

THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTERPRETATION STYLES IN QUR'ANIC EXEGESIS

Jubrah M. Arib, Siti Rohmah, and Sabil Mokodensebo

Abstract: This paper aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the development of various interpretative styles in the exegesis of the Qur'an. It addresses research questions related to the historical roots of the emergence and diversity of interpretative styles and the various approaches scholars employ in interpreting the Qur'an from the classical to the modern-contemporary periods. This study is necessary because Qur'anic exegesis represents the intellectual endeavour of understanding the various explanations of the Qur'anic verses as the word of Allah SWT — Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala (Glorified and Exalted Be He). Explanations of the Qur'an initially came directly from the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), followed by the companions, the successors (*tabi'in*), the successors of the successors (*tabi'ut tabi'in*), and various groups and sects that emerged after that, up to the present time. This development also coincided with the spread of Islam across different regions, accompanied by the advancement of knowledge and the emergence of various schools of thought and philosophical perspectives. This paper employs a qualitative method with literature analysis. The results of the literature analysis indicate that the historical roots of the emergence and diversity of interpretative styles, as well as the various approaches used by scholars in interpreting the Qur'an from the classical to the modern-contemporary periods, emerged alongside the development of knowledge, the spread of Islamic teachings, and the rise of various Islamic schools of thought. This eventually gave rise to various interpretative styles, such as linguistic (*lughawi*), philosophical (*falsafi*), scientific (*'ilmi*), jurisprudential (*fiqh*), mystical or Sufi (*tasawuf*), educational (*tarbawi*), theological (*i'tiqadi* or *kalam*), rhetorical and explicative (*balaghi* and *bayani*), and revolutionary (*haraki*) styles.

Keywords: interpretative styles; development of exegesis; diversity of interpretative styles

Abstrak: Tulisan ini bertujuan untuk memaparkan perkembangan corak penafsiran al-Qur'an. Tulisan ini menjawab pertanyaan penelitian terkait akar sejarah kemunculan dan keberagaman corak penafsiran, serta berbagai pendekatan yang digunakan ulama dalam menafsirkan al-Qur'an sejak periode klasik hingga modern-kontemporer. Tulisan ini perlu dilakukan karena tafsir al-Qur'an adalah bentuk olah pikir dari pemahaman akan berbagai penjelasan tentang ayat al-Qur'an sebagai *kalam* Allah SWT. Penjelasan tentang al-Qur'an datang langsung dari Rasulullah Saw, kemudian masa para sahabat, *tabi'in*, *tabi'ut tabi'in* atau kelompok-kelompok dan aliran-aliran yang hadir setelahnya, hingga sekarang ini. Begitu pula pada masa di mana umat Islam telah menyebar di berbagai wilayah yang dibarengi dengan terjadinya perkembangan ilmu pengetahuan dan berkembangnya berbagai aliran mazhab dan pemikiran. Tulisan ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan analisis data kepustakaan. Hasil analisis literatur menunjukkan bahwa akar sejarah kemunculan dan keberagaman corak penafsiran, serta berbagai pendekatan yang digunakan ulama dalam menafsirkan al-Qur'an sejak periode klasik hingga modern-kontemporer saat ini lahir bersamaan dengan berkembangnya ilmu pengetahuan, penyebaran ajaran Islam dan munculnya berbagai aliran mazhab dalam Islam. Hal ini pada akhirnya melahirkan berbagai corak penafsiran seperti corak *lughawi*, corak falsafi, corak *ilmi*, corak *fiqh*, corak tasawuf atau sufi, corak *tarbawi*, corak *i'tiqadi* atau *kalam* (teologi), corak *balaghi* dan *bayani*, serta corak *haraki*.

Kata kunci: corak tafsir; perkembangan tafsir; keberagaman corak tafsir

Introduction

As the ultimate source of guidance, the Qur'an is not limited to Muslims alone but serves all of humanity. For Muslims, it represents the third pillar of faith, following faith in Allah (SWT) and the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Understanding, practising, and applying the values contained within the Qur'an necessitates the ability to interpret each of its verses. There is no debate regarding the origins of the Qur'an; all schools and sects within Islam agree that the authority concerning the origins of the Qur'an lies with Allah (SWT), as the Qur'an represents the divine words of Allah (SWT) in the form of sacred verses or *Kalamullah*.

The definition of the Qur'an, derived from various references, concludes that the Qur'an is the word of Allah (SWT), revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) through the intermediary of the angel Jibril (AS) in highly grammatical and literary Arabic (Al-Ayubi et al., 2023; Arib & Mokodenseho, 2020). Reading it is considered an act of worship with immense value regarding reward and merit (Mokodenseho et al., 2024). It also stands as a prophetic miracle of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), which was revealed gradually (*mutawatir*). The physical form of the Qur'an consists of written texts arranged systematically from the beginning of Surah al-Fatihah to the end of Surah an-Naas.

Etymologically, in Arabic, the Qur'an means “reading”; as a holy book, the Qur'an is a revered reading. Even if one does not understand the content and meaning of the verses being read, reciting the Qur'an itself has a *zikr* (remembrance) effect, which psychologically and spiritually draws us closer to Allah (SWT) (Arib et al., 2022). Thus, reciting the Qur'an correctly is a commandment of the Qur'an (Bahren & Mokodenseho, 2023b). As Allah (SWT) has stated:

أَوْ زِدْ عَلَيْهِ وَرَتِّلِ الْفُرْآنَ أَنْ تَرْتِيلاً

Or add to it, and recite the Qur'an with measured recitation (Q.S. Al-Muzammil [73]: 4).

أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْفُرْآنَ أَنْ أَمْ عَلَى قُلُوبٍ أَقْفَالُهَا

Then do they not reflect upon the Qur'an, or are there locks upon [their] hearts? (Q.S. Muhammad [47]: 24).

The highest form of *zikr* (remembrance), *tadabbur*, is a profound practice that transcends vocalisation. It involves deep contemplation and earnest reflection on the meaning of the Qur'an, delving into its significance without depending on recitation. Our duty goes beyond mere proficiency in reciting the Qur'an; we are called to excel in understanding, internalising, and practising its teachings. This is because the primary purposes of the Qur'an's revelation are internalisation and practical application.

The authenticity of the Qur'an is not a matter of doubt, as it is guaranteed by Allah (SWT) Himself. As stated in the Qur'an: "Indeed, it is we who sent down the Qur'an and indeed, We will be its guardian" (Q.S. Al-Hijr [15]: 9). The Qur'an we have today is the same Qur'an received by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) through the intermediary of the angel Jibril. There has been no addition or subtraction, nothing lost or altered; its contents remain unchanged. Therefore, it is truly authentic. The veracity of the Qur'an is ensured through a continuous chain of transmission (*mutawatir*) without interruption. One reason for the Qur'an's preserved authenticity is its revelation in Arabic (Arib & Mokodenseho, 2022), as the Qur'an states: "In a clear Arabic language" (Q.S. Ash Shu'ara [26]: 195).

According to research by Marshall G. Hodgson, a Western scholar who extensively wrote about Islam, Arabic is a dynamic world language capable of adapting to changing times. Arabic has significantly impacted fields such as medicine and modern chemistry. A linguistics expert noted that Arabic's structural regularity and word formation resemble mathematical logic, unlike English, which appears more irregular in its word changes. This high level of regularity is evident in the science of morphology (*sarf*), both in linguistic (*lughawî*) and terminological aspects. Among the languages that have influenced human civilisation—Latin, Roman, Sanskrit, and Arabic—only Arabic continues to be used for communication today.

The Qur'an is an open book for anyone to study, understand, interpret, and explicate using various methods and styles of exegesis. These methods and styles encompass all dimensions or themes of human life (Bahren & Mokodenseho, 2023a).. They include linguistic analysis, historical context, and theological interpretation, among others. In understanding the Qur'an, interpretation is essential to guide every act of worship, whether ritual

(*mahdhab*) or non-ritual (*ghairu mahdhab*). Consequently, the influence of the Qur'an has led to the emergence of numerous sciences that examine it from various aspects, including the science of Tafsir.

The Qur'an contains not only simple and detailed expressions but also verses that are difficult to understand both in wording and meaning and verses that merely present principles. In this context, it is challenging for Muslims to comprehend and practice the Qur'an without the science of Tafsir. This science aims to elucidate the Qur'anic verses as intended by Allah (SWT) to the extent that a *mufasssir* (interpreter) can grasp.

The primary factor for the emergence of Tafsir is the advancement of thought. This field significantly influences the development of knowledge, both general and religious. Tafsir serves to obtain clear explanations about the meanings and objectives of Qur'anic verses (*nash*), which are intrinsically linked to these advancements. Significant developments have occurred in Tafsir, particularly concerning styles, methods, approaches, and theories of interpretation.

This paper aims to elucidate the development of various interpretative styles in the exegesis of the Qur'an. It addresses research questions related to the historical roots of the emergence and diversity of interpretative styles and the various approaches scholars employ in interpreting the Qur'an from the classical to the modern-contemporary periods. This study is expected to serve as a reference in one of the Qur'anic Tafsir studies and provide a clear overview of the diversity within the Qur'anic exegesis tradition.

Method

This paper employs a qualitative method with a thorough literature analysis. The literature research involves using various sources such as books, notes, and reports of previous studies. The data sources reviewed and analysed in this study include exegesis books, journal articles related to exegesis, tafsir styles, Islamic encyclopaedias, and the history of exegesis. To facilitate understanding, the author has organised the discussion into several main sections that primarily address the historical roots of the emergence and diversity of interpretative styles, as well as the various approaches used by scholars in interpreting the Qur'an from the classical to the modern-contemporary periods.

Results and Discussion

Interpretative Styles

Interpretative styles in tafsir refer to the tendencies or specialisations possessed by a *mufassir* (exegete). These tendencies can be influenced by their education, environment, or beliefs. For instance, if a *mufassir* is an expert in linguistics, they will interpret the Qur'anic verses using a linguistic analytical approach, commonly known as the *lughawi* style. If a *mufassir* is an expert in science, their interpretation will likely employ a scientific approach, referred to as the *'ilmi* style, and so on. However, it is important to note that every *mufassir* must possess adequate expertise, as interpreting the Qur'an requires both academic and methodological qualifications.

The background for the emergence of various interpretative styles lies in the rapid development of Islamic scholarship. As scholars mastered various disciplines and began to produce works in these fields, their tafsir works also emerged, reflecting their particular areas of expertise. Each *mufassir* has their own inclinations and focus areas, leading to the development of diverse interpretative styles.

History and Development of Tafsir Styles

The interpretation of the Qur'an, a practice that began during the time of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), holds significant importance. The Prophet, being the authoritative figure responsible for explaining Allah's (SWT) revelation, provided the most accurate interpretation. Following his death, his companions, including Abu Bakr Ash-Shiddiq, Umar bin Khattab, Uthman bin Affan, Ali bin Abi Talib, Ibn Mas'ud, Abdullah bin Abbas, Ubay bin Ka'b, Zayd bin Thabit, Abu Musa Al-Ash'ari, and Abdullah bin Zubair, continued this tradition.

Among these companions, Abdullah bin Abbas stands out as a notable *mufassir*. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) called him *Tarjumaan al-Qur'an* (Interpreter of the Qur'an). Other companions whose tafsir was also accepted include Abu Hurairah, Anas bin Malik, Jabir bin Abdullah al-Ansari, Abdullah bin Umar bin Khattab, and Aisha bint Abu Bakr ash-Shiddiq. However, the amount of tafsir received from them was less extensive than that from the companions as mentioned above. The evolution of Tafsir can be traced

through the generations. The period of the *tabi'in mufassirs*, followed by the period of the *tabi'it tabi'in mufassirs* and those after them, marked the period of *tadwin* (codification). As knowledge and its branches developed, so did *tafsir*, continuing to evolve through the period of the *muta'akhirin*. The emergence of the *tabaqat mufassirin* (generations of Qur'anic interpreters) in Mecca, originating from Abdullah bin Abbas, is a testament to this evolution. Ibn Abbas's *tafsir* was further developed by his students, including Sa'id bin Jubair, Ata bin Abi Rabah, Mujahid, Tawus bin Kaisan al-Yamani, and Ikrimah bin Abu Jahal.

The development of *tafsir* was significantly influenced by key figures. In Kufa, another generation –*tabaqaat*– of *mufassirs* emerged, originating from Ibn Mas'ud. There were also notable *tabaqaat* in Medina, including Zayd bin Aslam, whose *tafsir* was narrated by his son Abdur Rahman bin Aslam and Imam Malik bin Anas (Imam Malik). From these *tabi'in*, notable *mufassirs* from the *tabi'it tabi'in* emerged, including Imam Sufyan bin Uyainah, Waki' al-Jarrah, Shu'bah al-Hajjaj, Zayd bin Harun, and Abd bin Humaid. These scholars were pioneers for Abu Ja'far Muhammad bin Jarir at-Tabari, regarded as the foremost of all *mufassirs* and a primary source for subsequent *tafsir* scholars.

During the medieval period, various ideological styles of interpretation began to emerge, notably during the late Umayyad and early Abbasid dynasties. This period reached its golden age, particularly during the reign of the Abbasid caliph Harun al-Rashid (785-809), who paid special attention to knowledge development. His successor, al-Ma'mun (813-830) continued this tradition. At that time, the Islamic world experienced its golden age, or zenith of progress, in intellectual, educational, and civilizational advancements (Mustaqim, 2008). This period significantly influenced the styles of *Tafsir*.

Interpretative Styles

In the evolution of Qur'anic exegesis, several interpretative styles have emerged and remained prominent up to the modern era. These include *Lughawi* Style, *Falsafi* Style, *'Ilmi* Style, *Fiqh* Style, *Tasawwuf* or Sufi Style, *Tarbawi* Style, *I'tiqadi* or *Kalam* (Theological) Style, *Balaghi* and *Bayani* Style, and *Haraki* Style.

The *lughawi* or literary style of tafsir seeks to elucidate the meanings of the Qur'an by employing a rich array of linguistic principles. This interpretation is conducted with a tendency or approach that involves the analysis and application of linguistic rules, often characterised by word-by-word exegesis (*tablil al-lafzih*). It begins with the origins and forms of vocabulary (*mufradat*) and extends to grammar (*ilmu alat*), including the examination of aspects such as syntax (*nahwu*), morphology (*sharf*), and recitation (*qira'at*). The *lughawi* style is also referred to as a method of tafsir that utilises linguistic principles, showcasing the depth of the subject matter. Moreover, Mustaqim (2008) notes that *mufassirs* (exegetes) often include lines of Arabic poetry as foundational references. This style, which emerged due to the increasing number of non-Arabs converting to Islam and the deficiencies among Arabs themselves in the field of literature, connects us to the historical context of Islamic studies, necessitating explanations of the Qur'an's meanings.

A *mufassir* who wishes to interpret the Qur'an using a linguistic approach must comprehensively understand the Arabic language, including its syntax (*nahwu*), rhetoric (*balaghab*), and literary aspects. In this context, asy-Syurbasi (1999) emphasises the critical importance of language in Qur'anic exegesis. Mastery of Arabic is essential, as Ahmad Syurbasyi considers knowledge of the language and its related fields (syntax '*nahwu*', morphology '*sharf*', etymology, rhetoric '*balaghab*', and recitation '*qira'at*') as fundamental prerequisites for a *mufassir*. According to Shihab (2003), the linguistic style of tafsir during the classical period is exemplified by the Tafsir al-Kashshaf by Zamakhshari. Over time, other works of tafsir that emphasise linguistic '*lughab*', aspects include Tafsir al-Jalalain by al-Suyuti and al-Mahalli, and Mafatih al-Ghaib by Fakhruddin al-Razi.

With its various presentations and discussions, linguistics tafsir generally falls into two broad categories. The first is the purely linguistic tafsir, which primarily addresses language-related aspects. Examples include *Tafsir Ma'an al-Qur'an* by al-Farra', *Tafsir al-Jalalain* by al-Suyuti and al-Mahalli. The second category comprises linguistic tafsir that intertwines with discussions on other topics such as law, theology, and more. Examples of this type include *Tafsir al-Tabari* by Ibn Jarir al-Tabari, *Mafatih al-Ghaib* by Fakhruddin

al-Razi, and most tafsir works from the past to the present, including *Tafsir al-Mishbah* by M. Quraish Shihab.

Lughawi tafsir, in its development, encompasses various forms and types. Some works focus exclusively on aspects such as syntax (*nahwu*), morphology (*sharaf*), context (*munasabah*), and rhetoric (*balaghah*), while others integrate linguistic analysis with other interpretative styles. Syntax-Focused Tafsir (*I'rab al-Qur'an*); This type of lughawi tafsir concentrates solely on the grammatical positioning (*i'rab*) of each word in the Qur'an. An example is "*al-Tibyan fi I'rab al-Qur'an*" by Abdullah bin Husain al-'Akbari (d. 616). Morphology-Focused Tafsir (Sharaf) (semiotic and semantic); These works delve into the meanings of words, their derivations (*ishtiqaq*), and inter-word correlations. Examples include "*Tafsir al-Qur'an Karim*" by M. Quraish Shihab and "*Konsep Kufr dalam al-Qur'an*" by Harifuddin Cawidu. Context-Focused Tafsir (*Munasabah*); This style emphasizes the correlation between verses or surahs. Notable examples are "*Nazhm al-Durar fi Tanasub al-Ayat wa al-Suwar*" by Burhanuddin al-Buqa'y (d. 885), "*Mafatih al-Ghaib*" by Fakhruddin al-Razi (d. 606), and "*Tafsir al-Mishbah*" by M. Quraish Shihab. Allegory-Focused Tafsir (*Al-Amthal*); These interpretations highlight the parables and metaphors in the Qur'an. Examples include "*al-Amthal min al-Kitab wa al-Sunnah*" by Abdullah Muhammad bin Ali al-Hakim al-Turmudzi (d. 585), "*Amtsah al-Qur'an*" by al-Mawardi (d. 450 H), and "*Majaz al-Qur'an*" by Izzuddin Abd Salam (d. 660). Recitation-Focused Tafsir (*Qira'ah*); This type of lughawi tafsir explores the various modes of Qur'anic recitation. An example is "*Tabbir al-Taisir fi Qira'at al-Aimmah al-'Ayyrah*" by Muhammad bin Muhammad al-Jazry (d. 843 H).

Linguistic classification of tafsir involves the study of pure Arabic lexicon and those that are not, as exemplified in works like "*al-Muhadzẓab fi Waqa'a fi al-Qur'an min al-Mu'arrab*" by Jalaluddin al-Suyuthi. Additionally, other lughawi tafsir such as "*Tafsir Fawatih al-Hijaiyyah*" also fall under this category. The interpretation by Abdullah bin Abbas, who often used poetry as a source for his exegesis, laid the foundation for the lughah school '*madrasah lughah*'. This began when he served as a teacher and mentor at the tafsir school in Mecca during the first century of Hijrah and was continued by his students such as Sa'id bin Jubair, Mujahid bin Jabar, Ikrimah, Tawus

bin Kaisan, and Ata bin Abi Rabah into the second century of Hijrah (Ja'far, 1984). Sheikh Hasan Husain, in his views on the history of tafsir, states that the companions and *tabi'in* initially focused on something other than the science of tafsir, *i'rab* and *majaz* during the early stages of tafsir compilation. Instead, the method they used was similar to that of hadith scholars in narrating the meanings of the Qur'an. This situation changed in subsequent periods due to the increased interaction between Arabs and non-Arabs and the loss of *Arabic zuq* (flair) (Kamarudin & Mokodenseho, 2022). Consequently, *mufasssirs* felt a strong need for the codified sciences of the Arabic language, such as syntax (*nahwu*), morphology (*sbaraf*), semantics (*ma'any*), rhetoric (*bayan badi*), and others, to elucidate and explain the meanings and content of the noble Qur'an, leading to the current state of affairs (al-'Aridhi, 1994).

An example of lughawi tafsir can be seen in Surah al-Baqarah [2] verse 25:

أَنَّ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ

In the above verse, from the perspective of *mauqi' al-i'rab* (grammatical position), the phrase “تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ” (rivers flow beneath them) is in the accusative case (*nasab*) because it functions as an attribute (*sifat*) of the word “جَنَّاتٍ” (gardens), which is also in the accusative case. For example, in the phrase “وَأِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ” (and You alone we ask for help), the word “نَسْتَعِينُ” (we seek help) is derived (*musytaq*) from “الاستعانة” (seeking help), which denotes “الطلب” (request). The phrase “طلب العون” (seeking help) is one of the benefits of words following the pattern “استفعل,” which can convey several meanings, including transformation (التحول), union (الاتحاد), and request (الطلب), التحول – الاتحاد – الطلب. *Mausbulab* tools (relative pronouns) in lughawi tafsir have their specific characteristics. Typically, the relative pronoun for rational beings (*li 'aqil*) is “مَنْ” (who), and for non-rational beings (*ghair 'aqil*), it is “مَا” (what). However, this rule is not absolute. A relative pronoun usually used for non-rational beings is sometimes applied to rational beings ‘*li 'aqil*’ and vice versa. Using a relative pronoun for non-rational beings *li ghairi 'aqil* about rational beings ‘*aqil*’ is meant for disparagement (*li altabqir*).

As stated by Allah in Surah al-Baqarah [2] verse 116:
 وَقَالُوا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ وَلَدًا سُبْحٰنَةَ بَل لَّهٗ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ كُلُّ لَهٗ قٰنِیْنٌ

In the above verse, the relative pronoun used is “ما” (what), which is typically for non-rational beings (*li ghairi 'aqil*). However, the verse means “whatever is in the heavens and on the earth,” which includes humans, it is rational beings (*'aqil*). This is based on the context provided by the word ‘*qarinah*’ ‘قٰنِیْنٌ’ (devoutly obedient). Therefore, everything in the heavens and on the earth is of lower status before Allah.

Shihab et al (1999) state that the falsafi (philosophical) style of tafsir attempts to elucidate the meanings of the Qur'an by linking them to philosophical issues or employing philosophical theories. This interpretation strives to reconcile or find common ground between philosophy and religion, seeking to eliminate any conflicts between the two. Adz-Dzahabi (2005) explains that falsafi tafsir endeavours to interpret Qur'anic verses based on philosophical thought or perspectives, similar to tafsir *bi al-ra'yi* (interpretation based on personal judgment), a method of interpretation that relies on the interpreter's personal reasoning and understanding. In this context, the Qur'anic verses serve more as a justification for the philosophical ideas presented, rather than the ideas justifying the Qur'anic verses.

Regarding this style of falsafi tafsir, Anwar (2008) notes that scholars are divided into two groups. The first group rejects the sciences derived from the works of philosophers, believing that philosophy and religion are two conflicting fields of knowledge that cannot be reconciled. Among the scholars who staunchly opposed philosophers is al-Ghazali, who authored “*al-Iyyarat*” and other books to refute their views. Additionally, Fakhruddin al-Razi (d. 606), who wrote “*Mafatih al-Ghaib*,” also sought to refute their views. This group's perspective implies that the Qur'an should be interpreted without the influence of philosophical thought. The second group comprises those who accept, admire, and pursue philosophy as long as it does not contradict Islamic norms. They believe that as long as philosophy does not conflict with Islam, there is no prohibition against accepting it. They even strive to integrate philosophy and religion, eliminating the conflicts between them. Ichwan (2004) mentions that a notable figure who defended

philosophical thought is Ibn Rushd, who wrote his defence of philosophy in his book “*at-Tabafut*,” as a rebuttal to al-Ghazali’s “*Tabafut al-Falasifah*.” This group's perspective implies that the Qur'an can be interpreted in light of philosophical thought.

The approach of the second group, which integrates Islamic norms with philosophy, involves interpreting religious texts in a way that aligns with philosophical theories. This method includes the interpretation of certain Qur'anic verses by philosophers such as al-Farabi. For example, al-Farabi's interpretation of Surah al-Hadid [57] verse 3:

وَالظُّهُرُ وَالْبَاطِنُ

Al-Farabi (1907) interpreted the above verse by stating that no existence is more perfect than His. Nothing escapes His completeness; in His essence, He is manifest (*zhabir*), and due to His manifest nature, He is also hidden (*bathin*). Through Him, all things become visible, akin to the sun, which reveals all that is hidden, not because it is hidden but because it illuminates.

Ikhwan al-Shafa (1928) also offered interpretations concerning paradise and hell. They posited that paradise represents the celestial realm (planetary) ‘*alam falak*,’ while hell is the realm beneath the moon, the terrestrial world. They also discussed the purity of the soul and its longing for the celestial realm, asserting that the heavy and dense body cannot ascend there. Suppose the soul leaves paradise and is not prevented by evil actions, ill thoughts, accumulated ignorance, or reprehensible morals. In that case, it will reach the celestial realm faster than the blink of an eye, as its existence depends on desire and love. Just as one yearns to meet their beloved, if one's yearning is for the corporeal pleasures of this world and its adornments, they will remain here and will not ascend to the celestial realm. The gates of paradise will not be opened for them, and they will not enter paradise alongside the angels.

Another example of philosophical tafsir, as mentioned by adz-Dzahabi (2005), involves the interpretation by some philosophers who deny the possibility of the *mi'raj* (ascension) of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) occurring with his physical body as well as his soul. They believe that the *mi'raj* of

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) could only have occurred with his soul, not his body.

The *'ilmi* (scientific) style of tafsir attempts to elucidate the meanings of the Qur'an through a scientific approach or by exploring its contents based on scientific theories. Adz-Dzahabi (2005) describes *tafsir 'ilmi* as an exegesis that gathers scientific idioms present in the language of the Qur'an and endeavours to reveal various branches of knowledge and philosophical insights from these expressions.

Shahrur (d. 2019), as cited by Mustaqim (2008), asserts that to comprehend Qur'anic verses containing scientific information, scientific interpretation (*ta'wil' ilmi*) is required. Accordingly, the position of Muhammad (PBUH) as a prophet did not involve interpreting the Qur'anic verses that contained scientific information; rather, the Prophet's duty was to convey these verses to humanity without interpreting them. If the Prophet did perform interpretation (*takwil*), it was relative to the context of his time. It is important to underline that although humans can interpret (*takwil*) the Qur'anic verses, only Allah can provide a perfect interpretation, as Allah's knowledge is absolute and perfect. In contrast, human interpretation is relative due to the inherent limitations of human knowledge. Consequently, Syahrur (1992) suggests that interpretation must be an ongoing process (*sairurah*), continuously evolving with the advancement and development of scientific theories.

Al-Khuli and Zayd (2004) state that the *'ilmi* (scientific) tafsir emphasizes the discussion of Qur'anic verses using the approach of general scientific knowledge and findings based on the Qur'an. Many scholars assert that the Qur'an encompasses all knowledge in a general sense. Shihab (2003) notes that a prominent figure known for staunchly supporting *'ilmi* tafsir is al-Ghazali (d. 1111). In his works "*Ihya' Ulum al-Din*" and "*Jawahir al-Qur'an*," al-Ghazali frequently presents his views and supporting reasons. Al-Ghazali (1356) also asserts that all kinds of knowledge, whether ancient or modern, known or unknown, originate from the Qur'an. According to al-Ghazali (n.d.), all forms of knowledge are part of Allah's actions (*af'al*) and attributes, and the Qur'an explains His essence, actions (*af'al*), and attributes. This knowledge is limitless, and the Qur'an indicates its fundamental principles.

In Surah al-Mu'minun [23] verses 13-14, Allah (SWT) states:

ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَاهُ نُطْفَةً فِي قَرَارٍ مَّكِينٍ ثُمَّ خَلَقْنَا النُّطْفَةَ عَلَقَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْعَلَقَةَ مُضْغَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْمُضْغَةَ عِظْمًا فَكَسَوْنَا الْعِظْمَ لَحْمًا ثُمَّ أَنْشَأْنَاهُ خَلْقًا آخَرَ فَتَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنُ الْخَالِقِينَ

Then We placed him as a sperm-drop in a firm lodging. 14. Then We made the sperm-drop into a clinging clot, and We made the clot into a lump [of flesh], and We made [from] the lump, bones, and We covered the bones with flesh; then We developed him into another creation. So, blessed is Allah, the best of creators.

Zaghلول an-Najjar states that the Qur'an delineates the process of human creation into seven orderly stages: (1) A drop of sperm (*nutfal*); (2) The fusion of ovum and sperm (*nutfal amsaj*); (3) Something that clings (*alaqah*); (4) A lump of flesh (*mudhghah*); (5) Formation of bones (*izham*); (6) Envelopment of bones with flesh; (7) The formation of a clearly defined fetus.

Another compelling example can be found in Surah ash-Shu'ara [26] verse 80, where Allah (SWT) plays a pivotal role in the process of human creation, as He says:

وَإِذَا مَرَضْتُ فَبُهِدْتُ فَهُوَ يَشْفِينِي

And when I am ill, it is He who cures me.

Responding to the above verse, al-Ghazali states that the reference to medicine and disease cannot be understood except by those who are engaged in the field of medicine. Thus, this verse serves as an indication of medical knowledge.

Another scholar, Fakhruddin al-Razi, although not entirely in agreement with al-Ghazali, includes extensive scientific discussions in his work "*Mafatih al-Ghaib*." These discussions encompass philosophy, theology, natural sciences, astronomy, medicine, and more. His *tafsir* has been so extensively evaluated that it is sometimes humorously said to contain everything except *tafsir*. Another notable figure is Tantawi Jawhari, in his work "*Tafsir al-Jawahir*." Even before him, "*Tafsir al-Manar*" by Muhammad Rashid Ridha was considered an attempt to demonstrate this concept.

According to Ignaz Goldziher, Rashid Ridha endeavoured to prove that the Qur'an encompasses all scientific truths revealed by contemporary theories of his time, especially in the fields of philosophy and sociology.

The *fiqh* (jurisprudential) style of tafsir aims to elucidate the meanings of the Qur'an by focusing on discussions related to *fiqh* issues and its branches, as well as examining debates or differing opinions among the imams of various madhabs (Islamic schools of thought). In other words, the *fiqh* style of tafsir tends to seek out *fiqh* rulings within Qur'anic verses, paying special attention to verses that explicitly or implicitly contain legal rulings. This style of tafsir is also known as *tafsir ahkam*, which is oriented towards the legal (*ahkam*) verses in the Qur'an. *Fiqh* tafsir is more popularly known as *tafsir ahkam* because it is more oriented towards the legal verses in the Qur'an.

Prominent works by *mufasssirs* (exegetes) with a *fiqh*-oriented tafsir include *Ahkam al-Qur'an* by al-Jassas, which follows the Hanafi *fiqh* madhab. *Tafsir al-Kabir* or *Mafatih al-Ghaib* by Fakhruddin al-Razi, which aligns with the Shafi'i *fiqh* madhab. *Al-Jami' li Ahkam al-Qur'an* by Abu Abdullah al-Qurtubi is in line with the Maliki *fiqh* madhab. *Kanzu al-'Irfan fi Fiqh al-Qur'an* by Miqdad al-Saiwari, which adheres to the Imami *fiqh* madhab.

Like other styles, the *fiqh* style has undergone development and progress, facing various criticisms and debates. Despite this, the *fiqh* tafsir style has been widely accepted by almost all *mufasssirs*. It is a very ancient form of tafsir, as it emerged alongside the inception of Qur'anic exegesis itself. An example of *fiqh* tafsir can be seen in the interpretation of the word “وأرجلكم” (and your feet) in the context of *wudu* (ablution) found in Surah al-Maidah [5] verse 6. If it is read in the accusative case (*mansub*, with a *fathah*), the obligatory act for the feet during *wudu* is to wash them. However, if it is read in the genitive case (*majrur*, with a *kasrah*), the obligation is only to wipe them. The development of *fiqh* and the formation of various *fiqh* madhabs led each group to strive to prove the correctness of their opinions based on their interpretations of legal verses. One notable work of *fiqh* tafsir is *Ahkam al-Qur'an* by al-Jashshash.

Al-Qurtubi, as a representative of *fiqh* tafsir, begins his tafsir work from Surah al-Fatihah and concludes with Surah An-Nas. Thus, he employs the mushafi system, interpreting the Qur'an according to the sequence of verses

and surahs appearing in the mushaf. An example of *fiqh* tafsir can be seen in Al-Qurtubi's interpretation of Surah al-Baqarah [2] verse 43.

وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَءَاتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَارْكَعُوا مَعَ الرَّاكِعِينَ

And establish prayer and give zakah and bow with those who bow [in worship and obedience].

In interpreting the above verse, al-Qurtubi embarks on a comprehensive discussion, dissecting it into 34 issues. The 16th issue, in particular, is a point of interest as he navigates through various opinions on the status of a child leading the prayer (*imam* of *salah*). Notable scholars, such as al-Thawri, Malik, and Ashab al-Ra'yi, argue against its permissibility. However, al-Qurtubi, in a significant divergence from the madhab he follows, asserts that a child may lead the prayer if he possesses a good recitation, shedding new light on this matter.

Another example can be seen in his interpretation of Surah al-Baqarah [2] verse 234:

وَالَّذِينَ يَتَوَفَّوْنَ مِنْكُمْ وَيَذَرُونَ أَزْوَاجًا يَتَرَبَّصْنَ بِأَنْفُسِهِنَّ أَرْبَعَةَ أَشْهُرٍ وَعَشْرًا
فَإِذَا بَلَغْنَ أَجَلَهُنَّ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي مَا فَعَلْنَ فِي أَنْفُسِهِنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا
تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ

And those who are taken in death among you and leave wives behind - they, [the wives, shall] wait four months and ten [days]. And when they have fulfilled their term, then there is no blame upon you for what they do with themselves in an acceptable manner. And Allah is [fully] Acquainted with what you do.

Some scholars state that Allah has prescribed the *'iddah* (waiting period) for a wife whose husband has passed away to be four months and ten days, emphasizing its importance. Allah has also stipulated that the *'iddah* for a pregnant wife who is divorced is until she gives birth. Therefore, if a wife loses her husband while she is pregnant, her *'iddah* is subject to both of these rulings.

Al-Jashshash 's interpretation plays a crucial role in our understanding of charity. In the section on charity, he meticulously explains the verses related to this topic. Allah (SWT) says:

الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ لَا يُتَّبِعُونَ مَا أَنْفَقُوا مَنَا وَلَا أَدَى لَهُمْ
أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

262. Those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah and then do not follow up what they have spent with reminders [of it] or [other] injury will have their reward with their Lord, and there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve.

Regarding the above verse, al-Jashshash states that Allah (SWT) informs us that if the charity is not given sincerely but is accompanied by reminders of the giver's generosity or harm to the recipient's feelings, it becomes invalid. This means that charity yields no reward, similar to those who do not give charity. Thus, every action not performed sincerely for Allah (SWT) becomes void and earns no reward.

The *Sufi* interpretative style in *tafsir* reflects a *mufasssir's* inclination to understand the Qur'an through a mystical lens. This style can be divided into two categories:

First, theoretical Sufism or al-Nazari *Sufi* Tafsir. This approach attempts to study and examine the Qur'an based on the theories of Sufi schools and teachings. It is also known as *tafsir* based on the Sufi's contemplative thought, akin to philosophical reflection, and is generally rejected. The exegete makes every effort to align the Qur'anic verses with supporting factors for their theories, often appearing excessive and deviating from the apparent meaning (*dhabir*) intended by sharia, supported by linguistic studies. *Al-Nazari Sufi* Tafsir is constructed to promote and strengthen the mystical theories held by the *mufasssir*. In doing so, the exegete (*mufasssir*) deviates significantly from the primary purpose of the Qur'an, which is the welfare of humanity, and instead offers preconceived interpretations to validate their theories. Adz-Dzahabi notes that *al-Nazari Sufi Tafsir*, in practice, explains the Qur'an without regard for language or the intended meaning of sharia. Such interpretations are rejected and are quite rare. Works of this style are scattered across various Qur'anic verses and are attributed to Ibn' Arabi in his books "*al-Futubat al-Makkiyah*" and "*al-Fushuh*." Ibn' Arabi, a well-known Sufi scholar, is considered a competent figure in *al-Nazari Tafsir*, relying on the Qur'an to support several of his Sufi theories. His works include "*al-Futubat al-Makkiyah*" and "*al-Fushuh*." Ibn' Arabi is renowned for his concept of *wahdat al-wujud* (the unity of existence), which in Sufi theory

refers to the unity between humans and God. An example of a Qur'anic proof for this concept is Surah al-Baqarah [2] verse 186:

وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لِي وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا بِي لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشُدُونَ

And when My servants ask you, [O Muhammad], concerning Me - indeed I am near. I respond to the invocation of the supplicant when he calls upon Me. So, let them respond to Me [by obedience] and believe in Me that they may be [rightly] guided.

The word 'prayer' (*du'a*) in the verse above is interpreted by Sufis, not in the usual sense. For them, the word means to call or invoke. They call upon God, and God reveals Himself to them. In other words, they invoke God to remove the veil and manifest Himself to them.

Secondly, practical Sufism or *al-Tafsir al-Isyari* is a type of Sufism that practices an ascetic lifestyle, *zuhud* and immersing oneself in obedience to Allah. It is also a *tafsir* based on the personal experiences (*kashf*) of the *mufasssir*. Proponents of this school name their *tafsir* "*al-Tafsir al-Isyari*," which involves interpreting verses differently from their apparent meaning based on hidden indications that are only clear to the spiritual leaders (*suluk*) yet can still be reconciled with the apparent meaning (*dhabir*) intended. *Al-Tafsir al-Isyari* interprets the Qur'anic verses differently from their literal meanings based on special indications received by Sufi figures, but these meanings can be harmonized. This spiritual journey of the Sufis, their devotion, and commitment to understanding the Qur'an in a deeper sense is truly inspiring. The fundamental assumption they use with *al-Tafsir al-Isyari* is that the Qur'an encompasses both the apparent (*zahir*) and hidden (*batin*) meanings. The apparent meaning of the Qur'an is the text of the verse, while the hidden meaning is the implied indication behind it.

Al-Tafsir al-Isyari can be accepted (recognized) under several conditions. There must be supporting *shari'a* evidence, it must not contradict *shari'a* or reason, and it must not negate the apparent (*zahir*) meaning of the text. If these conditions are not met, it is rejected. This *Sufi* interpretative style is based on the argument that each Qur'anic verse potentially contains four levels of meaning: *zahir* (apparent), *batin* (hidden), *hadd* (limit), and *matla'* (ultimate). Quraish Shihab states that this style emerged as a response of Sufi

movements reacting to various parties' material tendencies or as a compensation for perceived weaknesses.

In addition to the two factors mentioned by Quraish Shihab, another factor is the emergence of the era of translating Greek philosophical works into the Islamic world, which also led to the development of philosophical Sufi tafsirs, including “Tafsir al-Qur’an” by Sahl ibn Abdillah al-Tustari (d. 283). Some consider that this tafsir unsatisfactory because it is less than 200 pages and does not comprehensively cover the 30 sections of the Qur’an. Another example is “*Haqiq al-Tafsir*” by Abu Abdurrahman al-Sulami (d. 412). However, Ibn Salah and adz-Dzahabi criticize this *tafsir* for its flaws, alleging that it contains many innovations (*bid’ah*), Shiite influences, and fabricated hadiths (*maudhu*). Similarly, adz-Dzahabi, in “*Tazkirah al-Huffazh*,” comments that “*Haqiq al-Tafsir*” contains many interpretations aligned with the *Batiniyyah* (esoteric) sect. In “*Minhaj al-Sunnah*,” Ibn Taymiyyah states that the book contains many falsehoods. There is also “*Arais al-Bayan fi Haqiq al-Qur’an*” by al-Syairazi and “*Latha’if al-Isharat*” by Abd al-Karim ibn Hawazin ibn Abd al-Malik ibn Thalhah ibn Muhammad al-Qushayri (374-465 H). “*Latha’if al-Isharat*” is positively regarded by scholars because its interpretations do not deviate and consistently strive to reconcile the dimensions of *shari’a* and *haqiqah* and the outward and inward meanings. Additionally, this tafsir is relatively free from the defence of sectarian ideologies. The comprehensive nature of some tafsirs, their thoroughness and dedication, is truly commendable.

An example of an acceptable *al-Tafsir al-Iyari*, meeting the conditions mentioned earlier, is al-Tustari’s interpretation of Surah al-Baqarah [2] verse 22:

الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ فِرْشًا وَالسَّمَاءَ بِنَاءً وَأَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَخْرَجَ
بِهِ مِنَ النَّمْرِ رِزْقًا لَكُمْ فَلَا تَجْعَلُوا لِلَّهِ أَنْدَادًا وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

[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].

Al-Tustari interprets the word “أندادا” (*andadan*) as referring to negative, wrathful desires. Therefore, the term “أندادا” in this context does not merely

pertain to idols, demons, or souls but specifically to the wrathful desires that people often elevate to the status of deities. The meaning conveyed by the verse is that humans frequently associate others with God by constantly becoming slaves to their wrathful desires. Interpreting Qur'anic verses by examining the indications within them has been widely practised by the Prophet's companions. For example, when the companions heard the first verse of Surah an-Nasr [110] verse 1:

إِذَا جَاءَ نَصْرُ اللَّهِ وَالْفَتْحُ

When the victory of Allah has come and the conquest,

Among them were those who attempted to interpret the verse by saying that it commanded them to be grateful to Allah and seek His forgiveness. In contrast, Ibn Abbas said that the verse signified the impending death of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

The *al-adabi wa al-ijtima'i* style is a form of tafsir that focuses on meticulously presenting the expressions of the Qur'an, explaining the intended meanings with beautiful and engaging language, and attempting to connect the Qur'anic texts under study with social realities and existing cultural systems. The term *al-adabi wa al-ijtima'i* comprises two words: *al-adabi* and *al-ijtima'i*. This style combines philological and literary interpretation (*tafsir adabi*) with social interpretation (*tafsir ijtima'i*). The word *al-adabi*, in its form, is an infinitive (*mashdar*) derived from the verb (*madhi*) "*aduba*," which means courtesy, etiquette, and literature. Lexically, it denotes norms that guide a person's life behaviour and expression of their artistic work. Therefore, the term *al-adabi* can be translated as cultural literature. Meanwhile, *al-ijtima'i* means social interaction or can be translated as social. Thus, etymologically, the *al-adabi al-ijtima'i* style is a form of *tafsir* oriented towards social and community issues, or it can be called socio-cultural *tafsir*.

The *al-adabi al-ijtima'i* style of tafsir focuses on explaining the guidance of Qur'anic verses that directly relate to society, and it aims to address societal issues based on the instructions of these verses. This is done by presenting guidance in language that is easy to understand and pleasing to hear. In this context, the *al-adabi al-ijtima'i* interpretative style is oriented towards social and cultural contexts. It emphasizes the meticulous explanation of Qur'anic verses, presenting them beautifully crafted, highlighting the primary

objectives of the verses' revelation, and linking their meanings to the natural laws governing society and the development of the world.

Regarding its sources, *the al-adabi al-ijtima'i* style of tafsir is considered *tafsir bi al-ra'yi* (interpretation based on reason). However, some scholars categorize it as a mixed *tafsir* because it balances traditional narrations (*athar*) and rational analysis (*aqḷ*) as interpretation sources. An example of this tafsir style is "*Tafsir al-Manar*," which comprises the ideas of Sheikh Muhammad Abduh and was compiled by Muhammad Rashid Ridha. The *al-adabi al-ijtima'i* tafsir style, which gained popularity during the era of Sheikh Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905), was further developed by his student Muhammad Rashid Ridha. This tradition was then carried forward by scholars such as Fazlur Rahman and Muhammad Arkoun. Notable works in this style, which span a significant historical timeline, include '*Tafsir al-Manar*' by Rashid Ridha (d. 1345), '*Tafsir al-Maraghi*' by Sheikh Muhammad al-Maraghi (d. 1945), '*Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Karim*' by Mahmud Shaltut, and '*Tafsir al-Wadhib*' by Muhammad Mahmud Baht al-Hijazi.

As an example, Muhammad Abduh's interpretation of Surah al-Fil [105] verses 3-4:

وَأَرْسَلَ عَلَيْهِمْ طَيْرًا أَبَابِيلَ تَرْمِيهِمْ بِحِجَارَةٍ مِّن سِجِّيلٍ

And He sent against them birds in flocks. Striking them with stones of hard clay,

Muhammad Abduh explains that the word "أَبَابِيلَ" refers to flocks of birds or groups of horses and similar creatures, each group following another. The term "طَيْرًا" refers to flying creatures in the sky, whether small or big, visible or not. The word "سِجِّيلٍ" is derived from Persian mixed with Arabic, meaning petrified clay. Abduh elaborates that "طَيْرًا" refers to a type of mosquito or fly carrying specific disease germs. The word "بِحِجَارَةٍ" (with stones) refers to dry soil mixed with poison, carried by the wind and adhering to the legs of these animals. When the poisoned soil touches a person's body, the poison enters through the pores, causing boils that eventually lead to the body's decay and the falling off, of the flesh.

Abduh's interpretation, steeped in a modern social perspective, is a testament to his intellectual acumen. His meticulous approach to the Qur'anic text, his engaging language that brings the verses to life, and his ability to

connect these verses to observable natural laws in society, all serve to enlighten and connect us to contemporary thought.

The *tarbawi* (educational) tafsir style, as the name suggests, is a scholarly exploration of Islamic teachings related to the development and achievement of educational objectives. This emphasis on education, particularly the themes and needs of Islamic education (*tarbiyah*), and the focus on the educational system found in the Qur'an, serves to inform and educate us, like Luqman teaching his son not to associate partners with Allah, the Qur'an instructs Muslims to be good to their parents as long as they do not encourage polytheism.

An example of *tarbawi tafsir* can be seen in the interpretation of Surah Luqman [31] verse 13:

وَإِذْ قَالَ لُقْمَانُ لِابْنِهِ وَهُوَ يَعِظُهُ يَا بُنَيَّ لَا تُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّ الشِّرْكَ أَعْظَمُ عَظِيمٍ

And [mention, O Muhammad], when Luqman said to his son while he was instructing him, "O my son, do not associate [anything] with Allah. Indeed, association [with him] is great injustice."

In the verse above, Luqman advises his son, Tharan, not to associate partners with Allah because doing so is a great injustice. According to Ibn Kathir, this is understandable, given that parents are the most loving towards their children, so it is appropriate for them to provide the best guidance. The first lesson Luqman gives his son is the teaching of monotheism and a warning to avoid wrongdoing against Allah by associating others with Him.

The *i'tiqadi* or *kalam* (theological) tafsir style focuses on issues of creed and discusses theological themes more than emphasizing the core messages of the Qur'an. Adz-Dzahabi states that tafsir with an *i'tiqadi* or *kalam* (theological) style requires exceptional skill and relies more on reason than on the text. This is particularly true for *i'tiqadi* tafsir that follows the *bi al-ra'yi al-madhmum* (reprehensible opinion-based) approach, which makes it easier for the *mufasir* to steer the interpretation according to their desires and divert views that oppose their opinions. An example of *i'tiqadi tafsir* is "*Tafsir al-Kashshaf*" by al-Zamakhshari, here, the author mentions al-Zamakhshari's interpretation, which follows the *Mu'tazilah* school, particularly when interpreting Surah al-Baqarah [2] verse 7:

خَتَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ وَعَلَى سَمْعِهِمْ وَعَلَى أَبْصَارِهِمْ غِشْوَةً وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ

Allah has set a seal upon their hearts and upon their hearing, and over their vision is a veil. And for them is a great punishment.

Zamakhshari explains that the word “*kbatama*” is synonymous with “*katama*,” and “*gbishawab*” corresponds to the meaning of “*githa*.” He then interprets the verse: Allah does not seal and lock their hearts, hearing, and sight. Instead, the verse carries a metaphorical (*majazi*) meaning, which, from a rhetorical (*balaghab*) perspective, encompasses two possible forms: *isti’arab* (metaphor) and *tamthil* (simile). In other words, the verse can be understood as functioning in the form of *isti’arab* because their hearts, hearing, and sight are figuratively sealed. Their hearts are considered sealed because the truth that comes from Allah cannot penetrate or reach their inner conscience. This is due to their unwillingness to accept and believe in the truth. The expression in the verse can also be understood as *tamthil*, as they derive no benefit from the guidance given to them, instead replacing it with something else that can be likened to a covering (*hijab*) that seals their hearts. Consequently, they cannot receive the truth that comes from Allah and thus cannot benefit from it.

If someone asks why the word “*kbatama*” is attributed to Allah, Zamakhshari responds that this attribution to Allah is a figurative expression (*kinayah*) of their extreme attitude in rejecting Allah's guidance, which has become deeply embedded in their hearts, hearing, and sight. According to Zamakhshari, all these faculties are creations of Allah (SWT). This attribution is intended to mention something that is incidental (*lazim*), but the actual intended meaning is what is implied (*malzum*). This is the main purpose of the expression in the verse.

The Balaghi and Bayani Styles. Balaghi Style: This style of tafsir bases its interpretation on the principles of *balaghab* (the beauty of words and the stylistic aspects of the Qur'an). An example of the balaghi style can be found in “*Tafsir al-Kashshaf*” by al-Zamakhshari. Meanwhile, Bayani Style: This style of tafsir focuses on the rhetorical aspects of the Qur'an in the form of ilmu bayan, such as *tasybih* (simile), *isti’arab* (metaphor), *tamsil* (parable), *fashal* (division), *washal* (conjunction), and their branches. It includes using literal (*haqiqi*) and metaphorical (*majazi*) meanings and similar rhetorical devices.

Balaghi tafsir encompasses three aspects: *first, Tafsir Ma'an al-Qur'an*; This type of tafsir focuses on the meanings of the Qur'anic vocabulary, sometimes called a practical encyclopedia. An example is "*Ma'an al-Qur'an*" by Abd Rahim Fu'dah. *Second, Tafsir Bayan al-Qur'an*; This tafsir emphasizes explaining words from their root forms, linking one meaning to another. An example is "*Tafsir al-Bayani al-Qur'an*" by Aisyah Abd Rahman bint al-Syathi'. *Third, Tafsir Badi' al-Qur'an*; This tafsir tends to examine the Qur'an from the beauty of its composition and linguistic style. An example is "*Badi' al-Qur'an*" by Ibn Abi al-Ishba' al-Mishry (d. 654).

An example of the *balaghi* tafsir can be seen in "*Tafsir al-Bayani al-Qur'an*" by Aisyah Abd Rahman bint al-Syathi' when interpreting Surah al-'Asr [103] verse 1:

وَالْعَصْرِ

"By time..."

When interpreting the meaning of "*al-'Asr*," al-Syathi' begins with its linguistic meaning. Literally, the word refers to the pressing of grapes (العنب) and other substances. Metaphorically, it is used to indicate restriction or confinement. The word is also employed to describe the act of squeezing something to extract its juice or oil. After examining its meaning from a linguistic perspective, both as used by the Arabs and in the Qur'an, al-Syathi' then focuses her study on the interpretation of the word "*al-'Asr*" in Surah al-'Asr according to various tafsir scholars. Al-Syathi' presents the opinions of tafsir scholars such as al-Tabari, al-Zamakhshari, Abu Hayyan, Sheikh Muhammad' Abduh, Fakhruddin al-Razi, al-Naisaburi, and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah. However, the strongest (*rajih*) opinion regarding the meaning of "*al-'Asr*" in this verse is 'time'. According to al-Syathi', Allah swears by time because of its immense importance for humans to safeguard it. In "*Mafatih al-Ghaib*," Al-Razi elaborates on six discussions concerning the significance of time. The term "*al-'Asr*" means 'time' because of the numerous pressures, difficulties, and trials humans face throughout their lives, compelling them to exert their energy and thoughts to navigate through these times.

The *haraki* (activist) style of tafsir focuses on explaining Allah's intentions in the Qur'an, particularly those related to social change and movement towards a better society. *Haraki tafsir* aims to interpret the Qur'an

and encourage the community to improve adverse social conditions. In this regard, the *mufassir* strives to urge society to return to the true teachings of religion, purifying it from all forms of *khurafat* (superstition) and *Isra'iliyat* (narratives from Jewish sources).

An example of haraki tafsir is “*Tafsir fi Zhalal al-Qur'an*” by Sayyid Qutb. Sayyid Qutb is considered one of the pioneers of a new theory for understanding, contemplating, thinking about, and interpreting the Qur'an in a manner suited to contemporary society. This theory, known as haraki tafsir, is dynamic and ever-evolving. Shalah Abdul Fattah al-Khalidi regards Sayyid Qutb as the founder and architect of the haraki methodology of tafsir, presenting the Qur'an as a living, dynamic force that influences contemporary Muslims.

The method of tafsir pioneered by Sayyid Qutb originated from his active involvement in the Islamic movement in Egypt. During that time, the movement faced significant upheaval when the Ikhwanul Muslimin (Muslim Brotherhood) was accused of attempting to assassinate the Egyptian president in 1954. This scandal, instigated by both internal and external enemies of Islam, led to Sayyid Qutb and other activists of the Ikhwanul Muslimin being imprisoned. While in prison, Sayyid Qutb and his fellow activists endured severe torture. Despite witnessing and hearing about the brutal massacres, none of their followers dared to defend them. This experience prompted Sayyid Qutb to reflect deeply on the reasons behind such events. He pondered why the enemies of Islam, despite their different factions, united to combat the Islamic movement. He questioned why society had become ignorant and readily obeyed the instructions of their oppressive leaders, why they disliked truthful and sincere individuals, and why the Egyptian people were willing to hand over their finest sons to their oppressors to be persecuted and tortured. This period of intense reflection and suffering significantly influenced Sayyid Qutb's approach to tafsir. He developed a methodology that emphasized the Qur'an's relevance to contemporary social and political issues, advocating for a return to genuine Islamic teachings and societal reform.

This situation deeply touched Sayyid Qutb's heart and led him to reflect on the issues he faced by immersing himself in the world of the Qur'an. He

not only engaged with the text of the verses but also with the conditions and experiences that accompanied the revelation of the Qur'an to the first Islamic community, encompassing the struggles of jihad against personal desires and human opposition, both in the contexts of Mecca and Medina. Sayyid Qutb then pondered that his and his companions' circumstances were similar to those of the early Islamic community. Eventually, Sayyid Qutb understood the reasons behind the Egyptian people's silence in the face of the crackdown on the Islamic movement. He concluded that the society that remained silent towards the Islamic movement needed to understand the creed (*aqidah*) correctly. They lacked clarity of faith and its implications in their thoughts and lives. They did not comprehend the true meaning and consequences of “*laa Ilaaha Illallaah*” (there is no god but Allah). They feared the tyrants (*taghut*), which was a result of their distance from the Qur'an. In this condition, Sayyid Qutb spent a long time reflecting on the Qur'an, which led to the birth of his new methodology of tafsir, the *haraki* (activist) methodology. This approach encourages Muslims to always live and move according to the Qur'an. An example can be found in his interpretation of Surah al-Baqarah [2] verses 1-2:

الْمَ ذَلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ

Alif, Lam, Meem. This is the Book about which there is no doubt, a guidance for those conscious of Allah.

Sayyid Qutb explains the first two verses of Surah al-Baqarah [2], verse 1 and 2. In interpreting the first verse, he applies the principle of entering the Qur'an without preconceived notions to uncover the secret behind the letters “الْمَ.” However, in his interpretation, Sayyid does not focus on explaining the meaning of “الْمَ.” He views these letters as a sign that the Qur'an is composed of letters like these, which cannot be imitated by anyone, despite humans being skilled in composing words and poetry. This interpretation showcases Sayyid Qutb's approach to capturing inspiration, nuance, and the Qur'an's secrets, illustrating its verses' richness. Sayyid Qutb reveals the essence behind the inclusion of these three letters, not by defining “الْمَ,” but by highlighting the miraculous secrets and inspirations behind their inclusion in the Qur'an. In his interpretation of the second verse, Sayyid Qutb underscores the importance of movement and guidance, particularly in how to attain guidance

from the Qur'an, as stated in the verse. He asserts that those who seek guidance in the Qur'an and wish to benefit from it must possess a heart of piety (taqwa). This means approaching the Qur'an with a pure, healthy, and sincere heart, filled with fear, responsiveness, and genuine devotion. This emphasis on the purity of heart in approaching the Qur'an is not just a requirement, but an inspiration for all seekers of guidance.

Thus, this applies the principle of explaining the essence of movement from the second verse as presented by Sayyid Qutb. He emphasizes that the primary purpose of the verse is to convey that the Qur'an is a guidance for those who are pious (muttaqin). After articulating the essence of movement and emphasizing the core purpose of implementing the second verse, Sayyid Qutb then applies the principle of deeply appreciating and capturing this verse's various inspirations, nuances, secrets, and subtleties. He elaborates on the meaning of taqwa (piety), explaining that taqwa is a sensitivity of the heart, an alertness in feeling, a responsiveness, a constant state of fear, perpetual caution, and continuous self-preservation from the thorns on the path of life. This path is fraught with the thorns of pleasures and desires, wants and ambitions, worries and fears.

Conclusion

Efforts to interpret the Qur'an in line with the development of various fields of knowledge have led to the emergence of new styles of exegesis. Consequently, the Qur'an has become a major driving force for advancing knowledge in every era. Allah (SWT) commands all humanity to use their intellect to liberate themselves from ignorance, lack of knowledge, and mental voids so that all forms of worship can align with the original intent of their prescription. The term "style of tafsir" refers to the tendency or specialization of a *mufasssir* (exegete). This inclination can be influenced by their education, environment, or beliefs. Therefore, if a *mufasssir* is a linguist, they will interpret Qur'anic verses using a linguistic analytical approach, commonly known as the lughawi style. If a *mufasssir* is a science expert, their interpretation tendency will be to use a scientific approach, commonly referred to as the 'ilmi style, and so forth. Thus, various styles have emerged from the time of the *tabi'in* (followers of the companions) and *tabi'ut tabi'in* (followers of the *tabi'in*) to contemporary scholars. Among the various styles of tafsir are: the

lughawi style, the *falsafi* style, the *'ilmi* style, the *fiqh* style, the *tasawuf* or *sufi* style, the *tarbawi* style, the *i'tiqadi* or *kalam* (theological) style, the *balaghi* and *bayani* styles, and the *haraki* style.

References

- Adz-Dzahabi, M. H. (2005). *al-Tafsir wa al-Mufasssirun* (1st–3rd ed.). Dar al-Hadith.
- Al-'Aridhi, A. H. (1994). *Tarikh Ilm al-Tafsir wa Manahij al-Mufasssirin* (Translated by Ahmad Arkom) (1st ed.). PT. Raja Grafindo Persada.
- Al-Ayubi, S. Y. ... Mokodenseho, S. (2023). Penggunaan Metode Audiolingual dalam Maharah Istima' di Madrasah Tsanawiyah Al-Kahfi Hidayatullah Surakarta. *Journal of Education Research*, 4(4), 1839–1845. <https://doi.org/10.37985/jer.v4i4.530>
- Al-Farabi, A. N. M. bin al-F. (1907). *Fushush al-Hikam*. al-Sa'adah.
- Al-Ghazali, A. H. M. (n.d.). *Jawahir al-Qur'an*. Percetakan Kurdistan.
- Al-Ghazali, A. H. M. (1356). *Ihya 'Ulum al-Din* (1st ed.). al-Tsaqafah al-Islamiyah.
- Al-Khuli, A., & Zayd, N. H. A. (2004). *Metode Tafsir Sastra* (translated by Khairon Nabdyyin) (K. Anwari (ed.)). Adab Press.
- Anwar, R. (2008). *Ilmu Tafsir*. Pustaka Setia.
- Arib, J. M., & Mokodenseho, S. (2020). Mushaf Bone: Telaah Aspek Kodikologi, Tulisan, Teks dan Visual Al-Qur'an. *OSF Preprints*. <https://doi.org/10.31219/osf.io/u3qwm>
- Arib, J. M., & Mokodenseho, S. (2022). Interpreting the Quran According to the Opinions of the Companions. *An-Nubuwah: Journal of Islamic Studies*, 1(1), 123–147. <https://journal.iainkotamobagu.ac.id/index.php/annubuwah/article/view/10>
- Arib, J. M. ... Mokodenseho, S. (2022). The Inheritance of Human Traits in the Qur'an Based on the Scientific Interpretation of Zaghul Rāghib Muḥammad an-Najjār. *AL QUDS : Jurnal Studi Alquran Dan Hadis*, 6(2), 863–886. <https://doi.org/10.29240/alquds.v6i2.4199>
- Asy-Syurbasi, A. (1999). *Sejarah Perkembangan Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Karim* (1st ed.). Kalam Mulia.

- Bahren, R. S. A., & Mokodenseho, S. (2023a). Metode dan Corak Penafsiran Ath-Thabari. *Mushaf Journal: Jurnal Ilmu Al Quran Dan Hadis*, 3(1), 151–166. <https://mushafjournal.com/index.php/mj/article/view/126>
- Bahren, R. S. A., & Mokodenseho, S. (2023b). The Tahḥlīlī Method in the Interpretation of the Qur’ān. *Mushaf Journal: Jurnal Ilmu Al Quran Dan Hadisan Hadis*, 3(1), 167–182. <https://www.mushafjournal.com/index.php/mj/article/view/128>
- Ichwan, M. N. (2004). *Tafsir ‘Ilmi: Memahami al-Qur’an melalui Pendekatan Sains Modern*.
- Ikhwan al-Shafa. (1928). *Rasail Ikhwan al-Shafa*. al-Mathba’ah al-Arabiyyah.
- Ja’far, M. M. A. A. (1984). *Asar al-Tatammur al-Fikriy fi al-Tafsir*. Muassasah al-Risalah.
- Kamarudin, K., & Mokodenseho, S. (2022). A Debate on the Islamic Practice of Pilgrimage to the Grave: Study of the Hadith on Grave Pilgrimage for Women. *AL QUDS : Jurnal Studi Alquran Dan Hadis*, 6(2), 495–510. <https://doi.org/10.29240/alquds.v6i2.4390>
- Mokodenseho, S. ... Sabir, R. (2024). Analysis of the Effectiveness of the Use of Tafsir in Islamic Religious Education on the Achievement of Character Education of Junior High School Students in Central Java. *The Eastasouth Journal of Learning and Educations*, 2(2), 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.58812/esle.v2i02.230>
- Mustaqim, A. (2008). *Pergeseran Epistemologi Tafsir*. Pustaka Pelajar.
- Shihab, M. Q. (2003). *Membumikan Al-Qur’an*. Mizan.

Shihab, M. Q. ... Umar, N. (1999). *Sejarah & 'Ulum al-Qur'an* (A. Azra (ed.)). Pustaka Firdaus.

Syahrur, M. (1992). *Al-Kitab wa al-Qur'an; Qira'ah Mu'ashirah*. al-Ahali lit-Thaba'ah wa an-Nasyr wa at-Tauji'.

Juhrah M. Arib¹, Siti Rohmah², and Sabil Mokodenseho³

¹Institut Agama Islam Negeri Manado, Indonesia

²Institut Ilmu Al-Qur'an Jakarta, Indonesia

³Institut Agama Islam Muhammadiyah Kotamobagu, Indonesia

Correspondence: ¹aribjuhrah@gmail.com