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**Amin Ahsan Islahi and Sayyid Qutb on *Sūrah* as an Integrated Whole:  
A Brief Methodological Comparison on the *Tafsīr* of *al-Aḥzāb*, *al-Ghāfir* and *al-Ṭūr***

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**Abstract:** In understanding the messages of the Holy Qur'ān, man refers to the exegetical works by scholars who spend their lives interpreting, uncovering, and exploring the Qur'anic verses. There are many types of exegetical works, each are represented by different methods, approaches and purposes resulting in diversity of interpretations of the divine text. This study compare two modern *tafsīr* works, *Tadabbur-e-Qur'ān* by Amin Ahsan Islahi and *Fī Zīlāl al-Qur'ān* by Sayyid Qutb, and their interpretations of three selected *sūrah* (chapters) of the Qur'ān; *sūrah al-Aḥzāb*, *sūrah al-Mu'min* (also named *al-Ghāfir*), and *sūrah al-Ṭūr*. The comparison looks at the general methodologies of both works, their sectional division of *sūrah*, their concern for the central theme, and issues and subjects highlighted by each work in interpreting a *sūrah*.

**Keywords and phrases:** Coherence in the Qur'ān, Amin Ahsan Islahi, Sayyid Qutb, Quranic exegeses, modern *tafsīr*.

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## Introduction

In understanding the messages of the Holy Qur'ān, a person refers to the exegetical works by scholars who spent their times restlessly in giving interpretation of the Quranic verses. There are many types of exegetical works with the use of different methods, approaches and purposes resulting in diversity of interpretations of the divine text. In this study, we will concisely compare between the two modern *tafsīr* works, *Tadabbur-e-Qur'ān* by Amin Ahsan Islahi and *Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān* by Sayyid Qutb, related with interpretations of three *sūrah* (chapters) namely *Sūrah al-Aḥzāb*, *al-Mu'min* (also named al-Ghāfir), and *al-Tūr*. Israr Ahmad Khan in his book, '*Understanding the Qur'ān: A Reflection*' described these two works as not only original but also comprehensive; their styles correspond with contemporary issues of humanity. Also, a common feature of their works, which distinguishes them from others, is that they treated the Qur'ān as an integral part in which they avoided the piecemeal approach in interpreting the verses of each chapter of the Qur'ān. The three *sūrahs* were selected in this study since each of them consists of a total number of verses that ranges between 55 to 85 which is not too long or short for a comparison. They make the suitable candidates for the study of the sectional division of a *sūrah* offered by the two scholars.

### 1.0 The General Methodology of Both *Tafsīrs*

#### 1.1 The Methodology of Islahi

In his *tafsīr*, Islahi applied a direct approach to the Qur'ān by focusing on the Qur'ānic verses rather than being immersed in the study of traditions and linguistic aspects. Nevertheless, both Islahi and Qutb stress the significance of understanding the Qur'ān in the context of its language, Arabic idiom as used and understood at the time of its revelation based on the fact that the Qur'ān elucidates its own meaning in diverse forms and contexts. Qur'ān [Hūd 11:1] reads: "This is a book with verses basic or fundamental (of established meaning) - further explained in detail from One Who is Wise and Well-Acquainted (with all things)."

According to his concept of the Qur'ānic coherence, every *sūrah* has its own theme, introduction that leads to an exposition of the message, and arguments that ends up with a suitable epilogue. The Qur'ān is considered integral parts in which all verses in each *sūrah* is coherent and cohesive.<sup>2</sup> Just as there is coherence within *sūrah* where all its verses are inter-related and bear remarkable relationship to each other, so also there is coherence between *sūrahs* of the Qur'ān. Islahi points out seven distinct groups of *sūrahs* in the Qur'ān, each of which has a definite theme and a distinct flavour of its own, with a most eloquent exposition of its respective theme.

<sup>1</sup> Ahmad Khan, Israr. (2015). *Understanding the Qur'ān: A Reflection*. Gombak: IIUM Press, preface, pp.xiv.

<sup>2</sup> Ahmad Khan, Israr. (2003). al-Biqā'i and Islahi: A Comparative Study of Tafsir Methodology. *Intellectual Discourse* vol. 11, pp. 183.

In his work Islahi begins with an introduction of each *sūrah* to its central theme (*‘amūd*), its apparent connection with the previous *sūrah* and a summary of its subject matter. Islahi’s method of interpretation consists of two main components: the linguistic and technical explanation of every word in the verses, and the elaboration of the message of the verses. He consulted two main sources as he explains the meaning of the Qur’anic verses. Firstly, the internal tools of the Qur’anic language, the Qur’ān itself and the coherence in the Qur’anic statements. Secondly the external component that comprise of authentic *ḥadīths*, historical background of the revelation, and classical books of *tafsir* such as al-Ṭabarī and Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī.

## 1.2 The Methodology of Sayyid Qutb

*Fī Ṣilāl al-Qur’ān* (translated: In the Shade of the Qur’ān) is a highly influential commentary of the Qur’ān that represents the magnum opus of Sayyid Qutb. It outlines his vision with regard to conceptual framework of Qur’anic governance and society. Qutb adopted to a certain extent the method of *tafsīr bi’l-ma’thūr* and addressed the analytical, *balāghah* (Arabic rhetoric) and social issues throughout his interpretation. He also paid much attention to the unity of the *sūrah* that links its subject to each other. By doing so, Qutb is of the view that that the *sūrah* was organized in a very distinctive manner and beautiful composition.

## 2.0 A Comparison Between the Two *Tafsīrs* on *Sūrah al-Aḥzāb*

### 2.1 General Methodologies

*Sūrah al-Aḥzāb*, translated as ‘The Joint Forces’,<sup>3</sup> is a Medinan *sūrah* which gets its name from the Battle of the Trench, when the joint forces of various tribes of disbelievers surrounded Medina with armed forces. Qutb commences his interpretation by focusing on the content of the *sūrah* and gives a direct description of the early Muslim community in Medina. That period was considered as the real model for shaping the Islamic Character. He links the events contained within the *sūrah* to the central concept of faith and submission to God. He argues that the *sūrah* plays a crucial role in reorganizing Muslim activities through modification of traditional practices to integrate with Islamic concept of life.

On the other hand, Islahi in his book *Tadabbur-e-Qur’ān* begins his *tafsīr* with an introduction to the *‘amūd* (lit. pillar, i.e. central theme) of the *sūrah*, with the sole aim at validating the authenticity of the messages of the Qur’ān. He then briefly illustrates some of the very prominent aspects of the *sūrah*. Two examples are as followed: First, the command towards Prophet Muhammad to fulfil his responsibility as a Messenger despite the disapproval of the people. Second, it presents the status of Prophet’s wives and their distinctive characters in the community. According to Islahi, *Sūrah al-Aḥzāb* was revealed in a period where the hypocrites had launched evil propaganda against Prophet PBUH to create

<sup>3</sup> Abdel Haleem, M.A.S. (2004). *The Qur’an*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp.266.

frustration and hatred among Muslims. Islahi then provides the analysis of the discussion by dividing the verses into eight topics in which he briefly explains the key points and objectives of those verses.

## 2.2 A Comparison of Their Sectional Divisions

Qutb divides his interpretation of *Sūrah al-Aḥzāb* into six sections. Each them is grouped with the main topic followed by exposition of the verses. He then proceeds to elucidate those verses dividing them into subtopics.

As for Islahi, he splits up the *sūrah* into seven sections. Under each section, he states some Qur'anic verses and its meaning and continues his *tafsīr* by explaining each verse separately. Both of them demonstrate similar view in dividing the verses of the *surah*. Qutb having six sections while Islahi seven. They differ on the verses that come after the fourth section where Islahi divides section five into two. The division can be described as follow:

Sayyid Qutb: Section 1 (verse 1-8), 2 (verse 9-27), 3 (verse 28-35), 4 (36-48), 5 (49-62), 6 (63-73).

Islahi: Section 1 (verse 1-8), 2 (verse 9-27), 3 (verse 28-35), 4 (36-48), 5 (49-52), 6 (53-62), 7 (63-73).

## 2.3 A Comparison of Their Interpretation

Qutb views the opening of this *sūrah* (verse 1-3) as a declaration concerning the basis of Islamic teachings, legislation, social system, and morality. He believes that it is essential that mankind submit to God and be willing to obey His orders and observe His prohibition, as this represents the true manifestation of faith and submission. According to him, legal concept and values are established based on those principles. Thus, the verses 1-3 begin with a directive order to the Prophet PBUH to maintain God-fearing and obedience to Him. The verses read:

“O Prophet! Fear God and do not yield to the unbelievers and the hypocrites. God is certainly All-Knowing, Wise. Follow what is revealed to you by your Lord; for God is well aware of all that you do. Place your trust in God; for God alone is worthy of all trust.”

Verses 1-3, thus, become the preface of the *sūrah* that regulates certain aspects of the social and moral life of the newly born Muslim community in Madinah. It is a beginning that tells us something about the nature of the Islamic system and its underlying principles. Islam is not merely a set of directives and admonitions, or manners and moral values, or a collection of laws and regulations, or traditions and practices, he said.”<sup>4</sup>

He then connects the ideas in the earlier verses to its succeeding verse. He explains that the verse “*Never has God put two hearts in one man's body*”. This (verse 4) refers to the

<sup>4</sup> Qutb, Sayyid. *In the Shade of The Qur'ān*. pp.9. Retrieved on 30th June, 2019 from <https://tafsirzilal.files.wordpress.com/2012/06/al-ahzab-eng.pdf>

practical situation of relying and obeying only One God. Qutb illustrates his view by these words:

*“This alludes to the fact that man cannot live in two different universes or follow two different systems. Should he do so he would stumble and become a hypocrite. Since he has only one heart, he must look up to One God and follow one system to the exclusion of all other things...”*<sup>5</sup>

His ideas depict that man needs one system that provides a comprehensive concept of life since he has only one heart.

On the contrary, Islahi describes the verse *“Never has God put two hearts in one man’s body”* (verse 4) as a prelude to what will be mentioned later. He relates this verse to the idea that God does not like that a person become a target of contradictory thoughts and goal of life. If He wills, He would have blessed a man with more than one heart. Islahi stated: *“The fact is that if he has one heart, then his thoughts and intentions too must not be contradictory. They should in fact be in complete harmony and accord”*.<sup>6</sup>

This verse is then followed by an example of a contradictory thought which discusses the topic of *ḡihār* during the pre-Islamic era where people expressed *ḡihār* to divorce their wives. They regarded the wives to be eternally prohibited to them the way mothers are. This practice is a clear example of a clash of intention which is a manifestation of their contradictory thoughts.

To conclude, a distinction between both *mufasssirs*’ interpretation can clearly be seen. Their approach to connect and link the verses with either its preceding or succeeding verses resulted in different understanding of the verses.

In the following discussion, we will further bring another example to compare their approaches of interpretation. In the verse number 23 of this *sūrah*, God mentioned:

مِّنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ رِجَالٌ صَدَقُوا مَا عَاهَدُوا اللَّهَ عَلَيْهِ فَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ قَضَىٰ نَحْبَهُ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ يَنْتَظِرُ وَمَا بَدَّلُوا تَبْدِيلًا

In interpreting this verse, Islahi begins by mentioning that in *Sūrah al-A’rāf* the use of the word رِجَالٌ in this way suggests that it serves to magnify the noun. Hence, it is translated as ‘righteous people’ or ‘commendable people’. He then proceeds to explain the word نَحْبُ saying: *“The word has a broad connotation. Thus, determination, resoluteness, promises, vows are included in it. Imam al-Bukhārī says that it means عهد (promise) and this explanation is in line with the essence of the word.”*<sup>7</sup> This example shows that Islahi consulted the sayings of traditional scholars to decide on the meaning a Qur’anic word. He quotes Imām al-Bukhārī’s statement reported in *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-‘Aẓīm* by Ibn Kathīr. He states his preference and deduces the meaning of the word by what suits the context of the

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., pp.2-3.

<sup>6</sup> Islahi, Amin Ahsan. *Tadabbur-e-Qur’ān*, vol. 6, pp.9. Retrieved on 30th June, 2019 from <http://www.tadabbur-i-Qur’ān.org/text-of-tadabbur-i-Qur’ān/volume-6/sūrah-ahzab/>

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., vol. 6, pp. 33.



verse. In addition, he links this verse with verse no. 15 of the *sūrah*. The verse 15 deals with the attitude of Hypocrites who broke their promises, turned their backs, and gave excuses to run away from battles. Thus, in this verse God mentions His faithful people who do not break even the slightest of their promise made with God.

Qutb explains this verse under a subtopic of “Strengthening Faith”. He views this verse as strategic plan against those who pledged to God that they would never run away rather to stick to their vows. He then explains the verse number 15 which is equal with what Islahi said. Interestingly, Qutb includes the exposition with a Companion’s report which narrates a story of Anas ibn al-Naḍr, who was believed that this verse was revealed in reference to him. It was related that he did not take part in the Battle of Badr and he was upset because of that. Thus, he pledged to fight in another battle with the Prophet. Qutb furthermore asserted that this report was narrated by Imam Aḥmad, Muslim, al-Tirmidhī and al-Nasā’ī. He commented that this is thus a test of faith for the believers; whether or not they hold onto their vows and promises.

### 3.0 A Comparison Between the Two *Tafsīrs* on *Sūrah al-Mu’min*

#### 3.1 Islahi’s Interpretation

As mentioned previously in his general methodology of *tafsīr*, Islahi commences his explanation by referring to the central theme of the *sūrah*. He briefly divided the 85 verses into seven sections by providing a summary analysis of the discourse of each of them. Islahi explains the *sūrah* in three long parts. The first part covers a range from verse 1 until verse 22, the second from verse 23 to verse 55, and the third or the last part deals with verse nos. 56 to verse 85. The central theme of *Sūrah al-Ghāfir* concerns with the oneness of God just like those other six *sūrahs* that start with the letters *ḥā mīm*.

In the first part of his explanation, Islahi mentioned the significance of the Qur’ān that was revealed to mankind with such a beauty style of arrangement. It is as guidance from Allah to His Messenger and the whole mankind. He who is the Almighty has power and control over everything as indicated by the attributes of God in the verse:

غَافِرِ الذَّنْبِ وَقَابِلِ التَّوْبِ شَدِيدِ الْعِقَابِ ذِي الطَّلُوعِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ إِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيرُ

“Forgiver of sins and Acceptor of repentance, severe in punishment, infinite in bounty.

There is no god but Him; to Him is the ultimate return” [al-Ghāfir 40:3].

Islahi mentioned in his exegesis that everyone is given the responsibility to decide his course of action; he can either accept the Qur’ān and hope to be forgiven by God’s mercy or oppose it and wait for His punishment and power to manifest themselves. If anyone is under the misconception that there is someone other than God who is worthy of worship, then he should remove this misconception. That is the true character of a believer. Islahi also brought historical evidences from the stories of the previous prophets prior the advent of Prophet Muhammad PBUH. Many nations before the Quraysh have denied the divine

messages of their respective messengers and they tried to get rid of them. However, they were punished by Allah which is the manifestation of His attribute شديد العقاب. Islahi argued that the purpose of using the word (عقاب) is to connote that the punishment that Allah afflicted to such rebellious people is because of a natural consequence of their actions.

In this part, Islahi also pointed to the state of fear of the angels and their seeking of forgiveness for the believers as can also be learned from the last verse of the preceding *sūrah* [al-Zumar 39:75] and in the *sūrah* that comes after the succeeding *sūrah*.<sup>8</sup> The former reads:

وَتَرَى الْمَلَائِكَةَ خَافِينَ مِنْ حَوْلِ الْعَرْشِ يُسَبِّحُونَ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِمْ وَقُضِيَ بَيْنَهُم بِالْحَقِّ وَقِيلَ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

“You [Prophet] will see the angels surrounding the Throne, glorifying their Lord with praise. True judgement will have been passed between them, and it will be said, ‘Praise be to God, the Lord of the Worlds.’ [al-Zumar 39:75], while the latter reads:

تَكَادُ السَّمَاوَاتُ يَتَفَطَّرْنَ مِنْ فَوْقِهِنَّ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ يُسَبِّحُونَ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِمْ وَيَسْتَغْفِرُونَ لِمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ

“The heavens are almost broken apart from above as the angels proclaim the praises of their Lord and ask forgiveness for those on earth. God is indeed the Most Forgiving, the Most Merciful” [al-Shūrā 42:5].

While in this *surah*, Allah informs us that the angels were saying during their prayer:

رَبَّنَا وَسِعْتَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ رَحْمَةً وَعِلْمًا فَاغْفِرْ لِلَّذِينَ تَابُوا وَاتَّبَعُوا سَبِيلَكَ وَقِهِمْ عَذَابَ الْجَحِيمِ

“Our Lord, You embrace all things in mercy and knowledge, so forgive those who turn to You and follow Your path. Save them from the pains of Hell” [al-Ghāfir 40:7].

This verse explained the seeking of forgiveness by the angels.

In the part that covers the verses 23 to 55, the story of Moses and his struggle against the Pharaoh is narrated. Similar to the stories of other prophets whose nations deny their message, the purpose of this narration is to remind the prophet and his companions that they should always be patient and continue to carry out their obligations. Finally, the third part of Islahi’s *tafsīr* of *sūrah* al-Ghāfir explained the glad tidings of Divine assistance and victory for the believers and the punishment that will be casted on the disbelievers.

### 3.2 Sayyid Qutb’s Interpretation

Sayyid Qutb mentioned in his *tafsīr* that each *sūrah* will start with an introduction of the *sūrah* and so is the case with *sūrah* al-Ghāfir or *al-Ghāfir*. After mentioning the prologue of the *sūrah*, he proceeds to divide the *surah* into 4 parts with a title for each part. Part 1 mentioned the prayer by angels and the verses are from 1 to 20. Part 2 consists of verses 21

<sup>8</sup> al-Shūrā [42:5]

to 55 with a title related to the believer in Pharaoh's house. The third part stresses that God always respond to prayers and the part is comprised of the verses 56 to 77. Finally, the fourth part that consists of verses 78 to 85 mentioned the faith of the believers and the disbelievers. In the introduction of his *tafsīr*, he mentioned that this *sūrah* deals with major issues of truth and falsehood, faith and unfaith. The battle between truth and falsehood as well as faith and tyranny transpire constantly. He also explained how the earlier communities were destroyed because of their opposition to the true faith and the day of judgement.

There seems to be no noticeable differences between Islahi and Sayyid Qutb in their interpretation of this *sūrah* except that Sayyid Qutb tried to link the fourth part to the third part. The *sūrah* treats the subjects of faith which feature prominently in Makkan revelations such as god's oneness, resurrection, and the authority of revelation. However, those issues are not the main theme of the *sūrah*. The main theme of this *sūrah* according to Sayyid Qutb is the battle between truth and falsehood, faith and unfaith, justice, and tyranny.

#### 4.0 A Comparison between the Two *Tafsīrs* on *Sūrah al-Ṭūr*

##### 4.1 The Differences between Islahi and Sayyid Qutb in their *tafsīr*

Islahi commences his *tafsīr* by focussing on major theme of the *sūrah*, its connection with the previous *sūrah* and ends it up with the summary and conclusion. On the other hand, Sayyid Qutb begins his *tafsīr* with an introduction of the *sūrah* along with a brief explanation of the entirety of the whole chapter.

Islahi divides the *sūrah* into two sections. The first consists of verses 1-28 and this section is divided again into sub- topic, verses 1-16 as the introductory part of the *sūrah*, while verses 17-28 deals with Allah's blessings towards the believers. The second part that consists of verses 29-49 is considered as the concluding remarks. After that, he gave detailed explanations of every verse. Meanwhile, Qutb put the text and interpretation from the beginning of *sūrah al-Ṭūr* until the end after the introduction of the *sūrah*. Then, the explanations regarding each section followed. He divided the *sūrah* into five sections and tried to see thematic links between them. The first section that captioned "No way out" consists of verses 1-16, the second "Playing with vain trifles" verses 11-16, the third "For believers and offspring" verses 17-28, the fourth "A reminder of God's Blessings" verses 29-44, and the last section "Perfect contrast" verses 45-49.

Third, Islahi, as we know, adopts the coherence theory in his interpretation of the entire Qur'ān, and he describes the central themes of this *sūrah* in more detail than Qutb. Islahi tried to relate the connection between the *sūrah* before and after *sūrah al-Ṭūr*, and also the relationship between the verses and the whole *sūrah* with the central theme. On the other hand, Qutb also attempted to provide the central idea of the *sūrah* but not as clear as Islahi's. It is not clear whether Sayyid Qutb was addressing the central idea of the *sūrah* or its objective.

## 4.2 The Similar Methods between Islahi and Sayyid Qutb in their *tafsīr*

The first similarity between Islahi and Qutb in their *tafsīr* regarding *sūrah* al-Ṭūr is the adoption of *tafsīr bi'l-ma'thūr* and *tafsīr bi'l-ra'y* in their works. *Tafsīr bi'l-ma'thūr* here means the method that includes the interpretation of the Qur'ān by other Qur'anic verses and the explanations of the prophet and his companions. *Tafsīr bi'l-ra'y* is derived from *ijtihād* that is based on reasoning. Islahi and Sayyid Qutb did not hesitate to offer their own opinion regarding some verses although their interpretations were different compared to former exegetes. Secondly, both of them looked at a *sūrah* as a whole and attempted to establish connections between each verse of the *sūrah*.

## 4.3 A Comparison of Interpretation of Verses

In this part, we divided this *sūrah* into three section, so it will become clearer and easy to understand. In every section, we do not mention all the interpretation from both exegetes on *Sūrah* al-Ṭūr, rather we highlight the differences between their interpretation.

### 4.3.1 Section 1 (Verses 1-16)

From the study of both *tafsīrs* for this section, it is found that the exegetes had conveyed similar interpretations, but some differing ideas and opinions that can still be identified and highlighted. First, in verse 4, Islahi interpreted the words 'البيت' to refer to the expanded earth overarched by the vast sky. The reason for this is that the verse that comes after, "By the lofty roof", refers to the sky, and the sky and earth are always mentioned in pairs in the Qur'ān. The word 'المعمور' means the signs of God relating to His power and wisdom. This opinion differed from Sayyid Qutb. He said that this verse may refer to the Ka'bah and it is more likely to refer to the house in the worldly heaven where the angels worshipped. Then he provided an authentic *ḥadīth* about the details of the Prophet's night journey to heaven (al-Isrā' wa al-Mi'rāj) quoting him as saying: "Then I was taken up to the much-visited House. Seventy thousand enter it every day and they do not return to it. It is the last thing they have to do..." [Recorded by al-Bukhārī, *ḥadīth* no. (3207) and Muslim, Book of Faith, no. (164 a)].

Second, in verse 7-8, Islahi claimed that these verses represent the central theme of the *sūrah*. The verses introduced 'punishment' as a prominent aspect within the *sūrah*. They were addressed to the Quraysh as a warning of their mockery. It is a promise of the calamity that will surely befall them due to their disrespect for Allah's words and none can give refuge to them. All of the magnificent signs mentioned in verses 1-6 are enough to substantiate the claim and the Quraysh were urged to take heed of it. Meanwhile, Qutb mentioned that God swears by the great creations in verses 1-6 to confirm a great event. This opening prepares the readers to heed more verses relating to the Lord's inescapable punishment.

Third, in verses 12-13, Islahi mentioned that verse 12 expresses the anticipation of death and perdition for those who deny the truth in this world on the Day of Judgement.

Verse 13 mentions the characteristics of these disbelievers which has brought the whole discourse in accordance with the situation. These disbelievers refer to the arrogant people who teased and harassed the Prophet. On the other hand, Sayyid Qutb elaborated these verses using a more philosophical approach.

#### 4.3.2 Section 2 (Verses 17-28)

This section of the *sūrah* is full of excitement, spreading comfort and happiness, after the preceding scenes of punishment given to the deniers. There are several differences between the interpretations in both *tafsīrs* that can be identified in this section. Firstly, in verse 20, Islahi asserts that the word 'مُتَكِبِّينَ' is actually an explanation of 'فَاكْهِنَ' in verse 18. Verse 19 is a parenthetical sentence, which clarifies verse 18. It implies the meaning that the righteous will enjoy bountiful favours from their Lord while sitting on thrones arranged in rows. Qutb mentioned that the dwellers of the heaven deserve whatever rewards they are given. Furthermore, they will recline on couches in heavens that were arranged in rows and giving them the pleasure of their company in such blissful surroundings. He then said that the phrase 'وَرَوْجَانَهُمْ بِحُورٍ عَيْنٍ' represents man's best enjoyment.

Secondly, Islahi believed that verse 28 is connected to verse 26 'قَالُوا إِنَّا كُنَّا قَبْلُ فِي أَهْلِنَا' مُشْفِقِينَ. This means that the verse refers to two groups of people; those who remained with their families while they were fearful of their kin, and those who sought God alone whether in the state of fear, hope or expectancy. Moreover, both groups do not associate partners with Him. Islahi is of the view that the content of verse 28 should have been placed after verse 26. However, verse 27 came in between to immediately express the favours and blessings of God. On the other hand, Qutb mentioned that in verse 26-28, the secret to this blissful ending is that they were always apprehensive and fearful about their fate on the Day of Judgement. So, they did their best by performing good deeds to please God and earn His grace. With all this fear and apprehension, the believers prayed in earnest, and they believed that God will give rewards to His servant.

#### 4.3.3 Section 3 (Verses 29-49)

This is the concluding part in *sūrah al-Ṭūr*. It is worth underlining a few verses in this section. Firstly, in verse 29-31, Islahi mentioned that when the non-believers harassed the Prophet by accusing him to be a poet, soothsayer or madman, Allah instructed him to continue reminding his people and just ignore what they were saying. The adversaries of the Prophet called him a poet because they wanted to reduce the effect caused by the potent and eloquent style of the Qur'ān on the heart of people. Their poets were very famous in their times, but after the Prophet came along with the Qur'ān as a guidance, their poetry come only second to the Qur'ān. They are hoping for the same thing to happen to the Qur'ān and were waiting for it. So, the Prophet told them to wait as well, as he was also waiting to see whether their foolish desires would be fulfilled. Meanwhile, Qutb interpreted that the disbelievers used to say that the Prophet was a soothsayer or a madman. These two descriptions are linked by the common notion that soothsayers receive their information

from the devil, and the devil possesses those who are mad. The same thing was mentioned in *tafsīr* Islahi, they accused the Prophet of such things because they cannot accept the Qur'ān. Hence, they claimed that the Qur'ān was transmitted by the devil, or that the devil helped in its composition.

Secondly, in verse 32 Allah mentioned the reasons for the Prophet's adversaries' rejection. There are two possibilities; either their intellect drove them to deny the Prophet and attributed him as a poet, or their haughtiness caused them to refuse the Prophet's calling and they were finding excuses for this rejection. Islahi said that the second possibility is the answer, as it was their haughtiness that had induced them to spew such words. Their intellect has no role in it because how can the Prophet, who is a true believer, be a poet or a mad person? Qutb interpreted that the first question in this verse is loaded with sharp sarcasm and it refers to some of the Quraysh elders as their attitude towards Islam is the antithesis of wisdom and logic. The second question carries a claim that should put them in shame because of their arrogance. The *sūrah* questioned whether the accusations thrown to the Prophet were due to the first question or the second. One or the other is true when they adopted such absurd attitude.

Thirdly, both Islahi and Qutb interpreted verses 33- 34 in a similar way. Another allegation that the Quraysh they made up was that the Prophet had fabricated the Qur'ān. They also accused that to falsely demand the status of prophethood, the Prophet had claimed that the Qur'ān was revealed by the Lord through His angel. Although they strongly made such allegations, they were still uncertain about what they had said. In response to this allegation, Allah challenged them to produce same thing as the Qur'ān if they really think that this Book was produced by the Prophet. But no one can challenge the Qur'ān until today. The difference is Qutb elaborated deeply about the miraculous of the Qur'ān following his interpretation of verse 34.

In verse 40, Islahi mentioned that it continues with the expression of wonder about the disbelievers' insistence to disapprove the Prophet. He did not ask for any penny to be heard and he was performing the favors of his Lord free of cost. Qutb said that this verse denounces their unjustified attitude. Since they were not asked to pay anything, their attitude appears to be totally unforgivable and unjust. They are taking advantage of him and do whatever they want to do to against him.

Fifthly, in verse 44, Islahi mentioned that although the Quraysh had been told about the punishment and more, they were still in disbelief. Even if they see the punishment descend from the sky, they will regard it to be clouds stacked in layers and will comfort themselves by saying that those clouds were a mercy from the God. Qutb said that after all the rhetorical questions in verses 35-43 have been refuted and all doubts removed, they were presented with a clear truth about the Oneness of God. Nonetheless, they still rejected the truth.

Islahi interpreted the final passage in verse 48 in detail. The letter 'ل' after 'صبر' in 'وَاصْبِرْ لِحُكْمِ رَبِّكَ' is an indication of the fact that the word 'patience' also encompasses the

meaning of waiting. It means that he should wait for the decision of his Lord with perseverance. The sentence 'فَإِنَّكَ بِأَعْيُنِنَا' means that the Prophet is always under His protection. Moreover, the words 'وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ حِينَ تَقُومُ' are the way the Prophet can acquire patience. On the latter, Sayyid Qutb mentioned that after the Prophet was attacked by the disbelievers, he was instructed to be patient, remain steadfast, continue his effort to advocate God's message and to leave the rest to God the Almighty. This instruction was also a confirmation of God's care for the Prophet. Such loving care will certainly calm the hardship that he faces. Sayyid Qutb added that this type of expression is unique because this verse implies a unique aspect of friendliness and care. It imparts unparalleled connotations that no human expression can describe.

## Conclusion

We believe the aforementioned examples suffice to briefly show *muffassirs'* style and approaches in interpreting Qur'anic verses. By looking at the approaches of both Islahi and Qutb, one may consider their *tafsir* works to be categorized as *al-Tafsir bi'l-Ma'thūr*. The Companions and the Followers were known to have utilised the Qur'ān, *ḥadīths* and their own *ijtihād* in their interpretations of the Qur'ān. Both exegetes cited from external aids that were comprised of *ḥadīths*, historical background of revelation and classical books of *tafsir*. They only differed in relation to the coherence in Qur'ān, where Islahi is more inclined to, as he began most sections of his *tafsir* with 'In the previous section' and stated the relationship of a *sūrah* with its group and central theme. On the other hand, Qutb, came out with another constructive approach by dividing a chapter into smaller subtopics to enhance understanding and linked those verses to their topics. To conclude, contradictions and differences in the interpretation of Qur'anic verses do not suggest that one is superior rather we regard it as complementary work that opens a new horizon and perspective in comprehending the messages of the Holy Qur'ān.

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