

THE FIELDS OF KNOWLEDGE

The sciences which Muslims took care to learn are of two types: basic and secondary.

Basic and original sciences: These are the sciences related to the Qur'an, Sunnah, Principles of the religion, literature and history etc. and Muslims themselves are the inventor of such sciences. They did not borrow these sciences from anyone else. These sciences are as under:

Science of Qira'aat: With the holy Qur'an there came into existence the science of Qira'at (Recitation). The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) caring for different dialects and people's ease would recite the holy Qur'an in more than one accent. The companions (may Allah be pleased with them) cared much for memorization of the holy Qur'an, its compilation and education. The famous Qurra (those expert at reciting the Qur'an with correct pronunciation) among the prophet's companions are: Ali bin Abu Talib, Uthman bin Affan, Ubai bin Ka'b, Zaid bin Thabit, Abu Musa Ash'ari, Salim Mawla Abu Huzaifah, Abdullah bin Mas'ood, Abu ad-Darda and Mu'az bin Jabal (may Allah be pleased with them all).

From these companions, other companions and great Tabi'een (those Muslims who saw sahaba and died as Muslims) of different countries learnt the Qur'an. Different people recited the holy Qur'an in various accents until there came the era of Seven Famous Qurra who are:

- 1,2: In Basra, Abu Amr bin 'Ala and Aasim
3. In Madinah, Nafe'
- 4, 5. In Kufa, Hamza and Kasaai
6. In Syria, Abdullah bin Aamir
7. In Makkah, Ibn Kathir

They paid much attention on preserving the reading style and traditions, and formulated rules for reciting the holy Qur'an. Thus, came into existence the science of Qira'at.

Qira'aat is the plural of Qira'at meaning "to read". And when used as a term it means reading the holy Qur'an as per the rules prescribed by any one of the leaders of Qira'ah. The reader must follow any of them in uttering the letters and pronouncing. A Qira'at is different from another. Muslims took much care to preserve these styles of reading and its rules as well as they made every effort to ascertain that the style or method of reading is attributed to any Qari correctly. There are various books on this subject:

1. At-Taiseer Fi al-Qira'aat as-Sab' by Ibn Sayrafi (died 444 AH)
2. Jame' al-Bayan Fi al-Qira'aat as-Sab' by Abu Amr Ad-Daani
3. An-Nashr Fi al-Qira'aat al-Ashr, by Ibn al-Jazari (died 833 AH)
4. Fi al-Qira'aat al-Ashr by Ibn Mahran Asbahani (died 381 AH)

The Science of Qira'aat and Tajweed (declamation of the holy Qur'an) helped people much in reciting the Qur'an correctly and kept it safe from adulteration. Similarly, the science of Tajweed helped another science come into existence i.e. Ilm al-Aswat (**Lexicography**). Later the scholars made rules for phonetics. And the scholars of phonetics benefitted much from this science.

The science of Tafseer:

It is the science that discusses the meaning and explanation to the Qur'an, the commandments and faiths mentioned in it, and the wisdoms and intelligence hidden in it. Ibn Abbas (*Radhi Allahu Anhu*) says that Tafseer is of four kinds:

1. That which can be understood through the language of the Arab (through Arabic dictionaries).
2. That which is known to all (as soon as one listens to the text he grasps its meaning and there remains no scope for vagueness.)
3. That which is known by the scholars (they know it through deduction and ijtihad)
4. That which is not known to anyone except Allah (these relate to the Unseen).

The methods of explaining the Qur'an:

- 1) Explanation of the Qur'an with the Qur'an itself.

- 2) Explanation of the Qur'an with the Sunnah.
- 3) Explanation of the Qur'an with the statements of the Companions
- 4) Explanation of the Qur'an with the statements of the Tabi'een.
- 5) Explanation of the Qur'an with the Arabic dictionary (because the Qur'an was revealed in evident clear Arabic language.)
- 6) Explanation of the Qur'an based on opinion and deliberation (al-Ra'i wa al-Ijtihad).

The explanation to the Qur'an will be done through the above mentioned means and in the same order. We cannot seek explanation through the second method unless the explanation of the required verse is not found in the first method, and so on. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) has explained some of the verses, but it is not proven with evidences that he has explained the whole Qur'an. Therefore, we will depend upon the explanation by the Messenger (ﷺ) only when it is known for certain that he had undoubtedly done it.

In the era of Tabi'een and those who followed them (Taba' Tabi'een), the science of Tafseer became a science separate from the science of Hadith. Separate books were written on both the sciences. So, different Tafseer books came into existence. From academic point of view, we can divide the Tafseer books into two broad categories:

Tafseer bi al-Mathur:

Such type of Tafseer is based completely on the narrations. In it, the Qur'an is explained through the Qur'an, Sunnah, statements of the companions and the tabi'een. Following are the important books on the subject:

1. Jami' al-Bayan Fi Tafseer al-Qur'an by Ibn Jareer Tabri (died 310 AH)
2. Tafseer al-Qur'an al-Azeem by Ibn Kathir (died 774 AH)
3. Ad-Durr al-Manthur Fi at-Tafseer al-Mathur by Jalaluddin Suyuti (died 911 AH)

Tafseer Bi al-Ra'i: One of the Tafseer methods is Tafseer Bi al-Ra'i in which the Qur'an is explained through ijtihaad, deduction, Arabic language, meanings of the words, Tafseer Mathur, reasons of revelation and Nasikh and Mansukh. In it a

scholar, after having knowledge of all Tafseer related sciences, struggles to explain the Qur'an. And these are the important books on the subject:

1. Mafateeh al-Ghaib by Fakhruddin Razi (died 606 AH)
2. Al-Bahr al-Muheet by Abu Hayyan al-Undulusi (Died 745 AH)
3. Irshad al-Aql as-Saleem by Abu Sa'ud al-Emadi (died 982 AH)
4. Rooh al-Ma'ani by Aalusi (died 1270 AH)

In the present age, too, the scholars cared to explain the Qur'an and such books of Tafseer are as follow:

1. Tafseer al-Manar by Muhammad Rasheed Rada
2. Fi Zilal al-Qur'an by Sayyid Qutub
3. Tafseer al-Qur'an by al-Shaikh al-Maraghi
4. Tafheem al-Qur'an by Sayyid Maududi
5. Tadabbur Qur'an by Ameen Ahsan Islahi
6. Tafseer Da'wah al-Qur'an by Shams Peer Zada

Similarly, in the present age Muslims also exposed the scientific aspects of the Qur'anic verses. Some of such Tafseer books are:

1. Tafseer al-Jawahir by Shaikh Tantawi Jauhari

The contemporary scholars have carried out researches in the universities about the statements of the sahaba, tabi'een and taba' tabi'een. They researched the handwritten documents related to Tafseer. The science of Tafseer has rendered great service to the cause of Islamic civilization. It helped deduct the commandments from the Qur'an and practically formulating the principles and rules of Islamic civilization. Likewise, this science also helped understand the aims of Allah's book.

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