

MODERNITY IN THE TAFSĪR OF THE QUR'AN: CLAIMS AND ERRORS

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Abstract

Treating early modern and contemporary exegesis of the Qur'ān as a distinct subject implies that there are characteristics by which this exegesis differs noticeably from that of the previous times. The assumption of such characteristics, however, is by no means equally correct for all attempts at interpreting passages of the Qur'ān in the books and articles of Muslim authors of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and even where such an assumption holds true, those authors, to certain extent, have deviated significantly from traditional patterns and approaches. Many Qur'ān commentaries of this time differ from older ones in the methods applied and the kinds of explanations given. The majority of the authors of such commentaries seldom made use of classical sources like al-Zamakhsharī (d. 538/1144), Fakhr 'l-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1210) and Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1373) in determining the proper meaning of lexical items and even the context in which verses were revealed. One should thus always bear in mind that in the exegesis of the Qur'ān there is a broad current of unbroken tradition continuing to this day. The majority of the new approaches to exegesis have so far been developed in the Arab and Islamic countries and particularly in Egypt and India. When mentioning content, it should be said, first of all, that new ideas about the meaning of the qur'ānic text emerged largely in answer to new questions which arose from the political, social and cultural changes brought about in Muslim societies by the impact of western civilization. Of particular importance among these were two problems: the compatibility of the qur'ānic world view with the findings of modern science and the question of an appropriate political and social order based on qur'ānic principles which would enable Muslims to throw off the yoke of western dominance. For this purpose the qur'ānic message had to be interpreted so as to allow Muslims either to assimilate western models successfully or to work out alternatives believed to be superior to them. These approaches were usually based on a new understanding of the nature of divine revelation and its mode of action in general, couple with the insinuations from certain quarters that the aims of the proponent of this assumed modernity include refutation of some content of traditional tafsīr and its laid down principles through rejecting of authentic traditions that expound such verses. The aim of this paper is to make an enquiry into this type of tafsīr and the claims of the antagonists of modernity in the tafsīr scholarship in attempt to ascertain the extent of deviation or otherwise of modernity in the Quranic exegesis. It is observed that the both parties are not far from reality. As the Qur'ān was not revealed for the understanding of only one generation of people, total alienation from the past in this area of study would be also impossible.

Key Words: Modernity, Exegesis, Qur'ān, Claims, Errors,

Introduction

There are insinuations from certain quarters that the objectives of modernity could be termed as an attempt repudiate the significance of traditional *tafsīr* and its principles, through rejection of authentic Hadith that expound those verses that have no theological importance, with the claim of it being concerning with political and mundane affairs.

The sources of modernity in this area of study could be traced to the superstitions of the Mu'tazilites, the method and theory of the Greek philosophers, humanists, colonialism and the orientalists. It was believed that modernity could include imitating of the western views of the cosmos, methods and approach in writing and thinking. Most of the pioneers of modernity were happened to have followed the method of the orientalists in ostensibly for freedom of expression and research which led some of them to extremism.

This phenomenon has evolved into societies, schools, organizations and individuals that are calling for the renewal of religious views, opinions and thinking. It has also led to waging war against religious authentic sources based on what they considered as exposure, through their studies in the West, and based on their mode of life. This group also supports the West in whatever is said of the East and its way of thinking mainly on socio-religious and political issues. This paper is a combination of the view of the modernists in the Islamic world the modern trend in the *tafsīr* of the Qur'an and the opinion of those who disagree with them. It is observed that the modernists would be right to some extent in some of their views while opinions of the opponents of modernity are not always proved to be sounder.

Modernity in Focus

Modernity basically refers to post-traditional, post-medieval historical period that started by the move from feudalism to agrarianism towards capitalism, industrialization secularism, rationalism, the nation state and its constituent institutions and other forms of surveillance. (Barker 2005. 444.

According to Charles Baudelaire, Modernity is the fleeting ephemeral experience of life in an urban metropolis and the responsibility that has to capture that experience. In concept, modernity is considered as the modern era and modernism with some distinct feature between the two. It also refers to the social relations associated with the rise of capitalism. Modernity may also refer to tendencies in intellectual culture especially the movements attached to secularism and post industrial life which include: Marxism, existentialism, and the former establishment of social sciences, associated with cultural movements of fifteen to eighteen centuries and up to the late twenty first century. (Toulmin 1992, 3-5). Modernity is typically defined as post-traditional and medieval historical period. (Heidigger 1938, 66-7).

Modernity thus denotes the renunciation of the recent past, favoring a new beginning, and re-interpretation of historical origin. It could also be likened to the word, model, in its apparent connotation as it could also be construed as the fashion of societies, cultures and civilizations, which is always brought up to date, through the force of the time of a new refashion.

Historically modernity is believed to have emerged sometimes in the fifteenth century precisely with the invention of the printing press. Marshall Berman (1982) opines that modernity evolved in three general phases: i.e early modernity from 1500-1789; classical modernity from 1789-1900; and late modernity from 1900-1989.

The central motive of modernity is emancipation from the yoke of religion, specifically the hegemony of Christianity and the consequent secularization. Modernity or modern thought repudiates the Judaism and Christianity beliefs in the Biblical God and considers it as mere relic of superstition of the old ages. (Fackenheim 1957, 272-73). It started with Descartes revolutionary methodic doubt which transformed the concept of truth in the concept of certainty, whose only guarantor is no longer God or the church but Man's subjective judgment. (Alexander 1931,484-5).

Theologians have been worried however, that modernity which is Western in orientation has brought the world to no longer been well disposed towards Christianity. (Kiblt, 2004, 262; Davis, 2004, 133; Cassirer 1944, 13-14). Modernity in this way aimed at a progressive force promising to liberate human being from ignorance and irrationality. (Rusenau, 1992, 5). The latter view is in consonance with our area of study as modernity in the Quranic exegesis is considered as an impact of the concept of revelation in the West on the modernists in the Islamic world.

Quranic Exegesis *tafsīr* Meaning and Dimension

Tafsīr means the art of interpreting, interpretation, exegesis, explanation. It also connotes an actual commentary on the Qur'ān. The term is used for commentaries on scientific or philosophical works, being in this last case equivalent to *sharḥ*, "explanation," which is reserved primarily for profane purposes such as commentaries on poetry and on philological, grammatical and literary. (Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān, vol. 2, E – I, P. 100) *Tafsīr* with no other qualification refers in most cases to a qurānic interpretation or commentary. The verb *fassara*, the root verb of *tafsīr* that mean to discover something hidden," is a borrowing from Aramaic, Syriac or Christian-Palestinian (*peshar*, *pashshar*. The same verb is also found in Jewish-Aramaic. Accordingly, it cannot be determined whether Arabs or Muslims took the word over from the Jews or the Christians.

The emergence of the word *tafsīr* as a technical term is unclear though, it occurs in 25:33: "They do not bring to you any similitude, but what we bring to you [is] the truth, and better in exposition (*wa-aḥsana tafsīran*)". Some of the qur'ānic commentators have proposed here an etymology by metathesis (*tafsīr*), "unveiling," or (*takshīf*), "uncovering;". It seems doubtful, to see in this verse the origin of *tafsīr* as a technical term. (Suyūṭī, *Itqān*, iv, 192)

Etymologically the word *tafsīr* is derived the root verb from *Fasara* which gives the meaning of exposure and discovery; it also means to remove a cover from something. It has also been suggested that *Fasara* is a capsized word from *Safara* which also means exposure. The Arabs say: *Safarat al-mar'at 'an Wajhahā*: translation: (The woman exposed her face by removing the veil), as they also say: "*Imra'atun Sāfiratun*" for a woman that exposes her face. They even say: "*Asfara al-Ṣubḥu*" when the dawn appears.(Dhahabi M.H., *al-Tafsīr wa-l-Mufassirūn*, ,vol. 1, 15, 151) It has been reported from Rāghib al-Asfahāni that the word *fasara* and *safara* are similar in

expression and meaning. He said that the former is implicit while the later is explicit.(Dhahabi M.H., *al-Tafsīr wa-l-Mufasssīrūn*, 335

However, the word *tafsīr* is derived from *fassara*, which means exposing the meaning of a problematic word or expression. Technically, *tafsīr* is a science that searches for the method of pronouncing the lexical items of the Qur'ān, its meaning, rulings and the implied meaning of its arrangement and other complements.(al-Suyūṭī J., (1997) *al-Itqān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*, Vol. 2, 184)

According to al-Zarkashi, *Tafsīr* is the science through which the Qur'ān could be understood, its meanings could be explained and its ruling and wisdom could be inferred. It has also been defined as: the science with which research could be carried out about the conditions of the Qur'ān, as it indicates the aims of Allāh according to the human ability. (Dhahbi M.H., *al-Tafsīr wa-l-Mufasssīrūn*, vol.1, 8)

Ta'wīl is another word that has a similar connotation with *tafsīr*. Its root is *awwala* which means to trace back, to manipulate, explanation and interpretation. It is as if the *mu'awwil* is manipulating the meaning of the Qur'ān by tracing it back to what certain words or expressions could originally mean. (Dhahbi M.H., *al-Tafsīr wa-l-Mufasssīrūn*, vol.1, 21. The antithesis *tafsīr* / *ta'wīl* has been attested since the first half of the second / eighth century, and probably before, in the earliest rudimentary attempts to classify exegesis. Muhammad Ibn al-Sā'ib Abū al-Nsr al-Kalbī (d. 146/ 763) reported Ibn Abbās (d. 69/688) to have said: "The Qur'ān was [revealed] in four aspects (*wujūh*): *tafsīr* [the literal meaning?], which scholars know; Arabic with which the Arabs are acquainted; lawful and unlawful (*Halāl wa-l-Harām*), of which it is not permissible for people to be unaware; [and] *ta'wīl* [the deeper meaning?] that which only God knows". When a further explanation of *ta'wīl* is demanded, Muqātil was reported to have described it as "what will be" (*mā huwa kā'in*).

This categorization is suggested to have had its origin nay similarity in the Jewish and patristic discussions on the four meanings of scripture (Heb. *peshat*, "literal translation"; *remez*, "implied meaning"; *derash*, "homiletic comprehension"; *sod*, "mystical, allegorical meaning"; Zimels, also the Bible; for patristic and medieval conceptions of the four meanings [literal/historical, allegorical/spiritual, tropological / moral and anagogical / eschatological].(Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān, vol. 2, E – I, 101)

Representative of this antithesis between *tafsīr* and *ta'wīl* is the opposition between the transmission (*riwāya*) of exegesis from early authorities, such as the Companions of the Prophet and an exegesis built upon critical reflection (*dirāya*), as a declaration of al-Māturīdī (d. 333/944) in his qurānic commentary indicates that the *tafsīr* belongs to the Companions, the *ta'wīl* to the scholars (*fuqahā'*), because the companions saw the events and knew the circumstances of the revelation of the Qur'ān. (Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān, vol. 2, E – I, 101)

This opposition varies according to a tradition attributed to Muqātil Ibn Sulaymān (d. 150/767), who said:

“He who recites the Qur’ān and does not know the *ta’wīl* of it is an *ummī* ” (lit. “illiterate,” but perhaps also a “pagan”. Others have said that *tafsīr* is the explanation (*bayān*) of a term which has only one significance, whereas *ta’wīl* is the reduction of a plurivocal term to a single signification according to the context, on the basis of which it could be argued that the distinction between the two terms remained a theoretical one as Abū Ubayd al-Qāsim Ibn Sallām (d. 224/838), asserted that they were one and the same.

One may suggest that the words *tafsīr* and *ta’wīl* are not the same in meaning as we have seen, but whether someone explains Qur’ān traditionally or based on an opinion with all of its diversities, all what he wants to do is to explain words or expressions of the Qur’ān, and that is generally *tafsīr*.

Essentials of *Tafsīr* : Proponents and Opponents

According to as-Suyuti, the exegesis rejected by the scholars in early Islam was based on historical legends and eschatological narratives (*malāim*). Citing Ibn Ḥanbal, he sees no such aversion at all in the first Islamic century, e.g. among the disciples of Ibn Abbās, and believes strong opposition arose in the second/eighth century. Thereafter, exegesis gained general acceptance with the introduction of special rules for the transmission of reports. It has been maintained that the opposition to *tafsīr* was limited to a special category of ambiguous or unclear (*mutashābih*, pl. *mutashābihāt*) verses of the Qur’ān.

Exegetes have never agreed, however, on which verses are unclear, or even what that qualification means precisely. It can thus be concluded that opposition to exegesis was above all an opposition to the use of personal opinion began from the end of the second/eighth century when the rules for the transmission of traditions were based on acceptable chains of authorities (*isnāds*). Exegetical traditions without any origin (*asl*), i.e. without authoritative chains which included exegesis by personal opinion or that promulgated by popular preachers were rejected, even though their narratives were often the same as those of the traditions introduced by authoritative, sound chains of scholars.

In spite of the supposed aversion of some classical scholars to Qur’ānic exegesis and the fact that the Qur’ān itself does not explicitly state that it should be interpreted, commentators have been able to legitimize their exegetical practice over the centuries. One of the passages of the Qur’ān to which they refer for this legitimization is Q 3:7: “*It is he who sent down upon you the book, wherein are verses clear (muhkamāt) that are the essence of the book, and others ambiguous (mutashābihāt). As for those whose hearts are perverse, they follow the ambiguous part, desiring dissension, and desiring its interpretation (ta’wīl); and none knows its interpretation, save God. And those firmly rooted in knowledge say, ‘We believe in it; all is from our lord’; yet none remembers, save men possessed of minds.*” The first part of the last periscope (“and none knows its interpretation...”) could be read in another way, since the Arabic text provides no indication of where stops and pauses should be taken: “And none knows its interpretation save only God and those firmly rooted in knowledge, who say....” With the latter reading, the interpretative as was open to unclear and ambiguous verses, as well as to the clear ones. (Suyūfī, J, Vol. 4. 205, 207-8)

According to Bauchi, H. T.,(1995) the knowledge of lexicography is considered an essential tool which enables a *Mufassir* to differentiate between the decisive verses from the ambiguous ones in the Qur'ān.²⁹ He reported the statement of As-Suyūṭī that the ambiguity in some words of the Qur'ān occurred in three ways, literal ambiguity, conceptual ambiguity and the combination of the two. This in turn may occur in nouns the words as well as verbs. Therefore, the knowledge of syntax, accident and etymology are fundamental to the understanding of the Qur'ān and Sunnah, likewise *‘Ulūm al-Balāghah* with its three components: *al-Bayān*, *al-Ma‘ānī* and *al-Badī‘* and *‘Ulūm al-Qur'ān*.³⁰

Essential sciences of the Qur'ān include the knowledge of the Makkan and Medinate revelations, sedentary and journey revelations, the day and night revelations, the summer and winter revelations, the *asbab al-Nuzul*, the celestial and terrestrial revelations, the verses revealed but acted upon before its revelation, the verses revealed and was not acted upon except after a long period of time. *al-Burhān fī ‘Ulūm al-Qur'ān* of al-Zarkashi is a good source for these aspects.

Other essential knowledge for a *Mufassir* includes the knowledge of an-*Nāsikh wa-l-Mansūkh* (abrogated and abrogating verses), the *Asbāb al-Nuzūl* (reasons for revelation) the cause of revelation does not preclude the application of such verses to other similar cases beside which it was originally revealed. "Consideration should be given to the generalization of expression and not to a specific reason".³¹

Theology *'usūl 'al-Dīn* which is the knowledge about God, His attributes, His deeds, the prophethood and the biography of the Prophet (S.A.W) and so on, it is equally essential in *tafsīr*,³² likewise, the knowledge of history is also vital for the proper comprehension of verses such as Q:3: 96-97 which says (The first ever temple to be established for mankind on earth was the temple of Bakkah) which establish the precedence of the sacred Mosque of Makkah to the 'Aqsa at Jerusalem.

Other pre-requisites enumerated by the author at this juncture include the knowledge of Hadith and its classifications, and the knowledge of *‘Usul 'l-Fiqh* (Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence), *Fiqh* (jurisprudence), and Sufism or Mysticism.³³ The sources of these pre-requisites enumerated above by the Muslim scholars are based on *al-Ijtihād* personal efforts of individuals, therefore it is not essential that a reader of the scripture should be acquitted with all of it otherwise it would be difficult to approach the Quran for the implementation of its teachings by the knowledge seekers and an ordinary researcher.

The Modernists and their Exegetical views on the Quran

The modernists called for re-examination of the exegetical methods bases of transmitted traditions, jurisprudence, and Islamic belief through the modern method of criticism. Sayyid Jamal-al Din al-Aghani and his disciples in Arabia and other Islamic countries likewise Sir, Sayyid Ahmad Khan and his followers in India disregard the traditional *tafsīr* even if such *tafsīr* is from the prophet, the companions and the successor except in the area of literal meaning of verses or the situation of some issues occurred during that era, which they also considered as a very little occurrence. To them, most of the traditional commentaries of the Qur'an, mentioned by the exegetes are Israelites reports and superstitions. M. Abduhu, *Tafsir al-Mannar*, 1, 7-8.

For instance, Muhammad Abduhu believed that some fundamentals of Islamic economic system such as usury could be legalized due to certain circumstances. He was of the view that the people of Bakhara, during his time, allowed usury due to some peculiar circumstances and that the Egyptian faced hardship due to the fact that people especially the rich were not given the privilege, so people went outside to borrow money with heavy interest which usurped the nation's resources. This is because the scholars hold fast to text rather than the spirit of Shari'ah to solve their contemporary needs. *Ta'rikh al-Usthadh Muh. Abduhu*, by Muh. Rashid Rida, 1, 944.

Sayyid Ahmad Khan was of the view that in this contemporary dispensation and revolution of knowledge, it becomes difficult if not impossible to base our understanding of the Qur'an on classical works that are loaded with superstitions of the past. The Qur'an needs to be understood through our personal and contemporary approach and understanding. The nature of the Qur'an, he continues, is that whenever human awareness and experiences about the world increase, the verses of the Qur'an open new vistas of knowledge and understanding. The present outlook and comprehending of the quranic verses may be different or even contradict the view of the past generations of scholars. This is essential as the early generation of scholars construed those quranic verses based on its literary meanings and or traditions in line with their level and the general knowledge of their time. (Bastami, Muhammad Saeed, *Ma'fhum Tajdeed al-Din*, 123, 229, 232)

According to Ahmad Zaki Abu Shadi, the repetition of the names of Abu Daud, Tirmithi, Nisai. Muslim and others along with the repetition of cooked irrelevant reports with the teaching of the Qur'an is betrayal of the message of Islam. (*Asbab al-khata' fi al tafsir*. P: 795). Islam, he said, is a dynamic religion that wishes well for mankind and it is based on a contentious evolution. The Qur'an and Hadith are collectives of fundamentals and ethics based on reason. It is therefore, believed that Islam is a flexible religion that recognizes change and dynamism in accordance with the ever changing conditions and circumstances of man. (*Asbab al-khata' fi al tafsir*. P: 795)

The modernists have followed the modern approach of thinking and research in expounding the scripture and traditional text. They opined that succinct verse of the Qur'an and traditions were revealed based on historical events that could not be suitable and of no importance to practical life, and the contemporary societies; individual traditions are rejected based on the excuse that they are of no legal importance. Transcendental information from the Qur'an and Hadith, in their view, are reports that could not be verified and therefore unrealistic and baseless. Information such as: Handling of the throne of the lord and receiving of scripture of deeds through the right and left hands are considered allegorical and metaphorical, while miraculous events are not evidence of prophet hood. (*manhaj al-madras at al-Hadith fi al-Tafsir*, 2; 532)

According to Muhammad Rasheed Rida, the narration of the stories of past the prophets including Moses and Jesus are some of the reason why the scientist turned away from Islam, as such stories and miracles could not be proved scientifically and have generated illogicalities concerning its authenticity and evidences. The greatest miracle of prophet Muhammad is the Qur'an but not other things that were attributed to him, his miracle was intellectual and concrete one and that is the Qur'an. Other miracles that are mentioned in the scripture are issue that could not be proved scientifically, based on that it must be interpreted if it is mentioned in the Qur'an or through authentic narrations. (*Tafsir al-Mannar*, 11/155,159,161)

Concerning the miracles of prophets as mentioned in the Qur'an, they opined that those miracles were meant for the early followers of religions as humanity was still in its primitive stage by then.

According to Hassan Hanafi, the stories of Adam, the Hawariyyum, the Angels and Devil are all superstitions of local people of those time and those who believed it among the past generation of Muslim scholars such as Ibn Taymiyyah, Ibn Qayyim and the like who had fallen into errors on the issue.. The contemporary Muslims may reject all the transcendental aspects of their believes and still remain ethically Muslims. (*Qadaya Muasiratun fi fikrina al-Muasir*. 91). According to Zakiy Najib Mahmud, metaphysical issues mentioned in the Qur'an are some of the weaknesses of Islam, while in the view of al-Hafiz Aslam, and Maqbul Ahmad, the paradise, and the hellfire mentioned in the Quran are mere scene of sufferness and comforts in which people sometimes find themselves in this world during the revelation of the Qur'an as human being are not equal in the matter of feeling of comfort and sufferness. Based on that, there is a need for modern definition of Paradise and Hellfire, therefore, fire here means hardship that makes man becomes internally burning. (*Asbab al-khata' fi al tafsir*. 824)

It is obvious here that some of the modernists did not reject transcendental issues but they interpreted it away from its general Islamic meanings as they thought to be in conformity with materialism. The *Jinn* or Spirits mentioned in the Qur'an is interpreted as an Arab tribe; the Angels as righteous feelings; devils as deposition towards evils; the paradise and Hellfire as indication of comfort and pleasure that people passed through in this world. (*Asbab al-khata' fi al tafsir*. 826)

Revelation is defined as revealing of law and the like by God to a prophet or the knowledge which someone sensed in his mind with assurance that it is from God directly or indirectly, the former with sound and the latter without. (*Asbab al-Khata' fi al-Tafsir*, 826)

According to Rashid Rida, revelation means whispering or secret information, it is also the knowledge that came from Allah to his prophets without any input or effort from them or from other person, it is what they feel in their hearts through meditation and not an abstraction form, based on the assurance that it is from God. In this way, it may be through an angel or directly from God. (*Tafsir al-Manar*, 1, p. 220)

According to Muhammad Farid Wajdi, revelation is the effect of general belief which should be taught by the generality of the people generally, but was spread by one person among his contemporary tribe. (*al-Islam Din al-Hidayyah wa al-Islah*, 11-12)

If the definition of Muhammad Farid wajdi of revelation is considered as novelty and modern, it may be benefited from the view of the orientalist who saw revelations as hallucination happened in the minds of the people or the prophet concerned within and not without their mind. The lofty and clean soul with strong belief in God and obedience toward Him along with denial and rejection of other goddesses and untidy costumes of the era of *jahiliyyah*, makes prophet experience from his mind or dreams and seeing what he believes to be orders from God and revelation from heaven. He may also see those things such as sensing that a man is talking to him consciously and believe that it was an Angel beyond was talking to him. The fact is that he only sees and hears what he believes

consciously. This view does not recognize revelation as information coming to the prophet from God or from Angel to the minds of prophet. This is based on total rejection of metaphysical matters.

Modernists Views of Islam and other Religions

According to Abdul Latif Ghazali the meaning of Q: 3 V: 85 is that: The Islam which Allah explained in the verse is general submission of self to God and during of righteous deed. Anybody with quality of submission and doing righteous deed should be considered as Muslim, even if he does not believe in the message and mission of Muhammad be he a Jew or Christian. In his view, Christianity is a religion of mercy while Islam is a religion of prowess and war. It would be better if the both religions are combined into one along with those qualities.

So, at present, there is no more polytheism and paganism, religion is for God alone in the revelation of both religions. The God of Muslims is the God of Christian and God of all the people and is only one. The freedom in the civilized world from the status of the United Nations is monotheism, while religious enmity is now polytheism as each of those religious claims to be only acceptable one to God and by that deserves His mercy, favour and help. As a result the understandings of each religion concerning God are not identical, therefore, one of them deserves the mercy of God while the other deserves His anger, curse and punishment and this is really a modern polytheism. (*Asbab al-khata' fi al tafsir*. P: 837)

According to Abdullah al-Alayili, the Islamic penal code of crime of murder is repugnant to the spirit of the Quran that makes retaliation meant for protection of life, how could it be possible when retaliation if implemented and the society is full of amputated and people with one eye, one ear, one leg and severed nose. In the same vein, there is no punishment such as stoning in the Qur'an according to the Kharites. In his own view, penalties as cited in the Qur'an are more allegorical rather than categorical so, no one should resort to it except based on necessity.

In the view of Husain Ahmed Amin, the veil that was put in place in Medina for Muslim women was to stop the attack suffered by the women then whenever they go out lonely and Hijab was instituted for that. Hijab was hallucinations of the Persians and the Turks as there is no text in the scripture as evidence for its use, or prevent women from going out without hijab as there is no punishment for them if they refuse to put it on. Therefore it is an ordinary trick of men to enslave women and keep them away from their socio-political rights. *Asbab al-khata' fi al tafsir*. 842-843

According to Hassan *al-turabi al-sudani*, the Hijab was instituted for the women of the prophet to cover their hands and faces whenever they go out, but for other women, it was not compulsory. (*Asbab al-khata' fi al tafsir*. Pp: 844). Al-Hafiz Asalam opined that the word *Awlad*, Arabic word for boy, in Arabic language consists of male and female therefore he sees no reason why male child should take more share in inheritance than the female. *Asbab al-khata' fi al tafsir*. 844

Refutation of Modernity in *Tafsīr*

The view of modernist in the interpretation of the Qur'an has been refuted by many notable scholars of Islam. It was reported from Ibn Abdul Bari who reported from Imam Malik criticizing the theologian who depended on dialectic arguments that if one of them surrenders to the view of the one who is more eloquent than him, will he continue to change his religion always. According to Ibn Hazm, the problem of any science and scientist is from the mediocre, who is really an ingnoramous claiming that he knows, therefore, he spoils rather than contribute.

According Muhammad Shakir al-misry, everybody should know that there are among men who read a part of science and became arrogant and extremist thinking that he was genius thereby started correcting whatever he likes among the Hadith of the prophet even though they are sound and authentic and authenticating the ones he likes even though they are not sound and fabrications. Likewise another one who follows the Christian missionaries in his way of thinking and approach to things, you would see him interpreting the Qur'an according to what he learnt from his foreign masters as if it were Hadith of the prophet, or a man who knows nothing about Islam, or a man who knows various type of science, but he knows nothing about Islam, but he thought he could correct Islam, Qur'an and Hadith based on what he learnt from his western masters, then he started beating about the bush with the claim of cleansing the Qur'an from superstitions of Muslim scholars.

Then he opined that the so called modernity is a mere initiation of the West, as they started to repeal the tradition by interpreting the Qur'an based on what they considered as public interest in their caprice, to the extent that it is feared that they might have renounced Islam by that.

According Muhammad Abu Zuharah, the proponents of modernity really want to alter the law of Shari'ah, not that they aim at implementing it on novel issues. Rather, they want human actions to govern the Qur'an and not the other way round as they failed to realize that Quran is a revelation from God aiming at adjusting human behavior and human relations. (*Usbul al- fiqh al-Islam al-Thalith*, 152, 154). According to Muhammad Asad, Muslims do not need to force modernity on Islam as some of us might have thought because Islam is initially complete. What we really need is to readjust our stands towards religion by taking care of laziness, our pride and our short sightedness, or our own shortcomings but not the so called Islamic shortcomings. We do not need new imported ethical principles, we only need to go back to those neglected old ethical principle for immediate implementation. Imitating foreign civilization is nothing but feeling of inferiority complex. (Muhammad Asad, *Islam at the cross road*, 113, 114)

The modernity phobia has been cited by many other scholars including Mustapha al-Tair who considered those *tafsīr* that are called modern as sick *tafsīr*. (Mustapha al-Tair, *Itijahat al- tafsir fi al- Asr al-Hadith*, p. 220, 221.) Muhammad al-Sadiq al-Urjun suggested that the proponent of modernity in *tafsir* do not have the correct tools,

sharp brain and sound foundation of Islamic science that could protect them from blaspheme and blind mimic. (*Nahwa manhajin li tafsir al-Qur'an*: Muhammad as-Sadiq al-Urjun, 18-20.

Sayyid Qutb rejected the opinion of unity of religions with reference to Q:5:51, and said, being good to the people of the books is one thing and taking them as intimate friends is another, though, it is not so clear to some Muslims who are not knowledgeable about the reality of Islam. It is a pity if we think that the both religions, Christianity and Islam are one. *Asbab al-khata' fi al tafsir*. 840. It is a pity if we think that we and the Christians could come together so that religion could prevail while all their wars are against the Muslims and Islam. Was it not the people of the book that supported the enemy against the Muslim in Medina? Were they not the one that waged wars of crusade against the Muslim and Islam for centuries? What did they do to Muslim in Spain? Were they not the ones that expel the Arabs and Muslims from Palestine and put the Jews in the place? And they still continue waging war against Islam all over the globe? It is working against the verse above to take them intimate friends and it is dangerous and suicide to do so.

Being good to the people of the Books is in the realm of interpersonal relations and not in the area of belief, social organizations or institutions. This is nothing but a plot to remove the belief that Allah would not accept any religion except Islam from anybody as mentioned in the Qur'an. (*Asbab al-khata' fi al tafsir*. 841.)

According to Mahmud Shaltūt any effort or modernity that aims at legalizing illegality is base on ignominy, simletority, and infidelity, such as when some of the modernists call for the legality of immorality to prevent secret prostitution. According to al-Shinqiti, distinction must be made between common law that does not put God into consideration and Shari'ah law that is God oriented. There are two types of legal systems, common law and Shari'ah law, the first one could be modernized but not the last one, the first one also must not be in conflict with Shari'ah as a matter of necessity. But when someone considers the distinction between male and female in the issue of inheritance, polygamy, divorce, stoning in adultery, cutting the hands of a thief all of these sharia law as barbaric and injustice then such person is no more a Muslim. (*Asbab al-khata' fi al tafsir*. 842.)

Conclusion

In summary, the choice of law and its implementation are not based on the changing of time, places and the level of advancement in science and contemporary matters but rather on what is in conformity with spirit and text of the Qur'an and Sunnah. Sunnah has been attacked by most of the exponents of modernity in *tafsir* of the Qur'an due to their less appreciation of its fundamentals and principles.

It is also essential to appreciate that most of the proponents of modernity in *tafsir* are mere scholars of Arabic literature that are not really at home in the area of Islamic sciences. Others were mere Journalists that were delving into the oceans of Islamic sciences without tools and by ordinary journalistic approach. Some of the modernist believes that the scriptures and the Qur'an inclusive are religious instruments that suppose to be dynamic and evolve with the evolution of each era.

It seems that these types of apologetics are based on an effort to defend Islam from those who accused it of aggression and to normalize relationship between Muslim and their enemies. It is a defeatist idea of those who have surrendered themselves to the hegemony of the West that are considered to be sophisticated in intellectual armament to the extent that it could not be challenged. It is essential to re-examine the teachings, understandings and implementation of the Qur'an from one generation to another and to accept the need for new ideas and understanding that could be in line with the spirit and evolution of human knowledge. Muslim scholars are faced with the challenge of interpreting some of the quranic expressions that are metaphorical and symbolic and tend to new exposition based on scientific facts in each generation.

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