The Tafsir Methodology of the Indian Scholar Shah Abdulaziz Dehlawi*

Enayatullah Azimi

0000-0002-7588-4301 | azimi7592@gmail.com
Eskişehir Osmangazi University, Institute of Social Sciences, Department of Basic Islamic Sciences, Eskişehir, Türkiye
ROR ID: 01dzjez04

Fatih Tok

0000-0003-4881-5455 | ftok@ogu.edu.tr
Eskişehir Osmangazi University, Faculty of Theology, Department of Tafsir, Eskişehir, Türkiye
ROR ID: 01dzjez04

Abstract

This article examines the tafsir work and tafsir methodology of Abdulaziz Dehlawi, one of the prominent Islamic scholars of 18th-century India. Born in Delhi, Dehlawi in Islamic sciences, particularly in the fields of tafsir, hadith, and fiqh, and authored notable works in these disciplines. Acknowledged as a leading scholar in both India and the broader Islamic world, he played a crucial role in the dissemination and preservation of Islamic knowledge. Dehlawi's approach to tafsir is characterized by a balanced use of both the narrational (riwayah) and rational (dirayah) methods. While prominently employing the method of "interpreting the Qur'an through the Qur'an" in his exegesis, he aimed to present a comprehensive interpretation by combining narrational and rational elements. This approach relies on the explanations of the Prophet, as well as the views of the Sahabah and Tabi'un, while also incorporating the exegete's intellectual and ijtihadi capacities. Dehlawi emphasized the importance of interpreting the Qur'an with hadith, highlighting that using prophetic traditions to explain Qur'anic verses enriches and deepens their meaning. Furthermore, he incorporated ijtihadi interpretations into his tafsir. Therefore, his methodology stands out as one that harmonizes narrational and rational approaches. It would be an incomplete assessment to categorize his tafsir solely as narrational. Dehlawi also included the views of the Sahabah and Tabi'un in his tafsir, which reflect how the Qur'an was understood and practiced by the earliest generations. This underscores the strong narrational dimension of his exegesis. Additionally, Dehlawi engaged with the sciences of Qur'anic recitation and utilized them in his tafsir, demonstrating how variations in recitation affect the meanings of verses. The rational method in his tafsir involves the use of intellect, linguistic knowledge, and analogy to deepen the understanding of Qur'anic verses. This methodology places great emphasis on linguistic and contextual factors, such as the subtleties of the Arabic language, rules of morphology (sarf) and syntax (nahw), lexical meanings, and the occasions of revelation (asbab al-nuzul). By highlighting the importance of linguistic sciences, particularly morphology and syntax, Dehlawi emphasized the critical role of language in understanding Qur'anic verses. The concept of *munasabat al-Qur'an* occupies a significant place in Dehlawi's understanding of the Qur'an. He believed in the strong interconnection and consistency among the surahs and verses of the Qur'an and elaborated on these relationships in his tafsir. This approach effectively demonstrates the unity of the Qur'an and the semantic links between its verses. Topics such as abrogation, occasions of revelation, and interrelations among verses are key elements that add depth to Dehlawi's tafsir. In addition to explaining the text of the Qur'an, Dehlawi aimed to convey the fundamental teachings of Islam and the spirit of the Qur'an to the readers. By categorizing surahs according to their themes and identifying the main theme of each surah, he facilitated a more systematic understanding of the Qur'an for his audience. This feature highlights the didactic dimension of his tafsir. Dehlawi's tafsir significantly contributes to the exegetical tradition as a work that deepens the interpretative world of the Qur'an and reveals the richness of Islamic sciences. His interpretative methodology, which integrates narrational and rational

methods in a balanced manner, both traditional and analytical approaches in understanding the Qur'an. Dehlawi's works continue to serve as a guiding reference for approaching the Qur'an not only in his time but also in contemporary exegetical studies, preserving their value as an enduring legacy in the field of tafsir.

Keywords

Tafsir, Qur'an, Shah Abdulaziz Dehlawi, Narration, Reasoning, Method

Hintli Alim Şah Abdülazîz Dihlevî'nin Tefsiri ve Yorum Metodu*

Enayatullah Azimi

0000-0002-7588-4301 | azimi7592@gmail.com

Eskişehir Osmangazi Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Temel İslam Bilimleri Anabilim Dalı, Eskişehir, Türkiye

ROR ID: 01dzjez04

Fatih Tok

0000-0003-4881-5455 | ftok@ogu.edu.tr

Eskişehir Osmangazi Üniversitesi, İlahiyat Fakültesi, Tefsir Anabilim Dalı, Eskişehir, Türkiye

ROR ID: 01dzjez04

Öz

Bu makale, 18. yüzyıl Hindistan'ın önemli İslam alimlerinden Abdülazîz Dihlevî'nin tefsir eserini ve yorum metodolojisini incelemektedir. Abdülazîz Dihlevî, Delhi'de doğmuş, İslamî ilimlerde bilgi sahibi olmuş ve özellikle tefsir, hadis ve fıkıh alanlarında önemli eserler vermiştir. Hem Hindistan'da hem de İslam dünyasında tanınan bir alim olarak, İslamî ilimlerin yayılmasında ve korunmasında önemli bir rol oynamıştır. Abdülazîz'in tefsir yaklaşımı, rivayet ve dirayet metotlarının dengeli bir şekilde kullanımını esas almaktadır. Dihlevî, tefsirinde 'Kur'an'ın Kur'an ile tefsiri' metodunu belirgin bir şekilde öne çıkarmakla birlikte, rivayet ve dirayet unsurlarını beraber kullanarak kapsamlı bir yorum sunmayı amaçlamıştır. Bu yaklaşım, Peygamberimizin açıklamaları ve sahabe ile tâbiîn görüşlerine dayanmakla birlikte, müfessirin aklî ve içtihadî yetkinliğini de devreye sokmaktadır. Kur'an'ı hadis ile tefsir etme yöntemini önemseyen Dihlevî, Kur'an'ın hadislerle açıklanmasının, ayetlerin anlamını derinleştiren ve zenginleştiren bir kaynak olduğunu vurgulamıştır. Öte yandan Abdülazîz tefsirinde içtihadî yorumlara da yer vermiştir. Bu nedenle Dihlevî'nin tefsir yaklaşımı, rivayet ve dirayeti harmanlayarak dengeyi gözeten bir metot olarak öne çıkmaktadır. Onu tamamen rivayet tefsiri kategorisine yerleştirmek eksik bir değerlendirme olacaktır. Dihlevî, tefsirinde sahâbe ve tâbiîn kavillerine de yer vermektedir. Bu dönemlerin görüşleri, Kur'an'ın ilk nesiller tarafından nasıl anlaşıldığını ve uygulandığını göstermektedir. Bu yöntem, Dihlevî'nin tefsirindeki rivayet boyutunun ne kadar güçlü olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Dihlevî, ayrıca kıraat ilimleriyle ilgilenmiş ve bu ilimleri tefsirinde kullanarak farklı kıraatlerin ayetlerin anlamlarını nasıl etkilediğini de göstermiştir. Dirayet metodu ise, Dihlevî'nin akıl, dil bilgisi ve kıyas gibi unsurları kullanarak ayetlerin anlamını derinleştirdiği bir yaklaşımı ifade etmektedir. Bu metodolojide, Arap dilinin incelikleri, sarf ve nahiv kuralları, kelime anlamları ve ayetlerin nüzul sebepleri gibi dilbilimsel ve bağlamsal faktörler önem taşımaktadır. Dihlevî, tefsirinde özellikle sarf ve nahiv gibi dil ilimlerine vurgu yaparak, dilin ayetlerin anlaşılmasındaki kritik rolünü gözler önüne sermiştir. Münâsebâtü'l-Kur'an, Dihlevî'nin Kur'an anlayışında önemli bir yer tutmaktadır. O, Kur'an'da sureler ve ayetler arasında güçlü bir bağ ve tutarlılık olduğuna inanmış ve bu ilişkileri tefsirinde detaylandırarak açıklamıştır. Bu yöntem, Kur'an'ın bütünlüğünü ve ayetlerin birbiriyle olan anlam bağlantılarını ortaya koymada etkili olmuştur. Özellikle, nâsih ve mensûh, sebeb-i nüzûl bilgileri ve ayetler arasındaki münasebetler gibi konular, Dihlevî'nin tefsirine derinlik katan unsurlar olduğunu söyleyebiliriz. Dihlevî'nin tefsirinde, Kur'an'ın metnini açıklamanın yanı sıra, İslam'ın temel öğretilerini ve Kur'an'ın ruhunu insanlara aktarma amacı güdülmüştür. Sureleri konularına göre ayırarak her bir surenin ana temasını belirlemesi, okuyucuların Kur'an'ı daha sistematik bir şekilde anlamalarına yardımcı olmaktadır. Bu yaklaşım, tefsirin didaktik yönünü de vurgulayan önemli bir özelliktir. Dihlevî'nin tefsiri, Kur'an'ın anlam dünyasını derinleştiren ve İslamî ilimlerdeki zenginliği ortaya koyan bir çalışma olarak, tefsir geleneğine önemli bir katkı sunmaktadır. Onun tefsir metodolojisi, rivayet ve dirayet metotlarının dengeli bir şekilde kullanıldığı, böylece Kur'an'ın anlaşılmasında hem geleneksel hem de analitik yaklaşımların bir araya geldiği bir model oluşturmuştur. Abdülazîz'in çalışmaları, sadece kendi döneminde değil, günümüzde de Kur'an'a yaklaşımda rehberlik etmekte ve tefsir sahasında özgün bir miras olarak değerini korumaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler

Tefsir, Kur'an, Şah Abdülazîz Dihlevî, Rivayet, Dirayet, Yöntem

Atıf Bilgisi

Inroduction

The 18th century in India marked a critical period during which the Islamic world underwent significant religious, political, and economic transformations.[1] Among the scholars who played a pivotal role in the reinterpretation and development of Islamic sciences during this time was Abdulaziz Dehlawi. His most significant work in the field of tafsir, "Fathu'l-Aziz", serves as a fundamental resource for understanding the impact of the period and the author's intellectual contributions to the tafsir tradition. This article will first provide a brief overview of Abdulaziz's life, followed by an in-depth analysis of his *Fathu'l-Aziz* and his tafsir methodology.

The purpose of this study is to examine Dehlawi's tafsir and his contributions to Islamic thought in his seminal work, "Fathu'l-Aziz". The article will specifically explore the balance between *riwayah*) and *dirayah* elements in *Fathu'l-Aziz* and evaluate the position of this methodology within the broader tradition of Islamic tafsir. Furthermore, the study will shed light on the distinctive aspects of Dehlawi's tafsir approach, its place in Islamic exegetical literature, and its methodological innovations. Finally, it will address how Dehlawi's tafsir differs from other exegetical approaches and the unique contributions his methodology has made to the field of Islamic knowledge.

The existing literature lacks comprehensive studies on Dehlawi's tafsir, and academic research on this subject in Türkiye remains notably limited. By offering a detailed analysis of Dehlawi's tafsir approach, this study aims to contribute to the existing body of literature and underscore the significance of *Fathu'l-Aziz* within the tradition of Islamic tafsir.

The central questions this study aims to answer include: How Abdulaziz's tafsir methodology differs from other tafsir approaches? What innovations has "Fathu'l-Aziz" introduced to Islamic knowledge? And how do these contributions reflect on contemporary Islamic thought? This research aspires to serve as a valuable resource for evaluating and understanding Dehlawi's tafsir from both classical and modern perspectives.

To analyze Dehlawi's tafsir methodology, a two-stage method will be employed. In the first stage, existing literature on Dehlawi will be comprehensively reviewed. This review will gather information about the exegete's life, scholarly contributions, and the general characteristics of *Fathu'l-Aziz*. Based on these findings, the general framework of Dehlawi's understanding of tafsir will be outlined. In the second stage, his approach to the Qur'an and his tafsir methodology will be examined in detail. Particular focus will be placed on the purpose of writing the tafsir, its context of revelation, and the ways in which it utilizes the science of abrogation. The analysis will include references to the sayings of the Companions, linguistic elements such as grammar, and other relevant details, accompanied by Turkish translations of selected verses from the tafsir. These efforts aim to highlight the distinctive aspects of Dehlawi's tafsir methodology and its contributions to Islamic scholarship. The study applies both Discourse Analysis and Content Analysis methodologies.

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[1] Muhammad Bashir Siyalkuti, *al-Imam al-Mujaddid al-Muhaddith Shah Waliullah al-Dehlawi Hayatuhu ve Davetuhu* (Beyrut-Lübnan: Daru İbn Hazm, 1999/1420), 7-17.

In conclusion, this research seeks to position Shah Abdulaziz's "Fathu'l-Aziz" within its historical and contemporary contexts, revealing its contributions to the tradition of tafsir. By examining Dehlawi's tafsir comprehensively, this study aims to clarify its significance and impact within tafsir literature and to enhance our understanding of its enduring influence on Islamic thought.

1. The Life and Scholarly Activities of Shah Abdulaziz Dehlawi

Shah Abdulaziz was a prominent Islamic scholar renowned not only for his profound contributions to Islamic sciences but also for his influential role in addressing the political and social challenges of his time. Born in Delhi into a family of distinguished scholars, his father, Shah Waliullah Dehlawi, was a leading figure in the Islamic revivalist movement of the 18th-century.

Abdulaziz's early education, firmly grounded in the traditional Islamic sciences, began with the memorization of the Qur'an and extended to advanced studies in hadith, tafsir, and fiqh.[2] Beyond the core Islamic sciences, Abdulaziz also demonstrated proficiency in auxiliary disciplines such as logic, geometry, and astronomy, which broadened his intellectual scope and informed his analytical approach to Islamic scholarship.[3]

The Rahimiyya Madrasah served as the central platform for Abdulaziz's educational and intellectual endeavors. Following the death of his father, Abdulaziz assumed leadership of the institution, which was later renamed Aziziyya Madrasah in recognition of his significant contributions. His affiliation with multiple Sufi orders, including the Naqshbandi, Qadiri, Suhrawardi, and Chishti traditions, further enriched his spiritual and intellectual outlook, reflecting the synthesis of mystical and scholastic elements in his work.[4]

It is estimated that Abdulaziz authored approximately fifty works in Persian, Arabic, and Urdu, underscoring his dedication to preserving and advancing Islamic knowledge.[5] Among his notable works, Fathu'l-Aziz, Tuhfa-i Ithna 'Ashariyya, and Bustan al-Muhaddithin stand out as significant contributions to Islamic thought.[6] These writings not only illustrate his mastery of the traditional Islamic sciences but also reveal his ability to contextualize Islamic teachings in response to the challenges of his era.

One of Abdulaziz's most consequential contributions was his opposition to the growing British influence in India. His fatwa declaring India as Dār al-Harb (territory under enemy occupation) in 1803 was not merely a political statement but also an expression of his broader vision for Islamic self-determination.[7] Grounded in his deep understanding of Islamic jurisprudence, this declaration reflected his commitment to addressing the socio-political

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[2] Talât Koçyiğit, "Abdülazîz ed-Dihlevî", Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi (İstanbul: TDV Yayınları, 1988), 1/188.

[3] Abdulhay b. Fahruddin al-Hasani, *Nuzhat al-Hawater wa Bahjat al-Masami wa al-Nawazir* (Beirut-Lebanon: Dar Ibn Hazm, 1420/1999), 6/1014.

[4] Hasani, *Nuzhat al-Hawater*, 6/1014.

[5] Abdulaziz's works include Fathu'l-Aziz; Bustan al-Muhaddithin and a Fatawa'yi Azizi among his main works.

[6] Zulfiqar Ahmad Qismati, *The Philosopher Shah Waliullah Dehlawi and His Thought* (Dhaka: Modern Publishing, 2000), 69.

[7] Mahmood Ahmad Ghazi, *Islamic Renaissance in South Asia 1707-1867: The Role of Shah Wali Allah and His Successors* (Islamabad: International Islamic University Islamic Research Institute), 175.

realities of colonial oppression. Through this fatwa, Abdulaziz aimed to protect the rights of Muslim traders and communities, demonstrating his ability to adapt Islamic principles to the practical challenges of his time.[8]

The socio-political conditions of India in the early 18th and 19th centuries played a pivotal role in shaping Abdulaziz's worldview. The decline of Mughal authority and the ascendancy of British colonial power created an atmosphere of uncertainty and upheaval for Indian Muslims. Abdulaziz's scholarly activities and his resistance to British influence can be understood as a direct response to these challenges. His teachings underscored the importance of preserving Islamic identity and resisting cultural assimilation. This commitment is particularly evident in his critiques of sectarianism and his efforts to bridge divides within the Muslim community.[9]

Abdulaziz's engagement with the philosophical and theological debates of his era further reflects the impact of the socio-political environment on his scholarship. His notable work, Tuhfa-i Ithna 'Ashariyya, addressed the Sunni-Shia polemic, presenting a Sunni perspective while engaging constructively with differing views. This text demonstrates his dedication to intellectual rigor and his balanced approach to addressing contentious issues, reflecting a commitment to unity and thoughtful dialogue within the Muslim community.[10]

The intellectual and spiritual legacy of Shah Waliullah, his father, profoundly influenced Abdulaziz's scholarly approach. Shah Waliullah's emphasis on harmonizing traditional Islamic sciences with the demands of contemporary society found strong resonance in Abdulaziz's works. As his father's foremost student and intellectual heir, Abdulaziz ensured the continuity of this vision through his teachings and writings.[11] His ability to synthesize diverse strands of Islamic thought stands as a testament to this inheritance, highlighting his intellectual depth and adaptability.[12]

Shah Abdulaziz's life and scholarly contributions exemplify the dynamic interplay between individual intellectual development and the broader socio-political context. His contributions to Islamic thought extended beyond theoretical discourse to practical applications that addressed the pressing challenges of his time.[13] Abdulaziz passed away in 1824 at the age of seventy-nine. His funeral prayers were performed in multiple locations across India, including Delhi, a testament to the widespread respect and influence he commanded during his lifetime.[14]

2. Approach to the Qur'an and Tafsir Methodology

2.1. Approach to the Qur'an

Abdulaziz defines the Qur'an as a binding guide that must be adhered to by all. According to him, the Qur'an is a miracle for the disbelievers, a unique source for those who are seeking to

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[8] For the text of the fatwa, see Abdulaziz Dehlawi, Fatawa'yi Azizi (Delhi: Matbaa-i Muctabaî, 1322), 1/16-17.

[9] Zehir al-Zawadi, *Shah Waliullah Tājid al-Dīn wa Tājid al-Dunya* (Beirut-Lebanon: Al-Intishar al-Arabi, 2012), 159-167.

[10] Abdulaziz Dehlawi, *Tuhfa-i Ithna 'Ashariyya* (Karachi: Daru'l-ishaat, 1982), 4-755.

[11] J.M.S. Baljon, *Religion and Thought of Shah Wali Allah Dehlawi 1703-1762* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1986), 1-14.

[12] Sureyya Dar, *Shah Abdu'l-Aziz Muhaddis Dehlawi aôr Un kî Ilmî Hidemât* (Lahor: Erib Publişenz, 1991), 337.

[13] Sayyid Abu'l-Hasan Nadwi, *Tarih-i Davet ve Azimet* (Lucknow: Majlis-i Tahkikat ve Nashriyat Islam, 1431/2010), 5/367.

[14] Abdulkayum Mazahiri, *al-Imam Shah Waliullah Muhadith Dehlawi* (Ganch Campour: Daire-i Maarif-i Milli, 1967), 112.

convey profound truths with clear evidence, and a text that dispels unfounded doubts. Abdulaziz asserts that the Qur'an is flawless and perfect, describing its structure as one imbued with mysteries and subtleties that steer its listeners away from misconceptions.[15]

Dehlawi identifies the Qur'an, Sunnah, ijma and qiyas as the fundamental sources of religion. According to him, some rulings are established through the Qur'an, others through the Sunnah, ijma, or qiyas. However, he emphasizes that the Qur'an occupies a distinct and superior position among these sources, underscoring its universal validity and binding nature. For Dehlawi, the Qur'an is the primary and ultimate source that must be followed by all people.[16]

Dehlawi describes the Qur'an as the teacher of divine rulings, asserting that its miraculous nature, eloquence, and clarity are unparalleled. Based on the Qur'anic verses, he argues that the Qur'an contains no doubt and serves as a self-evident proof of its miraculous character. He also notes that the Qur'an presents true sciences and accurate knowledge in a well-organized manner, in contrast to the scattered nature of previous scriptures. This implies that adhering to the Qur'an is tantamount to adhering to all prior heavenly books and religions. According to Dehlawi, the Qur'an represents the culmination and essence of earlier scriptures, and he underscores its miraculous nature and subtle intricacies.[17]

Dehlawi's approach to the Qur'an emphasizes its perfection, the profound secrets and subtleties it contains, and its role as a universal guide for humanity. His view that the Qur'an is the ultimate source of religion and the central axis of divine rulings reflects his profound commitment to its teachings and his belief in its indispensable role as a guide. He argues that the Qur'an is not merely a text but a divine law that offers guidance for every aspect of life.[18]

2.2. Purpose of Writing

Abdulaziz initially intended to write a commentary on selected portions of the Qur'an, focusing specifically on Sūrat al-Fātiḥa and the last two Juz' (Sūrat al-Mulk to al-Nabāʾ), rather than producing a complete exegesis of the entire Qur'an. This decision was influenced by the request and encouragement of his fellow scholar, Sheikh Musaddiquddin Abdullah. Abdulaziz chose these particular Surahs due to their frequent recitation by Muslims during the five daily prayers, Friday congregational prayers, in sacred places associated with prophets and saints, and during visits to the graves of righteous and scholarly individuals.[19] He found immense joy in interpreting these sections, diving deeply into their spiritual and intellectual depths. Through this effort, he sought to uncover the truths and subtleties of the Qur'an and make them accessible for the benefit of the wider community. His goal was to compose a fluid and accessible tafsir that reflected the socio-cultural conditions of his time.[20]

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[15] Abdulaziz Dehlawi, *Fathu'l-Aziz* (Pakistan-Peshawar: al-Maktaba al-Haqqaniyya, n.d.), 1/102.

[16] Dehlawi, *Fathu'l-Aziz*, 1/102-103.

[17] Dehlawi, *Fathu'l-Aziz*, 1/102-103.

[18] Dehlawi, *Fathu'l-Aziz*, 1/102-115.

[19] Rizwi's similar approach is noted; see Sayyid Athar Abbas Rizwi, *Shah Abd al-Aziz: Puritanism, Sectarian Polamics and Jihad* (Australia: Ma'rifat Publishing House, 1982), 105.

[20] Dehlawi, *Fathu'l-Aziz*, 1/3.

Another significant motivation behind Abdulaziz's tafsir was his opposition to Western colonial powers, particularly the British.[21] He is regarded as one of the earliest 18th-century preachers to criticize British colonialism. His 1218/1803 fatwa declaring India as Dār al-Harb and his resistance to British missionary activities aimed at converting Indians to Christianity are clear expressions of this stance. An illustrative example of his opposition is found in an Arabic poem he composed, in which he warned his associates, students, and friends about the destruction that British rule would bring.[22] In this poem, he prophesied that the region between Kabul and Delhi would fall under British occupation—a prediction that materialized and remained a reality for many years.

Another factor motivating Abdulaziz to write his tafsir was his desire to clarify and expand upon the more obscure aspects of his father Shah Waliullah's Persian translation of the Qur'an. Throughout his life, Abdulaziz devoted significant effort to preserving and advancing his father's intellectual legacy, often drawing upon Shah Waliullah's ideas to address the pressing societal issues of his time. General Characteristics of Abdulaziz's Tafsir Fathu'l-Aziz.

2.2.1.   The Essence and Scope of the Tafsir

Abdulaziz completed his tafsir *Fathu'l-Aziz*, in Persian in the year 1208/1793-1794. While Abdulaziz is most renowned for his work *Tuhfa-i Ithna 'Ashariyya*, his tafsir is considered to hold even greater significance for him personally and has played a central role in his scholarly recognition.[23] Due to various illnesses that Abdulaziz suffered in his youth, including blindness and leprosy, he did not physically write the tafsir himself but dictated it to his students,[24] who transcribed the work on his behalf. The question of whether Abdulaziz authored a tafsir encompassing the entire Qur'an remains a subject of debate among researchers. Some scholars claim that he did indeed write a comprehensive tafsir, significant portions of which were lost during the Indian Rebellion of May 10, 1857. Others contend that no manuscript beyond the existing three volumes has been found. However, the evidence supporting the claim that Abdulaziz completed a full tafsir is considered stronger and remains the prevailing scholarly opinion.

The existing tafsir consists of three volumes. The first volume includes al-Fātiḥa in its entirety and the commentary on al-Baqara up to verse 184. The second volume covers the tafsir on al-Mulk, while the third volume addresses the tafsir on al-Nabāʾ. Abdulaziz's tafsir is also known by the names *Tafsir-i Azizi* and *Bustanu't-tafasir*.[25] Some scholars have highlighted its potential significance by stating, "If this tafsir were complete, it would have been of such importance that there would be no equivalent on earth."[26]

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[21] For a historiographical study of Qur'an studies and British colonialism, see Nur Uddin, "Hint Alt Kıtasında Kur'an Çalışmaları ve İngiliz Sömürgeciliği Tarih Yazımsal Bir İnceleme" in *Hint Alt Kıtasında Tarih Kaynakları ve Tarihyazımı*, ed. Şefaattin Deniz vd. (Istanbul: Fikir Yayınları, 2024), 573-598.

[22] The English translation of the poem is as follows: I foresee that the British, who possess wealth and property, will occupy and corrupt the land between Delhi and Kabul.

[23] Rizwi, *Shah Abd al-Aziz*, 105.

[24] Abdülhamit Birışık, *Hint Alt Kıtası Düşünce ve Tefsir Ekolleri* (Istanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 2001), 68.

[25] Nadwi, *Tarih-i Davet ve Azimet*, 5/353, 356.

[26] Muhammad Hanif Nadwi, *Tefsir-i Siracu'l-Beyan* (Lahore: Melik Siracu'd-Din Eyend SENZ, 1983), 16.

Dehlawi's tafsir has been published multiple times across different periods and by various printing presses. It was first was independently published in Calcutta in 1831 and 1848, and later translated into Urdu and published between 1884 and 1920.[27] The last two volumes of the tafsir were translated into Urdu by Muhammad Hasan Khan Rampuri and published in 1845/1261. Subsequently, Haydar Ali Fayzabadi, a student of Abdulaziz and the author of *Muntahal-kalam*, expanded the tafsir into twenty-seven volumes under the title *Takmila-i Tafsir-i Azizi* in Urdu at the request of Iskender Begum, the Governor of Bhopal. These efforts reflect the enduring significance of Abdulaziz's tafsir and its impact on both Persian and Urdu-speaking audiences.[28]

2.2.2. General Characteristics of the Tafsir

It can be asserted that Dehlawi's work makes a significant contribution to the tradition of Qur'anic tafsir. Rather than focusing solely on the literal meanings of verses, he endeavors to uncover the deep relationships and thematic connections between them. For example, he links verses concerning disbelievers to those addressing hypocrites by emphasizing their shared characteristic as "bandits" who obstruct the path of truth, thereby providing a coherent connection between these two groups. This demonstrates Dehlawi's effort to approach verses, surahs and themes in an interconnected manner, presenting the Qur'an's message in a more comprehensive and holistic way.[29]

One of the most prominent features of Abdulaziz's tafsir is his ability to identify the central themes of each surah and emphasize them effectively. He succinctly summarizes the main topics of each surah, clarifying the fundamental themes they emphasize. For instance, in his analysis of Sūrat al-Baqara, he identifies five core themes: the existence of God, prophethood, the straight path (sirat al-mustaqim), striving (mujahada), and the afterlife. He explains that the remaining subjects within the surah serve to reinforce and complement these five primary themes. This thematic clarity highlights Dehlawi's systematic approach to Qur'anic exegesis.[30]

Another notable feature of Dehlawi's tafsir is his focus on symbolic expressions and representations within the Qur'an. According to him, the Qur'an employs symbols, metaphors, and representations to concretize abstract concepts and convey messages effectively. This method makes the states of individuals—such as believers, disbelievers, polytheists, and hypocrites—as well as abstract realities like faith, polytheism, disbelief, and the afterlife, more accessible and comprehensible to readers. For example, in his interpretation of Sūrat al-Baqara, verse 19, the expression is understood as a metaphor for those who abandon the fertile and beneficial teachings of Islam and the pleasure of Allah, instead choosing to embrace hypocrisy and disbelief. Dehlawi interprets the rainstorm as a symbol of Islam's teachings and the challenges associated with adhering to them. He explains that the hypocrites, like individuals fleeing from rain to seek refuge in a dry place, reject the spiritual nourishment of Islam and perceive their escape to an arid, barren environment—symbolizing disbelief and hypocrisy—as a rational and preferable choice. This analogy highlights the misguided reasoning of hypocrites,

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[27] Muhammad Salim Qasimi et al. *Jaiza-yi Tarajim-i Qur'ani* (India: National Preting Press, 1968), 102.

[28] A PDF version of the revised commentary is available on the website: https://www.Qur'anicthought.com/books

[29] Dehlawi, *Fathu'l-Aziz*, 1/325-330.

[30] Dehlawi, *Fathu'l-Aziz*, 1/78-79.

who consider the obligations and trials associated with Islam as burdensome, thereby forfeiting its rewards and benefits. Dehlawi's tafsir further expands on this symbolic interpretation by analyzing the remaining elements of the verse, offering deeper insights into the metaphors and their implications. This meticulous attention to symbolic language not only enriches the reader's understanding of the Qur'anic text but also underscores Dehlawi's distinctive approach to exegesis, which integrates linguistic, thematic, and spiritual dimensions. Through his interpretations, Dehlawi provides a profound framework for understanding the Qur'an's timeless guidance and its relevance to both personal and collective human experience.[31]

Abdulaziz emphasizes that the use of symbolic expressions in the Qur'an to explain abstract concepts is intended to guide people correctly and stimulate their contemplation. He also highlights that describing the blessings of Paradise by likening them to worldly pleasures is meant to help people comprehend realities they have never experienced.[32] These symbolic representations serve as a bridge between the known and the unknown, facilitating a deeper understanding of divine truths.

Abdulaziz draws attention to the uniqueness of the Qur'an's arrangement and style. In his tafsir, he systematically analyzes the structure of the verses by breaking them into components and addressing intricate questions. For instance, he explores phenomena such as the precedence of hearing over sight, the connection between the wrathful and the misguided, or the reasoning behind the arrangement of one prophet's story before another. Through these analyses, he provides rational explanations supported by theological and philosophical insights. For example, in his commentary on 7th verse of *Sūrat al-Baqara*, Abdulaziz explains the precedence of hearing over sight by noting that hearing is more crucial for understanding the call of prophets and the guidance of the Qur'an. He supports this claim with evidence, such as the role of hearing as an essential condition for prophethood and the fact that blindness does not hinder prophethood.[33] This interpretation underscores the vital role of auditory perception in receiving and comprehending divine guidance.

Abdulaziz also places significant emphasis on the Qur'anic stories, focusing on their profound meanings and the importance of extracting lessons from them. He views these stories as sources of guidance that encourage people to reflect on past events and align their actions with the right path. In his tafsir, he provides detailed analyses of the wisdom embedded in these narratives, offering practical examples to illustrate their relevance. For instance, in his interpretation of the "story of the cow" in *Sūrat al-Baqara*, he draws key lessons, such as the idea that when people unnecessarily complicate matters for themselves, Allah may impose greater challenges in response.[34]

Furthermore, Abdulaziz integrates events from the life of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) into his tafsir, drawing lessons that remain relevant for all believers. For example, in his discussion of the incident involving the blind companion Abdullah ibn Umm Maktum, he

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[31] Dehlawi, *Fathu'l-Aziz*, 1/143.

[32] Dehlawi, *Fathu'l-Aziz*, 1/174, 179, 187.

[33] Dehlawi, *Fathu'l-Aziz*, 1/125-126.

[34] Dehlawi, *Fathu'l-Aziz*, 1/365-366.

highlights that even prophets may make errors in judgment, but such mistakes are corrected through divine admonition This story, as Abdulaziz explains, underscores the importance of respecting and honoring believers, particularly those of piety, and reminds readers of the need to treat all individuals with care and dignity. He emphasizes that this incident offers enduring wisdom and lessons that remain valid until the Day of Judgment. By frequently drawing on such examples, Abdulaziz seeks to extract valuable insights and lessons from the Qur'anic verses, encouraging readers to apply these teachings to their own lives. His tafsir demonstrates a deliberate effort to connect the Qur'an's timeless guidance with practical and moral lessons, offering a comprehensive framework for both intellectual and spiritual reflection. Through his interpretations, Abdulaziz highlights the Qur'an's relevance as a source of wisdom and guidance for personal and collective growth across all times and contexts.[35]

2.3. Approach to Qur'anic Sciences

Abdulaziz was a scholar with profound expertise in Islamic sciences and tafsir. A close examination of his tafsir reveals that he conducted in-depth analyses of several Qur'anic sciences, including the reasons for revelation, abrogation, intertextual relationships and the mysterious letters (Huroof al-Muqatta'a). Dehlawi considered the study of the reasons for the revelation of verses and surahs, the relationships between verses, and the precise understanding of the Qur'an's messages to be of critical importance. In his tafsir, he employed methodological approaches designed to explore the contextual and holistic structure of the Qur'an, providing detailed explanations on these topics. Below, we examine Dehlawi's views on the reasons for revelation, abrogation, intertextual relationships within the Qur'an, and ambiguous topics such as the mysterious letters, highlighting the methodological richness of his tafsir.

Reasons for Revelation: Abdulaziz was one of the scholars who placed great emphasis on understanding the reasons for revelation in his tafsir. He has asserted that identifying the reasons for the revelation of specific verses was essential for their accurate interpretation. Accordingly, his *tafsir* frequently incorporates reasons for revelation as a key interpretive tool. Dehlawi often transitions between verses by referencing the reasons for revelation and, at times, directly explains the circumstances surrounding the revelation of entire surahs. In his tafsir, he presents this information in both Arabic and Persian, accompanied by detailed explanations. For instance, in his commentary on verse 95 of *Sūrat al-Baqara*, Dehlawi describes the attitude of the Jews toward the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and explains how this incident led to the revelation of the verse. Through such analyses, he provides the historical and contextual background necessary for a deeper understanding of the Qur'anic text. Dehlawi's focus on *asbab al-nuzul* extends beyond individual verses to encompass entire surahs, ensuring that his readers grasp the broader narrative and thematic framework of the Qur'an. By integrating detailed accounts of the reasons for revelation into his *tafsir*, he aimed to enhance the contextual comprehension of the Qur'an's messages. This extensive use of *asbab al-nuzul* stands out as a significant methodological feature of his *tafsir*, reflecting his commitment to grounding interpretation in historical and contextual realities.[36]

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[35] Dehlawi, *Fathu'l-Aziz*, 3/53-56.

[36] Dehlawi, *Fathu'l-Aziz*, 2/26, 118, 1/341, 426, 429, 485, 502, 514, 615, 728.

Abrogation: Abdulaziz also addresses the issue of abrogation in his work, offering a nuanced perspective on this complex subject. According to him, certain verses were abrogated during the time of the Prophet Muhammad. He acknowledges the existence of abrogation in the Qur'an and interprets the relationship between the abrogating and abrogated verses as manifestations of divine mercy and grace. Through various examples Abdulaziz explains the concept of abrogation and endeavors to clarify its rationale within the Qur'anic context, thereby providing deeper insights into its purpose and significance.

Abdulaziz's approach to naskh emerges as a significant factor in understanding the dynamic and comprehensive message of the Qur'an. He explains that some verses were revealed and later forgotten, or their rulings were abrogated before they were widely recited or implemented. By addressing abrogation within a rational and coherent framework, Abdulaziz argues that abrogation is both permissible and an actual feature of the Qur'an. Through this lens, he emphasizes that abrogation serves as a critical methodological element, reflecting the Qur'an's internal coherence and its role as a source of divine guidance for humanity.[37]

Munasabatu'l-Qur'an: Abdulaziz has extensively explored the interrelationships within the Qur'an in his tafsir,[38] aiming to highlight the organic connections between verses and chapters. This approach seeks to uncover the Qur'an's integrity and depth of its meaning. Dehlawi asserts that each verse should not be considered in isolation but as part of a whole, emphasizing the significance of internal connections in his tafsir. For example, in his discussion of the repetition of verses 134 and 141 of Sūrat al-Baqara, he argues that these repetitions are not redundant but serve distinct purposes, addressing different topics and offering unique insights. He explains that this repetition aligns with the Qur'an's eloquence, with each occurrence serving a specific and intentional purpose.[39]

In Dehlawi's tafsir, the intra-textuality between surahs is also examined in detail. For instance, in his discussion of the semantic relationship between Sūrat al-Taḥrīm and Sūrat al-Mulk, he notes that Sūrat al-Taḥrīm focuses on family leadership and individual responsibilities, while Sūrat al-Mulk addresses leadership and governance on a broader, more universal scale. According to Dehlawi, Sūrat al-Taḥrīm elaborates on the principles and rules of family leadership, whereas Sūrat al-Mulk emphasizes the governance of the entire world and the majesty of divine sovereignty. This thematic connection demonstrates how the verses and chapters of the Qur'an complement one another, creating a harmonious and interconnected whole.[40]

Huroof al-Muqattaʿa: Abdulaziz extensively examines sixteen different opinions proposed by scholars regarding the huroof al-muqattaʿa found at the beginning of certain Qur'anic chapters. Some of these views propose that the huroof al-muqattaʿa are names of the surahs, while others suggest they refer to divine names or the names of the Qur'an itself. For instance, Ibn Mas'ud

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[37] Dehlawi, *Fathu'l-Aziz*, 1/488-489.

[38] For detailed information on the science of Munasabatu'l-Qur'an see Enayatullah Azimi & Fatih Tok, "Elmalılı Muhammed Hamdi Yazır'ın Münâsebâtü'l-Kur'an İlmine Yaklaşımı-Baqarah Sûresi Örneği", *Eskişehir Osmangazi Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, 9/1, March 2022, 290-300.

[39] Dehlawi, *Fathu'l-Aziz*, 1/628.

[40] Dehlawi, *Fathu'l-Aziz*, 2/3.

and several prominent Companions express that these letters are divine names, whereas Kalbī, Suddī, and Katāda argue that they signify the names of the Qur'an.[41]

While presenting these diverse views, Abdulaziz establishes a connection between the science of tajweed and the huroof al-muqattaʿa, delving into the articulation points and characteristics of the letters within the framework of tajweed. He integrates concepts such as *huruf al-hijāʾ*, *qalqalah*, *mustaʿliyah*, and *ḥalqiyyah* to elucidate the significance of these letters.[42] For example, he references a Sufi interpretation suggesting that the letter *Alif* symbolizes Allah, *Lam* represents Gabriel, and *Mim* signifies Muhammad, highlighting one perspective in which these letters correspond to divine names.

Abdulaziz's tafsir not only unveils the profound meanings embedded in the Qur'an but also offers a robust methodological framework for understanding its dynamic and comprehensive message. Having outlined his perspectives on the Qur'an and his approach to Qur'anic sciences, this study now seeks to explore his method of *tafsir* in greater depth.

3.   Method of Tafsir

Each mufassir interprets the Qur'an through his unique perspective, knowledge, and worldview, employing a specific methodology in the process. This methodology is shaped by linguistic analysis, the consideration of historical context, and insights from related fields of study. Analyzing the meaning and internal coherence of the text constitutes a fundamental aspect of the mufassir's methodology.

Some mufassirs interpret the Qur'an primarily by referencing other Qur'anic verses, the Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad, and the sayings of the Companions and Tabi'un. Others, in the course of writing their tafsir, draw upon language, literature, religious knowledge, and various other disciplines, while also reflecting their own preferences and opinions. It is important to note that categorizing Dehlawi's tafsir solely as either a traditional or a purely rational interpretation would be an oversimplification. In his tafsir, Dehlawi incorporates references from Qur'anic verses, the Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad, and the sayings of the Companions and Tabi'un, while simultaneously engaging grammatical, literary, and rational arguments. Therefore, his work can be classified as a rational *tafsir* that meaningfully integrates traditional sources and reports.

3.1. Tafsir of the Qur'an by the Qur'an

Interpreting the Qur'an by utilizing its internal textual relationships has been a foundational method in Islamic exegetical tradition since the time of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), who explained the Qur'an to his Companions by referencing other Qur'anic verses. This method forms a crucial aspect of both classical and thematic tafsir.[43]

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[41] Dehlawi, *Fathu'l-Aziz*, 1/96-100.

[42] Dehlawi, *Fathu'l-Aziz*, 1/96-102.

[43] Taqi ad-Din Ibn Taymiyya, *Muqaddimat al-Tafsir* (n.p.: n.d.), 131-132; Badr ad-Din al-Zarkashi, *Al-Burhan fi ʿUlum al-Qur'an* (Beirut: n.p.), 2/156-160; 174-175.

The practice of interpreting the Qur'an by the Qur'an is often categorized as a type of transmission-based tafsir due to its reliance on the principle of textual transmission. In this approach, a mufassir, when interpreting a particular verse, references other verses that clarify or elaborate on its meaning. [44] However, some scholars argue that this tafsir method should be considered an act of independent reasoning (dirayah) by the *mufassir* rather than a purely transmission-based approach. Consequently, they exclude it from the scope of traditional *tafsir*, which is typically limited to explanations provided by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), the Companions, and the *Tâbi'un*. [45] This alternative perspective frames the method as a tool for human interpretative effort, emphasizing the active role of the *mufassir* in drawing connections within the text. [46]

İbn Taymiyyah asserts that the most effective method for understanding the Qur'an is to interpret it through itself, arguing that ambiguous or concise aspects of one verse are clarified by other verses. [47] His student, Ibn Kathir, adopts this approach in his tafsir, emphasizing Qura'n's internal coherence and interconnected meanings. [48]

In his tafsir *Fathu'l-Aziz*, Abdulaziz employs this method of interpreting the Qur'an with the Qur'an to explore the internal semantic relationships within the text. Dehlawi carefully considers both the textual and historical contexts of the Qur'an when analyzing the relationships between verses. His approach illustrates how the meaning of specific verses is supported and explained by other verses, thereby demonstrating the Quran's inherent unity and coherence. [49]

For example, in his interpretation of the verse "*On the path of those upon whom You have bestowed Your blessings...*", [50] Abdulaziz references the verse from al-Nisā': "*Those who obey Allah and the Messenger are with those upon whom Allah has bestowed His blessings— the prophets, the steadfast, the martyrs, and the righteous. They are excellent companions!*" [51] as an explanation of the former verse. Abdulaziz explains that those who have been granted blessings in the Qur'an are categorized into four groups: the Prophets, the Siddiqs, the martyrs, and the righteous. He interprets this by stating, "*It follows that the correct path is the path of these four groups. Therefore, when people supplicate to Allah, they should consider these four groups and seek their paths.*" [52]

In tafsir, when a mufassir explains a verse by referring to another verse, they directly cite the verse and interpret the verse in question in light of it. Abdulaziz frequently employs this

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[44] Zekeriya Pak, "Rivayet Ağırlıklı Tefsirler", *Tefsir El Kitabı*, ed. Mehmet Akif Koç (Ankara: Grafiker Yayınları, 2015), 159.

[45] Musaid b. Suleyman b. Nasır at-Tayyar, *Mefhûmu't-tefsir ve't-te'vil ve'l-istinabat ve't-tedebbür ve'l-müfessir* (Riyad: Daru'l-İbnu'l-Cevzî, 2006), 21, 36.

[46] For detailed information on whether the interpretation of the Qur'an by the Qur'an constitutes an independent reasoning (dirayah) or a transmission-based (riwayah) method, see Mehmet Akif Koç, *Isnad Verileri Çerçevesinde Erken Dönem Tefsir Faaliyetleri-İbn Ebî Hâtim (d. 327/939) Tefsiri Örneğinde Bir Literatür İncelemesi* (Ankara: Ankara University, Institute of Social Sciences, PhD Dissertation, 2001), 24-163.

[47] Ahmed b. Abd al-Halim b. Abd al-Salam Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmu' al-Fatawa* (n.p: n.d.), 13/363.

[48] Ebi'l-Feda Ismail b. Umar b. Kathir, *Tafsir al-Qurʾān al-ʿAzīm* (n.p.: Daru Tayyıbah, n.d.), 1/8.

[49] Dehlawi, *Fathu'l-Aziz*, 2/195, 230.

[50] al-Fātiḥa 1/7.

[51] al-Nisāʾ 4/69

[52] Dehlawi, *Fathu'l-Aziz*, 1/11-12.

method in his *tafsir*, making a concerted effort to connect the verses and themes he addresses to other parts of the Qur'an. By doing so, he underscores the internal coherence and intertextuality of the Qur'an, offering a deeper understanding of its meanings.[53]

3.2. Tafsir of the Qur'an Through Hadith

One of the fundamental sources for understanding the Qur'an is the Hadith and Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad. While the primary method for interpreting a Qur'anic verse is to explain it through other verses within the Qur'an itself, the Sunnah serves as a secondary yet indispensable source when such explanations cannot be derived directly from the Qur'an. The Sunnah provides practical applications of Qur'anic teachings, necessary clarifications, and additional expressions that reinforce or elaborate on the meanings of specific verses. In this context, Imam Shafi'i's statement, "Whatever the Prophet has judged is what he has understood from the Qur'an"[54] underscores the pivotal role of the Sunnah in comprehending the Qur'an.

The Sunnah is a vital source that elucidates the Qur'an. Its importance is reflected in the statement of the Prophet Muhammad, "I have been given the Qur'an and something like it." The significance of the Sunnah is further illustrated by the account of the Prophet sending Mu'adh ibn Jabal to Yemen. When asked how he would judge matters, Mu'adh replied that he would first refer to "the Book of Allah" and, if necessary, "the Sunnah of the Prophet." If he could find no answers in either, he would resort to ijtihad. This approach forms the foundational basis for interpreting the Qur'an in light of Hadith.[55]

Abdulaziz, in addition to being a distinguished mufassir, is also widely recognized as a renowned Hadith scholar within the Islamic world. It is inconceivable that a scholar of his stature would neglect the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad in his tafsir. Indeed, a thorough reading Dehlawi's tafsir reveals his systematic methodology in employing Hadith to explain the Qur'an. Abdulaziz's use of Hadith exhibits a range of approaches. At times, he incorporates Hadith without explicitly providing details about its source, narrator, or method of transmission. This varied use reflects the flexibility and depth of his exegetical method, which integrates both Quranic and prophetic teachings.[56]

When interpreting the verse "*It is You (Alone) we worship and You (Alone) we ask for help*"[57] the mufassir delves into the wisdom behind prioritizing worship over seeking help. The mufassir explains that worship is a means (wasila), while seeking help (isti'ana) is a necessity. The reason for presenting the means before the necessity is that seeking for help completes the act of worship. This sequence reflects a logical progression, as the completion of an act follows its initiation. The *mufassir* elaborates further, stating: "*I have begun to worship You according to Your decree. However, the completion of it is not in my hands. There may be obstacles, and to avoid these possible obstacles, I seek Your help.*"[58] To reinforce this interpretation, the *mufassir* cites the Hadith: "*Indeed,*

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[53] Dehlawi, *Fathu'l-Aziz*, 1/153-154.

[54] Muhammad b. Idris al-Shafi'I, *ar-Risâla* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 2015), 62.

[55] Ibn Kathir, *Tefsîr al-Qur'ān al-'Azīm*, 1/7.

[56] Dehlawi, *Fathu'l-Aziz*, 1/33, 45, 58, 59, 193, 234, 278, 335, 696.

[57] al-Fātiḥa ¼.

[58] Dehlawi, *Fathu'l-Aziz*, 1/45.

the hearts of the children of Adam are between two fingers of the Most Merciful"[59] However, Abdulaziz does not specify the source or the transmitter of this Hadith in his work.[60]

One of the methods employed by the mufassir in citing Hadiths for Qur'anic interpretation is to reference them using phrases such as "mentioned in a sahih Hadith" or "recorded in a Hadith." For example, when explaining the terms "anger" and "misguidance" in the verse "*not the path of those who have evoked [Your] anger or of those who are astray*"[61], Abdulaziz cites a narration in which Adi ibn Hatim asked the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) about the meaning of these terms. Abdulaziz states that this is found in a sahih Hadith and reports that the Prophet replied: "*Those who have evoked anger are the Jews, and those who are astray are the Christians.*"[62] However, Abdulaziz does not specify the Hadith collection where this narration can be found. Another Hadith cited on the same page of the *tafsir* is similarly referred to as "*mentioned in a Hadith*" without providing further details regarding its source or attribution. This lack of explicit referencing reflects a common practice in pre-modern exegetical works, where the emphasis is placed on the content and message of the Hadith rather than its chain of transmission (*isnād*).[63]

The abundance of narrations in the tafsir work of Abdulaziz raises the question of whether the authenticity and status (sahih or daif) of these hadiths were systematically evaluated. It is evident that the mufassir did not exercise strict scrutiny when incorporating hadiths, which led to the inclusion of weak and possibly fabricated narrations in his works.

That said, these evaluations should not lead to the assumption that all narrations in Abdulaziz's tafsir work are weak or fabricated. In fact, Abdulaziz has cited numerous narrations from authentic hadith sources. Nonetheless, it is apparent that he generally did not apply rigorous standards of scrutiny to the narrations he included and did not demonstrate significant diligence in critically selecting hadiths for his exegesis.

3.3. Tafsir with the Sayings of the Companions

In the early years of Islam, the Companions of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), having had direct contact with his words, actions, and life, possessed a unique and profound understanding of the Qur'an. Consequently, the narrations and interpretations of the Companions hold immense value in tafsir. Abdulaziz frequently incorporates the views of the Companions into his tafsir. In particular, Dehlawi draws upon the narrations and opinions of prominent Companions such as the four Caliphs, Abu Zar al-Ghifari (d. 32), Abu Musa al-Ash'ari (d. 42), Hz. Aisha (d. 58), Jabir b. Abdullah (d. 78).

For instance, in his interpretation of Sūrat al-Qadr, Abdulaziz cites the opinion of Abdullah b. Abbas' regarding the specific night in Ramadan that is considered the Night of Decree. According to this narration, Ibn Abbas notes that the phrase "Laylat al-Qadr" consists of nine

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[59] Ebu'l-Huseyn Muslim b. el-Haccac Muslim, *al-Câmi'u'ṣ-ṣaḥîḥ*. nşr. Muhammed Fuad Abdulbaki (Beyrut-Lubnan: Daru'l-Kutubu'l-ilmiyye, 1991/1412), "Kitabu'l-kader", 2654.

[60] Dehlawi, *Fathu'l-Aziz*, 1/33, 45, 58, 59, 193.

[61] al-Fātiḥa 1/7.

[62] Dehlawi, *Fathu'l-Aziz*, 1/59.

[63] Dehlawi, *Fathu'l-Aziz*, 1/59, 72.

letters, and this phrase appears three times within the surah. Based on this observation, he concludes that the Night of Decree falls on the twenty-seventh night of Ramadan.[64]

The example demonstrates how Dehlawi integrates the views of the Companions into his tafsir, highlighting their contributions as the first generation of scholars who witnessed the revelation. While this observation is derived from a single case, it reflects a broader pattern in his works, where he frequently aligns his interpretations with the insights of the Companions. By incorporating their perspectives, Dehlawi adds depth and authenticity to the *tafsir* of the Qur'anic text, leveraging the unique insights of those who had direct contact with the Prophet Muhammad and his teachings.

3.4. Tafsir with the Sayings of the Tabi'un

The Tabi'un were a generation that received knowledge directly from the Sahabah and transmitted this knowledge to subsequent generations. Abdulaziz extensively incorporates the views of the Tabi'un in his exegesis. The sayings of the Tabi'un play a complementary role to the interpretations of the Sahabah in tafsir studies, enriching and providing a deeper understanding of the Qur'anic text.

For example, Abdulaziz reports the narration of Hasan al-Basri regarding the verse from Sūrat al-Baqara: "*It is given to them in a form similar to theirs*"[65] According to this narration, some fruits in paradise resemble the fruits of this world. Dehlawi observes that most mufassirs interpret the term "mutashabih" in the verse as referring to "variety and form". Citing the views of Hasan al-Basri and other Tabi'un scholars, Abdulaziz explains, "The fruits of paradise are identical in appearance, but their flavors and tastes are different."[66] Similarly, in the tafsir of the term "Mā'ūn" in Sūrat al-Mā'ūn, he notes that the majority of the Sahabah and Tabi'un interpreted this term as referring to "zakat".[67]

Another example of Abdulaziz's use of *Tabi'un* interpretations is his reference to the statement of Sa'id b. Jubayr regarding the verse in Sūrat al-Baqara, "*And He taught Adam the names—all of them...*"[68] Sa'id b. Jubayr states that Adam was taught the names of all things, including camels, cows, and sheep. Abdulaziz includes this interpretation in his *tafsir*, demonstrating his reliance on the scholarly insights of the *Tabi'un*.[69]

Abdulaziz's inclusion of tafsirs based on the sayings of the Tabi'un reflects the profound knowledge of this second generation of scholars regarding the understanding and tafsir of the Qur'an. These interpretations not only represent the deep insights of the Tabi'un but also provide an additional layer of depth to the tafsir of the Qur'anic text, building upon and extending the interpretative traditions established during the era of the Companions.

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[64] Dehlawi, Fathu'l-Aziz, 3/259.

[65] al-Baqara 2/25.

[66] Dehlawi, Fathu'l-Aziz, 1/175.

[67] Dehlawi, *Fathu'l-Aziz*, 3/285.

[68] al-Baqara 2/31.

[69] Dehlawi, *Fathu'l-Aziz*, 1/211.

3.5. Tafsir Based on Qiraat Variants

The Qur'an is a sacred text renowned for its profound meanings, linguistic richness, and coherence. Understanding this holy book requires consideration of its various modes of recitation. Qur'anic scholars analyze these recitation variants to uncover diverse readings and reveal the rich meanings that emerge from these differences. Dehlawi incorporates the study of qiraat variations in his tafsir. In his explanations of Qur'anic verses, he employs the science of qiraat and draws upon the well-known recitation styles of the qiraat imams. Dehlawi observes that, in some cases, different recitations convey the same semantic content. Furthermore, he emphasizes the grammatical features (i'rab) of words and provides detailed discussions on the rules of tajwid.[70]

An example of Dehlawi's engagement with qira'at differences can be found in his commentary on the verse "وَاتَّخِذُوا" (*And take*) from Sūrat al-Baqara.[71] He notes that this term is read differently in two well-known qira'at. According to Nafi and Ibn ʿĀmir, it is recited with the letter "خ" (kha) with a fatḥa (short vowel mark) as "واتخَذوا" / vettehazū, rendering the meaning as: "We made this house a place to visit and a secure place. They also made the Station of Abraham a place of prayer for themselves." Other qira'at imams, however, recite it with a kasra (short vowel mark) as "واتخِذوا" / vettehizū, giving it an imperative form. In this case, the verse is interpreted as: "*And We said: 'Take the Station of Abraham as a place of prayer for yourselves.*'" Due to these differences, exegetes suggest that the phrase "قلنا" (We said) is implicit in the second, reading, clarifying the imperative command.[72]

Dehlawi is a scholar who places significant emphasis on both the transmission (riwayah) and reasoning (dirayah) methods in his tafsir. When addressing differences in qira'at, he combines traditional textual evidence with rational arguments to deeply explore the meanings of the verses and the implications of these qira'at variations. His nuanced approach not only underscores the Qur'an's linguistic depth but also demonstrates the integral role of *qira'at* in enhancing the understanding of its multifaceted meanings.

3.6. Grammar/I'rab

As a critical branch of linguistics, grammar examines the structure, rules, and components of a language. Arabic grammar is traditionally divided into two main categories: sarf and nahw. Sarf focuses on the morphological changes and derivations of words, while nahw addresses sentence structures, grammatical elements, and the ways in which meaning is conveyed.

In his *tafsir*, Abdulaziz frequently employs the question-and-answer method to elucidate Quranic verses from the perspectives of morphology and syntax. One example of this method appears in his interpretation of the verse:

"*If they believe in the same way you have believed, then they have certainly found the right path...*"[73]

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[70] Dehlawi, *Fathu'l-Aziz*, 1/510, 620.

[71] al-Baqara 2/125.

[72] Dehlawi, *Fathu'l-Aziz*, 1/575, 1/576.

[73] al-Baqara 2/137.

In this context, Abdulaziz raises a question regarding the phrase "*bimithli mā āmntum*" and its significance: "*Faith accepted by Allah is singular, and there is no need for multiplicity. Therefore, why is this expression used?*" To address this question, Abdulaziz refers to various tafsirs and tafsirs from different mufassirs. One explanation is as follows:

1.   The phrase implies a hypothetical and conditional situation.

2.   In the phrase 'مآ آمنتم,' the term 'ما' is not a relative pronoun but rather a verbal noun (masdar). The letter 'ب' at the beginning of the phrase 'بمثل' is employed to indicate a request for help or support.

3.   The word 'مثل' is not used here as an unnecessary addition but to convey reverence and respect.

4.   The terms "'بمثل and 'به are used to express causation and do not directly refer to the context of faith."[74]

The mufassir deepens his analysis of this verse by presenting and engaging with the views and interpretations of other mufassirs in detail. In Dehlawi's tafsir, grammatical expositions feature prominently, often explained with remarkable depth and precision. Rather than addressing grammar superficially, he examines word and sentence structures in detail, offering insights into their linguistic and syntactic functions. Additionally, Dehlawi's *tafsir* frequently highlights the relationships between the pronunciations, forms, and structures of words and sentences as they appear across different *surahs*. Through this meticulous approach, he uncovers the linguistic subtleties and eloquence of the Quranic text, contributing to a deeper appreciation of its stylistic and grammatical intricacies.[75]

Conclusion

Abdulaziz Dehlawi's tafsir reflects his profound expertise in Islamic sciences and stands as a testament to his intellectual depth. His work can be viewed as a deliberate response to counter the missionary activities of Western powers in India during his time, shaped significantly by the socio-political conditions of the era. In this sense, his tafsir serves as a work of resistance, rebellion and revival. It also represents a continuation of the intellectual legacy of his father, Shah Waliullah Dehlawi, who was recognized as a mujaddid (reviver) and a leader of intellectual revival movements of the period.

Abdulaziz's detailed treatment on the concept of naskh highlights his understanding of the Qur'an as both a historical and practical guide. His approach to naskh, if closely examined by modern Islamic jurists and exegetes, could pave the way for fresh perspectives in the field. Although parts of his tafsir have not survived in their entirety, the extant manuscripts retain a significant place within the broader Islamic tafsir tradition. Dehlawi's method of exploring interrelations between Qur'anic verses offers valuable insights and potential contributions to contemporary tafsir studies.

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[74]   Dehlawi, *Fathu'l-Aziz*, 1/620-621.

[75]   Dehlawi, *Fathu'l-Aziz*, 1/325, 330.

In his work *Fathu'l-Aziz*, Abdulaziz adopts an interpretative approach that emphasizes coherence by relating Qur'anic verses to one another, making it a valuable reference for mufassirs seeking depth and interconnectedness in their tafsirs. By elucidating symbolic meanings and allegorical expressions, he made the Qur'an's messages more accessible. Through these concrete examples, he clarified abstract concepts, thereby enhancing the comprehensibility of the Qur'anic message. Furthermore, his detailed views on abrogation underscore the dynamic nature of the Qur'an, making a significant contribution to academic discussions surrounding this topic.

Dehlawi's tafsir is further distinguished by its focus on grammar and the science of *qira'at*. His profound knowledge of language and literature played a crucial role in uncovering the richness of meaning within the Qur'an. Moreover, by frequently integrating the views of the *sahabah* and the *tâbi'un,* Dehlawi skillfully blended traditional narrations with modern tafsirs, thereby bridging classical and contemporary tafsir methodologies. As such, Dehlawi's tafsir offers both historical and methodological contributions to Islamic sciences.

Finally, studies analyzing the historical context of Dehlawi's tafsir, particularly his resistance against British colonial forces, could shed significant light on his scholarly legacy. In this regard, we believe that our research will make a meaningful contribution to the field and deepen the understanding of his enduring impact.

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