

The Development of School of Tafsir Haraki: An Analytical study

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Abstract

School of Tafsir Haraki is one of the systematic Quranic interpretation processes called “Madrasah al-Tafsir al-Haraki” that many scholars have moved towards renewal (*tajdid*) in their interpretation of the Quran at the end of the twentieth century. They directed their attention towards the message of the Quran and became more concerned about contemporary issues as well as the perceptions of the diverse groups of readers. Through a qualitative method, this study, attempts to introduce the concept and its origin, systematically gathered information on trends in the Quranic commentary in the nineteenth and twentieth century and the historical emergence of Islamic movement were measured. Several sources of prevailing established outputs of the Quranic studies with characteristics of the Islamic Dawa movements were studied. Based on the information gathered, descriptive analysis was done by viewing at the appropriate clarification of term ‘Manhaj Haraki’ in interpretation of the Quran. The study concludes that the ‘School of Tafsir Haraki’ is not completely a new method in the Quranic explanations, but it is a reproducing task occupied by the modern Islamic thinkers to the contemporary world which had been applied by the prophet Muhammad, his companions and the salaf al-saliheen in dealing with the Quran. The recognition for the formation of the haraki schools of tafsir spirits to the Muslim Brotherhood, however essentially it is the combined efforts of the men of reformation and renewal, the most popular of them all are Sayed Qutub, al-Mawdudi, Abd al-Hamid bin Badis, Mustafa Al-Maraghy, Badiu al-Zaman Sa’id al-Nursi, and of course, in addition to Imam Hasan Al-Banna.

Keywords: Tafsir Haraki, Islamic thinker, Quranic interpretation

Introduction

The Quranic commentary written by each commentator is also influenced by his background or culture; for instance some commentators select to enlarge on the metaphysical and theological themes, while others place more standing on the grammatical and syntactical characteristics and there are those who prefer to give their explanations based on the viewpoints of the numerous camps of *madhhab* in Islamic jurisprudence. Towards the end of the nineteenth and twentieth century, many Muslim scholars especially the Mufasssiroon have moved towards renewal (*tajdid*) in their interpretation of the Quran, thus they directed their attention towards the message

of the Quran and became more concerned about contemporary issues as well as the perceptions of the diverse groups of readers. Reformers began studying and interpreting the Quran, they also authored a number of *tafsir books* that were dedicated to reform the conditions of society and to stop aggressive ideas and doctrines of ignorance.

Literature review

The credit for the establishment of the haraki schools of tafsir enthusiasms to the Muslim Brotherhood. It is the combined efforts of the men of reformation and renewal, the most popular of them all are Abd al-Hamid bin Badis, Badiu al-Zaman Sa'id al-Nursi, Abu al-A'al al-Mawdudi and of course, in addition to al-Banna. Sayyid Qutb who came to complete the plan of al-Banna, to strengthen it and to improve on it by providing his own idea. He also established manhaj haraki as an combined, dynamic system that has its own its meaning, its waves, its scopes and physiognomies. He also established his own valuable tafsir based on the characteristics of this manhaj; this is the specialty or exceptionality that distinguish his interpretation of the Fi Zilal al-Quran from the rest of his explanations. Thus, it is only appropriate that he is rightly considered the founder of the theory of manhaj haraki in this era of written theoretical output, even though al-Banna had preceded him in the practical application of this manhaj. Thereafter it was known as 'School of Tafsir Haraki' except that manhaj haraki that was followed by Sayyid Qutb in his tafsir was not limited to research nor centered on a specific place, rather it was distributed all over in his book al-Zilal. In fact, al-Khalidi has summarized the merits and features of this manhaj in his book "al-Manhaj al-Haraki fi Zilal al-Quran". Haraki trend of tafsir is a trend that focuses on da'wah and movement (harakah), as well as on education, purification, jihad and struggle. It also focuses on calling muslims to move with the Quran, to fight against the non-believers and to present lessons about da'wah, jihad and confrontation.

Aim of the study

This paper is aimed to identify the major focus of Manhaj haraki and the appearance of modern trends in tafsir systematic.

Methodology

Through a qualitative method, systematically gathered information on trends in the Quranic commentary in the nineteenth and twentieth century and the historical emergence of Islamic movement were observed. Various sources of existing established outputs of the Quranic studies including characteristics of the Islamic Dawa movements were studied. Based on the information gathered, descriptive analysis was done by viewing at the applicable explanation of term ‘Manhaj Haraki’ in interpretation of the Quran.

Findings

In 1924, the downfall of the Caliphate is the main reason contributing to the development of Islamic movements. In addition to that, the presence of the secular nation-states that were formed based on ideologies contrary to the thought of Ummah and Islamic unity, as well as increase in moral and social advocacy, decay for pornography and revolution against traditions that were derived from religion, all played a part in the coming of Islamic movements.

With the downfall of the Caliphate the Muslim Brotherhood understood what Islam rightly means and was quick to realize the seriousness of the situations faced by the Ummah. The Brotherhood challenged the many different trends and confronted it, which helped restore the people’s confidence in their religion after their captivation with the West and its civilization. The Brotherhood also seemed to familiarize the teachings and declarations of Islam in a simple manner. In regard to this, the Brotherhood has made applaud able efforts in various fields such as in Fiqh, Usul, Ibadat, Mua’malat, as well as in tafsir and hadith.

Tafsir is to make one understand the meaning of the holy Quran; thus, whoever has a good understanding of it, then he’ll also be good at interpreting the Quran and vice versa. One can only gain a better understanding of the Quran if one practices what it preaches and applies its lively texts to contemporary times

Based on the review, it is clear that the credit for the establishment of the haraki schools of tafsir goes to the Muslim Brotherhood, nevertheless Emad Mahmud Abdul Karim states that actually it is the combined efforts of the men of reformation and renewal, the most popular of them all are Sayed Qutub, Abd al-Hamid bin Badis, Badiu al-Zaman Sa’id al-Nursi, Abu al-A’al al-Mawdudi and of course, in addition to al-Banna. Emad considers these individuals as pioneers of these schools, as their Quranic interpretations have an

integrated approach that provides a theoretical and practical view of life from the Quran, which was considered something new at that time. In fact, this point to the strong connection between the founders of the Brotherhood and the great similarity between them in their approach in Quranic tafsir as evident in their flowing, literary method, emphasis on the reality of the Ummah, accommodating the Quranic verse and making it relevant to present times, providing solutions on the basis of the Quran, concerned with a productive practical aspect. Though, each of them has their own genius, unique touch that manifested itself in the field of Quranic interpretation.

It is apparent that Emad has extended beyond the school of the Muslim Brotherhood to cover other Islamic movements, as he sees these movements have a joint share in the emergence of tafsir haraki in these modern times. For instance, Sayed Qutb's key objective in lettering the Zilal was to bring people back to the Quran by launching their interest in the text. He therefore stimulated people to read the Quran not only to gain God's blessing but also to use its message as the source of direction in facing the challenges of the modern era. Sayed Qutb's interest in Islam develops as he began to feel the necessity of fulfilling spiritual and religious elements in human life in addition to achieving scientific breakthroughs. The publication of his work al-Adalah in 1949 clearly exemplified the first phase of his new intellectual quest that was his interest in social issues and the need to return to Islam as their solution. The major focus of Manhaj haraki is

1. Highlighting the importance of aqidah (faith) and its influence in the life of Muslims; because man's performance and actions are the usual significance of what he believes in. This aqidah is the essence or the basis in building muslim individuals and communities
2. Eliminating misleading contradictions from the interpretation of the Quranic texts, as it can be used by the opponents of Islam to outbreak the Quran and to cause uncertainty in it. This apparent discrepancy and contradiction can be indifferent by reflecting in the meaning of the Quranic verses and by looking at it as an combined, objective feature of the Quran.
3. A inclusive, overall view of the Quran as a book of da'wah, movement and this view is the basic premise to understand and ponder the meaning of the Quran.

Generally, the methodology and interpretation used by modern mufasssiron seem to have been greatly influenced by their environment, coupled with the search for solutions to the problems

facing the Muslim Ummah. As a result, the Quranic text was interpreted in a wider context as the mufasssirun tried to detect a universal message and show its relevance to the modern world. They also showed that the Quran was not a dead text comprehensible only to the learned, but a dynamic, living text compatible with modern life.

Conclusion

It is difficult to differentiate or to associate between these noted intellectuals, because they each have long, field experiences and have made a hardworking, painstaking effort in the field of Islamic Da'wah. Therefore, it can be understood that the intellectual basis of manhaj haraki of tafsir has been established by these pioneers and they have participated in the formulation of this theory as they have participated in the battle between right and wrong. We are also of the opinion that al-Banna was ahead of the others because he has a greater impact on the Islamic awakening; as his movement was characterized by clarity of purpose and thoroughness of ideas, it was also characterized by practicability and effective planning. Additionally his movement combined intellectual depth with moral training and political activity. Therefore, it is only appropriate that his role in establishing and combining the manhaj haraki of tafsir is considered an original role- as the author and builder of theories of the Islamic activities. They had several other objectives in mind when writing the tafsir 1. Emphasizing the role of the human being as the vicegerent of God. 2. Teaching Muslims the Qur'anic principles. 3. Establishing a just and ethical society based on the Qur'an. 4. Shari'ah and Aqidah as the basis of an Islamic system. 5. Exposing the fallacy of materialistic thought.

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