

A scholarly review of Some Weak Narrations in Mūlvi Murād 'Ali's "Tafsīr Yasīr" (Surah al-A'rāf)

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ABSTRACT

The Holy Quran and the Sunnah of the prophet Muhammad (SAW) are the basic sources of Islamic Shari'ah. The validity of a hadith is based on the authentic sanad, because after the companions some fabricators presented countless narrations and attributed to prophet, so the Muhaddithīn founded the science of Jarh o Tadīl, due to which authentic and un-authentic narrators are distinguished. Most of tafasīr contain large number of fabricated and weak narrations, which impact the validity of those tafasīr, so it is the need of day to find the fabricated and weak narrations in different tafasīr. Mūlvī Murād Ali was a famous scholar who had compiled a tafsīr in Pashto language known as Tafsīr Yasīr. It is a big treasure of explanatory narrations but unfortunately he has quoted some weak narrations in his tafsīr. In this article some weak narrations in surah al-A'rāf are reviewed in a scholarly manner.

KEYWORDS: Validity, fabricators, countless, jarh o tadeel, treasurer.

INTRODUCTION

Allah has revealed the Holy Quran for the guidance of mankind, It contains two kinds of verses i.e. the verses which have clear meaning and the verses which do not have clear meaning and need to be explained. In prophetic era, when the companions faced some difficulties in understanding the meaning of the holy Quran, they asked directly from the Holy Prophet. After the Holy Prophet the successors asked from the companions. The science of tafseer in written form was started in the period of the companions.

Till the period of successors, explanation of Quran was together with hadith books, for which the Muhaddithin used to write a separate chapter of tafseer in their books but after the successors the tafseer were separated from Ahadith and a permanent explanation of Quranic verses were saved in the form of tafseer books.

When Islam spread in Non-Arab nations, the Holy Quran was translated into different languages. Till now, large number of tafaseer are written, every tafseer has its own features and methodology. Among these one tafseer is written by Pakhtun scholar Maulvi Murad Ali of Jalal abad (Afghanistan). It is the first printed tafseer in Pashto language. There are countless features in this tafseer but some weak narrations are present in it. Some of them in surah Al-A'raf are mentioned in this article.

Objectives

This article deals with points given below:

- 1: Introductions of Maulvi Murad Ali.
- 2: Introduction of Tafseer Yaseer.
- 3: A scholarly review of some weak narrations in tafseer Yaseer (Surah al-A'raf).

Literal Meaning of Tafseer:

The word "tafseer" comes from "fasara", which means, to explain, to uncover and to unveil. The word tafsir is the verbal noun of fasara and means the explanation of some things. The Muslims scholars have different views about the meaning of tafseer, some of them are the following [1],

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وَأَمَّا التَّفْسِيرُ فَيَا لُغَةً: فَهُوَ أَجْمَلُ بَعْضِ الظَّاهِرِ وَالكَشْفُ أَصْلُهُ فَيَا لُغَةً التَّفْسِيرُ قَوْلُ هَذَا قَلِيلٌ مِّنَ الْمَاءِ الَّذِي يُنْظَرُ فِيهَا لِأَطْبَاءٍ فَكَمَا أَنَّ الطَّبِيبَ النَّظَرَ فِيهِ يَكْشِفُ عَنْ عِلَّةِ الْمَرَضِ بِضَرْفٍ كَذَلِكَ الْمُفْسِّرُ يَكْشِفُ عَنْ شَأْنِ آيَاتِهِ وَفَصْصِهَا وَمَعْنَاهَا وَالسَّبَبِ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ فِيهِ وَقَالَ آخَرُونَ: هُوَ مَقْلُوبٌ مِّنْ سَفَرٍ وَمَعْنَاهُ يَصْطَلِحُ الْكُتُبُ قَالَ: سَفَرٌ يَأْمُرُ أَقْسَمُورَ إِذَا الْفَتْخَمَارَ هَا عَنُوجُهُمَا وَهِيَ سَافِرَةٌ

Literally tafseer means expression and explanation, its origin is tafseerah, it means that water by which doctor express the patient's illness, so the interpreter of Quran expresses the meaning, Qasas and revelation of the verses of Quran. Some others said, It is inverted from safar, It means also expression, a woman who uncovers her face is called safirah, so according to this definition tafseer means uncovering the meanings and exposing the secret of the Quran. Ibn-e-Manzoor Alafriqi writes[2]:

الْفَسْرُ: كَشْفُ الْمَغْطَى، وَالتَّفْسِيرُ كَشْفُ الْمَرَادِ عَنِ اللَّفْظِ الْمُشْكِلِ

“Al- Fasar means to unveil something and during tafseer difficult words are unveiled to explain”

Mujad-ud-Din Firoz Abadi writes[3]:

الْفَسْرُ: الْإِبَانَةُ، وَكَشْفُ الْمَغْطَى، كَالْتَّفْسِيرِ، وَفِعْلُهُ كَضَرَ يَوَضِّرُ

“Al-Fasar means to reveal and unveil and so as tafseer, its verbs are (رَوَضَّرَ) ”.

Meaning of Tafseer in Quran

The word tafseer is also used in Quran in the meaning of explanation, Allah says[4]:

وَلَا يَأْتِيَنَّكُمْ مِّنْهُ إِلَّا بِآيَاتٍ لَّا يَجْعَلُ الْغَوْفَ أَحْسَنَ تَفْسِيرًا

“And no example or similitude do they bring but We revealed to you the truth and the better explanation”.

Conventional Meaning of Tafseer

It is cleared from the above discussion that tafseer is the knowledge through which the meaning of Quran is cleared. Tafseer's conventional meanings are explained by many scholars according to their own point of views in different words but their sense are given the same. Some of them are the following,

Allama Zarkasi writes[5]:

التَّفْسِيرُ عِلْمٌ يُعَرِّفُ فِيهِ قُرْآنُ اللَّهِ الْمُنَزَّلَ لِعَلَّنِي بِهِ مُحَمَّدٌ صَلَّاهُ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ بَيَانًا مَعَانِيَهُوَ اسْتِخْرَاجُ أَحْكَامِهِ وَحُكْمِهِ

“The knowledge by which that book of Allah which is revealed to His messenger Hazrat Muhammad is understood, its meanings explained, and its rulings and wisdom derived”.

Abdul Azim Zarqani writes[6]:

علمٌ يبحث فيه عن القرآن آنالكر بمنحيث لا تهله علم ادالهته بقدر الطاقة البشرية

“Tafseer is the knowledge regarding Quran that discusses, as per human capacity, the will of Allah”.

Conclusion

The above research shows that the word tafseer is used for any explanation, whether it is the explanation of an ordinary book or a revealed book, whether it is the explanation of truth or false, whether it is the explanation of a matter or words, but in Islamic point of view it is the explanation of the holy Quran only, even the explanation of a Hadith also, is not called Tafseer.

Origin and Evaluation of Tafseer

The science of tafseer was started since the period of Prophet Muhammad, and he was the first commentator of the Quran, and it was the responsibility of the prophet to explain the Quran, Allah says[7]:

وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ

“And we have sent down to you (o Muhammad) the Dhikr(reminder and the advice i.e Quran), that you may explain clearly to men what is sent down to them”.

When the companions of Prophet faced a problem in the meaning of Quran then they asked directly from the Prophet, it is narrated[8]:

حَدَّثَنِي مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ بَشَّارٍ، حَدَّثَنَا ابْنُ أَبِي عَدِيٍّ، عَشْرَةَ، عَنْ سُلَيْمَانَ، عَنْ أَبِي إِهَيْمَ، عَنْ عَلْقَمَةَ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ [ص: 57] رَ بِاللُّهْغَةِ، قَالَ: " لَمَّا نَزَلَتْ: {وَلَمْ يُبَيِّنُوا} [الأنعام: 82] إِيْمَانَهُمْ بِظُلْمٍ أَصْحَابُهُ: وَأَبْنَاءُ الْمِطْلَمِ؟ فَنَزَلَتْ: {إِنَّا لَنَشُرُكَ} [لقمان: 13] لَطْلُمٌ عَظِيمٌ "

“And confuse not their belief with zulm(wrong)...was revealed, the prophet's companions said, “ which of us has not done zulm(wrong)?”. Then there was revealed: “Verily! Joining others in worship with Allah is a great zulm(wrong) indeed”.

Till the period of successors, explanation of Quran was together with Ahadith books, for which the Muhaddithin used to write a separate chapter of tafseer in their books, but after the successors the tafseer were separated from Ahadith and a permanent explanation of Quranic verses were saved in the form of tafseer books.

Types of Tafseer[9]

تفسير بالرأى وهو يسما التفسير بالمأثور وتفسير بالدرأى وهو يسما التفسير بالإشارة وهو يسما التفسير بالإشارة

There are three types of tafseer which are tafseer Bil-Mathur, tafseer Bil-Rai and tafseer Bil-Ishari.

1: Tafseer Bil-Mathur[10]

هو ما جاء في القرآن والسنة أو كلام الصحابة

When the verses of the Quran are explained by itself Quran or the Narration of the Prophet or the Narration of the companions then it is called tafseer Bil-Mathur[11].

أما ما ينقلنا التابعين ففيه خلافاً للعلماء منهم ما اعتبره من المأثور لأنهم تلقوا من الصحابة غالباً ومنهم من قال إنهم التفسير بالرأي

And tafseer of the Quran by the Narrations of the Successors some Mufasssireen included it in tafseer bil Mathur and some included it in tafseer bil Rai.

2: Tafseer Bil-Rai

That type of tafseer which is based on Ijtihad is said to be tafseer bil Rai, There are two types of tafseer bil Rai[12],

المراد بالرأي هنا الاجتهاد فإن كان الاجتهاد موقفاً لم يستند إلى ما يجبالاستناد إليه بعيداً عن الجاهل أو الضلال أو التفسير بهمحمود أو لا فمذموم

Rai (opinion) refers to ijtihad, if it is authentic and safe from error and ignorance then tafseer will be Mahmood otherwise Madhmoom.

3: Tafseer Bil-Ishari[13]

هو تأويل القرأن بغير ظاهره لا بشار تخفية تظهر لأرباب السلوك والتصوف ويمكن الجمع بينهما وبين الظاهر والمراد أيضاً وقد اختلف العلماء في التفسير المذكور فمنهم من أجاز هو من منمنعه

“It is the interpretation of the Quran beyond its outer meaning, It appears on the Sufi, and it can adapt with the apparent meaning, the scholars differed about this type of tafseer, some Mufasssireen allowed it and some forbade it”.

Introduction to Tafseer Yaseer

Its author is Maulvi Murad ali bin Abdur-Rahman Seilani of kamma, Jalal abad, Afghanistan. He was a great scholar and a mystic. He started this tafseer in 1282H and completed within two years. He was full command on Arabic, Persian and Pashto languages and also the poet of them. He had large number of students due to which his tafseer became very famous in Pakhtun area. He writes: “Some of my friends requested that I write a tafseer and translation of the holy Quran in Pashto language, a large number of tafaseer are present but no one in Pashto language, so i started a tafseer in fifth shawal of 1282H”. [1]

Silent features of Tafseer Yaseer

- 1: It is the first complete printed tafseer in Pashto language.
- 2: The writer divides the verses in small parts and writes their translation and commentary.
- 3: He writes reason for revelation of the verses where necessary, and often writes before the translation of the verses.
- 4: He translates literally and sometimes conventionally.
- 5: Its language is difficult; it has a large number of Arabic and Persian terminologies.
- 6: He was a great poet, so he has presented large number of Arabic, Persian and Pashto poetry.
- 7: At the end of the Surah, he has presented ahadith about Fazail (virtues) of Surah, but most of them are Weak or Fabricated.

Introduction to Hadith

Literally the word hadith means news or story, Allah says: “Has the story of Moses reached you?” [2] And its conventional meaning is,

“Hadith means, the words spoken or an act done or a confirmation given by the Holy prophet Muhammad (ﷺ)”.

Weak Hadith

A Weak hadith can be defined as [16],

الضعيف: وَهُوَ مَا لَمْ يَجْمَعْ صِفَةَ الصَّحِيحِ أَوِ الْحَسَنِ

“A hadith which did not collect the features of Sahih or Hassan Hadith”.

Some Weak Narrations in Tafseer Yaseer (Surah Al-A'raf)

In this tafseer most of the narrations and sayings of different Mufasssireen are taken from the following tafaseer,

- 1: Jami' al-bayan an tawil aya al-Quran/ Tafseer al-Tabari by Muhammad Ibn Jareer al-Tabari.
- 2: Tafseer Ibn abi Hatim (Tafseer al-Quran al-Azim) by Abdur Rahman bin Muhammad.
- 3: Tafseer al-Baghawi (Ma'alim al-Tanzil) by Abu Muhammad Husain ibn Mas'ud al-Farra al-Baghawi.

METHODOLOGY

1: The author narrates under, [17] (قَالَا هُبُّطُوا)

This narration is taken from tafseer tabari, its sanad is[19],

Status of the Narration

قَالَ الْبَخَارِيُّ: بَنَكَمُو فَيَهْلَسُنَا عَاقِبُو هَيَاهَا. وَقَالَ أَبُو زُرْعَةَ الرَّازِيُّ: لَا يَسْتَعْلِيهِ، كَانِيئَهُمْ. وَقَالَ ابْنُ أَبِي حَاتِمٍ: أَسَارَ عَلَيْهِمَا يَبْنِيَانِ عَيْرَ أَقَاهُ، فَإِنَّهَا أَفْسَدَ حَدِيثُهُ، وَقَالَ: لَا حِدْثًا لِمَنْ صُنِفَ.

2: He narrates under [21](أَخَاهُمُ شُعَيْبًا)

Its sanad is[23],

فَمَذِينُ قَبِيلَةٍ كَتَمِيمٍ.

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ حُمَيْدٍ، قَالَ: ثَنَّا سَلَمَةَ، عَنَّا نِسَاحَافًا كُنَّا الْأَمْرُ كَمَا قَالَ:

وَزَعَمَ أَنَّ النَّاسَ قَاتِلِيَّيْنِ عِبَادِي الذِّكْرِ اللَّهُ أَنْزَلَ سُلْطَانًا يَهْتَمُّونَ لِمَدَنِيَّتِهِ ۖ أَنَّهُ شَعْبِيٌّ مِثْلَكَ النَّبِيِّ سَجِرَ، قَالَ: وَاسْمُهُ السُّرُّ يَانِيٌّ بِرُونِ

Status of the Narration

It is a weak narration because in its sanad ibn humaid and salamah bin fazal both are weak.

Hafiz zahabi writes about ibn humaid[24]:

قَالَ أَبُو اسْحَاقَ الْجَوَزِيُّ: وَهُوَ غَيْرُ ثِقَةٍ كَتَبُوا زُرْعَةً، وَ مُحَمَّدٌ يُسْلِمُ، عَنْ مُحَمَّدٍ بِنِ حَمْدٍ حَدَّثَنَا كَثِيرٌ أَثْمَرَ كَالرَّوَاةِ عَنْهُ

Zahabi also writes about Salama bin fazal[25]:

وَقَالَ الْبُخَارِيُّ: عِنْدَهُمْ نَاكِيرٌ وَقَالَ النَّسَائِيُّ: □ عَيْفٌ.

3: He narrates under [26] (سَحَرُوا أَعْيُنَ النَّاسِ)

“And when they threw ropes and sticks, they bewitched the eyes of the people and the stick and ropes appear like big snakes that were running and climbing on each other”[27].

Its sanad is[28],

صَفْخَمْسَةَ عَشَرَ أَفْسَاحِرٌ، مَعْكَاسَاحِرٌ حِبَالُهُو عَصِيه.

حدثنا ابن حميد قال، حدثنا سلمة، عن ابن إسحاق قال:

وخرجوا سميعاً خرويتك على عصا هتنا أتالجمع، وفرعون فيم جلس معاً شراً فملكته، ثم قالت السحرة:

(يَا مُوسَى مَا أَنْفَقْتَهُمْ مَا أَنْتَ كُنَّا وَلَمْ أَفْقَ الْبَلَاءُ فَإِذَا حَبَالُهُمْ عَصِيهِمْ خِيَلًا لِيهِمْ سِحْرٌ هُمَا تَسْعَى)

فَكَانُوا لَمَّا خَلَطُوا بِمِصْرَ هَمِيرًا فَهَبْ يَصْبِرْ ۚ وَمَا كُنَّا فِيهِ نَاصِرًا ۖ ثُمَّ أَصْبَارًا لِلْأَسْبَاطِ ۚ

ثُمَّ أَفْكَرَ حُلْمُهُمَا فَبَدَّ هُمَا الْعَصَوُ الْحَيَالِ، فَذَا هُيَاكُلُهُمَا ثَمَالُ الْحَيَالِ، قَدَمَاتُهَا أَدْبِيرُ كُلِّ عَصَايَا عَصَا

Status of the Narration

It is a weak narration, because in its sanad ibn humaid and salamah both are weak narrators.Both have been examined above.

4: He narrates under [29] (الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ الرَّسُولَ)

“When Jews heard this verse then said that this mercy has sent for us because we believe in the signs of Allah and pay Zakat, so Allah finished there this hope and specify it to the ummah of Hazrat Muhammad (SAW)”[30].

Its sanad is[31],

حدثني عبد الكر يمقال، حدثنا ابراهيم بن بشار قال، قال سفيان قال، أبو بكر الهذلي: فلما نزلت: "ورحمته وسعت كل شيء"، قال إبليس: أنا من "الشيء"!

فنز عها اللهم ايليس، قال: "فسأكتبها الديننيقو نو يوتو نالز كاكو الذين هم بآياتنا يومنون"، فقال لليهود: نحن ننتقيو نو تيالز كاكو نو منبآياتر بنا! فنز عها اللهمنا ليهود فقال:

"الذين يتبعوننا ليسوا لانيشيا الأمم"، قال: نزعم ان الله معنا ليس، وعلانيه د، وجعلها هذه الأمة.

Status of the Narration

It is a weak narration, because in its sanad Abu Bakkr Huzli is weak narrator.

Hafiz Zahabi writes[32]:

- 2: In types of tafseer, tafsir Bil-Mathur and Tafsir Bil-Rai Al-Mahmood are permissible while Tafsir Bil-Rai Al-Madhmoom is not permissible.
- 3: The Holy Prophet (SAW) was the first Mufasssir of the Holy Quran.
- 4: Tafseer Yaseer is the first printed tafseer in Pashto language.
- 5: Tafseer Yaseer is “Tafseer bil Rai al-Mahmood”.
- 6: In this tafseer there is abundance of unauthentic, fabricated and false Israelitic narrations beside the authentic ones.
- 7: The basic sources of narrations of this tafseer are Tafseer Tabari and tafseer ibn abi Hatim.
- 8: Most of the narrations in this tafseer are taken as “Riwayah bil Ma'na”.

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