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A Consideration of the Harmony between all the Verses of the Qur'an¹

What has been mentioned so far makes up the primary foundation of Qur'anic exegesis. However, one of the important conditions for the correctness of tafsir and its strength is that the commentator must not consider each verse of a particular surah as being separate from the other verses of the same surah as well as the verses of all other chapters of the Qur'an. The commentator must realize that all the verses have either a single goal behind them, or multiple goals, all of which can be summarized in one extensive goal.

The greatest stumbling block in the commentary of the Qur'an lies in this stage meaning that a person, due to his mere knowledge of the rules of Arabic grammar, goes forth to offer a commentary of a verse of the Qur'an, neglecting other similar verses revealed about the same issue. It was this very blunder in exegesis that resulted in the formation of different Islamic sects and ideologies, and every creed and founder of a new sect, in order to establish his ideology, brought proof and testimony from the Qur'an!

Who does not know that all of the different schools of Islamic thought, whether the Mujabbirah², the Muftazilah³, the Mushabbihah⁴, the Mujassimah⁵, the Murjifah⁶, or the other proponents of ideologies and sects based their theoretical beliefs upon various verses of the Qur'an and considered themselves to be among the followers of the Qur'an! This is while, save for one, all other creeds are false and are distanced from the guidance of the Qur'an.

When we search for the root cause of the emergence of these sects, we observe that the reason, or at least one of the reasons for them coming about is that each sect attached itself to a specific verse and was negligent of the other verses that spoke of the same subject which could have served as an exposition to first the verse.

There is no doubt that the Qur'an contains numerous verses, which if taken and studied on their own, may make one reach various (incorrect) conclusions such as that of the beliefs of: predestination, free-

will, likening Allah (awj) to His creations, tanzih⁷, belief in Allah (awj) having a body, etc. However, one can never state that all of these contrary and opposite beliefs and ideologies stem directly from the Divine Revelation (wahi) and that all of these make up the actual goals and objectives which the Qur`an has put forward, since the Qur`an clearly states that:

وَلَوْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ لَوَجَدُوا فِيهِ اخْتِلَافًا كَثِيرًا

“And had this (Qur`an) come from any other than Allah then surely you would have found numerous discrepancies within it.”⁸

This confusion can also be cleared up if we do not forget the unity and harmony which exists amongst the verses of the Qur`an.

In addition, we must keep in mind that the Qur`an has been described as possessing the following two characteristics:

- a. Verses which are similar to one another;
- B. Often repeated – from the point of view of their content (not necessarily repeated verbatim).

This is clearly seen in a verse of the Qur`an in which it is stated:

اللَّهُ نَزَّلَ أَحْسَنَ الْحَدِيثِ كِتَابًا مُتَشَابِهًا مَثَانِي

“Allah has revealed the best of discourses in the form of a Book, consistent with itself, (yet) repeating (its teachings in various aspects).”⁹

Naturally, one thing may resemble something else and whereas it is possible that they may differ in some regards and aspects, however without doubt they would also have points of conformity and commonality amongst them and it is for this reason that they are referred to as being similar to one another. Therefore, in explaining one verse of the Qur`an, one must refer to all of the other verses which have been revealed in the same regard. At this point, from the collection of all the verses, a final opinion would be concluded, and this is how one should carry on the entire process of commentary of the Qur`an.

It is at this point that the necessity to search for another form of commentary of the Qur`an which is known as the ‘thematic exegesis’ of the Qur`an becomes obvious. The methodology used in such a commentary of the Qur`an is that all of the verses on a particular theme are – as much as is humanly

possible – gathered together, and then at that point, one keeps in mind the context of each verse and compares one verse to another. From this overall review, one outcome is extracted.

The other form of exegesis of the Qur`an, meaning the explanation of the verses of the Qur`an in sequential order chapter by chapter – is no doubt beneficial and very valuable, even for a select group of people and there is no other method of commentary of the Qur`an which would be as fruitful.

Unfortunately however, the only way to remove the curtains which may cloud over the true goals and aims of the verses of the Qur`an is through the thematic exegesis of the Qur`an, as this is the true soul and essence of seeing the harmony in verses of the Qur`an. In addition, this is the same path which has been taken by the author of this (present) work in compiling, *Manshur-e-Jawid-e-Qur`an* – “The Everlasting Charter of the Qur`an”¹⁰ and the work, *Mafahimul Qur`an* – “The Understandings of the Qur`an”¹¹. Of course it goes without saying that these works of ours are not free from flaws and defects, and those who shall come in the future will complete and perfect this form of exegesis of the Qur`an, God willing.

1. It should be noted that ‘referring to the harmony in the sum of verses of the Qur`an’ is something other than the commentary of one verse (of the Qur`an) through employing another verse (of the Qur`an) which was mentioned in the third condition given above for which, the difference is extremely clear.

2. This school of thought believes that man has no freedom and is merely a tool in the hands of Allah (awj). (Tr.)

3. They believe that man is totally free and Allah (awj) exercises no power over his action. (Tr.)

4. The anthropomorphists [Gr.,=having human form]. This term refers to those who believed in the Divine having a human form or having human characteristics. (Tr.)

5. Corporealists. (Tr.)

6. They were of the view that faith and belief are sufficient for salvation and good deeds are not necessary. (Tr.)

7. Tanzih or ‘Deanthropomorphism’ literally refers to the belief of, “ridding of philosophy or religion of anthropomorphic beliefs and doctrines.” However, this belief becomes misleading when one disregards every perfect trait that the human being possesses and believes that Allah (awj) is free from the perfect attributes. This is incorrect, for Allah (awj) possesses all of the perfect attributes but in the infinite and absolute form. Thus, for example, we cannot say that Allah (awj) has no mercy because man has mercy, but rather that ‘Allah has mercy, but in the Absolute sense.’ His mercy, unlike human mercy, does not follow the state of pity, which is “a state of change”. [Tr.]

8. Suratul Nisa (4), Verse 82

9. Suratul Zumur (39), Verse 23

10. The thematic exegesis of the Qur`an written in Farsi. Fourteen volumes have been published to date.

11. The thematic exegesis of the Qur`an written in ‘Arabic. Seven volumes have been published to date. This work can be read in its entirety at www.imamsadeq.org [1]

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[1] <http://www.imamsadeq.org>