

The meaning of tafseer

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Taken from the works of Shaykh Muhammad ibn Saalih al 'Uthaymeen (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With regards to the meaning of tafseer and its importance, Shaykh Muhammad ibn Saalih al 'Uthaymeen (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ)¹ comments:

Tafseer, in the linguistic meaning, is taken from al fasr which is "to uncover that which is covered".

And in the technical sense is "to clarify the meanings of the Noble Qur'aan".

And learning the tafseer is obligatory, as per His statement, He the Most High:

This is a Book which We have sent down to you, full of blessings that they may reflect over its aayaat so that men of understanding may remember.

[Soorah Saad (the 38th chapter) aayah 29]

And as per His statement, He the Most High:

Do they not then ponder over the Qur'aan or are there locks upon their hearts?

[Soorah Muhammad (the 47th chapter) aayah 24]

And the point of proof taken from the first aayah is that Allaah, the Most High, made clear that the wisdom behind sending down the Blessed Qur'aan was that the people would reflect over its aayaat and take a lesson from that which it contained.

And tadabbur (reflection) is - to think deeply about the words in order to arrive at their meanings. So if that does not occur, then the wisdom behind sending down the Qur'aan goes, and it becomes merely words which have no effect.

And because it is not possible to take a lesson from that which is in the Qur'aan without understanding its meanings.

And the point of proof taken from the second aayah is that Allaah, the Most High, has rebuked those people who do not reflect upon the Qur'aan and He indicated that that is by way of their hearts being locked and goodness not reaching them.

¹ (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) (rahimahullaah) May Allaah the Most High have mercy on him

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And the Salaf of this nation were upon that path which is obligatory, learning both the wordings and meanings of the Qur'aan – because through this they were in a position to act upon the Qur'aan in accordance with that which Allaah intended by it. For indeed it is not possible to act upon that whose meaning is not known.

(Tafseer ul Qur'aan il Kareem of Shaykh Muhammad ibn Saalih al 'Uthaymeen (رَجْمَةُ اللَّهِ) p28)