

INTRODUCTION TO TAFSEER

For all the readers that are unfamiliar with the term 'tafseer', it is an interpretation of the great word of Allah Ta'aalāh. Until now, I'm sure most of the readers probably recite Qur'an quite regularly and there are great benefits to reciting this Divine Book of Allah Almighty, but don't only be satisfied with reciting the book. Learn it! Understand it! Make it your life! The Qur'an is not meant to be put on a shelf and to be decorated and covered. In fact, Abu Dardaa' (ra) says that, 'Whenever a time comes when you decorate your Masaajid and you decorate your Mus'hafs (Qur'ans) then you will be destroyed,' because obviously that would be an indication that you are favouring symbols instead of substance.

And this is exactly where we find ourselves today- we have lost track of what the Qur'an should do for us or how we should study the Book of Allah. Take the example of Ibne Umar, he said: 'It took me 14 years to memorize Surah Baqarah - 14 Years! Can you believe that? So what must have taken him so long or what is it that he did so differently?

When the Sahabah (ra) spoke about memorization, they didn't only mean the words. They memorized its words, its meanings and interpretations and they implemented it into their lives totally and completely. This was their memorization. This was how they studied the Qur'an.

The Qur'an is the revelation of Allah (swt) in His exact words. Does it not send shivers down your back when you realize how totally divine this Great Book is. Each and every word from its text is directly from Allah (swt) to us. The Quran is a direct link between you and Allah. It would be absolutely impossible not to fall in love with this beautiful gift from Allah. Now why did Allah (swt) give us this gift and why is its tafseer and understanding so vital for us?

Allah (swt) mentions to us in the Qur'an that: 'It is an explanation for everything.' Therefore, if we were to look closely, we would be able to see that the Qur'an consists of every science, e.g., science, biology, mathematics, etc. And the object of Qur'an is Hidayah (guidance) for Mankind. So when we study tafseer this is obviously our objective. Allah Ta'aalāh verifies this in the Qur'an, where He says: ***'The Qur'an was revealed as a means of guidance for Mankind.'* (S2/V185)**

In other words, this great book of Allah (swt) is in actual fact an instruction manual for living life. Isn't it so very enlightening to know that we did in fact come with an instruction manual and it is only through this Book that we would be able to find and fulfill our purpose of existence. Life should be a whole lot easier from here on since we now know where to find all the answers and we have established a starting point.

The interpretation of the Qur'an is obtained from extensive explanations of our Prophet ﷺ and his Companions and has nothing to do with our mere opinions. The famous Mufasssireen (interpreters of the Qur'an) among the Sahabah were: Hadhrat Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, Ali, Abdullah bin Mas'ood, Abdullah bin Abbas, Ubai bin Ka'ab, Zaid bin Thabit, Abu Moosa Al- Ash'ari and Abdullah bin Zubayr, May Allah be pleased with all of them.

In the Qur'an you will find 500 to 600 verses dealing with Ahkaam (laws) ie. Fasting, hajj, jihad, inheritance, marriage, divorce, etc. The remaining 6000 verses deal with the general guidance and upliftment of Mankind. This includes belief, character and social life. Before we begin the study of tafseer itself, there are many different, important sciences of the Qur'an that would be extremely beneficial for us to understand.