



Principles of Quranic Interpretation: A Critical Analysis on the Methodology of Shah Waliullah

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| Received: 25.08.2023 | Accepted: 28.08.2023 | Published: 01.09.2023

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Abstract

Trend of new interpretation of Quran is rampant among feminist, LGBTQ+ and other progressive groups nowadays. These interpretations drastically differ and break the methodologies of early scholars. After 9/11, the trend seems on the rise. Muslim scholars, expertise on traditional interpretation, also seem to silent or unheard due to the fear of being judged as fundamentalist. Shah Oaliullah's book 'Al Faujul Kabir Fe Usulit Tafsir' (The Principles of Quranic explanation) was an unique book written in 1700s AD. This book follows the popular trend of interpretation of Quran. This book has relevance in contemporary context when progressive Muslims desperately try to interpret Quran without following any kind of context or principles. This research uses qualitative methodology. The textual analysis has been done on Shah Oaliullah's book 'Al Faujul Kabir Fe Usulit Tafsir' (The Principles of Quranic explanation). This research finds out that Shah Oaliullah's unique methodology to explain Quran can guide current interpreter of Muslims to maintain some basic principles. Shah Oaliullah does not prevent anyone to explain Quran rather he shows how majority of Muslim scholars maintained their principles to explain Quran to avoid misinterpretation of Quranic text.

Keywords: Shah Oaliullah, Feminist Muslims, LGBTQ+ Muslims, Quranic Exegesis, Interpretation of Quran, Methodology of Quranic Explanation

1. Introduction

We live in post-normal world as Ziauddin Sarder coined this phrase for the first time. If not at least he tries to popularize that world. He wrote a book entitled, ' Muslim Societies in Postnormal times' . In this book, he mentions approximately 19 trends that Muslim societies got to deal with¹. Unlike Abu Hamid Abu Sulayman's crisis in the modern mind, it tries to cover up some new trends with brief explanation. When we talk about integration of knowledge, the idea is quite complicated in a sense since so

many disciplines we need to combine and we can not focus on anything ultimately.

We talk against compartmentalization of knowledge but if we look each field, it is vast literature; and it is really troublesome when we talk about integration. Let alone integration, even Islamization projects sucks in a way how Ismail Raji al Faruqi called upon Muslim scholars to deal with. In this critical stage, how do we deal with religious text like Quran when it comes to interpretation. Which interpretation is to accept as a general Muslim. If we practice religion, I will be called as fundamentalist. If we talk about the Jihad, only thing that comes to our mind is terrorism. The term ' Jihad, means terrorism . That's how west has manipulated our Muslim minds over the years. When it comes to explanation of Quran, even if the best contemporary scholar has interpreted the

¹ Ziauddin Sarder , Jordi Serra, and Scott Jordan. Muslim Societies in Postnormal Times: Foresight Trends, Emerging issues and Scenarios. (International Institute of Islamic Thought: UK, 2019).

Quran by maintaining all the rules and regulations of Tafsir, we are still going to show our skeptic mentality and we will more likely reject the term ‘Jihad’ defined by the prominent contemporary scholar. That’s how west has manipulated our minds. We do not mind listening Quranic interpretation in social media but we would also not mind to go to Cinema and watch western movies with our friends. Therefore, the very credibility of any kind of modern interpretation will be under question. What the tendency is that if someone is lesbian and she loves to be like that way, she is going to subscribe that kind of interpretation only. This is like holly shit in the post-modern world. Psychological altruism is everywhere. We love to maintain psychological hedonism. That’s all we care. We do everything to benefit ourselves. We help because we will get benefit and we will get mentally happy. The acceptance is western narrative. The way they ask to accept we accept and we call ourselves as hypocrites, because that’s how they colonized us by their ideas. The cultural hegemony is in academia. The cultural hegemony within our religious texts. If we read the books of Ziauddin Sardar, reader can easily comprehend that concept of dominance by western world. A book is written for Muslims by 3 writers and two of them are non-Muslims. In this circumstance, it is necessary to understand the principles of interpretation of Quran to deal with contemporary challenge and to contextualize with contemporary world.

Imam Gazali wrote in his autobiographical (*Munkidh min al-Dalal*)work which is somehow relevant with current society². He wrote his magnum opus the *Revival of Religious Science* where he focuses on principle teachings of Islam. This is extremely important in contemporary time also. We can be diverted very easily and this is very common among young Muslims nowadays. Prophet ordered his followers to stick to with Quran and Sunnah and Imam Ghazali came with same conclusion after investigating all the field of sciences. He used skepticism to identify the truth as Descartes did in mid-century in Europe. In the field of knowledge, it is necessary to ask questions to find the truth, however, it is complicated in contemporary time because we ask to only google and we are satisfied with that narrative. This kind of self-learning without proper guidance can be extremely harmful as individual but we are not ready to understand. The systematic way to do interpretation of Quran is the need for Muslim community so that confusion does not arise, unfortunately that is no longer maintained by progressive Muslim groups. That’s why it has been vulnerable for Muslims scholars to guide young Muslims.

We have seen the rise of Muslim feminism; we have witnessed the rise of Muslim LGBTQ and we have been observing the rise of Muslim radicals’ groups after 9/11. Islamophobia is on the rise day by day on the other hand. Muslims countries prefer secularism over religion. Initially it was limited to non-Muslims but Islamophobia is now within Muslims. They try to avoid the topic of religion. We are mostly busy to discuss about job, food, cloth and career and enjoyment. The relationship with neighbor is no more in city where Muslims are living. This has been zombie society. Nobody likes nobody. The rise of racism is high.

The disease of nationalism makes more vulnerable towards Muslims community. We do not see someone as Muslim brother rather we see as Indian, Arab, Black, white and level them as nationality. The conflict is happening in Palestine with Israeli soldiers. So what? We are Indians and they are Arab. Let them deal with their problem. Then, they are Palestinians and we are Saudi. Let them deal with their problem. That is not our business. That’s kind of mentality has been created by nationalism. The solution has to be cured from the grassroot level and without going back to Quranic teaching it is impossible to discharge this racism, nationalism. Islam makes sure justice for all humanity but now the way Islam has been portrayed as if Islam even can not make sure

² Ghazzālī, and W. Montgomery Watt. *The Faith and Practice of Al-Ghazzālī*. (Oxford: Oneworld, 2007).

justice within Muslim community itself. That’s because we have been accepting the definition of west.

If we get manipulated by their definitional power, we can never expect to get rid of from this horrible loophole, only way to get rid of this loophole is to define our works and act upon our definition. Islam is here to be practiced not to put in museum as book only. We need new type of interpretation based on the principles of our early Muslim generation from the time of our beloved prophet, then it is possible to bring the glory of Islam again.

This research will try to come up with content and textual analysis of the Shah Wali Ullah(d.1762)’s famous book ‘ *Al-Faujul Kabir Fe Usulit Tafsir*’ (Bengali title : *Quran Bakhkhar Mulniti*) to comprehend the principles of explanations to understand the holy book, The Quran, of Islam.

What is Quran? The Quran is an Arabic word and the root of word is ‘qira’ which mean ‘ read’ . This book is read by all Muslims across the world. Muslims consider this book revealed by the God through different medium and Jibril, the trustworthy angel of God, mostly brought verses to Muhammad (pbuh) throughout his life span. This book has been continuously revealed over 23 years of messenger’s life. The Quran is also considered as one of the most controversial books in the human history in contemporary time. Especially after 9/11 attacks the book came into focus light by the western intellectuals.³ The book has been misinterpreted worldwide terms like ‘Jihad’(Holy War).

Because of misinterpretation of this book, Islamophobia is all time high across the world.⁴ Even within Muslim countries, the interpretation of this book is noteworthy. There are different sects within Muslim countries and these sects explain Quran in different ways. These kind of interpretation makes huge controversy withing Muslim communities. There are various types of Muslims like *Shia, Sunni, Hanfie, Maleki, Shafeii, Ahle Hadith, Mutazilaa*, Sufi, moderate Muslims, liberal Muslims, political Muslims, secular Muslims, agnostic Muslims, gay Muslims, lesbian Muslims etc. The major problem is each group thinks that they are on the right track only. They interpret Quran in their way and each group claim that their way of interpretation is right. Then , the extremist groups like Al-Kaeda, Taliban, Boko Haram, IS and so many other groups aroused and they also think that they are right from their stance⁵. This kind of diversity exists within this Muslim community. Some scholars say this is good while some scholars say this is not good. Prophet mentioned in the hadith indicating 73 groups will appear as the sign of the day of judgement. Only one of which will enter paradise.

In this kind of circumstances this is important to understand the concept of principles of explanation of Quranic text. There are so many books written on this topic by early Muslim intellectuals. However, this research will focus on

2. Biography of Shah Waliullah

³ “Islam and the Patterns in Terrorism and Violent Extremism.” Islam and the Patterns in Terrorism and Violent Extremism | (Center for Strategic and International Studies, November 15, 2022). <https://www.csis.org/analysis/islam-and-patterns-terrorism-and-violent-extremism>.

⁴ Al Jazeera. “Decades after 9/11, Muslims Battle Islamophobia in US.” September 11 News | Al Jazeera. Al Jazeera, September 11, 2022. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/9/11/decades-after-9-11-muslims-battle-islamophobia-in>.

⁵ Mahasneh, Anjad A. “The Translation of Jihad Verses after the Emergence of Isis: Distortion or Reality.” *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies* 10, no. 5 (2021): 129. <https://doi.org/10.36941/ajis-2021-0128>.

According to Encyclopedia Britannica, Shah Waliullah was born in 1702/3 in Delhi India and he died in 1762 in the same city of India⁶. He is famous for reassessing Islamic theology in the light of modern changes. Waliullah learned traditional Islamic teaching from his father. He also memorized Quran at the age of 7. In 1732, he went to Makkah for Hajj and he was Hajaz later on to study theology from prominent theologians. During his time Mughal empire collapsed and Hindus were ruling. This was challenging period for Waliullah as an imam. He allowed Ijtihad to bring change in Indian society. The famous work of Wali Allah was *Asrar al-din* (The Secrets of Belief).

3. Methodology of Shah Waliullah

Shah Waliullah used content analysis as well as textual analysis in '*Al Fauzul Kabir Fe Usulit Tafsir*'. It was translated in Bengali under the title of '*Quran Bakhkhar Mulniti*'. He went through all the major tafsir books from prominent Islamic scholars and he studied all of their methodologies of Tafsir to include the result for this book. He also referred to Quranic text and he analyzed the words and texts to convince readers so that readers can comprehend easily.

4. Exploration

Shah Oaliullah's book '*Al Faujul Kabir Fe Usulit Tafsir*' (The Principles of Quranic explanation) will be discussed in the following.⁷

At the introduction of book, Author divided 5 major themes in Quranic text.⁸

1. *Ilmul Ahkaam* (Rulings)
2. *Ilmul Jadal* (Ethics)
3. *Ilmut Tajkir Bi alallah*(ontological)
4. *Ilmut tajkir be aiameillah* (Creation)
5. *Ilmut Tajkir bil Maaut* (Metaphysics)

It is better to have some brief discussion on these 5 topics.

1. *Ilmul Ahkaam* (Rulings)

This knowledge focuses mainly on rulings. For instance, praying, transactions, household, politics, economy etc. Basically those becoming expertise in this field they are called as Fakhir and they can explain what is permissible or not permissible based on Quranic rulings.

2. *Ilmul Jadal*

This knowledge is mainly to argue with non-muslims like Jews, Christians, Polytheists and hypocrites. Those who are expert in this field are called *mutakallimin*.

3. *Ilmut Tajkir Bi alallah*

This knowledge discusses about things created by Allah swt. The signs of Allah in this universe.

4. *Ilmut tajkir be aiameillah* (Creation)

This knowledge is all about those who follow religion and how they will be rewarded and those who do not follow religion how they will be punished.

5. *Ilmut Tajkir bil Maaut* (Metaphysics)

This section of knowledge discusses about day of judgement, hellfire and heaven.

The Quran follows the narration style during Prophet's time and this narration style differs from later period of time. That means Allah uses very simple way so that people can understand very

easily during that period of time. He did not use complexity so that people are unable to understand. This is not the way Allah wants.

Usually, some interpreters may interpret some ayat and they try to bring one relevant story and they may think that only this story is only reason to reveal the ayat, but that is not necessarily the case sometimes. However, we come to learn that Quran was revealed to eradicate all types of cultural influences that are associated or have elements of Shirk (Associating partnership with God). Hence, there are different ayat in Quran and these ayat are revealed for different reasons. For example, Ayats related rulings are revealed to amend our daily actions so that we can establish justice and avoid from doing injustice. Similarly, there are some ayat which are revealed to remind people due to forgetfulness from God's bounty.

Interpreters should not spend too much explanation on small matters because Quran was not revealed for these small matters. However, if the ayat talk about story of previous prophets, it is always great to add some relevant stories so that the readers can grasp the overall context for that specific message that Allah swt mentions in ayat. Also, the readers are naturally inclined to listen story related to that particular ayat.

Ayate Mukhasama

Quran mainly shows the defects or illogical claims made by 4 groups⁹. Namely, Jews, Christians, polytheists and hypocrites. The purpose was to show all the defects of their claims and show them why those activities are band and Quran wanted to clarify the doubts and gave them solutions.

For instance, people of Makka used to think that they are the real follower of prophet Ibrahim (pbuh), but the problem is they would do polytheism and lots of activities that were not approved by Prophet Ibrahim (pbuh). They claim that they are following Abrahamic faith but they were involved with killing, stealing, interest, fornication, snatching wealth etc. The most dangerous part is shirik and this was rampant in Makkah till Prophet Muhammad was given revelation. As we read Quran, we can identify the shortcomings that people of Makka were having. E.g. they do not believe in day of judgement. They do not believe in life after death. These kinds of people are still existing in our contemporary society.

What Quran did was Quran asks he credibility for this kind of idol worship related God. Quran asks for evidence. Also, they are informed that all the prophets in the past came for one message and that is oneness of God. Also, there are few misunderstandings that Allah rectifies for them. Also, the message was vigilant that God is one and prophet Muhammad was a messenger of God and there is a day of judgement and thereafter there will be hell and heaven depending on our actions on this earth. If we notice chapters during Makkan period, we can see the trends related above matters. They even asked the credibility of prophethood of Muhammad (pbuh) asking why God did not send angel rather He sends man. Allah answers this question also.

Next, The Jews community believed in the Old Testament, but the problem was they distorted the book and the meaning also changed. There were numerous verses they eliminated also. They also did not maintain their religion also. They were racist. They could not accept Muhammad (pbuh) as prophet. They did bad remarks on God and prophet. Also, they had so many problems They thought that they are chosen people. Hence, they would not be punished in hereafter. Even though they get punished, they will be left afterwards. Quran refuted their claims. They used to claim their words as God's word. Also, Jews did not accept Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) because they thought that Prophet was not from Jews background. To sum up, Jews did use religion mostly for their self-interest. There are Muslim imams

⁶ Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Shāh Walī Allāh." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, January 1, 2022. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Shah-Wali-Allah>.

⁷ Shah Waliullah,. *Quran Bakhkhar Mulniti*(Principles of Interpretations for Quran).(Dhaka: Kutub Khanae Rashidia , 2004).

⁸ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁹ *Ibid.*, page-15

in our society who use religion for the sake of them. Quran mentions this category.

Afterward, the Christians. They had problem with the concept of trinity. The Father, The Son and the holy spirit. How Jibril came with the appearance of human. Jesus can come with one appearance but 3 in 1. Quran came and answered all the misconception about Christianity like the death of Jesus (pbuh) and the concept of trinity.

The last category of people is hypocrites. These people accepted Islam because whole tribes accepted Islam. They loved worldly lives only. They were busy with farming and other related stuffs. The even doubt the prophethood of Muhammad (pbuh) but they would not go that far as to renounce religion and talk against Islam openly.

The reason was Prophet was human like them and prophet's activity of conquering different part of the world was like conquering world by other nations. Prophet was just like strong king like other kings. They had friends among non-Muslims and they helped non-Muslims who were causing trouble to Muslims. In contemporary time we have leaders and students from science and social science background. They doubt about religion and get busy with worldly life.

The Story of Quran

The way Quran narrate the stories is completely different than story books.¹⁰ The Quran never go in details of any story. It offers story which is relevant to any particular message that Allah wish to make people understand. If whole story was described in the quran, people lose the core message of the story. There are few stories narrated several times following certain style. For example,

1. The creation of Adam, Story of Angels bowing down in front of Adam and how Adam was diverted from
2. For the spread of oneness of Allah, there are unique stories starting from Prophet Nuh, Saleh, Lut, Shoaeb (pbu them all) etc . These stories are important because these stories show how they face difficulties in spreading the message of Allah swt and how the unbelievers ridicule the prophets and how Allah punished them at the end for their stubbornness towards religion.
3. The conflict between Moses and King of Egypt (Firaun). This story has been mentioned few times to remind people how the disobedience of King towards Allah turned into nightmare for the King of Egypt at the end of his life.
4. Then the story of prophet Dawud and Sulaiman (pbuh) and then Prophet Auyub and Yunus (pbuh). How they overcome their difficult situation. How Prophet Zakaria's Dua was accepted. Also, the story of Isa (pbuh) how he was born miraculously and how he suffered for his tawhidic message among the Jews people.

All the stories have been told in the Quran for different reason. The reason is very clear. Allah shows how the outcome for doing shirk and the result for the believers in God.

Why the Quran is complicated?

Quran has been revealed in Arabic but as time passes Islamic State expanded and there were so many non-Arabs converted into Islam¹¹. Now the problem arises about teaching the Quran. The Arabic dictionary and grammar became necessary component. There so many problems started to arise. Tafsir books started to be written. There came necessary to explain some critical verses. There need examples. Sometimes the meaning of some words is

ambiguous and it is difficult to understand the whole meaning of that verse. That's why it is necessary how companions of prophets and successors understood those verses. Thats how we can try to grasp those meaning.

Nasikh and Mansukh problem

Sometimes one verse come later and former verse is negated due to later verse. Therefore, it is difficult to predict real significance.

Also, lack of information about the reason for the revelation of certain cases can cause ambiguity.

There are grammatical ambiguity also cause meaning ambiguity.

Therefore, if anyone wants to interpret Quran, it is responsibility for a interpreter to know the principles of Tafsir(explanation).

The possible best explanation for Quranic verses would be to use techniques of early interpreter like Abdullah Ibn Abbas and ibn Abi Talha (Ra).Many interpreters try to copy Ibn Abbas in their books. Imam Bukhari followed, for instance, early imam.

1. Nashak and Mansukh Problem

There are two groups for this problem.

One group is early generation like companions and successors

Another group is later generation.

According to early generation group, there are approximately 500 *mansukh* ayats that are under this category¹². However, it differs in later generation. *Naskh* and *Mansukh* mainly deal with the rulings which need to be negated or eliminated from practicing. For instance, Quran contains verses related alcohol consumption. It was not completely prohibited at the initial stage, how it was completely prohibited in later stage. These verses can be considered under the category of Naskh and Mansukh. There is another example to cite an example. In Quran, there is a verse (2:187) stating that sexual intercourse is allowed during the night of Ramada. At the initial stage, it was completely prohibited during ramadan even in night. We can notice how Naskh and Mansukh are working from this example easily.

2. Shane Nujul (Background Information of Quranic Verse)

To understand Quranic text and to explain the Quran, Interpreter may face this *Shane Nujul* (Context) challenge after Naskh and Mansukh problem¹³. We know that Quran has been revealed over 23 years on prophet depending on the problems or questions that were asked by people. There are so many situations and Allah reveals specific verses during that particular moment. When we read or try to understand any Quranic verse, it is difficult to understand that literal meaning only without understanding the specific purpose or in which context this verse was revealed. Once we know the background information or context , we would not be misled.

After 9/11, the attack on Muslims is very high. Islamophobia is rampant across the world. Western scholars some time use Quranic verse to justify their claim just to prove that Muslims are terrorist because their Quran says so. In that instance, they quote from Surah Tawbah. There is a verse in Surah tawbah asking to kill unbelievers wherever you find. Now imagine if you show this qur'anic verse to any person who has no knowledge about Shane Nujul (Contextual Information) about his particular verse. What would be the outcome? Obviously weather Muslims or Non-Muslims, you would obviously come to conclusion that Muslims are inclined to be terrorist by Quran. In reality, that is not the case. The background information of that verse is that there was a time when Muslims had to defend their land for their security purpose and as a consequence Allah reveals that particular verse. It is not like Allah is asking to kill every single unbeliever in the world. That is wrong conception for sure. An analogy can be useful in this instance, imagine you are patrolling as a soldier in the forest in

¹⁰ Ibid.,37.

¹¹ Ibid., 42.

¹² Ibid.,45 .

¹³ Ibid.,57

Malaysia and Thailand border. The rule from government of Thailand in case they find any perpetrator who are doing illegal activities in the border is ‘ Shoot first, ask later’.

This is important because if they do not do so, these soldiers might be killed by these smugglers. In that particular instance it is necessary to maintain that rule to safeguard country and its soldiers. The similar case happened in this particular verse. Unfortunately, western orientalisists are taking this kind of verse and using that verse to attack Muslim to prove as terrorist. Also, radical groups among Muslims use same verse to convince its followers. However, that should not be done in that way. We use same verse to misinterpret just to get our selfish interest and that is pure hypocritical. That’s why knowing Shane Nujul (Background information) is very necessary. This is post-normal times and intellectuals have tendency to use post-modern interpretation¹⁴. This kind of interpretation has obviously some good advantages since it encourages for critical thinking. However, if we only interpret religious text using primary source only eliminating the background context, the analysis by default would be shallow.

When this kind of shallow interpretation will be accepted, the result may be devastating as we experience destruction across Muslim world by Western invaders for last few decades. Another analogy may be fruitful here. Young generation are fond to social media news. They just scroll 100 of news every day. If these social media users predict something based on any news, that would be just shallow justification because they did not experience in person. E.g. A news showing a person is slapped by a police man and we feel sorry for that man, but we did not know that person was teasing a girl and as a consequence the police slapped that boy. Bernard Lewis¹⁵ and Samuel P. Huntington¹⁶ both did same thing by using their conspiracy theory towards Islam. The entire narrative of Islamic literature has been misrepresented. Islam has been portrayed as religion of invader and Quran has been portrayed as the source of international terrorism. Radical jews community in Israel use same strategy to interpret old testament in shallow manner just to promote state of Israel. The shallow interpretation of religious texts is a major trend in contemporary academia. It happens due to tsunami of information where it is difficult to distinguish right and false information.

The point is worth emphasizing here that if any similar event happens, prophet used to read that similar verse to relate that particular event , but what is happening in contemporary context is the even is different and they somehow try to relate to justify for their stance. For instance, Hijab will be banned by the prime minister within a Muslim country but it is all right if prime minister’s daughter does not wear Hijab. It was not the case of prophet Muhammad (pbuh). There is a famous saying of Muhammad (pbuh) about cutting the hand off Fatima for the ruling of stealing. The hypocritical mindset and interpretation for the benefit of self-interest is rampant in contemporary literature and this is extremely difficult to distinguish authentic and unauthentic interpretation.

For Muhaddis , they explain verse sometimes which is not *shane nujul*. Companions use different verses when they argue each other. Also, when prophet mentioned the verse in any particular moment. Sometimes they relate with hadith. Muhaddis brought all

the issues to explain some particular verse. Sometimes they may mention place of revelation or indefinite indication towards those for whom the verse was revealed. Sometimes they relate verse with that particular chapter or they focus on wordings of that verse.

It is not necessary for interpreter to relate with all the events of Muhaddis , rather interpreter needs to focus on particular event for which this verse has been revealed. This will give them to get the hint information. Also, interpreter needs to know why the meaning goes for different direction from literal meaning due to any particular instance. Without this it is hard to get the real message of the verse. These two are extremely important to interpret Quran. There are stories of prophet from bible also as we have noticed in Tafsir ibn Kathir. These kinds of stories we neither say right nor wrong. That’s how Imam Bukhari used to deal with these stories.

Sometimes Companions and successors use the characteristics of Jews and polytheists during their time as to explain similar situation related ayat. There are verses in Quran related the bad qualities and good qualities like having good relationship with parents or following bad companions in this world. These verses do not specify any particular event rather theses are common verse for all.

For companions, they used to make a question first before they start debating among themselves and then they investigate and sometimes they brought previous verse or later verse to comprehend the whole problem for the answer. Two things to remember for interpreters 1. They need to bring all relevant events that are indicated by verse. 2. If verse needs the shane nujul to convince the real meaning that is different from literal meaning, interpreters must mention this.

There are some other matters during interpretation of Quran. For example,

1. (*Hojf*)-elimination. By using *Hojf* in the part of sentence, the sentence meaning becomes uncertain. (e.g. Mudaf, Mausuf, Mutaallat etc.)
2. (*Ebdaal*)- Change. There are various changes in wordings in. It can be synonymous words or gender change or singular to plural or plural to singular. Sometimes sentence Quran also like if next sentence can maintain the message of previous sentence message, then one sentence is enough. Sometimes the narration style also can be changed. Inversion can happen as well.

Muhkam, Mutashabiha, Kenaya, Ta’reej, Majaje akli

There are two types of verses in Quran in general. One is *Ayat-e Muhkamat* and another is *ayat-e mutashabihaat*.¹⁷

Ayat Muhkamat refers to those verses that are clear to everyone and *ayat Mutashabihat* are the ayats that are unclear. Like if we read 2nd chapter of Quran and the first verse is combined with 3 Arabic letters like Alif, Laam, Mim. Prophet never explained about these kinds of verses because only Allah knows the real meaning of these verses. These are like the secret code of Quran and only Allah can decode these verses.

Kenaya refers to sentence that means different. For example, his hand is wide. This means he is very kind to donate people. This kind of sentence existing in Quran.

Ta’reej refers to implicit. That means we just talk generally but we refer to that some group for that talk.

Then, *Majaje Akli* refers to metaphor. For instance, Minister built this house. In fact, Minister did not build the house rather workers build the house but Minister owns this house since he spent money on this building for his family.

¹⁷ Shah Waliullah,. Quran Bakhkhar Mulniti(Principles of Interpretations for Quran).(Dhaka: Kutub Khanae Rashidia, 2004), p.96.

¹⁴ H. Nowotny ,*Time: modern and postmodern experience*. (Cambridge: Polity, 1994).

¹⁵ Author, No. “Islam and the West: A Conversation with Bernard Lewis.” Pew Research Center's Religion & Public Life Project. Pew Research Center, May 31, 2020. <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2006/04/27/islam-and-the-west-a-conversation-with-bernard-lewis/>.

¹⁶ Samuel P Huntington. *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*.(London: Penguin, 2014).

Characteristics of Quran

Unlike any other book in the world, Quran does not maintain chronological order. As mentioned earlier that Quran was revealed over 23 years and it is not like Allah sends the Quran chapter by chapter. Rather it depended on situation. Sometimes some verses or sometimes one chapter. All depends on circumstance. After the death of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), during the time of Abu Bakar it was compiled and fragmented verses and chapters were combined.¹⁸ Companions ordered them in 4 types.

1. *Saba Tual*: It consists of 7 long chapters
2. *Miun*: These Chapters consist of 100 verses.
3. *Masaani*: Less than 100 verses.
4. *Mufassal*: above 3 kinds were prominent and the rest chapters are under this category.

During the time of Uthman(RA), there were few copies of Mashaf and Uthman(Ra) sent to different part of the worlds. Till today we see the same format that was done during the time of Uthman (Ra). This Quran is like letter. This letter is from the king of the universe as a witness statement for whole of mankind.

Quran and Poetry

We love to recite poetry because poetry has rhythm and appealing wordings. Quran was revealed during the time when poetry was considered most educated modern art. Hence, it was kind of challenge towards the people of Makkah. Also, people who converted Islam can experience the real beauty of Quran in terms of its meaning and structure.

Quran is not poetry like traditional version rather it was open challenge and break the traditional way how Arabic poetry was composed.¹⁹ Quran breaks the tradition of poetry that Arab used to practice. That's how new literature evolves over the time. For example, if we look at Victorian literature and art and we compare with modern literature we can see the differences in terms of its structure and meaning. If we look at English romantic literature and compare with modern art and literature then we can realize how art and literature breaks through from traditional form of art by creating new art.

Similarly, Quran was magical breakthrough during that period of time. It had open challenge to the poetry community across Arab world and it brings revolution in terms of its meaning and message. The influence of poetry and literature we have observed in world art and especially during war poetry and literature motivates its people to fight till the end of his or her life. Same thing happened here. Quran was inspiration and is being inspiration till today for the Muslims over the centuries.

Also, humans are inclined to music and it gives us interest and recitation of Quran in Muslim prayers obviously has inclination for believers to stick to with their goal that is align with Islam. Quran is composed for Universal brotherhood and love and it connects with the love of the universe and the best poetry and literature in the world by default is the Quran.

In Shakespeare we have noticed about sonnet²⁰. We also see the iambic pentameter, rhyme etc. If notice qur'anic rhyme it is astounding. Let's look at the Surah Ikhlas the small surah with 4 verses only²¹. It has finished with the letter 'Dal'. So, 4 verses finished with the same letter. Now if you notice other chapters, you can notice this kind of work of art. It is like some greatest poet carefully did this art who is aware of the beauty and meaning what

he is uttering. The question is if this coming from Muhammad(pbuh) as a psychopath as atheist and psychologist raise regarding prophet²² and religious texts, how this kind of rhyme has been maintained by the psychopath along with meaning?

Also, prophet was busy with so many works like household, performing prayer as imam, talking and dealing with people, answering questions and dealing with warfare and so many things. When he answers questions, everyone can sense the question. So far mentioned in hadith, not even a single hadith that can be considered as not making sense. The issue of Jinn obviously something that science could not prove, that does not mean speaking about black magic and Jinn are fairytales. We obviously no knowledge about metaphysical world, however when we read Quran and reflect upon it, it can not be coming from human as soon as we compare with other works in the market.

Why repetition of verses? This we have noticed especially Chapter Rahman. It is to remind its reader the favor of Allah swt on us. There are other chapters also that do same thing. Prophet used to say 3 times if something is very important. Quran is the universal message for everyone. The repetition of the stories or verses are to emphasize on the topic.

There is another important point that is the chapter of Quran is not chronologically. For example, within one surah we notice few issues and stories. Quran was revealed during medieval period of time and Quran did not make sure to deliver its message only rather Quran tries to remember you what Quran is trying to convince. We use hook towards the beginning of any essay so that readers can get interest and sometimes nothing interesting inside the essay, however, Quran mix up all contents and the hook is found even toward middle and end of chapter. That's beauty of this Book.

Types of Scholars for Tafsir of Quran.

There are 7 types of interpreters of Quran²³.

1. *Muhaddis-Mufassirin*
2. *Mutakallimin Mufassirin*
3. *Fakih-Mufassirin*
4. *Lugati Muhassirin*
5. *Adabi Mufassirin*
6. *Kari Musassirin*
7. *Sufi Mufassirin*

Istembat, Tawjih and Tawil

1. *Istembat* deals with (masalah) solution from Quranic verses.²⁴

2. *Tawjih* or explanation: Different person will explain differently based on the capacity of that person.

3. *Ta'wil* or implicit meaning: This is done by few scholars based on Mutashabih verses. There are various reasons for this. It can happen for language, grammar. This actually started after companion time. Mystics explain Quran in different manner in complex way and that was not available during prophet time. The companions also did not explain like that way Sufi does.

5. Analysis:

Strong Points:

1. Shah Waliullah deals with basic principles how a scholar can do explanation of Quran by using different

¹⁸ Ibid., 101.

¹⁹ Ibid., 106.

²⁰ Oscar, and Lev. "Shakespeare's Sonnets." No Sweat Shakespeare, January 28, 2021. <https://nosweatshakespeare.com/sonnets/>.

²¹ "Surah Al-Ikhlās - 1-4." Quran.com. Accessed November 17, 2022. <https://quran.com/ms/al-ikhlas>.

²² "The Prophet Muhammad Was a Raging Sociopath." The Atheist Papers, January 21, 2014. <https://atheistpapers.com/2014/01/21/the-prophet-muhammad-was-a-raging-sociopath/>.

²³ Shah Waliullah, Quran Bakhkhar Mulniti (Principles of Interpretations for Quran). (Dhaka: Kutub Khana Rashidia, 2004), p. 124.

²⁴ Ibid, 135.

techniques that early Muslims do since the beginning of revelation.

2. He also explains all the major topics that Muslim scholars need to take into consideration during tafsir of Quran.
3. He also has good explanations with so many qur'anic verses as to make readers understand what is the topic is all about.

Weak Points

1. Shah Waliullah's book has lacking to deal with contemporary concerns like progressive groups who are using religious texts for progressive reform. For example, Irshad Manji promoting LGBTQ using religious text.
2. His book also has lack of explanations on those who are doing explanation based on translation works in contemporary times.
3. His book also has lacking in dealing with non-Muslims on how they can explain Quran as orientalist.

6. Criticism

1. Shah Waliullah did not deal with contemporary problem of Tafsir by radical or progressive reformists.
2. He did not explain the methodology of 6 categories well other than one category .E.g. He did not mention how mystics have done tafsir of Quran.
3. Wali Allah also did not engage much discussion on any specific tafsir book, rather he just provided general overview.
4. He also did not mention about orientalist. His focus on tafsir by Muslims.
5. He also did not discuss at all about progressive Muslims who are using the translation to do Tafsir of Quran.

7. Addition

1. When it comes to the scope of explanation of Quran, like orientalist or Muslims who do not have Arabic background. There must be some sort of new frame work for them, because simply ignoring these people explanation would not solve the problem of new explanation by progressive groups like LGBTQ, Feminism etc.
2. Moreover, there is a scientific literature in contemporary time. Hence, when explaining Quran, it is necessary to relate with accurate resources because when we put weak references and orientalist find these weak references and they try to criticize by saying these are contradictory with empirical evidence, however, these are weak reference which may not have any relation with actual qur'anic text.
3. Also, there should be solution for the radical groups of Muslims because these are the part of Muslim community and because of their identity as Muslims, entire Muslims community are viewed as fundamentalists promoting terrorism. IS and Al Qaeda for instance are product from Muslim countries.

8. Conclusion

It can be concluded that Shah Waliullah's book has significance to understand the principles of Tafsir. He was successfully able to draw the sketch on how Muslims can contribute in the field of Tafsir for Quran. This is indeed a great responsibility in each century for the Muslim intellectuals to come up with new explanation of Quran as to cope up with the new context. However, the contemporary challenge is very complicated since there are so many progressive groups are arising to interpret Quran and there are so many narratives. They do not maintain the principal of interpretations as mentioned by the previous scholars. This is extremely challenging time for Muslims in general. If we read interpretations of Quran by different progressive groups, we can encounter how these groups are trying to interpret Quran without referring to any kind of Arabic source and manipulating youth Muslims. Learning rational tafsir would help us how to interpret Quran based in the context. This is very crucial skills for contemporary scholars not to fall into trap that is given by orientalist. This is indeed a heavy task for the Muslim scholars in 21st century, especially age of technology is really challenging time when crypto currency, and artificial intelligence is ahead of us to lead the world. If Muslim scholars can not reconcile these raising concerns it would be really difficult to deal with current generation where they have tendency to move forward post-religious world.

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