

ŞAHİH AL-BUKHĀRÎ'S INFLUENCE ON TAFSÎR BI AL-MA' THŪR: Relevance and Impact in Contemporary Quranic Studies

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Abstract

Tafsîr bi al-ma' thûr holds a central position in Quranic interpretation as an authoritative approach grounded in transmitted sources. In contemporary Quranic studies, however, renewed debates concerning the reliability of riwâyah, the authority of hadith, and the methodological foundations of classical tafsîr underscore the urgency of reassessing the formative contributions of early scholars. This study addresses the need by examining al-Bukhârî's role to the epistemological and methodological foundations of tafsîr bi al-ma' thûr, with particular attention to his exegetical practices in the kitâb al-tafsîr section of Şâhîh al-Bukhârî. Employing a qualitative library-based approach, this article analyzes Şâhîh al-Bukhârî as the primary source alongside classical and later tafsîr works grounded in the ma' thûr tradition. Data are examined using a relevance-and-impact analytical framework to assess both the immediate and enduring influence of al-Bukhârî's contributions on the development of Quranic interpretive sciences. This approach enables an evaluation of al-Bukhârî not merely as a compiler of hadith but as a formative architect of exegetical methodology. The findings demonstrate that al-Bukhârî's contribution to tafsîr bi al-ma' thûr extends beyond the preservation of prophetic reports. He significantly promoted institutionalizing riwâyah as a source of tafsîr, formulating methodological principles for source selection, and conceptualizing standards of authenticity that continue to inform exegetical practice. His rigorous validation of sanad

established a systematic and selective model of Quranic interpretation that profoundly influenced subsequent *tafsîr* traditions. This study contributes to contemporary Quranic scholarship by clarifying the methodological legacy of *al-Bukhârî* and demonstrating its continued relevance for evaluating transmitted sources in modern interpretive debates.

Keywords: *hadith authority; saḥîh al-bukhârî; tafsîr bi al-ma'thûr; quranic exegesis*

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Introduction

In recent years, Islamic studies has grown significantly with Quranic education regarded as its crowning discipline (Sirry 2019, 1). This development occurred because classical scholars could transmit knowledge, while modern scholarship could also accept and criticize the discourse on the study of the Quran. *Tafsîr bi al-ma'thûr* (exegesis based on transmitted sources), as a sub-study of the Quran, holds an important position, especially as a source of interpretation. Although the approach and methodology of interpretation evolve, *tafsîr bi al-ma'thûr* is inescapable.

According to some scholars, the strong historical roots of *awâ'il* (precedent) in the tradition of interpretation make *tafsîr bi al-ma'thûr* authoritative compared to other methods. In addition, the criteria of *yufassiru ba'duhu ba'dan* in *bi al-ma'thûr* confirm its position as the most authoritative interpretation (Haleem 1993, 71; Rustom 2018, 1). Secondly, the interpretation of the Prophet, which dominates the understanding of the Quran, describes *bi al-ma'thûr* as a source of interpretation with great capacity. It is not only a textual process without dialectics, but *tafsîr bi al-ma'thûr* has an intertextual nature. A reduction in external sources often accompanies support for *tafsîr bi al-ma'thûr* (Rohman 2019, 169). Such a statement confirms the error in choosing a narration that requires an external source, such as the *ijtihad* of reason.

The relationship between the two sources of interpretation (*al-ma'thûr* and *al-râ'y*) is evidenced by the diversity among *mufassirs* (Islamic scholars who specialized in *tafsir* and commentary on the Quran) in their narrations. Therefore, even though the character of the *tafsir* with the historical model is based on *naqlî*, it does not mean that it cannot be

rationalized. Rationality in interpretation using history is used to determine the meaning of intended utterances and their significance (Ghozali 2021, 119). This culture of rationality is one of the arguments for selecting al-Bukhârî in this study. In detail, there are several reasons for choosing al-Bukhârî as the object of this research.

First, the credibility of al-Bukhârî as a hadith expert, as evidenced by the compilation of authentic hadith through the application of strict *sanad* (the chain of transmitters) and narrator-evaluation methods, is widely recognized. This is consistent with studies on the geopolitics and reliability of early hadith-transmission networks, which show how regional transmitter groups-including Kufan hadith transmitters-shaped evaluative criteria for narrator authenticity (Wendry et al. 2020, 215). Such findings help contextualize why Bukhârî's method of narrator selection became highly influential (Brown 2009, 87). Second, the role of al-Bukhârî and his *Šahîh* demonstrates not only the collection of hadiths but also their active use in interpreting Quranic verses. Classical *mufassirs*, such as Ibn Kathîr and al-Suyûṭî, regularly cite hadith from *Šahîh al-Bukhârî* as part of their *tafsîr* method, showing the continuity between hadith collection and *tafsîr bi al-ma'thûr* (Brown 2009, 109). Third, there is a clear method of interpretation based on hadith that aligns with *tafsîr bi al-ma'thûr*, wherein transmitted narrations (*riwâyât*) form the foundation of exegetical reasoning. The discipline of *tafsîr bi al-ma'thûr* continues to emphasize Hadith-based evidence, reinforcing the relevance of canonical compilations such as al-Bukhârî's. Fourth, al-Bukhârî uses only *sahîh* hadith as a foundation for validating interpretation. His methodological rigor in assessing transmitters aligns with historical analyses demonstrating the central role of transmitter networks in shaping hadith authenticity (Wendry et al. 2020, 224). Fifth, al-Bukhârî's influence extended beyond his own era and shaped the development of Quranic interpretation. This is evidenced by major *mufassirs*, such as Ibn Kathîr in *Tafsîr al-Qurân al-'Azîm* and al-Suyûṭî in *al-Durr al-Manthûr*, who incorporate extensive hadith quotations-many of them are drawn from al-Bukhârî-thereby demonstrating his lasting legacy within the *tafsîr bi al-ma'thûr* tradition (Brown 2009, 112).

Some of the literature related to this article includes Azmi (2017, 17), who discussed the methodology of hadith experts, especially Ibn Hanbal and al-Bukhârî, in relation to the Quran in the ninth century AD. Melchert attests to the uniqueness of the *sanad* in the *kitâb al-tafsîr* section,

rather than in the other parts of *Ṣahīh al-Bukhārī*. He believes that this uniqueness is an embryo of the hadith approach within interpretation (Melchert 2016). Meanwhile, Abdurrahman examines the character of al-Bukhārī and one of the Quranic discourses, but does not discuss the discourse's development and impact (Abdurrahman 2012, 120).

The character of al-Bukhārī in the field of *tafsir* (Najib 2009, 1) has also been researched by Ahmad bin Abdullah Najib. He demonstrated that, as a hadith figure, al-Bukhārī's book titled *Tafsīr al-Kabīr* attests to one of his scholarly endeavors, although it was not transmitted to later generations. Moreover, al-Ṭayyār conducted research exploring al-Bukhārī's interpretation of Surah al-Fātiḥah. He focuses on *Ṣahīh al-Bukhārī* by highlighting the excellence of al-Bukhārī's approach in interpreting Surah al-Fātiḥah (Altayyar, 2014).

Previous scholarship has largely concentrated on the historical dimensions, distinctive features, or technical characteristics of al-Bukhārī's *sanad*. It did not sufficiently elaborate on his methodology of Quranic interpretation. Moreover, many studies are limited in scope, focusing on individual figures, specific surahs, or particular *sanad* patterns, thus fail to capture the broader epistemological construction of *kitāb al-tafsīr*. To date, no research has systematically integrated an analysis of *sanad*, textual structure, and the hermeneutical pattern of al-Bukhārī in Quranic exegesis. This study seeks to address this gap by offering a comprehensive reading of al-Bukhārī's *tafsir* methodology and his contribution to the tradition of *tafsīr bi al-ma'thūr*.

Building on this academic context, the article examines al-Bukhārī's contributions in terms of methodology, influence, scholarly output, and the development of narration-based *tafsir*. It argues that al-Bukhārī provides a distinctive perspective on the function of hadith as a primary interpretive instrument for the Quran, demonstrating that hadith scholars also operate as *mufassirs* through a rigorous methodological framework. Finally, the study assesses the impact and relevance of al-Bukhārī's approach and clarifies the relationship between hadith transmission and Quranic interpretation within the Islamic intellectual tradition.

Research Method

This study employs a qualitative descriptive literature analysis method. The data sources include primary references in the form of *Ṣahīh al-Bukhārī*, especially the *kitāb al-tafsīr* section. The secondary references are

relevant scientific literature, which strengthen the validity and analysis. Important *tafsir* books based on *bi al-ma'thûr* are used to examine the implications of the influence and contribution of *Sahîh al-Bukhârî*, including *Jâmi' al-Bayân 'an Ta'wil ây al-Qur'ân* written by al-Tabarî (d. 310 AH), *al-Jâmi' li Ahkâm al-Qur'ân* by al-Qurtubî (d. 671 AH), *Tafsîr al-Qur'ân al-'Azîm* by Ibn Kathîr (d. 774 AH), and *al-Durr al-Manthûr fi al-Tafsîr bi al-Ma'thûr* by Jalâl al-Dîn al-Suyûtî (d. 911 AH).

This article employs documentation methods to collect, classify, and analyze relevant scholarly sources. The research begins by defining its main object of study, namely Imam al-Bukhârî's contribution to *tafsîr bi al-ma'thûr*. It then categorizes the hadiths in *kitâb al-tafsîr* based on the Quranic verses they explicate. The study identifies the structural characteristics of al-Bukhârî's interpretive approach, especially his reliance on prophetic hadiths and the *athar* of the Companions. His method is subsequently analyzed and compared with other exegetical models to reveal similarities and differences. Furthermore, the thematic and methodological roles of the hadiths are examined, situating al-Bukhârî within narration-based *tafsir* and assessing his broader methodological and epistemological influence.

This study employs content analysis (Krippendorf 2004, 86) of *Sahîh al-Bukhârî*, especially *kitâb al-tafsîr*, to uncover the problem and achieve the research objectives. This approach is integrated with impact theory to elucidate al-Bukhârî's contribution and influence, particularly through the relevance of his hadiths to *tafsîr bi al-ma'thûr* and the direct as well as indirect effects of his work. The analysis examines textual evidence, contextual dynamics, disciplinary intersections, and longitudinal scholarly networks to assess the continuity and development of his intellectual legacy in the academic ecosystem.

Results and Discussion

Tafsîr bi al-Ma'thûr in Modern Quranic Interpretation

Tafsîr bi al-ma'thûr is a variant of the source of Quran interpretation. This model of interpretation focuses on the narration or source of *naqlî* as the origin of its interpretation. Quraish Shihab defines *tafsîr bi al-ma'thûr* as interpreting Quranic verses by means of other verses, the Prophet's explanations, and the Companions' testimonies, while some scholars also add the views of the *tâbi'in* (Shihab 2015, 349). Al-Zarqânî (d. 1367 AH) defines *tafsîr bi al-ma'thûr* as "mâ jâ'a fî al-qur'ân aw al-sunnah aw kalâm al-

sahâbah bayânan li murâd Allâh ta‘âlâ min kitâbih (interpretation derived from the Quran, the sunnah, and the Companions' utterances as an explanation of Allah's intention from His book) (al-Zarqânî n.d., 12).

The essence of *tafsîr bi al-mâthûr* shows little variation across different figures. Therefore, current discussions focus less on definitional debates and more on renewing and revitalizing the values contained in the exegesis. Rooted in the authenticity of its sources and their connection to the Quran, *tafsîr bi al-mâthûr* constitutes the most fundamental step in the exegetical tradition. Therefore, *tafsîr bi al-mâthûr* is "authentic" and authoritative, which is constantly conveyed from the Prophet and transmitted to the first generation of Muslims (Kulinich 2022, 481). The chain of *sanad* in the transmission process in *tafsîr bi al-mâthûr* can strengthen its framework by documenting the narrator's honesty and coherence with the sharia and reason.

The essence of *tafsîr bi al-mâthûr* with *sanad* is also inseparable from the content of the text (*matn*), which impacts the two approaches of reading. The first group considers that *tafsîr bi al-mâthûr* should be statistically positioned and functioning. As a result of this reading, *tafsîr bi al-mâthûr* does not serve as a method to connect the historicity of the interpretation of the Quran and is only used as a "display". This is in contrast to *tafsîr bi al-mâthûr*, which is dynamically disciplined. Interpretation with *bi al-mâthûr* seeks to understand the text, but still considers the historical context (Azizy 2022, 3).

The effectiveness of a method will ultimately be tested, as well as its contribution to contemporary problems and phenomena. This is where the challenges and strengths of sources, principles, and adaptations in the modern context lie. This aligns with Izza Rohman's criticism of one aspect of *tafsîr bi al-mâthûr*, specifically the interpretation of the Quran based on the Quran itself. According to him, that part is no longer adequately included in *tafsîr bi al-mâthûr*. He emphasized that interpreting the Quran based on the Quran is not the result of tradition, so it does not require verification like other interpretations and traditions do, because the part of the interpretation of the Quran based on the Quran is *naqli/revelation from Allah* (Rohman 2018, 34).

The above-mentioned statement of Rohman, as conveyed by al-Harbî, shows the division of the Quran interpretation based on the Quran: First, the *wahy/naql*, considering *tawqîfî* (determined by Allah and His Messenger). Second, the *ra'y/istidlâl*, considering *ijtihâdî* (open to scientific

reasons) (al-Harbî 1996, 288). His findings not only challenge the traditional interpretation of the Quran but also strengthen the argument that *tafsîr bi al-ma'thûr* can be a valid source of interpretation for addressing contemporary problems. Apart from his criticism of the interpretation that comes from tradition, external aspects, such as hadith and past opinions, need to be considered in *tafsîr bi al-ma'thûr*.

The existence of an "external" aspect is not dominant in *tafsîr bi al-ma'thûr*, but it needs to be reviewed to reactualize such a view. External aspects are still necessary for reconciliation, including knowledge of the context of each verse to be interpreted and the topic of the verse, which is likely to be known through tradition. The Hadith, or narration of the Companions and tâbiîn, is necessary as a continuation of the inevitability of interpreting the Quran based on the Quran itself (Mudin 2016, 83).

Such a dialogue aims to stabilize the well-established moral framework in *tafsîr bi al-ma'thûr* since it does not explicitly respond to contemporary issues. Thus, it requires a rational-based interpretation. Al-Suyûtî has agreed upon this reconstruction of the method of *tafsîr bi al-ma'thûr* in *al-Durr al-Manthûr fî al-Tafsîr bi al-Ma'thûr*. He supports rational interpretation as a valid complement to tradition-based interpretation (Ally 2012, ii). The spirit presented is relevant to contemporary socio-ethical issues that are part of the reactualization of *tafsîr bi al-ma'thûr* (Sookhdeo 2006, 57).

The combination of the two traditions of *tafsîr* above, history and intellect, emphasizes the adaptation of *tafsîr bi al-ma'thûr* to contemporary discourse. The approach that enables its use is integrative. The source of history becomes the foundation. While reading modern social reality in a context, a trend is also visible in contemporary *tafsîr* practices that blend classical narration with modern interpretive needs (Syarifah & Fahimah 2020, 295). Modern issues, such as democracy, mental health, and the digital economy, remain thematically based but are combined with *tafsîr bi al-ma'thûr*, similar to how Quranic interpretation today responds to shifts in cultural and technological space (Purnama 2020, 250). In addition, the reactualization of *tafsîr bi al-ma'thûr* avoids it from being rigid and ahistorical so that it can become a relevant methodology for modern times, aligning with trends in contextual-theoretical *tafsîr* across contemporary scholarship (Bauer 2011, 210).

Repetition in narration, the absence of creative dialogue, and the inability to adapt to modern discourse will only place *tafsîr bi al-ma'thûr* as

a "memory" of Islamic scientific treasures. Avoiding only the normative nature of *tafsîr bi al-mâ'thûr* and establishing a strategic nature in the context of modern science will bring *tafsîr bi al-mâ'thûr* to a current methodology. The key is that a *mufassir* can place historical heritage in the contemporary discourse space, which is also emphasized in thematic-contextual studies of Quranic interpretation (Ahmed 2020, 340). This means that the legacy of history remains an urgent aspect in *tafsîr bi al-mâ'thûr*, so it is necessary to revitalize it in the spirit of the present day. In keeping with the tradition of narration in this kind of interpretation, we cannot deny al-Bukhârî's contribution. He inherited how the transmission of *Ṣaḥîh* plays a role in *tafsîr bi al-mâ'thûr* that must be maintained, and this is supported by research documenting the influence of reliable hadith-transmission networks in shaping *tafsîr* practices (Wendry et al. 2020, 225). This proves that he had a great influence on the reactualization of *tafsîr bi al-mâ'thûr* in this modern context.

The Structure of *Tafsîr bi al-Mâ'thûr* in al-Bukhârî's *Kitâb al-Tafsîr*

In *Ṣaḥîh al-Bukhârî*, the *kitâb al-tafsîr* presents a methodological approach specific to *tafsîr bi al-mâ'thûr*. This approach established the work as a authoritative references in classical Quranic interpretation. Imâm al-Bukhârî did not write a *tafsîr* in the form of narrative descriptions or lengthy explanations as al-Ṭabarî or Ibn Kathîr did. He wrote 473 chapters in *kitâb al-tafsîr* in *Ṣaḥîh al-Bukhârî*, which can be mapped in terms of method, approach, interdisciplinary scholarship, and epistemology. He presents chapter by chapter, based on the Quranic verses, which are explained based on authentic hadith, the *athar* of the companions, or the context of the reason for the Quranic verses revelation (Lucas 2006, 289). This demonstrates that the methodology is both fragmentary and thematic, yet highly focused on the authenticity of history. Moreover, Muhsin Al-Haddar argues that al-Bukhârî, in *kitâb al-tafsîr*, acts more as a "collector of historical data" for interpretation than a narrative interpreter, and this approach shows that hadith is not only a source of law but also a source of meaning in understanding the Quran (al-Haddar 2015, 1).

Explicitly, this methodology shows the main characteristics of *tafsîr bi al-mâ'thûr*, the principle stating that the Quran is interpreted through the Quran, the hadith of the Prophet, and the explanations of Companions and *tâbiîn* (Melchert 2016, 1). Al-Bukhârî presents the principle of his methodology by attaching importance to narration that

has the same degree of authenticity, strictly selected based on the method of *sanad* criticism. It is the main characteristic of *Sahîh al-Bukhârî's* work (Abdus & Adebayo 2020, 11). Furthermore, the existence of narrations from the Companions like Ibn 'Abbâs or valid *tâbiîn* commentaries reinforces the meaning of the verse. Abdullah Saeed in *Interpreting the Quran*, said that this history-based approach is very important in tracing the authenticity of the original meaning of a verse and providing a strong epistemological foundation in the context of classical interpretation (Saeed 2006, 9-10). Al-Bukhârî's approach, which focuses on authentic hadith as the basis for interpreting verses, has provided a systematic and selective reference for interpretation. This characteristic later became a legacy for the next *mufassîrs*, such as Ibn Kathîr and al-Suyûtî.

Kitâb al-tafsîr also reflects the close connection between the fields of *tafsîr* and Hadith. This interdisciplinary model enables the interpretation of the Quran not only based on understanding, but also in its historical and transmitted validity context. Al-Bukhârî proves that the quality of the meaning of the Quran cannot be separated from the credibility of the narration (Ganai 2024, 123). This explains that al-Bukhârî's epistemological contribution was in shaping the character of narration-based Sunni commentary (*ahl al-hadîth*), as well as filtering the influence of extreme *ra'y* (reasoning) in the commentary. Thus, *kitâb al-tafsîr* not only became a complement to the work of hadith but also became the initial prototype for a thematic interpretation based on hadith (*tafsîr mawdû'i*), which provided a new direction in the study of Quranic interpretation based on the discipline of hadith.

Al-Bukhârî also strengthens *tafsîr bi al-ma'thûr*'s position through his selective and strict selection in terms of narrations. Explicitly, the narration of weak *sanad* or the existence of *shadz* (odd) is not used, and hadith, with the quality of *sanad muttasil* (continuous), is accepted. This methodology reflects what is described in the studies on *tafsîr bi al-ma'thûr* in which rigorous *sanad* validation and narrational authenticity are foundational criteria for legitimate exegesis (Ikhsan & Nurdin 2023, 608). By employing a rigorous *sanad*-based standard, a new scientific benchmark is established in the application of interpretative history, while freeing exegesis from the grip of the *Isrâiliyyât* tradition and unsourced speculative reading (Institute for the Study of Quran and Tafsir 2025, 14). Therefore, al-Bukhârî's approach embodies a systematic, selective, and authentic interpretation model, providing a solid scientific basis for the form of

historical interpretation in the later era. Overall, al-Bukhârî's methodology in *kitâb al-tafsîr* significantly contributes to *tafsîr bi al-mâthûr* preservation and establishment, as well as shaping an interdisciplinary approach between hadith and *tafsîr*. He intends to achieve an authentic, primary source-based understanding.

Al-Bukhârî and the Epistemic Framework of *Tafsir bi al-Mâthûr*

Contribution in the context of *tafsir* refers to the extent to which scholars have given dedication in approaches, methods, and content of interpretation that enrich the literature of *tafsir*. In an effort to explore the contribution of a figure, a theoretical study of the figure of al-Bukhârî and his work also needs to be carried out. The inclusion of *sanad* in detail shows the authenticity of the sources used in its interpretation, which clearly has a positive effect on the development of hadith science (Saeed et al. 2021, 2). Not only in the context of hadith science, but its contribution is specifically long-term, with two main contributions, epistemological and institutional. These two contributions are closely related to the study of *tafsir*, especially *tafsîr bi al-mâthûr*, which continues to develop to this day. The purpose of the contribution of epistemology in this context shows the role of the knowledge system and the scientific thinking framework in the science of interpretation. This also emphasizes that contributions cannot only be expressed in the form of works, but can be felt by scholars and the surrounding community-for instance by providing a model of interpretation grounded in authenticated hadith and *sanad*-based methodology (Ishaq et al. 2025, 7-8).

Epistemology is often associated with one of the branches of philosophy to explore the theory of science, which includes the study of the nature of science, the sources of knowledge, methods, and the test of the truth or validity of a science (verification) (Mustaqim 2012, 10). Similarly, in this context, we will explore al-Bukhârî's epistemological contribution to *tafsîr bi al-mâthûr*. His contribution is rooted in efforts to establish the validity of sources of knowledge in interpreting the Quran. However, elements related to the rooting of these contributions cannot be avoided, so they will be closely related to the construction and elaboration.

The first contribution in this context is related to the nature of the science of interpretation. The tradition of hadith, particularly as compiled by al-Bukhârî, plays a significant role in the essence of the science of *tafsir* itself. As hinted by al-Zarkashî (d. 794 H), the existence of the knowledge

of the Quran and tafsir is motivated by having been formed in the science of hadith (al-Zarkashî 1957, 9). His opinion emphasizes that the tradition of hadith affects the essence of the science of interpretation. The majority of scholars define *ulûm al-Qurân* along with knowledge related to historical traditions, for example, the aspect of the Quran's descent, *naskh mansûkh*, *asbâb al-nuzûl*, and so forth (Itr 1993, 108).

This contribution can be evidenced by some of the verses mentioned in his narration, which include the phrase "*Qâla hiya mansûkhah*" (he says this verse was deleted). In addition, al-Bukhârî also displays the diversity of positions of the verses, whether they are deleted or not. For example, "*Qâla Ibn 'Abbâs laysat bi mansûkhah*". This form can be found in al-Bukhârî's interpretation of Q.S. al-Baqarah [2]:185 (al-Bukhârî 2012, Vol. 6, No. 4484-4485, 29). Similarly, it is related to the leniency of having sexual activity with one's wife at night during the month of Ramadan, and it is based on a man who violates the rule of "approaching" his wife during the day. The verse, "*Uhilla lakum laylah al-siyâm al-rafath ilâ nisâ'ikum*" as a form of leniency to the *ummah* is also related (al-Bukhârî 2012, Vol. 6, 29).

Knowledge of *naskh* and *asbâb al-nuzûl*, utilizing the tradition of history and the existence of a tradition of transmission, became the standard in the two discourses (al-Qattân, n.d.). Such reliance on historical transmission aligns with contemporary studies showing that Quranic sciences developed through codified historical and narrational frameworks (Burton 1990, 45). In fact, it not only mentions history but also demonstrates that the dedication to codifying history in these two discourses contributes to the essence of science, a conclusion strengthened by recent scholarship on the formation of early Islamic narrational methodology (Ahmed 2020, 61). There is an *adagium* in both; it is impossible to know both except through history. This historical dependency is consistent with findings on early hadith-transmission groups whose geopolitical and social environments shaped the preservation of narrations (Wendry et al. 2020, 220). Such a standard makes sense because the Companions and the Prophet were the first to see when and where a verse was descended, which situates *asbâb al-nuzûl* and *naskh* within lived historical memory (Suyûfî 2018, 77). Although in its development, there is a way for *Ijtihâd* to determine it all, it still sticks to the basis of history. This dependence on historical narrative traditions is reinforced by structural analyses of hadith transmission and regional

transmitter networks (Wendry et al. 2020, 228). This kind of construction of essence impacts the essence of the science of interpretation itself. The impact is directly linked to the linkage of one of the two to be part of the science of interpretation, as the intertwining of narrational heritage and interpretive methodology continues to define exegetical practice (Burton 1990, 52).

The establishment of the contrasting epistemological boundaries between valid and invalid interpretations shows that he selected *sanad* and *matn* selectively and carefully. This selective attitude is evidenced by not accepting weak narrations, *shâdz*, or mixing it with *Isrâ'iliyyât* whose truth is not confirmed. At this stage, he contributed to the epistemological preservation of *tafsîr bi al-mâ'thûr* from debilitating elements. Husayn al-Dzahabî (d. 1398 AH) noted that there were three reasons for the weakening of *tafsîr bi al-mâ'thûr*, which are false hadith (*hadîth mawdû'*), the inclusion of the narration of *Isrâ'iliyyât* (*dukhûl al-isrâ'iliyyât*), and the abolition of *sanad* (*hadîf al-asâ'îd*) (al-Dzahabî 2000, 115).

Although al-Bukhârî does not explicitly influence al-Dzahabî's reasoning, the three points indicate how the narration of *tafsîr bi al-mâ'thûr* should be free of these three reasons. The goal is to keep the meaning of the Quran from wild speculation and individual or group desires without a historical basis. Brown reveals that the development of a strong hadith epistemology is reflected in al-Bukhârî, and the presence of *kitâb al-tafsîr* in it strengthens the epistemic authority in the science of interpretation (Brown, 2009). The reinforcement and verification that one narration comes from the Prophet at the same time agrees with the proposal of Ali Sulaiman, who said that *tafsîr bi al-mâ'thûr* must be formed from an argumentative text (Ali 1996, 134).

Ali's proposal is the result of an in-depth study of the importance of the narration-based interpretation of the Prophet, on which al-Bukhârî has built the foundation. This is recorded when al-Bukhârî interprets the phrase *falâ taj'âlû lillâh andâdan wa antum lâ ta'lamûn* (Q.S. Al-Baqarah [2]: 22). Al-Bukhârî, when interpreting the sentence, writes a hadith:

"*Haddathanî 'Uthmân ibn Abî Shaybah, haddathanâ Jarîr, 'an Mansûr, 'an Abî Wâ'il, 'an 'Amr ibn Shurahbîl, 'an 'Abd Allâh, qâla: Sa'altu al-nabiyya sallâ Allâhu 'alayhi wa-sallam: Ayyu al-dhanbi a'zamu 'inda Allâh? Qâla: "An taj'ala li-llâhi niddan wa-huwa khalaqaka." Qultu: Inna dhâlikâ la-'azm. Qultu: Thumma ayy? Qâla: "Wa-an taqtula waladaka takhâfu an yat'ama ma 'aka."*"

Qultu: Thumma ayy? Qâla: "An tuzâniya halîlata jârika." (al-Bukhârî 2012, vol. 6, no. 4456, 10).

"Uthman ibn Abî Shaybah narrated to me, Jarîr narrated to us, from Mansûr, from Abî Wâ'il, from 'Amr ibn Shurahbîl, from Abdullâh, he said: I asked the Prophet Muhammâd (peace be upon him), "What is the greatest sin in the sight of Allah?" He replied, "That you set up a rival unto Allah though He alone created you." I said, "That is indeed a great sin." Then I asked, "What is next?" He said, "To kill your son lest he should share your food with you." I asked, "What is next?" He said, "To commit illegal sexual intercourse with the wife of your neighbor."

If we look carefully, we will find a model of the conformity of the pronunciation between the hadith quotation and what the Quran means. The utterance of *andâd* (counterparts) in Q.S. al-Baqarah [2]:22 is then mentioned again in a different form in a hadith, which is known as *niddan* (ally). The "counterparts" can be interpreted through the hadith as "allies." This statement explains the question, "What is the greatest sin in the sight of Allah?" Therefore, the hadith can elaborate the meaning and inspire other meanings, for example, *andâd* is a great sin, whereas the verse does not say so.

Additionally, the above-mentioned hadith hints at the sources and methods al-Bukhârî employed. Epistemologically, transmission and critical analysis are integrated (Hallaq 1999, 78). Its influence occurs on the development and relevance of the context. For example, in interpreting legal verses or stories, al-Bukhârî specifically lists the time and place. Understanding the initial context helps deepen the verse's meaning in an objective, holistic way. Abdullâh Saeed calls it *context-sensitive tafsîr*, a form of interpretation that considers the historical and socio-cultural context at the time of revelation (Saeed 2006, 107).

The epistemology developed later was related to the formation of thematic interpretations of Hadith. Although it does not explicitly list the themes in each Hadith, it implicitly includes several themes, a pattern also found in thematic-contextual Quranic interpretation, where clustering of verses or narrations forms the basis of conceptual grouping (Ahmed 2020, 340). This is evidenced by the grouping of several verses, which will be interpreted to serve as the beginning of thematic categorization.

For example, al-Bukhârî once explained the verse of Q.S. al-Anâ'm [6]: 59 and compared it to the Q.S. Luqmân [31]:34. Therefore, through this verse, the theme presented is six things that are known only to Allah,

which is consistent with thematic-cross referencing in classical *tafsir* (Haleem 1999, 23). The theme built remains based on historical traditions. It does not start from the verses of the Quran itself. When interpreting verses on legal issues, debts and receivables (assets), and testimonies, al-Bukhârî explicitly mentions the practice or discussion of these issues. This reliance on lived tradition is also highlighted in the studies of Hadith based legal interpretation (Wendry et al. 2020, 220). Such a model asserts that its epistemology inspires a close relationship between the text and the reality of its application, echoing modern thematic approaches that connect textual categorization with socio-historical practices (Syarifah & Fahimah 2020, 300).

Such ties are also used in the conception of thematic interpretation, especially in the categorization based on a topic or subject. The formation of interpretation around a single theme can proceed from reality to text or from text to reality, a movement that is also recognized in thematic-compositional studies in contemporary Quranic scholarship (Purnama 2020, 245). On the one hand, the development of thematic interpretation, in terms of the steps of interpreting, will not be separated from the thematization of Hadith. For example, 'Abd al-Hayy al-Farmâwî, who considers the hadith as the sixth step in thematic interpretation, shows that narrational foundations remain indispensable to thematic formulation (Ahmed 2020, 348).

The effort to collect hadiths that have a discussion similar to the Quranic verses is basically a development in thematic interpretation. In its development, it was often used in the *model of tafsîr bi al-mâthûr*. Any finding about *tafsîr al-qur'ân bi al-hadîth*-explaining the meaning of the verse with the hadith of the Prophet - is part of the attempt to interpret *bi al-mâthûr*, and it is a part of the thematic interpretation. The development of thematic interpretation can also be identified from the compilation of the work of *asbâb al-nuzûl* (i.e., Abû 'Alî al-Wâhîdî) (Syarifuddin & Azizy 2018, 44). As al-Farmâwî once said, the descent of the Quran was due to the seeds of thematic interpretation. It is strengthened by the source showing that *asbâb al-nuzûl* exists with the narration of the Prophet or Companions. It also shows al-Bukhârî's methodological contribution to the integration of *riwâyah* (the science of hadith narration) and *dirâyah* (assessing the status and quality of hadith).

The integration of *riwâyah* and *dirâyah* is the foundation of the relationship between the authority of the text and the autonomy of the

interpretation of the *mufassir*. This relationship can be reflected in the essence of contextual interpretation, which cannot leave the narration and historical aspects behind, a dynamic confirmed by contemporary hermeneutical studies that emphasize the interdependence between transmitted reports and interpretive autonomy (Bauer 2011, 215). In the contemporary era, this approach is important to position and respond to the relationship between revelation, text, and reality. Mustaqim discussed the context of contemporary epistemology of interpretation, emphasizing functional relationships, and this kind of epistemic mapping is also reflected in recent studies that examine how interpretive methods draw both narration and contextual reasoning (Ishaq et al. 2025, 12). In the end, al-Bukhârî's methodological legacy in *kitâb al-tafsîr* can function as a narration-based interpretation construction that remains intertextual and dialogical with the contemporary context, a position that aligns with broader scholarly discussions on the balance between text authority and contextual responsiveness (Zaman 2002, 67).

The reinforcement of the epistemic dimension of *tafsîr bi al-ma'thûr* carried out by al-Bukhârî is based on authentic history through strict verification of *sanad*, prioritization of hadith authority, and restriction of *ijtihad* space to remain within the framework of historical evidence. It is beneficial for the stability of meaning and the continuity of knowledge transmission. Meanwhile, the tendency of modern interpretation emphasizes rationality, greater autonomy of the *mufassir*, and analysis of the socio-historical context by actualizing the message of the Quran for modern life (Martin 1982, 362). This epistemic difference illustrates that the preservation of this history will be the orientation of classical interpretation, while modern interpretation is oriented towards the reconstruction and actualization of meaning through the approach of modern sciences; a tendency is also documented in contemporary *tafsîr* studies that tie textual meaning to modern social challenges (Taufik et al. 2025, 150).

The institutional contribution is the understanding that scientific traditions are formed and that knowledge is systematically transmitted. Not a few classical *tafsîr* curricula in traditional madrassas make *kitâb al-tafsîr* the primary reference in the teaching of *tafsîr*. Afterwards, the selection of hadith made by al-Bukhârî contributes to the system of validity of the *tafsîr* writing. Al-Tâabarî, Ibn Kathîr, and al-Suyûtî were scholars whom al-Bukhârî greatly influenced. In the institutional process, the *tafsîr*

bi al-ma'thûr has been widely "institutionalized" in Islamic schools and universities.

Egypt's al-Azhar University, the Islamic University of Medina, and hadith institutions in South Asia have even developed a system of studies based on *riwâyah wa dirâyah*. This form of teaching is a crucial aspect of understanding the Quran. If an institution does not actively study the book of al-Bukhârî, it may study modern commentaries that follow the pattern of *sanad* criticism today. *Tafsîr al-Manâr* written by Muhammad 'Abduh and Rashîd Ridâ or *Tafsîr fî Zilâl al-Qur'ân* written by Sayyid Qutb, are proof of the determination of contribution to the study of hadith criticism that has been institutionalized by being marked as a curriculum in various Indonesian state universities.

Epistemic Impact of *Sahîh al-Bukhârî* on *Tafsîr bi al-Ma'thûr*

One phenomenon of contemporary Quran interpretation is the growing prevalence of relativism and subjectivism. This happens and is inseparable from contextual readings that are too loose. Institutional and epistemological contributions long-term impacts of the interpretation of *bi al-ma'thûr* need to be presented as a form of solution. At its peak, the tradition of subjectivism and relativism will interpret the Quran as flexibly and manipulatively as possible. It is a mistake to interpret the so-called "open scriptures" as being completely open. This kind of practice is different from the purpose of Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd's conception that the sacred text is "open," which demands the active role of the reader in producing meaning (Zayd 1994, 1), not interpreting without control.

This long-term influence can be felt by giving a narrow space to subjectivism and relativism in interpretation. In the study of relativism, there is no general rule for determining that interpretation is accepted, so there are no concrete limits on such interpretations (Stecker 1995, 14). A framework that can be supported by Islamic sources is essential to ensure that the boundary between the *mufassir*'s opinion and the interpretation itself is not blurred. If the limit is blurred, this will shift meaning towards social and ideological interests; for example, interpretation is used to justify the legality of identity politics and moral liberalization. This issue is included in the discussion of disorientation of meaning. Normatively, disorientation in meaning arises in the deconstruction of Quranic values. Al-Bukhârî, with the consistency of maintaining the values of the source

of interpretation and its quality in the long term, will be a fortress in interpreting the Quran.

Thus, the jargon “*tafsîr bi al-ma'thûr* becomes a solution” needs to be campaigned to consolidate the text and the current context. The collection of hadiths-which includes the Prophet's words, deeds, and approvals-serves as a means of applying the Quranic text in reality. The Hadith expands the scope of meaning and provides contextual legitimacy derived from the Prophet's life experience, the Sunnah (Martin 1982, 369). With this kind of approach, the Quran is understood to be born of a strong oral tradition, and this connection can be evidenced by traces found in the Quran itself (Osborne 2024, 124). Al-Bukhârî maintains the authority of objective narration, the limitation of meaning as the initial consensus, and the balance between *naqli* and *aqli*. These three aspects are indispensable in the construction of contextual interpretation (Saeed 2014, 3) or contemporary (Mustaqim 2012, 66-67). Thus, when reading contemporary and contextual interpretation, one should not eliminate the initial context but relate the interpretation to the current issues and phenomena.

Not only evidenced by the existence of contextual interpretations, the works of medieval *mufassir* are also a symbol of al-Bukhârî's continued influence. There are three main elements as affirmation of contribution and its long-term impact. First, the standardisation of the authority of history in interpreting, especially the accepted categorisation of *tafsîr bi al-ra'y*, requires the narration as the initial footing. Second, it is the act of strengthening the pattern of *tafsîr bi al-ma'thûr*, which places the verification of *sanad* as a source of interpretive power. Al-Dhahabî explained that when *sanad* is removed, it will weaken *tafsîr bi al-ma'thûr*. Third, it is the spread of interdisciplinary patterns between hadith and *tafsîr*.

For example, Ibn Kathîr named Q.S. al-Nâs and al-Falaq “*al-Mu'awidhatayn*”, as found in *Şâhîh al-Bukhârî* (Al-Bukhârî, 2012, 4964-4965, 567), and this action is followed by al-Suyûtî and Ibn Kathîr (al-Suyûtî 1993, 683; Kathîr 1998, 530). The two *mufassirs* also both quoted al-Bukhârî's interpretation of *al-waṣṭ* (middle), which is justice. Meanwhile, al-Qurtubî finds a problem in the hadith narrated by al-Bukhârî about the context of *nafkah* (necessities of life) found in Q.S. al-Baqarah verse 195 (al-Qurtubî 2000, 361). This simple example proves that it still influences the *mufassir* after his era, related to the production of terms and

classifications of verses in the Quran, the meanings of words based on authentic history, and the formulation and development of problems (especially in *Fiqh*) and new analyses.

The long-term contribution of al-Bukhārī is interdisciplinary and is incorporated into the commentary. This can be felt and seen by the Islamic scholars or *mufassirs*, who are required to study various knowledge to gain a different perspective. Al-Bukhārī also laid a systemic interdisciplinary foundation between the science of hadith and *tafsir*. The foundation is increasingly being built on a wider base in religious studies (Abdullah 2022, 138). The impact presented by al-Bukhārī's interdisciplinary foundation was the development of important terms in the study of the contemporary Quran. The examples are the *micro and macro* of *asbāb al-nuzūl*-occasions or circumstances of Quranic verses revelation - (Fazlur Rahman's *double movement*), the understanding of the meaning of *asbabunnuzul* in the classical era (*asbāb al-nuzūl al-qādimah*), and the understanding of the meaning of *asbabunnuzul* in the modern era (*asbāb al-nuzūl al-jadīdah*). These terms were born from the inevitability of using contemporary scientific approaches, especially history, sociology, and philosophy. Therefore, al-Bukhārī's contribution not only adds to the treasure of interpretation but can also expand the epistemological area of interpretation itself.

Conclusion

This study found that al-Bukhārī's contribution to *tafsir bi al-ma'thūr* manifested in two central forms: his work and scholarly impact. His commitment to the validity of the *sanad* strengthened the authority of historical interpretation and established a more systematic and selective scientific standard for its practice. He also encouraged the combination of hadith and *tafsir*-later adopted by *mufassirs*-and exerted an epistemological influence, arguing that interpretation should be based on history, not solely on rationality. In addition, the compilation of *Sahih al-Bukhārī* provided the initial foundation for a pattern of thematic interpretation based on hadith.

The findings demonstrate that al-Bukhārī's works and methods exert a significant influence on the institutional, methodological, and conceptual development of *tafsir bi al-ma'thūr*. His standardization of *sanad* not only strengthened the scientific foundations of Quranic interpretation in the classical period but also provided a robust framework for

contemporary Quranic studies to assess the reliability of transmitted sources. Moreover, the interdisciplinary model he advanced, integrating hadith scholarship and Quranic exegesis, offers a more comprehensive approach to understanding the Quran. The thematic organization of hadith in *Sahîh al-Bukhârî* further facilitated the emergence of historically grounded thematic interpretations that continue to inform modern research.

This study is limited by its exclusive focus on al-Bukhârî's contribution, without a systematic comparison with his contemporaries or an examination of differing methodological responses. It also does not address the broader socio-political context that may have shaped interpretive practices in his period. Future research may extend this analysis by exploring the reception of al-Bukhârî's methodology across diverse exegetical traditions and by examining its engagement with contemporary approaches in hadith studies and Quranic interpretation.

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