

Concept of *Al-‘Amm* (General) and *Al-Khass* (Specific) in the Glorious Qur’an: The Perspective of *Shaykh ‘Abd Allah BnFoduye*

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Abstract:- Muslims have from earliest times applied themselves not only to the message from Allah-the Qur’an-but also to its setting and framework, and the preoccupation with these ultimately developed into the sciences of or ‘knowledge’ about the Qur’an, known as “*‘Ulum al-Qur’an*.”

‘Ulum al-Qur’an (Qur’anic Sciences) covers many areas such as *asbab al-Nuzul* (causes of revelation), the knowledge of *Makki* and *Madani* revelations, the knowledge of the various forms (*al-Ahruf*) it was revealed in, the understanding of its *al-Nasikhwa al-Mansukh* abrogated rulings and verses, the knowledge of the various classifications of its verses (*Muhkam* and *Mustashabih*, ‘*Amm* (general) and *Khass*(specific), *Mutlaq* and *Muqayyad* among the others). Therefore, the paper attempts to discuss the definition of Qur’anic sciences, Scope of Qur’anic Sciences, Aim and Objectives of Qur’anic Sciences, and Significance of Qur’anic Sciences to the Muslim *Ummah*. Furthermore, the two concepts that are *Al-Amm* and *Al-Khass* among the various topics in the Qur’anic sciences will be discussed extensively under the perception or views of *Shaykh Abd Allah BnFoduye*. The analytical method is used while gathering data of this research.

Keywords: *Al-‘Amm* (General) and *Al-Khass* (Specific), Glorious Qur’an, and *Shaykh ‘Abd Allah BnFoduye*.

I. INTRODUCTION

Al-Qur’an has generally been accepted as a term referring to the book containing the speech of Almighty Allah which has been revealed to the last and final Messenger Muhammad (Peace be upon him) through the medium of Angel Jibril (A.S) to serve as guidance to the entire World (Ibn al-Mandhur, 1414 A.H). The word “Qur’an” is a verbal noun derived from the root Qara’a, Yaqara’u, Qiratan (Muslim, 1978 & Anis, 1972). It literally means “reading” or “recitation” which happens in several Qur’anic verses as follows:

Established prayer at the decline of the Sun (from its meridian) until the darkness of the night and (also) the Qur’an (that is, recitation) of dawn. Indeed, the recitation of dawn is ever witnessed (Qur’an, 17:78).

In another verses Allah says:

Indeed, it is for Us to collect it and to give you (O Muhammad S.A.W)) the ability to

recite it (the Qur’an). And when We have recited it to you (O Muhammad S.A.W) through Angel Jibril then follow its recital (Qur’an, 75: 17-18).

According to the scholars of the Glorious Qur’an, like Abu Abdullah Muhammad bn Ahmad Al-Ansari *al-Qurtubi* states that, “The Qur’an is a name of uncreated speech of Allah (*SubhanahuwataAla*); an attribute to the One Who has no parallel and counterpart (that is Allah); a light derived from His Self (Al-Qurtubi, 1999), revealed to the Prophet (Peace be upon him) as his miracle, committed to memories, uttered by tongues, written in the copies, distributed as Surahs and verses, free from any addendum and curtailment in its alphabets and words (Al-Qurtubi, 1999).

IbnKathir, opines that; “The Qur’an is Allah’s word, His revelation, His enduring rope and straight path, and the most sublime book sent by Him to the Prophet (Peace be upon him) which includes two things: tidings and quest. The truth is his tidings and the justice is his quest (IbnKathir, 1999).

IbnQudama al-Maqdasi says: “The Qur’an is an unmistakable book of Allah, His enduring rope and straight path, and sent in explicit Arabic by the sustainer of all beings to the mind of the Prophet (Peace be upon him) through Jibril in uncreated form (IbnQudamah, 2000).

Above these definitions categorically reveal several facts about the Qur’an such as its source which refers to Allah who revealed it and all words it contained belonging solely to Him; its mediator, which refers to the Angel Jibril who conveyed its words to Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him); its recipient, Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) who is nominated as the final messenger of Allah its content which is the divine guidance to the right path; its language, which is Arabic; and its nature, which refers to uncreated. In fact these issues are explicitly corroborated by the verses of the Qur’an and commonly accepted by Muslim scholars (IbnQudamah, 2000).

However, the Qur’an is generally Allah’s speech revealed to Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) in Arabic with definite purposes and transmitted to us by *Tawatur* (continuous testimony) (Kamali,2008), which is collectively written in chapters consisting of 114 *Suwar* and 6616 verses

beginning with *Surah al-Fatihah* and end with *Surah al-Nas*(IbnAshur, 2000), and whose recitation is accepted as worship (Qattan, 2000).

According to *Shaykh*‘Abd Allah bnFoduye Al-Qur’an is a complete ocean which all knowledge was originated and developed from it, it is a comprehensive and universal Book of Allah sent to the Prophet (S.A.W) for the guidance of the human kind, and anything which goes against it is not used, is rejected (Foduye, 2013). Here *Shaykh* is trying to say that the Glorious Qur’an is the source of all knowledge, and source of healing as applying it in daily life, cures almost all psychological and social illnesses, and it is a law revealed to regulate human life for all people, regardless of time or place.

According to him Qur’anic science deals with so many things which are related to the Glorious Qur’an such as revelation and manners related to it like reasons for revelation, the verses those were revealed in *Makkah* and *Madinah*, day and night verses, summer and winter verses, and matters related to its recitation (that is *‘IlmTajwid*), compilation and preservation, among others.

II. DEFINITIONS OF QUR’ANIC SCIENCES

The word *‘Ulum* (Sciences) plural of the word *‘Ilm*(science). ‘Science means *al-Fahmuwa al-Idrak*(“understand and master”). Then the meaning of this word is changed to different sciences and branches. So, what is the *‘Ulum al-Qur’an*? *‘Ulum al-Qur’an* addresses issues related to the Qur’an in terms of *asbaabNuzuul*, *al-Nasikhwal-Mansukh*, *al-MuhkamwaMutashaabiha* *al-Madaniwa al-Makki*, and other related issues with the Qur’an. There are various definitions of what is meant by *‘Ulum al Qur’an* (the science of Qur’an). There are examples of some scholars as follows: Imam Al-Zurqani in his book *ManahilIrfan Fi ‘Ulum al-Qur’an* stated that *‘Ulum al-Qur’an* was discussed with the issues associated with the Qur’an, in terms of collecting, writing, recitation, miracles, *NasikhwaMansukh*, and a refutation of the things that can cause doubts about the Qur’an and so on (Al-Zurqani, n.d).” Imam Al-Suyuti in *al-Dirayah* said *‘Ulum al-Qur’an*: “is the science which deals with state of the Qur’an in terms of *Isnaad*, meaning, revelation, whether related to the *Tajwid* (spelling-pronunciation or good recitation) and so many issues associated with its laws, and so on (Suyuti, 1985).”

‘Ulum al-Qur’an (Qur’anic sciences), as a concept is a simple sentence with two parts constructed from main word and subordinate. The main word is science and the subordinate is Qur’an (Al-Amin, 1422 A. H). It has two meanings. In the first, it shows that it is a constructed subordinate and in the second, expresses that it is a science and academic research to be conducted as explanation to both two sides, (that is Qur’an and Science) (Al-Amin, 1422 A. H).

‘Ulum (Sciences): is plural of science and *‘Ulum* in Arabic language is a noun used to mean understanding, ‘perception’ and knowledge (Al-Amin, 1422 A. H). The meaning here is any knowledge that is related to the Glorious Qur’an, which is

linked to it, depended on it, and its meaning can be taken by it such as the knowledge of *Tafsir* (exegesis) the knowledge of reasons for revelation, the knowledge of *‘Ijaz al-Qur’an* (inimitability of the Qur’an), the abrogator and abrogated verses, the knowledge that concerns syntax of the Qur’an , the knowledge that explains *‘Ilm al-Qira’at* (modes of Qur’anic recitation), the knowledge that deals with the *Add Ayi*(counting of the verses), and its alliteration, the knowledge of Arabic language which relate to grammar rhetoric among others (Al-Amin, 1422 A. H).

Qur’anic science is a knowledge that concerned with research related to the Qur’an with an in-depth analysis of the Qur’an beginning with its revelation, the nature of its revelation, place and period, compilation and the history of its compilation during the Prophetic era, the time of Abubakar, Umar and ‘Uthman (may Allah be pleased with them). For proper understanding of its meaning and purposes of its revelation, *‘Ijaz al-Qur’an* (inimitability of the Qur’an), abrogator and abrogated verses, rhetoric and exaggeration, types, examples contain on it and arrangement of its chapters and verses, recitation (Al-Amin, 1422 A. H).

According to a general definition, *‘Ulum al-Qur’an* denotes studies that concerned with the book of revelation sent down upon the last Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him), its revelation, its collection, its order of arrangement, its writing down, information about the reasons and occasions of revelation, about what was revealed in *Makkah* and *Madinah*, and about the abrogator and abrogated verses, and about the ‘clear’ and the ‘unclear’ verses (Sabuni, 1970).

The term Qur’anic science also covers explanation of verses and passages by the Prophet himself, his Companions, their followers and the later exegetes of the Qur’an, the methods of explanation and the scholars of exegesis and their books (Denffer, 1998).

III. SCOPE OF QUR’ANIC SCIENCES

Muslims have from earliest times applied themselves not only to the message from Allah-the Qur’an-but also to its setting and framework, and the preoccupation with these ultimately developed into the sciences of or ‘knowledge’ about the Qur’an, known as “*‘Ulumal-Qur’an*.”

The scope of Qur’anic sciences deals with the knowledge of those sciences that have a direct bearing on the recitation, history, understanding and implementation of the Qur’an. It is therefore a vast field of Islamic scholarship. Thus, for example with regards to recitation, *‘Ulum al-Qur’an* deals with the *al-Tajwid* (science of pronunciation), the different methodologies of reciting the Qur’an (the *Qira’at*), the blessings of reciting the Qur’an and the etiquette of its recitation (Qhadhi, 1999).

From the description above is envisaged that *‘Ulum al-Qur’an* is the science related to various aspects related to the purposes of discussing al-Qur’an. Subhi al-Salih further explained that the pioneers of science of Qur’an are as follows. From among

the companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) from among *Tabi'in* in *Madinah* from among *Tabi'uttabi'in* (third generation Muslims) and the generations after that the scholars and commentators from all the generations included in the scope of interpretation of the Qur'an and '*Ulm al-Qur'an* always hold on to:

1. Al-Qur'anilKarim for that which is raised globally in one place paragraph is described in detail in place another verse. Sometimes also a verse comes in the form *Mutlaq* or general but was followed by another clause that limits or *Mansukhiyya*. This is called "*Tafsir Qur'an* with the Qur'an".
2. Prophet (peace be upon him) considering it teachings although he was the one to have the responsibility of explaining the Glorious Qur'an. Therefore it is natural that the Companions asked him when having difficulty in understanding something in the verse. Among the content of the Qur'an there are verses that cannot be known except through explanation of the Messenger of Allah, such as details about the commands and His prohibitions and regulations regarding the laws of Allah (Qhadhi, 1999).
3. The Companions gave the closeness to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and knew what was taught him (that is Qur'an) by Angel Jibril, therefore, knowing the history of the friends who came from the Prophet Muhammad is a reference in developing the science of the Qur'an (Qhadhi, 1999).
4. Understanding and *Ijtihad* if the companions do not get the interpretation of the Qur'an, nor get anything associated with it from the Prophet, and many differences among the companions, then they do *Ijtihad* to mobilize all abilities of reason. This is considering they are the original Arabs who really mastered the Arabic language, understand it and know that there are aspects in it. At the time the Companions, no slightest commentary, science knowledge about the Qur'an, which were recorded, for a new book keeping done in the second or third century of *Hijrah*. Accounting period it begins at the end of the dynasty of *Banu Umayyad* and early of *Abbasid* dynasty (Qhadhi, 1999).

With regards to the history of the Qur'an, '*Ulm al-Qur'an*, deals with the stages of revelation of the Qur'an, the compilation of the Qur'an, the art and history of writing the Qur'anic script (*Rasm al-Masahif*), and the preservation of the Qur'an.

With regards to its understanding and implementation '*Ulm al-Qur'an* covers the *asbab al-Nuzul* (causes of revelation), the knowledge of *Makki* and *Madani* revelations, the knowledge of the various forms (*al-Ahruf*) it was revealed in, the understanding of its *al-Nasikhwa al-Mansukh* abrogated rulings and verses, the knowledge of the various classifications of its verses (*Muhkamand Mustashabih*, '*Amm*

and *Khass*, *Mutlaq* and *Muqayyad* among the others), the knowledge of its *Tafsir* (interpretation), the '*Irab al-Qur'an* (grammatical analysis of the Qur'an) the knowledge of those words whose usage has become *Garib al-Qur'an* (uncommon over time) (Qhadhi, 1999).

Furthermore, among the scope of Qur'anic sciences there are topics relating to the Qur'an in terms of arrangement of chapters, '*Add al-Ay* (aggregation of verses) names of the Qur'an chapters, the types of verses long ones and short ones (Abdul-Haleem, n. d).

IV. AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF QUR'ANIC SCIENCES

The aim and objectives of '*Ulm al-Qur'an* (Qur'anic sciences) is to help towards a better understanding of the Qur'anic messages, by providing information on its setting, framework, and circumstances.

Also aim and objectives of the Qur'anic science is to raise general awareness of important issues pertaining Qur'an about which no Muslim should be ignorant. Qur'anic science is to enable one to defend the Qur'an against aspersions cast upon it; also Qur'anic science is to serve as an invaluable primer to those wishing to compile *al-Tafsir* of their own (Abdul-Haleem, n. d).

V. SIGNIFICANCE OF QUR'ANIC SCIENCES TO THE MUSLIM UMMAH

There was certain significance to the knowledge of '*Ulm al-Qur'an* (Qur'anic sciences) among the Muslim *Ummah*, the researcher will mention them in the following sentences:

1. It helps on teaching the Glorious Qur'an, understanding in the right way, driving the legal judgment and discipline from it, because it will not be easy to the teacher of the Glorious Qur'an or translator to reach a level of being right and correct without knowing how it's revealed? When it's revelation? On what situation is the arrangement of its chapters and verses? Where is the basis of its '*Ijaz* (inimitability)? How it becomes real, abrogator and abrogated verses and the structure of its recitation and teaching (Al-Amin, 1422.A.H).

2. He who studies this knowledge is capable of becoming powerful that will enable him to be out of the fabrications of the enemies of Islam and blocking their war which they weigh on the Glorious Qur'an which are adulterated lies, being it the basic of Islam it becomes mandatory to Islamic nations and upon all those capable of it and those who can make its ways better, let alone Scholars and state men in the Muslim nations. Indeed, it's a great honour that a Muslim becomes a protector of this great Book (Al-Amin, 1422. A. H).

3. He who studies this knowledge should have large portion in the Qur'anic science and what it contain of the kind of knowledge and sciences, he is going to prosper with great civilization on what is related to the Qur'an, if the sciences are civilization to normal perception, behavior, modification, self-regulation and guidelines for progress and development on top

of all these are the sciences of the Glorious Qur'an, Qur'an is the best narration and the truth and its sciences are the highest which is mandatory upon every Muslim (Maihankali, 1996).

4. It enables the reader to realize the wealth of knowledge and insight that exists with regards to the Book of Allah. As some scholars of the past said, "True knowledge is to know one's ignorance". Only when a person realizes what he does not know will he appreciate how little he does know (Qadhi, 1999).

5. It increases a person's *Iman* (belief), because he will realize the beauty of the Qur'an and the great blessings that he has been given through its revelation. He will not be fooled by the fallacious claims of its enemies, and his heart will be at ease with regards to its authenticity. He will understand the miraculous nature of the Qur'an and thus better cherish the greatest Book that mankind has been given (Usmani, 2000).

Therefore, it is not exaggeration to say that, once a person learns the essentials of his religion and what is required for him to know, the first knowledge he should turn his attention to is the knowledge of the Qur'an and its sciences.

VI. SHAYKH ABD ALLAH BNFODUYE AND HIS PERCEPTION ON AL-'AMM (GENERAL) AND AL-KHASS (SPECIFIC) IN THE GLORIOUS QUR'AN

From the viewpoint of their scope, words are classified into the 'general' and the 'specific'. *'Amm* (general) may be defined as a word which applies to many things, not limited in number, and includes everything to which it is applicable (Kamali, 1991). When a word is applied to a limited number of things, including everything to which it can be applied, say one or two a hundred, it is referred to as 'specific' (*Khass*) (Kamali, 1991).

Shaykh 'Abd Allah started this by mentioning the *Al-'Amm* (general) first and added that it refers to a generic term which carries a comprehensive sense meaning without restriction. On the other hand, *al-Khass* (specific) is the opposite of *Al-'Amm* (general). He explained that the form of general word is like the term "كُلِّ" meaning 'everyone' (Foduye, 2011). Example from the Qur'an where Allah says:

"Everyone upon it will perish" (Qur'an, 55:26).

Also, the term "مَنْ" meaning 'whosoever' is an example of *'Amm* (general) (Foduye, 2011) this can be found in the saying of Almighty Allah where He says:

"So whosoever does good equal to the weight of an atom shall see it" (Qur'an, 99:7).

Also, it shows *'Amm* (a general) when use the term "مَا" meaning "what" (Foduye, 2011) for example where Allah says:

"Indeed, you and what you worship other than Allah are the firewood of Hell. You will be coming to it" (Qur'an, 21:98).

Furthermore, the term "أَيُّ" meaning 'whichever' is among the terminology used in indicating the *'Amm* (general) in the Glorious Qur'an (Foduye, 2011), example has been shown in the Glorious Qur'an where Allah says:

Say, "Call upon Allah or call upon the Most Merciful whichever (name) you call-to Him belong the best names..." (Qur'an, 17:110)."

In addition, the term "الَّذِي" "He" and the category like "الَّذِينَ" "Those" are some concrete examples of showing *'Amm* (general) in the Qur'an (Foduye, 2011), this is where Allah says:

And those who believe and do righteous deeds and believe in what has been sent down upon Muhammad-and it is the truth from their Lord-He will remove from them their misdeeds and amend their condition (Qur'an, 47:2).

Al-'Amm (general) has some indefinite forms in order to be manifested and understood to the readers, the forms are as forms:

Negative form, where it was asked not to do something generally, for example where Allah says:

"....say not to them a word (so much as) "uff" and do not repel them but speak to them a noble word (Qur'an, 17:23)."

'Amm (general) could also be in a conditional form, for example where Allah says:

And if any of the polytheists seeks your protection, then grant him protection so that he may hear the words of Allah (Qur'an, 9:6).

The above mentioned examples show that there are many *'Amm* (general) in the Glorious Qur'an where Allah the Almighty talks comprehensively without specification to the people.

Furthermore, Shaykh 'Abd Allah discussed *Al-Khass* (specific) where he said could be either *Muttasil* (co-joined) or *Munfasil* (disjoined) (Foduye, 2011). An example of *muttasil* is as follows:

".....And your step daughters under your guardianship (born) of your wives unto whom you have gone in... (Qur'an, 4:23)."

Al-Khass (specific) could also be in a conditional form, for example where Allah says:

Prescribed for you when death approaches (any) one of you if he leaves wealth (is that he should make) a bequest... (Qur'an, 2:180).

Al-Khass (specific) could also be in exception form (*al-Istithna*) (Foduye, 2011) the example is from the Qur'an where the Almighty Allah says:

And the poets-(only) the deviators follow them; Do you not see that in every valley they roam. And that they say what they do not do?-Except those (poets) who believe and do righteous deeds and remember Allah often and defend (the Muslims) after they were wronged... (Qur'an, 26:224-227).

In the above last verse, there is an exception of those poets who believe and do righteous deeds, and remember Allah often and defend the Muslims. These are the exceptions from poets who deviate, roam in every valley and say what do not do.

VII. CONCLUSION

The researcher commences by stating that The Qur'an is a name of uncreated speech of Allah (*SubhanahuwataAla*); an attribute to the One Who has no parallel and counterpart (that is Allah); a light derived from His Self, revealed to the Prophet (Peace be upon him) as his miracle, committed to memories, uttered by tongues, written in the copies, distributed as Surahs and verses, free from any addendum and curtailment in its alphabets and words.

Furthermore, the researcher gave the definitions of the Qur'anic Sciences from various Scholars, aims and objectives of the Qur'anic Sciences, Scope of Qur'anic Sciences, and significance of the Qur'anic Sciences to the Muslim *Ummah*. Finally the researcher discusses the issue of two concepts in the Qur'anic sciences based on the understanding of ShaykhAbd Allah bnFoduye.

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