**Schools of Tafsir**

Theologists are divided into myriad of sects; each commenting the Qur'an with their own point of view. Some of these sects and their famous examples are;

**Classic Sunni**

The oldest and widest school of tafsir, they are generally classified as riwaya tafsirs, made by [Sunni](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sunni) scholars. Major examples are;

* [Jami al-bayan](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Jami_al-bayan&action=edit&redlink=1); written by [Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad_ibn_Jarir_al-Tabari)
* [Ma'alim al-Tanzil](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ma%27alim_al-Tanzil) by [al-Baghawi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Baghawi)
* [Al-Muḥarrar al-wajiz](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Al-Mu%E1%B8%A5arrar_al-wajiz&action=edit&redlink=1) by [ibn Atiyyah](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Ibn_Atiyyah&action=edit&redlink=1)
* [Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Azim](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Tafsir_al-Qur%27an_al-Azim&action=edit&redlink=1) by [ibn Kathir](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ibn_Kathir)
* [Zad al-Masir](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Zad_al-Masir&action=edit&redlink=1) by [ibn al-Jawzi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ibn_al-Jawzi)

**Mu’tazilah**

Mu’tazilah have a very rational way of tafsir, making them an important part of diraya tafsir. Most famous example are:

* [Al-Kashshaaf](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Kashshaaf) written by [al-Zamakhshari](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Zamakhshari)
* [Cami al-Ta’wil](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Cami_al-Ta%E2%80%99wil&action=edit&redlink=1); written by [al-Isfahani](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Isfahani)

**Shia**

Interpretation of the Qur'an according to [Shia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shia) point of view. Examples include:

* Tafsir al-Kummi a work by Ali ibn Ibrahim Kummi
* Al-Tibyan by Abu Cafer Tusi
* [Tafsir al-Mizan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tafsir_al-Mizan) by [Allamah Tabatabai](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allamah_Tabatabai)

**Sufistic approach**

It is an interpretation of the Qur'an which includes attribution of esoteric or mystic meanings to the text by the interpreter. In this respect, its method is different from the conventional exegesis. Esoteric interpretations do not usually contradict the conventional (in this context called exoteric) interpretations; instead, they discuss the inner levels of meaning of the Qur'an. A hadith from Muhammad which states that the Qur'an has an inner meaning, and that this inner meaning conceals a yet deeper inner meaning, and so on (up to seven levels of meaning), has sometimes been used in support of this view. Islamic opinion imposes strict limitations on esoteric interpretations specially when interior meaning is against exterior one. Esoteric interpretations are found mainly in [Sufism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sufism) and in the sayings (hadiths) of Shi'a Imams and the teachings of the Isma'ili sect. But the Prophet and the imams gave importance to its exterior as much as to its interior; they were as much concerned with its revelation as they were with its interpretation. These are generally not independently written, however are found in the books of Sufis. Some examples are;

* Hakaik al-tafsir by Sulemi

**Scientific approach**

Scholars deeply influenced by the natural and social sciences followed the materialists of Europe or the pragmatists. Under the influence of those secular theories, they declared that the religion's realities cannot go against scientific knowledge. What the religion claims to exist, but which the sciences reject should be interpreted in a way that conforms with the science; as for those things which the science is silent about, like the resurrection etc., they should be brought within the purview of the laws of matter; the pillars upon which the divine religious laws are based — like revelation, angel, Satan, prophethood, apostleship, Imamah (Imamate) etc. - are spiritual things, and the spirit is a development of the matter. As for the Qur'an itself, one should not explain it in the light of the old philosophy and theories, because they were not based on observations and tests — they were just a sort of mental exercise which has been totally discredited now by the modem science. Found by Ghazali and built upon by Razi, it is one of today's most abundant way of tafsir. Common examples are;

* [Mafatiḥ al-Ghayb](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Mafati%E1%B8%A5_al-Ghayb&action=edit&redlink=1) by [Fakhruddin al-Razi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fakhruddin_al-Razi)

**Philosophic approach**

The philosophers try to fit the verses on the principles of [Greek philosophy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greek_philosophy) . If a verse was clearly against those principles it was explained away. In this way the verses describing metaphysical subjects, those explaining the genesis and creation of the heavens and the earth, those concerned with life after death and those about resurrection, paradise and hell were distorted to conform with the said philosophy. That philosophy was admittedly only a set of conjectures — unencumbered with any test or proof; but the Muslim philosophers felt no remorse in treating its views on the system of skies, orbits, natural elements and other related subjects as the absolute truth with which the exegesis of the Qur'an had to conform.

**Fiqhi approach**

Fiqhi tafsir deals mainly with verses that have a legislative meaning (see [ahkam](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ahkam)), and it strives to obtain Islamic law from the Qur'an. It is a very common school classically and modernly. There is a dispute over the number of verses that contain jurisprudence, numbers ranging from 5 to 200 are reported. Some works part of this school are;

* Aḥkam al-Qur'an by [al-Jassas](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Al-Jassas&action=edit&redlink=1)
* Aḥkam al-Qur'an by [Qaḍi Abū Bakr ibn al-'Arabī](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Qa%E1%B8%8Di_Ab%C5%AB_Bakr_ibn_al-%27Arab%C4%AB&action=edit&redlink=1)