

## **Al-Mizan Fi Tafsir Al-Quran: A Review on Al-Tabataba'i's Philosophical Exegesis**

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**Abstract:** The Qur'anic philosophical exegesis was felt by Muslims in the formative period and the most contemporary exegetical book. In the modern era, new approaches have been presented to develop an insight into the Qur'anic exegesis, examining critically by various methodologies and approaches. As a result, new methods have enlarged research and discussion of this field. As one of the exegetical book is Tafsir al-Mizan by al-tabataba'i has applied philosophical exegesis in its approaches and could assist to produce broader interpretation with such approaches. However, although many studies have been done to figure out this book but still there are many unfamiliar to his excellent persona. Therefore by adopting the analysis of documents this article aims to discuss the methods and patterns of al-tabataba'i philosophical exegesis. Based on the analysis, found that al-tabataba'i is mastered on various disciplines knowledge such as linguistics, jurisprudence, history and specifically to Qur'anic exegesis and philosophy. The merger between narration and opinion was applied in his method of interpretation, the pattern as well was detected on philosophical considerations. Hence in this vein, al-tabataba'i's stature in the field of exegesis has produced a great research al-Mizan as one of great philosophical book.

**Key words:** Al-tabataba'i, al-Mizan, exegesis, philosophy, jurisprudence

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The philosophical exegesis (al-tafsir' al-falsafi) is one of the pattern of interpretation which associated to the philosophical issues. In this case, the verses were used as a tool for measuring the validity of the interpretation, instead a measure of the reliability of the verses.

Al-Zahabi states two methods were used by philosopher to harmonize the Qur'an with the philosophy. First, the Qur'anic verses interpreted in accordance to the philosopher views. In this method, the exegete attempt to interpret the verse in line to philosophical theories. Second, the verses were explained with philosophical theory. In this method, the philosopher views used as the main (primary) that must be followed while the Qur'an as the second (secondary) who follows the philosophy. In other words, the philosophy was over coming the Qur'an. Thus in this way the later more dangerous than the first.

History has recorded the rapid development of exegesis that accordance to the human needs and capabilities in the Qur'anic exegesis. Every exegetical

research has produced positive and negative impact as well as the philosophical exegesis that tends to advance the logic than revelation. However, the positive impact may assessed to unlock the hidden meanings of the verses and as a result, a contemporary of philosophical exegesis not solely depends on logic but supported also by other instruments in line with Sharia.

Generally, al-Mizan Fi Tafsir' al-Quran could be classified as an exegetical book which includes various disciplines such as philosophy, science, history, social and moral. These all branches of knowledge is almost cited entirely and was admitted by al-tabataba'i himself in the introduction of this book. However, some scholars have classify it as a philosophical exegesis due to his mastery of this field. It is relatively unusual for a well-known scholar like him who specializing with various fields of knowledge but shedding his focus in the field of philosophy with quoting and producing a range of works on it (Tabataba, 1987) as Bidayah al-ikmah Fi al-Falsafah and Nihayah al-ikmah Fi al-Falsafah.

Hence, this study aims to discuss al-Mizan as one example of philosophical exegesis book. The discussion

begins with a brief al-tabataba'i's biography and continues with a description of his methodology. The last part would be explained his philosophical approaches with quoting some examples in al-Mizan to acquire more neatly findings.

**Philosophy and exegesis; the interrelated:** Perhaps, the best characterization of Islamic philosophy is both generous and vague. It is the tradition of philosophy that arose out of classical Islamic culture. One virtue of such a circular definition is its capacity to accommodate contrasting portraits of the philosophical tradition drawn with one eye toward illustrating or proving different theories in the field of Islamic studies. What is more, most definitions of Islamic philosophy will exclude recognition of the rational approaches, methods and arguments hence, a philosophical temperament found on varying degrees in the Islamic sciences such as dialectical theology (kalam), rules for legal reasoning in Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh) as well as Qur'anic exegesis. And for whom the insertion of philosophical principles in exegesis automatically qualifies it as an opinion (ra'y).

As Muslim interest in Greek philosophical works began to develop in the early centuries of Islam, so too did arguments over the acceptability of philosophy and its place in Islam. While many Muslims argued against the use of philosophy in exegesis, those of a more rationalist orientation wholeheartedly adopted philosophy as a valuable part of the exegetical process. Such scholars preferred an allegorical interpretation of the Qur'an, particularly verse related to God, his nature and relationship to creation and the concepts of Paradise and Hell, tended to differ greatly from more literal readings of Qur'anic verses (Saeed, 2009).

Janssens (2007) sees that al-Kindi (800-870) offers an outspoken philosophical exegesis of Qur'anic verses for the first time in history. Moreover, Saeed (2008) states that the renowned philosopher and scientist al-Farabi (872-950) had such an influence on knowledge and science that he was known to many as the 'second teacher', the first being Aristotle. Although, researchers do not know whether he produced a full commentary of the Qur'an, his views had a significant influence on philosophical exegesis. Al-Farabi believed that while philosophy had come to an end elsewhere, it had found its place again in the world of Islam. A similarly influential philosopher, Ibnu Sina (980-1037) who was also a physician, produced a number of works, including a minor research of exegesis. The use of allegorical interpretation is a distinctive feature of philosophical exegesis of the Qur'an and one of its most illustrious examples is the research of the philosopher Ibn Rushd (1126-1198), the decisive treatise determining the

nature of the connection between religion and philosophy where he argued that the Quran and philosophical reasoning do not contradict each other as both are paths of 'the Truth'.

The implications for the Qur'an that result from the application of philosophy will depend on what type of philosopher one is. It is a fairly, generally accepted argument by many types of Islamic philosophy that the Qur'an and philosophy both come to the same conclusions, albeit differently expressed and for different audiences. The Qur'an is accessible to everyone, the conclusion of philosophy only to an intellectual and/or spiritual elite (Leaman, 2006). Finally, this study underlines that revelation is superior to philosophy insofar as it offers a truly encompassing answer to such difficult questions as for example, bodily resurrection and does so in terms easy to understand.

**An outline of the life of Sayyid Muhammad Husain al (aba) aba'i:** Sayyid Muhammad Husain al-tabataba'i (1903-1981) known to his contemporaries as al-tabataba'i was one of the foremost Qur'anic exegetes and traditional Persian philosophers of the twentieth century. Born to a well-known family of Shi'i scholars of Tabriz in A.H. 1321/1903 C.E. Called al-tabataba'i refers to one of his ancestor named tabataba'i ibn Isma'il al-Dibaj. When he reached nine years old, he became an orphan and cared for by his uncle Sayyid Muhammad Baqir al-Qai.

Al-tabataba'i carried out his early studies in the city of his birth and when some 20 years old, he set out for Najaf, Iraq to pursue more advanced studies in the juridical as well as philosophical sciences, reaching the highest level of ijtihad in both domains. It was also at this time that he underwent spiritual training and was initiated into the inner dimension of Islam associated in Shi'i circles with 'irfan (gnosis). In 1934, he returned to Tabriz where he began to teach but he did not become nationally known until the communist domination of the Iranian province of Azerbaijan forced him to move to Tehran and Qom at the end of World War II. He spent the rest of his life in Qom with some days of each month spent in Tehran. He devoted his time completely to teaching and writing and died in Qom 1981.

Since his death, al-tabataba'i has been greatly honored in Iran. A university has been named after him and his works continue to enjoy great popularity. His writings are also being translated to an ever greater extent into English and he is becoming known throughout the Islamic world as one of the major intellectual and spiritual figures not only of Shi'ism but of Islam as a whole during this century.

Al-tabataba'i studied primary education in his birthplace, Tibriz then in 1925 travelled to Najaf and completed his education in 10 years. In 1946, he immigrated to Qom and established the philosophy and metaphysics classes. He studied jurisprudence (Fiqh) and principal (Usul) in the presence of celebrated masters: al-Naini and al-Kambani and philosophy in the presence of al-Badkubi, mathematics in the presence of al-Khawansari and ethics in the presence of Mirzac Ali al-Qadi.

Al-tabataba'i's school was not restricted only to jurisprudence in addition to studying: Morphology, syntax and Arabic literature, he also learnt old mathematics from the principles of Euclid to the Almagest of Ptolemy, philosophy, theology, theosophy and achieved a high position in these sciences. He also travelled to Tehran successively and communicated with people who were interested in Islamic philosophy and discussed even with those who were against religion and could make them understand the reality of religion. Therefore, al-tabataba'i had a deep influence on Iran and modernist classes in the West.

All those influences combined in al-tabataba'i to create a well-balanced academic and spiritual personality. A well-respected authority on religious subjects of jurisprudence and its fundamentals; a philosopher of independent views and various new theories an inspired model of ethical and spiritual perfection, who not only taught morality but lived it. Yet, it will be correct to say that his scholarship was overshadowed by his fame and prestige as a philosopher and a spiritual man (Rizvi, 1981).

At once a great teacher, saintly presence and prolific writer, al-tabataba'i wrote a large number of works. Some of his works (some written in Arabic and others in Persian) deal with the Qur'an and specifically religious matters, the most important of which is the voluminous al-Mizan, written originally in Arabic and translated into Persian mostly under al-tabataba'i's direction. Among his religious works are Qur'an dar Islam (The Qur'an in Islam) and Shi'ah dar Islam (Shi'i Islam) both of which have been translated into English. A second category includes his numerous philosophical works, ranging from his major philosophical opus to his last philosophical writings, Bidayat al-hikmah and Nihayat al-hikmah. Finally, there are the works dealing with current religious and philosophical debates of which the most significant is Musahabat ba Ustadh Kurban, containing some of his discussion with the French Islamist and philosopher Henry Corbin.

Totally, al-tabataba'i produces approximately 38 research, whether in Arabic or Persian. Most of his works are still in manuscript form and has not been documented,

except al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah (risalah fi il-insan qabla, fi wa bacda al-dunya) and Tafsir al-Mizan. His works in Arabic, among others: al-Risalah Fi al-Burhan, al-Risalah Fi al-Asma' wa al-Sifat, al-Risalah Fi al-Ictibariyat, etc. Meanwhile in Persian are: Tacliqatc Ala al-Kitab al-Asfar, Tacliqatc Ala al-Kitab al-Kifayah, Risalah Fi al-Icjaz, etc.

**Al-mizan fi tafsir al-quran; a brief overview:** Among al-tabataba'i purely religious writing, the most influential is al-Mizan in which he used the method of commenting on a particular Qur'anic verse with the aid of other Qur'anic verses while talking into full consideration classical as well as recent Qur'anic commentaries written by Sunnis and Shicah alike.

Al-Mizan is in Arabic and has been written in 20 volumes and deals with a diversity of subjects. It adopts a particular style of Tafsir: Expressions of opinions and their comparisons and criticism also the method of reasoning and the research, makes this book not only stand out among al-tabataba'i's works but is also unique from the aspect of interpretation, Philosophy and Gnostics. This book has been put as a source of writings and researching for more researchers. Al-tabataba'i's fame rests on his various academic works, the most important being his great exegesis of the Qur'an, al-Mizan. It may correctly be said to be the foundation stone of the academic prestige which al-tabataba'i was accorded in the Muslim world.

Al-Usi states that the first time al-Mizan was taught by al-tabataba'i when he teaching at the University of Qum, Iran. Shortly, after that the students took the initiative to collect and publish, until completed the first volume in 1957 successfully. The name of al-Mizan refers to the method used by al-tabataba'i in interpreting the verses. He frequently put forward the various view of exegetes, then critically analyzed and considered (yuwazin) their views either be accepted or rejected. His book finished in 1972.

In his valuable exegetical book, al-tabataba'i mentioned the important points and information about God's Names, God's Attributes and Acts, mode of God's words and the way of creations talking, the way of God's talking with Man, allegorical language and its relation with interpretation. Qur'anic language and information about Man in the life before the world, hereafter and being in the world also information about good and bad morals of man and useful subjects that nowadays has been very discussed in modern theology (kalam) and had cleared carefully the Qur'anic viewpoints about it.

In his commentary, at first, he had related some Qur'anic verses then separately, mentions each of the verses and comments it. He also under the name of explanation (Bayan) brings up the philosophical, social,

historical, scientific and moral subjects. Then ending his discussion with traditional subjects and recounting the traditions.

However, al-Mizan has presents the true picture of the researchers academic taste and his way of thinking. Before starting this research, the researchers made a detailed plan to explain the Qur'an and he faithfully has fulfilled this pledge up to the end of the book. He has outlined this scheme in his preface in volume one of the book.

**Sources of reference:** Sources of reference used by al-tabataba'i are covering various disciplines such as exegetical books, prophetic tradition, history, linguistics, etc. Prior to that it should be stressed here that Shicah was the theology that professed by al-tabataba'i but there are also some views among Sunni scholars were quoted by him. Consequently, the books referenced either from among Sunni or Shicah. As for example the Sunni's book of commentary, among others: Jamic al-Bayan by al-Tabari (also see al-Mizan, vol. 5, p. 366 according al-Tabataba'i's citation on al-Tabari's exegesis) al-Mufradat by al-Asfahanin (also see al-Mizan, vol. 11, p. 22 according al-Tabataba'i's citation on al-Asfahani's exegesis) al-Dur al-Manthur by al-Suyuti (also see al-Mizan, vol. 11, p. 39 according al-Tabataba'i's citation on al-Suyuti's exegesis), etc. While references from Shicah's commentary books such as: Majmac al-Bayan by al-tabarsi (also see al-Mizan, vol. 20, p. 247 according al-Tabataba'i's citation on al-tabarsi's exegesis) Tasir al-Ayyashi by ibn Ayyash (also see al-Mizan, vol. 1, p. 314 according al-Tabataba'i's citation on Ayyash's exegesis) Tafsir al-Qumi by Hashim al-Qumi (also see al-Mizan, vol. 5, p. 93 according al-Tabataba'i's citation on al-Qumi's exegesis), etc.

Similarly, the hadith and historical traditions books referred by al-tabataba'i either from Sunni or Shiah. Among Sunni Hadith books are Sahih al-Bukhari (also see al-Mizan, vol. 2, p. 255 according al-Tabataba'i's citation on prophetic tradition was narrated by al-Bukhari) Sahih Muslim (also see al-Mizan, vol. 1, p. 22 according al-Tabataba'i's citation on prophetic tradition was narrated by Muslim) Sunan al-Tirmidhi (also see al-Mizan, vol. 2, p. 88 according al-Tabataba'i's citation on prophetic tradition was narrated by al-Tirmidhi), etc. Meanwhile, the Shiah hadith books are al-Ihtijaj by al-tabarsi (also see al-Mizan, vol. 3, p. 82 according al-Tabataba'i's citation on prophetic tradition was narrated by al-tabarsi) al-Ictiqadat by al-Qumi (also see al-Mizan, vol. 15, p. 337 according al-Tabataba'i's citation on prophetic tradition was narrated by al-Qumi) al-Ikhtisas by Shaykh al-Mufid (also see al-Mizan, vol. 2,

p. 406 according al-Tabataba'i's citation on prophetic tradition was narrated by al-Mufid), etc. Moreover, among the linguistics books were referenced by al-Tabataba'i are Lisan al-Arab by ibn Manzur (also see al-Mizan, vol. 5, p. 204 according al-Tabataba'i's citation on Lisan al-Arab) al-sahah by Hammad al-Jawhari (also see al-Mizan, vol. 5, p. 227 according al-Tabataba'i's citation on al-sahah) al-Qamus al-Muhit by al-Fayruzabadi (also see al-Mizan, vol. 302, p. 204 according al-Tabataba'i's citation on al-Qamus al-Muhit), etc. In addition, al-Tabataba'i also refers to the holy books (al-kutub al-muqaddasah), history, newspapers and magazines.

There are at least 135 references recorded by al-Usi in al-Mizan. Based on these numbers, clearly proves al-Tabataba'i excellence in various disciplines. His mastery of knowledge was absorbed into his exegetical book. Description, review and critique of opinions asserted were processed critically and thoroughly by him.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

Al-Tabataba'i have reviewed and analyzed the methods of interpretation used by the four groups in interpreting the Quran in introduction of his book, namely the people of tradition, theologians, philosophers and Sufis.

The people of tradition explained the Qur'an with the traditions ascribed to the companions and their disciples. They went ahead so long as there was a tradition to lead them on and stopped when they could not find any such tradition (provided the meaning was not self-evident). They thought it to be the only safe method but they were mistaken. Allah has not said in His Book that rational proof had no validity. How could He say so when the authenticity of the book itself depended on rational proof. On the other hand, he has never said that the words of the companions or their disciples had any value as religious proof. How could He say so when there were such glaring discrepancies in their opinions. In short, Allah has not called us to the sophistry which accepting and following contradictory opinions and views would entail. He has called us, instead to meditate on the Qur'anic verses in order to remove any apparent discrepancy in them. Allah has revealed the Qur'an as a guidance and has made it a light and an explanation of everything.

In another side, the theologians have divided into myriads of sects and each group clung to the verse that seemed to support its belief and tried to explain away what was apparently against it. The seed of sectarian differences was sown in academic theories or more often than not in blind following and national or tribal prejudice but it is not the place to describe it even briefly. However,

such exegesis should be called adaptation, rather than explanation. There are two ways of explaining a verse; One may say: "What does the Qur'an say?" Or one may say: "How can this verse be explained, so as to fit on my belief?" The difference between the two approaches is quite clear. The former forgets every pre-conceived idea and goes where the Qur'an leads him to. The latter has already decided what to believe and cuts the Qur'anic verses to fit on that body such an exegesis is no exegesis at all.

The philosophers suffered from the same syndrome. They tried to fit the verses on the principles of Greek philosophy (that was divided into four branches: Mathematics (al-riyadhiyat), natural science (al-tabi'iyat), divinity (al-ilahiyyat) and practical subjects (al-hikmah al-amaliyyah). If a verse was clearly against those principles it was explained away. In this way, the verses describing metaphysical subjects, those explaining the genesis and creation of the heavens and the earth, those concerned with life after death and those about resurrection, paradise and hell were distorted to conform with the said philosophy. That philosophy was admittedly only a set of conjectures-unencumbered with any test or proof but the Muslim philosophers felt no remorse in treating its views on the system of skies, orbits, natural elements and other related subjects as the absolute truth with which the exegesis of the Qur'an had to conform.

The Sufis kept their eyes fixed on esoteric aspects of creation; they were too occupied with their inner world to look at the outer one. Their tunnel like vision prevented them from looking at the things in their true perspective. Their love of esoteric made them look for inner interpretation of the verses without any regard to their manifest and clear meanings. It encouraged the people to base their explanations on poetic expressions and to use anything to prove anything. The condition became so bad that the verses were explained on the-basis of the numerical values of their words; letters were divided into bright and dark ones and the explanations were based on that division. Building castle in the air was not it? Obviously, the Qur'an was not revealed to guide the Sufis only; nor had it addressed itself to only those who knew the numerical values of the letters (with all its ramifications); nor were its realities based on astrological calculations.

Based on these reviews al-tabataba'i attempts to offer a method of interpretation which is much better than all four of the earlier; rejecting to fanaticism that was stated by earlier scholars without using intellect role in the process of interpretation, rejecting the bigoted attitudes to one opinion, rejecting the Qur'anic exegesis

which are in accordance with Greek philosophical thought and criticized the interpretation that heavily emphasizes to psychological condition by ignoring other verses that encourage attention to the nature of reality and science. However, there were times when al-tabataba'i tried to explain the interpretation of the verses in accordance with his sect ideology and reject all beliefs that do not correspond to his theological belief (Al-tabataba'i's exegesis (1973) in Sura al-Maidah verse five where he equalizes the mut'ah as a real marriage. Altabataba'i tends to legalize the mut'ah, although there is a hadith of the Prophet that prohibit this type of marriage. Moreover, the hadith related by San'ani is authentic).

Moreover, a prominent knowledge of al-tabataba'i are philosophy and exegesis and his method was refers to the both. His method in interpreting the Qur'anic verses are shows the relation between verses each others and at the same time it was proved that the Qur'anic verses are interrelated to produce a clear meaning and do not conflict with the view of sense. In other words, al-tabataba'i explains the facts stated in the Qur'anic verses with another verses to enhance the meaning. As an example when al-tabataba'i (1973, 1) interprets Sura Al-Baqarah (The Cow) verse 23, Allah said.

Fa'tubisurah min mithlihi (then produce a surah the like thereof). It is a challenge which human beings and jinn can never meet. This challenge has been offered to demonstrate the miracle of the Qur'an to show that it is a Book sent down by Allah, there is no doubt in it that it has been revealed as an everlasting miracle that will remain alive till the end of the world. This challenge has repeatedly been given in the Qur'an.

Say "If mankind and the jinn gathered in order to produce the like of this Qur'an they could not produce the like of it, even if they were to each other assistants" (al-Isra', 17: 88).

And also Allah said: "Or do they say, He invented it? Say, Then bring ten suras like it that have been invented and call upon (for assistance) whom ever you can besides Allah if you should be truthful" (Hood, 11:13).

This context shows that the pronoun it in mithlihi (like it) refers to his words mimma nazzalna (that which researchers have revealed to the servant) that is the Qur'an. It is a challenge to them to bring a like of the Qur'an in its inimitable style and meaning.

Strengthen the Qur'anic exegesis with the traditions of the Prophet (PBUH). For example when altabataba'i interprets Sura Al-Fatihah (The Opening) verse 1:

Allah has declared variously in the Qur'an that what is not for His person must perish, is in vain he will proceed to the deeds not done for his sake and shall

render them as scattered floating dust; he shall forfeit what they have done and shall nullify their deeds and that nothing shall remain except his honored person. Therefore, what is done for the sake of Allah and performed in His name shall continue and will not perish. Everything, every work and every affair shall have its share of eternity, as much as it is related to Allah. It is this reality that has been hinted at in the universally accepted tradition of the Prophet (PBUH).

Every important affair, not begun with the name of Allah, shall remain incomplete. The word *al-abtar* (incomplete) means a thing whose end is cut off, an animal whose tail is severed.

Quoting narrations from the companions such as *al-tabataba'i*'s interpretation on Sura Al-Baqarah verse 186, he (1973) says Ibn Umar reported in *al-Durru al-Manthur* that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said: Verily, when Allah wishes to answer (the call of) a servant, He allows him to call (upon Him). Also, Ibn 'Umar narrates from him (the Prophet): Whenever the door of prayer (dua) is opened for anyone among you, the doors of mercy are opened for him. Another tradition says: When the (door of) prayer is opened for anyone among you, the doors of the Garden (Paradise) are opened for him.

Quoting narrations from the *Ahlul al-Bayt* (progeny of Prophet) such as *al-aba*'s interpretation on Sura Al-Baqarah verse 115, he (1973, 1: 259-260) says *al-Ayyashi* said in his *Tafsir*: *Al-Baqir* said about the word of Allah: And to Allah belongs the east and the west, Allah has revealed this verse especially for the voluntary prayer; so wherever you (might) turn there is the Face of Allah. Indeed, Allah is all-Encompassing and Knowing. And the Apostle of Allah prayed on his camel by making gestures (for the actions of the prayer) wherever it turned to when he proceeded to Khaybar and also when he returned from Mecca and the Ka'bah was behind his back.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**The pattern of interpretation:** There is different views among scholars about the philosophical exegesis. Some scholars assume that philosophy contrary to Islamic teachings and away from the understanding of verses. Upon carried out, the implication is to equalize between religion and philosophy or philosophy as a religion. However, the scholars who support this pattern argue that philosophy and Islam do not have any significant conflict, due to the revelation of God is not contrary to reason. Therefore, they are trying to harmonize between religion and philosophy in interpreting the verses and explained it according to the sense.

Accordingly, *al-tabataba'i* had trying to equalize between Islam and philosophy. He assumes that the sense is one of the Islamic pillars that inseparable each other. For him Islam is impossible to contradict with the argument but there is also no one philosopher allow the sense contradict to the Qur'an and Sunnah.

Thus, *Tabataba* (1987) quoting and commenting philosophers' opinion either from the Muslims and the West as long as accordance with the purposes and provisions of the Qur'anic verses. This was done by him as an additional explanation only in what he called as a philosophical point of view (*mabath falsafi*).

Hence to get a clearer idea of *al-tabataba'i*'s philosophical exegesis here a few examples, among others; the impact of eligible why God has all kinds of praises and be praised by his servant as *al-tabataba'i* (1: 24) said:

Reason tells us that an effect as well as all its characteristics and affairs, depend on its cause; whatever perfection it may behaving is a shadow of the cause. If beauty or goodness has any existence then its perfect and independent entity is for Allah only as He is the Cause of all causes. The praise and thank is addressed in reality to the cause which creates the perfection and excellence referred to. Every perfection is caused by Allah, every praise and thank in reality is addressed to Allah. Therefore, all praise is for and due to Allah

Based on the earlier *al-tabataba'i* when describing the impact of eligible that God has all kinds of praises and be praised by his servant, due to He is the source of all things. This is meant to 'illah (causes) by *al-tabataba'i*. The argument is that everything has a cause and every perfection is referred to its cause. If goodness, beauty, and etc are owned by the creature then these forms beautiful things are mandatory pledged to God, because He is the source of all the whole causes and end to Him. Thus, when a person discloses his praise to thing that has perfection, it must be causes that this thing is deserve to be praised. Similarly, God has perfection and it was overcome belongs his creatures then the more important fact that all of the praises to be given to Him.

Another example of *al-tabataba'i*'s philosophical exegesis is when he described the nature of God as Creator, he (1973, v.1) said: The experience as well as the philosophical argument proves that any two things are different from each other in their respective particulars even if they are united in their common and general characteristics. Even if the two are so alike as to make it

difficult for the senses to discern any dissimilarity between them when seen or tested with the help of scientific instruments clear differences come before the eyes. It means that every creation is unique and original; no two things are made of one model. Now, we should look at this matter from the philosophical point of view. Let us take any two things and see why they are distinct from each other. If the basis of distinction is not a thing within them then it must be an outside factor. In that case, their selves must be absolute and indivisible entities. But an absolute and indivisible entity can not be duplicated nor repeated. In other words, the two distinct entities would become one and the same. And, it is a contradiction in terms. Therefore, we have to admit that every being is different in its own self from all other beings. It follows that everything is unique and does not have any similarity or likeness to any other thing. And, it is Allah who has given everything its uniqueness, distinction and originality as He is the Originator of the heavens and of the earth.

Based on the earlier, it is understandable that al-tabataba'i described that the nature of God as Creator, due to He made everything without any assistance along with Him. His Creation are produced without need to refer to any existing examples. An effect to be conveyed here are explained through philosophical argument that every creature which differ from each other must be caused by external factors. Thus, due to this, the creation able to be formed be multiplied and so on. And the external factors meant by al-tabataba'i is God.

Instead of applying philosophical arguments to support his exegesis, Tabataba (1973) also rejects a philosophical discourse if contradict to the meaning of Qur'an. The study found one example that when he interprets Sura Al-Baqarah, verse 1-5 of al (aba) aba'i's rejects western philosopher argument: Should we rely on rational concepts in addition to the things perceptible through the senses. It is a subject of great controversy among the Western scholars of the later days. All Muslim philosophers as well as most of the Western ones of ancient times believed that we could rely on the rational as well as the sensual perceptions. They were rather of the opinion that an academic premise does not look at a tangible and sensual factor as such. But, most of the modern scholars, especially the scientists, hold that nothing can be relied upon except what ne perceives through the five senses. Their proof is as follows: pure rational proofs often go wrong. There is no test or experiment, perceptible through the senses, to verify those rational proofs or their premises. Sensual perceptions are free from this defect when we perceive a thing through a sense, we verify it through repeated tests and experiments this testing continues till we are sure of the characteristics or properties of the object of test.

Therefore, sensual perception is free from doubt while rational proof is not. But this argument has many flaws.

**First:** All the above-mentioned premises are rational they can not be perceived by any of the five senses. In other words, these scholars are using rational premises to prove that rational premises can not be relied upon! What a paradox! If they succeed in proving their viewpoint through these premises their very success would prove them wrong.

**Second:** Sensual perception is not less prone to error and mistake than rational proof. A cursory glance at the books dealing with the optics and other such subjects is enough to show how many errors are made by sight, hearing and other senses. If rational proof is unreliable because of its possible mistakes, sensual perception also should be discarded for the same reason.

**Third:** No doubt there should be a way to distinguish the right perception from the wrong. But, it is not the repeated testing, per se that creates that distinction in the mind. Rather, it becomes one of the premises of a rational proof which in turn provides that distinction. When we discover a property of an object and the property remains the same through repeated tests, a rational proof on the following lines is offered by the thinking power. If this property were not this thing's own property, it would not be found in it so unfailingly. But, it is always found in it without fail. Therefore, it is its own property. It is now obvious that sensual perception too depends on rational premises to finalize its findings.

**Fourth:** Let us admit that practically every sensual perception is supported by test. But is that test verified by another test. If yes then the same question will arise about this later one. Obviously, it cannot go on ad infinitum there must come at the end a test whose verification depends not on a visible test but on the above-mentioned rational proof. It means that one can not rely on sensual perception without relying on rational concepts.

**Fifth:** The five senses cannot perceive absolute and major issues they know only the particular and minor things. Knowledge depends on absolute issues which cannot be tested in a laboratory nor can they be grasped by the five senses. A professor of anatomy operates upon or dissects, a number of living or dead human bodies. It does not matter how large or small that number is. He finds that each of the bodies which he has opened has a heart, a liver and the like. And after looking at those particular cases, he feels bold enough to teach an absolute proposition that all men have a heart and a liver. The

question is: has he seen inside all the human beings. If only that much can be relied upon which is perceived by the five senses, how can any absolute proposition of any branch of science be accepted as true. The fact is that sensual perception and rational concept both have their place in the field of knowledge; both are complementary to each other. By rationality and understanding, we mean that faculty which is the source of the earlier examples of absolute principles. Everyone knows that man has such a faculty. How can a faculty created by Allah (or as they say by nature) be always in wrong. How can it always fail in the function entrusted to it by the Creator. The Creator never entrusts any research to an agent until He creates a connecting link between them. So far as mistakes in rational and sensual faculties are concerned, the reader should look for it in related subjects like logic, etc.

Based on the earlier, it is understandable that there is a dispute between the rational as well as the sensual perceptions. All Muslim philosophers recognize human dependence on both while the western only recognize the senses perception. Furthermore both sides submitted arguments to ensure its behalf in the right track. Al-tabataba'i interprets Sura Al-Baqarah, verses 1-5 based on philosophical concept as described above. He elaborates the nature of God as Guide to His creatures with the decline of the Qur'an that is not found any doubts therein. He demonstrates the weakness of human senses and intellect to understand the object of faith such as the existence of the hereafter and other supernatural things. He stressed that despite the weakness of senses and the intellect, humans must return it to God as the Guide.

### CONCLUSION

Al-tabataba'i is one of the eminent exegetes who professes Shicah sect. With the theological background, this scholar strives to explain the Qur'anic exegesis in line with his belief and rejected otherwise that matters as implications of his theological basis. However, many of his citations from Sunni scholars' opinion that he put forward in the form of comparison, statement of ideas and ideals. Moreover, Al-tabataba'i excellence was reflected by the production of dozens writings, whether in Arabic or Persian.

Al-tabataba'i is one of the most prolific scholars in the various disciplines such as exegesis, prophetic tradition, jurisprudence, theology, mysticism, philosophy, science and so on. His proficiency in these various areas was very influential to his Qur'anic exegesis. Hence, it is not surprisingly, every scientific field above applied to his great work, al-Mizan. As a result, it could be classified according to these disciplines. However, the philosophical exegesis is more viscous in this book. Theoretically, al-tabataba'i's philosophical exegesis

pattern was found when he describes Sura al-Fatihah verse two on why God has eligible to all kinds of praise and be praised by His servant and similarly when, He described the nature of God as Creator. In addition, al-tabataba'i also rejects the view of philosophy if contradict to the Qur'anic meanings and also applies a philosophical argument as shown in interpreting Sura Al-Baqarah, verse 1-5.

The important feature of al-Mizan is about using the Qur'anic exegesis by Qur'an itself and it is the best method which might entail the highest level of authenticity (Rohman, 2013). This method in exegete's task, is not only summarized by putting the verses for understanding the meaning of words but he juxtaposes the similar and joint subjects in different suras then analyzes and compares them. For understanding the message of verses, he resorts to the pondering and researching.

Nevertheless, one of the noticeable dimensions of al-Mizan is its socialism. Undoubtedly, this feature has originated from researchers social thought and tendencies and has turned (referred) to the subjects such as: government, freedom, social justice, social order, problems of the Islamic people, the causes of Muslim's backwardness and woman rights. Attention to the opponent's doubts, criticisms, evaluating and studying of them is the obvious subjects in al-Mizan. Another one of exegesis aspects is about attention to the scientific, philosophical and theological subjects.

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