



**In the Name of Allah,  
the Entirely Compassionate,  
the Especially Merciful**



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- 1- Helping to spread the culture of Ahl al-Bayt (as) research in scientific and research centers;
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- 4- Publishing an authentic and reference Quarterly with scientific-research validity in the field of Ahl al-Bayt (as) culture and education.

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## ***Table of Contents***

- **Disruption of Contextual Coherence and Challenges in Understanding Qur'anic Verses in the Narrative Exegesis of the Ahl al-Bayt (as) School / Marziyeh Saemi, Seyyed Mohammad Razavi.....15-30**
- **Examining the Evolution and Representation of the Concepts of Imam, Imamate, and Imamiyya in Islamic Lexical and Theological Texts / Ammar Al Yousef, Mohsen Ghanbari .....31-44**
- **Evidence of the Imamate in The Qur'an and Narrations / Motreza AlKhatib.....45-58**
- **An Approach to the Essence of Tasbīḥ Through the Lens of Qur'anic Imagery and Narrative Explication / Mohammad Reza Aram, Hoorā Sadat Ghoozat.....59-84**
- **Analyzing the Concept of Establishing Divine Scripture (*Iqamat al-Kutub al-Samawiyah*) and Its Requirements in the Qur'anic Discourse / Maryam Haji Abdolbaghi, Minoo Naraghian, Hamid Reza Mostafid / .....85-106**
- **Foolhardiness (*Safah*) in the Qur'an and the Thought of Imam Ali (as): A Semantic, Jurisprudential, and Social Comparative Analysis/ Maryam Ebrahimi .....107-119**



## Disruption of Contextual Coherence and Challenges in Understanding Qur'anic Verses in the Narrative Exegesis of the Ahl al-Bayt (as) School

Marziyeh Saemi<sup>1</sup>  
Seyyed Mohammad Razavi<sup>2</sup>

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### Abstract

The Qur'an, as the principal source of guidance and knowledge in Islam, possesses a context-oriented structure in which accurate comprehension requires attention to the semantic continuity of its verses. One phenomenon worthy of examination in this regard is "contextual rupture," an occurrence that disrupts textual coherence and creates challenges in the processes of understanding and interpretation. This study, with a focus on the narrative exegesis of the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them), analyzes the effects of contextual rupture on the flow of Qur'anic discourse and its implications for the elucidation of Qur'anic teachings. Employing content analysis and examining selected verses, the research seeks to clarify the concept of contextual rupture, explore the exegetical approaches of the Ahl al-Bayt in addressing this phenomenon, and highlight their interpretive strategies. The findings indicate that the narrative approach of the Ahl al-Bayt plays a significant role in resolving ambiguities arising from contextual rupture and contributes to enhancing the depth of Qur'anic interpretation. The results of this study hold scientific and practical importance for scholars of Qur'anic exegesis and studies, particularly within the framework of the Ahl al-Bayt tradition.

**Keywords:** Contextual Disruption; Qur'anic Verses; Exegesis of the Ahl al-Bayt (as); Contextual Flow; Content Analysis.

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1. Marziyeh Saemi, Adjunct Faculty Member, Science and Research Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran (Corresponding Author): dr.marzieh.saemi@gmail.com.  
2. Assistant Professor, Department of Qur'anic Sciences and Hadith, Science and Research Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran: dsmrazavi@yahoo.com.



## Introduction

In an era where individuals delve into the most minute details and interpretations of the Qur'an, understanding its structural nuances and differences is of paramount importance. The Qur'an, a vast text revealed for the guidance of humanity, addresses a multitude of topics. Within this divine book, the phenomenon of contextual disruption holds significant weight. This phenomenon, which may initially seem illogical and even obscure, exerts considerable influence on the contextual flow of the Qur'anic text and directly impacts its understanding and interpretation.

This research aims to analyze the phenomenon of contextual disruption in Qur'anic verses and its relationship to the contextual flow of the text, as well as to examine the effects of this phenomenon on the comprehension and interpretation of the Qur'an. Here, we endeavor to explain the fundamental concepts, review previous research, and provide a detailed analysis to elucidate the connection between contextual disruption and a deeper understanding of the Qur'an. Before delving into the explanation of contextual disruption and its effects on the verses under examination, it is necessary to briefly discuss context and the analysis of the contextual flow of verses.

## Problem Statement

In the field of Qur'anic exegesis, the phenomenon of contextual disruption is a complex and contentious issue. Contextual disruption refers to the occurrence of verses in the Qur'an that, at first glance, may not appear to be connected to each other. This phenomenon poses challenges in the interpretation of the Qur'an and understanding its content. Therefore, this article examines and analyzes this phenomenon from a scientific and practical perspective.

This research analyzes the phenomenon of contextual disruption in Qur'anic verses and its impact on the understanding and interpretation of Qur'anic content. Specifically, this study endeavors to carefully examine the contextual structure of verses where contextual disruption is likely to occur, and to precisely investigate the effects of this disruption on the understanding and interpretation of those verses.

This research is entirely novel and no previous studies have been found on contextual disruption. Therefore, this study can contribute to the expansion of perspectives and methods of Qur'anic interpretation and help to provide a deeper explanation of the structures and meanings of the verses. Furthermore, a better understanding of the phenomenon of contextual disruption can help to clarify Qur'anic concepts and improve the understanding and interpretation of its content.



For this research, a descriptive-analytical approach has been employed. In this method, verses where contextual disruption is likely to occur are identified and analyzed, and then the effects of this disruption on the understanding and interpretation of those verses are carefully evaluated.

Through a detailed and in-depth analysis of the phenomenon of contextual disruption in Qur'anic verses, we have concluded that the effect of this phenomenon contributes to the expansion of methods of Qur'anic interpretation and improves the understanding and interpretation of its content, and can lead to innovation in the field of Qur'anic studies.

### **Definition and Elucidation of the Phenomenon of *Siyāq***

#### **The Lexical Definition of the Term *Siyāq***

The term was originally *Sawāq* but later transformed into *Siyāq*. The word *Siyāq* is the verbal noun (*maṣḍar*) derived from the verb *sāqa – yasūqu* (Ibn Manẓūr, 1415 AH, vol. 10, p. 166; Ṭurayḥī, 1375, vol. 5, p. 187). Lexicographers have provided multiple meanings for it, including: 'driving,' 'style and method,' 'follower,' 'continuous sequence,' 'hidden matters,' 'a metaphor for intensity,' and 'woman's dowry' (*ibid.*)."

Originally, *Siyāq* referred to the act of driving or leading livestock (Juhairy, 1407 AH, Vol. 4, p. 1499; Qazwini al-Razi, 1399 AH, Vol. 3, p. 117). In Arabic, a person who follows a caravan and drives it forward is called a "*sa'iq*." Similarly, the person who leads a caravan and guides it is called a "*qa'id*" (Ibn Manzoor, 1415 AH, Vol. 10, p. 168). In the movement of a camel caravan, the "*qa'id*" is primarily concerned with the path ahead, while the *sa'iq* maintains the order and organized movement of the camels (*ibid.*, p. 166).

In Arabic, a marketplace is called a "*suq*" because goods are brought from all directions to be sold there (*ibid.*). The dowry of women was referred to as *Siyāq* because, in ancient times, Arabs would give camels and other livestock as dowry to the bride's family (*ibid.*).

#### **Technical Definition of *Siyāq***

*Siyāq* in technical terms carries two primary meanings:

1. Linguistic Context: This is also known as "verbal context" and refers to the style of speech, the manner of sentence construction, the specific order of words, or the overall flow of discourse (Kulaini, 1365, Vol. 1, p. 130).
2. Linguistic and Situational Context: In this sense, *Siyāq* encompasses any linguistic or situational evidence associated with words and phrases. In other words, *Siyāq* is a characteristic of words or phrases that arises from their association with other words and sentences. For example, the phrase *اذهب الى البحر* when accompanied



by the phrase *واستمع من علمه بإهتمام* implies "go to the scholar," but when said alone, it means "go towards the sea" (Motahhari, 1364, p. 51).

## "2. Contextual Analysis

To understand the significance of context, let us consider the following two examples from the verses under examination:

1. In the verse *فَوَيْلٌ لِلْمُصَلِّينَ* failure to consider the context and the preceding and succeeding verses leads one to conclude that the worshippers are being threatened by God and condemned for performing this duty. However, the actual intended meaning refers to those worshippers who are indifferent to the plight of orphans and the poor, neglect their prayers, and are hypocritical and showy, withholding help from the needy (Razavi, 1395, p. 51).
2. In the verse "*وَاللَّهُ خَلَقَكُمْ وَمَاتَعَمَلُونَ*" which is, in fact, an argument of Abraham against idolaters who worshiped their handmade idols, disregarding the context would lead to the conclusion that God is the creator of human actions, and humans have no role in their destiny, essentially being like puppets manipulated by God's will (ibid.).

Before delving into the issue of contextual breakdown, it is essential to note that sometimes the context may suggest something that conflicts with other evidence. In such cases, the other evidence takes precedence over the context, as the authority of contextual implication is based on the authority of apparent meanings, and context loses its authority when it contradicts explicit textual evidence. For example, the verse of purification, which comes after the verses about the Prophet's wives, can be contextually linked to them. However, based on the narrations of the Ahl al-Bayt, this verse refers to the infallible Imams and cannot be interpreted based on the context (ibid., p. 52).

Similarly, in the verses, the tone, style of expression, and the characteristics of the pronouns and vocabulary used clearly indicate that the verse *إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ* *اللَّهُ لِيُدْهَبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا* is unrelated to the preceding verses and is entirely independent of them. This is because the preceding and succeeding verses, which pertain to the Prophet's wives, use feminine pronouns, while verse 33 addresses the masculine gender with the phrase "*عَنْكُمْ*" Moreover, the preceding verses have a tone of rebuke, whereas the aforementioned verse has a tone of praise and commendation."





expression. Therefore, contextual disruption lexically means a sudden change or interruption in the style or flow of expression (Tabatabaei, 1360, Vol. 10, p. 128; Ma'arif, 1411 AH, p. 24; Javadi Amoli, 1397, p. 36).

**Technical Definition:** Technically, contextual disruption in the Qur'an refers to an abrupt shift in the subject matter, tone, or style of verses within a sura or even between consecutive verses. This shift might involve a transition from one topic to another (verses 261-283 baghareh), a change from an admonitory tone to a warning tone (the initial verses of Surah Maryam), or a change in the addressee (Surah Al-Imran).

### Causes of Contextual Disruption in Qur'anic Texts

The most compelling argument for contextual disruption in the Qur'an is found in the words of Imam Mohammad Baqir (peace be upon him), as narrated by Jaber ibn Yazid Ja'fi, a prominent companion of the Imams. Jaber narrated:

عن جابر قال سألت أبا جعفر (عليه السلام) عن شيء في تفسير القرآن فأجابني، ثم سألته ثانية فأجابني بجواب آخر - فقلت: جعلت فداك - كنت أجبت في هذه المسألة بجواب غير هذا قبل اليوم - فقال لي (عليه السلام): يا جابر إن للقرآن بطناً، و للبطن ظهراً، يا جابر و ليس شيء أبعد من عقول الرجال من تفسير القرآن، إن الآية لتكون أولها في شيء و آخرها في شيء - و هو كلام متصل يتصرف على وجوه.

"I asked Abu Ja'far (peace be upon him) about something in the interpretation of the Qur'an, and he answered me. Then I asked him again, and he gave me a different answer. I said, 'May I be your sacrifice, you had given a different answer to this question before.' He (peace be upon him) said to me, 'O Jaber, indeed the Qur'an has an inner meaning, and for that inner meaning, there is another inner meaning and an outer appearance. And for that appearance, there is another appearance. O Jaber, nothing is farther from the minds of people than the interpretation of the Qur'an. Indeed, the beginning of a verse may be about one thing, and the end of the same verse may be about another thing. And yet, it is a connected discourse that can be interpreted in various ways.'"

The connected discourse here refers to the context or the flow of the text. Therefore, using the term "contextual disruption" is not a recent innovation attributed to certain interpreters; rather, it was used centuries ago by the Infallible Imams (peace be upon them) under the term "connected discourse," referring to the interconnected chain of verses.

Imam Sajjad (peace be upon him) also stated in this regard:

وَاللَّهِمَّ إِنَّكَ أَنْزَلْتَهُ عَلَى نَبِيِّكَ مُحَمَّدٍ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ مُجْمَلًا، وَآلِهِمَّهُ عِلْمٌ عَجَائِبُهُ مَكْمَلًا، وَرَتَّبْنَا عِلْمَهُ مَفْسَرًا، وَفَضَّلْنَا عَلَى مَنْ جَهَلَ عِلْمَهُ، وَقَوَّبْنَا عَلَيْهِ لِتَرْفَعَنَا فَوْقَ مَنْ لَمْ يُطِقْ حَمْلَهُ؛



"O Allah, You revealed it to Your Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him and his family) in a concise manner, and You inspired him with complete knowledge of its wonders. You inherited us with its interpretation, and You favored us over those who were ignorant of its knowledge, and You strengthened us with it to elevate us above those who could not bear its burden." (Sahifa al-Sajjadiyya, Supplication 42, No. 5)

Based on these statements, it is clear that the mere juxtaposition of verses does not guarantee a unified context. Rather, narrations are the governing factor in determining the context, and they serve as the most reliable evidence in interpretation. Only those who have a complete understanding of the Qur'an's mysteries and subtleties, like the Household of Prophethood (peace be upon them), are qualified to interpret it. Anyone else claiming such knowledge and understanding is either ignorant or malicious (Razavi, 1395, p. 51). Therefore, whenever we read or hear something from the Infallible Imams or their scholars, we should not reject it, for they are the experts in the revelation and interpretation of the Qur'an. As the possessors of this great book and the interpreters of divine revelation, they know best how to answer questions and provide beneficial guidance. There is nothing wrong with the beginning of a verse being about one topic, the middle about another, and the end about a third.

### **The Impact of Contextual Rupture on Qur'anic Interpretation**

To fully comprehend the significant role that the concept of "contextual rupture" plays in understanding Qur'anic verses, let us examine a few examples:

١. فِي بَضْعِ سِنِينَ لِلَّهِ الْأَمْرُ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَمِنْ بَعْدُ وَيَوْمَئِذٍ يَفْرَحُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ؛

"For a period of years, the matter is with Allah, before and after, and on that day the believers will rejoice" (30:4).

Based on the contextual flow and the consensus of both Shia and Sunni exegetes, the initial verses of Surah Rum discuss two influential wars between the Roman and Persian empires during the early Islamic period. The Qur'an predicts that after an initial Roman defeat, they would ultimately triumph over their long-standing rivals. The verse in question asserts that on the day of this Roman victory, the believers will rejoice in God's support.

The Qur'an states that on the day the Romans achieve victory, the believers will rejoice in God's support: 'And on that day the believers will rejoice in the victory of Allah' (30:4) «وَيَوْمَئِذٍ يَفْرَحُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ بِنَصْرِ اللَّهِ» (Qomi, 1363, Vol. 2, p. 153).

This interpretation is based on the context of the verses and the consensus of both Shia and Sunni exegetes. However, in a narration



attributed to Imam Sadiq, a different interpretation is provided. When asked why his mother, Fatimah al-Zahra, was given the title "al-Mansurah" (the victorious one), the Imam cited this verse. He explained that the day of the believers' rejoicing is the Day of Judgment, and their joy will be due to the intercession of Fatimah al-Zahra on their behalf. Thus, this verse, when viewed through the lens of contextual rupture, takes on a new meaning" Al-Majlisi, 1403 AH, Volume 43, page 98".

While both interpretations share the common theme of joy and victory, the former focuses on a historical event (the Roman victory), while the latter emphasizes a future eschatological event (the Day of Judgment) and the role of a specific individual (Fatimah al-Zahra) "Razavi, 1395, p. 54".

This exclusive focus on specific verses, without considering the surrounding verses, which is justified on the basis of 'breaking the context', is frequently found in the interpretive traditions attributed to the Infallible Imams. The foundational principles of such interpretations can only be grasped by entering the safe haven of divine authorities and seeking refuge in those sacred beings who are the door of repentance for believers and the absolution of their sins.

٢. وَإِذْ قُلْنَا ادْخُلُوا هَذِهِ الْقَرْيَةَ فَكُلُوا مِنْهَا حَيْثُ شِئْتُمْ رَغَدًا وَاَدْخُلُوا الْبَابَ سُجَّدًا وَقُولُوا حِطَّةً نَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ خَطَايَاكُمْ وَسَنَزِيدُ الْمُحْسِنِينَ فَبَدَّلَ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا قَوْلًا غَيْرَ الَّذِي قِيلَ لَهُمْ فَأَنْزَلْنَا عَلَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا رِجْزًا مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْسُقُونَ؛

And [remember] when We said, 'Enter this city and eat from it abundantly wherever you wish, and enter the gate prostrating, and say, "Pardon, we will amend," We will forgive your sins and increase the reward of the doers of good.' But those who wronged changed the word that was said to them, so We sent down upon those who wronged a punishment from the sky for what they were corrupting (2:58-59).

And recall when We said, 'Enter this city, which is the city of the Prophet's knowledge, and eat from its bounties abundantly and with pleasure. Enter the gate prostrating and say, "Our Lord, forgive our sins," so that We may forgive your sins and increase the reward of the doers of good.' However, the wrongdoers changed the word that was said to them, so We sent down upon the wrongdoers a punishment from the sky for their corruption.

It's worth noting that the Infallible Imams have offered an alternative interpretation of this verse, suggesting that the day of the believers' rejoicing, as mentioned in the Qur'an, refers to the day of the uprising of the Mahdi from the progeny of Mohammad and the establishment of his righteous government (Razavi, 1395, p. 524).



۳. وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ حُسْنًا وَإِنْ جَاهَدَاكَ لِتُشْرِكَ بِي مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ فَلَا تُطِعْهُمَا إِلَىٰ مَرْجِعِكُمْ فَأَنْتُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ؛

"And We have enjoined upon man to be dutiful to his parents. But if they endeavor to make you associate with Me that of which you have no knowledge, then obey them not. Unto Me is your return, then I shall inform you about what you used to do (29:8)."

According to the apparent meaning of this verse, based on its context, it enjoins individuals to be kind to their parents. However, based on the concept of "breaking the context" and the hadiths cited by Bahrani (1100 AH, Vol. 3, p. 241), the intended meaning is extended to encompass kindness towards the two leaders of the community: the Prophet Mohammad and Imam Ali. This kindness is manifested through extolling their virtues and educating people about the significance of their leadership.

۴. سَنَفْرَعُ لَكُمْ أَيَّ الثَّقَلَانِ؛

"And We shall bring you all to account, O you two groups! (55:31)."

According to the apparent meaning and context, this verse refers to the two groups of jinn and humans, who will be held accountable by God on the Day of Judgment. However, based on the concept of "breaking the context", the term "thakalan" (two groups) is interpreted to refer to the Qur'an and the Ahl al-Bayt (the Prophet's household), specifically the Qur'an. In this interpretation, the verse implies that on the Day of Judgment, God will scrutinize humanity's treatment of these two sacred entities and hold them accountable for any wrongdoing."

### Theoretical models in Qur'anic verses and contextual breakdowns

To better understand this, we will briefly refer to several narrations from the Infallible Imams (peace be upon them) regarding this matter.

- قَالَ عَلِيُّ بْنُ أَبِي طَالِبٍ (عليه السلام) سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ (صلى الله عليه و آله) يَقُولُ أَنَا وَ عَلِيٌّ (عليه السلام) أَبَوَا هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ وَ لِحَقُّنَا عَلَيْهِمْ أَعْظَمُ مِنْ حَقِّ أَبِي وَ لِوَالِدَتِهِمْ فَإِنَّهَا تُنْقِذُهُمْ إِنْ أَطَاعُونَا مِنَ النَّارِ إِلَى دَارِ الْقَرَارِ وَ نُلْحِقُهُمْ مِنَ الْعُبُودِيَّةِ بِخِيَارِ الْأَحْرَارِ؛

Ali ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him) said: I heard the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his family) say, "Ali and I are the fathers of this nation, and our right over them is greater than the right of their biological fathers. For indeed, if they obey us, we will save them from the Fire and lead them to the abode of peace (Paradise), and we will elevate them from servitude to the noble status of free people." (Barazesh, 2014, Vol. 11, p. 326).



- الحسن (عليه السلام): مُحَمَّدٌ (صلى الله عليه) وَعَلِيٌّ (عليه السلام) أَبَوَاهُ هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةُ، فَطُوبَى لِمَنْ كَانَ بِحَقِّهِمَا عَارِفًا، وَ لَهُمَا فِي كُلِّ أَحْوَالِهِ مُطِيعًا، يَجْعَلُهُ اللَّهُ مِنْ أَفْضَلِ سَكَّانِ جَنَّاتِهِ وَ يُسْعِدُهُ بِكَرَامَاتِهِ وَ رِضْوَانِهِ؛

Imam al-Hasan (peace be upon him) said: 'Mohammad (peace be upon him) and Ali (peace be upon him) are the fathers of this nation. Blessed is he who recognizes their rights and obeys them in all circumstances. May Allah place such individuals in the best gardens of Paradise and grant them His blessings and pleasure. (Bahrani, 1100 AH, Vol. 5, p. 326).

- الصادق (عليه السلام): سَنَفْرُغُ لَكُمْ أَيُّهُ الثَّقَلَانِ قَالَ الثَّقَلَانِ نَحْنُ وَ الْقُرْآنُ؛

Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) said: 'We will settle your accounts, O you two weighty things.' He said, 'The two weighty things are us and the Qur'an.' (Birazish, 1394, Vol. 15, p. 414; Majlesi, 1403 AH, Vol. 24, p. 324).

- الباقر (عليه السلام): عَنْ زُرَّارَةَ قَالَ: سَأَلْتُ أَبَا جَعْفَرٍ (عليه السلام) عَنْ قَوْلِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ سَنَفْرُغُ لَكُمْ أَيُّهُ الثَّقَلَانِ قَالَ كِتَابُ اللَّهِ وَ نَحْنُ (عليه السلام)

Imam al-Baqir (peace be upon him) said: 'Zurarah reported: I asked Abu Ja'far (peace be upon him) about Allah's saying, "We will settle your accounts, O you two weighty things." He said, "The Book of Allah and we." (Birazish, 1394, Vol. 15, p. 414; Majlesi, 1403 AH, Vol. 24, p. 324; Astarabadi, 1409 AH, p. 616).

- على بن إبراهيم: سَنَفْرُغُ لَكُمْ أَيُّهُ الثَّقَلَانِ قَالَ نَحْنُ وَ كِتَابُ اللَّهِ وَ الدَّلِيلُ عَلَى ذَلِكَ قَوْلُ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ (صلى الله عليه و آله) إِنِّي تَارِكٌ فِيكُمْ الثَّقَلَيْنِ كِتَابَ اللَّهِ وَ عِزَّتِي أَهْلَ بَيْتِي (عليه السلام) على بن إبراهيم سَنَفْرُغُ لَكُمْ أَيُّهُمَا الثَّقَلَانِ،

Ali ibn Ibrahim said: 'We will settle your accounts, O you two weighty things.' He said, 'We and the Book of Allah.' And the evidence for this is the statement of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his family): "Indeed, I am leaving among you two precious things: the Book of Allah and my family, my household. (Birazish, 1394, Vol. 15, p. 414; Qummi, 1363 SH, Vol. 2, p. 345)



## **The Impact of the Phenomenon of Contextual Discontinuity on the Interpretation of the Qur'an**

The phenomenon of contextual discontinuity (*Shikast-e Siyāq*) in the Qur'an, as one of the rhetorical and literary features of this divine book, has profound effects on the interpretation and understanding of Qur'anic verses. This phenomenon not only enhances the literary beauty of the Qur'an but also helps interpreters to understand and interpret the multiple and diverse messages contained in the verses of the Qur'an more accurately and comprehensively. Below, we discuss some of the important effects of the phenomenon of contextual discontinuity in the interpretation of the Qur'an:

### **1. Enhancing Attention and Focus of the Audience**

Contextual discontinuity, due to the sudden change in the subject, tone, or style of the verses, causes the audience's attention to be drawn to the verses and to focus more on the Qur'anic messages. This feature is especially important in verses that contain warning or good tidings messages. (Tabatabai, 1981, Vol. 3, p. 243)

### **2. Providing a More Comprehensive Explanation and Interpretation of the Verses**

Interpreters, by paying attention to the changes in the context, can understand the hidden and implicit meanings of the verses. The change in context can indicate important points that are effective in the interpretation of the verses. (Ma'rifat, 1411 AH, Vol. 2, p. 326)

### **3. Revealing the Relationship Between Different Verses**

Contextual discontinuity can help interpreters to better understand the relationship between different verses. Sometimes, the verses seem unrelated on the surface, but by carefully examining the changes in the context, the semantic and conceptual connection between them can be found. This feature is especially useful in long surahs that cover multiple topics. (Tabari, 1975, Vol. 3, p. 34)

### **4. Facilitating the Understanding of Divine Purposes**

Changes in the context can help to better explain the divine purposes of the revelation of the verses. By paying attention to the context of the verses, interpreters can understand why God has referred to a topic in a particular verse and then addressed another topic. This helps to better understand the wisdom and divine purposes of the revelation of the Qur'an. (Javadi Amoli, 1996, Vol. 3, p. 76)

### **5. Strengthening Interpretive Arguments**

Interpreters can use the changes in the context to strengthen their interpretive arguments. The context of the verses can provide strong



evidence to support or refute a particular interpretation, thereby making the foundations of interpretation more solid. (Suyuti, 1404 AH, Vol. 2, p. 56)

Therefore, this phenomenon can help to attract the audience's attention, provide a more comprehensive explanation of the verses, reveal the relationships between the verses, facilitate the understanding of divine purposes, and strengthen interpretive arguments. Interpreters, by paying attention to this feature, can achieve a deeper understanding of the meanings and messages of the Qur'an and provide more comprehensive and accurate interpretations. (Tabatabai, 1981, Vol. 3, p. 42; Ma'rifat, 1411 AH, p. 47; Tabari, 1975, p. 129; Javadi Amoli, 1397, p. 51; Suyuti, 1404 AH, p. 33)

### **Results and Implications of Investigating the Effects of Contextual Discontinuity (*Shikast-e Siyāq*) on Understanding Qur'anic Verses**

Investigating the effects of *Shikast-e Siyāq* in the Qur'an can lead to various results and implications in the fields of interpretation, linguistics, and education. These studies help interpreters and researchers to achieve a deeper and more accurate understanding of the Qur'an, as well as create new methods for teaching and interpreting Qur'anic verses. Here are some of the most important results and implications of these studies:

#### **1. Strengthening the Comprehensive and Coherent Understanding of Qur'anic Verses**

*Shikast-e Siyāq* can lead to a more comprehensive and coherent understanding of Qur'anic verses. By understanding the sudden changes in context, interpreters can achieve a more accurate and harmonious interpretation of the verses, which leads to a better understanding of the divine messages. (Tabatabai, 1981, Vol. 8, p. 42)

#### **2. Revealing Hidden Relationships Between Verses**

One of the important consequences of studying *Shikast-e Siyāq* is the revelation of hidden and conceptual relationships between different verses. This helps interpreters to find more accurate connections between different Qur'anic topics and provide a more comprehensive and coherent interpretation. (Suyuti, 1404 AH, Vol. 1, p. 221)

#### **3. Improving Qur'anic Educational and Teaching Methods**

Studying *Shikast-e Siyāq* can lead to the improvement of Qur'anic educational and teaching methods. By recognizing the changes in context more accurately, Qur'anic teachers and educators can adjust their teaching methods in a way that is more attractive and effective. (Javadi Amoli, 1397, p. 151)

#### **4. Developing Interdisciplinary Research**

Investigating the effects of *Shikast-e Siyāq* can strengthen interdisciplinary research. This phenomenon can create the basis for joint



research between scholars and researchers in various fields such as linguistics, literature, psychology, and educational sciences. (Ma'rifat, 1411 AH, Vol. 2, p. 162)

### **5. Increasing the Accuracy and Validity of Jurisprudential Deductions**

By having a better and more accurate understanding of the context of the verses, interpreters and jurists can provide more accurate and correct jurisprudential deductions. Studying *Shikast-e Siyāq* can contribute to the accuracy and validity of jurisprudential deductions, because changes in the context can provide important information about the main purpose of the verse and its application in jurisprudential issues. (Khoei, 1390, Vol. 1, p. 29)

### **6. Creating a Deeper and More Accurate Understanding of Spiritual and Moral Concepts:**

Studying the changes in the context in the Qur'an can help to a deeper and more accurate understanding of spiritual and moral concepts. Sudden changes in tone and subject can contribute to greater emphasis on some ethical and spiritual concepts and make the understanding of these concepts easier for the Qur'anic audience. (Motahhari, 1364, Vol. 1, p. 216)

### **7. Strengthening the Rhetorical and Literary Power of the Qur'an**

Investigating the effects of *Shikast-e Siyāq* can contribute to strengthening the rhetorical and literary power of the Qur'an. This rhetorical feature allows the Qur'an to convey its messages in an attractive and effective way and encourages the audience to think and reflect. (Tabari, 1975, Vol. 3, p. 420)

Therefore, studying the effects of *Shikast-e Siyāq* in the Qur'an leads to numerous results and implications in various fields of interpretation, linguistics, education, and jurisprudence. These studies help interpreters and researchers to achieve a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the Qur'an and create new methods for interpreting and teaching Qur'anic verses. According to authoritative and scientific sources, these studies can help to increase the accuracy and validity of Qur'anic deductions and strengthen interdisciplinary communication in Qur'anic research. (Tabatabai, 1981, Vol. 5, p. 123; Suyuti, 1404 AH, p. 215; Javadi Amoli, 1397, p. 269; Ma'rifat, 1411, Vol. 1, p. 264; Khoei, Abolqasem, 1390, p. 68; Motahhari, 1364, p. 153; Tabari, 1975, Vol. 5, p. 41)

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## Conclusion

Contextual discontinuity (*Shikast-e Siyāq*) in the Qur'an is one of the aesthetic and rhetorical features of this divine book, which allows it to convey multiple and diverse messages to different audiences in an effective and impactful way. These changes in context can help strengthen the spiritual and instructive impact of the verses and indicate the diversity and complexity of Qur'anic messages.

The phenomenon of *Shikast-e Siyāq* in the Qur'an, as one of its rhetorical and literary features, plays a very important role in deepening and enriching the interpretation of this heavenly book. Examining the effects of this phenomenon on understanding the verses of the Qur'an shows that sudden changes in subject, tone, and audience can lead to a more comprehensive and accurate interpretation of Qur'anic concepts. Analyzing *Shikast-e Siyāq* not only helps to discover hidden relationships between verses and a better understanding of divine messages but also leads to the strengthening of jurisprudential deductions and the improvement of Qur'anic educational methods.

This research shows that interpreters, by recognizing the changes in context more accurately, will be able to achieve a more harmonious and coherent interpretation and convey the multiple and diverse messages of the Qur'an to the audience in an attractive and impactful way. On the other hand, these analyses can lay the groundwork for interdisciplinary research in the fields of linguistics, literature, psychology, and educational sciences, which ultimately contributes to the development and deepening of Qur'anic knowledge.

Therefore, examining and analyzing the phenomenon of *Shikast-e Siyāq* in the Qur'an, as a powerful interpretive tool, can lead to a better and more comprehensive understanding of Qur'anic verses and pave the way for new scientific and educational research in the field of interpretation and understanding of the Qur'an.

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## Examining the Evolution and Representation of the Concepts of Imam, Imamate, and Imamiyya in Islamic Lexical and Theological Texts

Ammar Al Yousef<sup>1</sup>

Mohsen Ghanbari<sup>2</sup>

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### Abstract

The terms Imam, Imamate, and Imamiyya represent some of the most fundamental concepts in Islamic thought. Throughout history, they have faced significant conceptual and interpretive challenges within various theological and intellectual traditions of Islam. These concepts are reflected not only in the works of Muslim theologians but also in classical lexicons, where their meanings and usages have undergone notable transformations over time. With the rise of the translation movement in the Islamic world and the subsequent transmission of Islamic knowledge to the West, these crucial terms were often neglected or semantically reduced in many translated and secondary sources. This study adopts a theoretical and descriptive approach to examine the evolution and representation of these concepts in Islamic lexical and theological texts. It seeks to provide a framework for the study of specialized Islamic terminology based on authentic Muslim sources. The research first analyzes the place and function of each term within linguistic and theological contexts, and then explores their conceptual and historical dimensions within the discourse of Imamiyya. The findings demonstrate that a precise understanding of these terms requires returning to the linguistic, epistemological, and theological contexts in which they emerged. Only through such an approach can these concepts be authentically and accurately represented in contemporary Islamic studies.

**Keywords:** Imam, Imamate, Imamiyya, Islamic Terminology, Lexicography, Islamic Theology.

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1. PhD graduate, Al-Mustafa International University, Qom, Iran, (Corresponding Author): dr.ammara.yousef@outlook.com

2. Professor, Al-Mustafa International University, Qom, Iran: muhsenghanbari@gmail.com

## Introduction

Islamic studies are one of the other branches of knowledge and science that spread throughout the centers of science in the world in general and in the West in particular. Like any branch of knowledge, it involves a special linguistic structure, and therefore needs specialized scientific dictionaries that undertake to clarify the terms of the sciences it contains.

Not only that, but as we will point out, the matter becomes more complicated when we discover that a large number of terms differ from one sect of Muslims to another, and in addition, some terms differ between one school and another or one scholar and another within one sect, and this makes the matter even more complicated and reveals how important it is to delve into this topic. Hence, the terms Imam, Imamate, and Imamyya are perhaps among the most important terms that should be part of a specialized dictionary for Islamic studies.

In this context, we saw that returning to the structure of science that logicians had proposed at the end of their works would help in developing a general plan and strategy that would be useful in shaping that vision (Al-Ttahanawi, Mohammad Ali, 1996, Vol. 1, p. 14). Thus, the basic problem or question that this article addresses is how to create a specialized dictionary to explain the terminological meanings of the branches of Islamic knowledge, focusing on some of the most controversial and important terms, which are Imam, Imamate, and Imamyya. Hence, it is important to note that, given the novelty of this project in Islamic studies in foreign languages, especially English, some attempts have been made, but they have not been without some gaps. Most of them took the form of mentioning the synonym of the term in the foreign language and did not explain it based on Islamic sources. Furthermore, important terms were not given their due, even in the form of the dictionary addressing the explanation of the term.

## Definition

To begin with, it is worth clarifying the main elements as a base and foundation that plays an important role in determining the method of authoring that we should follow in creating the dictionary. Although, logicians emphasize that every science has a subject-matter that distinguishes it from other sciences and embodies an axis around which the issues and questions related to a science revolve. Then, the specialist investigates essential accidents or intrinsic properties of science's subject-matter (Al-Misri, Ayman, 2024, p. 27). And such essential accidents are only available in real sciences not conventional sciences (Subhani, Jafar, 2009, vol. 1, p. 15), while the subject of our article falls under conventional



sciences. Despite all that, specialists applied this logical rule to all branches of knowledge, whether real or conventional.

To explain, there are four degrees of existence for a thing. Two of them are real, i.e., do not differ among different people, and two are conventional, i.e., do differ among different people. The two real degrees are the existence of the thing in the external world, which is called the real existence, and the existence of the thing in the intellect, which is called the intellectual or mental existence. Whereas the two conventional existences are the linguistic existence and the written existence. The linguistic as well as the written existences only exist by convention that is by agreed consent between two or more individuals. Thus, they will differ among people according to their language, terminology and the signs used in writing them (Al-Muzaffar, Mohammad Rida, 1987, Vol. 1, p. 34).

Since lexicography was considered a conventional science—and before we explain the terms Imam, Imamate, and Imamiyya as among the most important terms that should be included in the specialized Islamic lexicon—we will address lexicography based on the eight elements that logicians have mentioned at the end of their books as a significant outset of every science are called the eight headings (Qutb al-Din Shirazi, Mahmoud ibn Masoud, 2004, p. 27). Definition, subject-matter, principles, issues, goal, benefit, rank and founder are eight themes related to every science that embody its identity in some ways and thus enable the student to have an overview about the science he or she is about to study (Al-Misri, Ayman, 2023, p. 10). To apply this outset to lexicography, some of these eight headings will be pointed out here:

### **1. Definition**

Linguistics is of several branches, among them are the disciplines of morphology, syntax, and semantics (Crystal, David. "Branches of Linguistics." <https://sheffield.ac.uk/linguistics/home/all-about-linguistics/about-website/branches-linguistics>). Semantics occupies an important aspect of linguistics which is in general the study of the meaning of words, and it is covered by sub branches, what concerns us of these sub branches is lexicology, which is in turn a discipline dealing with the vocabulary of a language and the properties of words as the main units of the language. Thus, it actually covers broader investigation than the meaning of words, such as its morphemic structure, history and meaning as well (Payne, Laura. "Lexicography." Encyclopaedia Britannica, <https://www.britannica.com/technology/lexicography>). The investigation of scientific terminology, although it shares some similarities with semantics, is also more specific than the investigation those aspects, including the meaning of words. Here the researcher will encounter the



difference between the word and the term. More light will be shed on this difference.

The important point here is that creating dictionary, whether it deals with the linguistic meanings of words or the meanings of terms, consists of two parts: lexicology and lexicography. Lexicography is simply: the skill, practice, or profession of writing dictionaries. It refers to the compiling, editing, or writing of a dictionary (Advanced American Dictionary, 2013, p. 985). While lexicology, the study of the words in a given language, including their origins, evolution, meanings, usage, and contexts (Payne, Laura. "Lexicography." Encyclopaedia Britannica, <https://www.britannica.com/technology/lexicography>). Accordingly, the specialized dictionary will be subject to both, with a difference imposed by the difference between the word and the term.

## 2. Subject-matter

The subject-matter of lexicography as mentioned above is precisely the scientific meaning of the term in special sciences, and not the meaning of words. To clarify, it is good to differentiate between the word and the term, because they cannot be used interchangeably, even though they both are, as we mentioned previously, conventional and belong to linguistic existence in some way.

First, to analyze linguistic signification briefly, three levels can be referred to: word, meaning, and instance. The word indicates the meaning, and the meaning, in turn, discloses its instances or individuals. For example: The word "human being" indicates the meaning of a "rational animal," and "rational animal" is applied to its individuals Ammar, Hussein, and Siraj. Therefore, there are two connections: first between the word and its meaning, and second between the meaning and its individuals. Conventional existence is the first of these two connections, which—based on the system of words-meanings equivalence that is made by a linguistic contract—can be in multiple forms, such as unequivocal and equivocal (Yazdi, Abdullah ibn Hussein, 1991, p. 26), for the word sometimes indicates only one meaning, like the signification of the word "human being," and sometimes can indicate more than one meaning, like the signification of the word "ring" in English, which can indicate both "jewelry" or the sound made by a phone. What matters here is that the term has the same connection with its meaning; although it is a conventional connection, it occurred later than the word's conventional connection with its meaning, that is, through transferring the word from its original meaning to a new meaning. Thus, the term is a word with different signification, in other words, a word is a meaningful element in a language. While a term is a word but has a particular meaning in a specific field. For further



clarification, the difference between the linguistic and terminological meanings is that the first refers to the meaning that the people of language used the word for, and the second refers to the meaning that the people of a certain field have agreed to give to that word or to use that word for. For example, the word Imam in Arabic language, refers to an individual who takes precedence over others (Ibn Manzur, Mohammad ibn Makram, 1994, Vol. 12, p. 26), regardless of whether he is worthy of being given precedence and priority over others or not. While in terminology of Islamic theology "it refers to an infallible individual who has been specifically designated by Allah to assume the primary responsibility of guardianship and authority over the nation and control it, encompassing both religious and worldly affairs." Eventually, this difference between the word and the term, leads to the fact that they cannot be used interchangeably.

### 3. Principles

The principles of science are all meanings and propositions upon which the investigation of an issue related to a particular science are based. Logic, for example, is based upon either self-evident or certain principles, such as the law of non-contradiction, which states that "a thing cannot be and not-be at the same time" or "equals of equals are equals." The principles of science, in fact, are the source of knowledge that the investigation in discovering and proving its issues relies on (Al-Misri, Ayman, 2023, p. 14).

In the case of lexicography—specifically, in creating a specialized Islamic dictionary that covers important terms such as Imam, Imamate, and Imamiyya—the principles are the Islamic references of Islamic studies. Therefore, the task here is not to investigate the essential accidents or intrinsic properties of the terms in these specific sciences. And this is not because we are dealing with conventional discipline that their subject-matters have no essential accidents, as they applied the eight elements to these as well, as we indicated. But rather, regardless of the subject-matter properties whether essential or accidental, intrinsic or extrinsic, the task is to define or describe the terms without investigating the proofs of their properties that the specialists relied on, and thus, it is not correct to intervene in the scientific investigation. Hence, the method that we follow in creating a specialized dictionary is mainly descriptive.

### 4. Issues

The issues of science encompass all that is ascertained and demonstrated in a science. Since the subject-matter and principles of lexicography have become clear, it also becomes clear that its issues are not scientific issues in the logical sense. This is not because of the fact that the investigation here is not based on the demonstration which is available in real sciences not conventional sciences, for the fact that specialists applied



the logical rule of being science to all branches of knowledge including the conventional. But this is because of the fact that the investigation here does not fall under either of them. Simply because the investigator here does not prove or deny the possible properties of the subject-matter, regardless of whether they are essential or accidental, intrinsic or extrinsic, but rather he merely defines and describes the scientific terms as they have been investigated by the specialist in the science that they belong to.

### **Authoring methods**

Since the investigator in this kind of investigation does not prove or deny the possible properties of the subject-matter, and then his task is to define or describe the scientific terms as they have been investigated by the specialist in the science that they belong to, and so does not have a right to intervene in the scientific investigation. Therefore, the main question posed by the investigator in the subject of lexicography is "what" not "why," and this represents a sign of the descriptive method. For example, the investigator asks about the term Imam using "what" question, i.e., what does Imam mean in Islamic theology? Or what is the theological meaning of Imam? And the answer, based on the theological sources and references, will be: "it refers to an infallible individual who has been specifically designated by Allah to assume the primary responsibility of guardianship and authority over the nation and control it, encompassing both religious and worldly affairs." However, if the investigator rarely asks using "why" question, as if asking about the infallibility of the Imam in the mentioned example, i.e., why the Imam is infallible? The answer will be in the same context, i.e., describing the evidence provided by theologians, because the investigator is not in the position of proof or denial.

Within the descriptive method as a basic method in the subject of lexicography, it is necessary to rely on both the analytical method and the comparative method. In the analytical method, it is necessary to analyze the texts and quotations that were taken from Islamic sources and references to identify the differences that existed between specialists. Then comes the role of the comparative method, to compare these texts and extract the terminological definition or definitions of the term.

In addition to the method of theoretical study, which is what has been explained so far, creating a specialized dictionary includes practical practice as well. To explain, the practical practice should be done through several steps, which are briefly as follows: Compiling the essential, useful and practical terms. Researching for the synonyms of the terms, which includes two stages (Searching for the linguistic synonym closest to the terminological meaning and comparing the linguistic synonym with what is mentioned in the dictionaries that appeared recently and choosing the



most appropriate one to the linguistic synonym). Researching for and quoting the definitions from the original sources and references. Translating the quotations into English and paraphrasing them—In the case of creating a specialized dictionary in English.

### **Applied Terminological Analysis**

Here is an application of the above elements and the steps to some of the most important terms in Islamic theology, presented in the form of a specialized dictionary:

#### **1. Imam / Divine leader**

The term (الإمام) in language, refers to an individual who takes precedence over others, regardless of whether he is worthy of being given precedence and priority over others or not. In theology, it refers to an individual who has been specifically designated by Allah to assume the primary responsibility of guardianship and authority over the Nation and control it, encompassing both religious and worldly affairs.

This is, in fact, the general theological meaning of this term. In order to understand all aspects of the term Imam, it is beneficial, before that, to have a good background on the term Imamate, as it serves as the foundation of this term, so that Shia Muslims have concluded several necessary attributes of Imam based on the principle Imamate as one of the five fundamental principles of Islam. The attributes of Imam are as follows:

#### **1. Infallibility of the Imam**

Shia Muslims hold the belief that Imam, just like a Prophet, must be infallible from all vices, defects, and sins, whether open or concealed, deliberately or unintentionally, from childhood up to death. Imam as well must be free from inadvertence, error, or unawareness, because the Imams, just like the Prophets, are maintainers of the religious law and they must stand out firm for it. The evidences that Shia have mentioned to prove the infallibility of the Prophets—the rule of grace—are the same as those that they have mentioned to prove the infallibility of the Imams, and the following attributes as well.

#### **2. Knowledge of the Imam**

Imam receives all Divine knowledge and laws, as well as information, from either the Prophet or the Imam preceding him. And if a new question arises, he must have knowledge of it through inspiration, which he receives through the power of sacredness that Almighty Allah has placed in him. Therefore, when he pays attention to something and wills to know it in its reality, he will neither miss nor fail to achieve it, without requiring rational evidences or guidance and instructions of mentors. However, the knowledge of Imam can be increased and intensified. And so the Holy



Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) used to pray to Almighty Allah, saying: “O Lord, increase my knowledge” (Qur’an 20:114).

### **3. Moral attributes of the Imam**

Imam, just like a Prophet, must be the best of all mankind in attributes of human perfection, such as courage, generosity, chasteness, truthfulness, justice, fairness, prudence, intellect, wisdom, and morality.

### **4. Obedience to the Imam**

Imam is the man of authority whom Almighty Allah has commanded people to obey. He is the witness over mankind, the gateway leading to Almighty Allah, the pathway leading to Him, the sign pointing to Him, the bearer of His knowledge, the interpreter of His revelation, and the pillar of belief in His oneness. By virtue of this, Imam has been consistently the cause of security for the inhabitants of the earth, as narrated from the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) that he said:

The likeness of my household in this Nation is the Ark of Noah; whoever embarked upon it was saved, but whoever departed from it was drowned.

Since the Imam is the man of authority whom Almighty Allah has commanded people to obey, the commandments of him are verily the commandments of Almighty Allah; the Imam's prohibitions are His prohibitions; to obey Imam is to obey Him; to disobey Imam is to disobey Him; to adhere to Imam is to adhere to Him; and to show enmity towards Imam is to show enmity towards Him.

Pursuant to this, the religious laws commissioned by Almighty Allah must not be derived from any resource other than the Imam's resource; thus, it is invalid to take these laws from sources other than the Imam, and the religious responsibility of any Muslim who refers to sources other than the Imam is not fulfilled. Indeed, such a Muslim must not feel content that he has carried out the duties imposed upon him by Almighty Allah unless he carries them out according to the teachings of the Imam.

Based on what has been mentioned at the beginning that the Imam is an individual who has been specifically designated for the position of Imamate by Allah, as well as the attributes mentioned regarding the Imam, it is a necessary and obligatory duty upon every Muslim to know his or her Imam; rather, it is, among Shia Muslims, just like a Prophet, a rational and necessary duty upon every human being according to the rule of grace. Therefore, those who believe in Imamate investigated the proofs and discovered the individual who is qualified and designated by Allah through the Prophet to be their Imam.

Shia Muslims rely on proofs that demonstrate that the Ahl Al-Bayt (peace be upon them) are the Divine leaders and Imams of Muslims after



the Holy Prophet of Islam. Thus, it is obligatory to refer to them in everything required by people to be guided to the straight path of the religion. The Holy Prophet, in the narration of Al-Thaqalayn, which has been unanimously and frequently narrated by both Sunna and Shia. He said to his followers:

Verily, I am leaving among you something that which shall forever save you from straying off—the straight path of Islam—as long as you hold fast to it. They are the Two Weighty Things (الثقلين), one of which is more significant than the other:

1. the Book of Almighty Allah, which is a rope extending from the heavens to the earth.

2. and my progeny (عتره), the members of my household—Ahl Al-Bayt.

It is certain that they shall never separate from one another until they join me at the Divine Pond on the Day of Resurrection.

The Holy Prophet of Islam emphasized this matter on numerous occasions, describing Ahl Al-Bayt as the ark of salvation, and the security for the inhabitants of the earth, and so on. (Al-Qadi Abd al-Jabbar, 1984, p. 750; Al-Tusi, Nasir al-Din, 1930, p. 426; Al-Hilli, Jamal ad-Din, 1981, p. 12; Al-Muzaffar, Mohammad Rida, 1960, p. 56)

## 2. Imamate / Divine leadership

Imamate, is one of the important fundamental principles of belief that is disputed among Muslims. In order to understand the detailed meaning of this term, it is necessary to rely on Muslims who believe in Imamate as one of the five fundamental principles of Islam, i.e., Shia Muslims.

In Shia Muslims' belief, Imamate is a divine position of leadership that is intellectually and religiously necessary for all human beings. They confirm several advantages of this belief:

1. Since Imamate is one of the five fundamental principles of belief, one's faith is imperfect without belief in Imamate. Therefore, it is unacceptable to rely on one's fathers, folks, or mentors as regards the belief in Imamate, no matter how great these individuals might be; rather, it is obligatory upon every individual to investigate and evaluate the matter of Imamate as exactly as it is obligatory to investigate the unity of Allah the Almighty and Prophethood. Furthermore, where all religious duties that are undoubtedly imposed by Almighty Allah are not known with certain evidence, it is obligatory upon every Muslim to investigate Imamate to release him or herself from religious duties and obligations depending upon one's belief in Imamate, as it is then obligatory to obey the Imam in the performance of one's religious duties if Imamate is truly a part of Muslims' belief.



2. Imamate, just like Prophethood, is a necessary grace of Almighty Allah, i.e., everything that leads and brings closer to obedience and distances from sins, Almighty Allah must provide Muslims, and indeed every human being, with that thing. As a result, there must be an Imam (leader) in each age to represent the Prophet in his missions of guiding and leading human beings towards the right path so that they might achieve prosperity and pleasure in this world as well as the next.

Accordingly, Imamate is only a continuation of Prophethood, and the reason for which Almighty Allah sends Messengers and Prophets is also the reason why the Prophet must be succeeded by an Imam. In fact, as a difference between Prophethood and Imamate, there must be an Imam in each age and era while there is no necessity to be a Prophet in every period of time.

3. Since Imamate is a continuation of Prophethood and there must be an Imam in each age, therefore it is impossible that any age can be devoid of a divinely commissioned Imam, whether he is present or absent from people's sight. As it is acceptable for the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) to be absent from people's sights, such as his disappearance from view in the cave or in the alleys, it is intellectually acceptable for the Imam to be absent from view, be his occultation long or short. Allah the Almighty has said in the Holy Qur'an: "And there is a guide for every people" (Qur'an 13:7). "There is not a nation, but a warner has passed among them" (Qur'an 35:24).

4. Since the Imam represents the Prophet in his missions of guiding and leading human beings towards the right path, he must also enjoy the same authority enjoyed by the Prophet, such as supreme authority over the people, so that he can manage their affairs and interests, maintain justice among them, and wipe out injustice and oppression.

Furthermore, this divine position of leadership cannot be decided without a commission from Almighty Allah conveyed to people by the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) or the previous Imam (peace be upon him). Thus, Imamate is not dependent on selection, choice or decision made by the people, for they are not authorized to nominate anyone to this position if they desire and to depose anyone they do not like from this position, and thus remain without an Imam, because, as it had been narrated uninterruptedly and frequently from the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family):

The individual who dies without recognition of the Imam of his time has in fact died just like the ignorant ones who died before accepting Islam, i.e., indicating the situation of the people in the period before Islam without believing in the Holy Prophet which is called (الجاهلية), so such an individual



will be; Al-Tusi, Nasir al-Din, 1930, p. 426; Al-Hilli, Jamal ad-Din, 1981, p. 12; Al-Muzaffar, Mohammad Rida, 1960, p. 54).

### 3. Imamyah / Shia

Imamyah is the name of those who adhere to the necessity of Imamate as a divine position of leadership that is impossible to be devoid of in any age. And believed necessarily in the obvious divine text, the infallibility, and the perfection of every Imam.

It is important to note that this meaning is an equivalent to Shia, which applies to more than one of the Islamic sects, such as Ithna Ashariyya, Ismailiyya, Zaidiyya, and so on. However, it is often used to refer to those who believe in the Divine leadership of the twelve Imams, i.e., Ali ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him) and the eleven Imam of his progeny.

This sect of Shia Imamyah believes in specific attributes and advantages mentioned in two terms: Imam and Imamate; therefore, they reject the belief of Extremists (الغلاة) and the Immanentists (الحلوليون) concerning the Imams; hence, Shia Ithna Ashariyya believes that Imams are human beings like other human beings, i.e., they enjoy the same rights that people enjoy and are required to do the same responsibilities that people are required to do. However, they are noble servants of Almighty Allah, Who has granted them special honor and bestowed upon them His authority, because they occupy the highest ranks of human perfection, such as knowledge, piety, courage, nobility, and chastity, as well as all moral standards and nobilities of character, and so no individual is capable of attaining the unique peculiarities that they hold. Consequently, they have been the most deserving of being leaders, guides, and authorities after the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) in providing instructions, interpretations, and explanations of the religious laws and the Holy Qur'an as needed by people.

In this respect, the sixth Imam of Shia Ithna Ashariyya Jafar Al-Sadiq (peace be upon him), says:

Whatever is reported to you about us that is possible for the creatures to hold, while you have had no previous idea about it or have not been able to understand it, then you must not deny it; rather, you must refer it to us. However, if what is reported to you about us is impossible for the creatures to hold, then you must deny it and you must not refer it to us.

As mentioned above, this sect of Shia Imamyah believes that the Imams who are truly worthy of holding the Imamate are twelve, who have been commissioned by Almighty Allah to hold the position of leading the Muslim Nation. The Holy Prophet, Mohammad (peace be upon him and his family), had referred to all of them by name before each Imam declared the



name of the name of the person who would succeed him. They are thus as follows:

1. Abu Al-Hasan, Ali ibn Abi Talib, Al-Murtadha (the Well-Pleased); BH (before Hijrah) 23 - AH (After Hijrah) 40.
2. Abu Mohammad, Al-Hasan ibn Ali, Al-Zaki (the Pure); AH 2 - AH 50.
3. Abu Abdullah, Al-Hussein ibn Ali, Sayyid Al-Shuhada (The Master of Martyrs); AH 3 - AH 61.
4. Abu Mohammad, Ali ibn Al-Hussein, Zayn Al-Abidin (The Adornment of the Worshippers); AH 38 - AH 95.
5. Abu Jafar, Mohammad ibn Ali, Al-Baqir (The Ripper of Knowledge); AH 57 - AH 114.
6. Abu Abdullah, Jafar ibn Mohammad, Al-Sadiq (The Veracious); AH 83 - AH 148.
7. Abu-Ibrahim, Musa ibn Jafar, Al-Kazim (The Suppressor of Rage); AH 128 - AH 183.
8. Abu Al-Hasan, Ali ibn Musa, Al-Ridha (The Amiable); AH 148 - AH 203.
9. Abu Jafar; Mohammad ibn Ali, Al-Jawad (The Magnanimous); AH 195 - AH 220.
10. Abu Al-Hasan, Ali ibn Mohammad, Al-Hadi (The Guide); AH 212 - AH 254.
11. Abu Mohammad, Al-Hasan ibn Ali, Al-Askari (Resident of Askar City); AH 232 - AH 260.
12. Abu Al-Qasim, Mohammad ibn Al-Hasan, Al-Mahdi (The WellGuided); AH 256... -

The twelfth Imam, Al-Mahdi, according to Shia Ithna Ashariyya is still alive; he is the awaited savior who shall reappear (after occultation) to fill the earth with fairness and justice as it is filled with injustice and oppression. This specific belief of the advent of Imam Al-Mahdi is frequently and indisputably reported from the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) by all Muslims who, apart from their various sects and opinions, have recorded and reported his narrations in this regard. Thus, the advent of Imam Al-Mahdi (peace be upon him) during the last period of existence of this globe is not an inventive idea that is embraced by Shia alone due to their being oppressed, as it is claimed by some writers who ascribed this idea to Shia's dreams in justice. Shia Muslims believe that if such belief was not established in the minds of all Muslims, there would not be those who claimed Mahdism in the first century after the advent of Islam, such as the followers of Kaysaniyya, the Abbasids, a group of the Alawiyya, and many others, so that they easily deceived the public and used this belief to grab power and authority (Al-Shaykh al-Mufid, Mohammad



ibn al-Numan, 1984, p. 38-39; Al-Sharif al-Murtadha, Ali, 1969, p. 153; Al-Shaykh al-Tusi, Mohammad, 1963, Vol. 1, p. 66; Al-Muzaffar, Mohammad Rida, 1960, p. 63-65).

### Conclusion

This article is a theoretical study that briefly presents a framework for researching specialized terminology, particularly Islamic terminology, relying on Islamic sources and references. It does so by defining and describing these terms—using a descriptive approach—as they are used in the disciplines to which they belong. This framework is then applied to some of the most important terms in Islamic theology: Imam, Imamate, and Imamiyya. This is because these terms faced a major challenge within the Islamic world, which in turn was reflected in the specialized dictionaries compiled by Muslim scholars.

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## Evidence of the Imamate in The Qur'an and Narrations

Motreza AlKhatib<sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

This study examines the issue of the Imamate (Leadership) from a Qur'anic and narrative perspective, aiming to demonstrate that the Imamate is a divine appointment (covenant) exclusively designated for infallible individuals chosen by God, not a matter of human selection or consultation (*Shūrā*). The study relies on an analysis of several Qur'anic verses that point to the Imamate and the status of the Ahl al-Bayt (the Prophet's Household, peace be upon them), such as the verses of Guardianship (*Wilāyah*), Those in Authority (*Ulul-Amr*), the Clear Proof (*Al-Bayyinah*), the verse of Ibrahim's Covenant, and the verses of Purification (*Al-Taṭhīr*) and Conveyance (*Al-Tablīgh*). Supporting evidence is drawn from rigorously authenticated prophetic traditions, notably the Tradition of the Two Weighty Things (Thaqalayn) and the Tradition of the Ark (*Safīnah*). The research focuses on elucidating the specific meaning of the Imamate (general vicegerency in both religious and worldly affairs) and the prerequisite of Infallibility (*ʿIsmah*) for the Imam, as their obedience is paired with the obedience to the Messenger and to God Almighty, emphasizing that the Pure Progeny are the designated explainers and interpreters of the Qur'an. Objectives: To analyze the Qur'anic evidence for the Imamate and the Imam's infallibility, and to document their implications using narrations from both schools of thought (Shi'a and Sunni). Methodology: The research adopted an analytical-deductive methodology, analyzing the verses and deducing their meaning through valid narrations.

**Keywords:** Holy Qur'an, Imamate, Guardianship (*Wilāyah*), Ahl al-Bayt(as), Infallibility (*ʿIsmah*), Prophetic Tradition (*Hadīth*), Those in Authority (*Ulul-Amr*).

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1. Member of the scientific board of Imam Mobin Research Center, Qom, Iran: better.mail22@yahoo.com



## Introduction

**The Imamate is a term:** Although there is a difference in words, it is similar in meaning, and according to the opinions of the scholars, they defined it with different definitions, some of which we will mention:

**Al-Muhaqqiq al-Hilli** (May Allah be pleased with him) defined it in his commentary on the book of the eleventh chapter in the chapter of the Imamate, who said: It is the general presidency in matters of religion and the world of a person on behalf of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him). (Al-Allama Al-Hilli, Chapter Eleven: vol. 1, p. 17)

**As for the author of "Mawaqif", he defined it as:** "The caliphate of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) in establishing the religion so that it must be followed by the whole nation." (Eji Mir Sayyid Sharif, Sharh al-Mawaqif, vol. 8, p. 345)

**Al-Maroudi defined it by saying:** "The Imamate is set up for the caliphate of the Prophethood in guarding the religion and the policy of the world in it." (Ali ibn Mohammad al-Baghdadi al-Marudi, Al-Ahkam al-Sultani wa al-Wilayat al-Didi: vol. 1, p. 5).

**As for Ibn Khaldun, he defined it:** "It is in fact a caliphate from the author of the law in guarding religion and the politics of the world." (Ibn Khaldun, Tarikh Ibn Khaldun, vol. 1, p. 239).

**Al-Nasafi defined it in his beliefs as:** "On behalf of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) in establishing the religion, so that all nations must follow."

And the research problem stems from the divergence of views regarding the source of the Imamate and the responsibility for appointing the Imam, as well as the resultant conditions and attributes required in the office holder. Is the Imamate a purely divine position, like Prophethood, where human selection plays no role, or is it a temporal position determined by consultation (*Shūrā*) and human choice? What are the clear and direct Qur'anic and narrative proofs that confirm it is a divine covenant requiring infallibility in its recipient?

**The Context of the Issue (The Need for an Explainer):** Achieving a complete understanding of the most crucial Qur'anic facts and their details is not solely possible through mere research, contemplation, and reflection on the verses. Instead, it must be supplemented by utilizing a designated Explainer (*Mubayyin*) and interpreter. This is a fundamental Qur'anic truth explicitly stated in multiple places:

{**So, when We have recited it, follow its recitation, then upon Us is its explanation**} (Qiyāmah: 18-19). Note that the Qur'an and its explanation (Bayan) are distinct, both originating from God.



{Nay, but they are clear signs in the breasts of those who have been granted knowledge}, (Al-‘Ankabūt: 49).

{But none knows its interpretation except God and those firmly rooted in knowledge}, (Āl ‘Imrān: 7).

{And that We may make it clear to a people who know}, (Al-An'am: 105).

The Holy Qur'an mentions two sources for the explanation and details of its demands: the Great Messenger (pbuh) and those referred to by their attributes, such as "Those in Authority (*Ulul-Amr*)" (Al-Nisā: 59), "Those firmly rooted in knowledge (*Al-Rāsikhūn fil-'Ilm*)" (Āl ‘Imrān: 7), and "He who has knowledge of the Book (*Man 'indahū 'ilm al-Kitāb*)" (Al-Ra'd: 34). The Messenger (pbuh) identified the latter group through the famous Tradition of the Two Weighty Things: "I am leaving among you the Two Weighty Things: The Greater Weight, the Book of my Lord, and the Lesser Weight, my progeny, the people of my house. Safeguard my role concerning them, for you shall never go astray so long as you cling to both of them" (Al-Faydh Al-Kashani, Tafsir Al-Şāfi: vol.1, p.21).

### **Chapter One: Evidences of Imamate in the Qur'an**

Before delving into the noble verses that pertain to the Imamate, it is essential to consider two foundational principles that must be taken into account in any Qur'anic study or research. In fact, these may be among the most critical prerequisites for such an endeavor:

#### **First Principle: The Necessity of Divine Clarification**

Attaining the most significant Qur'anic truths and their intricate details cannot be achieved solely through examination, analysis, and contemplation of the verses—although such efforts are undoubtedly important. Rather, this process must be complemented by seeking guidance from a divinely appointed interpreter and elucidator. This necessity is itself a Qur'anic principle, explicitly affirmed in multiple passages of the Holy Book.

**One such verse is:** “*So when We have recited it, follow its recitation. Then upon Us is its clarification.*” (Al-Qiyāmah, 75:18–19).

This verse clearly distinguishes between the Qur'an and its clarification (*bayān*), both of which are from Allah. It emphasizes that the act of clarifying the Qur'an is a divine responsibility, implying the existence of a designated authority who conveys this clarification to the people.

#### **Second Principle: The Dual Foundations of Qur'anic Interpretation**

The Holy Qur'an affirms that its verses, details, and meanings are built upon two foundational sources of interpretation. One of these is explicitly named multiple times: the Noble Messenger (peace be upon him and his



family). The second is also mentioned repeatedly, though identified by descriptive titles such as “those vested with authority” (*ūlī al-amr*), (Al-Nisa, 4:59), “those firmly grounded in knowledge” (*Al-rāsikhūn fī al-‘ilm*), (Al-Imran, 3:7), and “he who possesses knowledge of the Book” (Al-Ra'd, 13:43).

The Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) clarified the identity of this second group, and there is consensus on this matter. As the Qur'an states:

*“Nor does he speak from [his own] inclination. It is but a revelation revealed.” (Al-Najm, 53:3–4).*

Thus, the identification of these interpreters ultimately returns to divine designation.

### **Selected Verses on the Imamate and Guardianship of Ahl al-Bayt (Peace Be Upon Them)**

#### **1. The Verse of Guardianship (*Āyat al-Wilāyah*)**

*“Your guardian is only Allah, His Messenger, and those who believe—those who establish prayer and give alms while bowing down. And whoever allies himself with Allah, His Messenger, and those who believe—then indeed, the party of Allah will be victorious.” (Al-Ma'idah, 5:55).*

This noble verse is a divine address to the Muslim community, designating and identifying its rightful guardians—those whose obedience and leadership are divinely mandated. Their guardianship is explicitly linked to that of Allah and His Messenger.

A careful reflection on the verse reveals that “those who believe” in this context are distinct from the general believers being addressed. Moreover, the concept of *wilāyah* (guardianship) here differs from that found in the verse:

*“The believing men and believing women are allies of one another.” (Al-Tawbah, 9:71).*

The verse of guardianship thus points to a specific, divinely appointed leadership, intimately connected to the spiritual and political authority of Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them).

This guardianship, in relation to Allah the Exalted, differs from that of the Messenger (peace be upon him and his family) and the believers in terms of originality and derivation. The original guardianship belongs to Allah the Exalted, while the guardianship of the Messenger (peace be upon him and his family) and the believers (the Imams, peace be upon them) is derivative, taken and derived from the guardianship of the Lord of the Worlds.



**2. The Verse of Those in Authority (*Ūlī al-Amr*):** It is His saying, the Exalted: “*Obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you*” (Al-Nisā3:59).

This noble verse commands all believers to obey Allah, Blessed and Exalted, in His commands and prohibitions, and to obey the Messenger (peace be upon him and his family) and those in authority in all their commands and prohibitions without exception. This is to clarify that obedience to him (peace be upon him and his family) is obedience to Allah, and that the obligation to obey both is of the same kind, as seen in many other verses, such as:

“*And obey Allah and the Messenger so that you may receive mercy*” (Āl ‘Imrān 2: 132), “*Say: Obey Allah and the Messenger. But if they turn away, then indeed Allah does not love the disbelievers*” (Āl ‘Imrān2:32).

There is no doubt that the verse clearly indicates their presence in the community; otherwise, the command to obey them would be meaningless.

Moreover, the term *Ūlī al-Amr* is a plural noun indicating a number of individuals bearing this title. However, there is no objection to interpreting it as referring to individuals who assume authority one after another.

Jābir asked the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his family) about those in authority whom Allah commanded us to obey in this verse. He said: “I said: O Messenger of Allah, we have come to know Allah and His Messenger, but who are those in authority whose obedience Allah has linked to yours?” He (peace be upon him and his family) said: “*They are my successors, O Jābir, and the Imams of the Muslims after me. The first of them is ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, then al-Ḥasan, then al-Ḥusayn, then ‘Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn, then Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī—known in the Torah as al-Bāqir. You will live to see him, O Jābir, so when you meet him, convey my greetings to him. Then al-Ṣādiq Ja‘far ibn Muḥammad, then Mūsā ibn Ja‘far, then ‘Alī ibn Mūsā, then Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī, then ‘Alī ibn Muḥammad, then al-Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī, then my namesake and my namesake’s kunya—Allah’s proof on His earth and His remaining sign among His servants—the son of al-Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī. He is the one through whom Allah will open...*”

Exalted is His remembrance—through him, God will open the East and West of the earth. He is the one who will be concealed from his followers and allies in an occultation during which none will remain firm in affirming his Imamate except those whose hearts God has tested for faith.

Jābir said: I asked him, “O Messenger of Allah, will his followers benefit from him during his occultation?”

He (peace be upon him and his family) replied: “Yes, by the One who sent me with prophethood! They will be illuminated by his light and benefit from his guardianship during his occultation, just as people benefit from



the sun even when it is veiled by clouds. O Jabir, this is from the hidden secrets of God and the stored knowledge of God—so conceal it except from those worthy of it.” (*Al-Burhan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an, Al-Bahrani, Sayyid Hashim, Vol. 2, p. 103*).

**3. The Verse of Clear Proof (Āyat al-Bayyina):** It is His saying, the Exalted: *“Is he who stands upon a clear proof from his Lord, and a witness from him follows him, and before him was the Book of Moses as a guide and mercy? They believe in it. But whoever disbelieves in it from among the factions—the Fire will be his promised place. So do not be in doubt about it. Indeed, it is the truth from your Lord, but most of the people do not believe.”* (Hud 11:ʾ7).

The meaning of the *clear proof* mentioned in the noble verse is the Qur'an, for it is the everlasting miracle, as in His saying: *“Say: Indeed, I am upon a clear proof from my Lord, and you have denied it. I do not have what you are impatient for. The decision is only for Allah. He relates the truth, and He is the best of judges.”* (Al-An'ām 6:57).

From this, it becomes clear that the relative pronoun refers to the one possessing the clear proof—that is, the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family).

The meaning of the verse is: the one who stands upon a clear proof, which is the Qur'an, and is followed without separation by a witness from him—that is, from the Prophet himself (peace be upon him and his family). This is an honor and identification of the witness as being from the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his family), meaning part of him and of his rank.

There are many narrations in this context clarifying that the witness who follows the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his family) is the Commander of the Faithful, Ali ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him). We mention some of them:

*“Is he who stands upon a clear proof from his Lord”* refers to the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his family), *“and a witness from him follows him”* (Hud 11: 17), refers to the Commander of the Faithful (peace be upon him); Narrated by Burayd ibn Mu'awiyah al-'Ajali from Abu Ja'far (peace be upon him), who said...

The one who is *“upon a clear proof from his Lord”* is the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his family), and the one who follows him as a witness from him is the Commander of the Faithful (peace be upon him), followed by his successors one after another. (*Tafsir al-'Ayyāshī, Mohammad ibn Mas'ūd, Vol. 2, p. 142*).

And from Jābir, from 'Abd Allāh ibn Yaḥyā, who said: I heard 'Alī (peace be upon him) say: *“There is no man from Quraysh except that a*



verse or two from the Book of Allah has been revealed about him.” A man from the group said to him: “What was revealed about you, O Commander of the Faithful?” He replied: “Do you not read the verse in (Hūd: *‘Is he who is upon a clear proof from his Lord, and a witness from him follows him’* (Hūd 11:17)? Mohammad (peace be upon him and his family) is upon a clear proof from his Lord, and I am the witness.” (*Al-Biḥār, Vol. 9, p. 73; Al-Burhān, Vol. 2, p. 213; Al-Ṣāfi, Vol. 1, p. 782; Tafṣīr al-‘Ayyāshī, Vol. 2, pp. 142–143*).

### **Chapter Two: Imamate in the Qur'an**

Imamate is mentioned in the Qur'an in many blessed verses, including:

*“And [mention] when Abraham was tested by his Lord with words, and he fulfilled them. He said, ‘Indeed, I will make you a leader for the people.’ [Abraham] said, ‘And of my descendants?’ He said, ‘My covenant does not include the wrongdoers.’”* (Al-Baqarah 1:124).

#### **This noble verse clarifies the following points:**

**First:** Abraham (peace be upon him) was a prophet before the birth of his children, as in His saying: *“Praise be to Allah, who has granted me in old age Ishmael and Isaac.”* (Ibrāhīm 14:39) And Allah, the Exalted, said about Abraham’s wife: *“She said, ‘Woe to me! Shall I give birth while I am an old woman and this, my husband, is an old man? Indeed, this is an amazing thing!’”* (Hūd 11:72).

**Second:** Allah made Abraham (peace be upon him) an Imam after he had offspring. The evidence is that he asked for Imamate for his descendants. This proves that Imamate is a covenant from Allah, the Exalted, and a divine position granted to whomever He wills among His servants. It is not something appointed by people, nor is it subject to human selection or consultation (*shūrā*).

Imamate is confined to the righteous, infallible servants of Allah whom He has chosen to carry the message of the heavens. It is restricted to the progeny of the Prophet of Allah, Abraham (peace be upon him), and it is not granted to the wrongdoers.

As the Qur'an has clarified and explicitly stated in the blessed verse: *“He said: And from my descendants? He said: My covenant does not include the wrongdoers.”* (Al-Baqarah 1:124).

**And among them is:** *“And We made from among them leaders guiding by Our command when they were patient and [when] they were certain of Our signs.”* (Al-Sajdah 32:24).

#### **This blessed verse clarifies the following:**

**First:** Imamate is a divine position, as it is a designation from Allah, the Exalted. No human has any role in appointing the Imam—it is neither consultation (*shūrā*) nor human selection.



**Second:** The role of the Imam is to guide by the command of Allah, the Exalted.

**Third:** Among the qualities that qualified the Imam for this divine position are patience and certainty.

And among them is: “*And [mention] when your Lord said to the angels, ‘Indeed, I will make upon the earth a successor.’ They said, ‘Will You place upon it one who causes corruption therein and sheds blood, while we declare Your praise and sanctify You?’ He said, ‘Indeed, I know that which you do not know.’* (Al-Baqarah 2:30).

**This verse clarifies the following:**

**First:** This successor is earthly and exists in every era. The indication of this is His saying: “*I will make*” (*jā’ilun*), because the nominal sentence and the predicate in the form of the active participle—which is akin to the present tense verb—indicate continuity and permanence. That is, the succession continues until the Day of Resurrection, from Adam to the Seal of the Prophets (peace be upon him and his family), and after him comes the turn of his progeny—the Imams (peace be upon them all)—about whom he (peace be upon him and his family) informed in the Hadith of the Two Weighty Things (*ḥadīth al-thaqalayn*): “*Indeed, I am leaving among you two weighty things. If you hold fast to them, you will never go astray after me: the Book of Allah and my progeny, the people of my household.*” (*Wasā’il al-Shī’ah: Vol. 27, p. 33*).

The progeny remains until the Day of Resurrection, and they are the proof over the servants. The earth is never devoid of them, as the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them) stated: “*The earth is never without a proof.*” (*Awālī al-La’ālī: Vol. 4, p. 127*), And: “*If the earth were to be void of a proof for even the blink of an eye, it would sink with its inhabitants.*” (*Ilal al-Sharā’i’: Vol. 1, p. 198*). And so on.

**Second:** This successor is not just any human being, as in the verse: “*It is He who made you successors upon the earth. So, whoever disbelieves—his disbelief will be against him.*” (Al-An’ām 6:165). Rather, the intended meaning is a specific human being, as indicated by the subsequent verses which affirm that this earthly being deserved divine succession because: “*And He taught Adam the names—all of them.*” (Al-Baqarah 1:31), Then he became an intermediary between Allah and His angels: “*O Adam, inform them of their names.*” (Al-Baqarah 1:33).

It is clear that this cannot refer to every human being, especially those whom the Qur’an describes as: “*They are like cattle; rather, they are even more astray.*” (Al-A’rāf 7:179).

The names taught to Adam were the names of the messengers and their successors, specifically Mohammad and the family of Mohammad (peace



be upon them all), the successors of Allah on earth and his conclusive proofs.

### Chapter Three: Uses of the Term "Imam" in the Qur'an

The term *Imam* in the Holy Qur'an appears in various contexts and refers to different things. Sometimes it denotes:

**1 – A human being:** A person who bears the responsibility of leadership and guidance for a group of people. Allah says: *"Indeed, I will make you a leader for the people."* (Al-Baqarah 1:124).

At times, this Imam is beneficial and helpful to his followers, as in the noble hadith: *"Every follower has an Imam whom he follows and is illuminated by the light of his knowledge."* (*Nahj al-Balāghah: Letter 45*), This is also exemplified in the verse mentioned above.

At other times, this Imam is harmful to his followers, leading them to destruction and ruin in both this world and the Hereafter, as Allah says: *"And We made them leaders inviting to the Fire, and on the Day of Resurrection they will not be helped."* (Al-Qaṣaṣ 28:42).

Thus, the Imam—whether a rightful or wrongful one—is not limited to this world alone; rather, both bear the responsibility of Imamate in both realms. As Allah, the Exalted, says in a comprehensive statement: *"[The] Day We will call forth every people with their Imam..."* (Al-Isrā 17: 71).

And regarding the Imamate of Pharaoh, He says: *"He will precede his people on the Day of Resurrection and lead them into the Fire."* (Hūd 11:98).

**2 – The Book:** Allah says: *"...and before it was the Book of Moses as a guide and mercy..."* (Hūd 11:17).

**3 – The Path:** Allah says: *"So We took retribution from them, and indeed, both of them are on a clear Imam."* (Al-Ḥijr 15:79).

In this verse, the word *Imam* refers to the "path," because a traveler takes the path as a guide and leader, following it to reach the intended destination.

**4 – The Preserved Tablet (al-Lawḥ al-Maḥfūz):** As in His saying: *"...and We have enumerated everything in a clear Imam."* (Yā Sīn 36:12).

Since the Preserved Tablet is referred to as a "book," this category could be merged with the second. However, because the true nature and reality of the Preserved Tablet are unknown to us, we have mentioned it here independently. But if we interpret this verse as referring to the infallible Imam, then this category would fall under the first. (*Al-Fikr al-Khālīd, Shaykh Ja'far al-Subḥānī, Vol. 1, pp. 369–371*).

### Chapter Four: Qur'anic Indications of the Reality of Imamate

The concept of Imamate, from the Qur'anic perspective, is broad and comprehensive. It encompasses both religious and political authority. It is



a divine covenant granted to those who are worthy of it. It is also the essence of all Islamic commands, through which the guidance of all beings is realized. Here we point to some of its manifestations:

**1 – Imamate as a Divine Covenant:** Allah says in His decisive Book: *“And [mention] when Abraham was tested by his Lord with words, and he fulfilled them. He said, ‘Indeed, I will make you a leader for the people.’ [Abraham] said, ‘And of my descendants?’ He said, ‘My covenant does not include the wrongdoers.’”* (Al-Baqarah 1:124).

**2 – It is understood from the Holy Qur'an that the appointment of Imamate is by the command of Allah, and that He appoints it for those who are worthy of it, as the position of Imamate in the nation is distinguished and leading.** Allah says in the previously mentioned verse: *“Indeed, I will make you a leader for the people. (Al-Baqarah 1:124),* From this, it is clear that Allah attributes the appointment of Imamate to Himself.

The Qur'an also conveys the words of Prophet Musa (peace be upon him) when he said: *“He said: My Lord, expand for me my chest. And ease for me my task. And untie the knot from my tongue. That they may understand my speech. And appoint for me a minister from my family—Aaron, my brother. Strengthen through him my back. And associate him in my task. (Tāhā 20:25–31.*

Allah also says: *“And We made from among them leaders guiding by Our command when they were patient.”* (Al-Sajdah 32:24).

From these two verses and others, it is understood that Imamate has a meaning different from the commonly held understanding among the Sunnis.

**3 – Absolute obedience to the Imam because he is the guardian of Allah:** Allah says in His decisive Book: *“O you who have believed, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you.”* (Al-Nisā' 4:59).

Fakhr al-Rāzī says in his commentary on this verse: *“It is not possible for the one in authority to be other than infallible, because the command for absolute obedience to someone who is not infallible is impossible.”* (Tafsīr al-Fakhr al-Rāzī, commentary on verse 59 of Surah al-Nisā' 4).

**4 – Imamate is the essence of all Islamic commands:** Allah says in His decisive Book: *“O Messenger, convey what has been revealed to you from your Lord. And if you do not, then you have not conveyed His message. And Allah will protect you from the people.”* (Al-Mā'idah 5:67).

This verse was revealed on the Day of Ghadir and in reference to the Commander of the Faithful, Ali (peace be upon him), according to the consensus of Shia scholars and a large number of Sunni scholars. After its revelation, the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his family)



informed the nation of the guardianship (*wilāyah*) of Ali (peace be upon him).

From the phrase: “*And if you do not, then you have not conveyed His message*”, it is understood that the Holy Qur’an refers to a specific meaning of Imamate—one that differs from the interpretation held by the general Sunni view regarding this verse.

The Shia school of thought considers Imamate to be one of the fundamentals of religion and the essence of all rulings of the Sharia. So, what is the meaning of Imamate such that if the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) did not convey it to his nation, it would be as if he had done nothing and had not conveyed the message? Could this proclamation be anything other than informing the nation of the guardianship of Ali (peace be upon him)?

**5 – The Guidance of All Beings Through the Imam:** Allah says in His decisive Book: “*And We made from among them leaders guiding by Our command when they were patient and [when] they were certain of Our signs.*” (Al-Sajdah 32:24).

And He says: “*And We granted him Isaac and Jacob in addition, and all [of them] We made righteous. And We made them leaders guiding by Our command, and We inspired to them the doing of good deeds...*” (Al-Anbiyá’ 21:72–73).

Through this blessed verse, Allah the Exalted makes clear that He selected some prophets—after they had passed trials and shown patience in adversity—for the station of leadership and guidance. There is no doubt that this Imamate is an inner, ontological (*takwīnī*) Imamate, not a legislative (*tashrīṭī*) one, since the prophets (peace be upon them) already possessed legislative guidance and leadership before attaining the station of Imamate.

**Second: The Noble Hadiths:** The answer to this subject cannot be derived from the Qur’an alone, and no one can claim that all divine knowledge, beliefs, rulings, their details, components, and conditions must be found entirely in...

The Holy Qur’an is a book of guidance and instruction, and it must be accessible to people, easy to read, and beneficial in its meanings. The Qur’an addresses foundational principles, general rules, and essential matters.

As for the details, we must refer to the noble Prophetic Sunnah, which is conveyed through authentic and reliable narrations from the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them), whom the Noble Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) made equal to the Qur’an in the well-known and widely accepted hadith among both groups:



From the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his family): *“Indeed, I am leaving among you two weighty things: the Book of Allah and my progeny, the people of my household. If you hold fast to them, you will never go astray after me. They will never separate until they return to me at the Pond.”* (Previously mentioned)

The Qur’an commands us to refer to the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family), as in his saying: *“And whatever the Messenger has given you—take it; and whatever he has forbidden you—refrain from it.”* (Al-Hashr 59:7).

And his saying: *“Whoever obeys the Messenger has indeed obeyed Allah. But whoever turns away—We have not sent you over them as a guardian.”* (Al-Nisá 4:80).

And his saying: *“Nor does he speak from [his own] desire. It is but a revelation revealed.”* (Al-Najm 53:3–4).

And his saying: *“It is not for a believing man or woman, when Allah and His Messenger have decided a matter, to have any choice in their affair.”* (Al-Aḥzāb 33:36).

Then the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) refers us to the purified progeny, as in the hadith:

**From Ḥanash al-Kinānī, who said:** I heard Abū Dharr (may Allah be pleased with him) say—while holding the door of the Ka‘bah: *“Whoever knows me, knows me; and whoever does not, I am Abū Dharr. I heard the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) say: ‘Indeed, the example of my household among you is like the Ark of Noah among his people. Whoever boards it is saved, and whoever stays behind is drowned.’”* (Al-Mustadrak ‘ala al-Ṣaḥīḥayn, al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī: Vol. 3, p. 163).

The Holy Qur’an, which does not even mention the number of prayer units, nor its timings, nor the details of its conditions and components—how can it be said about it: *“Sufficient for us is the Book of Allah”*?

And the Qur’an that says: *“Among it are verses that are clear—they are the foundation of the Book—and others that are ambiguous. As for those in whose hearts is deviation, they follow what is ambiguous from it, seeking discord and seeking its interpretation.”* (Āl ‘Imrān 3:7).

How can we rely solely on it to establish all religious knowledge, rulings, and teachings, without referring to the authentic Sunnah for its interpretation and explanation?

Based on this, we say: the Qur’an refers to the matter of Imamate and guardianship, as in His saying: *“You are only a warner, and for every people there is a guide.”* (Al-Ra‘d 13:7).

Who is this guide? Is he not the Imam who is the successor to the Messenger (peace be upon him and his family)? It has been narrated in the



interpretation of this verse from both Shia and Sunni sources that the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) said to Ali (peace be upon him): “I am the warner, and Ali is the guide. O Ali, through you the guided ones are guided.” (*Mir’āt al-‘Uqūl*, ‘Allāmah al-Majlisī, Vol. 2, p. 346).

### Conclusion

The evidence from the Qur'an and authentic narrations conclusively demonstrates that Imamate is a divine, infallible, and guiding authority established by God's covenant. It is essential for the correct interpretation and implementation of Islamic teachings, and its appointment is not subject to human discretion. The Imams from the Prophet's family serve as the divine guides, ensuring the preservation of faith and justice in the Muslim community. Recognizing the divine origin of Imamate is fundamental to understanding Islamic theology and jurisprudence.

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## An Approach to the Essence of *Tasbīh* Through the Lens of Qur'anic Imagery and Narrative Explication

Mohammad Reza Aram<sup>1</sup>  
Hooria Sadat Qozat<sup>2</sup>

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### Abstract

The Holy Qur'an introduces all creatures and possible beings in existence as glorifiers (*musabbiḥāt*) of the Divine. Numerous verses emphasize that the cosmos, in its totality and universality, is composed of components that, without exception, are perpetually engaged in *tasbīh* (glorification). The nature and essence of *tasbīh* as one of the most significant Qur'anic concepts has been widely discussed among scholars of the Qur'an. The two primary perspectives in this regard are the theory of *tasbīh ḥālī* (attitudinal or metaphorical glorification) and *tasbīh qālī* (verbal or literal glorification). Relying on a descriptive-analytical method, this study seeks to examine the true nature of this profound concept and propose a third viewpoint. This is achieved through the lens of imagery—one of the mechanisms employed by the Qur'an to elucidate its intended meaning. The findings indicate that the Qur'an itself, through its illustrative techniques, effectively conveys its message regarding *tasbīh* to the reader. As a third perspective resulting from the approach derived from Qur'anic imagery and narrative corroboration, *tasbīh* is understood as the motion and dynamism of existence—a perpetual and purposeful movement throughout the entire cosmos, including all its components and particles.

**Keywords:** *Tasbīh* (Divine Glorification), Qur'anic Imagery, Purposeful Motion and Dynamism, Life, Perpetual Becoming.

1. Associate Professor, Department of Quranic Sciences and Hadith, Science and Research Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran: mohammadreza.aram@iau.ir

2. PhD student, Allameh Askari International University, Tehran, Iran (Corresponding Author): hs\_ghozat@yahoo.com



## 1. Introduction

The subject of *Tasbīḥ* (glorification of God), as one of the key concepts in the Holy Qur'an, has long been a focus of attention for exegetes and Qur'anic scholars, resulting in numerous works dedicated to its study. On the other hand, the topic of "imagery in the Qur'an" has, in recent years, gained traction among researchers as a novel approach in Qur'anic studies, with scholars examining the images and symbols employed in the Qur'an from various perspectives.

However, to date, there is no existing research that adopts the specific approach of this study—namely, one that systematically explores the relationship between the concept of *Tasbīḥ* and Qur'anic imagery, seeking to derive the meaning of a specific term (here, *Tasbīḥ*) through correlating the textual expressions used for it with the imagery presented in the Qur'an.

## 2. Statement of the Problem

Imagery in the Qur'an is a significant subject in the field of Qur'anic studies, one that has garnered considerable contemporary attention. Due to its vital role in conveying concepts and values, it is employed as a novel approach for attaining a deeper understanding of Qur'anic discourses. Through this technique, the Qur'an depicts profound doctrines and sublime themes in the form of exquisite and unparalleled scenes, rendering abstract concepts tangible and perceptible to human understanding.

Among the important and enlightening topics within the Qur'anic worldview is the concept of *Tasbīḥ* (divine glorification). The Qur'an considers all beings in the contingent world, without exception, as participants in a universal act of *Tasbīḥ*. The verse, "And there is not a thing but that it glorifies Him with His praise" (Qur'an 17:44), indicates that all of existence and everything that exists as a "thing"—from the smallest particle in the vast expanse of the cosmos to the most exalted beings across the hierarchy of existence—is engaged in *Tasbīḥ*. Consequently, every "thing qua thing," by virtue of its very thingness, is considered a glorifier (*musabbih*) of God Almighty.

The prevailing perspectives on *Tasbīḥ*, which are primarily divided into the two main categories of *tasbīḥ ḥālī* (attitudinal or metaphorical glorification) and *tasbīḥ qālī* (verbal or literal glorification), have attempted to explain the nature and modality of this glorification. However, fundamental questions regarding the essential nature of *Tasbīḥ* remain. Therefore, the proposition of these two views cannot be considered the final word on the subject. Focusing on the role of imagery in the Qur'an, this study seeks to answer the following questions:



1. Which aspect has been predominantly emphasized in the two main theories concerning *Tasbīh*, and what critique can be leveled against this emphasis?

2. What role does imagery play in elucidating Qur'anic teachings?

3. How does the mechanism of imagery demonstrate the essential nature of *Tasbīh*, and what meaning and concept does it thereby convey?

Accordingly, the present research aims to examine the manifestations of Qur'anic imagery in explicating the concept of *Tasbīh*. It seeks to demonstrate how the Qur'an itself, by utilizing the tools and techniques of imagery and by presenting scenes and aligning them with specific interpretations, imbues this term with its distinct meaning and concept.

### 3. Background of the Research

The subject of *Tasbīh* (glorification of God), as one of the key concepts in the Holy Qur'an, has long been a focus of attention for exegetes and Qur'anic scholars, resulting in numerous works dedicated to its study. On the other hand, the topic of "imagery in the Qur'an" has, in recent years, gained traction among researchers as a novel approach in Qur'anic studies, with scholars examining the images and symbols employed in the Qur'an from various perspectives.

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#### The Concept of *Tasbīh*

*Tasbīh* is a verbal noun of the *taf'īl* form (pattern II) derived from the root \*s-b-ḥ\* (*sabaḥa*). Lexically, it denotes swift movement through water or air. In the Holy Qur'an, this meaning is employed metaphorically for:

the movement of the stars: "Each swimming in an orbit" (Qur'an 21:33)

the running of horses: "And those that run with panting breath" (Qur'an 79:3),

and moving swiftly about a task: "Indeed, for you by day is prolonged activity" (Qur'an 73:7).

According to *al-Rāghib al-Isfahānī*, *Tasbīh* also means to proclaim the transcendence and purity of God Almighty, its essence being a swift passage in the worship of God. (*Al-Rāghib al-Isfahānī*, *Al-Mufradāt fī Gharīb al-Qur'ān*, Dār al-Qalam, Damascus, p. 392.)

The late 'Allāmah Muṣṭafawī considers the core meaning of the root *s-b-ḥ* to be "movement" (*ḥarakah*). He qualifies this by describing it as a movement along the path of truth, free from deviation or weakness, involving two dimensions: the direction of movement toward truth and the



state of being free from deficiency. (Al-Muṣṭafawī, Al-Taḥqīq fī Kalimāt al-Qur'ān, vol. 5, Markaz Nashr al-Kitāb, Tehran, p. 25.)

Ibn al-Athīr al-Jazarī, while explaining the meaning of *Tasbīḥ*, also refers to two aspects: swift movement toward God and a sense of lightness or vigor in worship. (Ibn al-Athīr, Al-Nihāyah fī Gharīb al-Ḥadīth, vol. 2, Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, Beirut, p. 331.)

In general, any smooth or effortless movement—such as a ship sailing through the sea, stars moving across the sky, and even sleep or rest—can be described by the root *sabaḥa*. (Nāder 'Alī, Ta'wīl Mufradāt al-Qur'ān, Intishārāt-i 'Ilmī, Tehran, 1388 AH, p. 122.)

#### 4. The Dichotomy of the Language of Being and the Language of Utterance in the Hermeneutics of *Tasbīḥ*

Within the discourse of Qur'anic exegesis and Islamic scholarship, two principal hermeneutical approaches have emerged concerning the concept of *Tasbīḥ* (divine glorification). One school of thought interprets *Tasbīḥ* through the ontological framework of "the language of being" (*lisān al-ḥāl*), consequently classifying it as metaphorical. Conversely, another scholarly perspective understands it through the prescriptive framework of "the language of utterance" (*lisān al-qāl*), thereby categorizing it as literal.

##### 4.1 *Tasbīḥ* as the Language of Being

Proponents of this view maintain that the *Tasbīḥ* (glorification) of beings other than humans consists of their inherent disposition (*al-dalālah al-ṭab'iyyah*) pointing to their Creator and His transcendence beyond all imperfections. According to this position, the meaning of creatures engaging in *Tasbīḥ* is that the very state of all beings testifies to God's absolute holiness (*subūḥiyyah*) and His transcendence beyond any defect in His essence, attributes, or actions (Muṭaḥharī, Majmū'ah Āthār, vol. 26, p. 345).

As expressed by 'Allāmah Ṭabrisī, the seven heavens, the earth, and all their inhabitants are perpetually engaged in God's *Tasbīḥ* through their language of being. Since they all indicate the existence of their Creator and His sublime attributes, it is as if they verbally declare God's freedom from any partner. There is no existent being that does not glorify God in this manner, for they are all contingent (*ḥādith*) and created (*maṣnū'*), and every created entity necessarily implies a Creator (*ṣāni'*) who is Himself uncreated (Ṭabrisī, Majma' al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān, vol. 6, p. 644).

Among the evidence cited by proponents of this theory is the absence of knowledge and awareness in inanimate entities. As Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī states:

"A morally responsible being (*mukallaḥ*) glorifies God in two ways: First, through speech and utterance, such as saying *Subḥān Allāh*. Second,



through its very state indicating God's oneness, sanctity, and invincibility. However, beings such as animals, which are not morally responsible, or entities like inanimate objects, which lack life, glorify God only through the second method. This is because verbal *Tasbīh* requires consciousness (*shu'ūr*), the faculty of speech (*nuṭq*), knowledge, and perception—attributes whose existence in inanimate objects is impossible" (Rāzī, *Al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr*, vol. 20, p. 175).

The foundational premise of this viewpoint's adherents is, first, that verbal *Tasbīh* necessitates knowledge (*ilm*) and consciousness (*shu'ūr*), and second, that non-sentient beings lack such attributes. The logical conclusion is thus the denial of verbal *Tasbīh* for such entities, restricting their glorification to involuntary *Tasbīh* expressed through the language of being.

#### 4.2. *Tasbīh* as the Language of Utterance

Proponents of this perspective maintain that all particles and beings in the universe possess a form of perception and consciousness, and are aware of their own act of *Tasbīh*, even if we cannot comprehend it. According to their belief, just as humans articulate *Tasbīh* verbally, the external reality of the universe—including inanimate objects, plants, animals, and humans—likewise glorifies the Divine through both the language of utterance and the language of being, sanctifying His essence from all imperfections (Ibn 'Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, vol. 1, p. 69).

Mullā Ṣadrā also affirms this reality, contending that every existent entity possesses a degree of perception and awareness proportionate to its ontological rank. Thus, the attribution of *Tasbīh* to such beings is literal (*ḥaqīqī*), not metaphorical (*majāzī*) (Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī, *al-Ḥikmah al-Muta'āliyah*, vol. 6, p. 117).

Similarly, Imam Khomeini, emphasizing the same principle and affirming the literal nature of *Tasbīh*, elucidates in his commentary on the first verse of Sūra Ḥadīd:

“The noble verse indicates the *Tasbīh* of all beings—even plants and inanimate entities—and to restrict this to rational beings stems from the veiled understanding of certain intellectuals.” (Imam Khomeini, *Sharḥ-i Chihil Ḥadīth*, p. 655)

Advocates of this view of *Tasbīh* support their position with numerous scriptural and rational proofs, asserting that the *Tasbīh* of all creatures is literal. By “literal,” they mean that each being glorifies God in its own distinct language and through its own mode of speech—even if their interpretations vary regarding the nature and manner of that speech (Aram, *Sho'ur va Tasbih Keyhani dar Negah-e Qur'ani va Adabi*, Baharestan-e Sokhan, Spring & Summer 2011, No, 17, pp. 206-227).



### 4.3 Critical Examination of Both Perspectives

A significant critique applicable to both the theory of *tasbīh ḥālī* (attitudinal or metaphorical glorification) and *tasbīh qālī* (verbal or literal glorification) is that, despite their interpretative differences, their proponents share a common foundational principle: they regard *Tasbīh* essentially as a verbal invocation (dhikr), belonging to the category of uttered speech (*lafẓ*). This implies that they understand *Tasbīh* as a form of divine sanctification and praise that necessarily requires linguistic articulation and possesses an audible component. By accepting and focusing on the aspect of speech and utterance in *Tasbīh* as a general principle, they have engaged in discourse on how this verbal, speech-like invocation can be attributed to both sentient and non-sentient beings, thereby delving into issues such as knowledge and consciousness in various types of entities. Similarly, translators, operating on this same basis, often use the phrase "they say *tasbīh*" in their renderings to convey this concept.

A pivotal point for reflection is whether the definition of *Tasbīh* is confined merely to verbal invocation, or whether broader dimensions can be acknowledged for it that are not necessarily dependent on audible expression and uttered words. Although numerous narrations mention the utterance *Subḥān Allāh* being heard from creatures, the textual content of these reports cannot necessarily be taken as fully and exhaustively explaining the complete concept of *Tasbīh*. It appears that the Qur'anic principle of the universality of *Tasbīh*, along with narrations that introduce it as one of the four foundational principles of Islam (Majlisī, *Bihār al-Anwār*, vol. 55, p. 5), emphasize a reality far greater than the mere repetition of words. This indicates that the concept of *Tasbīh* is vastly extensive and multidimensional, reaching far beyond verbal remembrance. For a more comprehensive understanding of *Tasbīh*, it is necessary to pay greater attention to other dimensions of this concept based on the verses of the Qur'an and the narrations from the Impeccable Imams. (Mohammad Rerza Aram, *Sho'ur va Tasbih Keyhani dar Negah-e Qur'ani va Adabi*, Baharestan-e Sokhan, Spring & Summer 2011, No, 17, pp. 206-227).

In this research, we aim to, while acknowledging the perspective of the proponents of 'real' *Tasbīh*, also propose an alternative understanding of *Tasbīh*. This is a concept whose quality and modality the Qur'an itself unveils through its mechanism of imagery.

### 5. The Role of Imagery in Elucidating Qur'anic Teachings

Given the significance of imagery (*al-taswīr*) in the Qur'an as a tool effective across various dimensions, it is necessary to first address two fundamental topics.



### 5.1. Imagery as a Mechanism for Elucidating Qur'anic Teachings

In the Noble Qur'an, imagery is employed as a powerful and effective tool for elucidating meanings and rendering them tangible before the audience's very eyes. In numerous instances, to impart awareness and knowledge to the minds of people living within the limited corporeal realm (*dā'irat al-mulk*), and to explain the sublime transcendental realities (*al-ma'ārif al-malakūtiyyah*) and to present and prove the most complex topics—even if those realities bear no relation to matter and the sensible world—God has used pictorial expression. The imagery of Paradise and Hellfire, with their various attributes and characteristics, is an example of elucidated realities portrayed through images, which the human mind, confined to the narrow corporeal sphere, has no other means of accessing.

Sayyid Quṭb, by presenting his theory of artistic imagery in the Qur'an and authoring his book *Al-Taṣwīr al-Fannī fī al-Qur'ān* (Artistic Imagery in the Qur'an), succeeded in drawing attention to the images created within the Qur'an while meticulously examining the spiritual connection between these images and the concepts intended by God. As the main proponent of the theory of "Artistic Imagery in the Qur'an," he believed that the Qur'an, in all areas, uses the best means of expression, namely, imagery (cf. Sayyid Quṭb, *Taṣwīr al-Fannī fī al-Qur'ān*, p. 12).

From the perspective of Islamic philosophers, the human perceptual faculties consist of external senses (*al-hawās al-zāhirah*) and internal senses (*al-hawās al-bāṭinah*). Unlike the external senses, the internal senses are not corporeal or material; rather, they receive, synthesize, and employ the forms (*ṣuwar*) derived from the external senses. Among the internal perceptual faculties is the faculty of imagination (*al-quwwah al-khayāl*), which plays a significant role in epistemological discussions. This faculty is the repository for the data of the common sense (*al-ḥiss al-mushtarak*) and the forms present within it; hence, it is also called *al-muṣawwirah* (the formative faculty). It can be said that this faculty can recreate a sensible object in its absence. This means that the limited boundaries of external sense perception are expanded through this internal sense, enabling humans to experience higher horizons (cf. Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī, *Al-Ḥikmah al-Muta'āliyah*, vol. 8, p. 314).

Drawing upon this element, Sayyid Quṭb believed that imagery is a stage wherein the mind, according to its own capabilities and capacities, and using the available 'copy' as raw material, presents its own perception, vision, understanding, feeling—in short, its own perspective—of that event or form (cf. Sayyid Quṭb, *Taṣwīr al-Fannī fī al-Qur'ān*, p. 12).

According to Sayyid [Quṭb], the "image" is not something created by the reader or researcher of the Qur'an; rather, it is something that the Author of



the Qur'an, through the Qur'an itself and by a specific mechanism utilizing its letters, words, and compositions, creates within the mind of the reader or researcher. Therefore, in Sayyid's view, "imagery" is fundamentally an act of the Qur'an and its unique compositional style, not an act of the reader or researcher.

He believed another crucial characteristic of Qur'anic "imagery" is its multidimensional nature. Through instruments such as diction, sentence structure, the musicality of words, and the method of treating a subject, all facets of these images can be perceived. Consequently, the images in the Qur'an are not flat or two-dimensional, such that a superficial and cursory glance at their outward form could suffice for comprehending their essence and entire reality. Instead, the outward form and appearance of these images serve as a means to access their deeper, more internal and subjective dimensions (Sayyid Qutb, *Al-Taṣwīr al-Fannī fī al-Qur'ān*, pp. 13-19).

In his view, "imagery" is the supreme instrument in the Qur'an's methodology. Through imagery, the Qur'an renders abstract concepts tangible. These images not only animate the mind of the audience but also engage their emotions, to the extent that the listener finds themselves within the heart of the narrative, becoming a spectator of the described scenes (Sayyid Qutb, *Al-Taṣwīr al-Fannī fī al-Qur'ān*, p. 59).

Āyatullah Ma'rifat, endorsing this perspective, maintains that the Qur'an, through the power of its "imagery," bestows life and movement upon beings and the phenomena of existence. The pen of the Qur'an has touched nothing without breathing life into it, as if the entire universe within the panels depicted by the Qur'an is alive, and all phenomena of existence are in motion (Ma'rifat, *Al-Tamhīd fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*, vol. 5, p. 341).

Some scholars are of the opinion that what Sayyid Qutb has presented enables researchers themselves to extract and utilize this treasure, benefiting from it through their own human conscience and perception (Ṣubḥī Ṣālīḥ, *Mabāḥith fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*, p. 320).

the argument while keeping it accessible.

## 5.2. Artistic Harmony in the Correlation of Image and Expression

This study proceeds from the premise that in the Qur'an, every word, by its essential reality, inherent philosophical purpose, and original coinage, conveys a specific meaning and concept, and the Qur'an itself employs various methods and mechanisms to elucidate them. Among these, imagery is one such mechanism utilized by the Qur'an to clarify its intended meaning—a mechanism that simplifies the comprehension of spiritual and intelligible matters for the audience. By employing this technique, the Qur'an weaves words and phrases in such a way that they become



visualized, animated, and imbued with life in the mind of the recipient, transforming into a beautiful, tangible, and perceptible image.

Sayyid Qutb discusses the subject of imagery in the Qur'an from various angles and by proposing multiple components. One such component is his focus on the aspect of "artistic harmony," which itself can be examined from different perspectives. Within the scope of this research, we are primarily concerned with the aspect of "the harmony between the image and the vocabulary used." This focus aims to uncover the true essence of the concept of *Tasbīh* by examining the harmony between the expression *Tasbīh* and the processed images. It should be clarified that the artistic dimension of imagery is of secondary concern in this study; the primary objective is to deduce the concept of *Tasbīh* through this imagery.

The focus of this inquiry is the unique harmony and precise correlation that the Qur'an employs in its use of a word and the concept it intends to convey. For instance, the Qur'an, through imagery set in diverse contexts, depicts a concept of motion, journeying, movement, and circular—yet purposeful—rotation. To depict this, it employs the root *s-b-h* (*sabaḥa*), which itself evokes this very meaning. Then, elsewhere, using the same root, it attributes the concept of *Tasbīh* to all particles of existence. This suggests a fundamental congruence between these presented images and the expression *Tasbīh*, which should be instrumental in understanding the concept of *Tasbīh* itself.

It can be argued that to elucidate the concept of *Tasbīh*, the Qur'an uses words that themselves play a role in that very elucidation. The processing of an image—such as the depiction of celestial orbits in the sky, conveying the notion of a specific type of movement pursuing a particular purpose—coupled with the use of a word like *Tasbīh*, which, by evoking the meaning and image of a swimming-like motion, plays a distinctive role in this imagery. This technique not only constitutes one of the Qur'an's inimitable expressive miracles but can also greatly assist in understanding the meaning and true essence of the word *Tasbīh*.

While this specific perspective and correlation, as emphasized in this study, is not explicitly found in the works of Sayyid Qutb, the core concept of imagery, of which he was a pioneering theorist, can serve as our guide in this endeavor.

## 6. The Strategy of Imagery in Elucidating *Tasbīh*

A crucial principle that must not be overlooked is that the concepts intended in the Qur'an correspond to truths and realities. Since the Qur'an's primary objective is guidance for the purpose of reaching the ultimate goal—namely, God Almighty—it is inconceivable that its use of language would focus merely on the words themselves without correlating them to



their essential truth or to external realities. Therefore, in elucidating a concept, the Qur'an never relies solely on linear exposition, especially when dealing with a concept as vast and profound as *Tasbīh*, which permeates and affects all components of existence. Consequently, the Qur'an employs multiple components to elucidate a concept, thereby presenting knowledge worthy of its grandeur. One such component is the powerful tool of imagery.

Investigating the issue of *Tasbīh* in the Qur'an through the lens of imagery is a strategic approach that appears to enable the proposal of a third perspective, supplementing the two previously mentioned ones. This implies that *Tasbīh* can be more comprehensive than just the categories of *ḥālī* (attitudinal) and *qālī* (verbal), and can encompass another meaning. From the viewpoint of this study, *Tasbīh* can also be considered as a purposeful act and operation. Explicit evidence in the Qur'an supports this. What is examined here, within the scope of this article, are several verses that, in the estimation of this research, present images which are instrumental in understanding the meaning of this reality and help us attain knowledge of that immense concept.

### **6.1. The Qur'an's Imagery in Elucidating the Concept of *Tasbīh* through the Correspondence of Image and Expression**

It has been established that "visual representation" holds a distinctive place as one of the expressive methods employed in the Qur'an and is counted among the miraculous aspects manifest in the Qur'anic text. This method is also capable of creating a connection between the text and its intended objective, as well as between the concepts it utilizes and the images it creates. Among these connective dimensions is the relationship between the manifestations of the Qur'an's imagery in elucidating a concept named *Tasbīh*, select examples of which, expressed through the method of visual representation, are presented below.

#### **6.1.1. Manifestations of Qur'anic Imagery Through the Celestial System and Structure in Elucidating the Concept of *Tasbīh***

This section addresses the visual manifestations of the system and structure of the celestial bodies and the connection and harmony in correlating these images with the expression *Tasbīh* to decode its profound meaning.

In a passage from *Sūrah Anbiyā'*, while expounding the system of *Tawḥīd*, the Qur'an speaks of the design of a firm structure within the cosmos:

"And it is He who created the night and the day and the sun and the moon. All float (*yasbahūn*), each in an orbit." (Qur'an 21:33)



An examination of this verse, which uses the word *yasbaḥūn*, and its surrounding context, reveals the depiction of unparalleled, multifaceted imagery. At times, it even creates one image within another. The movement and rotation of the sun and the moon, which the Qur'an illustrates using the root *s-b-ḥ* (*sabaḥa*), and the image processed in these verses, can serve as a guide to the connection established between the presented image and the expression *Tasbīḥ*.

The context of the verses first depicts a group of people who, heedless of the natural phenomena of the heavens and the earth, night and day, life and death—which they encounter daily—have drawn a veil of disbelief over their sight. In their neglect of the coherence and harmony of these phenomena, especially their neglect of the sky and the alternation of night and day, they have buried their heads in the hard shell of the earth; their horizon does not extend beyond it. It is as if they are unaware of the passage and rotation of time, the passing of this era, and the moment of departing the earth.

God addresses them not directly, but with the phrase: "Have those who disbelieve not considered that the heavens and the earth were a joined entity, and We separated them...?" (Qur'an 21:30). The use of this phrase implies that these established principles and laws of existence should have been seen and pondered. Therefore, whoever fails to consider and reflect upon them is addressed with the phrase "those who disbelieve" and is accused of disbelief. This address descends upon them from the very heavens they have neglected: "Do they not see that this earth and sky are not separate?" As if, just as their eyes are closed and they do not see, God also overlooks them and does not address them directly.

This context continues the preceding passage, which, across several verses, speaks of the oneness of God and the denial of partners or offspring for Him—something which, had it been true, would certainly have caused corruption: "Had there been within them [the heavens and earth] gods besides Allāh, they both would have been ruined." (Qur'an 21:22). Imam al-Ṣādiq (as), citing this verse, considers the interconnectedness of design and the perfection of creation as proof of God's oneness and, consequently, the absence of corruption (Al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq, *Al-Tawḥīd*, p. 250). The Qur'an itself uses this same reasoning as proof for *Tasbīḥ* and the transcendence of God Almighty: "So exalted is Allāh, Lord of the Throne, above what they describe." (Qur'an 21:22). It is for this reason that in the verse "that the heavens and the earth were a joined entity, and We separated them" (Qur'an 21:30), to explain the unity of creation and the Lordship over existence, it speaks of the heavens and the earth being joined, in order to



present it as proof of unity in Lordship and, consequently, the absence of corruption.

The preceding verses had reminded us of the truth that this heaven and earth, about which one is expected to reflect, were not created in vain:

"We did not create the heaven and the earth and what is between them for sport." (Qur'an 21:16)

Therefore, the context of the verses reminds the disbelieving person (the one who conceals the truth) that the heaven and the earth were once a joined entity:

"Have those who disbelieve not considered that the heavens and the earth were a joined entity, and We separated them...?" (Qur'an 21:30)

Subsequently, the verses speak of appointing "water" as the source of life for everything:

"And We made from water every living thing. Then will they not believe?" (Qur'an 21:30)

Then, once again returning to the sky with the phrase, it draws attention to the cosmic signs:

"And it is He who created the night and the day and the sun and the moon. All float (*yasbaḥūn*), each in an orbit." (Qur'an 21:33)

The verses in this sequence paint a picture of a space that appears like a boundless ocean, with the sun and moon swimming and circulating within it like small and large fish. It is a dynamic and moving image, and through the use of the word *kull* (all), it includes all related components in this dynamism. Then, in a sudden shift, the verses divert the mind from the expanse of the celestial ocean towards the subject of death and the impermanence of this world, thereby establishing a profound connection with the phrase "all swim in an orbit" and the passage of time.

Thus, the *siyāq* (context) of the verses, within the imagery they create of the heavens and the earth, the sun and the moon in motion, and the creation of *al-layl* (the night) and *al-nahār* (the day)—which are effects of this motion—also generates a depiction of a complete life cycle. This imagery commences from "We made every living thing from water" (Qur'an 21:30) and proceeds to "Every soul will taste death" (Qur'an 21:35). In this manner, a portrait is sketched between the two stages of *ḥayāt* (life) and *mamāt* (death), which become interlinked with the emergence of night and day and the revolution of the sun and the moon, serving as a reminder of the motion and journey of humanity, accompanying the cycle of night and day.

Therefore, although the *siyāq al-āyāt* initially constructs an image of the earth and the heavens and the motion of the celestial bodies (*kawākib*), due to the specific phrase «يَسْبَحُونَ» / "they swim (or float in an orbit)", it



incorporates human beings as a part of that boundless nature, which is affected by night and day and the passage of time, making them partners in this very course.

In this passage, the verses, in one scene, assemble the heaven and its celestial spheres into a single system, and in another scene, they depict an imagery between *hayāt* and *mamāt*. Thus, they expand the imagery to the vastness of the cosmos and all its beings, so that commensurate with its expanse, the concept of «تسبيح» / *tasbīḥ* and its essence finds meaning and flows through all components and dimensions of existence. An intellectual movement, accompanied by *tadabbur* (profound reflection) upon these verses and images, is necessary to link the concept of *tasbīḥ*—derived from the orbiting of the moon, the sun, the stars, and other celestial elements of which the earth is a part—to the human journey from birth to death. By speaking of the impermanence of life on earth, it once again directs humanity towards the heaven: “And We did not grant immortality to any human before you” (Qur’an 21:34), thereby constructing an imagery that is not initially apparent in the *prima facie* reading of the verses.

Imam al-Riḍā (‘a), in a tradition cited by the author of *Majma‘ al-Bayān* and transmitted from *Tafsīr al-‘Ayyāshī*, states:

"... And regarding the statement of the Almighty, *Lā al-shamsu yanbaghī lahā an tudrika al-qamara wa lā al-laylu sābiq al-nahār*' (It is not for the sun to overtake the moon, nor does the night outstrip the day) (Qur’an 36:40), it means the day has already outstripped it. Then He said, *wa kullun* (And all) – referring to the sun, the moon, and the stars – *Fī falakin yasbahūn* (float, each in an orbit). They travel within it with effortless motion (*inbisāt*), and anything that extends or moves freely within something is indeed swimming (*sabaḥa*) within it, from which the concept of 'swimming in water' is derived. The verb *Yasbahūn* is used with the *wāw* and *nūn* [indicating the third person masculine plural] because the action is attributed to them in a manner that is characteristic of human acts, just as He said, *mā lakum lā taṭīqūn* (Why do you not speak?) (Qur’an 37:92) when describing them with the attribute of one who is rational. And Ibn ‘Abbās said: *Yasbahūn* means each one of them flows in its orbit, just as the spindle rotates within the whorl." (Al-Ṭabarsī, *Majma‘ al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qur’ān*, vol. 8, p. 665)

This tradition contains two significant points. First, every entity in the cosmos moves within a specific orbit (*falak*), and this motion is dependent on the system in which the entity is placed. Thus, the tradition emphasizes the relationship between an entity and its environment. This is analogous to a fish swimming in water, which demonstrates the fish's complete dependence on its aquatic environment. Consequently, the application of



the concept derived from the verb *tasbīḥ* (to glorify, to swim) to *kull* (all/each) indicates that all components and particles of existence which engage in this cosmic motion (*musabbihāt*) are in a state of 'swimming' and journeying, interacting with a vast, boundless environment as part of a larger, integrated system. Therefore, it can be argued that the noble verse portrays the motion of the sun and the moon across the expanse of the heavens – a motion encapsulated in the term *tasbīḥ* – as a specific manifestation of this universal law of systemic journeying.

The second point is the use of the *wāw* and *nūn* in the verb *yasbahūn*, which is the form used for rational, sentient beings (*jam' al- 'āqil*). This grammatical choice, in addition to potentially affirming the possession of a perceptive faculty and suggesting a conscious dimension in the cosmic *tasbīḥ* of the universe, also directs attention towards the *tasbīḥ* of the most potent and supreme rational being (*dhū al- 'aql*), namely, the human. In other words, humanity, as the most rational being in existence, must inherently derive a greater share and a more profound manifestation of *tasbīḥ* within the sphere of existence than any other entity or creature. This implies that human *tasbīḥ* must be a more specific and elevated form compared to that of the other glorifying beings.

A similar connection and imagistic harmony, employing the concept of *tasbīḥ*, is established in Sūrah Yāsīn between the 'flowing' (*jary*) of the sun and the 'measuring' (*taqdīr*) of the moon's stations:

“And the sun runs [its course] toward a resting place for it. That is the determination of the Exalted in Might, the Knowing. (38) And the moon – We have determined for it phases, until it returns like the old date stalk. (39) It is not for the sun to overtake the moon, nor does the night outstrip the day. They all float, each in an orbit.” (36:38-40)

The context (*siyāq*) of these verses in Sūrah Yāsīn begins with the reprimanding phrase *a-lam yaraw* (Have they not seen...?) (36:31), speaking of the gathering of all beings in the presence of God – denoted by the divine plural pronoun *nā* (We) – in the verse 'wa-in kullun lammā jamī'un ladaynā muḥ'ḍarūn' (“And indeed, all of them will yet be brought present before Us.”) (36:32). It then describes the dead earth that is revived, causing seeds to sprout, yield fruit, and by divine decree, producing gardens of palm trees and grapes, with gushing springs flowing from it – all attributed to God using the pronoun *nā* (as in *akhrajnā*, We bring forth; *qadarnā*, We decreed) (36:33-35). Then it extols the Creator of all pairs, engaging in *tasbīḥ* (36:36), thereby linking the progression from dead earth to life, growth, and fruition to the *tasbīḥ* of God. After depicting these earthly images, the discourse shifts to portray images of the heavens, pointing to the flowing of the sun and the moon's passage through its



stations – all revolving within their ordained orbits under divine decree, without outstripping one another. Again, in line with the concepts previously discussed, it uses the phrase *wa kullun fī falakin yasbahūn* (36:40). The subsequent mention of ships and their passengers (36:41-42), which again evokes notions of journeying, motion, and floating, serves to portray another dimension of this comprehensive imagery.

#### 6.1.1.1. Image within an Image: A Further Manifestation of Coherence and the Connection of Expressions with Imagery

The same visual connection present in these verses can be established between the expressions “We made every living thing from water” (Qur’an 21:30) and “They all float, each in an orbit” (Qur’an 36:40). This is because the meanings of ‘water’ and ‘swimming’ are intrinsically linked, allowing us to understand that *kull shay* (everything), which is entirely *ḥayy* (living), is simultaneously *musabbih* (glorifying/swimming) within its own *falak* (orbit).

To elaborate and substantiate this point, one can draw upon the exposition of ‘Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā’ī in *Al-Mīzān*, where, in arguing for the reality of the *tasbīḥ* of all creatures, he states:

“Wherever creation has permeated, knowledge has also infiltrated. Every existent being, to the extent of its share of existence, possesses a portion of knowledge. This statement certainly does not necessitate that we claim all beings are equal in knowledge, or that knowledge is of one single type in all of them, or that they understand everything that a human understands, and that if a human does not perceive their knowledge, it proves they have none.” (Al-Ṭabāṭabā’ī, *Al-Mīzān fī Tafsīr al-Qur’ān*, vol. 13, p. 110)

This explanation, in a way, also articulates the *ḥayāt* (life) of all particles of existence. If we assert that wherever creation has permeated, knowledge has also infiltrated, it means that knowledge is considered a corollary of creation. And since knowledge itself is a corollary of life—as knowledge cannot be attributed to anything that is not *ḥayy* (living)—it can be said that creation is equivalent to life. Wherever creation has permeated, life also manifests itself there. Consequently, there is no created entity except that it is *ḥayy*, even though the degree and type of life, just like knowledge, are not uniform or of the same kind for all creatures. This means *kull makhliūq ḥayy* (every created thing is living), or, in other words, *kull shay’ ḥayy* (everything is living).

To this line of reasoning, one can add the verse: “They will say, ‘Our Lord! He who gave us speech has given speech to all things.’” (Qur’an 41:21). The attribution of the quality of *nuṭq* (speech, articulate faculty) to *kull shay’* (everything) can serve as evidence for the life of *kull shay’*,



because *nutq* is also a corollary of life and cannot be truthfully affirmed without the fundamental presence of life. Given that no existent being is devoid of knowledge and *nutq*, it can therefore be asserted that no existent being lacks life. On the other hand, there is no life except that which is derived from the Divine Name *Al-Ḥayy* (The Ever-Living). Thus, the source and origin of all *ḥayāt* is none other than One. It appears that the noble verse “We made every living thing from water” (Qur’an 21:30) also conveys this very meaning.

Thus, *ḥayāt* (life) is also intrinsically linked to *tasbīḥ*. This means that every “shay” (thing/entity), by virtue of its very essence as a 'thing,' partakes in a share of existence (*wujūd*). Whatever has a share of existence is therefore *ḥayy* (living), and this life of it is dependent upon *tasbīḥ* and the perpetual motion it continuously performs. Should it cease this for even a moment, it would lose its *ḥayāt*.

According to Mullā Ṣadrā, the life of every living being is identical to its mode of existence. The mode of existence of a living entity determines the vital effects that emanate from it. The more noble and powerful an entity's existence, the more complete its perception and the firmer its action will be. Furthermore, due to the equivalence (*masāwāqah*) of existence and life, it can be said that every existent is living, and life, just like existence, permeates all beings. (Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī, *Al-Ḥikmah al-Muta‘āliyah*, vol. 1, p. 417) In his discussion of life, Al-Jīlī enumerates five types of life, the first of which is "existential life" (*al-ḥayāt al-wujūdiyyah*) that permeates all existents. (Al-Jīlī, *Marātib al-Wujūd wa Ḥaqīqat Kull Mawjūd*, pp. 40-41)

Perhaps the wisdom behind the simile of *mā’* (water) is precisely this permeation and flow of the principle of life through all creatures.

Therefore, “Whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is on the earth” (Qur’an 2:284, et al.), which encompasses all particles of existence, great and small, are all—by virtue of their being 'things' and having existence—*ḥayy*. Since the origin of every life is also from *mā’*, every existent, meaning every possessor of life, realizes that its life is entirely dependent upon *mā’* (لِ), and every movement and action within this life is likewise dependent on *mā’*. This can be one profound dimension of the imagery that the Noble Qur'an sketches concerning *tasbīḥ* and its connection to *mā’* (لِ).

The imagery depicting the celestial bodies swimming in the heavens is of the same nature, for the existence and life of these celestial bodies are contingent upon the sun and their revolution around it. Should any one of them cease this revolution for a moment or deviate from its orbit, it would undoubtedly be annihilated and perish.



Therefore, it can be said that from the Qur'anic perspective:

1. «كُلُّ شَيْءٍ» / "Everything" (cf. Qur'an 2:29, 6:38), including all those modern sciences do not consider living, is «حَيٌّ» / *ḥayy* (living) and possesses life, simply by virtue of its existence (*wujūd*) and entity-hood (*shay'īyah*).
2. The life of «كُلُّ شَيْءٍ» is from «الْمَاءِ» / *al-mā'* (the water) (Qur'an 21:30), meaning a single, shared element is the origin of life for all components of existence.
3. From the Qur'anic viewpoint, all that is in the heavens and the earth, from the smallest atomic particle to the largest galaxy, is engaged in «تَسْبِيحٍ» / *tasbīḥ*. This establishes an inseparable bond between life and *tasbīḥ*.
4. The «تَسْبِيحٍ» of all glorifiers is «لِلَّهِ» / *lillāh* (for God) (cf. Qur'an 57:1, 59:1, 61:1). This indicates a shared ultimate purpose (*ghāyah*) in this universal *tasbīḥ*, which is God, the Exalted.
5. This shared origin (*mabda'*) and ultimate end (*muntaḥā*) of existence can demonstrate the perfection of the creative act (*ṣan'*) and the connectedness in the management of the cosmos, as was also alluded to in the statement of Imam al-Ṣādiq (as).
6. In one profound expression, this shared Origin and End is the possessor and reality of the Name «الْحَيِّ» / *al-Ḥayy* (the Ever-Living), which was depicted in the journey from the divine «نَا» / *Nā* (We) to the divine «نَا».

The conclusion is that «كُلُّ شَيْءٍ» is «حَيٌّ», shares a common origin, and is, moreover, proceeding towards a single ultimate destination. In this process and journey from origin to destination, all are in a state of «تَسْبِيحٍ». This means that the mere existence and entity-hood of a thing, by virtue of its being «حَيٌّ» and possessing life, necessitates dynamism, motion, and journeying. This understanding elevates the concept of «تَسْبِيحٍ» beyond notions of a static or merely verbal glorification to a dynamic, purposeful, and life-centric movement.

The verses in Sūrah Anbiyā' similarly paint a picture within the preceding imagery, depicting this cyclical movement from birth to death. This is where it immediately announces the absence of immortality in this world: "And We did not grant to any human before your eternity [on earth]." (21:34), and with the phrase "Every soul will taste death." (21:35), it deems every soul a taster of death. At the end of the verse, it speaks of "and to Us you will be returned." (21:35), a return to the same divine «نَا» found in "And We made from water..." (21:30). Thus, it sketches another image connecting the beginning to the end, from «نَا» to «نَا». (we to we).



In this manner, the *siyāq* (context) of the verses in Sūrah Anbiyā' also elevates the meaning of the subject verse beyond mere audible speech or a natural discourse. Through depicting an exemplar and employing the specific word «يَسْبَحُونَ» / *yasbahūn* (they float/swim/glorify) to describe it—instead of any other word—it conveys a meaning that no other word could have possibly carried. In doing so, it activates the mind of the audience to discover the existing connections and correspondences for comprehending the profound concept of «تَسْبِيح».

### 6.1.2. The Visual Manifestations of the Angels' *Tasbīh*

This section examines the correlation between the imagery depicting the motion and movement of angels and the concept of *tasbīh* in Sūrah Anbiyā' (centered on verse 20) and Sūrah Nāzi'āt (centered on verses 1–5).

"They glorify [Him] night and day, without ceasing" (Qur'an 21:20).

The preceding context of this verse reminds us of the principle that creation is governed by a purposeful system—the heavens and the earth and all that lies between them were not created in vain: "We did not create the heaven and the earth and what is between them in play" (Qur'an 21:16). "Play" (*la'ib*) refers to an action that, while systematic and governed by rules, lacks a meaningful or valuable purpose (Qummī, Farhang-i Vāzhigān-i Qur'ān). Alternatively, it denotes an action in which no correct aim or objective is intended (Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, Mufradāt Alfāz al-Qur'ān, vol. 1, p. 741).

Following this reminder, the verse "To Him belongs whoever is in the heavens and the earth" (Qur'an 21:19) attributes everything within this creation to "Him," employing the possessive *lām* to denote ownership. This ownership is real (*ḥaqīqī*), not conventional (*i'tibārī*), which would become void once its conventional basis expires. Thus, an inseparable, real relationship of ownership governs the heavens, the earth, and all that lies between them and "Him."

The verse then states that those in the station of "with God" never disdain His worship nor grow weary: "And those near Him do not disdain from worshipping Him, nor do they grow weary" (Qur'an 21:19). They are described as engaged in the act of *tasbīh* night and day, without interruption or fatigue: "They glorify [Him] night and day, without ceasing" (Qur'an 21:20).

In this way, the Qur'ān paints a picture of an infinite space where immense, numerous, yet coordinated forces—under the command of a single Supreme Authority—constantly and tirelessly move and operate to manage the affairs entrusted to them. These forces are precisely "whoever is in the heavens and the earth," introduced by the phrase "to



Him" as being under the ownership and authority of the One, "He." Being in the station of "with God," free from all pride and weariness, they perform *tasbīh*; therefore, their *tasbīh* is perpetual, uninterrupted, and free from any languor.

The alignment of the meaning of *tasbīh* with their motion and movement is further supported by subsequent verses, where they are described as "honored servants" (Qur'an 21:26), for servitude is achieved only through absolute obedience. It is at this level of servitude that a servant becomes an "honored servant." Clearly, absolute obedience here is not merely verbal or declarative, as the following verse describes their state through the attribute of "acting": "And they act by His command" (Qur'an 21:27). Moreover, these verses are often interpreted as referring to angels, who are also administrators of divine affairs: "Then those who arrange the affairs [of the world]" (Qur'an 79:5). This description further emphasizes that *tasbīh* transcends mere speech or words and is, in reality, an action and deed.

This imagery is further refined by the notion that forces in existence perpetually revolve around the Sun of the Axis of the Realm of Possibility (God), executing His commands and managing affairs without a moment's pause. The Qur'ān refers to this continuous motion and action in obedience to divine commands and the administration of the world under His absolute ownership and sovereignty as *tasbīh*. Thus, by employing the term *tasbīh*, the Qur'ān establishes a correspondence between the meaning of the word and the function it defines for the angels.

This imagery of angelic motion is further enriched in Sūrah Nāzi'āt with additional attributes:

"By those [angels] who extract [souls] violently, by those who remove [souls] gently, by those who swim [float] [in space], Then those who take the lead, then those who arrange the affairs [of the world]" (Qur'an 79:1–5).

Here, too, the verses depict forces—interpreted as angels—moving to and from. The description of their movements, in accordance with the words used, suggests a swimming-like, swift, smooth, and purposeful motion aimed at administering affairs. While these verses, in one sense, elaborate on the management of affairs, the addition of the beautiful description "by those who remove [souls] gently"—implying being immersed in the fervor, joy, and ecstasy of the ocean of divine love—adds another positive dimension to the previously bustling scene. It portrays a scene full of motion: angels, unrecognizable in their zeal and



indefatigable, with a sense of joy and exhilaration, racing ahead of one another in the path of obedience and fulfillment of divine commands.

In this imagery, the word *sabḥ* (swimming) effectively plays its role in depicting the form and manner of movement. Among all conceivable types of motion, *sabḥ* conveys movements that are swimming-like, smooth, energetic, and purposeful, vividly illustrating the nature of angelic motion.

### 6.1.3. The Visual Manifestations of the Birds' *Tasbīḥ*

Another dimension of the Qur'an's imagery in correspondence with the term *tasbīḥ* can be traced in Sūrah Nūr, centered on verses 41–42:

"Have you not seen that God is glorified by all in the heavens and the earth, and by the birds with wings outspread? Each knows its prayer and its glorification, and God is fully aware of what they do. To God belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth, and to God is the ultimate return" (Qur'an 24:41–42).

Upon closer examination, these verses present a vivid imagery of the flight of *Ṭayr* (birds), which aligns with the concept of *tasbīḥ*. Although the verse initially speaks of the *tasbīḥ* of all "who are in the heavens and the earth," it specifically emphasizes the *tasbīḥ* of birds.

The verse opens with the phrase "Have you not seen," evoking the idea that *tasbīḥ* is perceptible. While the primary addressee is the Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him), the continuation of the verses suggests that *tasbīḥ* can, in principle, be observable. How can the *tasbīḥ* of "all in the heavens and the earth" be visualized? The imagery of a bird in flight between the heavens and the earth serves as a tangible example to elucidate the meaning of *tasbīḥ*. Thus, the Qur'an creates another living scene: a bird soaring with outstretched wings across the sky. This imagery, too, depicts a form of *tasbīḥ*, as among all aspects of a bird's life, only its flight is highlighted in alignment with the act of *tasbīḥ*—a movement and journey that resonates with the concept of "transformational becoming" (*ṣayrūrāt*) at the end of the subsequent verse.

Further reinforcing this interpretation is the phrase "and God is fully aware of what they do," which explicitly emphasizes the "act" of *tasbīḥ*, clarifying that this act is not confined to mere "words." The expression "what they do" indicates that the Qur'an portrays *tasbīḥ* as a dynamic and active deed, not limited to verbal utterance.

One might argue that the specific mention of *Ṭayr* as an exemplar of *tasbīḥ* symbolizes the aspiration to ascend to higher realms and the divine kingdom, much like certain mystics have attributed this quality to the human soul, comparing it to the nature of birds (cf. ʿAyn al-Quḍāt Hamadānī, *Sharḥ Kalimāt Bābā Ṭāhir*, p. 46).



Since the term "each" in the verse encompasses all "who are in the heavens and the earth," it can be said that the act of *tasbīḥ*, in the sense of purposeful motion and movement, applies to all its manifestations. This universality of *tasbīḥ* reflects a common principle of life and motion shared by all beings.

Thus, the verse captures attention by presenting a dynamic and vivid imagery of birds—a sight visible to all—and links this imagery to the word *tasbīḥ* to imbue the term with meaning. It then connects this motion and journey with the phrase "and to God is the ultimate return," establishing a spiritual link between *tasbīḥ* and "transformational becoming" (*ṣayrūrāt*), thereby elucidating one of the most profound principles of existence. This transformational movement must occur within human existence so that human *tasbīḥ* transcends its external dimension and ascends to an internal, more profound level—a *tasbīḥ* of the soul. As ‘Allāmah Javādī Āmulī explains in defining "journey" (*sīr*) and "transformational becoming" (*ṣayrūrāt*):

"The difference between *ṣayrūrāt* (with *ṣād*) and 'sīr' (with *sīn*) is that *sīr* denotes motion, present in all earthly and celestial bodies. In contrast, *ṣayrūrāt* signifies transformation and evolution—a process of becoming, progressing from one state to another, from one station to a higher one" (Javādī Āmulī, *Ṣūrat va Sīrat-i Insān dar Qur'ān*, p. 99).

The importance of reflecting on these verses and their implications is so paramount that those who disregard and neglect them are reproached and characterized by the trait of disbelief.

Thus, we come to understand that the words of the Qur'an are not lifeless, and the purpose of its specific expressions and terminology is not merely to convey abstract meanings. Rather, the Qur'an creates with words. It engages in ontology through imagery. It enhances knowledge through ontology, thereby guiding humanity. By purposefully employing words and crafting vivid imagery, the Qur'an elucidates profound concepts to reveal truths that play a pivotal role in human guidance. It speaks of *tasbīḥ*, whose components—the sun, the moon, the earth, the celestial spheres, the night, and the day—encompass all that can be conceived within this realm. For what can be imagined that lies beyond its scope?

This appears to be a Qur'anic method: by presenting multidimensional imagery, it engages the mind and stimulates thought, urging one to move beyond a linear reading of the verses, to benefit from their generative potential, and to grasp deeper meanings and concepts through its vibrant and dynamic portrayals.



## 7. The Role of Narrative in Elucidating the Formative Mechanism of *Tasbīh* (The Motion Paradigm)

In depicting the concept of cosmic *tasbīh*, the Noble Qur'ān employs an innovative and profound technique of imagery. This expressive method presents intellectual and intangible concepts of *tasbīh* through sensory and dynamic symbols—such as the glorification of birds, mountains, angels, and celestial bodies. Based on an analysis of the structure of these Qur'ānic images, *tasbīh* is not confined to verbal or declarative expression; rather, it possesses an existential and universal nature manifested in the dynamism and perpetual motion of existence. These images function as a universal language of "actuality," unveiling a profound metaphysical truth within the structure of the cosmos and revealing that existence abides in a state of constant remembrance and motion.

In the course of interpreting and ontologically elucidating these Qur'ānic images, a narration from 'Alī b. Ibrāhīm al-Qummī, under the verse "There is not a thing that does not glorify Him with praise" (Qur'ān 17:44), serves as a key explanatory support. This narration, by explicitly stating that "the very motion of everything constitutes glorification of God, the Almighty," (al-Qummī, Tafsīr al-Qummī, vol. 2, p. 20) provides a functional and philosophical definition of *tasbīh*. This profound statement, in fact, explains the structure and mechanism governing the Qur'ān's imagery: while the Qur'ān refers to *tasbīh* through the language of art and allegory (the communicative dimension), the narration uncovers and elucidates the fundamental and intrinsic principle governing universal *tasbīh* by highlighting the pivotal concept of *ḥarakat* (dynamism) (the ontological dimension).



A systematic correlation between these two sources of knowledge leads to an important conclusion in understanding the reality of *tasbīh*: the Qur'ānic images do not merely serve a literary or metaphorical function; rather, they are visual and symbolic representations of the very formative motion defined in the narration as the universal rule and metaphysical truth of *tasbīh*. By enumerating diverse manifestations (multiplicity of forms), the Qur'ān familiarizes humanity with the vast phenomenon of *tasbīh*, while the narration, by focusing on the keyword "motion," points to the structural unity governing all these manifestations. From this perspective, *tasbīh* possesses two interconnected dimensions:

- a) A formative, dynamic reality encompassing all existence, and
- b) The artistic manifestation of this reality through Qur'ānic imagery.

This reading introduces existence as a living, dynamic whole in which every particle is in constant motion along its path of innate becoming and perfection. This, in turn, amplifies the "inward" (*anfusi*) responsibility of human beings to harmonize their existential motion with the universal symphony of *tasbīh*.

### **Conclusion**

*Tasbīh* as one of the epistemological matters frequently emphasized in the Qur'ān, constitutes a profound reality that encompasses every "thing qua thing" in existence.

In the present study, employing a descriptive-analytical method and utilizing the Qur'ān's tool of imagery, certain verses depicting *tasbīh* have been examined. It has been concluded that the Qur'ān, by applying the expression *tasbīh* in the context of specific imagery, effectively conveys its message regarding the meaning and concept of *tasbīh* to the reader. This meaning is reflected in verses that employ the motion of the sun, the moon, the stars, birds, and angels as examples to elucidate this concept. The narration, "The very motion of everything is *tasbīh* of God, the Almighty," aligns with this direction and, as an ontological and explanatory testimony, clarifies the philosophical foundation of the Qur'ān's artistic imagery.



Therefore, the true meaning of *tasbīh* is motion, movement, journey, and ceaseless dynamism that flows through all components and particles of existence—from a single atom to immense galaxies. In other words, existence in its entirety, with all its parts, is in constant journey and motion at every moment, and each component, while participating in that overall motion, also possesses its own particular movement. Thus, all components—whether encompassing or encompassed—exhibit a manner of journey and motion, and no particle in existence is static or immobile. This principle also indicates the vitality of all parts of existence.

This meaning, which appears to be a third dimension complementing the verbal and practical aspects of *tasbīh*, represents a living, dynamic, and yet coherent system. Although it appears to possess numerous determinations and multiplicities, it simultaneously has a definite origin and destination, governed under the shadow of a single whole—reflecting functional monotheism (*tawḥīd al-afʿālī*). This truth is also operative and pervasive in the human existential system.

Consequently, verses that are often interpreted in isolation can be interconnected and viewed coherently from within, leading to a better understanding of the order of the universe—with all its complexities—and the single divine governance (*rubūbiyyah*) presiding over it.



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**Analyzing the Concept of Establishing Divine Scripture  
(*Iqamat al-Kutub al-Samawiyyah*) and Its Requirements in the  
Qur'anic Discourse**

Minoo Naraghian<sup>1</sup>  
Maryam Haji Abdolbaghi<sup>2</sup>  
Hamid Reza Mostafid<sup>3</sup>

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**Abstract**

The concept of "establishing divine scriptures" (*Iqamat al-Kutub al-Samawiyyah*) within the Qur'anic discourse is a fundamental and practical topic that highlights the human responsibility toward divine scriptures and the implementation of their teachings in life. In verses 66 and 68 of *Surah Al-Ma'idah*, Allah calls upon the People of the Book to establish the Torah, the Gospel, and the Qur'an, making it a prerequisite for attaining guidance. This research raises the question: What does "establishing divine scriptures" mean, and what requirements exist for its realization in human societies? It delves into analyzing this concept within the Qur'anic discourse. Using a descriptive-analytical methodology and relying on exegetical sources, linguistic works, and related scholarly articles, the study provides a semantic analysis and identifies the requirements for establishing divine scriptures. The findings reveal that establishing divine scriptures encompasses preserving, clarifying, implementing, and realizing divine teachings across all individual and social dimensions. Furthermore, the research emphasizes that the establishment of the Torah, the Gospel, and the Qur'an, despite their historical and content differences, plays a crucial role in achieving shared objectives such as justice, guidance, and human piety.

**Keywords:** Establishing Divine Scriptures, Qur'anic Discourse, Torah, Gospel, Holy Qur'an.

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1. Phd student, Quranic Sciences and Hadith, North Tehran Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran: smrdarbandi@yahoo.com

2. Assistant professor, Department of Quranic Sciences and Hadith, North Tehran Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran (Corresponding Author): mhajabdolbaghi@gmail.com

3. Assistant professor, Department of Quranic Sciences and Hadith, North Tehran Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran: hr.mostafid@yahoo.com

## Introduction

The Almighty God explicitly links the credibility and value of the People of the Book to the establishment of the Heavenly Book and what has been revealed to them (through the Prophets). Therefore, the concern of this research is to answer the question: What is the meaning of the “Iqamat al-Kutub al-Samawiyyah” in verses 66 and 68 of Surah Al-Ma’idah, and what are the prerequisites for realizing the establishment of the Heavenly Books in the Quranic discourse?

Attention to the context of verses 65 to 68 of Surah Al-Ma’idah, which, contrary to the view of some commentators, possess thematic unity, aids in better understanding God’s intent regarding the establishment of the Book, which means: “You have nothing to stand upon (Lestum 'ala shay)”—i.e., your religion has no truth or value, you have not followed the path of guidance, and you lack legitimacy.

In verse 67, God addresses His Prophet: “O Messenger, if you do not deliver what has been revealed to you (the proclamation of the wilayah and succession of Amir al-Mu’minin Ali, peace be upon him), you have not fulfilled your divine mission.” Just as the entirety of the Prophet’s divine mission hinges on the proclamation of Ali’s wilayah and succession and the establishment of the divine government after the Prophet (as the pillar, standard, and measure of faith), the acceptance of what has been revealed in divine scriptures and oral revelations presented to the People of the Book is similarly the condition for their legitimacy and authenticity and the only path to true religiosity.

Divine governance establishes unity among believers (“Establish the religion and do not be divided concerning it”), facilitates the establishment of scriptures under the shadow of repentance, piety, and prayer (“Turning unto Him, and fear Him, and establish prayer”), and leads to the acceptance of divine government in the hearts of the people.

In these verses, God calls upon the People of the Book to establish the Torah, the Gospel, and the Qur’an and refers to them as the criteria for attaining guidance and salvation. However, an essential question arises: What does establish divine scriptures mean in these verses? Does it merely involve preserving and reciting these scriptures, or does it extend to implementing divine commands in all aspects of life?

Furthermore, given that in the contemporary world we face challenges such as intellectual deviations, religious extremism, and distancing from authentic divine teachings, analyzing this concept can provide a solution for returning to the principles and values of divine religions and strengthening Quranic discourse. Consequently, exploring this concept and



its requirements within the framework of Quranic verses, especially in Surah al-Mā'idah, emerges as an undeniable necessity.

Additionally, studying the concept of establishing divine scriptures and explaining its prerequisites not only contributes to a deeper understanding of Quranic teachings but also serves as a practical basis for redefining the relationship between human beings and divine scriptures. In an era where authentic religious teachings are subject to distortion and misinterpretation, returning to fundamental concepts such as the establishment of divine scriptures can pave the way for correcting beliefs and behaviors and fostering unity among divine religions.

Moreover, this subject holds significance in identifying the commonalities and differences among divine religions regarding human responsibility toward divine commands. Examining the concept of establishing the Torah, the Gospel, and the Qur'an can lead to a deeper understanding of shared values and unique features across divine religions in fulfilling their obligations toward God.

### **Previous Studies**

Previous studies have generally addressed concepts such as the establishment of religion, adherence to divine commands, and the responsibility of the People of the Book. Some research has explored the responsibility of the People of the Book in the Qur'an; however, the specific and specialized analysis of the concept of "establishing divine scriptures" in verses 66 and 68 of Surah al-Mā'idah has not yet been undertaken.

For instance, articles such as *"Semantic Analysis of the Terms 'Torah' and 'Gospel' in Quranic Contexts"* by Mohammad Taqi Ansari Pour and Ramin Babagolzadeh examine the Quranic usage of the Torah and Gospel. *"The Contentual Relationship of Divine Scriptures from the Perspective of the Qur'an"* by Motahhareh Jafari and Jalil Parvin analyzes the contentual connections among the Torah, the Gospel, and the Qur'an, addressing related concepts of establishing divine scriptures. *"The Qur'an and Other Divine Scriptures"* by Mohammad Taqi Diyari studies the similarities and differences between the stories of the Qur'an and the Old and New Testaments, touching upon the concept of establishing divine scriptures. Additionally, the article *"Semantic Study of the Word 'Kitab' in the Qur'an Based on Syntagmatic Relations"* analyzes the term "Kitab" in the Qur'an and its associations, offering insights into the concept of establishing divine scriptures.

An examination of existing literature reveals that these studies have mainly focused on general interpretations of these verses or on comparative analysis between the Qur'an and earlier scriptures. However, there remains



a gap for research that analyzes the concept of establishment as a central Quranic discourse and extracts its practical prerequisites.

This research offers innovation and distinction from three perspectives:

- **Precise conceptual analysis:** Unlike previous studies that mostly provide general interpretations of the verses, this study employs conceptual and comparative analysis methods to deeply investigate the concept of establishing divine scriptures.
- **Focus on practical prerequisites:** In addition to conceptual analysis, this research explores the practical requirements of establishing divine scriptures within Quranic discourse and lays the groundwork for its implementation in human societies.
- **Comparative approach among the Torah, Gospel, and Qur'an:** This study specifically examines the similarities and differences in the establishment of these three scriptures, offering a deeper understanding of the interactions among divine religions.

This research can be a significant step toward strengthening Quranic discourse, promoting constructive interaction among divine religions, and providing new foundations for religious and Quranic studies.

### 1. Conceptual Analysis of *Iqāmah* in the Qur'an

The term *iqāmah* in the Qur'an, as one of the frequently used terminologies, encompasses a variety of meanings and interpretations. This term is derived from the root "q-w-m" and, in lexical terms, signifies "establishing" (*Mustafid*, 1393 AH, p. 67), "sustaining" (*Jawhari*, 1984, vol. 5, p. 1395), "fulfilling the right of everything" (*Ṭurayhi*, 1375 AH, vol. 6, p. 1395), and "preservation and maintenance" (*Farāhīdī*, 1410 AH, vol. 5, p. 1395). Additionally, the concept of *iqāmah* in the Qur'an includes meanings such as "continuity," "stability," and "steadfastness" (*Zabidi*, 1994, vol. 17, p. 1395).

According to the Qur'anic verses, *iqāmah* is often used in various contexts, with the most significant being the establishment and persistence in religious practices, particularly prayer. For instance, in verses such as "*yuqīmūna al-ṣalāh*" (*al-Baqarah*: 3) and "*wa aqīmū al-ṣalāh wa ātū al-zakāh*" (*al-Baqarah*: 43), this term underscores the necessity of establishing and safeguarding prayer (*Ṭabaṭabā'ī*, 1417 AH, vol. 1, p. 47).

In some verses, the word *iqāmah* refers to the complete implementation of divine commandments and the fulfillment of rights. Specifically, in the verse: "*Say, O People of the Book, you are upon nothing until you uphold the Torah and the Gospel...*" (*al-Mā'idah*: 68), the People of the Book are admonished that without the full implementation of the laws of the Torah and the Gospel, they will not achieve religious perfection. This interpretation indicates that *iqāmah* in this verse extends beyond mere



recitation, referring instead to the practical implementation of divine commands and teachings (*Fakhr al-Rāzī*, 1420 AH, Vol. 12, p. 45).

In the Qur'an, *iqāmah* is presented as one of the fundamental responsibilities of believers. Verses such as "*aqīmū al-ṣalāh*" (*al-Baqarah*: 43) and "*wa al-muqīmīn al-ṣalāh*" (*al-Nisā*': 162) explicitly emphasize the importance of establishing prayer as a pillar of faith. These verses demonstrate that *iqāmah* is not merely the performance of an act but implies its preservation, continuity, and careful attention (*Rāghib al-Isfahānī*, 1412 AH, p. 395).

The term *iqāmah* sometimes overlaps in meaning with other expressions, but subtle differences exist. For example, the phrase "*idhā qumtum ilā al-ṣalāh...*" (*al-Mā'idah*: 6) refers to the intention and preparation for prayer, while "*yuqīmūna al-ṣalāh*" (*al-Baqarah*: 3) signifies consistent performance and safeguarding the quality of prayer (*Ibn Sīda*, 1421 AH, vol. 6, p. 592).

From the combined lexical and exegetical studies, it can be concluded that the term *iqāmah* in the Qur'an signifies broad meanings such as establishing, stabilizing, sustaining, and fulfilling obligations. In addition to its general meaning, *iqāmah* takes on a more specific significance in contexts such as establishing prayer or implementing religious laws, thereby becoming a divine and foundational duty for human beings.

Words derived from the root *q-w-m* in the Qur'an have various meanings, each acquiring specific connotations in different contexts. In this section, we explore some of these terms and their applications.

The phrases "*qāma 'alā*" and "*qāma bi*" in Arabic are used to mean "realizing" and "undertaking responsibility." These expressions also carry similar meanings in the Qur'an, referring to human actions and commitment to fulfilling responsibilities (*Āzarnūsh*, 1379 AH, p. 343).

The Term *al-Qiwām* (with the letter Qāf pronounced with a kasrah) in Lexicography and Qur'anic Usage: The term *al-qiwām* is defined in lexicons as "that which serves as the foundation upon which religion or truth is established." This concept refers to the pillar or basis upon which a religious or moral system is built (*Ibn Durayd*, 1987, vol. 2, p. 977).

The term *taqawwum* carries meanings such as "rising," "the opposite of halting," "stability," "continuity," and "the occurrence of an event." For instance: In the verse: "*I will bring it to you before you rise from your place*" (*al-Naml*: 39), it refers to "before you stand up from your position."

Similarly, in the verse: "*And of His signs is that the heavens and the earth are established by His command*" (*al-Rūm*: 25), *qiyām* is interpreted as the stability and continuity of the order governing the heavens and the earth (*al-Azhari*, undated, Vol. 9, p. 267).



The term *qayyimah* in the verse: "And that is the religion of uprightness" (*al-Bayyinah*: 5) refers to a community that upholds justice and equity. This concept is also reflected in other verses, such as: "You were the best nation..." (*Āl 'Imrān*: 110) and "Be steadfast in justice as witnesses for Allah..." (*al-Nisā'*: 135) (*al-Azhari*, undated, Vol. 9, p. 267).

The term *al-Qayyūm*, one of the divine names (*asmā' al-ḥusnā*), appears three times in the Qur'an: "Allah, there is no deity except Him, the Ever-Living, the Sustainer of existence" (*al-Baqarah*: 255), "Allah, there is no deity except Him, the Ever-Living, the Sustainer of existence" (*Āl 'Imrān*: 2), and "And all faces will bow before the Ever-Living, the Sustainer of existence" (*Ṭā Hā*: 111).

This term signifies God's attribute of sustaining and maintaining all creation. The term *istiqāmah* denotes "balance," "moderation," "uprightness," and "the avoidance of excess and deficiency." This meaning is observed in verses such as: "Guide us to the straight path" (*al-Fātiḥah*: 6), "Indeed, this is My straight path..." (*al-An 'ām*: 153), and "Indeed, my Lord is on a straight path" (*Hūd*: 56).

In these verses, *ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm* (the straight path) signifies a "firm and smooth way" that aligns with truth and is free from deviation (*Rāghib al-Isfahānī*, undated, p. 690).

The term *taqwīm* refers to "establishing firmly" and "perfecting." In the verse: "We have certainly created man in the best of stature" (*al-Tīn*: 4), it refers to the distinguished attributes of humankind, such as intellect, understanding, and uprightness, which indicate the superiority of humans over other creatures (*Rāghib al-Isfahānī*, undated, p. 690).

Words derived from the root *q-w-m* in the Qur'an convey a wide range of meanings, including establishment, continuity, steadfastness, justice, and guidance. Despite their diverse meanings, these terms all point to humanity's essential role in upholding individual and social responsibilities and adhering to divine order.

### **The Preferred Perspective on the Concept of *Iqāmah***

The term *iqāmah* in Islamic texts is a multifaceted concept encompassing meanings such as establishment, continuity, and undertaking responsibility. This term holds a central position, particularly in the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), and is emphasized in contexts like the *iqāmah* of the Divine Book as one of the highest human obligations.

By "*iqāmah* of the Divine Book," one refers to establishing, maintaining continuity, and fulfilling the rights of the Holy Scripture in the most complete and proper manner. This concept transcends mere recitation or memorization of the literal text of the Divine Book and extends to



applying its teachings for the scientific, practical, and social guidance of humanity. The *iqāmah* of the Divine Book signifies utilizing its revelatory teachings to direct human thoughts, behaviors, and motivations toward ultimate happiness and perfection.

Based on narrations explaining verse 68 of Surah Al-Ma'idah, it is derived that the establishment of the Divine Book is only achievable under the guardianship and authority of God, the Prophets, the Infallibles, and the divinely appointed leaders (*Awliyā' Allah*). This connection suggests that the *iqāmah* of the Divine Book is not an abstract concept but one deeply tied to the system of divine leadership and governance.

The establishment of the Divine Book is not solely the duty of the Prophets; rather, the followers of divine teachings are also obligated to implement their Heavenly Book in their individual and social lives. This is because God commands His Prophet to tell the People of the Book of his time that until they undertake the establishment of the Book, they will have no standing or credibility. As stated in Surah Al-Ma'idah, verse 68:

Say, O People of the Scripture, you are standing on nothing until you “uphold the Torah, the Gospel, and what has been revealed to you from your”...Lord

In verses ٤٤, ٤٥, and ٤٧ of Surah Al-Ma'idah, governance that is not aligned with divine commands, the teachings of the Heavenly Book, and the guidance of the Prophets is described as blasphemous, unjust, and sinful. These verses emphasize that any system of authority or rulership that disregards the principles of divine revelation is inherently flawed and illegitimate in the eyes of God

The *iqāmah* of the Divine Book is not solely the responsibility of the Prophets; the Muslim community, as the “best nation” (“*You were the best nation...*”; *Āl 'Imrān: 110*), is also tasked with steadfastness in implementing the Qur'an's teachings in their individual and societal lives. This responsibility involves three fundamental dimensions:

1. **Faith:** Belief in the truth of revelation and recognizing the Qur'an's position as the Book of guidance.
2. **Knowledge:** A deep and accurate understanding of Qur'anic teachings.
3. **Action:** Implementing the Qur'an's teachings in individual and societal behavior, while achieving the lofty Divine objectives in the structure of society.

Therefore, the *iqāmah* of the Divine Book is a comprehensive responsibility that goes beyond preserving its words. It includes safeguarding its principles, implementing them, and realizing Divine objectives in all aspects of human life. This duty is founded upon an



integration of faith, knowledge, and action, aiming to guide humanity toward happiness and perfection. The Qur'anic teachings in this regard deliver a clear message to the Muslim community as the heirs of Divine revelation, entrusting them with the responsibility of establishing this Heavenly Book.

### 3. Iqāmah of the Torah, the Gospel, and the Qur'an

The juxtaposition of the term iqāmah with the sacred texts—the Torah the Gospel, and the Qur'an—alongside the phrase *ma unzila ilaykum min rabbikum* (what has been revealed to you from your Lord) indicates that the establishment of these texts relies on comprehensive adherence to divine revelation. This adherence must be based on rational understanding and heartfelt faith; otherwise, the religiosity of those who claim faith lacks true value and is not worthy of presentation. This principle is articulated in verse ٩٨ of Sūrat al-Mā'idah: "Say, O People of the Book, you are upon nothing until you uphold the Torah, the Gospel, and what has been revealed to you from your Lord. And what has been revealed to you from your Lord will surely increase many of them in rebellion and disbelief. So do not grieve over the disbelieving people

In Qur'anic verses, the People of the Book (Jews and Christians) are explicitly called upon to uphold the Torah and the Gospel as their religious texts. The beginning of verse ٩٨ of Sūrat al-Mā'idah clearly states this while the latter part critiques many of them for their rebellion and disbelief stemming from their inability to accept the revelation of the Qur'an. This raises a hermeneutical challenge: how does the Qur'an, as a book with a universal message, ask the People of the Book to return to their sacred scriptures while simultaneously calling them to believe in the Qur'an

This question becomes more pronounced when considering other Qur'anic verses, such as verse 47 of Sūrah Nisā: O you who were given the Scripture, believe in what We have sent down, confirming what is with you. The verses invite the People of the Book to accept the Qur'an and the Prophet Muhammad, while verse 68 of Surah Mā'idah instructs them to adhere to their own sacred texts. Qur'anic exegetes have offered various explanations to address this issue:

#### 1. Adherence to the Universal Principles of Religious Knowledge

Some exegetes argue that the command to uphold the Torah and the Gospel refers to adhering to the universal principles of religious knowledge, such as *tawhīd* (monotheism), *nubuwwah* (prophethood), *ma'ād* (resurrection), and ethics. These principles are the unchanging foundations of the message of all prophets. Therefore, the request for the People of the Book to uphold these principles does not conflict with the call



to believe in the Qur'an and the Prophet Muhammad (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1417 AH, vol. 6, pp. 45-48).

## 2. Adherence to the Prophecies of the Torah and the Gospel

Another group of exegetes believes that the iqāmah of the Torah and the Gospel means adhering to the prophecies contained within these texts regarding the advent of the Prophet Muhammad. Thus, this verse aligns with those verses that invite the People of the Book to accept the Qur'an and the Prophet of Islam (Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, 1420 AH, vol. 12, p. 401).

## 3. A Comprehensive View

Some exegetes accept both of the above interpretations, asserting that the command to uphold the Torah and the Gospel encompasses adherence to the universal principles of religious knowledge as well as acting upon the prophecies about the Prophet Muhammad, ultimately leading to faith in the Qur'an (Ṭabrisī, 1372 AH, vol. 3, p. 346).

## 4. The Unique Perspective of 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī

'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī presents a distinctive viewpoint, suggesting that the phrase "You are upon nothing" in this verse indicates the inability of the People of the Book to uphold the Torah and the Gospel. He interprets this verse as a critique of their behavior, warning them of their failure to practically realize the divine commandments (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1417 AH, vol. 6, pp. 45-48).

The concept of iqāmah in relation to the Torah, the Gospel, and the Qur'an emphasizes a holistic approach to religious practice, requiring both faith and the practical realization of divine teachings. This perspective serves as a profound call for intellectual and spiritual engagement with scripture, addressing both the universal principles and specific prophecies found within the sacred texts.

## Factors and Requirements for the Establishment of the Book

The establishment (*iqāmah*) of the divine book, as one of the most significant principles emphasized in Qur'anic teachings, requires certain factors. Without these, the full realization of this principle is unattainable. These factors and requirements are elaborated in Qur'anic verses and narrations and include affirmation (*taṣḍīq*), faith (*īmān*), and adherence (*tab'īyyah*). The following sections analyze these elements in detail.

### 1.3. Affirmation (Taṣḍīq)

Affirmation of the divine book is among the most essential requirements for its establishment. The Qur'an states: "And has affirmed the best [reward]." (*al-Layl*, 6). This affirmation refers to belief in and acceptance of the promised blessings in the Qur'an and acting upon them. 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī writes in this regard: "A believer in Allah and His Messenger, who spends their wealth for Allah's sake and seeking His



reward, will attain the promised recompense." (*Tafsīr al-Mīzān*, vol. 20, p. 303).

### 2.3. Faith (Īmān)

Faith in the divine book and the Prophet Muhammad (*ṣallā Allāhu ‘alayhi wa-‘ālīhi*) is another essential requirement for the establishment of the Book. Regarding the faith of the People of the Book, the Qur’an states: "And when they hear what has been revealed to the Messenger, you see their eyes overflowing with tears because of what they recognize of the truth. They say, ‘Our Lord, we believe, so register us among the witnesses.’" (*al-Mā’idah*, 83). This verse emphasizes the profound impact of divine verses on human hearts and the recognition of truth. Additionally, some narrations interpret faith as the acceptance of the authority (*wilāyah*) of the Ahl al-Bayt (*alayhim al-salām*): "And establish prayer and fear Him. And it is He to whom you will be gathered." (*al-An‘ām*, 72). (*Fayḍ Kāshānī, Tafsīr al-Ṣāfi*, vol. 4, p. 368).

Some exegetes interpret the establishment of religion in this verse as the acceptance of monotheism (*tawḥīd*), faith in the prophets and heavenly books, and adherence to the teachings of Islam (*Ibn al-Jawzī, Zād al-Masīr*, vol. 4, p. 1).

### 3.3. Adherence (Tab‘iyyah)

Adherence to the divine book is another key factor in its establishment. The Qur’an states:

"And this [Qur’an] is a blessed Book which We have revealed, so follow it and fear Allah that you may receive mercy." (*al-An‘ām*, 155). Following the divine book is an obligation for all believers. According to Ṭabarī’s exegesis, adherence entails complete acceptance of the Qur’anic commands and practical commitment to them (*Ṭabrisī, Majma‘ al-Bayān*, vol. 4, p. 596).

### 4.3. Reverence and Humility (Khuṣū‘ wa Iḥtirām)

One of the essential pillars for realizing the establishment of the Book is reverence and humility toward it. The Qur’an repeatedly highlights this principle, considering it among the characteristics of true believers. For example, in verse 109 of *Sūrat al-Isrā’*, it is stated: "And they fall upon their faces weeping, and it increases them in humility." (*al-Isrā’*, 109). This verse underscores how listening to the Qur’an enhances their humility and submission.

### 5.3. Listening (Istimā‘)

The term *istimā‘*, derived from the root *s-m-‘*, refers to the sensory perception of sound by the ear. In the Qur’an, it is used in four senses:



1. **Literal hearing:** "Allah has set a seal upon their hearts and upon their hearing." (*al-Baqarah*, 7).
2. **Auditory perception:** "Indeed, they are, from hearing [the truth], veiled." (*al-Shu'arā'*, 212).
3. **Comprehension and understanding:** "And when the Qur'an is recited, listen to it and pay attention that you may receive mercy." (*al-A'rāf*, 204).
4. **Obedience and compliance:** As in the idiomatic expression, "Listen to what I tell you" (meaning, comprehend and act accordingly).

In conclusion, the establishment of the divine book requires these essential elements—affirmation, faith, adherence, reverence, and attentive listening—to ensure its transformative impact on both individual and collective lives.

### 3.6. Recitation, Tilāwah, Contemplation, and Teaching

These four concepts play a pivotal role in the realization of the establishment (*iqāmah*) of the Divine Book:

#### a) Recitation

Rāghib al-Isfahānī, in his work *Mufradāt*, defines recitation (*qirā'ah*) as originating from the root *q-r-*, meaning "to gather and join together." He writes: "Recitation means the gathering and joining together of letters and words." (*Mufradāt*, p. 669). This term appears 77 times in 16 chapters of the Qur'an, often in connection with words such as Qur'an, revelation (*waḥy*), and Book (*kitāb*). For instance, in the verse: "So when We have recited it [through Gabriel], then follow its recitation." (*al-Qiyāmah*, 18), some exegetes, such as Ālūsī, interpret "follow" as observing complete silence and full attention (*Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī*, vol. 29, p. 142).

#### b) Tilāwah (Recitation with Reflection)

In the Qur'an, *tilāwah* signifies recitation that involves reflection and fulfilling the rights of the Book. For example: "Indeed, those who recite the Book of Allah and establish prayer..." (*Fāṭir*, 29).

#### c) Contemplation (Tadabbur)

In the verse: "This is a blessed Book which We have revealed to you, that they might contemplate its verses." (*Ṣād*, 29), *tadabbur* refers to thoughtful reflection on the verses and comprehension of their meanings (*Baghawī, Anwār al-Tanzīl*, vol. 5, p. 28).

d) *Teaching (Tadrīs)* In the verse: "And they studied what was in it [the Book]." (*al-A'rāf*, 169), *tadrīs* is understood as teaching and deeply learning the knowledge contained in the Divine Book. This verse indicates that abandoning the establishment of the Book results from materialism and laxity in religious observance.



### 3.7. Reflection and Reasoning

Reflection (*tafakkur*) and reasoning (*ta'qqul*) are fundamental elements in the establishment of the Divine Book. These concepts hold significance not only in social and religious dimensions but also at the individual level. Individual reasoning involves strengthening and developing the intellect through teaching and learning. This process progresses to the point where it compels the individual to establish the Book and revelation, influencing the implementation of divine commands in both personal and societal life.

In particular, the *Ziyārat Jāmi'ah Kabīrah* describes the infallible Imams (*a'immaḥ ma'ṣūmīn*) as possessors of profound intellect and sagacious reasoning. This reasoning is directly tied to the establishment of divine commands, as they are described as: "*Those who uphold His command.*" In this ziyārah, it is stated that Allah has chosen them as His vicegerents on Earth: "*Peace be upon the guiding Imams... those endowed with intellect and understanding... I bear witness that you are the rightly guided, divinely inspired Imams... the obedient servants of Allah who uphold His command... and He has chosen you for His light and approved you as successors on His Earth.*" (*Ziyārat Jāmi'ah Kabīrah*).

### 3.8. Taking (*Akhadh*)

The root of the word *akhadh* contrasts with *'atā'* (giving) and in linguistic terms refers to acquiring, receiving, or addressing something (*Tāj al-'Arūs*, vol. 5, p. 345). In some contexts, it implies acquiring something with power or even force (*Mufradāt Alfāz al-Qur'ān*, p. 67).

In the Qur'an, the term *akhadh* is mentioned in 118 verses, 11 of which pertain specifically to "taking the Book." In some cases, this term is used in conjunction with *mīthāq* (covenant) and *alwāḥ* (tablets). For example, in chapters such as *al-Baqarah* (verses 63, 83, 93), *al-Ḥadīd* (verse 8), *al-'Arāf* (verses 154, 169), and *Āl 'Imrān* (verses 81, 187), *akhadh* is presented as a serious act tied to commitment.

Allah emphasizes in verses like: "*And [recall] when We took your covenant and raised over you the mount [saying], 'Take what We have given you with determination and remember what is in it that perhaps you may become righteous.'*" (*al-Baqarah*, 63), that taking the Book must be done with strength and commitment. This verse portrays *akhadh* as the conscious acceptance of the Divine Book and striving for its accurate and enduring establishment.

The covenant that Allah took from the Children of Israel and other communities includes accepting the divine books and fulfilling their commands. This commitment encompasses belief in the prophethood of Muhammad (*ṣallā Allāhu 'alayhi wa-ālīhi*) and the imamate of his



successors, including Imam 'Alī ('*alayhi al-salām*) and his descendants. However, some communities failed to uphold this commitment and ignored it (*Tafsīr al-Ṣāfi*, vol. 1, p. 138).

In the Qur'an, the concept of *akhadh al-kitāb* is highlighted as a binding and significant covenant, serving as a means to realize servitude and devotion to Allah. This underscores the unique role of *akhadh al-kitāb* in the spiritual development of individuals and the social system.

### 3.9. Clinging (*I'tiṣām*) and Holding Fast (*Tamassuk*)

#### a) Clinging (*I'tiṣām*)

The term *i'tiṣām* is derived from the root 'ṣ-m, meaning "to preserve, safeguard, or restrain." In Qur'anic terminology, it signifies holding onto something for protection or seeking refuge in it (*Mufradāt Alfāz al-Qur'ān*, p. 569). This word is used in several Qur'anic verses, such as: "No protector will there be today against the decree of Allah." (*Hūd*, 43), which conveys that nothing can prevent or resist the divine command.

In other verses, like: "And hold firmly to the rope of Allah all together." (*Āl 'Imrān*, 103) "And whoever holds firmly to Allah..." (*Āl 'Imrān*, 101), *i'tiṣām* is interpreted as holding fast to the *ḥabl Allah* (the rope of Allah), representing divine guidance and direction. These verses emphasize seeking refuge in Allah to safeguard oneself from misguidance and corruption (*Jamhara al-Lughah*, vol. 2, p. 627).

Additionally, in the verse: "But he sought to seek refuge [in Allah]." (*Yūsuf*, 32), *i'tiṣām* refers to seeking protection from sin (*Qāmūs al-Qur'ān*, vol. 5, p. 8).

In this context, *i'tiṣām* is a key Qur'anic concept, underscoring the necessity of turning to Allah during personal and social challenges or crises (*al-Iḥṣāḥ fī Fiqh al-Lughah*, vol. 1, p. 73).

#### b) Holding Fast (*Tamasuk*)

The term *tamasuk* means "to cling to or hold onto something" (*Lisān al-'Arab*, vol. 10, p. 487). In the Qur'an, *tamasuk* to the Divine Book is considered essential for upholding religion and is prescribed to the Prophet Muhammad (ṣallā Allāhu 'alayhi wa-ālihi). This word appears seven times in the Qur'an, consistently emphasizing adherence to Allah's Book as a means of countering opposition.

For instance, in the verse: "So adhere to what has been revealed to you. Indeed, you are on a straight path." (*al-Zukhruf*, 43), the Prophet (ṣallā Allāhu 'alayhi wa-ālihi) is commanded to hold fast to the revealed Book, as it assures his position on the straight path (*Translation of Tafsīr al-Mizān*, vol. 18, p. 155).



This verse highlights *tamasuk* to the Divine Book as a fundamental tool for guidance amidst challenges and opposition to the Qur'an. Various exegetes have also clarified that adherence to the Qur'an is vital for establishing its authority against detractors (*Tāj al-Lughah wa Ṣiḥāḥ al-'Arabiyyah*, vol. 4, p. 1676).

### 3.11. Bearing (*Ḥaml*)

The Arabic term *ḥaml* signifies "to carry, bear, or contain." It is also used to denote carrying a load or responsibility, as illustrated in the verse: "*Indeed, he will carry a burden [of sin] on the Day of Resurrection.*" (*Fāṭir*, 18). In this verse, *ḥaml* refers to bearing the burden of sin and responsibility, which will weigh heavily on a person who has carried the load of sin in their lifetime (*Tāj al-Lughah wa Ṣiḥāḥ al-'Arabiyyah*, vol. 4, p. 1676). In the Qur'an, the concept of *ḥaml* is often employed to refer to moral and religious responsibilities. These responsibilities encompass both individual and societal obligations placed upon humans, which they will be held accountable for on the Day of Resurrection (*Gonābādī, Tafṣīr Bayān al-Sa'ādah fī Maqāmāt al-'Ibādah*, vol. 2, p. 104).

### 4. Results of Establishing the Book

The acceptance of the "Wilayah of the Successors," which refers to accepting the authority of the Imams (‘alayhim al-salām), is considered by Shia exegetes as the foundation and basis for establishing the Book. In this regard, scholars have referred to hadiths in their interpretation of verse 66 of Surah al-Mā'idah: "*And if they had upheld the Torah, the Gospel, and what was revealed to them from their Lord...*" In these narrations, it is stated that the intended meaning of "establishing the Book" in this verse refers to establishing the Wilayah of Imam ‘Alī (‘alayhi al-salām) and accepting and following him (*Hawīzī, Nūr al-Thaqalayn*, vol. 1, p. 659). In this context, the emphasis on the Wilayah of Imam ‘Alī (‘alayhi al-salām) is not only explicitly mentioned but also conveyed implicitly in the Qur'an and numerous hadiths.

As mentioned in certain verses and narrations, what was expressed by the Prophets and their successors regarding the covenant made by Allah for the Prophethood of the Messenger of Allah (ṣallā Allāhu ‘alayhi wa-ālīhi) was similarly revealed regarding the Wilayah of Imam ‘Alī (‘alayhi al-salām), both explicitly and implicitly. For example, in one verse, it is stated: "*O Prophet! Do not grieve over their disbelief, and know that their deviation from Wilayah will harm neither you nor ‘Alī.*" (*Bayān al-Sa'ādah*, vol. 2, p. 104). Furthermore, Al-‘Ayāshī, the author of the book *al-Tafṣīr*, based on numerous hadiths, has linked the establishment of the heavenly Book to following the Wilayah of Imam ‘Alī (‘alayhi al-salām) (*‘Ayāshī, Tafṣīr*, vol. 1, p. 334).



Another significant outcome of establishing the Book, emphasized in Qur'anic verses and various hadiths, is the establishment of an Islamic government that focuses on social, gender, racial, and economic justice. The Qur'an specifically addresses these topics, and justice is consistently presented as one of the fundamental principles of an Islamic government.

1. **Social Justice:** In the Qur'an and hadiths, social justice is recognized as one of the essential requirements of an Islamic government. Particularly in the verses of Surah al-Mā'idah (verses 44, 45, 47, 50, and 68), the establishment of justice in society is emphasized.
2. **Gender Justice:** Another dimension of justice in the Qur'an is gender justice, which is addressed in various verses, such as Surah al-Nisā' (verses 7 and 36), Surah al-Baqarah (verse 228), and Surah al-Ḥujurāt (verse 13).
3. **Racial Justice:** Racial justice is also considered a fundamental principle of the Islamic government in the Qur'an, with emphasis on human equality before Allah in Surah al-Ḥujurāt (verse 13).
4. **Economic Justice:** Economic justice holds particular significance in the Qur'an, especially in the verses of Surah al-Baqarah (verse 188), Surah al-Nisā' (verses 5 and 8), Surah al-Ḥashr (verse 7), and Surah al-Isrā' (verse 35), which discuss economic issues and the fair distribution of resources and wealth.

##### **5. Those Who Establish and Those Who Neglect the Book**

In the Holy Qur'an, the terms "establishing the Book" and "neglecting the Book" refer to the moral and behavioral characteristics of individuals concerning the Book of Allah. Establishing the Book means the complete realization and practice of Qur'anic teachings in both individual and social life, whereas neglecting the Book refers to being heedless of these teachings or deviating from them. These two characteristics are explicitly mentioned in the Qur'anic verses and can serve as criteria for evaluating individuals' behavior and performance concerning the Qur'an and Islamic principles.

###### *Those Who Establish the Book*

Those who have devoted themselves to establishing the Qur'an are generally individuals who wholeheartedly commit to following the Qur'an and implementing its teachings in their personal and social lives. These individuals have specific characteristics that are clearly mentioned in various parts of the Book of Allah. One of the key characteristics of those who establish the Book is sincerity in action. They fully follow the guidance of the Qur'an and avoid distortion and misinterpretation of its meanings. In this regard, the Holy Qur'an explicitly speaks of these qualities.



### Those Who Neglect the Book

In contrast to those who establish the Book, those who neglect the Book are individuals who either neglect the implementation of the Qur'anic rulings or intentionally distort and misguide others with it. The Holy Qur'an repeatedly condemns these individuals, describing their behavioral traits in various verses.

The table below presents the verses related to the characteristics of the "establishers of the Book" and their opposites, the "neglecters of the Book":

Establishers	Neglecters
أُمَّةٌ مُّقْتَصِدَةٌ (a moderate community)	سَاءَ مَا يَحْمَلُونَ وَمَعْضُوبٌ (evil are their deeds and they are cursed)
يَكْفُرُ بِالطَّاغُوتِ (those who reject false gods)	أَوْلِيَاؤُهُمُ الطَّاغُوتِ (their allies are false gods)
مَنْ آمَنَ (those who believe)	صَدُّوا عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ (they turn others away from the path of Allah)
قَوَامُونَ بِالْقِسْطِ (those who uphold justice)	إِتِّبَاعُ هَوَىٰ (they follow their desires)
شُهَدَاءَ لِلَّهِ (witnesses for Allah)	أَوْ تُعْرَضُوا (distortion) وَإِنْ تَلَّوْا (turn away)
يُمْسِكُونَ بِالْكِتَابِ (holding fast to the Book)	لَسْتُمْ عَلَىٰ شَيْءٍ (you are on nothing)
مُصْلِحِينَ (those who reform)	مُفْسِدِينَ (those who cause corruption)
تَمَسَّكَ بِالْعَزْوَةِ الْوُثْقَىٰ (holding firmly to the strongest bond)	مُفْسِدِينَ (those who cause corruption)
سَابِقُونَ بِالْخَيْرَاتِ (those who hasten to good deeds)	ظَالِمُونَ لِأَنْفُسِهِمْ (those who wrong themselves)
أَصْحَابُ الْيَمِينِ (companions of the right)	أَصْحَابُ الشِّمَالِ (companions of the left)
اتَّبَعُوا (those who follow)	يَحْسُدُونَ (those who envy)
رَاسِخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ (those who are firm in knowledge)	طُغْيَانًا وَكُفْرًا (those who are rebellious and ungrateful)
تَسْلِيمٍ (those who submit)	يَبْتَغُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ (those who seek corruption on earth)
عِصْمَةً (those who are protected)	ضَالًّا، يَكْتُمُونَ الْحَقَّ (those who are misguided, concealing the truth)
رَافَةً وَرَحْمَةً (those who are compassionate and merciful)	فَاسِقٌ (those who are immoral)

As can be observed, the first column of the above table presents the characteristics and qualities of those who establish the Book from the perspective of the Holy Qur'an. The most important characteristics of the



establisher of the Book include: belief in Allah, turning away from the false gods (tāghūt) and their followers, establishing justice and fairness, being witnesses to the truth, holding fast to the divine Book, being foremost in good deeds, being firm in knowledge, and other moral and behavioral traits that place them on the path of guidance and adherence to divine teachings. In contrast, the second column of the table addresses the characteristics of those who neglect the Book, who are essentially the opposites of the establishers of the divine Book. The most important characteristics of those who neglect the Book include: being allies of false gods (tāghūt) and their followers, preventing people from the path of truth, following their carnal desires, being rebellious and corrupt in the divine way, and other negative attributes that lead to divine wrath. These individuals, instead of following the guidance of the Qur'an and the divine principles, go astray and become lost, thus distancing themselves from Allah's mercy.

### **6. The Role of Reason and the Establishment of the Book**

The issue that arises regarding the relationship between humans and truth is why a person, after understanding and grasping the truth, turns away from it due to their carnal desires and fails to uphold the religion to which they supposedly adhere. The Holy Qur'an explicitly addresses this issue: *"Do you then hope that they will believe for you while a group of them used to hear the word of Allah, then they would distort it after they had understood it, and they knew?"* (Al-Baqarah, 2:75). This verse clearly states that some individuals, after hearing and understanding the word of Allah, distort it. The question then arises: why, despite using reason, do these individuals not submit to the truth and neglect the establishment of the divine Book?

To answer this question, we must first consider the various definitions and classifications of reason that have been presented. Reason, in its different concepts, can play different roles. Some philosophers and Islamic thinkers have divided reason into two types: theoretical reason (‘aql nazārī) and practical reason (‘aql ‘amalī). Theoretical reason pertains to understanding and comprehending logical and scientific truths, while practical reason is concerned with applying this knowledge in practice, especially in making ethical and religious decisions.

In this context, it is practical reason that compels a person to submit to the truth and encourages them to establish the divine Book and follow its commands. Although theoretical reason may provide the capacity to understand the truth, if practical reason is influenced by carnal desires, the individual may stray from what they have correctly understood. In fact, individuals who do not use their theoretical reason properly and allow their



carnal desires and whims to dominate it may deviate in their understanding and practice of religious teachings.

Therefore, the correct use of reason as a tool to guide individuals toward the establishment of the divine Book requires the refinement and purification of carnal desires. This emphasizes the importance of the function of reason in all aspects of human life, especially in accepting the truth and following it, which ultimately leads to the proper establishment of the religion and the divine Book.

**The narrations: (*Riwayāt*)**

Narrations regarding the establishment (iqāmah) of the Scriptures and the Qur'an are quite limited. The following instances are primarily found in the exegesis of Verses 66 and 68 of Sūrat al-Mā'idah:

Narration from Ibn 'Abbās:

Ibn 'Abbās states that a group of Jews came to the Messenger of God (peace be upon him and his progeny) and asked him, "Do you not acknowledge that the Torah is from God?" He replied, "Indeed." They then said, "We believe in it and do not believe in anything else." Consequently, this verse was revealed:

"Say, O People of the Book! You are upon nothing until you uphold the Torah and the Gospel and that which has been revealed to you from your Lord. And surely, that which has been revealed to you from your Lord will increase many of them in rebellion and disbelief. So do not grieve over the disbelieving people."

This narration illustrates the context of the revelation, emphasizing the inadequacy of partial belief.



Narration from Imām ‘Alī (peace be upon him):

Imām ‘Alī (peace be upon him) remarked, "The news of the ultimate fate and ruin of the People of the Book reached the Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny), and it distressed him. Then, God, the Mighty and Majestic, revealed to him: ‘So do not let your soul be consumed by regret for them, and do not grieve over the disbelieving people.’ This verse serves to console the Prophet in light of the persistent disbelief of the People of the Book.

Narration from Ḥumrān regarding Imām al-Bāqir (peace be upon him): Ḥumrān inquired of Imām al-Bāqir (peace be upon him) about the verse: “Say, O People of the Book! You are upon nothing until you uphold the Torah and the Gospel and that which has been revealed to you from your Lord...”

The Imam responded, “This refers to the walāyah (guardianship) of the Commander of the Faithful, ‘Alī (peace be upon him).” This interpretation, unique to Shī‘ī thought, posits that the true establishment of the previous scriptures is intrinsically linked to the acknowledgment of Imām ‘Alī’s divinely appointed leadership

### **Conclusion**

The concept of "establishing the Book" in the Qur'anic discourse is one of the key concepts in the relationship between humans and the heavenly scriptures, as well as in religious understanding, which is referenced in various verses of the Holy Qur'an. Establishing the Book means adhering to divine commandments and teachings and implementing them in all aspects of individual and social life. In the Qur'an, establishing the Book not only refers to reading and reciting the divine verses but also to applying and operationalizing religious teachings in the different spheres of individual and social life.



In this article, the concept of establishing the heavenly books, with an emphasis on the Holy Qur'an and its teachings, has been explored. The Qur'an, in numerous verses, refers to the characteristics and qualities of the "establishers of the Book," including belief in Allah, the establishment of justice and fairness, witnessing to the truth, holding fast to the divine Book, being foremost in good deeds, and being firm in knowledge. These qualities are presented as important prerequisites for establishing the divine Book in the lives of individuals. The Qur'an also identifies those who misuse the divine Book and distort it as the "neglecters of the Book." Due to their intellectual and practical deviations, these individuals cannot live according to the divine Book and are consequently exposed to Allah's wrath.

One of the important concepts addressed in this article is the relationship between reason and the establishment of the Book. The Holy Qur'an emphasizes that reason not only aids in understanding and comprehending truths but should also serve the purpose of establishing the religion and acting upon divine commandments. Merely understanding the truth is not enough; practical reason must work alongside theoretical reason to compel the individual to establish the Book and fully embrace divine teachings. When carnal desires dominate reason, the individual may, despite correctly understanding the truth, neglect the establishment of the divine Book.

Ultimately, one of the fundamental points emphasized in this article is that establishing the Book is not limited to the recitation and understanding of the divine verses but requires a firm resolve to follow the teachings of the Qur'an in all aspects of life. From the Qur'anic perspective, establishing the Book means realizing justice, honesty, truthfulness, and other moral qualities in social and personal relations. Therefore, the establishment of the divine Book is a great responsibility that every Muslim should undertake in order to fulfill it.

Thus, in the Qur'anic discourse, establishing the Book is not only a religious command but also a tool for realizing a just, dynamic, and divine society. This issue emphasizes the importance and necessity of inner reform for both individuals and society, as it is only through the establishment of the Book that humans can achieve both worldly and otherworldly happiness.



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## Foolhardiness (*Safah*) in the Qur'an and the Thought of Imam Ali (as): A Semantic, Jurisprudential, and Social Comparative Analysis

Maryam Ebrahimi<sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

The term *Safah* (foolishness) in Islamic texts—particularly in the Holy Qur'an and the narrations of Imam Ali (as)—represents a multilayered and interdisciplinary concept that acquires diverse meanings across linguistic, jurisprudential, and social contexts. This study adopts a semantic-comparative analytical approach to elucidate the semantic evolution and functional dimensions of *safah* in the Qur'an and *Nahj al-Balaghah*, as well as to examine its reflection in Imami jurisprudence and contemporary legal systems. The research employs a descriptive-analytical and comparative method, drawing data from library sources categorized into three domains: Qur'anic, narrative, and jurisprudential. Findings indicate that *safah* in the Qur'an is variously used to denote ignorance and frivolity, legal incapacity (*hajr*), or intellectual and moral imprudence. In the thought of Imam Ali (as), the concept transcends linguistic boundaries and extends into the realms of social behavior and rational action—portraying *safah* in *Nahj al-Balaghah* as a manifestation of deviation in reasoning and a lack of social responsibility. Within Imami jurisprudence, *safah* is defined as “incapacity in financial and legal dispositions,” a concept reflected in Article 1207 of the Iranian Civil Code. The innovation of this research lies in its integration of linguistic, jurisprudential, and sociological analyses of *safah*, which together illuminate its position within the Islamic epistemological framework and contribute to a reinterpretation of the relationship between religious rationality and social order. The results of this analysis can inform the formulation of social and legal policies concerning irrational behaviors and the lack of individual legal capacity in Islamic societies.

**Keywords:** *Safah*, Imam Ali (as), Holy Qur'an, Imami Jurisprudence, Qur'anic Semantics, Social Analysis, Legal Capacity.

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1. PhD student, Quranic Sciences and Hadith, Science and Research Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran: hosseinnim5861@gmail.com

## Introduction

In Islamic texts, the term *safah* (foolhardiness) is among the concepts that hold a significant presence across various domains of religious thought—from the Qur'an and Hadith to jurisprudence and ethics. In several Qur'anic verses, such as those in Surat al-Baqarah, al-Nisá, and al-Jinn, references are made to *al-sufahā* (the foolish). Likewise, in the narrations of Imam Ali(as) and other infallible Imams (as), the manner of interacting with the foolish (mindless) and the social consequences of their behavior are addressed. The diversity of its usage in linguistic, jurisprudential, ethical, and social contexts indicates that the concept of *safah* is not merely a linguistic or moral issue, but rather a multidimensional social phenomenon directly related to rationality, legal capacity, and social order (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, n.d.; Makarem Shirazi, n.d.).

Despite this conceptual breadth, previous studies have generally remained confined to thematic or exegetical analyses. Few have examined *safah* comparatively across the Qur'an, Nahj al-Balaghah, and Imami jurisprudence from semantic, jurisprudential, and social perspectives (Asharieh & Beyranvand, 2020). This limitation has led to an underexploration of the functional and social dimensions of *safah* in the Islamic intellectual system, leaving its connection to rationality, social ethics, and legal competence largely overlooked.

In essence, *safah* in the Qur'an represents a form of disruption in human rational conduct, while in jurisprudence, it manifests as legal incapacity in exercising property rights. However, in Nahj al-Balaghah and the thought of Imam Ali (as), the concept transcends the individual level, elevating to the social sphere as a moral and intellectual critique of irrational behavior within society. Imam Ali (as), in various contexts—including his maxims and letters.

In the letters of Nahj al-Balaghah, *safah* is introduced as a disease of collective reason and an obstacle to social development (Nahj al-Balaghah, Sermon 178; Maxim 40). The present analysis draws inspiration from modern semantic methodologies in linguistics and the foundational principles of *Fiqh al-Ijtimā'* (the jurisprudence of social relations) within Imami thought. Accordingly, the necessity of this research lies in addressing the interdisciplinary gap among the three domains of the Qur'an, narration, and jurisprudence. This study aims, through a semantic and comparative analytical approach, to examine the semantic evolution of the term *safah* in Islamic texts while simultaneously analyzing its jurisprudential and social dimensions. The main research questions are as follows:



1. What are the similarities and differences in the concept of *safah* within the Qur'an, Nahj al-Balaghah, and Imami jurisprudence?
2. How can a semantic analysis establish a link between the linguistic, jurisprudential, and social layers of *safah*?
3. What role does the concept of *safah* play in shaping the criteria of rationality and legal competence within Islamic society?

This research seeks to highlight the connection between religious semantics and social analysis, striving to transform *safah* from a purely ethical term into a practical concept applicable in Islamic socio-legal policymaking.

## **Research Background and Theoretical Framework**

### **A) Research Background**

The term *safah* has a long-standing presence in Islamic sources; however, in contemporary academic studies, it has rarely been examined in a systematic and comparative manner. A review of previous works indicates that existing research can be categorized into three main groups.

#### **Semantic and Lexical Studies**

Works such as *Ma'āyīs al-Lughah* by Ibn Fāris (1404 AH) and *Al-Furūq al-Lughawiyah* by 'Askari (1412 AH) primarily focus on the etymology and semantic distinctions between the term *safah* and related notions such as Jahl (ignorance) and Hamaqah (stupidity). Although these studies establish the linguistic and semantic foundations of the concept, they lack applied analysis within Qur'anic or narrational contexts.

#### **Exegetical and Qur'anic Studies**

In classical commentaries such as *Al-Tibyān* by Shaykh Ṭūsī (1409 AH), *Majma' al-Bayān* by Ṭabarsī (1418 AH), and *Al-Mizān* by Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī (n.d.), the concept of *safah* is discussed in relation to verses such as Al-Baqarah 2:142 and Al-Nisā 4:5, with greater emphasis placed on its epistemological and ethical dimensions. However, these exegeses seldom engage in a comparative analysis between Qur'anic *safah* and its jurisprudential or social manifestations.

#### **Jurisprudential and Legal Studies**

In Imami jurisprudence, discussions of *safah* generally appear under the rulings concerning legally incapacitated individuals (*mahjūrīn*), alongside minors and the insane. Sources such as *Tahrir al-Wasilah* (Khomeini, 1390 AH), *Jawāhir al-Kalām* (Najafī, 1394 AH), and *Miftāh al-Karāmah* ('Āmili, 1426 AH) extensively describe the conditions, implications, and legal rulings pertaining to the *safīh* (unsound or legally incompetent person). Nevertheless, these works show little attempt to connect the jurisprudential discourse of *safah* with its social and ethical dimensions.

## Contemporary Interdisciplinary Studies

In recent years, studies such as “The Semantic Field of *safah* and *sifāhah* in the Qur’an and Hadith” (Asharieh & Beyranvand, 2020) have sought to combine lexical and exegetical analysis with ethical discussions. However, a comprehensive study that simultaneously explores the Qur’anic, narrational, jurisprudential, and social dimensions of *safah* is still lacking.

Accordingly, the present research aims to fill this gap by adopting a comparative approach among the Qur’an, the narrations of Imam Ali (as), and Imami jurisprudence. It seeks to explore the semantic and functional layers of *safah* and to propose an integrative model linking religious rationality with social behavior.

### B) Theoretical Framework of the Research

The theoretical framework of this study is founded upon three main pillars:

#### Semantic Field Theory

According to linguists such as Trier (1931) and Lyons (1995), every word derives its meaning within a network of semantic relations with other words. In this research, *safah* is examined within the semantic field of related concepts such as *Hilm* (forbearance), *‘Aql* (reason), *Jahl* (ignorance), and *Hajr* (legal incapacity), to reveal its semantic dimensions in Qur’anic and narrational contexts. Jurisprudential and Legal Foundations of *Hajr* in Imami Fiqh From a jurisprudential perspective, *safah* is one of the causes of legal incapacity (*hajr*), rendering the *safih* incapable of independently conducting financial transactions. These foundations are rooted in juristic works such as *Tahrir al-Wasilah* and *Jawāhir al-Kalām*, and they are also reflected in Article 1207 of the Iranian Civil Code. Within this framework, *safah* is conceptualized as a deficiency in legal capacity and as an indicator of a lack of rational prudence.

Max Weber’s theory of rational action within the field of religious sociology, human behavior can be analyzed from the perspectives of instrumental and value-oriented rationality (Weber, 1978). In this study, *safah* is interpreted as a form of irrational and unregulated behavior within the social system, and its relationship with rational action in Islamic society is examined. In this way, a connection is established between the Qur’anic understanding of the absence of rationality and the social consequences of *safah*. These three approaches collectively form the theoretical foundation of the article, enabling a comparative analysis of *safah* across the three domains of language, jurisprudence, and society. Accordingly, the semantic field (linguistics), the foundations of *hajr* (jurisprudence), and the theory of



rational action (sociology) constitute three complementary axes that explain *safah* at the lexical, normative, and functional levels.

### Research Methodology

The present study is a fundamental and interdisciplinary research project situated at the intersection of semantic linguistics, Imami jurisprudence, and religious sociology. In terms of nature, it is qualitative, analytical, and comparative, conducted through library-based research utilizing primary Islamic sources.

### Data Collection Method

The data for this research were collected through library-based methods. The primary sources include:

- The *Holy Qur'an* and authoritative Shi'a and Sunni commentaries;
- The *Nahj al-Balaghah* and its exegetical and analytical commentaries;
- Hadith collections such as *Al-Kāfi*, *Wasā'il al-Shī'a*, and *Bihār al-Anwār*;
- Jurisprudential texts such as *Tahrir al-Wasilah*, *Jawāhir al-Kalām*, and *Miftāh al-Karāmah*;
- And classical and modern sources in sociology and semantic linguistics (Weber, 1978; Lyons, 1995).

In the first stage, linguistic and conceptual data related to the term *safah* were extracted from these texts. In the second stage, propositions semantically associated with *'Aql* (reason), *Hilm* (forbearance), *Jahl* (ignorance), and *Hajr* (legal incapacity) were identified using a purposeful sampling method.

### Data Analysis Method

The analysis process was conducted in three stages: Semantic Analysis: Using the Semantic Field Theory, the usages of the term *safah* in the Qur'an and narrations were examined based on lexical collocations and oppositions—for instance, the contrast between *safah* and *Hilm* or *'Aql* in various textual contexts (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, n.d.; Fayz Kashani, n.d.).

Jurisprudential–Legal Analysis: The views of Imami jurists on the rulings and implications of *safah* within the framework of *Fiqh al-Hajr* were analyzed and then compared with the Iranian legal system to demonstrate the theoretical correspondence between Islamic jurisprudence and contemporary law (Khomeini, 1390 AH; Najafi, 1394 AH; Iranian Civil Code, Article 1207).

Social–Functional Analysis: Drawing on Max Weber's Theory of Rational Action, *safah* was examined as a form of irrational behavior within



the social system, exploring its effects on collective rationality, ethical order, and social development in Islamic society.

**Semantic Analysis:** Using the Semantic Field Theory, the occurrences of the term *safah* in the Qur'an and narrations were examined based on lexical collocations and oppositions—for instance, the contrast between *safah* and *Hilm* (forbearance) or *'Aql* (reason) in various textual contexts (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, n.d.; Fayz Kāshānī, n.d.).

**Jurisprudential–Legal Analysis:** The opinions of Imami jurists regarding the rulings and implications of *safah* within the framework of *Fiqh al-Hajr* were analyzed and then compared with the Iranian legal system to clarify the theoretical correspondence between Islamic jurisprudence and modern law (Khomeini, 1390 AH; Najafī, 1394 AH; Iranian Civil Code, Article 1207). **Social–Functional Analysis:** Drawing on Max Weber's Theory of Rational Action, *safah* was analyzed as a form of irrational behavior within Islamic society. At this stage, both individual and collective effects of *safah* on social and moral interactions were examined based on the teachings of Imam Ali (A) and Nahj al-Balaghah. From a socio-religious perspective, *safah* represents a type of irrational conduct that disrupts the moral and functional order of society; hence, its analysis can serve as an indicator for assessing the growth of collective rationality in an Islamic community.

**Research Validity and Reliability:** To enhance precision and academic credibility, all analyses were cross-checked with multiple authoritative sources, and interpretations were verified by consulting recognized commentaries on Nahj al-Balaghah and major Qur'anic exegeses. Additionally, narrations were cited exclusively from primary sources and critical editions to ensure textual accuracy and reliability.

### Research Limitations

The primary limitation of this study lies in the dispersion of narrational and exegetical sources concerning *safah*, as well as the scarcity of direct comparative studies integrating the Qur'an, Nahj al-Balaghah, and Islamic jurisprudence. Nevertheless, through the analytical–comparative method, this research seeks to address and partially overcome this scholarly gap.

### Main Body of Analysis

**Lexical Conceptualization of *safah*:** In Arabic linguistics, the root *s-f-h* (هفـس) denotes frivolity, instability of opinion, and deficiency in intellect and judgment. According to Ibn Fāris, this root signifies “lightness and lack of firmness,” implying a form of mental or moral weakness that prevents sound decision-making. (Ibn Fāris, 1404 AH, Vol. 3, p. 79) defines *safah* as the opposite of *hilm* (forbearance) and considers it a sign of frivolity in thought and action. Al-Farāhīdī (1410 AH, Vol. 4, p. 9) similarly defines



*safah* as “instability or disturbance in intellect.” Abū Hilāl al-‘Askarī (1412 AH, p. 199) explicitly states that *safah* derives from the semantic root of speed and rashness in behavior and stands in direct opposition to ḥilm, which implies patience and composure. In contemporary linguistics, *safah* occupies the semantic field of the words ḥilm, ‘*aql* (reason), and *jahl* (ignorance). From the perspective of descriptive semantics (Lyons, 1995), it is associated with notions such as frivolity, immaturity, and lack of wisdom. Therefore, in linguistic analysis, *safah* represents a disruption in the process of rational thinking and decision-making, which consequently has moral and social implications.

### **Qur’anic Analysis of *Safah***

*Safah* as Ignorance and Frivolity: In verse 142 of Sūrah al-Baqarah, it is stated: “The foolish among the people will say, ‘What has turned them away from their former qiblah?’” (Q 2:142)

‘Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā’ī (n.d., vol. 1, p. 318) interprets *al-sufahā’* in this verse as ignorant and shallow-minded individuals who lack a proper understanding of the divine command. Shaykh al-Ṭūsī (1409 AH, Vol. 2, p. 3) and al-Ṭabrisī (1418 AH, Vol. 1, p. 158) likewise describe the *sufahā’* as those who, due to instability of opinion and ignorance, fail to perceive the truth. In this usage, *safah* refers to intellectual ignorance and the absence of rationality in matters of faith and religious decision-making. It signifies a deficiency in the epistemic dimension of belief, in which the intellect fails to grasp divine wisdom. From a sociological standpoint, this form of *safah* may also be seen as a manifestation of irrational resistance to divine transformation and the new identity structure of the early Muslim community following the change of the *qiblah*.

### ***Safah* as Legal Incapacity (*ḥajr*) and Lack of Competence**

In verse 282 of Sūrat al-Baqarah, the Qur’an declares: “If the one who owes the debt is foolish or weak... then let his guardian dictate in justice.” (Q 2:282) Shi‘i exegetes such as Fayḍ al-Kāshānī (1376 Sh., Vol. 1, p. 132) and al-Baḥrānī (n.d., Vol. 1, p. 562) interpret *safih* in this verse as equivalent to maḥjūr—a person legally restrained from financial dealings due to an inability to manage property responsibly. This interpretation was later formalized in Imāmī jurisprudence and became the basis for the legal doctrine of *ḥajr* (Najafī, 1394 AH, Vol. 26, p. 94). Accordingly, within the Qur’anic framework, *safah* also assumes a juridical and legal dimension, directly related to issues of social and economic responsibility. It demarcates the boundary between intellectual maturity (*rushd*) and incapacity (*ḥajr*), signifying that rational competence is a prerequisite for legitimate social participation. This Qur’anic conceptualization links *safah* with both the ethical and functional dimensions of human action—



intellectual deficiency leading to social disorder. Thus, *safah* serves as a bridge between epistemology, ethics, and law in the Qur'an, illustrating how irrational conduct can undermine the moral and legal equilibrium of society.

### **Safah as Opposition to Reason and Innate Nature**

In verse 4 of Sūrat al-Jinn, the Qur'an declares: "And that the foolish among us used to speak against Allah with excessive transgression." (Q 72:4) 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī (n.d., vol. 20, p. 41) interprets *safah* here as "the baseness of the soul and deviation from innate rationality." According to Makārim Shīrāzī (n.d., Vol. 25, p. 106), this verse indicates that a *safih* may even possess knowledge, but his intellect has deviated from divine rationality. Therefore, in this Qur'anic context, *safah* signifies a rupture between knowledge and moral commitment.

### **Qur'anic Conclusion**

An analysis of the Qur'anic verses reveals that *safah* carries three principal semantic layers: Theoretical ignorance and frivolity in faith (al-Baqarah 2:142), Lack of legal competence and inability for financial management (al-Baqarah 2:282; al-Nisā' 4:5), Deviation of intellect from the path of innate reason and piety (al-Jinn 72:4). Across these three levels, *safah* stands in opposition to *'aql* (reason) as the principal measure of intellectual and social maturity. In other words, the Qur'an portrays *safah* not merely as cognitive deficiency but as a social and ethical malfunction that disrupts both personal responsibility and communal order.

### **Narrative Analysis and the Perspective of Imām 'Alī (as)**

In the corpus of Islamic ḥadīth, the term *safah* encompasses a wide semantic and moral range. Within the sayings of Imām 'Alī (as) and other Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt (as), it is discussed through ethical, behavioral, and sociological dimensions. Imām 'Alī (as), in response to Imām Ḥasan's (as) inquiry regarding the meaning of *safah*, said: "*Al-safah ittibā' al-danāh wa muṣāḥabat al-ghuwāh.*" "*Safah* is following the base and associating with the misguided." (Shaykh Ṣadūq, 1338 Sh., p. 247)

This statement highlights the social dimension of *safah*, framing it as a form of moral and social degeneration manifested through the corruption of companionship and choice of association. In *Nahj al-Balāghah*, *safah* appears closely associated with concepts such as *jahl* (ignorance), *ghaflah* (heedlessness), and *nifāq* (hypocrisy). In Sermon 32, Imām 'Alī (as) declares: "*Al-sufahā' ittaba'ū al-hawā fa-adallahum 'an al-ḥaqq.*" "The foolish follow their passions, and thus they are led away from the truth." (Nahj al-Balāghah, Sermon 32) This statement frames *safah* as an ethical deviation rooted in uncontrolled desire, leading to the corruption of



rational and moral discernment. In Maxim 40 of *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Imām ‘Alī (as) states: “*Man ghāzaka bi-qubḥ al-safah ‘alayk fa-ghizhu bi-ḥusn al-ḥilm minhu.*”

“If someone angers you with the ugliness of his foolishness, disarm him through the beauty of your forbearance.” This maxim emphasizes that *safah* is not merely an individual weakness but a socially disruptive behavior that threatens communal ethics. The appropriate antidote to *safah*, according to Imām ‘Alī (as), is *ḥilm* (forbearance) — the embodiment of social rationality and moral composure (Ibn Maytham al-Baḥrānī, 1362 Sh., vol. 5, p. 350). Further narrations from Imām al-Ṣādiq (as) reinforce this interpretation by linking *safah* to unbalanced and morally degrading conduct: “*Inna al-safah khuluq la’im yastaṭīlu ‘alā man dūnahu wa yakhḍa ‘u liman fawqahu.*” “Foolishness is a vile trait by which a person behaves arrogantly toward those beneath him and servilely toward those above him.” (al-Kulaynī, 1365 Sh., Vol. 2, p. 322)

Thus, from a narrative and ethical perspective, *safah* represents a profound disturbance in human moral equilibrium. It manifests as irrational, inconsistent, and socially harmful behavior, undermining both ethical integrity and social harmony. Imām ‘Alī’s teachings, therefore, elevate the discussion of *safah* from an individual moral flaw to a socio-ethical phenomenon, wherein irrationality becomes a threat to communal coherence and moral order. The cure, as he proposes, lies not only in intellectual correction but in cultivating virtues of patience, discipline, and socially conscious rationality.

### **Jurisprudential and Legal Analysis of *Safah***

In Imāmī jurisprudence, *safah* (foolishness or imprudence) is classified among the legal causes of *ḥajr*—the restriction of legal capacity (ahliyyah). Jurists generally define the *safīh* as follows: “*Huwa man lā yuḥsin al-taşarruf fī mālihi wa yatlifahu fī ghayr aghrād ṣaḥīḥah.*” “A *safīh* is one who does not manage his property appropriately and squanders it on irrational or illegitimate purposes.” (Khomeini, 1390 AH, Vol. 2, p. 15) According to the majority opinion of Imāmī jurists, the financial transactions of a *safīh* are not valid without the permission of a legal guardian (*walī*) or a legitimate authority (*ḥākim shar’ī*) (Najafī, 1394 AH, Vol. 26, p. 94). His contracts are considered void except in cases of necessity, such as fulfilling obligatory maintenance (*nafaqah*) or essential livelihood expenses. From the perspective of Islamic jurisprudence, *ḥajr* in relation to the *safīh* encompasses three principal dimensions: Economic dimension – Restriction on independent financial transactions and contractual authority. Legal dimension – Ineligibility to testify, hold guardianship, or exercise legal authority over others. Moral–social



dimension – The necessity of supervision, education, and ethical guidance by a legitimate guardian or authority. Similarly, Article 1207 of the Iranian Civil Code stipulates: “The following persons are legally incapacitated (*mahjūr*) and are prohibited from disposing of their property or financial rights: minors, the insane, and the foolish (*sufahā*).” Thus, *safah* in the modern Iranian legal framework is a direct continuation of its classical jurisprudential meaning, demonstrating how Qur’anic and Imāmī teachings have profoundly influenced the structure of legal capacity (ahliyyah) in contemporary Islamic law (Iranian Civil Code, 1928, Art. 1207). Social Analysis and Correlation with the Theory of Rational Action From the perspective of religious sociology, *safah* represents a form of irrational and anti-social behavior. Max Weber (1978) divides human conduct into two principal types: rational action (zweckrational / wertrational) and irrational action (affectual / traditional). Within this framework, *safah* can be understood as a manifestation of irrational action that violates both social order and religious values. In the thought of Imām ‘Alī (as), *safah* is a key factor in the disintegration of collective morality. The *safīh*, through his disregard for the consequences of his behavior, undermines communal norms and weakens social cohesion. In his famous letter to Mālik al-Ashtar, Imām ‘Alī (as) emphasizes reason, prudence, and deliberation as the essential foundations of governance and justice, warning that foolish behavior leads to instability and disorder within the social system (*Nahj al-Balāghah*, Letter 53).

A sociological reading of *safah* thus reveals that it is not merely an individual moral defect but a measure of the integrity of collective reason (*‘aql jam‘ī*) and social responsibility in the Islamic community. Within the religious worldview, *‘aql* (reason) functions not only as a tool for knowing the truth but also as the criterion for ethical and social behavior. Any deviation from this rational norm constitutes *safah*, a form of moral and functional disorder that threatens the social fabric (Rīshahrī, 1375 Sh.).

In conclusion, a comparative study of *safah* across *the Qur’an*, *the Nahj al-Balāghah*, and Imāmī jurisprudence demonstrates that this term has evolved from a linguistic concept into a comprehensive socio-legal framework. Its semantic transformation—from describing cognitive folly to designating legal incapacity and moral irresponsibility—reflects the depth of the Islamic intellectual system. Understanding this evolution can provide valuable insights for developing educational, judicial, and social policies in contemporary Islamic societies, ensuring that rationality and ethical responsibility remain the cornerstones of communal order and human dignity.

### Discussion, Conclusion, and Recommendations



Discussion and Synthesis of Findings: The present study aimed to provide a semantic, jurisprudential, and sociological analysis of the term *safah* (foolishness, imprudence) in the Qur'an and the thought of Imām 'Alī (as). The findings reveal that *safah* is a multilayered concept that originates from its lexical meaning—“frivolity and deficiency of intellect”—and expands across Qur'anic, hadith, and legal contexts, acquiring diverse functional implications. At the Qur'anic level, *safah* presents three principal meanings: A sign of intellectual ignorance and lack of decisiveness (al-Baqarah, 2:142); Equivalent to legal incapacity and lack of competence (al-Baqarah, 2:282; al-Nisā', 4:5); A symbol of deviation from innate reason and divine truth (al-Jinn, 72:4).

In the hadith tradition and *Nahj al-Balāghah*, *safah* transcends the epistemic domain and enters the ethical and social sphere. Imām 'Alī (as) characterizes *safah* not merely as a weakness of intellect but as a moral and behavioral disorder that disrupts human relationships and leads to the decay of collective reason. According to him, forbearance (*hilm*) is the cure for *safah*, for *hilm* represents a form of moral and social rationality that safeguards communal equilibrium (*Nahj al-Balāghah*, Wisdom 40; Letter 53). In Imāmī jurisprudence, *safah* is defined as one of the causes of legal restriction (*ḥajr*), rendering a person unable to manage their property without the guardian's authorization (Khomeini, 1390 AH; Najafī, 1394 AH). This legal understanding has been transferred into Iranian civil law, particularly in Article 1207 of the Civil Code, illustrating the continuity between religious teachings and the legal structures of rationality and capacity in the Islamic legal tradition. Finally, from the viewpoint of religious sociology and Weber's theory of rational action (1978), *safah* represents a form of irrational behavior that contradicts goal-oriented and value-based human conduct. Thus, in both Islamic tradition and modern sociological theory, *safah* signifies a departure from rationality and social responsibility.

### Conclusion

The originality of this research lies in three key dimensions: A comparative analysis across the Qur'an, hadith, and jurisprudence, which has not been previously attempted in similar studies. The integration of linguistic semantics, jurisprudence, and religious sociology to reconstruct the meaning of *safah* through an interdisciplinary framework. The conceptual reformulation of *safah* as a socio-legal and ethical indicator within the paradigm of religious rationality and social order. This study demonstrates that *safah* is not merely a linguistic or legal term, but a diagnostic concept for assessing the collective rational health of an Islamic society.



**Social and Legal Implications:** The results of this study have significant implications for three major academic and practical domains:

**Qur'anic and Hadith Studies:** The semantic analysis of *safah* enhances understanding of its conceptual counterparts—such as *'aql* (reason), *ḥilm* (forbearance), and *rushd* (maturity)—and opens new avenues for comparative research between *the Qur'an* and *Nahj al-Balāghah*. **Jurisprudence and Law:** Reinterpreting the philosophy of ḥajr based on the religious semantics of *safah* can inform revisions in fiqh rulings and legal provisions concerning capacity and competence. It is recommended that the Iranian legal system incorporate jurisprudential and hadith-based criteria into expert regulations concerning *safah* assessment.

**Social Sciences and Islamic Ethics:** Reexamining *safah* as a pattern of irrational behavior enables new sociological analyses of moral deviance, high-risk actions, and irrational decision-making within social contexts. This perspective can contribute to formulating strategies for ethical education, social policy, and behavioral correction in Islamic societies.

### Suggestions for Future Research

**Comparative Religious Studies:** Conduct a comparative analysis between the concept of *safah* in the Qur'an and analogous notions such as foolishness in the Hebrew Bible and other Abrahamic scriptures, to identify shared theological and moral underpinnings. **Philosophical and Ethical Rationality:** Examine the relationship between *safah* and moral rationality in the works of prominent Islamic philosophers such as al-Fārābī and Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, in order to trace the evolution of the concept within classical Islamic thought.

**Sociological Applications:** Analyze the sociological manifestations of foolish or irrational behavior (*safah*) in digital and virtual environments, exploring its connection with religious morality, ethical discipline, and the erosion of social rationality in contemporary contexts.

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