

Critique of Dhahabī's Perspective throughout the Historical Periods of Shi'a Exegesis with the Presentation of a New Model

Amir Joudavi*1 □ Mohammad Hossein Baroomand 2 □ Samiyeh Shahbazi 3

1. Amir Joudavi, Associate Professor, Department of Quran and Hadith Sciences, Faculty of Theology, Yazd University, Iran.
(Corresponding Author) amirjoudavi@yazd.ac.ir

2. Mohammad Hosein Baroomand, Associate Professor, Department of Quran and Hadith Sciences, Faculty of Theology, Yazd University, Iran. m.h.baroomand@yazd.ac.ir

3. Samiyeh Shahbazi, Assistant Professor, Department of Quran and Hadith Sciences, Faculty of Theology, Yazd University, Iran. samiyeh.shahbazi@yazd.ac.ir

Abstract:

The history of the Shi'a exegesis refers to the history of writing the exegesis written by a non-infallible commentator. The main purpose of this article is to criticize Dhahabī's perspective about Shi'a exegesis and to explain its historical periods throughout presentation of a new model. In this model, The time periods are two stages, five ages and two steps, respectively: the period of the two stages includes: the first stage from the beginning to 440 AH; The second stage from 440 up to now. Five ages including: the first and second ages of the first stage from the beginning to 95 AH; the third age of the first stage from 95 up to 440 AH; the first age of second stage from ۴۴۰ تا ۱۰۹۱ هجری قمری تاکنون. Also, the time period of the steps of the third age includes: the first step from 95 up to 260 AH and the second step from 260 AH to 440. Also prominent people of each time period, respectively, are: Imam 'Alī (AS); Saeed Ibn Jubayr, Imām Ḥassan 'Askarī (AS), Sheykh Ṭūsī and Fayḍ Kāshānī and the time periods are two stages, five ages and two steps, respectively.

Keywords:

History of Shi'a exegesis; stages, ages and steps; *ma'thur* exegesis (*tafsīr ma'thur*); *ijtihādī* exegesis (*tafsīr ijtihādī*); bases and tendencies of interpretation, Criticizing Dhahabī's model in History of Shi'a exegesis.

Accepted Article

Introduction

One of the effective parameters in writing books about history of exegesis is considering Muslim sects. Muslims are divided into several sects due to differences of opinion on the principles of beliefs and bases and tendencies of interpretation and how to use them; therefore, the history of their exegesis is different from each other. In the Twelver Shi'a sect, the Prophet (PBUH) and the Infallibles (AS) were at the forefront of interpretation from the very beginning, and the Shi'as continued this path; accordingly, the history of Twelver Shi'a exegesis is different from non-Shi'a sects, and each has its own history of exegesis.

According to Shi'a ideas; true exegesis is the truth of interpretation, which is the purpose of God, which has been revealed to the blessed heart of the Infallible (AS) in the form of light,¹ revelation² and spirit³ along with the Qur'an. But, Real exegesis (the time periods of which are the purpose of this research, and will be called Shi'a exegesis from here on) means what has been written in reality, and the non-infallible commentator acquires the sciences and conditions required by the science of *tafsīr* and interprets with the intention of revealing the meanings of the Qur'an and understanding its facts. This exegesis, unlike the real exegesis which was of soul, revelation and light, is of the word and meaning. This real exegesis is divided into two types according to the intellectual levels of the commentator and how to use it: *ma'thur* exegesis (*tafsīrī ma'thur*) (or acquired-elementary or narrative exegesis) and *ijtihādī* exegesis (*tafsīrī ijtihādī*) (or acquired-excellent or logical exegesis).⁴

Regarding the history of Shi'a exegesis, most scholars have followed the traditional model established by Dhahabī concerning the history of interpretation. However, this model is not compatible with Shi'a beliefs. Consequently, the present study proposes a new framework for understanding the history of Shi'a exegesis, taking into account Shi'a theological perspectives. The history of the Shi'a exegesis spans nearly 1400 years from the beginning to the present. Academic study of this long-time span, for convenience, first requires fragmentation and division into smaller time periods, according to the changes in methodology,⁵ such as stages, ages, and steps.⁶ After the division, it is time to determine the time period and name each of the time periods, which depends on knowing how the Shi'a leading commentators (prominent persons) perform in the interpretation.

The difference in the performance of these commentators leads to the creation of the main types of exegeses (*ma'thur* exegesis (*tafsīrī ma'thur*) and *ijtihādī* exegesis (*tafsīrī ijtihādī*)) in general and then to the creation of different types of commentators' use of interpretive bases (narration and reason or *naql* and *'aql*) in *ijtihādī* exegesis.

Accordingly, the main question of this research is what are the time periods of the history of interpretation (exegesis) and how is it organized? And sub-questions include: Who are the key

¹"There hath come to you from Allah a (new) light and a perspicuous Book" (Q. 5:15)

²"To thy heart and mind, that thou mayest admonish." (Q. 26:194)

³"And thus have We, by Our Command, sent inspiration to thee" (Q. 42:52)

⁴*ma'thur* exegesis (*tafsīrī ma'thur*), is a kind of interpretation by the help of *hadith* without the use of reason and rational *ijtihād*. In *ijtihādī* exegesis (*tafsīrī ijtihādī*) commentators also get help from analyzing and reasoning.

⁵Considering and comparing methodology and changes of methods of interpretations that happened during the history, helps us identify characteristics of each age. Like methodology that has investigated in this research: Hameed, Afaf A. "The Methodology of Tafsīr al-mubshir li-nūr al-Qur'an: The Only Complete Exegesis Written by a Woman (Nā'ila Hāshim Šabrī)." *Al-Bayan: Journal of Qur'an and Hadith Studies* 14, no. 1 (2016): 30-50.

⁶These periods of time have such sequence: stages > ages > steps

and influential people (prominent person) of each section? What is the name of each section and what time period do these sections cover? What are the types of interpretations (exegeses) and what effect do they have on creating time periods? How do commentators use interpretive bases and tendencies to help create these interpretive passages? How does the unavailability and availability of exegeses differentiate time periods?

Literary Review and its Criticism

An independent plan to examine the various periods of the history of the Shi'a exegesis based on the developments that have taken place in the exegeses throughout history, has not yet been presented. Books that have implicitly introduced this issue along with the introduction of exegeses and commentators or the history of the Qur'an, only consider the time parameter and do not examine changes in methodology of interpretation throughout history.

Since the basic requirement for writing any book on the history of interpretation (exegesis) is to provide a logical structure, what can be said about most sources at first glance, is that the authors of these books either did not have a logical structure or, unfortunately, they consciously or unconsciously imitated the structure of the book *Al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufasserūn* by Dhahabī (Dhahabī, 1976) which is not according to the history of Shi'a.

With the special title "History of Qur'anic Interpretation" or similar and close titles - in all three languages of Persian, Arabic and English - and in both sects, the following books can be briefly mentioned: *Tārikh Tafsīr* (History of Exegesis) (Ṭāleqānī, 1998); *Tārikh Tafsīr* (History of Exegesis) (Kamālī Dezfulī, 1978); *Tafsīr wa Tafāsīre Shi'a* (Ṣālehī Shahīdī, 2002); *Tabaqāt Mufasserān Shi'a* ('Aqīqī Bakhshāyeshī, 2008); *Tārikh al-Tafsīr* (History of Exegesis) (Qeysī, 1996); *Tārikh Tafsīr Qur'an* (Bābāī, 2008); *The Development of Exegesis in Early Islam* (Berg, Herbert, 2000); *Al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufasserūn* (Dhahabī, 1976); *Tārikh Tafsīr Qur'an Karim* (Muruvvatī, 2002); *Mufasserān Shi'a* (Shi'a Exegets) (Shafī'ī, 1970); *Al-Tafsīr bi al-Ma'thur wa Taṭavvurehi 'inda al-Shi'at al-Imāmiyyah* (Amin, 2000); *Āshenāī ba Tārikh Tafsīr wa Mufasserān* ('Alawīmehr, 2005).

Also here are some examples of the comments made in this regard that are more popular books:

A) *Tafsīr and Mufasserān* (Exegeses and Commentators), (Ma'rifat, 2000): It consists of fourteen chapters as follows:

1- Interpretation; 2- Qur'anic expression method; 3- Qur'an translation; 4- Genesis of interpretation; 5- Interpretation in the time of the Companions (*Ṣahāba*); 6- Interpretation in the age of followers (*Tābe'in*); 7- Famous commentators after the followers (*Tābe'in*); 8- The role of *Ahl al-Bayt* (AS) in interpretation; 9- Narrative exegesis (*tafsīr ma'thur*); 10- The most famous narrative exegeses; 11- *ijtihādī* exegesis (*tafsīrī ijtihādī*); 12- Mystical exegesis; 13- Interpretation in the new era; 14- Subjective exegesis.

In this book, the principle is based on the study of the commentators and not the evolution of the history of the real Shi'a exegesis, and as the names of the chapters of the book show, the views of Shi'as and Sunnis are confused in their opinions. This book borrows its structure from the book "*Al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufasserūn*" by Dhahabī, and in addition to not mentioning the bases of interpretation in full, there is confusion between the bases of *tafsīr* and the stages of *tafsīr*.

B) The Evolution of Shi'a Exegesis (*Sayr Ta'avvor Tarikh Shi'a*), (Ayyazī, 2002): For the history of the Shi'a exegesis during the fifteen centuries, the following fifteen titles have been considered: first century: genesis and establishment; second century: interpretation and separation from the science of hadith; third century: compilation period; fourth century: the consolidation of the science of interpretation with a tendency to narration (*tafsīrī ma'thur*); fifth century: the sprouts of *ijtihādī* exegesis, the age of flourishing and maturity; sixth century: the rise of the *ijtihādī* method and the use of other sciences; seventh century: the decline of interpretation; eighth century: cultural decline; ninth century: writing jurisprudential commentaries; tenth century: re-move of the interpretation; eleventh century: the end of the stagnation of interpretation in shi'a; twelfth century: tendency to the method of narration (*tafsīrī ma'thur*); thirteenth century: the revival of the *ijtihādī* method; fourteenth century: return to the Qur'an; fifteenth century: the peak of prosperity. Although in this book, the author's attention is drawn from the commentators to the exegesis, but it appears from the appearance and naming of the chapters that the author of this book also puts the principle on the *time* parameter and reviews the history of Shi'a exegesis from beginning to end. There is no plan that shows the evolution of the history of Shi'a exegesis.

C) History of the Interpretation of the Holy Qur'an, (Bābāī, 2008):

The first volume of this book is a history of interpretation that covers the time period from the era of the Prophet to the end of the era of the Minor Absence (329 AH). The three main chapters are in order; one: interpretation in the age of prophet; two: interpretation in the era of the presence of infallible imams; three: interpretation in the age of minor absence. The second chapter is divided into three parts; a) the commentators of the age of presence, b) the interpretive works of the age of presence, and c) the references and documents, features and developments of the age of presence. The internal titles of the three sections of the second chapter are almost identical to the sections. At the end of the introduction, the author says: "None of the books written on this subject in the last century are comprehensive, and there are analyzes in this book that are not found in any of them."^y

Since this book in its time divisions has used the era of the Prophet and the era of the Infallible Imam (AS) and the era of the Absence, it is closer to the Shi'a views. But again, the problem is that the division is based on the commentators and not the Shi'a interpretation (exegesis). Therefore, the author does not pay attention to changes in exegesis throughout history, while in examining the history of true Shi'a interpretation (exegesis), the main task is to study the changes that occur in the interpretation of the Qur'an over time and not historical developments such as the era of the Prophet (PBUH) or the era of Infallible Imams (AS).

Since the basic requirement for writing any book on the history of interpretation (exegesis) is to provide a logical structure, what can be said about most sources, at first glance, is that the authors of these books either did not have a logical structure or, unfortunately, they consciously or unconsciously imitated the structure of the book *Al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufasserūn* by Dhahabī.

^yibid.

Some of the other structural flaws in the reported books are as follows:

- 1-The use of Sunni terms and the incorrect application to Shi‘as, for example, it has been said: The period of compilation, while the period of compilation and writing in Shi‘as and Sunnis is separate, the Sunnis were required to carry out the command to ban the writing of hadith. But the Shi‘as have no obligation in this regard.
- 2- They did not pay attention to the lack and availability of exegeses or the existence or non-existence of exegeses and did not use this criterion in dividing and creating interpretive steps.
- 3- The *ijtihādī* exegesis has been mentioned, but the place of application of this *ijtihādī*, which is an important discussion of bases and tendencies of interpretation, has not been mentioned, and they have usually used the same old design of the four proofs (*‘Adellih ‘arba‘ah*).
- 4-The topical exegesis (interpretation), which is opposed to sequential exegesis (interpretation) and is related to the subject of methodology, has been included in the division, while this subject is a separate category.
- 5- The issue of “interpretation according to the idea of commentator” (*Tafsīr bi R’ay*) or “correct and incorrect interpretation” has been included in the division, while this issue is a separate category.

Also all recent researches which are directly or indirectly related to history of exegesis, are explaining this history according to structure of the book by Dhahabī (Abdul-Raof, 2013; Ali, 2017; Feener, 1998; Frolow, 1997; Fudge, 2006; Gilliot, 2020; Jullandri, 1968; Reynolds, 2008; Saleh, 2011; Saleh, 2004; Saleh, 2006; Versteegh, 2019).

In order to determine the time periods in the history of the Shi‘a real exegesis, this research will first collect the necessary parameters and elements to determine the structure, and in the second stage, will organize these parameters.

1- Examining the necessary parameters for organizing the time periods of the history of the Shi‘a exegesis

1-1- The first parameter: exegesis

1-1-1-Types of exegesis and access to them

Exegeses are divided into two categories: *ma‘thur* exegesis (*tafsīrī ma‘thur*) and *ijtihādī* exegesis (*tafsīrī ijtihādī*). In the *ma‘thur* exegesis, the commentator merely transmits the interpretive knowledge of the Infallible Man (AS), but in the *ijtihādī* exegesis of the commentator, he comments and presents his own views (Alavi et al., 2025).

A) Ma‘thur exegesis and its states

Ma‘thur exegesis or the use of narrations (*hadith*) in the interpretation of the Qur‘an is divided into the following three categories due to the various situations that it encounters when receiving, collecting and presenting hadith:

- 1- Oral quotation.
- 2- Compilation of interpretive narrations with other hadiths.
- 3- Independence of interpretive narrations [from other hadiths].

B) *Ijtihādī* exegesis and how to use the bases and tendencies in it

Bases and tendencies of *ijtihādī* exegesis:[^] Researchers of history of interpretation have mentioned different types, and classifications for the bases and tendencies of interpretation throughout history.[^] Each of these categories has advantages and disadvantages that will be mentioned in turn. It seems that the best division and classification according to the basis of the history of the Shi'a exegesis is their classification into interpretive principles or bases (*naql*) and tendencies (*'aql*).

The meaning of this statement is that when the non-infallible commentator, in trying to explain the divine meaning, either refers to the remaining works (*naql*) of the Prophet (PBUH) and the Ahl al-Bayt (AS), that are the Qur'an and Sunnah (in other words, interpretive bases) or to other sciences (*'aql*). The commentator uses the Qur'an or Sunnah to interpret the Qur'an or refers to human thoughts such as: Jurisprudence, theology, philosophy, mysticism, literature, experimental sciences, etc. (which are the same interpretive tendencies).

Interpretive tendencies can be divided into the following three categories according to the commonalities and differences as well as the conventional division in methodology books:

- 1- Sciences based on reasoning
 1. Jurisprudential
 2. Theological
 3. Philosophical
- 2- Sciences based on intuition
 1. Mystical
 2. Literal
- 3- Sciences based on experience and observation (experimental sciences)

Therefore, the meaning of the interpretive bases is the Qur'an and *Sunnah* (or *hadith* or *narration*), which has come from the Infallible (AS). The principle of the Qur'an means the use of the Qur'an in the interpretation of the Qur'an or in other words the interpretation of the Qur'an by the help of Qur'an and the principle of *Sunnah* (or *hadith* or *narration*) means the use of narration in the interpretation of the Qur'an. Tendencies refer to anything in the interpretation that has come from the non-infallible.

Since the non-Infallible commentator achieves cognition in two ways: a) heart and b) thought, therefore, human sciences or thoughts of non-infallible in interpretation can be divided into two categories of based on intuition and non-intuitive. This latter division, that is, non-intuitive, is divided into two types of reasoning and scientific-empirical due to the function of the mind in reaching the result through both analogy and induction. The first part, which is based on

[^]As Heern Zackery Mirza explains in this essay, three sources of texts, reason, and mysticism are important in the knowledge of Shi'a. Here the bases (consisting of the Qur'an and *Sunnah*) are given instead of the text and the tendencies are given instead of reason and mysticism.

The first part of the tendencies, which is "sciences based on reasoning", includes jurisprudential, theological and philosophical sciences that have come instead of reason. And the second part of the tendencies, which is "sciences based on intuition", includes mystical and literary sciences, which show the part of mysticism, (Heern, Z. M. (2018). Three Sources of Shi'i Knowledge and Authority: Texts, Reason, and Mysticism in Islamic Intellectual History. *Journal of Shi'a Islamic Studies*, 11(1), 43-78.)

[^]Classification of interpretive bases and tendencies

reasoning, is divided into three categories: jurisprudential, theological and philosophical. Also, the second category that is based on intuition has the ability to be divided into two subsets, mystical and literary. At the end, we have the last category that was called scientific-experimental. According to what has been said, interpretive tendencies means the commentator's approach to the Qur'an with different specialties.

How the *ijtihādī* commentator uses the bases and tendencies:

Ideally, we use the interpretive bases and then the tendencies. Because the interpretive bases are attributed to the Infallible Commentator (AS) and the tendencies are attributed to the non-infallible commentator. In the stage of using interpretive bases, we first use the Qur'an and then the *Sunnah* (or *hadith* or narration). The reason for the precedence of the Qur'an is the certainty of its issuance and the issuance of the words of the Qur'an from God. While narrations are quotations based on meaning and have been issued according to the understanding of the addressee, and therefore, in addition to the fact that their issuance is not definite, their meaning on the subject is also not definite.

In the stage of using the tendencies, first we will deal with the tendencies based on reasoning which is based on analogy and then we will deal with the tendencies based on intuition which is the other side of the coin of analogy and finally we will turn to induction (inductive reasoning).¹

The way *ijtihādī* commentators have used interpretive bases and tendencies has evolved throughout history. First, the commentators have used the bases and tendencies of interpretation incompletely and irregularly. Incomplete in the sense that they initially used one or more bases or tendencies, and irregular in the sense that they gave more credence to the tendencies rather than the bases. But from a certain time, on the one hand, they have made complete use of it, and on the other hand, they have used all the bases and tendencies regularly. This use has been in accordance with the semantic capabilities of the words and verses, in the order mentioned in paragraph (b).

C) The unavailability and availability of exegesis

Another criterion for dividing time periods is attention to unavailability and availability of exegetical books.²

¹All logicians have preferred analogy to induction.

²The division in this model is based on exegeses and not commentators, so as not to confuse between interpretation and commentators (like what happened in most the history of interpretation / exegesis books, including Dhahabī's model), the explanations of some Shi'a opinions about the commentators and their characteristics are briefly explained: Shi'a commentators can be divided into two categories of Infallible Commentators (AS) and non-infallible commentators according to their infallibility and non-infallibility (This word (infallibility) has a dubious and hierarchical meaning and human beings achieve degrees of it according to their actions, both quantitatively and qualitatively, as well as their faith. Of course, its complete example is manifested in the fourteen pure Infallibles. The interpretation of infallible commentators (AS), because of their infallibility is pleasing to God ("And Allah only wishes to remove all abomination from you, ye members of the Family, and to make you pure and spotless. (Q. 33:33). Because of these characteristics, they have the truth of interpretation (the true exegesis) and God Himself has asked them to express, explain ("Nay more, it is for Us to explain it (and make it clear)" (Q. 75:19); "that thou mayest explain clearly to men what is sent for them" (Q. 16:44)) and interpret the Qur'an. (Note the important difference between the interpretation of the Infallible (AS) which is the reality of exegesis and the *ma'thur* exegesis (*tafsīrī ma'thur*) which is according to the understanding of non-infallibles from *Sunnah* of Infallible (AS).)

Apart from the types of commentators described above, there are other important issues regarding the commentator in Shi'a. Among them are Characteristics (conditions and attributes) of the commentator that the late Fayḍ Kāshānī, inspired from Nahj al-

1-2- The second parameter: Time

The time periods are called stages, ages and steps. The stage is more important, more general, and broader than its ages, and the same is true for the age compared to the step that is formed within it.

2 - Periods of the history of Shi'a exegesis

2-1- Separate explanation of periods

2-1-1- Stages^{١٢}

A) Types of exegesis, clarifying the prominent commentator of each stage and naming exegetical stages:

Since the criterion for separating the first stage of Shi'a exegesis from the second stage is the separation and accompaniment of two types of *ma'thur* exegesis (*tafsīrī ma'thur*) and *ijtihādī* exegesis (*tafsīrī ijtihādī*), and Sheikh Tūsī is the prominent commentator (person) of these two stages by writing *Al-Tibyān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'an* exegesis, which is the first comprehensive^{١٣} Shi'a *ijtihādī* exegesis, these two stages can be named as follows:

١. The separation of *ma'thur* exegesis from *ijtihādī* exegesis: the stage in which non-infallible Shi'a commentators only reflect the views of Infallible Commentator (AS) and *ijtihād* has no role in this period.

Due to the presence of the perfect and Infallible man (AS) in their time, commentators did not allow themselves to interpret and finally tried to reflect the views of the perfect man (Infallible man (AS)) in interpreting to others. This stage can be called the stage of separation of *ma'thur* exegesis from *ijtihādī* exegesis, that is, the period in which the non-innocent commentator did not comment and present his opinion, which may have been

Balagheh, gave about the conditions and ideal qualities of the non-infallible commentator in the fifth introduction of *Tafsīr al-Šāfi* exegesis (Fayḍ Kāshānī, 1994: fifth introduction).

Also, in the introduction of the twelfth chapter of *Tafsīr al-Šāfi*, Fayḍ Kāshānī has mentioned the definition of the area of maneuver of the non-infallible commentator in the verses of the Qur'an and the division of the verses based on this: The field of Qur'anic verses is not the same area for the maneuver of non-infallible (non-innocent) commentator. He cannot enter and act uniformly in all verses of the Qur'an. According to some Shi'a commentators, Qur'anic verses are divided into at least two categories: (Fayḍ Kāshānī, 1994: 12th introduction, in this regard, see the four divisions of verses by Ibn 'Abbās (68 AH), Ṭabarī (313 AH) and Tūsī (460 AH):

B-1) Verses in the interpretation of which the non-infallible has an urgent need for the help of Infallible (AS) and cannot achieve the interpretation that pleases God except with the help of the Infallible (AS) and his works.

B-2) Verses in the interpretation of which the non-infallible commentator does not have an urgent and necessary need for the Infallible (AS).

Accordingly, the interpretation of a part of the verses that requires the use of the views of the Infallibles (AS), that is, the correct *ma'thur* interpretation. Without observing this, it will be an example of interpretation by opinion (*Tafsīr bi ra'y*). (Some use the title of *muhkamāt* and *mutashābihāt* in the classification, here the *muhkamāt* of the area are allowed to maneuver by non-infallible commentator and the *mutashābihāt* of the area are forbidden for him.) (Fayḍ Kāshānī, 1994: twelfth introduction)

^{١٢}From our point of view, the stage is a more important and wider period of time than its own ages. Wherever we mention the stage, we mean a more important period of time, and the ages have always been formed within the stages. Step <age <stage.

^{١٣}Comprehensive in the sense that an exegesis is provided for all verses and chapters of Holy Qur'an.

right or wrong. Rather, he devotes all his efforts to transmitting the interpretive knowledge of the Infallible Man (AS) of his time or past ages.

٢. Accompaniment of two types of *ma'thur* exegesis and *ijtihādī* exegesis: the stage in which some non-infallible Shi'a commentators continued the previous routine and others had personal *ijtihād* in interpreting the verses of the Qur'an.

Due to living in the time of absence (of Infallible Imām), they have tried to convey the views of the Infallibles (AS), and have tried to comment on the verses of the Qur'an.

Therefore, the total of 1400 years on Shi'a interpretation can be divided into two stages according to the performance of innocent Shi'a commentators in the field of Qur'anic interpretation, which are:

- a- The transfer of opinions of Infallible Imam (AS) and the use of memory and a kind of piety in not commenting
- b- Personal comment of non-infallible person (commentator).

B) Time periods of exegetical stages:

Considering that the first Shi'a *ijtihādī* exegesis, which is also comprehensive, is the exegesis of *Al-Tibyān* by Ṭūsī and the time of its writing is 440 AH, determining the time frame of these stages - according to the external emergence (the time of writing *Al-Tibyān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'an* by Ṭūsī 440 AH) is as follows:

- 1- The first stage from the beginning (12 years before the migration) to 440 AH.
- 2- The second stage from 440 AH until today.

Smaller time periods that are in one stage are shared due to the dependence of a stage and are separated due to internal differences. These distinctions allow us to divide interpretive stages that have a long-time span into smaller time periods, i.e., ages and steps.

2-1-2- Ages

2-1-2-1- Ages of the first stage

A) Modes of *ma'thur* exegesis (tafsīrī *ma'thur*), clarifying the prominent commentators and naming ages of the first stage:

We called the first stage the stage of separation of *ma'thur* exegesis from *ijtihādī* exegesis, so hadith and narration play the first role in it, but because this hadith and narration have been transferred in different ways, so these different forms of transfer have caused the creation of different ages. In other words, the non-infallible Shi'a commentator could have had several actions being faced with the interpretation of Infallible Commentator (AS):

- a) Hear the sayings and interpretive narrations of the Infallibles (AS) and record them only in his memory and transmit them orally to others.
- b) Write interpretive narrations.

This writing of interpretive narrations could:

- b-1) Be while writing other narrations (compilation of interpretive hadiths along with other hadiths or compilation along with hadiths): Since Imam 'Alī (AS) is

^١Our discussion is not about the beginning of *ijtihād* in Shi'a interpretation, but about the first Shi'a *ijtihādī* text (*ijtihādī* exegesis) in interpretation.

the first person who wrote the commentary in his *Mus'haf* at the same time as writing the Qur'an, he is the leading commentator (the prominent person) of this age and separates the first age from the second and third age.

b- 2) Be independent and separate from other narrations: Saeed Ibn Jubayr is the first person to separate interpretive hadiths from other hadiths, and therefore he is also a leading commentator (a prominent person) of this age and the separator of the second age from the third.

Sometimes it has been in such a way that it has separated the interpretive narrations from other narrations. This separation is also of two types. Sometimes, he did not completely separate the interpretive narrations from the other narrations, but presented them in a separate chapter and a chapter along with other hadith chapters in a single volume and sometimes it is completely separate and independent and delivered to the reader with a separate title and cover (Independence of interpretive narrations).

So, in the first stage, when *ma'thur* exegesis is common and has absolute dominance, performance of the non-infallible Shi'a commentator is divided into the following internal periods (ages):

- 1- Oral narration of hadiths and narrations
- 2- Compilation along with hadiths (compilation of interpretive narrations along with other hadiths)
- 3- Independence of interpretive narrations from other hadiths.^{1°}

But in practice, in the history of Shi'a exegesis, the first and second ages coincide with each other and are twins. Accordingly, the courses of the first stage are:

The first and second ages: oral narration and compilation along with hadiths

Third age: Independence of interpretive narrations from other hadiths

‘Alī (AS) is the prominent person of the first and second ages and Saeed Ibn Jubayr is the prominent person of the third age.

B) The time period of the first, second and third ages of the first stage:

The first and second twin ages of the history of Shi'a exegesis, which are the ages of oral narration and compilation of hadiths, cover from the beginning to the advent of Saeed Ibn Jubayr and are historically harmonious and nested because the *Mushaf* (Qur'an and exegesis) of ‘Alī (AS) is a writing of the interpretation of the Prophet (PBUH), which means the spelling of the Prophet (PBUH), it is a clear manifestation of this period and it was presented to the caliphs of the time three days after the death of the Prophet (PBUH) (11 AH).

^{1°}It is noteworthy that although there is a second criterion for the formation of the first stage ages, because each narration is composed of document (*Sanad*) and text, so we can look at the *Ma'thur* (narrative) interpretation from another angle and offer the following internal division:

1- The age of offering the text by mentioning the document (*Sanad*)

2- The age of offering the text without mentioning the document (*Sanad*) or deleting the document (*Sanad*)

However, due to the importance of the first parameter and the fact that today, due to the difference between the earlier and the latter terms regarding the authentic hadith and also the lack of serious attention to the document (*Sanad*), it will not be useful to study this division. So, we omit the independent calculation of the second criterion and parameter.

Saeed Ibn Jubayr has been introduced as the first compiler of commentary (interpretive narrations) and a personality who gave independence to interpretive narrations for the first time.¹³ According to his death in 95 AH and his birth around 43 AH and the period of his emergence and intellectual flourishing after about 30 to 40 years, the beginning of the third age can be announced from about 73 to 83 AH. This period in Shiism coincides with the period of imamate of Imam Sajjād (AS) (61 to 95 AH) and almost the middle of it.

2-1-2-1- Ages of the second stage

A) How to use the interpretive bases and tendencies, clarifying the prominent commentators and naming ages of the first stage:

Shi'a commentators have all used bases and tendencies to interpret, but they have not followed a single procedure in the number and manner of using these bases and tendencies. Some of them have used them irregularly and incompletely, and some in a complete and regular manner.

In this way, second stage courses can be created. Regarding the number of bases and tendencies that the commentator benefits from (all bases and tendencies or some of them) and also in the quality of use (regular or irregular use), commentators can be divided into the following categories:

A- Commentators who have used some of the bases and tendencies incompletely and irregularly (incomplete use of bases and tendencies)¹⁴

B- Commentators who have benefited from all the bases and tendencies of interpretation (complete use of all bases and tendencies)

B) The time period of the first and second ages of the second stage

The second stage, as we said, started around 440 AH and continues to this day.

A- The first age of second stage: use of some of bases and tendencies, in an irregular manner, it means dominant use of tendencies compared to the bases. It belongs to the exegesis of *Al-Tibyān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'an* by Ṭūsī in 440 AH, which is the beginning of the first age of second stage of the history of Shi'a exegesis. Accordingly, the time period of the first age of second stage is from the end of the first stage to about 1091 AH.

B- The second age of second stage: use of all the bases and tendencies regularly and completely and according to the pattern and dominant use of the bases in comparison with the tendencies, which belong to Fayḍ Kāshānī 1091 AH (who believes in reason and rational

¹³For more information, refer to the discussion of the first candidate to compile the date of interpretation; (Dhahabī, Muḥammad Husayn (1976). *Al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassserūn*, Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Tarāth al-'Arabī: 1/69)

¹⁴Since the community of commentators, like all other human societies, is gradually reaching the age of perfection, so it can be imagined that in the analytical history of Shi'a exegesis, the first non-infallible commentators appeared who benefited from only one basis or tendency in exegesis. Over time, those who have deeper and more comprehensive thinking have emerged and have offered multi-epistemic and multi-dimensional exegeses, and finally the period of comprehensive exegeses by using all bases and tendencies has emerged.

On this basis - in the end - the commentators and exegese can be divided into the following two categories based on regularity and irregularity, as well as more (dominant) or less use of bases or tendencies:

A- The irregular use of some of bases and tendencies (the use of tendencies prevails in comparison with the bases).

B- The use of all bases and tendencies, but in a complete and regular manner (overcoming the use of bases in comparison with tendencies).

Case A will form the first period of the second stage of history of Shi'a exegesis and case B will form the second period of the second stage of history of Shi'a exegesis.

(Asadinia 2014, 5-18)) and his exegesis is *al-Sāfi* and this means the beginning of the second age in the second stage.^{1^}

2-1-3- Steps

After forming the ages, it is necessary to divide some of the ages that can be divided into smaller time periods, which are called steps.

A) Availability and non-availability of exegesis, clarifying the prominent commentator and naming steps of some ages.

The unavailability and availability of exegeses can create the steps of the third period. The first step is non-existent exegeses, the second step is existing exegeses.^{2^} So, the steps of the third period are:

- A) Non-existent exegeses
- B) Available and existing exegeses

B) The time frame of the first and second steps of the third period

Since the first existing exegesis in Shi'a history is the exegesis of Imām Ḥassan 'Askarī (AS) and this exegesis is related to 260 A.H, the time frame of these two steps is separated in this way.

- 1- The first step of the third age from 95 AH to about 260 AH.
- 2- The second step of the third age from 260 AH to 440 AH.

^{1^}This evolution, that is, the emergence of the second age in the second stage of the history of Shi'a exegesis, is related to the independent Shi'a Safavid rule. The Safavids established the official Shi'a religion in Iran for the first time in 907 AH, and their rule continued until 1148 AH. In political and governmental history, the Shi'as did not have an independent government like the Safavid period before, and if they did, they were under the influence of Sunni rulers, Abbasid, Mughul and Teymurid caliphs.

^{2^}The necessary criterion for creating and forming the steps of the third age of the first stage is unavailability and availability of the exegesis and writings of Shi'a commentators, whether Infallible (AS) or non-infallible. That is, the non-infallible Shi'a commentators, although after writing and separating the interpretive narrations of the Infallible (AS) from other hadiths, have presented it to the Shi'a community of their time, but today, when we look at the result of their efforts in history, we encounter two situations:

- A. These books are now available and it is not the case that they are mentioned only in the books of the dictionary, references and classes of commentators (existing exegeses).
- B- These books are not available now and only the names of their authors have been mentioned in the relevant books that someone has also had a commentary (non-existent exegeses).

2-2- Explanation of the time periods of the history of true Shi'a exegesis together

These time periods are as follows:

Time Periods in the History of Shi'a Exegesis	First Stage: The separation of <i>ma'thur</i> exegesis from <i>ijtihādī</i> exegesis	Creator of the first and second ages: Imam 'Alī (AS) who created a written and codified Qur'an which was compiled along with the hadiths at the same time as the oral narration.	
		The first and second ages: Oral narration and Compilation of interpretive hadiths along with other hadiths (beginning up to 95 AH)	
		Creator of the third age: Saeed Ibn Jubayr, who for the first time separated interpretive hadiths from other hadiths	
		Third age: Independence of interpretive narrations from other hadiths (95 to 440 AH)	Step 1: non-existent exegeses (95 AH to 260 AH)
			Creator of the second step: the existing exegesis of Imām Ḥassan 'Askarī (AS), which is the first available existing exegesis
		Step 2: available and existing exegeses (260 to 440 AH)	
	Creator of the second stage: Sheykh Ṭūsī, who wrote the first comprehensive <i>Ijtihādī</i> exegesis (<i>Al-Tibyān</i>) along with <i>Ma'thur</i> exegesis that were written at that time.		
	Second Stage: Accompaniment of two types of <i>Ma'thur</i> exegesis and <i>Ijtihādī</i> exegesis	First age of second stage: Incomplete and irregular use of bases and tendencies (440 to 1091 AH)	
		Creator of the second age of second stage: Fayḍ Kāshānī who in his exegesis <i>al-Ṣāfi</i> , in addition to being <i>ijtihādī</i> , has used all the interpretive bases and tendencies completely and regularly.	
	Second age of second stage: complete and regular use of bases and tendencies (according to the subject of the verse) (1091 AH until today)		

Final conclusion:

Unlike what Dhahabī has presented as the history of exegesis, which has been accepted by various Shi'a and non- Shi'a writers, the model of history of exegesis proposed by Dhahabī is not compatible with Shi'a beliefs. In this research, a new model has been proposed that not only considers the chronological order but also takes into account Shi'a convictions

1. The time periods in the history of Shi'a exegesis are organized according to the different ways in which the commentator uses the types of interpretations and the bases of *ijtihādī* exegesis, as well as according to the unavailability or availability of exegeses.

2. Prominent people of each time period, respectively, are: Imam 'Alī (AS); Saeed Ibn Jubayr, Imām Ḥassan 'Askarī (AS), Sheykh Ṭūsī and Fayḍ Kāshānī.

3. The time periods are two stages, five ages and two steps, respectively.

4. The period of the two stages includes: the first stage from the beginning to 440 AH; The second stage from 440 up to now. Five ages including: the first and second ages of the first stage from the beginning to 95 AH; the third age of the first stage from 95 up to 440 AH; the first age

of second stage from 440 until 1091 AH; the second age of second stage from 1091 AH up to now. Also, the time period of the steps of the third age includes: the first step from 95 up to 260 AH and the second step from 260 AH to 440.

5. Types of exegeses, including *ma'thur* exegesis and *ijtihādī* exegesis, cause double stages in the history of true Shi'a exegesis. The first stage is the separation of the *ma'thur* exegesis from the *ijtihādī* exegesis and the second stage is the accompaniment of the two.

6. The way commentators use interpretive bases and tendencies has given rise to periods in the history of Shi'a exegesis. In the first to third ages, only the interpretive basis of *sunnah* or tradition is used. The first age is oral, the second age is the compilation of interpretive hadiths along with other hadiths, and the third age is the separation of interpretive hadiths from other hadiths. In the first age of the second stage, all the bases (Qur'an and *Sunnah*) and tendencies (jurisprudential, theological, philosophical, mystical, literal, experimental sciences) are used incompletely and irregularly. In the second age of second stage, the commentators use all the bases and tendencies regularly and completely.

7. The unavailability or availability of exegeses has led to the dual steps of the third age. The first step of non-existent (unavailable) exegeses from 95 up to 260 AH. The first existing exegesis is in the year 260 AH, that is, the exegesis of Imām Ḥassan 'Askarī (AS), until the year 440, when the next transformation took place, the second step is the period of existing exegeses.

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