

UNDERSTANDING AND EXEGESIS OF QUR'ANIC TEXT

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Abstract

The question of understanding and then clarifying the meaning of the Qur'anic text is a subtle one, especially because a piece of profound literature can often be read in more than one way. Arabic is rich in figurative language and can lead to variety of meanings, sometimes in ways that either adhere closely or diverge far from the 'original' meaning.

In order to understand a fine literary text in Arabic, one must have a comprehensive understanding of the issue of exegesis together with the concept that multiplicity of meaning does not necessarily lead to contradiction. This paper surveys the opinions of various literary critics and scholars of rhetoric *balāghah* on this issue with a brief discussion of the concepts of interpretation *tafsīr* and explanation *sharh*, which sometimes overlap with exegesis *ta'wīl*.

Introduction

At the beginning, I would like to offer preliminary remarks on the historiography of *tafsīr* in Arabic and its history of the book approach. As all the extensive histories of the *tafsīr* genre published so far are in Arabic, a close analysis of the historiography of these works is difficult. In this article, I will argue that there are three major categories of historiography, the traditional *tafsīr*, different Islamic schools, and the modernist approach.¹ Identifying these camps is essential if we desire to understand the manner in which *tafsīr* studies has been approached so far, since the proponents of all three have produced, and continue to produce, the editions of *tafsīr* works that are the basis of most histories in Western academia. It will also allow us to investigate the history of the all-present term '*al-tafsīr bi'l-ma'thūr*' which has come to play a key role in the categorisation of the Qur'anic commentary *tafsīr*. Charting the historiography of (*tafsīr*), moreover, is here undertaken in conjunction with discussion of the history of publications of editions of *tafsīr* in the Arab world. In other words, a history of the editions themselves as eventful milestones in a historiography of *tafsīr* is the primary means through which I will endeavour to understand this self-same historiography.²

Tafsīr is a literary genre with definable formal characteristics. The most fundamental of these is the presence of the complete canonical text of the Qur'ān (or at least a significant portion of it), segmented for purposes of comment, and dealt with in canonical order. In a work of *tafsīr*, passages of comment invariably follow canonical segments. Canon and segmentation, lemma and comment: where these are not systematically present, then a work is not an example of the central tradition of *tafsīr*, though it may belong to the margins of that tradition. This formal structure is so fundamental as to require no exemplification. In this paper, two further structures are proposed as constituting, together with this one, a sufficient description of *tafsīr*. Description is of course a mode of interpretation. The interpretation which I set forth in this paper is intended to be general, at least for the period under consideration, namely from the early time before

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¹ It is not in the scope of the paper to cover all these congeries. For more information on the Islamic schools of *tafsīr*, see, Al-Dhahabī, M. H., *al-tafsīr wa al-mufasssīrīn.*, 3.Vs. Cairo, 2005.

² Cf. Salih, Walid, *Preliminary Remarks on the Historiography of tafsīr in Arabic: A History of the Book Approach*, Journal of Qur'anic Studies, Vol. 12, (2010) (pp. 6-40)

Tabarī onward. Exemplification is restricted to commentary on verses which relate to juristic explanation and the elaboration of argumentation. This does not impair the generality of the description, for, as will be evident, Qur'anic narrative provoked more than merely narrative responses: in the hands of a skilled and sensitive exegete any Qur'anic verse might be found to have implications ranging across the scholastic disciplines. In this paper, also, the distinctive achievements of different genres illustrated by juristic scholars, like al-Qurtubi, Fakhr al-Din al-Razi and Ibn Kathir which are demonstrated in the light of the structural description, are concerned primarily with rules in their *tafsīr*. I maintain that this must be recognized as a significant deviation from the norms of the genre; perhaps as a major turning-point in its development. The structures which I propose as constitutive of the genre, and the tensions revealed by the varied manipulation of these structures, were recognized at least to a degree by participants in the tradition. Demonstration of this in the section below permits also of some concluding remarks about the dynamics of the genre and its limits.³

The Qur'ān:

This is the origin of all Islamic legislation, It sets forth the fundamentals of the Sharī`ah and clarifying its principle teachings. It clarifies beliefs in great detail and discusses forms of worship and legal matters in broad terms. Qur'ān fulfils the role in Islamic Law that a constitution fulfils for the man-made laws of nations.

It is the model for the Prophet (peace be upon him) and those who come after him. This is why the Qur'ān is considered the source of all legislation, even though its role as a “constitution” for Islamic Law limits it to clarifying injunctions in only general terms and rarely dealing with particular details.

What does Qur'ān mean?

Muslims believe that the Qur'ān is the miraculous word of Allah, that is perfected and revealed to His messenger Muhammad (pbuh) in the Arabic language, transmitted to humans by continuous testimony (tawatur), and is protected from any change or modification.

In other world, the Qur'ān is understood within the Islamic faith to be the revelatory words of Allah, dictated in segments to the Prophet Muhammad (PBU) between the years 610 and 632 CE/11A.H.

“We have sent it down as an Arabic reading so that you may reason/understand.” (Qur'ān, 43:3)

"إِنَّا جَعَلْنَاهُ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ" (الزخرف:3)

The Qur'ān is understood within the Islamic faith to be the revelatory words of Allah, dictated in segments to the Prophet Muhammad (PBU) between the years 610 and 632 CE/11A.H.

The revelations were memorized and recorded word for word, and are today found in the Arabic text of the Qur'ān.

The Qur'ān was revealed in order to achieve justice and to realize the benefits of people on earth and to help people achieve their happiness in this life and in the hereafter.

The Qur'ān comprises 114 Chapters, *Surahs* and **6236** verses.

³ Cf. Calder, Norman. “*Tafsīr from Tabarī to Ibn Kathīr: Problems in the description of a genre, illustrated with reference to the story of Abraham.*” In *Approaches to the Qur'an*, ed. G.R. Hawting and Abdul-Kader A. Shareef. London: Routledge, 1993.

What are the Major Topics of the Qur'ān?

Major topics:

1. Theology and Law;
2. The previous prophets story and the final judgment;
3. Manners or behaviours.

• When we read the Qur'ān we will find the following:

1. Every revelation of Allah revealed to any messenger other than Muhammad (pbuh) is not Qur'ān.
2. Every word or speech that is not the word of Allah is not the Qur'ān, even though it is about the Qur'ān or is in Arabic.
3. The Arabic exegeses or interpretation *tafsīr* of the Qur'ān is not Qur'ān although it is in the Arabic language and deals solely with the Qur'ān.
4. The translation of the meaning of the Qur'ān into other languages is not the Qur'ān; it is only the meanings of the Qur'ān.
5. The Qur'ān reveals a religion that is perfected and completed, Allah –the Exalted said:

(الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتَمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيْتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا) (المائدة: 3)

“This day I have perfected your religion for you, completed. My favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion. But as for him who is forced by severe hunger, with no inclination to sin, then surely, Allah is Forgiving, Most Merciful.” (Qur'ān, 5:3)

6. The Qur'ān was gradually revealed in portions. Then designated people among the companions of the Prophet wrote it down. Those people were called *Kuttāb al-Wahī*, or writers of the revelation. Allah says in the Qur'ān:

(وَفُورًا فَرَقْنَاهُ لِنُقَرِّأَهُ عَلَى النَّاسِ عَلَى مَكْثٍ وَنَزَّلْنَاهُ تَنْزِيلًا) (الإسراء، 106)

“And [it is] a Qur'ān which We have divided [into parts], in order that you might recite it to men at intervals. And We have revealed it by stages [in 23 years].” (Qur'ān, 17:106)

7. The Qur'ān is protected from any change or modification, Allah said:

(إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ) (الحجر، 9)

“We have, without doubt, sent down the Message; and We will assuredly guard it (from corruption).” (Qur'ān, 15:9)

Why the Qur'ān was revealed in Arabic.

Obviously, the Qur'ān is the only holy book revealed in the Arabic language to the Arab Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), who was primarily⁴ sent to the Arab people. Arabs were very lexical in their speech and poetry. The Qur'anic style was very new for them. Indeed, they can understand it; but their style was lagging behind. Since the Qur'ān was revealed in the Arabic language, there were no excuse for the Arabs not to understand it.

⁴ Although the Qur'an was revealed in Arabic, the message was meant to the whole world. Thus Qur'ān lexical style meant to challenge the lexical Arab speaker.

The special characteristic of the Qur'ān is that its words and thus its meanings are from God, that the words were revealed by God to the His messenger, and that the messenger was only a reciter of the Qur'anic words.

An interpretation of a chapter or translation of the Qur'ān into a language other than the Arabic is not considered the same as the Qur'ān, even though it was authentically translated to the extent that it is identical to the Qur'ān, because the words of the Qur'ān were revealed from God. Certainly, if this interpretation or translation of the Qur'ān was done by a qualified and highly respected scholar, it will be considered as a good interpretation or translation of the Qur'ān. But it does not qualify to be considered as identical to the Qur'ān and, therefore, does not meet the merit of the Qur'ān's rules and is not valid for prayer and worship.

Thus, in many verses the Qur'ān clearly states the reason behind its revelation in Arabic:

(إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ) (يوسف: 2)

(Indeed We have sent it down as an Arabic Qur'ān so that you may apply reason.⁵) (12:2)

(وَكَذَلِكَ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ حُكْمًا وَعَرَبِيًّا وَلَئِنِ اتَّبَعْتَ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ بَعْدَمَا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ مَا لَكَ مِنَ اللَّهِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَلَا وَاقٍ) (الرعد: 37)

(Thus We have sent it down for Arab discretion. If you followed their whims after the sort of knowledge which has come to you, you would have no protector nor any shield against God.) (41:3)

(وَكَذَلِكَ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا وَصَرَّفْنَا فِيهِ مِنَ الْوَعِيدِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ أَوْ يُحْدِثُ لَهُمْ ذِكْرًا) (طه: 113)

(Thus have We sent this down - an Arabic Qur'an and explained therein in detail some of the warnings, in order that they may fear Allah, or that it may cause their remembrance (of Him).) (20:113)

(قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا غَيْرَ ذِي عِوَجٍ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ) (الزمر: 28).

(An Arabic Qur'ān possessing no ambiguity so that they may do their duty.) (39:28)

(كِتَابٌ فَصَّلْنَا آيَاتِهِ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ) (سورة فصلت، آية رقم 3).

(A Book, whereof the verses are explained in detail; a Qur'ān in Arabic, for people who understand; (41:3)

(وَكَذَلِكَ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا لِتُنذِرَ أُمَّ الْقُرَى وَمَنْ حَوْلَهَا وَتُنذِرَ يَوْمَ الْجُمُعِ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ فَرِيقٌ فِي الْجَنَّةِ وَفَرِيقٌ فِي السَّعِيرِ) (الشعراء: 7).

(Thus We have inspired you with an Arabic reading so you may warn the Mother Town and anyone around her, and warn about the Day of Gathering there is no doubt will take place. A group will be in the garden while another group will be in the Blaze fire.) (26:7)

(إِنَّا جَعَلْنَاهُ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ) (الزخرف: 3)

(We have set it up as an Arabic Reading so that you may (all) use your reason.) (43:3)

(وَمِنْ قَبْلِهِ كِتَابُ مُوسَى إِمَامًا وَرَحْمَةً وَهَذَا كِتَابٌ مُصَدِّقٌ لِسَانًا عَرَبِيًّا لِيُنذِرَ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا وَيُبَشِّرَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ) (الأحقاف: 12)

(And before this, was the Book of Musa as a guide and a mercy: and this Book confirms (it) in the Arabic tongue; to admonish the unjust, and as Glad Tidings to those who do right.) (46:12)

⁵ Translation of the meaning of the Qur'anic verses in this paper are mostly quoted from Wahiduddin Khan , (<http://tanzil.net/#59:9>)

Interpretation (*Tafsīr*) and exegesis (*Ta'wīl*)

The Qur'ān, according to Ustadh Mahmūd M.Taha,⁶ has two semantic dimensions: the *near* or *apparent meaning*; and the *deeper* or *hidden meaning*. The Qur'ān has been revealed in various levels, stage upon stage, from God in His absolute to Man in flesh and blood. Every verse or even every word in the Qur'ān has endless levels of meaning.

(قُلْ لَوْ كَانَ الْبَحْرُ مِدَادًا لِكَلِمَاتِ رَبِّي لَنَفِدَ الْبَحْرُ قَبْلَ أَنْ تَنفَدَ كَلِمَاتُ رَبِّي وَلَوْ جِئْنَا بِمِثْلِهِ مَدَدًا) (الكهف: 109)

(Say: "If the sea were to become ink to record the Words of my Lord, indeed the sea would be all used up before the Words of my Lord are exhausted, and it would be the same even if We were to bring an equal amount of ink." (18:109).

Taha used the term *tafsīr* in the same way other scholars use it. It refers to the apparent meaning as implied by the language. So, *tafsīr* depends on understanding the Arabic language. Even non-believers can understand the apparent meaning of the verse as long as they understand a good level of Arabic.

The hidden or the further meaning is not given by the Arabic language alone. To understand the hidden meaning of a verse you need to be a diligent worshiper in accordance with *tafsīr* and *Ta'wīl* as God-given through self-illumination.

(وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَيُعَلِّمُكُمُ اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ) (البقرة: 282)

(And fear God; God teaches you, and God has knowledge of everything). (2:282).

Many Muslim scholars and interpreters of the Qur'ān think that *ta'wīl* is only known by God.

(وَمَا يَعْلَمُ تَأْوِيلَهُ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَالرَّاسِخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ يَقُولُونَ آمَنَّا بِهِ كُلٌّ مِّنْ عِنْدِ رَبِّنَا وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ إِلَّا أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ) (آل عمران: 7)

(But no one knows its meaning except God. Those who are firmly grounded in knowledge say, "We believe in it: it is all from our Lord." But only the wise take heed.) (7-3).

Taha disagrees with the above notion. For him between the peak and the base of the Qur'anic pyramid of meanings, there are endless levels of knowledge that are available to the knowledgeable according to their attainment of piety. The **peak** of *ta'wīl* is only known by God. Descending from that peak towards the base there are various levels of *ta'wīl* for individuals to know.

Ta'wīl is not a thought venture into the Qur'ān. It has its own rules. To be able to practise *ta'wīl* you have to go through a stage of meditation and religious self-discipline to achieve a purity level, through which you can understand and receive the word of God.

Ta'wīl should not contradict the apparent meaning of the same verse; but it transcends to a higher level of meaning. Both, *tafsīr* and *ta'wīl* of the same word or verse will remain right and correct, yet they are different.⁷

⁶ This intellectual biography of Mahmoud Muhammad Taha (1909- 1985), he was the founder father of the Republican Party in Sudan, was the renaissance and modern Islamic reformism at the most important transitional period in Sudanese history which saw the shift from traditional thought to Islamic reformism. The transition propelled political, religious and social change.

Taha's ideas remain vital to the intellectual debates happening in Islam. For more information about him, see:

(http://www.alfikra.org/index_e.php).

⁷ Taha, Mahmoud M., *al-Qur'ān wa Mustafā Mahmūd wa al-fahm al asrī*, 1971, Sudan.

(http://www.alfikra.org/chapter_view_a.php?book_id=20&chapter_id=5)

Requirements for Tafsīr:

The interpolator *mufasir* should master the Arabic language. He should be able to set up proofs and the conditions related to proofs. He also needs to know something of grammar and language so that he is capable of understanding the speech of the Arabs. [He needs sufficient knowledge of Arabic language] to distinguish the *sarīh* / direct, the *ẓāhir* apparent and the *mujmal* ambivalent in speech, also the *haqīqī* true and *majāzūh* the metaphorical, the general *‘āmm* and the particular *khās*, the secure *muhkam* and *mutashābih* the doubtful, *mutlaq* the absolute and *muqayyad* the qualified, *nas* the denotative and *fahwah* the connotative, *‘ilm al-sarf* the morphological and the semantic *mafhūmuh*.⁸

Examples of Quranic legal terms:

1. Direct *sarīh* / like:
قال تعالى: (وَأَحَلَّ اللَّهُ الْبَيْعَ وَحَرَّمَ الرِّبَا) (البقرة: 275)
(God has made trade lawful and made usury unlawful) (1:275)
2. The apparent *ẓāhir* like:
قوله تعالى: (كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِصَاصُ فِي الْقَتْلَى) (البقرة: 178)
(Believers, retribution is prescribed for you in cases of murder.) (2:178)
3. The ambivalent *mujmal* in speech, like:
كقوله تعالى: (وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ) (البقرة: 43)
(Attend to your prayers, give the zakat [prescribed alms] and bow down with those who bow down). (2:43)
4. The true *haqīqī*, like:
(وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا النَّفْسَ الَّتِي حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ ذَٰلِكُمْ وَصَلَّكُمْ بِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ" (الأنعام: 151)
(Do not take life which God has made inviolate -- except by right). (6:151)
5. The metaphorical *majāzūh*, like:
"وَأَسْأَلِ الْقَرْيَةَ الَّتِي كُنَّا فِيهَا وَالْعَيْرَ الَّتِي أَقْبَلْنَا فِيهَا وَإِنَّا لَصَادِقُونَ" (يوسف: 82)
(Inquire of [the people of] the city where we lodged, and of the caravan with which we travelled. We are telling you the truth). (12:82)
6. The general *‘āmm*, like:
(وَالْمُطَلَّاتُ يَتَرَبَّصْنَ بِأَنْفُسِهِنَّ ثَلَاثَةَ قُرُوءٍ) (البقرة: 228)
(Divorced women should wait for three menstrual cycles.) (2:228)
7. The particular *khās*, like:
"لَمْ يَجِدْ فَصِيَامَ ثَلَاثَةِ أَيَّامٍ فِي الْحَجِّ وَسَبْعَةٍ إِذَا رَجَعْتُمْ تِلْكَ عَشْرَةٌ كَامِلَةٌ" (البقرة: 196)
(But if he lacks the means, then let him fast three days during the pilgrimage and for seven days after his return.) (2:196)
8. The secure *muhkam*, like:
كقوله تعالى في قاذفي المحصنات: (وَلَا تَقْبَلُوا لَهُمْ شَهَادَةً أَبَدًا) (النور: 4)
(Do not accept their testimony ever after, for they are transgressors.) (24:4)
9. The doubtful *mutashābih*, like:
قوله تعالى: (يَدُ اللَّهِ فَوْقَ أَيْدِيهِمْ) (الفتح: 10)
(The hand of God is over their hands.) (48:10)
10. The absolute *mutlaq*, like:
" فَصِيَامَ ثَلَاثَةِ أَيَّامٍ فِي الْحَجِّ وَسَبْعَةٍ إِذَا رَجَعْتُمْ" (البقرة: 196)

⁸ Ibn Qudāmah, Abdallah b. Ahmad, *Rwadat al-Ndzir wa-jummat al-munāzīr fī usūl al-fiqh*, 959-64, Riyadh, 1993.

(But if he lacks the means, then let him fast three days during the pilgrimage and for seven days after his return) (2:196)

11. The qualified *muqayyad*, like:

"وَرَبَّانِيكُمْ اللَّاتِي فِي حُجُورِكُمْ مِّن تِسَانِكُمُ اللَّاتِي دَخَلْتُم بِهِنَّ قَايِنَ لَمْ تَكُونُوا دَخَلْتُم بِهِنَّ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ" (النساء: 23)

(And the daughters of your wives with whom you have consummated your marriage; but if you have not consummated your marriage then you will not be blamed [if you marry their daughters.]) (4:23)

12. The denotative *nas*, like:

"وَالسَّارِقُ وَالسَّارِقَةُ فَاقْطَعُوا أَيْدِيَهُمَا جَزَاءً بِمَا كَسَبَا نَكَالًا مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ" (المائدة: 38)

(Cut off the hands of thieves, whether they are male or female, as a [deterrent] punishment from God for what they have done. God is almighty and wise). (5:38)

13. The connotative *fahwāh*, like:

(فَلَا تَقُلْ لَهُمَا أُفٌ) [الإسراء: 23]

(say no word of contempt to them and do not rebuke them, but always speak gently to them) (17:23)

14. The morphological *'ilm al-sarf*, like:

"يَوْمَ تَرُؤْنَهَا تَذْهَلُ كُلُّ مُرْضِعَةٍ عَمَّا أَرْضَعَتْ" (الحج: 2)

(when that Day comes, every suckling mother shall forsake her infant and every pregnant woman shall cast her burden and everyone will appear intoxicated, although they are not: the punishment of God will be severe indeed). (22:2)

The semantic *mafhūmah*, like:

"أَيْنَمَا تَكُونُوا يُدْرِكْكُمُ الْمَوْتُ وَلَوْ كُنْتُمْ فِي بُرُوجٍ مُّشِيدَةٍ وَإِنْ تُصِيبْهُمْ حَسَنَةٌ يَقُولُوا هَذِهِ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ وَإِنْ تُصِيبْهُمْ سَيِّئَةٌ يَقُولُوا هَذِهِ مِنْ عِنْدِكَ قُلْ كُلُّ مِّنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ فَمَالِ هَؤُلَاءِ الْقَوْمِ لَا يَكَادُونَ يَفْقَهُونَ حَدِيثًا" (النساء: 78)

(Wherever you may be, death will overtake you, even if you be in strongly built towers." If some good befalls them, they say, "This is from God," and if ill befalls them, they say, "This is from you." Tell them, "All is from God." But what is wrong with these people that they fail to understand anything?) (4:78)

Conclusion:

Finally, interpretation *tafsīr* and exegesis *ta'wīl* are used by some scholars as Synonymous. While Taha, and the *sūfīs* regard it otherwise. *Ta'wīl* understood to be of extra knowledge. But it should not contradict the apparent meaning of the Qur'ān. Legislation is always based on *tafsīr* and not on *ta'wīl*, because *tafsīr* can be agreed upon while *ta'wīl* is always controversial as it is individual language.

Taha, also, believes that, "humanity today does not need *tafsīr al-Qur'ān*. It rather needs its *ta'wīl*."⁹ That is because Islam is into our lives very soon and with the help of God and under His guidance. "Islam is returning because the Qur'ān is still virgin and the ancestors did not break its seals except the seal of its cover."¹⁰ That means the hidden meanings of the Qur'ān still

⁹ Taha, Mahmoud M., *al-Qur'ān wa Mustafā Mahmūd wa al-fahm al asrī*, 1971, Sudan.

(http://www.alfikra.org/chapter_view_a.php?book_id=20&chapter_id=5)

¹⁰ Taha, Mahmoud M., *risālat salah 1963*, Sudan.

(http://www.alfikra.org/chapter_view_a.php?book_id=20&chapter_id=5)

remain unexplored. Islam is ready to come back because humanity needs it and is capable of practising it.

The rethinking of Islam will better be served by exploring *ta'wīl*. In the past centuries scholars explained Islam according to their understanding, which was limited to their knowledge about the universe and they did a great job by giving answers and solutions to the problems facing societies then.

Time has passed and our societies are now more complicated than ever before. Our problems are different but they can still be solved within Islamic legislations. Here comes the importance of rethinking. *Ta'wīl* will teach us the *hikmah* rationale and reasoning *ta'līl* behind legislation and will enable us to derive new solutions from the Qur'ān that suit our time.