

# RHETORICAL INTERPRETATION OF THE QUR'ĀN: A Study of Zamakhshari's *Ijjāz al-Qur'ān*

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## Abstrak

Tulisan berikut ini dimaksudkan untuk menjawab satu pertanyaan: dimanakah letak i'jaz al-Qur'an menurut Abū al-Qāsim Maḥmūd b. 'Umar al-Zamakhsharī al-Mu'tazili. Ia menyatakan bahwa letak *i'jaz al-Qur'ān* itu ada pada *nāz̄m*-nya (susunan kata-katanya) dan berita yang disampaikannya mengenai hal-hal yang ghaib. Pendapat Zamakhshari ini dapat ditela'ah dari kitab tafsirnya, *al-Kashshāf 'an Haqā'iq Ghawāmid al-Tanzīl wa 'Uyun al-Aqāwīl fī Wujūh al-Ta'wīl* dimana Zamakhshari menganalisis ayat-ayat al-Qur'an dengan pendekatan bahasa dan ilmu bantunya, termasuk di dalamnya Ilmu Bayan dan Ilmu Ma'ani. Ia berargumentasi bahwa keindahan komposisi ayat-ayat al-Qur'an, elegansi stilistik dan kehebatan diksinya tidak mungkin dapat diapresiasi secara penuh tanpa bantuan Ilmu Ma'ani dan Ilmu-Bayan, dua buah disiplin Ilmu Balaghah yang dianggapnya sebagai alat paling canggih dan efektif untuk menafsirkan ayat-ayat al-Qur'an yang diturunkan di tengah-tengah bangsa Arab yang gemar dengan sastra.

Kemampuan Zamakhshari mengungkap i'jaz al-Qur'an dari perspektif bahasanya ini diakui oleh para sarjana. Barangkali tidak berlebihan jika Ibn Khallikan sendiri pernah mengatakan bahwa "tafsir semacam al-Kashshaf ini belum pernah ditulis orang sebelumnya". Ibn Khaldun bahkan menasehatkan kepada muridnya agar mempelajari *al-Kashshaf* untuk mengetahui kekayaan analisis linguistik penulisnya, meskipun pada saat yang sama ia juga mengingatkan murid-muridnya untuk tetap hati-hati terhadap faham mu'tazilah yang juga menghiasi tafsir Zamakhshari ini.

## ملخص

تقصد هذه المقالة إجابة السؤال عن موضع إعجاز القرآن عند زمخشري المعتزل. قال زمخشري إن موضع إعجاز القرآن في نظمه والأخبار عن الغائب. يعرف هذا الرأي من تفسيره "ال Kashshaf عن حقائق غوامض التنزيل وعيون الأقاويل في وجوه التأويل". حلّ زمخشري في هذا التفسير آيات القرآن تحليلًا لغوياً باستخدام العلوم اللغوية كعلم البيان وعلم المعانى. احتج فيه زمخشري بأن جمال تركيب آيات القرآن وحسن اختيار الكلمات لا يمكن فهمها إلا بعلم المعانى وعلم البيان، علماً أن ضمن علم البلاغة اللذان يعتبران من أحسن آلة لتفسير آيات القرآن التي أنزلت وسط العرب الذين يرغبون في اللغة وأدابها.

مهارة زمخشري في إظهار إعجاز القرآن من الناحية اللغوية يعترف بها العلماء، فلذلك ليس من الغريب إذا قال ابن خلkan إن التفسير كال Kashshaf لم يكتب من قبل. وكان ابن خلدون يشجع تلاميذه على دراسية Kashshaf لمعرفة تحليله اللغوى الغنى وفي نفس الوقت حثّ تلاميذه إلى اجتناب تعاليم المعتزلة التي تملأ هذا التفسير.

ZAMAKHSHARI'S theory of *i'jaz al-Qur'an* can be extracted from his multivolume *al-Kashshaf*, where he uses a rhetorical interpretation to show that the inimitability of the Qur'an rests on its composition (*nazm*). This essay will examine specific passages of *al-Kashshaf* to show that Zamakhshari uses this work to implement his theory of rhetorical interpretation. A discussion of Zamakhshari's personal background as well as a consideration of the Muslim scholars who have discussed his work enables us to place his *tafsir* within the context of rhetorical exegesis.

Abū al-Qāsim Maḥmūd b. ‘Umar al-Zamakhsharī was born in 467/1075 in the province of Khawarazm,<sup>1</sup> only seven years after the death of al-Ṭūsī,<sup>2</sup> a prominent Shī‘ī exegete. He spent the first eighteen years of his life as a subject of the great Saljuq Sultan Malik Shāh I.<sup>3</sup> He traveled a great deal, studying under scholars in Bukhārā, Samarqand, Baghdaḍ and Mecca. It is said that his strongest intellectual influence was Maḥmūd b. Jarīr al-Dabbi al-Isbahānī later known as Abū Muḍar (d. 507/1113).<sup>4</sup> He was credited with introducing Zamakhsharī to Mu‘tazilī teachings and the people of Khawarazm, where his proselytism was far-reaching.<sup>5</sup> Zamakhsharī had a close personal relationship with his teacher who not only imparted knowledge to his student, but also supported him financially.<sup>6</sup> Because Zamakhsharī was well versed in knowledge, some scholars called him “unique in his time” (*wahīd ‘asrihi*).<sup>7</sup>

Zamakhsharī’s own adoption of the Mu‘tazilite doctrine was open and outspoken. He frequently called himself “Abū Qāsim al-Mu‘tazilī;”<sup>8</sup> once he answered a call by saying that “Abū al-Qāsim al-Mu‘tazilī is at the gate.” Proud of being Mu‘tazilī, he states explicitly that *al-Kashshāf* was written in order to provide a much-needed comprehensive Mu‘tazilī commentary to the Qur’ān.<sup>9</sup> This exegete is said to have begun his *tafsīr* with the phrase: “*al-hamdu li-llāhi al-ladhi khalaqa al-Qur’ān*.” He was later persuaded to temper the tone of “*khalaqa*” to “*ja‘ala*,” some scholars say “*anzala*” however, he didn’t want to change it; any copy of his *tafsīr* which uses these two proposed words, has clearly been edited by subsequent scholars.<sup>10</sup>

It is said that by the time Zamakhsharī reached Baghdaḍ, the golden days under vizier Nizām al-Mulk had already ended. The Saljuq empire was feeling the strain of internecine rivalry.<sup>11</sup> Yet the intellectual legacy of the previous era remained, continuing to attract students such as Zamakhsharī to Baghdaḍ’s *madāris* (study centers).<sup>12</sup> While in Baghdaḍ Zamakhsharī received licenses (*ijāzāt*) from some of that generation’s leading scholars in *Hadīth* and literary studies.<sup>13</sup>

After getting a licence in *Hadīth* from Baghdaḍ, he moved to Mecca, where he settled for a while and to which he returned from subsequent travels. His tenure in that city was long enough to win him the nickname of “God’s neighbor (*Jār Allāh*).”<sup>14</sup> Although born a Persian, his mastery of Arabic was extraordinary. He taught in Arabic and, more than that, he refused to speak any language other than Arabic to his students. He acknowledged the superiority of the Arabic language.<sup>15</sup> His book on

Arabic grammar, *al-Mufassal* became renowned for its bright and comprehensive exposition of grammatical principles.

In 538/1144, at the age of seventy-one, al-Zamakhsharī died in Jurjāniyah, a town about twenty miles north of Zamakhshar. History justifies that Zamakhsharī's *tafsīr* is among the most noted and most quoted of Qur'ān commentaries. Ibn Khallikān wrote: "Nothing like it had been written before."<sup>16</sup> The noted fourteenth-century Muslim historian Ibn Khaldūn (also known as the author of *al-Muqaddima*) suggested that his students make use of this *tafsīr* for varied linguistic information. However, he also reminded them to be careful when reading it; as Zamakhsharī was a Mu'tazilite by faith and action, he consequently used the verses of the Qur'ān to argue in favor of the doctrines of the Mu'tazila.<sup>17</sup>

It was during his second visit to Mecca that he wrote his commentary on the Qur'ān entitled *al-Kashshāf 'an Ḥaqā'iq Ghawāmid al-Tanzīl wa 'Uyūn al-Aqāwīl fi Wujūh al-Ta'wīl*. This work was completed during a two-year stay in Mecca around 1134. It is mentioned clearly in the introduction of his *tafsīr* that he had expected to spend more than thirty years on the task; he attributed the swift completion of the work to the miraculous power of the Ka'bah and the blessed influence that emanates from it.<sup>18</sup>

According to Andrew Rippin, the work is a phrase by phrase philosophical and philological commentary on the entire text of the Qur'ān, written in a concise, careful, and somewhat difficult style. Zamakhsharī first presented what he considered to be the obvious meaning of a verse and then noted other possible interpretations on the basis of grammar and textual variant readings, while always paying full attention to the notion of the rhetorical beauty (*i'jāz*) of the Qur'ān.<sup>19</sup> More than that, Ibn Khaldūn remarks that Zamakhsharī's commentary of the Qur'ān is based wholly upon the discipline of the science of rhetoric (*'Ilm al-Balāghah*).<sup>20</sup> This science is needed most importantly to Qur'ān commentators. Most classical commentators before Zamakhsharī disregarded it. When he wrote his Qur'ān commentary, he investigated each verse of the Qur'ān according to the rules of this discipline. This indicates, in part, its inimitability. It gives his commentary greater distinction than that possessed by any other commentary. However, he tried to confirm the articles of faith of the Mu'tazila innovators by deriving them from the Qur'ān by means of different aspects of rhetoric (*balāghah*). Therefore, many ortho-

dox Muslims have read his commentary with caution, despite his abundant knowledge of rhetoric.<sup>21</sup>

*Al-Kashshāf* is known as the only complete extant Mu'tazilite commentary on the Qur'ān. It is also the first and by far the most successful effort to apply the principles of Arabic rhetorics to Qur'ānic exegesis with a view to laying bare the bases of *i'jāz*, the inimitability of the Qur'ān.<sup>22</sup> Zamakhsharī believed that the beauty of Qur'ānic composition, the elegance of its style and the marvel of its diction could not be appreciated, nor its *i'jāz*, its inimitability, be established unless reference is made to the principles of *Ma'āni* and *Bayān*, the two disciplines of Arabic rhetorics.<sup>23</sup> He was convinced that a fuller comprehension of the *i'jāz al-Qur'ān* and a deeper and more thorough understanding of the bases on which the Qur'ānic challenge rested demanded the employment of the principles of Arabic rhetoric as the most effective and sophisticated tool of interpretation of the Qur'ānic verses. For the first time in the history of the Qur'ānic exegesis, he produced an explication of the entire Qur'ān on the groundwork of rhetorical principles, exposing thereby the roots of the inimitability of the Qur'ān and establishing its *i'jāz* on literary grounds. While doing so he made an important contribution to the evolution and development of Arabic rhetorics as well, by elucidating its principles in the framework of the interpretation of the Qur'ānic verses. He also enriched Arabic rhetorics by enunciating a number of rhetorical principles, hitherto unknown, and by adding numerous original rhetorical forms to those already existing.<sup>24</sup>

Fazlur Rahman has commented that *Tafsīr al-Kashshāf* fully reflects the achievements of its author, a versatile genius who had mastered the literary and religious sciences of his times.<sup>25</sup> The orthodox trend of *tafsīr bi al-ma'thūr* also received Zamakhsharī's full attention. However, it is ironic that his approach towards the traditional exegetical reports (*riwāya*) was that of an uncritical and passive acceptance, while, on the other hand, he was a Mu'tazilite by faith and action.

To understand Zamakhsharī's commentary demands a knowledge of Arabic grammar; without this his remarks are sometimes difficult to follow.<sup>26</sup> Commenting on this matter, McAuliffe states that: "on the basis of grammar, Zamakhsharī examined the stylistic peculiarities of the Qur'ān minutely and gave reasons for the apparent irregularities in the text. Deviations of word order and morphology are exhaustively explained. Unusual significances are justified, frequently by recourse to the

corpus of classical poetry. Such syntactical and lexical idiosyncrasies are then lauded as marks of the Qur'an's rhetorical preeminence. What begins as philological analysis becomes, in Zamakhshari's hands, a paean to the doctrine of the Qur'an's inimitability (*i'jaz*).<sup>27</sup>

Şāwī al-Juwaynī mentions that 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī's<sup>28</sup> theory of rhetoric (*balāghah*) has flourished since the appearance of Zamakhshari's *Kashshāf*.<sup>29</sup> In accord with this statement, al-Ḥāfiẓ 'Abd al-Rahīm agrees that Zamakhshari used and developed al-Jurjānī's theory of rhetoric. He adds that Zamakhshari's *Kashshāf* is not only a *tafsīr* devoted to analysing the Qur'anic verses grammatically as such, but also treats it from the rhetorical point of view which indicates the beauty of the Qur'an's composition.<sup>30</sup> Shawqī Dayf also remarks that Zamakhshari's theory of rhetoric is parallel to 'Abd al-Qāhir's.<sup>31</sup> In the last part of his article, Issa J. Boullata underlines that al-Jurjānī's theory of *nazm* was organized by Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 1209) in *Nihāyat al-Ijāz fī Dirāyat al-I'jāz* and put to practical purposes by al-Zamakhshari in his *Kashshāf*.<sup>32</sup> More than that, Boullata says "that there is no book on Qur'an exegesis that has better used the growing science of rhetoric in understanding the sacred text and shedding light on its *i'jaz* and its inimitable beauty and expressiveness than *al-Kashshāf* of Zamakhshari."<sup>33</sup> The evidence that 'Abd al-Rahīm, Şāwī al-Juwaynī, Shawqī Dayf and Issa Boullata are right can be found in the text of *Kashshāf*. This exegete consistently implements grammatical rules as well as rhetorical theory to explain the Qur'anic verses. Soraya Hajjaji-Jarrah also states that Zamakhshari's *Kashshāf* represents the increasing sophistication in the treatment of the holy Scripture of Islam. She argues that Zamakhshari's exegesis presents a combination of the philological, religious and dogmatic modes of thinking of his time.<sup>34</sup> She found Zamakhshari explores how the Qur'anic discourse utilizes the Arabic language's greatest possible penetrating power. This effort is intended to prove the literary superiority and inimitability of the Qur'anic discourse.<sup>35</sup> The following passages are examples of Zamakhshari's treatment of the Qur'anic verses based on grammatical analysis and rhetorical theory.

Before discussing examples from *al-Kashshāf*, it is necessary to underline the fact that Zamakhshari considered the miraculous nature of the Qur'an to rest upon two aspects: its *nazm*<sup>36</sup> (composition) and its *ikhbār 'an al-ghuyūb* (information about unseen matters).<sup>37</sup> He supported his ideas by citing the Qur'anic verses: "Fa 'lamū annamā unzila bi 'ilmī-

*llāhi*,”<sup>38</sup> (know that it [the Qur’ān] was revealed by God’s knowledge). Zamakhsharī understands God’s knowledge (*‘ilm Allāh*) as *nazm* and information about unseen matters.<sup>39</sup> So it is understood that nobody can produce *nazm* similar to the Qur’ān and its *ihkār ‘an al-ghuyūb* except God alone.

The following section will discuss examples of Zamakhsharī’s methods in explaining *i‘jāz al-Qur’ān* in turn. Zamakhsharī’s explanation of *i‘jāz* can be divided into three aspects: The science of meaning or Semantic (*‘Ilm al-Ma‘āni*), the science of syntax and style (*‘Ilm al-Bayān*), and the science of rhetorical figures (*‘Ilm al-Bādī*).<sup>40</sup> First of all, it is important to note that Zamakhsharī deals with information about the unseen. In order to explain that information about the unseen (*ikhbār ‘an al-ghuyūb*) is a miracle (*mu‘jiza*), Zamakhsharī cites Qur’ānic verses. First he quotes Qur’ān 2:24: “And if you are not sure of what We have revealed to Our servant, then produce one sūra like it.”<sup>41</sup> “If you can not do [that] and you will never be able to do [it] then protect yourselves from hell-fire.”<sup>42</sup> It can be understood that God’s challenge to produce such a sūra is followed by a warning of hell-fire, which is unseen matter. Other verses that give information about the unseen matters include *sūrat al-Baqarah* (2): 94-95 which explains about the hereafter and the mystery of death. In addition, Zamakhsharī argues that information about what has happened and what will happen is also considered a miracle; this can be found in *sūrat al-Rūm* (30): 1-3, which reads, “*Alif Lām Mīm*, The Roman Empire has been defeated, in a land close by, but they, [even] after [this] defeat of theirs, will soon be victorious.”<sup>43</sup>

The essence of Zamakhsharī’s theory of *i‘jāz* can be explained by using the text of *al-Kashshāf* which analyses most of Qur’ānic verses based on this discipline. He highlights the fact that composition is the essence of the miraculous nature of the Qur’ān (*al-nazmu huwa ummu i‘jāz al-Qur’ān*) and the regulation dealing with the *nazm* should be known by the *mufassir*.<sup>44</sup>

In implementing *‘Ilm al-Ma‘āni*, Zamakhsharī analyses some Qur’ānic verses based on this discipline; he believes that the use of demonstrative pronouns “*dhālika*” to honor something (*li al-ta‘zīm*); as in, *dhālika al-kitābu*<sup>45</sup> while “*hādhihi*” is intended to lessen the importance of something (*li al-tahqīr*); for example, *wa mā hādhihi al-ḥayāt ud-dunyā illa lahwun wa la‘ib*<sup>46</sup> is to lessen the importance of worldly matters. Zamakhsharī raised the question “why do the Qur’ānic verses use the

demonstrative pronoun '*dhālika*,' to refer to something that is very close. For example *dhālika l-kitābu* and not '*hādhā l-kitābu*.' It is to praise *al-Kitāb*. But, why does the Qur'an use *dhālika* to refer to something masculine. This is because many meanings are included in the word *al-Kitāb*, so it is better to use the general term to challenge the human mind.<sup>47</sup> Here we find that Zamakhsharī is very concerned with the aspect of the language used by the Qur'an, which becomes an important aspect of his rhetorical exegesis. To Zamakhsharī, the structure of the verses has also a secret meaning, such as the use of nominal sentence together with the verbal one. He argues that the nominal sentence which comes after a verbal one is meant to strengthen the meaning of the whole message. For example, in "*wakh-shaw yauman lā yajzī wālidun 'an waladihi, wala maulūdun huwa jāzin 'an wālidīhi shay'an*," the sentence "*walā mawlūdun huwa jāzin 'an wālidīhi shay'an*" is intended to strengthen the verbal sentence that comes before it, that is "*wahshaw yawman la yajzī wālidun 'an waladihi*." Based on this analysis, the rhetorical meaning should be: if the parents can not give *jazā*,<sup>48</sup> to their children, how can the children give *jazā* to their parents in the life after life.<sup>49</sup> The significance of this analysis is that everybody is responsible to God for their own actions in the hereafter.

Another example of his discourse on '*Ilm al-Ma'anī*' can be found in his interpretation of the Qur'anic verse: "*wa zannū annahum mā ni'atuhum huṣūnūhūm* (and they thought that their fortresses would defend them [from God])."<sup>50</sup> In an ordinary sentence we can say *wazannū anna huṣūnūhūm tamna'uhum*, but, Zamakhsharī argues, the Qur'anic verse is better because its real intent is to express the idea that the Jews of Banū Nadir were overly trusting in their power (*dalīlun 'alā farāti wuthūqihim biḥasānatihā*) to protect themselves from God's torture. The pronoun (*damīr*) "hum" here is the subject (*ism*) of *anna* and indicates their trust in themselves. This meaning can not be found in the second statement (*wa zannū anna huṣūnūhūm tamna'uhum*).<sup>51</sup>

It is interesting to see how Zamakhsharī explains the dual expression (*tathniyah*) in the Qur'an. He argues that this style can be used to produce a deeper and stronger understanding of the intended meaning (*ablāgh wa ākad fī taqdir al-ma'nā al-murād*), for example "*bal yadāhu mabsūtātān*." The preceding verse reads *yadu-llāhi maghlūlah* in the singular form, intending to show that God is very generous and at the same

time reject the idea of miserliness (*bukhl*).<sup>52</sup> In other words, we can say that God gives all with his two hands.

When he reaches the Qur'ānic verse: *afara'aytum mā tad'ūna min dūni-llāhi in arādaniya-llāhu bidurrin hal hunna kāshifāt durrihi*, Zamakhsharī analyses it from the point of view of the form of the word '*kāshifāt*.' It is in the feminine form (*ta'niθ*); according to Zamakhsharī, *ta'niθ* is a sign of weakness and softness. This expression is intended to show the unbelievers that their female goddesses (*al-lāta*, *al'uzzā* and *manāt*) were weak beings who could not protect them from danger. To summarize Zamakhsharī's implementation of '*Ilm al-Ma'āni*' in the interpretation of the Qur'ān, there is one final example, *uslūb al-ījāz* (simple style). When Zamakhsharī read the Qur'ānic verse: *hudā li-lmuttaqīn*, he posed a question, "why not *hudā li-ddallīn*?" Then he himself answered his own question by arguing that there are two parties of *dallīn*: permanent *dallīn* and temporary *dallīn* that may be guided. That's why the Qur'ān uses *hudā li-lmuttaqīn* as a shortened form of the long phrase: *hudā li-ssā'irīn ilā al-hudā ba'da al-dalāl*.<sup>53</sup>

Having examined Zamakhsharī's rhetorical exegesis on '*Ilm al-Ma'āni*', the next step is to analyze the ways in which he implements '*Ilm al-Bayān*' in his rhetorical exegesis. He analyses some verses of the Qur'ān based on the principles of '*Ilm al-Bayān*', such as his treatment of the Qur'ānic verse: *ulā'ika al-ladhīna-shtarawu ddalālata bi al-hudā famā rabīhat tijāratuhum wamā kānū muhtadīn*. Zamakhsharī treats this verse according to *majāz*. But he expands its meaning and goes beyond it by implementing the idea of '*aqīdah*' and does not only discuss it from the aspect of its rhetoric. He questions, why the lost (*al-khusrān*) is related to the trade (*al-tijārah*) and then answers his own question by arguing that according to the theory of *isnād al-majāzī*,<sup>54</sup> the verb should be related to something real, such as the relationship between trade and the subject of trade (*an yusnada al-fī'lū ilā shay'in yaltabisu bi-lladhi huwa fī al-haqīqah lahu kamā talabbasat al-tijārah bi al-mushtariñ*). Therefore the intention behind the mention of the words: "*al-ribh*" and "*al-tijārah*" is to describe the real trade (*mubāya'ah 'ala al-haqīqah*).

The next example of Zamakhsharī's analysis on '*Ilm al-Bayān*' is *uslūb al-kināyah wa l-ta'riḍ fī al-Qur'ān*. Zamakhsharī distinguishes between *kināyah wa al-ta'riḍ*. *Al-Kināyah* is to mention something indirectly through the use of metaphor (*an tadhkura al-shay'a bighayri lafzihī al-maudū'*). For example *tawīl al-nījād wa al-hamā'il* is said *li-tūli al-*

*qāmah*, or *kathīr al-ramād* to attribute the generous people. While *al-Ta'rid* denotes the thing that is not mentioned, as in statements that approach the subject in a roundabout manner; for example: *ji'tuka li'usal-lima 'alayka wa li'anzura ilā wajhika al-karīm*, for this purpose it is enough to say: *wa ḥasbuka bi-ttaslīmī minnī taqādiyan*. This style is also called *al-talwīh*.

The last example of his rhetorical exegesis deals with '*Ilm al-bādī*'. For example, take the style *al-jinās* in this verse: *wajī'tuka min saba'in binaba'in yaqīn*. This is saying that '*min saba'in binaba'in*' is a kind of *jinās*. This is a sort of *māhāsin al-kalām* which dealt with *lafz* by maintaining *siḥhat al-ma'nā*. Another example is *yā asafī 'alā yūsuf*. In this verse, we see *tajānus* between *al-asaf* and *yūsuf*. Another example is *uslūb al-Jaff*. Zamakhsharī takes *ayat al-tashrī* as an example: *walitukmilū al-'iddata walitukabbirū-llāha 'alā mā hadākum wala'al-lakum tashkurūn*. *Litukmilū* is to maintain the number, *litukabbirū* is to show the way they celebrate as the time of breaking the fast, and *la'allakum tashkurūn* is to show that God's command of fasting is something reasonable, that the believers should thank Him for. Another example is *wamin rahmatihi ja'ala lakumul-layla wa-nnahāra litaskunū fihi walitabtaghū min fadlihi wala'allakum tashkurūn*. From the last example, we can infer that some aspect of the Qur'an's beauty rests upon its style, such as the comparable element between night (*layl*) and day (*nahār*) which has three aims: to stay or to take a rest at night, to seek God's sustenance in the day, and to command people to thank God for His blessing and for making their life harmonious.

In conclusion, Zamakhsharī believed that the miraculous nature of the Qur'an rested upon its *nazm* and its information about the unseen. He successfully implemented the theory of rhetoric in his *tafsīr*, *al-Kashshāf*. Scholars consider it to be as a rhetorical interpretation of the Qur'an, and this is what distinguishes Zamakhsharī from other exegetes.

## End Notes

<sup>1</sup>C. Brocklemann, *Geschichte der Arabischen Litteratur (GAL)* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1937), Book I, 290; c.f. Supplement, 507.

<sup>2</sup>Muhammad b. al-Hasan b. 'Alī Abū Ja'far al-Tūsī who was born in 385/995 is the author of *al-Tibyān fi Tafsīr al-Qur'an*, 10 vols. (Najaf: al-Maṭba'ah al-'Ilmiyyah, 1376/1957). In the most recent edition, it has been printed in ten volumes. Henri Corbin

places al-Tūsī in the second period of Shī‘ī intellectual history. See Henri Corbin, *History of Islamic Philosophy*. Translated from French by Liadain Sherrard with the assistance of Philip Sherrard (London & New York: Kegan Paul, 1993) 23.

<sup>3</sup> Jane Dammen McAuliffe, *Qur’anic Christians: An Analysis of Classical and Modern Exegesis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991) 49.

<sup>4</sup> Yūsuf Biqā‘ī, *Sharḥ Maqāmāt al-Zamakhsharī* (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-Lubnānī, 1981) 5.

<sup>5</sup> See Lutpi Ibrahim, “Az-Zamakhsharī: His Life and Works,” *Islamic Studies* 29, 2 (1980): 95-97. See also McAuliffe, *Qur’anic Christians*, 50.

<sup>6</sup> Lutpi Ibrahim, “Az-Zamakhsharī,” 96.

<sup>7</sup> Lutpi Ibrahim, “Az-Zamakhsharī,” 96.

<sup>8</sup> Yūsuf Biqā‘ī, *Sharḥ Maqāmāt*, 6.

<sup>9</sup> Andrew Rippin, “Zamakhsharī, al,” *The Encyclopedia of Religion* (New York: MacMillan Publishing Company, 1987) 15: 554-55.

<sup>10</sup> Zamakhsharī, *Asās al-Balāghah* (Beirut: Dār Ṣawir li-ṭtibā‘ah wa al-Nashr, 1965) 6.

<sup>11</sup> Bernard Lewis, *The Middle East: 2000 Years of History from the Rise of Christianity to the Present Day*. Paperback edition (London: Phoenic Giant, 1996) 92-95. See also Ira M. Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) 166 and 173.

<sup>12</sup> A brief description on the transmission of learning through the medium of *madrasa* can be found in Albert Hourani, *A History of The Arab Peoples* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1991) 163-166.

<sup>13</sup> McAuliffe, *Qur’anic Christians*, 50.

<sup>14</sup> BN MacGuckin De Slane, trans. *Ibn Khallikān’s Biographical Dictionary*, vol. 3 (Paris: Oriental Translation Fund of Great Britain and Ireland, 1842) 322.

<sup>15</sup> Andrew Rippin, “Zamakhsharī, al,” *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, 15: 554-55.

<sup>16</sup> Shams al-Dīn Ahmad b. Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-A‘yān wa Anbā’ al-Zamān*. edited by Ihsān ‘Abbās, vol. 5 (Beirut: Dār al-Thaqāfah, 1968) 168.

<sup>17</sup> Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah*, 2: 447.

<sup>18</sup> Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf ‘an Ḥaqā’iq Ghawāmiḍ al-Tanzīl wa ‘Uyun al-Aqāwīl fi Wujūh al-Ta’wīl* (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-‘Arabī, n.d.) 1: page *ghayn*.

<sup>19</sup> Andrew Rippin, “Zamakhsharī, al,” *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, 15: 554-55.

<sup>20</sup> Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah: an Introduction to History*, vol. 3, Translated from the Arabic by Franz Rosenthal (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1958) 337.

<sup>21</sup> Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah*, 338-39.

<sup>22</sup> Fazlur Rahman, *An Analytical Study of al-Zamakhsharī’s Commentary on the Qur’ān, al-Kashshāf* (Aligarh: Faculty of Theology, 1982), ii.

<sup>23</sup> Muṣṭafā al-Ṣāwī al-Juwainī, *Manhaj al-Zamakhsharī fi Tafsīr al-Qur’ān wa Bayān I’jāzih* (Egypt: Dār al-Ma‘arif, 1968) 216-17. See also Fazlur Rahman, *An Analytical Study*, ii, and its review, *Islamic Culture* 63 (1989): 114-16.

<sup>24</sup> Fazlur Rahman, *An Analytical Study*, ii.

<sup>25</sup> Fazlur Rahman, *An Analytical Study*, iii.

<sup>26</sup> J.J.G. Jansen, *The Interpretation of the Koran in Modern Egypt* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1974) 62-63.

<sup>27</sup> McAuliffe, *Qur'ānic Christians*, 53-54.

<sup>28</sup> Al-Jurjānī is the author of *Dalā'il al-I'jāz* where he rejects the idea of *sarfa* (turning away), as he did in *al-Risālah al-Shāfi'iyyah*. For his complete biography as well as his works, see Ahmad Ahmad Badawī, 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī wa Juhūduhu fi al-Balāghah al-'Arabiyyah (Cairo: Mu'assasah al-Miṣriyyah al-'Ammah, n.d.) 5-29 his life, 30-77 his complete works.

<sup>29</sup> al-Juwainī, *Manhaj al-Zamakhsharī*, 216.

<sup>30</sup> al-Ḥafīz 'abd al-Rahīm, "al-Imām 'abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī wa Manhajuhu al-Balāghī," *al-Dirāsāt al-Islāmiyyah* 3, vol. 26 (1991): 64-65.

<sup>31</sup> See Shawqī Dayf, *al-Balāghah: Tatāwwur wa Tarīkh* (Egypt: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1965) 243.

<sup>32</sup> Issa J. Boullata, "I'jāz," *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, 7: 87-88.

<sup>33</sup> Issa J. Boullata, "The Rhetorical Interpretation of the Qur'ān: I'jāz and Related Topics," in *Approaches to the History of the Interpretation of the Qur'ān*, ed. Andrew Rippin (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 147.

<sup>34</sup> Soraya Hajjaj-Jarrah, "Al-Zamakhsharī and Yām ad-Dīn: Dogmatic and Literary Exegesis," unpublished term paper for Classical Qur'ān Exegesis Course taught by Prof. Issa J. Boullata, *McGill's Institute of Islamic Studies*, 1995. 5.

<sup>35</sup> Soraya Hajjaji-Jarrah, "Al-Zamakhsharī," 5-6.

<sup>36</sup> The same opinion is also expressed by 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī who states that the miraculous nature of the Qur'ān rests upon its *balāghah*, and the essence of *balāghah* is its *nazm*. See Ahmad Badawī, 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī, 79.

<sup>37</sup> "Innahu kitābun mu'jizun min jihatayni, min jihatī i'jāzi nazmīhi wa min jihatī mā fīhi min al-ikhbāri bi al-ghuyūb." See Muṣṭafā al-Ṣāwī al-Juwainī, *Manhaj al-Zamakhsharī*, 217.

<sup>38</sup> Qur'ān, 11:14.

<sup>39</sup> Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, vol. 1, 96-101

<sup>40</sup> M. Khalafallah explains that 'Ilm al-Bādī' is the branch of rhetorical science which dealt with the beautification of literary style. See his article on "Bādī", in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 1960, 1: 857-58.

<sup>41</sup> This is the author's own translation of *sūrat al-Baqarah* (2):23.

<sup>42</sup> Qur'ān, 2:24, the author's translation.

<sup>43</sup> A. Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Qur'ān: Translation and Commentary* (Lahore: Islamic Propagation Centre International, 1993) 1051.

<sup>44</sup> Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, vol. 2, 24.

<sup>45</sup> Qur'ān, 2:2.

<sup>46</sup> Compare between the following Qur'ānic verses: ,  
6:32 "wāmā lḥayāt al-dunyā illā la 'ib wa lahw..."

29:64 "wāmā hādhihi l-hayāt al-dunya illā lahw wa la 'ib..."

47:36. "innamā lhayāt al-dunya la 'ib wa lahw..."

<sup>47</sup> A detailed explanation about *dhālika al-Kitābu* can be read in Zamakhshari's *Kashshāf*, vol. 1, 32-37.

<sup>48</sup> *Jazā'* is a kind of reward in the hereafter. This idea arose when the parents of believers are going to hell because they are unbelievers, and their children ask God to save the parents for the sake of their believing children. Some scholars called it *shafā'ah*.

<sup>49</sup> Muṣṭafā al-Ṣawī, *Manhaj al-Zamakhshari*, 220-221.

<sup>50</sup> Qur'ān, 59:2.

<sup>51</sup> Muṣṭafā al-Ṣawī, *Manhaj al-Zamakhshari*, 221.

<sup>52</sup> Muṣṭafā al-Ṣawī, *Ibid.*, 221-222.

<sup>53</sup> Zamakhshari, *al-Kashshāf*, vol. I, 35. See also footnote on the same page.

<sup>54</sup> Appropriate discussion on the theory of *majāz* can be read in Ahmad Badawī, 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī, 236-246.

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