the Qur'an and while making this, classifying the verses related to the topic in accordance with the order of revelation.
- It is necessary to benefit from some sciences such as psychology and sociology.

MAKING RESEARCH
ON SETTING OF
THE REVELATION
AND HISTORY OF
THE QUR'AN

- Investigating the physical setting: Geographical conditions of the environment where the Qur'an was sent down; like the mountains, plains, deserts, rivers, and climate conditions should be investigated.
- Investigating the social, political, and cultural setting
- Investigating the culture such as art, history, and literature of the Arabs who were the first recipients of the Qur'an,
- Their social relationships such as administration, family, and tribe should be investigated.
- Investigating the process of revelation of the Qur'an,
- Investigating the process of writing the Qur'an,
- Investigating the process of collection of the Qur'an,
- Investigating the various recitations of the Qur'an are required.

INVESTIGATING THE WORDS AND PHRASES FOUND IN THE QUR'AN

- Determining how the words of the Qur'an were understood by its first audience,
- Determining what kind of transformations in the meanings of the words of the Qur'an have taken place from the time of revelation until today,
- Investigating differing usages of the words of the Qur'an and at different places and times in the Qur'an, in what contexts they were used,
- Preparing synchronic and diachronic dictionaries to determine meanings of the words are required.
- Evaluating the phrases of the Qur'an in the light of literary sciences such as syntax and rhetoric,
- Determining literary arts in the Qur'an,
- It is also required to find out the characteristics of the literary styles in the Qur'an.

Tafsir based on Sociological Subjects (Sociological Tafsir): This type of tafsir aims to examine verses of the Qur'an by taking the principles of sociology into account. The search for reasons why Muslim communities could not keep pace with changing conditions in the world in the last centuries influenced the birth of sociological tafsir. In this respect, Muhammad Abduh (d. 1905), Rashid Riza (d. 1935), and Mustafa al-Maraghi (d. 1952) stated that Muslims should avoid innovations (*bid'ah*) and superstition in religious matters, and the idea that the Qur'an is a book that leads people on the straight path should be put forward. The most famous example of sociological tafsirs is "*Tafsir al-Manar*", which began to be written by Muhammad Abduh and was completed by Rashid Riza.

These sociological tafsirs criticize earlier tafsirs for including false reports and *isra'iliyyat*. According to this approach, most of the previous tafsirs are just interpretations that include syntax, rhetoric, and other sciences instead of focusing on the aspect of the Qur'an that leads people to wisdom and compassion. The aim of sociological tafsir works is to direct people to faith and practice. For this reason, Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Riza, in "*Tafsir al-Manar*", asked people to give up imitating the past, to avoid laziness and dullness, and to use their minds.

Sociological tafsir is criticized for not consulting the earlier tafsirs and basing its method on freely using reason in the exegesis. Another criticism directed at this method was its attempt to interpret some verses of the Qur'an according to a modern understanding.

Many opinions were given claiming to have found solutions to the problems that appeared during the last centuries. Muslims tried to discover the answer to the question, “what would be the response of Islam to this kind of social problem?” These approaches have eventually found their place among studies on the exegesis of the Qur’an. Among this kind of tafsirs, “*Fi Zilal al-Qur’an*” by Sayyid Qutub (d. 1966) and “*Tafhim al-Qur’an*” by al-Mawdudi (1979) can be mentioned. These works state that the problems of humanity were solved most successfully during the first periods of Islam, and so, solutions to today’s problems can be found by observing the period of our Prophet. They also state that historical legacy should be reevaluated.

Historical Tafsir: Based on the idea that the Qur’an was sent down at a certain time and in a certain cultural environment, this type of tafsir argues that some rulings of the Qur’an should be regarded as historical. According to this understanding, the Qur’an addressed at a certain time to a certain group of people who had their own perception, tradition, culture, and civilization, and lived in a certain environment using their language. Hence, the Qur’an carries traces of a local culture. For this reason, Muslims living in the modern world should reconsider the rulings of the Qur’an in the face of the difficulties of modern life based on the historicity of these rulings.

The historical approach, especially considers the orders, prohibitions, and punishments concerning social institutions that carry traces of a certain culture as historical. They accept the principles of the Qur’an related to faith, acts of worship, and ethics as universal. For example, according to this approach, rulings related to polygamy, women as witnesses, the rules of inheritance and interest are accepted historically, whereas the principles concerning faith, acts of worship, and ethics are universal.

Fazl al-Rahman (d. 1988), who suggested the method of historical reading, developed a new method in tafsir of the Qur’an. So today’s reader, in the first step, must investigate the setting of revelation and determine the general principles on which the rulings that solved the problems of the community of that time are based. In the second step, the reader must deduce special rulings for today’s problems from the general principles, which they establish by returning from that historical setting to today. Therefore, today’s Muslims would live not based on solutions to their problems offered in the past but on solutions formulated for today’s problems.

The method of historical tafsir is supported by various Muslim intellectuals, such as Roger Garaudy, Muhammad Arkoun, and Hasan Hanafi as well as Fazl al-Rahman. However, applying the techniques of historical reading to the Qur’an, which have been applied to the sacred texts of Christianity as well, has been criticized.

LET’S NOTE

Muhammad Abduh explains why he did not want to apply the previous tafsirs:

“Allah will not question us from the words and understandings of the people in the hereafter. Rather He will ask us from His book that He sent to direct us to the straight path and guide us, and sunnah of His prophet.”

Tafsir al-Manar, v. 1, p. 26

LET'S EVALUATE THE CHAPTER

A. Answer the following open-ended questions.

1. Give an example of the Prophet's exegesis.
2. What features make the Companions' tafsir so important? Remark.
3. What were the characteristics of tafsir at the time of the Successors? Specify.
4. Explain the earliest written tafsir works.

B. Choose the correct answers to the following multiple-choice questions.

1. Which of the following characteristics do not belong to the tafsir of the Successors?

- A) All verses of the Qur'an were interpreted.
- B) Non-Arabs (*mawali*) started to take a bigger role in the tafsir movement.
- C) Mecca, Madinah, and Kufa tafsir schools started to be formed.
- D) In the exegesis of verses, they transmitted what they saw in the sunnah of the Prophet and what they heard directly from ahadith.
- E) As a consequence of interacting with different cultures, some tafsir understandings, which constituted the basis of varying opinions, became widespread.

2. Which of the following tafsirs is a tafsir 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-Zemakhshari D) Tafsir of al-Qurtubi
- E) Tafsir of al-Baydawi

3. Which of the following is a tafsir book written in Turkish?

- | | |
|---|-----------------------|
| A) Mafatih al-Ghayb | B) Tafsir al-Jalalayn |
| C) Al-Jami li Ahkam al-Qur'an | D) Ta'wilat al-Qur'an |
| E) Hulasat al-Bayan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an | |

4. Which of the tafsir movements avoids narrating innovations (bid'ah) and superstition while interpreting the Qur'an, remarks the necessity of putting forward the idea that the Qur'an is a book of guidance, and criticizes some previous tafsirs on the grounds that they include false and forged reports?

- A) Scientific tafsir movement
- B) Literary tafsir movement
- C) Sociological tafsir movement
- D) Historical tafsir movement
- E) Tafsir bi al-Riwayah

C. Fill in the blanks in the following sentences with the most suitable word from the list below.

(tafsir bi al-dirayah, tafsir bi-al riwayah, topical tafsir)

1. The tafsirs that solely use the Qur'an, sunnah, and words of the Companions and Successors as their sources are called tafsirs.
2. The tafsirs which give place to their own opinions and ijtihad in the direction of the Qur'an and sunnah are called tafsirs.

D. Write "T" for true and "F" for false for the following sentences.

(...) The general name of the tafsirs that explain the verses related to acts of worship like prayer, fasting, and pilgrimage and the verses dealing with various social relationships is Ahkam al-Qur'an.

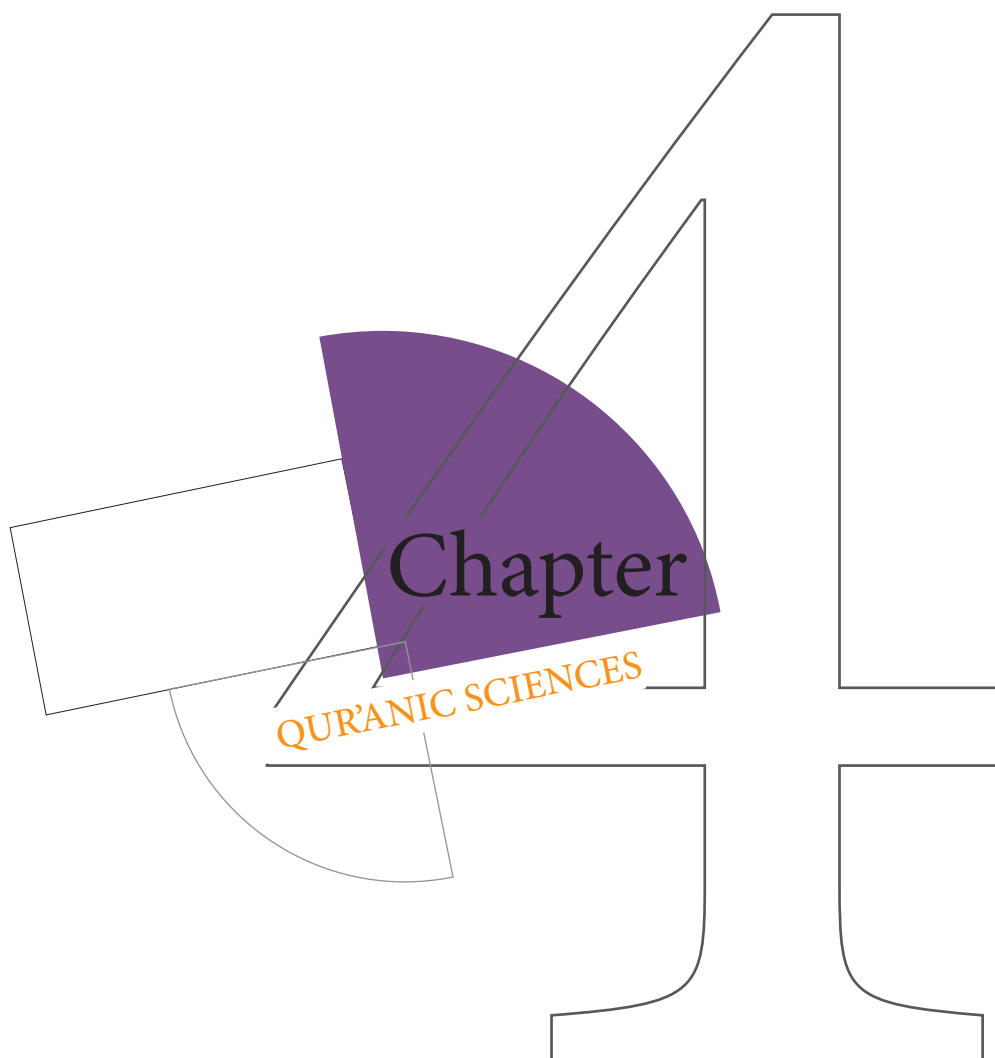
(...) The tafsir, which spread in reaction to worldliness among Muslims and emerged as a consequence of the understanding that Muslims should lead a more pious life and purify their soul, is called theological tafsir.

(...) The most important matter necessitating the translation of the Qur'an is to ensure that people who do not know Arabic understand the Qur'an.

E. Match the following statements.

Some mufasssirs and their tafsirs are given below. Match them by writing the correct number.

No	Name of Mufasssir	No	Name of Tafsir
1	Muhammad Jarir al-Tabari		Tafsir al-Jalalayn
2	Imam al-Maturidi		Al-Jami li Ahkam al-Qur'an
3	Jar Allah Umar al-Zamakhshari		Jami al-Bayan an Ta'wil Aay al Qur'an
4	Fakhr al-Din al-Razi		Al-Kashshaf an Haqa'iq Ghawamiz al-Tanzil
5	Muhammad al-Baydawi		Ta'wilat al-Qur'an
6	Muhammad b. Ahmed al-Qurtubi		Anwar al-Tanzil wa Asrar al-Ta'wil
7	Jalal al-Din al-Mahalli and al-Suyuti		Mafatih al-Ghayb
8	Mehmed Vehbi Efendi		Hak Dini Kuran Dili
9	Elmalılı Muhammed Hamdi Yazır		Hulasat al-Bayan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an
10	Ömer Nasuhi Bilmen		Kuran-ı Kerim'in Türkçe Meal-i Alisi ve Tefsiri



QUR'ANIC SCIENCES

LET'S GET READY FOR THE CHAPTER

1. Read from a tafsir book what the occasion of revelation of Surah al-Muzzammil was.
2. Read the first five verses of Surah al-Nisa and Surah al-Zumar and discuss their contents.
3. Gather information about the terms of “*mujmal*, *mutashabih*, and *majaz*.”
4. Read translations of the first verses of Surah al-Baqarah and Surah Maryam and compare them.
5. Is there any obscure word or verse in the Qur'an? Think about verse 58 of Surah al-Dukhan and verse 52 of Surah al-A'raf in this context.

1. The Emergence and Development of the Sciences of the Qur'an

The Noble Qur'an is a sacred book that addresses people directly. Their correct understanding of the message of the Qur'an enables them to fulfill their responsibilities in the presence of Allah. Verses of the Qur'an were generally revealed in a clear and comprehensible way. However, sometimes the meaning of a word from a verse may be implicit or unclear to us. In such a case, other verses help us to clarify this ambiguity. This method of explanation, presented by the Qur'an, has focused Muslims' attention on the Qur'an and to the one who delivered it at the time of its revelation. In time, this led to the emergence of the sciences of the Qur'an called “*عُلُومُ الْقُرْآنِ*”.

We see the most obvious core of the Qur'anic sciences in the Prophet's deliverance and his application of the Qur'an. The Prophet's recitation of the verses while delivering and teaching them to the people formed the foundation

of the science of “*qira’ah* (recitation)”. The application of some verses in his life or his explanations for the ambiguous verses constitutes the basis of the science of “*tafsir*”.

Afterwards, the Prophet and his Companions took on the task of explaining to people the correct meaning of the Qur’an. As they lived during the process of revelation, the Companions knew which verse was revealed upon which incident or occasion. Moreover, they witnessed the Prophet’s explanations of verses and how he applied them in his own life. They corrected mistakes in the understanding of the Qur’an made by those who did not have the opportunity to meet the Prophet. Using the occasions of revelation, abrogating and abrogated verses, and based on their personal views, the Companions responded to the questions of those who did not understand the verses and who sought explanations. Sometimes, they explained a verse with another verse or a hadith, or used as evidence meanings of words from classical Arabic poetry, which held an important place in Arab society. The Companions applied special orthographic rules (*rasm al-Mushaf*) in order to avoid wrong recitations of the verses while copying the Qur’an.

As Islam expanded, more effort was needed to understand the Qur’an. Those who did not speak Arabic and converted to Islam from different cultures encountered problems in understanding the Qur’an. The quest to solve these problems by reason and narrations led to the rise of *tafsir bi-al dirayah* and *tafsir bi-al riwayah*. ‘*Irab* studies were implemented to enable the correct reading and meaning of the Qur’an.¹ Then, studies regarding the wording of the Qur’an such as *lughah*, *isra’iliyyat*, *qira’ah*, the virtues of the Qur’an, *ma’ani al-Qur’an*, *gharib al-Qur’an*, and *ahkam al-Qur’an* followed.

From the 2nd century AH, separate works about the Qur’anic sciences began to be written. These works should be considered an attempt to find the correct meaning of the divine message and also as a defense against un-Islamic interpretations of it because, as Islam expanded, the doctrines of the newly encountered civilizations needed to be filtered.

One example of such efforts is Hasan al-Basri’s (d. 110/728) work gathering reports concerning the exegesis of the Qur’an coming from the Prophet, the Companions, and their Successors. Interpretations of issues related to jurisprudence, theology, and politics based on the Qur’an prepared the basis for juristic, theological, and sectarian tafsirs. Subtleties in the language of the Qur’an were determined and verses of *ahkam* were interpreted. Moreover, books on the literary and contextual supremacy of the Qur’an, *qira’ah*, *wujuh-naza’ir*, *nasikh-mansukh*, and *mushkil al-*

¹ Abd al-Azim al-Zarqani, *Manahil al-Irfan fi Ulum al-Quran*, v. 1, p. 23.

Qur'an were written. Thus, the field of the sciences of the *Qur'an* expanded.²

In the following centuries, some subjects like *asbab al-nuzul*, *muhkam – mutashabih*, *huruf al-muqata'a*, parables, and oaths were added to the *Qur'anic* sciences. Books of methodology examining the sciences of the *Qur'an* were written after the fifth century of the Hijrah. As a result of such studies, the sciences of the *Qur'an* had an increasingly comprehensive and rich literature. Thus, studies understanding and interpreting the Noble *Qur'an* by using the knowledge of the time have enabled the transmission of the sciences of the *Qur'an* in a more comprehensive and rich way.

2. Characteristics of the *Qur'an* with regard to Its Revelation Process

Some concepts must be known in order to understand the Noble *Qur'an* correctly. These concepts are *Makki* and *Madani*, which indicate the place and time of the revelation, and *asbab al-nuzul*, which deals with the occasions and stages of revelation, and *nasikh-mansukh*, which refers to abrogation.

2.1. Makki and Madani

The Noble *Qur'an* was revealed in Mecca and Madinah. The verses/chapters revealed in Mecca and its surroundings before the migration to Madinah are called *Makki* verses/chapters; the others, revealed in Madinah after the migration, are called *Madani* verses/chapters. These verses or chapters were sometimes revealed as a whole while, at other times, they were sent down in parts on different occasions. For example, the Surah al-Baqarah was revealed verse by verse in Madinah over 10 years.

Makki chapters concentrated on issues of tawhid (the Oneness of Allah) and the belief in the hereafter. A moral understanding, which protects the powerless and weak, was also introduced in these chapters. Showing patience and resistance were recommended to Muslims who encountered the violent treatment of polytheists. Approximately three-quarters of 114 chapters of the *Qur'an* are composed of *Makki* chapters with short and expressive verses.

² Erdoğan Baş, *Tefsir İlimlerinin Doğuşu ve Tarihi Gelişimi*, Kuran ve Tefsir Araştırmaları, p. 30- 38.

On the other hand, in *Madani* chapters, principles regulating social life were established and acts of worship, apart from prayer, were declared obligatory. In *Madani* chapters, the relationship of Muslims with *ahl al-kitab* (people of book), polytheist Arabs, and other nations were regulated. Similarly, by way of these chapters it was aimed to form an exemplary Muslim community. *Madani* chapters are generally longer and their number constitutes approximately one-quarter of the total number of chapters.

Knowing the setting in which the verses or chapters were revealed helps us understand the Qur'an correctly and enables us to comprehend the religious rulings more easily, helping us to learn the morals and life of the Prophet Muhammad (saw).

DID YOU KNOW?

In *Makki* chapters:

Verses generally start with the addressing

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ / O people!

An oath is usually used at the beginning of the chapters.

Accounts of the previous prophets are mostly narrated in these chapters.

In *Madani* chapters:

Verses start with the call of يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا / O those who believe or يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ / O people of the Scripture.

Rulings related to the issues of marriage, inheritance, and jihad (struggle for the sake of Allah) are established.

Hypocrites are mentioned.

LET'S FIND SOME PRINCIPLES

Makki:

1. "Go to Pharaoh. Indeed, he has transgressed. And say to him, 'Would you [be willing to] purify yourself. And let me guide you to your Lord...'" (Nazi'at, 79: 17-19)
2. "Then you will surely be asked that day about pleasure." (Takathur, 102: 8)
3. "By time, indeed, mankind is in loss. Except for those who have believed and done righteous deeds and advised each other in truth and advised each other to patience." (Asr, 103: 1-3)

The 1st verse mentions stories of previous prophets.

.....

Madani:

1. "Indeed, the hypocrites ... when they stand for prayer, they stand lazily, showing [themselves to] the people and not remembering Allah except a little." (Nisa, 4: 142)
2. "O People of the Scripture, why do you confuse the truth with falsehood and conceal the truth while you know [it]?" (Al-i Imran, 3: 71)
3. "O you who have believed, when you contract a debt for a specified term, write it down. And let a scribe write [it] between you in justice. Let no scribe refuse to write as Allah has taught him. So let him write and let the one who has the obligation dictate. And let him fear Allah, his Lord, and not leave anything out of it..." (Baqarah, 2: 282)

The 1st verse reports some characteristics of the hypocrites.

.....

Analyze the Makki and Madani verses given above, find some principles included in them, and fill in the blanks.

2.2. Asbab al-Nuzul

Most of the Noble Qur'an was revealed without any question or reason, while part of it was sent down based on reason. The incident or question that caused the revelation of a verse or verses is called *sabab al-nuzul* (the reason or occasion of revelation).

The verses revealed about an incident or a question sometimes aim to educate its addressees. For example, the time of the Day of Judgment was asked of the Prophet both by those who sincerely wondered at its time and by those who wanted to test him. Allah the Almighty gave the following answer responding to both groups: "... **Knowledge of it is only with Allah. And what may make**

you perceive? Perhaps the Hour is near.”³ This answer contains these lessons: Nobody is able to know the time of the Day of Judgment, even the Prophet himself, unless Allah informs him. One (thinking of his death which is, in a way, his little Day of Judgment) should not think that there is still time until the Day of Judgment and should make preparations now for eternal life.

The verses revealed as a response to questions or problems sometimes contained a general ruling. For example, Jabir, one of the Companions, who was seriously ill, guessed that he was soon going to die and asked the Prophet what he should do with his property. Regarding this question, the 11th and 12th verses of inheritance from Surah al-Nisa were revealed.⁴ These verses gave extensive information about the distribution of inheritance among heirs of the deceased.

Occasions of revelation were not explained in the Qur’an, but were narrated by the Companions⁵ who either personally experienced the incident or witnessed it. Tafsirs of the early period were mostly composed of these narrations. There is little information from the Meccan period, whereas more information comes from the Madinan period concerning *asbab al-nuzul*. This information was gathered in sections of the hadith books related to the exegesis of the Qur’an during the period of compilation.

There are many benefits to knowing the causes of revelation. To know for which incident a verse was sent down ensures its proper interpretation and prevents misunderstandings. For example, the necessity of performing *sa’y* (ritual walking) between the hills of Safa and Marwa while performing umrah is stated in the following verse: “... **al-Safa and al-Marwah are among the symbols of Allah. So whoever makes Hajj to the House or performs ‘umrah – there is no blame upon him for walking between them...**”⁶ This verse was revealed to clarify the doubts of al-Ansar who did not want to perform *sa’y*, because there were idols placed on these two hills in the Period of Ignorance. Urwa, from the Successors, being unaware of *sabab al-nuzul*, assumed that this verse gave the pilgrim the freedom to choose between performing or not performing *sa’y*. Aisha explained the error in this understanding by narrating *sabab al-nuzul* as mentioned above.⁷

Knowing *sabab al-nuzul* prompts believers to pay close attention to initial interpretations of verses and chapter to have a better understanding. Surah al-Fil, which was revealed about the Incident of the Elephant, is one of the most

LET’S NOTE

The most comprehensive work in Turkish concerning *asbab al-nuzul* is Bedrettin Çetiner’s book titled “*Esbab-ı Nüzul*”.

³ Ahzab, 33: 63.

⁴ Al-Wahidi, *Asbab al-Nuzul*, p. 83.

⁵ Ahmet Nedim Serinsu, *Kuran’ın Anlaşılmasında Esbab-ı Nüzul’ün Rolü*, p. 40.

⁶ Baqarah, 2: 158

⁷ Jalal al-Din al Suyuti, *Lubab Al-Nuqul fi Asbab Al-Nuzul*, p. 30.

important examples in this respect. Likewise, while reading the verse, “**Your Lord has not taken leave of you, [O Muhammad], nor has He detested [you].**”⁸ one thinks of questions such as “I wonder what happened for Allah to have expressed such a thing.” After a lull in the revelations, this above-mentioned verse was sent down to end the rumors of the polytheists who were saying that “his Lord has left Muhammad, He got angry with him.” Thus, knowing *sabab al-nuzul* ensured a better understanding of the Qur’an.

2.3. Nasikh and Mansukh

Naskh means the abrogation of the ruling of a nass (a scriptural statement) by another *nass* that was revealed later. The abrogated verse is called *mansukh*; the abrogating verse of the previous ruling is called *nasikh*; and *naskh* is the term used for abrogation.

The following is one of the verses mentioning *naskh* in the Qur’an:

مَا نَنْسَخْ مِنْ آيَةٍ أَوْ نُنسِهَا نَأْتِ بِخَيْرٍ مِنْهَا أَوْ مِثْلَهَا أَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١٠٦﴾

“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?”⁹

The Noble Qur’an approved of correct behavior in the community and abolished false beliefs step by step with new rulings to educate and improve individuals and society.¹⁰ This took place with the abolishment of the rulings of previous religions, as well as within the same religion because people cannot easily give up their former habits and traditions. People can accept changes only when they understand the essence of the new religion and the nobility of its principles. *Naskh* is a juridical tool that enables people to adapt to new rulings. *Naskh* should never be considered the result of Allah’s not knowing what was best. He changes an earlier rule at will and with full prior knowledge. Allah revealed His rulings according to the conditions of the society through *naskh* and used it as the best method of implementing sound morality.

The prohibition of alcohol can be given as an example of this. The consumption of alcoholic drinks was common among the polytheist Arabs. The Noble Qur’an did not abolish this bad habit immediately but rather, abolished it

LET’S EVALUATE

Find the verses of Surah al-Nahl, 16: 101; Surah al-Ra’d, 13: 39; Surah al-Nisa, 4: 160- 161; Surah al-Anfal, 8: 65; Surah Yunus, 10: 15; and Surah al-A’la, 87: 6-7 from a translation of the Qur’an and evaluate them in the class.

⁸ Duha, 93: 3.

⁹ Baqarah, 2: 106

¹⁰ Talip Özdeş, *Kur’an ve Nesh Problemi*, p. 16

gradually by educating the society. First, it emphasized the substantial harms of alcoholic drink but also mentioned that it had some benefits.¹¹ This warning placed the idea that “alcohol does substantial harm” in the minds of Muslims. Second, performing prayer in a state of drunkenness was prohibited.¹² After this verse was revealed, Muslims who consumed alcohol started to avoid drinking it before they went to pray and so, the time available to drink alcohol was narrowed down.

Finally, this habit was prohibited completely:

“O you who believe, indeed, intoxicants, gambling, [sacrificing on] stone alters [to other than Allah], and divining arrows are but defilement from the work of Satan, so avoid it that you may be successful.

Satan only wants to cause animosity and hatred between you through intoxicants and gambling and to avert you from the remembrance of Allah and from prayer. So will you not desist?”¹³

After the revelation of these verses, Muslims stopped drinking and poured all the wine in their possession away.

As can be understood from the examples above, *naskh* must be taken into consideration when interpreting the Qur’an or deducing rulings from it. This prevents mixing Qur’anic rulings with each other and clarifies the results.

RESEARCH- COMPARE		
The Prohibition of Alcohol	The Prohibition of Interest	Stages
Baqarah, 2: 219	Rum, 30: 39, Nisa, 4: 160, 161	1 st Stage
Nisa, 4: 43	.....	2 nd Stage
Ma'idah, 5: 91	.....	3 rd Stage
Research phases of the prohibition of interest from the verses of Surah Rum, 30: 39; Nisa, 4: 160, 161; Al-i Imran, 3: 130; and Baqarah, 2: 275- 279. Compare them in terms of the stages of prohibition of alcohol and organize the verses.		

¹¹ Baqarah, 2: 219
¹² Nisa, 4: 43
¹³ Ma'idah, 5: 90, 91

3. The Classification of Qur'anic Expressions

The science of tafsir deals with understanding the Qur'an correctly. For this reason, mufasssirs try to remove obstacles to the correct understanding of the Qur'an. These studies have developed over time and have been classified in accordance with certain principles leading to the emergence of the branches of science that examine expressions of the Qur'an.

3.1. Differences in Recitation

LET'S NOTE

Recitations are generally classified under two categories as *mutawatir* and *shath*. *Mutawatir* recitation is the one which is in accordance with Arabic grammar and writing of the codex attributed to Uthman and which can be traced to the Messenger of Allah by an authentic and uninterrupted chain of transmission. The number of these recitations is 10, seven of which are famous. If one of these three conditions is not met, it is called "*shath* recitation (contrary to the general rule)."

Reliable people to whom *mutawatir* recitation was attributed are called "*imam*"; differences among the narrators of the recitation imams are called "*riwayah*"; and the variations based on the preference of the reciter are called "*wajh*".

The science of *qira'ah* (recitation) means to know the differences between the recitation of the Qur'an and the narrators of these variations. The one who recites the Qur'an in accordance with the principles of the science of *qira'ah* is called *qari'*, the plural of which is *qurra'*; and the one who teaches this science is called *muqri'*.

Allah revealed the Qur'an in the dialect of Quraysh, and permitted a type of recitation that was easier for those who were not able to pronounce some words.¹⁴ After the Qur'an eventually settled on the tongues and in the hearts of the believers, there remained no need for this permission. For this reason, Uthman removed all the verbal variations other than the dialect of Quraysh and then copied the Qur'an.

Since the codices duplicated by Uthman had no diacritical marks and vowels, they made the variations of recitation in letters and vowels possible.¹⁵ For example, in the 94th verse of Surah al-Nisa (4)

¹⁴ Mehmet Ünal, *Kuran'ın Anlaşılmasında Kıraat Farklılıklarının Rolü*, p. 33.

¹⁵ İsmail Karaçam, *Kur'anı Kerim'in Faziletleri ve Okuma Kaideleri*, p. 61, 62.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً if we think about the word فَتَبَيَّنُوا without diacritical marks and vowels, it is possible to read it as فَتَشَبَّهُوا as well. As a matter of fact, it is recited both ways. So, these variances certainly change the meaning of the verse. In the first recitation, the expression takes on the meaning “Therefore, understand and listen (follow) carefully, act by the certain knowledge.” In the second recitation, it means “Take measures, keep your feet on a sound ground and act by advice.”¹⁶

Variances in recitation of a word based on the science of *qira'ah* create diversity and richness when understanding the Qur'an. For example, the recitation of the word نُنْشِرُهَا in the following verse¹⁷ وَأَنْظِرْ إِلَى الْعِظَامِ كَيْفَ نُنْشِرُهَا ثُمَّ نَكْسُوهَا means “raising the bones, putting them into their place”; while its recitation in the form of نُنْشِرُهَا with a letter difference (*ru*) means “resurrecting, giving life to the dead.”

Variations in recitation sometimes take the form of *madd* (extending the recitation) or *qasr* (shortening the recitation). For example, the extended recitation of the word مَالِكٍ in the fourth verse of Surah al-Fatiha (1) “مَالِكِ” is also recited as “ملك” in a shortened *qasr* form. When this word is recited in the former way, it means “Allah’s authority over property”; on the other hand, when it is recited as ملك it means “Allah’s authority over people.”¹⁸ As can be clearly seen from these examples, recitation variations do not form any contradictions in meaning and also enrich the meaning of the verse.

Diversity of meaning provided by *mutawatir* recitations gives Allah’s intent in that verse. Namely, when both meanings acquired through different recitations were accepted as valid, Allah’s intent would be given precedence. It should not be forgotten that recitation differences are not found in verses concerning lawful and unlawful acts.¹⁹

3.2. Gharib al-Qur'an

The Noble Qur'an was revealed in the dialect of Quraysh. There had been instances where a person who spoke the dialect of Quraysh could not understand a word that was borrowed from another dialect. For example, Abdullah b. Abbas learned the meaning of the word فَاطِرٌ which is found in the

¹⁶ Fatih Çollak, Kiraat İhtilaflarının Karakteristiği, Kur'an ve Tefsir Araştırmaları, p. 237.

¹⁷ Baqarah, 2: 258

¹⁸ Elmalılı Hamdi Yazır, Hak Dini Kur'an Dili, v. 1, p. 92.

¹⁹ Abdurrahman Çetin, Kur'an-ı Kerim'in İndirildiği Yedi Harf ve Kiraatler, p. 215, 216.

verse²⁰ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ فَاطِرِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ from two people who spoke in the dialect from which this word was borrowed. All languages naturally borrow some words from other languages, adopt and add them to their own vocabulary. The Arabic language has also borrowed words from other languages it came into contact and Arabicised them. Such Arabicised words used in the daily language of the time of the revelation are also found in the Noble Qur'an. It was natural that some people were not able to understand the meaning of these words. Today, all these words, which are terminologically called "*gharib*", have been identified.²¹ Such usages are found in the Qur'an, and they are called "*Gharib al- Qur'an*".

LET'S NOTE- FIND

Below are some of the *gharib* words found in the Qur'an and their meanings:

The Gharib Word	Dialect or Language	Meaning
Safih (Baqarah, 2/13)	Dialect of Kinanah	Ignorant
Sa'iqah (Baqara, 2/55)	Dialect of Oman	Death
Baghy (Baqara, 2/90)	Dialect of Tamim	Jealousy
Yamm (A'raf, 7/136)	Coptic Dialect	Sea
Ara'iq (Ya-Sin, 36/56)	Abyssinian Language	Armchairs
Athbat (Baqarah, 2/136)	Hebrew	Tribes
Ghassaq (Naba', 78/25)	Turkish	Rancid water, pus
Raqim (Kahf, 18/9)	Greek	Board
Sijil (Fil, 105/4)	Persian	Baked hard clay
Akwab (Baqarah, 2/236)	Nabataean Language	Pitchers
Asfar (Jumu'ah, 62/5)	Syriac	Books

Find and read the verses in which these words are found from the translations or tafsirs of the Qur'an.

The reason why everyone did not understand some words in the Noble Qur'an was that the Qur'an had ascribed a new meaning to that word. For example,

²⁰ Fatir, 35: 1.

²¹ Semih Ebu Muğuli, *Kuran'ın Dilleri Kuran'da Arapça Olmayan Kelimeler*, p. 60

although the meaning of the word **خَتَمَ** in the verse²² **خَتَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ وَعَلَى سَمْعِهِمْ وَعَلَى أَبْصَارِهِمْ غِشَاوَةٌ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ** was known as “He sealed”, the special meaning of it in the context of the verse could not be understood by some people as “**Allah has sealed their hearts.**”²³

Some words rarely used in the Qur'an also caused some people not to understand their meanings. The word **حَنَانًا**, which means “mercy, grace of soul and softness of heart” in the verse²⁴ **وَحَنَانًا مِنْ لَدُنَّا وَزَكَاةً وَكَانَ تَقِيًّا** can be given as an example. Abd Allah b. Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them) mentioned this word among four words whose meanings were unknown to him.²⁵

Studies to explain Arabicised words borrowed from foreign languages and dialects and adopted into the Arabic language began to be undertaken at the time of the Companions. Studies have also benefited from Arabic poetry to help identify the meaning of *gharib* words. These studies have been collected in special dictionaries called **غَرِيبُ الْقُرْآنِ**. It should not be forgotten that most of these words were known by the majority of society. The best example is the Persian word “*sang kil*,” which was used among the people with the pronunciation of **سَجِيلٍ** mentioned in the verse²⁶ **تَرْمِيهِمْ بِحِجَارَةٍ مِنْ سَجِيلٍ**.

Since the science of tafsir primarily deals with the literal meaning of the expressions, it is important for *mufasssirs* to determine *gharib* words by their meaning at the time of revelation. Otherwise, understanding and interpreting the Qur'an correctly becomes more difficult.

3.3. Mushkil al-Qur'an

Mushkil al-Qur'an is a branch of science that aims to clarify ambiguity in verses and words of the Qur'an. The following verse informs us that there cannot be real contradiction in the Noble Qur'an:

أَفَلَا يَتَذَكَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ وَلَوْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ لَوَجَدُوا فِيهِ اخْتِلَافًا كَثِيرًا

“Then do they not reflect upon the Qur'an? If it had been from [any]

²² Baqarah, 2: 7.

²³ Hüseyin Yaşar, *Kuran'da Anlamı Kapalı Ayetler*, p. 160.

²⁴ Maryam, 19: 13.

²⁵ İsmail Cerrahoğlu, “Garibu'l-Kur'an,” *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, v. 13, p. 380.

²⁶ Fil, 105: 4.

LET'S NOTE

The most famous work on *Gharib al-Qur'an* is “*al-Mufradat fi Gharib al-Qur'an*” of Raghīb al-Isbahani (d. 502/1108).

other than Allah, they would have found within it much contradiction.”²⁷

Resolving such seeming contradictions and ambiguities in the Qur'an requires taking the rules of the language, the entirety of the Qur'an, and Sunnah of the Prophet into consideration.

The ambiguity of a verse might originate from an expression in the verse. As an example, we can give the following verse²⁸ **“And follow the best of what was revealed to you from your Lord before the punishment comes upon you suddenly while you do not perceive.”** While all verses of the Qur'an are “the best”, the reason why the statement “the best of what was revealed to you” was used in the verse was examined and interpreted as follows: Each command and prohibition of the Qur'an and its ruling has the attribute of being the best. However, every person has a different position with regards to the application of the verses. In other words, the question of who would practice which ruling may change in time. For instance, the best deed for the rich is to spend money for Allah's cause and help the needy. Benefiting from permissions (*rukhsat*) is the best for patients, while fulfilling the requirements of the verses of repentance is the best for sinners.²⁹

The difficulty in understanding the verses may sometimes be due to what appears to be a contradiction. In this respect we can give the verses **“Indeed, We will cast upon you a heavy word.”³⁰** and **“And We have certainly made the Qur'an easy for remembrance...”³¹** as an example. In the first verse, heaviness of the Qur'an is mentioned, whereas in the second verse, it is mentioned that the Qur'an has been made easy. At first, this gives the impression of a contradiction. However, the first verse states that it is a heavy responsibility to deliver the message brought by the Qur'an and to practice it. On the other hand, the easiness of the Qur'an mentioned in the second verse is related to its recitation, comprehension, and memorization. It is easy to learn the Qur'an theoretically. However, there are many difficulties that require patience and willpower when living our personal and social life in the way prescribed by the Qur'an. The existence of *mushkil* in the Qur'an, or the words that are implicit and whose meanings are not clear, attracts people's attention and invites them to contemplate about the Qur'an.

LET'S EVALUATE

“Those messengers – some of them We caused to exceed others...”

(Baqarah, 2: 253)

“... We make no distinction between any of His messengers...”

(Baqarah, 2: 285)

Evaluate the relationship between the verses given above.

²⁷ Nisa, 4: 82.

²⁸ Zumar, 39: 55

²⁹ Abdülcelil Candan, *Kur'an Okunurken Zihne Takılan Ayetler*, p. 398

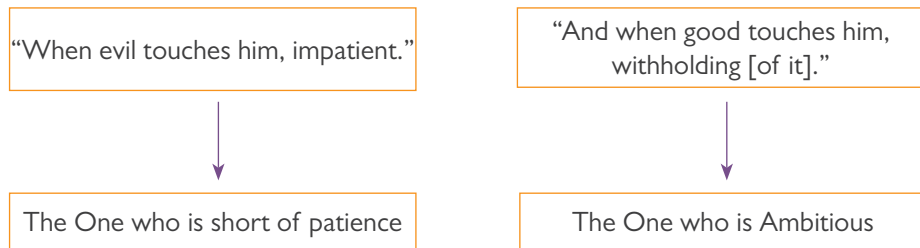
³⁰ Muzzammil, 73: 5

³¹ Qamar, 54: 17

3.4. Mujmal and Mubayyan

The term *mujmal* refers to a vague expression whose meaning cannot be understood unless it is explained. A word or practice that clarifies the vagueness is called *mubayyin* and may come either right next to the vague word or separated from it. The word that explains a *mujmal* verse and turns it into a phrase with a clear meaning is called “*mubayyan*”. Moreover, the process of explaining *mujmal* words and turning them into phrases with definite meanings is also called “*mubayyan*”. The meaning expressed by *mubayyan* words is so certain that it does not leave any place for doubt. For example, from the expression “give zakat”, the necessity of giving zakat is understood. Who must give *zakat* and in what proportion it should be paid is explained by the Sunnah.

Vagueness of words in verses can sometimes be the result of their lack of usage. The word هَلُوعًا in the verse إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ خُلِقَ هَلُوعًا “**Human was created as a halua.**”³² is an example for this. The vagueness of the word “*halua*” is made intelligible and is explained as “who is ambitious and short of patience” by the following verses: إِذَا مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ جَزُوعًا وَإِذَا مَسَّهُ الْخَيْرُ مَنُوعًا



(Ma’arij, 70: 20, 21)

As seen, the *mujmal* هَلُوعًا was clarified by two *mubayyin* verses and turned into a *mubayyan* / *mufassar* expression.

Some expressions in verses might sound vague because of having more than one meaning, and it is not clear which of these meanings should be taken. For example, the word عَشَّعْش in the verse³³ وَاللَّيْلُ إِذَا عَشَّعْش means both to depart and to arrive. Hence, it is not clear whether this word gives the meaning of “the departing night” or “the arriving one” to the verse.

³² Ma’arij, 70: 19.

³³ Takwir, 81: 17.

Sometimes, while the lexical meaning of a word is known, its usage in a special context also causes ambiguity. Examples of this type of *mujmal* are the concepts of *salah*, *zakat*, and *hajj*. While the word of “*salah*” in the verse³⁴ *وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَارْكَعُوا مَعَ الرَّاكِعِينَ* lexically means “pray (du’a)”, Allah the Almighty has chosen it as “the ritual prayer”, which has specific conditions and constituent parts. The Prophet explained this vagueness and thus, these words were turned into *mubayyan* / *mufassar* words. As it is clearly seen in the examples, the existence of *mujmal* in the Qur’an provides it with a richness of expression.

LET'S EXPLAIN

Discuss in the class how the *mujmal* word “*zakah*”, which means “cleaning”, becomes *mubayyan* and explain it together with its *mubayyin*.

3.5. Mubham

Mubham refers to the name of a place, time, or a person equivocally by using an *ism al-mawsul* (relative pronoun), *ism al-isharah* (demonstrative pronoun), and *dhamir* (pronoun). In such cases, it might not be understood to whom or what exactly the verses refer. In order to explain *mubham* phrases, the Qur’an, Sunnah, and the statements of the Companions should be taken into account. Moreover, historical research and scholarly findings can be used as well. For example, the *ism al-mawsul* *الَّتِي* in the verse³⁵ *وَالَّتِي أَحْصَنَتْ فَرْجَهَا* refers to a woman who guarded her chastity. Allah called this woman Mary, the daughter of Imran, in the verse *وَمَرْيَمَ ابْنَتَ عِمْرَانَ الَّتِي أَحْصَنَتْ فَرْجَهَا* “And [the example of] Mary, the daughter of ‘Imran, who guarded her chastity.”³⁶ Similarly, those who are indicated with demonstrative pronouns *هَؤُلَاءِ* in the verse³⁷ *وَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا هَؤُلَاءِ الَّذِينَ آقَسُوا بِاللَّهِ جَهْدَ آيْمَانِهِمْ إِنَّهُمْ لَمَعَكُمْ* “...Are these the ones who swore by Allah their strongest oaths that indeed they were with you?” are defined as hypocrites. This is explained in the 42nd verse of Surah al-Tawbah (9) as such:

وَسَيُخْلِفُونَ بِاللَّهِ لَوِ اسْتَطَعْنَا لَخَرَجْنَا مَعَكُمْ يُهْلِكُونَ أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ إِنَّهُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ “...And they will swear by Allah, “If we were able, we would have gone forth with you,” destroying themselves [through false oaths], and Allah knows that indeed they are liars.”

Ambiguous verses were sometimes clarified by the Prophet. For example,

³⁴ Baqarah, 2: 43.

³⁵ Anbiya, 21: 91

³⁶ Tahrim, 66: 12

³⁷ Ma'idah, 5: 53.

he explained the meaning of the word زِيَادَةٌ (literally means extra) in the verse³⁸ لِلَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا الْحُسْنَىٰ وَزِيَادَةٌ “For them who have done good is the best [reward] and extra...” as such: “After Allah the Almighty will reward His righteous servants with paradise, He will additionally show them His beauty.”³⁹

By the implementation of this method, the Qur’an makes a few words meaningful and calls attention primarily to the message without going into detail about the individuals or objects.⁴⁰

LET’S RESEARCH - LEARN

“ مِنْهَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ وَفِيهَا نُعِيدُكُمْ وَمِنْهَا نُخْرِجُكُمْ تَارَةً أُخْرَىٰ ”

Thereof We created you, and thereunto We return you, and thence We bring you forth a second time." (Ta-Ha, 20: 55.)

Find the meanings of the *mubham* words referred by the pronoun هَا with the help of the 67th verse of Surah al-Mu'min (or al-Ghafir 40) and the 25th verse of Surah al-Rum (30).

3.6. Muhkam and Mutashabih

Muhkam are the clear and easily understood phrases of the Qur’an. *Mutashabih* are the ambiguous expressions whose clear meaning cannot be identified with certainty because of having various meanings. The lexical meaning of *muhkam* and *mutashabih* expresses the soundness of the wordings of the Qur’an, its beauty and perfection.⁴¹ The 7th verse of Surah Al-i Imran (3) mentions both *muhkam* and *mutashabih* verses “... in it are verses [that are] precise (*muhkam*) – they are the foundation of the Book – and others unspecific (*mutashabih*). As for those in whose hearts is deviation [from truth], they will follow that of it which is unspecific, seeking discord and seeking an interpretation [suitable to them]. And no one knows its [true] interpretation except Allah...”

The meaning of *muhkam* verses is clear and does not need interpretation. As for the *mutashabihat* (plural form of *mutashabih*), their meanings are not clear even when they are supported by other words. Nevertheless, *mutashabihat* can be interpreted under the light of *muhkam* verses while paying attention to rational principles and rules of the language.

³⁸ Yunus, 10: 26.

³⁹ Suat Yıldırım, *Peygamberimizin Kur'an'ı Tefsiri*, p. 184.

⁴⁰ Halis Albayrak, *Kur'an'ın Bütünlüğü Üzerine Kur'an'ın Kur'an'la Tefsiri*, p. 107.

⁴¹ Hud, 11: 1; Yunus, 10: 1; Zukhruf, 43: 4; Zumar, 39: 23.

Muhkam verses mostly concern acts of worship, permissions, and prohibitions (halal and haram). These verses give information about topics concerning what we see, experience, feel, count, and what we can reason about.

Topics related to the unseen are mentioned in *mutashabih* verses. *Mutashabihat* mostly consist of topics related to the unseen such as the essence and attributes of Allah, faith, and the hereafter. They do not present topics directly but rather by using similar examples from our lives. This is because this world, which cannot be fully known, can only be explained to people through what they know and can comprehend. For example, Allah's authority and sovereignty over everything are expressed by the nouns *Rabb* (Lord) and *Malik* (King). Likewise, paradise is depicted through the beauties of the world, and hell is depicted through association with fire in order to make it understandable to people.

Allegorical meanings in verses are sometimes found in the way they are expressed. For example, the meaning of the word أَبًا⁴² in the verse وَفَاكِهَةً وَأَبًّا⁴² can be determined as pasture/ meadow with the help of the following verse
 [As] enjoyment for you and your grazing livestock.”

Mutashabih features might sometimes be found in the meaning. This kind of *mutashabihat* is found in meanings of verses related to the unseen world that cannot be perceived with one's senses. The verses related to topics and events which human reason cannot comprehend are called “the actual *mutashabih*” (*al-mutashabih al-haqiqi*). Some attributes of Allah such as His reality, power, and love can be listed in this group. Since human language is incapable of expressing the attributes of Allah, expressing them can only be possible by likening them to something known to people. For example, the expression يَدُ اللَّهِ⁴³ ... the hand of Allah is above their hands...”⁴³ speaks about the power of Allah by likening it to a hand. In the Noble Qur'an, some attributes of Allah such as His omniscience and omnipotence are expressed by likening them to our seeing and knowing.

Mutashabih characteristics might be found in both wording and meaning. The statement “...And it is not righteousness to enter houses from the back...”⁴⁴ is an example of this type. In order to understand the meaning of this verse, one must be acquainted with the Arab custom of not entering their

⁴² Abasa, 80: 31.

⁴³ Fath, 48: 10.

⁴⁴ Baqarah, 2: 189.

houses by the door but rather entering by a hole at the back of the house while they were in the state of *ihram*. Since the wording of the verse did not specify these details, there is an obscurity in both wording and meaning.

Some *mutashabih* verses (like the time of the Hour) are known only to Allah. Most people can understand some of them (like *gharib* words and implicit rulings) and some can only be understood by certain people who possess profound knowledge.⁴⁵

In order to understand *mutashabihat*, turning to the rational sciences and research was required and thus, the development of abstract thought was achieved. In addition to this, *mutashabihat* have also helped achieve the literal supremacy of the Qur'an.⁴⁶

LET'S MARK

Mark the statements related to *muhkam* with an (X) and the statements related to *mutashabih* with a (✓) mark.

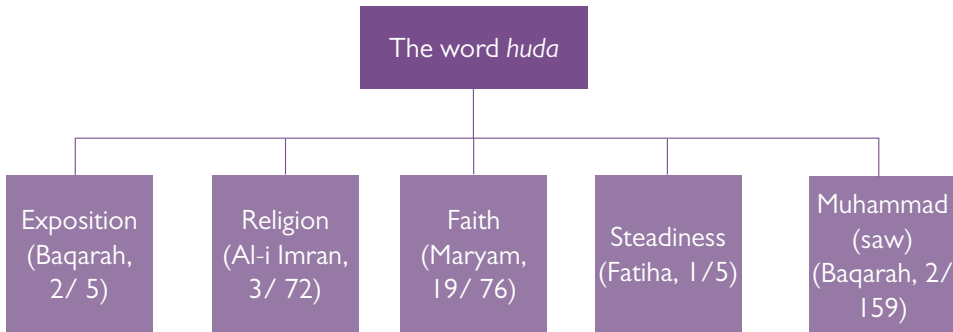
STATEMENTS	MUHKAM	MUTASHABIH
Since they have different meanings, one cannot be sure of their meanings.		
They are clear expressions that can be easily understood.		
They are related to unknowable topics like the essence and attributes of Allah, faith, and the hereafter.		
They are verses that should be interpreted in light of religious and rational principles and the rules of language.		
They are the verses whose meanings are certain and which relate to basic principles concerning acts of worship, what are lawful and unlawful actions.		
They are the verses that mention the topics related to the unseen with the help of similar examples in our lives.		

3.7. Wujuh and Naza'ir

⁴⁵ Raghīb Al-Isfahānī, *Al-Mufradāt fī Ḡharīb Al-Qur'an*, p. 373, 374.

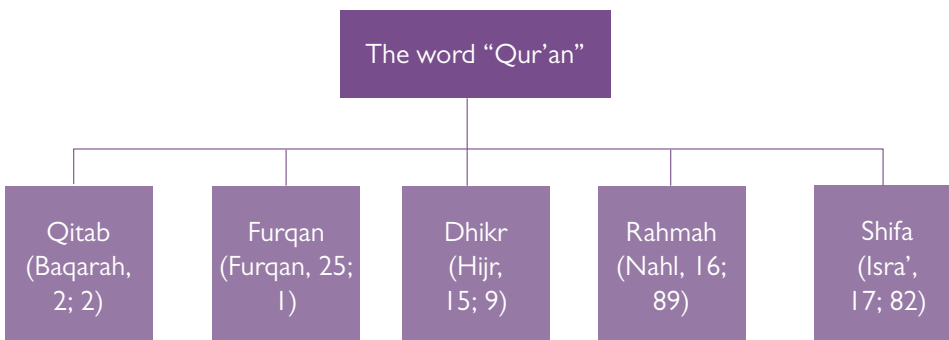
⁴⁶ Muhsin Demirci, *Kur'an'ın Mütəşabihleri Üzerine*, p. 54, 56.

Wujuh means homonym. It refers to the usage of the same word with varying meanings in different places of the Noble Qur'an. There are homonyms in all languages. In Turkish the word "yüz," which means "face, exterior, and direction," is an example of a homonym. The word "*huda*" in the Qur'an can be given as an example of a homonym.



The word "*huda*," used in five different verses is employed with five different meanings. In the same way, the word "*ummah*," meaning "a group of people, nation, and duration," is used with varying meanings in the Qur'an and presents another example of the occurrence of *wujuh* in the Qur'an.

Naza'ir is a term used for synonyms, which are words and verses similar to each other in wording, form, and sometimes in meaning. The words "rapid, quick, fast, and speedy" are examples of synonyms. We can give the word "Qur'an" itself as an example of *naza'ir*, which is expressed by different words even though they have the same meaning:



LET'S MAKE A SCHEMA

Show a schema application of *wujuh* by using the word "*kitab*" which means "the Qur'an" in the 2nd verse of Surah al-Baqarah; "waiting period" in the 235th verse of Surah al-Baqarah; "Torah" in the 27th verse of Surah al-Anqabut; "the book of deed" in the 7th and 10th verses of Surah al-Inshiqaq.

As can be seen, the words of *kitab*, *furqan*, *dhikr*, *rahmah*, and *shifa* are synonyms of the Noble Qur'an in these verses. In the same way, the expressions of "the day of judgment, the day of religion, the day of resurrection, the day of convergence, and the day of regret" are used as synonyms (*naza'ir*) of the hereafter.

Some verses that are similar to each other in wording or meaning are also called *nazir/ naza'ir*. For example, *naza'ir* in the verse **وَجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ نَّاصِرَةٌ** "[Some] faces, that Day, will be radiant."⁴⁷ can be expressed in the following ways: **وَجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ مُّسْفِرَةٌ** "[Some] faces, that Day, will be bright."⁴⁸ **وَجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ نَّاعِمَةٌ** "[Other] faces, that Day, will show pleasure."⁴⁹

Wujud and *naza'ir* are of great significance in the understanding of the Qur'an. Many words repeated in verses and chapters have different meanings in each place they are used. This richness of meaning brings richness of expression in explaining the verses. Ignoring *wujud* and *naza'ir* causes misleading or incomplete understanding.

4. Stylistic Characteristics of the Qur'an

The Noble Qur'an has a special expression and style in sentence formation and word selection. It is a divine book containing the supreme characteristics of poetry and prose. Sound, composition, and harmony of the lexical beauty of the Qur'an is like music that sounds beautiful and enthralls the soul. It uses different literary genres to perfection, such as *qissah* (parables), *taswir* (description), and *munazarah* (debate); and types of *bayan* (a type of rhetoric dealing with comparison and metaphor). The coherence between its wording and meaning is so excellent that it leaves no room for either a shortage or excess in expressing its purpose.

In the science of tafsir, certain basic concepts express the characteristics of the style of the Qur'an. Let's explain them respectively.

LET'S MAKE A SCHEMA

Show the usage of *naza'ir* by using the word "Ka'bah" (al-Ma'idah, 5/ 95), which is mentioned with its other names like "Bayt" in the 3rd verse of Surah Quraysh; "al-Bayt al-Atiq" in the 33rd verse of Surah al-Hajj; "Bayt al-Haram" in the 2nd verse of Surah al-Ma'idah; and "Masjid al-Haram" in the 144th verse of Surah al-Baqarah in a chart.

⁴⁷ Qiyamah, 75: 22.

⁴⁸ Abasa, 80: 38.

⁴⁹ Ghashiyah, 88: 8.

4.1. I'jaz al-Qur'an

I'jaz means incapacitating, convincing, and refuting the proofs of the listener. It technically refers to the inimitability of the Qur'an, or man's inability to produce a similar book. The Noble Qur'an not only uses all the subtleties of the Arabic language such as *mathal* (parable), *yamin* (oath), and *qissah* (story), but also is a *mu'jizah* (miracle) by its specific usage. Although the Qur'an presents a challenge, those who use the rhetoric of the same language could never produce its likeness. The polytheists did not accept the prophethood of our Prophet Muhammad who delivered the Qur'an to them. Influenced by the knowledge and phonetics presented by the Qur'an, however, they could not prevent themselves from secretly listening to it.

One reason for the impressiveness of the Qur'an is that it was revealed to the Prophet just as it was sent down by the divine source without any alteration. The other reason is the perfect harmony that exists among verses and chapters although it was revealed over a span of 23 years. Those who were unable to produce its likeness desired to extinguish the light of the Qur'an but they failed: **"They want to extinguish the light of Allah with their mouths, but Allah refuses except to perfect His light, although the disbelievers dislike it."**⁵⁰ Someone also desired to silence it:

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَا تَسْمَعُوا لِهَذَا الْقُرْآنِ وَالْغَوْا فِيهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَغْلِبُونَ

"And those who disbelieve say, 'Do not listen to this Qur'an and speak noisily during [the recitation of] it that perhaps you will overcome.'"⁵¹

Even though it is not possible to limit the *i'jaz* aspects of the Qur'an, the ones that were pointed out most can be enumerated as follows: It has been protected in its original form. The more the meaning and its contents are read, the more they are enriched and remain fresh. Verses and chapters in the Qur'an have a specific order, a style of recitation, and handling of the issues. It is unique in providing for the needs of people concerning faith, acts of worship, morality, thought, and social life. All these rulings in the Noble Qur'an are timeless. The verses explaining the creation are thought-provoking. In accordance with the purpose of its revelation, it contains principles that glorify human life and make it meaningful and complete.

⁵⁰ Tawbah, 9: 32.

⁵¹ Fussilat, 41: 26.

LET'S FIND AND WRITE

Verses	Aspects of Ijaz
<p>"The Romans have been defeated in the nearest land. But they, after their defeat, will overcome within three to nine years..."</p> <p>(Rum, 30: 2-5)</p>	<p>It gives information about the past and future.</p>
<p>Baqarah, 2: 23, 24; Anbiya, 21: 30; Anfal, 8: 31, 32; Yunus, 10: 15 and 38.</p>	<p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>

Find aspects of *ijaz* in the verses for which the numbers are given, form a table, and write them in the blanks.

4.2. Huruf Muqatta'ah

DID YOU KNOW?

Huruf muqatta'ah comprises 14 letters, and this number corresponds to half of the Arabic alphabet. These letters are used in the Qur'an in 13 different patterns with their numbers varying between one and five. They are found at the beginning of 29 chapters; 27 of them were revealed in Mecca and two of them in Madinah.

These letters are brought together in the following sentence:

سِرُّ لَهُ نَصٌّ حَكِيمٌ قَاطِعٌ

The word *huruf* is the plural form of the word *harf* (letter). *Muqatta'ah* means "a thing which is cut". Technically it means the letters found at the beginning of some chapters of the Qur'an, which are pronounced separately. *Muqatta'ah* letters are also called letters of *haja*.

The letters *ق, ن, ص, طس, المر, الر* and *ص* are considered part of the verses in the Qur'an. *Muqatta'ah* letters in other chapters are enumerated as separate verses.

Mufasssirs have generally considered *huruf muqatta'ah* among the *mutashabih* verses, the meaning of which is known only by Allah. As a result, they did not interpret them. However, theologians have tried to explain (*ta'wil*) these letters because the whole Qur'an is sent as guidance to humans. By presenting some letters of the Arabic alphabet, Allah the Almighty seems to be stating that: "These are the letters which you use. Form some words and sentences by using them and write a book similar to the Qur'an." Allah calls the addressees' attention to the Qur'an by this challenge. Some other *ta'wils* of *huruf muqatta'ah* are also available. In addition to the interpretations claiming that these letters indicate the names and attributes of Allah, and Allah swears upon them, it was also claimed that these are the names of the Noble Qur'an or the chapters.⁵²

LET'S WRITE

Huruf Muqatta'ah 1 letter 2 letters 3 letters 4 letters 5 letters

ك ه ي ع ص ط ق ك ل م ن ه ي ن ك ه ي ع ص

Find some patterns formed from one to five letters of *huruf muqatta'ah* collectively given above and write them in the blanks.

4.3. Beginnings of the Chapters

The beginning of a word is important in terms of its being suitable for the circumstances and level of its audience. For this reason, speeches should start in an interesting way to attract the attention of the audience. Again, the chapters of the Qur'an start with *hamd* (praises), oaths, *nida* (or interjection) prepositions, and *haja* letters. This style calls the attention of the listener in terms of expression, form, and meaning. Starting the Surah al-Naba' with a question is a good example of this:

⁵² İsmail Cerrahoğlu, *Tefsir Usulü*, p. 138-147.

عَمَّ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ عَنِ النَّبَاِ الْعَظِيمِ

“About what are they asking one another? About the great news?”⁵³

When we consider the Qur'an as a whole, its ability to attract the attention of its listener and astonish him or her, clearly manifests itself at the beginning of Surah al-Fatiha. The word starts by reminding people who live humbly with limited ability and means that the worlds and all praise belong to their Lord. Attention is immediately drawn from the realities of the narrow material world to the limitless spiritual world. Then, the mercy of Allah, the Day of Judgment, being a worshipper, and the need of people for material and spiritual support are mentioned. The place of human beings in the universe and in the belief system is determined, and it is stated that what humans will receive in the eternal life will be in accordance with their choices during their lifetime. All these subjects are upsetting to the thoughts and belief of those who worship idols and who do not accept the existence of a life other than that of this world.

Some chapters in the Qur'an start with words of praise (*hamd*, *tasbih*, *tabaraka*) for Allah. Approximately a quarter of the chapters start with *huruf muqatta'ah*. Some of them start with an interjection to Muslims and the Prophet. Sentences of *khavar* (report), *qasam* (oath), *amr* (command), *su'al* (question), and *raghbah* (request) are used in the beginning of some other chapters.

The beginning of the chapters draws the attention of the audience and directs them to the content of the chapter. Therefore, it makes it easier to understand the aim of the verses.

⁵³ Naba', 78: 1-2.

LET'S FIND AND WRITE

The chapters which begin with "hamd, tasbih, tabaraka"	An'am	.....
The chapters which begin with huruf <i>muqatta'ah</i>	Baqarah	.....
The chapters which begin with <i>nida</i> (recall)	Hujurat	.....
The chapters which begin with oath	Tin	.....
The chapters which mostly begin with the command " <i>qul</i> " (say)	Jinn	.....
The chapters which begin with a question	Inshirah	.....
The chapters which begin with a request	Humazah	.....

Based on the examples in the table, find the corresponding ones according to the beginning (of the Surah al-Lahab, Surah Ya-Sin, Surah al-Fatiha, Surah al-Tahrim, Surah al-Fil, Surah al-Qiyamah and Surah al-Kafirun) and write them in the blanks.

4.4. Oaths

Oaths in the Noble Qur'an are mentioned by the word *qasam*, and are studied under the name *Aqşam al-Qur'an*. Allah swears in the Noble Qur'an upon His Exalted Names, the prophets, the Qur'an, angels, the Hour, and important beings in nature.

Arabs of the age of ignorance employed oaths to confirm the accuracy and value of a report or a work, and they used to abstain from perjury (false oath). The Qur'an has maintained this wording of the language, confirmed its verses through oaths, and emphasized the points set forth. Allah points out the importance of beings upon which the oath is taken. For example; in 1-7th verses of Surah al-Shams, an oath is taken upon the heavenly bodies, the perfection of their cycle, humans, and their Creator: **"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, and [by] the soul and He who proportioned it."**

These verses related to the universe state the perfect order of the heavenly bodies and also emphasize that humans are not able to create these celestial bodies; so people must believe in the existence of their Creator.

Allah has drawn the attention of audiences through the objects upon which the oath was taken, and made them reflect on these entities. For example, an oath is taken upon the daily sunrise and upon the night's and the morning's power to give life to creatures. The night's being a time of rest and the ornamentation of the sky with stars is also emphasized. An oath is taken upon the benefits and taste of some foods such as the fig and olive. By swearing upon all these entities and blessings intertwined with human life, the thought "How can this wonderful balance and order exist? How can these flavors be extracted from the soil?" is awakened in people's minds.

Allah begins 17 of the chapters of the Qur'an by swearing upon various entities in order to achieve the aims mentioned above. In the chapter, He swears upon His own name, the Ka'bah, and various other entities as well. Moreover, he has taken oath upon the certainty of *tawhid* (oneness) and punishment and reward in the Hereafter.

Through oaths, Allah has raised the awareness of His believing servants in the essentials of faith, obtaining moral principles and guidance. As for His non-believing servants, He has made them think and called them to accept these points.

LET'S RESEARCH

Research the entities upon which an oath is taken considering the verses of the Surah al-Fajr, 89: 1-6; Surah al-Balad, 90: 1-4; Surah al-Shams, 91: 1-10; and Surah al-Tin, 95: 1-3.

DID YOU KNOW?

Oaths in the Noble Qur'an are mostly found at the beginning of chapters with the letter **و**. Likewise, as in the 1st verse of Surah al-Qiyamah, **ب** is also used; and in the 56th verse of Surah al-Nahl, **ت** is used as well to swear an oath.

4.5. Amthal

Mathal and its plural form "amthal" means words of wisdom and indirect laconic words, which are based upon comparison and have been recognized and spread within the community. In the sciences of the Qur'an, *Amthal al-Qur'an* means expressing concisely the meaning and purpose in verses in a way that impresses the human soul and evokes admiration. This concept is mentioned in the Qur'an by the phrase *darb al-mathal* meaning "to explain". In the Turkish language it is used for proverbs or maxims.

The Noble Qur'an gives place to *tamthil* because it is an effective form of expression in the Arabic language. Understanding abstract concepts by reason is very difficult. *Amthal* makes them more understandable and more easily retained by the memory. Most of the *amthal* are related to matters of faith;

primarily *tawhid*. Actual and moral *amthal* are also mentioned in the Qur'an.⁵⁴ *Amthal* are divided into two groups in terms of their meaning.

The first type is *sarih* or clear *amthal*. The target of the comparison made by this type of *amthal* can easily be understood. The 261st verse of Surah al-Baqarah,⁵⁵ which was revealed in Madinah where people were engaged in agriculture, is an example of this type. In this verse, sincerely using property for Allah's sake is associated with sowing a seed that grows seven spikes; in each spike is a hundred grains. Therefore, it is easily understood by the audience that this one deed brings at least 700 times more rewards. In the same way, the shortness of human life is compared to a plant that goes through the phases of seedling, blooming, bearing fruit, and becoming dry, and is then scattered by the winds. The transiency of wealth and the mortality of children, both of which are considered the delicious fruits of this mortal world, are compared to the short-living allurements of this world.⁵⁶

The second group of *amthal* is *kamin* or hidden ones. Comprehending them requires deeper reflection. For example, in the following verse, **“And the good land – its vegetation emerges by the permission of its Lord; but that which is bad – nothing emerges except sparsely...”**⁵⁷ good land is likened to the believer, good produce is likened to his good deeds. Arid land is associated with the disbeliever and insufficient and bad produce is associated with his evil deeds.

وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا أَنْفَقُوا لَمْ يُسْرِفُوا وَلَمْ يَقْتُرُوا وَكَانَ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ قَوَامًا

The verse **“And those who, when they spend, are neither prodigal nor grudging...”**⁵⁸ makes a lasting message of being moderate in spending.

There are some *amthal* that correspond with the meaning of common proverbs used among the community while they have a different wording in the Qur'an. The most vivid example is the similarity between the verse **“...Whoever does a wrong will be recompensed for it...”**⁵⁹ and the proverb “What goes around comes around.” (what you plant now you will harvest later).

Muslims who speak and think with Qur'anic concepts have changed some

LET'S RESEARCH

Ankabut, 29: 41;
Hadid, 57: 20;
Baqarah, 2: 264,
265; Kahf, 18: 32-44;
Saffat, 37: 62-68.

Research and think about the aim of *amthal* in the verses given above.

⁵⁴ Bedrettin Çetiner, *Kur'an'da Meseller, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, v. 29, p. 299, 300.

⁵⁵ Şadi Eren, *Kur'an'da Teşbih ve Temsiller*, p. 55, 56.

⁵⁶ Kahf, 18: 45, 46.

⁵⁷ A'raf, 7: 58.

⁵⁸ Furqan, 25: 67

⁵⁹ Nisa, 4: 123

verses into *amthal*.⁶⁰ To mean that a thing may seem evil at first sight but its result may be good; وَعَسَى أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ “...and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you...”⁶¹ After hearing of a disaster or sad news; إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَأَنَا لِلَّهِ رَاجِعُونَ “...Indeed we belong to Allah, and indeed to Him we will return...”⁶² In order to mean “Do not shoot the messenger!” the verse مَا عَلَى الرَّسُولِ إِلَّا الْبَلَاغُ “The duty of the messenger is only to convey (the message)...”⁶³ are some examples of the verses which were turned into *amthal*.

LET'S COMPARE

The intended purposes of using *amthal* in the Qur'an can be listed as follows:

- To show an example in order to explain an idea (Nur, 24: 39, 40)
- To make the meaning clear and leave a lasting impression on the mind (Hashr, 59: 21)
- To encourage good, to dissuade from evil (Ibrahim, 14: 14-16)
- To cause disgust from things prohibited by the religion (Hujurat, 49: 12)
- To state the permanency of truth and superstition being doomed to destruction (Ibrahim, 14: 24-26)
- To remind, to educate people in spirit (Fatir, 35: 19-22)
- To make the listener accept an opinion or a reality (Nahl, 16: 73-76; Ya-Sin, 36: 77-82)
- To protect morality and modesty (Baqarah, 2: 187)
- To make a person think, to praise or to satirize (Jumu'ah, 62: 5)
- To draw a lesson, to draw moral conclusions and to encourage (Hud, 11: 24)

Find the verses whose numbers are given above and the intended purposes of usage of *amthal* from a *ma'al* and compare them.

⁶⁰ Veli Ulutürk, *Kur'an'da Temsili Anlatım*, p. 23

⁶¹ Baqarah, 2: 216

⁶² Baqarah, 2: 156

⁶³ Ma'idah, 5: 99

4.6. Qasas (Parables)

Qissa lexically means “going after someone by tracing him and expressing a word to someone.” *Qasas* of the Qur’an are the events that are held up as examples and have a historical reality and accuracy.

When the Qur’an educates people, it often uses *qasas* as a method to enrich the style and to make understanding abstract realities easier. The theme in all the stories is centered on Allah, and they state that all prophets delivered the message of Islam. *Qasas* give advice to those who want to learn from the past. They show those who become depressed ways to recover and console them. The stories sometimes deliver religious ideas by motivating the emotional world of the audience and in this way, correct the thinking of the readers and their deeds. The best example of this is presented in Surah Yusuf regarding moral principles such as fidelity, loyalty, repentance, and cooperation.

The stories suggest that our Prophet and the believers overcame problems and were consoled. They make Muslims firm in faith and trust in themselves. They explain the grace of Allah as His reward to the believers; and the justice of Allah as His punishment to the deniers. In short, they praise good people, condemn the ungrateful, and advise them not to continue their denial and obstinacy.⁶⁴

The stories are historical realities. They bring forth religious awareness to people through historical events. The Qur’an keeps the exemplary, moral, and educational aspects of the stories fresh. While doing this, it instills them with its own viewpoint, summarizes some of them, or simplifies them. For example, the states of Aad, Thamud, and Pharaoh are summarized in seven verses from the 6th to the 13th verse of Surah al-Fajr (89).

“Have you not considered how your Lord dealt with ‘Aad, [with] Iram – who had lofty pillars, the likes of whom had never been created in the land? And [with] Thamud, who carved out the rocks in the valley? And [with] Pharaoh, owner of the stakes? – [All of] whom oppressed within the lands, and increased therein the corruption. So your Lord poured upon them a scourge of punishment.”

Stories concerning previous prophets and nations are wide ranging in the Qur’an. Moreover, the stories of certain people like Maryam and Qarun who

⁶⁴ Mehmet Paçacı, Ömer Dumlu, *Ana Konularıyla Kur'an*, p. 206

experienced exemplary events and some groups like Ashab al-Kahf (companions of the Kahf) are mentioned as well. Sometimes, interesting events like the example of the dining table sent down to the Israelites from heaven are narrated.

LET'S RESEARCH AND LEARN

The story of the elephant: Fil, 1-5, the story of Adam and Satan: A'raf, 11-26, the story of Luqman: Luqman, 12-19, the story of Moses: Qasas, 22-28, the story of one believer: Mu'min, 38-46, the story of Abraham and his father: Maryam, 41-50, the story of Ashab al-Kahf: Kahf, 10-18.

Choose three of the stories given in the verse groups, and research them to learn their main ideas.

The Qur'anic stories, in terms of their style of expression, start with an introduction that awakens the curiosity of the reader, such as the dream of the Prophet Joseph. In important scenes, figurative narration is preferred and the details are left to readers' imagination. Events are reported by vivid descriptions. Stories in Meccan chapters are given in a strict and concise way; whereas the stories in Madinan chapters use the method of extensive explanation and gentle words.

Repetitions in the stories revealed their significance and ensured they were taken to heart. Delivering the message of the religion (*tabligh*) has been repeated in different styles. Rhetoric of the Qur'an has been presented by narrating the same story in different ways.

4.7. Majaz (Metaphors)

Majaz means statements taken out of context and transmitted into another related meaning. *Haqiqah* is the opposite of *majaz* and means "necessary, true belief, purified deed, and a word exactly corresponding to its purpose."

Majaz and *haqiqah* are among the essential expressions of richness found in every language. Languages obtain their attractiveness through the expression of this style. It is inevitable that the Noble Qur'an, which transmits divine knowledge through human language, uses functions of this language. So, the Qur'an also uses *majaz* as one of the literary arts like *tashbih*, *tamthil*, and *kinaya* (allusion) in its expression.

Metaphors provide a precise, correct interpretation of the Qur'an and eliminate insipidity in terms of expression and style. For example, if we understand the statement قَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكُمْ لِبَاسًا "...We have sent down upon you clothing..."⁶⁵ literally, it would be understood that ready-made clothes are sent down from the sky like rain and snow. Whereas the verse actually expresses the result through *majaz* instead of stating in detail the preparation process of the clothes from the raw material to their being sewn.

Knowing whether an utterance in the Qur'an is used in the meaning of *haqiqah* or *majaz* ensures the correct understanding of the verse. For example, if the expression "Have you not seen?" in the verse أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ فَعَلَ رَبُّكَ بِأَصْحَابِ الْفِيلِ "Have you not seen, [O Muhammad], how your Lord dealt with the companions of the elephant?"⁶⁶ is taken in the real sense, it would mean "You have seen the event of the elephant." In fact, the Prophet (saw) was born after the event of the elephant.⁶⁷ Therefore, his witnessing this incident is not possible. If this expression is taken in a metaphorical sense, the incident of the elephant, which had remained fresh in the memories of the Arabs, would mean "do you not know?" which is the primary meaning that should be understood from the verse.

LET'S EVALUATE

"...the people entering into the religion of Allah in waves..." (Nasr, 110: 2), "May the hands of Abu Lahab be tied..." (Lahab, 111: 1), "Indeed, the worst of living creatures in the sight of Allah are the deaf and dumb who do not use reason." (An'am, 8: 22), "And whoever is blind in this [life] will be blind in the Hereafter and go more astray in way." (Isra, 17: 72)

Evaluate the verses given above in terms of *haqiqah* and *majaz* with your friends in the class.

⁶⁵ A'raf, 7: 26.

⁶⁶ Fil, 105: 1.

⁶⁷ Fayda, Mustafa, Fil Vak'ası, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi, V 13, p. 71.

LET'S FIND

Find examples of *khitaḥ* from the verses in Baqarah, 2: 153, 168; Ma'idah, 5: 41; Anfal, 8: 64; Mu'minun, 23: 51; Tahrim, 66: 7 and make a list.

4.8. *Khitaḥ*s

Khitaḥ means “to decide and to address”. Calling the listeners’ attention, *khitaḥ*, prepares the mind to comprehend the meaning of the statement. *Khitaḥ* is generally begun with the interjection (*nida*) letter يَا (O!).

Allah mostly addresses His first listener, our Prophet (saw), with the expression يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ (O Prophet). He addresses other prophets by their names such as يَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ (O Abraham) and to all the prophets together as يَا أَيُّهَا الرُّسُلُ (O Messengers).

He addresses people apart from the prophets as يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ (O people), to believers as يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا (O those who believe) and to unbelievers as يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا (O those who do not believe). Likewise, He addresses angels, jinn, animals, and non-living things as well. *Khitaḥ* includes meanings like praise, satire, and advice.

4.9. Repetitions

Repetition of some words, sentences, verses, and incidents more than once in the Noble Qur'an is called “*takrar al-Qur'an*”. Our Noble Qur'an sometimes gives place to utterance repetitions and sometimes topic repetitions so that people can properly understand the principles to which it refers.⁶⁸ Arabs before Islam had frequently used repetition as one of the subtleties of language. The Qur'an has continued this usage of style by enhancing it.

The esthetics of the repetition of the Qur'an originates from the established harmonious connection of the repeated verse or statement to previous parts. Hence, the statement / verse obtains a different beauty in style as if it were stated for the first time. We can give as an example the verse “**So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?**” which is repeated 33 times in Surah al-Rahman (55). Each of these verses is connected to the previous verse. Evidence for the existence of Allah is given through each of the mentioned blessings, humans are repeatedly reminded of the blessings of Allah, and the aim is to turn people towards Allah.

Repetition of the subjects, especially the lives of the prophets, is represented in different chapters in various forms and styles. In each chapter, the event is

⁶⁸ Erdoğ̃an Bař, *Kur'an'ın Üslubu ve Tekrarlar*, p. 38

viewed from a different point of view and various lessons are presented. For example, in the chapters where the story of Adam is repeated, it is narrated with emphasis on “the blessings of Allah, scarcity of people’s gratitude before these blessings, equality of all human beings or jinn, people’s weakness, and the error of establishing friendship with Satan.”

Repetition indicates the significance of the repeated subject and calls attention to it. It encourages the audience to do good, try to keep away from evil deeds, and asks them in a vital way to be grateful. Repetition of past events provides lessons in a clearer and more effective way.⁶⁹

LET’S CORRELATE

Read the verse “And We have certainly made the Qur’an easy for remembrance, so is there any who will remember?” (Qamar, 54: 17), which is repeated four times, and the verse “Woe, that Day, to the deniers (of the Prophet and the Hereafter).” (Mursalat, 77: 15), which is repeated 10 times, together with the previous verses. Correlate the meanings of these verses with the previous ones.

4.10. Questions and Answers

Another important instrument of interaction and communication used in the Qur’an is giving place to questions and answers. In this sense, questions and answers have been used in the Qur’an in order to guide the audience,⁷⁰ convince them,⁷¹ and teach them the truth.⁷²

Allah poses questions directly to believers,⁷³ ahl al-kitab (people of the book),⁷⁴ polytheists,⁷⁵ hypocrites,⁷⁶ and angels.⁷⁷ Allah also reveals the questions asked by them together with His answers to them.

⁶⁹ Erdoğan Baş, *Kur’an’ın Üslubu ve Tekrarlar*, p. 104

⁷⁰ Balad, 90: 12; Ghashiyah, 88: 1; Hajj, 22: 63; Ma’idah, 5: 91; Ra’d, 13: 5.

⁷¹ Tur, 52: 35, 36; Naml, 27: 59, 60; Al-i Imran, 3: 162.

⁷² Ma’idah, 5: 101; Baqarah, 2: 186; A’raf, 7: 6.

⁷³ Tawbah, 9: 38; Nur, 24: 22; Nisa, 4: 147; Hadid, 57: 16; Sad, 38: 28.

⁷⁴ Nisa, 4: 39; Baqarah, 2: 140; Al-i Imran, 3: 25, 71, 99; Tawbah, 9: 30.

⁷⁵ Naml, 27: 60; Mu’minun, 23: 86; Ankabut, 29: 63; An’am, 6: 143.

⁷⁶ Tawbah, 9: 63, 78, 109, 126; Nisa, 4: 139; Nur, 24: 50.

⁷⁷ Furqan, 25: 17, 18; Saba’, 34: 40, 41.

LET'S INVESTIGATE

Find the sentences of question and answer found in the chapters Duha (93), Tin (95), Qadr (97), Qari'ah (101), Fil (105), and Ma'un (107) and analyze them in terms of positivity, negativity, and their audience.

Questions in the Noble Qur'an are asked in the form of interrogatives,⁷⁸ verbs,⁷⁹ and indicative and subjunctive moods. The answers given to them start with parts of response⁸⁰ or verbs.⁸¹ While giving an answer, very different literary devices are used: Sometimes the question is answered in the same verse⁸² and sometimes in different verses.⁸³ Sometimes a question has been answered in more than one place.⁸⁴ Sometimes a question is answered by another question. In some places, the answer given to the question is longer than the question while in other places it is shorter.

In questions and answers such issues as the articles of faith, subjects related to the acts of worship, exemplary scenes from history, subjects of jihad (holy endeavor), family law, false gods, moral principles, miracles, *adab al-mu'ashara* (good manners), rights and responsibilities, lawful and unlawful things as well as punishment and reward have appeared.⁸⁵

SCIENCES OF THE QUR'AN

Differences in Recitation	Mushkil al-Qur'an	Beginnings of Chapters	<i>Khitabs</i>	Questions and Answers
Repetition	<i>Wujuh and Naza'ir</i>	<i>Mubham</i>	<i>Mujmal and Mubayyan</i>	<i>Gharib al-Qur'an</i>
Makki and Madani	<i>Nasikh and Mansukh</i>	<i>Huruf Muqatta'ah</i>	Oaths	<i>Majaz</i>
<i>Qasas</i>	<i>Mathal</i>	<i>Muhkam and Mutashabih</i>	<i>I'jaz al-Qur'an</i>	<i>Asbab al-Nuzul</i>

⁷⁸ Yunus, 10: 51; Muhammad, 47: 24; Ma'un, 107: 1; Furqan, 25: 45.

⁷⁹ Mulk, 67: 8; Baqarah, 2: 186; A'raf, 7: 6; Saffat, 37: 11; Yunus, 10: 53.

⁸⁰ An'am, 6: 41; Qiyamah, 75: 3, 4; Alaq, 96: 14; A'raf, 7: 44.

⁸¹ Baqarah, 2: 67; Shu'ara, 26: 23, 24.

⁸² Baqarah, 2: 219, 220.

⁸³ Furqan, 25: 7, 20.

⁸⁴ Zukhruf, 43: 31, 32; Qasas, 28: 68; An'am, 6: 124.

⁸⁵ Alican Dagdeviren, *Kur'an'da Sorular ve Cevaplar*, p. 6-10.

LET'S EVALUATE THE CHAPTER

A. Answer the following open-ended questions.

1. Explain the development process of the sciences of the Qur'an in three stages.
2. Explain the reason why *nasikh* and *mansukh* verses are found in the Qur'an.
3. In which topics *muhkam* and *mutashabih* verses are used? Explain each one with an example.
4. Through which methods can we remove the ambiguity of *mubham* verses in the Noble Qur'an? Explain.
5. What is the aim of the presence of oaths in the Noble Qur'an? Explain.
6. Remark what kind of superiority *majaz* has provided to the Qur'an.
7. List the aspects of the Qur'an that leave humans incapacitated and explain them briefly.
8. Give information about questions and explain the style of the Noble Qur'an in five points.

B. Choose the correct answers to the following multiple-choice questions.

- I. Which of the following decisions is not a correct statement about *sabab al-nuzul*?
 - A) *Asbab al-nuzul* are found in the "tafsir" section of hadith books.
 - B) There is less information about *asbab al-nuzul* for the Meccan period and more for the Madinan period.
 - C) *Asbab al-nuzul* are not found in the Qur'an, they were narrated by the Companions.
 - D) A greater part of the Qur'an was revealed in relation to questions and due to certain reasons.
 - E) The knowledge of *asbab al-nuzul* helps us to understand the Qur'an correctly.

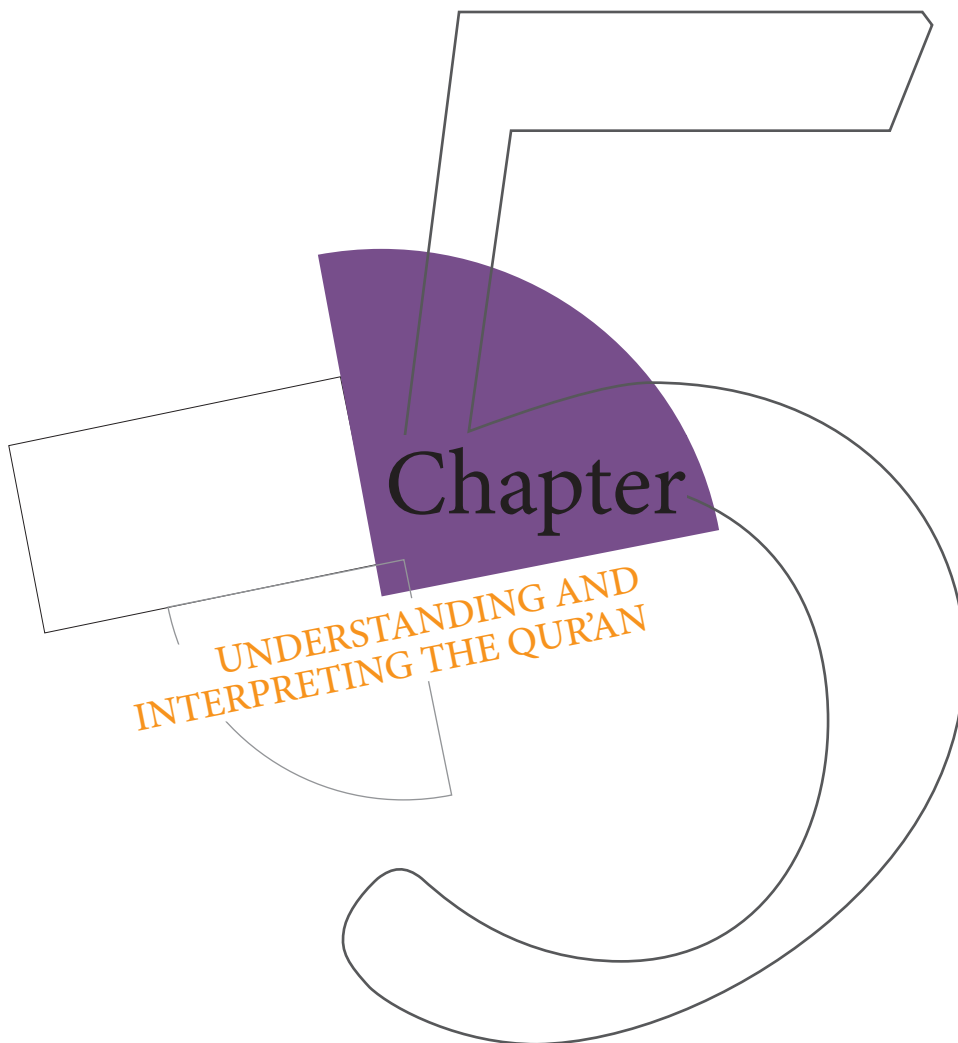
2. "Some words in the Noble Qur'an are ambiguous since they were taken from another language or dialect, or they gained new meanings." Which branch of science deals with this type of ambiguity?

- A) *Mushkil al-Qur'an*
- B) *Gharib al-Qur'an*
- C) *Mutashabih al-Qur'an*
- B) *Mubham al-Qur'an*
- E) *Ma'ani al-Qur'an*

C. Fill in the blanks in the following sentences with the most suitable expressions from those given below.

(Meccan, Madinan, *asbab al-nuzul*, *wujuh* and *naza'ir*, *i'jaz al-Qur'an*, *mubayyin*)

1. verses and chapters are the ones revealed after the migration.
2. means the revelation of some verses or chapters depending upon a question or a reason.
3. means a word, verse, or sunnah (tradition) which explains *mujmal* phrases in the Qur'an.
4. means the expression of the meaning of a verse in the way that it impresses the human soul and evokes admiration.
5. is the phrase used for heteronyms and synonyms in the Qur'an.



Chapter

UNDERSTANDING AND
INTERPRETING THE QUR'AN

UNDERSTANDING AND INTERPRETING THE QUR'AN

LET'S GET READY FOR THE CHAPTER

1. Gather information about the technical meanings of the concepts of “siyaq and sibaq.”
2. Read the section titled “Basic Sources of History of Islam” from your *History of Islam* textbook.
3. Gather information about the period and settings in which Surah al-Lahab (111) was sent down.
4. Find a verse related to faith (iman), acts of worship (ibadah), and morality (akhlaq).
5. Find information about Joseph (pbuh) in the light of Surah Yusuf (12).

1. Basic Principles in Understanding and Interpreting the Qur'an

LET'S EVALUATE

Evaluate the meaning of the verse given below in terms of the Qur'an being an intelligible book.

“And We have certainly made the Qur'an easy for receiving admonition, so is there any who will receive admonition?”

(Qamar, 54: 17, 22, 32, 40)

The Noble Qur'an, which is a source of mercy and guidance for people, is a sacred book sent down for people to live in accordance with its teachings. Understanding and interpreting the Qur'an properly has been the major duty

of Muslims since the day it was revealed. The Noble Qur'an calls on its listeners to understand the verses and to contemplate and practice the principles set forth in the verses. In the 29th verse of Surah Sad (38), the necessity of understanding the Qur'an, interpreting it, and receiving admonition from it is emphasized. It is stated:

كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ مُبَارَكٌ لِيَدَّبَّرُوا آيَاتِهِ وَلِيَتَذَكَّرَ أُولُوا الْأَلْبَابِ

“[This is] a blessed Book which We have revealed to you, [O Muhammad], that they might reflect upon its verses and that those of understanding may receive admonition.”

LET'S INTERPRET

Read the verse given below and interpret it in terms of the coherent and consistent characteristic of the Noble Qur'an.

“Then do they not reflect upon the Qur'an? If it had been from (any) other than Allah, they would have found within it much contradiction.”

(Nisa, 4: 82)

The Prophet (saw) delivered the revealed verses to his Companions and became an example throughout his life as to how these verses should be understood. The Companions made efforts to understand the Qur'an and to live accordingly by asking the Prophet about the verses that they had difficulty understanding.

As Islam spread quickly through different regions of the world, the Qur'an needed to be correctly understood by new Muslim communities as well. For this reason, the needs of these new Muslims who did not speak Arabic and had different cultural backgrounds needed to be taken into consideration in order to facilitate their understanding and practice of the Qur'an.

Changing circumstances also required that the Noble Qur'an had to be reinterpreted for the needs of the changing profile of the Muslim community. Mehmet Akif Ersoy, the poet of “İstiklal Marşı” (the Turkish national anthem), expressed this reality in the following manner: “Directly taking inspiration

from the Qur'an / We should make reason of the time say Islam."¹ To understand and interpret the Noble Qur'an in a correct way and to establish a relation between the modern age and guidance from the revelation, it is necessary to follow some basic principles.

1.1. Understanding the Qur'an through its Own Coherence

The first principle in order to understand and interpret the Qur'an correctly is to understand the Qur'an through its own coherence. The starting point of this principle, which we can also call "exegesis of the Qur'an by the Qur'an", is an undertaking to understand and interpret the words or concepts mentioned in a verse by taking into account both the whole verse and other usages in the Qur'an. An issue briefly mentioned in one verse of the Qur'an might take place in other verses in detail. For this reason, information related to the topic found in different chapters and verses of the Qur'an should be gathered, and all details and dimensions of the subject should be taken into consideration.

LET'S DISCUSS

Discuss with your friends the statements in the lines given below.

"Verses of the Qur'an have meanings supporting each other like sea waves, however, they are superior to the essence of the sea in terms of beauty and worth."

(Mahmut Kaya, *Kaside-i Bürdeyi Türkçe Söyleyiş*, p. 111)

Verses of the Noble Qur'an, its chapters, words, and concepts used in verses, and the issues mentioned in the chapters are in full harmony and coherence. All passages of the Qur'an as well as words, which are the smallest elements of the Qur'an, and sentences formed by these words, verse groups that mention specific topics, and stories are strongly connected to each other. This allows the reader to understand both the lexical meanings of words in different sentences and contexts as well as the new meanings that they gain in the Qur'anic text through the Qur'an's own coherence.

¹ Mehmet Akif Ersoy, *Safahat*, p. 402.

The Noble Qur'an is not a book arranged around topics. This is why it should be assessed through its coherence. Unless this method is applied to understand the Qur'an more completely, interpretations will either be deficient or wrong. It is not valid to take only one part of a verse or just one verse from a group of verses that speak about a specific topic, and then try to understand and interpret it and establish an opinion based on it. Such an attempt may make us interpret the Qur'an according to our personal beliefs.

When the Noble Qur'an is read carefully, it becomes clear that some basic words and concepts are related. For example, the word Allah is one of the basic words frequently used in the Qur'an. The word Allah is in close relation to other words and concepts of the Qur'an and forms an integral part with them. For this reason, while trying to understand Allah's Will in the light of the Qur'an within its coherence, the verses that speak about His being the Creator, His power, justice, and wisdom – as well as verses regarding the responsibility of humans, their will, their punishment, and reward in the Hereafter because of their deeds – should be taken into consideration.²

Since chapters and verses in the Qur'an are connected to each other, several topics can be mentioned in one verse; because all verses are related. For example, in the 10th verse of Surah al-Fatir (35), it is stated: **“Whoever desires honor [through power] – then to Allah belongs all honor. To Him ascends good speech, and righteous work raises it. But they who plot evil deeds will have a severe punishment, and the plotting of those – it will perish.”** In this verse, it is expressed that the real excellence, honor, and power belong to Allah. Moreover, the rules of good morality are mentioned, and we are commanded to speak appropriately and to avoid inappropriate words. It is also emphasized that Allah will reward this behavior.

Ambiguous phrases in verses and chapters can be understood through the Qur'an's own coherence. For example, in the 1st verse of Surah al-Ma'idah (5), it is stated: **“...Lawful for you are the animals of grazing livestock except for that which is recited to you [in this Qur'an] as unlawful...”** However, unlawful animal meat is not specified in this verse. The 3rd verse of the same chapter explains the animals whose meat is unlawful and removes the ambiguity of the

² Halis Albayrak, *Kur'an'ın Bütünlüğü Üzerine*, p. 49.

first verse. **“Prohibited to you are dead animals, blood, the flesh of swine, and that which has been dedicated to other than Allah, and [those animals] killed by strangling or by a violent blow or by a head-long fall or by the goring of horns, and those from which a wild animal has eaten, except what you [are able to] slaughter [before its death], and those which are sacrificed on stone altars, and [prohibited is] that you seek decision through divining arrows...”**

Again in Surah al-Fatiha (1), there is a statement: **“To the path of those upon whom You have bestowed favor...”**³ However, the answer to the question of who those bestowed ones are is not given in the same chapter. We find the answer to this question in the following verse of Surah al-Nisa (4): **“And whoever obeys Allah and the Messenger – those will be with the ones upon whom Allah has bestowed the favor of the prophets, the steadfast affirmers of truth, the martyrs and the righteous. And excellent are those as companions.”**⁴

Explanations by the Prophet about some verses clearly indicate the necessity of understanding the Qur'an within its own coherence. When the verse **“They who believe and do not mix their belief with injustice – those will have security and they are guided.”**⁵ was sent down, some Companions who had difficulty understanding the verse went to the Prophet and said: “O Messenger of Allah! Which of us do not have injustice to ourselves?” Upon this, the Prophet said: “The word (zulm) injustice in the verse is not in the meaning which you understand. Did not you hear that Luqman said ‘...**Indeed, association (with Allah) is great injustice...**’⁶ Know that injustice in this verse means shirk (association with Allah).”⁷ he explained a verse with another verse and gave a good example of understanding the Qur'an through its own coherence.

One of the prominent Companions, Abdullah b. Abbas, in his interpretation of the following verse from Surah al-Fatiha (1) **“(He) Sovereign of the Day of Religion.”**⁸, he resorted to another verse of the Qur'an and gave an excellent example of understanding the Qur'an by means of its coherence. “The Day of Religion is the Day of Judgment when the creatures will be questioned. Allah, on that day, will respond to people's deeds such as goodness for goodness and

³ Fatiha, 1: 7.

⁴ Nisa, 4: 69.

⁵ An'am, 6: 82.

⁶ Luqman, 31: 13.

⁷ Bukhari, Anbiya, 41; Tafsir, 31.

⁸ Fatiha, 1:4

(apart from whom He has forgiven) evil for evil; because, on that day, the command belongs to Him. Allah the Almighty states: **‘Unquestionably, His is the creation and the command.’**”⁹ ¹⁰

All parts of the Qur’an from its shortest word to its longest verse are components of a coherent whole. Without gathering these parts, understanding the whole cannot be possible. As words form the verses and the verses form the chapters, they complement each other’s meaning. Words and concepts do not take place in verses and chapters independent of and without relation to each other. For this reason, while trying to understand and interpret a word, concept, or topic in the Qur’an, it is necessary to consider the whole of the Qur’an; because the Qur’an includes many topics. Information about each topic is available in verses from different chapters. The latter should be gathered and evaluated holistically in order to reach a sound conclusion.¹¹

LET’S EVALUATE

SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF THE HUMAN BEING IN THE QUR’AN

Some verses about human beings are given below as examples of the principle “understanding the Qur’an through its own coherence” from the basic principles of understanding and interpreting the Noble Qur’an. Analyze the following verses in order to determine how different human characteristics are given in the Qur’an and evaluate how humans are dealt with in the Qur’an according to the results you have reached.

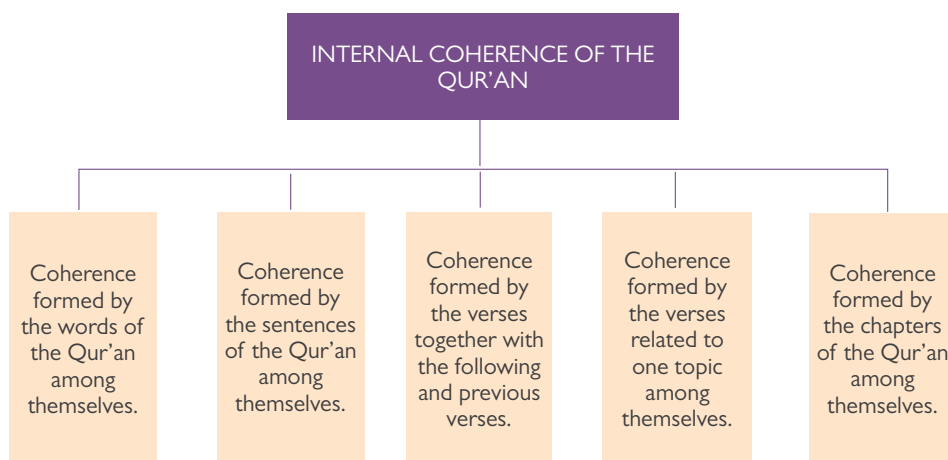
1. “Indeed, We created man from a sperm-drop mixture that We may try him; and We made him hearing and seeing.” (Insan, 76: 2)
2. “And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me.” (Dhariyat, 51: 56)
3. “Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity. It will have [the consequence of] what [good] it has gained, and it will bear [the consequence of] what [evil] it has earned...” (Baqarah, 2: 286)

⁹ A’raf, 7: 54.

¹⁰ Al-Tabari, *Jami al-Bayan*, v. 1, p. 144.

¹¹ Muhsin Demirci, *Tefsir Tanhi*, p. 190.

4. "Man is not weary of supplication for good [things], but if evil touches him, he is hopeless and despairing." (Fussilat, 41: 49)
5. "That no bearer of burdens will bear the burden of another. And that there is not for man except that [good] for which he strives. And that his effort is going to be seen – Then he will be recompensed for it with the fullest recompense." (Najm, 53: 38-41)
6. "And [by] the soul and He who proportioned it, and inspired it [with discernment of] its wickedness and its righteousness, he has succeeded who purifies it, and he has failed who instills it [with corruption]." (Shams, 9: 7-10)
7. "Indeed, mankind was created anxious: When evil touches him, impatient, and when good touches him, withholding [of it]." (Ma'arij, 70: 19-21)
8. "...And whoever is protected from the stinginess of his soul – it is those who will be the successful ones." (Hashr, 59: 9)
9. "And when affliction touches man, he calls upon Us, whether lying on his side or sitting or standing; but when We remove from him his affliction, he continues [in disobedience] as if he had never called upon Us to [remove] an affliction that touched him. Thus, is made pleasing to the transgressors that which they have been doing." (Yunus, 10: 12)
10. "And as for man, when his Lord tries him and [thus] is generous to him and favors him, he says, 'My Lord has honored me.' But when He tries him and restricts his provision, he says, 'My Lord has humiliated me.'" (Fajr, 89: 15-16)



1.2. Taking the Historical Context into Account

To understand and interpret the Qur'an correctly, the historical context in which the verses and the chapters were sent down should be taken into consideration. For this reason, we need to have historical knowledge that enlightens us about the period and the incidents leading to the revelation of the verses. Because of the importance of paying attention to the historical context, the science of *asbab-al nuzul* has become one of the sciences that mufasssirs apply in understanding the Qur'an. It is important to know the setting and circumstances of the period in which the verses were sent down to better understand the message given in the verses. Unless we take into consideration the context of the place and time of the verses, we would reach a wrong conclusion that is not meant by the Qur'an and would take the verse out of context.

When we consider historical development, the verses can be understood more easily. Unless we know where, when, and among whom an incident took place, we would come to various wrong conclusions and interpretations about that incident. To understand the real dimensions of the incident, we should have correct information about it. For this reason, it is very important to know the details of that incident, where, when, and among whom it took place. We can understand that event correctly and give an accurate explanation about it only after we have such information.

Knowledge about the incidents that occurred at the time and the place of revelation of the verses and the people and groups mentioned in these incidents, makes a great contribution to understanding and interpreting the verse correctly. For this reason, scholars of Islam have attached importance to information about the history of the Qur'an and the land to which it was sent down. The period and place of revelation, whether in Madinah or Mecca, reflect on the content and method of the verses and are significant to understanding the historical context. Mufasssirs have benefited from information indicating when the verses were revealed, upon which event, or because of which incident, and have tried to interpret the verses in the light of these reports.

Some Companions like Ali, Abdullah b. Mas'ud, and Abdullah b. Abbas mentioned that they knew about what, for whom, and where each verse was revealed. This indicates that they attached importance to understanding the Qur'an within its historical context. They knew everything concerning the

Qur'an and wanted to transmit this information to subsequent generations. This is because they lived at the time of revelation of the Qur'an, experienced the events, and observed how the relation between verses and events was established. For this reason, the Companions, who knew due to which events verses were revealed, became the most significant source of *asbab al-nuzul* (occasions of revelation) and the historical context of verses.¹²

Some verses in the Noble Qur'an were revealed after a question had been asked of the Prophet or following an event that had occurred at the time. In order to better understand and interpret such verses it is helpful to understand the relevant event or question.¹³

The social, political, and economic conditions; prevailing religious beliefs and cultural norms among the Arabs constitute the historical context in which the Noble Qur'an was revealed. Because of this, our knowledge of certain beliefs such as Judaism, Christianity, Zoroastrianism, and the Sabaeans who lived in the same area where the revelation took place and former divine books – Torah, Gospel, and Psalms – were revealed enables us to understand the setting of revelation better. The cities of Mecca and Madinah are the historical locations where the Noble Qur'an was revealed. Since the Qur'an addresses all of humanity, relevant conditions of this place and time need to be taken into consideration. Just as the verses revealed in Mecca are in accordance with the conditions of Mecca, the verses sent down in Madinah relate to the conditions of Madinah. Moreover, the conditions and special circumstances of the recipients of revelation are also important when attempting to understand the historical context of the Qur'an; because the earlier verses and chapters took this matter into consideration. The following statement of Aisha is the best example of this: "The first thing that was revealed in the Qur'an was a chapter from Al-Mufasssal, and in it was mentioned Paradise and the Fire. When the people embraced Islam, the verses regarding legal and illegal matters were revealed. If the first thing to be revealed had been: 'Do not drink alcoholic drinks' people would have said, 'We will never give up alcoholic drinks.' and if there had been revealed, 'Do not commit illegal sexual intercourse.' they would have said, 'We will never give up illegal sexual intercourse.' ..."¹⁴

¹² Ahmet Nedim Serinsu, *Kur'an ve Bağlam*, p. 17.

¹³ İsmail Cerrahoğlu, *Tefsir Usulü*, p. 115.

¹⁴ Bukhari, *Fadha'il al-Quran*, 6.

LET'S SHARE

Interpret Surah al-Ma'un (107) paying attention to the historical context given below and share your opinions with your friends.

In Meccan society, belief in Allah and the Hereafter had ceased and idol worshipping had become widespread. Orphans, the poor, and the powerless had been harshly treated, no one would have helped them and no one would have been allowed to help them. The community had turned the acts of worship into a game and entertainment, and brought pride and arrogance to the forefront.

Since the Noble Qur'an takes into consideration the social conditions of the period and the place of revelation, it was gradually revealed instead of being sent down all at once. This method was used to make people understand the revelation better and to link it to the conditions in which they lived. By stating **"And [it is] a Qur'an which We have separated [by intervals] that you might recite it to the people over a prolonged period. And We have sent it down progressively."**¹⁵, Allah the Almighty established a link between the purpose of revelation and the setting of its recipients.

Polytheism had become widespread in Mecca before the revelation of the Qur'an, belief in Allah and the Hereafter had been abandoned, the social and economic balance of the community had been destroyed, and morality had declined. The strong were oppressing the weak. The revelation which took the state of the Meccan community into account criticized this situation, it advised them to give up polytheism and associating partners with Allah, and to internalize the belief of *tawhid* (oneness of Allah), to help each other, to act with a sense of responsibility, and to be truthful and just.

In order to understand the historical context of the Qur'an better, learning from reliable sources that give information about that period is needed. Some literary works written about the period of revelation, the conditions of that period, its cultural life and thought, the life of the Prophet, the events that occurred during that period, and the lives of the Companions can be listed among these sources. While benefiting from these sources, it is very important to pay attention to the accuracy and reliability of the information provided in a given source. Moreover, we should also be aware that the message given by

¹⁵ Isra, 17: 106.

the Qur'an is universal, while the historical context of these messages is local. We should keep in mind that these local events and contexts do not limit the universality of the messages of the revelation to one period of history. Even though the reasons of revelation and their historical contexts are particular, messages given in the verses are universal. Keeping the historical context in mind is an important method to apply in the understanding and interpretation of the Noble Qur'an.

1.3. Benefiting from the Explanatory Characteristic of the Sunnah

The Prophet Muhammad (saw), as a person who understood and lived the revelation that he received, is the first mufasssır of the Noble Qur'an. He not only delivered the revealed verses to the community but he showed people how those verses should be understood through both his actions and his explanations; he is the one who best knew, understood, and interpreted the Qur'an. The greatest responsibility given to Muhammad (saw) through his prophetic mission was to deliver the verses as they are to people without altering them and to explain them. The Noble Qur'an says, **"...And 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."**¹⁶ Allah the Almighty clearly expressed this mission of the Prophet (saw).

The Prophet's explanations about issues that the Companions could not understand, his answers to questions directed to him, his recitation of the verses, and the explanations that he gave, the questions he asked on some topics to the people around him, and then the answers he gave to those questions show his understanding of the Qur'an. The Prophet (saw) guided people and led them in matters of faith, acts of worship, and morality in an exemplary way. We need to benefit from the explanatory characteristic of Sunnah to understand and interpret the Qur'an correctly because the Prophet's mission was not just transmitting the revelation. As for the Muslims, in addition to believing in the Prophet, they must also obey him, submit themselves to his commands and prohibitions, follow his exemplary behavior, and adopt his morality. In order to fulfill all these things, to understand, and interpret the revelation correctly, one needs to look into the Sunnah of the Prophet (saw).¹⁷ In the following verse, Allah the Almighty explains that we should follow the Prophet in

¹⁶ Nahl, 16: 44.

¹⁷ İsmail Karagöz, *İslam'ın Ana Kaynakları Kur'an ve Sünnet*, p. 101.

order to understand and correctly interpret the revelation: **“O you who have believed, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you. And if you disagree over anything, refer it to Allah and the Messenger, if you should believe in Allah and the Last Day. That is the best [way] and best in result.”**¹⁸

The first Muslims who had different degrees of knowledge and understanding needed the Prophet’s (saw) explanations in order to understand the Qur’an and apply it in their lives. Being aware of the level of differences among the first recipients of revelation, the Prophet (saw) explained the verses either directly or indirectly.¹⁹ The life of the Prophet (saw) constitutes the foundation for the correct understanding and interpretation of the Qur’an. For this reason, the Sunnah is accepted as the second source of understanding and interpretation after the Qur’an. The Prophet (saw) explained ambiguous verses, clarified or specified general rulings, elucidated the parts that constituted a problem due to having different meanings, explained the meanings of some words that were difficult to understand, and informed his listeners about the objectives of some verses that consisted of the literary arts.²⁰

Acts of worship, such as performing prayer, paying alms, performing pilgrimage, and fasting during the month of Ramadan are an obligation in the Noble Qur’an; however, the details about how to perform them are not given in the Qur’an. So, the only source for learning how these acts of worship should be performed is Sunnah, which is made up of the sayings and acts of the Prophet (saw). All explanations in respect of how to perform the prayer commanded in the Qur’an, its times, and the numbers of its cycles were clarified by the actual practice of the Prophet (saw). We can give the following example to show the explanatory characteristic of the Sunnah in understanding and interpreting the Qur’an: In the 238th verse of Surah al-Baqarah (2), it is stated: **“Maintain with care the (obligatory) prayers and (in particular) the middle prayer (salat wusta) and stand before Allah, devoutly obedient.”** The meaning of the phrase *salat wusta*, i.e. the middle prayer, in this verse is not clear. The Prophet’s clarification that “The middle prayer is the afternoon prayer.”²¹ enables us understand and interpret the verse correctly.

¹⁸ Nisa, 4: 59.

¹⁹ Suat Yıldırım, *Peygamberimizin Kur’an’ı Tefsiri*, p. 335.

²⁰ İsmail Cerrahoğlu, *İmam Hatip Lisesi Tefsir 12*, p. 34

²¹ Tirmidhi, Tafsir, 2.

Today, the explanatory dimension of the Sunnah should be evaluated to understand and interpret the Noble Qur'an correctly. To understand the universal message of revelation today, it is important to know how the revelation was understood and interpreted by the Prophet (pbuh) who transmitted and practiced it in his life in order to understand the universal messages of revelation, which speak to our day as well.

1.4. Benefiting from Scientific Data

In many of its verses, the Noble Qur'an calls on people to think and contemplate the universe and encourages them to solve problems they encounter in life by using their minds. By using the methods of reason, experiment, and observation, science contributes to human thought and to people's lives by means of explaining things in the universe. By using their reason, people benefit from science, which is the fruit of reason, and makes their existence and the reason for their existence meaningful with reference to scientific data; there is an unbreakable connection between religion and science. While religion addresses reason, calling us to think about the universe and its creatures and to explore the physical, biological, and social rules in the universe, science helps people by carrying out research in many fields such as medicine, economy, sociology, psychology, biology, and astronomy.

DID YOU KNOW?

"Much information can be found in the Noble Qur'an concerning the science of 'astronomy', such as the creation of the universe, the law of gravity, the seven spheres of heaven, moonlight and sunlight, lunar and solar orbits, the aspheric shape of the earth and its rotation; concerning 'geology', such as the balance in earth and formation of coal; concerning 'physics', such as air pressure, objects' being in pairs, and mentioning the iron and atom. Also concerning 'biology', such as botany and genetics; concerning 'medicine', such as protecting mental and bodily health, avoiding harmful foods and drinks, nutrition, and 'gynecology'; concerning 'anthropology', such as the creation of humans; concerning 'psychology,' such as awareness of religion, physiological and non-physiological motives, human types, self and personality; and concerning 'parapsychology', such as telepathy."

(Celal Kirca, *Kur'an ve Bilim*, p. 39)

The Noble Qur'an explains the relationship of human beings with objects and the universe through general principles and allows humans to investigate and learn about the world around them through their intelligence, ability, and endeavors. While it gives detailed explanations about the purpose of creation, it leaves open the answer to the question of how humans should experiment, observe, and endeavor.²²

Branches of science such as astronomy, physics, biology, medicine, psychology, sociology, history, and anthropology, can be used in understanding some Qur'anic verses. The data provided by these sciences can be explanatory in understanding and interpreting the Qur'an, because all creatures in the exterior world are cosmic signs of Allah. Scientific research has great importance in strengthening our faith and establishing the relation between the creating power of Allah and His creation.

When Muslims met diverse cultures and civilizations in different geographical areas after the conquests, they benefited from the information provided by them. They even translated scientific works belonging to the Persian, Greek, and Egyptian civilizations and cultures into Arabic, enabling the public to benefit from them. Imam Ghazali stated in many of his works that medicine and math are necessary sciences and tried to explain the aspheric shape of the world and solar and lunar eclipses by the available scientific data of those days. The great Muslim scholar Fakhraddin Razi understood and interpreted some verses of the Qur'an based on scientific data. He especially used the Aristotelian philosophy and Ptolemy's view on cosmology in the exegesis of the verses related to the universe and the celestial bodies.²³ In his work *Katib Çelebi*, an Ottoman scholar, pointed out the importance of philosophy and math, and expressed the necessity of these sciences in research on the essence of creatures. He even compared the religious opinion of a mufti who knew math and the opinion of another who did not know math and stated that the opinion of the one who knew math was more accurate, and he thus pointed out the significance of scientific knowledge.²⁴ Again, one of the Ottoman scholars, Ghazi Ahmet Muhtar Pasha, wrote a book on the relationship between the Qur'an and astronomy and tried to interpret many verses, which he said were related to astronomy in light of scientific data.

²² Celal Kırca, *Kur'an ve Bilim*, p. 31.

²³ Celal Kırca, *Kur'an ve Bilim*, p. 44

²⁴ Katib Çelebi, *Mizan al-Haqq fî Ikhtiyar al-Ahaqq*, p. 10.

LET'S NOTE

The following are the religious opinions of a mufti who knows geometry and of another who does not know geometry.

A person hired someone for eight *akcha* (currency) to dig a well the height, width, and depth of which were four *zira* (a unit of measure). He dug a well the height, width, and depth of two *zira* and asked for four *akcha* in return. They went to ask the religious opinion of a mufti. The mufti who did not know geometry said that his right was four *akcha*. The other mufti who knew geometry issued an opinion stating that his right was one *akcha*; and the latter one is the correct one. Because, a two-*zira* well is one-eighth of a four-*zira* well, so the wage should be one-eighth of the complete wage.

(Katib Çelebi, *Mizan al-Haqq fi Ikhtiyar al-Ahaqq*, p. 10.)

As a result of rapid evolution of scientific studies in the Western world, Muslim scholars have interpreted some verses which they regarded relevant with reference to these scientific studies. The Egyptian scholar Tantawi Jawhari used modern scientific data in his tafsir and has been accepted as the greatest representative of the school named “Scientific Tafsir”. Moreover, Elmalılı Hamdi Yazır applied scientific data to the interpretation of some verses. For example, the verse **“And you see the mountains, thinking them rigid, while they will pass as the passing of clouds. [It is] the work of Allah, who perfected all things. Indeed, He is Acquainted with that which you do.”**²⁵ he says that earth rotates; that the mountains are formed by circulating gases; that new creation evolves by chemical alteration; that things which seem stable in the world are in fact changing and going towards doomsday; that one day with a blow, the enormous mountains will be destroyed and the earth will be replaced with another earth.²⁶

To understand and interpret the Noble Qur'an correctly we can benefit from today's scientific data. We can especially benefit from the data provided by physics and astronomy in understanding and interpreting the verses that encourage thinking about creation in the exterior world and how it was created, their connection to the supreme power of Allah through their order and regularity. Some branches of science such as history, anthropology, and archeology play an instructive role in the identification of the ancient cultures and civilizations mentioned in stories of the Qur'an. We can take

²⁵ Naml, 27: 88

²⁶ Elmalılı Hamdi Yazır, *Hak Dini Kur'an Dili*, vol. 5, p. 5709, 5710.

today's scientific data into consideration in the explanation of many topics mentioned in the Qur'an. However, while using this scientific information, we must remember that the message of the Qur'an is universal and unchangeable, and because scientific data changes and constantly progresses through new investigations, they cannot limit the messages of the revelation.

2. Main Subjects of the Qur'an

The Noble Qur'an is the last link in the chain of revelation. It will continue to be a source of guidance for people, from the period of its revelation until the Day of Resurrection. To understand and interpret the Qur'an, which guides people in the topics that concern them either directly or indirectly, we should take into consideration the topics written in it and information about these topics. Different classifications can be made regarding the major subjects of the Qur'an, because the classification of a subject may change according to the perspective of the person who makes the classification. Major subjects of the Qur'an direct people in certain topics such as Allah, nature, humans, their family, relatives, neighbors, and all social relations. The verse **"...We have not neglected in the Book a thing..."**²⁷ expresses this reality. Moreover, the verse **"O mankind, there has to come to you instruction from your Lord and healing for what is in the breasts and guidance and mercy for the believers."**²⁸ states the main characteristic of the Qur'an.

To contemplate the revelation, get advice, and benefit from its guidance and mercy, one should have the correct information, correct belief, and correct behavior. Major subjects of the Qur'an explain these basic values. We can determine the major subjects of the Qur'an as the creation and universe, faith, acts of worship, morality, human relationships, and history (stories).

2.1. Creation and Universe

Allah the Almighty has brought into existence the whole universe. Allah states in the Qur'an that when He desired to create the universe and the things in it, everything came into existence on His command **"Be!"**, and this is expressed in the following verse: **"Originator of the heavens and the earth. When He decrees a matter, He only says to it, 'Be.' and it is."**²⁹ Allah did not only create the universe and things in it, He also enables its existence and survival. The

²⁷ An'am, 6: 38.

²⁸ Yunus, 10: 57.

²⁹ Baqarah, 2: 117.

universe was created in accordance with the divine plan and it submitted to the disposition of Allah. This matter is expressed in the Qur'an as such: **"Allah is the Creator of all things, and He is, over all things, Disposer of affairs."**³⁰

The words of *isharah* (indication), *ayah* (sign), and *burhan* (evidence) are used in the Qur'an for the universe and things in it, and it is stated that they indicate the existence and oneness of Allah. The entire universe such as the earth and heavens, mountains and seas, atmosphere and planets, submit themselves to the will of Allah and His rules, and continue their existence in harmony and coherence. It is stated in a verse: **"(He) is Who created and proportioned and Who destined and (then) guided."**³¹ If nature refrained from following the rules and measures determined for them, it would create disorder and the universe would be destroyed. The perfect creation of the universe and things in it, their harmonious running and consistency are indications of the power of Allah. This situation is stated in the Qur'an as such: **"[And] who created seven heavens in layers. You do not see in the creation of the Most Merciful any inconsistency. So return [your] vision [to the sky]; do you see any breaks? Then return [your] vision twice again. [Your] vision will return to you humbled while it is fatigued."**³²

LET'S INTERPRET

Interpret the creation of the universe together with the meanings of the relevant verses.

1. Allah the Almighty has created everything perfectly by His command "Be!"
(Baqarah, 2: 117; Al-i Imran, 3: 27, 59; An'am, 6: 101; Ya-Sin, 36: 82.)
2. Allah (in the creation) has separated the earth and the heavens, which were adjacent to each other in the past, widened them and rendered them what they are today.
(Anbiya, 21: 30; A'raf, 7: 54; Dhariyat, 51: 47)
3. The universe has completed its formation by the creation of the earth, sun, moon, stars, and other celestial bodies.
(Fussilat, 41: 9-12; Anbiya, 21: 31, 32.)

³⁰ Zumar, 39: 62.

³¹ A'la, 87: 2, 3.

³² Mulk, 67: 3, 4.

The created universe with all its entities is not something virtual; rather, it is a real world. Human beings perceive all parts of this universe, investigate, comprehend, and try to give meaning to it by the reason and senses given to them. The sole power that directs the running of the universe and manages it is the power of Allah because He has determined the rules of the functioning of the universe and all the objects that He has created.³³

The Qur'an states that water is the source of vitality and life. It points out that there is an unbreakable connection between water and life; human beings, animals, and other living beings were created from water and sprang to life from water. It is stated in the Qur'an regarding this matter: **"Allah has created every [living] creature from water. And of them are those that move on their bellies, and of them are those that walk on two legs, and of them are those that walk on four. Allah creates what He wills. Indeed, Allah is over all things competent."**³⁴

The perfection of the creation, harmony, and balance of the universe in itself are mentioned as signs leading (humans) to discover the existence of Allah and His oneness. All living beings in the universe have been given into the service of humans. So they should be conscious of Allah who is the Absolute Creator of the universe, which provides all their needs, and they should remember that nothing has been created aimlessly. The relationship between humans and the universe is given in the Qur'an in the following verse: **"Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day are signs for those of understanding. Who remember Allah while standing or sitting or [lying] on their sides and give thought to the creation of the heavens and the earth, [saying], 'Our Lord, You did not create this aimlessly; exalted are You [above such a thing]; then protect us from the punishment of the Fire.'"**³⁵

³³ *İslam'a Giriş (Gençliğin İslam Bilgisi)*, p. 250.

³⁴ Nur, 24: 45.

³⁵ Al-i Imran, 3: 190, 191.

LET'S LEARN

“Just as a waymark must not cause a traveler to focus on itself but direct him towards the real destination of his travel, so every natural phenomenon, instead of absorbing our attention should always act in such a way that our attention is directed towards something beyond it. At this depth of understanding, a natural phenomenon is no longer a natural phenomenon; it is a ‘sign’ or ‘symbol’ – *ayah* as the Qur’an calls it. And all so-called natural phenomena point us, ‘signs’ in the Qur’anic conception, to God Himself, or more precisely, this or that aspect of God such as His Benevolence, His Power, His Sovereignty, His Justice, etc...”

(Toshihiko Izutsu, *God and Man in the Qur’an*, Islamic Book Trust, 2008, p. 143-144.)

2.2. Iman

Iman is to believe sincerely in the basic principles of Islam and to accept them all without hesitation. The Noble Qur’an gives importance to the principles of faith. This matter is mentioned in the following verse: **“O you who have believed, believe in Allah and His Messenger and the Book that He sent down upon His Messenger and the Scripture which He sent down before. And whoever disbelieves in Allah, His angels, His books, His messengers, and the Last Day has certainly gone far astray.”**³⁶ As understood from this verse, Allah has stated these basic Islamic beliefs for humans whom He has created and counseled not to go astray.

The Qur’an places the belief of *tawhid* (oneness) at the center of the faith system. *Wahy* (the revelation) and other principles of faith, such as the belief in prophethood and the Hereafter, depend on acceptance of the existence of Allah and His oneness. According to the belief of *tawhid*, the One who has created the universe and everything in it and keeps it in order and harmony is Allah. He is the possessor of absolute power and force.

He is the only God who rules over everything in the universe through His infinite knowledge and power. Allah is a Being that is all Hearing (*Sami’*), all Seeing (*Basir*), Eternal and Everlasting, bestowing endless grace and mercy on His creatures. He is the only Being who has sent religion to people through revelation and the attributes which belong to Him cannot be ascribed to anyone else. The Qur’an expresses this matter in the simplest way: **“Say, ‘He**

³⁶ Nisa, 4: 136.

is Allah, (who is) One. Allah, the Eternal Refuge. He neither begets nor is born, nor is there to Him any equivalent.”³⁷

Another principle of faith delivered to us is belief in *wahy* (revelation). In order to show people the straight path Allah has sent divine messages via his prophets at different periods of history. As stated in the Qur’an, every community has become a witness to the revelation throughout history. The verse “And We certainly sent into every nation a messenger, (saying), ‘Worship Allah and avoid taghut.’...”³⁸ clearly expresses this because it is not possible for a nation that did not receive revelation to know Allah and to worship Him properly.

Belief in the books that convey His revelation is among the basic principles of Islamic faith. Guidance to understand revelation is needed for people to distinguish between right and wrong, good and bad, harm and benefit; to worship Allah properly. It is also necessary for one to perform one’s duties towards oneself, one’s family, and other people to the best of one’s ability with full consciousness of one’s responsibilities as a rational being.

The books, which came to people through revelation via the prophets, are the Psalms, the Torah, the Gospel, and the Noble Qur’an. The Qur’an is the last divine revelation and has been transmitted as it is, without change from the day of its revelation until today, and it will preserve this characteristic until the Day of Resurrection. The verse “**Indeed, it is We who sent down the Qur’an and indeed, We will be its guardian.**”³⁹ points to the immutability of the Qur’an.

Another principle that Islam emphasizes and mentions as a necessity of belief is *nubuwwah* (prophethood). Allah the Almighty has sent His messages to people via His prophets. Allah chose and appointed His messengers from human beings so that they would be examples and guides for their communities. Prophets were chosen from certain people who always told the truth and truthfully carried out the mission entrusted to them.

People who have intellect and willpower can be happy and live in peace in this world, but they cannot know the basic principles that would bring them happiness in the Hereafter. The happiness of humans depends on the

³⁷ Ikhlās, 114: 1-4.

³⁸ Nahl, 16: 36.

³⁹ Hijr, 15: 9.

fulfillment of their duty to Allah, themselves, other people, and nature. They can understand their responsibility if such knowledge is delivered by the prophets.⁴⁰ For this reason, Allah has sent a prophet to every nation and has stated that He will not punish those to whom He did not send a prophet. The essential mission of prophethood is to deliver the revelation received from Allah to people as they received it. Every prophet manifested miracles. The Noble Qur'an is the most important miracle of the last prophet Muhammad, who was sent as a mercy to the world.

Another essential principle of belief, which is among the major subjects of the Qur'an, is the belief in *akhirah* (the Hereafter). *Akhirah* means the life that will start after life in this world and which is eternal. There is continuous emphasis concerning the Hereafter in the verses sent down both during the period of Mecca and the period of Madinah. Life in this world and the life in the Hereafter are repeated in the same verses, and it is emphasized that people will be held accountable for all of their acts. Belief in the Hereafter is of great importance in attaining and strengthening a sense of responsibility in this world. Living in accordance with the meaning pointed out in the following verse, **“So whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it, and whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it.”**⁴¹ helps us become conscious of our acts and behavior.

2.3. Ibadah

One of the major themes of the Noble Qur'an is *ibadah*. Briefly, *ibadah* means to follow the orders of Allah and to avoid that which He prohibits. The range of *ibadah* is so wide that every behavior, act, and belief that ensures the satisfaction of Allah is considered within its limits. In addition to prayer, fasting, pilgrimage, and almsgiving performed for Allah by a believer in accordance with prescribed rules, every kind of good and beneficial action that a person does in his social environment is also regarded as *ibadah*. Many actions, such as saying a kind word, helping a needy person, protecting the poor and orphans, keeping the environment clean, fulfilling responsibilities, respecting the rights of others, being truthful, avoiding waste, being just, and behaving mercifully to all living beings are included in the scope of *ibadah*.

⁴⁰ Muhsin Demirci, *Kur'an'ın Temel Konuları*, p. 154

⁴¹ Zalzalah, 99: 7, 8.

Faith and *amal al-salih* (good deeds) are mentioned together in many verses of the Qur'an. A faith that does not develop into *amal salih*, defined as good behavior and sincerity and *ibadah*, and which is not built on faith would lose its permanence. Acts of worship must be performed for the sake of Allah only and not for any other purpose. Acts of worship cannot be done in order to gain advantage, ingratiate oneself with someone, or to pretend to be a different person. According to the verse **"It is You we worship and You we ask for help."**⁴², Muslims are commanded to worship only Allah and expect help and reward only from Him.

Ibadah is the best word to express being the servant of Allah and reflects gratefulness for the blessings He gives us. Ways of reaching *taqwa* (righteousness), achieving His pleasure, avoiding being ungrateful, and glorifying Allah while benefiting from countless blessings is to worship only Him with all sincerity. Allah the Almighty draws attention to this matter: **"O mankind, worship your Lord, who created you and those before you, that you may become righteous. [He] who made for you the earth a bed [spread out] and the sky a ceiling and sent down from the sky, rain and brought forth thereby fruits as provision for you. So do not attribute to Allah equals while you know [that there is nothing similar to Him]."**⁴³

On the one hand, acts of worship beautify the human spirit, and on the other, they strengthen belief in and love for Allah. They distance humans from evil behavior and sin. People should be conscious that they will be questioned regarding their actions and thoughts at any moment as this keeps alive the awareness of responsibility and controls their behavior. **"Recite, [O Muhammad], what has been revealed to you of the Book and establish prayer. Indeed, prayer prohibits immorality and wrongdoing, and the remembrance of Allah is greater. And Allah knows that which you do."**⁴⁴ In this verse the effects of prayer and other commendable acts of humans are pointed out.

⁴² Fatiha, 1: 5.

⁴³ Baqarah, 2: 21, 22.

⁴⁴ Ankabut, 29: 45.

READING TEXT

“O Allah! It is You alone we worship.”

As we express our gratitude to Allah we are prevented from all kinds of ungratefulness by acts of worship. By this means, we also improve our morals and our feeling of wisdom. However, Allah the Almighty is the only goal in our acts of worship. We only turn towards Him and worship Him alone. We do not associate anything with Him. We do not glorify anything, and we do not ascribe any position that belongs to Him to anything else. Our acts of worship are only performed for Him, and we never bow before anything other than Him. Because, bowing down before other beings decreases human honor and reduces people to a level which is lower than the thing or being which is deemed worthy to be worshipped. Since we never approve of this and never try to reduce the honor of our humanity – on the contrary we always try to enhance it – we worship only Allah and never bow before any of Allah’s slaves, anything or any being that we know as created. On the contrary, we benefit from that created being. But, we do not regard it as superior to us by reducing our soul before that being and attributing to it any divinity. We never worship material beings regardless of their value. Because, material beings are things that we use, process, and place at the disposal of our needs. Our intellect and power are superior to that being and because they are superior, they use it.

Therefore, the only object of our acts of worship is the satisfaction of Allah. We regard worshipping (something) other than Allah as derogative and restrictive, and we attain freedom only by worshipping Allah, feel the nobility and honor of our humanity, and pursue the highest purposes in life.

(Ömer Rıza Doğrul, *Kur'an'dan Ayetler*, p. 10, 11.)

2.4. Akhlaq

Akhlaq is a set of good behavior that people sincerely exhibit with their own free will. The Noble Qur'an advises us to carry out our responsibilities towards others and not to neglect sincerity while performing our acts of worship. For this reason, we should purify ourselves from any evil thoughts we have, manifest our abilities through positive behavior, treat all creatures with mercy, and regulate our lives by reaching moral maturity. Allah advises us to be mature people and to adorn ourselves with good behavior such as tolerance, justice, mercy, truthfulness, love, patience, humbleness, and contentment.

Akhlaq enables people to constantly renew themselves in terms of goodness and maturity. For this reason, above anything else, people must avoid evil and bad things and adorn their inner world with belief in Allah. People enjoy being moral with the knowledge of Allah's omniscience that they place in their hearts, showing determination in making no mistake by realizing their

mistakes, and turning away from all kinds of bad words and behavior.⁴⁵ Those who read the following verses **“And it is He who accepts repentance from his servants and pardons misdeeds, and He knows what you do. And He answers [the supplication of] those who have believed and done righteous deeds and increases [for] them from His bounty. But the disbelievers will have a severe punishment.”**⁴⁶ sincerely believe that Allah is a merciful God who forgives mistakes and makes them reflect on their behavior. Good behavior, which Allah is pleased with and commands to be practiced, is mentioned in the Qur’an as follows: **“Indeed, Allah orders justice and good conduct and giving to relatives and forbids immorality and bad conduct and oppression. He admonishes you that perhaps you will be reminded.”**⁴⁷ Those who have good behavior, commanded by Allah, are blessed with paradise. Allah has prepared for them endless blessings. These exemplary people are regarded among the real servants of Allah and their reward is explained in the Qur’an: **“A spring of which the [righteous] servants of Allah will drink; they will make it gush forth with force [and abundance]. They [are those who] fulfill [their] vows and fear a Day whose evil will be widespread. And they give food in spite of love for it to the needy, the orphan, and the captive, [Saying], ‘We feed you only for the countenance of Allah. We wish not from you reward or gratitude.’”**⁴⁸ This emphasis on morality taught by the Qur’an is an indication for the necessity of maturity in terms of morality as well as being conducive to a healthy community.

LET’S THINK

Read the verse given below and decide which behavior is emphasized as good acts of worship.

“Righteousness is not that you turn your faces toward the east or the west, but [true] righteousness is [in] one who believes in Allah, the Last Day, the angels, the Book, and the prophets and gives wealth, in spite of love for it, to relatives, orphans, the needy, the traveler; those who ask [for help], and for freeing slaves; [and who] establishes prayer and gives zakat; [those who] fulfill their promise when they promise; and [those who] are patient in poverty and hardship and during battle. Those are the ones who have been true, and it is those who are the righteous.”

(Baqarah, 2: 177)

We must avoid certain conduct and behavior that the Qur’an defines as

⁴⁵ Muhsin Demirci, *Kur’an’ın Temel Konuları*, p. 286.

⁴⁶ Shura, 42: 25, 26.

⁴⁷ Nahl, 16: 90.

⁴⁸ İnsan, 76: 7-9

evil, and adopt the behavior it praises and regards as good. We must make it an inseparable part of our lives in order to properly fulfill the duty of being Allah's servant. The concepts of "*taqwa*", which means to avoid violating the commands of Allah and sincerely fulfilling the duty of being His servant; "*dhikr*", which means to remember Allah and His blessings; "*shukr*", which means to be grateful for the blessings given by Allah and not to rebel against Him; and "*tawakkul*", which means to depend and rely on only Him in all of our affairs and to manifest moral responsibility towards Allah. Moreover, matters such as being truthful in all of our words and behavior, being just while carrying out our responsibility and using our power, protecting the things which have been entrusted to us, following goodness and avoiding evil, and giving our wealth to needy people indicate our moral responsibilities.

2.5. Human Relationships

Since people are social beings, they must live in a society. As people who live in a society have some rights and freedoms, they also have responsibilities towards each other. The Noble Qur'an mentions human rights and responsibilities and gives rulings related to human relationships. Reflections of faith, acts of worship, and morality in social life explicitly appear in regulations concerning these rights and responsibilities because believing individuals with good morals should also be people who implement justice and do not cause injustice to others in their social lives.⁴⁹

The formation of a functional society based on the foundations of justice and morality and its survival is one of the basic purposes of the Qur'an. The formation of such a society depends on human relationships standing on solid ground. To protect human rights in society, segregation and discrimination on the basis of language, race, and color should be abandoned. The Qur'an emphasizes that human beings are equal; nobody is superior to the other except in doing good; it overcomes all differences that would cause superiority among people, and establishes human relationships on the principle of equality of all people. This matter is mentioned in the Qur'an: **"O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted."**⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Mehmet Paçacı, *Kur'an'a Giriş*, p. 68.

⁵⁰ Hujurat, 49: 13.

The Qur'an, mentioning in this way the equality of people in essence, makes the following call to people in order to ensure the continuity of social relationships in a constructive way: **"O you who have believed, let not a people ridicule (another) people; perhaps they may be better than them; nor let women ridicule (other) women; perhaps they may be better than them. And do not insult one another and do not call each other by (offensive) nicknames. Wretched is the name of disobedience after (one's) faith. And whoever does not repent – then it is those who are the wrongdoers. O you who have believed, avoid much (negative) assumption. Indeed, some assumption is sin. And do not spy or backbite each other. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his brother when dead? You would detest it. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is Accepting of repentance and Merciful."**⁵¹

The Noble Qur'an, in order to establish sound relationships, social trust, and peace among humans, commands them in the following verse to implement justice, equality of all people before the law, and give no special privileges to anyone: **"O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives. Whether one is rich or poor, Allah is more worthy of both. So follow not (personal) inclination, lest you not be just. And if you distort (your testimony) or refuse (to give it), then indeed Allah is ever, with what you do, Acquainted."**⁵²

Humans are undoubtedly responsible beings. They should not act irresponsibly in any of their relationships. There are certain responsibilities that they must carry out towards themselves, their family, society, and the environment in which they live. The ideal human described by the Qur'an is an individual who is concerned with the problems of the society in which he or she lives; who makes a contribution to love, solidarity, brotherhood, social peace, and tranquility, and respects human rights and freedom. According to the Qur'an, in order to realize these values, one is required to avoid negative behavior that makes living together difficult such as feeling hatred, behaving selfishly, developing a grudge, insulting, gossiping, humiliating, and slighting others. The Qur'an, regards the tranquility and safety of society among its essential purposes, it gives explanations and rulings related to certain matters concerning relationships among people and which ensure the sound

⁵¹ Hujurat, 49: 11, 12.

⁵² Nisa, 4: 135.

continuity of the society like trade, *infaq* (giving charity to others out of one's own wealth), trust, bequest, loan, inheritance, marriage, divorce, and other issues concerning family life.

2.6. History (Qasas – Parables)

Qasas are the events reported in the Qur'an concerning the previous prophets and communities in order to provide lessons to people. History and stories, which give information about previous societies, are one of the basic subjects of the Qur'an. They provide the basic means of explaining revelation to the listeners in a better way. *Qasas* are applied to make the community's comprehension of the messages of the Qur'an easier. Some topics, such as the oneness of Allah, belief in the Hereafter, previous prophets, and the revelation sent down to them are cited through *qasas*.

In *qasas*, which give information about previous prophets and communities, the history of that period is not given in detail. Exemplary dimensions of the events and some sections that lead up to the message to be given are mentioned. The object of *qasas* is to give the message of revelation of the Qur'an through past events. Through *qasas*, good behavior – which kept previous communities on the right path – or the events that brought on their collapse are told. These stories convey messages to emulate good and correct behavior and how to avoid evil and false behavior displayed in previous communities. In *qasas*, the problems of previous prophets are reported, and believers of revelation are encouraged not to give in to problems they might encounter. The stories of Abraham as a man who searches for God; Joseph as an example of love and mercy; Job as a symbol of patience; and the wise man Luqman are told and people are instructed to follow their examples. Through these stories reported in the Qur'an, it was hoped that people would contemplate and learn lessons. For example, in Surah Yusuf, after the story of Joseph is reported, this matter is pointed out and it is stated: **“There is certainly in their stories a lesson for those of understanding...”**⁵³

The Noble Qur'an gives examples of the good behavior of previous communities through *qasas*, it encourages the recipients of revelation to adorn themselves with such behavior, and explains how evil behavior results in pain. It advises them not to follow that path. This matter is mentioned in

⁵³ Yusuf, 12: 111.

many verses, such as the following ones: **“And We sent not before you [as messengers] except men to whom We revealed from among the people of cities. So have they not traveled through the earth and observed how the end of those before them was? And the home of the Hereafter is best for those who fear Allah; then will you not reason?”**⁵⁴ Moreover, another very important message given through *qasas* is “all divine religions come from the same source and their principles are the same.” This matter is pointed out in the following verse: **“And We sent not before you any messenger except that We revealed to him that, ‘There is no deity except Me, so worship Me.’”**⁵⁵

DID YOU KNOW?

The stories, most of which were reported during the period of Mecca, became a moral support to the Prophet and Muslims during the difficult times of tabligh (deliverance of the message of Islam). *Qasas* in the Qur'an deal with the difficulties that the previous prophets encountered during their missions, the events that took place after these difficulties, the support of Allah to the prophets, and the punishments of unbelievers resulting in a bad end. Muslims who experienced similar difficulties had their spirits lifted by reading these stories.

(Mehmet Paçacı, *Kur'an'a Giriş*, p. 97.)

LET'S RESEARCH

Research the main ideas of the stories mentioned in the verses given below.

The story of Luqman:
Luqman, 31: 12-19.

The story of Dhu'l-Qarnayn: Kahf, 18:
83-98.

The story of Jonah:
Saffat, 37: 139-148.

The Noble Qur'an reports *qasas* by means of their specific style. Generally, without mentioning the time and place, only some details, which constitute an example and serve the desired purpose, are brought to the forefront and repeated many times. For example, in the story of Luqman, time and place are not mentioned; some information about his being an exemplary father and a wise man is included. The story of Joseph in chapter Yusuf is reported in chronological order, the whole story is widely reported in the same place and is not repeated in any other chapter. The story of Moses is the most repeated story in the Qur'an. While this story is reported in detail in Surah al-Qasas (28), it is also repeated in other chapters. Some topics, such as the birth of Moses, his childhood, youth, and marriage in Madyan are not repeated, but his meeting with the Pharaoh and his criticism of him are repeated. In order to achieve these aims, it is important to focus on the message given by *qasas* instead of the details of the events in the Qur'anic stories.

⁵⁴ Yusuf, 12: 109.

⁵⁵ Anbiya, 21: 25.

LET'S EVALUATE THE CHAPTER

A. Answer the following open-ended questions.

1. Why is the comprehension and interpretation of the Qur'an important? Explain briefly.
2. In which verse has the Prophet explained the word "zulm" in the 82nd verse of Surah al-An'am? Remark.
3. Which basic principles related to morality are emphasized in the Noble Qur'an? Explain.
4. Which advice does the Qur'an give to people in order for them to have healthy social relationships? Explain.
5. What is the basic message of the stories reported in the Meccan period? Explain.

B. Choose the correct answers to the following multiple-choice questions.

- I. Which of the following statements is not related to the internal coherence of the Qur'an?
 - A) The coherence formed by words of the Qur'an among themselves
 - B) The coherence formed by sentences of the Qur'an among themselves
 - C) The coherence formed by verses together with following and previous verses
 - D) The coherence formed by verses related to one topic among themselves
 - E) The coherence of the sunnah in itself

2. Which of the following statements is not one of the basic principles necessary to understand and interpret the Qur'an?

- A) Understanding the Qur'an within its own coherence
- B) Considering the historical context
- C) Benefiting from the explanatory characteristic of the sunnah
- D) Benefiting from scientific data
- E) Memorizing the Noble Qur'an

3. In the scope of which major Qur'anic themes can the verse "You (Alone) we worship, and you (Alone) we ask for help." be included?

- A) The Creation and the Universe
- B) Ibadah (Act of Worship)
- C) Akhlaq (Morality)
- D) Human Relationships
- E) History (Qasas)

4. Which of the following options is not one of the religious beliefs in Mecca and its surroundings during the revelation period of the Qur'an?

- A) Polytheism
- B) Hinduism
- C) Christianity
- D) The Hanif belief
- E) Judaism

5. "Whoever desires honor (through power) – then to Allah belongs all honor. To Him ascends good speech, and righteous work raises it. But they who plot evil deeds will have a severe punishment, and the plotting of those – it will perish."

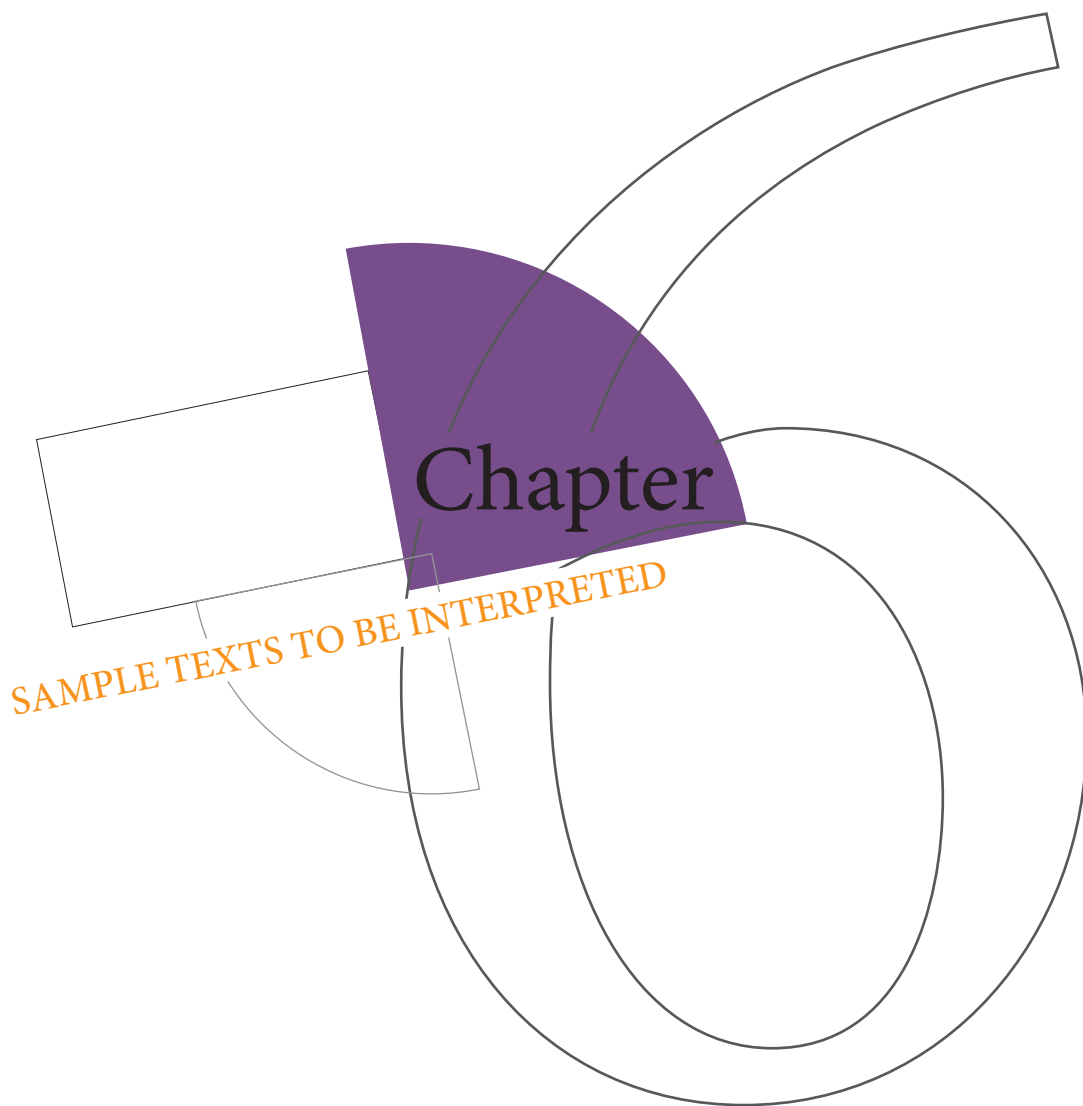
6. Which of the following statements cannot be said about the 10th verse of Surah al-Fatir?

- A) Any verse can deal with more than one topic.
- B) There is no need to look at other verses in order to understand this verse.
- C) There is a relation between good speech and righteous deeds.
- D) Matters related to faith and morality can take place in the same verse.
- E) All kinds of behavior will be answerable in the Hereafter.

C. Fill in the blanks in the following sentences with the most suitable word from those given below.

(particular, the Prophet, akhlaq, worshipping, message, taqwa)

1. The occasions of the revelation of the verses and their historical contexts are; the messages given by the verses are general.
2. The Sunnah of is the only source that transfers the messages of revelation into life and shows how these messages are practiced.
3. A set of good conduct and behavior that people exhibit by their own free will and sincerity is
4. The way of fulfilling our duty of gratitude towards Allah is only Him.
5. In order to reach these aims, it is more important to focus on given by qasas instead of details of the events reported in the qasas of the Qur'an.



SAMPLE TEXTS TO BE INTERPRETED

LET'S GET READY FOR OUR CHAPTER

1. Read the meaning of Surah al-Fatiha and try to understand it.
2. Research *sabab al-nuzul* found in Surah al-Fil (105) from the books of exegesis.
3. Find the meaning of the word “*abtār*” mentioned in Surah al-Kawthar (108).
4. Research the meaning of the terms *tasbih* and *tanzih*.
5. Find the differences in the meanings of the terms *hamd* and *shukr* and share them with your friends in the class.

1. Sample Surahs: the Ma'al and Tafsir of which will be Presented

1.1 Surah al-Fatiha¹

LET'S GET TO KNOW THE CHAPTER

Name:
Surah al-Fatiha

Meccan – Madinan:
Meccan

Number of Verses:
Seven

Included concepts:
Hamd, Rabb, Rahman, Rahim, the Day of
Din, Ubudiyyah (being servant), Isti'annah

The Order of Revelation:
Five*

¹ Fatiha means the first, opening, and beginning. This chapter is like a summary and preface that includes all of the Qur'an's objectives. It is the first chapter revealed in its entirety. This chapter, for its being a summary of all basic principles mentioned in the Qur'an, is called Umm al-Kitab (Mother of the Book) or Asas al-Qur'an (Essence of the Qur'an); for its being like an introduction to the Qur'an, called "Fatihat al-Kitab" (Introduction to the Qur'an); and for its being repeated continuously in prayers, called "Al-Sab' al-Mathani".

*This order of revelation is in accordance with the Script of Uthman.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ۝ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ۝ الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ ۝
 مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ ۝ إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ ۝ اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ۝
 صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ ۝

(1). Bismillahirrahmanirrahim

Basmala means “In the Name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful.” By pronouncing the Basmala, Allah’s servant accepts that success and power can only be attained with the help of Allah and remembers the limits drawn by Allah. Thus, he or she is careful not to exceed these limits.

INFORMATION BOX

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

The letter “ba” (ب) in the beginning of Basmala is attached to a hidden verb “I start” (أَبْتَدَأُ) or “I read” (أَقْرَأُ). Accordingly, it means “I start or read by asking for Allah’s help.”

(Süleyman Ateş, *Çağdaş Tefsir*, vol. I, p. 66.)

(2). [All] hamd is [due] to Allah, Lord of the worlds.

Hamd means to praise someone for his goodness and beauty with the tongue. *Hamd* has a wider meaning than *shukr*, which is done when a blessing is received. *Hamd* may be expressed in every situation. Rabb means the One who creates, feeds, brings up His creatures, makes them mature (disciplines them), controls and governs (the owner of disposition) those whom He disciplined, and who is the master and owner in His dispositions. Al-Alam consists of both perceptible and imperceptible creatures.

This chapter begins by reminding us that Allah, as the Lord of all creatures, worth praising. In addition to the magnificence of the creation, it is sufficient to praise Him for all the things in creation from which people can benefit. Moreover, this is also an expression of how generous He is.



LET'S NOTE

We can ask these questions in order to gain a better understanding of the Qur'an:

- What exactly is the subject of this verse?
- Why was this verse revealed to the Prophet?
- What conclusions can we make from this verse?

(3). (He is) the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful.

Allah is Omnipotent, but He is also very merciful. In this sense, majesty and mercy are combined in this surah.² At the beginning of the surah, speaking about a mercy that embraces everyone demonstrates Allah's love and respect for His servants. Moreover, it emphasizes that He created this world for goodness.³

(4). Owner of the Day of Din (Reward and Punishment).

The word "*din*" in this surah means "reckoning" where everyone is to receive his or her reward or punishment. The day of this return is called the Day of Din. The statement that Allah owns that day means that He ensures that justice prevails and that people will be held accountable for their actions.

(5). You (Alone) we worship, and you (Alone) we ask for help.

"*Ibadah*" means to consciously worship Allah by obeying and showing Him love and respect. It not only refers to acts like prayer, almsgiving, pilgrimage, and fasting, but it also means to hold on tight to something and turn to it. The term "*isti'ana*" means one's request for help from his Creator.

Since Allah is the Lord of the worlds, Rahman, Rahim, and Owner of the day on which everyone will be held accountable, people must worship only Him and ask help from Him alone. This is the refutation of "*shirk*", which means to ascribe the attributes and authority of Allah to other beings.⁴

(6). Guide us to the straight path.

Al-Sirat al-Mustaqim means the straight path in reference to Islam, meaning

DID YOU KNOW?

Al-Rahman expresses mercy encompassing every human; as for al-Rahim, it refers to mercy shown only to believers in the Hereafter.

(Süleyman Ateş, *Çağdaş Tefsir*, v. 1, p. 67.)

² Al-Razi, *Mafatih al-Ghayb*, vol. 1, p. 337; Ateş, *Çağdaş Tefsir*, vol. 1, p. 72.

³ Ateş, *Çağdaş Tefsir*, vol. 1, p. 62.

⁴ Al-Razi, *Mafatih al-Ghayb*, vol. 1, p. 340-342; *Kur'an Yolu*, vol. 1, p. 55; M. Vehbi, *Hulasat al-Bayan*, vol. 1, 2, p. 25.

the path of Allah.⁵ In this verse, servants are asked to search for the straight path. Thus, the desire to search and find the straight path leads them to act and behave carefully and in a trustworthy manner in all of their affairs in this world.

LET'S DISCUSS

It is remarkable that some verbs in this chapter of the Qur'an are used in the plural form such as "we do, we will." In other words, there is the hidden pronoun "we" instead of "I". In your opinion, what might be the reason for this usage?

Discuss.

(7). The path of those upon whom You have bestowed favor, not of those who have evoked (Your) anger or of those who [have gone] astray.

People's desire to walk on the straight path and obtain blessings leads them to look at the world positively. Moreover, awareness that there will be questioning in the Hereafter obliges people to behave carefully, which in turn promotes just behavior. A person's efforts to walk on the straight path should be in accordance with Allah's will so that the person does not deviate or be led astray.

INFORMATION BOX

The identity of those who have been bestowed with favors is defined in the verse given below as follows:

"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." (Nisa, 4: 69.)

LET'S LEARN

"Ghadab" means violence, rage, and anger, while "Dalalah" means going astray.

(Süleyman Ateş, *Çağdaş Tefsir*, vol. 1, p. 74.)

Allah does not want His servants to go astray and suffer. Therefore, worshipping only Allah, sharing one's blessings with others, and protecting the earth are important duties of the believers.

At the end of the surah, the word "*amin*" is pronounced. It means "accept our supplication and do not send us back empty-handed." This word is not included in the surah and it is not an *ayah* (verse). Saying this word at the end of the recitation of Surah al-Fatiha was recommended by the Prophet (saw).⁶

⁵ Muqatil, *Tafsir i Kabir*, vol. 1, p. 47; Elmalılı, vol. 1, p. 124. (see Surah al-Baqarah, 2: 120.)

⁶ Elmalılı Hamdi Yazır, *Hak Dini Kur'an Dili*, vol. 1, p. 140; M. Vehbi, *Hulasat al-Bayan*, vol. 1, 2, p. 28; Kur'an Yolu, vol. 1, p. 65.

LET'S ASK AND ANSWER

1. What does “asking the help from only Allah” (إِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ) mean?
2. What does “the Day of Din (religion)” (يَوْمَ الدِّينِ) mean?
3. Who does “those who have been bestowed by favor” (أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ) refer to?

LET'S FIND SOME PRINCIPLES

Let's find some principles regarding Surah al-Fatiha:

- Being a servant of only Allah makes people free.
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-

1.2. Surah al-Fil

LET'S GET TO KNOW THE CHAPTER

Name:

Surah al-Fil is named after the word “fil” (elephant), which is mentioned in the first verse.

Number of Verses:

Five

The Order of Revelation:

Nineteen

Sequence number in the Qur'an:
One hundred and five

Meccan – Madinan:
Meccan

Included concepts:
Keyd, Ababil, Sijjil

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ فَعَلَ رَبُّكَ بِأَصْحَابِ الْفِيلِ ۚ
 أَلَمْ يَجْعَلْ كَيْدَهُمْ فِي تَضْلِيلٍ ۚ
 وَأَرْسَلَ عَلَيْهِمْ طَيْرًا أَبَابِيلَ ۚ
 تَرْمِيهِمْ بِحِجَارَةٍ مِنْ سِجِّيلٍ ۚ
 فَجَعَلَهُمْ كَعَصِفٍ
 أَلْ يَوْمَئِذٍ

Abraha, the governor of Yemen, which was under the rule of Abyssinia in 570 CE, built a large temple in San'a to attract the attention of Arab pilgrims who visited the Ka'bah in Mecca every year. He sent messengers to various places to invite people there. However, it did not receive the desired attention because of people's interest in the Ka'bah. For this reason, he decided to demolish the Ka'bah and advanced towards Mecca with a great army that included elephants.⁷ Meccans called the year that this event took place “the year of elephant” and used this date as a turning point in their history. This event happened about the same time as the birth of our Prophet (saw).⁸ The question of “Have you not seen?” is used to mean “Don't you know?” and “Have you not heard?”

⁷ Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi, the Article of “Fil Vakası”, p. 70-71; Muqatil, *Tafsir i Kabir*, vol. 1, p. 455-459; Elmalılı Hamdi Yazır, *Hak Dini Kur'an Dili*, vol. 9, p. 126, 127.

⁸ Al-Razi, *Mafatih al-Ghayb*, vol. 23, p. 420; Elmalılı Hamdi Yazır, *Hak Dini Kur'an Dili*, vol. 9, p. 125, 136-149; Darwaza, *al-Tafsir al-Hadith*, vol. 1, p. 209.

(1). Have you not seen, (O Muhammad), how your Lord dealt with the companions of the elephant?

This verse reports that the army that attacked the Ka’bah was heavily defeated. Allah prevented the success of that army which used elephants.

(2). Did He not make their plan misguided?

“*Keyd*” denotes to deceive, to set a trap, and to manipulate. The verse emphasizes that Allah stands by good people and assists them against the tricks and treachery set up by ill-intended people. Their plot was to capture the Ka’bah, make their religion dominant, and seize the commercial earnings there.

LET’S NOTE

Starting the chapter with the question of “Have you not seen?” is a metaphor (*majaz*) that means “Don’t you know?” because the effects of that event were still alive, fresh, and continuing as it had been seen by Meccan society.

(al-Razi, *Mafatih al-Ghayb*, vol. 23, p. 414)

LET’S RESEARCH AND FIND

Find a proverb similar to the one given below by taking into consideration the verse “...but the evil plot does not encompass except its own people...” (Fatir, 35: 43)

Hoist with one’s own petard.

.....

....

(3). And He sent against them birds in flocks.

“Ababil” means something that comes in flocks, in masses, in groups, and one after another. In this surah, it means “birds in separate flocks that come one after another.”⁹

⁹ *Dini Kavramlar Sözlüğü*, “Ebabil”, p. 131; Elmalılı Hamdi Yazır, *Hak Dini Kur’an Dili*, vol. 9, p. 127, 128; Ateş, *Çağdaş Tefsir*, vol. 11, p. 95.

(4). (The birds are) striking them with stones of hard clay.

“Sijil” means hard clay, baked brick.¹⁰ Although Abraha gave his army the order to advance on the Ka’bah, the elephants refused to walk, and then flocks of birds threw baked stones at the army and destroyed them.

(5). And He made them like eaten straw.

It is reported that because the soldiers of the army attacking the Ka’bah were riddled with the stones thrown at them, they were compared to “straw” that was eaten by insects.

It is emphasized in the surah that Allah has a trap against the tricks and deceptions set by ill-intended people. Here, the people who remain helpless even though they do their best are taught not to lose hope of receiving Allah’s help.

INFORMATION BOX

“*Asf*” means pieces of straw and wheat husk, which are eaten by moths, insects, and worms and scattered about.

(*Kur’an Yolu*, vol. 5, p. 691)

LET’S ASK AND ANSWER

1. Which event does the surah point to?
2. How should the question “have you not seen?” (أَلَمْ تَرَ) be understood?
3. What was the plot (كَيْدُهُمْ) of the owners of the elephants?

LET’S FIND SOME PRINCIPLES

Let’s find some principles regarding Surah al-Fil:

- The shiniest stars illuminate the darkest of nights.

-

-

-

¹⁰ Al-Razi, *Mafatih al-Ghayb*, vol. 23, p. 421; Ateş, *Çağdaş Tefsir*, vol. 11, p. 129; *Kur’an Yolu*, vol. 5, p. 691.

1.3. Surah al-Quraysh

LET'S GET TO KNOW THE CHAPTER

Name:

Surah al-Quraysh is named after the word “al-Quraysh” mentioned in its first verse.

Number of Verses:

Four

The Order of Revelation:

Twenty-nine

Sequence number in the Qur'an:

One hundred and six

Meccan – Madinan:

Meccan

Included concepts:

Ilaf, Ubudiyah, Bayt

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

لَا إِلَافَ قُرَيْشٍ ۖ
إِلَافِهِمْ رِحْلَةَ الشِّتَاءِ وَالصَّيْفِ ۖ فَلْيَعْبُدُوا رَبَّ هَذَا الْبَيْتِ
الَّذِي أَطْعَمَهُمْ مِنْ جُوعٍ وَآمَنَهُمْ مِنْ خَوْفٍ

(1). For the covenants (of security and safeguard enjoyed) by Quraysh.

“Ilaf” means security, ease, inclination, being accustomed, and habit.¹¹ Quraysh is a great Arab tribe, which is mentioned in the Qur'an and from which the Prophet originates. The security provided for them during their commercial trips is mentioned in this *surah*.

(2). Their accustomed security [in] the caravan of winter and summer

Since Quraysh undertook the maintenance of the Ka'bah, it was a place of prestige among other tribes. After the incident of the Elephant, the Ka'bah gained more importance and accordingly the reputation of the tribe of Quraysh also increased. For this reason, nearby tribes would not do them any harm. Since

¹¹ Al-Razi, *Mafatih al-Ghayb*, vol. 23, p. 428; Elmalılı Hamdi Yazır, *Hak Dini Kur'an Dili*, vol. 9, p. 163; Derveze, *al-Tafsir al-Hadith*, vol. 1, p. 288.

Mecca was not suitable for agriculture and stockbreeding, people would travel in safety to the warmer places of Yemen in the winter and to the cold tablelands of Syria in the summer to trade.¹² It is emphasized in the rest of the verse that the Lord of the Ka’bah must be worshipped in order to secure safety on these trips.

(3). So let them worship the Lord of this House!

When it is considered that all these means are bestowed due to the respect shown to the Ka’bah, the call “So, let them worship the Lord of this House!” is understood more clearly.¹³ It is obvious that the expression هَذَا الْبَيْتِ refers to the Ka’bah.

(4). Who has fed them against hunger and secured them from fear.

Polytheists feared that if they accepted what the Prophet said, worshipped Allah who is the One, and removed the idols from the Ka’bah, they would lose their commercial earnings, go hungry, and hence, they would lose their security and their homes. This surah reminds Quraysh that they should show respect to Allah and glorify Him since He is the One who lets them make the journeys and trade in winter and summer. It emphasizes that Allah is the One who provides for their security and saves them from hunger. Thus, it warns them about the falsity of turning towards gods other than Allah because of these fears.

LET’S ASK AND ANSWER

1. To which notion is the security of the Quraysh society correlated?
2. What does the emphasis (هَذَا الْبَيْتِ) mean?
3. What is the reason for hunger and fear mentioned in the surah?

¹² Elmalılı Hamdi Yazır, *Hak Dini Kur’an Dili*, vol. 9, p. 168, 169; M. Vehbi, *Hulasat al-Bayan*, vol. 15, 16, p. 6575; *Kur’an Yolu*, vol. 5, p. 694.

¹³ Elmalılı Hamdi Yazır, *Hak Dini Kur’an Dili*, vol. 9, p. 171; Derveze, *al-Tafsir al-Hadith*, vol. 1, p. 289, 291; Süleyman Ateş, *Çağdaş Tefsir*, vol. 11, p. 108.

LET’S FIND SOME PRINCIPLES

Find some principles related to Surah al-Quraysh.

- When humans become servants of Allah they feel safe.
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1.4. Surah al-Ma’un

LET’S GET TO KNOW THE CHAPTER

Name: Surah al-Ma’un is named after the word “al-Ma’un” in its last verse.	Sequence number in the Qur’an: One hundred and seven
Number of Verses: Seven	Meccan – Madinan: Meccan chapter, according to most of the mufasssirs.
The Order of Revelation: Seventeen	Included concepts: Din, Wail, Salah, Riya, Ma’un

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

أَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي يُكَذِّبُ بِالْإِيمَانِ ﴿١﴾ فَذَلِكَ الَّذِي يَدْعُ الْيَتِيمَ ﴿٢﴾ وَلَا يَحْضُ عَلَى طَعَامِ
الْمِسْكِينِ ﴿٣﴾ قَوْلٌ لِلْمُصَلِّينَ ﴿٤﴾ الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ صَلَاتِهِمْ سَاهُونَ ﴿٥﴾ الَّذِينَ هُمْ
يُرَآؤْنَ ﴿٦﴾ وَيَمْنَعُونَ الْمَاعُونَ ﴿٧﴾

LET'S THINK

“The question ‘Have you seen?’ aims to show that an unexpected situation or conduct will be mentioned in the sentences that will follow, and thus is used to draw attention to the importance of the topic.”

(*Kur'an Yolu*, vol. 5, p. 696.)

(1). Have you seen the one who denies the din (religion)?

Denial of *din* means denial of accountability on the Day of Judgment.¹⁴

Our Prophet resisted the practices that destroyed the order of individuals and of society, and this was why he was blamed for denying the religion of the ancestors.¹⁵ However, Allah the Almighty explains the real deniers of religion and acquits His Prophet. Here, the denial of religion refers to the denial of the Day of Judgment. It means neglecting the orphans and the poor and rejecting the social responsibility related to them. The poor and orphans are among the helpless and the weak. For this reason, their guardian is society. Indeed, the strength of a chain is as much as (the strength of) its weakest link. Due to its importance, ignoring responsibility concerning orphans and the poor is considered equal to the denial of the Day of Judgment and those who behave in this way are warned.¹⁶

(2). For that is the one who drives away the orphan. (3). And does not encourage the feeding of the poor.

It is stated in the 19th verse of Surah al-Dhariyat (51) of the Qur'an: “**And from their properties was (given) the right of the (needy) petitioner and the deprived.**” In this verse, those who neglect the rights of the orphan and the poor are warned.

(4). So woe to those who pray. (5). (But) who are heedless of their prayer.

Surah al-Ma'un was revealed in the first years of the Meccan period. For this reason, those whose prayers are criticized in this verse are reported to be the polytheists. It is emphasized that the polytheists' claims of being close to Allah are meaningless while ignoring the problems of orphans and the poor. Some of the polytheists' actions in the name of service to the Ka'bah and worship of Allah are also criticized; their actions, which were nothing but whistling and handclapping,¹⁷ are condemned by the phrase “**Woe to those who pray!**”¹⁸

The expression “Woe to those who pray!” is also related to the prayers of the

LET'S DISCUSS

Every year many people die of hunger in the world. Discuss with your friends how the true understanding of Surah al-Ma'un contributes to the solution of this problem.

¹⁴ Al-Razi, *Mafatih al-Ghayb*, vol. 23, p. 439; Elmalılı, vol. 9, p. 175.

¹⁵ A'raf, 7: 70; Yunus, 10: 78; Qasas, 28: 36; Ma'idah, 5: 104.

¹⁶ Al-Razi, *Mafatih al-Ghayb*, vol. 23, p. 442; M. Vehbi, *Hulasat al-Bayan*, vol. 15, 16, p. 6580.

¹⁷ Anfal, 8: 35.

¹⁸ Ateş, Çağdaş Tefsir, vol. 11, p. 115-119.

hypocrites in addition to the polytheists. In this case, the word “*sahun*” is also understood as “Those who do not perform their prayers in time, those who do not take their prayers seriously, or those who do not care whether they are performed or not.” For this reason, it is clear that prayer in the sense of turning towards Allah should not only be in the form of actions; rather it must fulfill certain conditions oriented to its essence, such as *ikhlas* (sincerity) and cordiality. If a person postpones and then forgets his or her responsibilities, it means that person’s prayer has not produced the necessary moral virtues it should have.¹⁹

(6). Those who make show.

“*Riya* (show off)” means one’s pretending to have moral characteristics without genuinely having them. It first described the polytheist, who would drive away orphans and ignore feeding the poor while claiming to perform acts of worship, as nothing more than a pretense and show off.

In this verse, it is stated that ignoring the needy and showing off is unacceptable conduct from people who claim to be believers.²⁰ For this reason, those who neglect orphans and the poor in their society are condemned. Moreover, it emphasizes that acts of worship have the (potential) danger of turning into showing off (*riya*).

(7). And withhold (simple) assistance.

Social justice must encompass all people for the blessings in the world are for the benefit of all human beings. A peaceful society can be formed only by those who wish for others what they wish for themselves. In the surah, the polytheists’ behavior of begrudging even the simplest of assistance is criticized.

LET’S NOTE

“*Ma’un*” is a comprehensive word that is used for almsgiving, charity, doing a favor, anything that more or less has a benefit, such as the borrowing and lending of dishes, pots, and pans among neighbors.

(Muhammed Hamdi Yazır, *Hak Dini Kur’an Dili*, vol. 9, p. 174.)

¹⁹ Al-Razi, *Mafatih al-Ghayb*, vol. 23, p. 443, 445; Elmalılı Hamdi Yazır, *Hak Dini Kur’an Dili*, vol. 9, p. 179; Süleyman Ateş, *Çağdaş Tefsir*, vol. 11, p. 120.

²⁰ Elmalılı Hamdi Yazır, *Hak Dini Kur’an Dili*, vol. 9, p. 177.

LET'S ASK AND ANSWER

1. How should the expression of “denial of religion” (يَكْذِبُ بِالْـدِّينِ) be understood?
2. What is the importance of the emphasis on the orphan and poor in this chapter?
3. Who are implied by the expression of ”فَوَيْلٌ لِلْمُصَلِّينَ“?

LET'S FIND SOME PRINCIPLES

Let's find some principles related to Surah al-Ma'un:

- No one can be happy until everyone is happy.
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1.5. Surah al-Kawthar

LET'S GET TO KNOW THE CHAPTER

<p>Name: Surah al-Kawthar is named after the word “al-kawthar” mentioned in its first verse.</p> <p>Number of Verses: Three</p> <p>The Order of Revelation: Fifteen</p>	<p>Sequence number in the Qur'an: One hundred and eight</p> <p>Meccan – Madinan: It is a Meccan chapter, according to most of the mufasssirs.</p> <p>Included concepts: Kawthar, Abtar</p>
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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 إِنَّا أَعْطَيْنَاكَ الْكَوْثَرَ ۖ فَصَلِّ لِرَبِّكَ وَانْحَرْ ۚ إِنَّ شَانِئَكَ هُوَ الْأَبْتَرُ ۝

(1). Indeed, We have granted you, (O Muhammad), al-Kawthar.

“*Kawthar*” means abundant favor and multitude. This word is used to refer to valuable things. In the books of tafsirs, this word has been interpreted in many different ways, such as an endless favor, prophethood, a pool in paradise, and Islam.²¹

(2). So pray to your Lord and sacrifice (to Him alone).

The statement “So pray to your Lord” is an expression of gratitude for blessings bestowed. Asking help from Allah with patience and prayer is recommended in the 45th verse of Surah al-Baqarah (2). Prayer is the remembrance of Allah and an important act of worship in this respect.²²

Sacrificing (animals) is encouraged in the verse. In this sense, everyone should make an effort to gain the financial means to be able to sacrifice an animal. Moreover, this act of worship constitutes one of the best examples of solidarity.

(3). Indeed, your enemy is the one cut off.

Some polytheists used to say: “Muhammad has no sons who will take his place. When he dies his name and fame will be cut off and you will get rid of him.”²³ Meccan polytheists considered him powerless since he had no tribal support, and they described him as “*abtar* (one whose lineage was cut off)” since he had no son. This verse, which was revealed to refute this claim, consoled the Prophet and answered them back.

While the word “*abtar*” means “the one whose descendent is cut off”, it also contains the meaning of being cut off in all kinds of ways. The verse states that

INFORMATION BOX

In the characterization of “to your Lord”, there is an urge and encouragement. It expresses the necessity of performing acts of worship only for Allah.

(al-Razi, *Mafatih al-Ghayb*, vol. 23, p. 477.)

²¹ Al-Razi, *Mafatih al-Ghayb*, vol. 23, p. 463-471; Derveze, *Al-Tafsir al-Hadith*, vol. 1, p. 184; *Kur'an Yolu*, vol. 5, p. 700.

²² *Ankabut*, 29: 45.

²³ Al-Razi, *Mafatih al-Ghayb*, vol. 23, p. 478; *Bilmen*, vol. 8, p. 4105; Derveze, *Al-Tafsir al-Hadith*, vol. 1, p. 184, 185.

favor can be obtained by having a strong sense, sound belief, and unshakeable morality instead of having wealth, goods, and sons. Moreover, it is meaningful that Allah the Almighty Himself responds to such claims.²⁴

The polytheists said that our Prophet would be deprived of all means of the tribe and the city so long as he insisted on believing in *tawhid*. However, their numbers and wealth were not sufficient to justify them. This surah gives hope to the believers – by using the personality of the Prophet – that they will obtain Allah’s favor as long as they do what is right and perform good deeds. It is stated that even if the deniers, who hated the believers, put their intentions into action, they could not achieve any result.

DID YOU KNOW?

The one who dies without leaving heirs is called “*abtār*” in Arabic.

(Muqatil, *Tefsir-i Kebir*, vol. 1, p. 466.)

LET’S ASK AND ANSWER

1. What does the concept (الْكَوْثَرُ) mentioned in the surah mean?
2. What does the word (الْأَبْتَرُ) refer to?
3. What does the word ((وَأَنْحَزُوا)) mentioned in the surah mean?

LET’S FIND SOME PRINCIPLES

Let’s find some principles related to Surah al-Kawthar:

- Remembering the blessings that one possesses is sufficient reason to have a positive outlook on life in this world.

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²⁴ Al-Razi, *Mafatih al-Ghayb*, vol. 23, p. 481; Mehmet Vehvi, *Hulasat al-Bayan*, vol. 15, 16, p. 6590.

1.6. Surah al-Kafirun

LET'S GET TO KNOW THE CHAPTER

Name: Surah al-Kafirun is named after the word “ <i>al-Kafirun</i> ” in its first verse.	Sequence number in the Qur'an: One hundred and nine
Number of Verses: Six	Meccan – Madinan: It is a Meccan chapter, according to most of the mufasssirs
The Order of Revelation: Eighteen	Included concepts: Kafirun, Abidun, Abid, Din

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا الْكَافِرُونَ ﴿١﴾ لَا أَعْبُدُ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ ﴿٢﴾ وَلَا أَنْتُمْ عَابِدُونَ مَا أَعْبُدُ ﴿٣﴾
وَلَا أَنَا عَابِدٌ مَّا عَبَدْتُمْ ﴿٤﴾ وَلَا أَنْتُمْ عَابِدُونَ مَا أَعْبُدُ ﴿٥﴾ لَكُمْ دِينُكُمْ وَلِيَ دِينِ ﴿٦﴾

(1). Say: O disbelievers!

Being addressed in the form of “O disbelievers!” targets those who denied the Prophet. It is understood that the unbelievers spoken to in this chapter were stuck in their *kufur* (denial) in such a way that there remains no possibility of belief. Struggle with the deniers in the best way is recommended in the Qur'an.²⁵ For this reason, believers should recite this surah to sincerely embrace their religion and reject denial.²⁶

(2). I do not worship what you worship. (3). Nor are you worshippers of what I worship. (4). Nor will I be a worshipper of what you worship. (5). Nor will you be worshippers of what I worship.

Polytheists made this offer to the Prophet: “Give up your claims; we will

LET'S NOTE

The verb *qul* (قُلْ) (say) denotes that He who is the addresser is Allah Himself.

(al-Razi, *Mafatih al-Ghayb*, vol. 23, p. 487, 488.)

²⁵ Nahl, 16: 125; Yunus, 10: 41; Kahf, 18: 29.

²⁶ Elmalılı Hamdi Yazır, *Hak Dini Kur'an Dili*, vol. 9, p. 217.

LET'S DISCUSS

What is the counterpart of the concept of “servitude (or being a worshipper)” mentioned in Surah al-Kafirun, and what does the repetition of this expression mean?

Discuss.

LET'S INTERPRET

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

(An'am, 6: 82)

Interpret the verse given above in terms of the notions of tawhid (oneness and Unity of Allah) – shirk (associating partners with Him).

give you goods and wealth as much as you want. We will marry you to the girls whom you want. We will make you our leader. If you do not accept, we can worship your God provided that you agree to worship our gods. So, we can be partners, we can decide to the one in which the goodness is found.” In response to this offer, the Prophet said, “I take refuge in Allah from associating anything with Him.”

Surah al-Kafirun was revealed due to the statements of the people of Quraysh: “At least touch some of our gods and we will accept your claims and worship your Allah.”²⁷ In this chapter, attempts are made to protect believers from kufr (denial) and shirk (the association of partners with Allah).

In the surah, the objective was to dishearten the polytheists who made efforts to convert the Prophet and believers to their religion and to protect the Muslims from the deniers who tortured them in those days. Thus, it was stated that the desire of the believers to worship Allah who is the One is a right.²⁸

(6). For you is your religion, and for me is my religion.

The verse points to the differences of opinion and belief. It is stated in the 87th verse of Surah al-A'raf (7): “**And if there should be a group among you who has believed in that with which I have been sent and a group that has not believed, then be patient until Allah judges between us. And He is the best of judges.**” So, it offered to make the struggle between *haqq* (truth) and *batil* (wrong). However, probably because the deniers inwardly knew how deceptive and groundless their beliefs were, they could not show such patience.

²⁷ Muqatil, *Tefsir-i Kebir*, vol. 4, p. 467; al-Razi, *Mafatih al-Ghayb*, vol. 23, p. 498; Elmalılı Hamdi Yazır, *Hak Dini Kur'an Dili*, vol. 9, p. 214, 215.

²⁸ Elmalılı Hamdi Yazır, *Hak Dini Kur'an Dili*, vol. 9, p. 221, 222; Mehmet Vehbi, *Hulasat al-Bayan*, vol. 15, 16, p. 6596; Derveze, vol. 1, p. 197.

LET'S EVALUATE

“Have you not considered how Allah presents an example, (making) a good word like a good tree, whose roots are firmly fixed and its branches (high) in the sky? It produces its fruit all the time, by permission of its Lord. And Allah presents examples for the people that perhaps they will be reminded.” (Ibrahim, 14: 24-25)

Evaluate how the verses given above can contribute to the matter of making the struggle between *haqq–batil* and right–wrong through opinions.

There is nothing more consistent than the tolerance of a religion, which carries a profound emphasis on the truth and directs people to think about the different views of others. Everyone should take responsibility for one's own choices. In this sense, there are many verses expressing that the mission of the Prophet was not to force people to believe; rather, it was only to deliver truth.²⁹

LET'S ASK AND ANSWER

1. What is the reason (or occasion) for the revelation of Surah al-Kafirun?
2. What is the relation between the beginning and end of the chapter?
3. What does the word (دين) mean?

LET'S FIND SOME PRINCIPLES

Let's find some principles related to Surah al-Kafirun:

- Freedom of belief is everyone's most essential right.
-
-

²⁹ Al-i Imran, 3: 20; Nahl, 16: 82; Shura, 42: 48; Nur, 24: 54.

1.7. Surah al-Nasr

LET'S GET TO KNOW THE CHAPTER

Name: Surah al-Nasr is named after the word “ <i>nasr</i> ” mentioned in its first verse.	Sequence number in the Qur'an: One hundred and ten
Number of Verses: Three	Meccan – Madinan: Madinan
The Order of Revelation: One hundred and four	Included concepts: Fath, Hamd, Istighfar, Tawwab

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 إِذَا جَاءَ نَصْرُ اللَّهِ وَالْفَتْحُ ﴿١﴾ وَرَأَيْتَ النَّاسَ يَدْخُلُونَ فِي دِينِ اللَّهِ أَفْوَاجًا ﴿٢﴾ فَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ وَاسْتَغْفِرْهُ إِنَّهُ كَانَ تَوَّابًا ﴿٣﴾

(1). When the victory of Allah has come and the conquest.

The surah mentions the Conquest of Mecca. The days of the conquest are considered to be the last days of the Prophet's mission of prophethood and deliverance of the message of Islam.³⁰

When the Prophet entered Mecca with his 12,000 soldiers, he stopped at the door of the Ka'bah and said: "There is no god but Allah Who gives assistance to His servant and routes the armies single-handedly." Then, he asked: "O Meccans! What should I do you in your opinion?" When they said, "What can be expected from a good person except goodness?" the Prophet said: "So, go, you are free", and he set them free.³¹

³⁰ Elmalılı Hamdi Yazır, *Hak Dini Kur'an Dili*, vol. 9, p. 235; Ateş, *Çağdaş Tefsir*, vol. 11, p. 151.

³¹ Al-Razi, *Mafatih al-Ghayb*, vol. 23, p. 516, 517, 528; Elmalılı Hamdi Yazır, *Hak Dini Kur'an Dili*, vol. 9, p. 232, 233.

(2). And you see the people entering into the religion of Allah in multitudes.

“*Fawj*” means in multitudes. Our Prophet faced the hardships and difficulties with only a handful of people supporting him during the years when he started his mission. Many tribes of the time were mere spectators saying, “Let him be alone with his people, if he becomes victorious then he is the prophet.” However, during the period of Madinah, they gained many victories overcoming the enemy and conquering many lands. These conquests resulted in more than capturing a land and led to the spread of Islam to other regions and communities.³²

After the Conquest of Mecca, Arab tribes who saw the success as a consequence of this long struggle against injustice embraced Islam in droves without resistance. The conquest of Mecca without putting up a fight except for some small clashes was also Allah’s kindness. Thus, these people, most of whom were relatives, preferred Islam after the Conquest of Mecca and became brothers with them. No pillage was seen after the success of this conquest. Indeed, it was due to the virtue of the believers and their behavior that they succeeded by means of their religion.

(3). Then exalt (Him) with praise of your Lord and ask forgiveness of Him. Indeed, He is ever Accepting of repentance.

“*Tasbih*” from the perspective of meaning *tanzih* (declaring and believing Allah to be free from defect), denotes purification. It is stated in the 5th verse of Surah al-Muddaththir (74): **“Avoid the evil.”** The Prophet, starting his *tabligh* (delivering his message) with this command, became the leader for the cleansing of both implicit and explicit kinds of shirk (associating something with Allah), evil customs, and bad morality, such as the removal of the idols from Mecca shortly after its conquest.³³ The surah heralds the believers with a victory notifying that people will enter into Islam in multitudes. The chapter asks believers to conclude this success with *hamd* (expressing thanks) to Allah.

“*Tanzih*” means declaring and believing Allah to be free from all attributes which polytheists and infidels attribute to Him and from all kinds of defects.

LET’S NOTE

“*Nasr*” means assistance. The word “*fath*” implies the Conquest of Mecca. However, the conquest mentioned in the surah is not only related to countries; rather, it is also understood as opening and familiarizing a heart to Islam.

(Muhammed Hamdi Yazır, *Hak Dini Kur’an Dili*, vol. 9, p. 232.)

INFORMATION BOX

The usage of the expression “entering” into religion in the 2nd verse, instead of “they entered”, has been interpreted in the way that not only Arabs but all people in the future will continue to embrace this religion.

(Muhammed Hamdi Yazır, *Hak Dini Kur’an Dili*, vol. 9, p. 234.)

³² Elmalılı Hamdi Yazır, *Hak Dini Kur’an Dili*, vol. 9, p. 233; Bilmen, vol. 8, p. 4109; Kur’an Yolu, V5, p. 707.

³³ Al-Razi, *Mfatih al-Ghayb*, vol. 23, p. 523, 524; Elmalılı Hamdi Yazır, *Hak Dini Kur’an Dili*, vol. 9, p. 236-239.

DID YOU KNOW?

The concept of “*tasbih*” mentioned in this surah is similar to the way people in paradise and angels perform in the Qur’an and has been mostly interpreted as “*tanzih*”; sometimes interpreted as prayer (*salah*); and sometimes as “*Subhanallah*.”

(Yunus, 10: 10; Baqarah, 2: 30; Ra’d, 13: 13.)

Believers practice *tanzih* by acting and behaving in their words and actions in accordance with divine commands.

“*Istighfar*” means one’s asking forgiveness from Allah. This command is a call for self-criticism for everyone in the person of the Prophet.³⁴ Believers have been invited to “*istighfar*,” and their success was in accordance with the humility they showed after the victory gained by the help of Allah. The command to ask for forgiveness was also understood as an encouragement and warning for the Prophet to act with forgiveness after the conquest. Thus, it was desired to attract the believers’ attention regarding the danger of doing injustice to people. Moreover, this call shows that the believers did not just aspire to obtain material gains through conquest.

LET’S ASK AND ANSWER

1. When and under what circumstances was Surah al-Nasr sent down?
2. What could be the reason of the emphasis of (وَاسْتَغْفِرُهُ) in the surah?
3. What do “*tasbih*” and “*tanzih*” imply in the surah?

LET’S NOTE

“Some of the Companions inferred by these verses that the Prophet had completed his mission and that his death was close. For this reason, the surah was also called ‘*tawdi*’, which means farewell.”

(*Kur’an Yolu*, vol. 5, p. 708.)

LET’S FIND SOME PRINCIPLES

Find some principles related to Surah al-Nasr.

- Success and victory should be adorned by humility.
-
-

³⁴ Muhammad, 47: 19; Fath, 48: 2; Al-i Imran, 3: 17.

1.8. Surah al-Lahab

LET'S GET TO KNOW THE CHAPTER

Name:

Surah al-Lahab is named after the word “al-Lahab” mentioned in its first verse.

Number of Verses:

Five

The Order of Revelation:

Six

Sequence number in the Qur'an:

One hundred and eleven

Meccan – Madinan:

Meccan chapter

Included concepts:

Lahab, Hatab, Habi, Masad

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

تَبَّتْ يَدَا أَبِي لَهَبٍ وَتَبَّ ۝ مَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنْهُ مَالُهُ وَمَا كَسَبَ ۝ سَيَصْلَىٰ نَارًا ذَاتَ
لَهَبٍ ۝ وَامْرَأَتُهُ حَمَّالَةَ الْحَطَبِ ۝ فِي جِيدِهَا حَبْلٌ مِّن مَّسَدٍ ۝

The incident that caused the revelation of this surah is narrated as follows: When the verse “**And warn, (O Muhammad), your closest kindred.**”³⁵ was revealed, the Prophet climbed the hill of Safa, called the members of the Quraysh tribe, and said to them: “Would you believe me if I say that some horsemen will appear from behind that mountain?” They answered, saying “Yes, we have never heard a lie from you in all these years.” Upon this answer, when the Prophet said “So, I am warning you against a severe torment awaiting before us.”, his uncle Abu Lahab said “Did you call us for this?” and insulted him. Upon these words, this surah was sent down.³⁶

³⁵ Shu'ara, 26: 214.

³⁶ Al-Razi, *Mafatih al-Ghayb*, vol. 23, p. 538; Elmalılı Hamdi Yazır, *Hak Dini Kur'an Dili*, vol. 9, p. 247.

(1). May the hands of Abu Lahab be dried (ruined), and ruined is he.

The word “*tabbat*” means the damage that leads to destruction, efforts going down the drain, being unable to achieve one’s objective, and dying. The expression “May his hands be dried.” is a curse that metaphorically means “May he become disabled and may his hands be broken.”³⁷ “His hand” refers to himself. The verb “*tabba*” implies that this event will take place.

(2). His wealth did not avail him or that which he gained.

After the task of prophethood had been given to our Prophet, Abu Lahab’s treatment of the Prophet turned into hostility since he could not accept the notion that superiority can only be measured in terms of *taqwa* (piety). For this reason, he objected to the idea that considered him equal to the poor, the orphans, and helpless people and, together with his wife, he continued his hostility towards the Prophet. However, none of his possessions, such as his goods, position, reputation, and children could save him from the awful end he faced.

(3). He will (enter to) burn in a Fire of (blazing) flame.

It is emphasized that he will enter Hell because of his incorrigible conduct of denying the truth by likening his red face to the blazing flame. The verse makes it clear that blood relationship, even to the Prophet, does not accord one any privilege as long as one insists on hostility and practicing evil.

(4). And his wife (as well) – the carrier of firewood. (5). Around her neck is a rope of (twisted) fiber.

The wife of Abu Lahab was Umm Jamil; the sister of Abu Sufyan. Apart from spreading groundless rumors, she intensified her husband’s hostility so much so that she considered harming the Prophet by throwing briars on the road where the Prophet would pass. In the surah, it emphasizes that she will continue her hostile support of her husband against the Prophet in the Hereafter as well as the punishment of carrying wood for the fire of her husband. For this reason she is described as “the carrier of firewood.”

³⁷ Al-Razi, *Mafatih al-Ghayb*, vol. 23, p. 539; Elmalılı Hamdi Yazır, *Hak Dini Kur'an Dili*, vol. 9, p. 249, 250.

“*Habl*” means rope. It is reported that Umm Jamil had a famous necklace, which she always wore to show off her wealth and to mock the Prophet’s difficult financial situation. Moreover, it is known that she sold this necklace to fund activities hostile to the Prophet. Thus, a comparison is made between the rope around her neck and this necklace in the verse.³⁸

The surah deals with Abu Lahab’s arrogance which, due to his wealth and earnings, resulted in the continuous hostility that he showed, together with his wife. Thus, this is a warning to those who exhibit similar stubborn behavior against the truth.

DID YOU KNOW?

“*Masad*” means a sturdy rope or tether made by sturdy cables or date fibers. It also means kink, chain, and anchor.

(Muhammed Hamdi Yazır, *Hak Dini Kur’an Dili*, vol. 9, p. 256.)

LET’S ASK AND ANSWER

1. What is the reason for the revelation of Surah al-Lahab?
2. What might be the meaning of the expression “it did not avail” (مَا أَغْنَىٰ)?
3. Why was the wife of Abu Lahab mentioned in the surah?

LET’S FIND SOME PRINCIPLES

Find some principles related to Surah al-Lahab.

- People’s real earnings are the favors they do.
-
-

³⁸ Al-Razi, *Mafatih al-Ghayb*, vol. 23, p. 547, 548; Elmalılı Hamdi Yazır, *Hak Dini Kur’an Dili*, vol. 9, p. 254-256; *Kur’an Yolu*, vol. 5, p. 712.

1.9. Surah al-Ikhlās

LET'S GET TO KNOW THE CHAPTER

Name: Surah al-Ikhlās	Sequence number in the Qur'an: One hundred and twelve
Number of Verses: Four	Meccan – Madinan: According to most of the mufasssirs, it is a Meccan chapter
The Order of Revelation: Twenty-three	Included concepts: Ahad, Samad

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ ۝ اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ ۝ لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ ۝ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ ۝

(1). Say, “He is Allah, (who is) One.”

“*Ahad*” means the only one, the sole one, the one who has no equal and is without a partner. The uniqueness of Allah is mentioned in this surah as stated in the 11th verse of Surah al-Shura (42) “**There is nothing like unto Him.**” The attribute of *ahad* is not attributed to anyone other than Him.

LET'S NOTE

“Qul” (قُلْ) indicates that the word does not belong to the Prophet. It also means that “as you say this to yourself approving it in your heart and pronouncing it with your tongue, say it also to others as required in the third verse of Surah al-`Asr (103) (“...and (they) advised each other to truth”).”

Muhammed Hamdi Yazır, *Hak Dini kur'an Dili*, vol. 9, p. 262, 263

(2). Allah is Samad.

“*Samad*” means the One who is not in need of anyone, but everyone is in need of Him.³⁹ He is not in need of anything in terms of existence; He is the Necessary (Being).⁴⁰

This surah was revealed after Meccan polytheists went to the Prophet saying, “Mention the lineage of your Lord.” and informs us that Allah is free from having a lineage.⁴¹

(3). He neither begets nor is He begotten.

Surah al-Ikhlâs (112) sensitively lays stress on the principle of *Tawhid* (Oneness of Allah). It introduces Him as the One who is Self-sufficient, and Unique and Whose existence is intrinsic. By saying “**He neither begets nor is He begotten.**”, it rejects the claims of Christians who say “the Masih is the son of Allah”; of Jews who say “Uzair is the son of Allah”; and of the polytheists who consider the angels to be the daughters of Allah. He is free from being someone’s father or a son.

(4). Nor is there to Him any equivalent.

Allah’s Uniqueness in His essence, attributes, and actions implies that He has no equivalent to Himself.⁴² The surah is solely about Allah. It emphasizes that He has no equivalent as a One God and rejects the baseless opinions of polytheists and *ahl al-kitab* (the people of the Book). As a result, the surah in which His uniqueness is emphasized manifests the essence of Islam.⁴³

LET’S ASK AND ANSWER

1. What is the reason for the revelation of Surah al-Ikhlâs?
2. What does Allah’s being (أَحَدٌ) and (الضَّمَدُ) mean?
3. What does the sentence “He neither begets nor is He begotten” mean?

LET’S DISCUSS

How does “the understanding of a God whose existence is necessary and who has no need of anything” affect the heart and behavior of the servant of Allah?

Discuss with your friends.

INFORMATION BOX

Saying “**He neither begets nor is He begotten**” means “He never became a father or mother or son.” As he has no lineage or ancestry, He does not have either a beginning or an end.

(Muhammed Hamdi Yazır, *Hak Dini Kur’an Dili*, vol. 9, p. 296-304.)

³⁹ Mufradat, Raghib, the Article of “Smd”; M. Vehbi, *Hulasat al-Bayan*, vol. 15, 16, p. 6616.

⁴⁰ *Dini Kavramlar Sözlüğü*, the Article of “Samed”; p. 576, 577; Elmalılı Hamdi Yazır, *Hak Dini Kur’an Dili*, vol. 9, p. 285-295.

⁴¹ Al-Razi, *Mafatih al-Ghayb*, vol. 23, p. 555; Elmalılı Hamdi Yazır, *Hak Dini Kur’an Dili*, vol. 9, p. 259; *Kur’an Yolu*, vol. 5, p. 713.

⁴² Al-Razi, *Mafatih al-Ghayb*, vol. 23, p. 559; Elmalılı Hamdi Yazır, *Hak Dini Kur’an Dili*, vol. 9, p. 283; Ateş, *Çağdaş Tefsir*, vol. 11, p. 181.

⁴³ Elmalılı Hamdi Yazır, *Hak Dini Kur’an Dili*, vol. 9, p. 309; Derveze, vol. 1, p. 223; Ateş, *Çağdaş Tefsir*, vol. 11, p. 176.

LET’S FIND SOME PRINCIPLES

Find some principles related to Surah al-Ikhlâs.

- Everything is in need of Allah.
-
-

1.10. Surah al-Falaq

LET’S GET TO KNOW THE CHAPTER

Name: Surah al-Falaq is named after the word “al-Falaq” mentioned in its first verse.	Sequence number in the Qur’an: One hundred and thirteen Meccan – Madinan: According to most of the mufasssirs, it is a Meccan chapter.
Number of Verses: Five	Included concepts: Falaq, Ghasiq, Naffathat, Hasad
The Order of Revelation: Twenty	

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ الْفَلَقِ ﴿١﴾ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا خَلَقَ ﴿٢﴾ وَمِنْ شَرِّ غَاسِقٍ إِذَا وَقَبَ ﴿٣﴾ وَمِنْ
شَرِّ النَّفَّاثَاتِ فِي الْعُقَدِ ﴿٤﴾ وَمِنْ شَرِّ حَاسِدٍ إِذَا حَسَدَ ﴿٥﴾

(1). Say, “I seek refuge in the Lord of daybreak.”

“*A’udhu*” means that I seek refuge in someone else’s protection and ask his or her protection and assistance. ⁴⁴

“*Falaq*” has various meanings such as to split, morning, and morning light (dawn).⁴⁵ If it is taken into account together with the following verse, in a wider sense it denotes “the creation which split and goes out of non-existence into existence.” In that sense this verse means “I seek refuge in the Lord of all creatures.” Moreover, it expresses Allah’s splitting the darkness of night and extracting the morning light. Seeking refuge in Allah as “the Lord of morning” is a supplication reflecting human desire to come out of darkness into the light.⁴⁶

(2). From the evil of that which He created.

Harm may come from humans themselves as much as from the outside. Everything that brings harm is in this scope.⁴⁷ Seeking refuge in Him from all these things means recognizing evil and avoiding evil thoughts, evil people, and seeking the company of good people.

(3). And from the evil of darkness when it falls.

“*Ghasiq*” means night, pitch darkness, the Pleiades, coldness, sun, moon, snake, and everything that harms. It is also related to one of the following meanings “to fill, to flow, and to pour.”⁴⁸ It means seeking refuge in Allah from the effects of everything harmful. Mostly, “night” has been the preferred meaning since night creates an environment in which bad events occur, such as attacks by predatory animals, theft, fire, and raids, and getting help becomes difficult. The falling of nighttime darkness can also be metaphorically correlated to every situation that causes people worry and fear.

LET’S FIND

“And Allah will save those who feared Him by their attainment; no evil will touch them, nor will they grieve.” (Zumar, 39: 61.)

What is the main emphasis in the verse given above? Find.

⁴⁴ Elmalılı Hamdi Yazır, *Hak Dini Kur’an Dili*, vol. 9, p. 331; Bilmen, vol. 8, p. 4118; Ateş, *Çağdaş Tefsir*, vol. 11, p. 189.

⁴⁵ *Dini Kavramlar Sözlüğü*, the Article of “Felak,” p. 175; Elmalılı Hamdi Yazır, *Hak Dini Kur’an Dili*, vol. 9, p. 331-335; Süleyman Ateş, *Çağdaş Tefsir*, vol. 11, p. 189.

⁴⁶ Muqatil, *Tefsir-i Kebir*, vol. 1, p. 477; al-Razi, *Mafatih al-Ghayb*, vol. 23, p. 586; Elmalılı Hamdi Yazır, *Hak Dini Kur’an Dili*, vol. 9, p. 332.

⁴⁷ Elmalılı Hamdi Yazır, *Hak Dini Kur’an Dili*, vol. 9, p. 336; M. Vehbi, *Hulasat al-Bayan*, vol. 15, 16, p. 6621.

⁴⁸ Al-Razi, *Mafatih al-Ghayb*, vol. 23, p. 590-591; Elmalılı Hamdi Yazır, *Hak Dini Kur’an Dili*, vol. 9, p. 336-340.

INFORMATION BOX

“The fallen darkness” can be allegorically interpreted as the darkness of injustice and ignorance, dark thoughts, and bad habits such as grudges, anger, lust, and jealousy in human beings and the darkness of the soul or situations that make humans fear and worry, such as death, hopelessness, and pessimism.

(*Kur'an Yolu*, vol. 5, p. 721.)

LET'S SPEAK

Let's speak with our friends about the difference between envy and admiration with reference to the statement “The believer admires; the hypocrite envies.”

(Muhammed Hamdi Yazır, *Hak Dini Kur'an Dili*, vol. 9, p. 357.)

(4). And from the evil of the blowers in knots.

“*Naffathati fil-uqad*” means those who blow in knots.⁴⁹ This is a common expression used for actions that engage in falsehood, deception, and harm. The common interpretation for this expression is that sorcerers carry out these acts to influence people and cause them harm. However, if attention is paid, the misdoings of the sorcerers are expressed in the verse. Those who deceive other people and prevent them from looking for correct solutions to their problems and who direct them on the wrong path have a negative influence. The verse emphasizes the necessity of ignoring such people, staying away from them, and disregarding them. Here the aim is to make people seek refuge in Allah whatever their problems are.⁵⁰

LET'S NOTE

Usurping the rights of people and violating the law, treating them with injustice because of ambition and position and rank, causing sedition, tyranny, and mischief and the spread of evil and exorbitance among the community are interpreted as “blowing into knots” in reference to “turning something away from its natural course or presenting it in a false way.”

(Elmalılı Hamdi Yazır, *Hak Dini Kur'an Dili*, vol. 9, p. 356.)

(5). And from the evil of an envier when he envies.

“*Hasad*” means envy and is expressed as “a desire for the loss of a blessing obtained by others or jealousy for its presence in others.” This situation, which is a kind of disease, derives from impatience against somebody's superiority over the person.⁵¹ Here the expression of “*Idha hasad*” means that evil is put into action after the phase of intention.

Based on the insistence of the verses to keep people away from possible harm, it can be seen that they attach great importance to human life and its healthy running. The significance of supporting the concept of “taking refuge in Allah” with correct views and proper behavior is clear. As is known, Islam is against all superstition and all fears that these superstitions support. For this reason, people are encouraged to turn away from bad people and misdoings, and it is recommended that they should take refuge in Allah to feel safe.

⁴⁹ Al-Razi, *Mafatih al-Ghayb*, vol. 23, p. 591; Elmalılı Hamdi Yazır, *Hak Dini Kur'an Dili*, vol. 9, p. 342; Bilmen, vol. 8, p. 4118.

⁵⁰ Derveze, vol. 1, p. 213; Ateş, *Çağdaş Tefsir*, vol. 11, p. 191; *Kur'an Yolu*, vol. 5, p. 721.

⁵¹ *Dini Kavramlar Sözlüğü*, the Article of “Haset”, p. 235, 236.

LET'S ASK AND ANSWER

1. Where was Surah al-Falaq revealed?
2. What could “the evil of that which He created” mentioned in the surah be?
3. What does the expression (غَاسِقٍ إِذَا وَقَبَ) mean?

LET'S FIND SOME PRINCIPLES

Let's find a principle related to Surah al-Falaq:

- Do good things, and good things will happen to you.
-
-

1.11. Surah al-Nas

LET'S GET TO KNOW THE CHAPTER

Name: Surah al-Nas is named after the word “al-Nas” mentioned in the first three verses.	Sequence number in the Qur'an: One hundred and thirteen
Number of Verses: Six	Meccan – Madinan: According to most of the mufasssirs, it is a Meccan chapter.
The Order of Revelation: Twenty-one	Included concepts: Falaq, Ghasiq, Naffathat, Hasad



(1). Say, “I seek refuge in the Lord of mankind. (2). The Sovereign of mankind. (3). The God of mankind.”

In Surah al-Falaq, Allah, in whom refuge is taken from the night when darkness falls and from the sorcerers and enviers, is mentioned as “*Rabb al-Falaq*” (the Lord of morning) with only one attribute. In this chapter, even though *waswasah* (whispering) is the only thing mentioned in this surah as something to be protected from, three attributes of Allah – *Rabb*, *Malik*, and *Ilah* – are mentioned, because the praise to seek refuge is in accordance with the desired thing.⁵² This approach shows the gravity of the dangers that *waswasah* might cause, as well as emphasizing the greatness of Allah’s protection of humans.

(4). From the evil of the retreating whisperer. (5). Who whispers (evil) into the breasts of mankind.

“*Waswasah*” means doubt, whispering, secret word, illusion, and thoughts of human beings.⁵³ These evil thoughts sometimes come from inside human beings as expressed in the 16th verse of Surah al-Kahf (18), “... **We know what his soul whispers to him...**” And sometimes, it comes from Satan as in the 120th verse of Surah Ta-Ha (20), “...**Then Satan whispered to him...**” “*Khannas*” means the one who recedes, the one who works under the counter, the one who looks for an opportunity, and the one who hides himself. Satan is called *khannas*.⁵⁴ It is stated in the 200th verse of Surah al-A’raf (7) in the Qur’an “**And if an evil suggestion comes to you from Satan, then seek refuge in Allah...**”

⁵² Al-Razi, *Mafatih al-Ghayb*, vol. 23, p. 601; Elmalılı Hamdi Yazır, *Hak Dini Kur’an Dili*, vol. 9, p. 371; Ateş, *Çağdaş Tefsir*, vol. 11, p. 210.

⁵³ *Dini Kavramlar Sözlüğü*, the Article of “Vesvese,” p. 693; *Kur’an Yolu*, vol. 5, p. 702.

⁵⁴ Elmalılı Hamdi Yazır, *Hak Dini Kur’an Dili*, vol. 9, p. 114; M. Vehbi, *Hulasat al-Bayan*, vol. 15, 16, p. 6629; Bilmen, vol. 8, p. 4121; Derveze, vol. 1, p. 216.

Useless, worthless, groundless thoughts composed of suspicions, illusions, and evil imaginings and which direct people to bad and immoral behavior are also regarded in the scope of *waswasah*. This *waswasah* causes people to stray from the straight path and destroys their determination to struggle by dissolving their patience and discouraging them. It makes them lose track of reality and leads them to become captive to their evil desires.

(6). From among the jinn and mankind.

Waswasah, whether it comes from people or from Satan, loses its importance for those who seek refuge in Allah, who behave properly and truthfully, who try to avoid sin and try to keep their reason and conscience continuously alert. The guidance of the Qur'an helps them in this matter.

The surah advises people to seek refuge in Allah from every kind of *waswasah*, whether recognized or not, both open and secret, which causes people to fall into bad ways. It also aims to protect them from the harm that would affect them adversely and keeps them aware of evil things.

LET'S LEARN

"Indeed, over My (believing) servants there is for you no authority. And sufficient is your Lord as Disposer of affairs."

(Isra, 17: 65)

INFORMATION BOX

"Indeed, those who fear Allah – when an impulse touches them from Satan, they remember (Him) and at once they have insight."

(A'raf, 7: 201)

LET'S ASK AND ANSWER

1. Where was Surah al-Nas revealed?
2. What does the word (الْخَنَّاسِ) mentioned in the surah mean?
3. What does "waswasah" refer to?

LET'S FIND SOME PRINCIPLES

Let's find some principles related to Surah al-Nas:

- Humans are protected from evil by the right thoughts and proper actions.
-
-

2. Sample Texts From the Books of Tafsir

2.1. Surah al-Baqarah, 2: 1-5.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 أَلَمْ نَكْتُبْكَ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿١﴾

1. Alif, Lam, Mim. 2. This is the Book about which there is no doubt, guidance for those conscious of Allah.

قَالَ: قَالَ ابْنُ عَبَّاسٍ: هَذَا الْكِتَابُ

(Al-Tabari, vol. 1, p. 178)

وَأَخْرَجَ ابْنُ جَرِيرٍ وَالْحَاكِمُ وَصَحَّحَهُ عَنْ ابْنِ مَسْعُودٍ: أَنَّ {الْكِتَابَ}: الْقُرْآنَ

(al-Shawqani, vol. 1, p. 109)

{لَا رَيْبَ} لَا شَكَّ

(Jalalain, vol. 1, p. 2.)

يَعْنِي: نُورًا لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ {هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ}

(Ibn Kasir, vol. 1, p. 61.)

{لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ} قَالَ: اتَّقُوا مَا حُرِّمَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَأَدُّوا مَا افْتُرِضَ عَلَيْهِمْ

(al-Tabari, vol. 1, p. 182.)

الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ ﴿٢﴾

3. Who believe in the unseen, establish prayer, and spend out of what We have provided for them.

قَالَ: يُصَدِّقُونَ "الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ"

(al-Tabari, vol. I, p. 183.)

وَقِيلَ: (بِالْغَيْبِ) أَيْ بِصَمَائِرِهِمْ وَقُلُوبِهِمْ بِخِلَافِ الْمُنَافِقِينَ

(al-Qurtubi, vol. I-2, p. 164)

وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ {أَعْطَيْنَاهُمْ} {يُنْفِقُونَ} فِي طَاعَةِ اللَّهِ

(Jalalain, vol. I, p. 2.)

وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا أُنْزِلَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ وَبِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ يُوقِنُونَ ﴿٢٠٥﴾

4. And who believe in what has been revealed to you, (O Muhammad), and what was revealed before you, and of the Hereafter they are certain (in faith).

{وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا أُنْزِلَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ} أَيْ يُصَدِّقُونَكَ بِمَا جِئْتَ بِهِ مِنَ اللَّهِ، وَمَا جَاءَ بِهِ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ أَلْمُرْشَلِينَ، لَا يُفَرِّقُونَ بَيْنَهُمْ، وَلَا يَجْحَدُونَ مَا جَاءَهُمْ بِهِ

مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ

(al-Shawqani, vol. I, p. 115.)

{وَبِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ يُوقِنُونَ} {أَيُّ بِالْبَعْثِ وَالْقِيَامَةِ، وَالْجَنَّةِ، وَالنَّارِ، وَالْحِسَابِ،

وَالْمِيزَانِ}

(Ibn Kathir, vol. I, p. 66.)

أُولَئِكَ عَلَى هُدًى مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٢٠٦﴾

5. Those are upon (right) guidance from their Lord, and it is those who are the successful.

عَلَى هُدًى مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ { الْفَائِزُونَ بِالْجَنَّةِ النَّجُونَ مِنَ النَّارِ

(Jalalain, vol. I, p. 3)

وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ { أَيْ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ }

(Ibn Kathir, vol. I, p. 68.)

2.2. Surah al-Isra, 17: 23-29.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

وَقَضَىٰ رَبُّكَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا إِمَّا يَبُلُغَنَّ عِنْدَكَ الْكِبَرَ أَحَدُهُمَا

أَوْ كِلَاهُمَا فَلَا تَقُلْ لَهُمَا أُفٌ وَلَا تَنْهَرَهُمَا وَقُلْ لَهُمَا قَوْلًا كَرِيمًا ﴿٢٣﴾

23. And your Lord has decreed that you not worship any except Him, and to parents, good treatment. Whether one or both of them reach old age (while) with you, say not to them (so much as), “uff”, and do not repel them but speak to them a noble word.

وَقَضَى {يَعْنِي وَصَّى}

(Ibn Kathir, vol. 5, p. 61.)

وَقَضَى رَبُّكَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ {أَيْ أَمَرَ رَبُّكَ فِي أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ}

(al-Tabari, vol. 6, p. 5144.)

وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا {أَيْ وَقَضَى بِأَنْ تُحْسِنُوا بِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا}

(al-Shawqani, vol. 1, p. 109.)

أُفٍّ {فَقَالَ بَعْضُهُمْ: مَعْنَاهُ: كُلُّ مَا غُلِظَ مِنَ الْكَلَامِ وَقُبِحَ}

(al-Tabari, vol. 6, p. 5146.)

وَلَا تَنْهَرُهُمَا {أَيْ وَلَا يَصُدُّرُ مِنْكَ إِلَيْهِمَا فِعْلٌ قَبِيحٌ}

(Ibn Kathir, vol. 5, p. 61.)

قَوْلًا كَرِيمًا {جَمِيلًا، كَمَا يَقْتَضِيهِ حُسْنُ الْأَدَبِ وَالنُّزُولُ عَلَى الْمُرُوءَةِ}

(Al-Zamakhshari, vol. 2, p. 632.)

وَقُلْ لَهُمَا قَوْلًا كَرِيمًا {جَمِيلًا لَيْنًا}

(Jalalain, vol. 1, p. 230.)

وَخَفِضْ لَهُمَا جَنَاحَ الذُّلِّ مِنَ الرَّحْمَةِ وَقُلْ رَبِّ ارْحَمْهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيَانِي صَغِيرًا ﴿٢٤﴾

24. And lower to them the wing of humility out of mercy and say, "My Lord, have mercy upon them as they brought me up (when I was) small."

{وَاخْفِضْ لَهُمَا جَنَاحَ الذُّلِّ مِنَ الرَّحْمَةِ} قَالَ: لَا تَمْتَنِعْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ يُحَبِّبَانَهُ

(al-Tabari, vol. 6, p. 5148.)

{وَاخْفِضْ لَهُمَا جَنَاحَ الذُّلِّ} أَلِنْ لَهُمَا جَانِبَكَ الدَّلِيلِ {مِنَ الرَّحْمَةِ} أَيْ لِرَقِيبِكَ عَلَيْهِمَا {وَقُلْ رَبِّ ارْحَمْهُمَا كَمَا رَحِمْتَنِي حِينَ رَبَّيْتَنِي صَغِيرًا}

(Jalalain, vol. 1, p. 230.)

رَبُّكُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا فِي نُفُوسِكُمْ إِنْ تَكُونُوا صَالِحِينَ فَإِنَّهُ كَانَ لِلْأَوَّابِينَ غَفُورًا ﴿٢٥﴾

25. Your Lord is most knowing of what is within yourselves. If you should be righteous (in intention) – then indeed He is ever, to the often returning (to Him), Forgiving.

رَبُّكُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا فِي نُفُوسِكُمْ {مِنْ إِضْمَارِ الْبِرِّ وَالْعُقُوقِ}

(Jalalain, vol. 1, p. 230)

إِنْ تَكُونُوا صَالِحِينَ {قَاصِدِينَ الصَّلَاحِ وَالْبِرِّ}

(al-Zamakhshari, vol. 2, p. 635)

فَإِنَّهُ كَانَ لِلْأَوَّابِينَ {الرَّاجِعِينَ إِلَى طَاعَتِهِ}

(Jalalain, vol. 1, p. 230)

وَأَتِ ذَا الْقُرْبَىٰ حَقَّهُ وَالْمِسْكِينَ وَابْنَ السَّبِيلِ وَلَا تُبَذِّرْ تَبْذِيرًا ﴿٢٦﴾

26. And give the relative his right, and (also) the poor and the traveler, and do not spend wastefully.

{وَأَتِ {أَعْطِ {ذَا الْقُرْبَى {الْقَرَابَةِ {حَقَّهُ} مِنَ الْبِرِّ وَالصِّلَةِ}

(Jalalain, vol. I, p. 230)

وَالْمِسْكِينَ وَابْنَ السَّبِيلِ {يَعْنِي وَآتِ هَؤُلَاءِ حَقَّهُمْ مِنَ الزَّكَاةِ}

(Al-Zamakhshari, vol. 2, p. 635)

وَلَا تُبَذِّرْ تَبْذِيرًا {قَالَ: التَّبْذِيرُ فِي غَيْرِ الْحَقِّ، وَهُوَ الْإِسْرَافُ}

(al-Tabari, vol. 6, p. 5156.)

إِنَّ الْمُبَذِّرِينَ كَانُوا إِخْوَانَ الشَّيَاطِينِ وَكَانَ الشَّيْطَانُ لِرَبِّهِ كَفُورًا ﴿٢٧﴾

27. Indeed, the wasteful are brothers of the devils, and ever has Satan been to his Lord ungrateful.

إِخْوَانَ الشَّيَاطِينِ {أَمْثَالُهُمْ فِي الشَّرَارَةِ وَهِيَ غَايَةُ الْمَذَمَّةِ}

(al-Zamakhshari, vol. 2, p. 635.)

وَكَانَ الشَّيْطَانُ لِرَبِّهِ كَفُورًا {شَدِيدَ الْكُفْرِ لِنِعْمِهِ، فَكَذَلِكَ أَخُوهُ الْمُبَذِّرُ}

(Jalalain, vol. I, p. 230.)

وَأَمَّا تُعْرِضَنَّ عَنْهُمْ ابْتِغَاءَ رَحْمَةٍ مِنْ رَبِّكَ تَرْجُوهَا فَقُلْ لَهُمْ قَوْلًا مَيْسُورًا ﴿٢٨﴾

28. And if you (must) turn away from the needy awaiting mercy from your Lord, which you expect, then speak to them a gentle word.

ابْتِغَاءَ رَحْمَةٍ مِنْ رَبِّكَ {يَقُولُ: إِنِّي نَظَرْتُ رِزْقِي تَنْتَظِرُهُ مِنْ عِنْدِ رَبِّكَ، وَتَرْجُو تَيْسِيرَ اللَّهِ
إِيَّاهُ لَكَ}

(al-Tabari, vol. 6, p. 5158.)

فَقُلْ لَهُمْ قَوْلًا مَيْسُورًا {لَيْنَا سَهْلًا بِأَنْ تَعُدَّهُمْ بِالْإِعْطَاءِ عِنْدَ مَجِيءِ الرِّزْقِ}

(Jalalain, vol. I, p. 230.)

وَلَا تَجْعَلْ يَدَكَ مَغْلُولَةً إِلَى عُنُقِكَ وَلَا تَبْسُطْهَا كُلَّ الْبَسْطِ فَتَقْعُدَ مَلُومًا مَحْسُورًا ﴿٢٩﴾

29. And do not make your hand (as) chained to your neck or extend it completely and (thereby) become blamed and insolvent.

وَلَا تَجْعَلْ يَدَكَ مَغْلُولَةً إِلَىٰ عُنُقِكَ { أَيْ: لَا تَكُنْ بَخِيلًا مَّنُوعًا }

(Ibn Kathir, vol. 5, p. 67.)

وَلَا تَبْسُطْهَا كُلَّ الْبَسْطِ { وَلَا تُسْرِفْ فِي الْإِنْفَاقِ فَتُعْطَىٰ فَوْقَ طَاعَتِكَ }

(Ibn Kathir, vol. 5, p. 67.)

فَتَقْعُدَ مَلُومًا { فَتَصِيرَ مَلُومًا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ }

(al-Zamakhshari, vol. 2, p. 636.)

مَحْسُورًا { مُنْقَطِعًا بِكَ لَا شَيْءَ عِنْدَكَ }

(al-Zamakhshari, vol. 2, p. 636.)

2.3. Surah al-Mu'minun, 23: 1-10.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١﴾

Certainly will the believers have succeeded:

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٢﴾ قَدْ أَذْرَكَ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ مُحَمَّدًا صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ﴿٣﴾

(al-Tabari, vol. 7, p. 5901.)

الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي صَلَاتِهِمْ خَاشِعُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾

They who are during their prayer humbly submissive.

الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي صَلَاتِهِمْ خَاشِعُونَ {مُتَوَاضِعُونَ}

(Jalalain, vol. 2, p. 44.)

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنِ اللَّغْوِ مُعْرِضُونَ ﴿٢١﴾

3. And they who turn away from ill speech.

اللَّغْوُ: مَا لَا يَغْنِيكَ مِنْ قَوْلٍ أَوْ فِعْلٍ

(al-Zamakhshari, vol. 3, p. 171.)

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنِ اللَّغْوِ {مِنَ الْكَلَامِ وَغَيْرِهِ}

(Jalalain, vol. 2, p. 44.)

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِلزَّكَاةِ فَاعِلُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾

4. And they who are observant of zakat.

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِلزَّكَاةِ فَاعِلُونَ {الْأَكْثَرُونَ عَلَى أَنَّ الْمُرَادَ بِالزَّكَاةِ هَهُنَا زَكَاةُ الْأَمْوَالِ}

(Ibn Kathir, vol. 5, p. 457.)

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأُفْجُوْجِهِمْ حَافِظُونَ ﴿٥﴾ إِلَّا عَلَىٰ أَزْوَاجِهِمْ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ
غَيْرُ مَلُومِينَ ﴿٦﴾ فَمَنْ ابْتَغَىٰ وَرَاءَ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْعَادُونَ ﴿٧﴾

5. And they who guard their private parts. 6. Except from their wives or those their right hands possess, for indeed, they will not be blamed. 7. But whoever seeks beyond that, then those are the transgressors.

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأُفْجُوْجِهِمْ حَافِظُونَ {عَنِ الْحَرَامِ}

(Jalalain, vol. 2, p. 44)

أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُمْ {مَحَلَّ حَفْضٍ، عَطْفًا عَلَى الْأَزْوَاجِ}

(al-Tabari, vol. 7, p. 5904.)

غَيْرُ مَلُومِينَ {[الْمَعَارِجُ: ٥٣] كَأَنَّهُ قِيلَ: يُلَامُونَ إِلَّا عَلَىٰ أَزْوَاجِهِمْ}

(al-Zamakhshari, vol. 3, p. 172.)

فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْعَادُونَ {يَقُولُ: فَهُمْ الْعَادُونَ حُدُودَ اللَّهِ، الْمُجَاوِزُونَ مَا حَلَّ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ إِلَى
مَا حَرَّمَ عَلَيْهِمْ}

(al-Tabari, vol. 7, p. 5904.)

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأَمَانَاتِهِمْ وَعَهْدِهِمْ رَاعُونَ ﴿٨﴾

8. And they who are to their trusts and their promises attentive.

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأَمَانَاتِهِمْ وَعَهْدِهِمْ رَاعُونَ { أَى: إِذَا أَوْثَمِنُوا لَمْ يَخُونُوا، بَلْ يُؤَدُّونَهَا إِلَى أَهْلِهَا }

(Ibn Kathir, vol. 5, p. 458.)

يَقُولُ تَعَالَى ذِكْرُهُ: {وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأَمَانَاتِهِمْ { الَّتِي انْتُمِنُوا عَلَيْهَا (وَعَهْدِهِمْ)، وَهُوَ عُقُودُهُمُ الَّتِي عَاقَدُوا النَّاسَ {رَاعُونَ} يَقُولُ: حَافِظُونَ لَا يُضَيِّعُونَ، وَلَكِنَّهُمْ يُوفُونَ بِذَلِكَ كُلِّهِ }

(al-Tabari, vol. 7, p. 5905.)

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَى صَلَوَاتِهِمْ يُحَافِظُونَ ﴿٩﴾

9. And they who carefully maintain their prayers.

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَى صَلَوَاتِهِمْ يُحَافِظُونَ { يَعْنِي: فِي مَوَاقِيتِ الصَّلَاةِ }

(Ibn Kathir, vol. 5, p. 458.)

عَلَى صَلَوَاتِهِمْ يُحَافِظُونَ { قَالَ: يَعْنِي بِهَا الْمَكْتُوبَةُ }

(al-Tabari, vol. 7, p. 5906.)

أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْوَارِثُونَ ﴿١٠﴾

10. Those are the inheritors.

أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْوَارِثُونَ} قَالَ: يَرِثُونَ مَسَاكِنَهُمْ وَمَسَاكِنَ إِخْوَانِهِمُ الَّتِي أُعِدَّتْ لَهُمْ لَوْ
أَطَاعُوا اللَّهَ{

(al-Tabari, vol. 7, p. 5906.)

2.4. Surah al-Hujurat, 49: 6-12.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنْ جَاءَكُمْ فَاسِقٌ بِنَبَأٍ فَتَبَيَّنُوا أَنْ تُصِيبُوا قَوْمًا بِجَهَالَةٍ فَتُصْبِحُوا
عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلْتُمْ نَادِمِينَ ﴿٦﴾

6. O you who have believed, if there comes to you a disobedient one with information, investigate, lest you harm a people out of ignorance and become, over what you have done, regretful.

يَقُولُ تَعَالَىٰ ذِكْرُهُ: يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ صَدَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ

{إِنْ جَاءَكُمْ فَاسِقٌ بِنَبَأٍ عَنْ قَوْمٍ فَتَبَيَّنُوا}

(al-Tabari, vol. 9, p. 7528.)

وَالْفَاسِقُ: الْخُرُوجُ مِنَ الشَّيْءِ وَالْإِنْسِلَاحُ مِنْهُ

(al-Zamakhshari, vol. 4, p. 351.)

بِمَعْنَى: أَمْهَلُوا حَتَّى تَعْرِفُوا صِحَّتَهُ، لَا تَعْجَلُوا بِقَبُولِهِ، وَكَذَلِكَ
مَعْنَى (فَتَتَّبِعْتُمُوهُ)....(فَتَتَّبِعْتُمُوهُ)

(al-Tabari, vol. 9, p. 7528.)

فَتُصْبِحُوا {تَصِيرُوا} عَلَى مَا فَعَلْتُمْ مِنَ الْخَطَا بِالْقَوْمِ

(Jalalain, vol. 2, p. 185.)

وَالنَّدَمُ: ضَرْبٌ مِنَ الْغَمِّ

(al-Zamakhshari, vol. 4, p. 351.)

وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ فِيكُمْ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ لَوْ يُطِيعُكُمْ فِي كَثِيرٍ مِنَ الْأَمْرِ لَعَنِتُمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ حَبَّبَ
إِلَيْكُمْ الْإِيمَانَ وَزَيَّنَهُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَكَرَّهَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْكُفْرَ وَالْفُسُوقَ وَالْعِصْيَانَ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ
الرَّاشِدُونَ ﴿١٠٠﴾

7. And know that among you is the Messenger of Allah. If he were to obey you in much of the matter, you would be in difficulty, but Allah has endeared to you the faith and has made it pleasing in your hearts and has made hateful to you disbelief, defiance, and disobedience. Those are the (rightly) guided.

وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ فِيكُمْ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﴿١٠١﴾ فَلَا تَقُولُوا الْبَاطِلَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يُخْبِرُهُ بِالْحَالِ

(Jalalain, vol. 2, p. 185.)

وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ حَبَبٌ إِلَيْكُمُ الْإِيمَانَ وَرَيْتَهُ {حَسَنَةً}

(Jalalain, vol. 2, p. 185.)

وَكَرَّهَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْكُفْرَ وَالْفُسُوقَ وَالْعِصْيَانَ {أَيُّ: جَعَلَ كُلَّ مَا هُوَ مِنْ جِنْسِ الْفُسُوقِ}

(al-Shawqani, vol. 5, p. 81.)

الرَّاشِدُونَ {الثَّابِتُونَ عَلَى دِينِهِمْ}

(Jalalain, vol. 2, p. 185.)

فَضْلًا مِنَ اللَّهِ وَنِعْمَةً وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٨﴾

8. (It is) as bounty from Allah and favor. And Allah is Knowing and Wise.

فَضْلًا مِنَ اللَّهِ وَنِعْمَةً {أَيُّ هَذَا الْعَطَاءُ الَّذِي مَنَحَكُمْوهُ هُوَ فَضْلٌ مِنْهُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَنِعْمَةٌ
مِنْ لَدُنْهُ}

(Ibn Kathir, vol. 7, p. 353.)

وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ {بِهِمْ} {حَكِيمٌ} فِي إِتْعَامِهِ عَلَيْهِمْ}

(Jalalain, vol. 2, p. 186.)

وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ {أَيُّ عَلِيمٌ بِمَنْ يَسْتَحِقُّ الْغَوَايَةَ}

(Ibn Kathir, vol. 7, p. 353.)

وَأِنْ طَائِفَتَانِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ اقْتَتَلُوا فَأَصْلَحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا فَإِنْ بَغَتْ إِحْدَاهُمَا عَلَى
 الْأُخْرَىٰ فَقَاتِلُوا الَّتِي تَبْغِي حَتَّىٰ تَفِيءَ إِلَىٰ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ فَإِنْ فَاءَتْ فَأَصْلَحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا
 بِالْعَدْلِ وَأَقْسِطُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ ﴿٩﴾

9. And if two factions among the believers should fight, then make settlement between the two. But if one of them oppresses the other, then fight against the one that oppresses until it returns to the ordinance of Allah. And if it returns, then make settlement between them in justice and act justly. Indeed, Allah loves those who act justly.

وَأِنْ طَائِفَتَانِ مِنَ أَهْلِ الْإِيمَانِ اقْتَتَلُوا، فَأَصْلَحُوا أَيُّهَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ بَيْنَهُمَا بِالْأَدْعَاءِ إِلَى
 حُكْمِ كِتَابِ اللَّهِ

(al-Tabari, vol. 9, p. 7532.)

فَأَصْلَحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا {بِالدُّعَاءِ إِلَى حُكْمِ كِتَابِ اللَّهِ}

(al-Shawqani, vol. 5, p. 84.)

فَإِنْ بَغَتْ {تَعَدَّتْ}

(Jalalain, vol. 2, p. 186.)

حَتَّىٰ تَفِيءَ إِلَىٰ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ {يَقُولُ}: حَتَّىٰ تَرْجِعَ إِلَىٰ حُكْمِ اللَّهِ الَّذِي حَكَمَ فِي كِتَابِهِ بَيْنَ
 خَلْقِهِ

(al-Tabari, vol. 9, p. 7532.)

وَأَقْسَطُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ {أى: وَاعْدِلُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْعَادِلِينَ}

(al-Shawqani, vol. 5, p. 84.)

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ فَأَصْلَحُوا بَيْنَ أَخَوَيْكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ ﴿١٠﴾

10. The believers are but brothers, so make settlement between your brothers.
And fear Allah that you may receive mercy.

وَعَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: الْمُسْلِمُ أَخُو الْمُسْلِمِ لَا يَظْلِمُهُ، وَلَا يَخْذُلُهُ، وَلَا يُعِيبُهُ...

(al-Zamakhshari, vol. 4, p. 356.)

وَخَافُوا اللَّهَ أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ بِأَدَاءِ قَرَائِصِهِ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الْإِصْلَاحِ بَيْنَ الْمُقْتَتِلِينَ مِنْ أَهْلِ
الْإِيمَانِ بِالْعَدْلِ

(al-Tabari, vol. 9, p. 7536.)

{وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ} يَقُولُ تَعَالَى ذِكْرُهُ: وَخَافُوا اللَّهَ أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ بِأَدَاءِ قَرَائِصِهِ
عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الْإِصْلَاحِ بَيْنَ الْمُقْتَتِلِينَ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْإِيمَانِ بِالْعَدْلِ

(al-Tabari, vol. 9, p. 7536.)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا يَسْخَرْ قَوْمٌ مِنْ قَوْمٍ عَسَىٰ أَنْ يَكُونُوا خَيْرًا مِنْهُمْ وَلَا نِسَاءٌ مِنْ
نِسَاءٍ عَسَىٰ أَنْ يَكُنَّ خَيْرًا مِنْهُنَّ وَلَا تَلْمِزُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَلَا تَنَابَزُوا بِالْأَلْقَابِ بِئْسَ الْإِسْمُ
الْفُسُوقُ بَعْدَ الْإِيمَانِ وَمَنْ لَمْ يَتُبْ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٥١﴾

11. O you who have believed, let not a people ridicule (another) people; perhaps they may be better than them; nor let women ridicule (other) women; perhaps they may be better than them. And do not insult one another and do not call each other by [offensive] nicknames. Wretched is the name of disobedience after (one's) faith. And whoever does not repent – then it is those who are the wrongdoers.

{لَا يَسْخَرْ قَوْمٌ مِنْ قَوْمٍ} قَالَ: لَا يَهْزَأُ قَوْمٌ مِنْ قَوْمٍ أَنْ يَسْتَلَّ رَجُلٌ فَقِيرٌ غَنِيًّا، أَوْ فَقِيرًا

(al-Tabari, vol. 6, p. 7536.)

{وَلَا نِسَاءٌ مِنْ نِسَاءٍ} أَيْ: وَلَا يَسْخَرْ نِسَاءٌ مِنْ نِسَاءٍ {عَسَىٰ أَنْ يَكُنَّ} الْمَسْخُورُ بِهِنَّ

(al-Shawqani, vol. 5, p. 85.)

{مِنْ قَوْمٍ عَسَىٰ أَنْ يَكُونُوا خَيْرًا مِنْهُمْ} عِنْدَ اللَّهِ

(Jalalain, vol. 2, p. 186.)

{عَسَىٰ أَنْ يَكُونُوا خَيْرًا مِنْهُمْ} يَقُولُ: الْمَهْزُوءُ مِنْهُمْ خَيْرٌ مِنَ الْهَازِنِينَ

(al-Tabari, vol. 9, p. 7536.)

{وَلَا تَلْمِزُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ أَيُّ لَا تَلْمِزُوا النَّاسَ}

(Ibn Kathir, vol. 7, p. 356.)

{وَلَا تَنَابَرُوا بِالْأَلْقَابِ أَيُّ لَا تَدَاعُوا بِالْأَلْقَابِ، وَهِيَ الَّتِي يَسُوءُ الشَّخْصَ سَمَاعُهَا}

(Ibn Kathir, vol. 7, p. 356.)

{وَلَا تَنَابَرُوا بِالْأَلْقَابِ لَا يَدْعُو بَعْضُكُمْ بَعْضًا بِلَقَبٍ يَكْرَهُهُ، وَمِنْهُ يَا فَاسِقُ يَا كَافِرُ}

(Jalalain, vol. 2, p. 186.)

{يُسْ لَاسْمُ الْفُسُوقِ بَعْدَ الْإِيمَانِ إِلَى مَنْ دَعَى فَاسِقًا، وَهُوَ تَائِبٌ مِنْ فُسُوقِهِ}

(al-Tabari, vol. 6, p. 7541.)

{فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ لَا زِتَابَهُمْ مَا نَهَى اللَّهُ عَنْهُ}

(al-Shawqani, vol. 5, p. 86.)

يَقُولُ تَعَالَى نَهَى عِبَادَهُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَنْ كَثِيرٍ مِنَ الظَّنِّ... فَلْيَتَجَنَّبْ كَثِيرٌ مِنْهُ
إِحْتِيَاظًا

(Ibn Kathir, vol. 7, p. 357.)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الظَّنِّ إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ وَلَا تَجَسَّسُوا وَلَا
يَغْتَبْ بَعْضُكُم بَعْضًا أَيُحِبُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَنْ يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ مَيْتًا فَكَرِهْتُمُوهُ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ
اللَّهَ تَوَّابٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٢﴾

12. O you who have believed, avoid much (negative) assumption. Indeed, some assumption is sin. And do not spy or backbite each other. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his brother when dead? You would detest it. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is Accepting of repentance and Merciful.

عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى حَرَّمَ مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِ دَمَهُ وَعَرِضَهُ وَأَنْ
يُظَنَّ بِهِ ظَنًّا سَوِيًّا

(al-Zamakhshari, vol. 4, p. 362.)

وَالْإِثْمُ: الذَّنْبُ الَّذِي يَسْتَحِقُّ صَاحِبُهُ الْعِقَابَ

(al-Zamakhshari, vol. 4, p. 362.)

{وَلَا تَجَسَّسُوا} يَقُولُ: نَهَى اللَّهُ الْمُؤْمِنَ أَنْ يَتَتَبَعَ عَوْرَاتِ الْمُؤْمِنِ

(al-Tabari, vol. 6, p. 7542.)

{وَلَا يَغْتَبِ بَعْضُكُم بَعْضًا} أَيْ: لَا يَتَنَاوَلُ بَعْضُكُمْ بَعْضًا بِظَهْرِ الْغَيْبِ بِمَا يَسُوُّهُ

(al-Shawqani, vol. 5, p. 86.)

{أَيُّحِبُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَنْ يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ مَيْتًا} قَالُوا: نَكْرَهُ ذَلِكَ، قَالَ: فَكَذَلِكَ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ

(al-Tabari, vol. 5, p. 7545.)

{فَكَرِهْتُمُوهُ} قَالَ الْفَرَّاءُ: تَقْدِيرُهُ: فَقَدْ كَرِهْتُمُوهُ فَلَا تَفْعَلُوا

(Al-Shawqani, vol. 5, p. 87)

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: "لَا تُقَاطِعُوا وَلَا تَدَابِرُوا وَلَا تَبَاغِضُوا وَلَا تَحْسَدُوا، وَكُونُوا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ إِخْوَانًا، وَلَا يَحِلُّ لِمُسْلِمٍ أَنْ يَهْجُرَ أَخَاهُ فَوْقَ ثَلَاثَةِ أَيَّامٍ

(Ibn Kathir, vol. 7, p. 357.)

{إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَوَّابٌ رَحِيمٌ} أَيْ تَوَّابٌ عَلَى مَنْ تَابَ إِلَيْهِ رَحِيمٌ لِمَنْ رَجَعَ إِلَيْهِ

(Ibn Kathir, vol. 7, p. 364.)

LET'S EVALUATE THE CHAPTER

A. Answer the following open-ended questions.

1. What is the difference between *hamd* and *shukr*? Explain.
2. How should we understand the statement "only worshipping Allah"? Explain.
3. What does *ma'un* mean? Explain.
4. What does "the one whose lineage is cut off" imply? Explain.
5. What does starting with the verb "*qul*" (قُلْ) imply? Explain.

B. Choose the correct answers to the following multiple-choice questions.

1. Which of the following statements truly show the difference between Rahman and Rahim?

- A) Rahman is His mercy towards all people in the world; Rahim is His mercy only towards the believers in the Hereafter.
- B) Rahim is His mercy towards all people in the world; Rahman is His mercy only towards the believers in the Hereafter.
- C) Rahman is His mercy only towards the believers in the world; Rahim is His mercy towards all people in the Hereafter.
- D) Rahman and Rahim are His mercy towards all people both in the world and the Hereafter.
- E) Rahman and Rahim are His mercy towards all the people in the world.

2. Which of the following names do not belong to Surah al-Fatiha?

- A) Umm al-Kitab
- B) Asas al-Kitab
- C) Fatihat al-Kitab
- D) Sab' al-Mathani
- E) Tawdi

3. Which of the following statements cannot be concluded from Surah al-Falaq?

- A) Humans should support their good thoughts with good behavior.
- B) The characteristics of humans improve with good thoughts.
- C) Every man is the architect of his own fate.
- D) Nobody should be caused harm through jealousy.
- E) Evil thoughts lead to bad results.

4. Which of the following statements implies admiration?

- A) Let it be found in someone else, not in me.
- B) Let it be found in neither someone else nor me.
- C) Let it be found in both someone else and me.
- D) Let it not be found in someone else; rather let it be found in me.
- E) Let a little of it be in someone else, but much of it be in me.

C. Fill in the blanks in the following sentences with the most suitable word from those given below.

(success, language, action, prayer, *tawhid*, fasting)

1. By pronouncing the Basmala, Allah's servant accepts that and power come with Allah's help.
2. "Hamd" is to praise someone for his goodness and beauty by.....
3. As is known, and zakat come after faith as the essence of good deeds.
4. Surah al-Ikhlas carefully emphasizes the principle of (the Oneness of Allah).
5. The expression of "*Idha hasad*" implies that evil came to the phase of from the phase of intention.

D. Choose one of the groups of verses given below and state which principles can be deduced from them.

(Baqarah, 2: 1-5) (Isra, 17: 23-29)

(Mu'minun, 23: 1-10) (Hujurat, 49: 6-12)

ANSWER KEY

CHAPTER 1: THE HISTORY OF THE NOBLE QUR'AN

B

1. B
2. A
3. D

C

1. Muqabalah
2. Quraysh

CHAPTER 2: THE SCIENCE OF TAFSIR AND ITS BASIC CONCEPTS

B

1. C
2. D
3. D
4. D
5. C

C

1. Ta'wil
2. The Prophet
3. The Science of Hadith
4. Linguistics
5. History of Islam and Siyar

CHAPTER 3: THE HISTORY OF TAFSIR

B

1. A
2. D
3. E
4. C

C

1. Tafsir bi al-riwayah
2. Tafsir bi al-dirayah

D

1. T
2. F
3. T

E

1. Jami al-Bayan an Ta'wil Aay al-Quran
2. Ta'wilat al-Quran
3. Al-Kashshaf an Haqa'iq Ghawamiz al-Tanzil

4. Mafatih al-Ghayb
5. Anwar al-Tanzil wa Asrar al-Ta'wil
6. Al-Jami li Ahkam al-Quran
7. Tafsir al-Jalalayn
8. Hulasat al-Bayan fi Tafsir al-Quran
9. Hak Dini Kuran Dili
10. Kuran-ı Kerim'in Türkçe Meal-i Alisi ve Tefsiri

CHAPTER 4: QUR'ANIC SCIENCES

B

1. D
2. B

C

1. Al-Madani
2. Asbab al-nuzul
3. Mubayyin
4. I'jaz al-Quran
5. Wujuh and Naza'ir

CHAPTER 5: UNDERSTANDING AND INTERPRETING THE QUR'AN

B

1. E
2. E
3. B
4. B
5. B

C

1. Particular
2. The Prophet
3. Akhlaq
4. Worshipping
5. Message

CHAPTER 6: SAMPLE TEXTS TO BE INTERPRETED

A

1. A
2. E
3. C
4. C

B

1. Success
2. Tongue
3. Prayer
4. Tawhid
5. Action

GLOSSARY

A-B

Adab al-Muasharah	: Rules of good manners.
Adalah	: Justice; being just; a narrator's being religious and obeying the divine commands and prohibitions; paying attention to what is right and just.
Ahd al-Atiq	: Old Testament.
Ahkam	: Decisions.
Ahl-al Kitab	: People of the Book; Jews and Christians according to Islamic literature.
Akhirah	: Hereafter; a place where all people will stay forever after they die and will be questioned.
Al-Asma al-Husna	: The most beautiful and honorable names of Allah.
Amal	: Act; a person's deeds to carry out orders of the religion.
Amal al-Salih	: The deeds approved by the religion.

Amantu	: The invocation comprising the fundamentals of belief that every Muslim must believe, accept, and approve. There are six fundamentals of belief in Amantu; they are 1. To believe in Allah, 2. To believe in His angels, 3. To believe in His books, 4. To believe in His prophets, 5. To believe in the Day of Judgment (life after death), 6. To believe in destiny (qadar), that good and evil are from Allah.
Arafah	: The day before the religious festivals.
Asbab al-Nuzul	: Specific occasions or reasons for the revelation of the verses of the Qur'an.
Ashab	: Companions of the Prophet.
Astrology	: The study that assumes and attempts to interpret the influence of the heavenly bodies on human affairs.
Astronomy	: The science that deals with the material universe beyond the earth's atmosphere.
Awqaf	: Foundations; endowments and the institution that manages properties of a foundation.
Ayah	: Verse.
Balaghah	: Rhetoric, art of speaking and persuasiveness.
Baptism	: A ceremonial immersion in water, or application of water, as an initiatory rite or sacrament of the Christian church.

Basmala	: It is a word that means “In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.” and is used before doing an act.
Ba'th	: Resurrection, revival.
Batil Belief	: Superstition; unfounded false beliefs in supernatural events, secret and irrational powers.
Batin	: Hidden, unseen, imperceptible.
Bid'ah	: Innovation; new rulings and principles in certain subjects of Islam developed after the time of Prophet Muhammad.
Botany	: Pertaining to, made from, or containing plants.
Bughz	: Hatred, grudge, enmity, loathing, and disgust.
Burhan	: Evidence, proof.
C-D	
Cosmology	: The branch of astronomy that deals with the general structure and evolution of the universe.
Darb al-Mathal	: Proverb.
Din	: Religion; a way shown to people to direct them to wards happiness and peace in this world and Hereafter by Allah through His prophets, commands, and prohibitions.
Dhikr	: Remembrance, mentioning. Chanting the name of Allah successively by the adherents of a sufi order.

Dialect

: A variety of a language that is distinguished from other varieties of the same language by features of phonology, grammar, and vocabulary, and by its use by a group of speakers who are set off from others geographically or socially.

Dua

: Orison; invocation; prayer to Allah; religious text recited for praying Allah.

E-F

Fardh

: Obligatory; actions the fulfillment of which is asked in a decisive and obligatory way by Shari'ah.

Fiqh

: Knowledge of beneficial and harmful things in one's daily life; Islamic law.

Fitrah

: Creation; physical characteristics coming by nature.

Fitri

: Innate.

Forgiveness

: Pardon or remission of an offense, debt, etc.; absolve.

G-H

Jibreel

: One of the supreme angels who is responsible for conveying the revelation of Allah to prophets.

Galaxy

: A large system of stars held together by mutual gravitation and isolated from similar systems by vast regions of space.

Ghazi

: Those who fought against the enemies in Islam.

Gossip	: Idle talk or rumor, especially about the personal or private affairs of others.
Hadith	: The sayings, acts, and behavior of the Prophet Muhammad and the science which examines these sayings; singular form of ahadith.
Hafiz	: Memorizer of the whole Qur'an.
Halal	: Lawful; licit; something which is in accordance with the rules of the religion of Islam; the antonym of haram.
Handasah	: Geometry.
Haram	: Unlawful; illicit; prohibited; something which is against the rules of the religion of Islam; actions that are clearly and decisively prohibited. All statements and actions, about which there is a clear and certain judgment in the Qur'an, mutawatir sunnah or mashhur sunnah about their prohibition are considered haram.
Hashiyah	: Interpretation or glosses written by an author to explain the information given in a book or tractate of another author or to give detailed information about the same topic; foot or side notes
Hawari	: Each of the 12 disciples of Jesus, whom he charged with the mission to deliver his advice and beliefs to the people.
Haya	: Sense of shame, modesty.
Hebrew	: A Semitic language from the Afroasiatic family, the language of the ancient Hebrews.

Hijrah

: Migration of Prophet Muhammad from Mecca to Madinah, which is accepted as the beginning of Islamic calendar.

I-J**Ibadah**

: Carrying out the orders of Allah, conduct of respect towards Allah; acts of worship.

I'jaz

: Using laconic language, expressing many things with just a few words. Miraculous.

Ihram

: Seamless garment worn by Muslim pilgrims in Mecca; the special spiritual state in which pilgrims wear two white sheets of unstitched cloth and abstain from certain things in order to perform the major pilgrim age (Haji) or the minor pilgrimage (Umrah). A pilgrim must enter into this state before crossing the pilgrim age boundary.

Ihsan

: Doing favor, behaving in a good way, forgiveness and donation.

Ijtihad

: All kinds of efforts in order to comprehend the religion and implement it in daily life; to deduce the rulings that Allah asks from us from the Qur'an and Sunnah in accordance with His will/for His sake. The term ijihad is used to mean "all the endeavors of a judge and a ruler to reach the correct judgment." Those who are eligible to make ijihad are called mujtahid.

Ikhtilaf	: Differences of opinion, conflict, dispute.
Ikrar	: Avowal, recognition, approval, acceptance.
Ilham	: Feelings and thoughts peculiar to the divine world, inspired to the hearts of prophets by Allah.
Infaq	: Sacrifice of possessions for the sake of Allah, providing someone's livelihood.
Inziwa	: Seclusion. Somebody's disconnect with the world and turning in on himself or herself to be with Allah. Living alone; escaping from community life.
Irshad	: Showing the straight path, warning.
Israiliyyat	: The stories and interpretations originating from the Holy Bible.
Itiqad	: Belief, faith.
Izzah	: Greatness, sovereignty, supremacy.
Jahannam	: Punishment place in Hereafter for those who committed sin according to religious beliefs.
Jannah	: Eternal place of reward for those who had good deeds and stayed away from committing sin.
Jibreel	: One of the supreme angels who is responsible for conveying the revelation of Allah to prophets.
Juz	: The term used for each one-thirtieth part of the Qur'an; Every 20 pages of the Qur'an.

K-L

Ka'bah	: The sacred place in Mecca visited by Muslims through out the year and circumambulated around.
Kafarah	: Expiation; atonement; the charity given or fasting performed as atonement for a sin.
Kalam	: Word. Islamic theology, the discipline that deals with basic principles of the faith in Islam.
Katib al-Wahy	: Revelation Scribe; A person who writes the revelations sent by Allah. Name for the Companions who have written the commands coming to the Prophet.
Kawn	: Universe.
Kawni	: Something related to the creation of human beings and universe.
Khalifah	: Caliph; the Leader of Muslims and protector of the religion as deputy of the Prophet.
Khitabah	: Eloquence.
Khushu	: Humbleness. Submission to God, being full of respect and fear.
Khutbah	: Sermon; supplications and speech given from the pulpit at the time of Friday and festival prayers.
Kibr	: Conceit, arrogance, ego.
Kinayah	: Allusion. Insinuating, reproachful, and touching word.
Kitabah	: Clerkship. Composition, writing.
Kitab al-Muqaddas	: Common name given to Torah, Gospel, and Psalms. Sacred books.

Kulliyah	: Faculty. A complex in Ottomans consisting of a mosque, school, soup kitchen, fountain, library, hospital, etc.
Lafz	: Word, wording.
Linguistics	: The science of language, including phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics, and historical linguistics.
Lutf	: Favor, help, and grace coming from an important and respectful one.
Lughah	: Language.
M	
Ma'al	: Meaning, conception. Translation.
Majaz	: An utterance taken out of its real meaning and transmitted into another related meaning. Metaphor.
Madaniyyah	: Civilization.
Madhhab	: Method or movement in a branch of science or art having distinctive features and qualities; schools of thought emerged based on different interpretations of a religion.
Madrasah	: Schools or colleges in Muslim countries where Islamic disciplines are taught.
Magic	: The art of producing a desired effect or result through the use of incantation or various other techniques, which presumably assure human control of supernatural agencies or the forces of nature.

Main Idea	: The most important or central thought of a paragraph or larger section of text, which tells the reader what the text is about.
Mahram	: Somebody one is prohibited from marrying because of being one of the close relatives. Something hidden.
Mahshar	: Gathering place of those who were resurrected on the Day of Judgment. Great crowd.
Mahya	: A lit banner (writing) hung between two Minarets of the big mosques, especially used in the month of Ramadan.
Masjid	: The place where prayers are performed in congregation; prayer house; mosque.
Mathal	: Words of wisdom and indirect laconic words that are based upon simile and have been recognized and spread within the community. Tale, riddle, anecdote.
Mawali	: Non-Muslim Arabs in the Abbasid and Umayyad spread within the community. Tale, riddle, anecdote spread within the community. Tale, riddle, anecdote..
Mihrab	: The niche that imam stays in while leading the prayer.
Minbar	: Pulpit; a high ladder place on which imam gives sermon.
Mirath	: Inheritance, heritage; estate.
Muballigh	: The one who delivers a message.
Mubham	: Ambiguous, not clear.
Mufassal	: Detailed.

Mufasssir	: Exegete; the one who interprets the Qur'an benefiting from sciences of the Qur'an in the way that people can understand.
Mu'jizah	: Miracle; an event not ascribable to human power or the laws of nature and consequently attributed to a divine agency, namely prophets. Miracles have been shown by the prophets with the permission of Allah to prove their prophethood to the unbelievers.
Mukhatab	: Interlocutor, addressee, listener, or audience.
Munafiq	: Hypocrite. A person who pretends to believe even though he or she does not believe.
Munazzah	: Clean, pure.
Mundarajat	: Contents.
Muqabalah	: Recitation of the Qur'an by hafizs in the mosques to the congregation, while the congregation follows their recitation from the Qur'an.
Muqaddimah	: Preface, introduction.
Mushaf	: The codex of the Qur'an.
Musibah	: Sudden disaster. Nuisance.
Mushrik	: A person who associates something with Allah.
Mutabar	: Respected, reputable, notable.
Mutasawwif	: Sufi; a person who is devoted to Allah, adopting the sufi practices.
Mutawadi	: Humble; unpretentious.
Mutma'in	: The one who is sure.
Muttaqi	: The one who stays away from sins with the fear of Allah and has a righteous life.

Muttasil

: Contiguous, adjacent.
Uninterrupted, continuous.

N

Nabi

: The prophet to whom no holy book was sent down.

Nahw

: Syntax.

Nass

: Certainty, decisive, definitive; the definitive statements of the Qur'an that are not open to interpretation.

Nomad

: A member of a people or tribe that has no permanent abode but moves about from place to place, usually seasonally and often following a traditional route or circuit according to the state of the pasturage or food supply.

Nuskha

: Published or written version of a work.

O-P

Prostration of Recitation (*sajdah al-tilawah*)

: The prostration that becomes compulsory with recitation or hearing of one or more of the verses of prostration.

Q

Qadi

: Judge in an Islamic court.

Qawm

: Peoples, folk, nation, people who are connected to each other through the same ancestors.

Qiraah

: Reading. Reading the Qur'an in accordance with some specific rules and symbols; reciting sections from the Qur'an during prayer.

Qissah

: Short stories from which lessons should be taken.

Qiyamah : End of the life and the day when all people will be resurrected and gathered in a great crowd; the Day of Judgment, the Day of Resurrection.

R

Rabbi : A Jewish scholar qualified to rule on questions of Jewish law.

Rahim : The One who protects and has mercy. The Most Merciful (the name of Allah).

Rahman : The One who has mercy towards all people and all existing beings. The Most Benevolent (the name of Allah).

Rahmah : To show mercy and forgiveness; in Turkish public language it is also used as a metaphor for “rain.”

Ramadan : The 9th month of the lunar calendar; the last one of “the three months”; the month when Muslims fast.

Rasul : The one who reports to people the orders of Allah and calls them to the religion; messenger; prophet.

Ra’y : Opinion, thought, view.

Riayah : To respect, rely, esteem; to obey.

Riwayah : To report an incident or news.

Riya : Hypocrisy, show off.

S

Sabil : Drinking water distributed in the holy days as charity; stone building generally built near mosques in order to distribute drinking water as charity, *sebilahane*.

Sahaba (pl. Ashab)	: Those who saw the Prophet Muhammad, converted to Islam, were present at his congregations, and became his friends during his lifetime; Companions of the Prophet Muhammad.
Salah	: Prayer; showing servitude to Allah by means of definite acts.
Salawat	: The supplication recited to praise and show respect to the Prophet Muhammad (saw) especially after mentioning or hearing his name.
Sarf	: Morphology, grammar.
Sarih	: Clear, net.
Shadirwan	: The pool that has fountains around it and a sprinkler in the middle, and is generally located in the yards of mosques as a place to perform ablution before prayer.
Shahid	: Martyr; a person who was killed on the way of Allah or while struggling for the religion, motherland, honor, goods, or life which Allah regards as sacred.
Shaahid	: Witness.
Sharh	: Opening, separating. Explanation and interpretation of a book or an expression.
Shirk	: Polytheism, associating something with Allah.
Sin	: An action or a behavior regarded inappropriate and prohibited by religion.
Suhuf	: The divine notice sent to some prophets apart from the holy books.

Sunnah	: Sayings, acts, and tacit approvals of the Prophet Muhammad; his customs; the actions which are not fard or wajib but were fulfilled and recommended to Muslims by the Prophet.
Sur	: An instrument that the angel Israfil will blow and announce the Day of Resurrection.
Surah	: Each one of the 114 sections of the Qur'an; Chapters of the Qur'an
T	
Ta'assub	: Fanaticism.
Tabiin	: Successors of the Companions of the Prophet; the Muslims who saw the Companions.
Taba al-Tabiin	: The Muslims who saw the Successors of the Companions; successors of the Successors
Tabligh	: Inviting people to religion; informing and delivering the message of Islam.
Tadhib	: Decorative art of gilding the pages of manuscripts.
Tadwin	: Compilation.
Tafakkur	: Thinking, contemplating.
Tajwid	: The science that deals with the rules of correct recitation of the Qur'an. Recitation in accordance with the pronunciation of words and phonation.
Takhrif	: Defacement, falsification; Ruining the essence of a thing by additions and deletions, changing.

Taqwa	: Having fear of Allah; staying away from what the religion has prohibited and fulfilling what it has ordered.
Tariqah	: Path; Sufi order; different paths towards Allah, each of which has different principles based on different methods of interpretation and practice.
Tartib	: Aligning, arraying, and putting in order.
Tasawwuf	: A belief defined by adherents as the inner, mystical dimension of Islam; some others contend that it is a perennial philosophy of existence that pre-dates religion, the expression of which flowered within Islam.
Tashbih	: Simile; likening.
Tawaf	: The act of circumambulation around the Ka'bah keeping the Ka'bah on the left side. Tawaf is formed of seven circumambulations around the Ka'bah beginning from the corner of the Ka'bah where the Hajar al-Aswad (The Black Stone) is placed.
Tawakkul	: Doing everything that we can and then putting our trust in Allah's plan.
Tawhid	: Belief in the oneness of Allah.
Ta'wil	: Interpretation, explanation.
Thawab	: Rewards that will be awarded by Allah in the Hereafter for the good deeds done in this world.

Theory	: A coherent group of tested general propositions, commonly regarded as correct, that can be used as principles of explanation and prediction for a class of phenomena.
Tilawah	: Reciting the Qur'an nicely, loudly, and in accordance with the rules of recitation.
Tawbah	: Repentance and regret from a sin and resolution not to do it again.
Tradition	: The handing down of statements, beliefs, legends, customs, information, etc., from generation to generation, especially by word of mouth or by practice.

U-V-W-X-Y-Z

Ummah	: A community gathering around the same religion and believing the same prophet.
Usul	: The right way necessary to follow to gain an end and to be successful; method; style.
Usury	: Lending or practice of lending money at an exorbitant interest.
Virtue	: Moral excellence; goodness; righteousness.
Wajib	: Compulsory; according to Hanafi understanding, wajib refers to the actions whose fulfillment is commanded but is not as definitive as the obligatory ones (fardh).
Wahy	: Divine information and verses sent to the Prophet by Allah and gathered in the Noble Qur'an.

Waswasah

: Wrong and idle thought, anxiety; calling bad possibilities into mind and worrying; thinking that an improbable thing will happen.

Zahid

: A person who can stand up against tricks and traps of Satan, excessive desires and passions; never clings to the world excessively; tries to devote oneself to Allah; and by this way, improves himself or herself mentally and spiritually.

Zahir

: Clear, apparent.

Zakat

: Almsgiving; one of the five pillars of Islam performed by Muslims who are considered wealthy (who possess wealth above the required minimum amount) by giving a certain amount of their wealth to those who are specified by Allah for His sake.

Zoology

: The science or branch of biology dealing with animals.

Zuhd

: To turn away from the things that may keep a person from the remembrance of Allah; not to cling to the world and worldly possessions; piety.

Zulm

: Illegal oppression of a weak person by a powerful person, anxiety, mercilessness, injustice, suffering.

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