

THE SCIENCES OF THE QUR`AN` (QUR`ON ILMLARI) BY SHAYKH MUHAMMADSODIQ MUHAMMADYUSUF

*International Islamic Academy of Uzbekistan,
Shoira Ibodullaeva, MA student in Islamic studies,
Email: shoiraolivera@gmail.com
Phone number: +998941988432*

Annotation. Shaykh Muhammadsodiq Muhammadyusuf was an eminent figure in both Islamic scholarship in Central Asia, Russia and some parts of the Arab world and the Islamic movement for religious freedom in Soviet Uzbekistan. While his intellectual output covered a wide range of Islamic scholarship including Aqeedah, hadith sciences, fiqh and tafseer, he is perhaps one of the few local scholars in Central Asia who addressed and wrote a book on ulum al-Qur`an in Uzbek language covering and explaining as many disciplines as come in major literatures. Qur`anic sciences as a science which needs more scholarly attention now, his book `Qur`anic sciences` is a major contribution written in a local language fitting the needs and levels of both advanced students of knowledge and general public. This article illustrates the taxonomy of `Ulum al-Qur`an` by Shaykh Muhammadsodiq Muhammadyusuf, and gives a precise explanation of each chapter of the book.

Key words: Qur`an, disciplines, taxonomy, canonization of the mus`haf, asbab ul-nuzul, naskh and mansukh, muhkam and mutashaabih.

Shaykh Muhammadsodiq Muhammadyusuf was a prolific scholar of the area addressing and writing on many sciences and topics. His most famous works are `Tafsir Hilol` the commentary on Qur`an, `Hadis va Hayot` 39 volume explanation of hadiths, the translation of Qur`an, `Ruhiy tarbiya` the spirituality and morals of a believer, `Zikr ahlidan so`rang` originally 4 volume (right now it has been continued by his students) legal rulings, `Qur`on ilmlari` on sciences of Qur`an and other works including many translation works as well.

His most important contribution to Islamic sciences in Central Asia, is his 6-volume exegesis of the Qur`an `Tafsir Hilol`; it is his one of the earliest major works. His work is targeted at basically average Muslims who do not know Arabic; therefore, he avoids explaining much linguistic of verses, rather focusing on main purpose of them and deriving lessons. Categorically, we can consider the tafsir as being `tafsir ma`thur` (based on prophetic tradition) as Shaykh was not really up for tafsir bi`l ra`y (based on reasoning).¹

¹ Muhammadsodiq Muhammadyusuf. Tafsir, tush va masallar kitobi. – Toshkent.: Hilol Nashr.

The author gives a brief introductory in the beginning of each Surah and, then, explains the verses based on hadiths. Then, he connects the verses to current affairs and shows instructions how to act in these cases. Sometimes he adds political picture of the country before the Independence of Uzbekistan, and calls for Muslims to take lessons from the history. As being a Hanafi scholar, his voice and stand on legal issues are expressed precisely not diving into details. His tafsir can be considered frequently read and published tafsir books in the country and respected by all Muslims.

Second book on the list is the 30th volume of `Hadis and Hayot` called `Qur`on fazilatlarini` (` Blessings of the Qur`an`) which address to various topics including the morals of reciting Qur`an; the blessings of reciting particular Surahs, the brief history of the collection of the Qur`an and the Companions who were famous for their Qur`anic knowledge and so on. It is actually an earlier book prior to `Qur`on ilmlari` which captured huge attention of readers among the Muslims of Central Asia. After this work, he decided to write `Qur`on ilmlari` as this science was not known even among students in Islamic institutions.

The sciences of the Qur`an Shaykh Muhammadsodiq`s classification of the Qur`anic sciences including the details of the history of the tafsir in the current area of Central Asia captures the most common fields and disciplines that which Zarkashi, As-Sabuni and others added to their books. It subsumes around 50 disciplines, illustrated in four chapters.

Chapter I illustrates a wide range of common discipline of the ulum al-Qur`an (19 disciplines) including the major topics like places, occasions, circumstances of revelation and the misconceptions of the concept of wahy and linguistic miracles of Qur`an. In this chapter the author emphasizes the most significant topics in understanding Qur`anic message and their context and reasons of the revelation. Qur`an was revealed over 23 years in response to various occasions, making its text `above all a text rooted in context`. ² Compared to previous Sacred Scriptures, it was sent down in graduation for some obvious reasons. First of all, Arabs were not lettered to read or write, but they had a super talent for memorizing lines of poems. Therefore, the Qur`an was revealed gradually to make its memorization easier. Secondly, it has an entire codex of legal regulations and moral codes of conduct to cure the *jahilliyyah* of society.

When we talk about the setting in which a given verse or surah was revealed, we, first of all, need to differentiate between Meccan revelation and Medinan revelation. Although the categorization is quite large, we can refer to other scholars like Bulqini who gives much more detailed prescriptions such as the verses revealed during the

² Yousef Wahb. An introduction to `Ulum al-Qur`an: The field of Qur`anic studies. - Yaqeen Institute, 2022.

travel; the verses revealed in the city; the verses revealed at night; the verses revealed in the Prophet's bed or while he was asleep and so on.³

The chronology of the revelation of the verses or surahs and the orders of the surahs in the Qur`anic mus`haf are one of the most significant topics of the sciences of the Qur`an. It gives a historical context of the formation of the Muslim Ummah and the establishment of the legal rulings in emerging first Muslim community. Abu al-Qasim al-Naysaburi (d.406/1016) presents 25 sub-disciplines of the Meccan and Medinan revelations which Suyuti also cited him in his book Itqan.⁴ Also, Makki ibn Abi Talib and Abdul Aziz al-Dirini (d.697/1297) wrote independent books dedicated to the Meccan and Medinan revelations.⁵

There has been a debate amongst the scholars regarding these three aspects of the Meccan and Medinan revelations: 1) chronology of the revelations before and after the immigration; 2) the location or place of the revelation; 3) revelation's intended audience.⁶ However, this knowledge comes from the Companions and the Pious predecessors who had the best understanding of the Qur`an. As it is narrated from ibn Mas`ud, he did know the geographical location of every surah in Qur`an and he was ready to seek any knowledge related to Qur`an if he found out that someone has something he did not know.⁷

Meccan revelations focus on more about the Oneness of God and His attributes, theology, the truthfulness of the Qur`an and prophets, and addressing to the disbelievers and oppressors. They contain verses of Sajda (prostration), and the word *سجدة* is used around 33 times in 15 surahs. However, some conditions do not fit for all surahs. For example, the surahs which have `O mankind` is considered to be Meccan (but not all surahs which has it), while `O you have believed` is considered to come in Medinan revelations. In addition, the stories of previous prophets and the story of Adam (AS) and Iblis are mentioned in Meccan revelations except for Surah Baqarah. Medinan revelations, on the other hand, usually speak about the obligatory prayers, handling the hypocrites, calling for Christians and Jewish. They are usually long compared to Meccan revelations which are short.

Knowledge of the Meccan and Medinan verses allows us to study the sirah (biography) of the Prophet (PBUH) and identify the asbab al-nuzul (occasions or reasons) of the revelations. This discipline is imperative in studying the Qur`an and extract legal rulings as it gives us an important context in which a surah or verses were revealed. Therefore, the Qur`an as "a dialogic text which engages the audience, rather than a linear narrative. It frequently uses *jumal inshā'iyya*

³ Jalal al-Din al-Bulqini. Mawāqī' al-'Ulūm fī Mawāqī' al-Nujūm.

⁴ Al-Naysaburi. al-Tanbīh 'alā Fadl 'Ulūm al-Qur`ān.

⁵ Al-Suyuti. Itqan.

⁶ Yousef Wahb. An introduction to `Ulum al-Qur`an: The field of Qur`anic studies. - Yaqeen Institute, 2022.

⁷ Sahih al-Bukhari.

(affective sentences), in which it orders, persuades, prohibits, and questions its audience rather than introducing detached general instructions that might go over their head.”⁸

The benefits of studying the asbab al-nuzul are following: 1) knowing the wisdom of the revelation. It helps for believers to follow the commandments of the revelation and make them easier to follow; 2) understanding the verse or verses in a right manner; 3) knowing the context of the revelation; 4) understanding the reasons of the revelation make the memorization, tadabbur of the verses and following it easier. Asbab al-nuzul usually are frequently mentioned in tafsir books and independent books were also written on it. Amongst them the most referenced works are `Asbab al-Nuzul` of al-Wahidi (d. 468/1075), `Asbab al-nuzul wa Qisas al-Furqaniyya` by Muhammad ibn Asad al-Iraqi (d.566/1171), `al-Ujub fi Bayan al-Asbab` by ibn Hajar al-Asqalani (d.852/1171) and `Lubab al-Nuqul fi asbab al-Nuzul` by al-Suyuti.

Surahs or verses or a verse might be revealed for multiple occasions or reasons. In that, scholars go into differences or disputes. Al-Suyūṭī devised a third category of multiple verses that share one sabab.⁹ The possible scenarios for the reasons of the revelations and their acceptability by the scholars are following:

- One of the reasons are authentic, the second one is not;
- Both of the reasons are authentic, but one of them has a stronger factor over the other;
- Both of them are authentic, but they both have no stronger position over the other, so both could be counted equally;
- Both of them are authentic, however, none of the each has the stronger position over the other, nor the second is acceptable.¹⁰

The beginning verses of Surah *Duha* is the example for the first case about which Imam Bukhari and Muslim narrated that these verses were revealed when the Prophet (PBUH) was sick for a few days and did not come out. Then a lady comes and tells him that the Satan has forsaken him. The verses were revealed as a response this occasion. However, another reason, which is narrated by Tabarani and Ibn Abu Shayba, is that the verses came down when a dead dog was taken out from the under of the bed of the Prophet (PBUH). However, the second reason is weak, so unacceptable.

Γjaaz is the miraculous nature of the Qur`an proving it is the Speech of God. Since the revelation of the Qur`an the disbelievers of the Quraysh and the enemies of Islam and today`s atheists up until now claim that it is the speech of Muhammad or the speech which resulted from madness. Even the disbelievers of Quraysh knew

⁸ Haleem. Presenting the Qur`an out of Context. 566 p.

⁹ Al-Suyuti. Itqan.

¹⁰ Muhammadsodiq Muhammadyusuf. Qur`on ilmlari. – Toshkent.: Hilol Nashr, 2021. P. 176.

that it was the speech which made them incapable of lying against it, their arrogance and tribal biases made them deny the message.

Ṭjaaz is given to the Prophets to prove them that they are sent by God, therefore it has multiple conditions:

- Miracle must come from God only, humans must be incapable of doing it;
- Miracle must be something exceptional and unique, it must not be something that people are used to see.
- Miracle must be something cannot be denied; people should not be producing something like of it;
- Miracle must be preformed by the one who is claiming to be a Prophet, it should not come from others;
- It must fit the claims of the Prophet and it should not happen after Prophet.

Although the orientalist and secular scholars still argue about the source of the Qur`an, claiming that it is the words of Muhammad (PBUH), modern science and researches presented many evidences about the creation of the universe, Big Bang and the unending miraculous nature of the entire creation which Qur`an tells us before fourteen centuries ago.

Chapter II addresses the compilation of Qur`anic mus`haf in stages and the organization of the Surahs and canonization of the Uthmanic mus`haf. In this chapter the author discusses one of the confusing topics that are not correctly understood by the secular scholars. The collection of the Qur`an has two meanings:

- The memorization of the Qur`an in the hearts of the believers;
- The written collection of Qur`an verses.

Historically, the Companions of the Prophet (PBUH) were eager to memorize what Allah revealed them gradually, but amongst them were known Companions for their knowledge of the Qur`an such as Ubayy ibn Ka`ab, Abdulloh ibn Mas`ud, Abdulloh ibn Abbas and others. As for the written collection, they used to write some verses or Surahs to parchments, the leather, stones, etc.

During the times of the Prophet (PBUH), the only way of the preservation of the Qur`an was through memorization. The reasons behind this are following:

- It is the wisdom of the God that He did not reveal the Qur`an in a written form, but made the memorization as the way of its preservation;
- Arabs were unlettered people, so they had no other chance rather than memorizing it;
- The environment of that era was perfect for the memorization of the Qur`an;
- The people of those days had no distractions or obsession with the worldly life.¹¹

¹¹ Muhammadsodiq Muhammadyusuf. Qur`on ilmlari. – Toshkent.: Hilol Nashr, 2021. P. 211-212.

Following the death of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in 11 AH/632 CE and under the caliphate of Abu Bakr (d. 13 AH), the first official compilation of the Qur'an was undertaken in the year 12 AH.¹² Abu Bakr was persuaded by Umar ibn al-Khattab (d. 23 AH) who emphasized the importance of compiling the Qur'an after a large number of its reciters were martyred during the Battle of al-Yamamah.¹³ Then the responsibility of compilation of the Qur'an was given to Zayd ibn Thabit, and he compiled the verses from date-palm tree bark, parchment, thin white stones, and the hearts of men¹⁴ on the basis of two witnesses. Imam Sakhawi (d.643 AH) mentioned in his book *Jamal al-qurra and kamal al-iqra`* that *two witnesses* meant two people who had the verse or verses written down on something and could testify that they memorized or learned the verses directly through the Prophet (PBUH). The compilation of the first mus'haf took less than a year.

As the conquered lands of Islam expanded, a number of Muslims who are not originally Arabs increased, as the result they started to dispute over the recitation of the Qur'an. New Muslims and the students in the conquered lands or other Muslim cities learned the Qur'an from the Senior Companions who were present amongst them, and they copied the variant of the reading of the Qur'an from their mus'hafs. The multiplicity of the Qur'anic readings became the source of confusion.¹⁵ Then during the Caliphate of Uthman, Hudhayfah ibn al-Yaman (d. 36 AH) felt the great danger of the disputes and raised the concern to Uthman. Uthman then ordered the compilation of the Qur'an to Zayd ibn Thabit, Abdullah ibn al-Zubayr, Sa'id ibn al-As, Abd al-Rahman ibn Hisham in copies and if the disagreement occurs, ordered them to write in the dialect of Quraysh, the Qur'an was revealed in their tongue.

When it comes to the preservation of the Uthmanic mus'hafs up until now, there are multiple copies of ancient mus'hafs which are thought to be early Uthmanic mus'hafs. However, the other scholars disagree with that idea that early Uthmanic mus'haf or the mus'haf of Uthman are gone now. For example, those people say that the mus'haf being preserved in Cairo has the signs and carvings which the original Uthmanic mus'hafs did have, so they are not Uthmanic mus'hafs. Another famous mus'haf in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, is claimed to be the early Uthmanic mus'haf. However, the American scholar Dr. Yasir Qadhi, who visited Tashkent in 2019, says that it is not original very early Uthmanic mus'haf, but it must date back to the Umayyad period or the times of Tabi'un.¹⁶ Shaykh Muhammadsodiq Muhammadyusuf, on the other hand,

¹² Ibn Abi Dawūd. *Kitab al-masahif*. – Kuwait.: Mu'asassah Gharās li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzī, 2006. – P. 153–69.

¹³ Yousef Wahb. *How the Qur'an was preserved during the Prophet's time: Mechanisms of Oral and written transmission*. – Texas.: Yaqeen Institutue. – P. 4-5.

¹⁴ *Sahih al-Bukhari*. no. 7191. *Sahih Muslim*.no.1869.

¹⁵ Makki ibn Abi Ṭali. *al-Ibanah 'an ma'ani al-qira'at*. Egypt.; Dar Nahdah Misr. – P. 62.

¹⁶ (43) [The Tashkent Mushaf - Uzbekistan | Shaykh Dr. Yasir Qadhi - YouTube](#)

does not clearly point out his stance whether Tashkent mus`haf is one of the earliest Uthmanic mus`haf or not.

Chapter III discusses the naskh and mansukh, mukham and mutashaabih. Abrogation, which is naskh, has two meanings in Arabic. 1) it means to transfer something. For example, when it is said, `the book is abrogated`, it means a copy of the book has been made like which comes is Surah Jathiyah (45:29); 2) it means to efface, which means that the new ayah is revealed to abrogate another ayah. There are four types of abrogation in Qur`an and Sunnah:

1. The abrogation of the Qur`an through Qur`an.
2. Abrogation of the Sunnah through Sunnah.
3. The abrogation of the Qur`an through mutawatir transmission.
4. Abrogation of the Sunnah through Qur`an.

Scholars wrote separate books on the topic by Ubayd al-Qasim ibn Sallam (224/838), al-Nahbas, Ibn Al-Anbari, Makki, and al-Arabi.

Muhkam and mutashaabih are one of the delicate disciplines of the field. Muhkam, linguistically, means to improve or perfect something and forbid breaking it. In the scholastic terminology, it refers to the verses of the Qur`the meaning of which are clear, and easy to understand. On the other hand, mutashaabih, from a linguistic perspective, means `to resemble each other` and `to be mixed`. In terminology, it refers to the verses of the Qur`an, the meanings of which are similar and their meanings can be interpreted differently. These types of verses are a few and they test the faith of the believers.

Chapter IV gives a detailed information about the recitations, their transmissions and the lives of reciters; and the exegesis and exegetes and finally a brief history of tafsir in Mowarounnahr.

Summary. As we have seen, the knowledge of the Qur`an is endless and timeless. Historically, scholars have approached it from various perspectives and sciences to extract rulings, morals and etiquettes, to understand the universe and miracles of the world and so forth. Therefore, it is impossible to say that the sciences of the Qur`an are limited in number. The categorization and numeral approaches of scholars are meant to systematically explain the verses to make them easy understand.

References

1. Bakhtiyar Babadjanov. The last Soviet Mufti of Central Asia: Muhammadsodiq Muhammadyusuf. -Voices of Central Asia, 2018.
2. Shaykh Muhammadsodiq Muhammadyusuf. - Islom.uz - Маърифат маскани
3. Muhammadsodiq Muhammadyusuf. Tafsir, tush va masallar kitobi. – Toshkent.: Hilol Nashr
4. Yousef Wahb. An introduction to `Ulum al-Qur`an: The field of Qur`anic studies. - Yaqeen Institute, 2022.

5. **Jalal al-Din al-Bulqini.** Mawāqī' al-'Ulūm fī Mawāqī' al-Nujūm.
6. Al-Naysaburi. al-Tanbīh 'alā Fadl 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān.
7. Al-Suyuti. Itqan.
8. Sahih al-Bukhari.
9. Haleem. Presenting the Qur'an out of Context. 566 p.
10. Al-Suyuti. Itqan.
11. Muhammadsodiq Muhammad Yusuf. Qur'on ilmlari. – Toshkent.: Hilol Nashr, 2021.502 p.
12. Ibn Aqilah al-Makki. Al-Ziyadah wal-ihsan. Vol.1.
13. Ibn Abī Dawūd. Kitāb al-masahif. – Kuwait.: Mu'asassah Gharās li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzī, 2006. – P. 153–69.
14. Yousef Wahb. How the Qur'an was preserved during the Prophet's time: Mechanisms of Oral and written transmission. – Texas.: Yaqeen Institute.
15. Sahih al-Bukhari. no. 7191. Sahih Muslim.no.1869.
16. Makki ibn Abi Ṭali. al-Ibanah 'an ma'ani al-qira'at. Egypt.; Dar Nahdah Misr.
17. Al-Baghawī, Sharḥ al-sunnah. Beirut.: Al-Maktab al-islami.
18. [\(43\) The Tashkent Mushaf - Uzbekistan | Shaykh Dr. Yasir Qadhi - YouTube](#)