

## The levels of Tafsīr ul-Qur'ān bi-l-Qur'ān (Interpretation of the Holy Qur'ān by the Qur'ān) in terms of authenticity and non-authenticity

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### Abstract

The first source of the *Tafsīr ul-Qur'ān bi-l-Qur'ān* (interpretation of the Holy Qur'ān by the Qur'ān) is itself Qur'ān. Allah Almighty has clearly stated His commandments in various ways with repetitions at multiple places in the Holy Qur'ān. Allah Almighty sometimes mentions a matter briefly in one place in the Qur'ān and then explains it explicitly in another place. Therefore, when a commentator interpreting it, he should, first of all, explain the Qur'ān with the Qur'ān itself. So gather all the repeated verses related to a particular topic and compare these verses with one another so that what is briefly mentioned in one place can understand with the help of what is described in detail, and the ambiguous can be clarified by the explicit. The *Tafsīr ul-Qur'ān bi-l-Qur'ān* is esteemed by scholars as the highest form of exegesis. But scholars are differ on its absolute acceptance. Some fully endorse it, while others question its complete authenticity due to misuse by misguided sects. Consequently, its authenticity and acceptability cannot be unconditionally accepted or rejected. So, all exegesis of the Qur'ān by the Qur'ān is not equally credible and there are various levels and categories of the *Tafsīr ul-Qur'ān bi-l-Qur'ān* and they are vary in strength and rank. The primary reason for the differing opinions on interpretation of the Qur'ān by the Qur'ān is whether it falls under *Tafsīr bil-Mathūr* (exegesis based on transmitted reports) or *Tafsīr bir-rā'e* (exegesis based on opinion). Determining its category depends on the commentator and the sources that are used to get it. Scholars who view it as *Tafsīr bil-Mathūr* see it as absolutely acceptable, while those who consider it *Tafsīr bir-rā'e* do not fully endorse its authenticity. If the *Tafsīr ul-Qur'ān bi-l-Qur'ān* is explicitly from Allah or issued from the Holy Prophet PBUH or there is consensus on it, then its authenticity. When a *Sahabī* (companion) or *Tabi'i* (Successor) interprets the Qur'ān by the Qur'ān, it holds the same status as the tafsīr of the *Sahabī* and *Tabi'i*. However, if it involves disapproved interpretative opinions driven by personal desires or false beliefs, it is rejected. Acceptable interpretations are those that are free from personal biasedness and supported by valid evidence.

**Keywords:** Tafsīr ul-Qur'ān bi-l-Qur'ān, Interpretation of the Qur'ān by the Qur'ān, levels of tafsīr, Tafsīr bil-Mathūr, Tafsīr bir-rā'e, Authenticity.

## **Introduction**

The one who studies the Qur'ān knows very well that it consists of *ījāz-o-iṭnāb* (conciseness and elaborateness), *ijmāl-o-tabyīn* (summarization and elucidation), *Mutliq-o-Muqyyad* (absolute and restricted) and *khāṣ-o-'Aām* (specific and general). What is described briefly at one place, is presented in detail at another place in the Qur'ān. What is not clear in one place, we find its explanation at another place. What is absolute from one aspect, has been restricted from the other aspect. The ruling that is general in one verse, has been specified in another verse. All of this, is *Tafsīr ul-Qur'ān bi-l-Qur'ān*<sup>1</sup> (the interpretation of the Holy Qur'ān by the Qur'ān).

Through the study of the books on *Tafsīr*, *Usūl-e-Tafsīr* (principles of exegesis) and the '*Ulūm ul-Qur'ān* (the sciences of the Qur'ān), it becomes apparent that the commentators of the Qur'ān practically performed their interpretive services according to this type of Interpretation of the Qur'ān.

So *Tafsīr ul-Qur'ān bi-l-Qur'ān* has been recognized by the scholars as the most correct, the best, authentic and the highest form of exegesis. But despite its excellence and its precedence over all types of interpretation, there is a difference of opinion among the scholars regarding its absolute acceptance or rejection. Some scholars acknowledged its acceptance absolutely, while some scholars have denied its complete authenticity and absolute acceptance. Therefore, we cannot accept its authenticity and acceptance unconditionally, nor we can reject the possibility of its authenticity and acceptance entirely. Because the misguided sects have also deviated in their interpretations through this type of interpretation of the Qur'ān. Thus, its authenticity and acceptability cannot be absolutely accepted or rejected. Consequently different forms of *Tafsīr ul-Qur'ān bi-l-Qur'ān* are not regarded equal in its strength and rank.

As *Musā 'Īd al-Ṭayyār* writes:

” إِنَّ الْقُرْآنَ مَصْدَرُ مَهْمٌ مِنْ مَصَادِرِ التَّفْسِيرِ، وَلَا يَقْبَلُ التَّفْسِيرُ لِمَجْرَدِ كَوْنِهِ تَفْسِيرَ قُرْآنٍ  
بِقُرْآنٍ، بَلْ لاعتبارٍ أكر؛ كَانَ يَكُونُ مِنْ تَفْسِيرِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، أَوْ مِمَّا لَا يُمْكِنُ الاختلافُ  
فِي كَوْنِهِ مفسِّراً بِقُرْآنٍ، أَوْ مِمَّا يَكُونُ مجمَعاً عَلَيْهِ، أَوْ بِالنَّظَرِ إِلَى عُلُوِّ مَرْتَبَةِ، أَوْ غَيْرِهَا مِنَ الْقُرَائِنِ  
الَّتِي تَدُلُّ عَلَى صِحَّةِ التَّفْسِيرِ بِهِ ”<sup>2</sup>.

No doubt the Qur'ān is one of the most important sources of interpretation. However, it will not be accepted merely on the basis that it is an interpretation of the Qur'ān by the Qur'ān. Instead, its credibility is established because if this interpretation is derived from the Holy Prophet peace be upon him, or it is an interpretation of the Qur'ān by the Qur'ān itself in such a way that there is no possibility of any difference regarding it being *Tafsīr ul-Qur'ān bi-l-Qur'ān*, or if there is consensus on it, or if such an interpretation will also be acceptable after careful consideration and reflection with a highly ranked *Mufasssir*

(exegete) and scholar, or there are convincing evidences that attest the correctness, authenticity and health of this exegesis.

The *Tafsīr ul-Qur'ān bi-l-Qur'ān* that comes from a renowned and trusted *Mufasssir*, such an interpretation will hold the highest level of *ijtihād*<sup>3</sup> due to the exegete. Therefore the exegesis from Ummar Ibn Khattab A.S. will be stronger than the *Tābi īn*<sup>4</sup> (successors of the companions) who came after him<sup>5</sup>.

In terms of strength, clarity and distance and proximity, the level of all *Tafsīr ul-Qur'ān bi-l-Qur'ān* is not same; rather, variations are found among them in its ranks, grades or degrees. So, regarding credibility and non-credibility, there are various levels and categories of *Tafsīr ul-Qur'ān bi-l-Qur'ān*, which are as follows:

### First level

The Qur'ān itself is the first and foremost source of the *Tafsīr ul-Qur'ān bi-l-Qur'ān*. Allah Almighty repeatedly explains His orders in the Qur'ān in different ways. As Allah says:

اللَّهُ نَزَّلَ أَحْسَنَ الْحَدِيثِ كِتَابًا مُتَشَابِهًا مَثَانِي<sup>6</sup>

“Allah has sent down a very good discourse, which is a book that is similar to each other and has been repeated over and over again”.

He also said:

وَلَقَدْ صَرَّفْنَا فِي هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ لِيَذَّكَّرُوا<sup>7</sup>

“And We have explained it in different ways in this Qur'ān so that (it) can be understood well.”

It is not permissible for anyone to ignore the Qur'ān as a basic source of interpretation of the

Qur'ān, because the master of the word (Allah) possesses the greatest understanding of His words as compare to anyone else.

It is necessary that anyone who wants to interpret the Qur'ān, first of all should study the Qur'ān itself and the understanding of Allah's meaning should be derived from the Qur'ān first.

It is needed that such an interpretation is so clear and explicit in the Qur'ān that remains no chance of any form of dispute and disagreement among scholars about its being a definite interpretation of the Qur'ān by the Qur'ān. Moreover it does not require deep contemplation and reflection to understand its meaning. This form of *tafsīr* of the Qur'ān is the foremost and highest form of *Tafsīr ul-Qur'ān bi-l-Qur'ān* and it is called *Tafsīr ul-Qur'ān lil-Qur'ān* (interpretation of the Qur'ān for the Qur'ān).

Such an explanation sometimes occurs immediately after a verse and sometimes separately at another place in the Qur'ān. So it can be categorized into two types:

- Biyān-i Muttaṣil (Connected Statement)
- Biyān-i Munfaṣil (Separate Statement)

### Biyān-i Muttaṣil (Connected Statement)

When *Tafsīr ul-Qur'ān bi-l-Qur'ān* is connected, it may take various forms. One form is that it occurs in the manner of question and answer.

As Allāh says:

وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا يَوْمَ الدِّينِ ثُمَّ مَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا يَوْمَ الدِّينِ يَوْمَ لَا تَمْلِكُ نَفْسٌ لِنَفْسٍ شَيْئًا  
وَالْأَمْرُ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلَّهِ<sup>8</sup>

“And what do you know then what do you know about the day of justice? The day when no one will be able to do anything for anyone and that day will be the command of Allāh”.

In this verses, firstly Allāh mentioned, “*Yawmu al-ddīn*” and then in the same verse, a question asked about the Day - what is this day? And then an explanation of “*Yawmu al-ddīn*” was given that it is the day when nobody will have the power to help anyone, and it will be solely under Allāh's decree.

Another example of this type of explanation is that Allāh says:

كَأَلَّا لَيَنْبُذَنَّ فِي الْحُطَمَةِ - وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا الْحُطَمَةُ - نَارُ اللَّهِ الْمُوقَدَةُ<sup>9</sup>

“No way, he will definitely be thrown into the ruins, and do you know what the ruins are, it is the fire ignited by Allāh”.

In this verse, the “*Al-ḥuṭamah*” is mentioned first and in the very next verse, it is explained what is meant by “*Al-ḥuṭamah*”.

### Biyān-i Munfaṣil (Separate Statement)

Another type of *Tafsīr ul-Qur'ān lil-Qur'ān* is that sometimes the explanation of a verse is presented separately at another place in the Holy Qur'ān. As Allāh Almighty says:

إِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ - صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ<sup>10</sup>

“Show us the straight path, the path of those on whom You have rewarded, nor on whom Your wrath has descended, nor have they gone astray.”

In this verse, it is not mentioned who are the people upon whom Allāh's favor has been bestowed. But in *Sūrah al-Nisā'*, the matter is explicitly explained by identifying those upon whom Allāh's blessings have descended. The Qur'ān says:

فَأُولَئِكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ وَالصِّدِّيقِينَ وَالشُّهَدَاءِ وَالصَّالِحِينَ<sup>11</sup>

“Those whom Allāh has rewarded are the Prophet, the truthful, the martyr, and the righteous.”

### Second level

The second level of *Tafsīr ul-Qur'ān bi-l-Qur'ān* is that the Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him explained a certain verse by using another verse from the Qur'ān. As it is narrated from *Ḥaẓrat Abdullah* that:

لما نزلت هذه الآية ﴿الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَمْ يَلْبِسُوا إِيمَانَهُمْ بِظُلْمٍ﴾ شق ذلك على اصحاب النبي ﷺ و قالوا: أينالم يلبس إيمانه بظلم؟ فقال رسول ﷺ: انه ليس بذلك، الا تسمعون الى قول لقمان: ﴿ان الشرك لظلم عظيم﴾ (لقمان:13)<sup>12</sup>.

"When this verse ﴿الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَمْ يَلْبِسُوا إِيمَانَهُمْ بِظُلْمٍ﴾ was revealed, the Companions became distressed because they assumed that if, after embracing faith, any kind of mistake, sin, or injustice is committed, then according to this verse, on the Day of Judgment, they would be deprived of peace. They inquired from the Holy Prophet PBUH who amongst them had not committed any injustice. So the Holy Prophet PBUH clarified this by explaining it with a verse from *Sūrah Luqmān*, that it refers to associating partners with Allah (*shirk*)."

### Third level

The third grade of *Tafsīr ul-Qur'ān bi-l-Qur'ān* is that when a *Ṣhābī*<sup>13</sup> (companion of the Holy Prophet PBUH) interprets one verse with another verse, and there is no contradictory statement or narration by another *Ṣhābī*. Undoubtedly, the consensus of the *Ṣhābah* is acceptable. When a *Ṣhābī* interprets the Qur'ān by the Qur'ān, the criteria of acceptance and validity is the same as for the exegesis of a *Ṣhābī* who interprets the Qur'ān according to another principle of interpretation.

When an exegete is among from the senior *Ṣhābah* and *Tābi'īn* and he interpret the Qur'ān by the Qur'ān, scholars referred this type of interpretations as the "*Ablagh al-tafsīr*" (the most comprehensive exegeses). As *Imām Musā'id al-Tayyār* writes:

" أن تفسير القرآن بالقرآن يكون أبلغ التفاسير إذا كان المفسر به من كبار المفسرين من الصحابة ومن بعدهم من التابعين - "14 -

Interpreting the Qur'ān by the Qur'ān itself is the most eloquent form of exegesis, provided the interpreter is one of the senior exegetes from among the Companions and those who followed them (*Tābi'īn*).

There are numerous examples of *Tafsīr ul-Qur'ān bi-l-Qur'ān* from the *Ṣhābah* and *Tābi'īn* in "*Tafsīr al-Tabarī*". As Allah says:

وَالسَّقْفِ الْمَرْفُوعِ<sup>15</sup>

"And by the roof raised high"

*Imām Tabrī* narrated the tradition of *Ḥaẓrat 'lī* that *Ḥaẓrat 'lī* interpreted ﴿وَالسَّقْفِ الْمَرْفُوعِ﴾ (*Al-Twr* 52:5) as "heaven" and provided evidence for this interpretation by referencing another verse from *Sūrah Al-Anbīyā* سَقَفًا ﴿(Al-Anbīyā 21:32)﴾.<sup>16</sup>

Another example of this category is that as it is narrated in *Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī*:

"سألت مجاهدا عن سجدة في ص؟ فقال: سألت ابن عباس من أين سجدت؟ فقال: أو ما تقرا ﴿وَمَنْ ذَرِيَّتَهُ دَاوُدَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ﴾-----ولئك الذين هدى الله فبهداهم اقتده ﴿، فكان داود ممن امر نبيكم صلى الله عليه وسلم ان يقتدي به، فسجدها داود عليه السلام، فسجدها رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم" -<sup>17</sup>

*Mujāhid* was asked about *Sajdah* (prostration) in *Sūra Ṣ* and he said that he had inquired from *Ibn-i 'abbās* may Allah be pleased with them both, that what is the evidence for the *Sajdah* in *Sūra Ṣ*? *Ḥaẓrat Ibn-i 'abbās* replied, "Do you not read: ﴿وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِهِ دَاوُدَ﴾ (Al-An'am 6:84-90). *Ḥaẓrat Dāwūd* was also among those noble prophets whose obedience was commanded to the Holy Prophet Muhammad PBUH. *Ḥaẓrat Dāwūd* prostrated upon it, therefore Holy Prophet Muhammad PBUH also prostrated upon it.

*Ḥaẓrat Ibn-i 'abbās* used to prostrate on this verse. So *Ḥaẓrat Ibn-i 'abbās* explained a verse with another verse. In the first verse, the prostration of *Ḥaẓrat Dāwūd* is mentioned and in other verses, it is commanded to follow all the prophets. Therefore, it is certified to perform prostration upon reciting the verse of *Sūra Ṣ* as well.

Another example of this level is that *Qatādah* explained the "Muttaqīn" mentioned in the verse ﴿هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ﴾ (Al-Baqarah 2:2) by referring to another verse: ﴿الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ-وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ مِنْ﴾ (Al-Baqarah 2:3,4).<sup>18</sup>

*Qatādah* here described coherent *Tafsīr ul-Qur'ān bi-l-Qur'ān*. He clarified a verse with another verse which is aligned with the verse. This is undoubtedly a clear form of *Tafsīr ul-Qur'ān bi-l-Qur'ān*.

#### Fourth level

The fourth level of *Tafsīr ul-Qur'ān bi-l-Qur'ān* refers to an explanation of one verse through another verse, upon which there is a consensus among the scholars of Muslim *Ummah* (community). The repeated stories of the Prophets and the events of previous nations are the best examples of this level. For instance the story of *Ḥaẓrat Ādam* and cursed *Iblīs*, and the story of *Ḥaẓrat Mūsā* and Pharaoh are repeatedly mentioned in the Holy Qur'ān.

The *mufassarīn* (exegetes) often interpret the events of the stories of the prophets and previous nations by combining and correlating the verses which are dispersed throughout the Qur'ān at different places. There is no disagreement has been narrated among reputable scholar about such interpretations.

#### Fifth level

The fifth level of *Tafsīr ul-Qur'ān bi-l-Qur'ān* involves that an exegete interprets one verse with another verse based on his personal opinion, *istanbāʿ*<sup>19</sup> and *ijtihād*.<sup>20</sup>

Since such an interpretation of the Qur'ān by the Qur'ān is based on personal reasoning and *ijtihād*, so there is a possibility of both its accuracy and inaccuracy. For example, Allah says:

وَالْمُطَلَّقَاتُ يَتَرَبَّصْنَ بِأَنْفُسِهِنَّ ثَلَاثَةَ قُرُوءٍ<sup>21</sup>

“And divorced women shall keep themselves waiting for three menstrual periods”

There is a difference of opinion in the interpretation of “*Qurū'in*”. Some scholars interpret “*Qurū'in*” to mean “menstruation”, while others taken its meaning as *ṭuhār* (purification).

As *Imām Shinqīṭī* interpret “*Qurū'in*” as purification with the reference of another verse ﴿فَطَلِّقُوهُمْ لِعَدَّتِهِمْ﴾ (Aṭ-Ṭalaq 65:1). “Divorce them at their prescribed periods”. He said that in this context, according to the prophetic tradition, the term ‘*iddat*’ (Iddah) refers to the period of purification. Therefore, it is proved that the desired period or number of “*thalāthata qurū'in*” (three periods) is in terms of purification.<sup>22</sup> However for the acceptance of this type of interpretation, careful consideration is necessary.

### Sixth level

On the sixth level of *Tafsīr ul-Qur'ān bi-l-Qur'ān*, is the interpretation that is against the *hadith* of the Holy Prophet PBUH, the sayings of the Companions or the consensus of the *Ummah*. In this case, the principle of interpretation is correct, but its application is wrong. Such *Tafsīr ul-Qur'ān bi-l-Qur'ān* is definitely invalid and rejected. *Ahl al-Bid'ah*<sup>23</sup> and mislead sects used *Tafsīr ul-Qur'ān bi-l-Qur'ān* to prove their false beliefs. From *Mu'tazilah* (a rationalist and misguided sect) to modern rationalist movements, many *Mu'tazilah* and other similar sects have misused this principle and presented such inaccurate and false interpretations.

For example, the *Tafsīr* of *Ghulām Ahmad Parvez* “*Mtālib ul-Furqān, Qur'ān Majīd kī Tafsīr khūd Qur'ān Majīd se*” is the best example of such type of exegeses. As the title itself suggests “*Tafsīr of the Qur'ān by the Qur'ān itself*”. In this *Tafsīr*, there are many examples of misuse of the principle of *Tafsīr ul-Qur'ān bi-l-Qur'ān*.

The scholars present this verse ﴿وَجُودٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ نَّاصِرَةٌ. إِلَىٰ رَبِّهَا نَاظِرَةٌ﴾ (Al-Qiyamah 75:22, 23) as evidence to seeing the Allah Almighty on the Day of Judgment. But *Mu'tazilah* has denied it. So they made this verse ﴿إِلَىٰ رَبِّهَا نَاظِرَةٌ﴾ (Al-Qiyamah 75:23) a proof of negation of seeing Allah. According to their opinion, there is a suspicion in ﴿إِلَىٰ رَبِّهَا نَاظِرَةٌ﴾, so the matter of seeing Allah will be returned to this verse ﴿لَا تُدْرِكُهُ الْبَصَرُ وَهُوَ يُدْرِكُ الْبَاصِرَ﴾ (Al-An'am 6:103). In this way, the *Mu'tazilah* have used the principle of *Tafsīr ul-Qur'ān bi-l-Qur'ān* to deny the belief of seeing the Allah Almighty on the Day of Judgment.

Another example of it is that as the Allah has described the limit of punishment for theft in the Qur'ān as “cutting off the hand”. Allah says:

وَالسَّارِقُ وَالسَّارِقَةُ فَاقْطَعُوا أَيْدِيَهُمَا<sup>24</sup>

“And as for the thief, whether male or female, cut off their hands”

But *Ghulām Ahmad Parvez* misinterpreted the *Hadd-i sarqah* (punishment for theft) and said that “Cutting the hand does not mean cutting off the hand completely and throwing it away, but it means injuring the hands”. He supported this meaning with a verse: ﴿فَلَمَّا رَأَيْنَهُ أَكْبَرْنَهُ وَقَطَّعْنَ أَيْدِيَهُنَّ﴾ (Yūsaf 12:31) by using the principle of *Tafsīr ul-Qur'ān bi-l-Qur'ān*.<sup>25</sup>

However, the meaning of *qaṭ'-'iyad*, (cutting of hand) in this verse implying “to injure the hand”, is linguistically and contextually wrong. In this verse of *Sūrah Yūsaf*, the words that have come to cut the hand, are not related to the *af'āl* of *thlāthī mujarrad*<sup>26</sup> but to the *bāb-i taf'īl*<sup>27</sup> of *thalāthī mazīd fih*<sup>28</sup>. That is, instead of *qata'na* ﴿قَطَّعْنَ﴾, the verb *qaṭṭa'na* ﴿قَطَّعْنَ﴾ (with *tashdīd of t*) has come and showing more intensity and severity. So, from this point of view, instead of “injuring the hand”, “cutting off the hand” is the correct translation of the sentence. Because the meaning of “cutting off the hand” includes the meaning of “injuring the hand”, but the meaning of “injuring the hand” does not include the meaning of “cutting off the hand”.<sup>29</sup>

Similarly, another example of false interpretation of the Qur'ān by the Qur'ān is that *Ghulām Ahmad Parvez* and *Muhammad 'lī Lāhori* have denied that *Ḥaẓrat Ādam* was the first human being and father of human beings. According to them, after the creation of mankind, *Ḥaẓrat Ādam* was a member of an important tribe. To support this belief, they argue that wherever in the Holy Qur'ān, it is mentioned to prostrate to *Ādam* and misguiding humans from *Iblīs* to take revenge, the plural forms have been used to describe it. To prove this belief, they use *Tafsīr ul-Qur'ān bi-l-Qur'ān* and present the following verses as evidence. Allah says:

قَالَ رَبِّ بِمَا أَغْوَيْتَنِي لَأُزَيِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَأُغْوِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ<sup>30</sup> -

“Said O my Lord! As you have led me astray, surely I will show them on earth their sins and will lead them astray.”

ثُمَّ لَا يَجِيئُهُمْ مِنْ بَيْنِ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ وَعَنْ أَيْمَانِهِمْ وَعَنْ شَمَائِلِهِمْ<sup>31</sup>

“Then I will come to them, before them, behind them, from their right and from their left, and you will not find most of them grateful.”

In these verses “*Hum*” ﴿هُمْ﴾ is a plural pronoun and it refers to all human beings.

In addition, it is proved from the word “*Ajma'in*” ﴿أَجْمَعِينَ﴾ that it is not only the story of *Ḥaẓrat Ādam* and Eve, but it refers to the story of all human beings. In the same way, Allah says: ﴿وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَاكُمْ ثُمَّ

﴿وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَاكُمْ ثُمَّ صَوَّرْنَاكُمْ ثُمَّ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَكِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ﴾ (Al-Araaj, 7:11) “And Rahm created you, then made your forms, then ordered the angels to prostrate themselves to Adam”. From this verse, *Ghulām Ahmad Parvez* has argued that since the creation of humans is mentioned before the mention of *Ḥaẓrat Ādam*, it indicates that humans were created before the creation of *Ādam*. Therefore, *Ḥaẓrat Ādam* was neither the



“*Awwal-ul-Bashar*” (first human) nor the “*Abū al-Bashar*” (father of all humans)<sup>32</sup>

Allah says:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ أَصْطَفَىٰ آدَمَ وَنُوحًا وَآلَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَآلَ عِمْرَانَ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ ذُرِّيَّةً بَعْضُهَا مِنْ بَعْضٍ<sup>33</sup>

“Indeed, Allah loved *Ādam* and *Nūḥ* and the children of Abraham and the children of Imran from all the worlds, who are one.

Others had children”.

*Ghulām Ahmad Parvez* writes in the explanation of this verse that because of the mention of the word *Ādam* in this verse with *Ḥaẓrat Nūḥ*, it is generally argued that *Ādam* is also a prophet, but this argument is not correct because Allah Almighty said.

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلٰئِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً<sup>34</sup> (البقرة: ٣٠:٢) -

“When your Lord said to the angels, ‘Indeed I am going to set a viceroy on the earth,’”

Secondly, in the Qur’ān, the word “*aṣṭafā*” is also used for non-prophets. In this verse also, the word “*aṣṭafā*” was used for both ‘*āla ‘ibrāhīm*’ (the family of Abraham) and ‘*āla ‘imrān*’ (the family of Imran), and not everyone from the family of Ibrahim and Imran was a prophet, even Imran's name is not mentioned among the prophets. Rather, in one place the mother of *Ḥaẓrat Maryam* ﴿إِذْ قَالَتْ﴾ (Al-Tahreem, 66:12), *Ḥaẓrat Maryam* was mentioned as the daughter of ‘*imrān*’, so this verse describes different eras instead of different prophets.<sup>35</sup>

In these two examples, *Parvez* explained the false interpretation of the Qur’ānic verses through interpretation of the Qur’ān with the Qur’ān. In the previous example, he has denied the status of *Ḥaẓrat Ādam* as the “*Awwal al-Bashar*” (the first human being) and “*Abu al-Bashr*” (the father of human being) and in this example, he has denied the prophet hood of *Ḥaẓrat Ādam*. Here *Parvez* gave a wrong interpretation with his opinion.

## Conclusion

There is a difference of opinion among the scholars regarding the interpretation of the Qur’ān by the Qur’ān. Although the ancient and later scholars have recognized it as the best, comprehensive and the most correct type of interpretation, but as far as its authenticity is concerned, *Tafsīr ul-Qur’ān bi-l-Qur’ān* has neither been absolutely accepted nor rejected. The key reason for this difference is whether it is related to *Tafsīr bil-Mathūr* or *Tafsīr bir-rā’e*. Most of the scholars have considered it as the type of *Tafsīr bil-Mathūr*, but some scholars have pondered over recognizing it as the type of *Tafsīr bil-Mathūr*. In order to determine whether *Tafsīr ul-Qur’ān bi-l-Qur’ān* is related to *Tafsīr bil-Mathūr* or *Tafsīr bir-rā’e*, it depends on the commentator and the sources from which the interpretation of the Qur’ān with the Qur’ān is received. There are two basic methods to obtain *Tafsīr ul-Qur’ān bi-l-Qur’ān*. The first way is revelation that is the interpretation which Allah Almighty himself has

explained in the Holy Qur'ān. However, for this interpretation to be valid, it must be so explicit that there is no room for any disagreement, opinion or *ijtihad*. Apart from this, the sayings of the Holy Prophet PBUH also fall under the category of revelation according to the following sayings of Allah:

وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحَىٰ<sup>36</sup>

Another way to get *Tafsīr ul-Qur'ān bi-l-Qur'ān* is opinion and *ijtihad*. Since apart from the Prophet, the *Ṣaḥāba*, the *Tābi'īn* and the followers of the *Tābi'īn* and then the scholars who came after them organized the interpretation in this way, so when a *Ṣaḥabī* or a *Tabi'i* interprets the Qur'ān by the Qur'ān, it has the same ruling as the *Tafsīr* of the *Sahabi* and the *Tabi'i*.

In fact, *Tafsīr ul-Qur'ān bi-l-Qur'ān* is related to both *Tafsīr bil-Mathūr* and *Tafsīr bir-rā'e*. That's why there is a difference in its authenticity. Since interpretation of the Qur'ān with the Qur'ān cannot be called absolute *Tafsīr bil-Mathūr* or *Tafsīr bir-rā'e*, therefore its authority is also not absolutely accepted. The scholars who have included *Tafsīr ul-Qur'ān bi-l-Qur'ān* in *Tafsīr bil-Mathūr*, they consider it absolutely acceptable. The scholars who considered it as *Tafsīr bir-rā'e* are not convinced of its absolute authenticity.

If the interpretation of the Qur'ān with the Qur'ān is itself in the Qur'ān from Allah Almighty in such a way that no disagreement is possible in it, or if the interpretation of the Qur'ān with the Qur'ān is issued by the Prophet peace be upon him, or if there is consensus on it, then its authority will be absolute.

However, if the interpretation of the Qur'ān by the Qur'ān falls under the category of disapproved interpretative opinion, where some verses are interpreted with the help of some other verses to follow personal desires, establish corrupt and false beliefs, or support innovations, then such interpretation is categorically rejected.

But the *Tafsīr ul-Qur'ān bi-l-Qur'ān* which, although is related to the interpretation of the opinion, but that opinion is free from following personal desires and the affirmation of false beliefs and if the commentator is of high status or there are such rules and evidences, which indicate its validity and correctness, then such an interpretation will be acceptable after consideration.



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## References

<sup>1</sup> This term will be used frequently in this article. It is translated here. However, henceforth this term will not be translated and will be used in transliteration.

<sup>2</sup> Al-Ṭayyār, Musā 'Īd bin sulaiman bin nasir, *Maḥmūd ul altafsir wa al-Ta'wil wa al-Istinbāt wa al-Tadabbur wa al-Mufasssir*, Dar Ibn al-Jawzi, al-Riyad, 1427AH, P. 35.

<sup>3</sup> It involves a qualified scholar using their intellectual and analytical skills to find solutions to new religious issues based on the Qur'an, Sunnah, consensus, and analogy, especially when there is no clear ruling in these sources.

<sup>4</sup> This term will be used frequently in this article. It is translated here. However, henceforth this term will not be translated and will be used in transliteration.

<sup>5</sup> Al-Ṭayyār, Musā 'Īd bin sulaiman bin nasir, Maqalat fi 'Ulum al- Qur'ān wa Usul al-Tafsir, Dār al-Muḥaddith, Tafsir Shabakat al-Tafsir wa al-Ḥirasāt al-Qur'āniyah, al-Riyād, 1425 AH, P. 136.

<sup>6</sup> Al-Zumar, 39:23

<sup>7</sup> Al-Isra', 17:41

<sup>8</sup> Al-Infitar, 17:19

<sup>9</sup> Al-Humazah, 104: 4-6

<sup>10</sup> Al-Fatiha, 1:6,7

<sup>11</sup> Al-Nisa, 6:69

<sup>12</sup> Al-Bukhārī, Muḥammad bin Ismā'īl, al-Jāmi' al-Musnad al-Ṣaḥīḥ al-Mukhtaṣar min Umūr Rasūl Allāh ṣallā Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallam wa Sunanihi wa Ayyāmihi, Dār Ibn Kathīr, Dimashq, Bayrūt, 1423 AH - 2002. Kitāb: Istitabat al-Murtaddin wa al-'Anadīn wa Qitalihim, Bab: Ithm min Ashraka billahi wa 'Uqubatihi fi al-Dunya wa al-Akhirah, Hadith: 6918, P. 1711.

<sup>13</sup> This term will be used frequently in this article. It is translated here. However, henceforth this term will not be translated and will be used in transliteration.

<sup>14</sup> Al-Ṭayyār, Musā'id bin Sulaymān, Maqālāt fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān wa Uṣūl al-Tafsīr, p. 137.

<sup>15</sup> Al-Twr 52:5

<sup>16</sup> Al-Tibri, Jam'ualbiyan, 21/567

<sup>17</sup> Al-Bukhari, Al-Jam' Al-ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhari, kitāb: Tafsīr ul-Qur'ān, Bab: Wa inna Yūnusa lamina al-mursālīna, Hadith:4807, p. 209.

<sup>18</sup> Ibn Kathīr, Ismā'īl bin 'Umar, Abū al-Fidā' (m 774 H), Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Azīm, taḥqīq: Sāmī bin Muḥammad al-Salāmah, Dār al-Ṭayyibah lil-Nashr wa al-Tawzī', al-Riyād, al-Sa'ūdiyyah al-'Arabiyyah, 1420 H/1999, 1/239.

<sup>19</sup> Ratiocination/scholarly reasoning

<sup>20</sup> Effort of legal reasoning by independent interpretation of the legal sources, the Qur'an and the Sunnah to deduce the law.

<sup>21</sup> Al-Baqarah 2:228

<sup>22</sup> Al-Shinqīṭī, Muḥammad al-Amīn bin Muḥammad al-Mukhtār, al-Jakanī (m 1393 H), Aḍwā' al-Bayān fī 'Idāḥ al-Qur'ān bil-Qur'ān, ishrāf: Bakr bin 'Abd Allāh Abū Zayd, Dār 'Ālam al-Fawā'id, Makkah al-Mukarramah, al-Ṭab'ah al-Ūlā, 1426 H. 1/178.

<sup>23</sup> This term refers to those who introduce or adhere to innovations in religious practices that are not supported by the foundational sources of Islam (Qur'an and Sunnah).

<sup>24</sup> Al-Ma'idah 5:38

<sup>25</sup> Qāsimī, Muḥammad Dīn, Dāktar, Tafsīr Maṭālib al-Furqān kā 'Ilmī wa Taḥqīqī Jā'izah, Idārah Ma'arif-e-Islāmī, Manṣūrah, Lāhaur, Ishā'at Awwal, 2009, 2/256.

<sup>26</sup> “*Thlāthī mujarrad*” is an Arabic syntactic term. “*Thlāthī*” means three and “*mujarrad*” means empty or without addition. It describes three-letter root words in their basic form, containing only the three original letters without any additional letters. “*Af'āl of thlāthī mujarrad*” refers to a specific pattern of triliteral (three-letter) root verbs that are considered basic or simple in their form. In this pattern, the verbs are not modified with additional letters.

<sup>27</sup> It is an Arabic grammatical term that used to derive different additional meanings from trilateral (three-letter root) verbs. In this form, extra letters are added to the three root letters of the verb to bring it into a specific pattern.

<sup>28</sup> It is an Arabic syntactic term that refers to words or verbs that are formed by adding extra letters to the basic three-letter (*thulāthī mujarrad*) root. This process expands, alters, or clarifies the original meaning of the verb.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, 2/257,258

<sup>30</sup> Al-Hajr, 39:15

<sup>31</sup> Al-Araf, 7:17

<sup>32</sup> Qāsimī, Muḥammad Dīn, Dāktar, Tafsīr Maṭālib al-Furqān kā 'Ilmī wa Taḥqīqī Jā'izah, 2/25,26

<sup>33</sup> Āli 'imran, 3:32, 33

<sup>34</sup> Al-Baqarah,2:3

<sup>35</sup> Parvez, Ghulām Aḥmad, Maṭālib al-Furqān, Idārah Ṭulū'-e-Islām, Lāhaur, s.n., p. 65, 64.

<sup>36</sup> An-Najm,53:3,4