

The Discursive Value-Oriented Analysis of the Story of Moses and Khidr in the Reconstruction of Emotional Meanings: A Semiotic-Semantic Approach

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Article History: Received 11 April 2025; Accepted 8 October 2025

ABSTRACT:

Original Paper

The narrative of Prophet Moses and Khidr constitutes a complex structure amenable to semiotic analysis. By employing a discourse-oriented semiotic-semantic approach to this Qur'anic account, three distinct discursive modalities can be identified. Initially, an actional discourse emerges, driven by Moses' interaction with the external world. Subsequently, an interactional system develops through Moses' dialogue with Khidr, other subjects, and various phenomena. Within this system, the meaning-making process undergoes a significant transformation. Finally, a cognitive-affective system arises from Moses' engagement with his inner world and his perceptual relationship with phenomena. The actantial pattern of the story centers on Moses' agency and his oscillation between internal and external realms. Furthermore, the narrative exhibits inductive and cognitive-interactional discursive systems capable of generating and interpreting plural meanings. The primary aim of this study is to elucidate, through semiotic-semantic discourse analysis, how the narrative discourse of Moses and Khidr manifests phenomenologically. It explores how the emergence of internal impulses and tensive states in the protagonist develops aesthetic and affective dimensions, ultimately endowing his actions with meaning, cognition, and value. The findings indicate that the dominant narrative trajectory involves a transition from an actional regime to interactional-cognitive and inner-affective systems, thereby prioritizing the internal and

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<http://dx.doi.org/10.37264/JIQS.V4I2.10>

https://iqs.sbu.ac.ir/article_107100.html?lang=en

emotional realms. Consequently, the meaning-making process within this narrative not only encompasses actional, interactional, and cognitive-affective modalities but also undergoes elevation and evolution. In this dynamic flow of meaning production, Moses evolves into an active subject, reconstructing and generating the truth of Divine Unity within the interactional and cognitive-affective discursive systems.

KEYWORDS: Qur'an, Moses, Khidr, Action, Thymic experience, Semiotic-semantic analysis, Narrative.

1. Introduction

The semiotic-semantic approach to discourse analysis is a highly effective methodological framework for examining religious texts, particularly the Holy Qur'an. This model yields profound insights into the structural analysis of Qur'anic verses, particularly Qur'anic narratives, and offers a robust framework for understanding the mechanisms of both meaning production and reception. The narrative of Moses and Khidr, recounted in Surah al-Kahf (Q. 18:62–80), stands as one of the most compelling and structurally complex accounts within the Qur'anic corpus. Regarding the temporal setting, exegetical traditions suggest that this journey occurred after Moses had traversed significant stages of prophethood, including divine communion, the liberation of the Children of Israel from Pharaonic oppression, and the reception of the Torah and the Tablets. This period corresponds to a moment when Moses perceived himself as possessing the highest degree of knowledge on earth (Tabataba'i 1996, 13: 359). Spatially, the narrative unfolds at *Majma' al-Bahrayn* (the Junction of the Two Seas).

This narrative effectively integrates stative, actional, and interactional discursive regimes, presenting a sensory-cognitive discourse embedded with multiple layers of meaning. Beyond investigating these sensory-cognitive regimes through affective-state and actional processes, this study elucidates how the subject (Moses) undergoes a transformation in his mode of presence and receptivity to meaning vis-à-vis the Divine. It is posited that, within the framework of discourse analysis, meaning generation is not confined to actional structures; rather, stative and interactional configurations are equally constitutive. Consequently, this article employs a semiotic-semantic approach to explore the dominant discursive systems within the Qur'anic narrative of Moses and Khidr. Accordingly, the primary research questions are as follows:

1. How does the narrative discourse of Moses and Khidr transition from

an actional regime to a stative regime, thereby engaging the realm of inner phenomena and affective states?

2. How does the integration of stative and interactional regimes elevate the meaning-making process? Consequently, in what ways does the shift from an actional system to stative and interactional configurations facilitate the expansion and complexification of semantic layers?

The present study posits that the discourse governing the narrative of Khidr and Moses, characterized by its sensory-cognitive, interactional, and axiological nature, is particularly suited for analysis within a semiotic-semantic framework. Consequently, in addressing these research questions, the primary objective is to elucidate how external and objective phenomena contribute to the formation of discursive values, thereby generating distinct sensory and cognitive discursive systems. Within this narrative model, the subject establishes an objective presence vis-à-vis the external world, other subjects, and objects. Through this transformative process, the individual self evolves into a transcendent self. Thus, the narrative of Moses and Khidr fulfills an objective, pragmatic, and transcendent function, transmuting objective activities within the stative framework into a new supra-value, specifically that of spiritual growth and development. Methodologically, this research is based on documentary analysis, employing a semiotic-semantic discourse analysis approach.

2. Literature Review

While the scholarly literature on semiotic-semantics is extensive, a comprehensive review exceeds the scope of this paper. Nevertheless, this section highlights select foundational studies to contextualize the current research and delineate its distinct contribution.

Notably, Greimas and Fontanille (1991), in their seminal work *Sémiotique des passions*, investigated the constitutive role of affect in meaning production. They elucidated how the thymic category, encompassing states of euphoria and dysphoria, modulates the subject's evaluation of societal values and norms. Furthermore, Babak Moein (2017) expands upon the discursive semantic systems inherent in narrative analysis, offering a critique of classical approaches. Shairi (2007; 2009) has elucidated the theoretical shift from structural semiotics to semiotic-semantic discourse analysis, investigating the configuration of discursive regimes within literary texts. In the realm of narrative fiction, Zokhtareh (2018) utilized a semiotic-semantic framework to examine the motivational

functions within *One Thousand and One Nights*, tracing the narrative trajectory from mortality to immortality.

Regarding Qur'anic discourse, Nasiri, Moti, and Amiri (2020) analysed Surah al-Naba' employing the tensive model (*sémiotique tensive*), while Nasiri and Amiri (2018) applied a similar tensive discursive framework to the account of Moses' mission in Surah Ṭā Hā. Most recently, Faridasr et al. (2023) offered a narratological reading of the narrative of Moses and Khidr, focusing primarily on its mystical dimensions. Additionally, Davoudimoghadam et al. (2017) examined the narrative through the lens of counter-discourse (*contre-discours*) in their study of Surah al-Kahf, juxtaposing the story of Moses and Khidr with that of the Companions of the Cave.

While these scholarly works provide a vital foundation, the present study diverges from them by transcending a purely structuralist analysis. It investigates the mechanism of meaning production across actional, inductive, sensory-cognitive, and stative discursive frameworks. Furthermore, it elucidates how the subject's relation to objects and the external world facilitates the transmutation of linguistic signs into transcendent signs. Whereas prior scholarship has predominantly emphasized the mystical or exegetical dimensions of the narrative, this research, grounded in established semiotic-semantic theories, specifically focuses on the interactional, stative, and actional dimensions of the discourse in order to reveal its dynamic value-generating process.

3. *Semiotic-Semantics*

Algirdas Julien Greimas, the founder of the Paris School of Semiotics, gained prominence for his work on narrative semantics following the publication of his seminal book, *Structural Semantics (Sémiotique structurale)*. Drawing upon the binary oppositions of Saussurean and Jakobsonian linguistics, and adapting Propp's narratology, Greimas proposed a structural model for narrative analysis (Abbasi 2014). Despite the apparent diversity and complexity of narratives, they all adhere to a specific underlying structure. Complementing Greimas' actional regime, the stative discourse structure (*parcours d'état*) serves as one of the most effective tools for identifying and retrieving latent meanings within the text.

Meaning is fluid and elusive, deriving its influence precisely from this elusiveness. It emerges at the phenomenological intersection of the subject and the external world (object), possessing no definitive terminus. Rather, meaning traverses a continuum from the natural to the supernatural. Within

sensory-cognitive discourse, the subject interacts with the external world, and, based on the subject's affective states, a specific mode of reception and perception is formed. The reception of meaning is thus a sensory-cognitive event: the subject's senses engage with the world, producing an aesthetic perception that shapes meaning. This meaning temporarily detaches the subject from immediate reality. Following a profound aesthetic experience (that is, an internal movement), the subject returns to the world, though now transformed by this aesthetic encounter (Greimas 2010). Whenever discursive elements impact the perceptions and feelings of the agents, a stative condition arises. In such a state, shifts in emotions and thymic feelings propel action. The stative subject, in a phenomenological relationship with meaning, operates based on a sensory-cognitive and tensive-affective presence (Nasiri et al. 2020).

3.1. Features of the Actional Regime

One fundamental discursive regime is the actional regime. This mode was among the first to be rigorously theorized and extensively studied. Prominent theorists, including Georges Dumézil, Claude Lévi-Strauss, Paul Ricoeur, Marcel Mauss, Roland Barthes, and Algirdas Julien Greimas, have contributed seminal theories to the domain of narrative action. There is a consensus that narrative discourse possesses a central core designated as “action,” wherein the actant (or subject) strives to acquire or control a value-object (Shairi 2016). This discursive system operates with a mechanical logic, establishing meaning through the relationship between actants within a predetermined narrative program (Bertrand 2000, 175).

In this regime, the subject acts in accordance with a mandate or a prior fiduciary contract (Shairi 2007). From a semiotic-semantic perspective, the actant's motivation stems from the premise that the subject faces uncertainty regarding the stability of affairs. This state of lack (*manque*) generates a sense of threat, which is resolved only when the subject restores the lost certainty (Fontanille 1999). Greimas asserts that most narratives initiate with a state of lack, necessitating a contract—either with oneself or with another agent—to resolve it (Abbasi & Yarmand 2011).

In this system, regardless of whether the action originates from the subject or another agent, the primary focus is on the transformative role of action in generating desirable meaning. Thus, action serves as the narrative nucleus, altering the status and meaning of the actants. To fulfill its function, action must effectuate a transformation of meaning and establish a system of value exchange. Consequently, three concepts—action, value, and transformation—are pivotal to understanding actional narrative systems

(Shairi 2016). A defining characteristic of this system is the segmentation of action into two phases: competence (potentiality) and performance (execution). In this process, the actant first acquires the necessary modalities to act (competence) before actualizing the deed (performance).

3.2. Features of the Stative Regime

From a discursive perspective, cognition is an active process that manifests through specific linguistic strategies. These strategies operate within distinct domains, including actional, affective, cognitive-interactive, and stative patterns. The actional system is characterized by a logical sequence and rational calculation. In stark contrast, the stative (or mythic) regime constitutes a discourse that defines the mode of existence and the conditions of presence vis-à-vis the world and phenomena, thereby shaping the subject's phenomenological relationship with the object. It establishes a potent presence that "compels belief," rendering avoidance impossible; its nature is fundamentally evental (Fazeli & Alizadehzadeh 2015).

The stative mode represents a presence wherein the lived body experiences the immediacy of living, encountering every sign in its phenomenological essence. Thus, the stative regime signifies a mode of presence in which the subject's body, acting as the phenomenological anchor of interaction, is poised to respond to a world experienced as immediate, novel, and emergent. The stative subject is perpetually attuned to unpredictable reactions and impulses. Consequently, this state involves an affective fusion between the subject and the world, characterized by a readiness to register this presence. The factors determining the interactive process and the mode of semiotic presence depend on discursive conditions and the perspective through which situational parameters are negotiated. This indicates that meaning is not confined solely to language. Rather, language itself is contingent upon an external world, which shapes the subject's lived experience (Shairi 2016).

3.3. Sensory-Perceptual Processes and Their Semiotic Implications

Sensory fluxes possess the intrinsic capacity to generate meaning. A significant portion of linguistic production originates in affectivity, with the five senses—sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste—collectively contributing to the meaning-making process. In literary discourse, these sensory streams play a pivotal role and cannot be overlooked. Greimas

posits that such sensory elements are governed by a mechanism described as an “escape from reality”—a divergence that itself engenders aesthetic forms. Encountering reality behind the veil of appearances produces a nuanced or deviant meaning rather than a literal one. Since observing an object from a single vantage point inevitably conceals other aspects—thereby rendering every meaning partial or perspectival—aesthetics and phenomenology must be invoked to access the fundamental essence of sensory experience (Shairi 2006).

To complement the classical narrative system, which relies on an instrumental relationship between subject and object, Eric Landowski introduces an alternative regime based on “co-presence” and the sensory-perceptual interaction between subject and object. In this system, the subject-object connection is no longer defined mechanically by states of junction (having or lacking), nor is it predetermined by narrative programs. Rather, it involves immediate and mutual interactions among subjects and even between objects and subjects (Babak Moein 2015, 79).

At the narrative’s inception, Moses functions as a stative subject (*sujet d’état*). A significant semantic pivot at this stage is the emergence of the modal verb “to want” (*vouloir*). Through the modality of “wanting,” Moses initiates an internal movement and acquires the modal competence (that is, the necessary energy) required for action. God informs Moses of a servant in a distant land possessing knowledge that Moses lacks, indicating that he will find him at the “Confluence of the Two Seas” (*Majma‘ al-Bahrayn*), marked by the location where a fish is lost. Moses’ desire for growth propels him to depart from his familiar territory toward the Confluence. Here, the stative condition transmutes into action, serving as the modal precursor to Moses’ subsequent performance.

Consequently, the modality of “wanting” (*vouloir*) evolves into the modality of “obligation” or “having-to” (*devoir*), propelling Moses’ movement through the necessity of action. This deontic force compels Moses to depart from his initial locus, thereby triggering the dynamic process of the discourse. Spatial displacement is a prerequisite for the emergence of narrative discourse. Since relocation enables access to a value-object, it can be interpreted as a “quest” (*quête*) (Abbasi & Yarmand 2011). Seeking self-knowledge and an understanding of the world, Moses abandons his familiar setting. As a cognitive subject, he reaches a liminal or intermediate space, establishing a “meta-discursive” situation that prepares the ground for accessing a superior locus.

At this juncture, the cognitive subject is situated between two realms: the realm of habituation and the realm of semantic transformation and

transcendence (Esmaili et al. 2013). In the discourse of Moses and Khidr, intermediate loci correspond to stages of a journey that is simultaneously internal (stative) and external (that is, tangible and biological). Through this trajectory, the external passage gives way to an internal stative journey, resulting in a personal and existential transformation that ultimately enables Moses to comprehend the underlying meaning of Khidr's actions.

Fundamentally, narrative discourse aims to transmute chaotic conditions into structured order—a process vividly evident in the narrative of Moses and Khidr. The narrative discourse is dynamic: the stative subject transitions from stasis to active engagement with the external world, thereby gaining insight into higher values. Through his interactions with phenomena, such as the scuttling of the ship, the restoration of the wall, and the slaying of the youth, Khidr reconfigures the subject's axiological (value) system, assigning greater meaning and weight to his experiences.

In this dynamic discourse, the narrative recounts fundamental transformations. Moses undergoes a stative shift, and his perspective is fundamentally altered. This qualitative, value-centric knowledge possesses tangible and existential functions, producing a profound internal effect on Moses. According to Greimas (2010), such sensory-perceptual interactions lead to a fusion or intertwining between subject and object, thereby creating multi-layered relationships involving the audience and all discursive elements.

3.4. A Semiotic-Semantic Analysis of the Narrative of Khidr and Moses

Discourse initiates with the actant's initial state. This primary condition is characterized as a "deficiency of meaning" (*manque*) or a disruption of discursive equilibrium. In this phase, Moses, functioning as the subject, perceives a disjunction from the value-object. The subject in this modality is designated as a "stative subject" (*sujet d'état*). To achieve conjunction (union), he must undergo a transformation from a stative subject into an "operative subject" (*sujet de faire*). The discourse of Khidr and Moses is fundamentally narrative: the operative subject strives to transmute an undesirable semantic state into a desirable and complete one. Although opposing forces (that is, anti-subjects) initially impede his progress, and Moses occasionally experiences hesitation, his affective competence enables him to persevere. He advances through the narrative trajectory, ultimately attaining esoteric knowledge and a profound comprehension of the world (Bahmani et al. 2016).

The structural trajectories of this discursive narrative are generated through the interventions of the operative subject (*sujet de faire*), aimed at liquidating the deficiency (*manque*). The subject must endeavour to alter the status quo through a transformational process in order to attain transcendence. In this discourse, Moses' privation of perfective values constitutes the central narrative deficiency. The stative subject (*sujet d'état*) recognizes his disjunction from these values. Consequently, to achieve a state of conjunction (union), he transforms into an operative subject. He embarks on a quest for an agent capable of facilitating his transition from this stative condition.

Accordingly, he acquires the requisite information (that is, cognitive competence) necessary to initiate the preliminary action. Upon ascertaining the locus where Khidr may be found, the operative subject mobilizes toward the Confluence of the Two Seas (*Majma' al-Bahrayn*), as evidenced by the verse: “*When Moses said to his lad, ‘I will go on [journeying] until I have reached the confluence of the two seas, or have spent a long time [travelling]’*” (Q. 18:60; Tabataba'i 1996, 13: 339).

3.5. Spatial Dimension of the Narrative

Regarding the geographical localization of the “Confluence of the Two Seas” (*Majma' al-Bahrayn*), certain scholars hypothesize that it represents the easternmost extremity of the Mediterranean Sea and the westernmost point of the Persian Gulf. Consequently, this location is interpreted as a landmass situated between these two limits, a distinctive locus described as the meeting point of two distinct bodies of water. Lexically, the term *huqub* denotes an extended epoch or era. The exegetical import of the verse, in which Moses declares to his attendant, “*I will go on [journeying] until I have reached the confluence of the two seas, or have spent a long time [travelling],*” implies a commitment to a protracted journey, regardless of its temporal duration. Prompted by divine revelation, Moses exercises agency, resolving to traverse the distance toward this pivotal location.

The subject's condition is defined spatially, as narrative transformation necessitates displacement; he must abandon his “familiar space,” the locus of established authority and stability. This “space of authority” serves as the point of departure for the protagonist's trajectory; thus, Moses' trial originates within this familiar domain. However, the primary ordeal unfolds in a location distinct from his homeland, referred to as the “space of the other” (or the heterotopic space of action). In this alien environment, the hero's competence (potential) is actualized into performance (action) (Abbasi & Yarmand 2011).

Predominantly, the actant's pragmatic or actional activity is concomitant with spatial displacement, as remaining within a space of habituation and repetition impedes transformation (Esmaili et al. 2013). Moses directs his trajectory toward a target value, aiming for an object imbued with semiotic significance. Without this axiological objective, the operative subject cannot be fully constituted (Greimas 2010). The goal organizes and orients actions toward the object of value. For Moses, this object is the acquisition of knowledge and esoteric insight, necessitating the initiation of his journey from his homeland toward the Confluence of the Two Seas ("*until I have reached the confluence of the two seas*") (Q. 18:60).

3.6. Meeting of Moses and Khidr

Following the departure for the Confluence of the Two Seas, the narrative transcends its initial state and enters the median phase, which constitutes the dynamic core of the discourse. Prior to entering the primary space of action, Moses must traverse a transitional zone, conceptually termed the "intermediary space" (Abbasi & Yarmand 2011). Upon reaching the approximate location of the confluence, the attendant (identified in exegetical traditions as Joshua) inadvertently left the fish intended for sustenance near a spring, an act of forgetfulness encapsulated by the Qur'anic phrase: "*...they forgot their Fish...*" (Q. 18:61). According to Tabataba'i (1996, 13: 339), the disappearance of the fish functioned primarily as a semiotic index signaling the meeting with Khidr, rather than merely constituting a biological event of revivification.

Moses and his attendant forgot their fish, and proceeded along their path. The event described in the verse "*...which found its way into the sea, sneaking away*" (Q. 18:61) delineates an intermediate space within the narrative discourse of Khidr and Moses—a transitional zone they were required to traverse prior to the commencement of the main action. Consequently, Moses and his companion, Joshua, inadvertently passed beyond the Confluence of the Two Seas (Q. 18:60), the very locus where Khidr was situated. This process of seeking and epistemic curiosity, driven by the necessity to alter the condition of the operative subject, constitutes the dynamic dimension of the discourse, as it entails a transition from one phase to another in order to effectuate transformation (Bahmani et al. 2016). Thus, the protagonist transcends the initial sequence and enters the median sequence, which represents the dynamic core of the narrative.

Lexically, the verb *fartaddā* is derived from the root *irtidād*, signifying a return to the point of origin. The term *qaṣaṣ* denotes the act of following footsteps or tracking. From the verse statement, "*He said, 'That is what we*

were after!' So they returned, retracing their footsteps" (Q. 18:64), it can be deduced that Moses had previously been commanded through Divine Revelation to meet Khidr (the Divine Sage) at the Confluence of the Two Seas (*Majma' al-Bahrayn*), and that a specific sign had been provided to him. Precisely upon hearing the account of the fish, Moses declared, "*That is what we were after!*" (Q. 18:64). Recognizing this phenomenon as the designated semiotic sign for locating Khidr, they immediately turned back, retracing their steps to reach the location from which they had come.

Thus, they returned along the same path, continuing their search for Khidr while tracking their own route. After traversing the distance, they arrived at the precise spot where the fish had been forgotten, referred to in the verse: "*When we took shelter at the rock...*" (Q. 18:63). This location recalled for Moses the state in which they had stopped near the rock to rest briefly (Tabataba'i 1996, 13: 341).

3.7. Manipulative and Interactional Regime

At the core of the actional dimension lies a manipulative (or inductive) modality grounded in prompting, persuasion, or solicitation. The narrative further exemplifies a cognitive-interactional system of inductive discourse. All events pivot around two primary axes: Khidr's actions and Moses' reactions, interconnected through the functions of objects and the external world. Upon returning to the initial locus near the rock, they encountered Khidr: "*they found one of Our servants whom We had granted a mercy from Ourselves, and taught him a knowledge from Our own*" (Q. 18:65). This discursive segment depicts the confrontation between the two principal actants.

Initially, Moses remains receptive to Khidr's presence, as this mode of inductive discourse relies on elicitation. The narrative's organizing force resolves the subject's disorientation, culminating in the encounter with Khidr. Moses greets Khidr with deference and requests permission to follow and learn from him: "*May I follow you for the purpose that you teach me some of the probity you have been taught?*" (Q. 18:66). Khidr responds that his actions are arduous to witness and that Moses may lack the patience (*ṣabr*) necessary to endure them. Fearing the forfeiture of this opportunity, Moses pledges steadfast patience, as expressed in the verse: "*He said, 'You will find me, God willing, to be patient, and I will not disobey you in any matter'*" (Q. 18:69).

In this preliminary phase, Moses solicits guidance. Khidr, functioning as the sender (*destinateur*), conditions the acceptance of the journey on Moses'

commitment to silence (that is, refraining from questioning). This stage constitutes the preparatory phase, illustrating manipulative (inductive) discourse, wherein the interaction between actants generates or modulates action (Shairi & Vafaei 2009). According to Courtés (2003, 95), manipulative strategies encompass suggestion, request, intimidation, temptation, enticement, provocation, and flattery. Here, Moses employs a polite request for instruction. Only after this contractual phase does the operative subject enter the decisive test (*épreuve décisive*), leading both Moses and Khidr into the narrative's primary operations.

3.8. Analysis of the Dynamic Discursive Process

Moses' modal desire (*vouloir*) for growth and elevation serves as the catalyst for his agency. This modality possesses such potency that it effectively subordinates other discursive actants to its logic. Khidr imposes a mandate of absolute silence upon Moses, prohibiting any interrogation until the designated moment. This interaction establishes a fiduciary contract (*contrat fiduciaire*) and delineates the conditions of the probationary test (*épreuve qualifiante*) between the two subjects.

The fiduciary contract serves to test Moses' agency, cognitive evaluation, and practical judgment. This tension is exemplified by his immediate objection to Khidr's scuttling of the ship, where he exclaims: "...Did you make a hole in it to drown its people? You have certainly done a monstrous thing!" (Q. 18:71). Moses perceives this act as a transgression and a moral aberration. However, Khidr later elucidates the teleological rationale behind the act: namely, the preservation of the vessel from seizure by a tyrannical king. The underlying semiotic principle is that a seemingly destructive act constitutes a protective measure, thereby serving a higher instrumental value.

Moses repeatedly reacts to Khidr's performance with objection, prompting Khidr to reiterate the conditions of the contract regarding patience: "...Did I not say, indeed you cannot have patience with me?" (Q. 18:72). Moses renews the contract, demonstrating persistence toward the target value of epistemic and spiritual elevation. Following their disembarkation, the narrative trajectory progresses to a second incident involving the slaying of a youth. This dynamic progression transforms Moses into an active cognitive subject, preparing him for a higher tier of understanding. Khidr justifies this act by revealing the hidden truth: "As for the boy, his parents were faithful [persons], and We feared he would overwhelm them with rebellion and unfaith" (Q. 18:80). He then continues: "So We desired that their Lord should give them in exchange one better than

him in respect of purity and closer in mercy” (Q. 18:81).

In the final verse under discussion, regarding the repair of the wall and in response to Moses' objection, Khidr unveils the mystery of his action as follows: “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. 18:82). Finally, to dispel any lingering doubt or ambiguity for Moses, and to ensure certainty that all these actions were executed according to a specific divine plan and mission, Khidr added: “...*I did not do that out of my own accord*” (Q. 18:82), indicating that his actions were performed in accordance with divine command (Makarem Shirazi 1995, 12: 505). Despite the inhospitality of the town's inhabitants, Khidr proceeded to reconstruct the wall. He declares that he undertook this task out of regard for the righteousness of the two orphans' parents, lest the wall collapse, expose the treasure, and place it in jeopardy.

3.9. Transcendental and Stative Regimes of the Narrative

The specific quality of Moses' renewed commitment reflects the intensity of his modal desire (*vouloir*), placing the narrative trajectory explicitly under the direction of Khidr (the Sender). However, despite the removal of operative barriers, Moses fails to sustain the requisite modal competence, specifically patience, perseverance, and adherence to the fiduciary contract. Consequently, his impulses are sanctioned, and he is shifted from the position of an aspiring operative subject to a disqualified role, thereby rendering his evaluative agency ineffective. In other words, the interaction between Moses and Khidr illustrates the tensive dialectic between the modalities of “wanting” (*vouloir*) and “prohibition” (negative *devoir* or *ne pas devoir*). When the prohibition (“must not”) is transgressed, the intensity of desire propels the subject toward unauthorized action. The Prohibitor (Khidr) thus assumes the responsibility of enforcing the rule and restraining the subject's desires.

Citing the Qur'anic decree, “*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’*” (Q. 18:78), Khidr pronounces the final sanction (*sanction pragmatique*). He concludes, based on the inductive evidence of the preceding events, that Moses lacks the capacity to endure the esoteric rationale underlying the actions. It is at this juncture that Khidr initiates the separation and unveils the hidden truths (*ta'wīl*) underlying the events that

exceeded Moses' tolerance. The narrative, by positioning Moses as a subject in tension, demonstrates how the modal conflict between "prohibition" and "desire" precipitates human impatience.

Throughout the narrative trajectory, Moses experiences cognitive crises and commits discursive transgressions stemming from a deficit of patience. These crises compel him to negate his initial state, thereby propelling him toward a new discursive position. After experiencing an internal void (*vide*), which creates the capacity for a new existential reception, Moses advances toward transcendence. This movement, which is fundamentally transcendental, confers new meaning upon his existential trajectory, rendering prior surface-level interpretations obsolete. Ultimately, Moses enters the realm of pure meaning as a transformed stative subject (*sujet d'état*). Distinct from the pragmatic structure governing Khiḍr's actions, he generates supra-individual and trans-valuative meaning.

3.10. Theological and Semiotic Dimensions of Unity (*al-Tawhīd*)

Many mystics posit that the ultimate telos of the spiritual path is the realization of Divine Unity (*al-Tawhīd*), which unfolds in three graduated stages: the Unity of Acts, the Unity of Attributes, and the Unity of Essence. In the companionship of Moses and Khiḍr, both phenomena and stative conditions are unveiled to Moses. At the conclusion of their journey, Khiḍr discloses the ontological reality of existence and interprets the hermeneutics of his actions. Moses observes Khiḍr's performance and reacts primarily because the meanings initially generated in his cognition suffer from an axiological inversion relative to the truth.

For instance, Moses decodes Khiḍr's actions, the scuttling of the ship, the slaying of the youth, and the gratuitous restoration of the wall, as transgressive, unjust, or irrational. Operating within a limited epistemic perspective and a context-bound understanding, he assumes that Khiḍr is maliciously sinking a vessel, murdering an innocent soul, or failing to demand fair compensation for labour (Tabataba'i 1996, 13: 346).

This narrative exemplifies a dynamic discourse, wherein constituent elements undergo a trajectory of transformation. In such a discursive system, meaning evolves, guiding human agents from initial states toward secondary and elevated states (Portner & Partee 2002). Khiḍr possesses profound knowledge of esoteric realities (*bāṭin*) and the essence of events, whereas Moses lacks this immediate awareness. Often, the exoteric appearance (*ẓāhir*) of events diverges from their inner significance; what appears

incoherent or illogical on the surface may, within the deep structure, be profoundly sacred, calculated, and teleologically rational (Makarem Shirazi 1995, 12: 487).

3.11. *From Ritualism to Phenomenological Engagement*

Moses sought spiritual elevation and proximity to the Divine, initially equating this pursuit with ritualistic worship and ascetic practices such as prayer, vigil, and seclusion. Khidr, conversely, guided him toward empirical pedagogy and phenomenological observation, demonstrating that spiritual progression is not confined to solitary devotion but may also be achieved through direct semiotic engagement with the world (Gunābādī 1989, 2: 474–475). From a semiotic-discursive perspective, meaning emerges even in the absence of a predetermined subjective plan, specifically through the subject's interaction with the world. Greimas (2010) terms this emergent significance “stative meaning.”

All interactions between Khidr and Moses depict a transition from one actional state to another. The narrative's dynamism, linked to the progression between stages, introduces the fundamental concept of “becoming” (*devenir*). By experiencing concrete phenomena alongside Khidr, Moses, functioning as the stative modulator, attains a transcendental stage, which constitutes the narrative's central axis. The meanings and values within the story are generated according to the stative regime (*régime d'état*) and its transformative function. Khidr, as a divine pedagogue, conveys higher meanings not merely through dialogue but also through performative action, thereby employing both the actional and stative dimensions of discourse.

3.12. *Axiological Process of the Narrative Discourse*

Mystics delineate the practical realization of Divine Unity (*al-Tawhīd*) into three strata: the Unity of Acts, the Unity of Attributes, and the Unity of Essence. The stages of Moses' journey can be interpreted through this theological framework. In the initial stage—the scuttling of the ship—Moses perceives the act through the lens of human agency, whereas it is fundamentally a divine act contingent upon God's will. This episode initiates Moses into the Unity of Acts. The subsequent stage, situated between the Unity of Essence and the Unity of Acts, representing the transition to the Unity of Attributes. The final stage culminates in complete Unity of Essence (al-Ālūsī 1994, 8: 338).

Moses' movement is propelled by an internal modal drive rather than

external coercion, necessitating the navigation of prohibitions and interactions with other discursive actants. Khiḍr systematically transmits values and meanings through empirical exemplars, recalibrating Moses' perception in order to categorize and integrate experiences in accordance with divine criteria. By immersing Moses in the phenomenological reality of events, Khiḍr enhances his intuitive cognition, instructing him to transcend judgments based solely on exoteric appearances. Khiḍr's actions, manifested as external experiences, frequently generate inverse values. They appear incongruent with standard narrative logic because they confront Moses with a complex and turbulent reality. However, although meaning does not invariably adhere to a linear structure, the generated values remain consistent with the stative regime (*régime d'état*).

To attain elevated stations, Moses endures tribulations alongside Khiḍr, thereby acquiring essential gnostic insights. Each stage demands the acquisition of new experiences. Even when he breaches the fiduciary contract, Moses must realign himself with the established normative framework. Initially, the dynamic discourse foregrounds the operative subject's modal desire (*vouloir*). Since movement is oriented toward attaining a value-object, it constitutes a "quest" (*quête*). Moses transitions into a novel realm, experiencing "becoming" (*devenir*) through spatial displacement. In this process, the stative subject encounters internal states, thereby achieving a renewed mode of presence and meaning through the stative process.

Within the narrative economy, inverse values are supplanted by cognitive values, marking a transition from semantic expansion to internal tensive impulses and deep meanings. Disparate discursive elements converge, as all signs and external factors contribute to the narrative's resolution. Through this transformative discourse, Moses progresses from a dysphoric state of disjunction (separation) and absence toward a new state of conjunction (union) with the value-object. Achieving this transformation necessitates navigating multiple stages, collectively termed the discursive transformation process. In shifting from an undesirable state, the operative subject undergoes a qualifying test (*épreuve qualifiante*).

4. Conclusion

The semiotic-semantic analysis of the narrative of Khidr and Moses reveals the operation of multiple discursive regimes, specifically the sensory-perceptual, stative (mythico-symbolic), and actional-inductive systems. Within this narrative, discourse assumes a phenomenological dimension; an internal impulse impacts the protagonist, Moses, generating sensory-perceptual and aesthetic effects that ultimately catalyze meaning production through the stative regime.

In this context, the stative mode articulates the sensory-perceptual system. Actions such as the scuttling of the ship, the slaying of the youth, and the restoration of the wall function as phenomenological points of contact, establishing the conditions for the stative subject (*sujet d'état*) to transition from the external realm to the internal sphere. Analysis of the stative system demonstrates that Moses, through a trans-valuative process triggered by Khidr's actions, evolves into a stative and cognitive subject. Through direct confrontation with these events, he attains the Unity of Divine Lordship (*al-Tawhīd al-Rubūbī*) and acquires experiential and esoteric knowledge. Consequently, an axiological system is constituted, generating and receiving semantic discourse through the interactions and dialectical challenges between the actants.

When the subject perceives himself amidst external and tangible signs, encountering a new mode of *Dasein* (Being-there), he becomes cognizant of the existential void (*vide*) enveloping his being. In this discourse, Moses, as a stative subject, occupies the locus of sensory-perceptual tensions, maintaining a corporeal and lucid presence while engaging with situations that index the external world. Through this existential presence, Moses participates in the fluid process of meaning generation and value production. The stative subject not only experiences affective discontinuity across temporal and spatial dimensions but also actively confronts these discontinuities, eventually achieving cognitive detachment. Ultimately, the stative mode facilitates an intimate lived experience (*vécu*) with phenomena, producing a sensory fusion between the subject and natural phenomena, thereby situating him within a distinct semantic space.

Declarations

Funding: No funding was received for conducting this study.

Conflict of Interest: The authors declare no competing interests.

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