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Exploring Three Levels of Biodiversity: Genetic, Species, and Ecosystem, as Presented in the Qur'anic Verses

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ABSTRACT:

Original Paper

Today, the world faces environmental crises that have led to the loss of biodiversity. Biodiversity, which is essential for the processes supporting all life on Earth, refers to the variety of life at all levels-ranging from genes to ecosystems-and is classified into three levels: genetic, species, and ecosystem diversity. This research, employing a descriptive-analytical approach and based on careful interpretations, examines the scientific concepts related to the three levels of biodiversity as mentioned in the Holy Qur'an, to highlight the importance of biodiversity for the continuity of life, which is addressed in various forms within the Qur'anic verses. The results show that at the genetic diversity level, there are verses expressing genetic variation within the human species and other organisms. At the species diversity level, numerous verses reflect the diversity among plants and animals from different perspectives. At the ecosystem diversity level, some verses refer to the variety of ecosystems present on Earth, including forests, grasslands, gardens, agricultural lands, pastures, rivers, mountains, valleys, deserts, marine environments, and others. Overall,

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the research results indicate that many Qur'anic verses emphasize the diversity of life and its components.

KEYWORDS: The Qur'an and Biology, Biodiversity, Genetic, Species, Ecosystem.

1. Introduction

The Holy Qur'an conveys profound layers of meaning that reveal the secrets and mysteries of the universe. Throughout history, the quest to uncover these meanings has captivated researchers. Over time, the Qur'an has not only remained relevant, but its miraculous aspects have become increasingly evident, and the greatness of its content has become clearer to the world. As Imām al-Ṣādiq (PBUH) states in a narration: "God Almighty has not designated the Qur'an for a specific time or a particular group. For this reason, it is new in every era and among every group until the Day of Judgment" (Makarem Shirazi 1996). This divine book, while presenting the most important characteristics of the entirety of existence-meaning everything other than God-enumerates significant traits of the natural world, such as creation, dependency, total reliance for survival, order and causality, the diversity and variety of beings, the existence of consciousness and perception, the vitality and glorification of all natural beings, the specific functions of natural entities, and divine sovereignty over all of nature; these are just a few examples. Islam is among the religions that, unlike other non-religious beliefs, have removed the sacred status of the natural world from an epistemological perspective and established it as a field for human study and exploration (Qorbani 2015).

Based on this foundation, the examination of the status of natural sciences in the Qur'an has garnered scholarly attention. For instance, Aliwi (2024) explored the collection and analysis of verses related to scientific facts and cosmic phenomena, employing an inductive and descriptive approach. Blankinship et al. (2024) reviewed Qur'anic verses pertaining to biodiversity and their alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), identifying twenty-one verses aligned with four SDGs (Goals 12–15). Najafi (2016) focused on verses Q.13:3 and Q.51:49 to explore the universality of the pairing of beings, concluding that the widespread presence of male and female pairing across humans, animals, and plants serves as a reminder for humanity

to acknowledge the power, wisdom, and uniqueness of God. Qorbani (2015) demonstrated that natural science teachings in the Qur'an, while revealing aspects of nature, represent one of the most important means of knowing God and shaping a divine worldview that leads to true human happiness. Muhamad (2015) analyzed the Qur'anic instructions concerning the immense value of biodiversity as described by God, categorizing the related verses into two main groups: those pertaining to animals and those pertaining to plants. Solihu (2014) examined biological diversity from the Qur'anic perspective, aiming to clarify the kinds of value the Qur'an ascribes to non-human species, finding that non-human species are presented in the Qur'an as signs of God. Nasiri & Naghdi (2010), by exploring the miracles and wonders of the Qur'an in animal biology, showed that the Qur'an revealed the book of creation long before modern science, using simple language for humanity.

To understand the various dimensions of nature, familiarity with biodiversity is of particular importance. Biodiversity is a fundamental characteristic of life, defined as the wide variety of plants, animals, and environments (Badeian & Yusefwand 2017). The life of the Earth depends on preserving its biodiversity. Even the smallest species in an ecosystem play crucial roles. In ecosystems, greater species diversity results in longer food chains and more complex life networks, producing a more stable environment with enhanced self-regulating capabilities. Therefore, studying biodiversity serves as an indicator for comparing the ecological status of ecosystems. A reduction in biodiversity can negatively impact both the quantity and quality of ecosystems (Badeian & Yusefwand 2017). Moreover, richer biodiversity supports economic development, opportunities for discovering new drugs, and adaptive responses to new environmental challenges, including climate change. Biodiversity holds ecological values such as preserving water and soil resources, nutrient storage and recycling, pollution breakdown and absorption, contributing to climate stability, and ecosystem restoration after unpredictable events (Shah 2014). It also carries religious and moral values (the belief that creatures are created by God), aesthetic and emotional values (the sense of wonder, respect, and reward evoked by biodiversity's beauty), and recreational and sports values (contributions to human physical and mental health).

Due to the importance of biodiversity, the United Nations has designated May 22 as the International Day for Biological Diversity. Biodiversity is not only accepted as a vital principle for sustaining life on Earth but also prompts philosophical reflection on the foundations

of creation. The Holy Qur'an, as a comprehensive divine scripture, presents a unique approach to biodiversity, which is examined in this research. Revealing the verses that mention different levels of biodiversity is crucial because, in addition to emphasizing the Creator's power in creating diverse forms, it highlights the importance of biodiversity for the continuity of life, as discussed across various verses.

The focus of this research is biodiversity, which can be studied at three levels: genetic, species, and ecosystem diversity (Adom et al. 2019). This study examines the verses of the Holy Qur'an from these three aspects through a descriptive-analytical approach. To this end, verses containing terms related to the three levels of biodiversity were initially identified using the website Qur'an.inoor.ir, and subsequently described and interpreted with reference to various scholarly exegeses.

2. Concepts and Terminology

Four important concepts that play a key role in this study are biodiversity, genetic diversity, species diversity, and ecosystem diversity, which are described below.

2.1. Biodiversity

The term biodiversity is relatively new. Historically, it was initially referred to as biological diversity by the wildlife scientist and conservationist Dasmann (1968). The term biodiversity is thought to have first been coined as a contraction of *biological diversity* in 1985 and was subsequently popularized by several authors (Adom et al. 2019). The International Union for Conservation Nature (IUCN) defines biological diversity as the variety of life on Earth, encompassing the number, variety, and variability of living organisms such as animals, plants, fungi, microbes, etc., as well as the genetic differences among them and the ecosystems in which they occur. Yucel (2015) divides biodiversity into three main components: genetic diversity, species diversity, and ecosystem diversity.

2.2. Genetic Diversity

A gene is a distinct sequence of DNA (Deoxyribonucleic Acid) that forms part of a chromosome and is inherited by offspring from their parents.

Genetic diversity refers to the different types and variations of genes within the chromosomes of a species (Whittaker 1967). Each member of any animal or plant species differs broadly from others in its genetic makeup due to the vast combinations possible within genes, which confer specific characteristics unique to each individual. For example, each human being is genetically different from all others. This genetic variability is essential for maintaining a healthy breeding population of a species. If the number of breeding individuals decreases, genetic dissimilarity is reduced, leading to inbreeding, which can ultimately cause the extinction of the species.

2.3. *Species Diversity*

The term *species* is defined as the most basic category in the system of taxonomy. Taxonomy is a scientific classification system that organizes organisms into hierarchical categories (kingdom, phylum, class, order, family, genus, and species) based on their biological characteristics. A species refers to a group of organisms that can interbreed and produce fertile offspring under natural conditions. Members of the same species share common features and genetic similarities. Species diversity refers to the variety of species within a particular region. For example, in a small river, the presence of plants, frogs, fishes, and snakes represents species diversity. Species diversity is also known as species richness, which reflects the extent of biodiversity resources at a site (Naughton et al. 2005). This richness depends largely on climatic conditions.

2.4. *Ecosystem Diversity*

An ecosystem is a complex assemblage of interconnected living organisms inhabiting a particular area or unit of space, along with their environment and all interactions among organisms and between organisms and their environment. There are two main types of ecosystems: terrestrial and aquatic. Terrestrial ecosystems, those existing on land, include examples such as desert ecosystems. Aquatic ecosystems occur in water bodies, such as ponds. Ecosystem diversity refers to the particular assemblage and interactions of species living together and their physical environment within a given area (McGrath 1999; Whittaker 1967). In fact, ecosystem diversity encompasses all different habitats, biological communities, ecological processes, and variations within individual ecosystems.

3. Biodiversity in the Qur'an

This section presents the findings from an analysis of Qur'anic verses related to the three levels of biodiversity, beginning with genetic diversity.

3.1. Genetic Diversity in the Qur'an

The following verses reveal insights into genetic diversity as described in the Qur'an. They highlight the natural variations among living beings that reflect God's creation:

And among His Signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the variations in your languages and your colors: verily in that are Signs for those who know (Q. 30:22).

This verse references the genetic diversity among humans, which leads to the emergence of different races. Biologically, a race refers to a grouping within a species distinguished by specific characteristics (such as skin color, hair, eye color, skeleton or body shape, blood groups, anthropometric indices, etc.). These races are differentiated based on many features, one of which is skin color. According to some interpreters, the difference in languages mentioned in this verse, in addition to variations in vocabulary and grammatical rules across languages, may also indicate differences in accents and variations in voice tones. This means it refers to the distinction in the tone of voice of one person compared to others, just as differences in color indicate diversity in skin tones (Tabataba'i 1999, 16:16). The uniqueness of individuals in tone of voice and color originates from their genetic differences, and fingerprints also exhibit such unique characteristics.

And so among men and crawling creatures and cattle, are they of various colors. Those truly fear God, among His Servants, who have knowledge: for God is Exalted in Might, Oft-Forgiving (Q. 35:28).

This verse similarly emphasizes the diversity in color among humans and other living organisms, referring to the genetic diversity present within these beings.

3.2. *Species Diversity in the Qur'an*

The following analysis explores Qur'anic verses that illustrate the richness of species diversity, particularly among plants, highlighting nature's remarkable variety.

It is He who sendeth down rain from the skies: with it We produce vegetation of all kinds: from some We produce green (crops), out of which We produce grain, heaped up (at harvest); out of the date-palm and its sheaths (or spathes) (come) clusters of dates hanging low and near: and (then there are) gardens of grapes, and olives, and pomegranates, each similar (in kind) yet different (in variety): when they begin to bear fruit, feast your eyes with the fruit and the ripeness thereof. Behold! in these things there are signs for people who believe (Q. 6:99).

Interpreters have proposed two possible meanings regarding the phrase *nabāt kullī shay'* (vegetation of all kinds). The first is that it refers to the diverse types and species of vegetation, all nourished by the same water and grown from the same soil. This highlights a miraculous aspect of creation, demonstrating how many different plants-with sometimes opposite properties and various forms-can coexist in one land and thrive from a common source of water. The second possibility is that this phrase refers to the variety of plants required by different creatures; meaning that birds, animals, insects, as well as sea and desert organisms, all benefit from these plants (Qara'ati 2004, 5:369; Sharīf Lāhijī 1994, 1:802; Al-Qumī al-Mashhadī 1989, 4:406). Both interpretations emphasize the diversity among plant species.

The term *ḥabban mutarākiban* (grain, heaped up) refers to plants with dense, clustered seeds such as wheat, barley, millet, and others. The verse also mentions the date palm, which similarly produces closely grouped fruits. Botanically, these plants share a compound spike inflorescence, yet despite this similarity, they exhibit significant differences, illustrating species diversity among plants. The phrase *mushtabihan wa ghayr mutashābih* (similar and different) highlights that trees like grape, olive, and pomegranate are similar in some features-such as leaf shape (e.g., olive and pomegranate)-but differ in others, such as fruit shape, signifying their diversity (Makarem Shirazi 1995, 5:368).

It is He Who produceth gardens, with trellises and without, and dates, and tilth with produce of all kinds, and olives and pomegranates, similar (in kind) and different (in variety): eat of

their fruit in their season, but render the dues that are proper on the day that the harvest is gathered. But waste not by excess: for God loveth not the wasters (Q. 6:141).

This verse refers to the diversity of plant species through two structural features: stem and fruit. It describes gardens with trellises (plants with herbaceous aerial stems that climb, creep, or twine because their stems lack rigidity) and without trellises (plants with upright, sturdy stems capable of growing independently). This distinction points to the variety of trees based on stem forms. Additionally, the verse comments on the fruits, which may be similar or different in taste, shape, color, and other characteristics.

Of the cattle are some for burden and some for meat: eat what God hath provided for you, and follow not the footsteps of Satan: for he is to you and avowed enemy (Q. 6:142).

In the verse discussing *ḥamūlah* (cattle for burden), the term is understood as a collective noun that does not have a singular form, referring to large pack animals such as camels and horses. The word *farsh* (commonly meaning carpet) in this context is interpreted as sheep and other smaller animals. The implication is that these smaller animals stay much closer to the ground and, when viewed from a distance, a desert with grazing sheep appears like a carpet spread over the land, unlike a herd of camels, which does not present such an image (Tabataba'i 1999, 7:364; Al-Ṭurayḥī 1996, 5:35; Makarem Shirazi 1995, 6:8). Thus, this verse indicates animal species diversity in relation to human needs, fulfilling various purposes such as transportation, clothing, and nutrition.

And in the earth are tracts (diverse though) neighboring, and gardens of vines and fields sown with corn, and palm trees - growing out of single roots or otherwise: watered with the same water, yet some of them We make more excellent than others to eat. Behold, verily in these things there are signs for those who understand! (Q. 13:4).

This verse begins by mentioning adjacent but diverse pieces of land, continuing to describe gardens and different types of trees like grapes, crops, and date palms. Interestingly, these trees and their various types sometimes grow from a single trunk and stem, and at other times from different bases. The term *ṣinwān* (growing out of single roots), plural of *ṣinw*, originally means a branch that comes out from the main trunk of

a tree (Al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī 1991, 494). Therefore, *ṣinwān* refers to the different branches that emerge from a single trunk. In botany, trees have a single main trunk, while shrubs have multiple stems branching from the ground. Thus, this verse refers to the diversity of species present in woody plants based on the type of main trunk.

And the things on this earth which He has multiplied in varying colors (and qualities): verily in this is a sign for men who celebrate the praises of God (in gratitude) (Q. 16:13).

In this verse, the difference in colors of what has been created on the earth can be a metaphor for species diversity. In this case, the verse is closely related in meaning to Q. 13:4. Therefore, it indicates biodiversity in terms of species diversity.

He, Who has made for you the earth like a carpet spread out, has enabled you to go about therein by roads (and channels); and has sent down water from the sky. With it have We produced diverse pairs of plants each separate from the others (Q. 20:53).

Azwāj (pairs) means varieties and kinds of plants that are close to each other, and *shattā* (diverse) means different (Al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī 1991, 385 & 445). Therefore, this part of the verse refers to the diversity present among plants, which indicates species diversity.

And God has created every animal from water: of them there are some that creep on their bellies; some that walk on two legs; and some that walk on four. God creates what He wills for verily God has power over all things (Q. 24:45).

This verse categorizes animals based on their modes of locomotion: those that crawl on their bellies (reptiles and some amphibians), those that walk on two legs (some mammals and birds), and those that walk on four legs (some mammals and amphibians). This description implicitly corresponds to four major classes within the vertebrate phylum-reptiles, birds, amphibians, and mammals-highlighting species diversity at a higher taxonomic level.

Indeed, the mention of only a few types of animals is for the sake of brevity and conciseness; otherwise, the diversity of living beings is beyond counting. This diversity depends on the will of Almighty God. Therefore, at the end of the verse, it states that God's power is absolute, and thus all possible beings in their existence depend solely on His will. *When He decreeth a matter, He saith to it: "Be," and it is (Q. 2: 117)*

(Tabataba'i 1999, 15:137-138). Regarding the reason for mentioning these specific types of living beings in this verse, various interpretations and reasons have been presented by some commentators (Al-Rāzī 1999, 17:206; Al-Qurṭubī 1985, 13:292).

He created the heavens without any pillars that ye can see; He set on the earth mountains standing firm, lest it should shake with you; and He scattered through it beasts of all kinds. We send down rain from the sky, and produce on the earth every kind of noble creature, in pairs (Q. 31:10).

In this verse, *min kulli dābbah* (beasts of all kinds) means all animals that have voluntary senses and movement (Ṭayyib 1999, 10:419), which refers to the diversity of different animal species. The expression *min kulli zawj* (every kind in pairs) refers to the male and female characteristics in some plants, which had never been discovered as a general principle at the time of the revelation of these verses, or it means different classes and types of plants, because diversity in the world of plants is extremely numerous and surprising (Tabataba'i 1999, 18:340; Al-Ṭabrisī 1993, 9:213), which refers to the diversity of different plant species. *Min kulli zawj* has also been mentioned in Q. 22:5, Q. 26:7, Q. 50:7.

Seest thou not that God sends down rain from the sky? With it We then bring out produce of various colors. And in the mountains are tracts white and red, of various shades of color, and black intense in hue. And so among men and crawling creatures and cattle, are they of various colors. Those truly fear God, among His Servants, who have knowledge: for God is Exalted in Might, Oft-Forgiving (Q. 35:27-28).

Fruit is one of the reproductive organs of plants and contains a seed, which differs in different species in terms of appearance, including color. At the beginning of verse 27, the variety of species in plants has been mentioned with emphasis on the variety of fruits in terms of color. In the continuation of the verse and in verse 28, the difference in color among animals and the variety of animal species in terms of color have been mentioned. It should be noted that although the word *dawāb* (crawling creatures) means moving and includes *an'ām* (cattle: camel, sheep, and cow), but it is possible due to the importance and strong need of humans for cattle (Al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī 1991, 1:815), these three animals have been mentioned separately in the verse (Qara'ati 2004, 9:495). Earlier, in the discussion of genetic diversity, verse 28 was

mentioned, but with the above explanation, it can be said that this verse, in addition to genetic diversity, also refers to species diversity.

He created you (all) from a single person: then created, of like nature, his mate; and he sent down for you eight head of cattle in pairs: He makes you, in the wombs of your mothers, in stages, one after another, in three veils of darkness. such is God, your Lord and Cherisher: to Him belongs (all) dominion. There is no god but He: then how are ye turned away (from your true Center)? (Q. 39:6).

The word *an'ām* means camel, cow, sheep, and goat, and for this reason, they are called eight pairs, because it is the sum of their male and female. Based on this, this verse refers to the species diversity of cattle used by humans (Al-Qumī 1988, 1:219).

Seest thou not that God sends down rain from the sky, and leads it through springs in the earth? Then He causes to grow, therewith, produce of various colors: then it withers; thou wilt see it grow yellow; then He makes it dry up and crumble away. Truly, in this, is a Message of remembrance to men of understanding (Q. 39:21).

Zar' is a plant that does not have a strong stem, as opposed to a tree, which is often referred to a tree that has a strong stem. *Zar'* has a wide concept that includes non-food plants, all kinds of flowers and ornamental and medicinal plants and the like, which in terms of color; they are extremely diverse (Makarem Shirazi 1995, 19:423). Accordingly, in this verse, the diversity of ornamental and medicinal plant species has been mentioned based on color.

It is God Who made cattle for you, that ye may use some for riding and some for food (Q. 40:79).

This verse, like Q. 6:142, refers to the diversity of animal species from the point of view of meeting human needs.

Therein is fruit and date-palms, producing spathes (enclosing dates). Also corn, with (its) leaves and stalk for fodder, and sweet-smelling plants (Q. 55:11-12).

In these verses, species diversity among plants has been mentioned in terms of the type of fruit (palms with podded clusters), the type of seed (skinned seed) and the aromatic nature of some plants.

And produce therein corn. And Grapes and nutritious plants.
And Olives and Dates (Q. 80:27-29).

In verse 27, *ḥabb* (corn) refers to wheat, barley and other grains that grow from the ground. Although some scholars have considered its use only in wheat and barley (Tabataba'i 1999, 20:209; Ibn Manẓūr 1993, 1:294). In the following verses, the names of four other types of plants used by humans are mentioned, i.e. grapes, nutritious plants (*qaḍb* is a plant that is fresh and picked and eaten), olives, and dates. Based on this, these verses refer to the variety of plant species used in human nutrition.

3.3. *Ecosystem Diversity in the Qur'an*

The results of the investigation of the existing verses related to ecosystem diversity are given below (The verses are arranged according to the *Sūrah* number).

From the land that is clean and good, by the will of its Cherisher, springs up produce, (rich) after its kind: but from the land that is bad, springs up nothing but that which is niggardly: thus do We explain the signs by various (symbols) to those who are grateful (Q. 7:58).

In this verse, the diversity of ecosystems based on their soil has been mentioned, and this difference in soil causes the emergence of various plant communities. As in the salt desert ecosystem where the soil is salty, there are few plants that can tolerate saltiness.

And it is He who spread out the earth, and set thereon mountains standing firm and (flowing) rivers: and fruit of every kind He made in pairs, two and two: He draweth the night as a veil o'er the Day. Behold, verily in these things there are signs for those who consider! (Q. 13:3).

Rawāṣī is the plural of *rāsiyyah* which means fixed and rooted, and it refers to the mountains that have roots in the ground and stand up (Tabataba'i 1999, 11:291). Because the mountains cover the earth like an armor, and this causes it to prevent the strong vibrations of the earth due to the pressure of internal gases to a large extent; on the other hand, if it were not for the mountains, the surface of the earth would always be exposed to strong winds (Makarem Shirazi 1995, 10:114). In addition, 80% of the world's fresh water comes from mountains and the mountain

ecosystem has a great impact on the climate and is very rich in terms of biodiversity. In the continuation of the verse, the river ecosystem is mentioned, which together with the mountain ecosystem are important because of the role they play in maintaining and flowing water on the earth. This flow of water causes the growth of plants, which is mentioned in the next verse. In general, in this verse, two important ecosystems, mountains and rivers, are mentioned, which play an important role in creating landscape diversity.

And in the earth are tracts (diverse though) neighboring, and gardens of vines and fields sown with corn, and palm trees – growing out of single roots or otherwise: watered with the same water, yet some of them We make more excellent than others to eat. Behold, verily in these things there are signs for those who understand! (Q. 13:4).

The meaning of *qīṭa' mutajāwirāt* (tracts neighboring) is that there are different parts of the land that are next to each other and in the neighborhood of each other. Although these parts are all connected and related to each other, each of them has its own structure and talent, some are firm, some are soft, some are salty, some are sweet, and each of them has the talent to cultivate a specific type of plants and fruit trees and agriculture. Because the needs of humans and earthly creatures are many and different (Makarem Shirazi 1993, 10:116-117; Al-Ṭabrisī 1993, 6:424). Today, in the science of landscape ecology, these parts are called patches which shape the structural patterns of a landscape, and the more diverse they are, as mentioned in this verse, the more they enhance ecosystem diversity.

And the earth We have spread out (like a carpet); set thereon mountains firm and immovable; and produced therein all kinds of things in due balance (Q. 15:19).

At the beginning of the verse the mountain ecosystem and in the rest of the verse, the plants that grow in it has been mentioned. These plants, due to their types, create different ecosystems like forest, pasture, plain, etc. The interpretation of the plant as *mawzūn* (in due balance), which is originally taken from the meaning of *wazn* (weight), means to identify the size of everything, and it refers to the precise calculation and the wonderful order and proportional sizes in all the parts of the plants. Because the Arab uses *anbatnā* (produced) about the mine as well, it may

mean the development of various mines in the mountains (Tabataba'i 1999, 12:139; Makarem Shirazi 1995, 11:54).

And the things on this earth which He has multiplied in varying colors (and qualities): verily in this is a sign for men who celebrate the praises of God (in gratitude). It is He Who has made the sea subject, that ye may eat thereof flesh that is fresh and tender, and that ye may extract therefrom ornaments to wear; and thou seest the ships therein that plough the waves, that ye may seek (thus) of the bounty of God and that ye may be grateful. And He has set up on the earth mountains standing firm, lest it should shake with you; and rivers and roads; that ye may guide yourselves (Q. 16:13-15).

In these three verses, various ecosystems on earth have been mentioned. In verse 13, creatures of different colors refer to mines, types of plants and animal species, elements and what is on the earth from mountains, pits and natural hills (Gonabadi 1987, 2:409; Tabataba'i 1999, 12:215), which indicates forest, grassland and mountain ecosystems. As these different ecosystems visually create different colors due to the difference in the components, that is, what God has created is not similar to some others in terms of form and composition (Al-Ṭabrisi 1998, 2:281). In verse 14, the sea ecosystem and in verse 15, mountain and river ecosystems have been mentioned.

Set forth to them the parable of two men: for one of them We provided two gardens of grape-vines and surrounded them with date palms; in between the two We placed corn-fields. Each of those gardens brought forth its produce, and failed not in the least therein: in the midst of them We caused a river to flow (Q. 18:32-33).

In these two verses, the garden and agricultural ecosystems as artificial (man-made) ecosystems, and the river ecosystem as a natural ecosystem have been mentioned. The mention of these three ecosystems together is a key point because to have two artificial ecosystems, garden and agriculture, a water source such as a river is needed.

And We have set on the earth mountains standing firm, lest it should shake with them, and We have made therein broad highways (between mountains) for them to pass through: that they may receive Guidance (Q. 21:31).

In this verse, the mountain ecosystem and its functions are initially addressed, followed by a reference to the valley ecosystem located between the mountains. The valley ecosystem is significant because it generally serves as a passage for rivers and has suitable grassland cover for grazing animals. It also is a place for animals to pass, which is known as a corridor in ecology.

Gardens and Springs. And corn-fields and date-palms with spathes near breaking (with the weight of fruit) (Q. 26:147-148).

These two verses also refer to three ecosystems: the garden, river, and the agricultural ecosystems.

Or, Who has made the earth firm to live in; made rivers in its midst; set thereon mountains immovable; and made a separating bar between the two bodies of flowing water? (can there be another god besides God? Nay, most of them know not (Q. 27:61).

This verse refers to three ecosystems: the river, mountain, and sea. It begins with the river ecosystem, followed by the mountain ecosystem, and then discusses the sea ecosystem. Together, these three ecosystems contribute to the stability and tranquility of the earth. Also in this verse, the sea ecosystem highlights an important natural phenomenon, which is the barrier between two seas. This is elaborated in the Q. 25:53. Addressing this important topic requires independent research.

He created the heavens without any pillars that ye can see; He set on the earth mountains standing firm, lest it should shake with you; and He scattered through it beasts of all kinds. We send down rain from the sky, and produce on the earth every kind of noble creature, in pairs (Q. 31:10).

This verse refers to the mountain ecosystem, because of the establishment of other types of ecosystem in it (such as forest and grassland ecosystems), all kinds of animals are spread in mountain ecosystem.

Seest thou not that God sends down rain from the sky? With it We then bring out produce of various colors. And in the mountains are tracts white and red, of various shades of color, and black intense in hue (Q. 35:27).

The word *judad* is the plural of *judah*, meaning road or tract. The words *biḍu* and *ḥumr* are the plural forms of *abyaḍ* and *aḥmar* meaning

white and red, respectively. It seems that the word *mukhtalif* (various) is an adjective describing *judad*. The term *gharābīb* is the plural of *gharīb* meaning black intense in hue. Thus, the verse states: *And in the mountains are tracts white and red, of various shades of color, and black intense in hue.* These paths refer either to the roads located in the mountains that have different colors or to the mountains themselves, which appear as lines drawn on the earth's surface. Some of these mountain ranges are white, some red, some black, and others are multi-colored (Tabataba'i 1999, 17:42). Based on this explanation, the verse refers to the diversity of colors in the veins present in the mountains, resulting from the colors of the rocks and soil, which contributes to the diversity of the mountain ecosystem and the establishment of various plant covers and ecosystems.

And We produce therein orchard with date-palms and vines, and
We cause springs to gush forth therein (Q. 36:34).

The main meaning of *'ayn* (spring) is "eye," and it is used in various contexts to convey different meanings. A spring is referred to as *'ayn* because, like an eye, it contains water and serves as a source of water (Al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī 1991, 598-599). The word *fajjarnā* is derived from the infinitive *taffīr*, meaning to create a wide fissure (Al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī 1991, 625). Since springs emerge from the ground through fissures, this expression is used to describe the emergence of a spring from the earth. Based on this, the verse refers to gardens and rivers (along with a focus on the origin of some rivers) ecosystems.

And the earth - We have spread it out, and set thereon mountains
standing firm, and produced therein every kind of beautiful
growth (in pairs) (Q. 50:7).

This verse initially refers to the mountain ecosystem and then broadly mentions all the plant ecosystems established within it.

And We send down from the sky rain charted with blessing, and
We produce therewith gardens and Grain for harvests. And tall
(and stately) palm-trees, with shoots of fruit-stalks, piled one over
another (Q. 50:9-10).

Jannāt means gardens that have trees bearing various delicious fruits. Explanations were given earlier about the meaning of *ḥabb* (grain). In the first verse, the meaning of *ḥabb al-ḥaṣīd* is the harvested grain (Makarem Shirazi 1995, 18:341; al-Ṭabrisī 1993, 9:213). Based on what was said, these two verses refer to garden and agricultural ecosystems.

And We split the earth in fragments, And produce therein corn,
And Grapes and nutritious plants, And Olives and Dates, And
enclosed Gardens, dense with lofty trees, And fruits and fodder
(Q. 80:26-31).

All of these verses refer to plant ecosystems, including agricultural, garden, and pasture ecosystems. The importance of these ecosystems is in providing food for humans.

4. Conclusion

The Holy Qur'an introduces fundamental characteristics of the universe and highlights significant features of the natural world, inviting humans across all eras to reflect deeply upon them. Understanding biodiversity is essential for comprehending the multiple dimensions of nature, as it underpins all life-sustaining processes on Earth. This study examined biodiversity in the Qur'an at three levels: genetic, species, and ecosystem diversity. The key findings at each level are summarized as follows:

At the genetic diversity level, several verses illustrate genetic variation within human beings and other organisms, manifested in differences such as skin color and other traits, which give rise to distinct races. Regarding species diversity, the Qur'an addresses variation among plant species from multiple perspectives, including:

- Diversity based on flower types, such as plants with compound spike inflorescences;
- Diversity in stem structures, distinguishing trees with a single main trunk from shrubs with multiple stems;
- Variation in fruit types, exemplified by date palms with clustered fruits;
- Differences in seed types, such as husked seeds;
- Variation in color and other features.

Additionally, animal species diversity is highlighted through:

- Differences in locomotion organs referencing four classes of vertebrate phylum;
- Diversity in livestock species serving human needs such as transport, food, and clothing;
- Variation in color and other distinguishing characteristics.

At the ecosystem diversity level, the Qur'an mentions a variety of ecosystems including forests, grasslands, gardens, agricultural fields, pastures, rivers, mountains, valleys, deserts, and marine environments. Additionally, in some of the ecosystems mentioned, further details are provided. For instance, in the mountain ecosystem, the diversity of colors in the veins present in the mountains, resulting from the colors of the rocks and soil, is referenced, which contributes to the diversity of the mountain ecosystem.

Overall, this research underscores the Qur'an's emphasis on the diversity of life as a manifestation of divine creativity. This diversity not only expresses God's wisdom and power but also highlights the indispensable role of biodiversity for the balance and sustainability of the natural world-its absence posing serious threats today. Previous studies (Muhamad 2015; Solihu 2014) likewise affirm that the Qur'an portrays biodiversity as a purposeful divine provision and a sign of God's existence and unity. While the Qur'an's primary aim is spiritual guidance, it contains many implicit scientific facts that can advance human knowledge. It discusses natural phenomena and the roles of natural factors in their occurrence (Rohani Mashhadi & Hasanzadeh 2022). The findings of this study provide insights for researchers interested in the intersection of science and religion, reaffirming the Qur'an as a profound repository of knowledge consistent with modern scientific understanding. It highlights the importance of detailed and rigorous analysis of Qur'anic verses in light of scientific evidence, encouraging further interdisciplinary studies that bridge sacred text and empirical science.

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Reporting the Direct Speeches of the Qur'anic Prophets: Rabb and Allāh as Expressed by Hūd, Ṣāliḥ and Shu'ayb

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ABSTRACT:

Original Paper

Prophetology is certainly a very relevant topic in the Qur'an. Therefore, after having expounded this topic in general terms, the main purpose of this article is to examine the direct speeches of the prophets. In particular, the focus is on two words, namely *Rabb* and *Allāh*, as expressed by the so-called pre-Islamic Arab prophets: Hūd, Ṣāliḥ and Shu'ayb. Hence, the emphasis is on the type of discourse and the subjects involved in the dialogic context. In the specific case of these three messengers, both *Rabb* and *Allāh* in their discourses are used primarily when speaking to their people. This highlights the antagonism between the "Lord of good" (God) and the "lord of evil" (the unbelieving people), reinforcing the idea of God as "Lord" (*Rabb*) and "the God" (*Allāh*).

KEYWORDS: Qur'anic text and language, Direct Speeches, Prophets, Hūd, Ṣāliḥ, Shu'ayb, *Rabb*, *Allāh*.

1. Introduction

This article presents the results of a research focused mainly on the topic of Qur'anic prophethood, with special attention to the language used

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by the prophets.¹ The study began first of all by examining Qur'anic prophetic narratives, in order to analyze and reconstruct the plot of each narrative, as well as to understand the overall message contained therein and the textuality through the prophetic speeches (Sherif 1985; Rippin 2016; Tottoli 2023). The sequence of the narratives was based on the order in which they are usually presented in the literary genre of the Stories of the Prophets (*Qışaş al-Anbiyā*), as well as in Biblical literature. In fact, far from the narrative style of the prophetic accounts found in the Bible, the Qur'an comprises a series of different passages in different *sūrah*s to tell the episodes of the prophets. However, these passages do not always follow the chronological order of revelations, since the particular organization of the Qur'an does not follow any sequential subject or pattern, being the revelations supposedly brought by God to Muhammad through Gabriel, as "the word of a noble Messenger" (Q. 81:19; Q. 17:106; 25:32), in different contexts, at different times, over a period of more than two decades (al-Ṭabarī 1987, 30: 166).

Regarding the language of the prophets in particular, the target was to propose a symmetrical reading between the incidents and the specific language (and words) used by the envoys themselves. Thus, by drawing a personal profile of each individual subject, an attempt has been made to reconsider an approach that claims to see all the Qur'anic prophets as serving the mission of Muhammad. In fact, several reference works clearly suggest that some episodes of Muhammad's biography can be seen in those of other prophets (Stern 1985; de Prémare 1989; Segovia 2015), as well as in traits of personality or words spoken. Through different Qur'anic passages dealing with messengers, Muhammad is told that the previous prophets were just like him. They had the same mission and had to endure the same trials. Therefore, God frequently encourages him by revealing: "If they cry lies to thee, so too before them the people of Noah cried lies, and 'Ād and Thamūd, and the people of Abraham, the people of Lot, and the men of Midian; to Moses also they cried lies" (Q. 22:42-44). This aspect is also corroborated by the stereotypical historical-prophetic framework of most of the stories: God sends the prophet to his people, so that they adhere to the monotheism he preaches; yet he meets opposition, and the warning of a punishment is useless, as well as the signs the prophet brought. Thus, after God has

1. In this article the terms "prophet," "messenger" and "envoy" are used as synonyms, meaning chosen and divinely inspired people. Specifically, the "Prophet" designates Muhammad (PBUH).

been invoked, the unbelievers are punished and destroyed.¹ Hence, in other words the previous prophets can be seen as a sort of *preparatio prophetica* of Muhammad.²

No less important, Muhammad, in the same way as Moses, experienced an intimate encounter with God (Q. 53:6-7), and an enlargement of his breast at the beginning of his prophetic mission (Q. 94:1).³ Moreover, some Qur'anic verses establish a special relationship between him and Prophet Noah, who is a kind of prototype of Muhammad. This aspect emerges prominently in several Qur'anic passages, when in their speeches recur the same words: 'I do not say to you, "I possess the treasures of God"; I know not the Unseen. And I say not to you, "I am an angel"; I only follow what is revealed to me. Say: 'Are the blind and the seeing man equal? Will you not reflect?' (Q. 6:50; see Q. 11:31). However, the only difference is that in the fact that when these words are spoken by Muhammad they are introduced by the typical divine order *qul* (say).⁴ Finally, Muhammad appears as a prophet who was given a Scripture like Abraham, Moses, and Jesus (Q. 3:48; 5:48; 20:133; 25:35; 53:36-37; 87:18-19).⁵

1. While in Medinan passages there are only a few short references to past divine punishments (Q. 3:10-11; 9:70; 22:42-49; 47:10; 64:5-6), punishment stories mainly occur in the middle and late Meccan periods, the first phase of the prophetic mission (Q. 6:6; 7:64-65, 78, 83-84, 91-92, 94, 165; 20:128; 25:39; 29:40; 36:31; 38:12-15; 43:55-56; 50:12-14). Particular attention on this issue has to be given to *sūrah*s 7, 11, 26, 27, 37, and 54. They form a very considerable section of the Qur'anic text. According to Horowitz (1926, 10-32) the progress of these punishment stories represents Muhammad's growing knowledge of the Biblical stories. Abraham's account, despite not being a punishment story as it does not have any reference to annihilation, sometimes appears in the stories of the punishment of Lot's people (Q. 11:69-83). Finally, Jonah represents the only messenger whose people escaped castigation, thanks to their repentance (Q. 37:139-148; 10:98) (Bell & Watt 1970, 127-135; Marshall 1999; Jomier 1997; Juynboll 1986, 186; Fadel 1986, 294-298; Raven 1997, 451-461).
2. This feature seems to be particularly evident in the narrative of Abraham (Nöldeke & Schwally 1909-1938, 1: 19-20; Gilliot 1993, 278-279; Hurgronje 1951). In addition, Rezvan (1997, 41) says, "In speaking of the Biblical prophets, Muhammad more than once fashioned his narrative on the contemporary situation in Mekka and Yathrib."
3. However, Muhammad's status appears higher than that of Moses, since the former during his heavenly journey spoke to God without even trembling, while the second fainted at the manifestation of the divine attributes in the *Burning Bush* (Bell 1979, 176; Schimmel 1985, 62-63).
4. Al-Zarkashī (1988, 2, 373) takes the singular imperative *qul* as an honorific address.
5. Abraham and Moses specifically received the *al-ṣuḥūf al-ūlā* (the former scrolls), a part of a set of antique or earlier scrolls (Q. 20:133; 87:18).

Given that one of the main research results was the building of a corpus that gathers all the words spoken by each prophet (except those of Muhammad),¹ a final stage of the study considered the nature of its lexicon, as a specific segment of the Qur'an's lexicon, and the frequency with which each entry occurs.² Thus, a lexicometric analysis was very useful to start a specific in-depth investigation of the use of the terms *Rabb* and *Allāh* through the speeches of different prophets. This article, accordingly, focuses on the recurrence of these two words in the speeches of Hūd, Šāliḥ, and Shu'ayb, when found in a verbal exchange with other characters, emphasizing the subjects involved in the dialogical context. Obviously, starting from the data collected in the corpus of these prophets' speeches, the analysis can be extended to all "speaking" prophets.³

2. Narratives and Words of the Prophets in the Qur'an

In the Qur'anic text there are several prophets who also belong to the Biblical tradition, especially the Old Testament: from the patriarchs and envoys to Jesus. In addition, there are also the so-called pre-Islamic Arab prophets, namely Hūd, Šāliḥ, and Shu'ayb who otherwise seem to be absent from the Bible (Bell 1934, 330-340; al-Ṭarafī 2003, 113-124; Tottoli 2002; Wheeler 2002, 63-82, 146-156; Wheeler 2006, 24-57). Indeed, the commonality of prophetic characters found in the Bible and the Qur'an can be found in several Qur'anic passages, especially when it is God Himself, addressing the Prophet, who says: "So We

1. In this research the Qur'anic events of Muhammad's story have intentionally not been systematically related, considering all the peculiarities of the Qur'an as a revealed text and the precise role of the previous prophets in the life of Muhammad and his mission. Hence, the Qur'anic words spoken by Muhammad have deliberately not been reported, considering his identification as the 'implied privileged addressee'. In fact, Muhammad is generally addressed by the 'implied speaker' (God), by using the second person singular, though his name does not appear, unlike the other characters whose identity, when addressed as 'you', is always clear. There are, however, several verses where the second person singular is not used with Muhammad, but with humankind (Q. 7:24; 29:8; 82:6-8; 84:6. See Robinson 2003, 240-243).
2. In the Qur'an there are words that recur once (hapax legomenon). Thus, also in the corpus of prophets' speeches they were detected, such as *rijs* (punishment) (Q. 7:71), a term pronounced only by Hūd (Toorawa 2011).
3. During the research, the prophets were identified as "speaking" or "not speaking", depending on the fact that the words spoken by them are quoted in the Qur'anic text.

relate to thee stories of what has gone before, and We have given thee a remembrance from Us” (Q. 20:99). Most of the Qur’anic prophetic accounts with a Biblical subtext (Reynolds 2010), despite being the most narrative section,¹ when compared to the Biblical versions, appear to be distinguished by an elliptical and formulaic style, in addition to narrative omissions and fragmentations.² In fact, for instance, different narrative passages are integrated into *sūrah*s that are not characterized by stories, thus appearing as independent units.³ However, there are also specific passages composed wholly of stories or built around a core of stories.⁴ On the contrary, other *sūrah*s contain narrative parts enclosed in a few concise verses⁵ or allusive passages.⁶ Lastly, a given number of verses represent a mere list of envoys (Q. 3:84; 4:163; 6:84-86; 9:70; 22:42-45; 38:12-13; 50:12-14) and related episodes. While it is true that all prophetic characters are identified with the same mission, without any particular distinction in their function, it is equally true that not all of them have an evident narrative importance. Actually, some of them

1. Generally, the proportion of all the Qur’anic narratives is very large: 1,453 verses, or about a quarter of their total number, approximately 6,000. While 1,700 relate eschatological themes (al-Suyūṭī 1967, 1: 232; Sherif 1985, 46; Platti 2002, 174). They consist of stories about prophets (25 of them fall into this category) (al-Suyūṭī 1967, 3:67), sages, historical, mythical, historico-mythical or stereotyped figures of ancient times (Tottoli 2006, 467-480; Gilliot 1986, 517). In particular, some modern Arabic works discuss the general style and form of Qur’anic narratives. See, e.g., Abbas (1987) who arranges all of the narratives in chronological order, and Hasan (1982) who explores many literary devices, such as interrogative style (*uslūb al-istifhām*) and predicative style (*uslūb al-asnādī*).
2. Elliptical versions of several stories are found, e.g., in Q. 21:74-91. This pericope indeed reports the stories of Lot, David and Solomon, Job, Jonah, Zechariah, Maryam.
3. Q. 14:35-41 (Abraham), Q. 38:71-85 (Adam), Q. 40:23-56 (Moses), Q. 89:6-12 (‘Ād, Thamūd and Pharaoh) (Neuwirth 1981; Mir 1988; Abdel Haleem 1993; El-Awa 2006).
4. Q. 7 contains Noah (Q. 7:59-64), Hūd (Q. 7:65-72), Šālīh (Q. 7:73-79), Lot (Q. 7:80-84), Shu‘ayb (Q. 7:85-93) and Moses (Q. 7:103-157); Q. 54 reports five stories: Noah (Q. 54:9-17), Hūd (Q. 54:18-22), Šālīh (Q. 54:23-32), Lot (Q. 54:33-40) and Pharaoh (Q. 54:41-42). Q. 20 has two stories about Moses (Q. 20:9-99) and Adam (Q. 20:115-128); while Q. 26:10-189 narrates seven stories: Moses (Q. 26:10-68), Abraham (Q. 26:69-104), Noah (Q. 26:105-122), Hūd (Q. 26:123-140), Šālīh (Q. 26:141-159), Lot (Q. 26:160-175) and Shu‘ayb (Q. 26:176-189). See Gilliot, 1986, 518-522.
5. Q. 69:4-12 (Thamūd, ‘Ād, Pharaoh, *al-mu’tafikāt* (the Cities Overthrown), and Noah) and Q. 17 (Q. 17:61-65 (Adam), Q. 17:101-104 Moses and Pharaoh).
6. Q. 85:1-7 (the Men of the Pit), Q. 85:17-20 (Pharaoh and Thamūd); Q. 53:50-54 (‘Ād, Thamūd, Noah, and “the Subverted City”).

play an important role in extended passages (e.g., Abraham, Moses, and Noah) (Q. 2:124-136; 7:103-160), while others are only mentioned by name in brief verses or lists of prophets (e.g., Isaac and Jonah).¹

As regards the accounts of the prophets, as examples of “normative precedent” (Gwynne 2004, 32), even though some of them (e.g., those of Moses and Mary and Jesus) could be seen as reported in detail, all of them are not present in dedicated contexts, except for Joseph’s story in *Sūrah* 12. Each story is mainly portrayed as an edifying narrative, a divine “sign” and a reminder for listeners (Bell & Watt 1970, 124-125; Schwarzbaum 1982; Norris 1983). The Qur’an itself gives evidence of this trait at the end of “the fairest of stories” (Q. 12:3), that is the account of Joseph: “In their stories is surely a lesson to men possessed of minds; it is not a tale forged, but a confirmation of what is before it, and a distinguishing of everything, and a guidance, and a mercy to a people who believe” (Q. 12:111; see Abdel Haleem 1990). Consequently, given that the Qur’an gives priority to the moral aspects before the details (Donner 1998, 76-85),² all the characters, and related incidents, are for the most part depicted as moral paradigms. Likewise, specific narrative parts are repeated in different *sūrahs*, sometimes with a few variations or additions in the plot,³ as well as in several prophets’ speeches regarding the same issue. It means that the storyline is not recounted episodically as in a “normal” writing style. This feature also has an impact on the language used to relate the diverse stories, without forgetting that “their divergences, then, point to a successively changing narrative pact, to a

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1. For instance, Isaac seems to remain a minor character. Indeed, if compared with other prophets, he is not given much space in the narrative, except his presence in idiomatic expressions and formulaic lists in which he appears with his father Abraham and other messengers, often with a clear chronological disregard, if compared with Biblical episodes (Q. 2:136, 140; 3:84; 4:163). Furthermore, these lists appear as a sort of litany of remembrance about ancient prophets and God’s inspiration, messages, and guidance. The order can be Abraham, Ismael, Isaac and Jacob, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Q. 3:84; 6:84; 12:38; 38:45), or, following Jewish tradition, Ishmael and Isaac, Abraham and Isaac, Isaac and Jacob (Q. 12:6; 14:39; 19:49; 21:72; 29:27). Isaac occurs alone only in Q. 37:112.
 2. The lack of specific narrative features could suggest a certain knowledge to the first listeners of the Qur’an in regard to Biblical traditions, through Jewish and Christian interpretations, in some circles where Muhammad shared his revelations (Reeves 2003; Reynolds 2010).
 3. See, e.g., the story of Šāliḥ reported in Q. 27:45-53 that varies almost completely from the one given by the Qur’an in other *sūrahs*. See Q. 7:73-79; 11:61-68; 26:141-159; 27:45-53; 54:23-31; 91:11-15.

continuing education of the listeners and the development of a moral consensus that is reflected in the texts” (Neuwirth 1991, 261).

The Qur'an, specifically for the prophets, portrays their human traits, so that despite their divine mission, they cannot be considered divine (Q. 7:35; 12:109; 14:11; 16:43; 25:20).¹ Such an aspect appears above all when reporting direct speech, which defines noteworthy peculiarities and differences of their human personality. According to Abdel Haleem (1999, 206), the use of the direct speech of the unbelievers in the Qur'an is important as it records exactly what they utter so that they may be judged by what they themselves have professed rather than by what anybody has reported (Q. 22:51-69; 26:16-31). Certainly, dialogue is one of the media through which the Qur'an emphasizes their humanity (Mir 1992, 5). Also, dialogue lets the readers get a remarkable insight into characters (Quṭb 1963, 163-170), as both prophets and human beings. Yet, it is important to highlight that occasionally the words they speak, as “embedded speakers,” are clearly put in their mouths by God, Who is identified as the “implied speaker” (Robinson 2003, 234-238). Hence, the prophets can be seen as mouthpieces of divine revelation. In fact, these words passed untouched through them before being referred to their own people. This obviously happens, for instance, when the singular imperative *qul* appears in the so-called “say-passages” (with more than three hundred occurrences), as a characteristic device of the Qur'anic rhetoric, explicitly when God orders his prophets what to say.² The singular imperative *qul* recurs in passages that Welch (1986, 422-423) categorized as “say-passages”. They have two main parts, namely a statement (or a question) which designates the setting, and the say-statement which is sometimes followed by an answer, a comment (Q. 3:72-73; 6:148-151; 34:21-22), or a praise formula (Q. 2:110; 10:18, 68; 21:26). The setting statement usually reports something said or done by the opponents (e.g., Meccan pagans, Jews and Medinan “hypocrites,” opportunistic converts to Islam). Finally, it concerns Muhammad's followers only very occasionally (Bobzin 2011, 570).

1. On the human nature of the envoys, see also Q. 23: 33-34; 25:7.

2. The verb *qāla*, “to say” in the imperative form appears as the most divine frequent order understood to be referred primarily to Muhammad. Nonetheless, it is worth underlining that there are six passages where words which were clearly spoken by Muhammad do not follow the command *qul* (Q. 6:104, 114; 11:2-3; 27:91-92; 42:10; 51:50-51) (Robinson 2003, 9, 20, 235). Moreover, as a usual narrative pattern in the Qur'an, direct speech is mainly introduced by the verb *qāla*, in addition to *talā*, “to recite”, and *nabba'a*, “to inform”, predominantly in the imperative form (Q. 5:27; 10:71; 12:36; 15:51; 26:69).

Besides, with an obvious conative function of the discourse, different prophets address their interlocutors through the use of the vocative particle *yā* (O), within different phrases, or by directly invoking God (Abdul-Raof 2018, 15-17, 257-259). The most common kinds of dialogues are those between a prophet and his nation, and those which occur between God and some of his prophets. Also, among the other more recurrent addressees there is the town/tribal assembly, or council of nobles (*al-mala'*)¹ that, in addition to the prophets' peoples, represents the chief impediment to the achievement of the aim of several prophets, namely the conversion of all their people. Finally, several prophets are found in a sort of soliloquy/prayer, or one-sided dialogues, when relating and sharing desires, feelings or thoughts. This specific kind of dialogue also occurs in relation to God, for example, when in Q. 2:34–39, He addresses Satan and Adam and Eve (Mir 1992, 9-11; Mir 1986).

A very interesting aspect that emerged in the language of the prophets is that of repetition. The recurrent repetitions could be justified by the fact that “Human beings must be constantly reminded that the coming of a prophet is not unprecedented. God has consistently sent prophets to inform them of the existence of their Creator and to remind them of their covenantal obligation to him” (Gwynne 2004, 32; El-Awa 2003). Actually, repetition stresses the value of the events, by providing a core message and its connected motifs, even though in different contexts. Hence, as well as the use of stereotypical phrases, repetition can be intentional, in order to draw attention to possible different nuances of a notion. It is a sort of “re-contexting” of the same truths rather than literal repetition. No less important, repetition, as well as specific stereotypical phrases, underlines and recalls a relevant Qur'anic detail. Cadence and rhythm require a generous amount of repetition. Such repetition aids fluency and serves as a mnemonic that assists oral recitation and memorization (Akhtar 2008, 148).

Finally, through the words spoken by the prophets, God exemplifies and outlines the framework of the argument that He wants to present to the recipients of the Scripture. Yet, not all of them are cited as speakers, and if they are, the amount of speech (or significant verbal exchange) of each prophet is obviously directly proportionate to the development

1. This specific addressee emerges in the narrative of Noah, and mainly in that of Moses and the Pharaoh in which the major clash between a prophet, as a representative of heavenly power, materializes against a representative of evil earthly. In other words, the major clash between *al-mala' al-a'lā* (High Council), and an earthly court is realized (Q. 7:104-106; 10:75; 11:38; 17:102; 20:50-61, 63-70; 26:26-54; 37:8; 38:69).

of every single story. For instance, Adam, and especially Job, Jonah, and Elijah, to whom little narrative development is provided, are therefore not very developed as characters. Indeed, they remain minor figures throughout both in terms of narrative and direct speech. On the contrary, quite different is the case of Ishmael, Aaron, and David who, even though characterized only by a few utterances, appear clearly linked to stronger messengers in terms of individual narrative development, namely, Abraham, Moses and, although at a lower level, Solomon.

3. *Rabb and Allāh in the Speech of the Prophets*

The research on prophetic discourses in the Qur'an led to the structuring of a corpus in which all the words of the prophets have been organized according to their roots. The entries that appear with the greatest frequency are: RBB, 'LH, and QWM. Given the purpose of this article, the analysis presented here has focused mainly on the first two roots, from which *Rabb* and *Allāh* evidently derive. Specifically, in the following pages, these two words will be presented and investigated as they appear in linguistic exchanges of Hūd, Šāliḥ, and Shu'ayb, during different types of speech (e.g., dialogue, soliloquy/prayer).¹ The fact that God speaks of Himself in the third person mainly concerns the central issue of the Qur'an, namely the Oneness of God (*tawḥīd*) (Abdel Haleem 1999, 198): "So, do not invoke any gods beside God, or you will incur punishment" (Q. 26:213). Furthermore, the following passages, in which God is referred to as *Allāh* or *Rabb*, also emphasize the same concept: "You who believe, eat the good things We have provided for you and be grateful to God, if it is Him that you worship" (Q. 2:172); "We will strike panic into the disbelievers' hearts because they attribute partners to God although He has sent no authority for this. Their shelter will be the Fire—how miserable is the home of the evildoers!" (Q. 3:151); "Truly We have opened up a path to clear triumph for you [Prophet], so that God may forgive you your past and future sins, complete His grace upon

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1. Though the investigation concentrated mainly on the prophets' use of the names *Rabb* and *Allāh*, it is easy to imagine that these are not the only expressions the envoys use to refer to God; see, e.g., *al-'Alīm* (the All-knowing) (Abraham and Ishmael: Q. 2:127; Ishmael: Q. 2:128; Joseph: Q. 12:100); *'Allām al-ghuyūb* (Thou knowest the things unseen) (Jesus: Q. 5:116); *Ghafūr* (All-forgiving) (Noah: Q. 11:41; Jacob: Q. 12:98; Joseph: Q. 12:53); *al-Raḥīm* (All-compassionate) (Abraham: Q. 2:128; Ishmael: Q. 2:129; Jacob: Q. 12:98; Solomon: Q. 27:30) (Gimaret 1988; Böwering 1991).

you, guide you to a straight path, and help you mightily” (Q. 48:1-3). No less important, it is interesting to note that the conjunction of *Allāh* and *Rabb*, *allāhumma rabbanā* (Q. 5:114) occurs only once in the whole of the Qur'an in the speech of Jesus.

Even though the noun *Rabb* is found during all the phases of Muhammad's mission, its use is far from uniform throughout the course of revelation. In fact, it appears more frequently in the first Meccan period but gradually loses ground during the following periods and becomes quite rare during the Medinan revelations (Gaudefroy-Demombynes 1920-1930; Chelhod 1958; Jomier 2016). The reason is easily identifiable in the fact that the episodes of the prophets mainly represent a significant segment in the Meccan *sūrah*s. Besides, in Mecca the use of narrative as a tool to relate Muhammad's situation could reflect failure and powerlessness. On the contrary, the Medinan period illustrates only a small number of concise accounts or phrases (Q. 2:246-251; 5:20-26), frequently referring to punishment stories, thus, they constitute the rather meagre narrative clothing of the believer-unbeliever relationship in Medina (Marshall 1999, 161). The difference between the narrative materials of the two periods could be explained by considering the transformed religious condition, as well as the growing power and authority of Muhammad, since his attention turned to legal themes. Thus, messengers invoked as forerunners in the Meccan period of revelation were not as functional as in the Medinan period (Horovitz 1926, 25-27; Marshall 1999, 158-164).

However, although *Allāh* is the word with the highest frequency in the Qur'anic text (Watt 1953, 23-29; Jomier 2016; Mir 1987, 9; Badawi & Abdel Haleem 2008, 40), among the entries of the corpus of prophets' speeches, *Rabb* emerges as the most recurring name of God (Chelhod 1958; Mir 1987, 47; Badawi & Abdel Haleem 2008, 342), especially pronounced by Moses and Abraham (41 and 30 times respectively). As for *Allāh*, it occurs most often in the speeches of Noah and Moses (26 and 21 times respectively). Moreover, it can happen that in the same Qur'anic passage the prophet pronounces both names; thus, there is a shift from *Rabb* to *Allāh* or vice versa.¹ On different occasions, it happens that the term *Rabb* occurs in the expression *Rabb al-‘ālamīn* (the Lord of all Being) (Noah: Q. 7:61; 26:109; Hūd: Q. 7:67; 26:127; Šāliḥ: Q. 26:145; Abraham: Q. 2:131; 26:77; 37:87; Lot: Q. 26:164; Shu‘ayb:

1. For an exploration of pre-Qur'anic Arab notions of Allāh, see Sinai 2019; Cole 2025, 50.

Q. 26:180; Moses: Q. 7:104; 26:16; 43:46). Thus, in the Qur'anic text *Rabb* is used to refer to God's dominion over the universe. However, there is at least one example where exegetes note its use for a human being, namely Potiphar (*al-‘azīz*, “the powerful”) in Q. 12:23.

Finally, concerning the use of these two references to God by the other prophets, certainly, it is fair to point out that their occurrence is influenced by the amount of speech, or significant verbal exchange, of each messenger, directly proportionate to the development of each individual narrative. For instance, Adam and Elijah, to whom little narrative development is provided, thus remaining minor figures throughout both in terms of narrative and direct speech, say *Rabb* once and twice respectively, with regard to *Allāh* only Elijah pronounces this name once (Q. 7:23; 37:126). It should be noted, therefore, that Moses, being also the prophet who speaks the most, is also the one who uses the term *Rabb* the most in his words.

In the translation of the Qur'anic passages taken from Arberry's version, *Rabb* and *Allāh* are translated as “Lord” and “God”. Therefore, this translation will be used in the Qur'anic verses given in the following tables. Moreover, the verses have been listed according to the now-standard 1924 Cairo Edition.

3.1. *Rabb* as Mentioned by Hūd, Ṣāliḥ and Shu‘ayb

From the analysis of the dialogical contexts it emerges that Hūd, Ṣāliḥ and Shu‘ayb use the word *Rabb*, in a Meccan context, especially when addressing their polytheist people: ‘Ād, Thamūd, and Midian, respectively.¹ Specifically, Hūd uses it 12 times when addressing the

1. The eras of ‘Ād and Thamūd were between those of Noah and Abraham, and the era of Midian was between those of Lot and Moses. Such sequences evident in Qur'anic *sūrah*s generally follow the presentation of biblical history (Stewart 2024, 56). Furthermore, several Meccan *sūrah*s open and/or close with polemical discussions on different positions of conflict, corroborating as declared by Izutsu (2002, 75) that from the semantical point of view, the Qur'anic Weltanschauung is [...] a system built on the principle of conceptual opposition. As a frequent aspect of the Qur'anic discourse, it is principally seen in a dual conflict (this world and the next, heaven and hell, good and evil, belief and unbelief, and so on), in which the addressees are persistently tested to opt between alternatives, especially between faith and scepticism (Zebiri 2006). Accordingly, parables, metaphors, imageries and figurative language and other figures of speech, which produce both dramatic descriptions and complexity of meaning, are recurrently employed (Mir 2008; Stewart 2021).

‘Ād¹ (Q. 7:65; 11:59; 46:21), Ṣāliḥ 5 times when speaking to Thamūd² (Q. 7:73; 11:61; 26:141-2; 27:45), and Shu‘ayb 11 times when talking to Midian.³ Table 1 shows the occurrences in which Hūd, Ṣāliḥ, and Shu‘ayb pronounce the name *Rabb* and the type of speech and the interlocutors to whom they address it.

1. In the Qur’an the ‘Ād are mentioned twenty-four times in eighteen *sūrah*s. It is reported that they were called to faith in a place named al-Aḥqāf (Q. 46:21), which is also the title of *sūrah* 46; whereas a different verse connects them with the city of Iram, mentioned only once in Q. 89:6-7. In several other passages the ‘Ād are briefly mentioned with Noah, the Thamūd, the people of Ṣāliḥ, and others (Q. 9:70; 14:9; 22:42; 29:38; 38:12; 40:31; 50:13). Moreover, the Qur’an reports that they lived after the people of Noah in a fortress, and were very tall in stature, proud of their strength, but also ignorant and materialist (Q. 7:69; 26:128-30; 41:15; 46:23; 89:6-8) (Buhl 1986; Tottoli 2001; al-Ṭarafī 2003, 120-124; Wheeler 2002, 63-73).
2. The Qur’an refers to the Thamūd twenty-six times in twenty-one *sūrah*s and describes them as a godless wealthy tribe who lived in the Ḥijr area (Q. 15:80), located in north-western Arabia, in castles among gardens and fountains, as God’s bounties (Q. 7:74). They carved their houses out of the surrounding mountain cliffs (Q. 7:74; 26:149), the remains of which were declared in the Qur’an still visible (Q. 29:38). In other verses the Thamūd are briefly mentioned with Noah, the ‘Ād, the people of Hūd, and others (Q. 9:70; 14:9; 22:42; 29:38; 38:12; 40:31; 50:13) (Rippin 1995; Tottoli 2004; Id. 2002, 45-50; Shahid 2000; Firestone 2006; Serjeant 1954; van den Branden 1966). On Thamūd and Ṣāliḥ in Islamic tradition, see al-Ṭarafī 2003, 113-116; Wheeler 2002, 74-82; Brinner 1986, 114-123.
3. The people of Midian, or the people of the Thicket (*aṣḥāb al-aykah*), refer to the same group of people. Qur’anic references to them are found in Q. 7:85; 11:84, 95; 15:78; 26:176; 29:36; 38:13; 50:14. The location of Midian is mentioned in Q. 9:70; 20:40; 22:44; 28:22-3, 45. In the Qur’an, Midian is also related to the Biblical Midian and to the story of Moses and Jethro, his father-in-law, mentioned in the Bible (Q. 20:40; 28:22-3, 45; Ex 3:1; 4:18; 18:1-12). In the Bible Midian is also associated with one of Abraham’s sons through Keturah in Gen 25:2. Shu‘ayb himself should be recognized as Jethro, or be seen as his uncle (Jeffery 1938, 260; Beeston 1968; Brinner 1986, 274-277; Buhl and Bosworth 1986; Tottoli 2002, 45-50; Wheeler 2002, 147-150; Firestone 2003).

Table 1. Occurrences of the Word ‘Rabb’ as Mentioned by Hūd, Ṣāliḥ, and Shu‘ayb

The Prophet	Verses		Type of Speech and Interlocutors
Hūd	(O) My people , there is no folly in me; but I am a Messenger from the Lord of all Being.	7:67	Dialogue with his people
	I deliver to you the Messages of my Lord; I am your adviser sincere, faithful.	7:68	
	What, do you wonder that a reminder from your Lord should come to you by the lips of a man from among you?	7:69	
	Anger and wrath from your Lord have fallen upon you.	7:71	
	I ask of you no wage for this; my wage falls only upon the Lord of all Being.	26:127	
	And, O my people , ask forgiveness of your Lord, then repent to Him.	11:52	
	Truly, I have put my trust in God, my Lord and your Lord; there is no creature that crawls, but He takes it by the forelock. Surely my Lord is on a straight path.	11:56 (3)	
	But if you turn your backs, I have delivered to you that I was sent with unto you, and my Lord will make a people other than you successors; you will not hurt Him anything. My Lord is Guardian over everything.	11:57 (2)	
	Destroying everything by the commandment of its Lord.	46:25	

The Prophet	Verses		Type of Speech and Interlocutors
Şālih	O my people, serve God! You have no god other than He; there has now come to you a clear sign from your Lord – this is the She camel of God, to be a sign for you.	7:73	Dialogue with his people
	O my people, I have delivered to you the Message of my Lord, and advised you sincerely; but you do not love sincere advisers.	7:79	
	I ask of you no wage for this; my wage falls only upon the Lord of all Being.	26:145	
	O my people, serve God! You have no god other than He. It is He who produced you from the earth and has given you to live therein; so ask forgiveness of Him, then repent to Him; surely my Lord is nigh, and answers prayer.	11:61	
	O my people, what think you? If I stand upon a clear sign from my Lord, and He has given me mercy from Him, who shall help me against God if I rebel against Him?	11:63	

The Prophet	Verses		Type of Speech and Interlocutors
Shu‘ayb	O my people , serve God! You have no god other than He; there has now come to you a clear sign from your Lord.	7:85	Dialogue with his people
	We should have forged against God a lie if we returned into your creed; after God delivered us from it. It is not for us to return into it, unless God our Lord so will. Our Lord embraces all things in His knowledge. In God we have put our trust. Our Lord, give true deliverance between us and our people; Thou art the best of deliverers.	7:89 (3)	
	O my people , I have delivered to you the Messages of my Lord, and advised you sincerely; how should I grieve for a people of unbelievers?	7:93	
	I ask of you no wage for this; my wage falls only upon the Lord of all Being.	26:180	
	My Lord knows very well what you are doing.	26:188	
	O my people , what think you? If I stand upon a clear sign from my Lord, and He has provided me with fair provision from Him	11:88	
	And ask forgiveness of your Lord, then repent to Him; surely my Lord is All-compassionate, All-loving	11:90 (2)	
	O my people , is my tribe stronger against you than God? And Him – have you taken Him as something to be thrust behind you? My Lord encompasses the things you do.	11:92	

3.2. *Allāh as Mentioned by Hūd, Ṣāliḥ and Shu‘ayb*

Concerning the word *Allāh*, from the analysis of the different passages, it emerges that it recurs in the speeches of Hūd, Ṣāliḥ and Shu‘ayb, in a Meccan context, specifically when addressing their polytheist people. In particular, Hūd uses it 10 times when addressing the ‘Ād, Ṣāliḥ 15 times when speaking to Thamūd, and Shu‘ayb 13 times when talking to Midian. Table 2 shows the occurrences in which Hūd, Ṣāliḥ and Shu‘ayb pronounce the name *Allāh* and the type of speech and the interlocutors to whom they address it.

Table 2. Occurrences of the Word ‘Allāh’ as Mentioned by Hūd, Ṣāliḥ, and Shu‘ayb

The Prophet	Verses		Type of Speech and Interlocutors
Hūd	O my people , serve God! You have no god other than He; will you not be godfearing?	7:65	Dialogue with his people
	Remember God’s bounties; haply you will prosper.	7:69	
	What, do you dispute with me regarding names you have named, you and your fathers, touching which God has sent down never authority?	7:71	
	So fear you God, and obey you me.	26:126	
	So fear you God, and obey you me;	26:131	
	O my people , serve God! You have no god other than He; you are but forgers.	11:50	
	I call God to witness; and witness you, that I am quit of that you associate	11:54	
	Truly, I have put my trust in God, my Lord and your Lord	11:56	
	saying, Serve none but God! Truly I fear for you the chastisement of a dreadful day	46:21	
	Knowledge is only with God, and I deliver to you the Message with which I was sent; but I see you are an ignorant people.	46:23	

The Prophet	Verses		Type of Speech and Interlocutors
Şālih	The She-camel of God; let her drink!	91:13	Dialogue with his people
	O my people , serve God! You have no god other than He; there has now come to you a clear sign from your Lord – this is the She-camel of God, to be a sign for you. Leave her	7:73 (2)	
	Remember God's bounties, and do not mischief in the earth, working corruption.	7:74	
	So fear you God, and obey you me.	26:144	
	So fear you God, and obey you me;	26:150	
	Serve you God!	27:45	
	O my people , why do you seek to hasten evil before good? Why do you not ask forgiveness of God? Haply so you will find mercy	27:46	
	Your augury is with God; nay, but you are a people being proved.	27:47	

The Prophet	Verses		Type of Speech and Interlocutors
Shu‘ayb	O my people , serve God! You have no god other than He; there has now come to you a clear sign from your Lord.	7:85	Dialogue with his people
	And do not sit in every path, threatening and barring from God’s way those who believe in Him, desiring to make it crooked.	7:86	
	And if there is a party of you who believe in the Message I have been sent with, and a party who believe not, be patient till God shall judge between us; He is the best of judges.	7:87	
	We should have forged against God a lie if we returned into your creed; after God delivered us from it. It is not for us to return into it, unless God our Lord so will. Our Lord embraces all things in His knowledge. In God we have put our trust. Our Lord, give true deliverance between us and our people; Thou art the best of deliverers.	7:89 (4)	
	So fear you God, and obey you me.	26:179	
	O my people , serve God! You have no god other than He.	11:84	
	God’s remainder is better for you, if you are believers. And I am not a guardian over you.	11:86	
	My succour is only with God; in Him I have put my trust, and to Him I turn, penitent.	11:88	
	O my people , is my tribe stronger against you than God?	11:92	
	O my people , serve God, and look you for the Last Day; and do not mischief in the land, working corruption.	29:36	

4. Discussion

On the first reading, the corpus of the prophets' speeches obviously underlines both the main linguistic and textual, as well as contextual, characteristics of each prophet. In fact, it confirms that the speeches of some prophets present a strong connection with their episodes, in the sense that several stories—notwithstanding the common mission of each of them—are characterized by one or more peculiar elements that function as identifying the prophet himself. It means that the reader/listener of the Qur'an is immediately able to identify the prophet also thanks to some exclusive words used by him. Certainly, this "subject-object identification" of language is found in a number of interesting cases. With regard to the prophetic speeches that were the subject of this article, for instance, the term *nāqab* (she-camel), "as a clear sign" (Q. 7:73; 11:64; 26:155; 54:27-9; 91:11-5), always refers to Ṣāliḥ.¹ On the other hand, there are also some words recurring in different stories, such as *fulk* (ark), the most peculiar symbol of Noah's narrative in connection with the flood (Q. 7:64; 10:73; 11:37, 38; 23:28; 26:119; 36:41), which also appears in the account of Jonah (Q. 37:140). But, along with this term, the word *safīnah* recurs with the same meaning as *fulk* during an episode of Moses' narrative, as well as for Noah's vessel (Q. 18:71, 79; 29:15). In all these cases the context itself, where the words occur, "subjectivates" the words used/spoken.

Also, the context, also intended as a textual linguistic context in which the words occur, can also have another type of influence on the words. In fact, the utterances may start/end with stereotypical words, phrases or sentences on the lips of the different prophets, to proclaim, for instance, the omnipotence of God and confirm the prophetic mission, such as "so fear God, and obey me" (Noah, Hūd, Ṣāliḥ, Lot,

1. There are, of course, other examples as well. As for the word *ʿaṣā* (staff), it always denotes Moses' staff (Q. 2:60; 7:107, 115, 160; 20:18; 26:32, 45, 63; 27:10; 28:31); besides, it is used in Q. 20:66 and 26:44 in a plural form, *ʿiṣyāyah*, with reference to the Pharaoh's sorcerers), whereas in Q. 34:14 *minsāʾah* identifies that of Solomon. Another example is found in the word "sea," that is regularly designated by two different words. When it is related to the successful crossing of the Israelites the term is *baḥr*, "fresh water" (see Q. 2:50; 7:138; 10:90; 26:63; 44:24); yet, when it is in association with the fatal crossing of the Pharaoh and his troops the term is *yamm*, "mortal fire" (Q. 7:136; 20:78; 28:40; 51:40). Moreover, in Q. 20:39 and 28:7 it is also used in relation to the episode when Moses' mother left him in the river, with a clear negative meaning.

Shu'ayb, Jesus) (Q. 26:108, 110, 126, 131, 144, 150, 163, 179; 43:63).¹ In this case, the purpose to accomplish is not the "subjectivation" of the prophet's words, but the achievement of specific literary features. These recurring phrases could have, of course, a more systematic collection and description, in order to survey their origin, by adopting an intertextual approach.²

With an obvious conative function of discourse, in the Qur'anic text different prophets address their interlocutors through the use of the vocative particle *yā* (O), within different phrases, or by directly invoking God. Specifically, in the above verses, the three prophets use the vocative particle to address their own people exclusively, *yā qaṣmī* (O my people).³

By underlining the lexicographic characteristics of several prophets' speeches, as well as a symmetrical reading of the stories, between incidents and specific language used, an attempt was also made to point out an individual profile of some prophets, by getting an insight into characters. Indeed, speakers are usually distinguished from each other by the substance of their speech rather than by linguistic peculiarities; so, the Qur'an gives few visual details, because it focuses the reader/listener's attention primarily to the content of the speech (Mir 1992, 18). This approach, inspired by the method demonstrated in the works of Mir (1991; 1992; 2000; 2006; 2008), has highlighted interesting personal characteristics of the prophets: feeling of lack of control, distress, impatience, steadfastness, tenderness, humor, sarcasm, etc. All of these traits confirm, in line with the concept of Islamic prophethood, the humanity of God's envoys and their continuous dependence on Him, throughout all the phases of their mission, without losing their personal traits. Hence, each prophet remains God's servant.

In particular, taking into consideration the specific focus of this article, it emerges that Hūd, Ṣāliḥ, and Shu'ayb, notwithstanding their warning and signs brought during the mission to their people, they meet opposition by rejecting the monotheistic message. In fact, the unbelievers, in line with the previous sinful people, did not believe a word of what he

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1. The phrase is sometimes followed by the verse, "I ask of you no wage for this; my wage falls only upon the Lord of all Being" (Q. 26:109, 127, 145, 164, 179-180).
 2. For a contemporary approaches to the identification of Qur'anic literary structures, see Klar 2021.
 3. In the Qur'an some other prophets utter this expression: Noah (Q. 7:59, 61; 10:71; 11:28, 29, 30; 23:23; 71:2), Moses (Q. 2:54; 5:20, 21; 10:84; 20:86; 61:5), Abraham (Q. 6:78), Lot (Q. 11:78) and Aaron (Q. 20:90).

said and accused them (Q. 7:66; 26:123, 139; 54:18). Especially Hūd, like Prophet Muhammad, not being sent with a particular sign to his people, is reproached for not having demonstrated a miracle (Q. 7:69; 11:53-55; 46:22). However, even when they are shown a divine sign like she-camel in the story of Šāliḥ, in total contempt the opponents among the people killed her. Despite all this, prophets continue to trust in God while enduring difficulties (Q. 37:115; Q. 21:69-70, 76). As a consequence, the disbelieving peoples are punished and destroyed in a variety of explicit or unspecific ways.

5. Conclusion

Assuming that God guides His messengers' actions, He also often "guides their tongue". As for the recurrence of the words *Rabb* and *Allāh* in the speech of the so-called pre-Islamic Arab prophets, the analysis indicates that both *Rabb* and *Allāh* in their speeches occur especially when they dialogue with their people. This could strengthen the opposition between the Lord of good, i.e., God, and the lord of evil, i.e., the unbelieving people. Therefore, it can be hypothesized that the prophets use both terms with a "legal purpose," intending to present God as both Lord (*Rabb*) and the God (*Allāh*).

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A Critical Analysis of the Contextual Approach to Myth in the Qur'an: Focusing on Angelika Neuwirth's Perspective

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ABSTRACT:

Original Paper

The concept of myth within the Qur'an has been a subject of extensive scholarly inquiry among Orientalists, offering diverse perspectives and methodologies. Angelika Neuwirth, a prominent Qur'anic scholar, has made significant contributions to this field by examining the Qur'anic historical narratives and proposing a connection between these narratives and the concept of myth. In her view, myths function as narratives that employ archetypes to illuminate and interpret the world. To substantiate her claims, Neuwirth adopts a contextual approach, drawing upon the methodologies of biblical criticism. Emphasizing microstructures and contextual details of Qur'anic verses, this approach aims to uncover the origins of the stories and historical narratives in the Qur'an, attributing them to the social and theological milieu of early Muslims. It posits that these narratives are deeply rooted in the socio-theological milieu of early Muslims. Aligning with this approach, Neuwirth characterizes numerous Qur'anic stories and events as myths that have been shaped by archetypes embedded in the collective unconscious of the Qur'an's audience.

This paper employs a descriptive-analytical methodology, coupled with a comprehensive review of relevant literature, to critically evaluate the methodological underpinnings and presuppositions of the contextual approach to Qur'anic myth. Neuwirth's perspective is examined as a

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representative of this scholarly trend. The findings of this study reveal that, beyond methodological shortcomings, Neuwirth's approach is subject to several criticisms. These include an overemphasis on context as the sole determinant of Qur'anic knowledge, a neglect of the fundamental distinctions between the Qur'an and the Bible concerning the concept of revelation, and an overlooking of the distinct processes of compilation and canonization that shaped these two texts.

KEYWORDS: The Qur'an, Myth, Angelika Neuwirth, Contextual approach, Archetype, Orientalist studies.

1. Introduction

The concept of mythology in the Qur'an has drawn attention from various scholars, especially Orientalists, through different approaches. Some adopt a contextual approach, emphasizing the socio-historical context of the Qur'an's audience, while others use a phenomenological approach aimed at uncovering patterns and symbols within history. The contextual approach entails reading the Qur'an in the light of the social and theological context of its revelation, as well as the perspectives of early Muslims, along with related narratives and texts from sacred scriptures. This approach focuses primarily on the context and conditions surrounding the verses of the Qur'an, positing that a fundamental prerequisite for understanding these verses is to examine their context and environment. In this regard, the late antiquity period is highlighted as a key epistemological concept. While late antiquity refers to a specific period following classical antiquity, from the perspective of these scholars, it represents a shared epistemic space in which the sacred texts of Judaism, Islam, and Christianity were formed. Although the context of revelation holds great significance for Islamic exegetes (*mufasssirrūn*) in understanding the verses, there is a fundamental difference between Muslim studies in this field and those conducted by Orientalists, underscoring the necessity of engaging with these discussions.

Neuwirth is one of the Qur'anic scholars who has approached the study of the Qur'an from a contextual perspective. She defines mythology as a narrative that describes the world and everything in it through archetypes, thus paving the way for guiding its audience. According to such a definition, the concept of mythology encompasses not only

ancient polytheistic stories and narratives but, in a new approach, it also applies to stories with specific interpretive codes. These narratives call upon the audience to engage with the archetypes, applying them to particular characters, thereby facilitating the guidance process. Neuwirth argues that myth and legend, understood as narratives that differ in their interpretative significance, exist across all forms of religious and non-religious literature, including the sacred texts of the two monotheistic traditions prior to Islam, namely Christianity and Judaism. Such distinct stories and narratives embody a dynamic process of mythopoiesis that creates an independent meaning alongside the original meaning and narrative structure, further supporting the purposes of revelation (Neuwirth 2003).

In this article, employing a descriptive-analytical method and utilizing library resources, we aim to provide a critical analysis of the methodological principles and assumptions underlying the contextual approach, particularly assessing Neuwirth's views on mythology in the Qur'an as a representative of this perspective.

2. Methodology of the Contextual Approach

One of the most significant issues that delineates the divide between theologians and historians is the difference in the methods and approaches employed by these two groups in their treatment of historical narratives and stories. Historians contend that theologians attempt to explain and validate religious concepts and teachings without adhering to the criteria of historical analysis, while historians base their arguments solely on temporal and spatial contexts, which are the primary indicators of history. Myths and historical accounts that appear incompatible with cause-and-effect relationships and are grounded in metaphysical assumptions fall into this category.

Orientalists, often with a historical approach, endeavor to trace the origins of Qur'anic narratives in other sources, sometimes referencing archetypes and at other times examining the context of the Qur'an itself. Consequently, these scholars do not assess whether the Qur'an is realistic; rather, they aim to investigate the historical development of these propositions in terms of the history of beliefs and culture, rather than the history of events. In other words, the study conducted by Western scholars on this category of Qur'anic reports is primarily

historical, focusing on the origins and beginnings of beliefs, or functional, concerning the purposes and functions of these beliefs.

The historical-critical method, which is widely employed in Western Qur'anic studies, verifies only those historical propositions that align with the criteria of modern historical science through meticulous examination of historical sources. In this method, only reports whose authenticity has been substantiated through historical research are accepted, and it does not differentiate between divine texts and other ancient texts, treating sacred texts similarly to secular ancient texts. This implies that the accounts in Holy Scriptures and the Qur'an are subjected to the same scrutiny based on empirical historical analysis (Krentz 1977).

An important challenge faced by the historical-critical method is the skepticism that consistently accompanies it, as historical criticism seeks to articulate the most probable scenario among existing possibilities. Consequently, all assertions made by Western Qur'anic scholars regarding the historical narratives of the Qur'an, when employing this method, are imbued with doubt and uncertainty, leaving them susceptible to being contradicted by alternative interpretations. Thus, their conclusions and perspectives often manifest as claims that can be contested by presenting other possibilities (Aghaei 2012).

Although the researchers who utilize this method acknowledge the doubt inherent in the results obtained, they consider this uncertainty to be normal; the only definitive and certain conclusion is that there is no absolute certainty. According to this perspective, there remains no objective truth in the world, and everything is based on probabilities and the most probable scenarios, calling into question the foundations of science and certainty.

Another method used in the contextual approach by Western scholars is form criticism. This method, which is one of the approaches in biblical criticism, seeks to understand the emergence of the divine text by connecting it with the social and cultural context in which the text was produced. In other words, form criticism examines the relationship between the style and literary structure of the text and its historical and social environment, thereby forming categories within the divine texts (Black & Dockery 1991, 179). It aims to classify units of scripture into literary patterns (such as love poems, parables, sayings, elegies, and legends) and attempts to trace each type to its period of oral transmission (Britannica 2013).

The primary task of form criticism is to recognize and distinguish historical material from non-historical material and to determine the additions made to the sacred texts. Rudolf Bultmann is one of the biblical scholars who uses form criticism to examine New Testament texts. By analyzing the context and social and cultural conditions of the early Christians, he seeks to separate the historical reports of the Bible from non-historical accounts. Researchers employing this method attempt to identify the origins of these narratives by scrutinizing the social context of biblical stories. Form criticism emphasizes the contributions of Jews and Christians in the formation of biblical texts and seeks to uncover the content that entered the scriptures by utilizing findings from source criticism as well as existing oral traditions. Therefore, the difference between source criticism and form criticism lies in the former's focus solely on written sources, whereas form criticism also considers the oral traditions prevalent among Christians and Jews during the compilation of the texts (Marshall 2006, 155-157).

3. Myth in Western Qur'anic Studies

The concept of myth in Western Qur'anic studies has been defined and inspired by the concept of this term in biblical studies. Therefore, most of the features and characteristics attributed to myth in these studies have found their way into Qur'anic studies, and the Western scholars who define this concept in the Qur'an have paid attention to these features. In the Encyclopedia of the Qur'an, Neuwirth defines myths as narratives that serve to explain and describe the experienced world by revealing its archetypes. They are often staged in a cosmic or supernatural framework to manifest binding truths, generate meaning, and provide guidance. In this definition, there are two important components that most definitions of myth emphasize: narrative and explanation. In addition to these two elements, Neuwirth identifies other criteria in the definition of myth. By referring to the archetypes experienced in the world, she attempts to highlight this feature of myth and its relationship with archetypes. Archetypes are considered collective unconscious knowledge that is inherited in the chain of human ancestry and formed by phenomena related to human life since ancient times. These archetypes are regarded by Western Qur'anic scholars as one of the contexts of the Qur'an (Neuwirth 2003).

3.1. Types of Myths in the Qur'an

Western scholars categorize myths in the Qur'an into two basic types: myths of nature and myths of heroic figures. In introducing the first category, which includes myths that act as supernatural forces in nature, Neuwirth presents a general definition of myth that encompasses pagan stories and demonic supernatural forces, and she seeks to clarify the relationship between the scriptures and this concept. She considers such a definition of myth to be entirely opposed to the divine texts, as these texts emphasize the singular divine force affecting nature and history and reject any form of devilish or non-divine supernatural forces. In other words, according to such mythological interpretations, divine texts have played a demythologizing role. They reject mythological narratives that depict the influence of forces other than God in the creation and order of nature and history (Neuwirth 2003).

Neuwirth argues that the Qur'an rejects the mythological interpretation of the order of nature, which reflects a repetitive pattern in which the seasons follow one another. Instead of this polytheistic explanation, which emphasizes the power of nature and cosmic experience, the Qur'an presents a monotheistic interpretation centered on God's power. Consequently, the festivals established based on the holy text do not merely observe the annual changes of the seasons; rather, they celebrate significant events that have occurred through divine agency in past societies (Neuwirth 2003; Stetkevych 1996).

Neuwirth believes that within the Islamic context, such transformations in causal structures have been executed precisely, leading to the purification of the entire mythological fabric surrounding the cycles of seasons and the festivals and rituals associated with them. She asserts that Islam's approach to rituals and ceremonies has been quite conservative; despite continuing many ancient pre-Islamic practices influenced by the symbolism of seasonal change, the adoption of a new calendar effectively severed these practices from their Arab roots, completely disconnecting them from the cyclical nature of seasons and leaving no mythical subtext for them. Furthermore, new meanings and concepts have been imparted to Islamic rituals through this Islamic calendar, alluding to historical events. These redefined rituals either contribute to a sense of identity within the community or represent practices assigned to previous prophets that have been reinterpreted within Islam. In contrast, Judaism and Christianity have retained the temporal structure of ancient seasonal festivals, embracing and

integrating their primary symbols, which they have reconstructed based on the history of salvation, the central theme of the Bible. Thus, unlike Islam, these two religions maintain a mythical subtext in their seasonal and cyclical celebrations and practices (Neuwirth 2019).

It is evident that the Qur'an does not recognize any non-divine power in the order and cycles of nature, asserting that all power resides solely in the hands of God. Regarding the rituals and occasions that existed in pre-Islamic Arabic culture and continued in Islam, the Qur'an rectifies Arab misconceptions and presents these festivals and rituals through a new divine reinterpretation. It is accurate to say that the Qur'an does not entirely abandon all customs and cultural practices at once, nor does it accept all of them; rather, based on divine knowledge, it selectively retains a limited number. Among these carefully chosen elements, the Qur'an reveals its corrective approach.

The second type of myth, pertaining to heroic figures, involves individuals notable for their strength, courage, intelligence, and other heroic attributes (Gilliot 2003). In a comparative analysis, Neuwirth examines these characters across the divine texts of monotheistic religions, noting that the Old Testament is rich in heroic figures. In contrast, she finds that the Qur'an contains fewer heroic figures and categorizes its characters into two groups: biblical figures and Arabic prophets. Among these groups, Neuwirth highlights only a few notable figures, such as Noah, Abraham, Joseph, and particularly Moses, as heroes. The reason for this selection lies in the way the Qur'an portrays these individuals. Arabic prophets like Hūd, Ṣāliḥ, and Shu'ayb do not act independently and remain primarily focused on fulfilling God's will. Their actions appear static, preventing the audience from perceiving them as key characters or heroes (Neuwirth 2016, 192-193).

Suleiman Ali Mourad, a Qur'anic scholar, in his research on Maryam in the Qur'an, employs a contextual approach to investigate the context of the Qur'an and other sources available during that time. After presenting the Qur'anic account of Maryam and the birth of Jesus, he references the account from the Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew, which was written between the 6th and 8th centuries CE, highlighting the similarities between the two narratives. He posits that the source of both accounts of Maryam is the Greek myth of Leto and the birth of Apollo. Leto, who was desperately trying to hide herself from the angry Hera, sought the remote island of Delos. Aggrieved and distressed, she sat by a palm tree alongside the Inopos River and there delivered Apollo (Britannica 2024). He believes that the story of the palm tree, which

appears in *Sūrah Maryam*, is a reinterpretation of the myth of Leto. It concerns a distressed pregnant woman (Leto/Mary) who seeks a remote place (Delos/a secluded spot) and sits by the trunk of a palm tree beside a river (Inopos/a stream) to give birth to a holy child (Apollo/Jesus) (Mourad 2008, 168-169).

The first critique of this perspective is the same critique raised in the historical-critical method, which concerns the lack of concrete evidence for these possibilities. As stated, this group of Orientalists, relying on a historical framework independent of revelation, seeks only the history and sources of the concepts and narratives found in the Qur'an within other texts. Sometimes, by tracing these sources to Hellenistic myths and legends, they claim that the people of the time of revelation were familiar with such legends, merely presenting conjectures without substantiation. Conversely, other Orientalists, who argue that the story of Mary in the Qur'an is entirely free from mythological influences, underscore the doubts and uncertainties that exist within this approach (Neuwirth 2014; Neuwirth et al. 2010).

3.2. *A Contextual Reading of the Myth*

By emphasizing the microstructures and examining the context of the verses in the Qur'an, scholars employing a contextual approach have sought to understand the origins of the stories and historical reports within the Qur'an, asserting that these reports emerged from the social and theological context of the early Muslims. These scholars categorize many of the stories and historical events mentioned in the Qur'an as myths formed from the archetypes in the collective unconscious of the Qur'an's audience. In this manner, they not only typologize Qur'anic myths but also analyze the Qur'an's engagement with these myths (Neuwirth 2010).

As noted, Western Qur'anic scholars approach the Qur'an from a background in biblical studies. When they discuss context in their Qur'anic analyses, it is often informed by their prior experiences in biblical studies. Consequently, these scholars may overlook the fundamental differences between the two texts, leading to various interpretive errors. It seems that they have confused the concept of revelation in Islam with that in Christianity, resulting in a distinctly Christian approach to the subject. There is a significant difference between Christianity and Islam regarding the concept of revelation. For Muslims, the Qur'an is

entirely dependent on divine revelation; it is God's revelation, a true and complete message with clear, final expressions. In contrast, Christians believe that the most complete revelation is not found in a book but in a person. They contend that Jesus reveals God through his life and actions, expressing His will for humanity. The authors of the New Testament aimed to convey their experiences of Jesus to others, making this human testimony one of the foundations of the Bible. In other words, the New Testament documents the interactions and conversations of Christ as God with his people and society, and this account is validated and empowered by the Holy Spirit (Michel 1997).

In their analysis of the Qur'an, Western Qur'anic scholars often emphasize societal context and its role over divine revelation. They argue that the interactions of the Prophet with society, much like the interactions of Christ with his community, contributed to the formation of the Qur'an. While it is true that society and history are essential for a proper understanding of the Qur'an, and many ambiguities within it cannot be resolved without considering these factors, attributing greater significance to societal context than to the Qur'an itself as a revelation and divine word reflects a deviation stemming from the confusion of Christian and Islamic concepts of revelation (Alizadeh Mousavi 2019, 250-257).

Regarding the myths identified in the Qur'an that some Western scholars have claimed, two possibilities exist. The first possibility, also suggested by some Islamic commentators (*mufasssirūn*) who consider the term of *lisān al-qawm* (the language of the people) (Q. 14:4), emphasizes that this term does not refer to words and language in a literal sense but rather indicates that the Qur'an was revealed according to the level of thought and knowledge of its audience. According to this interpretation, the myths referenced by these Western scholars suggest that the Qur'an employs familiar concepts to convey its message more effectively and understandably to the people of its time, which does not imply an acceptance of those myths.

An example pertinent to this discussion is the reference by some Western scholars to the myth of the meteors in their interpretation of verses Q. 55:33-35. These scholars argue that these verses represent an ancient myth from the Arab community in the region where the Qur'an was revealed. According to this myth, jinn would obtain news and information from the occult through eavesdropping and relay it to privileged members of society, such as poets. With the advent of divine revelation, the jinn lost this power and authority (Neuwirth 2010). From

the perspective of these Western scholars, the verse Q. 55:33 refers to this limitation and loss of power:

يَا مَعْشَرَ الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنسِ إِنِ اسْتَطَعْتُمْ أَنْ تَنْفُذُوا مِنْ أَقْطَارِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ فَانْفُذُوا لَا تَنْفُذُونَ إِلَّا بِسُلْطَانٍ (الرحمن/33)

O company of jinn and humans! If you can pass through the confines of the heavens and the earth, then do pass through. But you will not pass through except by an authority [from Allah] (Q. 55:33).

They believe that the verse Q. 55:35, by stating two issues, re-considers disobeying this order and crossing the borders of the sky without permission:

يُرْسَلُ عَلَيْكُمَا شَوَاظٌ مِنْ نَارٍ وَنُحَاسٌ فَلَا تَنْتَصِرَانِ (الرحمن/35)

There will be unleashed upon you a flash of fire and a smoke; then you will not be able to help one another (Q. 55:35).

In this example, it can be emphasized that although there may have been a myth among the community regarding the revelation of the Qur'an, the Qur'an's view of this myth is correct and highlights the power and sovereignty of God over the earth and the sky, while denying any claims about the power of jinn without God's permission. Therefore, the Qur'an's use of the myth known among the Arabs demonstrates that this book attends to the beliefs and views that existed in the audience, and this is one of the unique features of the Qur'an.

The contrary point of such a view is that the myths and concepts included in the Qur'an serve to align with the culture of the time to the extent that the Qur'an has reflected them despite the knowledge of the invalidity of some views, theories, and traditions accepted at that time. In other words, the Qur'an has reflected these cases, although it acknowledged that these scientific theories and religious and historical beliefs are invalid and that their invalidity will become evident in the future. It can be said that the proponents of this point of view have presented such an interpretation of reflection with the motive of defending the Qur'an; in the seemingly conflicting cases between religion and science, by citing the point of view that the Qur'an itself has stated them while being aware of the invalidity of these cases, these conflicts and problems have been resolved. According to this point of view, the Qur'an, recognizing that some historical narrations are unfounded, has

reported these narrations only in order to engage the people of its era and to take advantage of the stories and narrations (Khorramshahi 1995, 91-97). The critics have considered this point of view as the meaning of engaging with and using the knowledge and false beliefs of the age consciously in the direction of divine goals.

Regarding this view, several criticisms and problems can be proposed, one of which is its incompatibility with the goals of the Qur'an, the most important of which is guidance. A contradiction with the sanctity of the Qur'an is also one of the other criticisms of this interpretation, because in this case, the Qur'an has merely pursued its own goals by using false knowledge, culture, and traditions. This point of view is also in conflict with verses from the Qur'an, as the Qur'an frequently refers to itself with titles such as *qawl faṣl* (the separator between right and wrong) (Q. 86:13) and asserts that it is not speaking out of whim and desire (Q. 53:3). Inconsistency with the necessity of in-depth study in the Qur'an, depleting the Qur'an of its content and message, and denying the immortality of the Qur'an are among the other criticisms that have been made against this view (Ayazi 2001).

3.3. *The Traditional Discourse of the Contextual Approach*

Western Qur'anic scholars in the modern era, especially since the second half of the 20th century, have often adopted an academic and methodological approach to Qur'anic studies. They have approached the study of this topic in the Qur'an by defining the characteristics of mythology, discovering archetypes and primordial examples, or by examining the functions of mythology. However, the orientalist scholars who have studied the Qur'an within the traditional discourse have investigated the similarities between the Qur'an and the written and oral sources at the time of the Qur'an, claiming that the Qur'an was borrowed from these sources.¹ They have primarily sought to identify similarities between Qur'anic teachings and the claimed sources of that time, without considering that these sources could include the Abrahamic texts or other oral and written traditions. Consequently, they have focused less on the semantics of mythology and regarded

1. It should be noted that there have been many works and research critiquing the idea of the adaptation of the Qur'an from other written and oral sources. In addition to Muslim scholars, many Western scholars have also criticized this notion, to the point that there are fewer scholars who maintain belief in adaptation using its traditional approach.

mythology in a manner similar to other sources available during the time of revelation, paying little attention to the characteristics attributed to mythology in the modern era. This group of scholars has primarily examined the fabric of the Qur'an through a philological approach. For instance, Tisdall, in his analysis of the story of *Hārūt* and *Mārūt* in the Qur'an, explores the etymology of these terms. He points to the names of two ancient Armenian deities who were worshiped by the Armenians before their conversion to Christianity in the 3rd and 4th centuries CE, considering *Hārūt* and *Mārūt* to be adaptations of the names of these gods. By providing numerous examples in his book, Tisdall refers to all the verses and historical narratives of the Qur'an as "Muhammadan legends," indicating his belief that the Qur'an was authored by Prophet Muhammad and adapted from various sources. According to him, the Qur'an serves merely as a retelling and myth-making of the Prophet from other existing narratives and stories during the time of its revelation (Tisdall 1905).

3.4. *Context, Canonization, and Mythology*

Some Western scholars contend that the Muslim perception of the Qur'an, following its canonization, transcends its historical context and details. Neuwirth argues that the Qur'an has evolved from being a historical document into a timeless text as a result of the canonization process, which has created numerous complications. She explains that with its final official canonization, the Qur'an lost its historical context, and instead of reflecting its gradual emergence as depicted in the text, it became characterized by the timeless and eternal nature of its message. This shift has made the understanding of the Qur'an increasingly reliant on the *sīrah*, a body of knowledge that, while transmitted and codified separately, has been integrated into the Qur'an by its early readers and listeners. Neuwirth suggests that prophetic tradition, in developing a meta-historical narrative, assumed the role that the history within the Qur'an should have held, despite the limited chronological evidence available. This includes the history of a liturgical and social communication process that took on a distinctly textual form in the Qur'an, reflected in the structure of its *surahs*. She emphasizes the need for further literary analysis of the Qur'an's microstructure to uncover the still-traceable aspects of that history, which remains an urgent area of study (Neuwirth 2002).

Neuwirth also highlights the implications of the canonization process on the decontextualization of texts from their historical backgrounds, facilitating their integration with myths and serving as evidence for societal myths (Neuwirth 2010). Based on Assmann's theory, when a message is preserved to endure beyond the context in which the original group was engaged, it typically undergoes significant structural changes. The message acquires a new form through processes of scripturalization and institutionalization. In the case of the Qur'an, a canon from below initially emerges prior to any canon from above, which appears only through the final redaction deemed necessary to combat pressures that could lead to fragmentation and provincialization. As a result, the grassroots canon evolves into an authoritative one, a development that mirrors what occurred in early Christianity when the official Church established an alliance with political authority (Neuwirth 2002).

According to Neuwirth, the Qur'an prior to canonization, which she describes as a book from below, differs significantly from the Qur'an post-canonization, which she characterizes as a book from above. In critiquing this perspective, it is important to note that Western scholars have often suggested that the canonization process created a new context for the post-canonical Qur'an, thereby paving the way for the incorporation of myths into the text. Although Neuwirth acknowledges certain fundamental differences between the Qur'an and the Bible regarding the number of biblical copies and their interpretations and translations, she has not sufficiently addressed the significant and fundamental differences between the two texts in the canonization process. In the case of the Qur'an, the Prophet of Islam actively encouraged the writing, recitation, and memorization of the text, ensuring that the general public was familiar with it, thereby minimizing the possibility of tampering or concealment from both the public and the Prophet himself. In contrast, the Bible was authored by various individuals over many centuries, with no precise information available regarding the authorship or the transmission of texts to subsequent generations. It appears that Neuwirth has overlooked this critical distinction between the Qur'an and the Bible, mistakenly equating the canonization process of the Qur'an with that of the Bible, which lacked direct supervision by the prophets and the community. Consequently, this misapprehension has led to the potential for the introduction of myths and alterations within the text.

Additionally, like many other Western and Muslim scholars, Neuwirth attributes the compilation of the Qur'an to the period of

‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān, overlooking the collection and compilation efforts that took place during the lifetime of Prophet Muhammad. She notes that, according to the prevailing Islamic tradition, the authoritative final version of the Qur’an is credited to the redaction performed by a committee convened by the third caliph, ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān. While this codex established a fixed sequence for the *surahs* that had not previously existed, it also integrated passages that had been transmitted separately into entirely new contexts. Neuwirth acknowledges, however, that the committee remained committed to the textual material whose authenticity was supported by reliable oral and written traditions, considering the complete body of Qur’anic revelations available at that time (Neuwirth 2002).

Therefore, there are two principal criticisms of Neuwirth’s perspective. The first criticism contends that Neuwirth equates the canonization of the Qur’an with the process of canonization that occurred for the Bible, thereby attributing to the Qur’an the same issues that canonization has purportedly created for the Bible, including the amalgamation of biblical texts with myths. The multiplicity of authors and the composition of biblical texts over many centuries, along with the lack of a clear record of their transmission to subsequent generations, represent a significant divergence between the Qur’an and the Bible, rendering the canonization processes of the two texts fundamentally different (Alizadeh Mousavi 2019). The second criticism of Neuwirth’s analysis of the Qur’an’s canonization pertains to her emphasis on the compilation of the Qur’an during the period of ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān, coupled with her insufficient attention to its compilation during the lifetime of the Prophet. However, historical evidence suggests otherwise, as numerous reports indicate that the Qur’an was indeed written and compiled during the Prophet of Islam’s lifetime (al-Zarkashī 1989; Khoei 2012; Ramyar 2014).

4. Conclusion

The contextual approach is a key methodology utilized by Western scholars in the study of the Qur’an, focusing on its historical and cultural context. The exploration of myth within the Qur’an is a significant topic that scholars have investigated from various perspectives. By relying on historical frameworks independent of revelation, these scholars seek alternative historical and non-revealed sources for Qur’anic

propositions, thereby prioritizing a contextual understanding of the text. One of the most important methods underpinning the research of this group, particularly Neuwirth, is the historical-critical approach. This method verifies only those historical propositions that align with the criteria of modern historiography through meticulous examination of historical sources. However, the doubts, uncertainties, and instability of results associated with this method present numerous challenges and criticisms. In this context, myth encompasses narratives that elucidate and describe the experienced world through archetypal lenses. By emphasizing micro-structures and investigating the context of the verses of the Qur'an, the contextual approach aims to understand the origins of the stories and historical statements within the Qur'an, positing that these statements emerged from the social and theological contexts of the early Muslim community. Scholars in this field categorize many stories and events mentioned in the Qur'an as myths, arguing that they were shaped by archetypes in the collective unconscious of the Qur'an's audience. In this manner, they articulate the characteristics of Qur'anic myths and examine the Qur'an's engagement with them.

However, by comparing the Qur'an with the Bible and neglecting the fundamental differences between these two texts—whether in terms of compilation and canonization or in the interpretation of revelation and context—these scholars assert that the Qur'an was influenced by the socio-historical context of the revelation era. They argue that many propositions and teachings of the Qur'an were derived from both written and oral traditions prevalent at the time. The multiplicity of authors and the composition of biblical texts over many centuries, coupled with the absence of a clear record regarding their transmission to subsequent generations, represent significant distinctions between the Qur'an and the Bible. Consequently, the processes of canonization for the two texts are fundamentally different, as the canonization of the Qur'an involved a distinct and more centralized approach compared to that of the Bible.

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Speech Acts in Qur'anic Verses of Iftirā': Meccan vs. Medinan Contexts

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ABSTRACT:

Original Paper

This study examines the use of speech acts in Qur'anic verses addressing the concept of *iftirā'* (slander), emphasizing the contextual and thematic distinctions between the Meccan and Medinan periods. Employing a descriptive-analytical method and drawing on Searle's classification of speech acts, the analysis identifies expressive acts as the most prevalent, followed by assertive, directive, commissive, and declarative acts. The study contextualizes these speech acts within the socio-religious frameworks of Mecca and Medina, demonstrating how the Qur'an's rhetorical strategies evolved to meet the distinct needs and challenges of each period. The findings categorize the sources of *iftirā'* into three primary groups, with the highest incidence attributed to disbelievers, followed by Jews, and then hypocrites. The themes of *iftirā'* in the analyzed verses include slanders about the divine unity, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), divine signs, the truth of prophethood, the Qur'an, the miracles of the prophets, the reality of resurrection, and human relationships. This research underscores the Qur'an's dynamic communicative approach, illustrating how its discourse effectively engaged diverse audiences while addressing theological and social dimensions of slander. The study offers

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valuable insights into Qur'anic rhetoric and its broader application in contemporary discourse analysis.

KEYWORDS: The Qur'an, *Iftirā'*, Slander, Searle's Theory, Speech Act, Linguistic Pragmatics, Meccan and Medinan Verses

1. Introduction

The Qur'anic text encompasses profound layers of meaning and can be examined through diverse analytical approaches. Undoubtedly, employing prominent theories from the field of pragmatics, which offer various methods for analyzing and interpreting linguistic data, can significantly enhance the understanding of Qur'anic meanings. Patte (1988), the author of *Speech Act Theory and Biblical exegesis*, argues that based on the said theory, all texts should be considered acts, and religious texts, in particular, should be viewed as religious acts. This perspective of treating texts as acts has enabled scholars to interpret the sacred nature of religious texts in a more systematic manner. Buss (1988) maintains that in certain periods, studies of sacred texts, directly or indirectly influenced by such approaches, have overlooked the supralinguistic truths governing these texts.

The Speech Act Theory has drawn significant attention in the fields of linguistics, language studies, and the study of religion, serving as a serious and effective analytical tool for examining religious texts. Pragmaticians focus less on syntactic relations between words and more on the characteristics of the speaker and listener, as well as the conditions of communication and the contextual environment (Cutting 2005). According to Searle, studying language as an independent subject and examining it in a detailed and thoughtful manner reveals that language is not as simple and straightforward as it initially appears; rather, it is highly complex and challenging. For this reason, many philosophical studies in the twentieth century were dedicated to this topic. In Searle's view, speaking a language entails engaging in a type of rule-governed and intricate behavior. Learning a language and gaining proficiency in it depend on acquiring its rules (Searle 1985).

Given the importance of this approach in text analysis, the present study aims to examine Qur'anic verses addressing the concept of *iftirā'* (slander) through the lens of this theory. The term *iftirā'*, derived from the root F,R,Y, appears 61 times in the Qur'an. *Iftirā'* refers to a reprehensible

social behavior that has existed across human societies, with individuals and groups committing it for various motives. The Qur'an extensively addresses this issue in multiple verses, exploring its various aspects. This study seeks to analyze the verses concerning *iftirā'* using textual analysis and speech act theory, focusing on identifying the responses to *iftirā'* based on the types of speech acts. This is achieved by categorizing and examining the five types of speech acts. Additionally, this research provides the opportunity to statistically compare the prevalence of each type of speech act in these verses and assess the appropriateness of the speech acts employed in these verses in relation to their contextual setting. Thus, it can be stated that the present research aims to answer the question of how the utterances containing *iftirā'* in Qur'anic verses can be categorized based on the speaker and the subject of the *iftirā'*. Additionally, what is the frequency of application of each type of speech act in the utterances involving *iftirā'* in Meccan and Medinan verses?

2. Research Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive-analytical approach to investigate the use of speech acts in Qur'anic verses addressing the concept of *iftirā'* (slander). The methodology was structured in several phases, each designed to systematically analyze the verses and interpret the findings based on Searle's Speech Act Theory. The first phase of the study involved the collection of all Qur'anic verses containing the term *iftirā'* or its variants, using a library-based approach. These verses were then categorized based on their place of revelation, distinguishing between Meccan and Medinan contexts. In the second phase, the study focused on identifying the key elements of speech acts within each verse. The verses were linguistically analyzed, and the speech acts were classified according to Searle's theory (1969). Each verse was examined for the presence and frequency of these speech acts, and thematic categories were developed based on the subject matter of *iftirā'*. The next step involved identifying the primary speakers involved in the acts of *iftirā'*, as outlined in the Qur'anic verses. These speakers were categorized into three main groups: disbelievers, Jews, and hypocrites. Each group was analyzed in terms of their role in propagating slander within the Meccan and Medinan contexts, with a focus on the specific ways in which the Qur'anic discourse addressed their actions and responses. Subsequently, the frequency of different speech acts within the verses of *iftirā'* was

determined. The distribution of these speech acts across Meccan and Medinan verses was analyzed to identify patterns and to understand how the Qur'an's rhetorical approach adapted to the varying socio-political contexts of these two periods. Finally, the study synthesized the findings to interpret how the Qur'anic discourse on *iftirā'* employed speech acts to address the theological and social implications of slander.

3. Literature Review

Research on the application of speech act theory to Qur'anic texts has garnered increasing attention in recent years. Delafkar et al. (2014) analyzed the structure of speech act of warning in the Holy Qur'an. Santosa et al. (2016) categorized directive speech acts into commands, questions, requirements, and advisories, emphasizing their role in the moral and spiritual guidance in Qur'anic stories. Hassanvand (2019) concluded that assertive and directive speech acts were used more frequently than other types of speech acts in *Sūrah Maryam*, primarily to inform the audience about the stories of previous nations. Dastranj and Arab (2020) applied the theory to both explicit and implicit Qur'anic references to *jihād*. They found that half of the instances involved assertive acts, followed by directive, declarative, expressive, and commissive acts in descending order of frequency. Taghavi (2020) analyzed Prophet Abraham's speech acts with his opponents within Searle's theoretical framework. The study found that assertive acts, aimed at introducing and propagating the concept of monotheism, were the most frequent, while declarative acts were the least frequent. Tajabadi and Pourmohammad (2022) extracted verses containing commissive acts through a library-based method using syntactic, lexical, and semantic criteria. They analyzed the discourse framework of these acts, identified the committing individuals, and outlined the content of the commitments. Khazaleh et al. (2023) used Searle's taxonomy to explore the speech act of supplication in the Qur'an. Despite the growing body of research on Qur'anic speech acts, the specific analysis in verses associated with *iftirā'* has not yet been undertaken. This context underscores the significance of this paper as a potentially innovative contribution to the field.

4. *Speech Act Theory*

The Speech Act Theory is one of the prominent theories in the field of linguistic pragmatics. Viewing religious texts as acts allows for a systematic interpretation of their nature, considering the educational, social, historical, and literary contexts of these texts. According to Searle, language, as a social phenomenon, encompasses speech acts that are produced in alignment with the speaker's mental state and in correspondence with the external world (Searle 1969). Searle, a renowned student of Austin—the pioneer of the philosophy of language—explored the role of speech in relation to the behavior of the speaker and the listener, categorizing speech acts into five types:

- **Assertive Acts:** The language user employs words with meanings of explanation, negation, critique, objection, reporting, or reasoning to express their beliefs about the truth of matters, emphasize a topic, or conclude an argument.
- **Directive Acts:** The language user utilizes words with meanings of command, request, suggestion, or reassurance to encourage the audience to perform or refrain from an action.
- **Expressive Acts:** The language user conveys positive or negative emotions regarding events through words.
- **Commissive Acts:** The language user, through words of promise or agreement, declares their commitment to performing an action in the future.
- **Declarative Acts:** The language user uses words with meanings of appointing, dismissing, annulling, or naming to announce a new event (Searle 1979).

While the framework of speech acts in contemporary linguistics appears to share similarities with traditional rhetoric themes such as context and situation (*ḥāl wa maqām*), secondary meanings of speech, and the order of speech components, it can be asserted that the classification provided by this model offers a more comprehensive framework for analyzing acts based on context and situational factors.

5. *Analysis of Verses of Iftirā'*

This section presents a detailed analysis of Qur'anic verses related to the concept of *iftirā'*. The primary objective is to identify the frequency of various speech acts within these verses and to classify their themes,

speakers, and contextual factors. In total, there are 53 verses associated with *iftirā’* in the Qur’an, distributed across the Meccan and Medinan *sūrah*s, as illustrated in Figure 1.

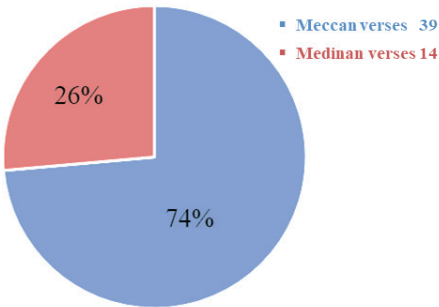


Figure 1. Distribution of verses of *iftirā’* in the Meccan and Medinan contexts

This distribution indicates a stronger emphasis on the concept of *iftirā’* in Meccan verses, likely due to the unique socio-cultural and religious challenges faced during the early period of Islam in Mecca. The prevalence of false accusations about the Prophet and the divine message necessitated addressing this issue extensively during that era.

In these verses, the concept of *iftirā’* is addressed in relation to various themes. As shown in Figure 2, the highest frequency pertains to the subject of divine unity (*tawḥīd*). These verses often refer to the accusations and distortions made by polytheists against the concept of monotheism. Other themes related to slander, in order of frequency, include Prophet Muhammad, divine signs, prophethood, the Qur’an, the miracles of the prophets, resurrection, and human relations.

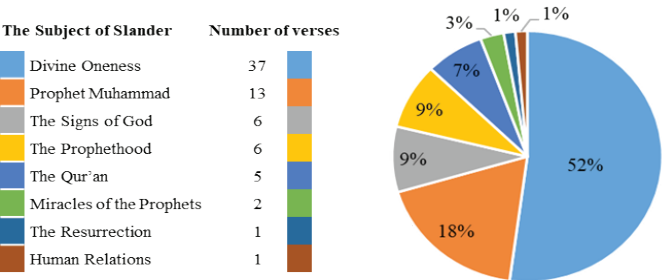


Figure 2. Distribution of themes in the verses of *iftirā’*

The frequency of various themes in the verses of *iftirā'*, categorized by Meccan and Medinan verses, is illustrated in Figures 3 and 4. This indicates that the theme of divine oneness remains the foremost topic of slander in both categories of verses. However, it is noteworthy that in the Meccan verses, 28 verses (54%) address this theme, whereas in the Medinan verses, 9 verses (48%), encompass this theme. The distribution of other themes related to *iftirā'* in the Meccan and Medinan verses is presented in Figures 3 and 4.

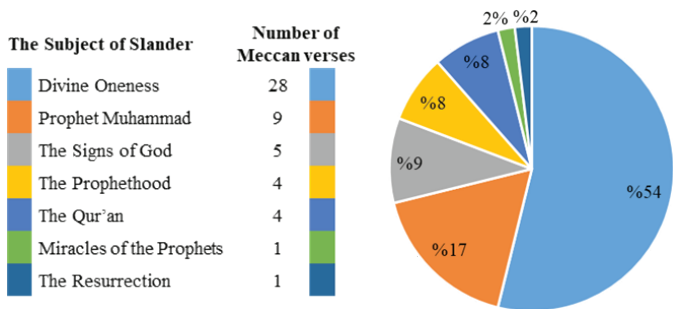


Figure 3. Distribution of themes in the Meccan verses of iftirā'

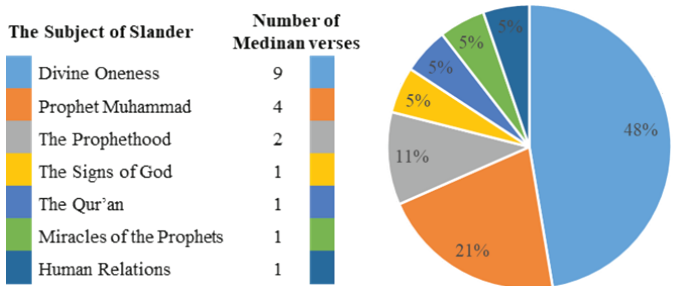


Figure 4. Distribution of themes in the Medinan verses of iftirā'

5.1. Speakers of Slander in the Verses of Iftirā'

Based on the analysis of the verses, the speakers of slander can be classified into three primary categories: disbelievers, Jews, and hypocrites. Each group plays a distinct role in propagating slander within the Qur'anic narrative (Figure 5).

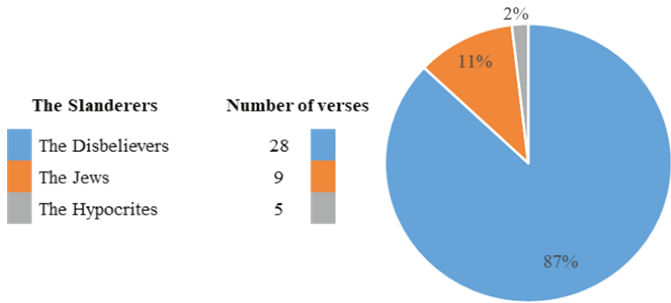


Figure 5. Speakers of Slander in the Verses of Iftirā'

5.1.1. The Disbelievers

Disbelief, in its essence, constitutes a rejection of the fundamental tenets of a religion, encompassing its symbolic representations and core faith elements. This denial, often fueled by hostility, obstinacy, self-interest, and other such motivations, fundamentally separates the individual from the embraced faith (Alizadeh Mousavi 2014). This antagonism can escalate to such an extent that the individual, blinded by his or her hostility, actively shuns the truth, preferring suffering and even death to its acceptance. This denial can manifest in various forms, including the denial of God with all His existential dimensions and attributes, the denial of prophethood, the denial of the Unseen, and the denial of the hereafter.

For instance, according to verse Q. 7:37, disbelievers, by associating partners with God and denying monotheism, falsely slander God and refuse to act according to the religion, and instead of accepting the religion of monotheism to which the prophets invite, they attribute another religion to God (Tabataba'i 1996). In another verse, God Almighty says:

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا أَوْ كَذَّبَ بِالْحَقِّ لَمَّا جَاءَهُ أَلَيْسَ فِي جَهَنَّمَ مَثْوًى لِّلْكَافِرِينَ
(العنكبوت/68)

Who is a greater wrongdoer than him who fabricates a lie against Allah, or denies the truth when it comes to him? Is not the [final] abode of the faithless in hell? (Q. 29:68)

The disbelievers, by denying the great blessing of the security of Mecca and believing in superstitions and idols that have nothing

but the name of God, have trampled on the truths and slandered the divine essence. This is because they have introduced false gods as partners to Him (Tabataba'i 1996). Pagan disbelievers, in their pursuit of divine intercession, blessings, and protection from evil, venerated and worshipped idols. By attributing partners to God, they engaged in false accusations against the Almighty (Q. 10:17). They presented inappropriate suggestions regarding the divine scripture, requesting the Prophet to alter the verses of the Qur'an. Furthermore, verse Q. 25:4 recounts the taunts and slander that the disbelievers directed towards the Prophet concerning the Qur'an, claiming that he fabricated it and attributed it to God. In their persistent resistance against the truth and divine revelations, they labeled the Prophet a slanderer and groundlessly dismissed the truth as mere sorcery (Q. 34:43) (Tabataba'i 1996).

5.1.2. *The Jews*

The Children of Israel were among the nations to whom God gave special favors, and through this, God's proof was completed upon them (Q. 2:47). But instead of being grateful for the divine favors and blessings, they considered this favor of God to be due to their racial superiority and inherent privilege (Haji Sadeqi 2011). They harassed their prophets and denied or killed many of them (Q. 2:61). The Qur'an has mentioned in many verses the Jews who slander God and make false accusations. For instance, they slandered God and said that they will not be punished except for a few days:

ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَالُوا لَنْ نَمَسَّنَا النَّارُ إِلَّا أَيَّامًا مَّعْدُودَاتٍ وَ غَرَّهُمْ فِي دِينِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ (آل عمران/24)

That is because they say, "The Fire shall not touch us except for a number of days," and they have been misled in their religion by what they used to fabricate (Q. 3:24).

The Jews believed that certain foods were initially forbidden to them, but God refutes this claim, stating that all foods were permissible before the revelation of the Torah. Those later prohibited were due to their transgressions (Q. 3:93-94). Additionally, their self-aggrandizement, claiming to be sons of God and His beloved allies (Q. 4:50), along with their idolatry of the calf (Q. 7:152), are among the calumnies they attributed to the Almighty. Moreover, when Jesus, son of Mary, said, "O Children of Israel! I am the messenger of God sent to you, confirming

the Torah that was revealed before me and giving glad tidings of a messenger to come after me, whose name is Ahmad," the Jews denied him and deemed his clear proofs and miracles to be sorcery. Thus, by rejecting the true religion, they once again slandered God (Q. 61:6-7) (Tabataba'i 1996; Makarem Shirazi 1995).

5.1.3. *The Hypocrites*

Hypocrites are the most dangerous individuals in any society because firstly, they live within the community and are privy to all its secrets. Secondly, identifying them is not always easy, as they often present themselves in the guise of friends, making their true nature difficult to discern. Thirdly, since their true face remains hidden from many, direct confrontation and open conflict with them become challenging. Fourthly, they have various familial and social ties with believers, and these connections further complicate efforts to combat their influence. Fifthly, their attacks are often unexpected and catch people off guard. These factors, among others, enable them to inflict irreparable damage upon communities. Therefore, a comprehensive and meticulously planned strategy is necessary to neutralize their threat. The Qur'an extensively discusses the hypocrites, exposing their characteristics, actions, and dangers. This significant attention devoted to them in the Qur'an underscores the profound threat they pose (Farazmand 2008).

Due to the inherent contradiction between their inner selves and their outward appearances, the hypocrites sought to conceal their malicious intentions for fear of exposure and the potential repercussions that might befall their lives, possessions, status, and families. To maintain their facade, they resorted to various justifications for their actions. They exercised extreme caution, particularly with regard to slander, to prevent anyone from discovering their secrets and true nature. Consequently, the reason why hypocrites were less frequently identified as the source of slander in the Medinan verses, compared to the disbelievers and the Jews, is their reluctance to reveal their true colors through open opposition to God, Prophet Muhammad, the Qur'an, and the basic tenets of the Islamic faith. This explains why the hypocrites, as propagators of slander, are less prominent in the Medinan verses compared to the disbelievers and the Jews.

Furthermore, hypocrites engaged in various subversive activities to undermine the Muslim community. These include obstructing and defying the Prophet's commands, employing deception and trickery,

forming alliances to inflict harm upon Islam, befriending disbelievers and the Jews, exhibiting duplicity in relationships, spreading corruption and discord, and breaking covenants. In the investigations conducted in this study, it was clearly demonstrated a correlation between the Qur'an's discourse strategies and the targeted audience during the period of revelation. This correlation indicates that the Qur'an offers a model for engaging with various audiences, particularly those who engage in slander. This approach can serve as a timeless and universal guide, adaptable to different contexts and circumstances. The Meccan period necessitated that the disbelievers, far more than the Jews and hypocrites, be identified as the primary source of slander. Therefore, the fact that expressive speech acts comprise the highest frequency (39%) of speech acts in the Meccan verses reflects the specific requirements of that era. The prevalence of slander attributed to the disbelievers during the Meccan period also arises from the unique circumstances of that time, influencing the style and tone of the Qur'anic discourse.

5.2. Situational Context of the Verses of Iftirā'

To understand the situational context of the verses of *iftirā'*, it is essential to first examine the content characteristics of the Meccan and Medinan verses in the Qur'an. The Meccan society was a polytheistic society deeply entrenched in idolatrous beliefs. Consequently, the Meccan verses of the Qur'an directly challenge the foundations of polytheism and idolatry, confronting their psychological and intellectual underpinnings, as well as their ethical and social consequences. Moreover, since Meccan society did not worship the One God, the Meccan verses emphasize the wonders of creation as evidence of the Creator. These verses also highlight the unseen world, resurrection and judgment, revelation, and the prophets, along with the supporting arguments and proofs. Thus, the Meccan verses focus on establishing these fundamental principles and explaining their broader concepts, aligning with the nature of the Meccan period as the initial phase of the Prophet's mission. This emphasis on foundational principles in the Meccan phase obviates the need for their repetition in the subsequent Medinan phase.

Furthermore, the Meccan verses address morality in its entirety, examining the practical manifestations of ethical concepts and outlining how to establish and implement moral laws within society. They warn against various forms of deviation, rebellion, and the pursuit of worldly

desires, including disbelief, disobedience, ignorance, arrogance, burying female infants alive, consuming the wealth of orphans, shortchanging and so forth. Alongside these admonitions, they illuminate the true nature of morality and the paths to righteousness (Hakim 1999).

Another prominent feature of the Meccan verses, as highlighted by Kafafi and Sharif (1972), is their recounting of the stories of prophets and messengers. These narratives depict the various challenges they faced in their struggles against disbelief within their communities and offer lessons and admonitions to be drawn from their experiences. The Meccan verses are further distinguished by their concise style, their resonant tone, and their captivating rhythm and rhyme. The Meccan period was a phase that required breaking the shackles of ignorance that bound society. This sharp and impactful approach, akin to thunderbolts, played a crucial role in overcoming obstacles and shattering the resolve of staunch opponents and saboteurs.

This analysis of the characteristics of the Meccan verses sets the stage for understanding the features of the Medinan verses. In Medinan society, Islam had become the dominant force, and the concept of revelation and communication with the divine was widely accepted. The social landscape of Medina has transformed, necessitating a different approach to presenting ideas and addressing issues. The Medinan verses delve into the details of religious rulings and social systems. They engage in debates with the People of the Book regarding their beliefs and deviations. They address the conditions of Islamic governance in Medina, the confrontation with the polytheists' stances, the concept of jihad and warfare, and the political and social positions of the Islamic call. They also explore the phenomenon of hypocrisy (*nifāq*) within the Muslim community, its causes, and strategies for dealing with it. Furthermore, they expound on political relations, the role of the leader in Islamic society, and the regulation of interpersonal interactions and transactions. All these factors necessitate that the Medinan verses elaborate on laws, systems, and related matters. Thus, the focus in Medina shifted from the fundamental principles of Islamic monotheism to its secondary aspects and details. The Medinan verses emphasize the boundaries and definitions of the monotheistic school of thought and strive to correct the deviations of the People of the Book (*Ahl al-Kitāb*) concerning monotheism. They also address the threats that could potentially undermine the Islamic community under its new governance and the pressures exerted by opposing systems (Hakim 1999). Considering the situational contexts governing the Meccan and

Medinan verses, it is natural that the prevalence of slander is higher in the Meccan context, and the response to it is more forceful. Consequently, the frequency of each speech act in the Meccan verses differs significantly from that in the Medinan verses.

5.3. *The Use of Speech Acts in the Verses of Iftirā'*

In the verses of *iftirā'*, specific types of speech acts are employed to establish effective communication with the audience and leverage literary features. Based on Searle's classification, the most frequently employed speech acts are primarily expressive acts, followed by assertive, directive, commissive, and declarative acts in descending order of frequency.

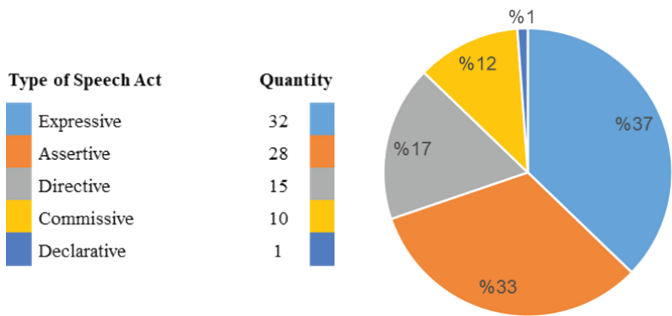


Figure 6. The frequency of application of various speech acts in the verses of *iftirā'*

As shown in Figure 6, expressive speech acts are the most prevalent in the divine discourse of the verses of *iftirā'*. An examination of their usage reveals that God, in addition to expressing His emotions regarding the prevailing circumstances, also engages in threatening and rebuking those who engage in slander. The second most frequent speech act is the assertive, comprising 33% of all applications. God addresses the slanders and demonstrates His commitment to the truth of the propositions He puts forth. He also aligns the propositional content with the external world and reveals His beliefs. In the context of the verses of *iftirā'*, one of the prominent characteristics of those who engage in slander is their ignorance, stubbornness, and arrogance in rejecting the truth. It appears that this very factor has prompted God to utilize this speech act to enlighten people. In essence, God's primary objective is to illuminate and inform people about their neglect of the truth, while also presenting arguments for the oneness of God, His control over all affairs, and His

limitless knowledge and power. This serves to distinguish the Oneness and Lordship of God from the idols and imaginary deities of those who engage in slander. This objective is achieved through the employment of assertive speech acts.

Directive speech acts are the third most frequent type of speech act in the verses on slander, accounting for 17%. God, in His address, utilizes directive speech acts to encourage the audience to take action. He warns, questions, requests, and challenges those who engage in slander. He also employs motivational aspects, such as urging them to provide conclusive evidence for their slanderous accusations if they are truthful, aiming to persuade the audience and inspire a change in their behavior. God utilizes directive speech act to capture the attention of those who engage in slander and to guide them towards compliance. Essentially, God's aim in employing this speech act is to call for adherence to righteous beliefs, to challenge and confront, to request proof and to remind those who engage in slander. In commissive speech acts, God, aiming to align the world with the propositional content, commits to punish and misguide those who engage in slander in the future, using expressions such as promising and swearing. The fulfillment of this type of speech act occurs over time. Declarative speech acts are the least frequent in God's discourse in the verses of *iftirā'*. In this speech act, God, possessing the necessary authority and qualifications, by revealing His command, brings about new changes and conditions for the audience (slanderer) in relation to the external world. Through this speech act, He emphasizes the consequences of the slander perpetrated by the disbelievers about the divine oneness, the divine signs, and the Qur'an, declaring that they have committed a grave offense through their slander.

Regarding the reasons for the high or low frequency of each speech act in the verses on slander, it can be stated that the frequency of speech acts in these verses is influenced by the main theme and aim of the text and its situational context. In the verses of *iftirā'*, it seems that the purpose of expressing slander is to instill fear in the audience regarding the consequences of such actions and the misguidance that results from it. Therefore, the use of expressive speech acts is consistent with this objective, which is why it has the highest frequency. Following this, the assertive speech act, which pertains to denying and rejecting the slander, as well as articulating, proving, and providing arguments against the slander in these verses, ranks next. Considering the differences and similarities in speech acts in the verses of *iftirā'*, it can be said that similar situational contexts typically lead to similar speech acts. In addition to

situational context, the speaker’s purpose, choice of vocabulary and the textual structure significantly influence the speech acts. For example, in the two verses Q. 6:137 and Q. 6:138, both address the issue of slander against God in a similar situational context (Mecca). However, the speech act in the first verse is assertive, while in the second verse, it is commissive-expressive.

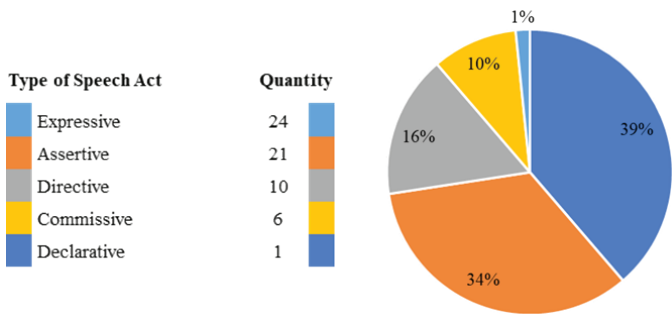


Figure 7. The frequency of application of various speech acts in Meccan verses of iftirā’

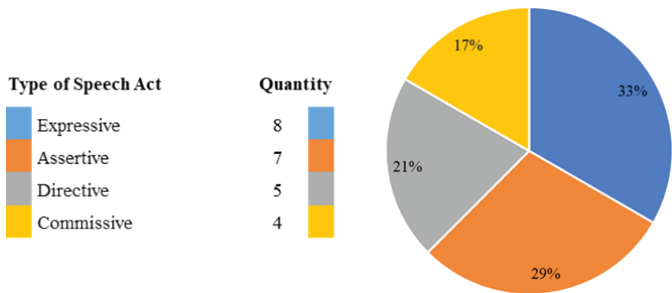


Figure 8. The frequency of application of various speech acts in Medinan verses of iftirā’

The frequency of each of the aforementioned speech acts, categorized by Meccan and Medinan verses, is illustrated in Figures 7 and 8. The higher frequency of speech acts in the Meccan verses compared to the Medinan verses is primarily due to the greater proportion of Meccan verses addressing the theme of slander—74% of the total verses are Meccan, while only 26% are Medinan. Additionally, the Meccan verses were revealed in a context of intense opposition to monotheism, requiring more frequent use of confrontational and persuasive speech acts, such as expressive and assertive acts, to refute falsehoods, warn

of consequences, and encourage repentance. In contrast, the Medinan verses focus more on community guidance and legislation, resulting in a lower overall frequency of speech acts.

Despite these differences in frequency, the order of prevalence of speech acts in both Meccan and Medinan verses remains the same: expressive acts are the most frequent, followed by assertive, directive, commissive, and declarative acts. The main difference lies in the percentages of usage, as shown in Figures 7 and 8. This consistency in the order of speech act usage reflects the overarching thematic and rhetorical goals in both types of verses, while the differences in frequency are shaped by the contextual and quantitative factors mentioned above.

6. Conclusion

The present study highlights the profound interplay between linguistic pragmatics and the Qur'anic discourse, particularly through the analysis of verses addressing *iftirā'* (slander) using Searle's speech act theory. By categorizing the speech acts into expressive, assertive, directive, commissive, and declarative types, and contextualizing their usage in Meccan and Medinan verses, this research unveils the nuanced strategies of divine communication aimed at confronting social and theological deviations.

The findings reveal that *iftirā'* primarily targets core Islamic tenets, including the oneness of God, the prophethood of Muhammad, the authenticity of the Qur'an, and the reality of resurrection. The expressive speech act, characterized by emotional intensity and divine rebuke, emerges as the most frequent, particularly in addressing the slanders of disbelievers during the Meccan period. This frequency underscores the Qur'an's intent to evoke awareness, instill fear of consequences, and counteract slander with clarity and resolve. Meanwhile, the declarative act, being the least frequent, reflects the selective use of authoritative declarations to emphasize the gravity of specific offenses.

A notable insight is the parallelism in the order of speech act usage across Meccan and Medinan verses, despite differences in frequency. The higher prevalence of speech acts in the Meccan verses is explained not only by their contextual demands but also by their greater numerical representation—74% of the verses on *iftirā'* are Meccan, compared to 26% Medinan. This distribution aligns with the early Qur'anic emphasis on confronting polytheism and establishing foundational beliefs.

Ultimately, this study underscores the Qur'an's strategic deployment of linguistic tools to address *iftirā'* across diverse social and theological contexts. It highlights how divine discourse employs tailored speech acts to engage different audiences, refute falsehoods, and guide humanity toward truth and righteousness. The integration of speech act theory into Qur'anic studies thus offers a powerful lens for appreciating the dynamic interplay between language, context, and divine purpose in the sacred text.

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Development and Validation of the Familiarity with the Qur'an Questionnaire

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ABSTRACT:

Original Paper

The Qur'an encompasses a multitude of valuable teachings that serve as essential guidance for Muslims. To fully derive benefits from this divine source, a comprehensive and continuous engagement is imperative. The present study aimed to develop and standardize the "Familiarity with the Qur'an Questionnaire" (FwQQ) and to investigate its factorial structure. Utilizing the insights of Qur'an teachers, experts, and lecturers of Qur'anic studies with seminary degrees from Saqqez County in Iran, the characteristics of individuals familiar with the Qur'an were identified. Based on these characteristics, a 22-item questionnaire was developed. A total of 434 primary and secondary school teachers as well as Qur'anic studies instructors from Saqqez, selected through multi-stage cluster sampling, participated in the study and completed the questionnaire. The collected data were analyzed using SPSS and LISREL software through exploratory factor analysis (EFA) (including principal component analysis (PCA) with varimax rotation), and confirmatory factor analysis

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(CFA) (using fit indices). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test indicated that the data were suitable for factor analysis. Additionally, PCA with varimax rotation revealed that the FwQQ comprises two factors: "Learning and Teaching the Qur'an," and "Tendency towards the Qur'an and Contemplation on It". These results were also supported by CFA, demonstrating a good fit between the data and the two-factor model. The reliability of the questionnaire, calculated using Cronbach's alpha, was found to be 0.97 for the overall scale, 0.93 for the first factor, and 0.96 for the second factor. This validated instrument holds promise for future research exploring the role of Familiarity with the Qur'an in various psychological and social contexts.

KEYWORDS: The Qur'an, Questionnaire Development, Qur'an Learning and Teaching, Reflection on the Qur'an, Qur'anic Inclination, Familiarity with the Qur'an, Psycho-metric Properties, Instrument Validation

1. Introduction

The Holy Qur'an, as an eternal and universal book, is immune to any distortion and is responsible for guiding humanity in all times and places (Fereidooni & Faraji 2014). This divine book offers a unique remedy for every society and never becomes obsolete. As a guide for humanity, guidance towards this source of light and mercy is only possible through continuous intimacy and connection with it (Ahmadian 2011). Familiarity with the Qur'an is a prelude to acting upon it and includes two components: eagerness and continuity, which have a reciprocal effect on each other (Fereidooni & Faraji 2014). Establishing a connection with God and maintaining it is the ultimate goal in Islamic education, and familiarity with the Qur'an is introduced as its most important method (Fazeli Dehkordi & Rezvan Khah 2010). Familiarity with the Qur'an refers to the quality and extent of human connection with the divine word and includes heartfelt inclination and practical attention in daily life (Velayati Terojani 2012). Familiarity with the Qur'an has a gradual and phased nature, and with effort and providing the necessary conditions, one can reach its higher levels (Behjatpour et al. 2006). According to Velayati Terojani (2012), the levels of familiarity with the Qur'an include touching, looking, reciting, listening, memorizing, contemplating, and acting upon it. Recitation of the Qur'an is one of the levels of familiarity with the Qur'an, which has been emphasized in

numerous verses (Q. 73:20; 2:121; 35:29) (Hussein Shah 2017; Paknia Tabrizi 2014; Babaei 2012; Velayati Terojani 2012; Najmi & Harisi 2008; Fallahpour 2013). Recitation requires familiarity with proper reading; therefore, the first step that a Muslim takes towards benefiting from the Qur'an is the ability to read it. Contemplating the meanings and themes of the verses is secondary to that. Correct recitation of the Qur'anic words, in addition to preventing distortion, provides the possibility of contemplating the verses (Taheri 1998).

Teaching the Qur'an is another level of familiarity with the Qur'an and leads to the dissemination of the divine word in society. The Holy Qur'an also emphasizes learning and teaching it (Q. 2:129, 151; 3:164). Contemplation of the verses of the Qur'an is another level of familiarity with the Qur'an, which has been emphasized in various verses, which facilitates a deep understanding of the verses and the realization of their undistorted nature (Q. 4:82; 47:24; 38:29; 23:68) (Paknia Tabrizi 2014; Babaei 2012; Velayati Terojani 2012), and unreflective and uncontemplative reading is considered without benefit (Mesbah Yazdi 2007). Another level of familiarity with the Qur'an, according to scholars, is memorizing the Qur'an (Paknia Tabrizi 2014; Velayati Terojani 2012; Hussein Shah 2017). Of course, memorizing the Qur'an along with contemplation and understanding of its concepts has more spiritual benefits for the individual. The memorizer of the Qur'an, through repetition and association of verses, influences their individual and social life with the divine word (Boshra 2012). The last stage of familiarity with the Qur'an is acting upon the teachings and commands of the Qur'an (Q. 8:2-4) (Paknia Tabrizi 2014; Velayati Terojani 2012).

Familiarity with the Qur'an, as an important variable in Qur'anic research, requires a valid and comprehensive tool for measurement. The absence of such a tool makes accurate and objective measurement of this concept impossible. Developing such a tool can contribute to Qur'anic studies, social and cultural planning, examining the relationship between engagement with the Qur'an and psychological and sociological variables such as job satisfaction, emotional intelligence, spiritual intelligence, social acceptance, adherence to religious practices, mental health, loyalty, and more. In Muslim societies, knowing the level of familiarity with the Qur'an among citizens is of great importance for religious and cultural planning, and by using it, strengths and weaknesses can be identified, and plans can be made to strengthen religious values. This tool will also be useful for researchers, students, Qur'anic and religious institutions, schools, and seminaries. However, it seems that no comprehensive tool

has been developed to measure familiarity with the Qur'an so far. The aim of the present study is to develop and standardize a tool that can accurately assess familiarity with the Qur'an and has sufficient validity and reliability.

To achieve this goal, the study will explore the characteristics of individuals familiar with the Qur'an, drawing on the insights of Qur'an teachers, experts, and lecturers of Qur'anic sciences in Saqqez City and it will address the following research questions: What are the characteristics of people familiar with the Qur'an, based on the opinions of Qur'an teachers, experts, and lecturers of Qur'anic sciences in Saqqez City? What are the factors (components) and items of the Familiarity with the Qur'an Questionnaire (FwQQ), based on confirmatory and exploratory factor analysis?

2. Literature Review

The concept of familiarity with the Qur'an encompasses various aspects and has been interpreted differently by scholars. Hossein Shah (2017) considers recitation, memorization of verses, beautiful recitation with a melodious voice, understanding the Qur'an, etc., as methods of fostering familiarity with the Qur'an in children from the perspective of the Infallible Imams (PBUH). From the viewpoint of Paknia Tabrizi (2014), gaining familiarity with the Holy Qur'an involves ten stages: keeping it in the house; looking at the Qur'anic script; remaining silent during recitation; listening to Qur'anic recitation; reciting silently while looking at the text; reciting from the Qur'an text (*al-mushaf*); reciting the Qur'an aloud; reflecting upon the verses; memorizing the Qur'an; acting upon the verses. Some scholars (Boshra 2012) consider the stages of understanding and becoming familiar with the Qur'an to include basic reading and correct pronunciation; eloquent and beautiful recitation; understanding translation and simple concepts; memorizing some *sūrah*s and verses; understanding the history and sciences of the Qur'an; understanding the profound truths and deep knowledge of the Qur'an. They also believe that all stages of understanding the Qur'an are a prelude to acting upon its content and becoming enlightened by its guidance, and that memorization of the Qur'an holds a special place in understanding, deepening faith, fostering familiarity, and acting upon it.

According to Najmi and Harisi (2008), familiarity with the Qur'an takes place in five stages: basic reading of the Qur'an; familiarity with the rules of correct recitation; translation of the Qur'an; interpretation of the Qur'an and familiarity with its truths, knowledge, and teachings; understanding the Qur'an or familiarity with the Qur'anic studies (Yadollahpour 2011). Shakoori and Fereidooni (2017) address the issue of the lack of precise and categorized indicators for measuring individuals' connection to the Qur'an. They utilize a descriptive-analytical method and group discussions to introduce two major indicators: Familiarity with the Text of the Qur'an and Familiarity with the Concepts of the Qur'an. They categorize related sub-indicators into three levels—basic, advanced, and expert—to provide a better assessment of individuals' engagement with the Qur'an.

Moreover, numerous studies have explored the impact of some kind of Qur'anic engagements on various aspects of individuals' lives, including spiritual wellbeing, moral development, and psychological health. Hanafi et al. (2021) developed a questionnaire on the motivation to learn the Qur'an, which has 12 items and three factors, designed based on a five-point Likert scale. Based on the research of al-Jabouri et al. (2021), listening to the Qur'an or music reduced anxiety caused by chemotherapy. Furthermore, there was no difference between these two methods for reducing anxiety in people with cancer. Nayef and Wahab (2018) found in their research that Qur'an recitation creates significant tranquility, which may be because the Qur'an has a special effect on the human heart, leading to the influence of certain hormones and chemicals in relaxation. The findings of Safrilsyah et al. (2024) indicate a significant difference between the experimental and control groups after listening to Qur'an recitation. The results of Nashori et al. (2022) showed that auditory therapy with Qur'an recitation, with and without interpretation, effectively increases the optimism of informal caregivers.

Although numerous scientific studies have examined the impact of various aspects of familiarity with the Qur'an on individuals, no research has focused on developing an instrument to measure this familiarity. Existing studies often concentrate on specific elements of Qur'anic engagement, such as memorization or recitation, without offering a comprehensive measure of overall familiarity. Most have employed qualitative and quasi-experimental methods, such as interviews and focus groups, to explore individuals' experiences with the Qur'an. While these methods provide valuable insights, they can be time-consuming and challenging to generalize to larger populations. Therefore, there is

a need for a reliable and valid quantitative instrument that specifically measures familiarity with the Qur'an, facilitating more efficient and systematic data collection.

3. Research Methodology

The present applied study employs a mixed-methods approach (qualitative and quantitative) for data collection. In the qualitative phase, the necessary data were gathered through library research and semi-structured interviews with Qur'an teachers, experts, and lecturers of Qur'anic studies in Saqqez City. Qualitative data collection was conducted in two stages: first, identifying the characteristics of individuals familiar with the Qur'an through interviews; and second, final verification of the collected characteristics. To identify the characteristics of individuals familiar with the Qur'an, based on theoretical saturation, interviews were conducted with 25 of the aforementioned individuals (Table 3), and 41 characteristics were identified in the form of declarative sentences (Table 1). The characteristics of individuals familiar with the Qur'an were adjusted using the Lawshe method (Table 2), and 28 of them, which had a Lawshe Content Validity Ratio (CVR) coefficient above 0.29, were confirmed by 52 Qur'an teachers, experts, and lecturers of Qur'anic studies in Saqqez City (Table 3).

In the quantitative phase, the statistical population consisted of all primary school teachers, secondary school teachers, experts and lecturers of Qur'anic studies (male and female) in Saqqez City, totaling 1,350 individuals, who were employed in Saqqez during the 2018-2019 academic year. Based on Morgan's table, a sample of approximately 300 individuals was deemed sufficient; however, a larger sample size was considered to enhance the study's validity. Accordingly, 450 individuals were selected as the sample using multi-stage cluster sampling. For sample selection, a number of primary and secondary schools in Saqqez City were randomly selected, and then, within each school, a number of male and female teachers who were willing to participate in the research responded to the questionnaire. Ultimately, 450 questionnaires were collected. During statistical data analysis, 16 questionnaires were excluded due to incompleteness or damage, and the data from 434 questionnaires were analyzed. The frequency distribution of the statistical sample of teachers, experts, and lecturers of Qur'anic studies

participating in the questionnaire standardization process is presented in Table 3.

4. Results

4.1. Questionnaire Validity

To assess the validity of the Familiarity with the Qur'an Questionnaire (FwQQ), three methods were employed: content validity, face validity, and construct validity.

4.1.1. Content Validity

The development of the FwQQ was conducted in two stages. In the first stage, to create a questionnaire with high content validity, the characteristics of individuals familiar with the Qur'an were identified through interviews with Qur'an teachers, experts, and lecturers of Qur'anic studies in Saqqez City. The interviews were conducted in person, and the researchers recorded the interviewees' viewpoints. The inclusion criteria for interview participants were having a Qur'an teaching certificate from the Ministry of Education with at least an associate degree or a seminary degree of level 1 or higher. Based on theoretical saturation, the necessary information was gathered by the 24th interview. To ensure comprehensiveness, a 25th interview was conducted, but these last two individuals did not mention any new characteristics. Therefore, the interviews were concluded after the 25th participant (Table 3). During the interviews, the participants were asked, "In your opinion, what characteristics do individuals familiar with the Qur'an possess?" The interviewees' responses were inferred and extracted in the form of declarative sentences under the title "Characteristics of Individuals Familiar with the Qur'an." As a result of the interviews, 41 characteristics were identified (Table 1).

In the second stage, the characteristics identified in the first stage were organized into a three-option format (1. Essential, 2. Useful but not essential, and 3. Not essential) based on the Lawshe formula (Figure 1) (Table 2). This table was provided to 52 Qur'an teachers, experts, and lecturers of Qur'anic studies with seminary degrees in Saqqez City (Table 4) for completion. These individuals included both the previous interviewees (25 people) and 27 other individuals. In this table, 41 characteristics of individuals familiar with the Qur'an were specified.

The table’s content, based on the Lawshe method, was designed so that the aforementioned individuals could both select one of the three options and write their views regarding the wording of the characteristic in the comment section. However, no significant comments were received. Based on the results of the Lawshe Content Validity Ratio calculation formula, if the number of participants is higher than 40, a value of 0.29 is considered acceptable as the minimum Content Validity Ratio (CVR) (Hajizadeh & Asghari 2011). Therefore, based on the number of expert participants in this study (52 people), the minimum acceptable CVR for the items was considered to be 0.29.

Accordingly, characteristics with a CVR of 0.29 or less were removed. Based on the obtained coefficients for each characteristic (Table 1), 28 characteristics were selected as questionnaire items, and thus, the FwQQ with 28 items was prepared for administration. For scoring the questionnaire, the responses were first recoded to have the same directionality; then, a score of 1 was assigned to “very low” responses and a score of 5 to “very high” responses. None of the responses had a negative score. The highest possible score is 110, and the lowest is 22. A higher score indicates greater familiarity with the Qur’an. The characteristics of individuals familiar with the Qur’an and the Lawshe CVR from the perspective of Qur’an teachers, experts, and lecturers of Qur’anic studies in Saqqez City are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Characteristics of Individuals Familiar with the Qur’an from the Perspective of Qur’an Teachers, Experts, and Lecturers of Qur’anic Studies in Saqqez City

	Characteristics of Individuals Familiar with the Qur’an	CVR
1	They enjoy participating in Qur’anic classes (recitation, memorization, translation, interpretation, etc.). (Interviewees 1, 9, 11, 15, 21, 23)	0.72
2	They always wish they were a prominent Qur’an reciter. (Interviewees 7, 11, 20)	0.31
3	They always wish they were a prominent Qur’an memorizer. (Interviewees 2, 21, 23)	0.33
4	They consistently follow news related to various Qur’anic fields in different media. (Interviewees 1, 13, 16, 19, 22, 25)	0.66

	Characteristics of Individuals Familiar with the Qur'an	CVR
5	They value being a Qur'an reciter or memorizer and take pride if there are such individuals among their family or relatives. (Interviewees 1, 5, 20)	0.34
6	They regularly participate in various Qur'anic activities and ceremonies. (Interviewees 3, 9, 12, 17, 21)	0.47
7	They are determined to engage in learning the Qur'an and being active in this field whenever possible. (Interviewees 4, 6, 8, 10, 13, 23, 25)	0.17
8	They admire the followers of the Qur'an and scholars committed to it. (Interviewees 3, 6, 11, 15, 19, 20)	0.49
9	Whenever the Qur'an is insulted, they react to the extent of their ability in a peaceful and logical manner. (Interviewees 5, 14, 16, 18, 23)	0.74
10	While listening to or reciting the Qur'an, they reflect on the meanings and concepts of the verses. (Interviewees 7, 14, 17, 19, 20, 22)	0.85
11	They enjoy discussing Qur'anic topics and issues with others. (Interviewees 1, 2, 3, 6, 9, 12, 18, 21, 24)	0.87
12	They have a copy of the Holy Qur'an (with or without translation) in their home. (Interviewees 3, 6, 15, 16)	0.32
13	They use cyberspace and social networks to spread and promote the Qur'an and Qur'anic sciences. (Interviewees 1, 5, 12)	0.59
14	They consider the presence of the Qur'an at home, in their car, at their workplace, etc., as a blessing. (Interviewees 12, 19, 22)	0.22
15	They regularly study and research Qur'anic topics. (Interviewees 9, 12, 15, 18, 21, 24)	0.65
16	They use their leisure time to study the Qur'an and engage in Qur'anic activities. (Interviewees 3, 5, 8, 9, 11, 14, 18, 25)	0.74
17	They study and reflect on the biographies of prominent Qur'anic scholars. (Interviewees 1, 5, 7, 11, 18, 22, 23)	0.61

	Characteristics of Individuals Familiar with the Qur'an	CVR
18	They use Qur'an Radio, Qur'an TV channel, and other media to learn Qur'anic sciences. (Interviewees 5, 9, 17, 20, 24, 25)	0.56
19	They participate in oral Qur'anic competitions (recitation, memorization) held annually or seasonally in their community or workplace. (Interviewees 1, 9, 13, 25)	0.17
20	They recite the Qur'an throughout the year and avoid limiting it to the holy month of Ramadan or other religious occasions. (Interviewees 10, 12, 15)	0.22
21	They recite the Qur'an throughout the year and do not limit it to Fridays. (Interviewees 9, 11, 16, 22)	0.22
22	They volunteer to recite the Qur'an in public gatherings or Qur'anic circles and events whenever needed. (Interviewees 2, 5, 7, 19)	0.11
23	They prioritize Qur'an recitation among their tasks and always allocate time for it. (Interviewees 4, 8, 9, 11, 19)	0.37
24	Listening to the recitation of prominent reciters of the Muslim world brings them pleasure and tranquility. (Interviewees 2, 8, 13, 14, 17, 23)	0.84
25	They can distinguish the voices of prominent reciters of the Muslim world. (Interviewees 1, 5, 7, 24, 25)	0.71
26	They encourage their family members and other relatives to learn the Qur'an and assist them in this regard. (Interviewees 6, 11, 13, 14, 25)	0.92
27	They participate in annual written Qur'anic competitions held in their community or workplace. (Interviewees 5, 7, 9, 24)	0.15
28	They attend Qur'anic classes held in their community or workplace. (Interviewees 3, 5, 8, 10, 15, 23)	0.27
29	If the conditions are suitable, they volunteer to teach the Qur'an to the best of their ability. (Interviewees 1, 4, 9, 12, 20)	0.89

	Characteristics of Individuals Familiar with the Qur'an	CVR
30	They participate in Qur'an memorization competitions held annually or seasonally in their community or workplace. (Interviewees 4, 10, 11, 19, 24)	0.20
31	They consistently and regularly memorize and review verses from the Qur'an. (Interviewees 2, 6, 8, 10, 15, 18, 21)	0.94
32	While studying the Qur'an, they look up the meaning of verses, terms, and words in a dictionary or through other means. (Interviewees 1, 6, 13)	0.26
33	They consistently follow and study new perspectives, viewpoints, and interpretations related to the Qur'an. (Interviewees 14, 15, 24, 25)	0.84
34	They consistently follow and study new findings related to the miracles of the Qur'an and Qur'anic sciences. (Interviewees 3, 11, 16, 19, 22, 24)	0.77
35	They consistently study the history of the Qur'an and reflect on its events. (Interviewees 4, 7, 12, 18, 25)	0.73
36	Based on their need for specific Qur'anic topics, they study and examine authentic Qur'anic interpretations. (Interviewees 15, 17, 23)	0.26
37	They regret if they miss the opportunity to participate in Qur'anic activities, gatherings, circles, and programs. (Interviewees 5, 11, 24, 25)	0.26
38	They refrain from swearing by the Qur'an for any purpose, even for their personal benefit, and consider it a sin. (Interviewees 19, 20, 22, 25)	0.11
39	They believe that the Qur'an is the word of God and was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). (Interviewees 3, 13, 17)	0.23
40	They always start their daily tasks by reciting a <i>sūrah</i> from the Qur'an or <i>Āyat al-Kursī</i> . (Interviewees 9, 13, 17)	0.23
41	In their daily conversations about various life issues (social, political, cultural, economic, scientific, ethical, etc.), they use Qur'anic verses as evidence. (Interviewees 5, 9, 18)	0.24

4.1.2. Face Validity

To establish the face validity of the questionnaire, the 28 items accepted by the supervisor and advisor, along with six (6) Qur’anic studies experts participating in the interview, were reviewed and approved.

Table 2. Sample Questionnaire Designed for Qur’an Teachers, Experts, and Lecturers of Qur’anic Studies to Express Opinions on the Characteristics of Individuals Familiar with the Qur’an, Based on Lawshe’s Formula

In your opinion, which of the following is a characteristic of individuals familiar with the Qur’an? (Choose only one option.)			
Preliminary Item	Essential	Useful but not essential	Not essential
1. They consistently follow and study new findings related to the miracles of the Qur’an.			
Comment:			
2. They memorize verses from the Qur’an and review them on a regular basis.			
Comment:			

The 41 characteristics (Table 1) obtained through interviews with 25 Qur’an teachers, experts, and instructors from the seminaries of Saqqez (Table 3) were compiled and organized in a table (Table 2). Then, 52 individuals from the aforementioned sample (Table 4) completed it. Both interview participants and other Qur’an teachers, experts, and instructors were included in the completion process. Respondents were also asked to write down their suggestions for editing the characteristics in the comment section. The final wording of the questionnaire items is presented in Table 8. After the questionnaires were completed by the mentioned individuals, the content validity of each item was calculated using Lawshe’s Content Validity Ratio (CVR) (Formula 1). The results are presented in the “CVR” row in Table 1.

$$CVR = \frac{ne - \frac{N}{2}}{\frac{N}{2}}$$

ne: Number of experts who have selected the “essential” option.

N: Total number of experts who have answered the questionnaire.

Formula 1. Lawshe’s Content Validity Ratio (CVR)

4.1.3. Construct Validity

To determine the construct validity of the questionnaire, exploratory factor analysis (Principal Component Analysis (PCA) method and Varimax Orthogonal rotation (VOR)) and confirmatory factor analysis were used. To ensure accuracy, the factor analysis process was repeated several times. In the first attempt, four items were scattered across different factors. Since these four items were dispersed and did not fall under a single factor or the main sub-factors, they were removed from the questionnaire. In the second attempt, exploratory factor analysis (PCA method and Varimax rotation) was performed on the remaining 24 items after removing the 4 items. This time, 2 other items were placed under two scattered factors. Since the variance of these 2 items was less than 0.5 and they fell under 2 other factors, they were removed from the questionnaire. Accordingly, items 2, 3, 5, 12, 20, and 23 in Table 1 were removed. Therefore, the number of items in the final questionnaire was reduced to 22. Finally, exploratory factor analysis was performed on the remaining 22 items. LISREL software and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) were used for confirmatory factor analysis. The reliability of the questionnaire was calculated using the internal consistency method and Cronbach’s alpha. The highest score obtainable from the questionnaire is 110, and the lowest is 22. Scores are interpreted as follows: 22-44 (weak), 45-66 (medium), 67-88 (good), and 89-110 (very good).

4.2. Demographic Information

According to Table 3, male Qur’an teachers and male Qur’anic studies experts and instructors with seminary degrees had the highest frequency

(7 individuals, 28%), while female Qur'an teachers had the lowest frequency (5 individuals, 20%).

Table 3. Frequency and Percentage of Interviewees to Identify the Characteristics of People Familiar with the Qur'an

Occupation	Qur'an Teachers		Lecturers of Qur'anic Studies with Seminary Degree		Total		Grand Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Frequency	7	5	7	6	14	11	25
percentage	28	20	28	24	56	44	100

According to Table 4, male Qur'anic studies experts and instructors with seminary degrees had the highest frequency (19 individuals, 36.54%), while female Qur'an teachers had the lowest frequency (7 individuals, 13.46%).

Table 4. Frequency and Percentage of Participants in the Final Approval of Characteristics of Individuals Familiar with the Qur'an

Occupation	Qur'an Teachers		Lecturers of Qur'anic Studies with Seminary Degree		Total		Grand Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Frequency	11	7	19	15	30	22	52
Percentage	21.15	13.46	36.54	28.85	57.70	42.30	100

According to Table 5, male Qur'an teachers with bachelor's degrees had the highest frequency (123 individuals, 28.34%), while female Qur'anic studies experts and instructors with Level 4 seminary degrees had the lowest frequency (0%, 0 individuals).

Table 5. Frequency and Percentage of the Studied Sample in the Quantitative Dimension by Educational Degree

Occupation	Degree	Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Qur'an Teachers	Associate Degree	Male	25	5.77
		Female	17	3.92
	Bachelor	Male	123	28.34
		Female	114	26.27
	Master's Degree	Male	35	8.06
		Female	27	6.22
	Ph.D.	Male	2	0.46
		Female	1	0.23
Lecturers of Qur'anic Studies with Seminary Degree	Level 1	Male	44	10.14
		Female	17	3.92
	Level 2	Male	8	1.84
		Female	3	0.69
	Level 3	Male	2	0.46
		Female	1	0.23
	Level 4	Male	15	3.46
		Female	0	0
Total		Male	254	58.53
		Female	180	41.47
Grand Total			434	100

4.3. Statistical Analysis and Findings

To assess the adequacy of the sample size (434 individuals) for factor analysis, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO) and Bartlett’s test of sphericity were used. The KMO result was 0.97, which was at a desirable and satisfactory level. Also, the result of Bartlett’s test of sphericity was statistically significant ($p < 0.01$, $df = 231$, $\chi^2 = 87.8393$).

To assess the assumption of normality of the data, their skewness and kurtosis were examined. Since the skewness value (-0.578) and the kurtosis value (-0.268) were between ± 2 , the research data were normal (Table 6).

Table 6. The Normality Assumption Test of Variables

Familiarity with the Qur'an	Number	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Standard Deviation	Statistic	Standard Deviation
	434	- 0.58	0.13	-0.27	0.23

Based on the Scree plot (Figure 1), two main factors have eigenvalues greater than 1. The Scree plot shows a non-linear bend after the second point (from top to bottom), which falls below 1. This bend indicates that only the initial values of the two factors (with eigenvalues of 13.18 and 1.61) were above 1, which were identified as the two main factors of the questionnaire.

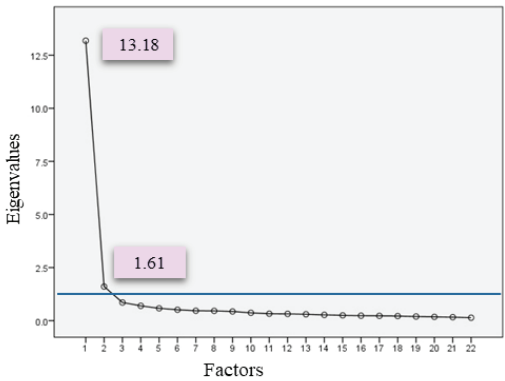


Figure 1. Scree Plot of the Factors of the Familiarity with the Qur'an Questionnaire in Exploratory Factor Analysis

According to the data in Table 7, the first factor (component) explained 59.91%, the second factor (component) explained 7.30%, and together they explained 67.21% of the variance of the items.

Table 7. Determining the Contribution of Each Factor in Explaining the Total Variance of All Items

Factors	Initial Eigenvalue		
	Eigenvalue	Percentage of Variance	Cumulative Percentage of Variance
Factor 1	13.18	59.91	59.91
Factor 2	1.61	7.30	67.21

According to the data in Table 8, all items had factor loadings above 0.3 and were correlated with the two (2) main factors. Table 8 also shows the results of the confirmatory factor analysis. The factor loading values should be greater than 0.3, and the t-value for each item should be greater than 1.96 to be significant. The results of the confirmatory factor analysis indicate that the questionnaire has an appropriate 2-factor structure and confirms the results of the exploratory factor analysis. All factor loadings related to the items are above 0.3, and the T-values are also above 1.96, indicating that the factor loadings of the items on their factors are significant. Therefore, it can be said that the researcher-made Familiarity with the Qur'an questionnaire has an appropriate 2-factor structure and has appropriate construct validity.

Table 8. Varimax Rotated Factor Matrix of the Familiarity with the Qur'an Questionnaire Based on Exploratory Factor Analysis

No.	Items	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor Loading	T-value	Significance
5	I like those people who follow the Qur'an and adhere to its instructions.	0.872		0.78	15.45	Significant
4	I can distinguish the voices of the prominent reciters of the Muslim world.	0.809		0.98	19.15	Significant
3	I use Qur'an radio, Qur'an television, social networks and other media to learn the Qur'an and Qur'anic sciences.	0.784		0.99	20.28	Significant
6	I continuously listen to the recitations of prominent reciters of the Muslim world.	0.755		1.02	20.26	Significant
8	I constantly follow the news related to different areas of the Qur'an in various media.	0.746		1	20.51	Significant
16	I read the Qur'an and do activities related to the Qur'an during my free times.	0.739		0.93	18.72	Significant
14	I use cyberspace and social networks to spread and promote the Qur'an.	0.687		1.04	21	Significant

No.	Items	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor Loading	T-value	Significance
2	I study the biographies of prominent scholars of the Qur'an and Qur'anic sciences thoughtfully.	0.681		0.97	19.96	Significant
21	Listening to the recitations of the eminent reciters of the Muslim world gives me pleasure and peace.	0.681		0.96	21.44	Significant
17	I constantly study new findings related to the miracle of the Qur'an.	0.675		0.98	20.18	Significant
22	If the right conditions be provided, I will teach the Qur'an and Qur'anic sciences voluntarily as much as I can.	0.670		0.97	19.7	Significant
7	I enjoy attending Qur'an classes (recitation, memorization, interpretation, etc.).	0.668		1.01	19.11	Significant
13	I have decided to dedicate more time to learn the Qur'an and Qur'anic sciences from now on.	0.641		1.05	21.57	Significant
10	I memorize verses from the Qur'an and review them on a regular basis.	0.639		1.02	20.96	Significant

No.	Items	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor Loading	T-value	Significance
20	When listening to the Qur'an, I reflect on the meanings and concepts of the verses.		0.822	0.81	17.8	Significant
19	I regularly do researches about Qur'anic concepts and topics.		0.806	0.77	15.85	Significant
18	I regularly participate in various Qur'anic ceremonies.		0.787	1.03	20.34	Significant
9	Whenever the Qur'an is insulted, I react as logically as possible.		0.753	1.01	20.38	Significant
1	I encourage those around me to learn the Qur'an and Qur'anic sciences and help them in this regard.		0.694	0.78	16.85	Significant
12	I enjoy talking to others about Qur'anic topics and subjects.		0.683	0.8	17.48	Significant
11	I am constantly following and studying new attitudes, views, and interpretations related to the Qur'an.		0.665	1.03	22.91	Significant
15	I am constantly studying the history of the Qur'an and thinking about the related events.		0.601	1.09	23.36	Significant

To examine the construct validity of the Familiarity with the Qur'an questionnaire, confirmatory factor analysis was used with LISREL software. The results are presented in Table 9.

Table 9. Model Fit Indices

Fit index	NNFI	GFI	IFI	RMSEA	CFI	NFI
Acceptable Domain	> 0.9	> 0.9	> 0.9	< 0.08	> 0.9	> 0.9
Observed Value	0.97	0.75	0.97	0.11	0.97	0.97

According to the data in Table 9, the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) is 0.11, which is greater than the criterion (0.08) and indicates that the fitted model is slightly larger than the desired index. The Incremental Fit Index (IFI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI), and Normed Fit Index (NFI) have also increased compared to the initial model and are greater than the desired criterion (0.9). Only the Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) is smaller than the desired criterion. Considering the obtained fit indices, it can be said that the factor analysis model has a good fit with the data.

4.4. Questionnaire Structure and Correlations

The correlation coefficient results between the different dimensions of the questionnaire in Table 10 indicate that the correlation between the first factor and the second factor was 0.79, the correlation between the first factor and the whole questionnaire was 0.98, and the correlation between the second factor and the whole questionnaire was 0.91. Therefore, the correlation between all dimensions of the questionnaire was above 0.7, which is considered appropriate.

Table 10. Correlation Coefficient Between the Dimensions of Familiarity with the Qur'an Questionnaire

Factors	Factor 1	Factor 2
Factor 1	-	
Factor 2	0.79	-
Total	0.98	0.91

In Table 11, the items correlated with Factor 1 and Factor 2 are shown in descending order of factor loading based on exploratory factor analysis (Varimax rotation method).

Table 11. Factors of the Familiarity with the Qur'an Questionnaire and Correlated Items Based on Exploratory Factor Analysis (Varimax Rotation Method)

Factors	Items associated with factors in the order of factor load
Factor 1	5-4-3-6-8-16-14-2-21-17-22-7-13-10
Factor 2	20-19-18-9-1-12-11-15

As observed in Table 11, based on the results of exploratory factor analysis (Varimax rotation) and confirmatory factor analysis, the Familiarity with the Holy Qur'an questionnaire was divided into two main factors (components): the first factor (component) had 14 items, and the second factor (component) had 8 items. Finally, based on the results of exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis, items 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 13, 14, 16, 17, 21, and 22 were correlated with the first factor, and items 1, 9, 11, 12, 15, 18, 19, and 20 were correlated with the second factor.

5. Discussion

5.1 Key Findings

Through exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis, the Familiarity with the Qur'an Questionnaire was finalized with 22 items, grouped into two distinct factors: Learning and Teaching the Qur'an, and Tendency towards the Qur'an and Contemplation on It. These two dimensions capture both the practical and reflective aspects of Qur'anic familiarity, providing a holistic approach to understanding this concept.

5.1.1. First Factor: Learning and Teaching the Qur'an

This factor encompasses 14 items related to active engagement with Qur'anic practices, such as:

- Loving and valuing Qur'an scholars and followers;
- Distinguishing the voices of prominent reciters;

- Using Qur'an Radio, Qur'an TV channel, and other media to learn Qur'anic knowledge;
- Enjoying listening to the recitation of prominent reciters;
- Consistently following news related to various Qur'anic topics such as the miracles of the Qur'an;
- Filling leisure time with studying the Qur'an and engaging in Qur'anic activities;
- Using cyberspace and social networks to promote Qur'anic knowledge;
- Willingness to teach the Qur'an;
- Enjoying participating in Qur'anic classes (recitation, memorization, translation, interpretation, etc.);
- Being determined to allocate more time to learning the Qur'an;
- Consistently memorizing and reviewing verses of the Qur'an.

The obtained results are consistent with the results of some previous studies. According to Hussein Shah (2017), recitation, memorization of verses, and reciting the Qur'an with a beautiful voice are essential for Familiarity with the Qur'an. Velayati Toroujeni (2012) believes that teaching and learning the Qur'an, reading the Qur'an, listening to the Qur'an, and memorizing the Qur'an lead to Familiarity with the Qur'an. Paknia Tabrizi (2014) considers being silent while reciting, listening to the recitation of the Qur'an, reciting from the text, reciting the Qur'an, and memorizing the Qur'an as ways of establishing Familiarity with the Qur'an. Moreover, understanding the translation and simple concepts and memorizing some *sūrah*s are necessary for Familiarity with the Qur'an (Boshra 2012).

However, this study also introduces new elements, such as appreciating committed scholars, recognizing prominent reciters, utilizing media like Qur'an Radio and TV for learning, regularly following Qur'anic news, engaging in Qur'anic studies during leisure, and employing social networks for promotion. These novel aspects reflect the evolving role of technology and media in Qur'anic studies, making the factor particularly relevant in contemporary contexts.

5.1.2. Second Factor: Tendency towards the Qur'an and Contemplation on It

This factor includes eight (8) items reflecting deeper cognitive and emotional engagement with the Qur'an, such as:

- Reflecting on the meanings of the verses;
- Studying and researching the Qur'an;

- Participating in various Qur'anic activities and ceremonies;
- Reacting appropriately and logically to those who insult the Qur'an in a peaceful manner;
- Encouraging family members and other relatives to learn the Qur'an;
- Enjoying discussions about the Qur'an with others;
- Exploring and studying new perspectives and interpretations of the Qur'an;
- Examining the history of the Qur'an and reflecting on its significance.

The findings of this study align with prior research on familiarity with the Qur'an. For instance, Hussein Shah (2017) underscores the importance of understanding the Qur'an, while Velayati Toroujeni (2012) highlights the significance of comprehending, contemplating, and acting upon the Qur'anic teachings. Similarly, Paknia Tabrizi (2014) emphasizes the need for reflection on the Qur'anic verses and their practical application. Additionally, Boshra (2012) identifies familiarity with the Qur'an as encompassing knowledge of its history and sciences, the recognition of its profound truths, and adherence to its guidance.

This study introduces several novel elements not explicitly addressed in previous research, reflecting a broader and more dynamic understanding of Qur'anic familiarity. These include fostering Qur'anic engagement within family and social circles, actively participating in Qur'anic activities and ceremonies, demonstrating a peaceful and thoughtful response to disrespect toward the Qur'an, and deriving enjoyment from meaningful discussions about Qur'anic teachings. These contributions, derived from the perspectives of Qur'an teachers, experts, and instructors in Saqqez, provide fresh insights into the multifaceted dimensions of Qur'anic familiarity.

5.2. Significance of Findings

This study underscores the importance of emphasizing individual interests, attitudes, and tendencies in fostering familiarity with the Qur'an—factors often overlooked in prior research. Many previous studies have relied heavily on analytical-documentary methods and traditional sources, neglecting field investigations and contemporary resources. As a result, key aspects of individuals' engagement with the Qur'an, such as their intrinsic motivations and attitudes, have been undervalued.

By incorporating items related to modern communication tools, including media, cyberspace, and social networks, the study provides a comprehensive framework for assessing Qur'anic familiarity in both real and virtual spaces. Additionally, the questionnaire introduces items such as responding peacefully to Qur'an-related offenses, reflecting the relevance of contemporary global issues. These contributions make the questionnaire a versatile tool for future research across Qur'anic studies and behavioral studies, applicable to diverse populations and settings.

5.3. Limitations and Future Directions

The study faced several limitations. The questionnaire was developed based on the perspectives of Qur'an teachers, experts, and instructors in Saqqez, where a limited number of female Qur'an professionals led to an imbalance in the gender representation of the sample. Additionally, the geographic focus on Saqqez may limit the generalizability of the findings to other contexts.

To enhance the questionnaire's validity, it is recommended to seek input from Qur'anic experts across different regions and societies. Administering the questionnaire to a wider range of groups, including employees, students, university professors, and other demographics, would provide richer insights into its applicability. Future studies should use this questionnaire alongside others measuring constructs such as general health, self-esteem, social adjustment, personality, job satisfaction, and spiritual intelligence. Recalculating its validity in combination with these measures could yield a more robust assessment tool. By addressing these limitations and suggestions, future research can build upon the present study to achieve a deeper understanding of Qur'anic familiarity in diverse social and cultural contexts.

6. Conclusion

This study validated the Familiarity with the Qur'an Questionnaire (FwQQ) using three approaches: content validity, face validity, and construct validity. Through comprehensive interviews with Qur'anic experts and teachers of Saqqez City, a meticulous process of item selection using Lawshe's formula, and rigorous statistical analyses, the questionnaire was refined to 22 items categorized into two key factors: Learning and Teaching the Qur'an, and Tendency towards the Qur'an and

Contemplation on It. The first factor emphasizes practical engagement with the Qur'an, including recitation, teaching, and leveraging modern tools like media and social networks for learning and dissemination. The second factor highlights cognitive and emotional connections, such as reflection, family engagement, and participation in Qur'anic discussions. Both factors collectively capture the multidimensional nature of Qur'anic familiarity, blending traditional practices with contemporary approaches.

The findings underscore the evolving role of technology and social dynamics in Qur'anic studies, making the FwQQ a relevant tool for assessing Qur'anic engagement in diverse settings. While the study achieved significant contributions, including insights into using modern communication tools and addressing global Qur'anic issues, it faced limitations in geographic scope and gender representation. By bridging traditional and modern perspectives, this study provides a robust framework for understanding Qur'anic familiarity, offering practical implications for educators, researchers, and policymakers in fostering a deeper connection with the Qur'an.

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Embodiment of Deeds in Near-Death Experiences: A Qur'anic and Theological Analysis Based on the Views of 'Allameh Tabataba'i

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ABSTRACT:

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The concept of the embodiment of deeds is discussed within the framework of Islamic eschatology, specifically concerning the afterlife, the recompense of actions, and divine justice. This study investigates the embodiment of deeds as reflected in Near-Death Experiences (NDEs) and examines its alignment with Islamic eschatological principles. Drawing on Qur'anic verses, hadiths, and the philosophical insights of 'Allameh Tabataba'i, the research emphasizes the intrinsic connection between actions, the soul, and their eternal forms. Employing a descriptive-analytical method, over one hundred NDE accounts from Iranian Shi'a Muslims were analyzed.

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The findings reveal various forms of embodiment, including the manifestation of significant physical actions, spiritual qualities, and the perception of life events and their consequences. The study concludes that the ontological nature of NDEs corresponds closely to the initial stages of the intermediary realm (*barzakh*), based on Tabataba'i perspective. By bridging empirical observations with Islamic teachings on divine justice and the system of reward and punishment, the research offers new insights into the interconnectedness of human actions and their spiritual realities. This multidisciplinary approach enriches contemporary discourse on the afterlife, highlighting the transformative potential of NDEs in fostering moral and spiritual awareness. The research further demonstrates that the embodiment of deeds, as reported in NDEs, is substantiated by both reason and revelation, with Qur'anic-philosophical interpretations from 'Allameh Tabataba'i providing a robust explanatory framework.

KEYWORDS: The Qur'an, Near-death experience (NDE), Islamic theology, Embodiment of deeds, Eschatology, Intermediary realm, *Barzakh*, 'Allameh Tabataba'i

1. Introduction

In some Qur'anic verses and Hadith, the system of recompense in the afterlife is characterized by the manifestation or embodiment of deeds. The fundamental principle underlying this system is the concept of objectivity, where actions have concrete consequences. The term *tajassum* (embodiment) is derived from *jism* (body), which refers to anything that occupies space, moves, and is perceptible, encompassing humans, animals, plants, and other entities (Muṣṭafawī 1989, 2: 88). In some narrations (*riwāyāt*), the embodiment of deeds is expressed as *tamaththul* (representation). Although the concept of deed embodiment is explicitly addressed in the Qur'an and Hadith, the specific term itself does not appear in them. This expression is inferred from religious texts. For instance, a tradition narrates Imam al-Ṣādiq stating that three entities – wealth, offspring, and deeds – are represented to a dying person. Among these, the representation of one's deeds remains with them in the grave until the Day of Judgment (al-Fayḍ al-Kāshānī 1985, 25: 599).

One potential function of studying near-death experiences (NDEs) is the experiential revelation of truths that emerge due to the unveiling of realities typically obscured by the strong bond between the soul and the body. If these experiences can be validated, they may serve as a

powerful means of attaining certainty, akin to the experience of Prophet Abraham, whose revelation of the truths of the heavens and earth led him to profound conviction:

Thus did We show Abraham the dominions of the heavens and the earth, that he might be of those who possess certitude (Q. 6:75).

Currently, near-death experiences (NDEs) have become more prevalent due to advancements in medical technology, and the widespread occurrence of this phenomenon has garnered significant attention. The nature of these experiences remains a subject of debate among thinkers from various disciplines. Philosophers, psychiatrists, neuroscientists, religious scholars, and phenomenologists have all attempted to understand and demystify these experiences. More importantly, many aspects and themes of NDEs resonate with Qur'anic and Hadith traditions, offering valuable insights into their interpretation.

The study of NDEs dates back to the research of Raymond Moody (1975). Following the impact of his work, numerous organizations dedicated to studying this phenomenon have been established. Given the dominance of materialistic perspectives in contemporary worldviews and the recurring theme of divine guidance throughout human history, NDEs should be considered a valuable resource for understanding eschatological concepts. They warrant careful examination from the perspective of metaphysical research and require accurate explanations of their elements and components based on religious texts.

In the thought framework of 'Allameh Muhammad Husayn Tabataba'i, the principle of *ma'ād* (resurrection and the afterlife) and its associated concepts are approached through a rational and analytical lens. Challenging purely scripturalist views, he places reason and logical proof at the core of understanding revealed teachings. By constructing an interconnected network of his interpretive, anthropological, and ontological views in conjunction with his eschatological perspectives, we can address numerous ambiguities surrounding this topic.

Before delving into the discussion, it is crucial to note that individuals who have undergone near-death experiences (NDEs) often report perceptions that have been identified as common features by researchers in this field. The common elements of these experiences typically include out-of-body sensations, feelings of peace and joy, distorted sense of time, passing through a tunnel of light, a life review, a strong attraction towards a brilliant light, awareness of the conditions of other people, heightened sensory perception, a sense of being protected, encounters

with deceased acquaintances, and meeting sacred figures (Moody 1975; Morse & Perry 1994; Long & Perry 2010). In this study, we aim to show that the embodiment of deeds is a prominent and almost common feature of Muslim NDEs, although it is not mentioned in the published works of the pioneers of NDE studies. The research addresses two central questions: How can the phenomenon of the embodiment of deeds in near-death perceptions, as reported by numerous Muslim experiencers, be explained through Tabataba'i's interpretation of Qur'anic verses and traditions (*ahādīth*)? Can Tabataba'i's framework validate the accounts of individuals who perceive the pleasant or unpleasant forms encountered during their NDEs as consequences and embodiments of their actions?

2. Methodology

This study employs a descriptive-analytical method based on data collected from interviews with over one hundred Iranian Shi'a Muslims who have undergone near-death experiences (NDEs) featured in the documentary "Life after Life". Directed and researched by Dr. Abbas Mozoun, this documentary aired in four seasons from 2020 to 2023 on Channel 4 of the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting and is currently available in the channel's archives. After gathering the NDE accounts, the analysis focused on identifying recurring themes and patterns regarding how deeds were embodied in these experiences. Each account was meticulously analyzed to categorize it, allowing for the creation of a typology of the embodiment of deeds in NDEs.

To answer the main questions of the study, the next phase involved a theological examination of the embodiment of deeds within the framework of Islamic theology, specifically focusing on Tabataba'i's works. This included a detailed review of his interpretations of relevant Qur'anic verses and hadiths in his commentary, *Al-Mizan*, and other writings, particularly concerning the concepts of divine reward, punishment, and the embodiment of actions in the Hereafter.

3. Literature Review

The literature on Near-Death Experiences (NDEs) is extensive and multifaceted, encompassing numerous perspectives and research spanning several decades. While the term "Near-Death Experience" was first introduced by Moody in 1975, similar accounts are present

in the folklore of various cultures. The phenomenon was initially clinically described by Heim in 1892, with earlier isolated cases noted in the 19th century. Once considered rare, NDEs are now reported to occur in 10% to 20% of cardiac arrest survivors (Greyson 2015). Early investigations by Moody (1975) identified key features of NDEs, such as feelings of peace, out-of-body sensations, and encounters with a brilliant light. Subsequent studies by Noyes and Slymen (1979), and Ring (1980) further categorized these elements and proposed sequential stages in NDEs. Others have identified distinct types of NDEs, such as autoscopic, transcendental, or combined (Sabom 1982), as well as cognitive, affective, paranormal, or transcendental (Greyson, 1985). Two primary theoretical frameworks have emerged to interpret NDEs: the biological/psychological hypothesis and the survivalist hypothesis. The former posits that NDEs arise from functional changes in the brain during the dying process or psychological responses to the perceived threat of death (Blackmore & Troscianko 1988; Morse et al. 1989; Blanke et al. 2004; Augustine 2007; Bokkon et al. 2013). However, NDEs, particularly those occurring during cardiac arrest or anesthesia, challenge the materialist view of the mind-brain relationship, as they involve vivid consciousness and memory formation even when brain function is severely impaired. The limitations of these models have led some researchers to explore non-reductionist explanations, proposing that NDEs may offer insights into a transcendent or mystical realm beyond the physical brain. The survivalist hypothesis suggests that consciousness may not be entirely dependent on the brain, proposing the persistence of some form of “soul” after death (Potts 2002; Greyson 2010; Thonnard et al. 2013; Greyson 2015). Hashemi et al. (2023) conducted a systematic analysis of case reports and qualitative research, categorizing NDEs into four main categories: emotional experiences (both positive and negative), cognitive experiences (heightened senses, altered perception of time, life review, sudden knowledge), spiritual and religious experiences (meeting the deceased, encountering religious figures, oneness, punishment/reward), and supernatural experiences (out-of-body experiences, metaphysical perceptions). Although the majority of near-death experiences (NDEs) are described as positive, historical accounts include terrifying deathbed visions and frightening journeys to infernal realms inhabited by malevolent entities. Assessing the frequency of these distressing or hellish NDEs is challenging, as the anxiety and judgment they provoke often discourage individuals from disclosing their experiences. Nevertheless, recent research suggests that

these negative NDEs occur in approximately 11% to 22% of all cases (Greyson 2023).

In recent years, several scholars have examined NDEs from religious and philosophical perspectives. Etemadinia (2011) investigated the compatibility and interpretive capacity of eschatological propositions within Abrahamic religions in light of NDEs. He later (2013, 2018) delved into the nature of NDEs and critically analyzed various explanations for these experiences, exploring the weaknesses and challenges associated with each interpretation. Sa'i and Ghasemiannejad (2014) also contributed to the discussion by elucidating the relationship between the soul and the body by drawing on systems theory and NDEs. Farahnakian (2014), referencing Qur'anic verses and hadiths related to the afterlife, rejected any contradiction between NDEs and Islamic teachings. He further suggested that the content of authentic NDEs is comparable to the mystical experiences of Sufis. Falahati et al. (2019) explored NDEs from the perspective of the reincarnation hypothesis. Salarian (2020) categorizes NDEs into positive and negative types, outlining various characteristics for each.

While there is an extensive literature on NDEs and the concept of embodiment of deeds separately, none of these works have specifically examined the embodiment of deeds within the framework of NDEs.

4. Theological Explanation of NDEs

Reports of near-death experiences (NDEs) are not confined to a specific geographical region, culture, or historical period. The observation of similar accounts with nearly identical features from a vast number of experiencers across the globe and throughout history, where the possibility of collusion or fabrication is improbable, indicates the authenticity of the NDE phenomenon and its independence from environmental or cultural factors. Moreover, the resemblance of these experiences among individuals from diverse nations, races, cultures, and religious beliefs further strengthens the credibility of this phenomenon.

An analysis of the various characteristics of NDEs reveals that these experiences can be interpreted as corresponding to the intermediary realm of *barzakh* in Islamic theology. A summary of Tabataba'i's views establishes the foundations and principles of the *barzakh* realm, which includes features such as:

- Individual existence and the dissolution of the collective life system (1996, 2: 184; 2009, 77);
- Continuation of worldly life (2009, 90; 1996, 8: 133);
- General judgment without delving into details (2009, 92);
- A realm of preparation for the Hereafter (1996, 11: 9);
- A temporary abode (1996, 11: 8);
- Incomplete severance of material interests (2009, 96);
- The encompassing nature of the Hereafter over the *barzakh* realm, and *barzakh* over the worldly realm (2009, 114);
- Incomplete disappearance of means and all veils (2009, 117);
- Continued progression towards felicity or misery (1996, 8: 134);
- Formation of *barzakh* objects from the actions and qualities of the human soul (2008, 2: 40);

These principles are generally present in the studied NDEs, although each experience may only depict certain aspects.

However, it cannot be definitively asserted that all experiencers were in a state of near-death or that they all reached certain levels of *barzakh*. According to the Shi'a tradition and the practices of ethical and mystical scholars, it is not obligatory to die to be able to perceive and experience *barzakh*. Human life has various levels. Being veiled from the *barzakh* realms is inherent to the lower level of worldly life. If someone transcends this lower level in the world and reaches a higher level of existence, they can, commensurate with their life rank and perceptual capacity, become aware of and witness the *barzakh* realms (Shojai 1997, 2: 192-239). It is crucial to note that, according to Islamic philosophers, the realm of existence is a reality with varying degrees of intensity and weakness (Tabataba'i 2008, 29; 2011, 41). Therefore, *barzakh*, as a realm of existence, is also a reality with multiple levels. While *barzakh* can be considered a single realm from one perspective, it is also viewed as multiple realms with various levels (Shojai 1997, 2: 227). The levels of perception are not equal for all individuals in *barzakh*. The varying degrees of life and the unique nature of each level result in different degrees of life's manifestations, including knowledge and perception. Hence, in the *barzakh* existence, each person possesses a specific level of life and its corresponding effects (Shojai 1997, 2: 186). It can be said that a person in *barzakh*, depending on their degree of faith and position in the realm of human existence, acquires a certain capacity and attains a specific level within *barzakh*.

Numerous spiritual devotee, by controlling their carnal desires in this world while on their journey towards God, have attained the ability to traverse the levels of *barzakh* during their lifetime and simultaneously manage both realms. *barzakh* observations necessitate the removal of the veil of nature and liberation from worldly attachments. In this case, these perceptions will be attained concurrently with the worldly life, whether through purposeful severance of worldly attachments or through events leading to a decrease in vital signs and near-death experiences.

In conclusion, considering the characteristics of the levels of *barzakh* existence, examining the works of scholars on the Hereafter, and comparing them with the present study group, it can be concluded that NDEs, among the realms of the world, *barzakh*, and the Hereafter, align with the levels of the *barzakh* realm. Death leads to entry into the higher levels of *barzakh*, while most NDEs, due to the incomplete separation of the soul from the physical body, represent an entry into the initial levels of *barzakh*. It is worth noting that some experiencers, due to their higher aptitude or other divine purposes, have progressed to higher levels and witnessed the punishments or blessings of souls in *barzakh* (Mozoun 2020-2023). Moreover, numerous examples of this kind in scholarly works on the Hereafter support this claim (Dastgheib 1997).

5. *Types of Embodiment of Deeds in NDEs*

The NDE accounts examined in this study reveal diverse manifestations of the embodiment of deeds, narrated in various forms. Based on interviews with more than one hundred Iranian Shi'a experiencers, these experiences can be categorized into several distinct types. Notably, studies indicate that a significant aspect of the diversity and variations in the forms of NDEs is attributed to the experiencers' spiritual qualities (Tabataba'i 2008, 2: 39). Analyzing the experiencers' spiritual, personality, behavioral, and interest-related aspects leads to intriguing insights. For instance, the embodiment of a single act, such as attempted suicide, varied between two individuals. One experienced it as a scene of intense thirst, a dark whirlwind, and the torment of navigating through it, while the other perceived it as witnessing the collective cries of all graves belonging to suicide victims and the universe's distress at the arrival of a new member in this category of the deceased (Mozoun 2021, Ep. 8; 2022, Ep. 6). Undoubtedly, suicide is the result of a chain of events, predispositions, individual traits, environmental conditions,

and contributing factors, each of which can play a significant role in these variations.

5.1. Embodiment of a Significant Physical Action

In this category, experiencers witnessed the tangible embodiment of a single salient act. These perceptions served as encouragement, admonition, or a call to attention. For example, one individual who helped resuscitate a young girl on the verge of death saw this act embodied as a girl in white attempting to assist and rescue the experiencer (Mozoun 2020, Ep. 13). Another experiencer witnessed their harsh words and sarcasm towards their spouse as a gigantic snake ready to devour them (Mozoun 2021, Ep. 25). Yet another experiencer saw their acquisition of ill-gotten wealth as creatures composed of a cow and a pig (Mozoun 2021, Ep. 30).

5.2. Embodiment of a Spiritual Quality

This type of experience occurred when a significant moral trait had become deeply ingrained in the experiencer, with its consequences affecting the lives of those around them. For example, an experiencer witnessed the embodiment of his anger, which had impacted his family life, as a terrifying black wolf confronting him (Mozoun 2021, Ep. 21). In analyzing these experiences, it is important to consider the true nature of human moral qualities that have become ingrained through repetition and their manifested influence on others. The immediate creation of a visual representation of these qualities during the NDE highlights the profound impact these traits have on others.

5.3. Perception of the Consequences of an Action

Some experiencers, instead of witnessing the visual embodiment of a specific action, perceived its actual effects on the environment and creation. This category includes an experiencer who, upon watering a tree, witnessed a display of water flowing through the cells, vessels, roots, and leaves of the tree, observing their vitality and feeling a sense of unity with the tree's components (Mozoun 2020, Ep. 25). Another experiencer witnessed the prevention of a family's breakdown resulting from his act of smiling and making a child laugh whose parents were

on the verge of separation (Mozoun 2021, Ep. 20). In this category, experiencers are shown the wide-ranging effects and consequences of seemingly insignificant actions. According to their descriptions, the original act transforms and branches out into other actualities, with its effects ultimately returning to the individual. These experiences offer unique messages and valuable insights from an ontological perspective and the sequential consequences of each action on the interconnected network of creation and the system of existence.

5.4. Perception of Recurring Life Events

Instead of witnessing the embodiment of their actions, this group of experiencers observed the embodiment of moments from their lives and daily actions, replaying their roles in these events. This category includes individuals of all ages, from young children to adults. They perceived a highly organized and coherent spectrum of events from birth to their final moments, in chronological order. In the sample population of this study, cases of this type are abundant (Mozoun 2020-2023).

5.5. Perception of Crucial Life Events

There was also a group among the interviewees who, instead of witnessing all the scenes of their lives, only observed the significant and prominent positive and negative events of their lives (Mozoun 2020, Ep. 31; 2021, Ep. 20).

While the latter two categories might not be considered by some to be the embodiment of deeds in the traditional sense, the review of life events accompanied by a perception of the inherent consequences of each action within the realm of existence can also be regarded as a form of embodiment of deeds. For instance, in some cases, experiencers reported witnessing the impact of their good deeds as praise and admiration from the universe. This suggests a new dimension in the understanding of the embodiment of deeds, one that focuses on the function and consequences of actions rather than solely on their visual representation.

5.6. Encountering Embodiment of One's Own Deeds or Others' Deeds

Examining over a hundred near-death experiences (NDEs) reveals a notable distinction between encounters with the embodiment of one's own actions and those involving the actions of others. From this perspective, experiencers can be categorized into two groups:

- a) Experiencers whose observations were focused on the embodiment of their own actions.
- b) Experiencers who were allowed to observe the embodiment of others' actions, both in the forms of divine mercy and divine wrath.

A noteworthy point about experiencers in Group B is that the purpose of witnessing the purgatorial suffering of others was sometimes to seek forgiveness from those who were wronged or to inspire good deeds after their return to alleviate the suffering of the deceased. In other instances, observing the favorable or unfavorable conditions of an individual or group had a social dimension, conveying an important message to the experiencer and, through them, to others. For example, one experiencer witnessed numerous people in animal forms who were suffering. It was made known that they were a group of Shi'a Muslims who were undergoing suffering due to their wrongdoings until the advent of the awaited savior (Imam Mahdī) and their intercession on the Day of Judgment through his prayers (Mozoun 2023, Ep. 20).

5.7. Explaining Diversity of Deed Embodiment in NDEs

Experiencers report a wide variety of observations in their NDEs. A significant aspect of this diversity is attributed to the unique embodiment of each individual's actions. These manifestations can be either beautiful scenes resulting from good deeds or terrifying scenes stemming from actions that contradict the purpose of creation. The diversity in reported experiences is so vast that it can be argued that no two NDEs are exactly alike. This variation is influenced by factors such as the difference in actions despite similar intentions, the experiencer's capacity for perception, and their level of spiritual development.

Moreover, analyzing the embodiments reveals a correspondence between the form and the action. For instance, a wrathful disposition aligns with the ferocious nature of a wolf. The hybrid creature composed of a pig and a cow, due to the pig's impurity and the cow's permissibility

as food, can symbolize wealth that is a combination of both lawful and unlawful. Similarly, encountering a viper after making sarcastic remarks to one's spouse reflects the association between hurtful words and the viper's venomous bite.

6. *Theological Analysis of the Embodiment of Deeds in NDEs*

The nature of the recompense for one's actions has always been a central theme in discussions of the afterlife (*ma'ād*) in Islamic theology. Reexamining how the Qur'an and Hadith portray this concept can offer valuable ontological insights. The embodiment of deeds refers to the manifestation of the inner reality of one's actions. While there is ample evidence in the Qur'an and Hadith supporting this concept, some scholars, like Al-Majlisī (1954), argue against its possibility based on certain theological premises. However, with the availability of NDE accounts, expressions in the Qur'an and Hadith that depict the consequences of actions in metaphorical terms become clearer. For instance, the Qur'an describes consuming the wealth of orphans as ingesting fire into the bellies (Q. 4:10) and backbiting others as eating the flesh of dead brother (Q. 49:12). Similarly, some narrations describe looking lustfully at someone as being struck by a poisoned arrow from Satan (Ibn Bābawayh 1985, 1: 264) and fasting as a shield against the fire of hell (Ibn Bābawayh, 1985, 1: 51).

As explained in the previous section, in the interviews conducted by Mozoun with NDErs over years of research and fieldwork, the embodiment of deeds is frequently observed among the experiencers. This finding illuminates the veracity of the doctrine of the embodiment of deeds found in the Qur'an and hadiths for contemporary audiences. NDEs offer a spectrum of insights into the consequences of one's actions. A common perspective views individual actions as solely originating from, related to, and directed towards oneself. However, the experiential evidence from NDEs challenges this notion and suggests a more intricate framework. Based on interviews with experiencers, several insightful propositions related to anthropology, ontology, and theology can be extracted from NDEs.

6.1. Ontological Statements

In exploring the embodiment of deeds within the context of NDEs, we find that these experiences provide profound insights into the nature of actions and their consequences. The ontological statements presented here emphasize the intrinsic relationship between actions and their effects, highlighting that every action carries significance beyond its immediate context:

- Every action has an effect. Neither the action itself disappears, nor do its effects. Human actions and their consequences have an inherently formative relationship.
- Angels and agents exist who reveal the actions and accompany the experiencer in reviewing their actions or their effects. These could be the angels who record deeds.
- The effects of actions, from the moment they are performed to the future when they persist, are the responsibility of the doer and will be revealed to them.
- Every action, regardless of its size, is evaluated in relation to those who are connected to and affected by it.
- Existence is a coherent, unified whole, with a genuine connection among all its parts. An individual action can involve multiple layers of those connected to it within the interconnected fabric of existence; its far-reaching effects can permeate the entire universe, ultimately returning to the doer. For instance, activities such as planting a sapling or watering a tree can have profound effects on the environment, the health and vitality of the local community, and even extend to future generations.
- The benefits and harms of our good deeds and sins go beyond the apparent weight of the actions. In this regard, one must understand the unified system of existence. Sometimes the reflection of a seemingly minor act, such as immodesty or a lustful glance, penetrates deep into the core of existence in a chain reaction.

6.2. Anthropological Statements

This section explores anthropological statements derived from NDEs, highlighting the impact of actions on family and community, emotional perceptions of good and evil, and the complexities of intercession and action visualization:

- If a trait or action has had a profound effect on the experiencer's family and immediate relatives in the present or past, it is visualized more prominently for them.
- Intense spiritual perceptions of the good or evil of actions and the ability to understand them emotionally from the perspective of those affected by the action are noteworthy in many of these experiences.
- The partial or complete lack of perception by some experiencers regarding the individual scenes, situations, and conditions they have been in, in relation to the visualization of actions is evident in some reports.
- The concept of the nullification of actions exists in some NDEs, but for certain reasons, it is not frequently observed, which is a point worth investigating.
- In the relationship between intercession and the manifestation of actions in NDEs, it can be said that since the action and the soul are interconnected, the intercession of one individual (the intercessor) on behalf of another (the one being interceded for) and their shared attributes may have a greater impact than intercession based solely on actions and personal characteristics. In this situation, the stronger influence (intercession) can prevail over the weaker influence (the manifestation of the action), and the negative manifestation of an action in *barzakh* can be negated through intercession (Asadi et al. 2024).

6.3. Theological Statements

This section explores the theological insights gained from near-death experiences (NDEs):

- In NDEs, the wrongdoings of the experiencers are often highlighted more than their good deeds. The function of this is to compensate for and abandon negative traits and actions. It can be explained within the tradition of guidance and the attribute of divine mercy.
- Confrontation with the visualization of others' actions is for the purpose of seeking forgiveness for the deceased, or for admonition and learning a lesson. Thus it cannot be considered contrary to the divine attribute of concealing.
- The preservation of the details of life and all human actions with great accuracy indicates the attribute of being the Preserver and the infinite power of God Almighty.

- The system of reward and punishment is based on justice because, instead of conventional and symbolic substitutes, the action itself is given to its doer, and the individual judges the effects and results of his or her own actions. He or she perceives the attribute of divine justice in its complete manifestation.
- Contemplation on NDEs provides an understanding of the beautiful names of God. The attributes of mercy, power, knowledge, justice, forgiveness, guidance, and preservation are among the divine attributes that are manifested in this way for the experiencer intuitively, and for those to whom these reports are conveyed, through acquisition.

7. Embodiment of Deeds from Tabataba'i's Viewpoint

Tabataba'i, in various parts of his commentary, *Al-Mizan*, under the verses related to the recompense of deeds in the Hereafter, has discussed the embodiment of deeds. In one of his discussions, Tabataba'i presents two aspects regarding the system of deeds and the divine law of reward and punishment: the embodiment of actions for their doer and the granting of recompense and reward to humans. He explains that there is no contradiction between these two aspects, each of which is supported by specific Qur'anic verses. According to his interpretation, God has created Paradise and Hell as rewards and punishments for His servants, and they are already prepared and existing. A veil, however, currently conceals them, which will be lifted after death. Simultaneously, based on verses related to the embodiment of actions, our deeds in the Hereafter manifest as heavenly blessings or hellish torment. Thus, the fact that Paradise and Hell exist now, as stated in some verses, and the idea that they are the creations and outcomes of human actions, as mentioned in other verses, do not conflict with each other (Tabataba'i 1996, 1:645). To substantiate this notion, Tabataba'i cites verses such as:

Indeed those who conceal what Allah has sent down of the Book and sell it for a paltry gain they do not take in, into their bellies, [anything] except fire ...(Q. 2:174).

Indeed those who consume the property of orphans wrongfully, only ingest fire into their bellies, and soon they will enter the Blaze (Q. 4:10).

The day when every soul will find present whatever good it has done; and as to whatever evil it has done. It will wish there were a far distance between it and itself (Q. 3:30).

Tabataba'i (1996, 1: 646) considers the verse Q. 3:30 to indicate the presence of the good and evil deed before its doer. The wish for temporal distance between the sinner and their deed further signifies the presence of the action in the sinner's presence. He believes that even if there were no other verses, a single verse, Q. 50:22, would suffice to prove the embodiment of actions:

You were certainly oblivious of this. We have removed your veil from you, and so your sight is acute today (Q. 50:22).

Moreover, in interpreting the verse Q. 17:13, Tabataba'i (1996, 13: 73) explains that the term "imposing the collar" refers to making the deed an inseparable part of the doer, and the term "neck" emphasizes this inseparability. Thus, the verse illustrates that, according to God's law, every action remains with its doer, and its good or evil consequences ultimately revert to the individual:

We have attached every person's omen to his neck, and We shall bring it out for him on the Day of Resurrection as a wide open book that he will encounter (Q. 17:13).

Tabataba'i (1996, 13: 75) further discusses the second sentence in verse Q. 17:13, emphasizing the concealed nature of actions in the earthly realm and their revelations in the Hereafter. By referencing Q. 3:30, he concludes that the record mentioned in Q. 17:13 relates to actions presented to humans in a manner where denial becomes impossible, as direct observation serves as the strongest evidence.

In moral philosophy, the reciprocal relationship between action and the soul is well-established. Every action performed by an individual leaves an imprint on the soul. If the initial impact is fleeting, it constitutes a temporary state. However, if it becomes ingrained through prolonged repetition, it transforms into a disposition (*malakah*) and remains embedded in the soul for a longer duration. With intensification, these dispositions merge with the essence of the soul, becoming part of its existential substance and ultimately transforming into a purgatorial form. Beatific forms lead to the individual's bliss, while wretched forms result in their torment (Tabataba'i 1996, 1: 277).

Moreover, Tabataba'i (2009, 87 & 157) references narrations that indicate the manifestation of deeds during the stages of dying and the grave to support the phenomenon of embodiment of deeds. He considers the narrations that describe the embodiment of fasting, prayer, almsgiving, and other acts of worship and sins in specific forms corresponding to their realities as numerous and beyond count.

6. Conclusion

This paper explores the profound and multifaceted concept of the embodiment of deeds as encountered in Near-Death Experiences (NDEs) and the theological reflections on this phenomenon. Drawing from more than a hundred NDE accounts, we identified various types of embodiment, from embodiment of significant actions and spiritual qualities to perception of recurring life events and the far-reaching consequences of one's deeds. These embodied manifestations suggest that human actions, whether physical, spiritual, or emotional, are not merely ephemeral but take on tangible forms that persist beyond the earthly realm.

Through theological analysis, particularly through the lens of 'Allameh Tabataba'i's interpretation of Qur'anic verses and Hadith, we find that the embodiment of deeds is deeply rooted in Islamic eschatology. Tabataba'i's reflections underscore that deeds are inseparably tied to the soul, ultimately manifesting as forms consistent with the reality of the deeds. His integration of moral philosophy highlights how repeated actions become ingrained dispositions, shaping the soul and determining the nature of one's eternal existence.

NDEs, therefore, offer valuable experiential insights into the spiritual truth conveyed by religious teachings, revealing that actions, both good and bad, resonate beyond this life, influencing not only the doer but the interconnected web of existence. This paper thus illuminates the ontological and theological dimensions of human responsibility, suggesting that the embodiment of deeds is an essential part of the metaphysical structure of the afterlife and a crucial aspect of divine justice.

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The Effect of Morphological Awareness on Reading Qur'anic Words and Pseudo- Words: A Case Study of English-Speaking Qur'an Learners

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ABSTRACT:

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Research findings have shown that acquiring proficiency in reading is highly dependent on morphology. Also, it has been proved that morphology is a stronger determiner and predictor for reading in Semitic languages such as Arabic. Due to the fact that Qur'anic reading is an important skill for the Muslim community and the gap in the literature on Qur'anic reading, the current research is an attempt to study the effect of morphological awareness on Qur'anic reading fluency and accuracy. To this aim, an intact group entailing 29 native English-speaking adults (aged 19-43) enrolled in a lower-intermediate Qur'anic course was selected through purposive sampling in which outliers were removed ($N = 27$). The remaining participants underwent three sessions of morphological instruction on some of the challenging and frequent Qur'anic roots and morphemes and then took part in three different reading tests on a standard Arabic text, a pseudo-word text, and a Qur'anic text. The results of an analysis through ANOVA ($F(2, 72) = 67.483, p = .000$) showed that the group performed differently in the three tests, i.e., the morphology instruction enhanced their performance in reading the Qur'anic text as well as the standard Arabic text while leaving the performance on the pseudo-word text almost unaffected. The post-hoc test showed that this

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effect was strongest in the Qur'anic test, revealing that Qur'anic reading is significantly affected by morphological awareness-raising. This indicates that raising awareness of morphology through instruction promotes the reading of difficult languages such as the Holy Qur'an and standard Arabic. These findings have implications for Qur'anic teachers, learners, and Arabic language practitioners.

KEYWORDS: Qur'anic Reading, Accuracy, Arabic, Fluency, Instruction, Morphology.

1. Introduction

Evidently, reading in any language requires a complex set of skills that work together and help language learners to identify and decode the printed words and then decode meaning and comprehend the text (Cain 2010). Some of these skills, such as word recognition, rest on the phonological aspects of language, while reading comprehension is dependent on the semantic aspects of language. However, in addition to these skills, gaining knowledge of the forms (morphs) of any language, especially those languages that are root-based, has a determining role in reading fluency and accuracy (Silverman et al. 2013). A bulk of research conducted on Semitic languages in the past decades has underscored the critical role of morphology in different linguistic aspects such as semantics and pragmatics as well as in different linguistic functions such as spelling, reading, and writing (Awwad & Mimran 2024). Yet, among other linguistic competencies, reading is more dependent on morphology compared with other language skills since it is interlocked with phonology and production operations, burdening cognitive processing (Issa 2022).

In line with the same assertion, in the previous decades, a number of studies conducted on Arabic reading have reported that the morphology of Arabic contributes fundamentally to its reading and spelling systems because it is a root-based language. Building on this understanding, this study investigates how morphological awareness impacts the reading fluency and accuracy of Iranian learners when engaging with Qur'anic texts, Arabic pseudo-words, and standard Arabic.

To underline the importance of the current research, it is worth mentioning that Prunet et al. (2000), Ravid and Malenky (2001), Abu-Rabia (2002), and Abu-Rabia and Taha (2004) have argued that in

spite of the fact that decoding vowelized Arabic words can be carried out consistently on the basis of grapheme-phoneme conversion, which is not apparently concerned with a word's morphological formation, the identification of non-vowelized Arabic words cannot be processed simply without morphological information. In addition to that, Arabic is a Semitic language in which word identification is dependent on the identification of word roots for prime lexical access, which subsequently leads to the retrieval of the missing phonological information and accurate word pronunciation (Abu-Rabia 2002). This is in line with Tibi (2016), who postulates that morphological and phonological awareness are among the linguistic and cognitive factors involved in Arabic reading accuracy and fluency. Morphological awareness is the ability to relate word components and their roles, such as nominal pattern, root, verbal pattern, and affixes (Frost 1994), knowing the internal structure of words and the rules for creating them (Bishara 2020), as well as the ability to reflect on and manipulate these structures (Carlisle 1995). Morphological awareness resides in morphology, which is a major sub-discipline in linguistics. In this regard, Yule (2006) states that morphology encompasses the smallest meaningful unit of a word (morpheme), which may be as short as a single letter, such as *tā'* for the feminine form in Arabic, or a whole word such as *walad* (child). It is worth noting that pseudo-words are letter strings that do not have meaning but are pronounceable since they conform to the orthography of the language (as opposed to non-words, which are not pronounceable and have no meaning). Pseudo-words are only used in language for instructional purposes, as is the case in the current study.

2. Literature Review

A scant review of the literature reveals that in alphabetic languages such as Arabic, phonological awareness is the strongest predictor of literacy proficiency and reading fluency and accuracy (Melby-Lervag et al. 2012); however, a good bulk of literature has also proved that morphology serves as a core skill in literacy and reading development. For instance, Bowers and Kirby (2009) believe that in the triangle model of word-reading suggested by Seidenberg and McClelland (1989), morphology has a critical position because morphological knowledge is a plausible constituent binding agent and therefore serves as a lexical representation glue that contributes to and strengthens knowledge of

word meanings. Therefore, morphology is a critical component for the study of Arabic because word structure in this language is morphemic, meaning that almost all Arabic words are derived by means of combining at least two bound morphemes, including roots and word patterns. Though a good bulk of studies have been conducted on the importance of morphological, phonological, and syntactic awareness in promoting different aspects of Arabic, including reading, almost all these studies have been conducted on eloquent standard Arabic.

Thus, morphology provides meaningful cues for readers, allowing them to analyze unknown words by breaking them into their morphemes and synthesizing these into meaningful units. Research has shown that morphological awareness is closely linked to literacy skills, particularly reading (Carlisle 2000; Roman et al. 2009; Kirby et al. 2012). At the same time, some studies conducted on Arabic have shown that readers of Semitic languages such as Arabic are sensitive to the morphological structure of a word, meaning that the representation of words in their mental lexicon is morpheme-based (Ravid & Malenky 2001). In addition, some scholars have reported that morphological awareness has a direct influence on reading fluency, reading accuracy, and even reading comprehension, among them Deacon et al. (2013) and Tong et al. (2014).

Although morphological awareness was neglected in a number of reading models and hypotheses developed around reading skill, such as Seidenberg and McClelland's tripartite model (1989), in later models and theories it was given more centrality. For instance, Perfetti (2007), in his lexical quality hypothesis, stipulated that the quality of the lexical representations that learners develop about lexical units exerts an influence on the efficiency with which words are retrieved during reading. Later, Verhoeven and Perfetti (2011) gave a more cardinal role to morphology in decomposing poly-morphemic words and enhancing the lexical quality of words, particularly complex words. After establishing the position of morphological awareness in reading skills, the next wave of research on this relation was devoted to the assessment of morphological awareness. According to Tibi (2016), morphological awareness can be assessed through a wide range of tasks across spoken and written language with different levels of complexity, in a way that some tasks demand composing words out of morphemes while others demand decomposing a morphologically complex word into its constituent morphemes. Semantic judgment and semantic relatedness are also two themes on which these tasks are carried out.

Considering the issues mentioned above, a number of studies were conducted in the Arabic language investigating the effect of morphological awareness on different aspects of reading. Here, we briefly review some of these studies. Elaborating on the role of morphology in Qur'anic language processing, Bashir et al. (2022) carried out a systematic review study to bring to light the latest advancement in Qur'anic reading processing tools, data sets, and approaches. It was revealed that these technologically based advancements not only raise reciters' morphological awareness but also help in modifying or correcting ill-formed patterns through speech recognition intelligence. An evident drawback in this research is that the application of these advancements in real educational settings is not discussed. Also, Bishara (2020) investigated the association between phonological and morphological awareness on one hand, and reading comprehension on the other, in Arab elementary schools. The research findings revealed that the higher the level of phonological awareness in Arabic, the better their reading comprehension. Also, it was found that the higher the level of morphological awareness in Arabic among learners, the better their reading comprehension level. Yet, it is not known whether morphological awareness alone (unaccompanied by phonological awareness) can bring about the same effects on children. Also, the generalization of these findings to normative Arabic learning is not discussed in the study.

Tibi (2016) investigated the role of morphological awareness in reading. In the first round of Tibi's study, 10 morphological awareness measures and two reading measures were developed and tested on a sample of one hundred and two Arabic-speaking children. Factor analysis of the 10 morphological awareness tasks resulted in one predominant factor, supporting the construct validity of morphological awareness in Arabic. Besides, hierarchical regression analyses indicated that the morphological awareness factor solution accounts for forty-three percent of the variance in reading. The relative merit of this study lies in the fact that the interaction of cognitive skills and linguistic processing is also discussed. However, the findings are reported in an experimental setting. Thus, the generalization of findings to real educational contexts remains a vital issue. Furthermore, Al-Musawi (2014) studied the role of phonology, morphology, and dialect in reading Arabic. The findings of this study, which was carried out on children with Arabic as their native language, revealed a significant superiority of phonological awareness as the predominant predictor of all literacy skills across children but also showed that morphological awareness is a predictor of first-graders'

spelling ability and was subsequently implemented to predict all the literacy skills of second-graders. However, it is not discussed whether these pedagogic findings can be securely generalized into andragogy and normative settings. Also, dialect served as a mediating variable, one without which the findings might change dramatically.

Last but not least, Abu-Rabia (2006) investigated the effect of morphological knowledge among normal readers and readers with dyslexia and found that readers with dyslexia experience difficulty with morphological knowledge, and this manifests in several ways, depending on the awareness and modality of knowledge being tested. It is then discussed that morphological-orthographic proficiencies, including familiarity with word structure and the ability to distinguish root letters and affixes, which help store words in a mental orthographic lexicon, affect reading. An epistemological flaw from which this research suffers is the assimilation of cross-cultural findings. Also, from a methodological viewpoint, the effect of different variables is reported monolithically, while morphology and orthography are two distinct variables affecting reading, as depicted by Wadi (2020), who postulated that the effect of orthography on text interpretation is a distinct phenomenon.

A review of the literature shows that none of the studies conducted on the role of morphological awareness in reading has selected second language learners for their investigations. In addition to that, none of the studies conducted on the Arabic language has investigated the effect of morphological knowledge on reading religious texts such as the Holy Qur'an. For the same reason, the current research is an attempt to delve into this effect among Iranian Qur'anic learners through a quasi-experimental design.

3. Method

The present study has adopted a quantitative approach via the agency of a quasi-experimental study in which three experimental groups participated in an intervention, post-test-only research design.

3.1. Participants

Participants of this study were selected from a Qur'anic center in the city of Qom in which Arabic language and Qur'anic skills, including reading, recitation, and interpretation, were taught simultaneously to

foreign learners of the Qur'an living in the city of Qom. In total, 27 Qur'anic learners registered in the lower-intermediate level were selected based on purposive sampling procedures. The logic behind using purposive sampling resides in the fact that these groups of learners could provide the richest data for answering the research questions. These participants, aged 19 to 43, were studying different disciplines of Islamic and Qur'anic sciences in Qom's seminary schools. Aiming at homogenizing the sample, a trainer-developed Qur'anic test of reading selected from the 30th chapter of the Qur'an was administered to this group, as a result of which two learners whose scores were two standard deviations beyond the sample mean were deleted as outliers.

3.2. Instruments

The major instrument employed in this study was the morphological awareness taxonomy adopted from Deacon et al. (2008), which served as the framework for intervention. In other words, the instruction of the trainer in the intervention phase was based on this taxonomy, which is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Morphological Awareness Intervention on the Basis of Deacon et al. (2008).

Composition	• Word analogy (standard/local) • Sentence analogy • Morphological relation judgement • Morphological composition • Sentence selection • Sentence completion
Decomposition	• Word analogy (standard/local) • Sentence analogy • Word analysis • Morphological relation judgment • Morphological production through decomposition • Sentence selection

In addition, the list of pseudo-words (Appendix I) and eloquent (standard) Arabic words (Appendix II) were adopted from Tibi (2016),

while the list of Qur'anic derivations (Appendix III) was adopted from Khoshmanesh (2009), as shown below:

3.3. Procedure of the Study

After selecting the participants of the study, homogenizing them, and determining the core roots for intervention (see Appendices I, II & III), the participants received a morphological instructional intervention for three intensive sessions. The rationale for limiting the intervention phase to three sessions was that the instruction was kept within the bounds of the adopted scales (the roots and pseudo-words represented in the three appendices) rather than general and normative morphological instruction. Each session lasted 60 minutes in the form of a teacher-fronted classroom, wherein metalinguistic information regarding the morphology of the selected lexical items, suffixation, infixation, lexical roots, bound morphemes, free morphemes, etc., was presented through an explicit approach. A mechanical post-task activity in each session evaluated the learning. Any error or ill-formed performance during the class was noticed and corrected by the teacher. The intervention was centered on the theoretical framework of Deacon et al. (2008) and encompassed the composition and decomposition tasks on the roots extracted from the adopted scales.

Then, in the post-test, the participants were administered three reading tests in three successive sessions, including a test developed from the core words, a test from Qur'anic verses centered on the roots, and a reading test based on pseudo-words listed in Appendices I, III and II, respectively. All three reading tests were developed by the researcher, but their face and content validity were commented on by an Arabic associate professor at Razi University. Also, the reliability of the tests was already estimated in three successive pilot studies employing non-native Arabic speakers at a seminary school in the city of Qom, using Cronbach's Alpha ($r = 0.68, 0.74, \text{ and } 0.69$, respectively). Each test encompassed 20 items, resulting in a parametric score ranging between 0-20. This quasi-experiment was conducted during the first semester of the seminary schools in the city of Qom in 2024.

3.4. Data Collection and Analysis

All three Arabic reading tests produced a score between zero and twenty. Accuracy, fluency, and speed of reading were the major criteria for scoring. The scores of Qur'anic learners in all three tests were collected and entered into SPSS (version 21). The mean scores of these tests were compared through a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). The rationale for using ANOVA was that three independent observations were made, and it was intended to determine any significant difference between the mean scores obtained in these observations (tests). Our dependent measure (tests) was continuous, and our independent categorical variables (groups) had more than two levels that meet critical assumptions of the measure. Outliers were already removed, and observations in the three different tests were independent, i.e., performance in each test did not affect performance in the other. Assumptions of normal or approximately normal distribution of the independent variable were affirmed. A drawback of one-way ANOVA is that the test is omnibus; thus, while determining the existence or non-existence of a significant difference between the groups, it does not determine exactly where the difference lies. In order to determine which test score is significantly different from the other test scores, a post hoc test (Tukey) was employed.

4. Results and Discussion

In order to answer whether raising awareness of morphological structures affects the reading of Qur'anic learners, an experimental study (intervention-post-test-only design) was carried out on Iranian lower-intermediate Qur'anic learners. The scores associated with the performance of the participants were collected and analyzed through ANOVA. The results of the analysis are presented in Tables 2 & 3.

Table 2. One-way Analysis of Variance for the Groups on Three Tests

	Sum of Squares	Df*	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	361.707	2	180.853	67.483	.000
Within Groups	192.960	72	2.680		
Total	554.667	74			
*df = Degree of Freedom					

As can be seen in Table 2, there was a statistically significant difference between the group’s performances on three tests as determined by one-way ANOVA ($F(2, 72) = 67.483, p = .000$). Also, conducting multiple comparisons through a Tukey post hoc test revealed that the performance of participants in the Qur’anic test was significantly higher than their performances on the Pseudo-words test ($p = .00$) and the standard words test ($p = .000$); however, there was no statistically significant difference between performance on the standard words test and the pseudo-words test ($p = .989$), showing that raising awareness of Qur’anic morphemes directly affects Qur’anic reading more than two other kinds of readings. This means that raising awareness of the morphological structure of Qur’anic words promotes Qur’anic reading among lower-intermediate learners in Iran.

Table 3. Result of Multiple Comparison for Three Performances of the Participants (Tukey HSD).

I Groups	J Groups	Mean Diff	Std. E	Sig	95% CI	
					LB*	UB**
Standard Test	Qur’anic Test	-4.400	0.463	0.000	-5.51	-3.29
	Pseudo-Words Test	0.480	0.463	0.556	-0.63	1.59
Qur’anic Test	Standard Test	4.400	0.463	0.000	3.29	5.51
	Pseudo-Words Test	4.880	0.463	0.000	3.77	5.99
Pseudo-Words Test	Standard Test	-.480	0.463	0.556	-1.59	0.63
	Qur’anic Test	-4.880	0.463	0.000	-5.99	-3.77
*LB = Lower Bound **UB = Upper Bound						

The findings of this study revealed that instructing Qur'anic learners with the composition and decomposition of Qur'anic morphemes promotes the reading fluency and accuracy of Qur'anic learners in the context of the study. The results obtained confirm Lotfi Gaskaree et al. (2023), reporting that analyzing lexical bundles in the form of suffixes or independent items promotes usage-based and use-based linguistic competence of language learners, particularly in Qur'anic language that is lexically sophisticated.

These findings are also in line with previous studies conducted on the English language, such as Berninger et al. (2010), Nagy (2007), and Stahl and Nagy (2006), reporting that morphological awareness contributes to accurate and fluent reading to a meaningful extent. Also, these findings are consistent with Tibi (2016) in Arabic, which confirmed that morphology has a determining role in the reading skill of Arabic learners, and also endorsed the substantial empirical evidence in other languages concluding that morphology is an independent and powerful determiner in Arabic reading.

Furthermore, considering the fact that the current study adopted an intervention-based design, the findings obtained support other intervention-based experimental studies conducted on other languages, including Elbro and Arnbak (1996), Goodwin and Ann (2013), and Quémart and Casalis (2015), which showed that morphological awareness exerts a positive effect on reading skills such as fluency, accuracy, and comprehension.

In addition, these findings confirm Almusavi (2014), who submitted proof of the predictive contribution of morphological awareness on the development of Arabic literacy and education among cognitively able and cognitively deficient Arabic learners, despite their age. Last but not least, the findings of the current research support a huge bulk of studies conducted on Semitic languages (Mahfoudhi et al. 2010), in which the role of morphology in reading was emphasized.

Why participants outperformed in reading the Qur'anic text compared with two other reading tests is subject to explanation from a couple of perspectives; attitudinal and linguistic. The difference between Qur'anic text performance and Arabic text performance was not statistically significant. From an attitudinal perspective, this subtle difference might be attributed to the inherent Muslims' attentiveness and heedfulness to the Holy Qur'an during reciting or reading it, rather than technical differences between the two sets of texts or the effect of the instruction on them. This means that this inherent tendency toward

Qur'anic texts might be a source of measurement error or scoring bias that cannot be controlled through similar experiments. Supriyadi and Julia (2019) stand firm behind this explanation.

However, why Qur'anic and Arabic test performances were significantly better than performance on pseudo-words has a linguistic explanation. According to Issa (2023, 334), Arabic word processing proceeds in a hierarchical way through which lexical items are accessed and then interpreted based on root or stem (morphological decomposition). This naturally decreases the cognitive load of working memory and attention pools in favor of accuracy, fluency, and speed. Since pseudo-words lack basic standard roots, stems, and critical suffixes, the instruction does not exert a significant effect on their reading.

5. Conclusion

This study was intended to answer whether raising awareness of the morphology of Qur'anic language promotes reading fluency and accuracy in Qur'anic learners. Considering the fact that the Qur'anic language follows the rules of Semitic languages, it is heavily dependent on phonology — especially in Qur'anic reading (Farokhipour et al. 2019) — and morphology, and the morphologically-rich instruction in the present experiment had a significant effect on reading. The current study has implications for Arabic instructors, Arabic learners, and above all, Qur'anic practitioners. The primary implication is for language teachers, who could consider integrating morphological knowledge into cognitively demanding linguistic performances such as reading fluently and accurately. This can also internalize the knowledge of Qur'anic learners about Arabic forms, which is contributive to learning other Qur'anic skills such as comprehension, translation, interpretation, etc. Besides, among other implications of the current research is the inclusion of morphologically loaded activities in regular Arabic and Qur'anic teaching, since knowledge about forms of language can enrich knowledge of other aspects of language such as semantics, pragmatics, and rhetorical conventions involved in text construction. These findings can also be used in teacher talk research and practice and therefore have implications for researchers and practitioners too.

Unlike any other research, the present study had some limitations. Thus, several suggestions for future research are proposed to address these limitations. The current study used an intact group through purposive

sampling. Future research can sample from a greater population and context to secure greater generalizability of its findings. Also, the inclusion of more learning and learner variables, such as other language skills, psychological traits such as anxiety and motivation, are suggested. It is also suggested to examine the effect of morphological knowledge on other aspects of Qur'anic education such as syntax, semantics, discourse analysis, etc. Furthermore, the current study employed a post-test-only control group design due to time and expense limitations. Further studies are suggested to use a pre-test/post-test design in which the amount of effect can be traced with more confidence.

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Appendices

Appendix I. List of Standard Arabic words adopted from Tibi (2016)

في، أنا، كان هو، الله، الصف، ماذا، الكتاب، الذي، أقرأ، الأطفال، الأرض، تحتها، ذلك، معلمي، الملونة، سيفعل، الفتى، الأسئلة، المدينة، بطاقة، المفاهيم، غنَّكَبُوت، الصحة، رئيس، يستخدم، نهاية، أتذكر، أعجبتني، مسرحية، أزهارا، عبارتين، اختراع، شاطئ، الآخرين، كثيرا، يحفظها، دائرة، الرياضية، إضاءة، الجائعة، تنبعث، زملائي، وظيفتها، قررت، خمسين، المتسابقون، التخصصي، أتأمل، مُسْتَطِيل، المؤلفون، رأسيان، حياتنا، سريره، عزيمتك، ليعالج، استفدت، يناقش، يحللها، أشتري، استمعت، القرويين، مبصرا، لاحظنا، المستشفيات، يتفادل، الرحلتان، الإيماءات، ينشدون، شلالات، وجوههم، ضوء، صائمين، أضحى، الخضراوات، قارئ، سيكرن، لبيعها، اصبروا، مقترحاتكم، ليستيقظ، المسورة، إقليميا، الدواوين، ترمَّوا

* All these words appeared in the tasks in a vowelized form

Appendix II. List of Pseudo-Words adopted from Tibi (2016)

عَيْقَاءُ، صَقٌّ، طَحَاضِمٌ، فَاشٌ، تَجَاعَشَ، ذَيْصٌ، ارْتَعَى، شَكَدَ، اجْلُودَ، رَوْحُنٌ، جَحْجَحِي،
 سُؤْيِجٌ، هَنْدَلَعٌ، خُوَيْيْفٌ، يَسْتَرْبُ، الصُّكَامُ، سَنَسْتَعْرِجُ، أَرِيضَةٌ، تَقَاجَجَتْ، غَرِيفَاتٌ،
 نَوِيطَرُومَا، صُقَيْرَاوَانُ، فَرَنْتَظَحْنَا، الدَّمَارَاتِ، جُبَيْهَلُومُ، مُؤُوسٌ، بَيِيرَامَا، غَرِيحَةٌ، ثَامِحٌ

* All these words appeared in the tasks in a vowelized form

Appendix III. List of some Qur'anic roots adopted from Khoshmansesh (2009)

Qur'anic Root	Qur'anic Example
ق ف ل	أَفَلَا يَتَذَكَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ أَمْ عَلَى قُلُوبٍ أَقْفَالُهَا
غ ف ل	وَلَا تُطِيعْ مَنْ أَغْفَلْنَا قَلْبَهُ عَنْ ذِكْرِنَا
غ ل ف	وَقَالُوا قُلُوبُنَا غُلْفٌ بَلْ لَعَنَهُمُ اللَّهُ بِكُفْرِهِمْ فَقَلِيلًا مَّا يُؤْمِنُونَ
ا ل ه	لَوْ كَانَ فِيهِمَا آلَهِ إِلَّا اللَّهُ لَفَسَدَتَا
ف ر ق	فَكَانَ كُلُّ فِرْقٍ كَالطَّوْدِ الْعَظِيمِ
ق ب س	انظُرُونَا نَقْتُبِسْ مِنْ نُورِكُمْ
ق ب ض	وَيَقْبِضُونَ أَيْدِيَهُمْ
ا ب و	كَمَا أَخْرَجَ أَبَوَيْكُم مِّنَ الْجَنَّةِ
ر ا ي	مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا تَرَوْنَهُمْ
ق ط ر	سَرَّابِلُهُمْ مِنْ قَطِرَانٍ
ق ل د	لَهُ مَقَالِيدُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
ق ن و	تُخْرِجُ مِنْهُ حَبًّا مُتَرَاكِبًا وَمِنَ النَّخْلِ مِنَ طَلْعِهَا قِنْوَانٌ دَانِيَةٌ
ك ف ت	أَلَمْ نَجْعَلِ الْأَرْضَ كِفَاتًا
ك ه ف	أَمْ حَسِبْتَ أَنَّ أَصْحَابَ الْكَهْفِ وَالرَّقِيمِ كَانُوا مِنْ آيَاتِنَا عَجَبًا
م س ك	خِتَامُهُ مِسْكٌ وَفِي ذَلِكَ فَلْيَتَنَافَسِ الْمُتَنَافِسُونَ
ه ج ر	وَاهْجُرْنِي مَلِيًّا

Assessing the Conceptual and Spatial Aspects of Persian Gardens through the Lens of the Qur'an: A Questionnaire-Based Survey

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ABSTRACT:

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The Holy Qur'an provides extensive descriptions of paradise as created by God for humanity. These descriptions not only emphasize material rewards but also highlight spiritual blessings that fulfill human emotional and psychological needs. This study investigates the realization of Qur'anic conceptual and spatial indicators of gardens in the design of Persian gardens, addressing the following questions: What are the conceptual and spatial indicators of gardens in Qur'anic verses? To what extent have these indicators been realized in Persian gardens? Using a

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descriptive-analytical methodology with a comparative approach, the Qur'anic verses and their interpretations were analyzed to identify key indicators of paradise gardens. These indicators were categorized into two groups: mental and intrinsic perceptions, such as feelings of security, wellbeing, eternity, spiritual tranquility, spiritual wealth, reflection on divine blessings, and recreation; and visual and spatial perceptions, including expansiveness, the attractiveness of greenery, scenic beauty, and decorative aspects of the garden. The study assessed these indicators through a survey of 200 visitors to 11 historical Persian gardens, utilizing an 11-item questionnaire. The data were analyzed using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). The findings reveal a significant alignment between the Qur'anic descriptions of paradise and the perceptions of visitors to Persian gardens. Mental and intrinsic components were found to have a greater impact than visual and spatial components in reflecting the spirituality and Qur'anic teachings embedded in Persian gardens. Among the mental and intrinsic elements, the sense of security emerged as the most influential factor, while scenic beauty ranked as the most impactful visual and spatial feature.

KEYWORDS: The Qur'an and Architecture, Persian Gardens, Qur'anic Paradise, Conceptual Features of Gardens.

1. Introduction

The Holy Qur'an, as a book of guidance for humanity, offers extensive descriptions of paradise. These descriptions highlight both material blessings, such as vast gardens and flowing streams, and spiritual rewards, including peace, security, and closeness to God. Such imagery not only shapes the mental perception of paradise but also serves as a source of inspiration for many Muslim architects in designing Persian gardens as metaphors for paradise. Gardens have always held a significant place in Iranian culture and history and are recognized as a national symbol of Iran worldwide. In modern times, humanity's physical and emotional need to connect with nature has led to the perception of nature as a form of cultural heritage across societies. In this cultural context, natural elements are considered divine signs and symbols, a perspective reinforced by their repeated mention in Islamic texts (Zamani et al. 2009).

The Persian garden, as one of the most prominent achievements of Islamic architecture, provides a platform to visually and conceptually

manifest Qur'anic teachings. In these gardens, elements such as vast spaces, water, trees, and greenery are meticulously designed not only to meet physical needs but also to address spiritual and emotional well-being. The Qur'an contains numerous verses that vividly describe the gardens of paradise and the material and spiritual blessings they hold:

Allah has promised the faithful, men and women, gardens with streams running in them, to remain in them [forever], and good dwellings in the Gardens of Eden. Yet Allah's pleasure is greater [than all these]; that is the great success (Q. 9:72).

Indeed the God-wary will be amid gardens and streams, in the abode of truthfulness with an omnipotent King (Q. 54:54-55).

In these verses, it is evident that God first emphasizes the material blessings of paradise and then refers to its greater spiritual rewards (Ansarian 2004). This study aims to examine the extent to which the conceptual and spatial aspects of the Qur'anic descriptions of paradise have been realized in the concept of the Persian garden. It seeks to address the following questions: What are the conceptual and spatial indicators of gardens in the Qur'anic verses? To what extent have these indicators been embodied in the Persian garden?

To achieve this, the Qur'anic verses and their interpretations were analysed to extract the conceptual and spatial indicators of the gardens of paradise. These indicators were categorized into two groups: mental and intrinsic perception, and visual and spatial perception. Subsequently, a questionnaire was designed based on these indicators, and visitors to eleven significant historical Persian gardens were asked to respond to the questionnaire. Finally, an analysis of the visitors' perspectives revealed the extent to which the conceptual and spatial indicators of Qur'anic paradise gardens have been realized in the concept of Persian garden.

2. Literature Review

Numerous studies and research have been conducted on Persian gardens and the manifestation of Qur'anic concepts in these gardens. Mirfendereski (2001) stated that garden creators, through a precise understanding of natural elements and their interrelationships, managed to create a spiritual space by utilizing material elements. Ansari and Mahmoudinejad (2006) explored and evaluated the allegorical nature

of the Persian garden as a representation of paradise. Bemanian et al. (2008) examined the factors influencing the Persian garden as a space aligned with environmental and spiritual values. Naghizadeh (2008) investigated the origins of the idea of creating paradise on earth. Zamani et al. (2009) analyzed the religious and ritualistic principles embodied in Persian gardens. Shahcheraghi (2010), emphasizing the importance of attention focus systems, explained the perceptual process of environmental fragmentation and its semantic connection in the garden. Goodarzisorush and Mokhtabad (2013) identified mental and physical similarities and the alignment of symbols in Persian-Islamic gardens with paradise. Bemanian et al. (2012) examined the wisdom of garden elements such as light and shadow, trees, plants, water, and other elements, which, based on sacred geometry and divine knowledge, guided humanity toward salvation. Mansouri and Heidar Nattaj (2011) critically analyzed the formal influence of paradise on the geometry of Persian garden layouts while emphasizing the semantic impact of paradise. Labibzadeh et al. (2012) investigated structural transformations in gardens based on changes in religious thought. Hamzenejad et al. (2014) explored the stronger inward-oriented aspect of Sassanian gardens compared to Islamic gardens. Medghalchi et al. (2014) explored the elements of Persian gardens and aligned them with spatial concepts and components to identify the qualities of the “spirit of place” in Persian gardens. Masoud et al. (2015) analyzed the meaning of Chahar Bagh and the features of Persian gardens within its semantic framework. Nafisi et al. (2016) demonstrated that religion had influenced the creation of gardens. Sheybani and Hashemi Zadegan (2017) focused on the sacredness and origin of Persian gardens, investigating their intrinsic validity. Meghdadi and Mousavi Gilani (2016) explored the religious, philosophical, and doctrinal aspects of Chahar Bagh architecture in the Safavid period. Haghighatbin (2017) discussed how paradise was embodied in the garden and the use of signs and symbols as representations of paradise. Lak and Jalalian (2022) examined the meaning of place in vibrant urban spaces. Belali Oskoui et al. (2020) addressed the structural and semantic complexities of the Persian garden in their article titled “Manifesting the concept of water in the paradise of Qur’an and Persian garden.” Belali Oskoui and Mahmoodi (2020) analyzed factors such as tranquility, comfort, and security in the garden in their article titled “Interpretive analysis of garden in Metraghchi’s miniature of Dargazin gardens.” Yahya et al. (2022) defined spirituality in Islamic literature as the use of reason, tendencies, and the ability to

experience awareness of the origin of the universe, worship of God, humility, submission, and trust.

Given the research background, it can be concluded that the Persian garden has been influenced by the Qur'anic concept of paradise, and architects, drawing on these concepts, have designed Persian gardens accordingly. This study will examine the conceptual and spatial features extracted from the Qur'an and analyze these features in 11 Persian gardens.

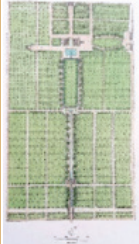
3. Research Methodology

This research employs a descriptive-analytical methodology with a comparative approach to explore the realization of Qur'anic conceptual and spatial indicators in Persian gardens. The study integrates textual analysis of Qur'anic verses and their commentaries with library research and field surveys to address the research questions. Data were collected from 200 participants who visited 11 historical Persian gardens. The gardens include Chehel Sotoun palace, and Bolbol Garden in Isfahan, Eram Garden, Delgosha Garden, Afif-Abad Garden, and Narenjestan-e Ghavam Garden in Shiraz, Fin Garden in Kashan, Golshan Garden in Tabas, Dowlatabad Garden in Yazd, Shazdeh Mahan Garden in Kerman province, and El Goli Garden in Tabriz (Table 1). The selection criteria for these gardens were based on their construction post-dating the advent of Islam, their recognition as significant and historical Persian gardens, and their preservation, allowing them to be visited today.

A structured questionnaire with 11 items, designed to capture both mental and intrinsic perceptions and visual and spatial perceptions, was used to gather data. Responses were measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." A sample size of 200 participants, which meets the recommended threshold for structural equation modeling (SEM) (McQuitty 2004; Hoe 2008), responded to the questionnaire. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was employed to analyze the data and evaluate the measurement model. CFA is particularly useful for testing hypotheses regarding the relationships between latent variables and their observed indicators, as well as assessing the goodness-of-fit of the overall model. The study applied both first-order and second-order CFA to account for the hierarchical structure of latent variables. This method is applied when the latent factors within a set of variables have two levels, such that the existing latent factors themselves are derived from other latent factors (Hakimzadeh & Abdolmaleki 2011).

Table 1. Characteristics of the Selected Gardens as the Statistical Population

	Gardens	Plan	Period	Description
1	Chehel Sotoun (Isfahan)		Safavid	Located within the urban fabric, with an approximate area of 52,000 square meters (Shahcheraghi 2016). The geometry is based on three main axes, with the pavilion situated in the western third of this axis (Nasr 2010). The reflection of the 20 columns in the pool creates the visual perception of the number 40 (<i>chehel</i>) for the viewer (Naeima 2006).
2	Bolbol Garden (Isfahan)		Safavid	This garden is the sole remaining component of the royal gardens along the Chaharbagh of Isfahan (Naeima 2006). The palace consists of a complex of four porticos. The pavilion is not centrally located within the garden but rather offset to one side (Nasr 2010).
3	Eram Garden (Shiraz)		Seljuk to Zand	Situated within the urban fabric, with an approximate area of 58,000 square meters (Shahcheraghi 2016). The broad dimensions of the planting beds in front of the pavilion form the most important space in the garden. The garden's primary structure is a water axis that enters from the highest part of the garden, forming a crucial element of its organization (Nasr 2010).

	Gardens	Plan	Period	Description
4	Delgosha Garden (Shiraz)		Zand	Located outside the city, with an approximate area of 74,000 square meters (Shahcheraghi 2016). This garden was restored by Qavam al-Mulk (Zangher 2012). It is an orange grove with abundant lemon, citron, and orange trees (Naeima 2006). The garden features a long stream and a large pool located opposite the southern side of the building (Zangher 2012).
5	Afif-Abad Garden (Shiraz)		14th century AD to Qajar	Located within the urban fabric, with an approximate area of 96,000 square meters (Shahcheraghi 2016). This garden is divided longitudinally into two sections by a watercourse. The overall plan of the building is rectangular (Zangher 2012). At the entrance of this garden, there is an elliptical driveway that extends to the front of the building's entrance steps (Naeima 2006).
6	Narenjestan-e Ghavam Garden (Shiraz)		Qajar	Located within the urban fabric, with an approximate area of 1,000 square meters (Shahcheraghi 2016). Due to the abundance of orange trees, it is called Narenjestan-e Ghavam (Qavam Orange Grove). Numerous palm and orange trees are planted there (Naeima 2006). The watercourse that runs alongside the regular flowerbeds is interrupted by pools of varying shapes, forming the central and main part (Zangher 2012).

	Gardens	Plan	Period	Description
10	Shazdeh Mahan Garden (Mahan, Kerman)		Qajar	Located outside the city, with an approximate area of 29,000 square meters (Shahcheraghi 2016). The garden's location was chosen on a sloping terrain suitable for creating a terraced garden. The display of water on horizontal and vertical surfaces is achieved through repeated cascades throughout the garden's length. The highest level, in front of the upper chamber (<i>bala-khaneh</i>), was created to provide a wider view (Naeima 2006).
11	El Goli Garden (Tabriz)		Safavid	Located within the urban fabric, with an approximate area of 112,000 square meters (Shahcheraghi 2016). The prominent feature of this garden is its artificial lake. An octagonal structure is located in the middle of the large water pool (Naeima 2006). The south of this garden borders scenic hills (Zangher 2012). The surrounding trees form a hedge around the pool (Naeima 2006).

4. *Qur'anic Theoretical Framework*

The Persian garden has consistently served as a terrestrial representation of paradise. Long before such a connection between humanity and the environment was established elsewhere in the world, Iranians cultivated a profound relationship with nature through their gardens (Wilber 1969). Upon its advent in various regions, Islam did not oppose existing beliefs, practices, rituals, and spaces that were not inconsistent with its tenets; rather, it often reinforced them.

The Persian garden, deeply rooted in Iranian reverence for nature and further supported by Islam's own emphasis on the natural world, continued to flourish after the advent of Islam. It is plausible that the Qur'an's descriptions of paradise may have accentuated certain characteristics of these gardens. In other words, while these descriptions did not originate the form of the Persian garden, they likely enhanced its development. Islamic teachings thus served as a guiding principle for architects in designing these spaces.

In Table 2, diverse characteristics of the paradise gardens described in the Qur'an are extracted based on the perspectives of several interpreters (*mufasssirūn*) and categorized into two groups: mental and intrinsic perception; visual and spatial perception.

Table 2. Conceptual and Spatial Features of Paradise Gardens in the Qur'an

Qur'anic Features of the Paradise Garden		Verses
Mental & Intrinsic Perception	The eternal and everlasting nature of the gardens of Paradise (Ansarian 2004; Kāshānī 2009; Tabataba'i 1996).	Q. 2:82; 3:15; 4:57; 7:42
	Security and well-being in the gardens of Paradise (Kāshānī 2009; al-Ṭabrisī 1994; Ansarian 2004; Tabataba'i 1996).	Q. 6:127; 10:25; 13:23-24; 15:46; 34:37; 44:51; 52:19
	Spiritual comfort and tranquility in the gardens of Paradise (Kāshānī 2009; Qara'ati 2006).	Q. 55:52, 54; 56:89; 76:13
	The freshness resulting from the constant presence of water in the heavenly gardens, which softens the air and creates spiritual and psychological effects (Makarem Shirazi 1992; Qara'ati 2006; Ansarian 2004).	Q. 2:25; 14:32; 16:10; 78:15
	Spiritual tranquility and human vitality through fragrant plants and flowers (Makarim Shirazi 1992).	Q. 55:12
	Paradise is the inheritance of the believers with the right to choose their dwelling as one of the blessings and privileges of Paradise (al-Ṭabrisī 1994; Kāshānī 2009; Ansarian 2004; Qara'ati 2006).	Q. 7:43; 23:11; 39:74; 43:72
	The existence of spiritual blessings such as forgiveness, purification of the heart, spiritual growth, and closeness to God, alongside material blessings like expansive gardens and flowing rivers (Makarim Shirazi 1992; Ansarian 2004).	Q. 3:136; 47:15; 54:55
	Remembrance of God when encountering the beautiful landscapes of nature (Qara'ati 2006).	Q. 18:39
	Providing pleasure and recreation (Qara'ati 2006).	Q. 22:14, 23; 9:72

	Qur’anic Features of the Paradise Garden	Verses
Visual & Spatial Perception	The vastness of the heavenly gardens, likened to the expanses of the skies and the earth (Kāshānī 2009; Ansarian 2004; al-Ḥarrānī 2001; al-Ṭūsī 2009).	Q. 3:133
	Enjoyment of the freshness and beauty of greenery, flowers and flowing water (al-Majlisī 1982; al-Ḥarrānī 2001; Qara’ati 2006).	Q. 27:60; 9:72, 89
	The remarkable natural landscapes of the gardens, plants, flowers, and flowing waters (al-Ṭabrisī 1994; Makarim Shirazi 1992; Qara’ati 2006; al-Majlisī 2009).	Q. 55:66; 47:12; 7:43; 6:141; 39:20; 83:23; 56:31; 50:7
	The adornment provided by diverse and colorful plants and all forms of vegetation (Makarim Shirazi 1992; Qara’ati 2006; Ansarian 2004; Kāshānī 2009).	Q. 10:24; 41:39

5. Findings and Discussion

In line with the research objective of examining the conceptual and spatial aspects in Persian gardens, a questionnaire was employed to avoid relying solely on logical analysis. The questionnaire, as an effective tool for assessing opinions, beliefs, and attitudes of a large number of individuals, was used to gather data. The aspects of Qur’anic Paradise Gardens identified in Table 2 were presented in a questionnaire. Two hundred visitors of the 11 selected Persian gardens were asked to answer it. The participants represented different age groups and held academic qualifications from various fields of study. The questionnaire consisted of 11 items based on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree”. Among the respondents, 56% were female, and 44% were male. Regarding educational background, 14% held a doctorate, 38% had a master’s degree, 38% a bachelor’s degree, and 10% had a high school diploma. In terms of familiarity with the gardens, 36% had visited fewer than five gardens, 48% had visited more than five gardens, and 16% were familiar with all the gardens (Table 3).

Table 3. Descriptive Information of Respondents

	Gender	Percentage (%)	Educational Level	Percentage (%)	Familiarity with the Gardens	Percentage (%)
Respondents	Female	56.0	Doctorate	14.0	All gardens	16.0
	Male	44.0	Master's Degree	38.0	Five or more gardens	48.0
			Bachelor's Degree	38.0	Fewer than five gardens	36.0
			High School Diploma	10.0		

To analyze the collected data and evaluate the research model, a multi-step statistical approach was applied. First, the data were examined for their reliability and validity to ensure the accuracy and consistency of the questionnaire as a measurement tool. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was employed as the primary data analysis technique to test the relationships between latent variables and their indicators and to assess the overall goodness-of-fit of the proposed model. This method provided insights into the extent to which Qur’anic conceptual and spatial indicators of paradise gardens align with the design features of Persian gardens.

The reliability index measures the precision of an instrument in assessing the intended constructs. This means that if the study is repeated under the same conditions, the results obtained from the questionnaire will remain consistent. Cronbach’s alpha is an indicator used to measure internal consistency by calculating the average correlation between the items of a survey instrument. It serves as a metric for reliability, indicating the extent to which the observed score reflects the true score of the construct under investigation. Convergent validity is assessed using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) index, which measures the variance explained by a construct relative to the variance due to measurement error. Fornell and Larcker (1981) proposed the AVE index as a criterion for assessing convergent validity, with a minimum threshold of 0.5. This threshold indicates that at least 50% of the variance in a latent variable is explained by its indicators.

Given that the values for Cronbach’s alpha, composite reliability (internal consistency), and other indices fall within the acceptable

range, the reliability and convergent validity of the research model can be deemed satisfactory. Specifically, Cronbach’s alpha and composite reliability values exceed 0.7 (Table 4).

Table 4. Reliability and Validity of the Model

Constructs	Cronbach’s Alpha	rho-A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Visual and Spatial Perception	0.687	0.724	0.808	0.517
Mental and Intrinsic Perception	0.828	0.834	0.872	0.527
Core Concept of Persian Gardens	0.878	0.888	0.901	0.519

Divergent validity, another crucial criterion, was also evaluated (Table 5). Divergent validity assesses the extent to which a construct is more strongly associated with its own indicators than with those of other constructs. Acceptable divergent validity indicates that a construct interacts more strongly with its indicators than with indicators of other constructs.

Table 5. Divergent Validity

Constructs	Visual and Spatial Perception	Mental and Intrinsic Perception	Core Concept of Persian Gardens
Visual and Spatial Perception	0.719		
Mental and Intrinsic Perception	0.814	0.784	
Core Concept of Persian Gardens	0.621	0.769	0.677

As shown in Table 6, in mental and intrinsic perception, the standardized coefficients (factor loadings) for items such as eternity, security, wellbeing, spiritual tranquility, divine blessings, and joyfulness exceed 0.4. Similarly, in visual and spatial perception, items such as garden expansiveness, the attractiveness of greenery, scenic beauty, and decorative aspects exhibit values more than 0.4. Furthermore, the

T-statistics for all items are greater than 1.96. The AVE for mental and intrinsic perception was calculated as 0.527, while for visual and spatial perception, it was 0.517, confirming the validity of the Persian garden construct.

Table 6. Factor Loadings of Indicators Influencing the Familiarity Scale with Persian Gardens

	Indicator	Factor Loading	T-Statistic	Significance Level	Result
Mental & Intrinsic Perception	Eternity	0.626	14.556	P < 0.05	Confirmed
	Sense of Security	0.763	25.374	P < 0.05	Confirmed
	Feeling of Wellbeing	0.746	27.202	P < 0.05	Confirmed
	Spiritual Tranquility	0.733	19.248	P < 0.05	Confirmed
	Spiritual Wealth	0.599	10.914	P < 0.05	Confirmed
	Reflection on Divine Blessings	0.720	21.108	P < 0.05	Confirmed
	Joy and Recreation	0.723	17.640	P < 0.05	Confirmed
Visual & Spatial Perception	Garden Expansiveness	0.626	13.047	P < 0.05	Confirmed
	Greenery Attractiveness	0.778	25.626	P < 0.05	Confirmed
	Scenic Beauty	0.839	38.514	P < 0.05	Confirmed
	Decorative Aspects	0.607	11.339	P < 0.05	Confirmed

Based on the model, the standardized regression coefficient for mental and intrinsic perception is 0.670, while for visual and spatial perception, it is 0.376. These coefficients represent the impact of the independent variable on the dependent variable, ranging from -1 to +1. It can be concluded that mental and intrinsic perception has a greater

influence on the concept of Persian gardens than visual and spatial perception, with an influence rate of 67%. Meanwhile, visual and spatial perception also has a positive impact, albeit with a lower influence rate of 38%.

Furthermore, based on factor loadings, it can be asserted that within the mental and intrinsic perception index, the sense of security indicator has the highest factor loading of 0.763, making it the most significant contributor to this perception. Factor loading measures the correlation between the indicators of a construct and the construct itself. Among the indicators of mental and intrinsic perception, the spiritual wealth indicator has the lowest factor loading of 0.599, indicating the weakest correlation.

For the visual and spatial perception index, the scenic beauty indicator shows the highest factor loading of 0.839, while the decorative aspects of the garden indicator have the lowest factor loading of 0.604. Overall, the scenic beauty indicator, with a factor loading of 0.839, demonstrates the strongest correlation across all indicators and provides the most significant explanation of the overall concept of Persian gardens (Figure 1).

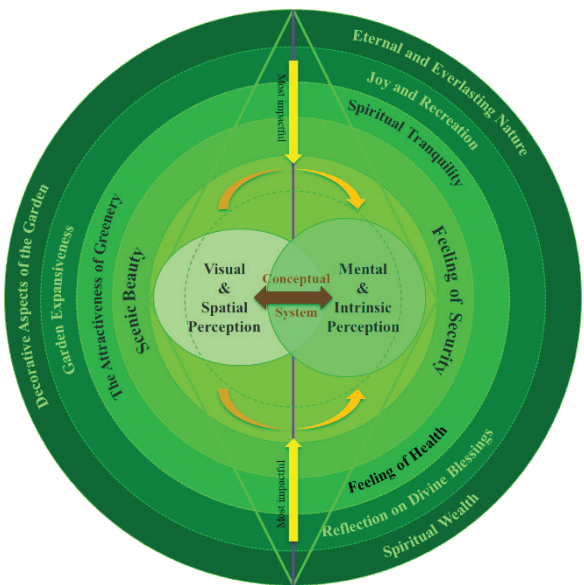


Figure 1. Conceptual Model of Persian Garden Perception

6. *Conclusion*

Garden architecture is both a cognitive and a visual phenomenon, facilitating the transmission of spiritual concepts both intrinsically and extrinsically. Despite changes in the physical form and function of Persian gardens over time, they have retained their conceptual and spatial aspects. Designers have crafted Persian gardens according to their understanding and talent, and each individual, by being present in these gardens, interprets Islamic teachings based on his or her own understanding and feelings, fulfilling human spiritual needs within these spaces. In this study, the conceptual and spatial components of paradise gardens, based on Qur'anic descriptions, were initially extracted. Subsequently, the extent to which these components were realized in Persian gardens was examined from the perspective of visitors to 11 historical Persian gardens. The conceptual and spatial components of paradise gardens were categorized into two groups: mental and intrinsic perception—including the eternal and everlasting nature, sense of security, feeling of wellbeing, spiritual tranquility, spiritual wealth, reflection on divine blessings, and joy and recreation—and visual and spatial perception—including expansiveness, the attractiveness of greenery, scenic beauty, and decorative aspects of the garden. To evaluate these components, an 11-item questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale was distributed among two hundred visitors of 11 historical Persian gardens, representing diverse age groups and educational backgrounds. The collected data were analyzed using confirmatory factor analysis. The results showed that the mental and intrinsic perception index plays a more prominent role in conveying the spirituality of Persian gardens compared to the visual and spatial perception index. Among the mental and intrinsic components, a sense of security had the highest impact, while spiritual wealth had the least impact. Among the visual and spatial components, scenic beauty had the highest impact and was also recognized as the most important component in the overall concept of the Persian garden.

These findings demonstrate a significant alignment between visitors' experiences of Persian gardens and the Qur'anic descriptions of paradise gardens. It shows that Persian gardens, in addition to their visual beauty, serve as a space for reflection, tranquility, and the experience of spirituality based on Islamic teachings. The architecture of these gardens, by integrating natural elements with religious concepts, provides visitors with a spiritually enriching and inspiring experience.

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The Concept of al-Adhā (Harassment) in the Qur'an: Toward Deriving Principles of Moral Education

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ABSTRACT:

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Exploring Qur'anic keywords through an educational lens presents a fruitful approach for uncovering the foundational principles of Islamic pedagogy. Among these, the term *al-adhā* (harassment)—frequently occurring and semantically rich—holds particular significance for moral education. By examining the contexts in which *al-adhā* appears and analyzing the associated discursive patterns, one can gain insight into Qur'anic conceptions of harassment and their ethical implications. This study seeks to engage the word *al-adhā* from a pedagogical perspective to extract actionable principles for moral education. Due to the multidimensional scope of the inquiry, a hybrid research methodology was employed: a descriptive-phenomenological reading of relevant verses, followed by grounded theory coding (open, axial, and selective) using MAXQDA software, and culminating in an inductive qualitative content analysis of the educational implications. The findings demonstrate that the Qur'anic conceptual model of *al-adhā* can be organized into five thematic categories: types of harassment, responses to harassment, consequences of harassment, the interplay between harm and facilitation, and the notion of constructive suffering (*al-adhā* in a positive sense).

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From this conceptual structure, five core principles and approaches for moral education are derived: the approach of recognizing the importance of language as a moral force in ethical education; a motivational approach toward hardship; adopting the perspective of others; a focus on the layered outcomes of behavior; a facilitative approach in moral education, especially in contexts where harm might hinder spiritual growth.

KEYWORDS: The Qur'an, *Al-adhā*, Harassment, Moral education, Educational principles.

1. Introduction

In the Holy Qur'an, the concept of *al-adhā* (harassment) emerges as one of the key notions in the domain of human and moral relations. This study aims to examine the semantic structure of this term in the Qur'an and to analyze its various usages across different verses. The primary objective of this research is to derive principles of moral education through a semantic and functional exploration of the term *al-adhā* in the Qur'anic context. The study endeavors to identify and investigate the diverse contexts in which this term appears, with the goal of attaining a more profound understanding of the principles of moral education related to this concept in the Qur'an, thereby offering practical insights for enhancing human interactions based on Qur'anic teachings.

The central focus of this study is to extract usage patterns of key terms related to harassment from an educational perspective within the Qur'anic framework. This is achieved through a detailed analysis of the recurring keywords associated with harassment in the Qur'an. Based on this theoretical and conceptual framework, the study aims to derive educational implications for educators, particularly regarding the moral upbringing of future generations.

Several key points underscore the necessity of this research. First, it adopts an educational lens for reading the Qur'an to infer principles of moral education. Second, it employs a rational analysis of the keyword 'harassment' to develop a relevant theoretical and conceptual model. This model can form the basis for deriving moral educational principles, thereby enriching pedagogical foundations grounded in religious teachings. Furthermore, the study's focus on extracting overarching theoretical and conceptual frameworks from the Qur'an—through the

focused analysis of specific keywords—represents a novel approach that could open new avenues for contemporary Qur'anic studies.

The word *al-adhā* refers to any harassment inflicted upon an individual, whether physical or spiritual, worldly or otherworldly (al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī 1991, 113). It has also been stated that *al-adhā* means anything from which one experiences harm or harassment (al-Farāhīdī 1988, 8:206; al-Azharī 2001, 15:39; Ibn Manẓūr 1993, 14:27). The root of *al-adhā* is “,Dh,Y” which signifies something disliked and unpleasant to a person. Consequently, *al-īdhā* denotes the act of causing something hated or disliked, and *al-ta’adhdhī* describes the state experienced by a person upon receiving something unpleasant. *Al-adhā* is the verbal noun derived from this root. However, it has been employed to refer broadly to anything that causes harm or harassment (Ibn Fāris 1979, 1:78; Muṣṭafawī 1989, 1:72).

In the Qur’an, the term *al-adhā* is associated with distinct legal rulings and can be explored from sociological, ethical, and psychological perspectives. In psychology, it is addressed under categories such as self-harm and harm to others. This study examines the term *al-adhā* and its derivatives within this analytical framework. It is important to note that just as general engagement with the Qur’an allows one to extract educational principles for human life, similarly, from a focused perspective, by analyzing patterns of Qur’anic words, categorizing, and organizing them, we can advance towards a life-affirming educational framework. To this end, the word *al-adhā*, one of the frequently mentioned terms in the Qur’an, has been examined here from an educational perspective.

Based on this understanding and by considering the theoretical and cognitive foundations related to the word ‘harassment’ and its usage patterns in the Qur’an, it becomes possible to derive principles for moral education. These principles not only support educators in fulfilling their moral responsibilities but can also serve as strategic guidelines throughout the educational process. Teaching and learning become genuinely fruitful when educators’ tasks and responsibilities are integrated with both scientific and religious foundations, thus providing a strong and reliable framework for educational activities. In light of the above, this study aims to extract a theoretical and conceptual model related to the keyword *al-adhā* through a comprehensive examination of all relevant Qur’anic verses, with the goal of deducing essential principles for moral education. Accordingly, the research questions are as follows:

- How is the term *al-adhā* (harassment) conceptually and theoretically constructed within the Qur'anic discourse?
- What moral educational principles can be systematically derived from the Qur'anic conceptual model of *al-adhā*?

2. Literature Review

The study of Qur'anic keywords has consistently attracted the attention of researchers and scholars. However, approaching the keyword *al-adhā* (harassment) from the angle of extracting its theoretical and conceptual model is a perspective that has received comparatively less attention. Moreover, the attempt to establish a relationship between this keyword and the principles of moral education is a subject not previously addressed in academic literature. Upon reviewing the existing body of research, no study was found that directly investigates the concept of *al-adhā* in the Qur'an. Nonetheless, the following works, while not directly aligned, are relevant due to their focus on Qur'anic terminology or conceptual parallels with the present topic:

Narimani et al. (2022) assert that by analyzing the terms *marād*, *adhā*, *ḍarar* and *suqm* using dictionary sources, the Qur'an, and exegetical works, the differences between the terms have been clarified and their non-interchangeability has been established. This conceptual differentiation shows that *marād* refers to physical illness, *ḍurr* indicates severe financial distress and the loss of children, *al-adhā* also connotes anxiety and spiritual disturbance arising from change, and *suqm* implies hesitation and doubt. Based on this analysis, in addition to dispelling misconceptions about divine prophets, aspects of the scientific miraculousness of the Qur'an and its respect for women are also highlighted.

Bashiri (2022), in his thesis titled "Harassment of God, the Prophets, and the *Ahl al-Bayt* (PBUTH) and Its Examples in the Qur'an and Hadith," argues that among the attributes that lead individuals to ruin is the act of harassment toward others. Any form of harassment against living beings is considered reprehensible and carries both worldly and eschatological consequences, depending on the status of the one being harassed. Accordingly, harassment of God, the Prophets, and the *Ahl al-Bayt* is regarded as the most severe form and entails the most serious worldly and spiritual punishments. Therefore, understanding the

concept and examples of such harassment is essential for cultivating a greater sense of responsibility and ethical sensitivity.

In her article, "Harassment, Seclusion, and the Status of Women in the Workplace: An Islamic and International Human Rights Perspective," Sarah Balto (2020) discusses the intersection of Islamic jurisprudence and international human rights law concerning the harassment of women in the workplace. She concludes that gender relations and the structure of the workplace in Islamic societies differ significantly from those in Western contexts due to religious, social, and cultural traditions. In many Muslim societies, women live in patriarchal cultures where a woman's honor is considered sacred.

A review of the existing literature reveals that the present study introduces an innovative perspective in several key areas: it offers a new approach to the concept of harassment by analyzing its theoretical and conceptual model; it categorizes this model based on the concepts extracted from the Qur'anic verses related to the term; it clarifies the theoretical and conceptual framework of the term harassment for a more comprehensive understanding; and it explains the principles of moral education from an educational standpoint, focusing on how harassment is treated in the Qur'an.

3. Research Methodology

Given the multidimensional nature of the topic, this study employs a combination of qualitative methods for data collection, analysis, and coding. In the initial phase, a descriptive phenomenological approach is used to examine the verses of the Holy Qur'an. Phenomenology is a qualitative method that seeks to uncover the essential and unchanging nature of a given phenomenon (Langdridge 2007). The steps involved in this method are as follows: Formulation of a research question based on the model "What is the essential nature of this phenomenon?"; Purposeful sampling; Data collection; Data analysis (Abedi 2009).

These steps are not strictly linear and may be applied recursively. Based on these steps, the following research question was formulated: How is the word *al-adhā* used in the Qur'an? Next, a purposeful sampling was conducted until theoretical saturation was reached, which in the current study required reading all Qur'anic verses related to the keyword *al-adhā*. In the next step, data collection was performed using library research methods, primarily by referencing the Qur'anic text.

Finally, for data analysis, the MAXQDAY software (version 3–12PORO) was employed.

This study applied the descriptive phenomenological method in three stages: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. Initially, primary codes were assigned to various elements of the data. These codes, which are derived from the extracted verses, were then grouped in two ways. First, multiple primary codes were placed in a single category and assigned a new label. Then, multiple primary codes were nested under a broader parent code. Together, these codes form main categories and subcategories, a process known as open coding. Following this, axial coding was conducted. Axial coding involves establishing connections among categories and organizing them under a more general heading. The software facilitated this process by identifying relationships among categories, which eventually led to the formulation of hypotheses, a phase referred to as selective coding. Through selective coding, categories were refined, and a theoretical framework was constructed (Corbin & Strauss 1990). At this stage, the pattern of usage of the word *al-adhā* in the Qur'an was identified in terms of five main categories. In the final stage, a comparative analysis of the open and axial codes was conducted using the qualitative content analysis method in an inductive manner to extract the relevant educational principles. The stages and application of this method are as follows:

1. Determining the unit of analysis: The unit of analysis refers to the object or subject upon which the analysis is focused. In qualitative content analysis, this is typically the theme, which represents a specific meaning derived from a word, sentence, or clause (Momeni Rad 2013; Marouf & Yusefzadeh 2009). In this study, the theme served as the unit of analysis for the Qur'anic verses.
2. Developing a categorization system: The study employed an inductive categorization system. In this approach, categories are first identified, and then data are extracted from the text in accordance with these categories, in a step-by-step process (Mayering 2014).
3. Analyzing and interpreting the text: In this phase, the researcher examined the content with a deep interpretive lens to uncover implicit meanings (Jankowski & Jensen 2002). Through these three steps—theme extraction, categorization, and interpretive analysis—the educational principles presented in this study were ultimately derived.

4. Statistical and Descriptive Findings

In the present study, the open codes extracted from the Qur'an were presented in the form of tables and visual charts using MAXQDA software. This method of coding and visualization facilitates a clearer understanding of content types and distributions for researchers. Initially, all verses containing the word *al-adhā* and its derivatives were identified and examined. Subsequently, verses with overlapping concepts or repeated expressions were excluded, and a theoretical model was developed based on the remaining verses. The term “theoretical model” here refers to the categorization of related verses into general thematic groupings and the analysis of interrelations among them. Table 1 represents the applications of the term *al-adhā* in Qur'anic verses based on open coding results using MAXQDA software.

Table 1. The Applications of the Term al-Adhā in Qur'anic Verses Based on Open Coding Results Using MAXQDA Software

Code	Number	Percentage
Harassment	0	0.00
Types of Harassment	0	0.00
Verbal	0	0.00
Slander	1	4.35
Denial	1	4.35
Verbal Abuse	2	8.70
Lying	1	4.35
Behavioral	2	8.70
Dealing with Harassment	0	0.00
Command	0	0.00
Patience	1	4.35
Trust in God	1	4.35
Observance of Divine Limits	1	4.35

Code	Number	Percentage
Maintaining Hope	1	4.35
Prohibition	0	0.00
Intolerance	1	4.35
Consequences of Harassment	0	0.00
Positive	0	0.00
Divine Reward	1	4.35
Blessings from God	1	4.35
Negative	0	0.00
Deprivation from Guidance	1	4.35
Invalidation of Charity	1	4.35
Divine Punishment	1	4.35
Divine Curse	1	4.35
Easing Regulations during Harassment	0	0.00
Illness	1	4.35
Environmental Conditions	1	4.35
Constructive Harassment	0	0.00
Suffering in the Path of God	1	4.35
Observance of Divine Law	1	4.35
Natural Hardship	1	4.35

The categorization of applications of the term *al-adhā* in Qur'anic verses is visually represented in Figure 1.

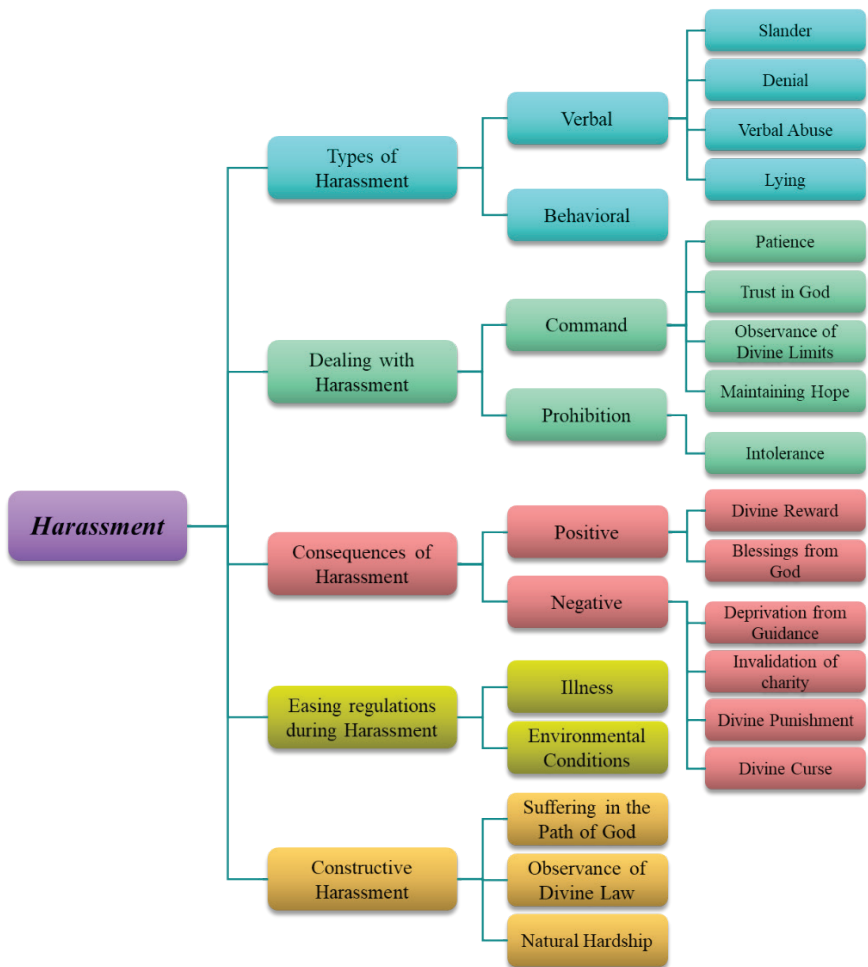


Figure 1. Categorization of Applications of al-Adhā (Harassment) in Qur’anic Verses

Table 2 presents representative verses for each categorization of harassment, demonstrating the semantic range and contextual diversity of *al-adhā*.

Table 2. Representative Verses for Each Type of Harassment Associated with Selected Open Codes

Selected Code	Pivotal Code	Open Source	
Types of Harassment	Verbal	Slander	Those who torment faithful men and women undeservedly, certainly bear the guilt of slander and flagrant sin (Q. 33:58).
		Denial	Apostles were certainly denied before you, yet they patiently bore being denied and tormented until Our help came to them. Nothing can change the words of Allah, and there have certainly come to you some of the accounts of the apostles (Q. 6:34).
		Verbal Abuse	Grudging you [their help]. So when there is panic, you see them observing you, their eyes rolling, like someone fainting at death. Then, when the panic is over, they scald you with [their] sharp tongues in their greed for riches. They never have had faith. So Allah has made their works fail, and that is easy for Allah (Q. 33:19). Among them are those who torment the Prophet, and say, “He is an ear.” Say, “An ear that is good for you. He has faith in Allah and trusts the faithful, and is a mercy for those of you who have faith.” As for those who torment the Apostle of Allah, there is a painful punishment for them (Q. 9:61).
		Lying	O you who have faith! Do not be like those who tormented Moses, whereat Allah absolved him of what they alleged, and he was distinguished in Allah’s sight (Q. 33:69).

Selected Code	Pivotal Code	Open Source
Types of Harassment	Behavioral	O you who have faith! Do not enter the Prophet’s houses unless permission is granted you for a meal, without waiting for it to be readied. But enter when you are invited, and disperse when you have taken your meal, without settling down to chat. Indeed such conduct torments the Prophet, and he is ashamed of [asking] you [to leave]; but Allah is not ashamed of [expressing] the truth. And when you ask anything of [his] womenfolk, ask it from them from behind a curtain. That is more chaste for your hearts and their hearts. You may not torment the Apostle of Allah, nor may you ever marry his wives after him. Indeed that would be a grave [matter] with Allah (Q. 33:53). Should two among you commit it, chastise them both; but if they repent and reform, let them alone. Indeed Allah is all-clement, all-merciful (Q. 4:16).

Selected Code	Pivotal Code	Open Source	
Dealing with Harassment	Command	Patience	And why should we not put our trust in Allah, seeing that He has guided us in our ways? Surely, we will put up patiently with whatever torment you may inflict upon us, and in Allah let all the trusting put their trust (Q. 14:12).
		Trust in God	And do not obey the faithless and the hypocrites, and disregard their torments, and put your trust in Allah, and Allah suffices as trustee (Q. 33:48).
		Observance of Divine Limits	You will surely be tested in your possessions and your souls, and you will surely hear from those who were given the Book before you and from the polytheists much affront; but if you are patient and God wary, that is indeed the steadiest of courses (Q. 3:186).
		Maintaining Hope	They said, "We were tormented before you came to us and [also] after you came to us." He said, "Maybe your Lord will destroy your enemy and make you successors in the land, and then He will see how you act" (Q. 7:129).
Dealing with Harassment	Prohibition	Intolerance	Among the people there are those who say, "We have faith in Allah," but if such a one is tormented in Allah's cause, he takes persecution by the people for Allah's punishment. Yet if there comes any help from your Lord, they will say for sure, "We were indeed with you." Does not Allah know best what is in the breasts of the creatures? (Q. 29:10)

Selected Code	Pivotal Code	Open Source	
Consequences of Harassment	Positive	Divine Reward	Then their Lord answered them, “I do not waste the work of any worker among you, whether male or female; you are all on the same footing. So those who migrated and were expelled from their homes, and were tormented in My way, and those who fought and were killed I will surely absolve them of their misdeeds and I will admit them into gardens with streams running in them, as a reward from Allah, and Allah with Him is the best of rewards” (Q. 3:195).
		Blessings from God	Apostles were certainly denied before you, yet they patiently bore being denied and tormented until Our help came to them. Nothing can change the words of Allah, and there have certainly come to you some of the accounts of the apostles (Q. 6:34).

Selected Code	Pivotal Code	Open Source	
Consequences of Harassment	Negative	Deprivation of Guidance	When Moses said to his people, “O my people! Why do you torment me, when you certainly know that I am Allah’s apostle to you?” So when they swerved [from the right path] Allah made their hearts swerve, and Allah does not guide the transgressing lot (Q. 61:5).
		Invalidation of Charity	An honourable word with pardon is better than a charity followed by affront. Allah is all-sufficient, most forbearing. O you who have faith! Do not render your charities void by reproaches and affronts, like those who spend their wealth to be seen by people and have no faith in Allah and the Last Day. Their parable is that of a rock covered with soil: a downpour strikes it, leaving it bare. They have no power over anything of what they have earned, and Allah does not guide the faithless lot (Q.2:263-264).
		Divine Punishment	Among them are those who torment the Prophet, and say, “He is an ear.” Say, “An ear that is good for you. He has faith in Allah and trusts the faithful, and is a mercy for those of you who have faith.” As for those who torment the Apostle of Allah, there is a painful punishment for them (Q. 9:61).
		Divine Curse	Indeed those who torment Allah and His Apostle are cursed by Allah in the world and the Hereafter, and He has prepared a humiliating punishment for them (Q. 33:57).

Selected Code	Pivotal Code	Open Source
Easing Regulations during Harassment	Illness	Complete the Hajj and the Umrah for Allah’s sake, and if you are prevented, then [make] such [sacrificial] offering as is feasible. And do not shave your heads until the offering reaches its [assigned] place. But should any of you be sick, or have a hurt in his head, let the atonement be by fasting, or charity, or sacrifice. And when you have security for those who enjoy [release from the restrictions] by virtue of the Umrah until the hajj let the offering be such as is feasible. As for someone who cannot afford [the offering], let him fast three days during the hajj and seven when you return; that is [a period of] ten complete [days]. That is for someone whose family does not dwell by the Holy Mosque. And be wary of Allah, and know that Allah is severe in retribution (Q. 2:196).
	Environmental Conditions	When you are among them, leading them in prayers, let a group of them stand with you carrying their weapons. And when they have done the prostrations, let them withdraw to the rear, then let the other group which has not prayed come and pray with you, taking their precautions and [bearing] their weapons. The faithless are eager that you should be oblivious of your weapons and your baggage, so that they could assault you all at once. But there is no sin upon you, if you are troubled by rain or are sick, to set aside your weapons; but take your precautions. Indeed Allah has prepared for the faithless a humiliating punishment (Q. 4:102).

Selected Code	Pivotal Code	Open Source
Constructive Harassment	Suffering in the Path of God	Then their Lord answered them, “I do not waste the work of any worker among you, whether male or female; you are all on the same footing. So those who migrated and were expelled from their homes, and were tormented in My way, and those who fought and were killed I will surely absolve them of their misdeeds and I will admit them into gardens with streams running in them, as a reward from Allah, and Allah with Him is the best of rewards” (Q. 2:195).
	Observance of Divine Law	O Prophet! Tell your wives and your daughters and the women of the faithful to draw closely over themselves their chadors [when going out]. That makes it likely for them to be recognized and not be troubled, and Allah is all-forgiving, all-merciful (Q. 33:59).
	Natural Hardship	They ask you concerning menses. Say, “It is hurtful.” So keep away from wives during the menses... (Q. 2:222).

5. Principles of Moral Education Derived from the Concept of Harassment

Religion, fundamentally, is a system for the moral and spiritual education of humanity. From this perspective, Qur’anic keywords can serve as a meaningful basis for deriving educational principles applicable to various contexts and populations. Such analyses serve both religious and pedagogical purposes, offering theoretical foundations for practical educational efforts. Teachers, in particular, can benefit from insights and solutions grounded in divine revelation. Accordingly, following the development of the theoretical and conceptual model of the term harassment and the classification of the related Qur’anic verses, several moral-educational principles can be extracted.

5.1. *Language as a Moral Force in Ethical Education*

In the discussion on *al-adhā*, the distributional chart of the extracted data reveals that verbal harassment appears more frequently than behavioral forms, highlighting the moral weight of speech in Qur’anic ethics (Figure 2). This data indicates the significant and miraculous nature inherent in speech. Language, when employed in the service of truth, becomes, in the words of Florence Scovel Shinn, “Your word is your wand” (Shinn 2020); yet when used in the service of falsehood, it becomes, as narrated, “A slip of the tongue is worse than the wound of a spear, and the most destructive calamity” (Reyshahri 2010, 5:147).

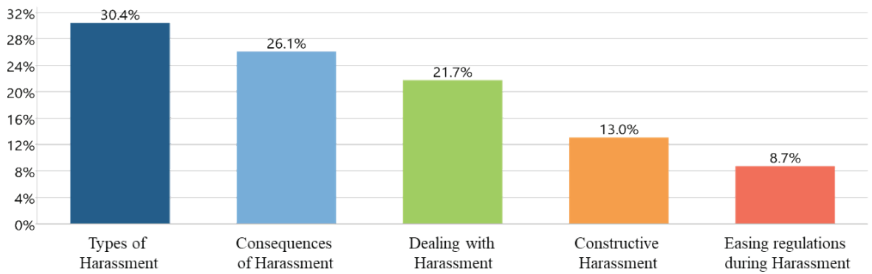


Figure 2. Distribution of Applications of al-Adhā (Harassment) in Qur’anic Verses

Three core weaknesses in moral education can be identified concerning the relationship between offensive speech and ethical cultivation. First, there is an underestimation of the role of language in moral upbringing, despite it being the primary instrument for either salvation or ruin. Second, there is a lack of training focused on employing language positively. Third, there is a weakness in understanding the role of both speech and silence as two sides of the same coin in communication.

In moral education—whether within the family structure or in educational and cultural institutions—the first and foremost challenge is the audience’s unfamiliarity with the role of language in interpersonal interaction and ultimately in determining one’s worldly and spiritual destiny. Neither educational approaches aimed at conveying knowledge nor those focused on ethical reminders have adequately addressed the linguistic dimensions of morality. This, despite reports such as Prophet Muhammad’s (PBUH) statement: “Most of those who enter Hell do so because of their tongues” (al-Ghazālī 2014, 3:94), or another narration in which the human tongue is described as addressing the body each

morning, saying: "How are you?" The limbs respond, "If you leave us alone, we will be fine," and they implore the tongue: "Fear God! For we are rewarded or punished because of you" (Ibn Bābawayh 2002).

Genuine and effective moral education must not only succeed in explaining ethical propositions but also clarify the prioritization of ethical issues and critical moments for its audience. In addition to clarifying the role of speech in shaping human destiny—which forms the lower threshold of moral education by encouraging the avoidance of harmful and abusive language—another pedagogical approach must also be adopted. This higher level of moral training aims at fostering the use of language for constructive and positive purposes: to exert influence, educate, speak wisely, express affection, and so on. The first step in this process is understanding that good speech is not reserved only for family or friends; it must be universally applied. As noted in the verse "*Speak kindly to people*" (Q.2:83), this directive applies to all people, whether believers or opponents. A believer smiles at co-religionists and speaks to adversaries with tolerance so that they might be drawn to faith—or, if not, at least be prevented from acting harmfully toward the believer and his fellow faithful (Nūrī 1988, 12:261).

Another crucial point after defining the scope of positive speech is understanding how to speak well. The qualities of wise, affectionate, tolerant, or otherwise constructive language, and the manner and context of their application, are often missing links in moral training. The absence of this training not only leaves some individuals entirely uninformed about the role of speech but also confuses those who are aware of its significance yet struggle with applying appropriate communicative methods in diverse social contexts. Without proper educational planning to address these gaps, moral instruction risks producing individuals who, despite desiring to be ethically sound, lack the models and discipline to practice moral speech consistently.

Finally, at the highest level of verbal moral training lies the understanding of the relationship between speech and silence—an often overlooked and underdeveloped dimension of moral education. Questions such as when speaking is appropriate, when silence is preferable, and what the respective benefits of each are, remain largely unexplored. Neglecting this aspect of moral education can result in a multitude of practical challenges in daily life. People may fail to recognize the origin of their missteps or moral failings. Countless are the silences that could have prevented hurtful words, and equally numerous are the ill-timed or misguided utterances that have caused others pain. The realm of

moral discourse is expansive and nuanced. Ignoring its complexities may even cause those who claim religious devotion to fall victim to verbal transgressions—sarcasm, verbal harassment, or inappropriate remarks—thus undermining the very foundations of moral training.

5.2. *A Motivational Approach to Hardships*

While the previous principle dealt with the process of moral education regarding the act of harming others—especially verbal harassment—this principle focuses on how one should confront harassment, particularly verbal abuse. In general, the Qur'anic keywords associated with facing harm—such as *ṣabr* (patience), *i'rāḍ* (avoidance), *rajā'* (hope), and *tawakkul* (trust in God)—illuminate the broader framework of ethical education. They indicate that responding to harassment from others is not meant to be reactive or retaliatory. In other words, an approach rooted in vengeance, impatience, intolerance, or complaint reflects a weakness in proper moral upbringing.

This observation reveals that moral education often fails to prepare individuals both in recognizing how to face harassment and in managing their own responses to such harassment. The challenge deepens when moral education is tasked with drawing a clear line between non-retaliatory conduct and submission to injustice. Furthermore, it must delineate the boundary between *tawakkul* (trust in God) and passivity. That is, while one should trust in divine wisdom, one must not allow such trust to justify inaction or resignation to oppression. The matter is delicate. On one hand, believers are instructed to adopt a faithful and trusting attitude in the face of worldly hardships, as encapsulated in the verse “Indeed, with hardship comes ease” (Q. 94:6). On the other hand, ethical conduct demands that one refrain from retaliation when harmed by fellow believers yet avoid passive tolerance in the face of injustice inflicted by non-believers or oppressors. The distinction between friend and foe, and the nature of harm inflicted by each, must be discerned. Even in dealing with adversaries, if there exists a possibility for moral or reformatory engagement, that path should be prioritized.

These complexities demonstrate that moral education in this context is fraught with nuanced and critical distinctions. Failure to articulate and internalize them leads to a moral framework that is weak, inconsistent, and prone to error. At a higher level, this approach calls for fostering

a positive outlook on hardship itself. In contrast to the previous stage, where harassment is seen as destructive but *ṣabr* and *tawakkul* render it constructive, this stage emphasizes that some forms of hardship are inherently beneficial. These include trials endured in the path of God or while practicing divine commandments, which contribute directly to the spiritual and moral growth of individuals and communities. Even physical discomforts that lead to long-term health and well-being can be considered positive hardships.

This broader outlook imposes a further responsibility on moral education: to elevate the individual's perspective beyond the immediate appearance of events, encouraging a vision that discerns hidden benefits—whether in the hereafter or in long-term worldly outcomes. This goal can be achieved by cultivating an analytical view of divine providence, internalizing belief in the wisdom, mercy, and goodness embedded in divine acts, and nurturing a positive mindset toward life's challenges. In doing so, the mission of moral education becomes not only more complex but also significantly more profound.

5.3. Adopting the Perspective of Others

The Qur'an states: "But when you have eaten, disperse without lingering for conversation. Such behavior annoys the Prophet" (Q. 33:53). This verse highlights a more refined level in moral education. Beyond the foundational principle that one must avoid causing harassment to others—especially verbal harassment—this higher ethical standard encourages the moral subject to view their words and behavior through the lens of others' perspectives. Even if a certain action is not explicitly forbidden by law (*shar'*) or ethics, it should be avoided if it causes discomfort or displeasure to others.

The criterion for recognizing such cases—where religious or ethical rulings remain silent—is articulated in the universal moral maxim attributed to Imam 'Alī: "Like for others what you like for yourself, and dislike for others what you dislike for yourself" (Reyshahri 2010, 3:179). Hence, when it comes to behavioral forms of harassment, legal and ethical boundaries alone are not sufficient. Some actions, though technically permissible, may leave a negative emotional or psychological impact on others. These must also be avoided according to the moral principle of non-harm and empathetic reciprocity.

Ultimately, this principle—alongside the previous two—reveals that moral education regarding harassment is challenged by various weaknesses and oversights. Neglecting these nuances weakens social conduct. Moreover, it is evident that the moral framework in this regard goes beyond the mere limits of religious rulings. This broader scope demands more sophisticated planning and deeper attention within the domain of moral education.

5.4. Focusing on the Outcomes of Behavioral Layers

An analysis of the Qur'anic data (especially regarding the negative outcomes of harassment) reveals a new educational perspective: the necessity of attending to the layered consequences of human actions. While the structure of creation operates according to cause and effect, behavioral consequences in social and ethical contexts do not always appear immediately, nor do they necessarily correspond in form or timing to the original action.

When someone harms another, the consequences will inevitably follow according to divine causality. However, these consequences may not manifest instantly or in a manner visibly linked to the original act. Many instances of verbal or emotional harm appear to pass without visible repercussions. It is the critical responsibility of moral education to illuminate this reality in light of the verse: “So whoever does an atom’s weight of evil will see it” (Q. 99:8). Even the smallest instance of harm—verbal, emotional, or physical—has consequences in either this world or the hereafter. For example, giving charity accompanied by verbal reproach invalidates the act of charity itself. On deeper levels, negative consequences such as spiritual misguidance, punishment, or deprivation from divine mercy can ensue, corresponding—though not always directly—to the type and severity of harassment caused.

Therefore, moral education must present divine laws as a comprehensive system. If the principle of cause and effect is taught, its complement—such as the spiritual equivalent of karma—must also be explained. It must be clarified that divine response does not always mirror the form of human action. A sharp tongue, for instance, might return to its source in the form of illness or affliction. The central and immutable principle remains:

So whoever does an atom’s weight of good will see it and whoever does an atom’s weight of evil will see it (Q. 99: 7-8).

5.5. *A Facilitative Approach Regarding Harassment*

One may ask, in light of the preceding principles: does God, through creation, law, or decree, intend to cause human suffering? The answer is provided by both the Qur'anic analysis of hardship and the well-known maxim: "Islam is a religion of ease" (al-Suyūṭī 1983, 1:192). Harm, in and of itself, is not a divine objective; rather, creation is aimed at human growth and perfection. Therefore, when hardship or harm results in spiritual development and ethical refinement, it is valued and purposeful. But when harm leads only to rigidity, alienation, or spiritual fatigue without any corresponding growth, moral education—and religion itself—must adopt a more facilitative, compassionate stance.

This means that moral education must carefully consider the capacities of individuals and should not impose hardship that yields no formative value. Based on the insights of the first principle (regarding proper understanding of harassment) and in light of the results of the preceding sections, the educational approach to hardship and harm should be schematized as follows (figure 3).

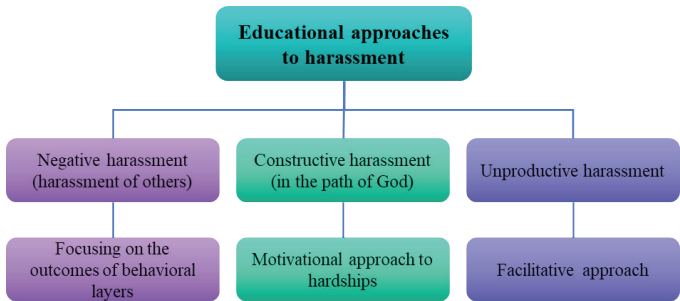


Figure 3. Educational Model Outlining Qur’anic Educational Approaches to Various Forms of Harassment

Finally, the principles outlined above may be summarized and visually synthesized into the following diagram (Figure 4), which maps out the key dimensions and guidelines of each moral approach to hardship and harassment.



Figure 4. Schematic summary of principles of moral education based on the ethical approaches to harassment in the Qur'an

6. Conclusion

This study sought to examine the conceptual and theoretical model of the Qur'anic term *al-adhā* (harassment) and explore its implications for moral education. In response to the first research question—"What is the theoretical and conceptual model of the term *al-adhā* in the Qur'an?"—the findings indicate that the conceptual framework of *al-adhā* can be classified into five overarching categories, each comprising multiple subcategories. Types of harassment are divided into verbal and behavioral forms. Verbal harassment, according to the Qur'an, includes slander, denial, verbal abuse, and lying. Responses to harassment are categorized into prescriptive and prohibitive reactions. The prescriptive responses

include patience, reliance on God, observing divine boundaries, and maintaining hope, while the prohibitive response is intolerance or lack of endurance. Consequences of harassment are divided into positive and negative outcomes. Positive outcomes include divine reward and assistance, while negative ones comprise deprivation from guidance, invalidation of charity, divine punishment, and curse. The relationship between harassment and facilitation encompasses factors such as illness or environmental circumstances which may mitigate the moral burden of harm. Positive harassment refers to suffering endured for the sake of God, commitment to divine commandments, and natural or inevitable hardships.

The second research question—"Based on the theoretical and conceptual model of *al-adhā* in the Qur'an, what educational principles can be derived for moral education?"—is addressed through five key moral-educational approaches: the approach of recognizing the importance of language as a moral force in ethical education; a motivational approach toward hardship; adopting the perspective of others; a focus on the layered outcomes of behavior; a facilitative approach in moral education, especially in contexts where harm might hinder spiritual growth.

The articulation of theoretical and conceptual frameworks for Qur'anic key terms can significantly contribute to understanding moral education at both macro and micro levels. At a macro level, it provides a solid foundation for exploring ethical principles, and at a micro level, it yields practical strategies for moral formation. What remains particularly essential in this process is that moral educational principles be extracted through a valid and rigorous methodology. In other words, any proposed educational framework must be grounded in comprehensive and holistic criteria, taking into account the complexity of human nature and the purpose of creation. Even when engaging with contemporary scientific theories or competing pedagogical models, the Qur'anic foundations may serve as evaluative benchmarks and effective filters for integrating or rejecting modern educational content.

As one of the frequently recurring and anthropologically significant terms in the Qur'an, *al-adhā* is deeply intertwined with human development and moral refinement. Understanding its conceptual dimensions is not only valuable for educators but also offers concrete, actionable guidelines for shaping moral character. The present study has made an initial effort toward this goal within its scope and limitations. To enrich this line of research, future studies are recommended to

explore other key Qur'anic terms related to *al-adhā*, aiming to develop a more comprehensive conceptual and theoretical model and to extract further educational principles.

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Translating the Qur'anic Hypotext into a Religious Dramatic Hypertext: A Case Study of the TV Series *Sahebdelan* (2006) (The Spiritualists)

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ABSTRACT:

Original Paper

The concept of translation encompasses a broad spectrum, including various forms of textual adaptation and adjustment that occur across languages and cultures. Within this spectrum, adaptation and imitation are also considered part of the translation family. This study, conducted using a comparative, descriptive-analytical method, seeks to explore the issue of adapting a contemporary religious drama from Qur'anic narratives, employing Gérard Genette's theory of hypertextuality. It examines the structural and thematic aspects of the hypertext in question—the television series *Sahebdelan* (*The Spiritualists*), directed by Mohammad Hossein Latifi (2006)—and its relation to its hypotext, the narratives of the Qur'an. The aim is to determine the extent and manner of the Qur'an's influence on the adapted hypertext and to analyze the types of transformations that have occurred.

The findings reveal that, based on Genette's categorization of transtextual relationships, this form of translation from hypotext to hypertext constitutes a recreation of parts of the lives of certain prophets in the Qur'an in the format of a television drama. This recreation—shaped by filmmaking motives, media constraints, target audience, and the purpose

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of the series—has involved substantial changes to narrative elements such as characters, events, time and space of narration, and intertextual connections. These transformations have enabled the transmission of Qur'anic themes and messages in a contemporary and accessible language for today's viewers. The impact of Qur'anic narratives in shaping the content and themes of this dramatic work has been significant, making it a prominent example of religious adaptation.

KEYWORDS: Qur'anic narratives, The Qur'an and dramatic arts, Hypertext, Hypotext, Transtextual relationship, Adaptation, Transformation, Stories of the Prophets

1. Introduction

Translation is no longer seen merely as the interlingual transfer of a text from one language to another (Birsanu 2010). Even-Zohar (1990) regards translation as a form of transfer within a polysystem, emphasizing the role of transfer in cultural and literary functions. The concept of translation is highly expansive and encompasses a wide range of textual modifications that occur between languages and cultures. Within this framework, adaptation is not simple reproduction, but rather a creative and interpretive act of translation across media, genres, or cultures. This act of translation involves recontextualization and transformation, situating adaptation firmly within the realm of translation studies (Hutcheon 2006; Chan 2020).

Eco (2004) argues that adaptation falls under the category of intersemiotic translation, since in this type of translation, the previous text is often radically transformed, necessitating the clarification of implicit elements and their depiction in visual form. In intersemiotic translation, there is interaction between visual arts, such as painting, and other non-visual semiotic systems. In the case of cinema, for example, translation occurs from the semiotic system of literature to that of film; Pasolini's film serves as a case in point, representing a translation of sacred texts from a verbal semiotic system to a verbal-visual filmic semiotic system. The Bible functions as the hypotext, which is translated into Pasolini's film as the hypertext. Intertextual relations—and more specifically, hypertextual relations—are no longer confined to the realm of literature. Today, borrowing and adaptations have become prevalent in the form of intercontextual appropriations.

This research aims to conduct a comparative study of the adapted screenplay of the television series namely *Sahebdelan (The Spiritualists)*, directed by Mohammad Hossein Latifi (2006), with its source text (hypotext), the Holy Qur'an, and to analyze the process of narrative, conceptual, and thematic transformation from the hypotext to the hypertext. The series follows the life of an elderly bookbinder named Khalil who, upon receiving a copy of the Qur'an for binding, embarks—with his granddaughter Dina—on adventures inspired by the stories of the prophets in the Qur'an. While this adapted work retains nearly all foundational elements of the hypotext in many instances, it produces a novel creation. The screenwriter, has transitioned from one semiotic system to another, from a verbal medium to an audio-visual medium. Consequently, it has been necessary to reconstruct the hypertext through modifications in characterization, plot events, time, place, gender, symbols, and other narrative elements to effectively engage the contemporary audience. Accordingly, this study seeks to answer the following questions: What is the extent and manner of the hypotext's influence on the hypertext? What types of alterations are observed during this translation from the Qur'anic hypotext to the *Sahebdelan* TV series hypertext?

2. Theoretical Framework

According to intertextual theory, texts have historically borrowed from and influenced one another over time. From a structuralist standpoint, Gérard Genette (1997) addresses intertextual relations and identifies them as one of five types of transtextuality. He defines transtextuality as any element that links a text to other texts, either explicitly or implicitly. Genette's framework can be categorized as follows:

- The first category, intertextuality, refers to the co-presence of two or more texts, defined as the explicit presence of one text within another. Examples include quotations and allusions in literary texts.
- The second category, paratextuality, encompasses those elements situated at the threshold of a text. This includes intratextual components such as titles, prefaces, and notes, as well as extratextual components like interviews, reviews, and editorial commentary.
- The third category, metatextuality, denotes the relationship whereby one text critiques or comments on another without necessarily

naming it. It connects critical or interpretive discourse with the text under consideration.

- The fourth category, hypertextuality, describes the relationship between a literary work and a preceding one.
- The fifth category, architextuality, relates to the expectations readers have of a work based on its genre, thereby shaping its reception. This involves the relationship between a text and the generic conventions to which it adheres.

Among the five transtextual relationships introduced by Genette, adaptive works fall under the category of hypertextuality. Hypertextuality refers to any relationship uniting a text B (hypertext) to an earlier text A (hypotext), upon which it is grafted in a way that is not commentative. A hypertext derives from a hypotext through a process of transformation, wherein text B evokes text A without necessarily referring to it directly (Genette 1997). Hypertextuality entails a derivative relationship that includes both imitation and transformation. In imitation, the hypertext typically recreates the hypotext by maintaining its structure, language, and content, but in a new form. In other words, it involves the near-complete preservation of the hypotext within the hypertext, without major alterations. In contrast, transformation introduces changes ranging from minor modifications to profound shifts, often impacting the text's semiotic system (Namvar Motlagh & Fakharizadeh 2014; Azar 2016). Simply put, the presence of one text in the creation of another—such that the second would not exist without the first—is referred to as hypertextuality. It can be argued that the most effective form of a “second-degree text” is embodied in the relationship between hypertext and hypotext. Thus, hypertextuality is a deliberate and derivative connection that allows the hypertext to be formed based on the hypotext (Namvar Motlagh 2007). This derivation can manifest in various forms: within imitation, forms such as pastiche, charge, and forgery, and within transformation, forms such as parody, travesty, and transposition (Genette 1997; Azhari & Namvar Motlagh 2022).

Parody is primarily intended for mockery and humor, using satire to ridicule or critique the hypotext and often serving a playful function. Travesty, on the other hand, is a form of exaggerated or distorted imitation with a humorous effect. Transposition involves a shift in medium or structural features and is often associated with a more serious tone (Genette 1997; Allen 2000; Hutcheon 2006). Transposition consists of a change of the signifying system or medium—for example,

a novel adapted into a film (Genette 1997). Adaptation is a creative and interpretive act of appropriation aimed at bringing a work from one cultural or artistic context or medium into another (Hutcheon 2006).

Considering the nature of the work under study and the importance of transitional shifts from one semiotic system to another (from the verbal sign system of the Qur'an to the audio-visual/verbal sign system of the series), the main focus of this research is on the transformative aspect, particularly the concept of transposition. In fact, adaptation can be seen as a form of transposition, where the hypotext is not merely translated linguistically but is reconfigured into a new form of semiotic system. This process typically involves changes in content, narrative, and aesthetics (Stam & Raengo 2004). These changes are essential to sustain the connection between hypertext and hypotext while simultaneously resonating with contemporary audiences.

3. *Research Methodology*

This study adopts a comparative, descriptive-analytical approach rooted in intertextual and adaptation theory. The primary aim is to investigate the transtextual relationship between the Qur'anic narratives (hypotext) and the television series *Sahebdelan* (hypertext), directed by Mohammad-Hossein Latifi. The series, produced by Reza Joudi and written by Alireza Talebzadeh, was first broadcast on IRIB1 in 2006. Drawing on Gérard Genette's theory of hypertextuality, the research analyzes how core narrative elements—such as plot, characterization, setting, themes, and symbols—have been transformed during the adaptation process from a sacred textual tradition into an audiovisual medium.

The analysis is conducted through a close reading of selected episodes and scenes of *Sahebdelan*, identifying narrative parallels and symbolic reinterpretations of specific Qur'anic stories, including those of Prophets Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Joseph. These are then compared with the corresponding Qur'anic verses to assess the nature and extent of adaptation. Emphasis is placed on identifying modes of transposition and transformation, as well as the cultural and communicative functions these adaptations serve for contemporary audiences. This methodology allows for a nuanced understanding of how intersemiotic translation mediates between textual fidelity and creative reinterpretation in the context of religious media.

4. Literature Review

Literary adaptation in cinema refers to the transformation of a story, novel, play, or other literary form into a cinematic work, ensuring compatibility with the unique demands of the film medium. Although adaptation extends beyond literature, it remains its most common source. Early theories emphasized absolute fidelity to the source text, but later approaches classified adaptation into three categories: transposition (minimal alteration), commentary (moderate modifications), and analogy (significant creative departure) (Ghahramani & Samini 2000). Giannetti (2008) similarly categorizes film adaptations as loose, faithful, and literal. Loose adaptation uses only elements like an idea or character to create a new narrative, while faithful adaptation closely follows the source, preserving key characters and tone. Literal adaptation, exemplified by theatrical plays, involves direct transfer with minimal changes. Adaptations often modify aspects such as characterization, staging, discourse emphasis, and audiovisual techniques to suit the new medium (Rezapour & Anushiravani 2021). Overall, most cinematic adaptations are either loose or faithful, as literal adaptations are rare.

In the realm of adapting the Qur'an into visual and broadcast media, several prominent productions can be noted from the outset: the TV series *The Men of Angelos* (*Mardan-e Anjelos*), directed by Salahshour (1997), based on the story of *Aṣḥāb al-Kahf* (the People of the Cave); the film *Saint Mary* (*Maryam-e Moghaddas*), directed by Bahrani (2000), depicting the life of Mary, the mother of Jesus, based on the Qur'an; the film *The Kingdom of Solomon* (*Molk-e Soleyman*), also directed by Bahrani (2010), based on the story of Prophet Solomon in the Qur'an; and the TV series *Prophet Joseph* (*Yusuf-e Payambar*), directed by Salahshour (2008), based on the story of Prophet Joseph in the Qur'an. As the titles of these productions suggest, viewers can clearly identify the Qur'anic source texts being adapted. These works aim to portray the corresponding Qur'anic narratives almost in their entirety.

However, in the case study examined in this research, the TV series *Sahebdelan* (2006), the title and storyline do not explicitly indicate the Qur'anic source, making it less apparent to an average viewer. Thus, identifying this work within a framework of hypertextual relationships with the Qur'an increases its appeal and encourages deeper viewer's engagement. It is important to note that no prior research has been conducted in this specific area, and to the best of the author's knowledge,

no single artistic production has been created with such extensive performative adaptation of the Qur'anic text and its esteemed narratives.

Furthermore, studies have also explored the adaptation of the Qur'an. Mohammadi Vashnuh (2022), in a thesis on the principles and methods of intersemiotic translation, argue that the Qur'an, given its rich cultural, artistic, and literary context, offers significant potential for intersemiotic translation. The target medium of such translation is typically a form of art, such as film, which is facilitated by various artistic methods and tools. Zibaeenejad (2018) categorizes adaptation of the Qur'an into two types: first, where a poet uses a verse with the same intended meaning as in the Qur'an; and second, where a poet transfers the verse into a different context, diverging significantly from its original meaning. Asadi (2017) emphasizes that the Qur'an is an independent revelatory text, not derived from any prior source. Many Qur'anic verses have specific occasions of revelation, which limits the possibility of adaptation. Moreover, the Qur'an and the Bible differ profoundly in semantics, language, and narrative style, including contradictions and fundamental inconsistencies between their teachings. Sabbaghi (2016) examines Qur'anic adaptations from the perspectives of traditional rhetoric and modern literary theory. He concludes that adaptation may sometimes function as a literary device indicating influence from the Qur'an and narrations, or alternatively, may be viewed as a form of plagiarism. However, according to intertextual theory, adaptation is understood as an artistic ability to evoke a previous text and demonstrate the adapter's creative capacity in recontextualization.

5. *Research Findings*

The Qur'an is replete with narratives—stories that are meant to come to life in the heart of performance. The television series *Sahebdelan (The Spiritualists)*—as an artistic-spiritual work—effectively draws on some of these narratives. Its themes resonate with contemporary societal issues, presenting valuable Qur'anic concepts through original storytelling and short narratives, thereby avoiding conventional clichés. Through a strategy of defamiliarization, the series fosters a deeper engagement with Qur'anic concepts. The following section examines each adaptation in this series based on Qur'anic stories.

5.1. *The Story of Prophet Abraham*

The central character in the narrative is a faithful man named Khalil. The events of the story revolve around him, his beliefs, and convictions. His name evokes the title *Khalīl Allāh* (Friend of God), associated with Prophet Abraham (Ibrāhīm) (Q.4:125), and elements of his life are adapted from this prophet's biography. For example, Ibrāhīm had no children from his wife Sārah, and in old age, God granted him offspring. In this series, Khalil's second wife, Akram, is likewise childless and repeatedly pleads with him to pray to God for a child. Like Ibrāhīm, Khalil must destroy not only external idols—representing worldly attachments—but also internal ones—symbolizing egotism. Regarding Abraham, God states:

وَ إِذِ ابْتَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ رَبُّهُ بِكَلِمَاتٍ فَأَتَمَّهُنَّ قَالَ إِنِّي جَاعِلُكَ لِلنَّاسِ إِمَامًا ... (البقرة/124)

And when his Lord tested Abraham with certain words, and he fulfilled them, He said, "I am making you the Imam of mankind..." (Q. 2:124)

This verse refers to God granting him the status of Imam (leader), which occurred later in his life. The word *ibtalā'* (trial) refers to a test meant to reveal inner attributes such as obedience, courage, generosity, chastity, knowledge, and loyalty (Tabataba'i 1996, 1:40). It is narrated that God first took Ibrāhīm as His servant before making him a prophet; He made him a prophet before a messenger; and He made him a messenger before appointing him as His friend (*Khalīl*); then He made him an imam (al-'Arūsī 1994, 1: 121). The word *kalimāt* (words) refer to a dream in which Ibrāhīm was commanded to sacrifice his son Ismā'il, a task he undertook with determination. Thereafter, God said to him, "Indeed, I will make you a leader for the people" (al-Ṭabrisī 1993, 2: 107). The Qur'an affirms that some dreams reflect future events (Makarem 1995, 9: 311).

Khalil also experiences a significant dream. He sees himself shackled, interpreting it as a sign of divine punishment due to his people's persistence in sin and injustice. For salvation, he must fulfill his mission: guiding a community mired in various transgressions. Much like Ibrāhīm, Khalil must undergo a trial to attain a higher rank. Though already a "messenger" in the story, his mission must be completed before he may be admitted to the rank of the *Sahebdelan*—those with enlightened hearts. Notably, Khalil, like Ibrāhīm, is portrayed in his old age.

5.2. *The Story of Moses and Pharaoh*

The character Jalil, the brother of Khalil, serves as a symbolic embodiment of Pharaoh's delusional might and ostentatious wealth. The choice of his name reflects this representation. Jalil ridicules belief in the unseen and mocks the faith of his brother and like-minded individuals. His ego is so inflated that he even opposes his own wife—who is devout and God-fearing—and prevents her from practicing religious obligations like prayer and fasting in his home. In various scenes, particularly during the month of Ramadan, the show portrays the blatant breaking of fast in corporate gatherings hosted by Jalil. When discussions of faith and piety arise, he scoffs in a Pharaonic manner, denying all and responding with sarcastic laughter. One notable scene that exemplifies Jalil's audacity toward religious beliefs is when he arrogantly tells Khalil: "How much for the entire hereafter, with all its luxuries, written out in a check?" This clearly echoes the Qur'anic portrayal of Pharaoh:

مِنْ فِرْعَوْنَ إِنَّهُ كَانَ عَلِيًّا مِنَ الْمُسْرِفِينَ (الدخان/31)

From Pharaoh. Indeed he was a tyrant among the profligates (Q. 44:31).

That is, Pharaoh was arrogant, seeking superiority, and was among the transgressors whose rebellion and defiance had exceeded all bounds (al-Ṭabrisī 1993, 22: 309).

The character of Jalil's wife mirrors Asiya, the wife of Pharaoh, who is upheld in the Qur'an as a model of the faithful. She lived in Pharaoh's palace, surrounded by idolatry and religious oppression, yet she remained firm in her belief in the One God. Upon witnessing Moses' miracles, she believed in him. In the series, the character Ahdiyah appears to be a symbolic Asiya of her time. Her name—phonetically close to Asiya—suggests her steadfastness in keeping her covenant with God, despite the denial of faith by her family. The sin-filled environment has no effect on her—just as Pharaoh's tyranny could not deter Asiya, who stood firm in faith until her death. The series frequently makes direct references to Qur'anic stories. For instance, in one scene, Akram calls Ahdiyah and says, "Hello Asiya—oops, sorry, I mean Ahdiyah."

Ahdiyah is physically paralyzed and unable to move, symbolizing Asiya's captivity in Pharaoh's palace. She implores Khalil to pray for her recovery—from her illness and the metaphorical Pharaoh's house of Jalil.

وَضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا امْرَأَتَ فِرْعَوْنَ إِذْ قَالَتْ رَبِّ ابْنِ لِي عِنْدَكَ بَيْتًا فِي الْجَنَّةِ وَنَجِّنِي
مِنَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَ عَمَلِهِ وَ نَجِّنِي مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ (التحریم/11)

Allah draws an[other] example for those who have faith: the wife of Pharaoh, when she said, “My Lord! Build me a home near You in paradise, and deliver me from Pharaoh and his conduct, and deliver me from the wrongdoing lot” (Q. 66:11).

In this verse, God transmits her supplication, which reflects her high status in servitude. Despite the palace’s temptations and worldly pleasures, she renounced them for her faith (Tabataba’i 1996, 19:344).

Similarly, just as Moses was commanded to go to Pharaoh with his brother Hārūn, Khalil enters Jalil’s house accompanied by an old Qur’an, symbolizing the staff of Moses. Dina, akin to Hārūn, accompanies him. They are mocked and rejected by Jalil and his family. Eventually, Khalil is beaten and thrown out.

ثُمَّ أَرْسَلْنَا مُوسَى وَأَخَاهُ هَارُونَ بِآيَاتِنَا وَسُلْطَانٍ مُبِينٍ إِلَى فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَئِهِ فَاسْتَكْبَرُوا وَكَانُوا
قَوْمًا عَالِينَ (المومنون/45-46)

Then We sent Moses and Aaron, his brother, with Our signs and a manifest authority, to Pharaoh and his elites; but they acted arrogantly and they were a tyrannical lot (Q. 23:45-46).

Karimi (2006) states that Jalil is a symbolic Pharaoh, while the character “Doctor”—Jalil’s son-in-law—is both a representation of modern rationalism and a deceiver. He who mockingly called “Doki” in the show blurs the lines between good and evil, reward and punishment, magic and miracle. His tools are metaphorical snakes—doubt and pragmatism—that block faith. Khalil’s faith, however, surpasses the Doctor’s intellect. The inclusion of Akram alongside Khalil highlights the distinction between divine miracle and human illusion.

5.3. *The Story of Moses and Khidr*

Among the many Qur’anic narratives subtly reimagined in the series, the story of Moses’ journey with Khidr—centered on divine wisdom hidden behind seemingly unjust actions—receives a particularly creative adaptation. In one scene, while Khalil is prostrating, verse 61 from *Sūrah al-Kahf*, which relates to the story of Khidr and Moses and the story

of the fish returning to the water, is recited (Figure 1). Subsequently, a mystical vision occurs to Khalil.

فَلَمَّا بَلَغَا مَجْمَعَ بَيْنِهِمَا نَسِيَا حُوتَهُمَا فَاتَّخَذَ سَبِيلَهُ فِي الْبَحْرِ سَرَبًا (الكهف/61)

So when they reached the confluence between them, they forgot their fish, which found its way into the sea, sneaking away (Q. 18:61).



Figure 1. Recreation of the story of the fish returning to the water (Latifi 2006).

In his mystical vision, Khalil is led through the streets at night by a man (the same individual who brought a copy of the Qur'an for binding in the opening episode). The man engages in strange, seemingly immoral acts. Khalil, disturbed, repeatedly asks for explanations, but the man conditions their journey on Khalil's silence, threatening to reclaim the Qur'an if he asks further. First, he gives money to an addicted man. Khalil is surprised that he is aiding the promotion of immorality and corruption. Then, they approach a car parked on a street corner, and the man breaks the car window. Next, they go to a bus stop where a man is crossing the street, and the guide pushes him into the street.

Later in the story, the mystery behind these events is revealed. The car belongs to a man whose only source of income is this vehicle, and the guide explains to Khalil that thieves had intended to steal the car that night but would fail because of this action. The addicted man was planning to trade his daughter to a wealthy and corrupt old man. His daughter works and has been repaying his debts, but this month she would receive her salary later than usual. By helping him, the guide indirectly assists the daughter. The man who was pushed into the street had planned to murder someone that night. As a result of this push, his leg was broken and he is now bedridden; otherwise, he would have been imprisoned, leaving his family destitute.

This extended allegory closely reflects verses Q.18:60–82, particularly in the narrative structure and moral resolution of each event, reinforcing the scriptural themes of divine wisdom behind seemingly unjust acts:

He said, "If you follow me, do not question me concerning anything until I [myself] make a mention of it to you." So they went on. When they boarded the boat, he made a hole in it. He said, "Did you make a hole in it to drown its people? You have certainly done a monstrous thing!" He said, "Did I not say, indeed you cannot have patience with me?" He said, "Do not take me to task for my forgetting, and do not be hard upon me." So they went on. When they encountered a boy, he slew him. He said, "Did you slay an innocent soul, without [his having slain] anyone? You have certainly done a dire thing!" He said, "Did I not tell you, indeed you cannot have patience with me?" ... So they went on. When they came to the people of a town, they asked its people for food, but they refused to extend them any hospitality. There they found a wall which was about to collapse, so he erected it. He said, "Had you wished, you could have taken a wage for it." He said, "This is where you and I shall part. I will inform you about the interpretation of that over which you could not maintain patience. As for the boat, it belonged to some poor people who work on the sea. I wanted to make it defective, for behind them was a king seizing every ship usurpingly. As for the boy, his parents were faithful [persons], and We feared he would overwhelm them with rebellion and unfaith. So We desired that their Lord should give them in exchange one better than him in respect of purity and closer in mercy. As for the wall, it belonged to two boy orphans in the city. Under it there was a treasure belonging to them. Their father had been a righteous man. So your Lord desired that they should come of age and take out their treasure as a mercy from your Lord. I did not do that out of my own accord. This is the interpretation of that over which you could not maintain patience" (Q. 18:70-82).

5.4. *The Story of the Sons of Adam*

The characters Shahin and Ramin, sons of Jalil, are introduced in *Sahbedelan* as symbolic representations of the Qur'anic pair Qābil and

Hābīl (Cain and Abel). Their names echo the rhythmic pairing of the original figures and signal to the viewer the thematic duality of virtue and vice. Among the two, Ramin—following in the footsteps of his devout mother—is portrayed as the morally upright son, deeply concerned with religious teachings. His ethical stance often puts him at odds with his brother Shahin.

In one of the most evocative scenes, Shahin, driven by jealousy or frustration, lures his elder brother to a garden under false pretenses. Their conversation escalates into a confrontation, culminating in Shahin striking Ramin violently (Figure 2). As Ramin lies unconscious, Shahin is visibly distraught and unsure how to proceed. Ultimately, he abandons the scene, leaving his brother in the garden. This sequence echoes the Qur'anic narrative of the sons of Adam, reimagined for a contemporary religious drama. The Qur'an recounts:

Relate to them truly the account of Adam's two sons. When the two of them offered an offering, it was accepted from one of them and not accepted from the other. [One of them said,] "Surely I will kill you." [The other one] said, "Allah accepts only from the God-wary." ... So his soul prompted him to kill his brother, and he killed him, and thus became one of the losers. Then Allah sent a crow, exploring in the ground, to show him how to bury the corpse of his brother. He said, "Woe to me! Am I unable to be [even] like this crow and bury my brother's corpse?" Thus he became regretful (Q. 5:27, 30-31).

After committing the murder, Qābīl became distressed and fearful that others might discover his crime. God then sent a raven to teach him how to bury his brother's body. This part of the narrative is mirrored in *Sahebdelan* in a subtle yet artistically meaningful way. As Ramin lies motionless, Shahin gazes toward the sky, overwhelmed by uncertainty. Rather than a literal raven, the series employs the sound and flight of crows to symbolically reference the Qur'anic verse.



Figure 2. Argument between the brothers: A reinterpretation of the story of Adam's sons (Latifi 2006)

This scene illustrates how the Qur'anic tale is contextualized in a modern setting through symbolic and emotional cues, preserving its theological and moral undertones.

5.5. *The Story of Prophet Joseph*

Another significant narrative adapted in the series is the story of Prophet Joseph (Yūsuf), creatively reimagined through the experiences of the character Dina, Khalil's granddaughter. Dina, the female counterpart of Joseph in this narrative, is assaulted by her uncle—who, like Joseph's brothers, is envious of her and continually seeks to eliminate her. Just as Joseph's brothers did to him by casting him into a well (Q. 12:10), Dina's uncle strikes her and abandons her unconscious in a well. When she is eventually rescued from the well, she is injured and has lost her memory. The well is located in the garden of a wealthy household named the Heshmatian—a name that itself symbolizes grandeur, magnificence, and affluence. In this way, Dina is discovered and enters the household, paralleling Joseph's arrival at the palace of the 'Azīz of Egypt. Dina loses her memory as a result of the incident, and she is unable to explain how she ended up in the well. It is as though, upon emerging from the well, she assumes a new identity—just as Joseph did when he was brought out of the well and entered the palace of the 'Azīz of Egypt. The difference, however, is that while Joseph did not disclose his true identity, he did not suffer from amnesia.

Within this new environment, Dina encounters numerous challenges. The lady of the house is a woman obsessed with luxury, behaving like aristocrats do—mirroring Zulaykhā in the story of Joseph. Upon seeing Dina, she assigns her the name Kamelya, a name meant to reflect high social status—just as Zulaykhā assigns Joseph the name Yūzārsīf, which

she deems more suitable for the Egyptian court. Eventually, the lady decides to marry Dina off to her hedonistic son who lives abroad, has been previously married, and already has a child. This narrative development is a reinterpretation of Zulaykhā's desire to seduce Joseph (Q. 12:31). The woman organizes a party to introduce Kamelya to her friends as a prospective bride for her son. During the gathering, she asks Kamelya to dress beautifully and appear before the guests. The guests, much like the women of Zulaykhā's court, are enchanted by her appearance (Figure 3). Dina's reluctant compliance with this demand reflects the Qur'anic narrative.

فَلَمَّا سَمِعَتْ بِمَكْرِهِنَّ أَرْسَلَتْ إِلَيْهِنَّ وَأَعْتَدَتْ لَهُنَّ مُتَّكًا وَآتَتْ كُلَّ وَاحِدَةٍ مِنْهُنَّ سِكِّينًا وَ
قَالَتْ اخْرُجْ عَلَيْهِنَّ فَلَمَّا رَأَيْنَهُ أَكْبَرْنَهُ وَقَطَّعْنَ أَيْدِيَهُنَّ وَقُلْنَ حَاشَ لِلَّهِ مَا هَذَا بَشَرًا إِنْ هَذَا
إِلَّا مَلَكٌ كَرِيمٌ (يوسف/31)

When she heard of their machinations, she sent for them and arranged a repast, and gave each of them a knife, and said [to Joseph], "Come out before them." So when they saw him, they marveled at him and cut their hands [absent-mindedly], and they said, "Good heavens! This is not a human being! This is but a noble angel!" (Q. 12:31).



Figure 3. The lavish gathering at the Heshmatian residence, where Dina is invited to join the guests (Latifi 2006)

The accusation leveled against Joseph (Q. 12:35) is also addressed by the scriptwriter and reinterpreted according to the structure and content of the narrative. Dina decides to leave the household, and as a result, she is accused of insubordination and fleeing from the home of those who ostensibly offered her shelter. Law enforcement officers find her in a park, and on suspicion of having fled the household and possibly engaged in immoral behavior, she is taken into custody. Thus, she becomes imprisoned for a crime she did not commit. In a direct allusion to the Qur'anic account, the characters portraying her cellmates mention the dream interpretation episode involving two prisoners and the 'Azīz of Egypt's dream about seven fat and lean cows (Q. 12:43–44). Now, with trust in God, she must find deliverance.

When one of the inmates is about to be released, she asks Dina whether she can provide the name and address of a relative so that help can be sent. Dina initially attempts to recall and provide her grandfather's phone number, which she now remembers, but then changes her mind and says, "Now is not the time. I must wait until the Heshmatian family comes for me." In this segment, her story diverges slightly from that of Joseph. When one of Joseph's fellow inmates was released, Joseph requested that he speak of his innocence to the 'Azīz of Egypt so that he might be freed (Q. 12:42). Joseph later regretted having asked anyone but God for assistance and spent his days and nights repenting. When he was summoned to interpret the 'Azīz's dream, he refused to leave prison until his innocence was proven before the 'Azīz himself (Q. 12:50).

Like Joseph, Dina had to be separated from her Jacob figure—here, Khalil—and enter the palace of the 'Azīz. She had to endure many trials in order to be prepared for understanding the Qur'an that she had originally brought to her grandfather for binding. She had to be spiritually refined through patience so that she might eventually be counted among the *Sahebdehan* (the spiritualists). As portrayed in the film, once she regains her memory and returns from the Heshmatian household, Dina is no longer the same person; she has attained a higher level of maturity, wisdom, and moral clarity.

وَلَمَّا بَلَغَ أَشُدَّهُ آتَيْنَاهُ حُكْمًا وَعِلْمًا وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ (يوسف/22)

When he came of age, We gave him judgement and [sacred] knowledge, and thus do We reward the virtuous (Q. 12:22).

This indicates that just as God rewarded Joseph for his patience, so too shall all who perform righteous deeds be similarly rewarded (al-Ṭabrisī

1993 12: 189). Likewise, Dina traverses difficult and dangerous paths, and her patience in pursuing righteousness is tested so that she may become worthy of accompanying the *Sahbedelan* (spiritualists). As seen in the conclusion of the story, she too, like those whose names appear at the end of the Qur'an and who are recipients of divine grace, appears to have joined this spiritual path. She passes the Qur'an on to another *Sahbedel*, symbolically entrusting it to a kindred spirit.

5.6. *Brief Allusions to Other Qur'anic Narratives*

Some Qur'anic stories are narrated directly by the characters themselves. For instance, the story of Moses being placed in the river Nile at birth to save him from Pharaoh has been reimagined here. Just as Moses was drawn from the Nile, Dina too is rescued from water. The character playing the attorney of the Heshmatian family remarks, "In my opinion, anyone who is pulled from water should be named Nilu"—a name that might symbolically suggest "drawn from the Nile" (*Nīl*).

Prophet Jesus (ʿĪsā) would heal the sick by his life-giving breath. In the story, Khalil is tasked with a similar role. He seeks to heal the paralyzed wife of his brother Jalil by the permission of God and aided by the Qur'an. Khalil and Dina enter Jalil's house together, carrying the old Qur'an, and their actions evoke the rites of *Laylah al-Qadr*. The Qur'an is raised above the head of Ahdiyah, and Khalil, with deep faith, begins to pray.

Moreover, Khalil's character can be compared with Prophet Jacob (Ya'qūb), who loses his beloved son due to the jealousy and deceit of his other sons, and mourns for years in his absence. Dina's character—whose name itself evokes Dinah, the sister of Joseph—serves as a feminine counterpart to Joseph. However, in this retelling, she is not cast into the well by her brothers but by her uncle, repeating the motif of betrayal by kin. The setting of the well, unlike the desert context of the Joseph narrative, is transposed into a modern urban environment.

5.7. *The Story of Prophet Noah*

The narrative also contains allusions to the story of Prophet Noah (Nūḥ). The repeated references to building an ark of salvation are explicitly voiced by Mahmud, the misguided son of Khalil, who parallels Noah's disbelieving son. While Khalil is deeply devout and committed to

divine truth, his son adopts a contrary stance, mocking his father and dismissing his actions as futile. Similarly, the people of Noah, rather than considering that his repeated warnings might be inspired by divine revelation or that the threat of a flood could be real, continued to ridicule and mock him. Despite this scorn, Noah persevered with extraordinary patience, born of deep faith. Undeterred by their mockery, he persisted with determination, and day by day, the frame of the Ark took shape. The Qur'an states:

وَ اصْنَعِ الْفُلْكَ بِأَعْيُنِنَا وَ وَحِينَا وَ لَا تُخَاطِبُنِي فِي الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا إِنَّهُمْ مُعْرِضُونَ وَ يَصْنَعُ الْفُلْكَ وَ كَلَّمَا مَرَّ عَلَيْهِ مَلَأٌ مِنْ قَوْمِهِ سَخِرُوا مِنْهُ ... (هود/37-38)

Build the ark before Our eyes and by Our revelation, and do not plead with Me for those who are wrongdoers: they shall indeed be drowned. As he was building the ark, whenever the elders of his people passed by him, they would ridicule him... (Q. 11:37-38)

In parallel fashion, following a visionary dream in which he is reminded of his mission to guide his people, Khalil begins constructing a vessel in the courtyard of his home. He gathers planks, tools, and nails, intending to build a salvific ark with his own hands. Yet, unlike the Qur'anic account, this Ark remains incomplete. In the final scenes, Khalil's lifeless body is shown lying upon the unfinished vessel. As Dina puts it, he has "begun the journey alone." The dialogue surrounding the Ark, the derision Khalil endures, his ominous proclamations of divine punishment—all echo the story of Noah. The series concludes with a heavy rain and surging floodwaters, evoking the image of the Qur'anic deluge and signaling the eschatological resonance of Noah's storm.

6. Discussion and Analysis

The guiding research questions for this study concerned the modes and degrees of influence from Qur'anic narratives in the television series, and the types of transformations introduced during their adaptation. The findings indicate that the greatest borrowings derive from the stories of the five great prophets, whose miracles and aspects of their lives are presented in various episodes. The most explicit influences stem from the stories of Joseph and Moses, while references to Prophet Muhammad appear more subtly—most notably through the Qur'an itself, which is considered his enduring miracle. As the series title *Sahebdelan* (*The*

Spiritualists) implies, these are people whose stories have already been recorded in the Qur'an. The sacred text thus serves as the narrative framework, recounting the struggles between good and evil through the lives of prophets and the righteous.

Significantly, the series begins with the arrival of the Qur'an during the holy month of Ramadan and concludes with its re-binding and transmission to another character, symbolizing the completion of a full reading of the Qur'an. This motif implies that such stories and themes are intended to continue through future individuals and generations. In the final scene, verse Q.2:2 is recited, directly referencing the theme of guidance central to the series' message:

ذَٰلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ (البقرة/2)

This is the Book, there is no doubt in it, a guidance to the God-wary (Q.2:2).

Given the audiovisual and dialogical nature of the medium, the adaptation is a serious case of transformation, and intersemiotic translation inevitably involves significant modifications. The complete dramatization of every detail from the original Qur'anic narratives is neither feasible nor intended, considering the medium's constraints and its general audience. Instead, the series aims to convey the messages and values embedded in these stories in a way that resonates with contemporary viewers and encourages reflection. Thus, while inspired by the Qur'an, the narrative is not a literal retelling; dramatic elements have been selectively amplified or reduced, and certain elements have been omitted or reimagined altogether. The series draws from Qur'anic stories, yet reinterprets them through modernized characters, altered events, and updated messages. These transformations reflect a deliberate attempt to balance fidelity to Qur'anic meaning with artistic reinvention in a contemporary context. In general, the transformations that have occurred in the hypertext compared to the hypotext (the stories of the prophets) are as follows.

6.1. Transformation of Characters

Characters undergo major changes in their development. Khalil, though portrayed as a devout and spiritually gifted man, remains a mortal figure with human shortcomings. Unlike the prophets, his flaws are visible, which tempers the viewer's tendency to read him as a verbatim

representation of a prophetic figure. Khalil is a man of faith and God-consciousness, but he is not infallible.

The spiritual guide—an anonymous man who performs strange, incomprehensible actions—is modelled after the figure of Khidr. Unlike Khidr who accompanies Moses extensively, this character withdraws quickly, showing frustration at Khalil's lack of restraint, thus indicating a more limited function.

Jalil, Khalil's brother, represents a modern incarnation of Pharaoh, characterized by arrogance, materialism, and religious denial. His behavior—such as eating during daytime in Ramadan and opposing religious obligations—reinforce the symbolic connection. His household members serve as contemporary analogues to Pharaoh's court.

The character of Joseph is transformed into Dina, offering a gender-swapped reinterpretation of the narrative. As the story progresses, Dina undergoes intellectual and spiritual maturation, ultimately becoming one of the *Sahebdelan*. She embodies both a female Joseph and a female Aaron (Hārūn). The enmity and jealousy of Joseph's brothers are transferred to Dina's uncle, who throws her into a well, preserving the motif of familial betrayal.

The role of Zulaykhā is reimagined as a vain matriarch in the Heshmatian household, who introduces Dina as Kamelya and attempts to marry her off to her son. Unlike Zulaykhā, however, this character is not herself romantically involved but seeks to elevate her family's status by showcasing her "ideal" choice.

The role of Jacob, Joseph's father, is reassigned to Khalil, Dina's grandfather. Like Joseph, Dina is separated from him for a time, a journey that becomes essential for her spiritual growth.

Khalil's wife at times reflects the wife of Abraham (Ibrāhīm), while in other instances, she evokes the wife of Lot (Lūṭ), or transcends either typology entirely, serving a more symbolic function rather than a direct parallel.

6.2. Transformation of Symbols

Several core themes and concepts drawn from the Qur'an are conveyed in the series through transformed and updated symbols. These symbolic shifts not only modernize the narrative but also make it more relatable to contemporary audiences. Key examples include:

6.2.1. *Jealousy and Sin*

The theme of envy, as presented in the Qur'anic story of Qābil and Hābil (Cain and Abel), is reinterpreted through Shahin's jealousy toward Ramin, and through familial and moral disputes that echo those between Khalil and Jalil. The uncle's envy toward his niece Dina also echoes the jealousy of Joseph's brothers. These dynamics are relocated into more familiar family and social structures of modern life, enhancing the emotional immediacy of the story.

6.2.2. *Repentance, Reliance on God, and Moral Reform*

In the Qur'an, Joseph expresses regret for seeking help from anyone other than God and returns to full trust in divine providence. In the series, Dina initially considers giving the authorities her grandfather's phone number in hopes of release from detention, but then repents and decides to remain patient, trusting that God will open a path for her. Similarly, Dina's uncle and Shahin—modern counterparts to Joseph's brothers and Qābil—also come to regret their wrongdoing, although their remorse is presented in a differentiated narrative context. The series thus explores repentance as a deeply human, evolving process.

6.2.3. *Divine Trials and Patience*

Like Joseph, Dina must endure various tribulations, and her patience becomes the means through which she achieves spiritual growth and is ultimately recognized as one of the *Sahebdehan* (the spiritualists). Other characters—such as Khalil, Ahdiyah, and Ramin—each face trials that test their faith at different levels. The emphasis on divine wisdom, the necessity of patience, and trust in God is expressed across the narrative through contemporary and emotionally resonant portrayals that align with everyday experiences.

6.2.4. *Guidance and Salvation of Others*

Certain characters are cast in the metaphorical role of prophets within their communities, while others embody spiritual figures who seek to guide and redeem the lost among their family, kin, or acquaintances. These individuals face resistance, denial, and various difficulties in their mission, reminiscent of prophetic hardships but contextualized within a modern familial and societal framework. In each of these cases,

Qur'anic meanings and messages are retained but delivered through novel, culturally relevant symbols. These adaptations allow the series to maintain theological depth while offering a renewed narrative accessible to a contemporary audience.

6.3. Transformation of Narrative Structure

The narrative structure in the series diverges significantly from its Qur'anic antecedents, particularly in its treatment of temporal and spatial dynamics.

Time is manipulated freely within the series. The destinies of multiple prophets unfold simultaneously or in parallel through the experiences of the main and supporting characters, irrespective of historical chronology. The narrative opens with a reference to the miracle of Prophet Muhammad, while the story of Noah appears toward the conclusion, with interspersed allusions to the children of Adam and various other figures. Temporal shifts between past, present, and future occur without restriction, reflecting a non-linear storytelling approach that aligns with modern cinematic conventions.

The spatial setting has also been transformed. Events no longer unfold in the historical locations of the Qur'anic accounts but are instead rooted in modern-day Tehran and its surroundings—primarily in the homes of Khalil and Jalil or in their respective workplaces. Even multiple stories are narrated in a single location.

Because of these temporal and spatial relocations, other core elements of narrative structure—such as the introduction, climax, resolution, and dramatic tension—have been modified or deliberately reengineered. These adjustments enable the inclusion of subplots and newly created dramatic episodes, enhancing viewer engagement while integrating Qur'anic themes into a broader, fictional framework. Unlike the Qur'anic text—wherein the narrator is God—many of the series' events are conveyed through the speech of supporting characters or indirectly through visual storytelling. The frequent use of Qur'anic verses and Hadith in dialogues enriches the religious tone, although the linguistic style, tone, and diction have been altered to suit a contemporary audience and the demands of the dramatic medium.

6.4. Transformation of Narrative Events

Although in some cases, similarities between the hypertext—namely, this television series—and the hypotext, the Qur'anic stories, can be observed, in general, the transformation of events is evident across all narratives derived from the Qur'an. The construction of the ark by Khalil, the incidents that occur during his journey with a guiding man—resembling Khidr—the separation between Khalil and his granddaughter Dina which leads to a reimagining of the story of Prophet Joseph and Dina's entrance into the lavish house of the Heshmatian; the healing of Ahdiyah through the prayer of Khalil on the Night of Qadr, and simultaneously the effort to liberate her from Jalil's Pharaoh-like household akin to Asiya's story; the jealousy between the sons of Adam, and other secondary narratives—all have been reimagined through the replacement of elements with socially tangible and contemporary components, transforming the Qur'anic hypotext into a dramatic hypertext.

7. Conclusion

The Qur'an does not possess only a single face; it has a public face that is open to all, serving as a clear light and a guide for creation. Yet it also possesses other faces—faces which it reveals only to the contemplative, and to each person according to the measure of his or her being and his or her effort mingled with sincerity. The author of this article has, within the limits of his own understanding, attempted to interpret these manifest signs of the Qur'an in the language of contemporary drama. Translating a valuable hypotext such as the Qur'an is praiseworthy, yet extremely delicate and difficult—because the enduring concern remains how to render the Qur'anic narratives and exalted concepts in a way that is comprehensible to the recipients of the hypertext. This often necessitates a descent from the depth of meanings to a more accessible level of understanding.

The translation from a verbal hypotext to a visual-verbal hypertext involves a shift from one semiotic system to another. Therefore, such a process of transfer or adaptation—accompanied by a change in the communicative situation—requires measures that lead to a revision of structural and content dimensions such as plot, motifs, themes, characters, and other elements. As a result of these changes brought about by adaptation, the audience may be presented with a hypertext

that, to varying degrees, diverges from the original text and establishes a new communicative situation for the recipients of the hypertext. Today, such Qur'anic adaptations attempt to forge connections between the contemporary human and Qur'anic characterizations and events, and through the narration of Qur'anic stories from a new perspective, guide the audience's minds toward deciphering the relationships between the original hypotext and the new hypertexts.

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An Analytical Study of Human Relationships in the Qur'an through the Lens of Conceptual Metaphor

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ABSTRACT:

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Conceptual Metaphor Theory, a modern approach within cognitive linguistics introduced by Lakoff and Johnson in *Metaphors We Live By* (1980), posits that concepts are constituted not solely by inherent attributes but primarily by interactional characteristics. From this perspective, entities in the world do not possess fixed, intrinsic properties; rather, their meaning emerges only in relation to human action. Consequently, metaphors can assume the status of truth. Within the Qur'an, numerous injunctions and relational concepts can be interpreted through this theoretical framework as being grounded in interactional characteristics rather than in purely essentialist definitions. Adopting a descriptive-analytical method, this study examines several Qur'anic relationships, demonstrating how their meanings can be more adequately apprehended through the lens of Conceptual Metaphor Theory. The findings suggest that even human relationships in the Qur'an are not conceived as immutable or purely intrinsic. Instead, the Qur'an redefines relational concepts—such as mother, spouse, brother, and child—according to their roles, functions, and interactional qualities. Thus, notions such as the motherhood of the Prophet's wives for the Muslim community and the brotherhood of believers represent, in Qur'anic discourse, new conceptual realities that transcend mere metaphorical usage.

KEYWORDS: The Qur'an, Conceptual metaphor, Interactional nature of concepts, Lakoff and Johnson.

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1. *Introduction*

The Holy Qur'an contains concepts that establish certain injunctions for Muslims: it names the Prophet's wives as "mothers of the believers" (Q. 33:6), refers to believers as brothers to one another (Q. 49:10), and rejects certain kinship relations. For instance, regarding Noah's son, it states that he is not of his family (Q. 11:46), and it identifies some wives and children as enemies (Q. 64:14). It also describes spouses as garments for each other (Q. 2:187). For example, in the verse:

Said He, "O Noah! Indeed He is not of your family. Indeed he is [personification of] unrighteous conduct. So do not ask Me [something] of which you have no knowledge. I advise you lest you should be among the ignorant" (Q. 11:46).

God tells Prophet Noah about his son, saying that he is not truly part of his family because he is a disbeliever (Al-Ālūsī 1994, 12: 69). Does this imply that Prophet Noah did not recognize his own son? However, it can be argued that these verses possess hidden layers, which can be uncovered through Conceptual Metaphor Theory and the concept of interactional definitions of concepts, thereby reaching the core meanings of the verses.

This article, employing a descriptive-analytical method, examines some of these Qur'anic concepts and relationships based on conceptual metaphor and the interactional nature of concepts. The aim is to clarify the rationale behind these injunctions and to render the understanding of these concepts more tangible. Accordingly, this research does not address the various types of conceptual metaphors; rather, it focuses on defining specific human relational concepts in the Qur'an from the perspective that concepts are defined not solely by inherent features but primarily by interactional characteristics, in accordance with the principles of Conceptual Metaphor Theory. The significance of the issue lies in the pivotal role that Conceptual Metaphor Theory plays in interpreting Qur'anic verses. Although extensive research has been conducted, particularly in the field of Qur'anic studies, there remains scope for complementary investigations in this area. The present research aims to deepen the understanding of these concepts with particular regard to their interactional features. Consequently, it seeks to answer the following questions: (1) On what basis have certain injunctions arising from relational concepts—such as the Prophet's wives being considered mothers or believers being brothers to one another—been

legislated in the Qur'an? (2) Are these injunctions merely metaphorical, or do they represent truths?

2. Literature Review

Numerous studies have been conducted on conceptual metaphor in the Holy Qur'an, facilitating a deeper understanding of its verses. Talebi Anvari and Mirdehghan (2022) analyzed conceptual metaphors in the final ten sections of the Qur'an. They identified the frequency of metaphors based on source and target domains and concluded that Qur'anic metaphors contribute to the formation of cultural and cognitive patterns. Saheb Obaid (2019) investigated the role of conceptual metaphor in understanding the Holy Qur'an. He argues that an overreliance on numerous interpretations can create difficulties, while the use of conceptual metaphor theory enables a clearer understanding of God's intended meanings. According to this view, divine attributes such as power, life, and knowledge are abstract and beyond full human comprehension, so God expresses these concepts in terms accessible to human understanding.

Abdelhameed (2019) investigated linguistic and conceptual metaphors in selected verses of the Qur'an, focusing on the metaphor "Prayer is a building." Using the conceptual metaphor framework of Lakoff and Johnson, along with the Pragglejaz model for metaphor identification, he examined how this metaphor contributes to the experience of inner peace for Muslims. The study highlighted three types of metaphors: structural, ontological, and orientational. Salhb al-Quraishi (2023) examined the role of metaphor in the Qur'an from a dynamic cognitive perspective. This study highlighted the distinction between the concepts of thought, experience, and reality as understood in cognitive linguistics. Unlike psycholinguistics, which focuses on the cognitive processes involved in language learning and understanding using empirical data, cognitive linguistics emphasizes the relationship between thought and experience. The study also raised important questions about the connection between the mind and reality.

Given that conceptual metaphor plays a significant role in understanding the verses of the Qur'an, the present research aims to complement previous studies. The distinct contribution of this study lies in its focus on conceptual metaphors relating to human concepts and relationships in the Qur'an, particularly those defined by interactional

characteristics, in order to elucidate their meanings more clearly. For instance, God states that believers are brothers to one another, and the Prophet's wives are the mothers of the believers. This study seeks to explain the basis upon which God has mandated these rulings and relationships—specifically, whether these designations are merely metaphorical or whether they express a form of truth.

3. Theoretical Framework

Conceptual metaphor is an active process within the human cognitive system, with linguistic metaphors functioning merely as symbols or vehicles of this process (Lakoff & Johnson 2008). In other words, language is not an isolated domain of the mind or brain; rather, imagination—as one of the cognitive faculties—involves mapping some concepts onto others (Barcelona 2003). Over the past thirty years, experimental studies in cognitive science have emphasized that metaphor extends beyond mere language, figurative speech, rhetoric, and eloquence (Nemati et al. 2021). Indeed, one of the key aims of conceptual metaphor is to provide illumination (Hasanzade Neery & Hamidfar 2020). These metaphors are so naturally and spontaneously integrated into our lives that they often pass unnoticed in daily practice (Qasemzadeh 2012).

To better understand the nature of metaphor, it can be said that in conceptual metaphor we understand one domain of experience in terms of another. The source domain—used to understand the target domain—is typically more physical, more directly experienced, and better known. The target domain is usually more abstract, less directly experienced, and less well known (Kovecses 2015). In conceptual metaphor, elements from the source domain are systematically mapped onto elements of the target domain (Hooshangi & Seyfiporgoo 2009). Each mapping is a systematic set of ontological correspondences between entities in the source domain and entities in the target domain (Lakoff & Johnson 2008). The notion of “mapping,” which originates from mathematics, is the most fundamental aspect of conceptual metaphor (Afrashi & Afkhami 2017). A mapping constitutes a systematic network of correspondences between the elements of the source and target domains (Barati 2018).

It should be noted that patterning in conceptual metaphor is relative: if the patterning and structuring were complete, the two concepts would merge into one (Pourebrahim 2009). Even naming itself can be considered a form of metaphor. However, the prevailing formal view in the literature

is that objects and meanings have a true and original designation, which is sometimes extended to other things on an occasional basis (Davari Ardakani et al. 2012). In this sense, even the names we assign to people are metaphorical rather than absolute realities. Therefore, metaphors are primarily related to modes of thinking and only secondarily and incidentally manifest in language and linguistic expressions (Geeraerts 2010).

Consequently, concepts are defined not just by their inherent characteristics, but primarily by their interactional characteristics. Lakoff and Johnson (2008), in their discussion of interactional concepts, explain that most of our concepts are understood on the basis of interaction—namely their roles, functions, and purposes. That is, the concepts we consider “real” possess inherent characteristics only to a certain extent and are defined to some extent by interactional characteristics. For example, “love” is defined only to some extent by inherent characteristics such as infatuation, passion, affection, sexual desire, and the like; that is, love is understood through what we call interactional characteristics.

To clarify, consider the concept of a gun. You might think that this concept is fully described by its inherent physical characteristics, such as its shape, its weight, how to connect its elements, and so on. But when this concept is used with different descriptors, it goes beyond these characteristics. For example, consider the difference between the descriptors “black” and “toy” when they are used with “gun”. We normally assume that a “real” gun (a gun that shoots) is a gun, whereas a toy gun is not. However, this assumption is incorrect. Why do we think a toy gun is not a gun? This is because a toy gun does not perform the actual function of shooting. If we insist that a toy gun is not a gun, we face unanswerable questions: If it is not a gun, then what is it? A bowl of soup? A giraffe? We must understand how “toy” preserves the concept of “gun”; a “toy” gun must be able to preserve what we call the motion characteristics of a real gun. Furthermore, having a “toy” gun implies fulfilling some of the purposes of a real gun (e.g., to threaten, to be used in play, and so on). What makes a gun a “toy” gun is that it cannot function like a real gun. If it could shoot, it would not be a toy; it would be real. Ultimately, it cannot be made for the purpose of functioning like a real gun. Therefore, the descriptor “toy” preserves some types of gun characteristics and discards others: thus, a gun is not a well-defined concept specific to a particular object, but rather is defined to some extent by interactional characteristics related to perception, motion,

purpose, function, and so on (Lakoff & Johnson 2008). Conversely, a real gun has an intrinsic characteristic (its ability to function) and several interactional characteristics that we also utilize with a toy gun: we treat it like a real gun, we threaten with it, and we use it in play. In reality, the category of “gun”—and, by extension, all our concepts—depends on our purpose in using that category. Therefore, a toy gun should also be considered a gun and a new reality.

4. Analyzing Human Relationships in the Qur'an

It is noteworthy that in the Qur'an, God establishes new concepts of human relationships based on interactional characteristics. In the Qur'an, the concept of *mother* is not limited exclusively to the biological mother who gives birth. There exists another form of *motherhood*, defined not only by conceptual similarity but also by interactional roles and functions. This means that even human relationships in the Qur'an are conceptualized through metaphor and grounded in interaction: God defines these relationships in terms of their roles, functions, and purposes, and establishes them as binding injunctions. By understanding concepts as interactional, we can better grasp the meaning of these injunctions. Concepts such as mother, brother, child, spouse, and garment in the Qur'an are not confined to particular individuals or objects; rather, they are concepts defined through interactional characteristics. As mentioned in the theoretical framework, the concepts by which we live are rooted in our experiences and recognized according to their roles, purposes, functions, and components. Accordingly, the type of conceptual system we possess results from our interaction with cultural and physical environments. Metaphors such as “Happiness is up,” “Argument is war,” and “Events are objects” exemplify such interactional conceptualization (Lakoff & Johnson 2008).

4.1. The Prophet's Wives Are Mothers of the Believers

In the verse Q. 33:6 a significant ruling is issued for Muslims:

النَّبِيُّ أَوْلَىٰ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ مِنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ وَأَزْوَاجُهُ أُمَّهَاتُهُمْ (الاحزاب/6)

The Prophet is closer to the faithful than their own souls, and his wives are their mothers (Q. 33:6).

The designation of the Prophet's wives as mothers of the believers is a divine legal ruling unique to the Prophet. Its meaning is that just as respecting one's biological mother is obligatory and marriage to her is forbidden, respecting the Prophet's wives is likewise obligatory for all Muslims, and marriage to them is strictly prohibited. Subsequent verses explicitly confirm this prohibition:

وَمَا كَانَ لَكُمْ أَنْ تُؤْذُوا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَ لَا أَنْ تُنْكِحُوا أَزْوَاجَهُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ أَبَدًا إِنَّ ذَٰلِكُمْ كَانَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ عَظِيمًا (الاحزاب/53)

You may not torment the Apostle of Allah, nor may you ever marry his wives after him. Indeed that would be a grave [matter] with Allah (Q. 33:53).

The comparison of the Prophet's wives to mothers applies to some, but not all, aspects of motherhood. For instance, a biological mother, in addition to being owed respect and being prohibited in marriage, has other legal implications: such as mutual inheritance with her children, the permissibility of seeing her unveiled, and kinship ties with her other children (e.g., halfsiblings through her). By contrast, the wives of the Messenger of God (peace be upon him and his family)—apart from the rulings of respect and prohibition of marriage—do not share these other rulings or characteristics of biological motherhood (Tabataba'i 1996, 16:414).

From the perspective of conceptual metaphor and interactional characteristics, we understand that the motherhood of the Prophet's wives should not be regarded as a mere simile. Instead, it should be considered a new, real concept of "motherhood" that is defined by specific interactional features. Based on the interactional nature of concepts, this ruling preserves two key characteristics of biological motherhood—respect and the prohibition of marriage—while setting aside others, such as inheritance and childbirth. Just as, in the earlier example, a toy gun cannot be dismissed as "not a gun," here we cannot dismiss the motherhood of the Prophet's wives as merely metaphorical or symbolic. Rather, we are dealing with an expanded and redefined concept of *mother*, which is best understood through its function.

In other words, the Prophet's wives relate to the believers in a way that parallels the relationship of a toy gun to a real gun: the concept retains certain essential functions while discarding others. In the Qur'an, the concept of *mother* is thus not a fixed, intrinsic concept; it is redefined through interactional characteristics (respect and prohibition

of marriage) and is not limited to the biological relationship. The concept of *mother* contains both intrinsic characteristics (such as giving birth) and interactional characteristics (such as being a source of respect and a figure one may not marry). If what metaphors recommend are the most important aspects of our experiences, then metaphor can stand in for truth (Lakoff & Johnson 2008). Since respect and the prohibition of marriage are our most salient experiences of motherhood, the Prophet's wives, by embodying these functions, are considered the true mothers of the believers.

4.2. *Believers Are Brothers to One Another*

Another verse in which God establishes an injunction for believers is verse 10 of *Sūrah al-Hujurat*:

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ أَخَوَيْكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ (الحجرات/10)

The faithful are indeed brothers. Therefore make peace between your brothers and be wary of Allah, so that you may receive [His] mercy (Q.49:10).

Al-Ālūsī considers the application of *brotherhood* to believers as metaphorical, either as a simile or as a *tashbīh balīgh* (eloquent simile). He states that the shared possession of faith by two individuals is analogous to their shared origin through birth, because just as birth is the cause of continued existence in this world, faith is the cause of continued existence in Paradise (Al-Ālūsī 1994, 13:303). Similarly, Tabataba'i (1996, 18:472) explains that the brotherhood intended in this verse refers to religious and conventional brotherhood, which has only social and ethical implications and does not affect rulings concerning marriage or inheritance.

Once again, the Qur'an does not treat the concept of *brother* as a fixed, intrinsic concept. Instead, it redefines brotherhood by presenting believers as brothers to one another. This ruling preserves some key characteristics of brotherhood, such as a shared origin—here, faith—and the ethical and social responsibilities expected among brothers, while setting aside others, such as legal rulings on inheritance and marriage. Therefore, this concept does not represent a mere metaphor or simile; rather, it embodies an interactional reality. Believers, in relation to one another, preserve the essential characteristics of brotherhood while discarding others. In this context, the brotherhood of believers is to the

biological brotherhood as a toy gun is to a real gun: a redefined concept that retains essential functions. Within the Qur'anic framework, and on the basis of the interactional nature of concepts, believers are therefore regarded as true brothers to one another.

4.3. *A Sinful Child As Not One's Child*

Another example of a Qur'anic decree concerning relationships is found in the statement regarding Prophet Noah's son:

قَالَ يَا نُوحُ إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ مِنْ أَهْلِكَ إِنَّهُ عَمَلٌ غَيْرُ صَالِحٍ فَلَا تَسْتَعِظُنْ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ إِنِّي أَعِظُكَ
أَنْ تَكُونَ مِنَ الْجَاهِلِينَ (هود/46)

Said He, "O Noah! Indeed He is not of your family. Indeed he is [personification of] unrighteous conduct. So do not ask Me [something] of which you have no knowledge. I advise you lest you should be among the ignorant" (Q. 11:46).

Here, God declares that Noah's son is not of his family because the criterion for true kinship is faith. Although Noah is bound to him biologically, this kinship is nullified by disbelief, as there is no genuine bond between a believer and an unbeliever. Religious kinship is presented here as stronger and more real than genealogical kinship (Al-Ālūsī 1994, 12:69). This is also reflected in the famous saying of Al-Ḥamdānī (1944, 353): Salmān al-Farsī's affection caused kinship to the Prophet, and there was no kinship between Noah and his son. It means that Salmān al-Farsī's loyalty and acceptance of guardianship (*wilāyah*) established a spiritual kinship with the Prophet, whereas the disbelief of Noah's son severed the natural kinship bond.

From an interactional perspective, this verse shows that religious kinship holds a more fundamental reality than biological descent. Just as Salmān was included in the Prophet's family (*Ahl al-Bayt*) by virtue of his faith and allegiance, God here makes piety the key criterion for familial relationships. In the absence of piety, those relationships lose their validity. Just as believers are considered brothers due to their shared origin in faith, Noah's son, because of his unbelief and ungodly conduct, is denied the status of "child" by God. This explains the divine command: "So do not ask of Me that of which you have no knowledge."

Thus, in this verse as well, the concept of "child" is shown not to be a fixed, intrinsic concept. Rather, it is a relational concept defined,

in God's decree, by a person's actions and righteousness rather than by biology.

4.4. *Some Wives and Children Are Enemies*

Another verse in which God issues a decree concerning relationships is verse 14 of *Sūrah al-Taghābun*:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّ مِنْ أَزْوَاجِكُمْ وَأَوْلَادِكُمْ عَدُوًّا لَكُمْ فَاحْذَرُوهُمْ وَإِنْ تَعْفُوا وَتَصْفَحُوا وَ
تَعْفِرُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ (التغابن/14)

O you who have faith! Indeed among your spouses and children you have enemies; so beware of them. And if you excuse, forbear and forgive, then Allah is indeed all-forgiving, all-merciful (Q. 64:14).

According to exegetes (*mufasssirūn*), there are four primary reasons why God describes some wives and children as enemies:

- Disagreement with the faith of the believing spouse.
- Pressuring the spouse to abandon faith and refrain from righteous deeds.
- Inducing the spouse to commit wrongful acts, such as theft and the usurpation of others' property.
- Placing love for one's spouse or children above the love of God and the religion of Islam.

Consequently, believers are cautioned against such spouses and children and are urged to exercise vigilance to avoid harm (Tabataba'i 1996, 19:515).

In this verse, based on the interactional nature of truth, it becomes clear that those wives and children whom God designates as enemies are so described because they functionally fulfill the role of an enemy—through opposition, coercion towards sin, or preventing righteousness. In reality, they have set aside most of the characteristics of being a supportive spouse, friend, or family member. Therefore, what we are dealing with here is not merely a metaphorical expression, but an interactional reality.

Consequently, it can be argued that, throughout the Qur'an, concepts such as mother, brother, and child are defined by the interactional nature of truth. When individuals fail to fulfill the primary roles, functions, and purposes associated with these concepts, the roles and their very

definitions are nullified. Thus, concepts are determined not only by their inherent characteristics but also by their functional and relational aspects. The metaphors mentioned in the Qur'an, therefore, are not mere figures of speech but represent new realities. The Qur'an is replete with these complex, interconnected conceptual metaphors. As Lakoff and Johnson (2008) observe: Truth is a function of our conceptual system, which is grounded in our experiences and the experiences of other members of our culture and is constantly tested by all of us in our everyday interactions with other people and with physical and cultural environments.

Most conceptual metaphors are interactional in nature, such as "Argument is war," "Life is a journey," "Love is a journey," and so on. Other examples of interactional conceptualization found in the Qur'an include: "This worldly life is mere diversion and amusement" (Q. 29:64); "Life is commerce" (Q. 35:29); "Life is a race" (Q. 56:10); "Piety is clothing" (Q. 7:26).

5. Conclusion

According to Conceptual Metaphor Theory, the world consists of entities that do not possess inherent, fixed characteristics; instead, their meaning arises from interactional characteristics that become significant only in relation to human actions. This framework enables a deeper understanding of some of the injunctions mandated by God in the Qur'an. These injunctions express concepts that God has ordained based on their interactional nature, thereby giving them new dimensions of meaning. Such concepts are understood through the roles, functions, and purposes they fulfill. Thus, based on Conceptual Metaphor Theory and the discussion of interactional concepts, even human concepts and relationships in the Qur'an are not defined by inherent and rigid attributes. They are, instead, conceptual metaphors that shape how believers live. The Qur'an redefines human relationships, introducing new realities that transcend conventional biological and social definitions. For example, God states that: The Prophet's wives are the mothers of the believers, and marriage to them is forbidden; Believers are brothers to one another; Regarding his disbelieving son, God tells Prophet Noah: "Indeed, he is not of your family;" Some wives and children are enemies; And spouses are described as "garments" for one another. Therefore, many of the metaphors and concepts by which

we live are interactional, and even the concepts of mother, brother, child, and spouse in the Qur'an possess inherent characteristics only to a limited degree. Their full meaning emerges from their interactional nature. According to Conceptual Metaphor Theory, these are not simply figurative expressions but divinely ordained realities that must be understood through their roles and functions.

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Ichwani Tafsīr Method: An Integrative Approach to the Interpretation of the Qur'an

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ABSTRACT:

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This article introduces *Ichwani tafsīr* method, an integrative approach to Qur'anic interpretation that combines various traditional and contemporary methods. The main issue raised is the need for a more comprehensive approach to interpretation, which includes not only classical interpretation but also takes into account modern contexts and socio-historical dynamics. The purpose of this method is to provide a more relevant interpretation while maintaining the authenticity of the message of the Qur'an. The *Ichwani* method consists of nine steps, starting with language analysis (*tafsīr lughawī*), classical *tafsīr* analysis (*bil-ma'thūr*), and contemporary *tafsīr* (*bil-ra'y*), followed by understanding the background of the verse (*asbāb al-nuzūl*) and socio-historical analysis. These steps culminate in thematic interpretation (*tafsīr mawḍū'ī*), assessment based on *maqāsid al-sharī'ah* (objectives of the Sharī'ah), as well as renewal (*tajdīd*) and reform (*iṣlāḥ*). The findings of this article show that *Ichwani* method can produce a holistic and contextual interpretation, answering modern challenges without abandoning its traditional roots. The author recommends this method as a new approach that can enrich the study of Qur'anic interpretation and encourage dialogue between various disciplines to understand the sacred text more deeply and in a more relevant manner.

KEYWORDS: The Qur'an, *Ichwani tafsīr* Method, Integrative Interpretation, Methods of Interpretation, *Maqāsid al-Sharī'ah*, *Tajdīd* and *Iṣlāḥ*

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1. Introduction

The interpretation of the Qur'an is one of the most critical fields in the Islamic scientific tradition (Guessoum 2008; Abdullah & Sarhan 2024; Friedman 2012). In the long history of Islamic scholarship, from the early days of the Qur'an to the present, Muslim scholars have tried to develop various methods to explore the meaning contained in the Divine revelation (Çonkor 2024; Humphreys 2015). The methods of interpretation developed reflect an understanding of the text as well as a response to changes in the social and cultural context that are always dynamic. Various developed approaches include *tafsir bil-ma'thur*, an interpretation that relies on the history or narrative of Prophet Muhammad and his companions, and *tafsir bil-ra'y*, which emphasizes critical and rational thinking (Nur et al. 2019). These two approaches continue to adapt to the times, resulting in a deeper and richer understanding of meaning, making them relevant to the needs of the people in various contexts.

However, as the challenges facing Muslims in this modern era become more complex, there is an urgent need to develop a method of *tafsir* that can integrate various classical approaches with contemporary approaches (Bashir et al. 2013; Özaktan 2022). The challenges facing the *ummah* today are not only limited to spiritual problems but also include increasingly complex social, political, economic, and cultural problems (Jamil 2020). Issues such as economic inequality, climate change, gender, and human rights are increasingly urgent and must be addressed through a relevant and contextual Islamic perspective (Waleed El-Ansary 2018). In the context of globalization, Muslims also face challenges in maintaining their cultural and religious identities while adapting to rapid social changes (Ichwan et al. 2024b). Therefore, the method of interpretation developed is expected to provide a deep understanding of the Qur'anic text and be responsive to contemporary issues.

As an illustration, Fazlur Rahman, in his work *Islam and Modernity*, emphasizes the importance of a thematic approach in interpreting the Qur'an to answer modern problems. This approach allows exegetes (*mufasssirun*) to highlight the universal values of the Qur'an that can be applied to various social contexts, including the era of globalization and structural changes in society (Akbar 2020; Rahman 1982). Thus, developing an integrative interpretation method is a strategic step in answering the challenges faced by Muslims in this modern era.

The *Ichwani Tafsīr* Method is a new approach to interpreting the Qur'an, designed to answer the challenges of contemporary hermeneutics while remaining grounded in the classical framework. Its novelty lies in the systematic integration of linguistic analysis (*tafsīr lughawī*), the authority of classical interpretation (*tafsīr bil-ma'thūr*), and the contextual approach (*tafsīr bil-ra'y*) within one hierarchical framework. In contrast to the thematic method of *tafsīr (mawḍū'ī)*, which tends to be a partial or critical method that often ignores the authority of the scholars, *Ichwani tafsīr* combines the two in a balanced manner, then complements them with contemporary socio-historical analysis and evaluation based on *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*. The final step, namely *tajdīd* and *iṣlāḥ*, explicitly makes interpretive renewal a goal, so this method is both descriptive and transformative. Thus, *Ichwani tafsīr* is not just a compilation of existing approaches but a coherent system of interpretation, where each stage reinforces the other to produce a complete, relevant, and harmonized understanding aligned with the principle of *maṣlaḥah* (benefit).

The uniqueness of *Ichwani tafsīr* is seen in its ability to overcome the dichotomy between tradition and modernity without being trapped in extremes. For example, in interpreting the verses on polygamy or women's leadership, this method not only relies on literal or historical readings but also analyzes them through the lens of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* and contemporary social realities, and then formulates a more progressive interpretation without ignoring the authority of the text. In addition, its integrative step serves as a final screening mechanism that ensures consistency between linguistic analysis, the context of verse revelation (*asbāb al-nuzūl*), and the need for renewal. This is what distinguishes it from other methods: *Ichwani tafsīr* Method does not stop at the deconstruction of meaning but actively offers solutions based on the principle of *iṣlāḥ* (reform). With a clear framework and measurable interpretive goals, this method is worthy of being called new and necessary in responding to the complexity of understanding the Qur'an in the modern era.

This article introduces and explains *Ichwani tafsīr* Method as an integrative interpretation approach. This method combines a variety of existing interpretation approaches, both from classical and contemporary traditions, to provide a more comprehensive perspective on understanding the messages of the Qur'an. In addition, this article will also discuss the application of this method in several examples of the interpretation of Qur'anic verses, as well as its potential for development in the future. Thus, it is hoped that this method can

significantly contribute to the development of *tafsir* in the modern era and answer the challenges Muslims face in various aspects of life.

2. Literature Review

2.1. *Tafsir Lughawī*

Tafsir lughawī is one of the main approaches to understanding the Qur'an because of the richness of the Arabic language, which is complex and has many dimensions of meaning (Mughal 2011). Arabic, as the language of revelation, has a unique grammatical structure, an extensive use of synonyms, and a profound style of rhetoric (Sabour et al. 2024). Through linguistic analysis, exegetes can explore the deeper meanings of Qur'anic verses by understanding the historical context and the specific usage of words (Saylan 2019).

One notable example is the word *qalb* in the Qur'an, which in Arabic can mean the physical heart, or the center of emotion and intellect. To understand the meaning of a verse, an exegete refers to classical sources such as Ibn Manẓūr (1997), which contains thousands of definitions based on usage in early Arabic literature (Al-Rawashdeh et al. 2024). With *lughawī* analysis, an exegete can distinguish between literal (*ḥaqīqī*) and figurative (*majāzī*) meanings to provide a more accurate and contextual interpretation (Mutammam & Zubaidah 2017). For instance, the word *ṣalāt*, which generally means prayer, is often understood as ritual worship, depending on the sentence structure and the context of the verse in which it appears.

The relevance of *tafsir lughawī* is not only limited to the classical period; it is also important in addressing modern challenges, such as translating the Qur'an into various languages (Kholiq et al. 2023). One of the main challenges is maintaining the original meaning of the Qur'an when translating it into languages that lack Arabic's grammatical structure and lexical depth (Abdel Haleem 2010). For example, the word *ẓālim* in Arabic encompasses a range of meanings—from minor injustices to major forms of oppression—so translation without in-depth linguistic analysis can result in misinterpretation. In this context, *tafsir lughawī* helps preserve the substance of Qur'anic verses and ensures the original message is retained (Mughal 2011).

In addition, linguistic analysis is relevant in responding to accusations of contradiction or ambiguity within the Qur'an. Through the *lughawī*

approach, differences in the meanings of words or phrases can be explained scientifically and textually, thus supporting the argument that the Qur'an is free from contradictions (Campanini 2005). Thus, *tafsīr lughawī* contributes not only to the understanding of traditional texts but also becomes essential in addressing modern critiques of Islam and the Qur'an.

2.2. *Tafsīr bil-Ma'thūr and Tafsīr bil-Ra'y*

Tafsīr bil-ma'thūr is a method of interpretation rooted in the primary sources of Islam—namely, the Qur'an, the *ḥadīth* of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), and the views of the *ṣaḥābah* and *tābi'ūn* (Nur et al. 2021). This method is considered the most authoritative because it directly refers to reliable revelation and historical narrations (Nur et al. 2019). For example, the interpretation of the verse on the obligation to fast (Q. 2:183) is often elaborated upon with narrations (*aḥādīth*) that provide technical details on how fasting is to be carried out. This *tafsīr* also maintains the continuity of the Islamic intellectual tradition by relying on authentic narrations, as codified in classical works such as *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī* (Arsad 2018).

However, this method has limitations when dealing with issues not explicitly addressed in the Qur'an or *ḥadīth*, such as bioethics or artificial intelligence. In such cases, relying solely on *tafsīr bil-ma'thūr* is often insufficient, necessitating a more flexible approach to accommodate contemporary realities (Fatoni & Salman 2023). Even so, *tafsīr bil-ma'thūr* remains a foundational reference, as it preserves the integrity of the text and ensures that interpretations do not deviate from the core teachings of Islam.

On the other hand, *tafsīr bil-ra'y* offers a rational approach to understanding the Qur'an, particularly in relation to modern social dynamics and ethical challenges (Demir 2023). This method involves logical analysis and *ijtihād* based on common sense and overarching Islamic principles such as justice (*'adālah*) and societal benefit (*maṣlaḥah*). One notable exegete who employed this method was Imām al-Rāzī, renowned for his philosophical and rational approach to *tafsīr*. *Tafsīr bil-ra'y* allows for the interpretation of verses that do not have explicit precedent in early sources—such as those related to environmental sustainability or gender equity—to remain relevant in current contexts (Fajria & Kholil 2024). For example, the verse on trust (*amānah*) (Q. 4:58)

can be interpreted today in light of leadership ethics or principles of public governance.

However, this method also carries risks if applied without adequate scholarly grounding, as it can open the door to misinterpretation. Therefore, the optimal solution is the *Ichwani* method, which integrates *tafsir bil-ma'thur* and *tafsir bil-ra'y*. With this combination, the historical basis is preserved, while rational analysis helps bridge the relevance of the text to modern realities. This integrated method enables a more comprehensive interpretation of the Qur'an that can guide Muslims across generations and contexts.

2.3. *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*

Maqāṣid al-sharī'ah, or the objectives of Islamic law, is a fundamental concept in Islamic jurisprudence that focuses on achieving benefit and preventing harm to humanity (Zuhdi & Nasir 2024). This concept includes five main goals: preserving religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property (Maulida & Ali 2023). In this context, *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* serves as both a theoretical framework and a practical tool for interpreting the verses of the Qur'an (Supena 2024). For example, an interpretation based on *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* of a verse prohibiting usury can lead to an understanding that the prohibition aims to observe economic justice and prevent exploitation. Data shows that the practice of *ribā* contributes to economic instability and poverty in various communities (Obaid et al. 2024). Therefore, this interpretation considers not only textual aspects but also broader social implications, making *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* relevant in facing the challenges of modern economics. According to research by Maulida and Ali (2023), *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* is also used to evaluate people's welfare, which shows a positive relationship between religious values and economic conditions. Thus, *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* is relevant not only in a theoretical context but also in practical applications aimed at creating a balanced and just society.

The importance of *maqāṣid* in interpreting the Qur'an lies in its ability to offer adaptive and relevant solutions to the dynamics of the times (Güney 2024). In an ever-changing world, the core values of Islam remain a guideline, but their application needs to be adapted to the current context. For example, regarding climate change, the *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* approach can provide a basis for environmental policies to protect the sustainability of nature and the well-being of humanity

(Maulidiana & Famulia 2023). An exegete who understands *maqāṣid* can provide interpretations that prioritize tangible benefits for society. For instance, on issues of human rights and social justice, *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* can offer a framework for assessing public policies and social practices based on Islamic principles. Research shows that the *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* approach can help reduce social and economic injustice by emphasizing justice, benefit, and collective welfare (Maulidiana & Famulia 2023). Thus, *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* not only enriches our understanding of the Qur'an but also encourages Muslims to contribute positively to society, ensuring that the interpretation of the Qur'an serves as a source of inspiration and guidance in daily life.

2.4. Integrative Interpretation

The integrative interpretation methodology is an approach that combines various classical and contemporary interpretive methods to create a more holistic understanding of the Qur'an. In this approach, the literal aspects of the Qur'anic text are not ignored but are seen in a broader context, including the history, culture, and social conditions in which the verse was revealed (Zainatul Nadra Zainol et al. 2018). For example, in interpreting verses related to family law, such as Q. 4:34, the relationship between husband and wife becomes more meaningful when we consider the patriarchal context of Arab society during the time of Prophet Muhammad. This approach combines the methods of *tafsīr bil-ma'thūr* (interpretation based on transmitted reports), *tafsīr bil-ra'y* (interpretation based on reason), linguistic analysis, and sociological perspectives to offer interpretations that are not only textually sound but also relevant to contemporary issues, such as gender equality. A study by Abdullah Saeed (2008) emphasizes the importance of a contextual approach in understanding the dynamics of Qur'anic interpretation in the modern era. Thus, integrative interpretation allows exegetes of the Qur'an to extract deeper meanings and adapt Islamic teachings to evolving social needs.

The integrative interpretation methodology includes a thematic approach that highlights key values in the Qur'an, such as justice, compassion, and freedom. It bridges the sacred text with the lived realities of Muslims by linking these themes to contemporary concerns, such as human rights and social justice. This approach allows for a more dynamic form of interpretation, where Islamic principles can

be applied practically in modern society (Jones 2021). For example, in discussing gender issues, integrative interpretation can combine feminist perspectives with Qur'anic teachings to provide a more inclusive understanding. Research shows that this approach enhances public awareness of gender rights within an Islamic framework (Smith 2022). Thus, this methodology not only enriches our understanding of the Qur'an but also motivates Muslims to play an active role in creating a more just and equitable society while addressing present-day social challenges.

3. Method

3.1. Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis in this study is the methodological approach applied to the *Ichwani tafsir* method. The main focus is on the steps that make up this *tafsir* framework, which includes linguistic analysis, *tafsir bil-ma'thūr*, and *tafsir bil-ra'y*. This research will explore how each step contributes to producing a more holistic understanding of the verses of the Qur'an. By analyzing these components, the researcher aims to demonstrate the relevance of *Ichwani* method in a dynamic social and historical context while also addressing the modern challenges Muslims face.

3.2. Research Design

This study uses a descriptive qualitative design (Koh & Owen 2000; Carvalho et al. 2005) to introduce and explain *Ichwani tafsir* method in depth. Through this approach, the researcher will examine the steps in the interpretation method and how they interact. This research will also involve a comparative analysis with other interpretation methods to clarify its uniqueness (Houck 2013). Thus, this study highlights the advantages of *Ichwani* method and places it in the broader context of Qur'anic interpretation studies.

3.3. Data Sources

The data sources in this study include literature related to the interpretation of the Qur'an, including classical and contemporary *tafsir*

books, journal articles, and scholarly works that discuss interpretive methodology. Researchers will collect data from sources that show the application of various interpretation methods and the analysis of relevant modern issues. In addition, the researcher will refer to documents that discuss *maqāṣid al-sharī‘ah* and its implications in *tafsīr* to strengthen the argument regarding the relevance of *Ichwani* method in the current context.

3.4. Data Collection Technique

The data collection techniques used in this study are literature review and content analysis (Cole 1988). The researcher will conduct an in-depth study of relevant sources to define and explain the *Ichwani tafsīr* method. In addition, interviews with interpreters and academics in Islamic studies will also be conducted to gain additional perspectives on the application of this method. This technique is expected to provide comprehensive and in-depth data on how the *Ichwani* method can be implemented to understand the verses of the Qur’an.

3.5. Data Analysis

The data analysis in this study was carried out thematically by identifying the main steps in the *Ichwani tafsīr* method and how each step contributes to a broader understanding. The researcher analyzed the interaction between linguistic, historical, and social-contextual components in interpretation. In addition, a comparative analysis was conducted to assess the effectiveness of *Ichwani* method compared to other interpretation methods. Through this approach, this research aims to provide deeper insight into the potential of *Ichwani* method in renewing the way we understand the Qur’an in the modern era.

4. Result

4.1. Introduction to Ichwani Tafsīr Method

The term *Ichwani* is taken from the Arabic *akhun*, meaning brother. In the Arabic linguistic context, this word refers to blood bonds and the union of different elements into one harmonious unit. In this context, *Ichwani* method, which is attributed to its originator, Prof. Mohammad

Nor Ichwan, conveys the idea of “brotherhood” or “integration.” The choice of this name reflects a methodological vision that seeks to bridge various approaches to interpretation that are often considered to be contradictory, such as traditional-modern or textual-contextual. Thus, linguistically, *Ichwani* emphasizes the principle of inclusivity, collaboration between methods, and the spirit of brotherhood in Islam that transcends the barriers of difference.

The word *Ichwani* also has a dynamic dimension, as the root word (*akhun*) is used in the Qur'an to describe an active and mutually reinforcing relationship (e.g., in Q. 49:10). This is in line with the goal of this method, which is not only to passively combine approaches, but also to actively create a productive dialogue between interpretive disciplines. In the semantic study of the Qur'an, the word *ukhuwwah* (brotherhood) is often associated with the concept of *tawhīd*, which, in the context of *tafsir* methodology, can be interpreted as the unification of truths spread across various methods (Almalachim & Maulana 2021). Thus, this term is not just a label, but a philosophy that underlies all its operational steps.

In the tradition of Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia, the term *Ichwan* is often used to refer to discussion groups or learning communities, emphasizing collaboration and the exchanging of ideas. The choice of this name is also a form of respect for the local cultural roots, where this method was developed. Linguistically, *Ichwani* deliberately avoids pure Arabic terms (such as *tawhīdī* or *jam'ī*) to affirm its originality and contextuality as a product of the archipelago's Islamic science. Thus, this term becomes a symbol of integration not only at the methodological level but also at the level of scientific identity.

As a method, the term *Ichwani tafsir* focuses on theoretical aspects and practical applications in answering contemporary issues such as gender justice, ecology, or technology. In contrast to classical methods that often stop at the authority of past scholars, this approach specifically includes contemporary socio-historical analysis and *tajdīd* as an integral part. In this respect, it is similar to thematic interpretation but expanded to include the dimension of renewal (*iṣlāḥ*) and alignment with the goals of *sharī'ah*. Thus, the definition of the term includes both epistemological and practical dimensions. From this perspective, this method can be categorized as a *muqāran* (comparative) interpretation that is enriched by an interdisciplinary approach. However, its commitment to producing new syntheses, not just comparisons, sets it apart. For example, in step nine (integrative interpretation), the interpreter not only registers the

difference of opinion among scholars but also creates a new reading that simultaneously considers language, historical context, modern reality, and *sharī'ah* goals.

4.2. *Integration of Classical and Contemporary Tafsīr*

The *Ichhwani tafsīr* method is a new approach that offers a comprehensive and holistic way of interpreting the Qur'an. In contrast to traditional interpretation methods that focus solely on literal or textual aspects, *Ichhwani* method seeks to integrate various classical and contemporary approaches in the interpretation process. This approach is based on the idea that the Qur'an, as a holy book, has a depth of meaning that cannot be studied from just one point of view. Therefore, *Ichhwani tafsīr* method brings together literal, contextual, thematic, historical, and social aspects to understand the text of the Qur'an in its entirety and depth. Research shows that this holistic approach can increase people's understanding of universal values in the Qur'an, such as tolerance and justice. The method also considers psychological and linguistic aspects that are often overlooked in traditional approaches, making interpretations more relevant to today's social context (Hassan 2022). Thus, *Ichhwani tafsīr* not only enriches the understanding of the text but also encourages the application of Qur'anic values in daily life.

One of the advantages of *Ichhwani tafsīr* method is its ability to capture nuances and complexities in interpreting the Qur'an. By combining various approaches, this method can produce a more comprehensive understanding of sacred texts. For example, in understanding a verse, *Ichhwani tafsīr* method examines the literal meaning and considers the historical, social, and cultural context in which it was revealed (Perry 1985). Research shows that an approach considering this context can increase the relevance of Qur'anic interpretation in modern life (Saeed 2014). In addition, a thematic approach is also used to identify the common threads and main messages in the verses of the Qur'an, thus allowing readers to understand the universal values (Rosyada 2017). Thus, *Ichhwani tafsīr* method can present a rich, in-depth, and relevant interpretation for the current context. This method also pays attention to the dynamics of the development of science and technology that can affect the understanding of the verses of the Qur'an, making it an effective tool to answer the challenges of the times.

The presence of *Ichwani* method of interpretation is important in the discourse of contemporary Qur'anic interpretation. During the rise of various interpretations that tend to be partial or even extreme, *Ichwani tafsir* method offers a balanced and moderate approach. By integrating classical and contemporary aspects, this method can bridge the gap between traditional understanding and the demands of the times. In addition, *Ichwani tafsir* method also has the potential to enrich the scientific treasures of *tafsir* and significantly contribute to the development of Qur'anic studies in the future. Therefore, the research and application of *Ichwani tafsir* method are of significant importance and should be studied in depth. This method, when applied in Islamic universities, can broaden academic horizons and stimulate more complex interdisciplinary studies.

Ichwani tafsir method also allows for a constructive dialogue between Islamic traditions and the development of modern thought. Through this method, scholars and academics can find a harmonious common ground between the teachings of the Qur'an and universal human values. This is important in responding to the global challenges Muslims face, such as justice issues, human rights, and the environment. *Ichwani tafsir* method invites interpreters to focus not only on the text but also on the context in which the text is applied. As such, this approach can help reduce the potential for interpretive conflicts and pave the way for a more inclusive and holistic understanding. For example, on environmental issues, *Ichwani tafsir* method allows for interpretations that consider the urgency of protecting nature as part of God's mandate to humans. In addition, this approach is also relevant in the context of technological advancements, where interpreters need to understand the ethical implications of innovations and ensure that the application of technology remains aligned with Islamic principles. Thus, *Ichwani tafsir* method offers interpretive solutions that are timely, contextual, and relevant to the needs of Muslims today.

In practice, *Ichwani tafsir* method requires qualified expertise in various fields of science. An exegete who uses this method must have extensive knowledge of Islamic and social sciences, humanities, and the natural sciences. This expertise includes an in-depth understanding of the history, culture, and language used in the context of the Qur'an's revelation. Collaboration between disciplines is the key to successfully implementing *Ichwani tafsir* method. For example, the historical approach can be integrated with the sociological approach to understand how social conditions during the time of the Qur'anic revelation affected the

meaning and application of its verses. In addition, in-depth linguistic analysis is necessary to unearth the meanings of words and phrases in both classical and modern Arabic. Thus, an exegete can produce a more comprehensive interpretation that is relevant to current conditions. This approach also allows for constructive interdisciplinary dialogue, which can enrich the understanding and application of the teachings of the Qur'an in various aspects of modern life. This is crucial in answering the challenges and changes Muslims face in this era of globalization.

Ichwani tafsīr method offers great opportunities for further development in the study of the Qur'an. By integrating various approaches, this method provides a more comprehensive understanding of sacred texts and opens up opportunities for innovation in interpretation. Additionally, this method can help identify relevant solutions to contemporary issues, such as environmental concerns, human rights, and social justice. Amid a rapidly changing and dynamic world, the *Ichwani* method can be an effective tool to maintain the relevance of the teachings of the Qur'an. This method allows the exegete to interpret the verses of the Qur'an while considering the current historical and social context, resulting in a more applicable and contextual interpretation. Therefore, there needs to be a continuous effort to develop and disseminate this method so that it can be widely adopted in the academic community and Muslim society in general. Thus, *Ichwani tafsīr* method can contribute significantly to enriching Muslims' insight and understanding of the teachings of the Qur'an, as well as strengthening the relationship between sacred texts and the reality of modern life.

4.3. Operational Steps to Understand the Qur'an

The *Ichwani tafsīr* method is a comprehensive approach that combines various interpretive methods of the Qur'an to achieve a more comprehensive (holistic) and contextual understanding. In its development, this method embraces classical interpretation that relies on the history and traditions of previous scholars, as well as contemporary interpretation that uses a rational and critical approach. The integration between these two approaches allows for the formation of an analysis that presents not only a textual or literal understanding of the verses of the Qur'an but also a more profound meaning based on the needs and developments of modern society. Thus, *Ichwani tafsīr* method bridges the legacy of traditional scholarship with modern thought, creating a

method of interpretation that is flexible but still firmly rooted in the basic principles of Islamic scholarship.

In addition to combining classical and contemporary interpretation, the *Ichwani tafsir* method also focuses on linguistic analysis and the application of the principles of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, which are the objectives of Islamic law. The linguistic approach aids in understanding the subtleties of the Qur'an's rich language of symbolism and contextual meaning. At the same time, *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* ensures that interpretation focuses not only on legal aspects but also on broader goals such as justice, welfare, and the benefit of the *ummah*. Considering the socio-historical context and the challenges facing Muslims in the modern era, this method is designed to provide relevant answers to contemporary problems while maintaining the integrity of the teachings of the Qur'an. The following are the operational steps in *Ichwani tafsir* method:

4.2.1. Linguistic Analysis (*Tafsir Lughawī*)

The first step in the *Ichwani tafsir* method is a linguistic analysis that focuses on a deep understanding of words and sentence structures in native Arabic, the language used in the Qur'an. This analysis is carried out by referring to classical dictionaries that are recognized for their authority, such as *Lisān al-'Arab* (Ibn Manẓūr 1997) and *Mufradāt al-Qur'an* by Al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī (Dhahir 2022), both of which are important sources for understanding the meaning of the words of the Qur'an precisely. This process includes not only a basic understanding of the meaning of words but also the study of word forms (morphology) and relationships between words in sentences (grammar). In addition, this analysis involves the study of the meaning of words in a broader context, identifying changes in meaning that may occur when words are used in different verses. Thus, linguistic analysis is the main foundation for accurately understanding the message of the Qur'an.

This step is very important because the Arabic language of the Qur'an has a wealth of meanings that are not always easy to grasp without a deep understanding (Morris 2000; Shah 2016). The words used in the Qur'an often have various nuances of meaning that can significantly affect interpretation. Therefore, this linguistic approach also includes the identification of rhetorical styles (*balāghah*) such as *majāz* (figurative), *isti'ārah* (metaphor), and *kināyah* (metonymy), which are often used to convey deeper and symbolic messages (Alkhatib & Shaalan 2017). These

rhetorical styles show how rich and dense the meaning contained in each verse is, thus helping to clarify implicit messages that may not be immediately apparent. By understanding these stylistic devices, interpreters can capture a broader and more complete meaning of the verses of the Qur'an, resulting in a more accurate and contextually relevant interpretation.

4.2.2. *Analysis of Classical Interpretation (Tafsīr bil-Ma'thūr)*

The second step in the *Ichwani tafsīr* method is the study of classical *tafsīr* based on the historical reports and explanations of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), his Companions, and early scholars. *Tafsīr bil-ma'thūr*, or interpretation based on transmitted reports, plays an important role because it reflects an early understanding of the Qur'an grounded in direct experience with revelation and the socio-historical context of the time (Nur et al. 2019). Classical *tafsīrs* such as *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, and *Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī* are often used as primary references in this step (Arsad 2018). These commentaries present an in-depth view of how the verses of the Qur'an were understood by the early generations of Islam, who had direct access to sources of knowledge such as the Prophet and the Companions. Thus, classical commentary offers invaluable insights for modern interpreters and serves as an important foundation for understanding the traditional text of the Qur'an.

In the context of this method, classical interpretation not only provides a literal understanding of the verses of the Qur'an but also presents how the verses were interpreted by early Muslims who lived during the time of revelation. This understanding is important because they were closely related to the verses' cultural, social, and historical context. However, classical interpretation is not used exclusively or rigidly in the *Ichwani tafsīr* method. Instead, it is combined with other approaches, such as linguistic analysis and contemporary interpretation, to produce a more holistic understanding relevant to modern challenges. Thus, classical interpretation is one of the main components, but it is balanced with a more critical and contextual approach to address today's problems.

4.2.3. *Analysis of Contemporary and Contextual Interpretation (Tafsīr bil-ra'y)*

Contemporary and contextual interpretation, also known as *tafsīr bil-ra'y*, has emerged as a response to the challenges of the evolving times.

This approach prioritizes interpretation of the Qur'an that is relevant to the social, political, and intellectual needs of modern life. *Tafsir al-Manār* by Muḥammad 'Abduh and Rashīd Riḍā is one of the key contemporary works of interpretation that emphasizes the importance of understanding the Qur'an rationally and progressively (Burge 2021; Ichwan et al. 2024a). 'Abduh emphasized that Islamic teachings do not contradict reason and can adapt to changing times. In his interpretation, he invites Muslims not only to understand the text textually but also to consider the historical context and the needs of modern society, such as educational reform, social justice, and legal renewal in Islam (Zulkarnaini & Badawi 2021). This shows that contemporary interpretation not only discusses religious teachings but also aims to build a more just and competitive society amid global developments.

Contemporary exegetes also seek to relate the Qur'anic message to relevant modern issues, such as gender equality, human rights, and technological developments. For example, Amina Wadud (1995), in her commentary that focuses on a gender perspective, attempts to interpret the verses of the Qur'an with an egalitarian approach. She emphasized that Islam supports equality between men and women and sought to correct the patriarchal interpretations that have dominated the discourse of classical exegesis (Zenrif & Bachri 2003). In addition, on the issue of human rights, several exegetes, such as Fazlur Rahman (2009), emphasized the importance of understanding *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* (the objectives of Islamic law) to create a society that respects freedom, justice, and welfare. In the context of technological developments, modern exegetes have also begun to discuss the relevance of Islamic principles to the ethics of using technology—such as artificial intelligence and digitalization—ensuring they remain aligned with the moral values taught in the Qur'an.

Contemporary and contextual interpretation serves as a bridge between the teachings of the Qur'an and the realities of modern life. By adopting this approach, exegetes not only maintain the relevance of the Qur'an amid changing times but also demonstrate that this holy book has the flexibility to respond to new challenges. *Tafsir bil-ra'y* provides space for Muslims to engage in dialogue with tradition and progress so that religion is not viewed as rigid, but rather as a guide to a dynamic and constantly evolving life. Through this approach, the messages of the Qur'an can be translated into concrete solutions to human problems in the modern era—without losing their spiritual values.

4.2.4. *Analysis of the Occasion of Revelation of a Verse (Asbāb al-Nuzūl)*

Understanding the reasons for the revelation of Qur'anic verses is an essential step in interpreting the text in depth. Knowledge of the social, political, and cultural background of the time helps explain the message God conveyed to mankind. For example, verses related to war—such as in *Sūrah al-Anfāl* or *al-Tawbah*—have a specific context related to the conflict between Muslims and polytheists in the early days of Islam. By understanding this context, we can avoid misunderstandings when applying these verses outside the appropriate situation. The approach known as *asbāb al-nuzūl* provides a richer perspective on the Qur'anic text so that its messages can be understood in a more relevant way and do not deviate from their original purpose.

Works such as *Lubāb al-Nuqūl fī Asbāb al-Nuzūl* by Imām al-Suyūṭī or collections of *ḥadīth* are the primary sources for studying *asbāb al-nuzūl*. In these works, narrations reveal the occasion of the revelation of certain verses (Rippin 1988). For example, Q. 24:11–12, which discuss slander against 'Ā'ishah, have a specific background: an incident known as the *Ifk* incident. Without understanding this context, one may misinterpret the verse in an irrelevant situation. In addition, these narrations also describe the social and cultural dynamics of Arab society at the time, including traditions, laws, and interpersonal relationships. Thus, *asbāb al-nuzūl* clarifies the meaning of a verse and helps us appreciate the complexity of the historical process behind the revelation.

The importance of understanding *asbāb al-nuzūl* lies in efforts to maintain the relevance of the Qur'an across various times and places (Cragg 1999). The verses of the Qur'an were not revealed in a vacuum but within specific contexts that shaped their content. By knowing this background, Muslims can apply the teachings of the Qur'an wisely, according to the needs of the times. This approach also prevents the misuse of verses in ways that can trigger conflict or injustice—such as when verses about interreligious relations are used to justify intolerance. Therefore, studying *asbāb al-nuzūl* is essential to understanding the Qur'an comprehensively so that its divine messages continue to serve as a relevant and universal guide for life.

4.2.5. *Contemporary Socio-Historical Analysis*

Contemporary socio-historical analysis aims to bridge the relevance of the holy verses to modern life (Halpern 1957). In understanding certain

verses—such as the command regarding the *ḥijāb* in Q.33:59—it is important to recognize the cultural and social context of Arabia at the time of revelation. At that time, the *ḥijāb* served as a symbol of protection and identity for Muslim women amid a social situation full of threats. When applied in the modern era, the concept of *ḥijāb* becomes not only a form of obedience but also a symbol of freedom of expression and spiritual identity amid globalization. Similar dynamics apply to other issues, such as social justice, which require new interpretive approaches in line with the evolving context. Thus, this analysis helps Muslims remain relevant without losing the essence of religious teachings.

The interpretation of Qur'anic verses is inseparable from the cultural, political, and economic influences that develop in each era. In the modern context, the implementation of the *ḥijāb* is often influenced by political policies and public discourse in particular countries. In some regions, the *ḥijāb* is viewed as a symbol of resistance to cultural colonialism, while in others, it is used as a tool to politicize religious identity (Gi Yeon 2014). In addition, economic factors also play a role, such as the rise of the Islamic fashion industry, which transforms the *ḥijāb* from a purely religious obligation into part of a consumer lifestyle. This shows that understanding verses requires consideration of the various aspects that affect today's society. With this approach, interpretation becomes more inclusive and applicable.

Modern circumstances often require a more flexible approach to interpreting Qur'anic verses. For example, in multicultural societies, the application of Islamic values must consider diversity and social dynamics. Verses on justice, for instance, can be translated into efforts to empower marginalized groups—such as women and religious or ethnic minorities—who continue to face structural injustice. In addition, global challenges such as climate change and economic inequality require cross-sectoral thinking that remains grounded in the principles of the Qur'an. By understanding the contemporary socio-historical context, Muslims can develop an interpretive approach that is relevant and adaptive, while remaining faithful to the fundamental values of religion. This analysis not only strengthens religious conviction but also enables Islam to offer solutions to the challenges of the times.

4.2.6. *Analysis of Thematic Interpretation (Tafsir Mawḍū'ī)*

Thematic interpretation, or *tafsir mawḍū'ī*, is an approach that groups Qur'anic verses based on specific themes for in-depth analysis (Thabet

2005). This method aims to thoroughly understand a theme by connecting various verses spread across several *sūrah*s. For example, the theme of social justice can be found in various verses, such as *Sūrah al-Baqarah* on the obligation of *zakāt* (Q. 2:177), to *Sūrah al-Nisā'* regarding justice in the distribution of inheritance (Q. 4:11). Through this approach, the message of the Qur'an becomes more integrated and able to address contemporary issues in a relevant way. In addition, thematic interpretation allows Muslims to see how religious principles can be applied contextually in daily life. Thus, this method emphasizes textual understanding and practical application in various aspects of life.

The process of thematic interpretation begins by identifying the theme to be studied and then collecting all verses related to the theme from various *sūrah*s (Thabet 2005). For example, for the theme of environmental protection, verses such as the prohibition of doing damage on the earth (Q. 7:56), the command to maintain the balance of nature (Q. 55:7–9), and the responsibility of humans as *khalīfah* on earth (Q. 2:30) can be analyzed together. These verses are then contextualized with modern realities, such as the issue of global warming and the exploitation of natural resources. By connecting these verses, the *tafsīr mawḍū'ī* provides a more comprehensive and integrative view. This approach can also help Muslims understand how Qur'anic values remain relevant in responding to the challenges of the times, such as environmental crises and social injustices.

Thematic interpretation has great potential in answering complex modern problems (Thabet 2005). For example, the theme of gender equality can be explored by examining verses such as the command to respect one another between men and women (Q. 49:13) to the principle of equality of rights in worship and pious deeds (Q. 16:97). This approach allows Muslims to understand that the Qur'an supports efforts to create a more inclusive and just society. In addition, the *tafsīr mawḍū'ī* can also be used to examine other global issues, such as economic justice or world peace. By connecting relevant verses, Muslims can find solutions based on religious principles without ignoring today's social, cultural, and political realities. Therefore, this method of *tafsīr* not only enriches the understanding of the Qur'an but also provides an applicable guide in facing the challenges of the modern world.

4.2.7. Analysis of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*

Maqāṣid al-sharī'ah is an essential framework for understanding Islamic law to remain relevant and contextual (Susanto 2017). The main goal of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* is to achieve justice, benefit, and welfare, both for individuals and society. In interpreting the verses of the Qur'an, this approach ensures that the interpretation is not only legalistic or textual but also considers the universal values at the core of Islamic teachings. For example, in understanding the verses about criminal punishment (*ḥudūd*), such as cutting off the hand of a thief (Q. 5:38), *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* emphasizes the protection of property and the prevention of crime. With this approach, the interpretation of the verse focuses not only on the application of punishment but also on efforts to create a just social system and prevent the causes of crime, such as poverty or economic inequality. The *maqāṣid* approach makes Islamic law more humane and relevant to the needs of the times.

The interpretation of the Qur'an by *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* aims to balance the legalistic aspects and the larger objectives of Islamic law (Soediro & Meutia 2018; Susanto 2017). For example, protecting the soul, intellect, religion, heredity, and property are the five main principles of *maqāṣid* that form the basis for understanding the law. In the modern context, interpreting verses on *ribā* (Q. 2:275) focuses on explicit prohibitions and the *sharī'ah* goal of protecting society from economic exploitation and injustice. This means the Islamic economic system must be designed to create justice and welfare, not simply to avoid literal usury transactions. With the *maqāṣid* approach, interpretation becomes more dynamic and applicable while remaining faithful to the fundamental values of Islam.

The *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* approach is very relevant in addressing complex modern challenges. In the issue of environmental protection, for example, *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* can be used to understand verses that call for humans to maintain the balance of nature (Q. 30:41). This interpretation not only highlights the obligation of humans not to damage the earth but also emphasizes the collective responsibility to ensure the sustainability of natural resources for future generations. In addition, *maqāṣid* also helps address other contemporary issues, such as human rights, gender equality, or social justice, by providing a more progressive perspective without abandoning the basic principles of the *sharī'ah*. Therefore, assessing the interpretation by *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* ensures that Islamic law is not only a tool to enforce rules but also a solution to create a better and harmonious life for all parties.

4.2.8. Contextual Interpretation in Modern Life (*Tajdīd and Iṣlāḥ*)

Contextual interpretation in modern life emphasizes the importance of *tajdīd* (renewal) and *iṣlāḥ* (reform) in understanding the Qur'an. *Tajdīd* aims to update the understanding of religion so that it remains relevant to the development of the times without abandoning the basic principles of Islam (Mariuma 2014). On the other hand, *iṣlāḥ* serves to correct aspects that are considered inconsistent with *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, which is the primary goal of *sharī'ah*, encompassing justice, humanity, and the benefit of the *ummah*. In this context, the *Ichwani* method of interpretation is important because it combines textual and contextual approaches. This helps Muslims understand the Qur'an's teachings more dynamically to answer new challenges in modern life, such as globalization, technology, and other social issues.

One of the applications of *tajdīd* and *iṣlāḥ* can be seen in interpreting verses related to slavery. In the historical context, slavery was once a socially accepted practice and regulated in the *sharī'ah*. However, through a contextual approach that considers *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, slavery is now seen as irrelevant because it is contrary to the principles of justice and humanity. This interpretation shows that Islam, as a *rahmatan lil-‘ālamīn* religion, can adapt to changing times without losing its essence. Thus, *tajdīd* and *iṣlāḥ* allow Muslims to continue to update their understanding of religion critically and relevantly.

In addition to the issue of slavery, contextual interpretation also needs to be applied to other modern issues, such as human rights, ecology, and technological development. For example, in the face of the global environmental crisis, Muslims can interpret verses about human responsibility as *khalīfah* on earth by emphasizing the importance of nature conservation. This aligns with *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, which prioritizes protecting life and sustainability. Similarly, in the age of technology, *Ichwani tafsīr* can help find ethical guidance in using technology to remain in accordance with Islamic values. This interpretation, based on *tajdīd* and *iṣlāḥ*, not only provides practical solutions for Muslims but also strengthens the relevance of the Qur'an as an eternal guideline for life.

4.2.9. Integrative Approach to Understanding the Qur'an

The *Ichwani tafsīr* method is a new approach that offers a holistic understanding of the Qur'an by combining various sources and

approaches. This approach unites linguistic analysis, classical interpretation, contemporary interpretation, and socio-historical context with the foundation of the principles of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*. *Maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, as the main goal of *sharī'ah*, emphasizes the aspects of justice, benefit, and welfare for mankind. With this approach, the *Ichwani* method focuses not only on the literal meaning of the text of the Qur'an but also on the larger goal of Islamic teachings. This allows for the flexibility of interpretation relevant to modern issues, such as human rights, ecology, and technological developments, without sacrificing the fundamental principles of religion.

This integrative approach is crucial in answering the increasingly complex challenges of modern times. Considering the socio-historical context, *Ichwani tafsir* method provides space for an interpretation that is not static but remains rooted in Islamic values. For example, in interpreting verses on women's rights, this method not only refers to classical interpretations that are often confined to past contexts but also integrates contemporary interpretations that are more relevant to the issue of gender equality. This allows Muslims to develop a more equitable and contextual understanding of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*. Thus, *Ichwani tafsir* method not only maintains the authenticity of the Qur'an but also makes it more applicable to modern life.

The *Ichwani tafsir* method provides more relevant guidance in dealing with global issues, such as environmental crises and technological ethics. For example, verses about human responsibility as *khalīfah* on earth can be reinterpreted to emphasize the importance of environmental conservation in the face of climate change. Similarly, in the digital age full of ethical challenges, *Ichwani tafsir* method can help Muslims understand how Islamic principles can be applied in the wise use of technology. Combining textual and contextual approaches produces an interpretation that deeply understands the Qur'anic text and provides practical and relevant solutions. Therefore, the *Ichwani tafsir* method is an essential innovation in the science of interpretation that can bridge the tradition of Islamic scholarship with the needs of the modern world.

5. Discussion

The *Ichwani tafsir* method is a new approach to studying Qur'anic interpretation that integrates classical and contemporary methods to achieve a more holistic understanding. This method focuses on the

text's literal meaning and involves contextual, historical, linguistic, and social analysis to produce interpretations relevant to modern challenges. This method's advantage lies in combining classical approaches based on the traditions of earlier scholars, such as *tafsīr bi-l-ma'thūr*, with more rational and critical contemporary approaches, such as *tafsīr bi-l-ra'y*. Its operational measures, such as linguistic analysis, *asbāb al-nuzūl*, *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, and thematic approaches, provide a solid foundation for understanding the Qur'an in depth. With its flexibility, this method is relevant for academic studies and for answering global issues such as social justice, human rights, and environmental conservation.

The research results related to the *Ichwani tafsīr* method reflect the urgency of a new approach to understanding the Qur'an in the modern era. Amid the dominance of literal and often rigid interpretation, this method offers a more inclusive and adaptive perspective. These results show the importance of considering the historical and social context in understanding sacred texts, given that the Qur'an is not revealed in a vacuum. In addition, this method emphasizes the importance of integrating modern science into Islamic studies so that the teachings of the Qur'an can continue to be relevant amidst the times. This reflection also underlines the challenge of implementing the *Ichwani tafsīr* method: the need for cross-disciplinary competence from exegetes. This opens up opportunities for developing a more interdisciplinary *tafsīr* curriculum in Islamic universities and encouraging collaboration between scholars, academics, and experts from various fields of science.

Ichwani tafsīr method can be interpreted as a response to the need for a more dynamic and contextual approach to *tafsīr*. By blending classical and contemporary interpretations, this method provides space to understand the verses of the Qur'an in a socio-historical framework relevant to modern issues. For example, the integration of linguistic analysis and *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* allows for interpretations that are not only legalistic but also aimed at achieving justice and the benefit of the *ummah*. The emphasis on thematic and contextual interpretation also shows that this method aims to understand the text textually and address global issues such as climate change, gender equality, and technological ethics. This interpretation emphasizes that the *Ichwani* method is not just an academic approach but also an effective tool to bridge the Islamic scientific tradition with the needs of the modern world.

The *Ichwani tafsīr* method has advantages over the traditional *tafsīr* approach, which sometimes focuses too much on the literal aspect and does not consider the context of the times. Compared to classical

tafsir, such as *Tafsir al-Ṭabarī* or *Ibn Kathīr*, this method is more flexible because it involves a contemporary approach relevant to modern needs. On the other hand, *Ichwani* method also goes beyond contemporary interpretations, such as *al-Manār*, because it integrates the principles of *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah*, emphasizing *sharīʿah* goals such as justice and benefit. The advantage of this method is also seen in its ability to combine thematic and contextual approaches, which are not always found in classical or contemporary interpretations. However, compared to the progressive *tafsir* approach developed by Fazlur Rahman, *Ichwani tafsir* method still maintains a balance between tradition and innovation, making it more inclusive and moderate.

Further research is needed to develop and disseminate the *Ichwani tafsir* method among academics and the Muslim community in general. One of the crucial steps is to develop a practical guide or curriculum that can be used in Islamic universities to train exegetes in applying this method. In addition, there is a need for a more in-depth study of how this method can answer specific issues, such as the environmental crisis, economic inequality, and the role of women in Islam. Interdisciplinary research involving scholars, social scientists, and technology experts can also enrich the application of the *Ichwani* method in various contexts. Another effort must be made to promote this method through seminars, publications, and scientific discussions to increase understanding and acceptance of this integrative approach. Thus, the *Ichwani* method can significantly contribute to the development of Qur'an studies in the modern era.

6. Conclusion

This research reveals that the *Ichwani tafsir* method offers a practical, integrative approach to interpreting the Qur'an, combining various classical and contemporary methods. The main findings suggest that integrating linguistic analysis, *tafsir bi-l-ma'thūr*, and *tafsir bi-l-ra'y* can produce a more holistic understanding relevant to the modern context. This approach considers the text's literal meaning while also accounting for the underlying historical and social context. Thus, the resulting interpretation is not only textually accurate but can also answer the challenges and problems Muslims face today. In addition, the emphasis on *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah* as the basis of interpretation allows *tafsir* to provide practical and applicative solutions, directing understanding

to broader *shari'ah* goals such as justice, welfare, and benefit. These findings underscore the importance of a comprehensive approach to understanding the Qur'an, which can bridge the gap between tradition and modernity. Thus, the *Ichwani tafsir* method has the potential to be an essential reference in the development of future *tafsir* studies, making a significant contribution to a deeper and more relevant understanding of the teachings of the Qur'an.

The contribution of this research to the development of interpretation science is very significant, especially in creating a dialogue between Islamic scientific traditions and the dynamics of contemporary thought. *Ichwani tafsir* method not only enriches the treasures of classical *tafsir* but also introduces a more adaptive approach to dealing with modern issues, such as human rights and social justice. This research opens opportunities for developing more interdisciplinary interpretation studies, combining religious science with social sciences, humanities, and natural sciences. This is very important, considering the challenges Muslims face today that require a deep and comprehensive understanding. With this method, interpreters can bridge traditional understandings and the demands of the times so that the resulting interpretations are academically relevant and applicable in daily life. Therefore, this research contributes to developing theories and interpretive practices to answer society's increasingly complex and diverse needs.

As a suggestion for further research, exploring the application of this method in various more specific contemporary contexts and issues is recommended. Further research may involve case analysis of how these methods are applied in interpreting verses related to current issues such as climate change, technology, and gender. This approach will not only enrich insights in the study of *tafsir* but also provide a new perspective on the relevance of the Qur'an in the modern context. In addition, collaboration between academics from various disciplines is also essential to expand the scope and impact of this method, given the complexity of the problems facing Muslims today. Further research can produce a more inclusive and holistic interpretation by involving various perspectives. It is hoped that this effort will have a positive impact not only on the development of the science of interpretation (*tafsir*) but also on increasing public awareness and understanding of the teachings of the Qur'an so that it can be applied effectively in daily life.

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Two or Three Authors	(Laudon & Laudon 2003) (Coveney, Ganster & King 2003)
	Laudon, K.C. & Laudon, J.P., 2003, <i>Essentials of management information systems: Managing the digital firm</i> , Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River. Coveney, M., Ganster, S. & King, D., 2003, <i>The strategy gap: Leveraging technology to execute winning strategies</i> , Wiley, Hoboken.
More than Three Authors	(Jones et al. 1999: 34) Jones et al. (1999: 34) suggested that ...
	Jones, P., Smith, A., Hudson, T., Etherton, J., Connelly, W. .& Gardener, J., 1999, <i>Business management for the new era</i> , Wyland Publishing, Adelaide.
Book Editor	(ed. Shaw 2003) Shaw (ed. 2003: 87) indicates that ...
	Shaw, M.J. (ed.), 2003, <i>Ebusiness management: Integration of Web technologies with business models</i> , Kluwer Academic, London.
Second, further or revised editions	Dyson, Geoffrey H.G., 1977, <i>The mechanics of athletics</i> , 7th edn., Homes and Meier, New York.
	Cohen, Jacob, 1977, <i>Statistical power analysis for the behavioral sciences</i> , rev. edn., Academic Press, New York.
Translated works	Bakhtin, M., 1984, <i>Rabelais and his world</i> , transl. H. Iswolsky, Indiana University Press, Bloomington.
No date can be established	(Lansdown n.d.).
	Lansdown, M., n.d., <i>Bridging courses</i> , Central Queensland University, Rockhampton.

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Transliteration System

ء	'	خ	kh	ش	sh	غ	gh	ن	n
ب	b	د	d	ص	ṣ	ف	f	ه	h
ت	t	ذ	dh	ض	ḍ	ق	q	و	w
ث	th	ر	r	ط	ṭ	ک	k	ی	y
ج	j	ز	z	ظ	ẓ	ل	l	ة	h
ح	ḥ	س	s	ع	‘	م	m		

Short Vowels	
اَ	a
اُ	u
اِ	i

Long Vowels	
اَآ	ā
اُو	ū
اِی	ī

Diphthongs	
اَو	aw
اِی	ay
اِیّ	iyy
اُوّ	uww

Persian Letters	
پ	p
چ	ch
ژ	zh
گ	g



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Contemporary
Thoughts
Press

Contemporary
Thoughts Press