



A 111 Uloom Al- Quran– Lecture No. 11

ULOOM AL-QURAN SCIENCES OF THE QURAN

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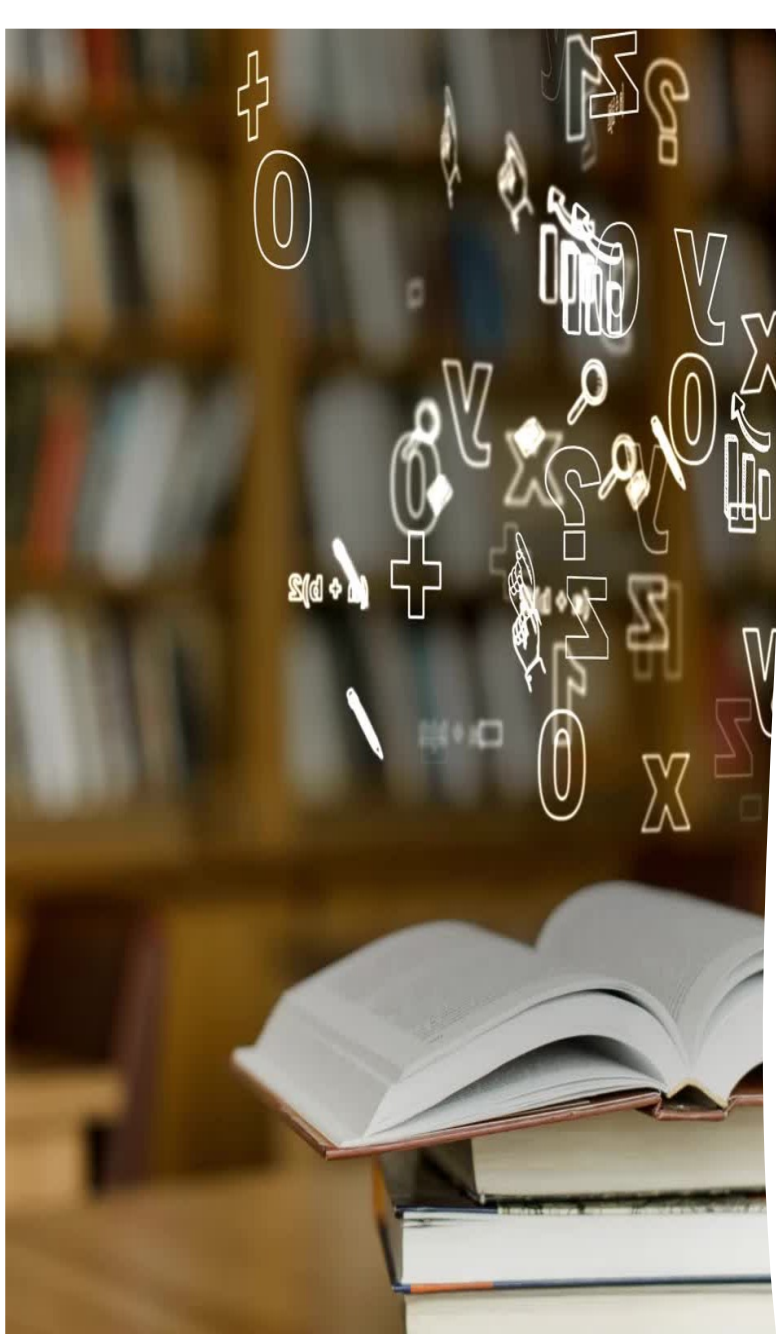
**Exegesis
Tafsir of
Quran**

**Lecture
11**

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Tafsir (Exegesis) of Quran and Ta'weel

- ❑ Understanding and interpreting the Quran is of utmost importance to Muslims. The Quran is the primary source of legislation for Muslims, and comprehending its teachings is crucial for the well-being and success of the ummah.
- ❑ While some may understand its surface-level meanings, others can uncover more profound insights.
- ❑ Muslims engage in the study of the Quran to attain a more profound interpretation.

Tafsir Exegesis



Tafsir is derived from the word "f-a-s-r," which means "to open." The word "fassara" means to explain or expound.

The word tafsir can also be derived from "s-f-r," which linguistically means, 'to expose, to uncover.'

“The disbelievers say, If only the Quran had been sent down to him all at once!”

‘We have sent it’ as such ‘in stages’ so We may reassure your heart with it. And We have revealed it at a deliberate pace “Whenever they bring you an argument, We come to you with the right refutation and the best explanation” (Al-Furqan, 25:33).

• وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَوْلَا نُزِّلَ عَلَيْهِ الْقُرْآنُ جُمْلَةً وَّاحِدَةً ۖ كَذَلِكَ لِنُثَبِّتَ بِهِ فُؤَادَكَ ۖ وَرَتَّلْنَاهُ تَرْتِيلًا ۚ وَلَا يَأْتُونَكَ بِمَثَلٍ إِلَّا جِئْنَاكَ بِالْحَقِّ وَأَحْسَنَ تَفْسِيرًا

Tafsir refers to uncovering and clarifying the meanings and secrets of the Quran. Ibn Abbas said that (تَفْسِيرًا tafseran) means (details). It is believed that the word "safar" means uncovered. It is also noted that "safirah" means unveiled, and "Asfara Alfajr" means the dawn is revealed.

Tafsir Exegesis

❑ In Terminology:

Tafsir is the scientific method of understanding the Quran, explaining its meanings, and deriving its rulings. It's the interpretation or explanation of a text.

❑ **Tafsir, or Quranic exegesis, is crucial in correctly understanding and implementing the Quran.**

❑ **It is the most researched topic in 'Uloom al-Quran and is closely linked to all aspects of the Islamic way of life. Hence, according to Imam Zarkashi, this science refers to the knowledge one understands the Quran's commandments and wisdom.**



"Ta'weel"

- "Ta'weel" is often used to explain and interpret the Quran.
- It comes from the root word "a-w-l" which means "to return" or "to revert".
- Ta'weel has two meanings:

1. Ta'weel implies going back to the original meaning of a word to understand its true meanings and connotations. "We have certainly brought them a Book which We explained with knowledge—a guide and mercy for those who believe." "Do they only await the fulfilment of its warning? The Day it will be fulfilled, those who ignored it before will say, "The messengers of our Lord certainly came with the truth. Are there any intercessors who can plead on our behalf? Or can we be sent back so we may do good, unlike what we used to do?" They will have certainly ruined themselves, and whatever gods they fabricated will fail them". Al-A'raf, 7:53)

" وَلَقَدْ جِئْتَهُمْ بِكِتَابٍ فَصَّلْنَاهُ عَلَىٰ عِلْمٍ هُدًى وَرَحْمَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ ، هَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا تَأْوِيلَهُ ۚ يَوْمَ يَأْتِي تَأْوِيلَهُ يَقُولُ الَّذِينَ نَسُوهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ قَدْ جَاءَتْ رُسُلُ رَبِّنَا بِالْحَقِّ فَهَلْ لَنَا مِنْ شُفَعَاءَ فَيَشْفَعُوا لَنَا أَوْ نُرَدُّ فَنَعْمَلَ غَيْرَ الَّذِي كُنَّا نَعْمَلُ ۚ قَدْ خَسِرُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَضَلَّ عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ " (الأعراف:53)

They are now eagerly awaiting its interpretation, fulfilling the prophecies of the Qur'an about the Resurrection, its signs, and the afterlife, including pages, scales, heaven, hell, and other aspects.

"Ta'weel"

The second meaning of Ta'weel

- ❑ Ta'weel is used to clarify and interpret the Quran, with no distinction from the meaning of "Tafsir"
- ❑ Some scholars explain the Quran through tafsir, which involves providing the meanings of individual words in a verse, while ta'weel offers the meaning of the verse.
- ❑ Ta'weel is a term used in the Quran that helps to explain the meanings of words, inform about the facts of events (Isra, 17:35), predict outcomes, and interpret dreams as in (Yusuf:36).
- ❑ In all instances, the use of ta'wil in the Qur'an is related to people, except for one instance, which is associated with God in (Al-Imran, 3:7).

"Ta'weel"

□ The verses where the word Ta'weel" is referenced.

1. The interpretation of words in Surah (3:7),

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 unspecific. 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.** 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. (Ali Imran, 3:7)

هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ مِنْهُ آيَاتٌ مُحْكَمَاتٌ هُنَّ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ وَأُخَرُ مُتَشَابِهَاتٌ ۚ فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ زَيْغٌ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ مَا تَشَابَهَ مِنْهُ ابْتِغَاءَ الْفِتْنَةِ وَابْتِغَاءَ تَأْوِيلِهِ ۗ وَمَا يَعْلَمُ تَأْوِيلَهُ إِلَّا اللَّهُ ۗ وَالرَّاسِخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ يَقُولُونَ ءَأَمَّنَّا بِهِ ۗ كُلٌّ مِّنْ عِنْدِ رَبِّنَا ۗ وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ إِلَّا أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ. (آل عمران: 7)

"Ta'weel"

2. Ta'weel of the Dreams

"And there entered the prison with him two young men. One of them said, "Indeed, I have seen myself [in a dream] pressing [grapes for] wine." The other said, "Indeed, I have seen myself carrying upon my head [some] bread, from which the birds were eating. **Inform us of its interpretation**; indeed, we see you to be of those who do good."(yusuf, 36)

وَدَخَلَ مَعَهُ السَّجْنَ فَتَيَانٍ قَالَ أَحَدُهُمَا إِنِّي أَرَانِي أَعْصِرُ خَمْرًا ۖ وَقَالَ الْآخَرُ إِنِّي أَرَانِي أَحْمِلُ فَوْقَ رَأْسِي خُبْرًا تَأْكُلُ الطَّيْرُ مِنْهُ ۗ نَبِّئْنَا **بِتَأْوِيلِهِ** ۗ إِنَّا نَرَاكَ مِنَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ". (يوسف: 36)

3. About Actions (informs about the facts of events)

Give in full when you measure, and weigh with an even balance. That is fairest and best in the end.(Isra', 17:35) **وَأَحْسَنُ تَأْوِيلًا** ۗ ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَوْفُوا الْكَيْلَ إِذَا كَلْتُمْ وَزِنُوا بِالْقِسْطَاسِ الْمُسْتَقِيمِ ۗ

The Need for Tafsir



AYAATA ACADEMY
أكاديمية آيات للعلوم الإسلامية

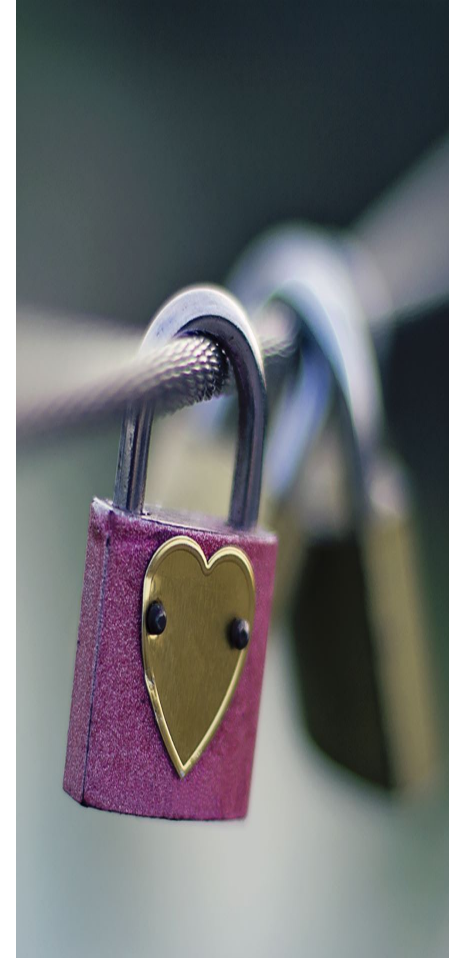
- The Muslims need to understand the Quran to practice their religion correctly. Therefore, the Quran must be explained and interpreted by an expert according to the conditions and needs of the time. Some verses in the Quran are (Muhkam) clear and understandable, while some are (Mutashabih)ambiguous and have multiple possible meanings that require extra evidence to choose the correct interpretation.
- Early scholars had to make an authentic interpretation of the verses when certain deviated groups used some Quranic verses as a base for their views. Later generations of Muslims lacked the strong faith of the Companions, which made logical interpretation of the unclear verses necessary to remove any doubts about the Quran. To avoid confusion and doubt, words and verses in the Qur'an that have multiple meanings and contradictory verses had to be explained.
- As the Muslim world expanded, it was necessary to explain the Quran to new Muslims who faced different and new challenges. The basis for all later interpretations of the Quran is the explanation given by Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), who was the first to teach it to the Muslims.



The Purpose of Tafsir

- Tafseer is a helpful tool that expands on the teachings of the Quran.
- It helps people understand the belief system, how the Creator and the created relate to each other and how to develop good behaviour.
- Tafseer provides guidelines for personal, family, societal and political relationships between communities and nations.
- It also narrates the histories of past nations to provide examples of good behaviour and warn against lousy conduct.
- Tafseer shows the authenticity of the Prophet's message by highlighting the miraculous nature of the Quran.

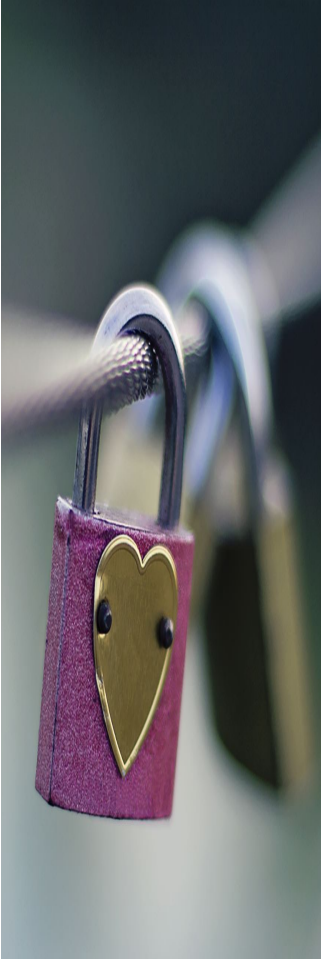
The honour of interpretation



- Interpretation is considered one of the most important and noble fields in Shariah law. It deals with the word of God, which is the source of all wisdom and virtues, making it the most significant science in terms of purpose and need.
- Interpretation aims to understand the most potent and reliable means to achieve genuine happiness. Since every aspect of religious and worldly perfection must align with the knowledge of the Book of God and follow Sharia law, the need for interpretation is intense.
- It is essential to detach oneself from desires. Some sects, such as the Qadariyya, Rafidite, and Mu'tazila, try to gain followers through eloquent speeches. Instead, we should begin by interpreting the Qur'an with the Quran itself, as the Quran is self-explanatory. Whatever is brief in one place is explained in another.
- Additionally, we should seek interpretation from the Sunnah, which further clarifies the Quran. The Quran states that the rulings of the Prophet pbuh only come from God, and we should judge accordingly.

Conditions to be met by the interpreter (Mufasssir)

- The interpreter (Mufasssir) must meet certain religious and knowledge conditions to interpret the Quran accurately. Interpreting the Quran is a heavy responsibility, as the interpreter's words are considered the word of God. Therefore, only those with the necessary qualifications can interpret the Quran.
- An interpreter must have pure intention and true Islamic belief and follow morality and the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ. The interpreter must be pious, have practical knowledge and avoid significant sins.
- The interpreter must intend to seek God's pleasure and serve the Quran and the Muslim community. Any attempt to interpret the Quran for worldly gains is not permissible. Unfortunately, some individuals with misguided intentions and false beliefs have misinterpreted the Quran to support their claims. These interpreters may pose as pious Muslim believers, but they aim to cause harm to Islam by sowing seeds of doubt in the minds of Muslims. It is vital to stay vigilant and interpret the Quran correctly



A Mufassir must possess extensive knowledge in various areas



- **1. Arabic philology:** This includes an in-depth understanding of the language's grammar, lexicography, word meanings, rhetorical studies, etc.
- **2. Science of Eloquence (Balaghah):** This pertains to the mean, bayan, and badi' concepts.
- **3. Science of Hadith and the methodology of Hadith:** The individual should know how Hadith was compiled and its methods.
- **4. Fiqh and Usool al-Fiqh:** This includes understanding Islamic jurisprudence and its foundations.
- **5. Sciences of the Quran:** The individual should know the reasons behind the revelation of verses, abrogating and abrogated verses, Muhkam and Mutashabih verses, etc
- **Additionally, one must be well-versed in the science of recitation of the Quran (Qira'aat), and theology and possess a good understanding of sociology, physiology, astronomy, physics, chemistry, medicine, history, etc. These sciences are necessary for the trusted interpretation of the Quran. A person with insufficient knowledge in these areas will make many mistakes in their understandings.**

Conditions and etiquette of the interpreter

As an interpreter, it is paramount to uphold the following etiquettes:

- 1. **Good intentions and correct purpose:** Good intentions should drive your actions. As an Islamic Shariah interpreter, your objective should be the greater good, to provide virtuous deeds for the benefit of Islam, and to purify yourself of worldly distractions so that God may guide your path. Always strive to gain knowledge with sincerity and use it for the betterment of others.
- 2. **Good manners:** The interpreter holds a position of authority and should lead by example in their conduct and character. Maintaining good manners and avoiding using rough and inappropriate language is crucial, which may hinder the student's ability to comprehend and disrupt their thought process.

THE HISTORY OF TAFSEER



- According to God's law, messengers were sent in their people's language so they could communicate with them easily.
- “We have not sent a messenger except in the language of his people to clarify the message for them. Then Allah leaves whoever He wills to stray and guides whoever He wills. And He is the Almighty, All-Wise” (Ibrahim: 4) وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ رَّسُولٍ إِلَّا بِلِسَانِ قَوْمِهِ لِيُبَيِّنَ لَهُمْ فَيُضِلُّ اللَّهُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۗ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ (إبراهيم: 4)
- The Quran was revealed to Prophet Muhammad in Arabic, his native language, so that he could convey the message. “Indeed, We have sent it down as an Arabic Quran so that you may understand” (Yusuf: 2) . The Quranic text is in Arabic because its meanings correspond to the Arabic language and culture. Even if a few words in the Quran are from other languages, they have been Arabized or are purely Arabic but from languages that influenced Arabic. This does not diminish the fact that the Quran is an Arabic scripture.
- The science of tafsir originated during the lifetime of the Prophet ﷺ himself. One of the primary functions of the Prophet ﷺ was to interpret the Quran.
- Allah affirms, “And We sent down the Message (The Quran) so that you explain to the people what has been revealed for them and so that they may ponder” (Nahl:44) وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ“.

The Period of the Prophet ﷺ in Tafsir

The science of tafsir (interpretation of the Quran) was relatively straightforward during the lifetime of the Prophet ﷺ.

Firstly, the Companions of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ bore witness to the revelation of the Quran and the circumstances in which it was disclosed. They were aware of the reasons behind the revelation of each verse (Asbab an-Nuzool) and did not need to search for this knowledge as later interpreters would have to.

Secondly, the Arabic language spoken by the Companions was identical to the Arabic of the Quran, as the Quran was revealed in their dialect. As a result, they understood the Arabic of the Quran without any complications.

Lastly, and most significantly, the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was the one who received the revelation of the Quran. Even if the Companions had difficulties in understanding any verse, they could turn to the Prophet ﷺ for an explanation. They were careful to understand every single verse in the Quran correctly.

For instance, the Prophet ﷺ elaborated on the verse: "Those who believe and do not mix their belief with injustice" (6:82) **الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَلَمْ يَلْبِسُوا إِيمَانَهُمْ بِظُلْمٍ أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمُ الْأَمْنُ وَهُمْ مُهْتَدُونَ** (when he was asked about Zulm (shirk), with another verse: "Indeed, shirk (associating others with Allah) is a great injustice." (31:13).

The Period of the Companions in Tafsir



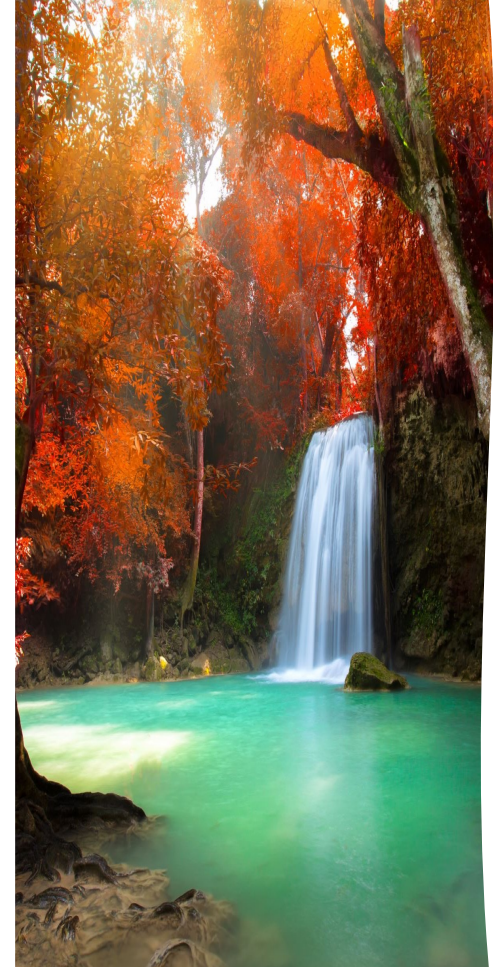
- During the lifetime of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, his companions were deeply committed to understanding every verse of the Quran. They would not proceed to the next set of verses until they had fully comprehended the ideas and regulations of the previous set. Their keenness to comprehend the Quran meant they would not commit any verses to memory until they had grasped their meanings.
- Ten of the Prophet's companions, the Four Rightly Guided Caliphs, were renowned for their Quranic interpretation (tafsir) knowledge. **Abdullah ibn Mas'ood, Abdullah ibn Abbas, Ubay ibn Ka'ab, Zayd ibn Thabit, Abu Mousa al-'ASharee, and Abdullah ibn Zubair.** It is worth noting that **Ali ibn Abi Talib has the most narrations** among the Khalifah. On the other hand, the reports of Abu Bakr, Umar, and Uthman are relatively rare to find, as they passed away early. This implies that the tafsir narrations of these three Khalifahs are not comprehensive.

The Period of the Companions in Tafsir

- Moreover, there was less need to interpret the Quran during the time of Abu Bakr, Umar, and Uthman since the companions were numerous and widely dispersed. However, the demand for interpreting the Quran increased significantly in later times, particularly during the Caliphate of Ali.
- Ibn Abbas, the cousin of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, was the most knowledgeable Companion in interpreting the Qur'an. The Prophet ﷺ prayed for Ibn Abbas to know the Book and Wisdom. Despite being young, he was respected by the Companions. Umar allowed him to attend meetings with older Companions. Ibn Abbas, Abdullah ibn Mas'ood, Ali ibn Abi Talib, and Ubay ibn Ka'ab are the most cited Companions in tafsir literature. They left behind students and interpreted only where misinterpretation or ignorance existed

The Period of the Successors

- Following the passing of Prophet Muhammad , ﷺ the responsibility of interpreting and explaining the Quran was passed down to his companions. The companions' students, the Successors (at Tabien), continued this responsibility.
- They relied on the exact interpretation sources of the companions, including the Quran, the Hadith narrated by the companions, the companions' reasoning (ijtihad), the Arabic language, and the Judeo-Christian tradition.
- After the Prophet's death, the companions went to different Muslim cities to spread the teachings of Islam. Each of them taught numerous Successors who later became scholars. During this period, three major learning centres were established in the Muslim Empire:



The Major Learning Centres of Tabi'een

These centres became the leading authorities of knowledge, including Tafsir.

- **In Makkah**, Ibn Abbas taught his primary students, who later became scholars in this area. Sa'eed ibn Jubayr, Mujaahid ibn Jabr, 'Ikrimah, Taawoos, and 'Ataa ibn Rabaah became the leading authorities in tafsir. Their names can still be found in many works of tafsir.

- **In Madinah**, 'Ubay ibn Ka'ab was an influential figure in the field of tafsir He taught several students who became renowned scholars of tafsir in Madinah, including Abu al-'Aaliyah, Muhammad ibn Ka'ab al-Quradee, and Zayd ibn Aslam.

- **In Koufah**, 'Abdullah ibn Masoud was a renowned scholar of tafsir who left a remarkable legacy. He taught many students, including 'Alqamah ibn Qays, Masrooq, and al-Aswad ibn Yazeed, who all eventually became famous scholars of tafsir themselves. Other successors from Koufah known for their knowledge of tafsir were 'Aamir ash-Sha'bee, al-Hasan al-Basree, and Qataadah as-Sadoosee.



The Period of the Successors

- During this period, there was a significant emphasis on the Judaeo-Christian tradition, also known as Isra'iliyyat. Therefore, many of these narrations entered Islamic literature. Most of the people who narrated these traditions were Jews and Christians who had converted to Islam, such as 'Abdullah ibn Salaam, Ka'ab ai-Ahbaar (who embraced Islam after the Prophet's death and did not see him), Wahb ibn Munnabih, and 'Abdul Maalik ibn Jurayj. Many of the Judaeo-Christian traditions found in Tafsir's literature can be traced back to these scholars.
- During this period, **there were significant differences in interpreting the Quran compared to the Companions' time**. There was also a notable increase in the number of forged narrations attributed to the Prophet ﷺ. This was primarily due to the widespread political and religious turmoil across Muslim territories. Furthermore, the Successors had narrated more verses than the Companions since there was a greater need to explain more verses during this period.



The Compilation of Tafseer



During the period following the Successors, scholars began to compile and write tafsir.

This stage saw the emergence of significant works by scholars of hadith, who included sections on tafsir in their narrations and works. As a result, tafsir narrations were considered a branch of hadith literature during this stage.

Some of the scholars of this period who were known for their tafsir narrations include Yazeed ibn Haron as-Sulamee, Sufyaan al-Thawri (Sufyaan ibn 'Uyaynah (Wakee' ibn al-Jaraah Shu'bah ibn al-Hajjaaj, Aadam ibn Abee Iyaas and Abd ibn Humayd. None of their works have survived intact until today.

During the development of tafsir literature, there was a time when tafsir was separated from hadith, and independent works were solely created for tafsir. This stage also involved discussing every verse in the Quran, not just those with narrations from the Prophet and Companions.

Determining the first person to write a comprehensive tafsir of the Quran is difficult due to a lack of manuscripts from the first century of hijrah. However, later works reference several manuscripts, including Sa'eed ibn Jubayr's. It is unlikely that it was a complete tafsir but rather a compilation of narrations from previous generations. The Fihrist of ibn Nadeem contains a gripping narration.

Summary of the history of Tafsir

The first period was during the time of the Companions and Successors.

This period mainly consisted of narrations about verses over which there was a difference of opinion or misunderstanding, along with the Prophet's hadith dealing with tafsir. The Companions and Successors only used personal reasoning (ijtihad) when necessary.

The second period was the era of the late Successors and the generation after them. During this time, Hadith's literature was compiled, and Tafsir's narrations were included in Hadith's works. Additionally, narrations from different Companions were collected, whereas, in the first period, these narrations were typically limited to a specific area.

The third stage saw the rise of independent tafsir works, based on hadeeth works of the previous generation. As a result, tafsir became an independent science. The first complete Quranic tafsirs were produced, and the commentary was not limited to only those verses concerning which narrations existed from previous generations. However, during this stage, the primary source of tafsir remained narrations of the prior generation.

Summary of the history of Tafsir

- **In the fourth stage, reliance on narrations decreased, and greater emphasis was placed on personal reasoning. Tafsirs were written based on sectarian bias, and this period witnessed the increase of forged narrations in Tafsir literature as the isnad disappeared from Tafsir's works.**
- **The final period of the history of tafsir, which has lasted from the fourth century of the hijra until today, saw the culmination of the science of tafsir and the emergence of various categories of tafsir. These include tafsir based on narrations, personal reasoning, topic-wise interpretation, polemical interpretation, and jurisprudential interpretation. Some tafsirs sought to combine all these topics into one work, giving a broad, all-encompassing approach to interpretation**

TADWEEN PERIOD (The Codification Era)

During the late Umayyad and early Abbasid eras, codification began with hadith first. Scholars compiled Tafsir, but no author was assigned to interpret the Quran. A group of individuals narrated interpretations and collected hadith. Scholars of hadith emerged and included tafsir in their works. Tafsir became a branch of hadith literature, with scholars like Yazid ibn Haron being known for their tafsir narrations.

Most prominent scholars who contributed to tafsir literature are Yazid bin Harun Al-Sulami (d. 117 AH), Shu'bah bin Al-Hajjaj, (d. 160 AH), Waki' bin Al-Jarh (d.197 AH), Sufyan bin Uyaynah, (198 AH), Ruh bin Ubadah Al-Basri, (d. 205 AH), Abdul Razzaq bin Hammam, (d. 211 AH), Adam bin Abi Iyas, (d. 220 AH), and Abd bin Hamid, (d. 249 AH).

TADWEEN PERIOD & THE OBJECTIVE TAFSIR

- Many scholars were interested in the objective interpretations of the Quran and wrote various books such as:
 - Ibn al-Qayum, wrote Al-Tibyan fi Aqsaam al-Quran,
 - Abu Ubaidah the (Majaz al-Quran),
 - Al-Raghib Al-Isfahani (Mufradat al-Quran),
 - Abu Jaafar Al-Nahass Al-Nasikh and Mansookh,
 - Abu Al-Hasan Al-Wahidi wrote Asbab Anuzul,
 - Al-Jassas wrote Ahkam al-Quran.
- The ongoing Quranic research leads to new interpretations of certain verses for specific aspects of the Quran.



Lecture 12

**The
Principles
of Tafsir**

**Types of
Tafsirs**