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Al-Tha‘ālibī’s Methodology in Presenting the Prophetic Stories in al-Jawāhir al- Hisān

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ABSTRACT:

This study examines Imam ‘Abd al-Rahmān al-Tha‘ālibī’s methodology in presenting the stories of the Prophets through his tafsīr al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān. It aims to identify his sources and highlight the main features of his approach to presenting Qur’anic narratives. The study shows that al-Tha‘ālibī considered the Holy Qur’an the primary source for interpreting these stories, while also drawing on authentic ḥadīths, reports from the Companions and Successors, and the statements of leading Qur’anic exegetes. He dealt cautiously with Isrā‘īliyyāt, accepting reports that were consistent with Islamic sources and rejecting those that contradicted them or compromised the status of the Prophets. The study also highlights al-Tha‘ālibī’s concern with affirming the Prophets’ integrity and deriving educational and spiritual lessons from the narratives, as well as his use of linguistic analysis and poetic evidence to clarify meanings. His style is characterized by conciseness and clarity, reliance on established reports, and cross-reference when narratives are repeated. The study concludes that al-Tha‘ālibī’s methodology combines the authenticity of transmitted sources, scholarly verification, and an educational dimension, making his tafsīr one of the notable works in the presentation of the stories of the Prophets.

Keywords: Methodology, Al-Tha‘ālibī, Stories of the Prophets, al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān

INTRODUCTION

Praise be to Allah, Lord of the worlds, and may peace and blessings be upon the trustworthy Prophet, our master Muhammad, and upon all his family and Companions. To proceed:

Writing in the field of Qur’anic exegesis is regarded as one of the most prominent features of the Algerian scholarly tradition. Numerous exegetical works have become well known, attracting students of knowledge who have devoted themselves to studying them, examining their contents, deriving their subtle insights, and investigating their finer details. Among the most prominent of these works is the tafsīr *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān* by Imam ‘Abd al-Rahmān ibn Makhlūf al-Tha‘ālibī al-Jazā’irī. This blessed work presents the words of Allah Almighty without tedious elaboration or excessive brevity. It demonstrates the author’s linguistic proficiency, his legal preferences, his theological views, and his educational and guidance-oriented admonitions.

Among the areas of Qur’anic exegesis in which Imam al-Tha‘ālibī excelled was the study of Qur’anic narratives, particularly the stories of the Prophets, peace and blessings be upon them. In presenting their stories and accounts, he relied on the explicit Qur’anic text and the authentic Sunnah. He based his presentation on transmitted reports and selected the most authentic narrations. He also distinguished himself from other exegetes through his careful examination and verification of the reports cited in interpreting their stories. He distinguished authentic reports from weak ones, either disregarding the latter or rejecting them by demonstrating their weakness and the invalidity of using them as evidence. Moreover, may Allah have mercy on him, he did not limit himself to a mere presentation of the Qur’anic narratives. Rather, he adopted a distinctive approach by relating the stories to their Qur’anic contexts and deriving educational and moral lessons from them. This constitutes an integrated methodology that I shall examine in this academic paper, entitled:

“Al-Tha‘ālibī’s Methodology in Presenting the Prophetic Stories in *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān*”

Significance of the Study:

The significance of this topic lies in the following:

1. It highlights the value of Imam al-Tha'ālibī's exegetical heritage.
2. It enriches scholarly studies of the stories of the Prophets in Qur'anic exegesis.
3. It examines the methodological principles adopted by Imam al-Tha'ālibī in presenting the stories of the Prophets.
4. It reveals the educational and reformatory dimension of the tafsīr *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān*.

Research Problem:

The main research problem can be formulated as follows: What methodology did Imam al-Tha'ālibī adopt in presenting the stories of the Prophets in his tafsīr *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān*?

This main question gives rise to several subsidiary questions, the most important of which are:

1. What sources did Imam al-Tha'ālibī rely on in presenting the stories of the Prophets in his tafsīr?
2. How did Imam al-Tha'ālibī deal with the Isrā'īliyyāt reports found in the stories of the Prophets?
3. Did Imam al-Tha'ālibī limit himself to the historical narration of these stories, or did he go beyond this to instill values, cultivate the soul, and reform conduct?

Research Objectives:

This study aims to:

1. Introduce Imam al-Tha'ālibī and highlight his scholarly status.
2. Identify the most important sources used by Imam al-Tha'ālibī in presenting the stories of the Prophets.
3. Determine the general methodological foundations adopted by Imam al-Tha'ālibī in presenting the stories of the Prophets.
4. Reveal the educational and value-based dimension that Imam al-Tha'ālibī brings to the stories of the Prophets.

Research Methodology:

The study adopts the following two methods:

1. The inductive method: This method is reflected in examining the tafsīr *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān* to identify the passages relevant to the study.
2. The analytical-critical method: This involves studying these passages to identify the characteristics of his methodology in presenting the stories of the Prophets, his methods of dealing with transmitted reports, and the educational and value-based dimensions underlying his presentation of the narratives.

Research Structure:

To answer the research problem outlined above, I have divided this study into an introduction, six sections, and a conclusion, as follows:

The study begins with an introduction that provides an overview of the topic, explains its significance, highlights the research problem, presents its objectives and methodology, and gives a brief outline of its structure.

The first section is devoted to introducing Imam al-Tha'ālibī and his tafsīr *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān*. The second section presents the main sources used by Imam al-Tha'ālibī in discussing the stories of the Prophets. The third section examines Imam al-Tha'ālibī's position on conflicting Isrā'īliyyāt reports. The fourth section discusses his affirmation of the Prophets' integrity and his presentation of them as models of guidance. His emphasis on the admonitory and educational dimension of the stories of the Prophets is examined in the fifth section. The final section discusses the features that distinguish his methodology in presenting the stories of the Prophets, particularly his conciseness and clarity in narration.

The study concludes by presenting the main findings reached through the research.

Section One: Introducing Imam al-Tha'ālibī and His Tafsīr *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān*

1- Introduction to Imam al-Tha'ālibī:

He is 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Makhlūf al-Tha'ālibī, Abū Zayd al-Jazā'irī, a Mālikī in jurisprudential affiliation and Ash'arī in creed. He was of the lineage of Imam 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (may Allah be pleased with him). He was given the nisbah al-Tha'ālibī in reference to his forefathers, the Tha'ālibah, al-Jazā'irī in reference to his homeland, Algeria, and al-Mālikī in reference to his Mālikī legal school. He was born in 786 AH in the region of Wadi Yassar, southeast of the city of Algiers, where he was also raised.¹

Scholars' formative years are generally characterized by the pursuit of knowledge and moral refinement from an early age, and this was also the case with Imam al-Tha'ālibī. His upbringing was marked by learning, piety, diligence, and perseverance in the pursuit of knowledge. His scholarly journey began with the scholars of his native region, Wadi Yassar. He subsequently travelled to Béjaïa in 805 AH, where he spent five years studying under some of the most prominent scholars of Béjaïa at the time. He then continued his scholarly journey by travelling to Tunis in 809 AH, followed by the Turkish city of Bursa, where a zāwiyah was established for him and remains endowed in his name to this day. He

¹ For his biography, see: Muḥammad b. Qāsim Makhlūf, *The Pure Tree of Light in the Classes of the Mālikīs*, vol. 1 (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 2003), 382; Muḥammad b. Maymūn al-Jazā'irī, *The Morbid Masterpiece on the Bakdashīyya State in the Protected Land of Algeria*, 2nd ed. (Algeria: al-Sharika al-Waṭaniyya li-l-Nashr wa-l-Tawzī', 1981), 334.

subsequently returned to Egypt and then to Tunis in 819 AH.² At the end of his tafsīr of Sūrat al-Shūrā, may Allah have mercy on him, he discussed his scholarly journey, travels, and the scholars from whom he studied across various parts of the Islamic world.³

After acquiring knowledge of various Islamic sciences, Imam al-Tha'ālibī devoted himself to writing, enriching the Islamic scholarly heritage with numerous works, the most prominent of which is his tafsīr *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*. He also authored numerous other works, for which he compiled a dedicated bibliographical work in which he documented the chains of transmission of his reports.⁴ Among his most notable works are: *Rawḍat al-Anwār fī al-Fiqh*; a book on the miracles of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him); *al-Anwār al-Muḍī'ah fī al-Jam' bayna al-Sharī'ah wa al-Ḥaqīqah*; *al-Durr al-Fā'iḳ fī al-Adhkār*; *al-'Ulūm al-Fākhīrah fī Aḥwāl al-Ākhīrah*; a two-volume commentary on Ibn al-Ḥājjib's *al-Furū'*; *Irshād al-Sālik*; *Arba'ūn Ḥadīthan Mukhtārah*; *al-Mukhtār min al-Jawāmi'*; *Jāmi' al-Fawā'id*; *Jāmi' al-Ummahāt fī Aḥkām al-'Ibādāt*; *al-Naṣā'ih*; *Tuḥfat al-Aqrān fī I'rāb Ba'd Āy al-Qur'ān*; *al-Dhahab al-Ibrīz fī Gharīb al-Qur'ān al-'Azīz*; a commentary on Ibn Barrī's didactic poem on the reading of Nāfi'; and *al-Irshād fī Maṣāliḥ al-'Ibād*.⁵ This richness and diversity in the Islamic sciences to which Imam al-Tha'ālibī devoted his writings reflects his comprehensive knowledge of the various branches of Islamic scholarship and his mastery of their disciplines. He did not confine himself to Qur'anic exegesis; rather, he explored a wide range of Islamic sciences, including theology, ḥadīth, jurisprudence, Qur'anic readings, and Arabic language. He was thus truly an encyclopedic scholar of the Islamic sciences, enriching the Islamic scholarly heritage through his works and benefiting the Muslim community.

He died in 876 AH in Algeria and was buried in the "Jabānat al-Ṭalabāh" cemetery near "Bāb al-Wādī" in Algiers.⁶

2- Introduction to His Tafsīr:

In the introduction to his tafsīr, Imam al-Tha'ālibī explicitly stated the title of his work: "I named it *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, and I ask Allah to benefit everyone who acquires it."⁷

As for its sources, he drew upon numerous scholarly works, most notably Ibn 'Aṭīyyah al-Andalusī's tafsīr *al-Muḥarrar al-Wajīz fī Tafsīr al-Kitāb al-'Azīz*. He also cited al-Ṭabarī's *Jāmi' al-Bayān*, al-Tha'labī's *al-Kashf wa al-Bayān*, and Ibn al-'Arabī al-Andalusī's *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*. In the introduction to his tafsīr, he states concerning *al-Muḥarrar al-Wajīz*: "I have gathered for myself and for you in this abridged work what I hope will delight both our eyes in this world and the Hereafter. By the grace of Allah, I have incorporated into it the essential material contained in Ibn 'Aṭīyyah's tafsīr."⁸

He also consulted nearly one hundred scholarly works, selecting numerous benefits from them. He explicitly stated this in the introduction to his tafsīr: "I added to it numerous benefits from other books by leading scholars and trustworthy authorities of this community, according to what I found or transmitted from reliable sources. These works number nearly one hundred. Each of them is attributed to a renowned imam known for his religious scholarship and counted among the authoritative scholars. Whenever I quoted something from an exegete, I took it directly from his work, relying on the wording of its author. I did not paraphrase any of it for fear of falling into error; rather, I retained the expressions and wording of their original authors and attributed them to them."⁹

In keeping with the brevity he stipulated for himself in the introduction to his tafsīr, readers of *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān* encounter several symbols used by Imam al-Tha'ālibī. At times, they find the letter tā', at others the letter 'ayn, and at others the letter ṣād. He, may Allah have mercy on him, explained the meanings of these symbols, stating: "I have made the letter tā' a sign for myself instead of 'I said'; whoever wishes may write it as 'I said.' As for the 'ayn, it refers to Ibn 'Aṭīyyah. As for the grammatical analysis that I have taken from someone other than Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, it is mostly from al-Ṣafāqūsī's abridgement of Abū Ḥayyān, and I have made the ṣād a sign for it. At times, I have also quoted from others, attributing each statement to the person from whom I transmitted it. Everything I have transmitted from Abū Ḥayyān has generally been transmitted through al-Ṣafāqūsī." Al-Ṣafāqūsī said: "I have made the letter mīm a sign for what I added to the work of Abū Ḥayyān."¹⁰

Al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān is among the tafsīr works whose authors gave particular attention to transmitted reports and made them a fundamental source for explaining the meanings of revelation. A reader of this tafsīr observes that its author interprets the Qur'an through the Qur'an and frequently cites Prophetic ḥadīths in his interpretation of numerous verses. He

² See: 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Jilālī, *The General History of Algeria*, vol. 2 (Algeria: Maktabat al-Sharika al-Jazā'iriyya; Beirut: Dār Maktabat al-Ḥayāt, 1965), 280–281.

³ See: 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Makhluḥ al-Tha'ālibī, *The Jewels of the Qur'anic Interpretations*, vol. 5 (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 1418 AH), 171.

⁴ See: al-Tha'ālibī, *The Gain of the Visitor and the Desire of the Noble Seeker* (Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 2005), 26–29.

⁵ Muḥammad b. Qāsim Makhluḥ, *The Pure Tree of Light in the Classes of the Mālikīs*, vol. 1, 382.

⁶ See: Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā al-Wansharīsī, *Wafayāt al-Wansharīsī* (n.p.: Sharikat Nawābiḡh al-Fikr, n.d.), pp. 105–106.

⁷ al-Tha'ālibī, *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān*, vol. 1, p. 120.

⁸ al-Tha'ālibī, *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān*, vol. 1, p. 117.

⁹ al-Tha'ālibī, *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān*, vol. 1, pp. 117–118.

¹⁰ al-Tha'ālibī, *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān*, vol. 1, p. 118.

also cites reports transmitted from the Companions and Successors and draws, when necessary, on linguistic discussions and rhetorical subtleties contained in the verses. As for his position on Isrā'īliyyāt reports, his predominant approach is to cite them using cautious and non-assertive formulations. It can also be observed that he was not among those who extensively transmitted such reports; rather, he limited himself to those that did not contradict the explicit Qur'anic text or the authentic Sunnah. When he transmitted a weak report, he followed it with a refutation, weakened its authority, and drew attention to its invalidity. His position on Isrā'īliyyāt and his methodology in transmitting such reports in his presentation of the stories of the Prophets, peace and blessings be upon them, will be discussed in detail in the main body of this study.

Section Two: Sources Used by Imam al-Tha'ālibī in Presenting the Stories of the Prophets

The sources from which Imam al-Tha'ālibī drew in presenting the stories of the Prophets were diverse. The following is a brief presentation of the most prominent of these sources:

1- The Holy Qur'an:

The primary source to which Imam al-Tha'ālibī turned when presenting the stories of the Prophets was the Holy Qur'an. What is presented briefly in one passage is explained in another, while what may be unclear in one context is clarified by another context. Examples of this include the following:

- Regarding the meaning of "good" in the statement of our master Noah to his people: {I do not say of those whom your eyes look down upon that Allah will not bestow any good on them} ¹¹. After Imam al-Tha'ālibī mentioned several views on the matter, he commented: "The correct view is that 'good' is more general than all of these meanings. Consider the statement of Allah Almighty: {So whoever does good equal to the weight of an atom (or small ant) shall see it} ¹², which encompasses wealth and other forms of good. Similarly: {And do good that you may be successful} ¹³. Consider also his statement, peace and blessings be upon him: 'O Allah, there is no good except the good of the Hereafter,' ¹⁴ and the statement of Allah Almighty: {If you find there is good and honesty in them} ¹⁵. Here, wealth has no place except by way of interpretation. The intended meaning of 'good' may also be wealth alone, depending on the contextual indications, as in the statement of Allah Almighty: {if he leaves wealth, that he makes a bequest to parents and next of kin, according to reasonable manners. (This is) a duty upon Al-Muttaqun.} ^{16,17}
- In his interpretation of the statement of Allah Almighty: {And when Musa (Moses) came at the time and place appointed by US, and his lord (Allah) spoke to him; he said "O my Lord! Show me (Yourself), that I may look upon You." Allah said: "You cannot see Me, but look upon the mountain; if he stands still in its place when than you shall see Me." So when his Lord appeared to the mountain, He made it collapse to dust, and Musa (Moses) fell down unconscious. Then when he recovered his sense, he said: "Glorified are You, I turn to You in repentance and I am the first of the believers."} ¹⁸. *Al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān* states: "... The word 'lan' negates a future action. If we considered this negation in isolation, we would conclude that Moses would never see Him, not even in the Hereafter. However, it is established elsewhere through mutawātir ḥadīths that the people of faith will see Allah on the Day of Resurrection, and Moses, peace be upon him, is even more deserving of seeing Him. I say: Allah Almighty also states: {Some faces that day shall be Nadirah (22) Looking at their Lord (Allah) (23)} ^{19,20}
- Imam al-Tha'ālibī also connected Qur'anic verses relating to the same story across different sūrahs. In Sūrat Hūd, while interpreting the statement of Allah Almighty: {And it was revealed to Nuh (Noah): None of your people will believe except those who have believed already. So be not sad because of what they used to do} ²¹, *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān* states: "It is reported that when this was revealed to him, he supplicated and said: {And Nuh (Noah) said: "My Lord! Leave not one of the disbelievers on the earth!} ^{22,23} Thus, the connection between the two verses is

¹¹ Hūd 11/31.

¹² al-Zalzalah 99/7.

¹³ al-Ḥajj 22/77.

¹⁴ Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl al-Bukhārī, *al-Jāmi' al-Musnad al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 1 (n.p.: Dār Ṭawq al-Najāh, 1422 AH), Kitāb al-Ṣalāh, Bāb "Hal Tunbash Qubūr Mushrikī al-Jāhiliyya wa Yuttakhadh Makānahā Masājid," ḥadīth 428, p. 93; Muslim b. al-Ḥajjāj, *al-Musnad al-Ṣaḥīḥ al-Mukhtaṣar* (Beirut: Dār Ihya' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, n.d.), vol. 3, Kitāb al-Jihād wa-l-Siyar, Bāb "Ghazwat al-Aḥzāb wa Hiya al-Khandaq," ḥadīth 1805, p. 1431.

¹⁵ al-Nūr 24/33.

¹⁶ al-Baqarah 2/180.

¹⁷ al-Tha'ālibī, *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān*, vol. 3, p. 281

¹⁸ al-A'rāf 7/143.

¹⁹ al-Qiyāmah 75/22–23.

²⁰ al-Tha'ālibī, *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān*, vol. 3, p. 74.

²¹ Hūd 11/36.

²² Nūḥ 71/26

²³ al-Tha'ālibī, *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān*, vol. 3, p. 282.

clear.

2- Prophetic Ḥadīths and Transmitted Reports:

Imam al-Tha'ālibī relied on a number of ḥadīths and transmitted reports that provide details not mentioned in the Holy Qur'an or clarify potentially ambiguous meanings. Throughout this process, he was careful to ensure the authenticity and accuracy of his transmissions. Examples include the following:

- At the beginning of his presentation of the story of our master Moses and al-Khiḍr, *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān* states: "In an authentic ḥadīth²⁴, the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said that Moses, peace be upon him, once sat in a gathering of the Children of Israel and delivered a sermon, conveying it effectively. He was then asked: 'Do you know of anyone more knowledgeable than you?' He replied: 'No.' Allah then revealed to him: 'Indeed, Our servant Khiḍr is more knowledgeable than you.' Moses said: 'My Lord, show me the way to meet him.' Allah revealed to him that he should travel along the length of the sea until he reached the meeting point of the two seas, and that when he lost the fish, he would find him there..."²⁵
- After al-Tha'ālibī²⁶ presented the reports concerning Jacob's seeking forgiveness for his sons, he followed them with evidence from an authentic report of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, in which he advised 'Alī, may Allah be pleased with him: "When it is Friday night, if you are able to rise during the last third of the night, then do so, for it is a witnessed hour and supplication during it is answered. My brother Jacob said to his sons: 'I shall seek forgiveness for you from my Lord,' meaning until Friday night comes..."²⁷
- Regarding the meaning of "biḍ'" in the statement of Allah Almighty: { And he said to the one whom he knew to be saved: 'Mention me to your lord (i.e. your king, so as to get me out of the prison).' But Shaitān (Satan) made him forget to mention it to his Lord [or Satan made Yūsuf (Joseph) to forget the remembrance of his Lord (Allāh) as to ask for His Help, instead of others]. So [Yūsuf (Joseph)] stayed in prison a few (more) years. }²⁸, Imam al-Tha'ālibī stated: "There is disagreement concerning its meaning. The majority hold that it refers to a period from three to ten years. This was stated by Ibn 'Abbās, and upon this is based the Mālikī position regarding claims and oaths. Qatādah said: *biḍ'* refers to a period from three to nine years. This is supported by the statement of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, to Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq concerning his wager with Quraysh over the victory of the Romans over the Persians: 'Did you not know that *biḍ'* refers to a period from three to nine?"²⁹
- In the story of our master Moses, *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān* states: "Ibn 'Abbās said: Then Moses, peace be upon him, passed by while remaining watchful, and there he saw the same Israelite who had fought the Copt the previous day fighting another man from among the Copts. The killing of the Copt had remained hidden from the people and had been kept secret..."³⁰
- Regarding the dream of the two young men in the story of our master Joseph, *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān* states: "It is narrated from Ibn Mas'ūd that the two young men presented these two dreams in order to test him. It is also narrated from Mujāhid that they had actually seen these things in their dreams."³¹

3- Isrā'īliyyāt:

Although Imam al-Tha'ālibī did not rely extensively on Isrā'īliyyāt in his tafsīr, he sometimes drew upon them to provide certain historical details when they did not contradict an established religious text. His methodology also shows that he sometimes transmitted Isrā'īliyyāt using cautious formulations, such as "it is narrated," "it is said," and "they claimed," among others, indicating that he did not assert the certainty or authenticity of such reports. Examples include the following:

- In his narration of the story of our master Moses and Pharaoh, he begins the account by stating: "It is reported that, among the events of the story of Moses, peace be upon him, Pharaoh was informed that the destruction of his kingdom would occur at the hands of a boy from the Children of Israel. He therefore ordered the killing of every male child born among the Children of Israel..."³²
- At the beginning of Sūrat al-Qaṣaṣ, he states: "It is reported concerning the circumstances surrounding this verse

²⁴ al-Bukhārī, *al-Jāmi' al-Musnad al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 1, Kitāb al-'Ilm, Bāb "Mā Dhukira fī Dhahāb Mūsā fī al-Baḥr ilā al-Khiḍr," ḥadīth 74, p. 26.

²⁵ al-Bukhārī, *al-Jāmi' al-Musnad al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 3, p. 533.

²⁶ See: al-Bukhārī, *al-Jāmi' al-Musnad al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 3, p. 351.

²⁷ Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Ḥākim, *al-Mustadrak 'alā al-Ṣaḥīḥayn*, ed. Muṣṭafā 'Abd al-Qādir 'Aṭā, 1st ed. (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1411 AH/1990), Kitāb al-Witr, ḥadīth 1190

²⁸ Yūsuf 12/42

²⁹ al-Tha'ālibī, *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān*, vol. 3, p. 329.

³⁰ al-Tha'ālibī, *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān*, vol. 4, p. 276.

³¹ al-Tha'ālibī, *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān*, vol. 3, p. 326.

³² al-Tha'ālibī, *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān*, vol. 4, p. 54.

that Moses' mother wrapped him in his clothes, placed him in a small chest, secured it with a lock, hung its key from it, and entrusted him to Allah out of confidence in Him and in anticipation of His promise..."³³

- In his presentation of the story of our master Joseph, he states: "It is narrated that the person who purchased Joseph brought him to Egypt, the well-known land. He presented him in the marketplace, and he was the most handsome of people. Bidding for him continued until a great price was reached. It was said that his price was equivalent to his weight in gold, silver, or silk. Al-'Azīz then purchased him; he was the king's chamberlain and treasurer."³⁴
- Elsewhere, he states in his presentation of the king's dream: "And regarding His statement, Exalted is He: { And the king (of Egypt) said: 'Verily, I saw (in a dream) seven fat cows, whom seven lean ones were devouring }³⁵, it is narrated that he said: 'I saw them emerging from a river, followed by seven lean cows, which ate the seven fat cows, and they disappeared into their bellies.'"³⁶
- Elsewhere, in the context of his presentation of Joseph's interpretation of the king's dream, he states: "It is narrated that when Joseph, peace be upon him, came out and explained this plan to the king, and the king was impressed by it, he said to him: 'I have entrusted you with responsibility for managing the food supplies during these coming years.' This was the first position that Joseph assumed."³⁷
- Regarding the merchandise of the brothers of our master Joseph, *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān* states: "It is narrated that Joseph's brothers had returned the merchandise that was in their saddlebags and were reluctant to take the food without payment. This is why they said: 'You certainly know'—that is, 'You know that we are scrupulous in such matters.' It is also narrated that they had become known in Egypt for their righteousness and abstinence, and that they would place coverings over the mouths of their camels so that they would not consume people's crops. This is why they said: 'You certainly know.'"³⁸
- Regarding the meaning of *rabwah* in the statement of Allah Almighty: { And We made the son of Maryam (Mary) and his mother as a sign, And We gave them refuge on high ground, a place of rest, security and flowing streams } Maqdis. He claimed that the Torah -is Bayt al *rabwah*bār said: 'The ḥA-states: "Ka'b al *isān*ḥ-Jawāhir al-al,³⁹ states that Bayt al-Maqdis is the closest place on earth to heaven and that it rises eighteen miles above the earth."⁴⁰
- Elsewhere, in the context of his presentation of the story of our master Abraham, he states: "Ka'b al-Aḥbār, may Allah be pleased with him, said: 'The fire did not burn except the rope with which they had bound him. He, Glorified and Exalted is He, made this a sign, a lesson, and evidence of His oneness for whoever He opened his heart to and enabled to embrace faith.'"⁴¹
- Regarding the reason why our master Solomon asked about the hoopoe, *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān* states: "Abd Allāh ibn Salām said: 'He sought the hoopoe because he needed to know the depth of the water beneath the surface of the earth. He had settled in a barren land where there was no water, and the hoopoe was able to perceive what lay beneath and above the surface of the earth. It would therefore inform Solomon of the location of water, after which the jinn would extract it within an hour. Other explanations have also been given, and Allah knows best what is authentic among them.'"⁴²
- In the story of our master Jonah, he states: "It is narrated that Allah Almighty revealed to the fish: 'I did not make Jonah your sustenance. Rather, I made your belly a protection and a prison for him.'"⁴³

4- Tafsir Works:

Imam al-Tha'ālibī drew upon the views of earlier Qur'anic exegetes, such as al-Ṭabarī, al-Tha'labī, Ibn 'Aṭīyya, Ibn al-'Arabī, Abū Ḥayyān al-Andalusī, and others, relying on them to complete the meaning and clarify the intended significance. Examples include the following:

- Regarding the division of the people of Moses, Imam al-Tha'ālibī stated: "The majority of Qur'anic exegetes said that the Children of Israel divided into three groups: one group disobeyed; another prohibited the wrongdoing, spoke out against it, and withdrew; and a third group withdrew without either committing the wrongdoing or prohibiting it."⁴⁴

³³ al-Tha'ālibī, *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān*, vol. 4, p. 246.

³⁴ al-Tha'ālibī, *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān*, vol. 4, p. 246.

³⁵ Yūsuf 12/43.

³⁶ al-Tha'ālibī, *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān*, vol. 3, p. 317.

³⁷ al-Tha'ālibī, *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān*, vol. 3, p. 329.

³⁸ al-Tha'ālibī, *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān*, vol. 3, p. 331.

³⁹ Al-Mu'minūn 23/50.

⁴⁰ al-Tha'ālibī, *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān*, vol. 3, p. 341.

⁴¹ al-Tha'ālibī, *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān*, vol. 4, p. 150.

⁴² al-Tha'ālibī, *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān*, vol. 4, p. 247.

⁴³ al-Tha'ālibī, *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān*, vol. 5, p. 47.

⁴⁴ al-Tha'ālibī, *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān*, vol. 3, p. 89.

- Regarding the story of the Flood, he quoted Ibn 'Aṭīyya as stating: "The reports and books of Qur'anic exegesis unanimously indicate that the drowning affected all the inhabitants of the earth and that the water covered the entire earth. Ibn 'Abbās and others held this view. This is evident from Noah's command to take pairs of every kind of animal; had there been no fear that they would become extinct throughout the earth, there would have been no reason for this."⁴⁵
- In his interpretation of Allah's statement: { They said: 'O Ṣāliḥ (Saleh)! You have been a man of whom we had high hopes till this (new thing which you have brought to us)! }⁴⁶, Imam al-Tha'ālibī stated: "The majority of Qur'anic exegetes said that it means: one in whom we placed our hopes, expecting you to become a leader who would attain the status of the eminent."⁴⁷
- In the story of our master Joseph, Imam al-Tha'ālibī quoted Ibn al-'Arabī on several occasions. Among these is his statement: "Ibn al-'Arabī said in his *Aḥkām*⁴⁸, concerning His statement: { And they sold him for a low price }⁴⁹[Yūsuf: 20]: 'That is, his brothers and the caravan. As for his brothers, it was because their intention was to get rid of him; as for the caravan, it was because they feared that their companions would share in the proceeds with them.'"⁵⁰

5- Historical and Biographical Sources:

Imam al-Tha'ālibī benefited from historical sources in his narration of the stories of the Prophets. He relied on reports and accounts collected by historians to facilitate understanding of the narratives and connect their events, provided that these accounts did not contradict established religious texts. Examples include the following:

- Regarding the identity of those who asked the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, about the Hour, Imam al-Tha'ālibī stated: "In Ibn Hishām's *Sīrah*, it is reported that those who asked were Jewish scholars, Ḥaml ibn Abī Qushayr and Samaw' al ibn Zayd."⁵¹
- Elsewhere, he states: "Regarding His statement, Exalted is He: { And (remember) when Allah promised you one of the two parties (of the enemy) that it should be yours: you wished that the one not armed should be yours, but Allah willed to justify the truth by His Words and to cut off the roots of the disbelievers }⁵² This verse contains a fine narrative, the full account of which is found in Ibn Hishām's *Book of the Biography of the Messenger of Allah*, peace and blessings be upon him. In summary, when the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, was informed—or, according to another report, received revelation—that Abū Sufyān ibn Ḥarb was returning from Syria with the caravan carrying the trade goods and wealth of Quraysh, he said to his Companions: 'The caravan of Quraysh has come within your reach, so go out to it, perhaps Allah will grant it to you as spoils...'"⁵³

6- Linguistic Sources and Poetry Collections:

Imam al-Tha'ālibī employed linguistic sources and poetry collections to clarify words and constructions related to the narrative context. He relied on Arabic dictionaries and poetic evidence to explain unfamiliar expressions and elucidate their precise meanings, while highlighting the artistic imagery and rhetorical purposes found in the stories of the Prophets. Examples include the following:

- In his presentation of the story of our master Moses and his people, concerning their statement: { They said [to Mūsā (Moses)]: 'Whatever Ayāt (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) you may bring to us, to work therewith your sorcery on us, we shall never believe in you }⁵⁴, *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān* explains the meaning of *mahmā* as follows: "According to al-Khalīl, its original form is *mā mā*, with the first alif changed into hā'. Sībawayh said that it is *mah mā*, two elements combined into a single word with a single meaning. Others said that it means *mah*, that is, 'stop' or 'refrain,' while *mā* is a conditional particle, as mentioned by al-Zajjāj. This verse reflects their transgression, arrogance, and their firm resolve to persist in outright disbelief."⁵⁵
- In his interpretation of Allah's statement: { And Musa (Moses) chose out of his people seventy (of the best) men for Our appointed time and place of meeting }⁵⁶, *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān* states: "...A group of grammarians said that its meaning is: 'Moses chose from among his people,' with the preposition *min* omitted. One may say: 'I chose

⁴⁵ al-Tha'ālibī, *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān*, vol. 3, p. 285.

⁴⁶ Hūd 11/62.

⁴⁷ al-Tha'ālibī, *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān*, vol. 3, p. 289.

⁴⁸ Ibn al-'Arabī, *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*, ed. Muḥammad 'Abd al-Qādir 'Aṭā, 3rd ed. (n.p., 1424 AH/2003), vol. 3, p. 43.

⁴⁹ Yūsuf 12/20.

⁵⁰ al-Tha'ālibī, *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān*, vol. 3, p. 317.

⁵¹ al-Tha'ālibī, *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān*, vol. 3, p. 99.

⁵² Al-Anfāl 8/7.

⁵³ al-Tha'ālibī, *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān*, vol. 3, p. 115.

⁵⁴ Al-A'rāf 7/132.

⁵⁵ al-Tha'ālibī, *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān*, vol. 3, p. 68.

⁵⁶ Al-A'rāf 7/155.

Zayd from among the men,' and 'I chose the men, Zayd.'"⁵⁷

- Regarding the meaning conveyed by "min" in our master Noah's statement to his people: { He (Allāh) will forgive you of your sins and respite you to an appointed term }⁵⁸, *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān* states: "Regarding His statement, *min dhunūbikum*, some scholars said that *min* is redundant, and this is a Kufan grammatical position. As for al-Khalīl and Sībawayh, they do not permit the addition of *min* in affirmative constructions."⁵⁹
- In explaining the meaning of our master Joseph's statement, "aṣbū ilayhinna," he quoted⁶⁰ the following verse by Durayd ibn al-Ṣimmaḥ: "He inclined as he inclined until old age overcame his head; when it overcame him, he said to falsehood: 'Keep away.'"⁶¹
- Regarding His statement, Exalted is He: { They said: 'By Allah! You will never cease remembering Yūsuf (Joseph) until you become weak with old age, or until you be of the dead }⁶², he states: "The meaning is: 'By Allah, you will not cease.' Thus, *lā* is omitted in this oath construction because the context indicates it. Among examples of this is the statement of Imru' al-Qays⁶³:
"I said, 'By Allah, I shall not cease sitting here,

even if they were to cut off my head and limbs before you.'"⁶⁴

The Third Section: His Position on Contradictory Isrā'īliyyāt

In presenting the stories of the Prophets, Imam al-Tha'ālibī frequently drew attention to Isrā'īliyyāt that contradicted the Qur'an and Sunnah, or that compromised the integrity and status of the Prophets. He therefore warned against such reports, explicitly declaring them false and fabricated, or interpreting them in a manner that preserves the status of prophethood and the integrity of the Prophets, peace and blessings be upon them. Examples include the following:

1- Commenting on some Isrā'īliyyāt concerning the story of our master Adam, he stated: "Adam and Eve must be regarded as free from obeying Satan, and I have not yet found evidence establishing the authenticity of what has been narrated in these stories. Even if it were authentic, it would have to be interpreted [figuratively]."⁶⁵

2- In his interpretation of Allah's statement: { Thus did Adam disobey his Lord, so he went astray }⁶⁶, Imam al-Tha'ālibī transmitted several reports explaining the verse and then followed them with the following comment: "Other interpretations have also been given, which I do not consider appropriate to mention here. How excellent was Ibn al-'Arabī⁶⁷ when he said: 'The Prophets, peace and blessings be upon them, must be regarded as free from what the ignorant have attributed to them. Yet the Creator, Glorified be He, by His effective decree and preordained judgment, allowed Adam to eat from the tree intentionally, while forgetting the covenant. Thus, with regard to his deliberate act, He said: "Adam disobeyed," and in explaining his excuse, He said: "Indeed, We had previously made a covenant with Adam, but he forgot." The object of the covenant is therefore distinct from the state of forgetfulness. It is permissible for the Master to say of His servant, in reference to what befell him: "He disobeyed," as a form of reproach, and then to show him favor by saying: "He forgot," as a form of drawing him near. However, none of us may apply such an expression to Adam or mention it except when reciting the Qur'an or quoting the statement of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him.'"⁶⁸

3- In narrating the story of our master Abraham, he stated: "It has been narrated that when he was cast into the fire, Allah protected him, while the rope with which he had been bound was burned. People have greatly elaborated on his story, so we have abridged it because most of these reports are not authentic..."⁶⁹

4- Commenting on the Isrā'īliyyāt concerning the story of our master Solomon, he stated: "Know—may Allah have mercy upon you—that people have greatly elaborated on the story of this verse with accounts whose authenticity cannot be established."⁷⁰

⁵⁷ al-Tha'ālibī, *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān*, vol. 3, p. 81.

⁵⁸ Nūḥ 71/4.

⁵⁹ al-Tha'ālibī, *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān*, vol. 5, p. 488.

⁶⁰ See: al-Tha'ālibī, *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān*, vol. 3, p. 324.

⁶¹ al-Aṣma'ī, *al-Aṣma'īyyāt*, ed. Aḥmad Muḥammad Shākir and 'Abd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn, 7th ed. (Egypt: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1993), p. 108.

⁶² Yūsuf 12/85.

⁶³ Imru' al-Qays, *Dīwān Imru' al-Qays*, ed. 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Muṣṭawī, 2nd ed. (Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rifa, 2004), p. 137.

⁶⁴ al-Tha'ālibī, *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān*, vol. 3, p. 347.

⁶⁵ al-Tha'ālibī, *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān*, vol. 3, p. 102.

⁶⁶ Tā Hā 20/121.

⁶⁷ See: Ibn al-'Arabī, *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*, vol. 3, p. 259.

⁶⁸ al-Tha'ālibī, *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān*, vol. 4, p. 71.

⁶⁹ al-Tha'ālibī, *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān*, vol. 4, p. 92.

⁷⁰ al-Tha'ālibī, *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān*, vol. 5, p. 67.

The Fourth Section: Upholding the Integrity of the Prophets and Presenting Them as Models of Guidance

Imam al-Tha'ālibī was particularly strict in this regard. His critical approach was not limited to Isrā'īliyyāt but extended to some interpretations and scholarly opinions of earlier Qur'anic exegetes when he considered them inconsistent with the status of the Prophets, peace and blessings be upon them. Examples include the following:

1- In presenting the story of our master Adam in Sūrat al-Baqarah, Imam al-Tha'ālibī quoted Ibn 'Aṭīyya as stating: "Ibn al-Qāsim narrated from Mālik that he said: 'It has reached me that the first acts of disobedience were envy, arrogance, and stinginess: Satan envied Adam and became arrogant, while Adam was stingy in eating from a tree that he had been forbidden to approach.'"⁷¹ Imam al-Tha'ālibī then commented critically on this statement: "Applying the term 'stinginess' to Adam contains something that is not difficult for you to recognize; it is necessary to believe that the Prophets are free from anything that diminishes their rank."⁷²

2- Regarding Allah's statement: {But when He gave them (the polytheist and his wife) a Sālih (good in every aspect) child, they ascribed partners to Him (Allāh) in that which He has given to them }⁷³, Imam al-Tha'ālibī transmitted several reports stating that Satan suggested to Eve that she name her son "Abd al-Hārith," which was one of Satan's names, and threatened to kill her if she did not give him this name, so she obeyed him. This was understood as associating partners with Allah through naming. Imam al-Tha'ālibī then commented on these reports, stating: "Adam and Eve must be regarded as free from obeying Satan. I have not yet found evidence establishing the authenticity of what has been narrated in these stories. Even if it were authentic, it would have to be interpreted... Ibn al-'Arabī⁷⁴ stated, in weakening and refuting this view: 'This view and similar reports are mentioned among the weak ḥadīths in al-Tirmidhī and elsewhere, as well as among the Isrā'īliyyāt that have no firm basis and upon which no person of sound judgment should rely.'⁷⁵ He then quoted Ibn 'Aṭīyya,⁷⁶ who held that the intended referent of this address is the polytheists: when Allah granted them a sound and healthy child, they diverted him from the natural disposition toward which they had wished to direct him and instead led him to associating partners with Allah. Imam al-Tha'ālibī then followed Ibn 'Aṭīyya's view with the words of Ibn al-'Arabī: "Ibn al-'Arabī stated in his *Aḥkām*⁷⁷: 'This interpretation is closer to the truth and more consistent with what is correct. It is also the apparent meaning of the verse and its generality, which encompasses all its possible applications. It also preserves the Prophets from the deficiency that is unbecoming even of ordinary human beings, let alone their leaders and Prophets.' End quote. This is a sound statement, and success is granted by Allah."⁷⁸

3- In the story of our master Solomon, when he requested the throne of Bilqīs, Imam al-Tha'ālibī presented two interpretations⁷⁹ concerning his purpose in requesting the throne. The first, attributed to Ibn Zayd, states that his purpose was to demonstrate the power that Allah had bestowed upon him. The second, attributed to Qatāda, holds that he intended to acquire the throne before they embraced Islam. Imam al-Tha'ālibī then commented on both interpretations, preferring the first and stating: "The first interpretation is more befitting the status of prophethood, and therefore the verse must be understood accordingly."⁸⁰

4- In the story of our master Jonah, specifically concerning his supplication: {Lā ilāha illā Anta [none has the right to be worshipped but You (O, Allāh)], Glorified (and Exalted) be You [above all that (evil) they associate with You]! Truly, I have been of the wrong-doers }⁸¹, Imam al-Tha'ālibī stated: "There is nothing in these words indicating that he confessed to a sin, as some have suggested. In the authentic ḥadīth, it is reported: 'The supplication of my brother Dhū al-Nūn while he was in the belly of the fish was: "There is no deity but You; glory be to You; indeed, I was among the wrongdoers." No believing—or, according to another wording, Muslim—servant supplicates with it without having his supplication answered.'^{82,83}

⁷¹ See: Ibn 'Aṭīyya, *al-Muḥarrar al-Wajīz*, vol. 1, p. 125.

⁷² al-Tha'ālibī, *al-Jawāhir al-Hisān*, vol. 1, p. 217.

⁷³ Al-'A' rāf 7/190.

⁷⁴ See: Ibn al-'Arabī, *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*, vol. 2, p. 355.

⁷⁵ al-Tha'ālibī, *al-Jawāhir al-Hisān*, vol. 3, p. 102.

⁷⁶ See: Ibn 'Aṭīyya, *al-Muḥarrar al-Wajīz*, vol. 2, p. 486.

⁷⁷ See: Ibn al-'Arabī, *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*, vol. 2, p. 355.

⁷⁸ al-Tha'ālibī, *al-Jawāhir al-Hisān*, vol. 3, p. 104.

⁷⁹ See: al-Tha'ālibī, *al-Jawāhir al-Hisān*, vol. 4, p. 250.

⁸⁰ al-Tha'ālibī, *al-Jawāhir al-Hisān*, vol. 4, p. 251.

⁸¹ Al-Anbiyā' 21/87.

⁸² al-Tirmidhī, *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, ed. Aḥmad Muḥammad Shākir et al., 2nd ed. (Egypt: Sharikat Maktabat wa Maṭba'at Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1975), Abwāb al-Da'awāt, vol. 5, ḥadīth 3505, p. 529; authenticated by al-Albānī in *Ṣaḥīḥ wa-Da'if Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, vol. 8, p. 5.

⁸³ al-Tha'ālibī, *al-Jawāhir al-Hisān*, vol. 4, p. 98.

5- In commenting on some reports concerning the story of our master Joseph, he quoted Qādī 'Iyād⁸⁴ as stating: "...The correct position, Allah willing, is to regard them as free from all defects even before prophethood and to affirm their protection from everything that could give rise to doubt."⁸⁵

6- Concerning the story of our master David, *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān* states: "...In the books of the Children of Israel, this story contains accounts that are unbecoming. 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib said: 'Whoever narrates what these storytellers have said concerning David, I would impose upon him two prescribed punishments because of the violation he has committed against the sanctity of one whose rank Allah has elevated.'"⁸⁶

The Fifth Section: Highlighting the Exhortative and Educational Dimension in the Stories of the Prophets

Imam al-Tha'ālibī did not overlook the exhortative and educational dimension in the stories of the prophets in his *Tafsīr*. He drew lessons and moral teachings from them, highlighting the ethical and educational guidance they contain, which serves to refine conduct, cultivate religious values, and strengthen one's connection with God Almighty. He employed a refined rhetorical style that combines elegance of expression with depth of meaning. Examples include:

1- In his presentation of the story of Joseph, Imam al-Tha'ālibī quoted Imam Ibn al-'Arabī as saying: (Consider the great forbearance of Joseph, peace be upon him, and his abundant good manners. He said: "What happened to the women who cut their hands?" Thus, he mentioned the women collectively, allowing the wife of al-'Azīz to be included within the general expression by implication rather than explicit mention."⁸⁷ Imam al-Tha'ālibī then commented: "These were also the qualities of our Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. He would not confront anyone with something unpleasant; rather, he would say: "What is the matter with people who do such-and-such?" without identifying anyone specifically. In general, every praiseworthy quality mentioned in the Qur'an with which the prophets and the righteous were characterized was also possessed by our Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, for his character was the Qur'an."⁸⁸

2- In his interpretation of the verse: ﴿And when they meet those who believe, they say, "We believe," but when they are alone with their devils, they say, "Indeed, we are with you; we were only mocking."﴾ [al-Baqarah: 14], *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān* states: "Such was the condition of the hypocrites: they displayed faith before the believers while displaying disbelief in private. The Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him, would turn away from them and leave them in their state of uncertainty, fearing that people might say that he killed his companions, as occurred in the case of 'Abd Allāh ibn Ubayy ibn Salūl."⁸⁹ Imam al-Tha'ālibī then offered guidance and instruction, saying: It is incumbent upon the believer to avoid these reprehensible qualities. It has been authentically reported from the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, that he said: "Among the worst of people is the two-faced person who comes to these people with one face and to those people with another."⁹⁰ ⁹¹

3- In his interpretation of the verse: ﴿He said, "O Moses, I have chosen you above the people through My messages and My speech. So hold fast to what I have given you and be among the grateful.﴾⁹², Imam al-Tha'ālibī stated: "So hold fast to what I have given you and be among the grateful" contains instruction, contentment, and guidance toward the path of safety. It is an example for everyone in their own circumstances, for all blessings come from God Almighty according to a measure, and all matters occur under His sight and hearing."⁹³

4- In Sūrat al-A'rāf, while presenting the story of Moses, he stated: If you seek success, O brother, then you must follow the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, honor his law, and honor all that pertains to it.⁹⁴

5- In his interpretation of the verse: ﴿I will never send him with you until you give me a solemn covenant in the name of God that you will certainly bring him back to me, unless you are surrounded and overcome.﴾⁹⁵, *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān* states: ((The expression "unless you are surrounded and overcome" is general and encompasses all forms of defeat. Observe that Jacob, peace be upon him, took a covenant in this matter, called upon God as witness, advised his sons, and then declared his reliance upon Him. This is reliance accompanied by taking the necessary means, which is the reliance of all believers,

⁸⁴ See: Qādī 'Iyād, *al-Shifā' bi-Ta'rīf Ḥuqūq al-Muṣṭafā*, vol. 2, p. 335.

⁸⁵ al-Tha'ālibī, *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān*, vol. 3, p. 319.

⁸⁶ al-Tha'ālibī, *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān*, vol. 5, p. 62.

⁸⁷ Ibn al-'Arabī, *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*, vol. 3, p. 58.

⁸⁸ al-Tha'ālibī, *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān*, vol. 3, p. 333.

⁸⁹ al-Tha'ālibī, *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān*, vol. 1, p. 189.

⁹⁰ See: al-Bukhārī, *al-Jāmi' al-Musnad al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 9, Kitāb al-Aḥkām, Bāb "Mā Yukrah min Thanā' al-Sultān," ḥadīth 7179, p. 71; Muslim, *al-Musnad al-Ṣaḥīḥ al-Mukhtaṣar*, vol. 4, Kitāb al-Birr wa-l-Ṣila wa-l-Ādāb, Bāb "Dhamm Dhī al-Wajhayn wa-Tahrīm Fi'lihi," ḥadīth 99, p. 2011.

⁹¹ al-Tha'ālibī, *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān*, vol. 1, p. 190.

⁹² Al-A'rāf 7/144.

⁹³ al-Tha'ālibī, *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān*, vol. 3, p. 77.

⁹⁴ al-Tha'ālibī, *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān*, vol. 3, p. 86.

⁹⁵ Yūsuf 12/66.

except those who go to extremes in abandoning all effort and are content merely with water and wild plants. This represents the highest degree of reliance, and some of the prophets followed it. Those who act according to the revealed law affirm the legitimate means of attaining things.

The gnostic Shaykh ‘Abd Allāh ibn Abī Jamrah, may God be pleased with him, said: The Qur’an contains numerous rulings, including reliance upon God Almighty and abandoning means, as well as taking outward means while the heart remains unattached to them. The latter is the noblest and purest, because it combines wisdom with the reality of monotheism. This is only attained by the exceptional individuals upon whom God has bestowed success. For this reason, God Almighty praised Jacob, peace be upon him, in His Book, saying: { And indeed, he possessed knowledge because of what We had taught him, but most people do not know” }⁹⁶. This was because he employed the means and exerted himself in fulfilling them, which is required by wisdom, and then entrusted the entire matter to God Almighty and submitted to Him, which is the reality of monotheism. Thus, he said: “I cannot avail you against God in any way; judgment belongs only to God...”⁹⁷. God Almighty praised him for combining these two great states.⁹⁸

6- In the context of presenting the story of Abraham, he quoted Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh al-Sakandarī as saying: “Be Abrahamic, O brother, when he was placed in the catapult and Gabriel came to him and asked: “Do you have a need?” He replied: “From you, no; but from my Lord, yes.” Gabriel said: “Then ask Him.” He replied: “His knowledge of my state is sufficient for my asking.” Consider how he raised his aspiration above creation and directed it toward the Sovereign, the True One. He did not seek help from Gabriel, nor did he devise a means of asking; rather, he saw his Lord as closer to him than Gabriel and closer than his own request. Thus, God saved him from Nimrod and his punishment and bestowed upon him His gifts and favors.”⁹⁹

Section Six: Concision and Clarity in Narrative Presentation

Imam al-Tha‘ālibī’s method of presenting the stories of the prophets was characterized by clarity and concise narration, without excessive brevity that might impair meaning or tedious elaboration. He explicitly stated this in several places in his *Tafsīr*. Examples include:

1- In *Sūrat al-Anbiyā’*, before presenting the story of Ayyūb, peace be upon him, Imam al-Tha‘ālibī stated: “The story of Ayyūb, peace be upon him, is lengthy and contains differing accounts, and a summary of some of it is as follows...”¹⁰⁰ He then presented the story.

2- After citing some reports concerning the story of Abraham, peace be upon him, he commented: “... People have given many accounts of his story, so we have abridged it because most of them are not authentic.”¹⁰¹

3- In determining the number of magicians in the story of Moses, Imam al-Tha‘ālibī combined accuracy, brevity, and clarity in narration, stating: “People differed greatly regarding the number of the magicians, with many opinions for which there is no reliable chain of transmission. What can be concluded is that they were a large group.”¹⁰²

4- After citing some reports from Imam al-Ṭabarī concerning the story of Moses and Pharaoh, he commented: “... Other accounts have also been related, which I have abridged because of their weak substantiation.”¹⁰³

5- After citing some reports concerning the table of Jesus, he stated: “... People have elaborated extensively on the story of the table, much of which I have deemed appropriate to abridge because it lacks a chain of transmission.”¹⁰⁴

6- In his interpretation of the verse: { And to Thamūd (people, We sent) their brother Sālih (Saleh) }¹⁰⁵, Imam al-Tha‘ālibī quoted Ibn ‘Aṭīyya as saying: “The meaning is: We sent to Thamūd their brother, referring to kinship, and they were an Arab people. Hūd and Šāliḥ were Arabs, as were Ismā‘īl and Shu‘ayb; this is what people have said, although there is an issue concerning Ismā‘īl.”¹⁰⁶ Imam al-Tha‘ālibī then commented: “The issue to which he alluded is clear: Ismā‘īl’s father was Abraham, peace be upon him, who was non-Arab, and Ismā‘īl learned Arabic from the Arabs who settled with him in Mecca, according to what the authors of prophetic biographies have mentioned. This is the point to which he alluded. Yet there is also an issue with his own observation, which prevents me from discussing it further, since my aim here is brevity and concision rather than elaboration and extensive discussion.”¹⁰⁷

7- In presenting the story of Solomon and Bilqīs, he combined brevity with clarity when commenting on some reports:

⁹⁶ Yūsuf 12/68.

⁹⁷ Yūsuf 12/67.

⁹⁸ al-Tha‘ālibī, *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān*, vol. 3, p. 338.

⁹⁹ al-Tha‘ālibī, *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān*, vol. 4, p. 92.

¹⁰⁰ al-Tha‘ālibī, *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān*, vol. 4, p. 96.

¹⁰¹ al-Tha‘ālibī, *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān*, vol. 4, p. 92.

¹⁰² al-Tha‘ālibī, *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān*, vol. 3, p. 63.

¹⁰³ al-Tha‘ālibī, *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān*, vol. 1, p. 235.

¹⁰⁴ al-Tha‘ālibī, *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān*, vol. 2, p. 439.

¹⁰⁵ Hūd 11/61.

¹⁰⁶ See: Ibn ‘Aṭīyya, *al-Muḥarrar al-Wajīz*, vol. 2, pp. 420–421.

¹⁰⁷ al-Tha‘ālibī, *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān*, vol. 3, p. 48.

“Some people have elaborated extensively on her story, which I have chosen to abridge because of its lack of authenticity. What is required from the verse is only that she was a queen ruling over the cities of Yemen, possessed great authority, and was a disbeliever among a disbelieving people.”¹⁰⁸

8- In the prophetic narratives, while presenting one of the battles between the Muslims and Quraysh, he stated: “... People differed considerably regarding their number, and therefore I have abridged it.”¹⁰⁹

9- Another aspect of his method of concision was cross-reference. He frequently referred the reader to an earlier presentation of the same story in his *Tafsīr*. For example, when commenting on the fire of Moses in Sūrat al-Qaṣaṣ, he stated: “... Its story has already been presented, so refer to it in its appropriate places.”¹¹⁰ Elsewhere, while presenting the story of Lot with his people, he stated: “... The story of the verse has already been presented.”¹¹¹

Conclusion

The present study has reached the following main findings:

- Imam al-Tha‘ālibī relied on the Holy Qur’an as one of the primary sources for narrating the stories of the prophets. He connected the different passages in which the same story is mentioned and used the Qur’an to understand what is stated concisely in one passage and explained in another, as well as to clarify the meanings of words occurring within the story.
- Imam al-Tha‘ālibī drew on Prophetic hadiths and reports transmitted from the Companions and Successors when presenting details and events from the stories of the prophets. In doing so, he carefully considered their authenticity and indicated the status of reports when necessary.
- Imam al-Tha‘ālibī benefited from the diversity of Qur’anic exegesis sources, particularly the works of Ibn ‘Atīyya, al-Ṭabarī, Ibn al-‘Arabī, and Abū Ḥayyān. He transmitted their views fairly and accurately and, at times, preferred one interpretation over another through a balanced textual and rational approach.
- Imam al-Tha‘ālibī adopted a firm position towards Israelite reports that undermine the infallibility of the prophets. He emphasized the need to absolve the prophets of anything unbecoming of their status, critically reassessed the views of some exegetes, and rejected reports that diminished their standing or compromised their prophetic integrity.
- Imam al-Tha‘ālibī devoted considerable attention to the Arabic language and poetry in explaining the meanings of words occurring in the stories of the prophets. He related their usage to the appropriate narrative context, thereby demonstrating the breadth of his linguistic knowledge.
- Imam al-Tha‘ālibī presented the prophets as models of guidance and exemplary conduct, emphasizing in his exegesis such qualities as forbearance, patience, chastity, reliance upon God, and proper conduct towards God and His creation.
- Al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān is characterized by a clear educational and formative dimension. Imam al-Tha‘ālibī derived moral, behavioral, and spiritual lessons from each story and frequently cited the statements of scholars to highlight and reinforce this dimension.
- Al-Qur’an al-Karīm. Translation of the Meanings of the Noble Qur’an in the English Language. Translated by Muhammad Taqi-ud-Din al-Hilali and Muhammad Muhsin Khan. Madinah: King Fahd Complex for the Printing of the Holy Qur’an.
- Imam al-Tha‘ālibī’s methodology relied on a gradual and concise narrative presentation. He focused on the key events of the stories and referred to earlier discussions when they were repeated, making his style clear, accessible, and easy to understand for both general readers and students of Islamic knowledge.

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¹⁰⁸ al-Tha‘ālibī, *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān*, vol. 4, p. 248.

¹⁰⁹ al-Tha‘ālibī, *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān*, vol. 5, p. 257.

¹¹⁰ al-Tha‘ālibī, *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān*, vol. 4, p. 271.

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