

## Religious Basis of Scientific Tafsir<sup>1</sup>

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### Summary

The term of "scientific tafsir" only emerged recently. The term is used to refer to the interpretation of the verses of the Qur'an in accordance with the discoveries or theories of natural sciences. "Scientific tafsir is the application of a scientific data to the knowledge reported in the Qur'an in order to prove the gospel truth of the Qur'an in certain matters " [1]. The purpose of such an interpretation is to prove that the Qur'an is the word of God and that there is no contradiction between religion and science. However, some people in this area have gone to the extremes and this has caused an attitude of disrepute that rejects the practice altogether. Many scholars and commentators living in the last period have followed a moderate attitude in this regard.

**Keywords:** Qur'an, scientific tafsir, interpretation of the verses, religion, science

### Scientific Tafsir

Abu Ishaq al-Shatibi (d. 790/187), who is one of those opposed to associating the verses of the Qur'an with the sciences, states: "Many people have crossed the line against the Qur'an in this claim. And they ascribed the knowledge of all kinds of people of science and art, such as nature, mathematics, logic, and science, to the Qur'an. This attitude, on the other hand, is not correct according to the opinion we have just presented. There is no information conveyed to us that the Companions, Tabiun and tabe-i Tabiun made such claims even though they knew the content of the Qur'an better. They only made explanations about religious obligations, religious rules, judgments pertaining to the hereafter and similar things. If they had entered into these issues and expressed their opinions, we would have received information indicating the origin of this issue.

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But since there is no such thing, it turns out that they do not have such a practice. This shows that there is no record of their claims in the Qur'an." [2]

According to Shatibi, the purpose of the verses "We did not neglect anything in that Book." (An'am 6/38), "O my Messenger! Here we have sent down this holy Book to you so that it will explain everything and show you the right path." (Nahl 16/89), is *Lawh-i Mahfuz* (preserved and protected from anything being added or taken away, or any alteration or changes). It is not permissible to attribute meanings to the Qur'an other than those understood by the Arabs who lived at the time the Qur'an was revealed.[3]

We can accept Muhammad Hussein al-Dhahabi (d. last quarter of the 20th century) as the spokesperson of those who reject scientific tafsir. He defines scientific tafsir as follows: "It is a form of tafsir that makes scientific terms the referee in understanding the expressions of the Qur'an and tries to extract various sciences and philosophical ideas from them." . He rejects scientific tafsir in the following ways:

1- In terms of language: With the advancement of time, the meanings of most of the words of the Qur'an have expanded and changed. Would it be correct to accept the meanings that emerged later?

2- In terms of eloquence: Eloquence means speaking in accordance with the situation. Scientific tafsir harms the eloquence of the Qur'an. For, if the Qur'an meant these meanings at the time of its revelation, but the people did not understand them, then it leads to the conclusion that the Qur'an is not eloquent. If they understood these meanings, then why didn't that scientific development occur in the first centuries?

3- In terms of belief: Allah sent the Qur'an to all humanity to be valid until the Day of Judgment. If we say that the Qur'an contains all sciences, we will make Muslims doubt the Qur'an. Because the theories of sciences are constantly changing. If we attribute certain scientific theories to the Qur'an which are then later disproved, the belief of Muslims about the Qur'an will be shaken. Anything validated by the Qur'an today cannot be invalidated by it tomorrow.

M. H. Zehebî apparently rejects those who go to extremes in reconciling the Qur'an with scientific theories. As a matter of fact, this situation can be understood from the sentence he wrote in the last

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part of his ideas on this subject: "However, it should have been enough for them that no clear text in the Qur'an contradicts any of the fixed principles of sciences. It is sufficient for the Qur'an to contain knowledge compatible with new theories and scientific discoveries." Isn't it miracle enough that the Qur'an does not contradict any fixed scientific facts?

### **Specific Metaphors And Allegories**

The main reason why the Qur'an contains examples of scientific truths is the presence of metaphorical and allegorical verses.

The Qur'an states that it contains two types of verses, the first of which is the *muhkam* verses – which are clear and precise – and forms the foundation of the Book, and the other is *mutashabih* (elusive or unspecific) (Surah Al-i Imran, 7). *Muhkam*: meaning verses that have a single meaning, and *mutashabih*: verses that have the possibility of more than one meaning i.e. capable of having different meanings. *Muhkam* verses are sufficient for humanity in terms of faith, worship, legal and moral principles, and it is through them that Allah has explained the issues that He holds people responsible for.

Much discussion can be made about the wisdom behind the existence of *mutashabih* verses. Let's just say this much here: man is in contact with the world that surrounds him. He is a part of that whole. But man knows very little about himself and the past of the universe. What he knows about the reality of existence is limited only to the narrow sense and perception framework. All he knows about his Creator consists of seeing only his obvious works. The facts about the future and the hereafter that lies before him are foreign to him.

In order to complete his guidance, Almighty Allah wanted to partially inform man about the facts of his existence. The person who has this knowledge gains a more insight into the truth of his own existence. Those who do not reach this consciousness live as narrow-minded beings. Here are the *mutashabih* verses that touch on these issues.

These are called "relative mutashabihs", and they are many in number. There are also those related to the attributes of Allah SWT, which are called "*Mutashabihus-sifat* (Adjectives)". This part, together with the other matters of the hereafter and the *huruf-i mukattaa*, are called "true

mutashabih", and only Allah knows their true interpretation. As for the relative ones, comments can be made within the limits of human possibilities.

The words in the language are limited to the meanings that fall within the framework of the human senses. How, then, can a person have an idea about the great truths that he does not know? Here, Allah Almighty has given us *mutashabih* words that express great truths in a relative manner so that He may guide and inform us. The word *mutashabih* does not fully comply with the truth it points to, it only indicates it in one aspect from several aspects. In these verses, there is no consensus, but *mushabah*, that is, resembling something. Let's give an example:

Let's say you want to explain what a television is to a community that lived 500 years ago. Inevitably, you will try to explain this phenomenon, which they do not know, by using a concept they know. For example, you can say, "A television is a metal or wooden box and shows the image and voice of the man speaking on the other side of the world." However, a television is not the kind of box they know. There are many elements in telecommunication technology such as electricity, electronics, electromagnetic waves, lens, camera, image tube, color filters, diascope, satellite channel, satellite antenna, director studio, transmitter, space stations. The word "box" is similar to television in only one aspect. But unfortunately, this *mutashabih* wording is essential to tell people at that level.

However, trying to decipher the truth from ambiguous words (*mutashabih lafız*) may lead to a dead end. If you were tell people who lived 500 years ago that "there is a wonderful box in our country that speaks and displays distant situations", they will go on to draw various conclusions from the concept of the "talking box". Some might say that since this box speaks, then it must have a tongue. Because speech is only possible with a tongue. Another might say: "Since it has a tongue, then it must have a mouth." Another might further say: "If it has a mouth, then it must also eat". Another may also say: "Since it has a mouth and can eat food, then it must have a stomach, and it must seek food. From this illustration, we can see that those who do not know the truth of ambiguous words (*mutashabih lafız*) are destined to make such mistakes.

However, Allah Almighty said, "There are *mutashabihs* in the Book. Be very cautious in evaluating them." And the believer, who takes this warning as his guide, understands them in a

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solemn manner. In other words, the believer knows and accepts that *mutashabihs* are truths coming from Allah, and Allah is aware that we do not possess the capacity to fully understand all aspects of these verses. Thus the believer, without insisting on the letters, embraces the spirit of these truth and is able to have an idea of them. “Those rooted in knowledge (although they may have an idea) are all from our Lord. They say, 'We believe – that whatever we know and do not know – is His will. They reject the meaning of *mutashabih* verses in the face of *muhkam* verses. Those with bad intentions, on the other hand, try to cause suspicion and discord among believers by misinterpreting the *mutashabihs* according to their whims.[4]

No matter how hard one tries, it is not possible to understand the essence of the verses (*muteshabihu's-sifat*) about the attributes of Almighty Allah. But, as we pointed out earlier, there are also relative the *mutashabihs* (*al-mutashabihu'l-idâfi*) besides the true *mutashabih*. Their understanding may differ “by the situation”. Depending on the human scientific level, different understandings may emerge. However, there is no contradiction (paradox) between these meanings. Just as when a stone is thrown into a pool, a small circle first appears which then gradually enlarges and larger intertwined circles emerge, so also are these miraculous and laconic verses of the Qur'an can inspire meanings that show other nuances at every level. The following should never be forgotten:

The Qur'an is the word of God, who is eternal. It cannot be compared to the words of mortal people.

The Qur'an came from Allah, whose knowledge encompasses everything. It does not originate from the ephemeral, weak and limited human knowledge. Thus, the meanings contained therein are not limited to human capacity.

Allah is the One whose attributes are perfect. He knows the future as if it is the past. He is the creator of all things in the universe, and nothing happens in the universe except by His permission. Allah has declared that the Qur'an is not for a limited time, or place, or a limited level and specialization, but it is a lesson sent for all time and place until the day of judgement. In other words, in the Qur'an, all generations are lined up one after another until the Day of Judgment. Through *mutashabihs*, the Qur'an can also give some specific lessons according to centuries within its general lesson.

Let's try to explain this fact with the following example: Although a the bulb and voltage burning in a crystal chandelier do not change, the crystal pieces show different refraction when viewed from different angles (since the crystal pieces are shaved to create very different angles). With a little movement, the rays, the colors, the glows change. With this representation, we can relatively understand that *mutashabih* verses give different glows according to people's perspectives.

Because of this secret, the i'jaz of the Qur'an cannot remain exclusive to a century or a generation. If we liken it to a tree, its root has general meanings and its leaves, flowers and fruits have specific meanings. "This is something that other books don't have. If it is said that it is not feasible to have this feature in a book of fourteen centuries ago, we will say: "It is true, this feature is not found in any other book; But the Qur'an is like this because it is not like any other book, and it is the only one of its kind, that is, it is the Book of Allah. As the Prophet (pbuh) stated, "The difference between the word of God and the word of man is like the difference between the Creator and the creature."

Another criticism directed at establishing a relationship between the Qur'an and scientific discoveries is as follows: "The Qur'an was sent by Allah to inform people of the unchanging principles of religion until the Day of Judgment. Where as scientific theories and explanations change from time to time. The verse is interpreted according to a certain scientific understanding. If that understanding changes later, it will be concluded that the Qur'an does not comply with the truth, and the beliefs of some of the Muslims about the Qur'an may be shaken.

We accept that this danger exists. However, this concern can be eliminated by acting in a moderate manner. This is possible by applying the previously established facts. Moreover, sciences should be based on proven facts, not hypothetical determinations. It is true that in sciences, proven and established facts are few, and theories and hypotheses are much more in number. It is also true that many authors interpret them according to these theories. However, this can be said in that regard: The purpose of the *mutashabih* verses of the Qur'an is not always the ultimate truth, but sometimes the relative truth. It is sufficient for the meaning of the verse to be correct in only one aspect from many aspects.

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After all, the goal is "tawhid", and the ultimate and unchanging reality is ORDER, which leads to this oneness. So, the important thing is that people, according to their scientific level, are aware of the reality of the order in the universe and are able to achieve "tawhid" (which is their goal) by submitting to the order of the Creator. The means/ways employed for the purpose of arriving at this guidance of the Qur'an is not really important. For example, a person can reach this idea of order by knowing the ground is flat and the sun is moving. He glorifies and praises his Creator by reflecting on matters such as the fact that the sun rises and sets at the same time without fail on all days of the year, that it is placed in a perfect place in relation to this world, and that it warms and illuminates it in an appropriate manner. "Tawhid" is realized by knowing that the world is in motion and the sun is fixed, and that this system is the order of the Almighty. This is also the case since the sun revolves around itself and thus, keeps the planets in space by its gravitational force. The same purpose is achieved also by knowing that the sun is in motion with the whole solar system too. A poetic person is interested in the sun's scattering like a golden ship in a deep blue sky ocean. A biologist emphasizes that this sustains life on earth by distributing energy, praising the one who established this order.

This means that although the occurrence of "relative *mutashabih*" isn't very frequent, it is non-existent. The verses of the Qur'an contain the facts of the germination of a seed.[5] All stages from seed to plant can represent different levels of human science. Consequently, a certain level understands the truth contained in that verse in proportion to its own capacity. More facts may arise in the future. There is nothing wrong with that. This does not mean that the Qur'an contains contradictory meanings. Therefore, it does not prevent the Qur'an from being the source of truth. The Qur'an always maintains its correctness. It is no doubt that changes in meaning is due to people's understanding. "The fact that the interpretations of the verses of the Qur'an differ according to the ages shows that the Qur'an addresses every age. This is because the exegete interprets and explains the words of the Qur'an which are likely to have many meanings only according to the available scientific knowledge of his time.[6] Scientific exegesis interprets a verse or several verses in the light of the data of science available. This does not mean that this interpretation is the only way to understand the verse. When this is the case, if the scientific theory turns out to be wrong, it shows that it was wrong to have understood the verse in that way. It does not mean that the verse itself is wrong. Just as a scholar deduces a provision from a certain verse

and when an evidence appears that this provision is wrong, he realizes that his understanding was wrong [7]

In the following pages, we will consider these claims based on the views of some contemporary commentators. One of them, Muhammad et-Tahir Ibn Ashur (d.1973), states the following in the tenth preface of his *tafsir*, where he mentions *I'jazu'l-Qur'an*: [8] The second kind of scientific *i'jaz* of the Qur'an is also divided into two parts. The first part: The part that can only be heard and understood with the meaning understood instantly. The other is the part that depends on understanding the aspect of *i'jaz* and knowing the principles of various sciences. This part becomes clear gradually, depending on the level of understanding of man and the development of sciences. Both parts are proof that the Qur'an is from Allah. Because even the Prophet (pbuh) came from amongst a people who were not overly concerned with matters of science. He was also a person who had always stayed in Mecca. The Qur'an clearly stated this: "Say: "If Allah had willed, I would not have recited the Qur'an to you, nor would He have revealed it to you in any way. You know, I've lived among you for a lifetime (I've never made such a claim). Won't you use your mind and understand this?" (Yunus 10/16).

After the revelation of the Qur'an, Muslims learned the existing sciences from those who had knowledge of those sciences, and they were able to surpass them. Ibn 'Arafa interprets the following verse as follows: "You cause the night to enter the day, and You cause the day to enter the night; and You bring the living out of the dead, and You bring the dead out of the living. And You give provision to whom You will without account [i.e., limit or measure]." (Âl-i Ĩmrân 3/27) : Some say: "The Qur'an contains truths that only ordinary people can understand, and some truth only the elite can understand, and some truths that both ordinary people and the elite can understand. This verse is of that kind. Because medical sciences (bringing the living out of the dead and vice versa) can only be understood by the learned elites. On the other hand, the verse also covers the phenomenon of day and night that the common people can understand.". furthermore, the following verse (Anbiya 21/30) is of the same kind: " Have those who disbelieved not considered that the heavens and the earth were a joined entity, and then We separated them and made from water every living thing? Then will they not believe? ". One of the ways of the Qur'an's scientific connotation is that it invites contemplation, examination of the universe and comparison. The owner of *al-Shifa* (Kadi Iyaz) says: "One of the concise aphorisms of the Qur'an



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is that it covers some knowledge and ingenuity that both the Arabs and other scholars of other nations do not know, and are not included in their books. Thus, in the Qur'an, there is a refutation of the various other gods of different *ummahs* with strong evidence, declaring the supremacy of shar'i sciences, and further drawing attention to the ways of using rational proofs. For example in (Anbiya 21/22): "Had there been other gods besides Allah in the heavens or the earth, both 'realms' would have surely been corrupted. So Glorified is Allah, Lord of the Throne, far above what they claim." And in (Yasin 36/81): "Is not He who created the heavens and the earth Able to create the likes of them? Yes, [it is so]; and He is the Knowing Creator."

The Qur'an and science opened people's eyes to the benefits of knowledge: "It was sent to warn every living person so that the divine judgment may be finalized against the disbelievers." (Yasin 36/70). "Allah is the Guardian of the believers—He brings them out of darkness and into light." (Baqarah 2/257). "And these examples We present to the people, but none will understand them except those of knowledge." (Ankabut 29/43). "Are those who know equal to those who do not know?" (Zumar 39/9). In this type of *i'jaz*, the Qur'an openly opposed the poetic styles and various purposes of poetry. While this is the case, we see that Shatibi said the following in his *al-Muwafakat*. "The Qur'an is interpreted only according to the meanings known to the Arabs." In other words, the meaning of the Qur'an consists of the meaning understood by an ordinary Arab in the age of revelation. It seems that Shatibî uttered this phrase (to cut it short) in order to avoid the criticism of the oppressors, in order to prefer safety in his research and not to waste his precious time. Otherwise, it is not possible to understand why he denied that the Qur'an is a miracle in all centuries and that his *i'jaz* was understood and devoted to imitating them after the first Arab century (he is a scholar who will not claim this). Although we accept the superiority of those people in eloquence, this only shows that the people of that century confessed to the *i'jaz* of the Qur'an. It would not be a convincing evidence for this particular part to understand *i'jaz* or for other people to understand it. It does not show that the people of every other century understand *i'jaz*.

The fact that the Qur'an is a revelation and that the Ummah of Muhammad constitutes the majority means that this miracle is valid for all times. Ibn Ashur wrote: "There is no prophet who has not been given a miracle that will enable the people around him to believe. But the miracle given to me is from the type of revelation (the word). For this reason, I hope that the number of those who will follow me on the Day of Judgment will be more." [9] Thus, *ummahs* with very different

temperaments will enter the religion of Islam by means of this miracle, and the Prophet (pbuh) will thus be the prophet with the most followers. This has actually come true. Because the meaning of a follower is to obey the religious truths.[10] (...) This aspect of *i'jaz* is a feature found throughout the Qur'an. Because, each verse or each surah may not contain this type of brevity. Therefore, the challenge of the Qur'an in this area is not a challenge with certain verses, but a type of *i'jaz* that comes from the whole of the Qur'an. This is indicated in the following verse (Nisa 4/82): "Will they not consider the Qur'an properly? If the Qur'an belonged to anyone other than Allah, they would certainly have found many inconsistencies in it."

Ibn Ashur says in the fourth introduction of his tafsir[11]: "A third way is by bringing up some issues from some sciences related to the purpose of the verse. Namely: The verse may have a slight allusion to a different meaning. As a matter of fact, some scholars in interpreting the verse: "He gives wisdom to whomever He wills. Whoever is given wisdom, indeed, he has been given a lot of goodness." (Baqarah 2/269) mention that wisdom can be seen as a division of science and can be categorised under the concept of "goodness". Therefore, although the term "wisdom" can be an allusion to a science, it does not cover the whole meaning of the verse. Therefore, the real meaning of the verse does not go away and the details of the wisdom support it. In the same way, "Until those goods do not become wealth that changes hands only amongst the rich amongst you." (al-Hashir 59/7), we can deduce the details of the science of political economy from this verse, how the distribution of public wealth will be made, and the reasons for the preaching of *zakat*, inheritance, and corporate transactions such as *mudaraba*, and we can understand and conclude that the verse alludes to them. The relevance of some scientific issues in the interpretation of some verses may be even stronger. For example, in the science of *kalam*, we refer to the verse of the Qur'an that says, "Had there been other gods besides Allah in the heavens or the earth, both 'realms' would have surely been corrupted." (Anbiya 21/22). Or, while describing the issue of *mutashabih*, we can refer to "We built the sky very solidly, it was Us who expanded it. For We have great power and dominion." (Dharyyat 51/47). It is obvious that this is one of the aims of tafsir. Or let's look at the following verse: "Do they not look at the sky above them? Do they not look and think how We built and adorned it firmly and that there is not the slightest crack or imbalance in it?" (Qaf 50/6). The purpose of this is to learn a lesson from an observed situation. If the exegete goes further to give details on this, explains some of its secrets, and connects it with

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some fact discovered in the science of astronomy, it will serve the purpose of the verse even better. Thus, the exegete sometimes reconciles the meaning in the Qur'an with the meaning proven in science - whenever possible. Also, from the following verse of the Quran, “Beware of the Day We will blow the mountains away, and you will see the earth laid bare. And We will gather all humankind, leaving none behind.” (Kahf 18/47), it can be deduced that the end of the world may occur with an earthquake. Again, from the verse “When the sun is rolled up and its light is out.” (Takwîr 81/1-2), we can deduce that the law of gravity will be abolished on the Day of Judgment. The condition for this type of inference to be acceptable is that it should be laconic. Only an extract should be taken from the science in question, and secondary explanations should not become the purpose. The *ulema* have succinctly different views on the application of this third style: Some of them find it acceptable to reconcile non-religious sciences with the meanings of the Qur'an. They think that the Qur'an refers to most of those meanings.

Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Rushd (d. 595/1198) states the following in his book *Faslu'l-Mekal*: "Muslims have agreed that not all the words of the Shari'ah should be understood according to their literal meanings, but also that not all of the Shari'a words should be taken away from their literal meanings by interpretation. . The reason why the Shari'ah has outward and inward meanings is because people's perspectives are different and their temperaments change regarding approval." As a result, he states that there is a connection between religious sciences and philosophical sciences.

Kutbeddin al-Shirazi (d. 710/1311) in his work *Sharhu Hikmeti'l-Israq*, also, the attitudes of) al-Ghazali (d. 505/1111), Imam Fahrud-din er-Razi (d. 606/1209) and Abu Bakr ibnu' Arabi (d. 543/1148) and many of his peers require such a breadth and reconciliation in scientific matters. In fact, they filled their books with the rules of philosophy and other sciences, and inferences on the meanings of the Qur'an. Likewise, jurists have done the same in the books of "*Ahkâmu'l-Qur'an*". As a matter of fact, you have already learned what Ibnu'l-Arabi wrote about Surah Nuh and the story of Khidr. Likewise, scholars such as Ibn Jinni (d. 392/1002), Zejjaj (d. 311/923) and Abu Hayyan (d. 745/1344) filled their commentaries with a lot of inferences to the Arabic language rules.

It is established through the unanimity and disagreements of the scholars of *Usul al-Din*, *Usul-i Fiqh* and *Usul-i Tafsir* that: "The meanings of the word of Almighty Allah, who is free from all shortcomings, cannot be built on the understandings of a certain community only. On the contrary, its meanings fully correspond to all truths. Therefore, no matter what branch of science it is, if it is true and can be related to a verse, it is certain that such scientific truth is intended to the extent that people's understanding now and in the future. This is different according to the difference of the authorities and is based on the existence of different understandings. The meaning that is contacted in Arabic is valid under the following conditions; not to go beyond the possible meaning, not to stray from the apparent meaning unless it is based on evidence, and not to make an obvious compulsion." [12]

Abu Ishaq Shatibi says in the third chapter of the fourth issue: "In the profession of understanding and explaining, it is essential to observe the understandings of all Arabs. It is necessary not to show monopoly in implying things that they cannot afford to understand." In the fourth issue of the second type, he says: "In understanding the Shari'ah, it is absolutely necessary to follow the habits of the illiterate. They are the Arabs to whom the Qur'an was revealed in their own language. If there is a constant custom in the language of the Arabs, it would not be right to go to ignore it in understanding the Shari'ah. If there is no custom, it would not be right to apply what they do not know in understanding the Shari'ah." [13] "It is not permissible to attribute to it something that the Qur'an does not dictate. As a matter of fact, it is not permissible to deny what it requires. In order to understand the Qur'an, it is necessary to apply to sciences specific to Arabs only. It is only in this way that the understanding of the Shari'ah rules can be reached. Those who look for a tool other than its main tool will not understand it, and will attribute to Allah and His Messenger what they did not say." [14]

Ibn Ashur says the following about Shatibi's statement: "This opinion of his is based on his thought: Since the Qur'an is addressed to illiterate Arabs, its understanding and narration will be according to the level of those Arabs. The qualification for understanding the Shari'ah is to be illiterate." This is incorrect for six reasons:

1. According to his opinion, the Qur'an did not aim to transfer Arabs from one state to another. This is also false, as we have stated before. As a matter of fact, Allah the Exalted says, "That is

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from the news of the unseen which We reveal to you, [O Muḥammad]. You knew it not, neither you nor your people, before this.” (Hud 11/49). This verse clearly states that the Qur'an contains many facts that the people of the Prophet did not know, and that they are of the kind of news of the unseen and miracles.

2. The purpose of the Qur'an is to make its message public. The Qur'an is an eternal miracle. In that case, there must be parties in the ummah who observe the scientific level of future generations in the centuries when science spread.[15]

3. The Salaf-i Salihin said: "The beautiful meanings of the Qur'an are inexhaustible." Their purpose lies in the meanings of the Qur'an. If the case had been as Shatibi said, its meanings would have been limited and therefore would have been exhausted.

4. One of the aspects of i'jaz is that it is expressed in concise words although it contains many meanings which could be expressed in volumes.

5. Speaking according to the level of the addressee requires that the first addressees understand the original meaning. However, although this original meaning remains, the secondary meanings that can be added to it may be reserved for certain people. Such meanings may be revealed to some interlocutors and hidden to others. “How many people who transmit fiqh can reach someone who is more jurist than himself.”

6. “The Salaf-i Salihin did not engage in such interpretations. This is proof of its inconsistency.” an objection is not valid. Because we know that the Salaf did not deal with sciences that did not shed light to the purposes of the Qur'an. However, they have made extensive explanations and studies on all aspects of the Qur'an's purposes. We must also show that we comply with the aims of the Qur'an by making use of the scientific results that were not available in their time and are now available. In fact, if we do not engage in them, we will not be able to comply with them properly.

Evidence can be found in the following practice of the Prophet (SAW) that it is possible to establish a connection between natural sciences and the verses of the Qur'an. Some of his interpretations are not according to the literal meaning of the verse. So, the Prophet wanted to encourage his ummah

to consider even the most distant meanings of the verses of the Qur'an. [16] To give an example: "When Umm Kulthum (RA), the daughter of Uqba b Muayt, migrated to Madina as a Muslim, the Prophet (SAW) read this verse to her, "Allah brings the living out of the dead.". Although the verse has a literal meaning, our Prophet interpreted it metaphorically.

According to Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, the meanings of some verses may become more clear with the advancement of time and the development of sciences. Because the meanings of the Qur'an al-Hakim are inexhaustible. The meanings and provisions of some of its clear verses do not change with time. However, it has some secondary meanings that indicate the scientific developments that have emerged gradually according to the development course of human science. The apparent truths declared by the Salaf-i Salihin are apodictic and reserved. No one can doubt them. Because these are the verses and firm principles that should be believed. The Qur'an is "*Qur'an-in Arabiyyin Mubin*". This requires that its main meanings be clear. The divine address circulates around these meanings, reinforces and reveals it. Whoever denies these meanings, almost denies Allah and accuses the Prophet (SAW) of misunderstanding the Qur'an. [17]

Bediuzzaman touched on the following question after discussing on some of the scientific meanings of the Qur'an: "If you say: How can we know all the meanings in the examples you have given, which the Qur'an intends and points to? We would reply: Since the Qur'an is a pre-eternal address, and sitting above and beyond the centuries, which, layer upon layer, are all different, addresses and instructs all of mankind lined up within them, certainly it will include and intend numerous meanings according to those varying understandings, and will make allusions to what it intends. The numerous meanings contained in the Qur'an's words similar to those mentioned here have been proved in *Isharat al-I'jaz* (Signs of Miraculousness) according to the rules of Arabic grammar, and the sciences of rhetoric, semantics, and eloquence and their rules. According to the consensus of those qualified to interpret the Shari'ah, the Qur'anic commentators and scholars of theology and jurisprudence, and according to the testimony of their differences, on condition they are considered correct by the sciences of Arabic and the principles of religion, all the aspects and meanings which are found acceptable by the science of semantics, and appropriate by the science of rhetoric, and desirable by the science of eloquence, may be considered among the meanings of the Qur'an. The Qur'an has placed allusions to each of those meanings according to its degree. They are either literal or metaphorical. If metaphorical, there are allusions to them in either the

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preceding context or the after context or in other verses. Some of them have been expounded in Qur'anic commentaries of twenty, thirty, forty, sixty, and even eighty volumes, written by exacting scholars, which are clear and decisive proofs of the extraordinary comprehensiveness of the Qur'an's words." [18]

The exegete also conveys the following question on this subject and gives him his answer as follows: "If you were to ask: It is the mark of guidance and eloquence to elucidate, provide clear explanations, and to save minds from confusion. But Qur'anic commentators have been at variance over verses like this and have suggested different meanings, and have propounded conflicting aspects of the phrases. So how can the truth be recognized among all these? You would be told: All are right, for the listeners vary greatly. For the Qur'an was not revealed for the people of only one century, but for the people of all the centuries; nor for only one class, but for all the classes of mankind; and each of these has its own share and part in understanding the Qur'an. Between people there are vast differences of understanding, and their tastes vary greatly, and they incline to different sides of the Qur'an, and appreciate different aspects of it, and their pleasures are diverse, and their temperaments are all different. How many things are there that one nation deems beautiful which another does not even notice, and which one enjoys greatly while another does not even recognize their existence? You can draw even further analogies in the same way. It is because of this mystery and instance of wisdom that in most places the Qur'an is not specific and makes its statements general so that everyone can appraise them according to their own taste and appreciation. The Qur'an has structured its sentences and positioned them in such a way that numerous different meanings unfold from its various aspects, and [different people with] their diverse understandings may reflect on them and each may receive his share. etc. That is to say, all these different interpretations are permissible on condition they are not opposed to the sciences of Arabic, are approved by the science of rhetoric (eloquence), and are acceptable to the science of the principles *maqasid al-Shari'a* (aims of the Shari'a). Thus, it emerges from this point that one of the aspects of the Qur'an's miraculousness is its word-order and its arrangement in a style that conforms to the understandings of the people of all ages and all classes." [19]

For example, Let us consider the verse (Anbiya, 21/30), "Do the disbelievers not realize that the heavens and earth were 'once' one mass then We split them apart?1 And We created from water every living thing. Will they not then believe?". This verse expresses the following meaning for a

person who is not too immersed in modern sciences: When the sky was clear without clouds and the earth was dry, and the crop was not sensitive to plant growth, Allah the Exalted conquered the sky with rain and the earth with vegetation, matched them with each other, and created every living thing from water. A searching philosopher would explain the same words in this way: while at the start of creation the heavens and earth were a formless mass, each consisting of matter like wet dough without benefit, offspring, or creatures, the All-Wise Creator both rolled them out and expanded them into a beautiful, beneficial form, and made them the source of adorned and numerous creatures. The philosopher would stand in awe.

A modern scientist would explain the words thus: at first, our globe and the other planets which form the solar system were fused together in the form of an undifferentiated dough. Then the All-Powerful and Self-Subsistent One rolled out the dough, and placed each of the planets in its position; leaving the sun where it was and bringing the earth here, He spread earth over the globe of the earth and sprinkled it with rain from the skies, scattered light over it from the sun, and inhabited it, placing us on it. The scientist would pull his head out of the swamp of nature, and declare: "I believe in God, the One, the Unique!" [20]

Any person can say: At times, reality is contrary to what the Qur'an indicates. For example, we see the sun rise and set, and the ground is motionless. How about that? Our answer to this is: The Qur'an is the book of guidance. It would be beneficial if guidance observes the opinion level of the majority of the society. The people, on the other hand, are plebeians for the most part. The common people cannot afford to see the truths naked. They can only understand the truth through familiar expressions. That is why the Qur'an has described such truths with *mutashabihs* and metaphors. Thus, the Qur'an protected the intellectually immature people from falling into confusion.

The Qur'an has left vague and succinct matters that the people consider to be untrue with their apparent senses, yet it has not neglected to imply the truth by putting some signs. If this subtlety is understood, it is necessary to know the following: The religion of Islam, which is based on rational proof, is the summary of sciences that constitute the essence of life. Shari'ah is the index of the principles contained in sciences such as morality, administration, housekeeping, and politics. Islam has given explanations according to the need in matters deemed necessary. It has been



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compiled with a summary in places where it is not necessary or on issues where the minds are not ready yet, or on issues that are not capable of time. [21]

It tolerates what the common and unwise people perceive with their external senses, who see with their eyes that the earth is flat, and does not openly tell him that the earth is spherical and revolves rapidly around itself on the one hand and around the sun on the other. No, the Qur'an does not want to arouse suspicion among the people and disorient them from guidance, which is its main purpose. If the Qur'an had said this and some other similar truths, people would have distanced themselves from it and even made fun of it. The Qur'an did not do this. But it did not neglect to allude to this fact in a way that people could understand when their understanding reached the level where they could understand the shape and movement of the earth.

Accordingly, the commentators of the last period need to reconcile the verses of the Qur'an that point to these scientific facts and the unravelling of this phenomenal information. Because these truths are found in the Qur'an in concise and summary form. These issues are not matters of belief, worship, judgment and treatment. For this reason, past generations can believe in them and be content with concise knowledge. This does not constitute a shortcoming for the past generations who did not have the opportunity to know the Qur'an and these issues in detail. On the contrary, it would be another proof of the *i'jaz* of the Qur'an. Because the Qur'an clearly declares that it contains some truths whose truths were not yet fully revealed at the time of revelation. "No, they quickly denied this Qur'an without having a comprehensive knowledge of it and not yet fully grasping its interpretation." (Yunus 10/39). The last sentence of the verse clearly shows that the Qur'an contains some truths that time will interpret. Mufassir al-Alusi (d. 1270/1854) says the following in the commentary of the aforementioned verse: "It means that the Qur'an is a miracle in terms of its style and eloquence, as well as its pointing to some information that will emerge in the future, with news of the unseen. They, on the other hand, blindly tried to deny it without examining its style, thinking about its meanings, and waiting for the news it gave about the future to come true." [22]

Allah Almighty says in another verse: " We will show them Our signs in the universe and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that this 'Quran' is the truth. Is it not enough that your Lord is a Witness over all things?" (Fussilet 41/53)

As we know, the word "sign" in the Qur'an sometimes means the evidences showing the power, wisdom and unity of Allah in the book of the universe, and sometimes the phrases of the Qur'an. If we analyze this verse briefly, it is clear that:

1. Allah will show some proofs.
2. This will happen in the future, that is, at a time after the descent of the Qur'an.
3. These proofs will be both in the outside world and in their own existence.
4. These discoveries will prove that the Qur'an is a work of revelation.
5. The guarantor of this work is Almighty Allah, the witness to everything. [23]

Even a person like Mufassir Ibn Kathir (d. 774/1373) who stays away from scientific tafsir says the following while interpreting this verse: The verse can also mean the following: "Materials, elements and strange systems in the composition of the human body may be meant, these are incompatible with Allah's wisdom. It is reported in detail in the science of dissection (anatomy). [24]

Ibn Kathir states that this verse points to some facts studied by the science of biology and anatomy. Tabari (d.310/922), who quoted Ibn Zayd's interpretation of this verse from the Salaf as "the verses of the universe", [25] does not adopt his interpretation. Because things like the heavens, the sun and the moon were already known and to the people of that time.

Bediuzzaman, on the other hand, says the following to clear up some doubts about this issue: "Now consider this: the verse *"And if you are in doubt as to what We have revealed"* indicates that because some people are heedless of what the Lawgiver (*al-Shâri* ') intends in guiding the mass of people and are ignorant of the necessity of offering guidance commensurate with their mental capacity, they fall into doubt, the source of which is three matters:

.... *The Second:* They say: "The Qur'an is vague and general concerning the truths of creation and the physical sciences (*funûn al-kâ'inât*), but this is contrary to its way and method (*maslak*), which is to teach and guide.

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*The Third:* They say: "Some of the Qur'an's literal meanings tend to be contrary to rational proof so may be opposed to reality, and this is contrary to its veraciousness.

*The Answer:* Success is from Allâh alone. O you doubters listen to this! What you suppose to be causes of defect, in reality are truthful witnesses to the mystery of the Qur'an's miracle.

*The Answer to the Second Doubt,* which is the Qur'an's vagueness concerning the shaping of creation, although the modern sciences are explicit.

Understand that included in the tree of the world is the desire to be perfect (*mayl al-istikmâl*), out of which branches the inclination to progress is found in man. The inclination to progress resembles a seed that sprouts and grows as a result of numerous experiences, and takes form and expands through the meeting of minds [and exchange of ideas] and produces the fruits of successive sciences, whereby the following can arise only after the previous one has come into being, and the previous one can only be preliminary to the subsequent one after it has been universally accepted. Consequently, if ten centuries ago a person wanted to teach science - remembering that sciences are born only as the result of numerous experiments - and call people to it, all he would have done would have been to confuse their minds and caused them to fall into error. For instance, if the Qur'an had said: "O people! Behold the stationary sun and rotating earth and the swarming millions of living beings in creation, then conceive of the Maker's grandeur!", it would have driven the people either to denial, or to deceive themselves or to compete with it. For because of their superficial view, rather their false view, they look on the earth as self-evidently flat and the sun as rotating. So indeed, to confuse people's minds, especially over the period of a thousand years just to satisfy a few people of our times would have been contrary to wise guidance and opposed to the spirit of eloquence.

One time when I was ill, in a state between sleeping and waking, [the following] occurred to me about "And the sun runs its course to a place appointed." (36:38) That is, [it turns] "in" its appointed place so that its [the solar] system can be upheld. That is, by rotating it generates the force of attraction [gravity] which holds the solar system in its order. Otherwise, it would fall apart.

The sun is a fruit-bearing tree; it shakes itself so that the planets fall not, its fruits.

If it rested motionless the attraction would cease, and they would weep through space, its ecstasies. }

*The Answer to the Third Doubt*, which is some of the literal meanings of verses tending to be contrary to rational evidences and the findings of science.

Consider this: the Qur'an's main aim is to instruct the mass of people (*al-jumhûr*) about its four basic principles, which are proof of the Single Maker, prophethood, the resurrection of the dead, and justice. Thus, its mention of the universe is secondary and digressive, for purposes of deduction (*al-istidlâl*), for it was not revealed to teach geography or cosmography (astronomy). It mentions the universe in order to conclude from the divine art in it and its unique order [the existence of] the True Orderer (May His glory be exalted). It is a fact that traces of art, purpose, and order are to be seen in all things, but however they were formed does not concern us since it is unconnected with the main aim. For seeing that the Qur'an speaks of beings for purposes of deduction, and seeing that their existence has to be known before the proposition, and seeing that the evidence has to be clear, how could guidance and eloquence not make it imperative that [the Qur'an] should incline with some of its apparent or literal meanings (*zawâhir al-nusûs*) towards their emotional views and literary knowledge, making concessions to them? Such literal meanings are not for affirming or indicating their knowledge but are allusive (*min qabil al-kinâyât*) or associative expressions (*mustatba'ât al-tarâkîb*). In any event, [the Qur'an] includes signs and indications for investigators of the truth (*ahl al-tahqîq*) that point to the truth.

For example, suppose when presenting its argument (*fi maqâm alistidlâl*) the Qur'an had said: "O people! Ponder over the sun's being stationary although it apparently moves, and the earth's daily and annual rotations although it is apparently stationary. Reflect on the extraordinary gravity holding the stars [in place]. Behold the marvels of electricity, and the infinite combinations of the seventy elements, and the massing together of uncountable organisms in a droplet of water and know that Allâh is powerful over all things!" Had it spoken thus, the evidence would have been obscurer and far less clear than what was being claimed, and that is opposed to the rules of deduction. Moreover, since [the literal meanings of verses that apparently tend to contradict science] are allusive, their meanings are not either true or false [that is, their meanings should not be taken literally]. Don't you see that the alif in the word "*qâla*" denotes lightness, so it makes no difference whether its root was *yâ* or *wâw*, *qâf* or *kâf*.

*In Short:* Since the Qur'an was revealed for all people of all times, these three points [which are thought to raise doubts] are evidence of its miraculousness. I swear [by Allâh] Who taught the miraculous Qur'an, that the view of the Bringer of Good News and Warner

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and his critical insight were too fine, brilliant and penetrating to confuse truth and illusion, and his way of truth was too elevated, pure and exalted to deceive people or mislead them.

Bediuzzaman states that in the stories of the prophets, there are signs of discoveries in the sciences. As it is known, the stories of the Qur'an are mentioned not only for historical information, but also for various other purposes. Pointing out some worldly affairs is among those wisdoms. He says: "Quas-i Anbiya encourages us to benefit from the religious perfections of the prophets, while also encouraging them to benefit from their material miracles. It is a fact that Allah did what the prophets did as a miracle in their hands. But we can think that there is a hidden guidance in these stories to take them as an example. Because Allah did not perform these miracles without a reason and without tools, He used material means for them. For example, the wind made the vehicle for Prophet Solomon to travel a distance of two months in one day. As it is known, aircraft technology is based on aerodynamics (air effect on a moving object). Thus, the Qur'an seems to want to say: O people of intelligence! Take a lesson, there are various lessons for you in the miracles of the Prophet. Take advantage of all of them. Try to make an effort in this way, so that you can do something similar to what Allah gave His prophets as miracles, subject to the order (sunnatullah) set by Allah. As a matter of fact, we can say that some religious and material perfections and worldly wonders were gifted to humanity by the hand of prophets. For instance: Ship, was given as a gift by the hand of prophet Noah.

Bediüzzaman said that: Bearing in mind the verse: "*Nor anything fresh or dry but is [inscribed] in a Record Clear,*" (6:59) and supported by the facts that the Qur'an both offers you clear statements and evidences, and teaches you through signs and indications, I understand from the masterly signs and indications of the Qur'an's miraculousness in the stories of the prophets and their miracles, that it is encouraging mankind to attain similar achievements. It is as though with these stories, the Qur'an is pointing the finger at the main lines and final results in the future of mankind's efforts to progress, for the future is built on the foundations of the past, while the past is the mirror of the future. And it is as though the Qur'an is slapping humanity on the back urging and encouraging men, saying: "Exert yourselves to the utmost [and discover] the means to achieve some of these wonders!" You surely know that it was the hand of miracles that first gave mankind the clock and the ship.

If you wish, consider now the verses: *"And He taught Adam all of the names."* (2:31) "We bestowed grace aforetime on David from Ourselves: 'O you mountains! Sing back the praises of Allâh with him, and you birds [also]!" (34:10) *"And unto Solomon [We made subservient] the wind; its morning course [covered the distance of] a month's journey, and its evening course, a month's journey. And We caused a fountain of molten copper to flow at his behest."* (34:12) *"Strike the rock with thy staff!" - whereupon twelve springs gushed forth.*" (2:60) *"And you heal those born blind, and the lepers, by My leave."* (5:110). Now dwell on what combined human thought has produced and the thousands of rational sciences it has deduced: each of them [is related to] one of the species [realms of being] in the universe, so that mankind has come to manifest *"And He taught Adam all of the names."* (2:31)

Now ponder over the railway and telegraph and other wonders of art deduced by human thought and by means of smelting iron and forging copper, so that man came to manifest *"and We softened iron for him,"* (34:10) and this became the basis of his industries. Think also about the aeroplanes that human minds incubated and hatched, which travel a month's journey in a day, so that humankind would come to manifest: *"its morning course [covered the distance of] a month's journey, and its evening course, a month's journey."* (34:12).

And reflect on the progress achieved in tools invented through human enterprise, staffs to strike arid deserts, causing copious springs to gush forth and transforming the sandy wastes into gardens, so that man is on the point of manifesting *"Strike the rock with thy staff!"* (2:60).

Now ponder over the wonders of medicine yielded by man's experiments that are beginning to heal those born blind and the lepers and the chronically sick, by Allâh's leave - you will see that [between the above verses and the future scientific discoveries] is a full correspondence and you will be right to say that [those miracles] are the criteria and measure [of those future discoveries], and that the miracles point to them and urge [mankind to work to achieve] them.

Similarly, consider such verses as: *"We said: 'O fire! Be cool, and [a means of] safety for Abraham."* (21:69) *" Had he not seen an evidence of His Lord."* (12:24) That is, according to one narration, had he not had a vision of Jacob biting his finger. *"I do indeed scent the presence of Joseph."* (12:94) *"O you mountains! Sing ye back the praises of Allâh with him."* (34:10) *"O you people! We have been taught the speech of birds."* (27:16) *"I will bring it to you within the twinkling of an eye."* (27:40). Now consider mankind's discovery of the degree of heat that does not burn and noninflammable materials; and the invention of means of attracting images and

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sounds from far off and bringing them to you before you can blink your eye; and 'speaking' machines [such as the radio]; and the employment of some species of birds like the pigeon and so on. You may see the agreement and congruity between these two sorts [of wonders], and may rightly say that [the verses] signify and allude to [the future discoveries].

Similarly, reflect on the particular attribute of the Supreme Miracle [the Qur'an], articulate speech and thought, the peculiarity of humanity, and literature and eloquence.

Now think about the highest means of training the human spirit, and the subtlest means of purifying the conscience, and the finest way of adorning human thought, and the best at expanding the heart: this is none other than a sort of literature. For some unknown reason, this literature is the most extensive of sciences, it has the widest scope, is the most penetrating and effective, and the closest to the human heart. Indeed, it is the sultan of the sciences. Think over this carefully!"

## **Conclusions**

We can deduce the following conclusions from the aforementioned considerations:

1. The Quran is the word of Allah. Its speech came from the divine knowledge of Allah, which encompasses everything. For this reason, the meanings of the divine *kalam* are incomparably broader than human speech based on a limited knowledge.
2. The Qur'an itself has stated that some of its truths will emerge after the time of revelation.
3. The Qur'an does not address a specific generation or a specific place, on the contrary, it addresses humanity living in all times and places to come until the Day of Judgment.

The *muhkam* verses of the Qur'an about creed, worship, deeds, rules and morals have been understood in detail since the time of the *Salaf-i Salih*. These essential meanings of the Qur'an do not change with the passage of time. However, apart from these main meanings, the Qur'an contains many secondary meanings with its relative *mutashabih* verses. The meanings of this *mutashabihat* can be understood perfectly and in detail centuries after the time of its revelation. But there is an apparent and *ijmâl* meaning that Salaf understands from such *mutashabih*.

5. The Wisdom of Allah, the Almighty, wished to contain various kinds of *mutashabih*. Thanks to these *mutashabihs*, the Qur'an contains too many meanings to be counted. "With these *mutashabihs*, Allah did not hold people responsible for understanding a certain interpretation, on the contrary, he opened the door of *ijtihad* before the human mind and wanted it to realize the blessing of understanding and free will that Allah bestowed upon it." [28]

"When *mutashabih* is mentioned, it would be a big mistake to think that a meaningless blasphemy is claimed. *mutashabih* is not meaningless and improbable, it is an expression that does not seem possible to determine a certain purpose due to its several meanings, and more precisely, it is an expression that seems ambiguous because the truth that it expresses is not capable of being wholly internalized with the human mind. It is such a statement that contains a collection of existential statements such as truth-metaphor, explicit-allusion, representation-verification, apparent-light. For this reason, we used the expression "*al-malumu'l-mechul*" in the ballad. In fact, obscurity in kalam constitutes one of the greatest eloquence according to his position." [29]

We can liken the *mutashabih* of the Qur'an to a crystal chandelier. Since the lamp burning inside the crystal chandelier and the voltage remain unchanged, the crystal pieces are shaved to create very different angles, and when viewed from different angles, they show different refraction. With a little displacement, the rays, colors and glows change.

6. There are several layers of meaning under the clear meanings of the Qur'an. Indicative and figurative meanings are from these layers. The Indicative meaning is also a general meaning and it has different parts and members in different periods. Far from harming the *i'jaz* and eloquence of the Qur'an, this part of it, on the contrary, reinforces it. [30] sensible meaning cannot be deduced from this, "The meaning of the Qur'an is ambiguous, you can pull it in any direction you want.". It is understood that the verses of the Qur'an sometimes have interrelated meanings. Just like when a stone is thrown into a pool of water, successive enlargement rings occur. Without changing the original meaning, additional meaning (rings) are possible. In other words, if the meanings are likened to a tree, the tree has a visible part above the ground, as well as a deep root, and many capillaries beyond it. The style of the verse covers all these elements. [31] Therefore, what people understand from the verse may differ according to their level of knowledge.



7. When Allah describes the Qur'an, He said: "We have sent down this book to you little by little as a statement that explains everything, a guidance, a mercy and a good news for Muslims." (Nahl, 16-89). The Prophet (pbuh) also said: "Its original meanings are inexhaustible. Repeating it too much will not wear it down." [32] If the truth of the matter were as Shatibî, Zehebî and the likes said, its meanings would have been limited to certain meanings and would have been exhausted. There are many reports that the meanings of the Qur'an are possible in many aspects. Hundreds of volumes of tafsir books are evidence for the multiplicity of the Qur'an's meanings, with both their differences and similarities. While explaining the *i'jaz* of the Qur'an, Muhammad Rashid Rıza, in summary, writes the following under the title of "Investigating the issues that people did not know before": It contains facts in many scientific and historical issues that were only discovered in later centuries by researchers and scholars in the fields of nature and theology. (After giving some examples regarding this, he ends his speech as follows: "The book of Allah Ta'ala is manifested in the verse, "He is always in action." (Rahman 55/29). [33]

8. Although the supreme purpose of the Qur'an is guidance, it also contains principles and declaration in the fields of law, psychology, and science. [34]

9. The meanings contained in the divine words of Allah, the Almighty, cannot be based on the understanding of only a certain group of people. However, its meanings fully correspond to the truths in all aspects. Therefore, no matter what branch of science it is, if it is true and can be related to a verse, it is certain that the verse is intended to extend to the level of understanding people have reached or will reach it in the future. This can change with the change in level of understanding and as a result, multiple possibilities are found. The meaning that is subsequently arrived at remains valid provided that it does not go beyond the possible meaning in Arabic, does not stray from the apparent meaning –unless it is based on evidence–, does not go beyond the original meaning and does not force it excessively, and does not turn into *Batiniyya* commentaries. [35]

10. The aims of the Qur'an are to make its message public. Since the Qur'an is an eternal miracle, it would be appropriate to have certain aspects in it that will take care of the understandings of people who will live in later centuries when natural sciences and other sciences spread.

11. The Salaf-i Salihin did not engage in such interpretations. They went into details as a proof of its inconsistency. We must also show that we comply with the aims of the Qur'an by making use of scientific results that were not available in their time and are now available.[36]

The Qur'an contains major general principles which will lead people to material and spiritual perfection. In addition, it also leaves the door open to the understanding of scientists working in various branches of science, and accepts that these general principles can be utilized to explain other minor issues to people according to the scientific level they reach in their lifetime. Moderate view is an attitude adopted by many commentators in the last period. We quoted Bediuzzaman Said Nursi and Ibn Ashur from amongst these commentators. We can also give the following examples of similar commentators:

M. Reşid Rıza in the commentary 7/53, Tafsiru'l-Manar 8/445-448 and in the commentary of 2/23 1/210-212.

al-Maragi: Tafsiru'l-Maragi 14/15 for the commentary on 15/19; 23/10-11 for Yasin/40; 23/145 for 39/5.

Muhammed Draz: In the "Scientific Facts" section of his book "Introduction to the Qur'an", he says: "The Qur'an also includes some natural issues to remind us of the power of Allah and to inform us that the texts of the Qur'an are fully compatible with modern scientific discoveries." . Then he gives the following verses as an example: 65:6-7 origin of human creation; 22:5 and 23:14 stages of the fetus in the womb; 21:30 that all living things were created from water; the occurrence of 30:48 rain; 39:5 that the earth is spherical; 13:40 earth is spherical and lacking sphericity at the poles; 36:38 the movement of the sun towards a certain point; 6:38 and 16:69 all animal species, especially bees, live a social life like humans; 36:36 and 51:49 everything is created in pairs; 15:22 that grafting (pollination) in plants is by winds.

While mentioning these, Muhammed Draz criticizes the extremism in linking the scientific discoveries with the Qur'anic texts and draws attention to the importance of contemplation in the external world and in one's own existence, then says: "We do not ultimately interpret these verses with the scientific discoveries we have pointed out. But we observe the striking correspondence

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between the texts of the Qur'an and the researches of the experts over the centuries. This cannot be a coincidence, on the contrary, it is considered a miracle.”[37]

For examples from Hasan el-Banna and Muhammed el-Behiy: Abdullah Shehate, Tefsiru'l-Ayati'l-Kevniyye, p.9.

Sayyid Qutb says in his commentary of the verse 39:5: “This (yukawwiru) is an odd statement and forces the addressee to think about the modern discovery that the earth is spherical. In my book Fi Zilali'l-Qur'an, I am very meticulous about pushing the Qur'an to theories about human discoveries (...) but despite this meticulousness, this expression of burden in the verse inevitably compels us to think that the earth is spherical.”

51:49 dual creation of all things, plus and minus poles of atoms and electricity. [39]

41:10 talks about the formation of the heavens and the earth, the formation of the earth's crust, and makes quotations from books on science on this subject. [40]

9:98 for 7:172.

Fi Zilal 2:74 for fasting verse 2:183.

Fi Zilal for 23:14 18:15-16.

Fi Zilal 30:119 for 86:6-7.

2:57 for 2:173.

Muhammed Tabatabai adopted this attitude in his work Tafsiru'l-Mizan.

Mizan 12:146 for 15:22.

Mizan 17:92 for means of transport in 36:42.

36:36 Mizan 17:87 for everything to be double.

21:30 when the heavens and the earth become one, then Mizan 14:279-280 for their separation.

Mizan 14:279-280 for the creation of mountains 21:30.

Mizan 11:288 13:2 for the creation of celestial bodies without pillars.

36:39 Mizan 17:90 for ranges of the Moon.

51:47 Mizan 18:383 for the expansion of the heavens.

Mizan 17:89 for the motion of the solar system 36:38.

Muhammed Hamdi Yazır gives many examples of adopting this moderate attitude in his commentary called *Hak Dini Kur'an Dili*. He says: "Again, it must be admitted that as the discovery and application of sciences progressed in the field of experience, they did not contradict the meanings of the Qur'an, but on the contrary helped to better understand many verses," he explained in detail the importance of new astronomy data in understanding the Qur'an. [41] He advises not to close our eyes to developments in sciences. However, he also attaches importance to being careful about this issue: "For this reason, it would not be right to try to narrow the thoughts and consciences by taking the interpretation of the Qur'an within the boundaries of science or philosophy of any time." [42] Let us quote only the following from the many examples in this commentary.

## **References**

[1] Ahmed Ömer Ebu Hacer, *et-Tafsiru'l-Ilm fi'l-Mizan*, 503, Beirut, Daru Kutaybe, 1411/1991.

[2] Abu Ishaq al-Shatibi, *al-Muvafakat*, 2/79-80. Commentary: Abdullah Dıraz, Publication: Muhammed Abdullah Dıraz., Cairo, 1381/1961.

[3] *el-Muvafakat*, 2/80-82.

[4] A. Zendânî, *Kitabu Tavhîdi'l-Hâlık*, 3/104-107, Jeddah, 1405/1985.

[5] C. Kırca, *Kur'ân-ı Kerim ve Modern Bilimler*, 263.

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[6] Ibid, 264.

[7] Ahmed Omer Ebu Hacer, et-Tafsiru'l-İlmi fi'l-Mizan, 503.

[8] Muhammed İbn Âşur, Tafsuru't-Tahrîr ve't-Tanvîr, 1/127-129, Tunus, 1984.

[9] Buhârî, Fadailu'l-Kur'ân, 1; Müslim, İman, 239.

[10] İbn Âşur, 1/128-129

[11] İbn Âşur, 1/42-43

[12] İbn Âşur, Tafsiru't-Tahrîr ve't-Tanvîr, 1/145

[13] Şatibî, Muvafakat, 1/82

[14] Ibid

[15] In another part of his Tafsir, Ibn Âshur states that there are three main aspects of *i'jaz* and explains the third aspect as follows: In the age of the revelation of the Qur'an, even in the next few centuries, mental and scientific signs that human minds could not reach yet were included in the Qur'an. Our scholars such as al-Bakillani (d.403/1013), Kadi Iyaz (d.544/1149) who expressed their opinions about *i'jaz* are not aware of this aspect of *i'jaz*. However, in this third aspect, the Qur'an has revealed its *i'jaz* for all of humanity. This *i'jaz* is continuous for centuries. This is an expression of the following statements of religious imams about the Qur'an: The Qur'an is an eternal miracle that has continued for centuries. Because, through the translation of legislative, scholarly, scientific and moral meanings, people of wisdom and ideas from non-Arab nations can comprehend the *i'jaz* of the Qur'an. This is a detailed proof for those who are aware of those meanings, and a concise proof for those who have reached this witness of theirs.” (Ibn Ashur, 1/127-128)

[16] İbn Âşur, 9. mukaddime, 1/94-95.

[17] Bediüzzaman Said Nursi, Mektubat, 400-401.

[18] Bediüzzaman B. Said Nursi, Sözlür, 425-426, Trs. Abdülmecid Nursi, İstanbul, Şahdamar P., 207.

[19] Bediüzzaman, İřaratu'l-İ'câz, s. 39. Trs. Abdülmecid Nursî, İstanbul, Şahdamar P. 2007

[20] Bediüzzaman, Sözlür, 422-423, Şahdamar Trs., İstanbul 2007

[21] *If you were to ask: The Qur'an, and likewise its expounder - I mean Hadiths - have only taken summaries from all the sciences, but isn't it possible for a single individual to comprehend numerous summaries?*

*You would be told: Through their apt positioning and fitting use in fertile ground, in matters that are only hinted at - as we indicated in the second point above - such summaries reveal like glass a full cognizance of the science [in question] and complete proficiency in it. So the summary becomes like the science and it would not be possible for such a person [as you mention to comprehend it].*

[22] Alûsî, Ruhû'l-Maânî, 11/120

[23] Suat Yıldırım, Kur'ân-ı Kerim ve Finnî Keşifler, Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı, Ankara , 1989, 10-11

[24] İbni Kesir, Tafsiru'l-Kur'âni'l-Azîm, 7/175

[25] Taberi, Camiu'l-Beyan, 5/25.

[26] Bediüzzaman, İřaratu'l-İ'câz, 120-121.

[27] Bediüzzaman, İřaratu'l-İ'câz, 207-209.

[28] Mahmud Şeltut, Tafsiru'l-Kur'âni'l-Kerim, Cairo, 67-68.

[29] M.Hamdi Yazır, Hak Dini Kur'an Dili, 1/48.

[30] Bediüzzaman, Şualar, 644.

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- [31] Muhammed Said Ramazan el-Buti, *Min Revai'i'l-Kur'an*, 113.
- [32] Tirmizi, *Fadailu'l-Kur'an*, 14.
- [33] Muhammed Reşid Rıza, *Tafsiru'l-Manar*, 1/210-212.
- [34] Abdullah Şehate, *Tafsiru'l-Âyâti'l-Kevnîyye*, Cairo 1400/1480, 22
- [35] İbni Âşûr, *Tafsiru't-Tahrir*, 1/145.
- [36] Ibid
- [37] M. Draz, *Kur'an'a Giriş*, 144.
- [38] Seyyid Kutub, *Fi Zılali'l-Kur'an*, 24/12-13.
- [39] Ibid, 27/25.
- [40] Ibid, 24/114-119.
- [41] Elmalılı M.H. Yazır, *Hak Dini Kur'an Dili*, 8/208.
- [42] Ibid, *Interprets of 67/5*, 8/209.