



THE FORMATION OF THE SCIENCE OF TAFSIR IN MAWARANNAHR

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ABSTRACT

Since the beginning of Islam, interpretation of the Qur'an has been one of the important issues. Mawarannahr became one of the centers of Qur'anic studies, i.e. the science of interpretation (tafsir), in the Middle Ages. In general, the books of tafsir written in Mawarannahr are not taught only in Central Asia, but also in other famous religious educational institutions of the Islamic world, including Al-Azhar (Egypt), Dar al-Ulum (India and Pakistan), Islamic higher education and scientific research institutions (Saudi Arabia, Iraq, etc.). These valuable works, written in Arabic, have been published again and again. They have taken a firm place among the works that are in the focus of the world's researchers. In the 9th century, muhaddiths such as Abd Ibn Humayd al-Keshi, Imam al-Bukhari, Imam al-Tirmidhi, Abu Abdullah al-Darimi started the tradition of writing naqli tafsir in Mawarannahr. In this article, the stages of emergence and development of the science of tafsir in Mawarannahr are scientifically analyzed. First of all, the emergence of the science of interpretation and its introduction into the region is discussed. The types of interpretation are touched upon. Tafsirs written by scholars of Mawarannahr and their specific aspects are revealed. Whether these commentaries have reached us or not, as well as information about their modern editions, is given.

KEY WORDS: Mawarannahr, Tafsir, Mufasssir, Ta'wil, Tafsir bir-Ra'y, Tafsir bil-Ma'thur, Naqli Tafsir.

The holy book of Muslims, the Qur'an, was revealed to Muhammad (PBUH) over a period of twenty-three years. It is divided into 30 juz's, the number of surahs in it is 114, and the verses are 6236. The text of the Qur'an contains 77,439 words, which are written in 323,671 letters. The Islamic science that specializes in the study of the Qur'an is called tafsir.

The word tafsir (plural tafsir) is derived from the root of the Arabic verb fasara, and in the dictionary it means "explain", "cover", "illuminate", and in religious interpretation, it means that a person understands the purpose of the Qur'an at the level of his mind and explains it to others. In a broader interpretation, tafsir is the science of understanding the Qur'an through the lens of vocabulary, nahw, sarf, explanation, usul fiqh and qira'at, sabab an-nuzul, nasikh and mansukh sciences, explaining its meanings, and deriving judgments and wisdom from them.

Interpretation and commentary of the Qur'an has been one of the most important issues since the beginning of Islam. First, Muhammad (PBUH) personally commented on the verses, then the Companions learned tafsir from him and then Tabiin, Tabaa Tabiin, and later mufasssirs were engaged in this activity. In the early Islamic era, tafsir was not a separate science, but developed within the hadith and became an independent science over time. During its development, it branched into several directions.

Tafsir is one of the most important religious sciences because it is the science of understanding and learning the meaning of the Qur'an. Its high importance is also mentioned in the main book of Islam. For example, the verse "This is a blessed Book which We have revealed to you O Prophet so that they may contemplate its verses, and people of reason may be mindful" (Sad: 29) was interpreted by the famous mufasssir Imam al-Qurtubi as "this verse contains proof of the importance of knowing the meanings of the Qur'an." Companion mufasssir Ibn Abbas "He grants wisdom to whoever He wills. And whoever is granted wisdom is certainly blessed with a great privilege. But none will be mindful of this except people of reason" (Baqara: 269) explained the word "wisdom" as "tafsir".

Therefore, it is natural that there are hundreds of interpretations (tafsirs) of the text of the Qur'an since the emergence of Islam. In this regard, it should not be forgotten that in addition to authoritative tafsirs accepted by the absolute majority, there are books of tafsir created by heretical groups.

Qur'anic studies, which is called "Ulum al-Qur'an" in Arabic or "Qur'anic Studies" or "Koranovedenie" ("Koranistika") in Western languages, is not only a separate science, but also a scientific direction that includes many fields. In the Middle Ages, nasikh and mansukh, the reason of the revelation, common and special, qualities of surah and verse, recitation, etc. were recognized as the sciences of the Qur'an. Today, the scientific study of the miracles embodied in the verses of the Qur'an, its aspects related to



medicine, astronomy, linguistics and other fields, based on logical knowledge, are also developing rapidly. It is currently impossible to define the scope of the Qur'anic studies. The rapid development of science and technology is giving impetus to the emergence of new directions in the field of Qur'anic studies.

Mawarannahr became one of the centers of Qur'an studies, i.e. the science of interpretation, in the Middle Ages. As one of the main reasons for this, it can be shown that the local population has been enlightened since ancient times, and because of this, they accepted the new religion relatively easily, and the intelligentsia brought this religion to the highest level of knowledge. The famous scholar Ibn Khaldun (732/1332-784/1382) also emphasized this point and noted that the presence of many learned people here contributed to the rapid development of Islamic culture and knowledge. This was also helped by the fact that the local people were allowed to translate the verses so that they could understand them more quickly.

The hadith collections of Imam al-Bukhari, Imam al-Tirmizi, Imam al-Darimi can be mentioned as the books containing the first tafsirs in Mawarannahr. After all, they have special chapters dedicated to Qur'anic interpretations. In this way, tafsir narratives were initially collected in hadith collections. Later, the science of interpretation was separated from hadiths and separate books were written.

It should be emphasized that the mufassirs of Mawarannahr were mainly representatives of the Hanafi sect. This is because this sect has deep roots in this area. In turn, the kings and generals from the Turkic tribes adhered to the traditionalist Hanafi sect and opposed various heresies and superstitions. Representatives of the Turkish Seljuk dynasty occupied Khurasan in 1040, and then Iran. In 1055, Baghdad also surrendered to them. In 1071, the rule of the Seljuks spread throughout Asia Minor. As they occupied the lands of the Arab caliphate, they themselves became defenders of Islam. Turkish kings such as the Karakhanids and Khorezmshahs also supported the Hanafi sect in their territories. As one of the consequences of this, the mufassirs remained loyal to this sect.

But there were also famous scholars of the Shafii sect in Mawarannahr. They also contributed to the development of the scientific and religious environment of Mawarannahr. Among the famous of such scholars, we can include al-Qaffal al-Shashi (291/904-365/976), Abul Hasan Qasim, Imam al-Taftazani (722/1322-794/1392). It is recorded in the sources that they were engaged in interpretation. It is important that the works of scholars of this sect have been taught in the educational institutions of Mawarannahr and other Muslim countries for centuries within the framework of subjects such as tafsir, aqeedah, and linguistics.

In general, the interpretations created in Mawarannahr have been taught not only in Central Asia, but also in other famous religious educational institutions of the Islamic world, including Al-Azhar (Egypt), Darul Ulum (India and Pakistan), Islamic higher education and scientific research institutions (Saudi Arabia, Iraq, etc. .). These valuable works written in Arabic have been published repeatedly in major scientific centers. They have taken a firm place among the works that are in the focus of the world's researchers.

The stages of development of the science of interpretation include several periods. The Prophet (PBUH) and the Companions, Tabiin, Tadwin and modern times are among them. Compilation of tafsir books began during the period of Tadwin, that is, the writing down of interpretations. As a result, two directions were formed in tafsir - naqli (tafsir bil-ma'thur) and aqli (at-tafsir bir-ra'y). The rapid development of the science of interpretation in Mawarannahr coincides with the period of Tadwin.

Interpreting a verse with another verse, according to the Sunnah, Sahabah, or the traditions of the Tabiin, is a naqli tafsir. One of the most famous such tafsir books created in Mawarannahr is the work "Bahr al-Ulum" (Sea of Knowledge) by Abul Lais al-Samarkandi (d. 373/983-4).

Famous narrative tafsirs written in Mawarannahr. In the 9th century, muhaddiths such as Abd Ibn Humayd al-Keshi, Imam al-Bukhari, Imam al-Tirmidhi, Abu Abdullah al-Darimi started the tradition of writing naqli tafsir in Mowarounnahr.

Abd ibn Humayd al-Keshi also had a book of tafsir in the naqli style. This tafsir, published in Beirut in 2004, consisting of a commentary on Surahs Al-Imran and Nisa, is considered one of the first naqli tafsirs in Mawarannahr. It is mentioned in the sources that Imam al-Bukhari has a book called al-Tafsir. However, it has not reached us. It is not known that al-Tirmidhi and al-Darimi wrote a book of tafsir. But based on the fact that the collections of hadiths compiled by them have separate chapters on the interpretation of the Qur'an and the verses in them are explained through the hadiths, it can be said that they were muhaddiths who interpreted them on the basis of narrations.

This tradition continued into the 10th century and beyond. Abu Ishaq al-Nasafi's manuscript has not been found, but it is claimed that he had a book called al-Tafsir, which may be a naqli tafsir. Abu Lays al-Samarkandi's "Bahr al-Ulum" used a lot of interpretations based on verses and hadiths. Although it is said that Abu Hafs Omar ibn Muhammad al-Hamazani al-Samarkandi also had a work called "al-Tafsir", it is difficult to give a clear opinion about what kind of tafsir it is because it has not reached us.



However, based on the views of that time and the scholar, it can be said that it was a narrative interpretation. It is noted that Abu Bakr al-Qaffal Muhammad ibn Ali al-Shashi from Tashkent has a commentary called “al-Tafsir al-Kabir”. Although its manuscript copy has not been preserved, but the quotations from it in some commentaries show that it is narrative-rational.

In the 13th-15th centuries, among other Islamic sciences, the science of tafsir also developed in Mawarannahr. However, as a result of the passage of time and the emergence of new fields in science and the increasing need for intellectual answers, it has not been established that there was a naqli tafsir written in the Mawarannahr region after the twelfth century. Based on the above, it can be noted that narrative interpretations were mainly created before the 12th century. In the later periods, more mental commentaries were written than narrative commentaries. There are several reasons for this.

First of all, by this time, narrative narrations were collected in hadith collections, musnads, and early tafsir books. As a result of the passage of time and the formation of authentic collections, even the narrators were not mentioned in the books. Because authentic hadiths have been separated, their narrators have been identified, and there was no need for it anymore. Instead, it became a habit to be content with expressions such as al-Bukhari, Muslim, al-Tirmidhi’s narration. At the same time, adding a series of narrators over time would increase the volume of the book. It can be said that this is the reason for the decline of narrative interpretations.

Secondly, in the course of the development of science, as a result of the emergence of new scientific fields, the increase of discoveries and inventions, there was a need to understand the Qur’an based on those sciences. For example, interpretations in areas such as jurisprudence, aqidah, philosophy, and mysticism, which are among the intellectual sciences, have increased. In addition, today there are cases of linking the meanings of the verses to the advancements of modern technology. As a result, many studies related to medicine, catastrophes, and physics related to Qur’anic studies are emerging.

Thirdly, not only non-Arabs, but also Arabs need to learn the language of the Qur’an, the meanings of its words, grammatical features, maturity and eloquence. This is because over time, there was a need to move away from the original language, to not understand some words or to understand them more deeply. Naturally, as a result of the study of these aspects by linguists, many linguistic interpretations of the Qur’an were created.

Famous intellectual tafsirs written in Mawarannahr. In the 10th century, complete intellectual commentaries began to appear in Mawarannahr. Mental interpretation refers to the interpretation of verses based on the rules of language, pronunciation and usage, maturity and eloquence, aqeedah, jurisprudence, and Sufism. Due to the wide use of intelligence and ijthad in this type of interpretation, it is called by such names as “rational interpretation”, “ijtihadi interpretation”, “interpretation with diraya (knowledge)”.

Mental interpretations began to multiply from the XI-XII centuries. This, on the one hand, shows the development of mental sciences at that time, and on the other hand, it indicates that mental examples were used more in controversial issues. Therefore, with the passage of time, the interpretation of the Qur’an based on reason, apart from narration, has become the demand of the times. These types of interpretations are divided into different directions, depending on the style, characteristics and the sciences advanced in them. Some of them focus more on nahw, others on aqeedah or philosophy, and still others on history and Israeliyot, that is, on the narrations of the People of the Book - Jews and Christians, all of which are considered permissible intellectual interpretations. The most famous of such tafsirs created in Mawarannahr are Imam al-Maturidi’s “Ta’wilat al-Qur’an”, Abul Barakat al-Nasafi’s “Madarik at-Tanzil wa Haqaiq al-Ta’wil”, and Mahmud al-Zamakhshari’s “al-Kashshaf”. Among intellectual commentaries, “al-Kashshaf” by al-Zamakhshari is considered one of the most notable works in the world that embodies the capabilities of the Arabic language.

It can be said that Abu Mansur al-Maturidi (d. 333/944) was one of the first mufasssirs in this direction. Based on the writing methods of his book “Ta’wilat Ahl al-Sunna” and the cases of interpretation of many verses, it can be called intellectual tafsir. For example, scholars ask intellectual questions in many places, give them logical answers and justify them with verses and hadiths. While commenting on Surah Fatiha, he quotes several verses and hadiths, but it can be observed that there are more intellectual explanations and interpretations compared to narration. More specifically, this interpretation consists of rational examples based on narrative evidence. This tafsir is one of the most famous works in the Islamic world.

Later, the tradition of intellectual commentary was continued by scholars such as Abu Hafs Umar al-Nasafi, Abu Nasr al-Haddadi al-Samarkandi, and Alauddin al-Samarkandi. In the commentary of Abu Hafs Umar al-Nasafi, special emphasis is placed on the Persian language.

Jorullah az-Zamakhshari, as a mature scholar who perfected intellectual knowledge, revealed the spiritual, lexical, and grammatical aspects of the Holy Qur’an at a highly professional level. This fact has been acknowledged by many mufasssirs over the centuries.



Tafsirs based on intellectual sciences can also be found in the works of scholars such as Abu Ali Ibn Sina and Muhammad ibn Abdurrahman az-Zahid al-Bukhari.

The tradition of creating intellectual interpretations in Mawarannahr was continued by scholars of later centuries. Among such scholars are Abul Barakat al-Nasafi (d. 710/1310), Jamaluddin al-Kashani (d. 731/1329-1330), Abul Fadail Muhammad al-Burhan al-Hanafi (d. 687/1289), Alauddin Abdulaziz al-Bukhari (d. 730/1330), Mas'ud Sa'duddin al-Taftazani (722/1322-794/1392), Alauddin Ali Mawlana al-Qushchi (1403-1474), Abul Qasim ibn Abu Bakr as-Samarkandi al-Bayani (lived in the 9th/15th century), Kamaluddin Hafiz al-Kohaki al-Tashqandi (1490-1572), and Muhammad al-Bukhari (d. 985/1578).

Abul Barakat al-Nasafi took intellectual and logical examples from his spiritual teacher al-Maturidi, thought-provoking methods in refuting sects, and skills in revealing the secrets of the Qur'an, balagha and fasaha of the Qur'an from az-Zamakhshari.

In Mawarannahr, among the intellectual interpretations, symbolic interpretations (ishari) are also developed. This can be seen in the example of al-Hakim al-Tirmidhi who lived in the 9th-10th centuries. In the book written by Allama, whose name remains unknown, there is a commentary on 80 words found in the Qur'an and the verses are explained in a mystical-allegory style. The books of Najmuddin Kubra (545-618/1150-1221), Jamaluddin al-Kashani, Khoja Porso (756-822/1355-1420), and Ya'qub Charkhi (1363-1447) can also be included among the ishari tafsirs. This shows that during the development of Sufi sects, Sufi interpretations also increased.

In general, there are so many intellectual commentaries created in Mawarannahr that most of them have not yet been fully studied and published.

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