

"Sirāt al-Jinān fī Tafsīr al-Quran": An Overview

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Abstract

Tafsīr is one of the prominent branches of *Qur'ānic* science. There is a long list of commentaries of the Quran in different languages. Many commentaries have been written in Urdu and are still being written. This article studies a new Urdu *Tafsīr* of the Holy Quran written by a Pakistani scholar Muhammad *Qāsim Qādarī*. It highlights its methodology and distinctive features. It finds *Sirāt al-Jinān* a nice and worth studying *Tafsīr*. The commentator has aptly depicted social evils and gives the pathway to new generation for addressing their problems in the light of Holy *Quran*.

Keywords: *Tafsīr*, *Sirāt al-Jinān*, methodology

Introduction:

Since the time of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) to the current day, an enormous number of scholars have thought of it as their obligation to interpret the *Quran* and work hard to compile commentaries on the studies of the *Quran*. To write a commentary, the commentator needs to understand and be aware of the contemporary and current situation. Otherwise, the commentary will not be in accordance with the conditions and requirements of the age, so the commentator must be aware of the current situation and the problems. After the completion of the Holy

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Quran, many commentators have written their commentary. From the beginning till now, commentaries have been written in every language and in every region. The Indo-Pak subcontinent did not lag in this great work behind either. After the fall of the Mughal Empire, the British occupied subcontinent and tried to divide the Muslims in different ways. Mufti Muhammad Qāsim Qādarī, belongs to *Barīlvī* School of religious thought, is one of these learned scholars who enlightened the people with the Divine Word by writing understandable and easy commentary of the Holy *Quran*. "*Sirāt al-Jinān fī Tafsīr al-Quran*" is a complete *Tafsīr* with two translations.

Naming

The author describing the name and reason of naming this commentary asserts that *Alhāj Muhammad Fārooq Madanī* was with us in the caravan of "*Chal Madīnah*" and I had the opportunity to see him up close during this pilgrimage. The greatness of this very pious person, who spoke very little, very seriously and recited the *Quran* frequently, became ingrained in my heart. We have suggested that there should be a simple interpretation of *Maūlānā Ahmad Razā Khan's* translation of "*Kunz al-Īmān*" so that even the less educated people can benefit from it. The name of the proposed commentary was "*Sirāt al-Jinān*". Blessed is this great work that began in *Makkah Al-Makrma*.¹

Concise and Simple

Tafsīr -ul-Quran has been written concisely and comprehensively which keeps in view the general understanding and mental level of less-

¹Muftī Muhammad Qāsim Qādarī, *Sirāt al-Jinān fī Tafsīr al-Quran* (Karachi: *Maktaba-tul-Madīnah*, 2013), 1:2.

educated people. This is a unique *Tafsīr* of its kind. While writing *Tafsīr Sirāt al-Jinān fī Tafsīr al-Quran*, he does not go into too much depth and does not discuss more scholarly topics. He has tried to make this *Tafsīr* short but comprehensive. The author himself has also written the features of this commentary.²

Characteristics

The salient features of this commentary include idiomatic translation, common sense, and simple style, introduction, revelation of *sūrahs*, discretion of *Makkī* and *Madani* *Sūrahs*, the meaning of verses, explanation of the complex and difficult subject etc. Explanation of the meaning of the verses by proverbs, the connection of *Sūrahs* and verses before and after, summary articles, eloquence, and rhetoric, examples of clear arguments on the truthfulness of the *Quran*, detailed reference to the events of the torment of previous nations and interrogative assessments are notable. Similarly, *Qādarī* has made his commentary popular and well-known by interpreting it in different ways, and described all kinds of commentary attributes, styles, and explanations in it enabling the readers to understand it easily.

Methodology

Tafsīr through the Quran

Qādarī has interpreted the Holy *Quran* through original sources. The first source of interpretation of *Tafsīr* is *Qur'ānic* text itself. For example the verse: "The way of those whom you have favored, who did not incur your wrath, who are not astray?"³ has been explained by the author by verse in

² *Qādarī*, *Sirāt al-Jinān*, 1:38.

³ *Al-Fātiha* 1: 7.

Sūrah al-Nisā⁴ which says: "And he who obeys *Allah* and the Messenger - they shall be with those whom *Allah* has favored the Prophets, those steadfast in truthfulness, the martyrs, and the righteous." How excellent will they be for companions?"⁵ The favored persons according to surah *Fātiha* verse no: 7 are prophets, the truthful, the martyrs and the righteous. Therefore, those who are guided to follow the path are those who obey *Allah* and His Messenger, the Prophets, the truthful, the martyrs, and the virtuous.

Tafsīr through Ḥadīth:

The author interprets the *Qur'ānic* verse with the hadith and describes the several *ahādīth* narrated on the same subject. The same style could be seen at various places in his *Tafsīr*. For instance the author while interpreting this verse: "*Alif-Lām-Mīm* (Individual Letters of Arabic Alphabet), that high ranked Book (*Quran*) there is no place of doubt, in it there is guidance to the God-fearing people" ⁶ cites the many *Ahādīth*. The two of them are as follow:

(1). "On the authority of *Attiyah Al-Saadī*, one of the companions of the Prophet, said: the Messenger of Allah said: "A man does not reach to be one of the righteous until he leaves what is not wrong with him, being careful with what he has."⁷

⁴An-Nisaa 4:69.

⁵See: Qādrī, *Sirāt al-Jinān*, 1: 54.

⁶Al-Baqara 2: 2.

⁷Qādarī, *Sirāt al-Jinān*, 1:54. With reference to Tirmidhī, *Al-Sunan*, Kitāb al Sifat al-Qiyāmah, 19: 4/204-205, Ḥadīth no: 2451.

(2). "It is from *Abū Sa'id* (may *Allah* be pleased with him). The Lord is one, and the father is one, and there is no preference for an *Arab* over an *Ajamī*, nor on an *Ajamī* over an *Arab*, nor red over black, nor black over a red but through piety.

Tafsīr through Aqwāl-e-Şahābah, Tāb'īn and Tāb' a-Tāb'īn

Tafsīr through Aqwāl-e-Şahābah, Tāb'īn and Tāb' a-Tāb'īn has also been done in the referred writing, for example explaining the verse: "Do not think that those who exult in their misdeeds and love to be praised for what indeed they have not done, do not think that they are secure from chastisement. A painful chastisement awaits them."⁸ The author quotes: "*Jundub* narrates that the Prophet said: He who lets the people hear of his good deeds intentionally, to win their praise, *Allah* will let the people know his real intention (on the Day of Resurrection), and he who does good things in public to show off and win the praise of the people, *Allah* will disclose his real intention (and humiliate him)."⁹ And then quotes "*Ibn Ka'b Ibn Mālik al-Ansārī*'s narration from his father, that the Messenger of *Allah* (*s.a.w*) said: Two wolves free among sheep are no more destructive to them than a man's desire for wealth and honor is to his religion."¹⁰

Discussion on Issues of Marriage and Divorce

In the interpretation of the verse: "And if the husband divorces his wife (for the third time), she shall not remain his lawful wife after this (absolute) divorce, unless she marries another husband, and the second husband divorces her. (In that case) there is no harm if they re-marry,

⁸Al-e-Imrān 3: 188.

⁹Muhammad bin Ismā'īl Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Ḥadīth no: 6499.

¹⁰Tirmidhī, *Kitāb al-Zuhd*, Ḥadīth no: 2376

provided that the woman and her first husband are convinced that they will be able to keep within the bounds fixed by *Allah*. And these are *Allah*'s bounds, which He makes clear for the guidance of those who know (the consequences of transgression)"¹¹ the commentator states the important issue regarding three divorces is that three divorces are given in three months or in one month or in one day or in one sitting or one sentence in any case. After divorce, it is clearly *Harām* and unlawful for a man and a woman to have intercourse without a *Shar'ī* method, and those who try to make peace are equally complicit in sin. In short, when person divorced women and they are nearing the end of their *'iddāh*, then stop them in a good way or leave them in a good way. The author of this commentary refers to the books of Sunnī scholars for details.

Discussion on legal Issues

The Author in his book also describes legal matters and judicial issues. A verse says: "Thus it is more likely that they will either bear the right testimony or else they will at least fear that their oaths may be rebutted by other oaths. Have fear of *Allah* and pay heed. *Allah* does not direct the disobedient to the right way"¹² Giving the exegesis of this verse, the author describes that in the case of *Udāy* and *Tamīm*, the testimony and the law of oath, which was stated against them, i.e. those against whom the claim was made, after taking oaths, if they are proved to be false, then two of the heirs of the deceased should take oaths. The wisdom of being told is that people should learn a lesson from this incident and not leave the path of truth in testimonies and should be afraid that the end of false testimony is

¹¹Al-Baqara2: 230.

¹²Al-Ma'idah5: 108.

nothing but shame and disgrace.¹³The condition of the people has deteriorated to such an extent that they are harming the honor of their Muslim brother by swearing falsely, giving false testimony, and they force them to live a life of helplessness behind heavy iron bars, to usurp one's Muslim brother's property unjustly as if it were not even on the list of crimes. They should learn these *Qur'ānic* verses and these *Ahādīth* carefully and learn from them.¹⁴

Political Issues

The author also describes political issues and the linkage of politics and Islamic teachings. Quran says:

"It also belongs to those who were already settled in this abode (of Hijrah) having come to faith before the (arrival of the) Emigrants. They love those who have migrated to them and do not covet what has been given them; they even prefer them above themselves though poverty is their own lot. And those who are preserved from their own greed, such are the ones that will prosper."¹⁵

In the commentary of this verse, the commentator states that if two groups of Muslims fight with each other, you should reconcile them.¹⁶

Conclusion

The commentary under consideration is a good addition in Urdu tafsīr literature. It enlightens the people with the Divine Word in a simple and

¹³Qādarī, *Sirāt al-Jinān*, 3:48.

¹⁴Qādarī, *Sirāt al-Jinān*, 3:49.

¹⁵Al-Hujrat59: 9.

¹⁶Qādarī, *Sirāt al-Jinān*, 9:414.

easy way. It is useful for common and uneducated people who intend to learn the teachings of the Quran in an easy and comprehensive style. Since the commentators are associated with *Da'wah* and preaching, he has spoken in the commentary with reference to *Daā'wat* and preaching. The commentator has aptly depicted social evils and gives the pathway to new generation for addressing their problems in the light of Holy *Quran*. However, it has many points that are debatable in various respects.