

# THE GLORIOUS QUR'AN

From Revelation To Recitation & Beyond

*SOURCES OF TAFSEER*

*THE QUR'AN & HADITH*

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## SOURCES OF TAFSEER – QUR'AN & HADITH

### FIRST SOURCE: THE QUR'AN SHAREEF

The first source of Tafseer is the Qur'an Shareef itself, because one verse of the Qur'an Shareef is often explained by another verse. As an example, there is a Dua in the very first Surah of the Qur'an Shareef: “Take us onto the straight path. The path of those on whom You have bestowed Your grace.” (1:5)

This verse refers to those who are blessed with Allah's grace, but it does not identify them. However, there is another verse that identifies the different categories of these people in clear terms. It says: “Those who obey Allah and the Messenger ﷺ are with those whom Allah has blessed, namely, the Prophets ﷺ, the Siddiqueen, the Shuhada and the righteous.” (4:69)

In this way, the latter verse has explained the former one. Since there are numerous such examples in the Qur'an Shareef, the Mufasssireen place their foremost reliance on this source of Tafseer.

*(Meanings of the Noble Qur'an – Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani)*

Similarly, in certain passages, narratives of the Ambiya have been explained in brief, while in other parts, their lives have been explained in detail. Certain verses direct the reader to another passage in the Qur'an, or inform the reader that the subject has already been discussed.

Hence, it is essential that the verses of the Qur'an be considered in light of its 'sister' verses, to ensure that no interpretation of any verse of the Qur'an contradicts another verse.

### SECOND SOURCE: THE AHADITH

Hadith is an Arabic word that is defined as the 'the words spoken or the actions done by Rasulallah ﷺ'. Since the major function entrusted to Rasulallah ﷺ was to interpret and teach the meanings of the Qur'an Shareef, as explained earlier, it goes without saying that his explanations are the most reliable source of interpretation of the Qur'an Shareef on par with the Qur'an. The Qur'an says: “Whatever the Messenger gives you accept it, and whatever he asks you to refrain from, keep away from it.”

Rasulallah ﷺ spoke only that which was revealed to him. The Qur'an bears witness to this: “Nor does he say of his own desire. It is no less than inspiration sent down to him.”

These explanations were at times given verbally, and at other times by his acts and practices. It will be wrong to presume that the explanations given by the Prophet (ﷺ) were based on his personal opinion or understanding. In fact, the divine revelation was of two kinds: one in the form of the text of the Qur'an Shareef, and the other in the form of non-textual revelations that he at times received from an angel sent by Allah Ta'ala, and at other times through the ideas and knowledge placed into his blessed heart directly from Allah Ta'ala. We understand this from the following verse: *"Then (after the Qur'an Shareef is revealed to you) it is upon Us to explain it."* (75:19)

It is evident from this verse that Allah Ta'ala Himself has explained the Qur'an Shareef to the Prophet ﷺ through some non-textual revelations. To quote a simple example: the Qur'an Shareef has ordered us to "to establish Salah and pay Zakah". However, the Glorious Book does not provide details as to how Salah should be established, what are the prescribed times of Salah, which acts are prohibited during Salah, and so on. Likewise, the Qur'an Shareef has not described the detailed rules of paying Zakah. All such details are given by Rasulullah ﷺ through his words and acts.

Another example is when the verse was revealed: *"And eat and drink, until the white thread shows clearly to you from the black thread."*

Adiy bin Hatim, physically took two ropes, one white and the other black, and looked at them, but was unable to distinguish one from the other. Then he went to the Prophet ﷺ in the morning and told him about what had happened. The Prophet ﷺ explained to him what was really meant by the verse was day and night.

It is for this reason that Ahadith have a vital role in correct understanding of the Qur'an Shareef. Any attempt to interpret it against the explanations given by the authentic Ahadith can mislead the reader.

In order to check the authenticity of Ahadith, the scholars have developed unique sciences of Isnad and Usoolul Ahadith whereby the status of every narration can be checked by a systematic system of academic 'criticism'. It is imperative, therefore, for a reliable interpretation of the Qur'an Shareef that the interpreter is well-versed not only in the relevant Ahadith, but also in these sciences, so that he may distinguish the authentic reports from the non-authentic ones. Hence, it is not correct to interpret the Qur'an Shareef on the basis of a report somewhere without checking its authenticity and without ensuring that no other stronger report goes against it.

It is yet another miracle of the Qur'an that not only its words have been preserved in pristine purity, but its interpretation in the form of Hadith have also been preserved. It is mandatory on the commentator of the Qur'an to refer to the authentic Ahadith.

The Qur'an itself and Hadith are the two primary sources of Tafseer. Both sources must be considered simultaneously in order to arrive at a conclusive understanding. These two sources are also the final authority on the interpretation of the Qur'an, no interpretation shall contradict them or supersede the interpretation of the Qur'an and Sunnah.

*(Meanings of the Noble Quran – Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani)*





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