

## A Critical Study of Zamakhsharī's Interpretive Thoughts in Al-Kashshāf

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### بررسی انتقادی اندیشه‌های تفسیری زمخشری در الکشاف

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### Abstract

Tafsīr-e-Kashshāf is one of the most important interpretations that has been considered by most commentators of the Qur'an. From Zamakhsharī's point of view, the science of semantics and expression is the most important and necessary knowledge for the interpretation of the Qur'an. In his view, not only with the help of this science, the rhetorical aspects of the Qur'an are known, but also the subtleties and beauties of the Qur'an are known only in the light of this knowledge. According to Zamakhsharī, the most delicate and precise topics of rhetorical sciences are the industry of Takhyīl (i.e. some kind of imagination), without which the interpretation and understanding of the verses of the Qur'an is not possible. The industry of Takhyīl is a kind of compound simile that is used to depict wonderful meanings and indescribable concepts that cannot be explained by a simple description. Zamakhsharī, while considering the verses of the Qur'an as miracles, eloquence and rhetoric, does not count all the verses as rhetoric on the same level. Zamakhsharī has tried to prove the legitimacy of his religion by interpreting the verses of the Qur'an. Zamakhsharī has opened a new horizon in the subject of Qur'anic rhetoric and has been able to introduce new points and materials on the topics that Abdul Qāhir Jurjānī (d. 471 AH) has invented about the rhetoric and meanings of the miracles of the Qur'an.

**Keywords:** Zamakhsharī, Tafsīr-e-Kashshāf, Rhetorical Sciences, Takhyīl.

### چکیده

تفسیر کشف از مهم‌ترین تفاسیری است که مورد توجه اکثر مفسران قرآن قرار گرفته است. از دیدگاه زمخشری علم معانی و بیان مهم‌ترین و ضروری‌ترین دانش برای تفسیر قرآن به‌شمار می‌آید. از نظر او نه تنها به مدد این علم وجوه اعجاز بلاغی قرآن شناخته می‌شود بلکه لطائف و زیبایی‌های قرآن تنها در پرتو این دانش دانسته می‌شود. از نظر زمخشری لطیف‌ترین و دقیق‌ترین مباحث علوم بلاغی، صنعت تخیل است که بدون آن تأویل و فهم آیات قرآن مقدور نیست. صنعت تخیل نوعی تشبیه مرکب است که برای به تصویر کشیدن معانی شگرف و مفاهیم وصف ناشدنی بکار می‌رود که با توصیف ساده نمی‌توان آن را تبیین کرد. زمخشری ضمن آنکه آیات قرآن را در غایت اعجاز و فصاحت و بلاغت می‌داند، اما همه آیات را در یک سطح و مرتبه از بلاغت نمی‌شمرد. نیز زمخشری با استفاده از سیاق آیات قرآن کوشیده است ضمن تفسیر آیات به‌نوعی به اثبات حقانیت مذهب خود بپردازد. زمخشری افق جدیدی را در مبحث بلاغت قرآنی گشوده و توانسته نکات و مطالب جدیدی را بر موضوعاتی که عبدالقاهر جرجانی (متوفی ۴۷۱ ه.ق.) در باره بلاغت و معانی اعجاز قرآن ابداع نموده، بیافزاید.

کلمات کلیدی: زمخشری، تفسیر کشف، علوم بلاغی، تخیل.

### Introduction

Allameh Abu al-Qasim Mahmud ibn Umar known as Jārullāh Zamakhsharī (53-467 AH) is one of the most famous commentators of the Holy Qur'an at his time. In addition, he has been the leader of his contemporary scientists in various sciences such as vocabulary, grammar, rhetoric, hadith, principles of jurisprudence and theology. He left valuable works, the most famous of which is the book "Tafsīr-e-Kashshāf". Undoubtedly, this valuable work has been considered by most contemporary or later commentators. Although he has written his commentary on the theological religion and the principles of the Mu'tazilite, however, many commentators who are in conflict with the I'tizāl school, while criticizing his theological method and taking a firm stand against the I'tizāl school; at the same time have admired Zamakhsharī's literary and rhetorical style and they were strongly influenced by him and referred to his sayings and opinions in interpreting the Qur'an. Even some scholars like Qādī Bayḍāwī (d. 685 AH) have summarized and refined his commentary and written numerous explanations and notes on it.

### Motivation to write Tafsīr-e-Kashshāf

As Zamakhsharī himself says: before attempting to write a commentary on "Kashshāf" at the request of the followers of the Mu'tazilite religion; he explained and interpreted some verses of the Qur'an for them, which caused them to be surprised and eager for this kind of interpretation, and for this reason, he was asked to write a commentary in this style about the Holy Qur'an. Zamakhsharī stated that he initially asked them to exempt him from doing so but they didn't accept. As Zamakhsharī says, at the beginning

of his work, he began to write about the Fawātiḥ of Surahs and to interpret some of the verses of Surah Al-Baqarah. He states that such interpretive dictations were long and used in the form of questions and answers for his listeners, a subject that can now be seen everywhere in his interpretation. Zamakhsharī mentions his lectures as a model and example of interpretation so that the audience can better understand the Qur'anic truths. He says that during his journey from Khārazm to Mecca, passing through different cities, he found in each city a group eager for this kind of interpretation of the Qur'an. Until in the city of Mecca, at the request of the emir of this city, Abu Al-Hassan Ali ibn Hamza ibn Wahas, he took care of writing his commentary and completed it within two years and three months (Muharram 526 - Rabi al-Awwal 528 AH). (Zamakhsharī, 1407: 1/18 and 19)

### The position of Tafsīr-e-Kashshāf

Zamakhsharī's commentary called: "Al-Kashshāf 'an Haqā'iq Ghawāmiḍ al-Tanzīl wa Uyūn al-Aghāwīl fī Wujūh al-Ta'wīl"<sup>1</sup> is one of the most important interpretations in the Islamic world. Not only Zamakhsharī's supporters but also his opponents, while protesting his I'tizālī views, have praised the value and credibility of his interpretation. Zamakhsharī has a very high position in the scientific position and has been completely surrounded by sciences such as grammar, syntax, rhetoric, reading, principles, Qur'anic sciences and the sciences of hadith and jurisprudence. In addition, his

١. الكشاف عن حقائق غوامض التنزيل وعيون الأفاويل في وجوه التأويل.

enjoyment of God-given taste and talent in rhetorical and aesthetic discussions has added to the value of his interpretation. In such a way that even people like Ibn Khaldūn (732-808 AH) - who are considered to be stubborn opponents of the Mu'tazilite - have spoken in describing his book and called it the best interpretation in the field of rhetorical sciences (Ibn Khaldūn, Introduction, nd: 555). Similarly, Yaḥyā ibn Ḥamza Alawī (d. 749 AH) in his book "Al-Ṭarāz" has stated that the existence of rhetorical issues and points in Tafsīr-e-Kashshāf has distinguished it from other interpretations and this feature cannot be seen in other interpretations. (Yaḥyā ibn Ḥamza Alawī, 1423: 1/7)

Many commentators, including Nasafī (710 AH), the author of Madārik al-Tanzīl, Bayḍāwī (791 AH), the author of Anwār al-Tanzīl, Fakhr al-Din Rāzī (d. 606 AH), Abu al-Sa'ud Al-Imādī (d. 982 AH), the author of Irshād al-Aql al-Salim ilā Mazāyā al-Qur'an al-Karim have been influenced by him in writing their commentaries.

Undoubtedly, Shi'a moderate commentators such as Abu al-Futūḥ al-Rāzī (d. 554 AH) and Ṭabrasī (d. 548 AH) have respected Tafsīr-e-Kashshāf and his interpretive views and have used his commentary. Abu al-Qasim Gorji - in an introduction to the books of Jawāmi' al-Jāmi' - has said: Although Zamakhsharī is considered a Shi'a scholar in Mu'tazilite principles and in the Hanafī sects, as well as Ṭabrasī, but Ṭabrasī (d. 548 AH) after the authorship of Majma' al-Bayān came across the book Kashshāf Zamakhsharī and found it to contain novel and valuable points that cannot be found in any other book. And that's why Ṭabrasī has written his another book called Jawāmi' al-Jāmi' with an emphasis on

the contents of Kashshāf Zamakhsharī (Ṭabrasī, 1998: 15), but by studying the book of Majma' al-Bayān, it is clear that Ṭabrasī has achieved Zamakhsharī's interpretation during the compilation of Majma' al-Bayān. Because in the last parts of his commentary in Majma' al-Bayān, he mentioned him with phrases such as "Imam al-Mahmoud al-Zamakhsharī" (Ṭabrasī, 1993: 3/400) and "Imam al-Allameh al-Zamakhsharī" (4/706) and in the same book he quotes from Zamakhsharī and protests some points according to him (Ṭabrasī, 1993: 706/4 and: 319.7)

Abu al-Futūḥ al-Rāzī (d. 554 AH) is one of the Shi'a commentators. In his commentary, while describing Zamakhsharī with kindness and respect and with the title of "Our Sheikh" and has benefited from his commentary (Abu al-Futūḥ, 1408: 16/171)

Seyyed Ḥaydar Āmulī (d. 787 AH) also mentions Zamakhsharī as the greatest commentator of the "Greatest Commentators" (Āmulī, 1422: 2/19) and considers his book Kashshāf as a valid interpretation that is common to all scholars. (Ibid. 1/232) In his view, the combination of Tafsīr Majma' and Kashshāf is the same as wisdom and brings about the closeness of God. (Ibid.) Therefore, apart from these two interpretations, it has not shown any attention to other interpretations. He has considered Tafsīr Kashshāf and Majma' al-Bayān in most issues as similar and close to each other. (Ibid.)

Also one of the most important people who have been marginalized on his interpretation is Abu Al-Abbas Ahmad Ibn Munīr (683 AH) the author of (Intisaffi ma Tadminuhu al-Kashshāf minal-I'tizāl), Sharaf al-Din al-Ṭayyib (d. 743 AH), the author of Faṭḥ al-Ghayb fi al-Kashf an Qinā al-Rayb,

Seyyed Sharif Jurjānī. Suyūfī (d. 900 AH) also said so in his book called "Nawāhid al-Abkār" after mentioning the commentators of early Islam. Then a group of scholars in rhetoric - which is known as the miracle of the Qur'an to this knowledge - appeared that the author of Tafsīr-e-Kashshāf is the leader of this method and that is why his book (Tafsīr) is famous in the East and West Is (Suyūfī, 1424 AH 2)

Undoubtedly, Tafsīr-e-Kashshāf has a unique place among all commentaries in the Islamic world, and that is why its author is proud to write it where he says:

إنّ التفاسير في الدنيا بلا عدد

وليس فيها لعمرى مثل كشافي

إن كنت تبغى الهدى فالزم قراءته

فالجهد كالداء والكشاف كالشافي

(Hamawī, 1411: 19/29 and: Hufi, 1980: 46)

Translation: Undoubtedly, the number of interpretations of the Qur'an in the world is innumerable, but swearing by one's own soul, no one is the same as (Tafsīr-e-Kashshāf). If you are in search of guidance, study this work. Because ignorance is like a disease, and my Kashshāf is like a healing medicine.

### **The importance and role of rhetorical sciences in understanding the Qur'an from Zamakhsharī's point of view**

Zamakhsharī has considered the science of meanings and expression as the most important and necessary knowledge for interpreting the Qur'an. In his opinion, not only with the help of this science, the rhetorical aspects of the Qur'an are known, but also in the light of this knowledge, the subtleties and beauties of the Qur'an are known.

In this regard, he cites the words of Jāhiz (150 - 255 AH) in the book "Order of the Qur'an" - of which no trace has been obtained so far - and states: No matter how much the jurist surpasses his peers in the science of jurisprudence and fatwas and no matter how much the theologian overcomes the thinkers in theology. And no matter how much the knowledge of the storyteller is more than Ibn Qaryah (d. 84 AH). No matter how much Khaṭīb is better than Hassan Baṣrī in eloquence and speech (110-121 AH), and no matter how much the syntactic is superior to Sībawayh (148-180 AH) in grammar, and no matter how much the lexicologist is more adept at choosing words than others, as long as they do not acquire mastery and skill in these two sciences (meanings and expression), which are considered as a special Qur'anic knowledge, they will not be able to understand the meanings and truths of the Qur'an (Zamakhsharī, 1407: 1/16 and 17).

Zamakhsharī's attention to the points and details of semantics is very evident in "Kashshāf". In his commentary, he has referred to topics such as attention, dedication, delay, negation, introducing Mubtadā and Khabar, adjectives, expressions in the Holy Qur'an, and has referred to its verbal and spiritual beauties. And he has elaborated on the trope, the repetition, the irony, imagination and allegory, as well as the novel issues of puns and problems.

### **Belief in the existence of eloquent verses in the Qur'an**

While Zamakhsharī considers the verses of the Qur'an to be the end of miracles, eloquence and rhetoric, does not count all the verses on the same level of rhetoric. He believes that some

verses of the Qur'an are superior to others. He explains why all the verses are not on the same level and some of them are eloquent and some of them are more eloquent. He states: As in any position, it is not obligatory to use the word "Akīd" instead of the word "Ākid". In the same way, it is not necessary to use the word "Ahsan" instead of "Hassan" in every position, because the use of different types of speech causes variety in speech and adds to its beauty. In fact, Zamakhsharī points out to what scholars of rhetorical sciences refer to as the necessity of the present and the necessity of position and counts evidence in this regard in various places in his interpretation. He says about this:

«ليس بواجب أن يجيء بالآكد في كل موضع. ولكن يجيء بالوكيد تارة وبالآكد أخرى، كما يجيء بالحسن في موضع وبالأحسن في غيره ليفتن الكلام افتتاناً»  
(Zamakhsharī, 1407: 2/256)

For example he considers the verse 107 of surah Yūnus more eloquent than verse 38 of surah Zumar. (Zamakhsharī, 1407: 2/256)

If Allah afflicteth thee with some hurt, there is none who can remove it save Him; and if He desireth good for thee, there is none who can repel His bounty. He striketh with it whom He will of his bondmen. He is the Forgiving, the Merciful. (Yūnus)

If Allah willed some hurt for me, could they remove from me His hurt; or if He willed some mercy for me, could they restrain His mercy? Say: Allah is my all. In Him do (all) the trusting put their trust. (Zumar/38)

He also says: verse 20 of surah Hajj is more eloquent than verse 15 of surah Muhammad. (Zamakhsharī, 1407: 3/9)

Whereby that which is in their bellies and their skins too, will be melted. (Hajj/20)

And they are given boiling water to drink. (Muhammad/15)

While explaining the interpretation of the verse 64, Zamakhsharī has said: One who does not benefit from the knowledge of meanings and expression cannot find the correct meaning of this verse and similar verses.

The Jews say: Allah's hand is fettered. Their hands are fettered and they are accursed for saying so. Nay, but both His hands are spread out wide in bounty. He bestoweth as He will. (Maidah/64)

### Using "Takhyīl" in interpreting verses

One of the most important methods of Zamakhsharī for interpreting verses is utilizing the science of expression and especially imagination and allegory. Takhyīl industry is a kind of compound simile that is used to depict wonderful meanings and indescribable concepts that cannot be expressed in ordinary words. According to Zamakhsharī, the most delicate and precise topics of rhetorical sciences are the industry of Takhyīl, without which the interpretation and understanding of Qur'anic verses is not possible. And he says below the following holy verse:

And they esteem not Allah as He hath the right to be esteemed, when the whole earth is His handful on the Day of Resurrection, and the heavens are rolled in His right hand. Glorified is He and High Exalted from all that they ascribe as partner (unto Him). (Zumar/67)

"In the world, there are very big issues and matters that the minds and thoughts of human beings are confused in understanding them and human beings cannot understand the depth of

such issues, and the listeners are not able to understand them easily. And it is only with the Takhyīl industry that such issues can be understood. Hence, many verses have been revealed in this context to make the understanding of wonderful meanings more tangible for human beings. Zamakhsharī says that the best and most useful way to interpret the similarities of the Qur'an as well as other divine books and the words of the divine prophets is to benefit from this knowledge, because most of his words are based on Takhyīl. And this is why many people who have made mistakes in interpreting the Qur'an and have misinterpreted the hadiths of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) due to their lack of attention to this knowledge." (Zamakhsharī, 1407: 3/409)

He also refers to this hadith that: One day, (AS) was in the presence of holy Prophet (PBUH) and said to him: O Abu al-Qasim! On the Day of Judgment, God Almighty will place the heavens on one finger and the earth on one finger, and the trees and other creatures on one finger, and shake them, saying: I am the (true) king. And the Prophet (PBUH) smiled in surprise, recited this holy verse in confirmation of Gabriel's words:

وَمَا قَدَرُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ قَدْرِهِ ...

Zamakhsharī explains that the smile and laughter of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) was due to the fact that he has understood the same thing from this verse that the scholars of semantics understand it without any hesitation. Rather, this statement indicates the amazing power and actions of God Almighty, which the minds and intellect of human beings are astonished to understand it, and weak illusions do not understand the truth

and the meaning of it. And the listener can understand its meaning only by expressing this kind of Takhyīl. (Zamakhsharī, 1407: 3/409)

It is necessary to mention that people like Zarkashī (745-794 AH) who was on the Salafi religion under the influence of Zamakhsharī have mentioned the most useful method in interpreting the verses of attributes (news) Takhyīl. (Zarkashī, 1391: 3/440)

Mullah Sadra (1059 AH) is one of those who, under the influence of the views of Fakhr Rāzī (d. 606 AH), criticized Zamakhsharī on the subject of "Takhyīl" and while mentioning a number of commentators such as Nayshābūrī, Qādī Baydāwī; he says: All these commentators have followed the words of Qafāl, he believes that the interpretation of some verses according to the theory of "Takhyīl" is incorrect and is not satisfied by the Almighty God. And carrying Qur'anic verses and narrations to mere Takhyīl is like opening the door to sophistry and explaining and closing the way of seeking guidance. (Mulla Sadra, 1987: 4/157 and 158)

Zamakhsharī says under following verse:

Allah hath sealed their hearing and their hearts, and on their eyes there is a covering. Theirs will be an awful doom. (Baqarah/7)

"If it is asked: What is the meaning and concept of sealing hearts and ears and covering the eyes? In response, I say; In fact, there is no sealing and closing. Rather, this statement is trope and it is possible that this statement is a metaphor or allegory. He goes on to explain that if we consider the verse in its metaphorical sense, it means that

"Their hearts are such that due to arrogance and turning away from the truth, the word of truth does not penetrate in it and their ears do not accept the truth, as if they have been sealed in their hearts and ears, because they see the verses of truth but refuse to accept it, even though their eyes have been veiled."

He goes on to say about this allegory: Because the hypocrites have not understood the purposes of the rules of Islamic Shari'a, which is seeking guidance - and they were created for this purpose in principle - they are like those who are hindered between them and the benefits of religious rules by "Termination" and a veil has been created on them. (Zamakhsharī 1407: 1/158)

Undoubtedly, the most important motivation of Zamakhsharī in presenting the allegorical meaning of the holy verse is in order to remove the perception of determinism from the verse. Because, as some determinists carry the holy verse in its literal meaning; it would be in conflict with the principle of justice, which is the most important element of the principles of Adliyah (Mu'tazilite and Imāmīyyah). Since most of Zamakhsharī's opponents cite the lexical meaning and appearance of the verses, he, on the other hand, considers the most basic way to prove his viewpoint as referring to the Arabic word and in this regard cite a wide variety of Arabic words as evidence and argument. He says: The phrase "Their hearts are sealed" is like the phrase "When someone is killed" and the phrase "When someone is absent for a long time". So, he is likened to someone whom has been annihilated by "Valley" or has been kidnapped and

hidden from view by "Phoenix". Likewise, those who have turned away from the right and, like cattle, the promise of the truth have no effect on them. Now they are like those whose hearts and ears are sealed and whose eyes are veiled. And therefore they do not accept the word of truth. (Ibid)

Zamakhsharī strongly rejects the apparent meaning of this type of verses because it requires a tendency to think forcedly and attribute "Oppression" to God. An attribute that is considered to be one of the greatest ugliness, and God Almighty has announced His purification from this unjust attributes. Verses such as:

The sentence that cometh from Me cannot be changed, and I am in no wise a tyrant unto the slaves. (Qāf/29)

We wronged them not, but they it was who did the wrong. (Zukhruf/76)

Allah, verily, enjoineth not lewdness. Tell ye concerning Allah that which ye know not? (A'rāf/28) (Zamakhsharī, 1407: 1/158)

And (remember) when thy Lord brought forth from the Children of Adam, from their reins, their seed, and made them testifies of them, (saying): Am I not your Lord? They said: Yea, verily. We testify. (That was) lest ye should say at the Day of Resurrection: Lo! of this we were unaware. (A'rāf/172)

He says: The purpose of bringing out the descendants of Adam (AS) from his back and their confession and testimony to the monotheism and oneness of God (the Almighty) and the words of the Almighty saying "Am I your Lord? They said yes we testify" all are Takhyīl. He says: In fact, the meaning of the verse is that because the proofs of the Lordship and monotheism

of God (Almighty) have been laid down for human beings, and the wisdom and hearts of human beings testify to the truth of monotheism and they can distinguish right from wrong as well as guidance from misguidance; it is as if God Almighty had made a covenant with them about His Lordship and monotheism and said to them: Am I not your Lord? They have confessed: Yes, you are our Lord. (Zamakhsharī, 1407: 2/129)

In the same way, the holy verse:

His throne includeth the heavens and the earth. (Baqarah/255)

While expressing four aspects about the word "Chair", says: "The chair" of God, with all its greatness and breadth, covers all the heavens and the earth. But the meaning of mentioning this phrase is just to express the imagination and depict the greatness of God. And in fact there is no throne, no sitting. (Ibid: 1/301)

Zamakhsharī says that the use of allegory in the Holy Qur'an and the words of the Holy Prophet of Islam (PBUH) as well as in the Arabic language is common and has a certain extent. He cites many examples of the use of allegory in this regard; like:

And Our word unto a thing, when We intend it, is only that We say unto it: Be! And it is. (Nahl/40)

and said unto it and unto the earth: Come both of you, willingly or loth. They said: We come, obedient. (Fuṣṣilat/11)

Zamakhsharī says that it is clear from the promise mentioned in the verses; it is not the usual word for human beings, but a kind of allegory and image to explain the meaning of God's power and speed in creation

(Zamakhsharī, 1407: 2/129) and also under the holy verse:

And when I have fashioned him and breathed into him of My Spirit, then fall down before him prostrate. (Sad/72)

He has been stated that the meaning of bloating (blowing) is the same as reviving. And the word "bloating" is to show reviving, and in fact there is no bloating. (Zamakhsharī, 1407: 2/390)

Also about the holy verses:

Lo! We offered the trust unto the heavens and the earth and the hills, but they shrank from bearing it and were afraid of it. And man assumed it. Lo! he hath proved a tyrant and a fool. (Aḥzāb/72)

If We had caused this Qur'an to descend upon a mountain, thou (O Muhammad) verily hadst seen it humbled, rent asunder by the fear of Allah. Such similitudes coin We for mankind that haply they may reflect. (Haṣhr/21)

He said: Offering a trust in the heavens and the earth and revealing the Qur'an on the mountains is a kind of trope and allegory, and it means blaming human beings for their ruthlessness and unreasonableness, as well as a little humility towards the greatness of the Qur'an and his lack of contemplation in divine verses. (Zamakhsharī, 1407: 3/276. and: 4/87.) Of course, before him, commentators such as Ṭabarī (224 - 310 AH), Sharif Morteza (355 - 436 AH) and Sheikh Tūsī (385-460 AH) have referred to this issue. And they have interpreted the following verses as their metaphorical meaning:

And they found therein a wall upon the point of falling into ruin, and he repaired it. (Moses) said: If thou hadst



wished, thou couldst have taken payment for it. (Kahf/77)

Then, when the anger of Moses abated, he took up the tablets, and in their inscription there was guidance and mercy for all those who fear their Lord. (A'rāf/154)

Ṭabarī in Jāmi' al-Bayān, while expressing the differences of opinion of some Arabic scholars and literature about the meaning of:

فَوَجَدَا فِيهَا جِدَارًا يُرِيدُ أَنْ يَنْقَضِبَهُ

they have preferred the metaphorical and figurative sense, and He narrated some examples in Arabic language:

يَشْكُو إِلَى جَمَلِي طَوْلَ السُّرَى... صَبْرًا جَمِيلًا

فَكِلَانَا مُبْتَلَى (طبري، ١٤١٢: ١٥/٣١٥)

(Meaning: My camel complains about the hardships of travel during the journey and I call him patience; we are both suffering from this hardship)

It is important to note that some ostensible commentators and a group of Sufis strongly consider using Takhyīl and Ta'wīl in the interpretation of the Holy Qur'an to be incorrect and heretical. And they have opposed Zamakhsharī.

There is no doubt that Zamakhsharī has opened a new horizon in the subject of Qur'anic rhetoric. He was able to add new points and materials on the topics that Abd al-Qāhir invented about the rhetoric and meanings of the miracles of the Qur'an. He raises the issue of aesthetics of the order of meanings of the Qur'an and the relationship between Qur'anic expressions and verses with each other in terms of rhetoric, which is based on irony, metaphor, simile, trope and allegory; he was able to add to the richness of his commentary in such a way that most of the commentators,

and even his enemies and opponents, have mentioned his commentary due to containing valuable rhetorical issues.

### Using syntactic words and rules in interpreting verses

Zamakhsharī sometimes turns to syntactic issues to interpret the verses. He says about the following verse:

He said: Do you worship things that you have carved [with your own hands? But Allah is the One Who has created you and the material of which you make your gods. (Ṣāffāt/95-96)

That is, God (the Almighty) created you and the things from which you make idols: He answers the question of how it is possible for an object to be a creature of God (the Almighty); also a lord for pagans: This is like saying: a carpenter made a door or a chair or a goldsmith made bracelets and anklets. And in fact, it means that the carpenter and the goldsmith made the shape and form of these objects and not its essence. And the idols also have essence and form and God (Almighty) has created their essence and principle. And the makers of these idols have created some shapes for them by shaving and working on them. In the face of this syntactic question, he says what is wrong with considering the word "What" as a infinitive and not as a connected "What"; to make the meaning of the verse as follows: (God (Almighty) created you and your action) as the determinists believe. He says that in addition to the fact that the intellect and the Qur'an invalidate this meaning, the appearance and context of the verse does not reflect this meaning, because God (the Almighty) protests against the polytheists because the worshipers (the polytheists) and the (idols) are the creatures of God. So how

one creature can punish another creature? It is important especially if the worshiper has created the shape and appearance of the god (idols)!!!? And if it is said: God (Almighty) created you and your deeds; the argument will not end against them. And the word will not have the necessary adaptation. Another point is that the phrase "What you do" is the translation and meaning of the phrase "What you carve" and just as in the holy verse "What you carve" "What" is for connecting sentences; "What" will also be for connecting in "What you do" and there is no doubt about this. Except those who interpret the verse in a different way, regardless of the science of expression and the order of the Qur'an, and just out of ignorance. (Zamakhsharī, 1407: 4/51)

### **Zamakhsharī's defense from the I'tizāl school and his allusion to the opposition**

Zamakhsharī has tried to prove the legitimacy of his religion by interpreting the verses by using the context of Qur'anic verses.

For example:

Allah (Himself) is Witness that there is no Allah save Him. And the angels and the men of learning (too are witness). Maintaining His creation in justice, there is no Allah save Him the Almighty, the Wise. Lo! Religion with Allah (is) the Surrender (to His Will and Guidance). Those who (formerly) received the Scripture differed only after knowledge came unto them, through transgression among themselves. Whoso disbelieveth the revelations of Allah (will find that) lo! Allah is swift at reckoning. (Al Imrān/18-19)

While expressing the aspects of I'rāb in the verse, it is stated that in this holy verse, God Almighty and the angels and scientists have testified to the oneness of God (monotheism) and justice, and the meaning of 'Ulu al-'Ilm is those who prove his oneness and justice with clear reasons and proofs. He also considers the holy verse "Truly, now Islam is the only religion for GOD" to be the most useful and at the same time emphatic sentence for the previous verse. He states in this verse that the true religion of Islam is the religion of justice and monotheism. And other religions such as the religion of similes and determinists are far from the true religion of Islam. (Zamakhsharī, 1407: 1/418 and 419) Naturally, this kind of Zamakhsharī's use of verses in confirming his theological religion has caused his opponents, such as Fakhr Rāzī, to dissatisfy with his words and severely attack him, and attribute him to prejudice and ignorance (Rāzī, Fakhrudīn, 1420: 179)

He also says under the following verse:

And you, [Muslims] do not be as those who were divided and Disagreed with one another after Clear Signs came to them; it is they for whom there is a Grievous Chastisement. (Al Imrān/105)

The meaning of "Those who were divided and disagreed" is Jews and Christians. And some have said that they mean heretics in this Ummah, it means Mushbihih, Mujbirah and Hashwīyah. (Zamakhsharī: 1/453) Ibn Munīr (620-683 AH) criticizes his words under the following verse:

Then because of their breaking of their covenant, and their disbelieving in the revelations of Allah, and their slaying of the prophets wrongfully, and

their saying: Our hearts are hardened - Nay, but Allah set a seal upon them for their disbelief, so that they believe not save a few. (Nisā'/155)

He says: The meaning of the Jews (Our hearts are sealed) is that God makes their hearts unguided and remembrance and preaching are not effective in it, as God Almighty quotes from the language of the polytheists as saying: If God wanted, we didn't worship them.

Zamakhsharī states: The religion of the determinists is also of this opinion. And God Almighty has deprived them of His grace and blessings due to their disbelief and has left them. As if their hearts are sealed. And not that their hearts are closed and don't accept God's mentioning and advice. (Zamakhsharī 1407: 1/578)

Zamakhsharī, like the Mu'tazilite, believes that the perpetrator of great sins will not be forgiven without repentance (p. 115).

Whoso slayeth a believer of set purpose, his reward is hell for ever. Allah is wroth against him and He hath cursed him and prepared for him an awful doom. (Nisā'/93)

In order to support the Mu'tazilite's' belief and to deny the belief of those who are in view of the permission of the forgiveness of great sins without repentance, he says that in this verse, there are many threats and aggravations regarding the premeditated murder of a believer, and this is why Ibn Abbas (d. 68 AH) and SufyānThūrī (d. 161-97 AH) believe in not accepting repentance of the premeditated murder of a believer. And this is due to the concentration and intensity that exists in the verse regarding the premeditated murder of a believer. Otherwise, it must be said that every sin disappears with repentance. And by quoting narrations,

he emphasizes that the forgiveness of sins will not be possible without repentance. (Zamakhsharī 1407: 1/548)

### **Opposition to determinists**

Zamakhsharī is one of the justice-oriented commentators. In his commentary, he was able to respond well to the suspicions of the oppressors and to clearly explain the inaccuracy of their opinions and beliefs. He rejects the arguments of the determinist commentators, while rejecting their arguments and opinions, and emphasizes the correctness of the views of the justice-oriented commentators, according to his I'tizālī view, which in the explanation of verses that are important to determinism and which determinists have relied on to strengthen their ideological foundations. To prove this, he has mostly used the context of the verses and the method of interpreting the Qur'an to the Qur'an.

For example, he says about the following verse:

Then because of their breaking of their covenant, and their disbelieving in the revelations of Allah, and their slaying of the prophets wrongfully, and their saying: Our hearts are hardened - Nay, but Allah set a seal upon them for their disbelief, so that they believe not save a few. (Nisā'/155)

He has said: The meaning of this verse is the Jewish people who deny the truth and said (Our hearts are sealed) and they meant that God (the Almighty) has sealed their hearts. In a way that no advice enters their hearts as the polytheists and the determinists used to say, "If God had willed, we would not have worshiped the idols" (Al-Zukhruf: 20). Zamakhsharī says: In response to them, this is said: God (Almighty) left them alone because of

their disbelief and withheld His grace from them, and therefore their state is like the state of one whose heart is sealed, not that God (Almighty) has created their hearts unenviable that they cannot accept a sermon. (Zamakhsharī, 1407: 578)

Zamakhsharī cites the following holy verse to prove the freedom of human will and says:

And Satan saith, when the matter hath been decided: Lo! Allah promised you a promise of truth; and I promised you, then failed you. And I had no power over you save that I called unto you and ye obeyed me. So blame not, but blame yourselves. (Ibrahim/22)

If the truth is what the determinists believe, Satan said: Do not blame me and yourself because He has decreed disbelief for you and you have to disbelief. Zamakhsharī says: If it is said: the word of Satan is false and it cannot be cited, it is said in the answer: If this statement was false, God Almighty would have declared it invalid and inaccurate, because in this position, there is no use for false and inaccurate statements. Do not you see the word of Satan?

Lo! Allah promised you a promise of truth; and I promised you, and then failed you. And I had no power over you save that I called unto you and ye obeyed me. (Ibrahim/22)

God (Almighty) has promised you the truth and you and I have promised you and acted contrary to it, and I had no power or dominion over you except that I invited you (to the ugly) and you acted according to that action. The Almighty God has also said in another place:

Lo! as for My slaves, thou hast no power over any of them save such of the forward as follow thee. (Hijr/42)

(Zamakhsharī, 1407: 374)

In some cases, Zamakhsharī resorts to the lexical method of interpreting the important verses of determinism: for example, he has said about the following verse:

and obey not him whose heart We have made heedless of Our remembrance, who followeth his own lust and whose case hath been abandoned. (Kahf/28)

(The one whose heart is sealed) means the one whose heart We made forget the truth by leaving him to himself. The second meaning for which we can imagine: that we found him unaware. As in Arabic, whenever it is said: "Ajbantuh" means that I found him cowardly and greedy and whenever it is said "Afhamtuh" it means that I found him dumb, and whenever it is said: "Abkhaltuh" means that I found him stingy (Zamakhsharī, 1407: 2/482)

### Ta'wīl of Ahadīth

Zamakhsharī under the following verse:

And when she was delivered she said: My Lord! Lo! I am delivered of a female - Allah knew best of what she was delivered - the male is not as the female; and lo! I have named her Mary, and lo! I crave Thy protection for her and for her offspring from Satan the outcast. (Al Imran/36)

Reminds the following narrative:

"ما من مولود يولد إلا والشيطان يمسه حين يولد فيستهلّ صارخاً من مس الشيطان إياه، إلا مريم وابنها"

(Bukhārī, 1422: 4/164; Muttaqī Hindī, 1989: Hadith: 32345) and he has doubted its authenticity and stated that if we consider this hadith to be correct, it should be considered as a kind of imagination and allegory. And if, like Hashwīyah, we know its true meaning

and if we believe that the devil really makes every infant metamorphosed during his birth, then the whole world should be full of cries and lamentations of human beings. (Zamakhsharī, 1407: 426)

### **Zamakhsharī's trust in some exaggerated narrations**

Despite the attempts made by Zamakhsharī to refrain from the forged narrations and Isra'iliyyat mentioned as objections for him, however, he mentions some hadiths in his commentary, including the hadiths of the virtues of Surahs, which are considered by many to be forged and fabricated. (Ibn Taymiyyah, 1426: 13/354)

He also mentions some things in his commentary book which indicate a kind of exaggeration that has been mentioned in the Isra'iliyyat, for example, the following holy verse:

(Pharaoh) said: If thou comest with a token, then produce it, if thou art of those who speak the truth. Then he flung down his staff and lo! it was a serpent manifest. And he drew forth his hand (from his bosom), and lo! it was white for the beholders. (A'rāf/106-8)

"It is narrated that a great dragon opened its mouth, put its lower jaw on the ground and its upper jaw on the roof of the palace, then wanted to kill the Pharaoh so he jumped down from his bed and ran away. And for this reason he defiled his clothes, and the people were frightened and cried out. Pharaoh ordered some people to repel the dragon, but they were defeated and twenty-five thousand people perished due to the crowd, and Pharaoh went to Moses' house and said to him: Take that dragon! I am the first to believe in you and send the Israellites with you.

Moses took that dragon ..." (Zamakhsharī, 1407: 2/130) It seems that the loss of twenty-five thousand people in this story is a kind of exaggeration.

Zamakhsharī has tried to interpret the verses, but in some cases he has refused to interpret them. For example, in the case of the holy verse:

And ye know of those of you who broke the Sabbath, how We said unto them: Be ye apes, despised and hated! (Baqarah/65)

Most commentators have interpreted the verses in their apparent meaning, but Mujāhid ibn al-Jabr al-Makkī believes in the transformation of the hearts of the Companions of the Shabbat and not in their apparent transfiguration. (Abu Ḥayyān, Bahr al-Muḥīt: 1/209), but in this case Zamakhsharī agrees to other commentators and believes in the true metamorphosis of the Companions of the Shabbat (Zamakhsharī. 1407: 174).

### **Rationalism and the avoidance of imitation**

Zamakhsharī says: With the reason of intellect, we can get to know the Creator of the universe and the monotheism and wisdom of God (Almighty). And unless a prophet is sent to human beings, however, the way to reach the Shari'a and divine commands is possible only through the prophets. (Zamakhsharī, 1407: 3/240)

If it is asked: Was it not so until the revelation was revealed to a prophet, he did not forbid people to worship idols for the sake of reason. And after the revelation, he does this.

He answers: Yes! It should be noted, however, that revelation confirms the precepts of reason, just as reason confirms revelation. (Zamakhsharī, 1407: 3/435 and 436)

According to Zamakhsharī, religiosity and faith are acceptable based on argument and reason. Therefore, blind imitation and following do not have a place in Islam.

In this case, he cites to the verses of the Qur'an, including the following verses:

though they bring no clear warrant (vouchsafed) to them. (Kahf/15)

(O man), follow not that whereof thou hast no knowledge. Lo! the hearing and the sight and the heart - of each of these it will be asked. (Isrā/36)

Zamakhsharī considers imitation ugly and disgusting and states that the most disgusting things are imitation and accepting words without a reason. He says that the greatest trick of the devil is to trap the imitators who have followed their fathers in the worship of idols, and they, while helping their religion, quarrel with the people of truth. While they think that they are right about the religion. He says that in the condemnation of imitation, it is enough that the idolaters are among the people of imitation. (Zamakhsharī, 1407: 2/574)

Zamakhsharī says that imitating the mother is misguidance. Like Mu'tazilite, he emphasizes the element of reason. He bases the foundation of religion on reason. Therefore, while he has a special value for narration and hadith, he also tends to interpret (praised) opinions, but it is necessary to mention that he only pays attention to interpretive narrations. Not only does he not deny it, but he sometimes considers it to be misleading. He states in this regard: Follow the flag of proof on the road of religion. And do not suffice with individual narrations from one person to another. He says if misguidance has a mother, undoubtedly, its mother will be

imitation. And whoever goes astray, God will throw a string of fire around his neck. (Zamakhsharī, Aṭwāq al-Dhahab fī al-Mawā'iz wa al-Khaṭab: 110)

The Mu'tazilite has used reason as a tool to defend Islamic law and dispel the suspicions of atheists, heretics and determinists. Especially to prove the absence of contradiction in the Holy Qur'an, they have used the tools of reason. Using the lexical simile, they have opened a wide chapter in this field in order to interpret the verses of the Holy Qur'an according to I'tizālī views.

### **The opposition criticize Zamakhsharī**

Most of the criticism to Zamakhsharī's interpretation has been made by his opponents, namely the followers of the Ash'arites religion, and especially the determinists and formalists, who believed in some kind of simile. Muqaddasī has said in this regard: Zamakhsharī's opponents tried to write criticisms and denials on Zamakhsharī's interpretation with their pens and works. They exaggerated their opposition to his interpretation to such an extent that they ordered his book to be torn down and the public to be forbidden from reading it. And only some scholars who have been in the position of refuting the interpretation of Zamakhsharī have been allowed to study it (Sabki, 1413: 115). However, Zamakhsharī's opponents acknowledged his greatness and grace in Islamic sciences. And most of the criticisms about Tafsīr-e-Kashshāf have been expressed by Ahmad Ibn Munīr Iskandarānī (620-683 AH). Even Ibn Khaldūn (732-808 AH), who is considered one of the most stubborn enemies of the Mu'tazilite, acknowledged the importance and

value of Zamakhsharī's commentary. They can benefit from Zamakhsharī's views and theories on the subject of the miracle of the Qur'an. (Ibn Khaldūn, 1431: 508)

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