

## ***Tafsir: Origin, Schools and Trends***

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### **Abstract**

New trends in Qur'an exegesis *Tafsir* are increasing nowadays, resulting to wrong interpretations *Ta'wilun Bad'ilun* of the noble Qur'an. This is becoming so serious and worrisome in contemporary societies. Muslims respect the glorious Qur'an as the final divine message sent by Allah to the generality of mankind, thus, they give maximum consideration in studying its sciences and servicing its meanings, hence, the Prophet (SAW) Himself introduced the science of *Tafsir*, which as time goes, Muslims developed this science into a complete educational institution, they developed trends for this institution and compiled voluminous works on the science. This paper discussed the trends of *Tafsir*, and its development through the generations of Islam. It discusses the definition of *Tafsir*, its origin, brief history of *Tafsir* during the time of the Prophet (SAW), the companions and the *Tabi'oon*, the three schools of *Tafsir*, thus; Makkan, Madinan and Iraqian schools, the trends of *Tafsir*; the creed, scientific, linguistic, and logical trends, literature and deviant trends, the paper concluded that, there is possibility of the emergence of new trends in *Tafsir*, due to the different ideologies and creeds some Muslims may hold as time passes. A descriptive research method was used in the work.

Key Words: *Tafsir*, Trend, Literature, Qur'an, *Ta'wil*

### **Introduction**

Quran is a final divine message to the mankind, this reality awakens the conscious of Muslims to give special attention to every aspect of its understanding, they give maximum consideration in studying its sciences and servicing its meanings, hence, the Prophet (*Sallallahu alaihi wasallam*) used to explain the verses of the Qur'an which needed explanation as they were being revealed (Roomey, Ittijahat1/26), this was later known as the science of *Tafsir*.

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Tafsir has been a mainstay of Islamic scholarship since the earliest days of Islam. The companions used to take only ten verses from the Prophet and they would not exceed them until they learnt their meanings and put them into practice (Al-Tabari 1/80), and the Prophet Himself stressed that they “shall hear from him” so that others will hear from them and another generation will hear from those that heard from them as well (Ahmad 5/104; 2945; Abu Dawud 3/321:3659), this made the generation of the companions best among all generations in terms of religious understanding and Qur’anic exegesis in particular. After the emergence of many sects including the *mutakallimun* (rationalists), other trends started to evolve with their emergence. The former is commonly known as the traditionalist school of *Tafsir bil Maathur* (*Tafsir* through revealed evidences) and the latter as rationalist school of *Tafsir bil Maaqul* (*Tafsir* through logical deductions).

The emergence of rationalists arouse debate between the early generations and the adherents of the rationalists’ school of thought, as conservatives being the majority then rejected it, the rationalists considered it the only acceptable method of tafsir. However, despite these differences, both schools of thought have contributed to the development of this field of Islamic knowledge, and have effect in shaping the way Muslims interpret the Qur’an either negatively or positively.

Over the centuries, there have been many different *tafsir* literatures, some authors focused on the historical context in which the verses were revealed *Asbab al-Nuzul*, while others focus on the linguistic meaning of the words and textual analysis.

As time goes, different trends have emerged in the field of *tafsir*, reflecting different changes in the Muslim world, socially, politically, intellectually and the emergence of different ideologies which all have effect on the way some Muslims interpret the Qur’an, and all these trends would not be divorced from either traditionalists or rationalists’ schools of *Tafsir*.

This work aims to examine the origin of *Tafsir*, its institutes, and trends, with special emphasis on the importance of *Tafsir bil Maathur* (*Tafsir* through revealed

sources). The work collected both primary and secondary data, and both descriptive and analytical method of data analysis were used.

### **Concept of *Tafsir***

The Arabic word *Tafsir* is derived from the word *fasara* which literally means “to make clear” or “to explain” (Zarqaniy 7). According to Zahaby it was derived from root word *fasri* which means explanation and unveiling (Tafsir, 5). Therefore, linguistically *Tafsir* means explanation or an exposition as in the glorious Qur’an “for any parable they bring, I will bring you the truth and better explanation (*tafseeran*)” (Q 25:33; Philips 13).

Technically, *Tafsir* is the science through which one will understand the revelation and its causes, Makkan and Madinan Chapters *suwar*, abrogated and non-abrogated verses of the Qur’an, absolute *mutlaq* and restricted *muqayyad*, *mujmal* (indefinite) and *mubayyan* (definite), general *amm* and specific *khass*, etc. (Zarkashiy 148). Professor Abdurrahman I. Doi composed a more precise definition, thus “*Tafsir*, therefore, would mean the sciences through which the Book of Allah can be understood” (22). According to Ab Rahman, Abdul Kadir and Adam “*Tafsir* is a branch of knowledge related to the interpretation and understanding of Qur’an” (1184).

From the above definitions of *Tafsir*, it could simply be concluded that *Tafsir* is one of the greatest sciences in Islam, it deals with the interpretation of the injunctions, stories and other treasures lying buried in the glorious Qur’an. It is of highly importance here to highlight briefly the distinction between *Tafsir* and *Ta’weel* which are close in meaning. Moreover, to early clerics of *Tafsir*, the terms are synonymous (Zarqaniy 2/8) but the later scholars gave it another meaning. According to them, *Ta’weel* is a shifting of an expression from its obvious meaning to one of its likely meanings due to its context (Philips 16). Therefore, according to this category of scholars, *ta’weel* falls on different page with *Tafsir*.

### **Types of *Tafsir* and the Importance of *Tafsir Bil Maathur* (*Tafsir Through Revealed Sources*)**

Basically, *Tafsir* can be classified into two, namely; *Tafsir bil Maathur* (*Tafsir through revealed sources*) and *Tafsir bil- Ra'y* (logical *Tafsir*), each of the two classes are further expanded into other classes which eventually developed into the trends of *Tafsir*. *Tafsir bil Maathur* for instance could also be classified into four, viz; *Tafsirul Qur'an bil Qur'an* (explaining Qur'an with other Qur'anic verses), *Tafsirul Qur'an bis Sunnah* (explaining Qur'an through Prophetic traditions), *Tafsirul Qur'an bi aqwal as-Sahabah* (explaining Qur'an through the words of the companions of the Prophet), and *Tafsirul Qur'an bi aqwal at-Tabi'oon* (explaining Qur'an through the words of the successors of the companions) (Uthaimin, Usool 25-28).

It's known that only Qur'an and *Sunnah* were revealed sources of *Tafsir*, as the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (SAW) was also revealed by Allah as clearly stated in different parts of Qur'an (Q 15:9; 53:3) and *Sunnah* (Ahmad 28/410:17174; Abu Dawud 4/200:4604), however, the words of *Sahabah* could not also be less important as they were the students of the Prophet who witnessed the revelation and vividly knew the reasons of revelations and circumstances. It was reported from Abdullah bin Mas'ud as he was saying

I swear by Allah who there is no deity worthy of worship but Him, there is no verse revealed in the Book of Allah that I don't know where it was revealed, and on what it was revealed, if I know somebody who knows the Book of Allah better than I do, and camels reach him, I would have ridden to him (Al-Bukhari 6/187:5002; Muslim 4/1912: 2462),

Allah Himself has reiterated the importance of *Tafsir* in different verses of Glorious Qur'an where He instructs the Noble Prophet to explain the verses of Qur'an (Q 16:44), hence, if this kind of divine *tafsir* has no importance over other kinds of *Tafsir*, Allah would not have emphasized it, Allah *taala* says

﴿وَمَا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ إِلَّا لِتُبَيِّنَ لَهُمُ الَّذِي اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً  
لِقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ﴾ (النحل: ٦٤)

“And We have not sent down the Book (the Qur'an) to you (O Muhammad), except that you may explain clearly unto them those things in which they differ” (Q 16:64)

The instruction given by Allah to the Prophet to explain the meanings of Qur'an indicates the importance of such acts and consequently the superiority of the explanations of the Prophet over all explanations. Ibn Taimiyah stressed that:

Generally, whoever defies the methods of the companions (*Sahabah*) and Successors (*Tabi'oon*) and their *Tafsir* and accepts what contradicts them, that person has mistaken the path and should be considered an innovator, even if they belong to the class of *Mujtahidun* (who can deduce rulings from the primary sources), whom will be rewarded in their deductions and would have their mistakes forgiven ... and we all know that the companions and their successors have read the Qur'an, and they were the most knowledgeable of its exegesis and meanings, also they were most knowledgeable of the truth that Allah sent with Muhammad may Allah bless him and grant him peace, so whoever contradicts their views, and explains Qur'an with contradictory meaning from what they explained, has mistaken both the reference and the purport (28)

He also argues “and if the successors conformed on something then there is no doubt that it is the truth and established fact” (46). Imam Al-Tabari also insisted that the closest exegetes to the truth in *Tafsir* are those who do not go outside the views of the predecessors among the companions, *tabi'oon* and the pious scholars of the *ummah* (1/93). *Ibn Kathir* confirms that “explaining Qur'an by mere rational (*ra'y*) is haram” (1/10), however, some scholars of *Tafsir* classified *Tafsir bil Ra'y* into two; *Tafsirul Quran bil Ra'y al Mahmud* (accepted logical *Tafsir*) which was based on *ijtihad* (accepted way of deducting Islamic laws) which is based on *qiyas*,

and linguistic deductions and do not normally goes out of the views of the companions and the successors, and the *Tafsir bil Ra'y al-Madhmum* (the doubtful logical tafsir) which is based on the mere rational (Zahaby, Tafsir 1/88).

### **Development and Phases of Tafsir**

It's a divine system of Allah to reveal his books through the understood languages and the dialects of the people to whom those revelations were sent. This is an established way which Allah (S.W.T) Himself strictly adhered to since the creation of the world (Roomey, *buhus* 14). This is explained in the verse. "And We sent not a Messenger except with the language of his people, in order that he might make (the Message) clear for them" (Q 14:4).

The final Prophet; Muhammad (PBUH) was not an exception; he was also sent with a book revealed in Arabic which was the native language of his people (Q 12:2; 26:195). It's the primary responsibility of all prophets to explain the revelations they received to their people, Prophet Muhammad, despite the fact he was sent to Arab, and the Book was revealed in clear Arabic, Allah has still ordered him to interpret the Qur'an for them. This was observed in the verse: "And we have also sent down unto you (O Muhammad) the dhikr (Reminder and the advice (i.e. the Qur'an), that you may explain clearly to Men what is sent down to them" (Q 16: 45).

This is clear instruction given by Allah to his Prophet (*sallallahu alaihi wasallam*) to interpret the Qur'an to his people for they may not understand it without proper interpretation and commentary from him (*Khalaf* 70). As the companions used to memorize and eventually report all the interpretations given by the Prophet (*sallallahu alaihi wasallam*) and the *Tabi'oon* did the same until the science of *Tafsir* was fully developed and documented.

### **Tafsir During the Time of the Prophet (SAW)**

The Prophet (SAW), as he was ordered, interpreted the Glorious Qur'an to his companions. Muslim scholars held diverse view regarding the limit of portion which was interpreted by the Prophet (*sallallahu alaihi wasallam*). According to a group of scholars the Prophet (P.B.U.H) interpreted the whole Qur'an to his

companions since Allah has instructed him to interpret the Qur'an (Usaimeen17; Sa'adiy 853), another group of scholars opined that he did not; He only interpreted what was in need of interpretation, the obscure issues that could not be understood through mere understanding of Arabic language (Roomey, buhus 17).

At-Tabari in his famous book of *Tafsir* reported that Abdullah B. Abbas (R) said: the *Tafsir* are of four kinds; *Tafsir* that is known by Arabs for their knowledge of the language, the *Tafsir* that one would not be excused for its ignorance, the *Tafsir* that is only known by scholars and the *Tafsir* that is only known by Allah (62). Zahabi concluded that by observing this statement of Ibn Abbas, the Prophet (*sallallahu alaihi wasallam*) might have only interpreted the third kind for it is the only one that is in need of interpretation (*Ilm al-Tafsir*16).

### ***Tafsir in the time of Companions***

After the demise of the noble Prophet (SAW), his companions began to extend and spread the knowledge they learnt from him as he ordered them (Al-Bukhari 4/170 No 3461). Each companion, in his teaching, focuses on his area of specialization. Some had specialized in *hadith*, others in recitation of the Qur'an. Some had chiefly specialized in the science of exegesis of the Qur'an.

The *Tafsir* of *Sahabah* has been unique in its pattern, as they were the best people raised after the Prophet (SAW) (Q 3:110), they learnt from the Prophet and memorized from him, they were the intermediary between him and the nation (*Ummah*), they were the best in terms of knowledge and pioussness, they were on one creed (*Aqidah*) so there was no fabrication during their time in support of deviant views and creeds, they did not also explain every part of Qur'an, they only explained what was obscured. The science of *Tafsir* during this time was not separated from *Hadith*, it was reported together with *Hadith*, and it was also not documented as they used to rely on their memories to report everything they heard from the Prophet (*sallallahu alaihi wasallam*) (Zahaby, *Al-Tafsir wal Mufasssirun* 1/73). The companions usually use the sources of Qur'an, Prophetic traditions and *Ijtihad* (valid reasoning) and in some cases the sources of the people of the book (*Ahlul Kitab*) in their commentary (Zahaby, *At-Tafsir wal Mufasssirun* 1/31).

There were many companions who were known to have special contributions in *Tafsir*, among who are: the four Rightly Guided Caliphs; Abubakar, Umar, Uthman, Aliyu, and Abdullah bn Mas'ud, Abdullah bn Abbas, Ubay bn Ka'ab, Zaid bn Thabit, Abu Musa Al-ash'ari and Abdullah bn Zubair (Suyootee 2/526), Anas bn Malik, Abu Hurairah, Abdullah bn Umar, Abdullah bn Amr and Jabir bn Abdillah (*Khalaf* 70). The wife of the Prophet (*sallallahu alaihi wasallam*) Aishah had also contributed immensely to the development of *Tafsir* (*Khalaf*, 70). Most of the interpretations reported from *Sahabah* were from; Aliyu bn Abi Talib, Ubay b. Kaab, Abdullahi b. Abbas, and Abdullahi b. Mas'ud. The companion passed away one after the other, leaving the task of developing the science of exegesis rested on their students, the *Tabi'oon* (Doi 27). The culture of the last three schools mentioned will be discussed after elaborating the era of *Tabi'oon*.

### **Tafsir in the Time of *Tabi'oon* and the Schools of *Tafsir***

There is no so much distinction between *Tafsir* in this gamut and the previous one (Roomey, *buhus* 30). They relied on the same sources of Qur'an, *hadith*, and what they have learnt from *Sahabah* in addition to their personal *ijtihadat* (reasoning) (Zahabiy, at-*Tafsir wal mufasssirun* 1/76), however, some of the *Tabi'oon* had excessively used *isra'iliyyat* (unverified reports of the people of the book) (Zahabiy, at-*Tafsir wal mufasssirun*1/97). The *Tafsir* of *Tabi'oon* also carries the same pattern with that of *Sahabah*, and their *Tafsir* was considered the best *Tafsir* after the *Tafsir* of *Sahabah*, as they were the best people after the generation of *Sahabah*, however, some variations started to emerge as some deviant views and ideologies started to be introduced into the religion, giving chance for dispute and debates in supporting different views. The method of reporting *Tafsir* has also started to change as people of this generation normally rely on the reports and interpretations of the scholar of their School only (Zahaby, *Al-Tafsir wal Mufasssirun* 1/97). This era was the time of the emergence of various institutes for the learning of *Tafsir*, been established in different vicinities of Islamic states (Siddiqui web) through the scholars of the schools. The brief exploration of each school and its scholar is given below:

### **Makkan School of *Tafsir*, under Abdullahi b. Abbas**

This school was founded and mastered by Abdullah b. Abbas b. Abdil Muttalib b. Hashim b. Abdi manaf. A scholar of *Tafsir* and cousin of the noble Prophet (sallallahu alaihi wasallam), Abdullah was, “as some scholars observed, the father of *Tafsir*” (Doi 26). He is *Turjumanul-Qur’an* (interpreter of the Qur’an). He took knowledge of commentaries from the Prophet first as he was his cousin and his aunt Maimunah married the Prophet, so he used to frequently visit them and learn from the Prophet and after the death of the Prophet he took the majority of the knowledge he missed from the companions (Abu Azeez and Ayyoub 147) and more particularly, the four Caliphs; Abubakar, Umar, Uthman and Aliyu, Ubay bn Kaab, Zaid bn Thabit, and Abdullah bn Mas’ud (*Khalaf* 77) as the Prophet died while he was thirteen or fifteen (*Khalaf* 75). The Prophet (PBUH) has once prayed for him “O Allah teach him (the knowledge) of the Book (Qur’an) (Al-Bukhari 9/91 No 7270). Thus, he became a scholar and master of exegeses. Even the companions were praising him for his knowledge of *Tafsir* (Doi 26). He established a centre of *Tafsir* in Makkah. He died in the city of *Taif* at seventy-two, in year seventy-five (75H). His funeral prayer was led by Muhammad b. Hanafiyya. (*Bin Khalkan* 64). Ibn Taimiyya insisted that “the most knowledgeable people in *Tafsir* are people of Makkah, for they are student of Abdullah b. Abbas.” (Qtd in Usaimeen 50). Some of the students of this school are:

1. Mujahid bn Jabar al-Makki (d. 104 AH-722 C.E): he was one of the prominent scholars, he was among the great students of Abdullah bn Abbas. He said “I read the (whole) Qur’an in front of Bin Abbas thirty times.” (Zahabiy, *Tafsir* 104; *Siyar* 4/450). He died while he was in Sujud (Zahaby, *Siyar* 4/456).
2. Sa’id Bn Jubayr Bn Hisham alwaliby (d. 95H-714 CE): he was regarded as one of the leading members of *Tabi’oon* and one of the prominent students of Abdullah bn Abbas, a scholar of *Qiraat*, *Tafsir*, *Fiqh* and *Hadith*, he achieved a high level of scholarship to the extent that Abdullah bn Abbas himself used to refer students to him (Zahaby, *al-Tafsir wal Mufasssirun* 1/78).

3. Ikrimah Maula Ibn Abbas (d. 105 AH): He was a slave servant of Abdullah Bn Abbas later freed by his son, scholars had differed on him, while a group of them considered him reliable, others have reservations on his memory, but the majority of scholars consider him as one of the prominent scholars of his time and accepted his reports (Zahaby, *al-Tafsir wa al-Mufasssirun* 1/84).
4. Other students of Abdullah bn Abbas include Tawus bn Kaisan al-Yamani and Ata' bn Abi Rabah, among others.

### **Madinan School of Tafsir, under Ubay bn Kaab**

There were a lot of companions who had not left Madinah, they stayed and taught people in Madinah, but one of the prominent scholars who specialised in *Tafsir* and established the Madinan school of Tafsir was Ubay bn Ka'ab bn Qays al-Ansary, he memorized the whole of the Qur'an from the Prophet *sallallahu alaihi wasallam* (Zahaby, *Siyar* 1/393), and Allah Himself once instructed the Prophet to read Qur'an to Ubay (Al-Bukhari 5/36:3809; Muslim 1/550:799), the Prophet himself has instructed his companions to learn Qur'an from Ubay (5/36: 3808; Muslim 4/1913: 2464). His students include:

1. Zaid Ibn Aslam Al-Adawy (d. 136 AH) freed servant of Umar bn Khattab, one of the prominent *Tabi'oon*.
2. Abul A'liyah, Rufai'i Bn Mihran al-Rayahy (d. 90 AH) one of the prominent *Tabi'i*, He accepted Islam two years after the death of the Prophet (Zahaby, *al-Tafsir wal Mufasssirun* 1/86).

### **Iraqian School of Tafsir, under Abdullahi b. Mas'ud**

This School was established by Abdullah bn Mas'ud al-Huzaly, he was the sixth person to embrace Islam and first to recite publicly in Makkah after the Prophet (*sallallahu alaihi wasallam*) and was among the great scholars of *Tafsir* and has reported a lot of knowledge from the Prophet. The recognition of his Qur'anic knowledge is given by the Prophet himself where he said "whoever wants to read Qur'an as fresh as it was revealed, let him learn it from ibn Umm Abd" (Ahmad 1/309: 174; Abu Azeez and Ayyoub 136). He was one of the smartest scholars, he

was appointed as judge and head of *Baitul mal* (treasury house) in *Kufah*, established a school of Qur'anic commentary therein and later fled and died in Medina in 32 AH and was buried in *Baqi'a* graveyard. (Zahabiy, *Siyar* 499 Vol 1). His students include:

1. Alqama bn Qais bn Abdullah al-Nakha'iy: one of the prominent *tabi'i*, he was born during the time of the Prophet but he didn't meet him, he was one of the best students of Abdullah bn Mas'ud, he was also considered as his nearest successor in terms of his knowledge and guide, to the extent that Abul Muthanna said that if you meet alqama, it would not affect you that you missed Abdullah, because he inherited his knowledge and guidance, he died in year 61 AH at 90 years (Zahaby, *Siyar* 4/54)
2. Other students of Abdullah bn Mas'ud include: Masruq bn al-Ajda' al-kufiy al-Hamadani (he was also one of the best students of Abdullah, d 63 H), Aswad bn Yazeed bn Qais al-Nakha'iy (d 74 H), Murrah bn Shurahil al-Hamadaniy (also known as Murrat al-Khair and Muurat al-Tayyib for his devotion, d 76 H), Aamir bn Shurahil al-Shaaby (he was known of his retentive memory to the extent he said he never used a pen on a paper to write anything, and he never ask anyone to repeat anything to him, he was the judge of *kufah*, d 109 H (Zahaby, *Al-Tafsir wal mufasssirun* 1/92), Al-Hasan bn Abi al-Hassan al-Basry (d 110 H) and Qatadah bn Daamah al-Sadusy (he was also known of his retentive memory, d 117 H).

### **Documentation of *Tafsir***

*Tafsir* has been developing through these eras through oral transmission. In the late first century after *hijrah*, the period of documentation began. It first begun by compiling it vis-à-vis *hadith* documentation. Hence, it was documented in books of *hadith* as separate chapter (Roomey, *buhus*35). People that wrote in this way include: Yazid bn Harun al-Sulamy (d. 117 AH), Shu'ubah bn al-Hajjaj al-Ataky (d. 160 AH), Waki'i bn al-Jarrah al-Rua'sy (d. 197), Sufyan bn Uyainah (d. 198H), Rauh bn Ubadah al-Basry (d. 205H), Abdul-Razaq bn Hammam al-San'any (d. 211 H), Adam bn Abi Iyas (d. 220 H) and Abdu bn Humayd (d. 246) among others (Roomey, *buhus* 35; Zahaby, *Al-Tafsir wal Mufasssirun* 1/104).

As the golden age of documentation began, scholars started to document Tafsir separately. According to Roomey, Abdulmalik bin Abdul-Aziz bin Jurajj (80 AH-149 AH) was first person to write a book of Tafsir (*buhus* 36), who died in Baghdad (*Bin Khalkan* 164 vol 3). Then he was followed by other scholars, such as: Muhammad bn Yazeed bn Majah Al-qazwiniy (d. 273 AH/ 886 CE), Muhammad bin Jarir al-Tabari (d. 310 AH/ 923 AD), Muhammad Abdurrahman bn Idrees (Abu Hatim al-Razi) (d. 320 AH) and Muhammad bin Hibban Albustiy (d. 354 AH).

All these books were documented the way hadith was documented; with their chain of transmission (Roomey, *buhus* 36). Thereafter, the later Scholars began to omit chains of transmission in their books, and that marked the beginning of the emergence of Israelite, baseless opinions, etc. And then was the evolution of various Tafsir trends (Roomey, *Ittijahat* 51).

### **Trends of Tafsir**

Trends or dimensions is known in Arabic as (*ittijahat*), from the Arabic root verb *Ittajaha, yattajihu, ittijahan*, its singular form is *ittijah*. It is a goal which a *Mufasssir* (exegete) want to achieve with his interpretation of the Qur'anic verses. This goal may be explaining literature, creeds, legal injunctions etc. through the verses of the Qur'an (Roomey, *buhus* 55).

Trends or dimension could be divided into the following:

1. Creeds trends *Aqadi*
2. Scientific *ilmiy* trends
3. Logic trends *Aqli*
4. Literature trends *Adabi*
5. Juristic Trends *Fiqhi*
6. Deviants' trends

These divisions are detailed below:

## **Creed Trends of Tafsir**

This is a trend of *Tafsir* which the exegete adopts. It focuses on explanation of creed through the Qur'anic interpretation. Below are some examples of works in each creed:

### 1. Method of *Ahlu-Sunnah*

This is a method adopted by people who follow the Prophetic traditions, who were also known as *Ahlul Hadith*, there was no division among Muslims during the time of the Prophet, hence, all Muslims were known as Muslims, however, after the death of the Prophet some heretic views and movements started to evolve which were countered by the companions, as the sects were evolving, every sect have their names and identities and the mainstream who followed the unpolluted teachings of the Prophet maintain the name of *Ahlu-Sunnah* (Roomey, *Ittijahat* 1/54). Examples of works written under this cadre are:

- i. *Jami' al-Bayan fi Ta'wil al-Qur'an* also known as *Tafsir al-Tabari* by Muhammad Ibn Jarir at-Tabari (d. 310 AH/ 923 AD)
- ii. *Maalim at-Tanzil fi Tafsir al-Qur'an* also known as *Tafsir al-baghawy* by Muhyi al-Sunnah, Husain bn Mas'ud al-Baghawy (d. 510 H).
- iii. *Tafsir Al-Qur'an Al-azeem* also known as *Tafsir Ibn Kathir* by Abul Fida Ismail bn Umar Ibn Kathir al-Dimashqi (d. 774 H) (Zarqaniy 28 vol 2).
- iv. *Mahasin al-Ta'wil* by Muhammad Jamal al-Din bn Muhammad al-Qasimi (d. 1332 H)
- v. *Adhwa' al-Bayan fi Idhah al-Qur'an bil Qur'an* by Muhammad Amin bn Muhammad Mukhtar al-Shanqity (d. 1393 H at Makkah).
- vi. *Taisyr al-Karim al-Rahman fi Tafsiri Kalam al-Mannan* by Abdul-Rahman bn Nasir al-Saady (d. 1376 H).

*Manhaj Tafsir bil Ma'athur* (method of *Tafsir* through revealed sources) could also fall under this, while other researchers discuss it under scientific trend, all the books mentioned above could also be cited as examples of this method, with addition of *al-Dur al-Manthur* by Jalaluddeen al-Suyootee (d. 911) and *al-Jami' li Ahkam al-Qur'an* by Muhammad bn Ahmad al-Qurtubi (d. 671H).

## 2. Mu'tazilite Method

The examples of books developed under this trend are:

- I. *Tafsir al-kabir* also known as *Tanzih al-Qur'an an al-Mata'in* by Qadiy Abdul-Jabbar bn Muhammad al-Baghdadi (d. 415 H).
- II. *Al-kash-Shaf* by Mahmud bn Umar al-Zamakhshariy (d. 538 H)(Zarqaniy, supra).

## 3. Shi'ites Methods

According to Roomey (*ittijahat*, 39) Shiites were shattered to various factions, each faction has its own trend in Tafsir. Some of these groups and the examples of their works of *Tafsir* are mentioned below:

- a. *Batiniyya* Group; they are the people who rejected the direct and clear interpretation of Qur'an and claim that there are obscured meanings which were meant only for them, they are also in different groups such as: *al-Qaramitah*; the followers of Hamdan *Qurmut*, *al-Isma'iliyyah*; who claim to follow Isma'il bn Jaafar al-Sadiq, *al-Sabaiyyah*; from number seven, who claim that in every seven people there must be an *Imam* that must be imitated, *al-Haramiyyah*; because they use to violate people's dignity, *al-babikiyyah*; followers of Babik *alkharmi* and *al-Muhammirah*; because they wear read cloths (Zarqany 2/75). Ahmad Husain ibn Mansur's work of Tafsir entitled "*Tafsir Qulhuwallahu Ahad*" is an example of this method.
- b. *Ithna Ashariyya* Group

The following are the instances of written works under this trend:

- I. *Tafsir Hassan Al'askani* (d. 204)
  - II. *Alburhan* by Hashim Bahraniy (d. 1107)
  - III. Ibrahim bn Muhammad Hilal (d.373)
  - IV. *Mir'atu al-Anwar wa Mishlatu al-Asrar* by al-Maula Abdul-Latif al-Kazilani from Najf.
- c. *Zaidiyya* Faction; they claim to follow Zaid bn Aliyu bn al-Husain, they further divided into groups, including; *al-Batriyyah* (also known as *Salihyyah*), *al-Jaririyyah* also known as *al-Sulaimaniyyah* and *al-Jarudiyyah*. But they didn't have enough contribution in *Tafsir*, and their

*Tafsir* took a dimension of *Ahl-Assunnah Tafsir* with exception of some issues, some scholars have given the famous book “*Fath al-Qadir*” by Muhammad bn Aliyu Ash-shaukani and *al-Thamarat al-Yani’ah* by Yusuf bn Ahmad as examples of this trend (Roomey, *Ittijahat* 1/278; Zahaby, *Al-Tafsir wal mufasssirun* 2/208), however, its known that Ash-Shaukani, even though he studied *Zaidiyya* and has been an adherent in his early years, but later has changed to *Ahlus-Sunnah wal Jamaah*, and his *Tafsir* was known to be majorly on the *salaf* creed (Zahaby, *al-Tafsir wal Mufasssirun* 2/211-212).

#### **4. Sufi Dimension of Tafsir**

This is a dimension in which a *mufasssir*, in the cause of his interpretation, focuses on Sufi’s mysticism. It’s basically classified into *Nadhari* (logical) and *Ishari* (demonstrative). Examples of these works are;

- I. *Tafsir al-Quran al-Adhim* also known as *Tafsir al-Tustari* by Sahl bn Abdullah Tustari (d. 283H) (keeler xi).
- II. *Haqa’iq al-Tafsir* by Abu AbdulRahman al-Sulamiy (d. 412H).
- III. *Ara’is al-Bayan fi Haqa’iq al-Qur’an* by Abu Muhammad al-Shirazy (d. 666H).
- IV. *Al-Ta’wilat al-Najmiyyah* by Najmuddeen Dayah (d. 654H), he died before finishing then *Ala’ al-Daulah al-Sumnani* (d. 736H) completed the work (Zahabi, *Al-Tafsir wal mufasssirun* 2/291).

#### **Scientific Trend**

Scholars began to specialize in different aspects of knowledge. Hence, they began to focus on their various specialized fields in the cause of their interpretations. A hadith traditionist (*Al-muhaddith*) would focus in his *Tafsir* by narrating *hadith*; a Jurist (*Al-faqih*) would focus on jurisprudence and legal injunctions. Linguist (*Al-lughawiy*) focuses on giving meaning of words, etymology, and grammar and so on. A medical doctor focuses on menstruation and the causes of endometriosis, causative agents of ectopic pregnancy and so on (Roomey, *ittijahat* 41).

The following method is considered the major method under this trend:

***Manhaj al-Ilmiy At-Tajriybiy*** (Practical Scientific dimension in *Tafsir*)

Qur'an contained so many branches of knowledge, for instance, the knowledge of medicine, engineering, astronomy, psychology, philosophy, etc. (Roomey, *ittijahat* 588). Scholars like *Ghazali*, *Razee*, *Suyooty* among others opined that these treasures should be exposed during commentary of the Qur'an reasoned that they are part of its miracles. While *Shatibiy* and the majority of scholars opposed this view, they insisted that *mufassir* should restrain himself to the explanations of only Allah's commandments (Roomey, *ittijahat* 588).

**Logical Trend *Ittijah Aqliy***

This is a type of *Tafsir* in which a *Mufassir* would only be depending on his intellectualism in interpretation. The pillars of trend according to Roomey (*Ittijahat* 718) are:

- I. A *Mufassir* will depend on his intellect in *Tafsir*
- II. There will be less interpretation through *hadith*
- III. Warning against *taqleed* and objecting it
- IV. Warning against *Tafsir* by using narrative tradition of the Jewish people (Israelite)
- V. Qur'an is the first source of Islam
- VI. Qur'an comprises everything
- VII. Warning against hyperbolism in *Tafsir*
- VIII. Promoting societal values

Examples of works in this trend are;

- I. *Tafsir al-Qur'an Hakim* popularly known as "*Tafsir al-Mannar*" by Muhammad Rashid Ridha
- II. *Tafsiru Juz 'u Tabarak* by Abdul-qadir Mustapha Almaghrabiy
- III. *Tafsir juz 'u Amma* by Muhammad Abduh
- IV. *Tafsiru surat Al-asr* by Muhammad Abduh

### **Literature Trend**

This is a dimension of *Tafsir*, in which a *Mufasssir* focuses on literature, grammar and other linguistic tips contained in the Qur'an. The following works are rested on this trend:

- I. *Majaz al-Qur'an* by Ma'amar bn Ma'an
- II. *Nadhm al-Qur'an* by Jahiz
- III. *I'jazu al-Qur'an* by 13<sup>th</sup> century scholar Baqilaniy

### **Juristic Al-Fiqhiy Trend**

This is a method of *Tafsir* in which a *Mufasssir* focuses in his interpretation on verses that contain legal injunctions. Abu-Bakr Ibn al-Arabiy al-Maliki from *Maliki* school, *Jassas* from *Hanafi* school, *Ilkiya al-Tabaree* from *Shafi'i* school and *Ibn Abi ya'ala* from *Hanbali* wrote different works on *Tafsir* titled "*Ahkam al-Qur'an*" in which each of them interpreted legal verses based on his school of thought (*Khudair web*).

### **Deviants' Trend**

These are people who study Qur'an and exegesis but intentionally failed to interpret the Qur'an based on the correct and right approach rather, they interpret it based on their self-desire *Hawa*. Qadianis trend of *Tafsir* could also be considered, as Fisher observed, under this category, he observes that they are interpreting Qur'anic verses based on their claims, such as the total rejection of the finality of Prophet Muhammad (*Sallallahu alaihi wasallam*) (38).

### **Conclusion**

The work concluded that the importance of Qur'an to Muslims cannot be overemphasized, it is this reality that made them giving particular attention to its *Tafsir*, not only Muslims, the Prophet himself was directed to explain the Qur'an to his followers, this eventually developed into the science of *Tafsir*. It started to be transmitted orally, then it was documented together with *Hadith* before it fully developed into a discipline of its self with methods and trends, the work also highlighted the major trends of *tafsir* with examples of the works under each trend. The paper finds that, there is possibility of the emergence of new trends in *Tafsir*,

due to the different ideologies and creeds some Muslims may hold as time passes. There are emerging trends which are not covered by this work.

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