



Qur'anic Revelation: The Comparison between the Methods of Tafsir and Fiqh in its Interpretation

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Abstract

This research article delves into the significance of understanding the accurate interpretation of the sacred scripture, the Qur'an, as a religious priority for Muslims. It asserts that it might be an obligatory duty for Islamic scholars to exhibit a profound knowledge of this revered text. The study begins by introducing key terminologies, including Quranic revelation (Wahy), its exegesis (tafsir), and Qur'anic interpretation (ta'wil). These technical terms are elucidated to facilitate a straightforward comparison between the methodologies employed in the fields of tafsir (Qur'anic commentary) and fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence) for interpreting the Qur'an. The research comprehensively investigates the subject matter and the aforementioned terms by employing an analytical approach. To ensure the rigor of the research, various documented materials such as books, journal articles, and manuscripts related to the field of Qur'anic science and its interpretation have been consulted. This study aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the importance of interpreting the Qur'an accurately and the methods employed in its interpretation within the context of Islamic scholarship.

Keywords: Qur'anic interpretation, Revelation, Tafsir, Fiqh.

Introduction

The Qur'an, the holy book revealed by Almighty Allah to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), holds a central position in Islam.¹ It serves

¹ Altine, Zayyanu. "Methods and Importance of Qur'anic Hifdh (Memorisation): An Islamic Perspective." (2019): 288-96; Abbas, Yasir. "استنباط احكام میں ضعيف حديث كا مقام اور فقہاء كى آراء." Analytical study of the Status of hadith e Da'eef in the interpretation of rulings كا تجزیاتی مطالعہ.

as the ultimate source of guidance and wisdom for Muslims worldwide. The interpretation of the Qur'an, known as Quranic exegesis or tafsir, plays a vital role in understanding the profound teachings encapsulated within its verses.² In parallel, Islamic jurisprudence or fiqh represents another essential branch of Islamic scholarship, providing guidance on the practical application of Quranic principles in various aspects of life.³

To underscore the importance of Quranic interpretation within the Islamic tradition, it is pertinent to reflect on a Quranic verse, specifically verse 2:213, which states: "All mankind were once one single community; then they began to differ, whereupon God raised the prophets as heralds of glad tidings and as warners, and through them bestowed revelation from on high, setting forth the truth, so that it might decide between people about all on which they had come to hold divergent views." This verse underscores the role of prophets and divine revelation in guiding humanity and resolving disputes arising from differing viewpoints.⁴

Within the realm of Islamic scholarship, two interconnected disciplines stand out as pivotal to grasping the essence of Quranic revelation: tafsir, which involves the detailed commentary and interpretation of the Quranic text, and fiqh,⁵ which encompasses Islamic jurisprudence and the practical application of Quranic principles to legal and ethical issues.⁶ These disciplines serve as key conduits through which

and the opinions of the jurists." *Al-Amir* 4, no. 01 (2023): 27-51.

² Amir, Ahmad Nabil, and Tasnim Abdul Rahman. "The Influence of Muhammad Abduh in Indonesia." *International Journal Ihyā'Ulum al-Din* 23, no. 1 (2021): 27-59.

³ Abdal-Haq, Irshad. "Islamic law-an overview of its origin and elements." *J. Islamic L. & Culture* 7 (2002): 27. Kamali, Mohammad Hashim. "Qawa'id al-fiqh: The legal maxims of Islamic law." *The Association of Muslim Lawyers* (2015).

⁴ Sachedina, Abdulaziz. "14 The Qur'an and other religions." *The Cambridge Companion to the Qur'ān* (2006): 291; Lamprey, Jerusha Tanner. *Never wholly other: A Muslima theology of religious pluralism*. Oxford University Press, 2014.

⁵ Ramli, M. A. "Postmodernism approach in Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh)." *Middle-East Journal of Scientific Research* 13, no. 1 (2013): 33-40; Kamaruddin, Kasimah Binti, and Mohd Shukri Bin Hanapi. "The Islamic knowledge approach as a qualitative data analysis method in Islamic-based research." *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences* 11, no. 2 (2021).

⁶ Sonbol, Amira El-Azhary, ed. *Beyond the exotic: women's histories in Islamic societies*. Syracuse University Press, 2021.

Muslims seek to gain a deeper understanding of the Quranic message and its relevance to their lives.

In light of this, the primary objective of this paper is to shed light on the comparative aspects of tafsir and fiqh in interpreting Quranic texts. Before delving into the intricacies of these disciplines and their methodologies, it is crucial to establish a clear understanding of the concept of revelation as it pertains to the Quran. By elucidating this foundational concept, we can distinguish the technical applications of these notions in the broader Islamic field of knowledge and subsequently explore the distinctive methods employed by tafsir and fiqh in the interpretation of the Quranic scriptures. Through a thematic comparison of the methodologies adopted by these two terms, tafsir and fiqh, in the interpretation of the Quran, this research aims to provide insights into how Islamic scholars approach the sacred text. This exploration seeks to enhance our comprehension of the multifaceted dimensions of Quranic interpretation within the Islamic tradition.

The comparative analysis of tafsir and fiqh in Quranic interpretation allows us to delve into the diverse approaches taken by Islamic scholars when grappling with the Quranic text. By dissecting these methodologies, we can gain a more nuanced understanding of how these disciplines contribute to the broader landscape of Islamic scholarship. Before proceeding further, it is crucial to define the key terminologies and concepts associated with Quranic revelation, tafsir, and fiqh. These foundational definitions will serve as a solid framework upon which we can build our comparative examination. Quranic Revelation (Wahy): Quranic revelation refers to the divine communication and guidance sent down by Allah to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) over a period of 23 years. It is the primary source of Islamic teachings and is considered the word of God.⁷ Tafsir: Tafsir, or Quranic exegesis, involves the scholarly interpretation and

⁷ Saeed, Abdullah. "Rethinking 'Revelation' as a Precondition for Reinterpreting the Qur'an: A Qur'anic Perspective." *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 1, no. 1 (1999): 93-114. Snyder, Sarah. "A word about the Word: Building scriptural bridges with the Muslim community." In *New Perspectives for Evangelical Theology*, pp. 200-215. Routledge, 2009.

commentary of the Quranic text. Scholars engaged in tafsir seek to elucidate the meanings, context, and wisdom contained within the Quranic verses, drawing from linguistic, historical, and theological perspectives.⁸ Fiqh (Islamic Jurisprudence): Fiqh represents the comprehensive body of Islamic jurisprudence that outlines the practical application of Quranic principles and prophetic traditions (hadith) to various aspects of life, including worship, ethics, and social matters. It guides Muslims in matters of law, ethics, and morality.⁹

With these foundational concepts in mind, we can delve into the comparative analysis between tafsir and fiqh in Quranic interpretation. By examining how these disciplines approach the Quranic text and the nuances of their respective methodologies, we can appreciate the complementary roles they play in the Islamic scholarly tradition. This research endeavor aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between tafsir and fiqh in interpreting the Quran and, in doing so, contribute to the broader discourse surrounding Islamic scholarship. By shedding light on the methodologies employed in Quranic interpretation, we can gain insights into how the Quran continues to guide and inspire Muslims in their daily lives and ethical decision-making.

The Qur'anic revelation

The lexical usage of the word "wahy" encompasses several meanings and contexts in the Qur'an. It is perhaps intended to imply or indicate various forms of communication between Allah and humans. This includes efforts to approach, indicate, converse, and inspire, as well as conveying messages into someone's heart. However, the fundamental meaning of the

⁸ Nugroho, Kharis, Muhammad Zawil Kiram, and Didik Andriawan. "The Influence Of Hermeneutics In Double Movement Theory (Critical Analysis Of Fazlurrahman's Interpretation Methodology)." *QiST: Journal of Quran and Tafseer Studies* 2, no. 3 (2023): 275-289; Hasan, Hamka, Asep S. Jahar, Nasaruddin Umar, and Irwan Abdullah. "Polygamy: Uncovering the effect of patriarchal ideology on gender-biased interpretation." *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 78, no. 4 (2022): 7970.

⁹ Rifai, Dr Sulaiman Lebbe. "General Philosophy of Islamic Law (Maqāsid) and Identification of Some Flaws in Conventional Legal Theories (Usūl Al-Fiqh)." *Available at SSRN 3790599*(2021).

word "wahy" is to speak to others imperceptibly or silently. The word "wahy" has been used in the Qur'an to express different meanings, such as delivering messages into the heart, assigning duties to both living and non-living entities, and conversing silently.

In the Qur'an, examples of the use of the word "wahy" include: first, Delivering messages into someone's heart, as in the verse stating that Allah inspired the mother of Moses (Q:28:7). Second, Assigning tasks or commands to living beings and inanimate objects, such as when Allah commanded bees to build their hives in the mountains (Q16:68) or assigned duties to the heavens (Q41:12). Third, communicating silently or using signs, such as when Prophet Zakariyya communicated with signs to people inside the sanctuary (Q19:11). All these examples are based on the fundamental meaning of the word "wahy." Furthermore, technically, the term "Wahy" in the context of the Qur'an is used to refer to the revelation and guidance from Allah to His creation. This guidance is brought by the Prophets, who received the word from Allah through various means, including dreams, direct revelations, or through angelic intermediaries. This is a significant understanding in Islam of how Allah communicates and provides guidance to humanity through revelation.¹⁰

The meaning of the word "wahy" in the context of the Quran is as follows. The word "wahy" is used in the Quran to depict various meanings and concepts. In general, the term "wahy" refers to the communication or message given by Allah to humans through various means. The usage of the word "wahy" in the context of the Quran can be explained as follows: Intimacy or Indication: The word "wahy" is used to indicate that Allah desires to communicate with humans. This can mean providing guidance, inspiration, or a message to someone. Communication Without Being Seen or Silently: Fundamentally, the word "wahy" refers to speaking to others without being seen or without using audible words. It illustrates how Allah communicates with humans, sometimes through sudden inspiration and

¹⁰ Khanam, Farida. *A Simple Guide to Islam*. (2001, P. 64-65. Islamic bookstore.com.) <https://www.islamicbookstore.com/b8320.html> (accessed November 14, 2020).

understanding.

Assignments or Tasks Given to Humans and Inanimate Objects: The Quran uses the word "wahy" to describe tasks or commands that Allah gives to both living beings and inanimate objects. For example, the command to bees to build their hives in the mountains or the command to the heavens to carry out specific duties and orders. **Speaking Silently or Through Signs:** At times, the word "wahy" is used to depict communication done silently or through signs. An example of this is when Prophet Zakariyya communicated with signs to the people inside the temple.

In addition to these meanings, the word "wahy" is also used in a technical sense in the context of the Quran to refer to the revelations and guidance that Allah provides to humans through the Prophets. The Prophets receive this revelation from Allah through various means, such as dreams, direct revelations, or through angels. Therefore, this text explains that the word "wahy" is used in the Quran to encompass various aspects of communication and guidance from Allah to humans, including messages given to individuals, tasks assigned to living and non-living beings, and revelations received by the Prophets as guidance for humanity.

The Method of Tafsir in Interpretation of Qur'an

As it is stated in the above definitions; that the establishment of tafsir from space and time is to register that its discipline employs research on the textual analysis of the Quran. The Quranic interpretation is accepted through the authentic narration from the prophetic tradition and the narration from the golden generations. The scholars of tafsir, like al-Zarkashi, Suyuti, al-Ragib al-Asfani, and al-Dhahabi has concluded that the method of tafsir in interpreting the Quran has mainly based on several linguistic features and semantic characteristics, this paper may not include every ruling on it, but as an example, five features will be addressed here as following:

- a. The uncovering of the hidden content of a Qur'anic word *Gharib al Qur'an* that needs to be settled on solid narration, as in *junah*, meaning *haraj* (objection); *khutuwat al-shaitan*, will mean *'amal al-*

- shaitan* (the work of the Satan); *al-mass*, stand for *al-jima'* (sexual intercourse), etc.
- b. the appellative meanings of the Qur'an's words, that is *khairan*, to mean *malan* (wealth, or money) in Q2:180, and *mu'ridun*, to mean *mukadhdhibun* (those who turn away, or the disbelieve) in Q21:1;
 - c. the lingual rules of speech in isolation and in collection with other speech, like *bil-akhirati hum yuqinun* (in the hereafter they have firm faith; Q2:4) where *bil-akhirati* (in the hereafter) serve as a prepositional phrase that foremost (foregrounded), it means the *muqaddam*, in order to accomplish the pragmatical function of the importance of content value and to show regard to those believers.
 - d. the mode of articulation of Qur'anic text, or the manner of reading it, for example, the '*wa'idha ra'aita thumma ra'aita na'iman wamulkan kabiran* [When you look there (in paradise), you will see pleasure and great dominion],' (Q76:20) the word *mulkan* can be interpreted as either pleasure, if it is articulate like *mulkan* where the letter (m) takes the short vowel /u/ (*al-dammah*) and the letter (l) is made vowel-less (*haruf sakin*), then;
 - e. the elaborated semantic componential features of a Qur'anic statement, like *safwan* (very soft stone), *wabil* (torrential rain) and tall (tiny drops of rain) in the Q2:264.

These are a few of the examples of the way of tafsir in interpreting the Qur'an, further information is provided in the same source that is the cited material in this section.¹¹

Moreover, textual illustration in the mainstream tafsir (tafsir bil-ma'thur) is located first in the prophetic exegesis. While the prophetic exegesis is based on the following technical expression: fist, Explaining the worshipping matters: like his explanation toward the ayah: "And ascertain the prayer and pay the Zakat" (Q2:42). This is explained by the prophet's word: Learn your rites from me and pray as you saw me praying. Second, Clarification of the confusing words: This kind of interpretation is made

¹¹ Abdul Raof, 210, p. 87-88

when the prophet explained the meaning of the verse of (Q2:186) Allah states: "Eat and drink until the white thread of dawn is cleared to you from the black thread of night". Uday b. Hatim narrated that he asked the prophet about this verse and whether it means the black and white thread? But he answered (No, it is the darkness of the night and the lightness of the day).

Third, the genetic issues: This type occurs in the (Q6:82) the Lord (saw) said: "Those people that believed in Allah and did not combine their faith with a grievance". When this verse was revealed to the prophet was so scared and said who among us did not have an attribute to the common injustice! The Prophet now clarify the significant meaning of the verse to them with another verse of the Quran that the injustice meaning in the verse is associating something with Allah (al-Shirk) this is understandable in his word (peace be upon him) " No, is not as you said, did you not hear what Lukman (as) said to his son: O son, do not associate anything with Allah is a huge injustice" (Q31:13) this narration is from authorities like sayyidina Abu Bakr al-Siddiq (d. 13/634), Umar (d. 24/644), Abay b. Kaab (d. 29/649), Salman (d.32/652), Hudhaifa (d.656), Ibn Abbas (d. 68/687), Ibn Umar (d. 693), Abu Abdul Rahman al-Salami (d. 412/1021), Mujahid (d. 104/722), Ikrimah (d. 105/723), al-Nakhai' (d. 75/694), Al-Dahhak(d. 102/720), Qatada (d. 117/735) and al-Sad(d. 55/674).¹²

Fourth, Specifying Restriction on the unrestricted: The example of this is the word Allah: (As for the male and female that engages in thief activities, amputate their hands) Q5:38. The prophet interpreted the verse to mean cutting off the right hand only, this is known when they took a thief to him and he ordered that they should cut off his right hand.¹³The afforestation method generally appeared as the solid stylistic of tafsir in interpreting the Qur'an. It often deals with text analysis on several occasions as was shown above.

Lastly, the tafsir also gained a modesty way of interpretation, which may also testify to the signification of the Qur'anic word. That means to say that the tafsir traces its connection to the historical mater of Qur'an, and

¹²Ibn Kathir, *Tasir al-Qur'an al-Azim*, 1999, v. 3, p. 290.

¹³ Abdul Raof, 210, p. 134-136.

interpreted its texts from this perspective. This elucidation is exposed in the story of Ashab al-Kahaf and Dhu 'L-Qarnain. The scholars use tafsir to elaborated on the miraculous scenes, they slept for centuries without dying, but alive. It is the situation where they found their selves in a cave and air could not enter into it, with the fresh bodies. Tafsir pay attention to the words *ayqaz* and *ruqu* in surah al-Khaf Q:7-8, the meaning is not actually waking and sleeping, but rather being alive and dead.¹⁴ An example of this mentioned story is repeated in numbers in the Quranic text. Therefore, the following pages of this paper will explicate the way of fiqh in interpreting the Quran.

The Method of Fiqh in Interpretation of Qur'an

In slit difference to the way of tafsir in interpreting the Qur'an that deals with linguistic context aspect of Qur'anic exegesis, the method of jurisprudence (fiqh) in interpreting Qur'an based on Islamic legal rulings (al-ahkam). That is all that it related to allowed and not allowed, prayer and zakat, fasting, hajj, marriage, sex outside marriage (al-zina), divorce transactions, and inheritance. Most of the Islamic matter is discussed in the Quran in the following verses; Q2, Q4, and Q5 where the injunctions are explained explicitly. The right interpretation of these verses according to the way of fiqh in Quranic exegesis is through deriving the ayah's meaning (al-istinbat), the example of that is in the verse Q2:187: "You believers are permitted to have a sexual intercourse with your wives during the night of the fast..seek what Allah has ordained for you, eat and drink until the white thread of dawn becomes distinct from the black" It is clearly stated with the help of fiqh's tafsir in the passed verse, that the fast of the husband and wife is valid with their sexual affairs, so people can eat and drink till the start of the dawn which is been understanding as to the starting of the new day.¹⁵

Thus the interpretation of the Quran is also much important in the field of Islamic jurisprudence since the major source of legal evidence is the

¹⁴Baljon, Johannes Marinus Simon. *Modern muslim kuran interpretation*, p. 31

¹⁵ Abdul Raof, p. 213

Quran. According to as-Shafi'i," the first and foremost root *usul* of law is naturally the Quran"¹⁶ then the sunnah, consensus, and the qiyas, and other additional proofs. Similarly, the jurist like malik and shafi'i and many others in their classical works employed the effort on the citation of verses of Quran as the priority in searching proofs on Islamic legal ruling. This is seen in Malik's work (*mukhatab* and *muktasarat*), also during his pronouncement on the matter of pilgrimage, where he depends on Quranic authority than the prophetic tradition with juridical interpretation to this revealed text.¹⁷

Following the way of fiqh in interpretation, Kamali expands that the nass (Quranic verse or prophetic tradition) should be applied on Din matters, then other manifest text (*zair*) of the divined command can be interpreted while applying them on the Islamic general issue (*'amm*) and specific (*khas*), absolute and qualified (*mutlaq* and *muqayyad*) etc.¹⁸ Likes of this view are explained further in as-Shafi'i's *Risalah*; while it is stated that The general statement revealed in the Qur'an is meant to be Comprehensive *'Amm*, and it includes the Particular *Khas*. Meanwhile, the explicit general statement of the Qur'an in which the general and the specific are also included. Also, the explicit general statement of the Qur'an seems to be general but is knowing to be entirely particular. And the collection of *al-Bayan* in the Qur'an through which meaning is expressed by context. This category of *al-Bayan* in the Qur'an is the wording that indicates the Implicit *al-Batin* meaning rather than the explicit *al-Zahir*. Then there is the Qur'anic verse, which was sent as general but the Sunnah specifically indicates it to means particular.¹⁹ All these reviewed concepts are categorized to be the way, in which the fiqh related to the interpretation of the Qur'an.

Consequently, to cite more additional examples, the contextual classification of jurisprudence rules is applied to jurist's exegesis. Based on the chapters of Islamic law and its topics, such as Fasting, Salat, purification,

¹⁶Weiss, Bernard G., ed. *Studies in Islamic legal theory*. Vol. 15. Brill, 2002, pp. 26.

¹⁷ Ibid, 11

¹⁸Kamali, Mohammad Hashim. *Principles of Islamic jurisprudence*, 1991, pp. 326.

¹⁹al-Alwani, Taha Jabir. *Source Methodology in Islamic Jurisprudence: Usul Al Fiqh Al Islami*. Al Ittehad Publications, 2010., p. 23.

etc. Exactly this is an exemplification of this claiming idea in the work of al-Jassa, in the area named; the chapter on the permissibility of delaying the missing fast of Ramadan. He states that Almighty Allah said: (*Whoever among you is ill or on travel, then several days later*). He enjoins the waiting period on days that are not specified in the verse. So our scholars said: "It is permissible for him or her to fast any time he wants." There is no narration from them about the permissibility of delaying it until the end of the year. Al-Jassas continues by saying; what I have is that it is not permissible to delay it until another Ramadan begins, and it is according to their beliefs, because if the matter for them is not temporary then the fast is to be replaced immediately.²⁰ The way of fiqh in interpreting the Qur'an is clearly showcased in the above quotation from the jurist.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Qur'an is the sacred book revealed by Allah to the prophet with human language which is Arabic; it is therefore recognized as the guidance and divined constitution for the Muslim community. Intending to gain a sound understanding of the Quranic teachings about Islam; the prophet as the master of the religion has established his Quranic exegesis by the commandment of Allah, to educate his companions. The companions transferred the gained knowledge to their successors and so on till this last generation of this era. It should be noted that researchers have registered many methods of branches of Islamic sciences in interpreting the Qur'an. Hence, tafsir has used the stylistic of expatiated the textual aspect of Qur'an, like providing format on its occasions of revelation, abrogation, the meaning of the cleared and unclear statement, and other words that related to historical issues in the chapters of Qur'an. Meanwhile on the other hand the fiqh has adopted a bit different method toward the interpretation of the Quran. As the Qur'an is noted to be the first major source of proof in Islam, all that has to do with the Islamic law and warship matters has been the

²⁰ Recep Dogan, *Usul Al-Tafsir: The Sciences and Methodology of Qur'ān*. (New Jersey: Tughra Books, 2014), pp. 121.

focus on in fiqh's way of interpretation. However, the Qur'an is juridically interpreted, to derive the ruling from the verses in an appropriate manner, based on what is expected in Islamic shari'ah.

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