



**“The encyclopedic approach in Tafsir (Qur’anic exegesis), according to djaber al-Djazairi. The easiest interpretations of the speech of the Great Most High—and in the margin, the River of Good on the easiest interpretations.**

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**Abstract:**

The book’s title is presented in detail as a principal title, ‘The Simplest Exegesis of the Words of the Most High’, and as a secondary title, ‘The River of Goodness upon the Simplest Exegesis’.

What drew my attention to the interpreter’s method was his treatment of the marginal notes, which function as rich, varied and deep encyclopaedic references through careful and sincere research into the following aspects:

- Examining jurisprudential issues in acts of worship and transactions by clarifying the integration of Qur’anic exegesis with the prophetic hadith, since ‘he speaks not from inclination; it is only revelation sent down’.

Studying lexicographical derivations within the sciences of the Arabic language by explaining the entrances of linguistic derivation and the extent to which the interpreter invests in these derivations when resorting to methods of interpreting Qur’anic verses, with the aim of grasping the internal and external dimensions of meaning.

- Assessing rhetorical derivations and the aartistic and applied streams they carry, which bring the paths of understanding closer and provide an easy avenue for linking teachings and rulings to conduct and actions. Thus, the Qur’an becomes a functional school of life, before and after death.

In this research paper, I will focus on the marginal notes in the exegesis through analysis, drawing on examples adopted by the scholar-interpreter Djaber al-Djazairi and examining this encyclopaedic reference.

**Keywords:** The Noble Qur’an, Encyclopaedic Tafsir, Djaber al-Djazairi, Jurisprudence, Semantics, Prophetic Hadith

**Author profile: Abo Bakr djaber al-Djazairi**

Abo Bakr al Djazairi was born in 1921 in Tolga, Biskra, southern Algeria. He acquired an important standing in the academic and religious scholarly community. He worked as a professor at the Islamic University in Medina for more than twenty years.

His works include To the Players in Fire, as well as writings addressing riba-related transactions, including his response to those involved in them. He also wrote against Shi’ite scholars, criticising their exclusive claim to prophetic and divine knowledge as Ahl al-Bayt.

He authored a book entitled My Advice to Every Shi’ite. He was also renowned for teaching at the Prophet’s Noble Mosque for fifty years.



His book *Manhaj al-Muslim* is considered one of his most widely accepted and broadly circulated works in Arabic-speaking countries. He passed away in 2018 in Madinah.

### **Introduction:**

This exegesis begins with the style and tone of a preacher. The exegete takes a gradual, step-by-step approach, using rhetorical devices and techniques to help Djaber al-Djazairi connect with the audience, creating a sense of intimacy and reassurance.

Accordingly, the introduction is familiar and well-known, marked by the simplicity and closeness typical of the preacher and direct communication with his listeners. The introduction to the book has a ‘Friday morning’ atmosphere, where the experience of reading the Qur’an merges with the spiritual ambience of the reader, who recites the Qur’an’s exegesis with the attentive listener present. This falls within the aesthetics of reception.

This quality is clearly manifested in the praise of Allah (*ḥamdalah*), the seeking of assistance and refuge, and the affirmation of divine unity, as well as acceptance of the Muhammadan message. It also involves declaring Allah free from imperfections and distancing oneself from innovations and misguidance.

These are all avenues to intimacy and closeness, offering a kind of dual, gradual guidance to both the reader and the listener. Additionally, there is a sensory linguistic cue through the expression (‘then, as for what follows’). It is as if we are seated in the presence of Sheikh Djaber al-Djazairi.

### **This is reflected in his saying:**

‘Praise be to Allah Most High. We praise Him, seek His help and forgiveness, and seek refuge in Allah from the evils of our own selves and the misdeeds of our actions. Whoever Allah guides has no one to lead him astray, and whoever He leaves to stray has no guide. I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, who has no partner, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger. He sent him with the truth as a bearer of glad tidings and a warner before the Hour. Those who obey Allah and His Messenger have indeed found guidance, while those who disobey Allah and His Messenger harm only themselves and do no harm to Allah. As for what follows: Verily, the most truthful speech is the Book of Allah and the best guidance is that of Muhammad ﷺ. The worst matters are the newly invented things, and every newly invented matter is an innovation and misguidance.

We also find him taking the reader by the hand, as in his statement: ‘This is a concise exegesis’, and his remark: ‘Being mindful of the needs of the Muslims.’ These points clarify the exegete Djaber al-Djazairi’s concern for, and careful attention to, drawing near to all kinds of people despite differences in temperament, and taking into account varying degrees of patience in reading and instruction.

He also selects the words ‘healing’ and ‘mercy’, supporting them with relevant verses from the Qur’an, which reveals the persuasive rhetorical strategy he adopted. He cites Allah’s saying:

“And We send down of the Qur’an that which is a healing and a mercy for the believers.” (Qur’an 17:82).

The exegete also affirms that the motives behind composing this book demonstrate the gravity of the matter. Hence, Djaber al-Djazairi adopts the stance of a preacher and khatib, intending to correct distorted ideas until the dawn of reality breaks through.



He emphasises that the Qur'an was not revealed exclusively for the dead or for funerals. Sadly, this is still a reality in many Muslim homes: the Qur'an is only recited in the month of Ramadan and then put away in drawers once the twenty-seventh night has passed. Interpreting the Qur'an is also considered a sin. Furthermore, he discusses the practice of attributing the title 'Sayyid' (master) to a buried saint, which he views as leading to destruction and shirk. He then explains his seriousness and keenness in writing this work, which we believe is clearly driven by a profound religious cause for the sake of Allah Almighty.

**This is evident in his introduction:**

'Being mindful also of the desire of Muslims today to study the Book of Allah, understand it, and act upon it. This is a desire that they did not have for many centuries. The Qur'an was recited over the dead rather than the living, and interpreting it was considered the worst sin. Consequently, it became commonplace among Muslims to assert that 'any correct interpretation of the Qur'an is erroneous and constitutes kufr.' Therefore, the reader reads: 'Indeed, the mosques are for Allah alone, so do not call upon anyone along with Allah.' Meanwhile, people around the shrine of the buried saint near the mosque call upon him in the loudest voices: "O my master, O my master, so-and-so," and no one dares to say, "O my brothers, do not call upon the 'Sayyid,' for Allah says: 'And indeed the mosques are for Allah alone, so do not call upon anyone along with Allah.'

Indeed, Djaber al-Djazairi emphasised the importance of avoiding fabricated laws imported from the East and West. The determination and sincerity of the exegete are evident in his efforts to overcome the obstacles and misconceptions associated with these malicious claims, which have no basis in God's teachings. This is evident in his statement:

'Thus, the reader recites the verse: 'And whoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed — then it is they who are the disbelievers.' The one who hears it does not consider that the verse explicitly declares unbelief for those who do not judge by what Allah has revealed. Rather, most Muslims are implicated in this unbelief since they have abandoned the judgement of Islamic Shariah in favour of the fabricated laws of the East and West. Therefore, one reads the Qur'an over the dead and the living, yet one does not see any effect of it in life.'

It is also worth noting that the exegete relied on thematic unity when presenting his lessons, as he himself declared.

'Indeed, I have made these two, three, four and five verses a lesson, and I rarely add more than five. This is in pursuit of thematic unity and connected meaning.'

Moreover, he relied on the following four references: An Exposition of the Qur'an for the Interpretation of the Qur'an by Ibn Jarir al-Tabari;

- The Exegesis of the Two Jalals, attributed to al-Mahalli and al-Suyuti; The Exegesis of al-Maraghi, and Facilitating the Noble Merciful One: Exegesis of the Speech of the Bestower by Abd al-Rahman ibn Nacer al-Saadi.

The title of the book is divided into two parts: a main title, 'The Easiest Exegesis for the Speech of the Sublime Great One', and a subtitle, ('The River of Goodness upon the Easiest Exegesis'), which appears in the margin. 'The River of Goodness upon the Easiest Exegesis'.



What particularly caught my attention in the exegete's approach to marginalia was that these notes constituted a weighty, comprehensive and varied repository of reference material, rich in content, through rigorous and sincere research, especially with regard to:

- presenting juristic issues in acts of worship and transactions;
- clarifying how exegesis is interwoven with the Prophetic hadith — nothing is uttered from desire, only revelation.
- investigating lexicographical derivations in the sciences of the Arabic language by outlining approaches to linguistic etymology and the extent to which our distinguished exegete applied these derivations when interpreting the verses of the Noble Qur'an, seeking to grasp their full meaning, both internal and external.
- Examining rhetorical derivations and the artistic currents they carry, which bring the paths of understanding closer and provide an easy conduit for linking teachings and rulings to conduct and actions.

Thus, the Noble Qur'an becomes a functional school for life — before and after death.

### **Clarifying Technical Terms in Tafsir Djaber al-Djazairi**

The exegete begins by setting out a general framework and clarifying technical terminology. This engages the beginner, and then the exposition gradually expands. The focus is on key terms found in the Noble Qur'an that are particular to it, across different fields.

#### **1) The term: Tafsir (exegesis)<sup>1</sup>**

##### **Linguistically: explanation and clarification.**

Technically, it is the explanation of Allah's speech so that His intended meaning is understood and His commands and prohibitions are followed, and one is guided by His direction and guidance. One can learn from its stories and be admonished by its exhortations.

He further stresses that he adheres to the preferred meaning, which is the view held by the majority of righteous predecessors among interpreters. He states his purpose as follows:

'This is because all Muslims need a unified, sound and correct Islamic way of thinking.'

In terms of scholarly integrity, the author also conveys what the exegete wrote, explaining his method of compiling the book and acknowledging the scholars he relied upon.

Core method and references (as stated in the text you provided):

Four references were relied upon:

- An Exposition of the Qur'an by Ibn Jarir al-Tabari.
- Exegesis of the Two Jalals by al-Mahalli and al-Suyuti;
- The Exegesis of al-Maraghi
- Facilitating the Noble Merciful One: Exegesis of the Speech of the Bestower by Abd al-Rahman ibn Nacer al-Saadi — may Allah have mercy on them all — and may we all gather with them in the Gardens of Bliss.

##### **Adopting Moderation:**

Using concise, beneficial exposition,

<sup>1</sup>- Source (دَرَسَ/فَسَّرَ): to interpret; its verb is also used in the sense of "explaining," as in فَسَّرَ كَنْصَرَ فُسْرًا—i.e., making the speech clear and revealing its meaning.



- Following harmonisation among the four schools of jurisprudence, without drifting into interpretive disagreements.

Avoid Israelite reports except to the extent required for interpretation in support of the broader idea of emulating the Prophetic Sunnah.

With regard to the Hadith, he restricts himself to reports that are (sound) and (good), and therefore attributes them to their sources only rarely.

(Exegesis vs. Hermeneutic Interpretation)

Despite the overlap between exegesis and hermeneutic interpretation, Allah says:

“And no one knows its ta’wil except Allah and those firmly rooted in knowledge...”

There is a distinction between the two in terms of specificity and generality. In Djaber al Djazairi’s understanding, tafsir is an accessible approach. He cites Allah’s statement:

“Indeed, We have made the Qur’an easy for remembrance...”

In tafsir, the reader follows the correct interpretive approach, and this is the place of agreement.

By contrast, ta’wil is often where contested issues arise — matters that give rise to different interpretations. For example, consider the book *Interpretation of the Difficulties of the Qur’an* by Ibn Qutayba. Ta’wil may sometimes mean tafsir in the sense of a clear, guided explanation. It may also be praiseworthy in some contexts and condemned in others, where the wording diverges from the preferred likelihood (rajih) to the less preferred likelihood (marjuh) based on an accompanying proof. Among later scholars, ta’wil can be connected with the interpretation of texts concerning divine attributes, as referenced by al-Qattan in ‘Sciences of the Qur’an’.

Thus, the term ta’wil is multifaceted: it can carry meanings of explanation and clarification, but it also overlaps with issues requiring caution, such as matters that Allah has singled out for Himself (i.e. matters that should not be pursued beyond the limits of authentic knowledge).

For this reason, Djaber al Djazairi exercises caution, hence why the title emphasises facilitation — which is precisely the objective so long as the purposes of Sharia focus on what benefits people in matters of worship and transactions.

### **The term: Ayah**

The term ayah pertains to the Qur’anic system of composition, also known as the System of Quranic Structure. In Arabic usage, this term does not have the same meaning. Therefore, Djaber al Djazairi explains the appearance of ayah in the language with another indication, namely that it means ‘a sign’, citing, in the first marginal note, the verse used by a poet:

“You thought of ayat, and you recognised them — after seven years, if the year is seventh...”<sup>2</sup>

Ayat is the plural of ayah.

Linguistically, it means ‘a sign’.

In the Qur’an, it is a sentence (or clause) of Allah’s speech that provides guidance to people by indicating Allah’s existence, power and knowledge, as well as the prophethood of Muhammad ﷺ and his message<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>2</sup>- Abu Bakr djaber al-Djazairi, , *The Easiest of Explanations for the Words of the Most High, the Most Great* with its margin “The River of Goodness upon the Easiest of Explanations” vol. 1, 3rd ed., 1410 AH / 1990 CE, p. 9.

<sup>3</sup>- The same source, p. 9.



### The Qur'anic ayah as a sentence bearing guidance

The exegete states that the āyah in the Qur'an is a sentence of Allah's speech that provides guidance for people. However, upon closer inspection, one will notice that the author does not specify how the āyāt take shape in terms of the number of words, nor how this relates to proper pauses. This area is instead the domain of scholars of Tajwid and specialists in Arabic recitation and language. They distinguish between the āyah and the next unit, taking the Qur'anic phrasing as evidence:

“And the taliyat (reciters/following verses) are a reminder...”

This is a useful approach, but delving into its branches requires further pauses which may distract beginner students and others. This becomes a separate topic.

It seems that Djaber al-Djazairi did not want to indulge in digression in exegesis. Rather, his discussion is comprehensive and fully conveys the intended meaning, namely that the meanings of the verses are linked to guidance and admonition, so he shortens the path for learners, enabling them to reach their objectives directly. This is what he explicitly stated in the introduction to the book:

“Not to address the readings except very rarely, for necessity determines whether the meaning of the āyah depends on that.”

- The term ‘Surah’: The commentator used the term ‘Surah’ to mean ‘a piece/portion’ in the text, explaining that it refers to the variation in the number of verses in the Noble Qur'an. Its shortest Surah is three verses in Surah al-Kawthar, and its longest is Surah al-Baqarah.

A surah<sup>4</sup> is a ‘piece’ from the Book of Allah containing three verses or more. There are one hundred and fourteen sūrah in the Noble Qur'an; the longest is “al-Baqarah”<sup>5</sup> and the shortest is “al-Kawthar”. Returning to the margin, we find an analysis of the term ‘surah’ from a linguistic perspective. It starts from the concept of derivation and the difference in meanings as indications of elevation and loftiness/status, giving the example of the elevations/upperness of lands/countries. This falls under the category of correspondence in language, since the indication intersects with meanings of honour and greatness, from which comes the ‘Great Qur'an’.

In addition to that meaning, there is another indication: (the remainder/remaining portion) from (vessels/containers for drink). The commentator linked this to the concept of the ‘piece’ mentioned in the main text. In other words, he clarified the meaning and placed it in its proper context, emphasising the significance of the word ‘baqiyah’ due to its association with ‘piece’, meaning a cut-out portion of the meaning of the whole.

As for the fourth margin, the commentator included it in the main text to clarify the meaning of ‘surah’ as ‘a piece’, specifying the number of verses. This may lead the reader to think that the word ‘longest’

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<sup>4</sup>- The word surah ” is derived either from:

- (“the wall/structure of a town”), because it is elevated and its status is high; or
- (“the remainder/leftover”), i.e., it is a remaining part—meaning it is a remainder from the Book of Allah, i.e., a portion of it.

The derivation from “elevation and high status” is more appropriate. Evidence for that is the statement of the poet: (Source: same, p. 9)

“Did you not see that Allah has given you a surah  
You see every king, without it, falters and sways.”

<sup>5</sup>- The longest verse in the Qur'an is ayat al-Dayn at the end (of) al-Baqarah. The shortest verse is (مُذْهَبًا) from Surah al-Rahman. (Source: same, p. 9)



is only attached to al-Baqarah, since it is the longest sūrah in the Qur'an with 286 verses. However, the commentator expanded on this in the margin, presenting one of the subtleties of interpretation and specifying the longest single verse in the Qur'an — namely Ayat al-Dayn from Surah al-Baqarah. Therefore, Surah al-Baqarah has two distinctions: it is the longest surah in the Qur'an and it contains the longest verse, Ayat al-Dayn (verse 282), which consists of fifteen lines.

Similarly, the reader may think that the phrase 'shortest' in the main text is only attached to Surah al-Kawthar. Yet the commentator broadened the analysis in the margin, showing the shortest verse in the Qur'an, as indicated in the fourth margin — namely 'مدھامتان' from Surah ar-Rahman.

Thus, the commentator distinguishes between the length of the sūrah and the length of the verse.

#### **The term 'Salah' is attached to Surah al-Fatiḥah<sup>6</sup>.**

The commentator clarified the terms connected to Surah al-Fatiḥah. In the first margin, he cited Jalal ad-Din as-Suyuti (in al-Itqan), but limited himself to some of the terms. We also find that he agrees with Ibn Baz. However, he disagrees with as-Suyuti over the name 'the Seven Oft-Repeated', as this refers to the fact that the surah is recited in every rak'ah of the prayer, as shown in the second margin.

Therefore, al-Fatiḥah is also known as al-Fatihah, and it has many other names<sup>7</sup>, including: Mother of the Qur'an, the Seven Oft-Repeated<sup>8</sup>, Mother of the Book<sup>9</sup>, and salah.

We want to clarify that the commentator linked Surah al-Fatihah to the term salah — a term also mentioned by as-Suyuti<sup>10</sup>. This confirms the commentator's commitment to guidance and instruction. Salah is one of the pillars of Islam, and the honour and greatness of its connection to and recitation as part of al-Fatihah is significant. The commentator uses the Prophetic hadith to explain this honour: "Al-hamdu lillah is the greatest surah in the Qur'an", as stated in al-Bukhari from Abu Said ibn al-Mualla. The Prophet ﷺ said to him:

'I will teach you the greatest surah in the Qur'an,' and then added, 'Nothing was revealed in the Torah, the Gospel or the Qur'an like it.'<sup>11</sup>

Here, the commentator's carefulness is evident in his linking of explanations to acts of worship and fiqh rulings, making the path of fatwa easier for learners and worshippers.

According to the fatwas of Ibn Baz<sup>12</sup>, if a worshipper reads only al-Fātiḥah, their prayer is valid. This applies to all five daily prayers: if he reads only al-Fatihah, the prayer is valid because it is a pillar of prayer; anything beyond this is recommended but not obligatory. However, the Sunnah is to add to it

<sup>6</sup>- It has been reported by the author of Perfection that it reached nearly twenty-one names, and nothing from that was reported in the Sunnah except four: Fatiḥat al-Kitab, Umm al-Qur'an, The Seven Oft-Repeated Verses", and Umm al-Kitab.

<sup>7</sup>- Therefore, al-Fatiḥah is also known as al-Fatihah, and it has many other names, including: Mother of the Qur'an, the Seven Oft-Repeated, Mother of the Book, and salah.

<sup>8</sup>- It was called The Seven Oft-Repeated Verses" because it تَكَرَّرَتْ (i.e., it repeats)—meaning it is repeated in each rak'ah of the prayer. (Source: same, p. 10)

<sup>9</sup>- Due to its comprehensiveness with respect to the Qur'anic foundations of beliefs, acts of worship, legal rulings and narratives, it was called Umm al-Kitab. (Source: same, p. 10).

<sup>10</sup>- Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti, The Perfect Guide to the Sciences of the Qur'an, vol. 1, p. 193.

'Al-Fatihah is the surah of prayer' because prayer depends on it.

<sup>11</sup>- The same source, p. 12.

<sup>12</sup>- <https://binbaz.org.sa/fatwas/8329>



in the first and second rak'ahs of dhuhr, asr, maghrib and 'isha', and also in fajr, because the Messenger ﷺ used to do so.

However, he also said:

'There is no prayer for the one who does not recite the Fātiḥah of the Book.'

This indicates that al-Fātiḥah is a pillar of the prayer, while anything beyond it is recommended.

This is what Djaber al-Djazairi clarified in the second margin and in the final margin, where he describes the conversation between the servant and his Lord while reciting al-Fatihah.

The term 'al-Basmalah' (saying 'Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Rahim'):

Jaber al-Djazairi explained the meaning of al-Basmalah:

'I begin my recitation, seeking blessings in the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful, and asking for His help. Glorified and exalted is He.'

Therefore, al-Basmalah is connected to blessing and seeking help from Allah. He also points out a linguistic subtlety, namely how the related grammatical phrase (jar wa majrur) is estimated according to context and situation. This is because the reader says, 'I begin my recitation', while the writer says, 'I begin my writing', and likewise, each person attaches it appropriately: the one who eats says, 'I begin my eating'<sup>13</sup>.

It is also worth noting that al-Basmalah is taught through reciprocal behaviours, such as opening and closing, turning on and off, and other similar pairs. We rely here on al-Khurshi's explanation in Mukhtasar Khalil:<sup>14</sup> as saying 'tasmiyah' is recommended when performing ablution, it is likewise recommended when washing, performing tayammum, eating and drinking, entering and leaving the house, putting on and removing clothing, closing and opening a door, and lighting and extinguishing a lamp.

**Jaber ibn Abd Allah narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said:**

'When evening falls, keep your children with you, for the devil spreads out at that time. When one hour of the night has passed, let them go. Close the doors and mention the name of Allah, for the devil does not open a closed door. Tie up your water skins and mention the name of Allah. Cover your vessels and mention the name of Allah, even if you only place something over them. And extinguish your lamps.'

Reported by al-Bukhari (3280) and Muslim.

The commentator gave preference to the view that al-Basmalah is not an ayah, while aShafi'i made it obligatory in prayer.

It is said that al-Basmalah is the seventh ayah, and this is the view of al-Shafi'i, who therefore obligates reading it in prayer. However, based on the stronger view that al-Basmalah is not an ayah, the previous ayah would be:

'Not [the path] of those who incurred anger nor of those who are astray' — and that would be the sixth āyah.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>13</sup>- The Easiest of Explanations by al-Djaber al-Djazairi, p. 11.

<sup>14</sup>- <https://www.islamweb.net/ar/fatwa/97485>

<sup>15</sup>- The Easiest of Explanations, Djaber al-Djazairi, p. 10.



For the sake of clarity, we will also mention what has been confirmed by the Prophet ﷺ regarding the recitation of al-Basmalah in prayer and at the beginning of every surah.

It is prescribed for the believer that, at the beginning of every surah — in al-Fatihah and others — he seeks refuge with Allah from the rejected devil as soon as he begins reading. Then he recites the tasmiyah (al-Basmalah), then he reads al-Fatihah, and likewise in the other surahs: he says tasmiyah at the beginning of each surah. If he repeats seeking refuge, there is no harm. If he leaves it out, seeking refuge at the beginning of his prayer is sufficient. As for reciting the tasmiyah, it is recommended to repeat it for every surah<sup>16</sup>.

**The term ‘:(seeking refuge) الاستعاذة’**

This term is connected to reciting the Qur’an and the Sunnah<sup>17</sup>, as it is recommended for anyone who wishes to recite any part of the Qur’an — a surah or more — to say: ‘I seek refuge in Allah from the rejected devil’, before reciting. It is also recommended that one seeks refuge when becoming angry or when an evil thought occurs.

A person may ask: How is seeking refuge from the devil appropriate when reciting the Qur’an or when feeling angry?

Anger is a clear state of mind, while seeking refuge drives away anxiety and brings about calmness. Seeking refuge from the devil during Qur’an recitation is a way of purifying oneself from baseness and sinful thoughts, preparing the soul for reciting the Qur’an with cleanliness and chastity. This is part of the manners of addressing Allah, glorified and exalted is He. Also, Surah al-Fatihah, as explained earlier, is a form of dialogue between the servant and their Lord, or a way of showing proper adab when addressing the speech of Allah in general.

The commentator also supported this by using the Qur’an to explain the Qur’an, referring back to the detailed discussion in the margin. He cited an ayah from Surah an-Nahl (Meccan) to demonstrate the ruling on seeking refuge. This also clarifies that the Qur’an was revealed gradually according to events and then arranged according to the Uthmanic script. Sūrah an-Naḥl is in the middle of the muṣḥaf; it is the sixteenth sūrah and appears on page 267 of the Qur’an. However, seeking refuge comes at the beginning of recitation in al-Fatihah.

This overlap and harmony in linking meanings is also found between Surah an-Nisa’ and Surah al-Fatihah, in Allah’s words:

‘Those upon whom You have bestowed favour...’

These are the prophets, the truthful, the martyrs and the righteous<sup>18</sup>. Every person whom Allah has favoured with belief in Him, knowledge of Him and of what He loves and dislikes, and success in doing what He loves and avoiding what He dislikes is included.

The commentator expanded the explanation in the margin of the tafsir, using Surah an-Nisa (Madani) as evidence, even though, in the Qur’an’s arrangement, it appears before al-Fatihah (and it is on page

<sup>16</sup>- Previous reference

<sup>17</sup>- Allah's statement: 'So when you recite the Qur'an, seek refuge in Allah from the accursed Satan.' (From Surah an-Nahl.)

<sup>18</sup>- This explanation is found in Allah’s statement in Surah An-Nisa': “And whoever obeys the Messenger will be with those upon whom Allah has bestowed favour: the prophets, the truthful, the martyrs and the righteous...”



77 of the mushaf). This is despite the fact that the discussion is brought together with al-Fatihah (Meccan).

**This led to the statement in the words of Allah in Surah an-Nisa’:**

‘Whoever obeys the Messenger — then such are among those whom Allah has bestowed favour: the prophets, the truthful ones, the martyrs, and the righteous. And excellent are they as companions’.

In the tafsir margin, we also find a lexical-semantic subtlety (iltifat in the analysis of word meaning): when explaining the meaning of ‘seek refuge’, he clarifies the difference between ‘seeking refuge’ and ‘al-lija’ — two concepts that differ in a negative and positive sense. ‘Seeking refuge’ is connected to something disliked and reprehensible, while ‘al-lija’ is connected to something beloved and recommended. This is what Djaber al Djazairi made clear, citing two couplets from the ‘springs/sources’ of Arabic poetry. This demonstrates how meanings can be interpreted flexibly, making it easier for the reader by linking the explanation to examples.

**He wrote in the margin that:**

Seeking refuge with Allah — glorified and exalted — means seeking protection/defence from that which is disliked (harmful or objectionable).

‘Al-lija’ with Allah — glorified and exalted — means seeking to obtain the beloved (what is desired).’

**The poet’s words support this:**

“O You to whom I resort regarding what I hope for, and in whom I seek refuge from what I fear.

You are not forced to break people’s greatness — You are the One who breaks it, and they will not weaken a great bone — You are the One who repairs it.”

This semantic approach is evident in the tafsīr, where the commentator pays attention to the meanings of ‘specificity’ and ‘generality’ in language, as well as the paired terms: (gratitude) and (praise), and also in the paired meanings of praise and praise-with-reflection.

**Djabir al-Djazairi turned to the difference between praise and commendation:**

Hamd is for voluntary beauty, so Allah is praised for His kindness, mercy and favour because these are voluntary (belonging to His choice). It can also apply to both voluntary and necessary matters: people praise a person for the beauty of their face, even though they did not create it, and for their kindness, which is not necessarily an action.

Madḥ is for voluntary and necessary matters: people praise a person for the beauty of their face (which is not their doing) and for their kindness, which is their voluntary action. Madḥ is repeated — praise is said again and again.

Gratitude is praising with the tongue the One who bestowed favours for the favours given. Shukr is more specific than hamd in its subject matter (because it only concerns favours) and broader in its scope (because it includes the heart, tongue and bodily faculties). As the saying goes:

‘Your blessings have benefited me in three ways: my hand, my tongue, and my concealed heart/mind.’

And ḥamd encompasses both madḥ and gratitude, based on the hadith: ‘Hamd is the head of gratitude.’

**Conclusion:**

In his book, Djaber al Djazairi relied on the Ḥafṣ narration, even though most people in the Arab Maghreb, including in Algeria, generally rely on the Warsh narration. This is because:

1. All Qur’anic recitations are valid and have been reported from the Prophet ﷺ.



2. It appears that the exegete (al-mufassir) chose the Ḥafṣ narration because it fits the conventional pattern within the educational system at all levels: primary, middle and secondary. In this way, the exegete seeks to make the exhortative and guidance-oriented style as accessible as possible to learners.

**The exegete states:**

“I have set out the verses with vowel markings for the Hafs reading, using the script of the mushaf.” I call upon Muslims to first recite the verses so that they memorise them, then study their words to understand them, then study their meaning until they comprehend it, and finally recite their guidance to apply it. Thus, he combines memorising the Book of Allah with understanding and acting upon it.’

**The hadith also supports this approach:**

“Indeed, Allah raises some people by means of this Book and lowers others.”

Whoever reads it with good intentions — memorises it, understands it, acts upon it and teaches it — may be called ‘great’ in the heavens. In the authentic hadith:

“The best among you are those who learn the Qur’an and teach it.”

**Djaber al-Djazairi concluded his book with a supplication:**

“O Allah, let me and all believing people be among those who attain this goodness, so that they may learn Your Book, act upon it and teach it. O Living One, O Self-Subsisting One!”

**He also says:**

‘Finally, I call upon every believing man and woman reading this interpretation, named The Easiest Explanation of the Words of Allah, the Most High, the Most Great, to ask forgiveness for me and have mercy on me...’

**Then he prays:**

“O Allah, I ask You — by my testifying that You are Allah, the One, the Only, the Eternal Refuge; You neither beget nor are begotten — that You forgive Shaykh Djaber al-Djazairi (Abu Bakr), have mercy on him and on us, and forgive us and our parents and all the Ummah of Muhammad.”

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