

CULTURE AND CIVILIZATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Theological Approaches to Qur'anic Exegesis

A practical comparative-contrastive analysis

Hussein Abdul-Raof



Theological Approaches to Qur'anic Exegesis

This book provides a comprehensive and systematic analysis of the various schools of Qur'anic exegesis, from the earliest periods through to the present day.

Employing a comparative-contrastive methodology, the author examines traditional and rational schools of thought – such as the Mu'tazili, Shi'i, Ibadi, Sufi, metaphysical, modern, and scientific approaches to the interpretation of the Qur'ān – to give a detailed analysis of the similarities and differences in their theological views. The study spans a broad period, covering exegetical techniques adopted in Qur'anic exegesis from its infancy during the 1st/7th century up to the beginning of the 15th/21st century. Furnished with copious micro- and macro-level examples which explicate the Qur'anic notions and the points of view relevant to each school and exegetical approach, the book provides a rounded empirical study of Islamic thought.

This thorough and holistic historical investigation is an important contribution to the study of Qur'anic exegesis and Islamic theology, and as such will be of enormous interest to scholars of religion, philosophy and Islamic studies.

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Arabic transliteration system

Throughout the present work, the Library of Congress transliteration system has been consistently employed whenever an Arabic expression is quoted. The following table explains the Arabic transliteration system for Arabic consonants and vowels:

Arabic	Transliteration	Arabic	Transliteration
	a		t
	'		z
	b		c
	t		gh
	th		f
	j		q
	ḥ		k
	kh		l
	d		m
	dh		n
	r		h
	z		w
	s		y
	sh		
	ṣ		
	ḍ		

Arabic short-long vowels and case endings:

Arabic	Transliteration	Arabic	Transliteration
	ā		-an
	ū		-un
	ī		-in
	a		
	u		
	i		

Introduction

Overview of the work

This book is an in-depth empirical comparative-contrastive account of the various and theologically distinct schools of Qur'anic exegesis. It embarks upon a historical and methodological investigation of the development of Islamic hermeneutics and provides a holistic account of these various schools of exegesis. This work aims to provide a detailed explicated account of the exegetical techniques adopted by different exegetes of the formative, recording, and modern phases of the evolution of Qur'anic exegesis. This has been achieved through a comprehensive practical exegetical analysis of the major tafsīr works by prominent exegetes representative of different historical phases, different schools of thought, different methodologies, and genres. However, the book is not concerned with the discussion of the historicity of these tafsīr works. Their historical investigation lies outside the purview of the present work. It is a trans-disciplinary comparative-contrastive methodology through which the divergent political and dogma-driven exegetical schools and techniques are explicated to the reader. Being an empirical-based approach, the book is furnished with copious examples explicating the Qur'anic notions and the points of view relevant to each school and exegetical approach. For our comparative-contrastive exegetical analysis, we have selected nine samples from the Qur'ān which, we believe, are representative samples of the divergent exegetical and theological views of the mainstream and non-mainstream exegetes. These Qur'anic passages are well selected in order to mirror the major objective of this work. The Qur'anic samples are: sūrat al-baqarah (Q2:102), sūrat al-baqarah (Q2:213–216), sūrat āl 'imrān (Q3:27–41), sūrat al-an'ām (Q6:1–39), sūrat al-isrā' (Q17:70–80), sūrat al-ḥajj (Q22), sūrat al-nūr (Q24:1–25), sūrat al-qamar (Q54), and sūrat al-ḥāqqah (Q69).

Wild (1996, p. vii) observes that 'the genesis of the Qur'anic text continues to absorb the interest of scholars'. However, there has been a definite and irrevocable shift of attention in the last few decades. The new interest is devoted to the Qur'ān as a textual corpus regardless of its scriptural pre-history (Wild 1996, p. viii). We believe that in order to provide a critical insight into the genesis and evolution of Qur'anic exegesis, a trans-disciplinary comparative and contrastive methodology is required. Therefore, major exegetical works constitute useful foci for our

2 Introduction

proposed critical comparative and contrastive investigation of the formative, post-formative, and modern Qur'anic exegetical works of both mainstream and non-mainstream schools of exegesis that encompass and espouse multifarious theological and political points of view of Muslim theologians and exegetes. Thus, the focus of our methodological investigation will be on classical and modern Qur'anic exegetical works, their relevant exegetical genres and ad hoc techniques. These works are thoroughly investigated to illustrate and explicate the methodological similarities and cleavages as well as the distinct exegetical genres and techniques that are employed by different commentators from the first/seventh century to the end of the fourteenth/twentieth century.

The book aims to provide a practical analysis of Qur'anic discourse. The views of different exegetes are put into practice in the form of a comparative-contrastive analysis of āyahs and sūrah. Qur'an exegetical commentaries have been marked by one of the following nine exegetical approaches that represent mainstream and non-mainstream exegetes. In their Qur'anic text analysis, classical and modern Muslim exegetes have adopted diverse exegetical approaches (*uslūb*) which designate the genre of a given tafsīr work. The main distinctions between exegetical approaches are related to the amount of details provided by the exegete, the use of intertextuality, whether all or some āyahs are accounted for, and whether exegesis is provided at word, sentence, or text level. However, some exegetical works can be described as hybrids of more than one approach. These exegetical approaches are as follows:

- (i) Analytical exegesis is referred to as *al-tafsīr al-taḥlīlī* and is the most common hermeneutical approach in which all the āyahs (*musalsal*) according to their arrangement in a given sūrah are analysed.
- (ii) Synoptic exegesis is referred to as *al-tafsīr al-ijmālī* which is a gist āyah-by-āyah (*musalsal*) exegesis and is a modern approach in which the exegete provides a periphrastic exegetical outline of the āyahs according to their arrangement in a given sūrah.
- (iii) Legal exegesis features jurisprudential topics such as faith, daily ritual prayer, alms giving, fasting, holy war, pilgrimage, lesser pilgrimage, usury, theft, abrogation, the imposition of poll tax, and marriage.
- (iv) Allegorical exegesis is concerned with allegorical (*majāzī*), i.e. esoteric (*bāṭin*), interpretation (*ta'wīl*) of Qur'anic passages. Allegorical hermeneutics is rational and is hinged upon the following: (a) personal opinion (*dalīl ḥannī*), (b) discovery of meaning (*istinbāṭ*), (c) symbolism and allusion (*ishāri*), (d) probability (*al-iḥtimāl*), and (e) connotative meaning (*al-ma'nā al-bāṭin*). Allegorical exegesis represents Sufi and Mu'tazili exegetical views.
- (v) Comparative exegesis is referred to as *al-tafsīr al-muqārīn* and is a comparative-contrastive exegetical analysis in which the exegete compares and contrasts between different views of exegetes on an exegetical problem represented by a given āyah. The contrasted views may represent different schools of law.

- (vi) Thematic exegesis is referred to as *al-tafsīr al-mawḍūʿī* (topic-based) and emerged during the early years of the formative phase, i.e. during the Prophet's phase, and has continued up to the modern phase. Thematic exegesis is not a *musalsal tafsīr*, i.e. the approach of thematic hermeneutics does not follow the arrangement of the āyahs or sūrah. Most importantly, this form of hermeneutics occurs at three different levels of analysis: (a) at word level, (b) at āyah level, and (c) at text level.
- (vii) Literary exegesis has been introduced in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries by exegetes such as Saiyid Quṭb, Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, Muḥammad Mutwallī al-Shʿrāwī, and Ḥasan al-Turābī. Among the Shīʿī exegetes who have adopted the modern literary approach to Qurʾanic exegesis is the Iranian exegete Ayatollah Maḥmūd Taleqani (d. 1980) who also called for a political analysis of the Qurʾān. Taleqani was influenced by the Egyptian exegete Muḥammad ʿAbdu (1849–1905) (Amirpur 2005, p. 337),
- (viii) Stylistic exegesis is a linguistic/rhetorical approach which is both textual and lexicographical. Thus, it is concerned with semantic, syntactic, phonetic, and rhetorical features of an expression or an āyah. In this sense, it is a glossary form of *tafsīr* which provides a brief definition of selected words from selected āyahs. Stylistic exegesis is concerned with:
 - (1) *gharīb* works which deal with the collection in sūrah order of Qurʾanic expressions that are semantically ambiguous due to their rare use, such as foreign words, tribal dialect words, and lexical oddities;
 - (2) *wujūh*, *naẓāʾir*, and *ashbāh* works which deal with the multiple senses of Qurʾanic expressions;
 - (3) *mutashābihāt* works which deal with the stylistically distinct but grammatically similar āyahs;
 - (4) the variant modes of reading;
 - (5) the syntactic analysis of āyahs and expressions that have more than one grammatical analysis which leads to different meanings;
 - (6) Quasi-syntactic analysis of āyahs where the exegete provides a brief grammatical analysis of selected expressions of a given āyah with or without further exegetical details;
 - (7) syntactic analysis of āyahs with particular attention to Arabic grammatical structures and grammatical rules;
 - (8) consonance-based analysis which illustrates the thematic and conceptual relationship between consecutive āyahs and sūrah;
 - (9) stylistically based analysis of Qurʾanic discourse which involves the discussion of the rhetorical and linguistic aspects of the āyah.
- (ix) Scientific exegesis is a form of thematic exegesis approach that is primarily concerned with the scientific aspects of some āyahs that demonstrate God's omnipotence, on the one hand, and that the two canonical sources of Islam are compatible with the scientific developments of our modern age.

4 Introduction

Mainstream exegetes are representative of traditional Sunni exegesis which is referred to as *al-tafsīr bil-ma'thūr*, whose approach is based on: (a) the three canons of exegesis, namely the Qur'ān, the ḥadīth, and the views of the companions and early successors, and (b) the exoteric meaning of the āyah or a Qur'anic expression. However, the expression 'non-mainstream' is an umbrella under which a large number of schools of exegesis are sheltered. Non-mainstream exegetes include Sunni and non-Sunni Islam and share a number of exegetical techniques such as:

- (i) They adopt a personal opinion, i.e. rational, approach to the Qur'anic text.
- (ii) They deal with the esoteric meaning of the āyah or Qur'anic expression.
- (iii) They have limited reference to Qur'anic intertextuality or the ḥadīth.
- (iv) They have limited reference to the exegetical views of the companions and the early successors. Non-mainstream exegesis represents the major dogmatic views of the Sufis, Mu'tazilis, Shī'is, and Ibāḍis.

Greek philosophy has impacted Qur'anic exegesis in two ways and has led to the evolution of non-mainstream exegesis: (a) Mu'tazili exegesis, and (b) meta-physical exegesis. However, modern scientific theories and discoveries have led to the emergence of another school of non-mainstream exegesis represented by the modern school of scientific exegesis, whose premise is inimitability oriented and is led by Sunni and non-Sunni Qur'ān scientists and exegetes. The modern phase has also witnessed the evolution of the school of literary exegesis and the rebirth of the school of linguistic exegesis, whose premise is also inimitability oriented.

It is worthwhile to note that we can classify the schools of linguistic and scientific exegesis as non-mainstream due to the fact that the argument of their adherents is hinged upon rational, i.e. hypothetical, linguistic, and scientific views. Our claim does not exclude the linguistic approach of the Andalus mainstream school of Qur'anic exegesis. For this reason, the views of linguist and scientist Qur'ān exegetes must be dubbed as 'interpretation' (*ta'wīl*) rather than exegesis (*tafsīr*). However, for mainstream scholars and exegetes, linguistic interpretation (*al-ta'wīl al-lughawi*) and scientific interpretation (*al-ta'wīl al-ʿilmi*) is considered permissible or commendable hypothetical 'rational' interpretation of the Qur'ān (*ta'wīl maqbūl*, or *ta'wīl maḥmūd*). In other words, the views of linguist and scientist Qur'ān scholars are not dubbed as heretical by mainstream scholars. This, however, should not be misinterpreted as an umbrella under which other schools of rational exegesis can be sheltered.

To clarify the theological position of mainstream exegetes on this controversial matter, we can argue that:

- (i) Linguistic and scientific exegetical approaches, which may or may not be inimitability oriented, are non-heretical but are non-mainstream.
- (ii) Although linguistic and scientific views are hinged upon esoteric and rational meaning, they are permissible Qur'anic interpretation.

- (iii) The linguistic exegetical views of the Mu'tazili, Shī'i, and Ibāḍi schools of exegesis are not heretical if these linguistic views are not theologically or politically oriented.
- (iv) If the linguistic exegetical views of the Mu'tazili, Shī'i, and Ibāḍi schools of exegesis are theologically or politically motivated, i.e. counter to mainstream Qur'anic exegesis, such linguistic exegesis is considered heretical.
- (v) The theological exegetical views of the Mu'tazili, Shī'i, and Ibāḍi schools of exegesis are heretical. This is attributed to the fact that their theological views are not intertextually based on the Qur'ān and the sunnah.

Therefore, generally speaking, Qur'anic interpretation (ta'wīl al-qur'ān) is no longer exclusive to theologically or politically oriented views. We can, therefore, classify Qur'anic interpretation into:

- (i) theologically oriented
- (ii) politically oriented
- (iii) scientifically oriented
- (iv) linguistically oriented.

For more details on the dichotomy between interpretation and exegesis, see Abdul-Raof (2010, Ch. 4). For more details on theologically and politically oriented interpretation, see Abdul-Raof (2010, Ch. 3).

Structure of the work

This book comprises an introduction and five chapters:

Chapter 1 accounts for the traditional school of exegesis, how it developed, its major approaches, sources, and representative exegetes and their works.

Chapter 2 investigates the hypothetical opinion school of exegesis, its evolution, its major approaches, sources, and representative exegesis works. It also highlights the major schools that constitute all the non-mainstream exegetes such as the Ibāḍi, the Mu'tazili, and the Sufi, as well as the Shī'i exegetes and Shī'i sub-sects such as the Ismā'īlis, the Zaidis, and the Ḥūthis. Therefore, various Muslim schools of thought will be analysed in terms of Qur'anic exegesis and approaches to Qur'anic discourse.

Chapter 3 deals with the linguistic school of Qur'anic exegesis and provides explicated details about the Middle East and the Andalus exegetes who adopt a linguistic/stylistic approach in their exegetical analysis. Representative exegesis works of this school will also be dealt with.

Chapter 4 is a holistic and methodical comparative-contrastive practical exegetical analysis of copious examples of āyahs and sūrah's that can vividly mirror the differences in opinion among the various schools of exegesis and their relevant theologians. This chapter will provide linguistic, stylistic, jurisprudence, and historical informative details with regards to a given āyah or sūrah. The school of scientific exegesis will also be referred to whenever deemed necessary according to the āyah or sūrah under investigation.

Chapter 5 illustrates the impact of contextual and co-textual relevance in the exegetical process of Qur'anic discourse. This chapter provides an interesting critical assessment of the views of Western Qur'ān scholars on the Qur'anic text and exegetical problems. It provides a valuable discussion of the notion of cohesiveness as a major textual feature of the Qur'anic text which can lead to misunderstanding if it is misinterpreted.

Methodology

The present methodology is trans-disciplinary comparative and contrastive analysis of selected Qur'anic texts. Throughout the marathon journey of Qur'anic exegesis since the first/seventh century, classical and modern Qur'ān exegetical works have focused on a limited number of approaches. This can be attributed to: (i) the multi-faceted textual nature of the Qur'ān, (ii) the expertise of the exegete, and (iii) space limitation. In other words, no matter how encyclopaedic a given exegete can be, he remains to be a human and suffers from limitation of knowledge and limitation of space when recording his exegesis. However, each historical phase of Qur'anic exegesis is different from the others in terms of approaches. Although the iconic companion exegetes of the formative phase during the first/seventh century had a bird's eye view of the Qur'anic text, they focused during their oral transmission of Qur'anic exegesis on a limited number of approaches and were generally periphrastic. The same applies to the early successor exegetes. Qur'ān exegetes of the recording classical and modern phases have been no exception to this. Thus, Qur'anic exegesis has remained generally constrained by a given exegetical approach or at times to more than one approach. Qur'anic exegesis has never been comprehensive in terms of the application of all the exegetical approaches. Therefore, had Qur'ān exegetes included all the exegetical approaches, their commentaries would have been in dozens of volumes. Thus, this task has been impossible to undertake.

Our methodology in the present practical comparative-contrastive exegetical analysis is unique in the sense that it provides a holistic Qur'anic textual analysis where a wide range of mainstream and non-mainstream, classical and modern exegetical approaches will be applied in order to unravel the intriguing contrastive theological cleavages and the historical, linguistic, mystical, philosophical, scientific, and socio-political views. In order to achieve this task, our textual analysis is selective and is hinged upon a set of āyahs or a whole sūrah that is not too long, such as Q22 or Q69. Although our approach is not concerned with word-for-word or āyah-by-āyah (musalsal) exegesis, it is informative through the methodically comprehensive analysis of the major distinctive exoteric and esoteric meanings and the comparative-contrastive discussion of theological and dogmatic differences among classical and modern Qur'ān exegetes. We can thus argue that no exegete, classical or modern, can undertake such an uphill task.

The school of scientific Qur'anic exegesis is an offshoot of the inimitability-oriented approach to Qur'anic exegesis. Our investigation has proven that there

is an increasing interest among readers in the science-based āyahs. As a result, we have provided several science-based āyahs in our discussion of the school of scientific Qur'anic exegesis. There are, however, limitations with resources. There are not many available resources by Muslim scientists or exegetes who provide detailed scientific analysis of science-based āyahs.

Most importantly, due to space limitation and to avoid repetition of mentioning the sources consulted, we have not listed, at times, all or some of these sources since they are already listed in the bibliography.

Statistical information for Qur'anic exegesis

This is an account of the semantic fields of major Qur'anic expressions. A semantic field involves all the expressions that are semantically related to a given word. This includes:

- 1 The Qur'ān as a book: the Qur'ān has 30 parts (juz'), 60 sections (ḥizb), 240 quarters (rub'), 114 sūrahs, 6,236 āyahs, 77,437 words, 323,671 letters.
- 2 Animals in the Qur'ān: cow, livestock, camel, she-camel, pig, dog, elephant, calf, lion (qaswarah), monkey, donkey, mule, wolf, goat, sheep, ewe, horse, wild beast, frog.
- 3 Insects in the Qur'ān: Spider, fly, mosquito, ant, lice, locust, moth, serpent, snake, bee, woodworm.
- 4 Birds in the Qur'ān: hoopoe, quail, crow, birds of prey.
- 5 Trees and plants in the Qur'ān: olive tree, lote tree, grapevine tree, tamarisk tree, date palm, gourd tree, zaqqūm tree, thorny plant, tree of eternity, grass, vegetation, field.
- 6 Fruits and vegetables in the Qur'ān: olives, figs, green herbs, onion, garlic, cucumber, lentils, grapes, ginger, dates, seeds, grain, pomegranate, mustard, bitter fruit, tamarisk, lote, sweet basil.
- 7 Sea animals in the Qur'ān: fish, whale, pearl, coral.
- 8 Perfumes in the Qur'ān: narcissus, musk.
- 9 Planets in the Qur'ān: sun, moon, earth, shooting stars, stars, swimming orbits.
- 10 Categories of people in the Qur'ān: man, woman, male, female, elderly, those who evoked God's anger, those who have gone astray, deaf, dumb, blind, lame, just, unjust, pious, believer, unbeliever, immigrant, supporter, idolater, wrongdoer, wretched, criminal, poor, rich, orphan, needy, way-farer, slave, prisoner of war, winner, successful, loser, humble, doer of good, wrongdoer, arrogant, those who stand in awe of their Lord, past nation, truthful, mad, liar, deceiver, disobedient, corrupt, oppressor, wise, foolish, those who commit excess in expenditure, those who hinder good, those who cause others to doubt, those who commit abuse, those who cause and spread corruption, those who shed blood, aggressive, patient, impatient, reformer, wavering, corrupter, slanderer, sceptical, denier, mocker, ridiculer, opponent, hypocrite, lazy, asleep, alive, dead, awake, asleep, ill, poet, soothsayer magician, soothsayer, illiterate, strayed, friend, gay, enemy, thief.

8 Introduction

- 11 Natural phenomena in the Qur'ān: day, morning, light, shadow, night, darkness, the passing of the night, fire, smoke, wind, whirlwind, clouds, cloud mass, hail, rain, water, spring, sea, river, bank, flood, waves, foam, torrent, land, sand, plain, valley, earthquake, heat, coolness, lightning, thunderbolt, mountains, mirage, heap of sand, shake, blast, elevation, dust, clay, stone, rock, fragments, horizons, sleep, lethargy, dreams, creation, the heavens and earth were a joined entity, falling fragments from the sky, setting of stars, the glow of sun set, sun rise, sun set, the sun is past its zenith.
- 12 Times in the Qur'ān: dawn, morning, day time, night time, darkness, sun rise, sun set, summer, winter, beginning of day, end of day, before dawn prayer, evening, evening prayer, white thread of dawn, black thread of dawn, noon, the declining day, the crescent moons.
- 13 Week days in the Qur'ān: Friday, Saturday.
- 14 Months in the Qur'ān: Ramadan, the sacred month.
- 15 Scriptures in the Qur'ān: former scriptures, the book of Psalms, the Old Testament, the New Testament.
- 16 Prophets and messengers in the Qur'ān: Adam, Noah, Idrīs, Shu'aib, Šālīḥ, Ishmael, Isaac, Jonah, Ayyūb, Hūd, Abraham, Lot, Jacob, Aiyūb, Dhū al-Kifl, David, Solomon, Zachariah, Yaḥyā, Ilyās, al-Yasa'a, Moses, Aaron, Jesus, Muḥammad.
- 17 Metals in the Qur'ān: gold, silver, iron, copper, shackles.
- 18 Clothes in the Qur'ān: clothes, shirt, garment, wool, feather.
- 19 Body in the Qur'ān: body, head, face, cheek, eyes, tears, mouth, lips, tongue, nose, tooth, neck, aorta, chest, whispering, talking, throat, elbow, hand, arm, finger, nail, ear, leg, foot, ankle, heart, jugular vein, back, belly, intestines, sleeping, awakening, hearing, sight, thinking, knowing, womb, embryo, menstruation, flesh, bone, collar bone, backbone, rib, skin, burns, wound, pain, spirit, disease, puberty, private part of man, private part of woman, sperm.
- 20 Liquids in the Qur'ān: water, milk, honey, wine that does not intoxicate, wine, oil, liquid pitch, liquid copper.
- 21 Numbers in the Qur'ān: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 19, 40, 60, 70, 80, 99, 100, 200, 309, 950, 1,000, 2,000, 3,000, 5,000, 50,000, 100,000, half, third, quarter, fifth, eighth.
- 22 Directions in the Qur'ān: east, west, right, left.
- 23 Colours in the Qur'ān: black, white, yellow, green, red.
- 24 Cultural items in the Qur'ān: utensils, plate, food, egg, well, chest, gateway, cup, intoxicates, wine that does not intoxicate, burning lamp, ladder, depository, dirham, grave, white thread, black thread, cushion, couch, carpet, bed, linings, furniture, leather, wool, fur, hair, light, lamp, niche, glass, silk brocade, back door, toilet, chair, pillar, house, Makkah, chamber, mosque, church, monastery, synagogue, tent, palace, home, key, dwellings, pavilion.
- 25 Jewellery in the Qur'ān: gold, silver, bracelets of silver, pearl, rubies, coral, adornments.
- 26 Seasons in the Qur'ān: summer, winter.

- 27 Flowers in the Qur'ān: rose, flower.
- 28 Finance in the Qur'ān: account, capital, price, loss, debt, loan, deposit, interest, contract, covenant, scribe of contract, witness, trade, transaction, inheritance, will, excessiveness in expenditure, pay, postponement of payment, ransom, the writing off of debt.
- 29 Family in the Qur'ān: family, husband, wife, child, son, daughter, relatives, offspring, father, mother, brother, sister, paternal uncle, paternal aunt, maternal uncle, maternal aunt, friend, neighbour.

1 School of traditional exegesis

(al-tafsīr bil-ma'thūr)

1.1 Introduction

The present discussion provides an explicated account of the traditional school of Qur'anic exegesis and how it developed. The major sources of the school of traditional exegesis are also discussed and explicated. These sources include the Qur'ān, Muḥammad's tradition (sunnah), the companions' views, and the early successors' views. This chapter also accounts for how the exegetical notion of Qur'anic intertextuality is related to the semantic notion of polysemy, the modes of reading, and the theological *mutashābihāt*. Details are also provided about the position held by mainstream exegetes towards non-mainstream exegesis.

1.2 School of mainstream exegesis

The school of mainstream exegesis is the earliest form of traditional Qur'anic exegesis, which dates back to the lifetime of Muḥammad (d. 11/632). The major sources of this school of exegesis are: (i) the Qur'ān, (ii) the customary practice (sunnah) of Muḥammad and his tradition (ḥadīth), (iii) the views of the companions, and (iv) the views of the early successors. The evolution of mainstream Qur'anic exegesis (al-tafsīr bil-ma'thūr or al-tafsīr al-naqli) dates back to the classical formative phase¹ since the lifetime of Muḥammad and is hinged on one of the above sources that are explained in the following sections.

1.2.1 *The Qur'ān*

It is claimed by Muslim scholars that the Qur'ān interprets itself (al-qur'ānu yufassiru nafsahu). In other words, through Qur'anic intertextuality, the exegete can interpret the Qur'ān. What is brief in a given āyah of a sūrah, is elaborated on by another āyah or set of āyahs elsewhere. Qur'anic intertextuality is an exegetical approach which is concerned with establishing textual links within the Qur'ān in terms of an expression, an individual phrase, or an āyah. Thus, the meaning of an expression, a portion of an āyah, or an āyah can unfold through reference to thematically and semantically similar expressions, notions, or āyahs

which act as semantically disambiguating devices. For instance, the leitmotif of spending extravagantly versus being tight-fisted in expenditure is laid down by Q17:29 which sheds some light on home economics. However, more exegetical elaboration is given by Q25:67 (walladhīna idhā anfaqū lam yusrifū walam yaqturū wakāna baina dhālika qawāmā – They are those who, when they spend, do so not excessively or sparingly but are ever, between that, justly moderate). However, the exegete is required to inform the reader that he/she is also instructed by the Qur’ān to spend his/her wealth for causes that will please God as we are informed by further intertextual reference in Q2:215 (qul mā anfaqtum min khairin falil-wālidaini wal-aqrabīna – Say: ‘Whatever you spend of good is to be for parents and relatives’), Q8:36 (fasayunfiqūnahā thumma takūnū ‘alaihim ḥasratān – So they will spend it; then it will be for them a source of regret), and Q59:9 (wayu’thirūna ‘alā anfusihiḥim walaw kāna bihiḥim khaṣāṣah waman yūqa shuḥḥa nafsihī fa’ulā’ika hum al-mufliḥūn – But [the Anṣār] give the emigrants (al-muhājirūn) preference over themselves, even though they are in privation. Whoever is protected from the stinginess of his soul, it is those who will be the successful). Similarly, the reader is instructed to worship the Lord in (yā aiyuha al-nāsu u‘budū rabbakum alladhī khalaqakum walladhīna min qablikum la‘allakum tattaqūn – O mankind, worship your Lord who created you and those before you, that you may become righteous, Q2:21). However, he/she is not told about what acts of worship that are required. This problem is exegetically illuminated through the intertextual reference to Q22:77–78 (yā aiyuha alladhīna āmanu irka‘ū wasjudū wa‘budū rabbakum wa‘alū al-khaira la‘allakum tufliḥūn. wajāhidū fi allāhi ḥaqqa jihādihi . . . fa‘aqimu al-ṣalāta wa‘ātu al-zakāta wa‘taṣimū billāhi . . . – O you who have believed, bow and prostrate and worship your Lord and do good, that you may succeed. And strive for God with the striving due to Him . . . So establish prayer and give zakāt and hold fast to God . . .).

The exegetical tool of Qur’anic intertextuality (tafsīr al-qur’ān bil-qur’ān) can perform one of the following functions in Qur’anic exegesis:

- (a) Through Qur’anic intertextuality, we can make a generic meaning more specific through elaboration, as in: (lan tanālu al-birra ḥattā tunfiqū mim mā tuḥibbūn – Never will you attain the good reward until you spend in the way of God from that which you love, Q3:92) which refers to (al-infāq – spending) in a general way. This generic meaning of (al-infāq) is made more specific by Q76:8 (wayuṭ‘imūna al-ṭa‘āma ‘alā ḥubbihi miskīnan wayatīman wa’asīran – They give food in spite of love for it to the needy, the orphan, and the captive) which specifically states how (al-infāq) can be made. Another example of how the general meaning of an āyah can be made more specific by another āyah is found in Q5:32 and its counterpart Q4:93. Q5:32 provides a generic meaning through the expression (nafs – soul) which occurs in the indefinite noun form: (min ajli dhālika katabnā ‘alā banī isrā’īla annahu man qatala nafsān bighairi nafsīn aw fasādin fi al-arḍi faka’annamā qatala al-nāsa jamī’an waman aḥyāhā fak’annamā aḥya al-nāsa

jamī'an – Because of that, We decreed upon the Children of Israel that whoever kills a soul unless for a soul or for corruption done in the land, it is as if he had slain mankind entirely. And whoever saves one, it is as if he had saved mankind entirely). However, Q4:93 explains the specific meaning of what (nafs) actually means: (waman yaqtul mu'minan muta'ammidan fajazā'uhū jahannamu khālidan fihā – Whoever kills a believer intentionally, his recompense is hell wherein he will abide eternally). Thus, the expression (nafs) specifically means (a believer) according to Q4:93. Similarly, in Q4:123, the expression (sū'an – a wrong deed) has a generic meaning: (man ya'mal sū'an yujza bihī – Whoever does a wrong will be recompensed for it). However, Q34:17 provides a specific meaning to (sū'an): (dhālika jazaināhum bimā kafarū – We repaid them because they disbelieved). Thus, (sū'an) in Q4:123 specifically means: (kafarū – to disbelieve) according to Q34:17. The same applies to Q22:1 (yā aiyuha al-nāsu ittaqū rabbakum – Mankind, be mindful of your Lord), where the expression (taqwā – to be mindful of the Lord) has a generic meaning and, therefore, requires elaboration to unlock its restricted signification. In Q22:77–78, elaboration is provided on what the nature of (taqwā) is (yā aiyuha alladhīna āmanū irka'ū wasjudū wa'būdū rabbakum waf'alū al-khaira . . . wajāhidū fī allāhi ḥaqqa jihādihi . . . aqīmu al-ṣalāta wa'ātu al-zakāta wa'taṣimū billāhi – O you who have believed, bow and prostrate and worship your Lord and do good, that you may succeed. And strive for God with the striving due to Him . . . establish prayer and give zakāt and hold fast to God).

- (b) Qur'anic intertextuality can unlock an ambiguous meaning of an āyah or expression and be made clear, as in: (wa'ākharūna murjawna li'amri allāhi immā yu'adhdhibuhum wa'immā yatūbu 'alaihim – There are others deferred until the command of God whether He will punish them or whether He will forgive them, Q9:106) in which the meaning of the expression (ākharūn – others) is ambiguous. This semantic ambiguity is explained by Q9:118 (wa'alā al-thalāthati alladhīna khullifū ḥattā idhā ḍāqat 'alaihim al-arḍu bimā raḥubat waḍāqat 'alaihim anfusuhum waẓannū an lā malja'a min allāhi illā ilaihi thumma tāba 'alaihim liyatūbū – He also forgave the three who were left behind and regretted their error to the point that the earth closed in on them in spite of its vastness and their souls anguished them and they were certain that there is no refuge from God except in Him. Then He turned to them so they could repent) whose circumstance of revelation refers to Hilāl b. Umayyah, Marārah b. Rabī', and Ka'b b. Mālik.

Another example of how a semantic ambiguity can be explained is encountered in: (nakāla al-ākhirati wal-ūlā – exemplary punishment for the last and the first transgression, Q79:25) which is an ambiguous āyah. However, its vague meaning can be disambiguated by two more āyahs: (waqāla fir'awnu yā aiyuha al-mala'u mā 'alimtu lakum min ilāhin ghairi fa'awqid li yā hāmānu 'ala al-ṭīni faj'al li ṣarḥan la'alli atṭali'u ilā ilāhi mūsā wa'innī la'azunnuhū min al-kādhībīn – Pharaoh said: 'O eminent ones, I have not known you to have a god other than

me. Then ignite for me, O Hāmān, a fire upon the clay and make for me a tower that I may look at the god of Moses. Indeed, I do think he is among the liars', Q28:38), where the meaning of the expression (al-ūlā) is explained as 'the first transgression made by Pharaoh'. The vague meaning of Q79:25 is further explained by: (anā rabbukum al-a'lā – I [Pharaoh] am your most exalted lord, Q79:24) which makes the vague meaning of (al-ākhirati) clear, i.e. this is the second transgression made by Pharaoh.

An āyah, a section of an āyah, or an expression can be semantically illuminated through intertextual reference within the Qur'anic text. Below are examples of Qur'anic intertextuality as an exegetical tool in the interpretation of Qur'anic discourse by the school of mainstream exegesis:

- 1 (ihdinā al-ṣirāṭa al-mustaqīm – Guide us to the straight path, Q1:6), where the expression (al-ṣirāṭa al-mustaqīm – the straight path) is explained by Q42:52–53 (wa'innaka latahdī ilā ṣirāṭin mustaqīmin. ṣirāṭi allāhi alladhī lahu mā fī al-samāwāti wama fī al-arḍi – Indeed, [O Muḥammad], you guide to a straight path. The path of God, to whom belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth); thus, Q1:6 is intertextually related to Q42:52–53.
- 2 (fatalaqqā ādamu min rabbiḥi kalimātin fatāba 'alaihi – Adam received from his Lord some words and God accepted his repentance, Q2:37), where the expression (kalimātin – some words) is intertextually related to and explained by Q7:23 (qālā rabbanā ḡalamnā anfusanā wa'in lam taghfir lanā watarḡamnā lanakūnanna min al-khāsirīn – They (Adam and Eve) said: 'Our Lord, we have wronged ourselves and if You do not forgive us and have mercy upon us, we will surely be among the losers.') It is worthwhile to note that Q2:285 is also explained by Q4:136.
- 3 (wakuntum azwājan thalāthah – You become of three kinds, Q56:7) is explained intertextually by:
 - (i) (fa'aṣḡābu al-maimanati mā aṣḡābu al-maimanati – The companions of the right, what are the companions of the right?, Q56:8) which represents the first category of people who, on the day of judgement, will be given their records of good deeds in their right hand and will therefore be destined for paradise;
 - (ii) (wa'aṣḡābu al-mash'amati mā aṣḡābu al-mash'amati – The companions of the left, what are the companions of the left?, Q56:9) which represents the second category of people who, on the day of judgement, will be given their records of bad deeds in their left hand and will therefore be destined for hell fire;
 - (iii) (wal-sābiqūna al-sābiqūna ulā'ika al-muqarrabūn –The forerunners in good deeds are the forerunners. Those are the ones brought near to God, Q56:10–11) which represents the third category of people on the day of judgement.
- 4 (qur'ānan 'arabiyyan ghaira dhī 'iwajin – It is an Arabic Qur'ān without any deviance, Q39:28) is intertextually related to Q12:2 (innā anzalnāhu qur'ānan

‘arabiyyan – Indeed, We [God] have sent it down as an Arabic Qur’ān), Q13:37 (wakadhālika anzalnāhu ḥukman ‘arabiyyan – Thus, We [God] have revealed it as an Arabic legislation), Q16:103 (lisān alladhī yulḥidūna ilaihi a’‘jamiyyun wahādḥā lisānun ‘arabiyyun mubīn – The tongue of the one they refer to is foreign, and this Qur’ān is in a clear Arabic language), Q20:113 (wakadhālika anzalnāhu qur’ānan ‘arabiyyan – Thus, We [God] have sent it down as an Arabic Qur’ān), Q26:195 (bilisānin ‘arabiyyin mubīn – in a clear Arabic language), Q41:44 (walaw ja’alnāhu qur’ānan a’jamiyyan laqālū lawlā fuṣṣilat āyātuh a’‘jamiyyun wa‘arabiy – If We [God] had made it a non-Arabic Qur’ān, they would have said: ‘Why are its verses not explained in detail in our language? Is it a foreign Qur’ān and an Arab messenger?’), and Q42:7 (wakadhālika awhāinā ilaika qur’ānan ‘arabiyyan – Thus, We [God] have revealed to you an Arabic Qur’ān).

- 5 (atā amru allāhi falā tasta‘jilūh – The command of God is coming, so do not be impatient for it, Q16:1) is semantically explained through intertextual reference to Q10:50 (qul ara’aitum in atākum ‘adhābuhu bayātan aw nahāran mādhā yasta‘jilu minhu al-mujrimūn – Say: ‘Have you considered : if His [God’s] punishment should come to you by night or by day – for which aspect of it would the criminals be impatient?’), Q11:8 (wala’in akhkharnā ‘anhum al-‘adhāba ilā ummatin ma’dūdatin layaḡūlunna mā yaḡbisuh – If We [God] hold back from them the punishment for a limited time, they will surely say: ‘What detains it?’), Q29:53–54 (wayasta‘jilūnaka bil-‘adhābi walawlā ajalun musamman lajā’ahum al-‘adhābu walaya’tiyannahum baghtatan wahum lā yash‘urūn. yasta‘jilūnaka bil-‘adhābi . . . – They urge you to hasten the punishment. And if not for the decree of a specified term, punishment would have reached them. But it will surely come to them suddenly while they perceived not. They urge you to hasten the punishment . . .), Q38:16 (waqālū rabbānā ‘ajjil lanā qitṭanā qabla yawm al-ḥisāb – They say: ‘Our Lord, hasten for us our share of the punishment before the day of account’), and Q42:18 (yasta‘jilu bihā alladhīna lā yu’mīnūna bihā walladhīna āmanū mushfiqūna minhā – Those who do not believe in it are impatient for it, but those who believe are fearful of it).
- 6 (walā taḡzan ‘alaihim – Do not grieve over them, Q15:88) is semantically illuminated by Q5:68 (falā ta’sā ‘ala al-qawmi al-kāfirīn – Do not grieve over the disbelieving people), Q16:127 (walā taḡzan ‘alaihim walā taku fī ḡaiqin mim mā yamkurūn – Do not grieve over them and do not be in distress over what they conspire), Q18:6 (fala’allaka bākhi’un nafsaka ‘alā āthārihim in lam yu’mīnū bihādha al-ḡadīthi asafā – Then perhaps you would kill yourself through grief over them, [O Muḡammad], if they do not believe in this message, and out of sorrow), Q26:3 (la’allaka bākhi’un nafsaka allā yakūnū mu’mīnīn – Perhaps, [O Muḡammad], you would kill yourself with grief that they will not be believers), and Q35:8 (falā tadḡhab nafsuka ‘alaihim ḡasarāt – Perhaps, [O Muḡammad], you would kill yourself with grief that they will not be believers).

- 7 (yā aiyuha al-nāsu u^ʿbudū rabbakum alladhī khalaqakum walladhīna min qablikum la^ʿallakum tattaqūn – O mankind, worship your Lord who created you and those before you that you may become righteous, Q2:21) is exegetically illuminated through the intertextual reference to Q22:77–78 (yā aiyuha alladhīna āmanū irka^ʿū wasjudū wa^ʿbudū rabbakum waf^ʿalū al-khaira la^ʿallakum tufliḥūn wajāhidū fī allāhi ḥaqqa jihādihī . . . fa^ʿaqimū al-ṣalāta wa^ʿātū al-zakāta wa^ʿtaṣimū billāhi huwa mawlākum – O you who have believed, bow and prostrate and worship your Lord and do good – that you may succeed. And strive for God with the striving due to Him . . . So establish prayer and give zakāt and hold fast to God. He is your protector).
- 8 A single āyah can unlock the context of a whole sūrah, as in Q10:104 (Say, O Muḥammad: ‘O people, if you are in doubt as to my religion, then I do not worship those which you worship besides God, but I worship God who causes your death. I have been commanded to be of the believers’), which semantically explains Q109 (Say: ‘O disbelievers, I do not worship what you worship, nor are you worshippers of what I worship, nor will I be a worshipper of what you worship, nor will you be worshippers of what I worship. Your religion is for you, and my religion is for me).

1.2.2 The customary practice of Muḥammad (al-sunnah) and his tradition (al-ḥadīth)

This is referred to as the Prophet’s exegesis (tafsīr al-nabi) and includes the actions and tradition of Muḥammad. According to Q59:7, the Prophet’s interpretation became the cornerstone of mainstream exegesis: (wamā ātākum al-rasūlu fakhdhūhu wamā nahākum ^ʿanhu fantahū – Whatever the Messenger has given to you – take it, and what he has forbidden you, refrain from). Moḥammad’s interpretation, however, was brief, not comprehensive, based on intertextuality, and orally transmitted to his companions. The sunnah and tradition illuminate what is not explained in the Qur’ān, as in the rituals of pilgrimage (manāsik al-ḥajj), the zakāt, and the beginning of fasting a day. The ḥadīth (ṣallū kamā ra^ʿaitumūnī uṣallī – Pray as you have seen me pray) explains how the five daily prayers should be performed. An interesting example of how the actions and sayings of Muḥammad laid down the foundation of mainstream exegesis was the incident of Ṭāwūs b. Kaisān al-Yamānī (d. 106/724) who used to read two units of prayer (rak^ʿatān) after the afternoon (^ʿaṣr) prayer. Ṭāwūs was advised by Ibn ^ʿAbbās not to do so as this was not the practice of Muḥammad. This incident explains the fact that the Qur’ān does not stipulate certain matters and that it is the sunnah which provides an answer to what is not specifically said by the Qur’ān. Among the exegetical techniques of the Prophet’s exegesis are:

- (a) Explaining a general meaning, as in (wa^ʿaqimū al-ṣalāta wa^ʿātū al-zakāta warka^ʿū ma^ʿa al-rāki^ʿīn – Establish prayer and give zakāt and bow with those who bow in worship and obedience, Q2:42) which is too general and is made

more specific in terms of the form and manner of the five daily prayers, the amount of zakāt, and the rites of pilgrimage by Muḥammad's sunnah and tradition.

- (b) Explaining a semantic ambiguity, as in (wakulū washrabu ḥattā yatabaiyana lakum al-khaiṭu al-abyaḍu min al-khaiṭi al-aswadi min al-fajri – Eat and drink until the white thread of dawn becomes distinct to you from the black thread of night, Q2:187), where the expressions (al-khaiṭu al-abyaḍu – the white thread) and (al-khaiṭu al-aswadi – the black thread) constitute a semantic ambiguity. Thus, when ʿUdai b. Ḥātim asked Muḥammad about the meanings of these expressions, Muḥammad explained: (huwa sawādu al-laili wabayāḍu al-nahāri – It means the darkness of the night and the whiteness of the day).

Similarly, the expression (al-kawthar) in (innā aʿṭaināka al-kawthar – Indeed, We [God] have granted you [O Muḥammad] al-Kawthar, Q108:1) represents a semantic ambiguity which was explained by Muḥammad as: (A river in paradise which God gave him, and that he [Muḥammad] saw it when he made the ascension to the heavens (al-isrāʾ), and that he asked Gabriel about it and he told him: 'It was the river of kawthar').

- (c) Making a generic meaning more specific, as in (alladhīna āmanu walam yalbisū imānahum biẓulmin – They who believe and do not mix their belief with injustice, Q6:82), where the expression (ẓulm) which literally means (injustice) is made more specific by Muḥammad through a Qurʾanic intertextual reference to Q31:13 (yā bunaiyah lā tushrik billāhi, inna al-shirka laẓulmun ʿaẓimun – O my son, do not associate anything with Allāh. Indeed, association with Him is great injustice.) Thus, the word (ẓulm) in Q6:82 specifically means (al-shirk – polytheism). Muḥammad also explained to his companions the general meaning of the expression (mafātiḥu al-ghaib – the keys of the unseen) in Q6:59 (waʿindahū mafātiḥu al-ghaibi lā yaʿlamuhā illā hū – With Him are the keys of the unseen; none knows them except Him, Q6:59) and said: (mafātiḥu al-ghaibi khams – the keys of the unseen are five) and then he makes a Qurʾanic intertextual reference to: (inna allāha ʿindahū ʿilmu al-sāʿati wayunazzilu al-ghaitha wayaʿlamu mā fī al-arḥāmi wamā tadrī nafsun mādhā taksibu ghadan wamā tadrī nafsun biʾaiyi arḍin tamūt inna allāha ʿalimun khabīr – Indeed, God alone has knowledge of the hour and sends down the rain and knows what is in the wombs. No soul perceives what it will earn tomorrow, and no soul perceives in what land it will die. Indeed, God is Knowing and Acquainted, Q31:34).
- (d) Making the unrestricted meaning more restricted, as in Q4:11–12 which involves an Islamic legal ruling. Muḥammad's exegesis provides a restricted meaning to the unrestricted expression (min baʿdi waṣiyyatin – after any bequest he may have made) as: (al-thuluth – the third).

Muḥammad also provided exegetical views through lexical paraphrase and synonymy for some Qurʾanic expressions. However, Muḥammad's lexical

paraphrase is marked by brevity which was sufficient then to his companions, as in the following examples:

- 1 (al-sāriqu wal-sāriqatu faqtu[°]ū aidiyahumā – As for the male and female thief, amputate their hands, Q5:38). However, the word (yadd – hand) has an unrestricted meaning, i.e. it does not specify which one. Thus, the companions were told that (yadd) in Q5:38 meant: (al-yumnā – the right hand).
- 2 (wa'a'iddū lahum ma istaṭa[°]tum min quwwatin – Prepare against them whatever you are able of power, Q8:60). The companions were informed about the meaning of the expression (quwwatin) as: (al-rami – the firing of arrows in the battlefield).
- 3 (wa'adhānun min allāhi warasūlihī ila al-nāsi yawma al-ḥajji al-akbar – It is an announcement from God and His messenger to the people on the day of the greater pilgrimage, Q9:3). Muḥammad explained the meaning of (al-ḥajj al-akbar – the greater pilgrimage) as: (yawm al-naḥr – the day of immolation), which is on the tenth of dhū al-ḥijjah during which pilgrimage takes place.
- 4 (fa'anẓala allāhu sakīnatahū 'alā rasūlihī wa'ala al-mu'minīna wa'alzamaḥum kalimata al-taqwā – God sent down His tranquillity upon His messenger and upon the believers and imposed upon them the word of righteousness, Q48:26). The companions were told about the meaning of (al-taqwā) as: (lā ilāha illā allāh – There is no deity but God.)
- 5 (lahum fihā azwājūn muṭahharatun – They will have therein purified spouses, Q2:25). Muḥammad explained to his companions the meaning of (muṭahharatun) as: (muṭahharatun min al-ḥaiḍ wal-buzāq wal-nukhāmah – purified from menstruation, saliva, and mucus.)
- 6 ('asā an yab'athaka rabbuka maqāman maḥmūdān – So that your Lord may raise you to a highly praised status, Q17:79). According to Muḥammad's exegesis, the meaning of the expression (maqāman maḥmūdān – a highly praised status) is: (al-shafā'ah – intercession).
- 7 (ghair al-maghḍūbi 'alaihim walā al-ẓāllīn) is explained as: (alyahūd wal-naṣārā – the Jews and the Christians).
- 8 (kamā anzalnā 'alā al-muqtasimīn – Just as We [God] had revealed Scriptures to the separators, Q15:90), where the expression (al-muqtasimīn) is explained by Muḥammad as: (alyahūd wal-naṣārā – the Jews and the Christians).
- 9 (alladhīna ja'alu al-qur'āna 'iḍīn – Who have made the Qur'ān into portions, Q15:91), where the expression ('iḍīn) is interpreted by Muḥammad as: (āmanū biba'ḍ wakafarū biba'ḍ – They believed in some [of the Qur'ān] and disbelieved in some [of it]).
- 10 (hal jazā'u al-iḥsāni illa al-iḥsān – Is the reward for good anything but good?, Q55:60), where the whole āyah is meant according the Muhammad's exegesis as: (hal jazā'u man an'amtu 'alaihi bil-tawḥīd illa al-jannah – Is the reward for whoever I have bestowed monotheism upon him/her but paradise?)
- 11 (wakadhālika ja'alnākum ummatan wasaṭan – Thus, We [God] have made you a just nation, Q2:143), where the expression (wasaṭan) is explained by Muḥammad as: (al-'adlu – justice).

- 12 (fa'amma alladhīna āmanū wa'amilu al-ṣāliḥāti fayuwaffihim ujūrahum wayziduhum min faḍlih – As for those who believed and did righteous deeds, He will give them in full their rewards and grant them extra from His bounty, Q4:173), where the expression (ujūrahum – their rewards) is interpreted by Muḥammad as: (adkhalahum al-jannah – He [God] allowed them to enter paradise) and (wayziduhum min faḍlih – grant them extra from His bounty) as: (al-shafā'ah fiman wajabat lahū al-nār mimman ṣana'a ilaihim al-ma'rūfa fī dunyāhum – The intercession [by those who believed and did righteous deeds] for the person who was granted the fire and was kind to them during their lifetime).
- 13 (latarkabanna ṭabaqan 'an ṭabaqin – You will surely experience state after state, Q84:19) is given the exegetical meaning by Muḥammad as: (ḥālan ba'da ḥālin – state or situation after another).
- 14 (man istaṭā'a ilaihi sabīlā – whoever is able to find thereto, Q3:97) is explained by Muḥammad as: (man wajada zādan warāḥilatan – whoever has got food and a means of transport).

The interpretation of the Qur'ān through tradition (ḥadīth) includes the following examples:

- 1 (yuthabbitu allāhu alladhīna āmanū bil-qawli al-thābiti fī al-ḥayāti al-dunyā wafī al-ākhirati – God keeps firm those who believe, with the firm word, in worldly life and in the hereafter, Q14:27), which involves a semantic ambiguity and is made clear through the ḥadīth: (al-muslimu idhā su'ila fī al-qabri yashhadu an lā ilāha illa allāhu wa'anna muḥammadan rasūlu allāhi – The Muslim, when asked in his/her grave, he/she answers: 'there is no god but Allāh and that Muḥammad is His messenger) (Muslim 1994, ḥadīth no. 2871).
- 2 (ḥurrimat 'alaikum al-maitatu – The dead animals are prohibited to you, Q5:3), where the expression (al-maitatu – the dead [animals]) designates a generic meaning which has become more specific through the tradition: (huwa al-ṭāhūru mā'uḥu al-ḥillu maitatuhu – It [the sea] is that whose water is clean and whose dead [fish] is allowed to be eaten).
- 3 (inna al-ṣalāta kānat 'alā al-mu'minīna kitāban mawqūtan – Indeed, prayer has been decreed upon the believers a decree of specified times, Q4:103) and (khudh min amwālihim ṣadaqatan tuṭahhiruhum watuzakkīhim bihā – Take from their wealth a charity by which you purify them and cause them increase) whose general meanings are explained by the ḥadīths: (buniya al-islāmu 'alā khamsin . . . al-ṣalātu . . . wa'itā' al-zakāt – Islam is based on five pillars . . . the five daily prayers . . . and the payment of charity (zakāt)), and (ṣallū kamā ra'aitumūni uṣallī – Pray as you have seen me pray).
- 4 (al-sāriqu wal-sāriqatu faṭṭu'ū aidiyahumā – As for the male and female thief, amputate their hands, Q5:38), where neither the value nor the quantity of the stolen thing nor how the amputation should be carried out are specified. However, we are given more details about this jurisprudential problem

through prophetic tradition: (lā tuqṭa° al-yadu illā fi rub°i dinārin faṣā°idan – The thief’s hand should not be amputated unless he/she steals the value of a quarter of a Dinar or more).

- 5 (yūṣikum allāhu fi awlādikum – God instructs you concerning your children [with regards to their portions of inheritance], Q4:11), which is generally understood as meaning ‘each father can be inherited’. However, this āyah is specifically interpreted by the ḥadīth: (naḥnu ma°āshira al-anbiyā° lā nūrath. mā taraknāhu ṣadaqah – We, Prophets, are not inherited. Whatever we leave [after our death] should be given [to the poor] as charity).
- 6 (walā tattakhidhū āyāt allāhi huzuwan – Do not take the verses of God in jest, Q2:231), which is explained by the ḥadīths: (thalāth jaddahunna jaddun wahazalahunna jaddun al-nikāḥ wal-ṭalaq wal-raḥ°ah – There are three matters if you take them seriously, they are taken seriously, and if you take them in jest, they are still taken seriously. These are marriage, divorce, and change of mind), and (man ṭallaqa aw a°taqa aw nakaḥa aw ankaḥa jaddan aw la°iban faqad jāza °alaihi – Whoever divorces, sets a slave free, gets married, allows someone to get married, whether seriously or in jest, his/her action will be legally binding).
- 7 (wa°in kāna dhū °usratin fanaḥiratun ilā maisaratīn wa°an taṣaddaqū khairun lakum in kuntum ta°lamūn – If someone is in hardship, then let there be postponement until a time of ease. But if you give from your right as charity, then it is better for you, if you only knew, Q2:280), which is interpreted through the anecdote ḥadīth: (kāna tājirun yudāyinu al-nāsa fa°idhā ra°ā mu°siran qāla lifityānihi tajāwazū °anhu la°alla allāh an yatajāwaza °annā fatajāwaza allāhu °anhu – There was a businessman who used to lend money to people. When he found out about a man with financial hardship, he used to tell his children: ‘Forgive him, i.e. write off his debt, so that God may forgive us.’ Then, God forgave him [the businessman]).
- 8 (inna alladhina yashtarūna bi°ahdi allāhi wa°aimānihim thamanan qalīlan ulā°ika lā khalāqa lahum fi al-ākhirati walā yukallimuhum allāhu walā yanẓuru ilaihim yawma al-qiyāmati walā yuzakkihim walahum °adhābun alīmun – Indeed, those who exchange the covenant of God and their own oaths for a small price will have no share in the hereafter, and God will not speak to them or look at them on the day of resurrection, nor will He purify them; and they will have a painful punishment, Q3:77), which is explained by the ḥadīth: (man iqtata°a māla imri°in muslimin bighairi ḥaqqin laqiya allāha wahuwa °alaihi ghaḍbān – Whoever takes a portion of a Muslim’s wealth unjustly, he/she will meet God angry with him/her).
- 9 (innā ansha°nāhunna inshā°an faja°alnāhunna abkāran °uruban atrāban – Indeed, We [God] have produced the women of paradise in a new creation, and made them virgins, devoted to their husbands and of equal age, Q56:35–37) which is explained by the ḥadīth: (hunna allawāti qubidna fi al-dunyā °ajā°iz shamṭan, khalāqahunna allāhu ba°da al-kibari faja°alahunna °udhārā – They are the ladies who died at a very old age but God will recreate them after this old age and make them young and virgin).

- 10 (inna al-ḥasanāti yudhhibna al-saiyi'āti – Indeed, good deeds do away with misdeeds, Q11:114) which is explained by the ḥadīth: (al-ṣalawātu al-khams yaghfirna mā kāna bainahunna – The five daily prayers can repent for you whatever misdeeds you have done within them).
- 11 (wa'adbāra al-sujūdi – and after prostration [i.e. prayer], Q50:40) is explained by the ḥadīth: (yā ibn 'abbās ruk'atān ba'da al-maghrib adbāra al-sujūdi – O Ibn 'Abbās, a two-unit prayer after the sunset prayer means after prostration).
- 12 (inna allāha ya'murukum an tu'addu al-amānāti ilā ahlihā – Indeed, God commands you to render trusts to whom they are due, Q4:58) is explained by the ḥadīth: (addi al-amānata ilā man i'tamanaka walā takhun man khānaka – Give back the object of trust given to you to the person who entrusted you with it and do not betray whoever betrays you).
- 13 (idh qāla allāhu yā 'īsā innī mutawaffika – Mention when God said: 'O Jesus, indeed, I will take you', Q3:55) is explained by the ḥadīth: (inna 'īsā lam yamut wa'innahū rāji'un ilaikum qabla yawm al-qiyāmah – Indeed, Jesus did not pass away. He will come back to you before the day of judgement).
- 14 (walaqad ātaināka sab'an min al-mathānī wal-qur'ān al-ʿaẓīm – We [God] have certainly given you, [O Muḥammad], seven of the often repeated verses and the great Qur'ān, Q15:87) is explained by the ḥadīth: (hiya al-sab'u al-mathānī wal-qur'ān al-ʿaẓīm – It [i.e. Q1] is the seven of the often repeated verses and the great Qur'ān).
- 15 (lā yukallifu allāhu nafsān illā wus'ahā – God does not charge a soul except with that within its capacity, Q2:286), which is explained by the ḥadīths: (idhā amartakum bi-amrin fa'tū minhu mastatātum – When I order you to perform something, you can perform only what you are able to), (khudū min al-a'māli mā tuṭīqūn – Perform such deeds which you are capable of), and (ṣalli qā'iman fa'in lam tastaṭī' faqā'idan fa'in lam tastaṭī' fa'alā janb – Perform your obligatory prayer standing up; if you are unable to do so, then perform it sitting, and if you are unable to do so, then perform it while lying on your side).

Prophetic tradition can also explain Islamic legal rulings which are not mentioned in the Qur'ān, as in:

- 1 (la'ana allāhu al-wāshimāt wal-mustawshimāt – God has cursed the tattoo marker and the tattooed woman), where the practice of tattoo marking is not mentioned in the Qur'ān nor the curse of God on people who mark their bodies with tattoos.
- 2 (lā yarithu al-qātilu shai'an – The murderer does not inherit anything), where the Qur'ān does not make any reference to the inheritance of a murderer.
- 3 (walā taj'alu allāha 'urḍatan li'aimānikum an tabarrū watattaqū watuṣliḥū baina al-nāsi – Do not make your oath by God an excuse against being righteous and fearing God and making peace among people, Q2:224) and

(lā yu'ākhidhkum allāhu bil-laghwi fī aimānikum – God does not impose blame upon you for what is unintentional in your oaths, Q2:225), where there is no reference in the Qur'ān about perjury. However, the tradition explains this jurisprudential matter: (man ḥalafa 'alā yamīn fārā'ā ghairahā khairan minhā falya'ti alladhī huwa khair waliyukaffir 'an yamīnih – Whoever takes oath for something but he/she later on finds out that there is something else better, he/she should carry on with the thing that is better and pay an atonement).

- 4 For more details on the features of the Prophet's phase of Qur'anic exegesis, see Abdul-Raof (2010, Ch. 5, Sect. 5.2.1.1.2).

1.2.3 The companions' views

The companions provided invaluable service to the evolution and development of Qur'anic exegesis and their exegetical views dominated the various works of classical and modern exegesis. They witnessed the circumstances of revelation and were highly knowledgeable of jurisprudential, linguistic, and semantic problems. However, their knowledge of Qur'anic exegesis varied from one companion to another for various reasons such as the volume of contact with Muḥammad, one's own general knowledge about the Qur'ān and the linguistic knowledge of the different dialects of different Arab tribes. Among the most knowledgeable companion exegetes were 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib (d. 40/660), Ibn 'Abbās (d. 68/687), Ubai b. Ka'b (d. 20/640), and 'Abd Allāh b. Mas'ūd (d. 32/652). After the death of Muḥammad, some companions laid down the foundation of the discipline of Qur'anic exegesis and as a result three major schools of exegesis began to evolve. These were:

- (1) the school of Makkah led by Ibn 'Abbās;
- (2) the school of Madīnah led by Ubai b. Ka'b;
- (3) the school of Kūfah led by Ibn Mas'ūd.

Another school contemporary to these three was also founded during the first/seventh century. However, it was not led by a companion but by an early successor. Thus, we have:

- (4) the school of Baṣrah led by a renowned pious preacher known as al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110/728).

With regards to the level of authenticity of a companion's exegetical view, a companion's opinion can be either of a marfū' status or a mawqūf status:

- (a) marfū' status: This means attributed to Muhammad's tradition and customary practice and thus the views of a companion are considered as conclusive evidence (ḥujjah). The prerequisites of a marfū' status exegetical view are

that: (i) the companion's personal opinion was attributed to and based on Muḥammad's tradition and customary practice which the companion was part of, (ii) he witnessed a revelation, (iii) he was aware of the circumstance of revelation, (iv) he witnessed a historical event such as a battle, and (v) he was known for being not influenced by Judeo-Christian anecdotes.

- (b) *mawqūf* status: This means that a companion's exegetical views are his own and are not attributed to Muḥammad's tradition and customary practice. Therefore, his personal opinion exegesis is considered as inconclusive evidence (*ghair ḥujjah*). The prerequisites of a *mawqūf* status exegetical view are that: (i) the companion's personal opinion was influenced by Jewish and Christian anecdotes, (ii) his narration was not based on tradition and the standard practice of the Prophet, (iii) he was not aware of circumstances of revelation, (iv) he did not take part in historical events such as battles, and (v) his views were about something that took place after the death of Muḥammad.

Companion exegetical views were characterized by brevity, word-for-word, paraphrase, or a word for a portion of a given āyah, as illustrated by the following examples: (*wakafā billāhi wakīlā* – Sufficient is God as disposer of all affairs, Q4:132) means (*rabban* – a Lord), (*in yasha' yudhhibkum* – If He [God] wills, He can do away with you, Q4:133) means (*yuhlikakum* – destroy you), (*in shakartum* – if you are grateful, Q4:147) means (*in waḥḥadtum fi al-sirr* – if you practise monotheism in private) (Ibn ʿAbbās 2005, p. 108, and p. 110), (*talfaḥu wujūhahum al-nāru* – The fire will sear their faces, Q23:104) means (*taḍrib wujūhahum wataḥriq ʿiẓāmahum wataʿkul luḥūmahum al-nāru* – the fire strikes their faces, burns their bones, and eats up their flesh) (Ibn ʿAbbās 2005, p. 366), (*muḥḍarūn* – will be brought into the punishment to remain, Q34:38) means (*muʿadhdhabūn* – are being tortured), (*lā yamliku* – does not possess, Q34:42) means (*lā yaqdiru* – is not able) (Ibn ʿAbbās 2005, p. 456).

During the formative phase of the evolution of Qurʾanic exegesis, Qurʾanic intertextuality has also been related to: (i) polysemy, (ii) the modes of reading, and (iii) the theological *mutashābihāt*² expressions which are known as God's names and attributes (*asmāʾ waṣifāt allāh*). These three matters are discussed below:

- (i) The semantic notion of polysemy is a feature of Qurʾanic discourse, as in (*al-ṣalāt*) which can either mean (*al-duʿāʾ* – supplication, invocation) as in (*waṣalli ʿalaihim inna ṣalātaka sakanun lahum* – Invoke God's blessings upon them. Indeed, your invocations are reassurance for them, Q9:103), or (*al-ṣalāt al-mafrūḍah* – the prescribed daily prayers) as in (*inna al-ṣalāta kānat ʿala al-muʾminīna kitāban mawqūtan* – Indeed, prayer has been decreed upon the believers a decree of specified times, Q4:103). Muḥammad was not asked by the companions with regards to the whole meaning of the Qurʾān. For this reason, we encounter divergent exegetical views among the companions, as in the following examples:

- (1) (al-qur') in: (wal-muṭallaqātu yatarabbaṣna bi-anfusihinna thalāthata qurū'in – Divorced women remain in waiting and do not remarry for three periods, Q2:228). For ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, ʿAli b. Abī Ṭālib, Ibn ʿAbbās, Ubai b. Ka'b, ʿAbd Allāh b. Masʿūd, and Abu Mūsā al-Ashʿari, the expression (al-qur') means (al-ḥaiḍ – menstruation). However, for ʿĀ'ishah, Zaid b. Thābit, Muʿāwiyah b. Abī Sufyān, and ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿUmar, the expression (al-qur') means (al-ṭuhr – cleanliness).
 - (2) (ʿasʿasa) in: (wal-laili idhā ʿasʿasa – By the night as it closes in, Q81:17). The companions and their successor students also had different exegetical views about the meaning of this word. For ʿAli b. Abī Ṭālib, Ibn ʿAbbās, al-Ḍaḥḥāk, Qatādah, and Ibn Zaid, the expression (ʿasʿasa) means (adbara – to go away, retreat), while for Mujāhid and al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, it means (aqbala – to come, arrive).
 - (3) (al-hīm) in: (fashāribūna shurba al-hīm – And they will drink as the drinking of thirsty camels, Q56:55). For Ibn ʿAbbās and for successor exegetes like Mujāhid, al-Ḍaḥḥāk, Qatādah, and ʿIkramah, the word (al-hīm) means (al-ibl al-ʿiṭāsh – the very thirsty camels), while for Sufyān al-Thawrī, it means (al-raml – sand).
- (ii) During the formative phase of the evolution of Qur'anic exegesis, the Madīnah and the Kūfah schools of Qur'anic exegesis were interested in the modes of reading (al-qirā'āt) as an exegetical technique in the interpretation of the Qur'ān (al-qirā'ah al-tafsīriyyah or al-qirā'ah ʿala al-tafsīr). However, Ubai b. Ka'b of the Madīnah school employed a different approach to the modes of reading which was primarily based on articulatory phonetics of Qur'anic words and how they could be read with either different case endings (al-ḥarakāt) or with doubling of consonants without resulting in a change of meaning. For instance, the Madīnah scholars read: (waqur'ānan faraqnāhu – It is a Qur'ān which We [God] have revealed in parts, Q17:106) as: (waqur'ānan farraqnāhu), where the consonant letter /r/ is doubled. They also read: (fī ʿamadin mumaddadah – in towering columns, Q104:9) as: (fī ʿumudin mumaddadah), where the short vowel /a/ (fathā), i.e. the vowel /a/ in (ʿamadin) is replaced by the short vowel /u/ (ḍammah) represented by the nominative case, which is the vowel /u/ in (ʿumudin). Thus, the Madīnah school's approach to modes of reading was phonetically based.
- As for Ibn Masʿūd of the Kūfah school, he used to employ a mode of reading that is meant to paraphrase a given expression or replace a phrase for another phrase in an attempt to disambiguate the meaning. For instance, the āyah: (wa'idh akhadha allāhu mīthāqa al-nabiyyīna lamā ātāitukum min kitābin waḥikmatin – When God took the covenant of the Prophets saying: 'Whatever I give you of the Scripture and wisdom', Q3:81) is read differently by Ibn Masʿūd: (wa'idh akhadha allāhu mīthāqa {alladhīna ūtū al-kitāba} lamā ātāitukum min kitābin waḥikmatin – When God took the covenant of {those who were given the Book} saying: 'Whatever I give you of the

Scripture and wisdom'), where the phrase (al-nabiyyīna) is explained, i.e. replaced by the phrase {alladhīna ūtū al-kitāba – those who were given the Book}. Also, in (faṣiyāmu thalāthati aiyāmin – to fast for three days, Q5:89), we find that this āyah was read as (faṣiyāmu thalāthati aiyāmin {mutatābi'āt} – to fast for three {consecutive} days) by Ibn Mas'ūd, where the word (mutatābi'āt – consecutively) is added to provide exegetical details. Similarly, in (wal-sāriqu wal-sāriqatu faṭṭa'ū aidiyahumā – the thief, male and female, amputate their hands, Q5:38) involves a jurisprudential problem as to which hand to be cut off, is it the right or the left? Ibn Mas'ūd solved this problem by his exegetical mode of reading: (wal-sāriqūna wal-sāriqātu faṭṭa'ū aimānahum – The thief, male and female, amputate their right hands). It is also worthwhile to note that the Kūfah school developed another exegetical technique in exegesis through the modes of reading which was based on lexical substitution, as in (faḡad ṣaḡhat qulūbukumā – your hearts have deviated, Q66:4). This āyah was read by Ibn Mas'ūd as (faḡad zāḡhat qulūbukumā – your hearts have deviated), where the word (ṣaḡhat – to lean towards [to listen to] falsehood) was replaced by the word (zāḡhat – to deviate). Thus, the Kūfah school's approach to modes of reading in Qur'anic exegesis was semantically oriented and based on paraphrase and lexical substitution. For more details on the modes of reading, see [Chapter 3](#), Section 3.6 of this work.

- (iii) During the formative phase of the evolution of Qur'anic exegesis, the Madīnah school of Qur'anic exegesis was considered as a school of personal opinion (madrāsāt ra'i). However, the expression (ra'i) was not 'hypothetical' or 'rational' in the sense that it was counter to Qur'anic intertextuality and the prophetic tradition. Rather, it was limited to jurisprudential matters such as the lawful and the prohibited. Most importantly, the personal opinion approach of the Madīnah school neither dealt with the exegetical analysis of the theological problem of the names and attributes of God (asmā' waṣifāt allāh), nor did it deal with the exegetical analysis of theological mutashābihāt expressions. The Makkah school, however, exercised both exegetical approaches: personal opinion (ijtihād) and discovery of meaning (istinbāṭ). It demonstrated interest in the exegetical analysis of the names and attributes of God and in theological mutashābihāt expressions such as the time of the hour (qiyām al-sā'ah), the meanings of cryptic letters, the notion of istiḡwā' (God established Himself above the throne, Q7:54; Q10:3; Q13:2), the attributes of (hand – yadd, Q48:10) and (coming – maji', Q89:22). This was a serious turning point in Qur'anic exegesis and marked the beginning of the hypothetical opinion exegesis. However, Ibn 'Abbās and his students, such as Mujāhid, were not against the dogmatic position of the mainstream Qur'anic exegesis. Rather, they were in line with the mainstream theological position shared by the schools of Madīnah, Kūfah, and Baṣrah, namely: (i) the theological notion of the names and attributes of God remain to be firmly believed in without questioning its underlying semantic contents, and (ii) the theological mutashābihāt expressions were real and not allegorical.

1.2.4 The early successors' views

Early successor exegetes are the students of the companions and, therefore, the level of authenticity of their exegetical views was categorized as *maqṭūʿ*, meaning 'cut off, terminated', i.e. not directly linked to Muḥammad and his customary practice. In other words, the successor's exegetical views were recycled views and second-hand narration, i.e. entirely based on the companions' views. Thus, there was a missing link between Muḥammad and the successors and the gap in narration was filled by the companions. The following were among the early successors who were the students of companion exegetes:

- (a) Mujāhid b. Jabr (d. 104/722), Saʿīd b. Jubair (d. 95/713), ʿIkramah al-Barbari (d. 105/723), ʿAṭāʾ b. Abī Rabāḥ (d. 114/732), and Ṭāwūs b. Kaisān al-Yamāni (d. 106/724) were the students of Ibn ʿAbbās of the Makkah school.
- (b) Abu al-ʿĀliyah (d. 93/711), al-Quraḏi (d. 118/736), Zaid b. Aslam al-ʿAdawi (d. 136/753), and ʿUrwah b. al-Zubair (d. 93/711) were the students of Ubai b. Kaʿb.
- (c) ʿAlqamah b. Qais (d. 61/680), Masrūq b. al-Ajdaʿ (d. 63/682), ʿAmir al-Shaʿbi (d. 109/727), ʿAbidah b. ʿAmru al-Salmāni (d. 72/691), al-Aswad b. Yazīd al-Nakhʿi (d. 74/693) were the students of Ibn Masʿūd of the Madīnah school.
- (d) al-Ḥasan al-Baṣri (d. 110/728) was the student of Anas b. Mālik (d. 91/709) and was also influenced by ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb (d. 23/644) and in particular by the Madīnah school of exegesis. Qatādah al-Sadūsī (d. 117/735) was the student of al-Ḥasan al-Baṣri of the Baṣrah school.

Examples of successors' Qur'anic exegesis:

- 1 Mujāhid b. Jabr (d. 104/722), Ibn ʿAbbās' student: (walākin kūnū rabbāniyyīna – but instead be pious worshippers of the Lord, Q3:79), which is explained as (kūnū fuqahāʾ ʿulamāʾ ḥukamāʾ – be jurists, scholars, and wise men); (taʾmurūna bil-maʿrūfi watanhawna ʿan al-munkari – You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong, Q3:110), where the expressions (bil-maʿrūfi) and (al-munkari) are explained as (al-tawḥīd – monotheism) and (al-shirk – polytheism) respectively (Mujāhid 2005, p. 40).
- 2 al-Ḥasan al-Baṣri (d. 110/728), the founder of the school of Baṣrah: (aknantum fī anfusakum – what you conceal within yourselves, Q2:235) means (asrartum – what you keep in private) (1992, 1, p. 173); (mā qadaru allāha ḥaqqā qadrih – They did not appraise God with true appraisal, Q6:91) means (mā ʿazzamu allāha ḥaqqā ʿazamatih – They did not glorify God with true glorification) (al-Ḥasan al-Baṣri 1992, 1, p. 358).
- 3 al-Daḥḥāk b. Muzahim al-Balkhi (20–105/640–723) was from Khrāsān and did not study with any of the companion exegetes as he resided in Balakh, his birthplace city. Although he did not meet Ibn ʿAbbās, al-Daḥḥāk mentioned narrations from Ibn ʿAbbās through Saʿīd b. Jubair (d. 95/713),

Ibn ʿAbbās's student. al-Daḥḥāk also narrates from Ibn ʿUmar: (waʿtaṣimū biḥabli allāhi jamīʿan – Hold firmly to the rope of God, Q3:103), where the phrase (ḥabli allāhi) means (al-qurʾān – the Qurʾān) (al-Daḥḥāk 1999, 1, p. 255); (min kulli shaiʿin mawzūn – something of every well-balanced thing, Q15:19), where the word (mawzūn) means (maʿlūm – known) (ibid., 1, p. 505); (innā lamūsiʿūn – We are expanders (of the heaven), Q51:47), which means (innā aghniyāʾ – We are wealthy) (ibid., 2, p. 794).

Early successor exegetes used to refer to circumstances of revelation but without any details, as in:

Mujāhid b. Jabr: (lā tattakhidhū biṭānatan min dūnikum – do not take as intimates those other than yourselves, Q3:118), where we are told that 'this was in connection with the hypocrites of Madīnah' (2005, p. 41), and (idh hammat ṭāʾifatāni minkum an tafshalā – When two parties among you were about to lose courage, Q3:122) that 'it was related to the tribes of Banū Ḥārithah, Banū Salimah with regards to the Battle of Uḥud' (ibid.).

However, late successors like Muqātil b. Sulaimān (d. 150/767) provided some details about the circumstances of revelation, as in: (ittaqu allāha ḥaqqā tuqātihi – Fear God as He should be feared, Q3:102), where we are informed that this was abrogated by (fattaqu allāha ma istaṭaʿtum – Fear God as much as you are able, Q64:16) and that both were related to the story of the fighting that was about to take place between the tribe of al-Aws (al-anṣār – the helpers of Muḥammad) and the tribe of al-Khazraj (al-muhājirūn – the emigrants) in Madīnah and how Muḥammad successfully managed to reconcile these two tribes (Muqātil 2003, 1, p. 184).

1.3 Position towards non-mainstream exegesis

Mainstream exegetes reject non-mainstream exegesis for the following reasons:

- (i) Non-mainstream exegetes have minimized the role of ḥadīth in their commentaries.
- (ii) Non-mainstream exegetes employ ḥadīths which, for mainstream scholars, are fabricated or weak, in order to justify a political or theological point of view or a sectarian position.
- (iii) Non-mainstream exegetes use personal opinion which, for mainstream scholars, is considered as subjective, and hypothetical views that are not substantiated by the Qurʾān, ḥadīth, or companion views.
- (iv) Non-mainstream exegetes employ fabricated exegetical views falsely ascribed to iconic companions or successors to substantiate a dogmatic or sectarian point of view.
- (v) Some of the non-mainstream exegetes are anthropomorphic (mushabbihūn) and others advance dogmatic beliefs that are counter to the Qurʾān and the

prophetic standard practice (sunnah), such as the notion of the creation of the Qur'ān, not seeing God in paradise, and that God has not any attributes except that of eternity.

- (vi) Non-mainstream exegetes rely heavily on esoteric (allegorical) meaning of Qur'anic expressions.
- (vii) Non-mainstream exegetes have taken Qur'anic exegesis as political and theological platforms for their dogmas.

2 School of rational exegesis (al-tafsīr bil-raʿi)

2.1 Introduction

The present chapter investigates the rational, i.e. hypothetical or personal opinion, school of Qurʾanic exegesis, its evolution, its major approaches and sources. The present account also highlights the major schools that constitute all the non-mainstream exegetes such as the Shīʿi, the Ibāḍi, the Muʿtazili, and the Sufi. This chapter is furnished with numerous informative examples to demonstrate why al-tafsīr bil-raʿi is allegorically based. Therefore, various Muslim schools of thought will be analysed in terms of Qurʾanic exegesis and approaches to Qurʾanic discourse. The present discussion explains why mainstream exegetes are sceptical about the school of rational Qurʾanic exegesis, the criteria and characteristics of rational exegesis, and why it is objectionable (madhmūm). This chapter also provides a detailed and explicated analysis of the theological and exegetical approaches of the various schools of rational exegesis. These schools include the Shīʿi, the Shīʿi sub-sects (the Ismāʿīli, the Zaidi, and the Ḥūthi), the Ibāḍi, the Sufi, and the modern school of Qurʾanic exegesis which is sub-divided into (i) reform-based and (ii) inimitability-oriented, where the former is divided into socio-educational and socio-political, while the latter is divided into linguistic, phonetic, stylistic, and scientific which is also sub-divided into science-based and number-based.

2.2 Overview of rational Qurʾanic exegesis

Rational exegesis is referred to in Arabic as (al-tafsīr al-ʿaqli) which is claimed to be based on personal opinion and to be hypothetical. This is due to the fact that it is based on intellect (al-ʿaql) and personal knowledge or judgement (al-dirāyah). Rational exegetes consider intellect as a fundamental source of knowledge, promoting deduction (al-istinbāṭ), rejecting imitation, questioning the reliability of ḥadīth, and as an insufficient source to explain the Qurʾān. However, mainstream exegetes have been sceptical about the school of rational exegesis and have criticized it as being subjective because it is primarily based on personal judgement which is classified as ‘hypothetical’ (dalīl ḡanni). The expression (al-dirāyah) is the antonym of (al-naql – the narration from Muḥammad or his companions). Thus, the personal exegetical view lacks canonical support

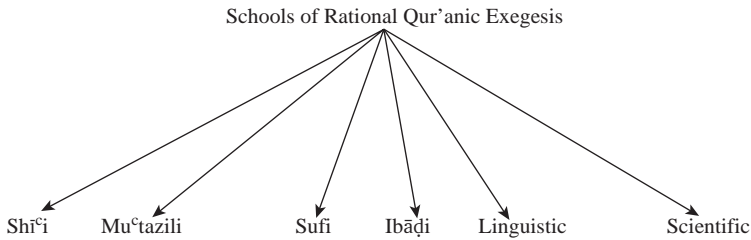


Figure 1 Major schools of rational Qur'anic exegesis.

based on Qur'anic intertextuality, ḥadīth intertextuality, and views of the companions or early successors.

For mainstream exegetes and theologians, rational theologians and exegetes are doctrinally suspect, and esoteric exegesis is heresy. Mainstream exegetes also view rational exegesis as fanciful, and a scholar who adopts this approach is nicknamed an 'interpreter of the Qur'ān' (mu'awwil) by hypothetical opinion, i.e. personal reasoning, and his tafsīr is considered wrong and counter to the Qur'ān and the sunnah (the standard practice) of Muḥammad. Mainstream scholars substantiate their objection to rational exegesis by reporting the ḥadīth on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās in which Muḥammad is believed to have said: 'The Prophet of God said: "man qāla fī al-qur'ān bira'yihī falyatabawwa' maq'adahū min al-nār – Those who explain the Qur'ān by independent reasoning will have their place prepared for them in the fire of hell"', and also on the ḥadīth narrated by Jundub b. 'Abd Allāh: 'The messenger of God said: "man takallama fī al-qur'ān bira'yihī fa'aṣāb faqad akhta' – Those who interpret the Qur'ān by independent reasoning are wrong even if they arrive at the right meaning"' (al-Mubārakfūri 1990, 8, pp. 223, 225; Ibn Ḥanbal 1993, 1, p. 420).

The rational school of Qur'anic exegesis is an umbrella under which different non-mainstream schools, i.e. approaches, to Qur'anic exegesis have evolved. This is illustrated by Figure 1.

Political and theological cleavages have emerged as a result of the above diverse approaches to the exegesis of the Qur'ān. The growing polarity between traditional and rational schools of Qur'anic exegesis has significantly contributed to the genesis of sectarian exegesis. Thus, Qur'anic exegesis has acquired a politico-religious overtone favouring esoteric shades of meaning of Qur'anic expressions or passages and adopting ḥadīths which are dubbed 'forged' or 'weak' by mainstream exegetes. An exegetical work can mirror the politico-theological orientation of a given commentator and his school of exegesis. For more details, see Abdul-Raof (2010, Ch. 1, Sect. 1.2).

2.2.1 Features of the school of rational exegesis

Rational exegesis invokes esoteric meanings (allegorical, underlying meanings) of a given Qur'anic expression or āyah and for this reason it is also referred to by mainstream exegetes as (ta'wīl – hypothetical interpretation of the Qur'ān). Esoteric

meaning is referred to in Arabic as (al-ma'nā al-bāṭin – the underlying, hidden meaning). It is, thus, the antonym of exoteric meaning (al-ma'nā al-ẓahir, or al-ḥaqīqī – the surface or real, i.e. non-allegorical meaning) which is adopted by the mainstream school of exegesis (al-tafsīr bil-ma'thūr). When rational exegesis is considered as (ta'wīl), it is also categorized as either (ta'wīl maqbūl – acceptable hypothetical interpretation of the Qur'ān) or (ta'wīl ghair sā'igh – not permissible, unacceptable hypothetical interpretation of the Qur'ān) (al-Juwaini (d. 478/1085) cf. al-ʿAkk 1986, p. 59). Thus, rational exegesis is viewed as (ta'wīl) rather than (tafsīr – exegesis). Ta'wīl, in exegetical studies, is a notion that is based on a number of criteria:

- (i) It is hinged upon hypothetical opinion (dalīl ẓanni).
- (ii) It is primarily concerned with the discovery of meaning (istinbāt) of Qur'anic expressions.
- (iii) It ignores the surface denotative meaning (al-ma'nā al-ẓāhir) of Qur'anic expressions and instead adopts an allegorical meaning (al-ma'nā al-bāṭin – underlying, esoteric, symbolic, allusion (ishāri) to something else) for a given expression or āyah.
- (iv) It provides an exegetical meaning based on probability (iḥtimāl).

For more details on the dichotomy between tafsīr and ta'wīl, see Abdul-Raof (2010, Ch. 4). Thus, rational exegesis is also referred to as (al-tafsīr bil-ra'i). The expression (ra'i) refers to (al-ʿaql) as the antonym of the expressions (ma'thūr – the prophetic tradition) or (manqūl – narrated from Muḥammad on the authority of his companions) where the latter two expressions are interrelated with Qur'anic intertextuality but most importantly with Muḥammad's customary practice that indicates his actions and sayings (al-sunnah wal-ḥadīth). Also, the expression (ra'i) is not necessarily based on Qur'anic intertextuality (tafsīr al-qur'ān bil-qur'ān), tradition intertextuality (tafsīr al-qur'ān bil-ḥadīth), or on the views of the companions and their early successor exegete students. However, our expression 'rational exegesis' does not include the exegesis of the schools of Makkah and Madinah of the formative phase (see [Chapter 1](#), Section 1.2.3, point (iii) of this work) although the exegetes of these schools adopted the exegetical approaches of personal opinion (ijtihād) and discovery of meaning (istinbāt). This is due to the fact that the expression (ra'i) meant during the first/seventh century 'personal opinion for jurisprudential matters' only rather than the controversial theological mutashābihāt expressions.

Acceptable hypothetical 'rational' interpretation of the Qur'ān (ta'wīl maqbūl) was practised by both Ibn ʿAbbās and Ibn Masʿūd of the Makkah and the Madinah schools of exegesis respectively, as well as by their successor students. However, their hypothetical 'rational' exegesis was restricted to jurisprudential matters only. It was also exercised by linguist exegetes of the formative phase. Early linguist exegetes who engaged in rational linguistic exegesis were like al-Kisā'i (d. 187/802), al-Farrā' (d. 207/822) and Abu ʿUbaidah (d. 210/825). Most importantly, acceptable rational exegesis was the

cornerstone of the Andalus school, which is today's Spain and Portugal, during the eighth/fourteenth century. The Andalus school of Qur'anic exegesis focused primarily on linguistic and jurisprudential analysis, based their exegetical views on mainstream exegesis of the Madinah and Kūfah schools of the formative phase, and rejected esoteric meanings and Judaeo-Christian anecdotes (*al-isrā'iliyyāt*).¹ (For further details on the Andalus school, see Abdul-Raof 2010, Ch. 5, Sects 5.2.2.2 and 5.2.2.2.1). Permissible hypothetical 'rational' interpretation of the Qur'ān (*ta'wil maqbūl*) has also been exercised by modern exegetes who adopt one of the literary style approaches such as the scientific approach, and the text linguistic approach which is based either on consonance (conceptual chaining and thematic links) among sūrahs and āyahs or on sūrah structure. Rational Qur'anic exegesis is characterized by the following features:

- (1) It does not object to Judeo-Christian anecdotes as an exegetical technique, mythical anecdotes that support a theological standpoint.
- (2) It is rife with ḥadīths that, for mainstream exegetes, are either fabricated or politically and theologically motivated.

However, the above two characteristics do not apply to scientific and text linguistic approaches. Rational Qur'anic exegesis may be either: (i) commendable, sound (*maḥmūd* or *mamdūḥ*), or (ii) objectionable, not permissible (*madhmūm*). According to mainstream Muslim scholars, objectionable rational exegesis includes Mu'tazili, philosophical, scientific, Sufi, Ibāḍi, and Shī'i works of exegesis. However, mainstream scholars do not reject rational exegesis which is linguistically or scientifically based. They have only rejected the rational exegesis based on Shī'i, Mu'tazili, Sufi, and Ibāḍi views and branded it as objectionable for the following reasons (Abdul-Raof 2010, pp. 10–11):

- (i) Non-mainstream exegetes invoke esoteric meanings (allegorical, underlying meanings) of Qur'anic words. This approach to Qur'anic exegesis is not adopted by Muḥammad and his companions.
- (ii) They have made Qur'anic commentary a political and theological platform to advance their own dogmas.
- (iii) They are anthropomorphic.
- (iv) They minimize the role of ḥadīth in their commentaries.
- (v) They include forged ḥadīths and ascribe them to authoritative companions to substantiate a political or a theological premise.
- (vi) They include fabricated exegetical views and ascribe them to iconic companion or successor exegetes to substantiate their dogmas.
- (vii) Some of the non-mainstream exegesis works are marked by polemics against the companions of Muḥammad.
- (viii) They provide dogma-based reasons for the revelation of some āyahs.
- (ix) They provide different abrogated āyahs.
- (x) They use unknown (*majhūl*) individuals in their chains of authority (*isnād*) with regards to a given ḥadīth or an exegetical view.

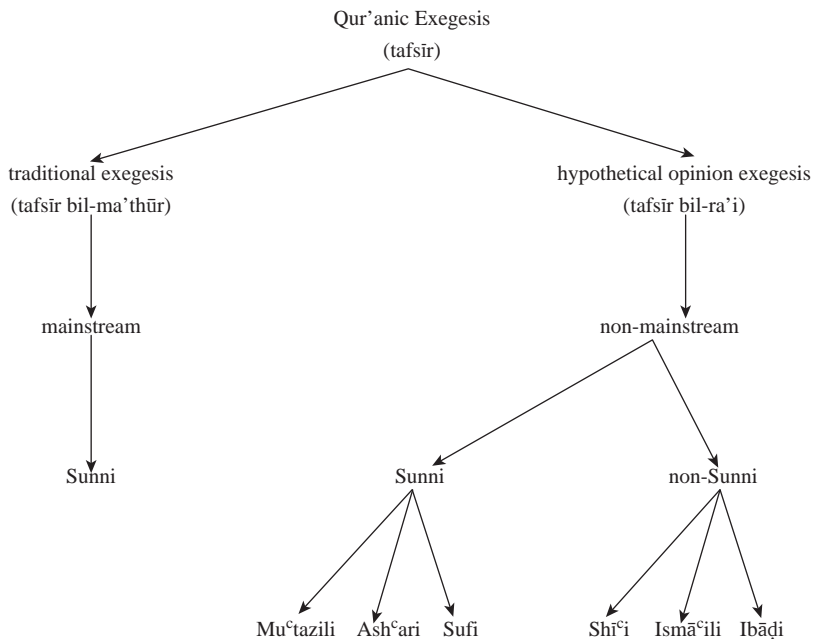


Figure 2 Mainstream and non-mainstream approaches to Qur'anic exegesis.

- (xi) They avoid exegetical elaboration on āyahs that are counter to their political or theological views.
- (xii) They are influenced by scholastic theology, and most seriously.
- (xiii) Their exegesis includes pernicious innovations (bid'ah).

Rational exegesis is the second major approach to Qur'anic exegesis and subsumes mainstream and non-mainstream exegetes. It, therefore, involves several ramifications as illustrated by [Figure 2](#).

2.3 Approaches of non-mainstream Qur'anic exegesis

Although non-mainstream exegesis is rational, it remains hypothetical and, therefore, subjective. The following is an account of the various schools of non-mainstream schools of exegesis that have emerged during the formative phase of the evolution of Qur'anic exegesis and specifically since the end of the first/seventh century.

2.3.1 School of Mu'tazili Qur'anic exegesis

Mu'tazilism appeared after Wāṣil b. ʿAṭā' (d. 131/748) (who was al-Ḥasan's student) and ʿAmru b. ʿUbaid (d. 142/759) seceded (i'tazalū) during the lifetime of

al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110/728) when these two scholars differed with al-Ḥasan regarding the notion of man's free will (al-qadar),² i.e. that the individual had a free will and is free to choose or do whatever he/she wants. The debate on rejecting Qadarism (nafi al-qadar) by Wāṣil and ʿAmru led al-Ḥasan to expel them from his study circle. The city of Baṣrah became the birthplace and the centre of Muʿtazilism. However, Baghdad became a second centre for Muʿtazilism after al-Maʾmūn (170/786–218/833), the seventh caliph of the dynasty of the Abbasids, espoused Muʿtazilism. al-Maʾmūn imposed public adherence to Muʿtazilism and especially to the doctrine of a created Qurʾān, man's free will, and not seeing God in the hereafter. This was known as al-miḥnah (inquisition) which was instituted by al-Maʾmūn in 218/833. Muʿtazilism was a scholastic approach and was the product of the influence of Greek philosophy. During the early third/ninth century, four Muʿtazili sects emerged:

- (i) al-Hudhailiyyah led by Abu Hadhīl al-ʿAllāf (d. 235/849);
- (ii) al-Bishriyyah led by Bishr b. al-Muʿtamir (d. 210/825);
- (iii) al-Jāḥiẓiyyah led by al-Jāḥiẓ (d. 255/868), and al-Nazzāmiyyah led by al-Nazzām (d. 231/845) (ʿAbd al-ʿAziz 1989, p. 15).

In the view of Schmidtke (2006, p. 108), Muʿtazilism was virtually banned from about the end of the fifth/eleventh century. Among the major Muʿtazili exegetes are al-Jaʿad b. Dirham (d. 124/741), Jahm b. Ṣafwān (d. 128/745), ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Kaisān al-Aṣamm (d. 240/854), Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb b. Salām al-Jubbāʾi (d. 303/915), Abu al-Qāsim al-Balkhi al-Kaʿbi (d. 319/931), Abu Hāshim ʿAbd al-Salām al-Jubbāʾi (d. 321/933), Abu al-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. ʿĪsā al-Rummāni (d. 384/994), al-Qāḍi ʿAbd al-Jabbār (d. 415/1024), and al-Zamakhshari (d. 538/1144) (Zaghlūl 1977, p. 185; al-Shahrastāni 1986, 1, p. 43; Netton 1997, p. 160; Bāsallūm 2005, pp. 128–131). For more details on Muʿtazili exegetical views, see al-Zamakhshari (1995), al-Jubbāʾi (2007), and al-Balkhi (2007). For a rebuttal to Muʿtazili theological views, see al-Qaṣṣāb (died around 280/893).

Among the dogmatic views of Muʿtazili theologians are:

- 1 They believe that the wicked Muslim or the grave sinner (al-fāsiq, murtakib al-kabīrah) is neither a believer nor a disbeliever, i.e. he/she is in an intermediate position (manzilah baina al-manzilatain). Thus, they have espoused rational exegetical views and expressed a non-mainstream point of view with regard to this theological problem.
- 2 They do not believe in God's physical attributes; rather, they believe in the esoteric and allegorical³ meaning of Qurʾanic expressions and especially those that refer to God's physical attributes.
- 3 They believe in monotheism as the only attribute of God and do not believe in God's old attributes such as the creator, the generous, the mighty, because these attributes are shared by human beings, while God is not similar to his creation.

- 4 They believe that the Qur'ān is created.⁴
- 5 They believe that the hell fire does not exist now, i.e. the fire has not been created yet by God but will be created just before the day of judgement.
- 6 They believe that neither the believers nor the disbelievers will see God in the hereafter.
- 7 They believe that since God is just and wise, He is far from commanding evil and that God does good deeds only.
- 8 They believe in the notion of man's free will (al-qadar), i.e. that the individual has a free will, he/she creates his/her own good and bad deeds, and therefore he/she is responsible for his/her good and bad actions, belief and disbelief, obedience and disobedience. Thus, he/she deserves respective reward and punishment.
- 9 As Mu'tazili theologians are rational and scholastic, they favour the intellect (al-*ʿaql*) over narration (al-*naql*, al-*samʿ*). As a result, they believe in the Qur'ān as the only major canon.
- 10 They believe that Abu Bakr, ʿUmar, and ʿUthmān are legitimate successors to Muḥammad, do not denounce them, and have high respect to them.
- 11 They express varying degrees of reservation with regard to ḥadīth and companions' views, and reject consensus (al-*ijmāʿ*). Some Mu'tazili scholars like Wāṣil do not accept any ḥadīth except that which enjoys multiple source (al-*mutawātir*) and the well-known (al-*mashhūr*).
- 12 They believe that angels are of a higher status than Prophets and mankind. Thus, for al-Zamakhshari (1995, 2, p. 654), Gabriel is better than Muḥammad (cf. Q17:70).
- 13 According to Mu'tazili exegetes, a Muslim who does not perform pilgrimage (ḥajj) is a disbeliever.

Examples of Mu'tazili Qur'anic exegesis:

- 1 (wattakhadha allāhu ibrahīma khalīlā – God took Abraham as an intimate friend, Q4:125) means: (God took Abraham as a poor person). According to Mu'tazili exegetes, the word (khalīl) is morphologically related to (al-khallah – poverty). However, (khalīl) also means (an intimate friend) which for Mu'tazili theologians is impossible.
- 2 (ilā rabbihā nāẓirah – Looking at their Lord, Q75:23) where the expression (nāẓirah) means: (muntaẓirah – waiting). Thus, Q75:23 allegorically means: (Waiting for their Lord). However, for mainstream exegetes, Q75:23 means that the people of paradise will be able to see and look at their Creator in the hereafter.
- 3 (wakallama allāhu mūsā taklīmā – God spoke to Moses with a direct speech, Q4:164) means: (Moses spoke to God because God does not speak and that sounds and words are features of whoever has a body and since God does not have a body, therefore, He does not pronounce words or sounds as humans and animals do). However, this Mu'tazili premise can be rebutted by

Q7:143 (walammā jā'a mūsā limiqātinā wakallamahu allāhu – When Moses arrived at Our appointed time and his Lord spoke to him). However, for Mu'tazili exegetes, God in Q7:143 does not speak as He does not in Q4:164 because, for them, God creates the speech whose sounds and words are pronounced by other creatures. In other words, other creatures are made by God to speak on God's behalf. Thus, in the view of Mu'tazili exegetes, Moses has heard the words and sounds uttered by other creatures as instructed by God.

Q4:164 represents a theological controversy in Qur'anic exegesis since it has two grammar-based modes of reading which lead to two theologically divergent views: It means that (God spoke to Moses directly). Thus, it should be read as (kallama allāhu mūsā taklīmā) where the noun (allāhu – God) occurs in the nominative case with the short vowel /u/ and makes (mūsā) the direct object of the verb (kallama – to speak to). Grammatically, the absolute object (taklīmā – directly) acts as a confirmation that the act of (taklīm – speaking) has indeed taken place and eliminates the esoteric meaning that this act is allegorical. For Muctazili exegetes, however, Q4:164 is read as (kallama allāha mūsā taklīmā) where the noun (allāha) occurs in the accusative case with the short vowel /a/ that makes it the direct object and the noun (mūsā) is the grammatical subject. Thus, (mūsā) is the one who does the act of 'speaking' and (allāha) is listening to him.

- 4 (inna alladhīna yashtarūna bi'ahd allāhi thamānan qalīlan . . . lā yukallimuhum allāhu walā yanẓuru ilaihim – Indeed, those who exchange the covenant of God and their own oaths for a small price will have no share in the hereafter, and God will not speak to them or look at them on the day of resurrection, Q3:77) where the words (yukallimu – to speak to) and (yanẓuru – to look at), in the view of Mu'tazili theologians and exegetes, are employed in this āyah allegorically to denote contempt and scorn of those who exchange the covenant of God and their own oaths for a small price. Therefore, Q3:77 is interpreted in an esoteric way. However, mainstream exegetes argue that if allegorical meaning is evoked, then one should apply an allegorical meaning to the rest of the āyah to include the phrase (walahum 'adhābun alīmun – and they will have a painful punishment). Thus, the expression (painful punishment) should also signify an allegorical meaning and this will lead to the non-existence of punishment in the hereafter.
- 5 (wa'idhā aradnā an nuhlika qaryatan amarnā mutrafihā fafasaqū fihā . . . tadmīrā – When We [God] intend to destroy a city, We command its affluent but they defiantly disobey . . . and We destroy it with complete destruction, Q17:16). For Mu'tazili exegetes, the phrase (amarnā mutrafihā – We [God] has given the affluent wealth but they abused it and made it a means towards the disobedience of God). However, for mainstream exegetes, Q17:16 means: (God commanded the affluent to obey Him but they chose to disobey Him; thus, they deserved His wrath). Thus, linguistically, the second exegetical meaning involves the ellipsis of the the object noun (bil-ṭā'āt – to obey

and worship God), i.e. (amarnā mutrafihā [bil-ṭāʿāt] fafasaqū fihā – We [God] commanded its affluent [to obey God and worship Him] but instead they defiantly disobeyed).

- 6 (wa'ashraqat al-arḍu binūri rabbihā – The earth will shine with the light of its Lord, Q39:69) where the word (nūr) for Muʿtazili exegetes means (the truth, the Qurʾān, and the proof) rather than its exoteric meaning: (light).
- 7 (wal-arḍu . . . qabḍatuhu . . . maṭwiyyātun biyamīnih – They have not appraised God with true appraisal, while the earth entirely will be within His grip on the day of resurrection, and the heavens will be folded in His right hand, Q39:67). For Muʿtazili exegetes, this āyah represents (an imagery of the greatness of God and is not a description of physical matters). However, for mainstream exegetes, this āyah is evidence that God possesses specific attributes such as hearing, sight, hands, face, mercy, anger, coming, encompassing, being above the throne, etc. However, Muʿtazili scholars further argue that God dissociates Himself from the limitations of human attributes or human imagination. In other words, human attribute like (karīm – generous) or (qawī – strong) do not lexically match the same divine attributes of God. Mainstream exegetes argue that there is no similarity whatsoever between the Creator and the created in terms of essence, attributes, and deeds. Thus, for mainstream theologians, a Muslim is required to believe in the existence of God's attributes without interpreting them allegorically, i.e. giving them an esoteric meaning. Mainstream exegetes back up their position by Q42:11 (laisa kamithlihi shai' – There is nothing like unto Him [God]) (*Saheeh International Translation of the Qurʾān*, 2010, pp. 33, 420).
- 8 (wajhu rabbika – the face of your Lord, Q55:27) allegorically means: (the survival of God's existence).
- 9 (kullu shai'in hālīkun illā wajhah – Everything will be destroyed except His face, Q28:88) where the expression (wajhah) means: (God).
- 10 (yadu allāhi fawqa aidihim – The hand of God is over their hands, Q48:10) where the word (yadu) means: (power) which is an allegorical meaning.
- 11 (yadu allāhi maghlūlah – The hand of God is chained, Q5:64) where the expression (yadu) means: (al-niʿmah – blessing) which is an esoteric meaning.
- 12 (nafakha fihi min rūḥihi – He [God] breathed into him [mankind] from His created soul, Q32:9) where the expression (rūḥihi) for Muʿtazili exegetes means: (God's command).
- 13 (taʿlamu mā fī nafsi walā aʿlamu mā fī nafsik) means: (You [God] know what I have but I do not know what You have). However, for mainstream exegetes, Q5:116 means: (You [God] know what is within myself, and I do not know what is within yourself, Q5:116).
- 14 For Muʿtazili exegetes, (istawā ʿala al-ʿarsh, Q7:54) means: (God took control of, or be in possession of the throne); thus, the expression (istawā) for Muʿtazili theologians means: (istawlā – to take control of, to possess something). For mainstream exegetes, however, Q7:54 means: (God established Himself above the throne).

2.3.2 School of Shī'ī Qur'anic exegesis

Shī'ism evolved during the Umayyad dynasty (41–132/661–749) but its legal and doctrinal system took firm roots during the Abbasid rule (132–655/749–1257). In their attempt to promote Shī'ism, Shī'ī exegetes resorted to esoteric exegesis.⁵ Thus, their exegetical approaches were based on: (i) language, where their exegesis was characterized by scholastic views similar to those of the Mu'tazilah, and (ii) interpretation and personal opinion (ta'wil) in order to substantiate their support to 'Ali's household (ahl al-bait). The Shī'ah were the supporters of 'Ali b. Abī Ṭālib (d. 40/661), who was Muḥammad's cousin, his wife, Fāṭimah, who was Muḥammad's daughter, and the fourth caliph. The Shī'ah believed that 'Ali, rather than Abu Bakr al-Ṣiddīq, was the legitimate successor to Muḥammad. The doctrine of Shī'ism is hinged upon the dogma of the Imāmate (al-imāmah) which is associated with the twelve Shī'ī Imāms (religious leaders) who were the descendents of 'Ali, that no other individual Muslim could be entitled to it, the legitimate succession of 'Ali and his descendants from his wife Fāṭimah after the death of Muḥammad, that the Imāmate was interrelated with the notion of religious authority (al-marjī'iyah), that the Imāmate is one of the principles of faith (rukun min arkān al-dīn), and that whoever denies the Imāmate is a disbeliever and will suffer perpetual punishment in the hell fire. It is worthwhile to note that none of the Shī'ī Imāms have held the theological view that a Muslim who does not believe in the Imāmate is a disbeliever and will suffer perpetual punishment in the hell fire. However, later Shī'ī theologians and exegetes held such a view, such as the Shī'ī exegete Abu al-Ḥasan 'Ali b. Ibrāhīm al-Qummī (d. 307/919). This non-mainstream theological view evolved in much later centuries, especially during the Safavid rule in 1501–1736. This view is also found today on the Shī'ī website of the contemporary Shī'ī Iraqi cleric and spiritual leader al-Sistānī. However, some modern Shī'ī theologians such as Muḥammad Bāqir al-Ṣadr from Iraq and 'Ali al-Amīn from Lebanon have rejected this view and do not believe that the Imāmate is one of the principles of faith. During the Safavid rule and afterwards, Shī'ī theologians and exegetes espoused the view of political allegiance and support to 'Ali b. Abī Ṭālib and his descendants as an integral part of Islam. However, it is worthwhile to note that some classical Shī'ī exegetes like al-Ṭūsī (d. 460/1067) rely heavily on the exegetical views of Sunni classical exegetes like 'Ā'ishah, Ibn 'Abbās, Ibn Mas'ūd, Mujāhid, Qatādah, al-Suddī, 'Aṭā', Sa'īd b. al-Musaiyab, Sa'īd b. Jubair, Ibn Sirīn, al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, and Imām al-Shāfi'ī. Also, al-Ṭūsī refers to Mu'tazili scholars such as al-Jubbā'ī (d. 321/933) and al-Rummānī (d. 386/996).

Shī'ī exegetes espoused a number of theological doctrines which constituted the proto-Shī'ī phenomena such as:

- 1 The infallibility (al-ʿiṣmah)⁶ of their Imāms who were divinely selected and spoken to by angels.
- 2 The Shī'ī Imāms were and are still able to perform miracles.⁷

- 3 The twelve Imāms would undertake intercession on the day of judgement,
- 4 temporary marriage⁸ is lawful.
- 5 The belief in the awaited guided one who was the twelfth Imām and was called (al-qā'im – the one who will be raised up by God), i.e. a kind of messiah (al-mahdī al-muntaẓar – the awaited Mahdi). The Mahdi's name is Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-ʿAskari who was born in the Iraqi city of Sāmarrā' in 255/868 and disappeared in 260/874 or 264/878. In their view, al-Mahdi had disappeared in his father's cellar when he was four or eight years old and that he is still alive. He is also nicknamed (al-Ḥujjah – the proof), (al-qā'im al-muntaẓar – the one who is still alive, the awaited), (ṣāḥib al-zamān – the owner of the time).
- 6 The belief in the occultation (al-ghaibah) of the hidden Imām who was Abu al-Qāsim Muḥammad al-Ḥasan known as al-Mahdī al-Muntaẓar (born in 255/869 and disappeared in 260/874 or 264/878).
- 7 The belief in the return of al-Mahdi al-Muntaẓar (al-raġʿah) who is the twelfth Shīʿi Imām.
- 8 The rule of the jurist (wilāyat al-faqīh). This allows a qualified Shīʿi jurist (faqīh) to be installed as the spiritual leader of Shīʿis in the absence of the awaited Shīʿi Imām al-Mahdi. In other words, the Shīʿi jurist acts as the representative of Imām al-Mahdi,
- 9 The practice of dissimulation (al-taḳiyyah) of one's religion, especially in time of persecution or danger whether from other non-Shīʿi Muslims or from non-Muslims although for mainstream scholars, the belief in al-taḳiyyah is hypocritical (al-ṭukhī: fol. 36v).
- 10 Friday prayer should be led by either an infallible Imām or by a just Imām.
- 11 The optional prayers after the evening prayer during Ramaḍān (ṣalāt al-tarāwīḥ) is an innovation.
- 12 The Shīʿi Imām, like the Prophets, possesses the knowledge of the unseen (ʿilm al-ghaib).
- 13 The Imām is appointed by a bequest (waṣiyyah) rather than being elected (al-imām yuʿaiyan bil-naṣṣ lā bil-intikhāb). However, this is contested by moderate Shīʿi scholars like Hādī Kāshif al-Ghiṭā', Muḥammad Bāqir al-Ṣadr, and ʿAlī al-Amin.
- 14 The payment of charity of 20 per cent (zakāt al-khums) of the Muslim's wealth or money to a Shīʿi Imām or whoever is related to him, i.e. his descendents.
- 15 God will not be seen in the hereafter.
- 16 The Qur'ān is not created.
- 17 The Qur'ānic text is corrupted (taḥrīf al-qur'ān).⁹
- 18 They espoused rational and hypothetical exegetical views in Qur'anic exegesis.
- 19 The belief in the notion of the beginning anew (al-badā').¹⁰
- 20 Unlike the Mu'tazili scholars, Shīʿi exegetes believe that the hell fire exists now, i.e. the fire has been created already by God.
- 21 Shīʿi scholars believe in the legitimate right of Fāṭimah, Muḥammad's daughter, to inherit her father (irṭh al-anbiyā'), and back up this theological notion on (wayrithu min āli yaʿqūba – and inherit from the family of Jacob,

Q19:6). However, for mainstream exegetes and non-mainstream Ibāḍī, Sufi, and Muʿtazilī exegetes, all Prophets cannot be inherited but what is inherited of them is their knowledge and the message they deliver to mankind. Their view is based on the ḥadīth narrated by Abu Bakr al-Ṣiddīq: (lā nūrathu. mā tarknā ṣadaqah – We are not inherited. What we leave behind [after our death] is charity [for people]).¹¹

- 22 Shīʿī exegetes believe that Prophets are of a higher status than the angels. Thus, Muḥammad is favoured over the rest of the angels. However, the angels are better than and favoured over ordinary people (cf. Q17:70).
- 23 In his exegesis (n.d., p. 383), the eleventh Shīʿī Imām, Abu Muḥammad al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī al-ʿAskari (d. 260/874), claims that Muḥammad, according to narration, said that people who like ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib are better than the angels.
- 24 For Henry Corbin there would be ‘no complete Islam without the Shīʿī Imāms’ who were ‘the guides to exegesis’, ‘the heirs to Muḥammad’, and without them ‘the truth of the Qurʾān could never be known’ (Adams 1985, pp. 139, 144). Although the Shīʿī Imāms were ‘not Prophets, they were people spoken to by angels and recipients of a special non-Qurʾanic kind of revelation’ (Ayoub 1988, p. 187). In a similar vein, Ayoub (1988, p. 178) claims that Muḥammad ‘reserved the teaching of exegesis for the Imāms’, that ‘Muḥammad and the Imāms alone know the full meaning of the Qurʾān’, that ‘the Qurʾān was primarily addressed to the Imāms’, and that ‘while the Qurʾān is silent, the Imāms are the speaking Qurʾān’ (Ayoub 1988, pp. 179, 183). For al-Qummi (d. 307/919), a Shīʿī exegete, the Imāms were ‘the purpose of the creation’ (Ayoub 1988, p. 180). In the view of al-Sabḥānī (n.d., 5, pp. 345, 408), the Imāmate is a divine position (maṣab ilāhi), i.e. a politico-theological post given by God to a person after the death of Muḥammad. Shīʿism also espouses the doctrine of the Imāms being vicegerents (awṣiyāʾ) of Muḥammad. Thus, Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq (d. 148/765), the sixth Shīʿī Imām, declared: ‘God made authority (walāyah) to us as the pole of the Qurʾān and the pole of all Scriptures. Around it, the clear āyahs (muḥkam) of the Qurʾān revolve; through it, Scriptures were elucidated and through it faith becomes manifest’ (Ayoub 1988, p. 181). (Also see: Donaldson 1936; Watt 1973, pp. 54–59; al-Shahrastānī 1986, 1, p. 146; al-Dhahabī 1987, 1, p. 5; al-ʿĀmili 1993, 21, pp. 5–80; al-Rūmi 2002, 1, p. 111; Loebenstein 2003.)

In the view of Shīʿī exegetes, whoever opposed the succession of ʿAlī after the death of Muḥammad was a disbeliever, a liar, and a hypocrite. They established this view on Q2:4 (walladhīna yuʾminūna bimā unzila ilaika wamā unzila min qablika wabil-ākhirati hum yūqinūn – Those who believe in what has been revealed to you, and what was revealed before you, and of the hereafter they are certain in faith) and Q2:9 (yukhādīʿūna allāha walladhīna āmanū – They think to deceive God and those who believe) which, for them, are evidence for their political theology. In a similar vein, for them, Abu Bakr, ʿUmar, and ʿUthmān were illegitimate successors to Muḥammad (al-Sālūs 2002, 2, p. 164, pp. 167–168).

On the notion of distortion of the Qur'ān (taḥrīf al-qur'ān), Shī'ī scholars were also of the opinion that the 'Uthmanic master codex of the Qur'ān had suffered interpolation with regard to the name of 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib. This position was aimed to elevate the status of 'Alī and his legitimate succession to Muḥammad (Alī 2005, p. 84). Similarly, Shī'ī exegetes such as al-Ṭabarsī believed that the 'Uthmanic master codex, the *textus receptus*, of the Qur'ān suffered distortion (taḥrīf) by anti-Shī'ism. For him (1997, 3, p. 46), the phrase (ilā ajalīn musammā – for a specified term) was missing from Q4:24. Thus, this āyah should read: (. . . famā istamtatū bihī [ilā ajalīn musammā] minhunna . . . – So for whatever you enjoy of marriage [for a specified term] from them give them . . .) This Shī'ī jurisprudential view aims to justify the Shī'ī doctrine of temporary marriage.

For Shī'ī theologians, prophethood passes on to the descendants of the Prophets; thus, 'Alī and his sons are the heirs of prophethood according to Q29:27 (wawahabnā laḥū isḥāqā waya'qūba waja'alnā fī dhurriyatihī al-nubuwwah – We gave to him Isaac and Jacob and placed in his descendants prophethood) and Q57:26 (walaqad arsalnā nūḥan wa'ibrāhīma waja'alnā fī dhurriyatihimā al-nubuwwah – We have already sent Noah and Abraham and placed in their descendants prophethood).

Shī'ī exegetes argued that the notion of (ahl al-bait – the household of) referred to 'Alī, his wife Fāṭimah, his two sons, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusain. This expression occurs in Q33:33 and had dominated the dichotomy between Sunni and Shī'ī exegesis. However, Sunni theologians argued that the notion of (ahl al-bait) referred to the Prophet's household, i.e. his wives and the houses where his wives used to live in (Q33:34) and substantiated their view through the intertextual reference between Q33:32 and Q33:33–34 where āyah 32 makes an explicit reference to the Prophet's wives: (yā nisā' a al-nabīy – O wives of the Prophet). In order to promote the Shī'ī notion of the household of 'Alī, Shī'ī scholars provide emotionally charged ḥadīths attributed to Muḥammad, but for the mainstream scholars, these are fabricated. In his *Majma' Maṣā'ib Ahl al-Bait*, al-Hindāwī (2001, 1, p. 75) mentions the pro-Shī'ī ḥadīth:¹² (ḥabībī yā ḥusain ka'annī arāka 'an qarībīn murammalan bidimā'ika madhbūḥan bi'arḍi karb balā' baina 'iṣābatīn min ummatī wa'anta ma'a dhālik 'aṭṣḥān lā tusqā wa ḡam'ān lā turwā wahum ma'a dhālik yarjūna shafā'ati yawma al-qiyāmah. lā anālahum allāhu shafā'atī – O my sweetheart Ḥusain, I can closely see you as if you were covered by your own blood, slaughtered in the city of Karb Balā' [literally meaning 'distress and affliction'] among a gang from my nation; although you were thirsty, you were not given water. In spite of this, they wish for my intercession on the day of judgement. May God will not grant them my intercession), which explicitly denounces anti-Shī'ism. However, a close look into the stylistic and textual features of this ḥadīth, one can figure out the distinction between genuine ḥadīth style and the style of this particular ḥadīth. For instance, the expressions (ḥabībī – my sweetheart), ('iṣābah – a gang), and (ma'a dhālik – in spite of that) are not textual features of Muḥammad's sound ḥadīths. Also, the phrases ('aṭṣḥān lā tusqā – you were thirsty but you were not given water) and (ḡam'ān lā turwā – you were thirsty but you were not given water) are synonyms and there is no stylistic reason to use the second phrase.

Prophetic ḥadīths figure less prominently in Shī'ī tafsīr works than in Sunni works of tafsīr. Also, the majority of Shī'ī exegetical ḥadīths are related on the authority of the sixth Imām Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (d. 148/765). With regard to Shī'ī ḥadīth, Buckley (1999, pp. 37–38) notes that the Shī'ī chain of authorities (isnād) took one of three basic forms: (i) they were either related solely on the authority of an Imām, (ii) they went back to an Imām who related on the authority of his forefathers, or (iii) they went back to an Imām who transmitted on the authority of Muḥammad either directly or through a chain of his forefathers. However, the vast majority of Shī'ī ḥadīths were not derived from Muḥammad nor were they based on a chain of an Imām's forefathers, but were usually in the form of a question asked of one of the Imāms along with the Imām's answer (Buckley 1999, p. 38). It is also worthwhile to note that Shī'ī exegetes do not recognize the Sunni books of ḥadīth (Ṣaḥīḥ) collected by the two well-known Sunni ḥadīth scholars Muslim (206–261/821–874) and al-Bukhari (194–256/809–869). Instead, their main source of ḥadīth is from *Uṣūl al-Kāfi* written by al-Kulaini (d. 329/940). However, many Shī'ī scholars as well as the modern Shī'ī theologian and spiritual leader al-Khū'i do not recognize *al-Kāfi* as a reliable ḥadīth source and believe that al-Kulaini has included innumerable spurious and weak ḥadīths, and most importantly his ḥadīths are mursal, i.e. in the chain of authorities of a ḥadīth, the name of a companion is dropped by a successor narrating the ḥadīth; thus, the ḥadīth is defective. For more details on the forms of defects in the ḥadīth chain of authorities, see Abdul-Raof (2010, Ch. 2, Sect. 2.8).

Mu'tazilism had impacted upon Shī'ism and, as a result, Shī'ī exegesis was hinged on esoteric analysis and rationalism. In Henry Corbin's understanding, Sunni Islam was concerned with the exoteric aspect of revelation, whereas Shī'ism searches beyond the external and literal for the deepest hidden secret (Adams 1985, p. 138; Ayoub 1988, p. 187). Thus, their exegetical approaches were based on linguistic analysis and scholastic views similar to those of Mu'tazili exegetes. In the view of Abrahamov (1987, pp. 80, 85) and Schmidtke (2006, pp. 108–109), Shī'ī theologians accepted Mu'tazili scholastic and theological views. For instance, Imām Zaid b. 'Alī b. al-Ḥusain b. 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib (d. 122/739) was a student of the Mu'tazili scholar Wāṣil b. 'Aṭā'. The reception began in the second half of the third/ninth century. Mu'tazili teachings could only be gleaned from the writings of later Shī'ī theologians. The Shī'ī scholar al-Qāsim Ibn Ibrāhīm Ibn al-Ḥasan Ibn 'Alī (169/785–246/860) and the canonical Shī'ī theologian al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā (d. 436/1044) were influenced by Mu'tazilism. The latter adopted the teachings of the Baṣrah school of Mu'tazilism which was founded by Abu Ḥāshim 'Abd al-Salām al-Jubbā'i (d. 321/933); thus, the fusion of Shī'ism and Mu'tazilism reached its final shape. The Shī'ī interpretation (ta'wīl), however, was employed to substantiate their support to 'Alī's household (ahl al-bait).

Persian philosophy had also its impact upon the evolution of Shī'ism. The inheritance of prophethood by 'Alī and his household, for instance, was evidence of this influence whose roots stemmed from the 'sacred royal right theory' (naẓariyyat al-ḥaqq al-malaki al-muqaddas) which the Persians believed in (Bāsallūm 2005, p. 114). Unlike Mu'tazilism, Shī'ism had Sufi leanings, although

based on Shīʿi tradition. In the view of Adams (1985, pp. 136, 139), there was a Sufi tradition within Shīʿism, and Sufism could be characterized as a kind of proto-Shīʿism or incipient Shīʿism, as a partially developed spirituality on the way to achieving the fullness that would come with the recognition of the Shīʿi Imāms and their authority. Among prominent Shīʿi exegetes were: al-Ḥasan b. ʿAli al-ʿAskari (231–260/845–873) who was the eleventh Imām, Furāt b. Ibrāhīm b. Furāt al-Kūfī (d. 352/963), Muḥammad b. Masʿūd al-ʿAiyāshi (d. 320/932), ʿAli b. Ibrāhīm al-Qummi (d. 307/919), Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Nuʿmāni (d. 360/971), and Abu ʿAli al-Faḍl b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṭabarsi (d. 548/1153).

2.3.2.1 ʿAli's household and the companions

Shīʿi exegetical works and Shīʿi ḥadīths narrated on the authority of Shīʿi Imāms lead one to believe that ʿAli b. Abi Ṭālib and his household were antagonists to the companions. However, a close look at the relationship by marriage (al-muṣāharah) between ʿAli and his household and the companions portrays a different picture. They were, in fact, close friends and had high respect to each other. For instance, ʿAli's daughter, Um Kulthūm, was the wife of ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb. Abu Bakr al-Ṣiddīq's daughter, Ḥaṣṣah Bint ʿAbd al-Raḥman, was the wife of Imām al-Ḥusain. Imām Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq is related through his mother to Abu Bakr al-Ṣiddīq. Her name is Farwah Bint Asmā' Bint Ḥaṣṣah Bint ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Bint Abi Bakr al-Ṣiddīq. Also, ʿAli had other children, named Abu Bakr, ʿUthmān al-Akbar, ʿUthmān al-Aṣghar, ʿUmar al-Akbar, and ʿUmar al-Aṣghar. Similarly, Imām al-Ḥusain had other children, named Abu Bakr, ʿUmar, and ʿUmar al-Ashraf. Imām Mūsā b. Jaʿfar al-Kāẓim had two sons named Abu Bakr and ʿUmar, and a daughter named ʿĀ'ishah. Imām al-Ḥasan also had children named Abu Bakr and ʿUmar. Marwān b. Abān b. ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān was married to Um al-Qāsim Bint Imām al-Ḥusain b. ʿAli. Similarly, Zaid b. ʿAmru b. ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān was married to Sakīnah Bint Imām al-Ḥusain.

2.3.2.2 The notion of forgery of the Qur'ān

The notion of forgery of the Qur'ān (taḥrīf al-qur'ān) is referred to by Shīʿi exegetes and theologians and is always taken as a premise to defend the Shīʿi notions of ʿAli being the legitimate successor to Muḥammad, as well as to defend the allegiance to ʿAli and the Shīʿi Imāms. Thus, we encounter several examples of āyahs whose wording is not compatible with the current ʿUthmanic codex. In their book *Salāmat al-Qur'ān min al-Taḥrīf*, the Shīʿi al-Risālah Centre (n.d.) acknowledges that major Shīʿi works such as *al-Kāfi* of al-Kulaini believe that the Qur'ān was forged and that Shīʿi scholars and exegetes support their argument by narrations from major Shīʿi Imāms. Some Shīʿi exegetes are also of the opinion that the the codex of ʿAli is different from the current ʿUthmanic codex. In his *al-Kāfi*, al-Kulaini (al-Risālah Centre (n.d.)) refers to a number of allegedly forged āyahs, such as: (wa'in kuntum fī raibin mimmā nazzalnā ʿalā ʿabdinā [fī ʿali] fa'tū bisūratin min mithlihi – If you were in doubt about what We

[God] have sent down [the Qur'ān] upon our servant [the Prophet Muḥammad] [with regard to °Ali], then produce a sūrah the like thereof, Q2:23) and (man yuṭī° allāha warasūlahu [fī wilāyati °ali wal-a'immah min ba°dihī] faqad fāza fawzan °aẓīmā – Whoever obeys God and His Messenger [with regard to °Ali's allegiance and the Shī'ī Imāms after him] has certainly attained a great attainment, Q33:71). al-Kulaini (al-Risālah Centre n.d.) also mentions Q45:29 in a different and irregular mode of reading which is Shī'ī-oriented: (hādhā kitābunā [yunṭaqu] °alaikum bilḥaqqi – Here is Our record that tells the truth about you) where the word (yunṭaqu) occurs in the passive voice meaning (the record is being told to you) rather than the authentic version based on the current °Uthmanic codex which is the active voice (yanṭiqu) meaning (to tell the truth). Similarly, al-°Aiyāshi (d. 320/932) in his *Tafsīr* (n.d., 1, p. 317) claims that Q17:89 (fa'abā aktharu al-nāsi illā kufūrā – But most of the people refused anything except disbelief) has been forged by the companions and that the original version of this āyah is (fa'abā aktharu al-nāsi [wilāyat °ali] illā kufūrā – But most of the people refused [the allegiance of °Ali] anything except disbelief). In his *Tafsīr*, al-Qummi (1983, 1, p. 110) claims that Q3:110 (kuntum khaira ummatin ukhrijat lil-nās – You are the best nations produced as an example for mankind) is a forged āyah which should have been [kuntum khaira a'immatin ukhrijat lil-nās – You are the best Imāms produced as an example for mankind]. Similarly, Q4:166 (lākin allāhu yashhadu bimā anzala ilaika anzalalhū bi°ilmihī wal-malā'ikatu yashhadūn – But God bears witness to that which He has revealed to you. He has sent it down with His knowledge, and the angels bear witness as well) is a forged āyah for al-Qummi (1983, 1, p. 159) and that it has been revealed as (lākin allāhu yashhadu bimā anzala ilaika [fī °ali] anzalalhū bi°ilmihī wal-malā'ikatu yashhadūn – But God bears witness to that which He has revealed to you [with regards to °Ali]. He [God] has sent it down with His knowledge, and the angels bear witness as well). The same applies to Q5:67 where the expression (with regards to °Ali) is inserted.

However, al-Risālah Centre (n.d., p. 39) argues that the notion of forgery in the Qur'ān is a flawed argument for the following reasons:

- (i) The alleged forged āyahs mentioned by some Shī'ī scholars have been quoted as āyahs in the form of an exegetical mode of reading.
- (ii) The alleged forged āyahs are narrated by a single source (āḥād) rather than a multiple source (mutawātir).
- (iii) The alleged forged āyahs which are claimed to have been taken from °Ali's codex are meant to be an exegetical account of the original āyahs that have occurred in the °Uthmanic codex.
- (iv) There is no conclusive evidence to substantiate the premise of forgery of the Qur'ān.
- (v) Major Shī'ī scholars and exegetes such as al-Kāshānī, al-Majlisi, and al-Khū'i oppose the notion of forgery of the Qur'ān.

Moreover, al-Risālah Centre (n.d., p. 47) provides a rebuttal to some Shī'ī scholars' claims that °Ali's codex is different from that of the °Uthmanic codex:

- (i) The arrangement of the codex of °Ali was according to the revelation of the āyahs and sūrahs.
- (ii) In the codex of °Ali, the abrogated āyahs (al-mansūkh) are placed before the abrogating āyahs (al-nāsikh).
- (iii) The codex of °Ali includes exegetical details based on the circumstances of revelation.
- (iv) The codex of °Ali includes sacred ḥadīths (ḥadīth qudsi) which are classified as non-revelations and do not constitute a Qur'anic discourse.

Below are representative samples of Shī'i Qur'anic exegesis:

- 1 (yā aiyuha al-rasūlu balligh mā unzila ilaika min rabbika wa'in lam taf'al famā ballaghta risālah – O Messenger, announce that which has been revealed to you from your Lord, and if you do not, then you have not conveyed His [God's] message, Q5:67) refers to Muḥammad's announcement of the appointment of °Ali as his successor, i.e. °Ali's authority (al-walāyah) and also to the household of °Ali (ahl al-bait).
- 2 (aṭī'u allāha wa'tī'u al-rasūla wa'uli al-amri minkum – Obey God and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you, Q4:59), where the expression (wa'uli al-amri minkum – and those in authority among you) means: (the Shī'i Imāms).
- 3 (bal huwa āyātun baiyinātun fī ṣudūri alladhīna ūtu al-°ilma – The Qur'ān is distinct verses preserved within the breasts of those who have been given knowledge, Q29:49), where the expression (alladhīna ūtu al-°ilma – those who have been given knowledge) means: (the Shī'i Imāms).
- 4 (walaqad ātaināka sab°an min al-mathānī wal-qur'āna al-°azīm – We have certainly given you (O Muḥammad) seven of the often repeated āyahs and the great Qur'ān, Q15:87), where the expression (sab°an min al-mathānī – seven of the often repeated āyahs) means: (the Shī'i Imāms). However, for the Sufi exegete and philosopher °Abd al-Karīm al-Jili (d. 805/1402), (sab-°an min al-mathānī) means: (the seven divine characteristics which are life, knowledge, resolve, power, hearing, seeing, speaking) (Zaidān 1988, p. 86).
- 5 (inna allāha lā yastahī an yaḍriba mathalan mā ba°ūdātan famā fawqahā – God does not shy from drawing comparisons even with something as small as a gnat or larger, Q2:26), where the expression (ba°ūdātan – a gnat) means (Muḥammad) and (famā fawqahā – or larger) means (°Ali).
- 6 (wa'idh najjainākum min āli fir°awn . . . yudhabbiḥūna abnā°akum . . . – Recall when We saved you from the people of Pharaoh who afflicted you with the worst torment, slaughtering your sons, . . . Recall when We parted the sea for you . . . Recall when We made an appointment with Moses . . . Q2:49), where (wa'idh najjainākum min āl fir°awn . . . – Recall when We saved you from the people of Pharaoh who afflicted you with the worst torment, slaughtering your sons, . . .) refers to (°Ali, his wife Fāṭimah, and her father Muḥammad), the word (āl – people) refers to (polytheism, disbelief and evil), the name (fir°awn – Pharaoh) refers to (°Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb), the

expression (yudhabbiḥūna abnā'akum – slaughtering your sons) refers to (Yazīd and the murder of al-Ḥusain in Muḥarram 61/October 680).

- 7 (nūrun °alā nūr – light upon light, Q24:35) which refers to Shī'i Imāms.
- 8 (wal-sābiqūna al-sābiqūn – and the forerunners, the forerunners, Q56:10) refers to the light of faith in God which is manifested on the faces of the Shī'is on the day of judgement.
- 9 (innamā yūridu allāhu liyudhhiba °ankum al-rijsa ahla al-bait – God intends only to remove from you the impurity of sin, O people of the household, Q33:33), where the expression (ahl al-bait – people of the household) refers to °Ali, his wife Fāṭimah, and their sons al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusain.
- 10 (mā salakakum fī saqar. qālū lam nakun min al-muṣallīn – What put you in Saqar? They will say: 'We were not of those who prayed', Q74:42–43) means: (What put you into Saqar? They will say: 'We were not Shī'is').
- 11 (salāmun hiya ḥattā maṭla'ī al-fajr – It [the night of decree] is peace until the emergence of dawn, Q97:5) means: (It [the night of decree] is peace until the emergence of the awaited Mahdi).
- 12 Q103. The Shī'i Imām Ja'far al-Ṣādiq is claimed to have given the following exegetical views:

Q103:1, the word (al-°aṣr) means: (the time of the awaited Mahdi);

Q103:2 (inna al-insāna lafi khusr) means: (the enemies of the Shī'is);

Q103:3 (illa alladhīna āmanū) means: (those who believe in the Imāmate);

Q103:3 (wa°amilu al-ṣāliḥāt) means: (those who extend their consolations to the Shī'is);

Q103:3 (watawāṣaw bil-ḥaqqi) means: (the Imāmate);

Q103:3 (watawāṣaw bil-ṣabr) means: (the perfection of religion and the best blessing that will be enjoyed during the emergence of the awaited Mahdi).

- 13 (inna °iddati al-shuhūri ithnā °ashara shahran – In deed, the number of months with God is twelve lunar months, Q9:36) means: (the twelve Shī'i Imāms).
- 14 (wal-samā'ī dhāt al-burūj – By the sky containing great stars, Q85:1) means: (By the sky with the great twelve Shī'i Imāms).
- 15 (walfajri – By the dawn) means: (the awaited Mahdi); (walayālin °ashr – and by ten nights) means: (the first ten Shī'i Imāms); (wal-shaf'i – and by the even number) means: (°Ali and his wife Fāṭimah) (wal-watr – the odd number) means: (God); (wal-laili idhā yasr – and by the night when it passes) means: (the period of darkness that extends from the disappearance of the Mahdi until his emergence) (Q89:1–4).
- 16 (Your ally is none but God and therefore His Messenger and those who have believed, those who establish prayer and give zakāt, and they bow in worship, Q5:55). For Shī'i theologians and exegetes, the circumstance of revelation of this āyah is related to °Ali b. Abī Ṭālib. Thus, in their view, this āyah alludes to the theological notion of political allegiance and support (al-walāyah al-siyāsiyyah) to °Ali b. Abī Ṭālib and his descendents and that a Muslim who does not believe in the political allegiance to °Ali and his descendents is a disbeliever. However, for moderate Shī'i theologians like °Ali al-Amīn from

Lebanon, Q5:55 refers to ‘Ali but does neither mean political allegiance to him nor to his descendents, and Q5:55 refers only to religious allegiance to God, Muḥammad, and the believers (al-walāyah lilāhi wa-lirasūlihi wa-lilmu’minin). It is worthwhile to note that moderate Shī‘i theologians like Hādī Kāshif al-Ghiṭā’, Muḥammad Bāqir al-Ṣadr, and ‘Ali al-Amīn have rejected the notion of political allegiance to ‘Ali and do not believe that Muḥammad nominated ‘Ali after him. These scholars are proponents of the view that Muḥammad did not nominate ‘Ali as his successor, as ‘Ali did not nominate a successor after him, and that Muḥammad’s statement has been abused semantically for political reasons since the word (mawlā) which has occurred in Muḥammad’s statement means, based on its context, (friend) rather than (successor).

- 17 (faman yakfur bil-tāghūt – whoever rejects false gods, Q2:256), where the phrase (al-tāghūt – false gods) refers to those who denied ‘Ali and his ancestors their legitimate succession after the death of Muḥammad, and the phrase (faqad istamsaka bil-‘urwati al-wuthqā – he has grasped the firmest handhold) refers to the allegiance to ‘Ali.
- 18 In the view of the Shī‘i exegete al-Qummi (d. 307/919) (1983, 2, p. 397), Q75:31–33 are concerned with the companion Mu‘āwiyah. For al-Qummi (1983, 2, p. 397), when Muḥammad called for the allegiance to ‘Ali, Mu‘āwiyah got very annoyed and went home ‘swaggering in pride’ (yata-mattā). For al-Qummi (1983, 2, p. 397), Q75:16 was sent down in connection with the same circumstance of revelation which, for al-Qummi, means: (O Muḥammad, do not spread the news that Mu‘āwiyah has rejected your call for the allegiance to ‘Ali).

2.3.2.3 *Historical overview of Shī‘i sub-sects*

Mainstream Shī‘ism believes in twelve Imāms and its followers are called the twelver Shī‘is (al-shī‘ah al-ithnā ‘ashariyyah) who are largely in southern Iraq, eastern region of al-Dammām in Saudi Arabia, Iran, and in Bahrain. However, there are several splinter Shī‘i sects that have different dogmatic cleavages. In this section, we shall provide an outline of the three major Shī‘i offshoots, the Ismā‘īlis, the Zaidis, and the Ḥūthis.

2.3.2.3.1 THE ISMĀ‘ĪLI SECT (AL-ISMĀ‘ĪLIYYAH)

This is the second largest Shī‘i sub-sect after the mainstream twelver Shī‘is. The Ismā‘īlis, dubbed (al-bāṭiniyyah – the esoterics, because they believe that the Qur’ān has esoteric meanings) are mainly in the Indian sub-continent, Syria, the Yemen, and Saudi Arabia. The major difference between the twelver Shī‘is and the Ismā‘īlis is about who the seventh Imām is. After the death of the sixth Shī‘i Imām, Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq (d. 148/765), the mainstream Shī‘is appointed his younger son Mūsā al-Kāẓim (d. 183/799) as their Imām, while the Ismā‘īlis appointed his eldest son Ismā‘īl (d. 145/762) as their Imām. However, the Ismā‘īlis claim that

Ja'far al-Šādiq appointed his son Ismā'īl, hence Ismā'īlism (al-ismā'īliyyah), as his successor Imām during his lifetime; however, Ismā'īl passed away before his father but also had a son called Muḥammad (Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl) whom Ja'far al-Šādiq did not appoint as his successor. In the view of the Ismā'īlis, Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl is the legitimate successor to Ja'far al-Šādiq. During the tenth/sixteenth century, the Ismā'īli Imām 'Abaid Allāh al-Mahdi (d. 322/934) travelled to Tunisia and settled there and managed to establish the Fatimid (al-fāṭimiyyūn) dynasty in north Africa (296/909–566/1171). Their first capital was the Tunisian city of al-Qairawān from 296/909 to 307/920; they then moved to the Tunisian city of Mahdiyyah in 307/920 until 358/969, followed by Cairo in 358/969 until 566/1171.

The major dogmatic views of Ismā'īlism include:

- 1 They share the first six Imāms only with the Shī'is.
- 2 They believe that the Imām should be a descendent of either Imām al-Ḥasan or imām al-Ḥusain.
- 3 The Imām is appointed by a bequest (waṣiyyah) rather than being elected (al-imām yu'āiyan bil-naṣṣ lā bil-intikhāb).
- 4 The prerequisites and character traits of the Ismā'īli Imām are: justice, piety, courage, wisdom, and truthfulness.
- 5 There is an Imām in every age whose obedience is obligatory.
- 6 Rebellion and military opposition are legal against the oppressive Imām or ruler who does not apply Islamic law.
- 7 Any reference to numbers in the Qur'ān has a special significance.
- 8 The practice of dissimulation (al-taḥiyyah) of one's religion especially in time of persecution or danger.
- 9 There is an awaited Mahdi (al-mahdi al-muntaẓar).
- 10 Qur'anic exegesis should be based on both exoteric meaning (al-ma'nā al-ẓāhir) and esoteric meaning (al-ma'nā al-bāṭin).
- 11 The seeing of God will not take place in the hereafter.
- 12 The Qur'ān is not created.
- 13 Ismā'īli scholars espouse rational and hypothetical exegetical views in Qur'anic exegesis.
- 14 They believe that Prophets are of a higher status than angels. Thus, Muḥammad is favoured over the rest of angels. However, the angels are better than and favoured over ordinary people (cf. Q17:70).
- 15 They believe that the Qur'ān has esoteric meanings known only to their Imāms who are endowed with divine knowledge.

2.3.2.3.2 THE ZAIDI SECT (AL-ZAIDIYYAH)

The Zaidis believe in four Imāms only, 'Ali b. Abi Ṭālib, al-Hasan, al-Husain, and Zaid b. 'Ali b. al-Ḥusain b. 'Ali b. Abi Ṭālib, also nicknamed Zain al-ʿĀbidīn al-Sajjād. For this reason, in the view of mainstream twelver Shī'ism, the Zaidis are disbelievers. For the Zaidis, the last Imām is Zaid b. 'Ali b. al-Ḥusain b. 'Ali

b. Abi Ṭālib (d. 122/739) who is their major Imām and the sect is named after him. Zaidism was brought to the northern parts of the Yemen¹³ in 280/893 by Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥusain b. al-Qāsim, nicknamed al-Hādī (d. 298/910), who was a descendent of Imām al-Ḥasan b. ʿAli. Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥusain b. al-Qāsim. Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥusain b. al-Qāsim was born in 245/859 in Madīnah but decided to settle down in the Yemen in 280/893. Yaḥyā successfully managed to rule most of the Yemen and parts of the Saudi region of Ḥijāz. The Zaidis' rule of the Yemen continued for eleven centuries through Yaḥyā's sons and grandsons until the Yemeni revolution in 1962. It is worthwhile to note that the people of the southern parts of Yemen belong to the Sunni Shāfiʿī school of thought. Muʿtazilism has a limited impact on Zaidism (al-zaidiyyah) due to the fact that Imām Zaid b. ʿAli was a student of the Muʿtazili scholar Wāṣil b. ʿAṭāʾ (d. 131/748). Imām Zaid was also taught by his elder brother Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir (d. 114/733). Although the Zaidis are a sub-sect of Shīʿism, their theological views are very close to Sunni Islam. This can be attributed to the fact that there were personal contacts between Imām Abu Ḥanīfah (d. 150/767) and Imām Zaid. Also, Imām Zaid's grandson, Aḥmad b. ʿĪsā b. Zaid, was influenced by Imām Abu Ḥanīfah.

Imām Zaid and his grandchildren after him believed in armed struggle against the Muslim ruler who did not establish Islamic law. Encouraged by the Shīʿīs of Kūfah, Imām Zaid led an army of 500 men against the Umayyad ruler Hishām b. ʿAbd al-Malik (d. 125/742). His rebellion was crushed and Imām Zaid was killed after the Shīʿīs of Kūfah abandoned him because he refused to denounce Abu Bakr, ʿUmar, and ʿUthmān. When his Shīʿī supporters abandoned Zaid, he told them: (rafaṭtumūni – You have rejected me). Thus, the expression 'rejectors' (al-rāfiḍah) was coined.¹⁴ The Zaidis are mainly in northern Yemen and among their Qurʾān exegetes is al-Shawkānī. The principal dogmatic views of the Zaidis include:

- 1 The infallibility of the Imām is not a prerequisite for the Imāmate.
- 2 Infallibility applies only to Muḥammad; even their Imām Zaid b. ʿAli is fallible.
- 3 The Imāmate is not exclusive to the descendents of either al-Ḥasan or al-Ḥusain; in other words, the Imām does not need to be a Hashemite.
- 4 The Imāmate is not necessarily inherited; rather, it is based on allegiance (al-mubāyaʿah). For the Zaidis, the Imām is not appointed by a bequest (waṣiyyah) and can be elected. For them, the person who is favoured (al-mafḍūl), i.e. elected, by people can be their Imām even though there is a better person (al-fāḍil) than him. For this very reason, the Zaidis give their allegiance to Abu Bakr, ʿUmar, and ʿUthmān because people elected them although there was a person, i.e. ʿAli, better than them.
- 5 They do not believe in the practice of dissimulation (al-taḳiyyah).
- 6 The Muslim grave sinner (murtakib al-kabīrah) remains a Muslim but he/she is neither a believer nor a disbeliever, i.e. he/she is in an intermediate position (manzilah baina al-manzilatain).
- 7 Muḥammad does not provide intercession to Muslim wrongdoers.
- 8 They do not believe in God's attributes; for the Zaidis, God's attributes are allegorical and should be interpreted in an esoteric sense.

- 9 They espouse rational and hypothetical exegetical views in Qur'anic exegesis.
- 10 They believe that God's knowledge is eternal and old (*azali wa qadīm*) and that everything is written in the preserved tablet (*al-lawḥ al-maḥfūz*).
- 11 They believe that Abu Bakr, ʿUmar, and ʿUthmān are legitimate successors to Muḥammad, do not denounce them, and have high respect to them.
- 12 Rebellion and military opposition are legal against the oppressive ruler who does not apply Islamic law.
- 13 Temporary marriage (*zawāj al-mutʿah*) is counter to Islamic law.
- 14 It is possible to have two contemporary Imāms in different places or countries.
- 15 The Imāmate is neither one of the pillars of Islam nor whoever disbelieves in it is a disbeliever.
- 16 They do not believe in Qadarism (*al-qadar*); instead, they believe in man's free will, i.e. the individual enjoys a free will.
- 17 The optional prayers after the evening prayer during Ramaḍān (*ṣalāt al-tarāwīḥ*) is an innovation.
- 18 There will be no awaited Mahdi (*al-mahdi al-muntaẓar*).
- 19 Because the Zaidis do not believe in the Shīʿi Imām al-Mahdi, they also do not Believe in the rule of the jurist (*wilāyat al-faqīh*). However, mainstream Shīʿism allows a qualified Shīʿi jurist (*faqīh*) to be installed as the spiritual leader of Shīʿis in the absence of the awaited Shīʿi Imām al-Mahdi.
- 20 The payment of charity of 20 per cent (*zakāt al-khums*) of the Muslim's wealth or money to a Shīʿi Imām or whoever is related him, i.e. his descendents.
- 21 The seeing of God will not take place in the hereafter.
- 22 The Qur'ān is not created.
- 23 Zaidi scholars believe that Prophets are of a higher status than the angels. Thus, Muḥammad is favoured over the rest of angels. However, the angels are better than and favoured over ordinary people (cf. Q17:70).
- 24 They believe that Sufism is counter to Islamic law.

2.3.2.3.3 THE ḤŪTHI SECT (AL-ḤUTHIYYAH)

The Ḥūthis (*al-ḥūthiyyūn*) are a sleeping volcano in the Yemen. They are mainly in the region of Ṣaʿdah in northern Yemen which is 240 kilometres north of the capital Sana. Although they are a new splinter sect of Zaidism, they are heavily influenced by mainstream Shīʿists who represent the twelver Shīʿis (*al-shīʿah al-ithnā ʿashariyyah*). Historically, the Ḥūthis belong to the blind Kūfan scholar Abu al-Jārūd Ziyād b. al-Mundhir al-Hamadāni whose sect is nicknamed al-Jārūdiyyah (Jārūdism), which is a Shīʿi sub-sect whose dogmatic beliefs are similar to mainstream Shīʿism but is also a splinter sub-sect of Zaidism. Our interest in this sect is attributed to the fact that the Ḥūthis are still politically and militarily active during our time. They aim to establish the Imāmate and have consequently led five armed rebellions against the Yemeni government; the first was in 2004 and the last was in 2010. The recent conflict between the Yemeni government and the Ḥūthis caused \$8 billion worth of damage. Ḥūthism is a political movement,

founded at the end of 2003 by a Zaidi gentleman called Ḥusain Badr al-Dīn al-Ḥūthi who is politically influenced by al-Khomani of Iran and the Lebanese Ḥizb Allāh party led by Ḥasan Naṣr Allāh. Ḥūthism, therefore, is an extension of the Iranian revolution of Khomeini and Ḥizb Allāh. The spiritual leader of the Ḥūthis is an 86-year-old scholar called Badr al-Dīn b. Amīr al-Dīn al-Ḥūthi who is the father of Ḥusain Badr al-Dīn al-Ḥūthi. He lived in Tehran with his son Ḥusain for a few years until 1997, where both were influenced by mainstream and Iranian Shī'ism. The influence of mainstream Shī'ism on the Ḥūthis, which began in the 1990s, is illustrated below:

- (i) Prostration on a piece of mud taken from the city of Karbalā', in southern Iraq, called al-turbah al-karbalā'īyyah. This piece of mud comes in different shapes and sizes and is placed on the ground; the twelver Shī'i or Ḥūthi Muslim places his/her forehead on it during prostration when performing prayers. In mainstream Shī'ism, Karbalā' is a sacred city in which the Shī'i Imām al-Husain was killed and buried. Thus, prostration on al-turbah al-karbalā'īyyah is obligatory and symbolizes mainstream Shī'ism.
- (ii) The Ḥūthis have adopted the mainstream Shī'i belief in the Imāmate as one of the pillars of Islam and that any Muslim who renounces it is a disbeliever.
- (iii) The Ḥūthis have publically denounced the companions, especially Abu Bakr, 'Umar, and 'Uthmān, whom they consider as illegitimate successors to Muḥammad.
- (iv) The Ḥūthis were members of the Zaidi educational and religious organization called the Youth Union (ittiḥād al-shabāb) established in 1986. The Ḥūthis were also members of the Truth Party (ḥizb al-ḥaqq), a Zaidi political umbrella. However, in 1991, the Ḥūthis left the Zaidi Truth Party; Ḥusain Badr al-Dīn al-Ḥūthi established his own political party called the Young Believers (al-shabāb al-mu'min); 1997 marked the beginning of the Ḥūthi theological transition from Jārūdism/Zaidism to twelver mainstream Shī'ism.
- (v) The Ḥūthis have begun to espouse the rule of the jurist (wilāyat al-faqīh) which allows a qualified Shī'i jurist (faqīh) to be installed as the spiritual leader of the Ḥūthis in the absence of the awaited Shī'i Imām al-Mahdi. In other words, the Shī'i Ḥūthi jurist can act as the representative of Imām al-Mahdi. The adoption of the mainstream Shī'i notion of the rule of the jurist has given Ḥusain Badr al-Dīn al-Ḥūthi a political leverage in order to appoint himself as the political and spiritual leader of the Ḥūthis.

As a result of the above, during the closing years of the twentieth century, the Zaidi scholars of the Yemen signed a declaration (The Declaration of Zaidi Scholars) in which they disavowed the Ḥūthis and declared them as non-Zaidis. In 1993 and 1997, Ḥusain Badr al-Dīn al-Ḥūthi was elected as a member of the Yemeni parliament. From the city of Ṣa'dah, Ḥusain Badr al-Dīn al-Ḥūthi led the first Ḥūthi rebellion in 2004 against the government in which he was killed on 10 September 2004 at the age of 46. He was succeeded by his younger brother 'Abd al-Malik Badr al-Dīn al-Ḥūthi (born in 1979) who so far has led four more rebellions against the Yemeni government, the last one of which was in 2010.

The major dogmatic and political views of Ḥūthism include:

- 1 Calling for violence against Israel and the United States, who are called ‘the enemies of God and Islam’.
- 2 Mistrust of the Jews and Christians.
- 3 Any Muslim who has links with the Jews or the Christians is a disbeliever.
- 4 Calling for the allegiance to ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib. For the Ḥūthis, and mainstream Shī‘ism, he is the legitimate successor to Muḥammad.
- 5 Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, and ‘Uthmān are not the legitimate successors to Muḥammad. For the Ḥūthis, these three companions are worthy to be denounced.
- 6 Calling for the Imāmate, which is a declaration of allegiance to all Shī‘i Imāms.
- 7 The belief in the Imāmate as a one of the pillars of Islam and that any Muslim who renounces it is a disbeliever.
- 8 The Imām is not appointed by a bequest (waṣīyyah); rather, the Imām should be selected through allegiance (al-mubāya‘ah). This theological notion is politically motivated, since it provides Ḥusain Badr al-Dīn al-Ḥūthi political manoeuvrability among his Ḥūthi supporters who have given him their political and religious allegiance.
- 9 Rebellion and military opposition are legal against the oppressive ruler or Imām who does not apply Islamic law. This notion has given legitimacy to Ḥusain Badr al-Dīn al-Ḥūthi’s political agenda.
- 10 The Ḥūthis believe in the rule of the jurist (wilāyat al-faqīh) which allows a qualified Shī‘i jurist (faqīh) to be installed as the spiritual leader of the Ḥūthis in the absence of the awaited Shī‘i Imām al-Mahdī. In other words, the Shī‘i Ḥūthi jurist can act as the representative of Imām al-Mahdī.
- 11 Prostration on a piece of mud taken from the city of Karbalā’, in southern Iraq, called al-turbah al-karbalā’iyyah is obligatory and symbolizes mainstream Shī‘ism.
- 12 The payment of charity of 20 per cent (zakāt al-khums) of the Muslim’s wealth or money to a Shī‘i Imām or whoever is related him, i.e. his descendents.
- 13 The seeing of God will not take place in the hereafter.
- 14 The Qur’ān is not created.
- 15 Ḥūthi scholars espouse rational and hypothetical exegetical views in Qur’anic exegesis.
- 16 They believe that Prophets are of a higher status than the angels. Thus, Muḥammad is favoured over all the angels. However, the angels are better than and favoured over ordinary people (cf. Q17:70).

2.3.3 School of Ibāḍi Qur’anic exegesis

Ibāḍism emerged in the Iraqi city of Baṣrah during the first/seventh century and was founded by the early successor Jābir b. Zaid (d. 93/711) who was succeeded by Abū ‘Ubaidah Muslim b. Abī Karīmah. However, the nickname was taken from the Ibāḍi scholar ‘Abd Allāh b. Ibāḍ al-Tamīmī (d. 86/705). The Ibāḍis

remained in Baṣrah until the end of the third/ninth century. It was the first school of thought to be established in the first/seventh century. Thus, when ʿAbd Allāh b. Ibāḍ passed away in 86/705, Imām Abu Ḥanīfah (born in 80/699) was only six years old. Ibāḍism, however, emerged initially as an opposition political and religious movement to the Umayyad and Abbasid rulers. During the Abbasid period, the Ibāḍi scholar ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Rustam (d. 190/806) managed to establish an Ibāḍi state called the Rustami State in the Algerian city of Tāhirt which lasted for 120 years. The Ibāḍis mainly live in the Sultanate of Oman but there are some who live in the Libyan city of Zwārah, the Mīzāb valley in Algeria, and the Tunisian city of Jarbah. One of the offshoots of Ibāḍism called al-Ḥafṣiyyah, who were the followers of Ḥafṣ b. Abī al-Miqdām, expressed strong views against ʿAli b. Abī Ṭālib. They believed that Q2:204 (There is a kind of man whose views on the life of this world may please you, he even calls on God to witness what is in his heart, yet he is the bitterest of opponents) referred to ʿAli, and that Q2:207 (But there is also a kind of man who gives his life away to please God) referred to ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥjib who murdered ʿAli (al-Khalili 1988; al-Kindi 2004; al-Shaibāni 2008).

The major dogmatic and political views of Ibāḍism include:

- 1 Allegiance to the Muslim ruler whether he applies Islamic law or not.
- 2 The Qurʾān is created.
- 3 Ibāḍi scholars believe that the hell fire does not exist now, i.e. the fire has not been created yet by God but will be created just before the day of judgement.
- 4 God will not be seen in the hereafter.
- 5 God's attributes are allegorical, such as the attributes of (al-samʿ – hearing), (al-naẓar – seeing).
- 6 Qurʾanic exegesis should be based on esoteric (bāṭin) meaning.
- 7 None of the companions is infallible except for the Prophet Muḥammad.
- 8 They believe that Abu Bakr, ʿUmar, and ʿUthmān are legitimate successors to Muḥammad, do not denounce them, and have high respect to them.
- 9 They believe that ʿAli b. Abī Ṭālib was wrong to accept arbitration (al-taḥkīm) with Muʿāwiyah. For this reason, they abandoned ʿAli.
- 10 According to Ibāḍi exegetes, a Muslim who does not perform pilgrimage (ḥajj) is a disbeliever.

Examples of Ibāḍi Qurʾanic exegesis:

- 1 (lā tudrikuhu al-abṣāru wahuwa yudriku al-abṣāra – Vision does not perceive Him [God], but He perceives all vision, Q6:103) and (qāla lan tarāni – God said: ‘You will not see Me’, Q7:143) are evidence for the Ibāḍi exegetes that no one will see God in the hereafter. For the Ibāḍis, the Shīʿis and the Muʿtazilis, even the believer who wins paradise will not see God in the hereafter. However, for mainstream exegetes, Q7:143 means (God said: ‘You will not see Me during the life of this world, but you will see Me in the hereafter in paradise’).

- 2 (khāliq kullī shai'in – the Creator of all things, Q6:102) is evidence for the Ibāḍī scholars that the Qur'ān is created because like other things, it is 'a thing'.
- 3 The grave sinner (murtakib al-kabirah) will undergo perpetual punishment in the hereafter unless he/she has repented before his/her death. For them, this view is supported by ḥadīths: (ṣinfān min ahl al-nār lam arāhumā . . . lā yadkhulūna al-jannata walā yajidūna riḥahā – Two categories of people of the fire whom I will not see . . . They will never enter the garden and will never experience its smell) and (thalāthatun lā yadkhulūna al-jannata mud-minu al-khamri . . . – Three people will never enter the garden; the person who is alcohol addict, . . .).
- 4 (wal-arḍu jamī'an qabḍatuhū yawma al-qiyāmah – while the earth will be entirely within His [God's] grip, Q39:67) and (qul inna al-faḍla biyadi allāh – Say: 'Indeed, all bounty is in the hand of God', Q3:73) where the words (qabḍa – grip) and (yad – hand) are interpreted as (al-mulk – the dominion of God, al-qudrah – power, might of God). This is an allegorical interpretation which is based on esoteric meaning (al-ma'nā al-bāṭin, al-ma'nā al-majāzī).
- 5 (waqālat al-yahūdu yadu allāhi maghlūlah, Q5:64) where the word (yad – hand) is interpreted allegorically as (al-rizq – provision). Thus, we have (The Jews say: 'The provision of God is limited'). However, according to exoteric exegesis, Q5:64 means: (The Jews say: 'The hand of God is chained').
- 6 (walituṣṣa'a 'alā 'ainī – You (Moses) would be brought up under my eye, Q20:39). However, for Ibāḍī exegetes, the word ('ain – eye) is given an allegorical interpretation as (al-'ilm – knowledge).
- 7 The Muslim ruler does not have to be a descendent from the tribe of Quraish. For the Ibāḍīs, this is elitism and is counter to the political notion of consultation (shūrā) stipulated by the Qur'ān (wa'amruhum shūrā bainahum – whose affair is determined by consultation among themselves, Q42:38).
- 8 If one wakes up in a state of major ritual impurity (junub) during Ramaḍān, his/her fasting of that day is invalid. If he/she deliberately delays washing himself/herself, an atonement, i.e. expiation (kaffārah) for this sin should be paid.
- 9 Ibāḍī scholars believe that Prophets are of a higher status than the angels. Thus, Muḥammad is favoured over all the angels. However, the angels are better than and favoured over ordinary people (cf. Q17:70).

2.3.4 School of Sufi Qur'anic exegesis

Sufism started as a mystico-ascetic pattern of life which laid emphasis on the introspective examination of the self and seclusion and turned into a revolt against religio-political systems. The Sufis were active in ordering what is right and forbidding what is wrong, to the displeasure of the ruler, at times. Sufism can be traced back to the formative phase¹⁵ of the evolution of Qur'anic exegesis during which the Baṣrah school of exegesis was established by al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, who led an ascetic life style that had impacted on his approach to Qur'anic exegesis; hence, the seeds of asceticism had grown into Sufism at a later phase. Krymsky,

however, discovers the impact of Greek philosophy on Sufism. He claims that 'formal philosophy, and strangely enough, Aristotelian philosophy, could in no way be said to contradict Sufism. Several Enneads of Plotinus ascribed by the Arabs to Aristotle used to be learned by every Arab philosopher'. 'It is for this reason that the Arab philosophers were pure neoplatonists' (1959, p. 110).

Sufi exegetes have established their supposition (iftirāḍ) and guessing (takhmīn) of esoteric meaning on the ḥadīth: (lilqur'āni wajhun ṣāhirun wawajhun bāṭinun waḥaddun wamaṭla'un – The Qur'ān has exoteric meaning, esoteric meaning, an end, and a beginning). Due to its esoteric and symbolic approach to the Qur'anic text, Sufism has been met with opposition by both mainstream and most non-mainstream exegetes. In the view of Abul Quasem, Sufism was condemned by jurists (al-fuqahā'), traditionists (al-muḥaddithūn), and the Ḥanbalites (al-ḥanābilah) (1979, p. 63). Melchert (2001, p. 352) notes that Sufism and Ḥanbalism are contradictory; the former is associated with moral laxity and the latter with severe morals and rigid orthodoxy. For Krymsky (1959, p. 109), 'Sufism is in fact entirely contrary to the tenets preached by Muḥammad' and it was influenced by Christianity during the Umayyad period (41–132/661–749) and by the Indo-Persian sects during the Abbasid period (132–655/749–1257) (ibid., p. 114). However, the German scholar Tholuck who made a profound account of Sufism asserted that Sufism developed out of Islam without the slightest foreign influence (ibid. p. 114), as well as Abul Quasem (1979, p. 63) who argued that Sufism of the medieval times had its roots and fundamentals in the Qur'ān and the sunnah.

In an effort to attain purification of the soul, the Sufis read the Qur'ān with an introspective perception and rely on symbolic exegesis (al-tafsīr al-ishārī) which, they claim, can be arrived at only through the faculty of intuition. Thus, the Iraqi Sufi exegete al-Ḥusain b. Maṣṣūr al-Ḥallāj (d. 309/921) said: (man lam yaqif 'alā ishārātīnā lam tanfa'hu 'ibārātunā – Whoever does not understand our symbolism, will not benefit from our expressions) (Nūr al-Dīn 1992, p. 65). The same proposition was echoed by al-Ghazālī who admonishes against the divulgence of esoteric interpretations to those who may not be capable of understanding them (Heer 1999, p. 235). In his tafsīr, al-Sulāmi (d. 412/1021) explains: (aw ukhrujū min diyārikum – or leave your houses, Q4:66) as 'to remove worldly love from your heart', and in: (inna al-abrāra lafī na'im wa'inna al-fujjāra lafī jaḥīm – Indeed, the righteous will be in pleasure, and indeed, the wicked will be in hell fire, Q82:13–14), the word (na'im – pleasure) means 'divine knowledge' and (jaḥīm – hell fire) means 'the self which has succumbed to its own evil desires'. For 'Abd al-Karīm al-Jīlī (767–822/1365–1419), Q15:87 (walaqad ātaināka sab'an min al-mathānī – We [God] have certainly given you, O Muḥammad, seven of the often repeated verses), the expression (al-mathānī – often repeated) means: (the seven divine characteristics which are: life, knowledge, resolve, power, hearing, seeing, speaking, that these seven characteristics are only possessed by the perfect person, and that the perfect person can have these features because he is the mirror of the divine essence) (Zaidān 1988, p. 86).

Among the Sufi exegetes were al-Ḥallāj (d. 309/921), al-Sulāmi (d. 412/1021), al-Qushairī (d. 465/1072), al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111), Rozbahān (or al-Baqli)

(d. 606/1209), Ibn ʿArabi (d. 638/1240), al-Jili (d. 805/1402), and al-Ālūsī (d. 1270/1853). Modern Sufi exegetes include Muḥyi al-Dīn al-Ṭaʿmi and Moḥammad Ghāzi ʿArābi.

Among the theological and dogmatic views of Sufism are:

- 1 Sufi scholars lay great significance on the remembrance of God (al-dhikr) during which the attributes of God are repeatedly mentioned. The remembrance of God in Sufism constitutes the waging of a constant spiritual warfare against the soul that commands evil (al-naḥs ammārah bil-sūʿ) and the deceptive world (al-dunyā al-gharūr). This is part of the Sufi spiritual aspiration (al-himmah), through which they aim to achieve divine closeness and enjoy spiritual flights (Abdul-Haq 1990, pp. 39–40).
- 2 The Sufis rely on absolute submission to God and on the annihilation of the ego (Heer 1999, p. 235).
- 3 Sufi exegetes stress the spiritual aspect of the Qurʾanic moral teachings, highlight the spiritual significance of the āyah, deduce their exegetical views from their mystical experience and renunciation of desires, and indulge in speculative and philosophical thought (Ahmad 1967, p. 116).
- 4 Although the meaning of the Qurʾān is divine for the Sufis, only those endowed with knowledge and divine illumination, they claim, can have access to this divine meaning.
- 5 Sufi exegetes believe that Qurʾanic exegesis is hinged upon esoteric interpretation and that the Qurʾanic exegesis should be rational (ʿaqli) and based on symbolism and allusion (ishāri). The Sufi approach adopts the esoteric, i.e. allegorical, symbolic meaning (al-maʿnā al-bāṭin or al-maʿnā al-majāzi) of the Qurʾanic expression or āyah and gives it a mystical import and a touch of asceticism, as in: (wattakhadha qawmu mūsā min baʿdihī min ḥuliyiyihim ʿijlan jasadan laḥū khuwār – The people of Moses made, after his departure, from their ornaments a calf, an image having a lowing sound, Q7:148) which, for Sahl al-Tustari, means any thing that keeps the individual from his/her Lord is the ‘golden calf’ which can be in the form of one’s family, his/her children, or his/her wealth, which he/she is attached to (Ahmad 1967, p. 107).
- 6 Humans, for the Sufis, face obstacles in seeking the truth. These obstacles include: weakness of faith, lust after material things of life, and the way of clinging to the literal meaning of the āyah. Thus, for Abu Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 450/1058–505/1111), humans can read the words of the Qurʾān but fail to comprehend their meanings and only the angels can. Thus, for him, the meanings of the Qurʾān belong to ‘the world of angels’, i.e. the meanings of Qurʾanic words are divine (cf. Ahmad 1967, p. 111).
- 7 For Sufi exegetes, most believers are unable to understand the underlying meanings of the Qurʾān and are thus unable to deal with its esoteric analysis and that people’s intellect has been veiled by Satan (Heer 1999, p. 253).
- 8 Sufi exegetes like al-Tustari (d. 283/896) provide exegetical details which have no back up by Qurʾanic intertextuality, the prophetic tradition, the

companions' views, or the views of early successors. For instance, when David asked God where He was, God replied: 'In a broken heart.'

- 9 For Sufi theologians, Adam was created from the clay of honour but honour was created out of the light of Muḥammad.
- 10 In paradise, we are told by Sufi scholars that Muḥammad's name is written on every leaf of every tree (Ahmad 1967, p. 108).
- 11 For the Sufi exegete 'Arābi (2006, 2, p. 830), Muḥammad inherited God's light.
- 12 They believe that Abu Bakr, 'Umar, and 'Uthmān are legitimate successors to Muḥammad, do not denounce them, and have high respect to them.
- 13 The Qur'ān is not created.
- 14 God will be seen in the hereafter.
- 15 Sufi exegetes believe that Prophets are of a higher status than the angels. Thus, Muḥammad is favoured over all the angels. However, the angels are better than and favoured over ordinary people (cf. Q17:70).

According to Sufi exegetes such as al-Tusturi, the following āyahs and Qur'anic expressions have esoteric and allegorical meanings (Zaghlūl 1977, p. 323):

- 1 (al-jāri dhi al-qurbā wal-jāri al-junubi wal-ṣāḥibi bil-janbi wa-ibni al-sabīl – the near neighbour, the neighbour farther away, the companion at your side, the traveller, Q4:36) has esoteric meanings such as: (al-jāri dhi al-qurbā – the near neighbour) signifies (the heart), (al-jāri al-junubi – the neighbour farther away) refers to (nature), (al-ṣāḥibi bil-janbi – the companion at your side) signifies (the reason that follows Islamic law), and (ibni al-sabīl – the traveller) refers to (the senses obedient to God).
- 2 (al-bait al-ma'mūr – By the frequented house, Q52:4) signifies: (the frequented house in the fourth heaven) and it also has the esoteric meaning: (the heart that is thronged with knowing, loving, and being entertained by God. It is the house which the angels make pilgrimage to because it is the house of monotheism).
- 3 (huwa yuḥyi wayumīt – God gives life and causes death, Q7:158) means: (the hearts of all people of the truth which are kept alive by the remembrance and seeing of God).
- 4 (watruk al-baḥra rahwan – Leave the sea in stillness, Q44:24) means: (prepare your heart to ponder upon God).
- 5 (fa'ammā man aṭā . . . waṣaddaqa bil-ḥusnā – As for he who gives and fears God and believes in the best reward, Q92:5–6) refers to: (Abu Bakr al-Ṣiddiq).
- 6 (man bakhila wastaghna – but as for he who withholds and considers himself free of need, Q92:8) refers to: (Abu Sufyān who withheld to obey God and the Prophet and considered himself free of need).
- 7 (waman aḏlamu mimman mana'a masājida allāhi . . . ismuh – Who are more unjust than those who prevent the name of God from being praised in God's mosques, Q2:114) where the expression (masajid – mosques) refers to (al-qulūb – the hearts) and (that people are busy with matters which are not their concern).

- 8 (idhhabā ilā firʿawna innahū ṭaghā – go, both of you, to Pharaoh. Indeed, he has transgressed, Q20:43) where the word (firʿawna – Pharaoh) means: (the heart).
- 9 (rabbi arinī kaifa tuḥyi al-mawtā – My Lord show me how You give life to the dead, Q2:260) where the expression (al-mawtā – the dead) means: (the hearts).
- 10 (yā aiyyuha alladhīna āmanū qātilu alladhīna yalūnakum min al-kuffāri – O you who have believed, fight those adjacent to you of the disbelievers, Q9:123) where the expression (alladhīna yalūnakum min al-kuffāri – those adjacent to you of the disbelievers) means: (the evil soul) because it is the nearest thing to us. Thus, it is our enemy.
- 11 (wajnubnī wabaniyya an naʿbuda al-aṣṇām – Keep me and my sons away from worshipping idols, Q14:35) where the expression (al-aṣṇām – idols) means: (love of wealth, silver and gold). Thus, Q14:35 has the estoric meaning: (Keep me and my sons away from the love of wealth, silver and gold.)

2.3.5 School of modern Qurʿanic exegesis

Permissible or commendable hypothetical ‘rational’ interpretation of the Qurʿān (taʿwīl maqbūl, or taʿwīl Maḥmūd) has been exercised since the nineteenth century by modern exegetes who adopt one of the literary style approaches. Modern rational approaches to Qurʿanic exegesis can be classified into three major categories: (i) literary, (ii) text linguistic, and (iii) scientific. The text linguistic approach can be sub-classified into: (a) consonance-based, and (b) sūrah structure-based. This classification is illustrated by [Figure 3](#) over page.

2.3.5.1 School of literary style Qurʿanic exegesis

The principal objective of literary style tafsīr works is to raise religious awareness and admonition. Literary style Qurʿanic exegesis highlights the following features:

- (i) belief;
- (ii) the role of religion in the individual’s life;
- (iii) God’s omnipotence;
- (iv) socio-political ills;
- (v) modern scientific developments;
- (vi) new scientific details to attract the modern reader.

Although literary style exegesis is rational, it calls for the abolition of:

- (i) Judaeo-Christian anecdotes;
- (ii) unnecessary long details;
- (iii) weak ḥadīths.

Literary style Qurʿanic exegesis is a rational technique adopted to achieve socio-educational reform. Thus, literary style has become synonymous with religious sociology and educational reform scholarship. For instance, the

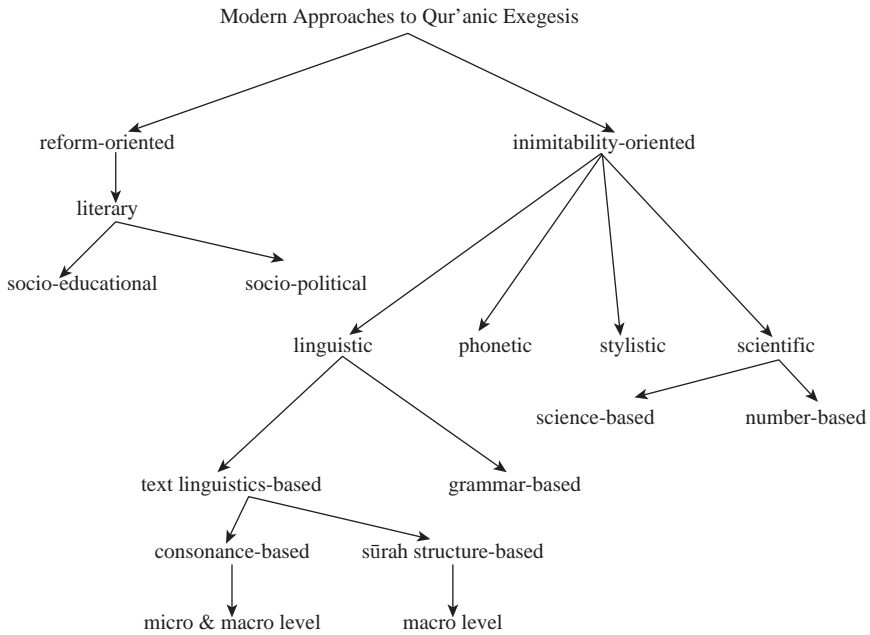


Figure 3 Classification of modern approaches to Qur'anic exegesis.

Malaysian exegete Aḥmad b. Ḥasan al-Hādi (1867–1934) was influenced by the Egyptian exegetes and reformers Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī (1839–1897) and his student Muḥammad ʿAbdu (1848–1905). Similarly, the Egyptian exegete, Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā (d. 1897) wrote his tafsīr work *Tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-Ḥakīm* known as *al-Manār* in a socio-religious reform-based literary style. This exegetical approach influenced the Malaysian exegete and educational reformer Muṣṭafā ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Maḥmūd (1918–1968) in his tafsīr work *Tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-Ḥakīm* which bears the exact title of Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā (ʿAbd Allāh 2007, p. 117). Literary style Qur'anic exegesis has also been adopted by various non-mainstream exegetes such as the Ibāḍī exegete Baiyūḍ (2005).

Literary style Qur'anic exegesis with political leanings aims to raise political awareness and calls for political reform. For socio-political exegetes like Sayyid Quṭb (d. 1966), for instance, the Muslim governments were too Western in thought and too secular in outlook. Although it is politically oriented, socio-political exegesis makes reference to ḥadīth and views of the companions and the early successors, but avoids jurisprudential details and Judaeo-Christian anecdotes.

2.3.5.2 School of linguistic Qur'anic exegesis

The school of Qur'anic exegesis includes different linguistic approaches, such as:

- (i) Grammar-based Qur'anic exegesis: This modern grammar-based approach to Qur'anic exegesis is concerned with the grammatical analysis of expressions.

For further details, see [Chapter 3](#), (Sections 3.2, 3.2.1–3.2.3 and 3.6, 3.6.1–3.6.3, 3.6.3.1, 3.6.3.2, 3.6.4–3.6.6), and for examples and their linguistic analysis on the school of linguistic exegesis, see [Chapter 3](#) (Section 3.5).

- (ii) Rhetorical features-based Qur’anic exegesis: This modern rhetorical features-based approach to Qur’anic exegesis is concerned with the stylistic features of Qur’anic discourse at the rhetorical level. For further details, see [Chapter 3](#) (Sections 3.7, 3.7.1, 3.7.3), and for examples and their stylistic analysis on the school of linguistic exegesis based on the stylistic approach, see [Chapter 3](#) (Section 3.7.3).
- (iii) Text linguistic Qur’anic exegesis: The text linguistic approach to Qur’anic exegesis is a theme-based exegetical technique hinged upon the text linguistic notion of consonance, which can be captured at either the macro text level, such as the sūrah, or at the micro text level, such as single expressions or āyahs. For further details, see [Chapter 3](#) (Section 3.4.1), and for examples and their text linguistic analysis on the school of linguistic exegesis based on the text linguistic approach, see [Chapter 3](#) (Sections 3.3.4.1.1, 3.4.1.1.1, 3.4.1.1.2, 3.4.1.2).

2.3.6 School of scientific Qur’anic exegesis

Although the school of scientific Qur’anic exegesis is science-based and its argument is hinged upon factual scientific argument, it is classified as non-mainstream. This is attributed to two reasons:

- (i) Scientific exegesis is rational (‘aqli), i.e. based on hypothetical and personal opinion whose argument is either metaphysically based or mathematically based.
- (ii) It does not rely on the three major canons of exegesis: the Qur’ān, the ḥadīth, and the companions’ views.

Scientist exegetes have tried to subjugate the Qur’ān and the customary practice of Muḥammad (sunnah) to the scientific discoveries of pure sciences. The major drive of their approach is to substantiate three major premises:

- (i) the divine source of the Qur’ān;
- (ii) the notion of inimitability of the Qur’ān;
- (iii) the Qur’ān transcends time and geographical limitations.

Scientist Qur’ān scholars and exegetes claim that the Qur’ān is a Scripture whose message can integrate with any age and in any country, race, or culture. This claim put forward by reformists and scientist exegetes is either scientifically or mathematically oriented. Scientific exegetical approach is selective rather than an āyah-by-āyah exegesis (tafsīr ghair musalsal). Scientific exegesis is a form of thematic genre (tafsīr mawḍū‘i), i.e. it is topic-based, which is concerned with the scientific aspects of some āyahs that demonstrate God’s omnipotence, on the one

hand, and that the two canonical sources of Islam are compatible with the modern age of sciences, on the other. This form of Qur'anic exegesis occurs at two different levels of discourse analysis: (i) at word level, and (b) at āyah level.

There are several statements in the Qur'ān clothed with scientific undertones, such as (By the pen, Q68:1), (Look at what is in the heavens and on the earth, Q10:101), (Have they not thought about their own selves, Q30:8), (There are various colours among human beings, wild animals, and livestock, Q35:28), (On earth, there are signs for those with sure faith, and in yourselves, too; do you not see?, Q51:20–21). In the Qur'ān, we also encounter statements which grant people of knowledge an elevated status: (How can those who with knowledge be equal to those with no knowledge?, Q39:9), (It is those of His servants who have knowledge who stand in true awe of God, Q35:28), (God will raise up, by many degrees those of you who believe and those who have been given knowledge, Q58:11).

2.3.6.1 *Historical development of the school of scientific exegesis*

The school of scientific Qur'anic exegesis is primarily concerned with the inimitability-oriented analysis of Qur'anic discourse. For more details on the scientifically oriented approach to Qur'anic stylistic inimitability, see [Chapter 3](#) (Section 3.6.2). This is a science-based approach that deals with expressions or āyahs rather than a whole Qur'anic chapter. During the fifth/eleventh century, Greek metaphysics had impacted Qur'anic exegesis and the influence was echoed by the exegetical views of al-Rāzi (d. 606/1209) and Abu Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111) who were both influenced by Greek sciences.

During the fourth/eleventh century, Qur'ān exegetes like Ibn Sīnā (d. 428/1036) and al-Rāzi (d. 606/1209), were influenced by Greek metaphysics and provided science-based Qur'anic exegesis. Ibn Sīnā, for instance, provides a scientifically oriented esoteric exegesis to Q69:17 (The angels will be on all sides of the heaven, and on that day, eight angels will bear the throne of your Lord). Ibn Sīnā claims that (al-ʿarsh – the throne) is the ninth orbit (al-falak al-tāsiʿ) and is the master orbit (falak al-aflāk) while 'the eight angels' refer to 'the eight orbits which are underneath the ninth orbit'. Thus, the fourth/eleventh century marks the birth of scientific interpretation (al-ta'wil al-ʿilmi).

During the modern phase of Qur'anic exegesis, exegesis reformists like Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī (1839–1897) and his student Muḥammad ʿAbdu (1848–1905) called for:

- (i) ridding Qur'anic exegesis of unnecessary details, Judeo-Christian anecdotes, and weak ḥadīths;
- (ii) espousing simplified literary style;
- (iii) making Qur'anic exegesis easy for the uneducated reader;
- (iv) most importantly, embracing scientific factual details based on modern scientific discoveries and theories that are compatible with Qur'anic statements.

Ironically, however, the major objective of both Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī and Muḥammad ʿAbdu, to 'make Qur'anic exegesis easy', has not been achieved

because their approach is based on science. Thus, we have begun to encounter pure science jargon such as ‘gravity theory’ when dealing with Q6:125 (God makes the breast of the misguided person tight and constrained as though he/she were climbing into the sky) and Q91:5 (By the sky and how God built it). Similarly, Muḥammad ‘Abdu links Q105 with germs, chickenpox, and measles which afflicted the soldiers of Abrahah, saying that these diseases originated from the stones of hard clay (ḥijāratin min sijjil) which might have been poisonous, that the soldiers were not attacked by birds (ṭairan) but rather by mosquitoes and flies which of course also had wings to fly, or that the poisonous tiny pieces of hard clay were carried by the wind and could have got stuck in the legs of the mosquitoes and flies, and that once they were in contact with the body of a soldier, he would have got a serious infection.

In his 25-volume *al-Jawāhir fī Tafsīr al-Qur’ān*, Ṭanṭāwī Jawhari (1870–1940) is of the opinion that the Qur’ān can only be understood through modern scientific theories and discoveries, that the Qur’ān is science-based since it has 750 scientific statements compared to 150 statements on Islamic legal rulings. Jawhari includes in his exegesis Western scientific details, statistics, and pictures of animals and plants, and refers to the science of conjuring up the dead when he deals with Q2:66–72. Through articles published in Egyptian magazines, the Syrian-born exegete ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Kawākibi (d. 1902) argues that the Qur’ān includes scientific theories which substantiate its inimitability. He refers to Q21:30 as evidence of his premise: (Are the disbelievers not aware that the heavens and the earth used to be joined together and that We [God] ripped them apart, that We made every living thing from water), that the earth separated from the solar system, the moon separated from the earth according to Q54:1 (The hour [the day of judgement] draws near, and the moon is split in two), that the earth has seven layers based on Q65:12 (It is God who created seven heavens and a similar number of earths), and that the clay of swamps was the source of the diseases and infections that affected the soldiers of Abrahah in Q105:3–4).

‘Abd al-‘Azīz Ismā‘īl is a physician who published numerous articles in *Nūr al-Islām* magazine of al-Azhar in which he argues for the correlation between modern medicine and the Qur’ān. He refers to Q4:56 (We [God] shall send those who reject our revelations to the fire. When their skins have been burned away, We shall replace them with new ones so that they may continue to feel the pain) which he believes that when the skin is burned away, there will be no more pain felt. Thus, to maximize the pain, the roasted skin is replaced by a new skin. Medically, Dr Ismā‘īl claims, the pain nerves are located in the skin. Thus, the skin has a strong level of sensation of pain. However, the sensation of pain is much weaker by the tissues, muscles, and internal organs. For this reason, he claims, minor burns which do not go deeper than the skin are more painful than major burns which go as deep as the tissues and can be dangerous. Thus, renewing the burned away skin is to keep the pain constant (cf. Hamīmī 2002). In a similar vein, ‘Adnān al-Sharīf (2001) has also written his book *Min ‘Ilm al-Ṭibb al-Qur’āni* in which he illustrates medical facts and conditions that, in his view, have been referred to in the Qur’ān or the ḥadīth.

Hanafi Ahmad is a geologist and University of Durham graduate. His *al-Tafsīr al-‘Ilmī lil-Āyāt al-Kawniyyah fī al-Qur’ān* (Hanafi 1980) is scientific inimitability-oriented. He deals with āyahs like Q21:31 (We placed firm mountains on the earth lest it should sway under them) and Q31:10 (He placed firm mountains on the earth in case it should shake under you) which substantiate the scientific fact that mountains are placed on the earth to create balance and stability on earth. This argument, he believes, is supported by Q78:7 (God created the mountains to keep earth stable.) The expression ‘pegs’ (awtād) in this āyah reminds the reader of the pegs required to stabilize the tent and hold it firm. In his book *Earth*, Frank Press (1986, p. 435), President of the National Academy of Sciences in Washington, argues that mountains have underlying roots which are deeply embedded in the ground.

‘Abd al-Razzāq Nawfal has written on the notion of Qur’anic scientific inimitability from a dietary perspective. Nawfal refers to protein-rich foods such as beans and that although they are a good source of energy, they should not be consumed regularly or in large amounts, especially by children, because they can upset the body organs, and for this reason, they should be replaced by carbohydrate-rich foods as a source of energy. He also argues that the protein found in meat is better than that of beans. Thus, Nawfal concludes, Q2:60 (Moses told the Children of Israel: ‘Would you exchange what is better for what is worse?’) reflects a dietary fact. This āyah is about the Children of Israel who asked Moses to change their diet from meat to vegetarian. Nawfal distinguishes between the nutritional values of meat and vegetarian foods. Scientific exegetes argue that Q2:61 is compatible with medical facts. According to new research, people who get their protein from vegetables rather than meat have lower blood pressure and that the amino acids and magnesium found in vegetables help lower blood pressure. Nawfal has also dealt with physics and discussed Q7:189 (It is He [God] who created you all from one soul, and from it made its mate so that he might find comfort in her.) For him, the expression (nafsīn wāḥidatin – one soul) is the proton whose mate is the electron, that from both the proton and the electron, the atom is generated, and that tranquillity is achieved between the husband and wife as it is achieved between the proton and its mate the electron in electricity.

Zaghlūl al-Najjār has also written three parts of his book *Min Āyāt al-ʿĪjāz al-‘Ilmī fī al-Qur’ān al-Karīm* in which he has discussed several science-oriented āyahs.

Abdelda’em Al-Kaheel is a Syrian scientist and Qur’ān scholar who has been working on the analysis of āyahs which have scientific orientation. He is a leading expert in number-and science-oriented Qur’anic inimitability. Al-Kaheel has been publishing through his *Encyclopaedia of Numeric Miracle, Qur’ān Miracle Newsletters*, and website (www.kaheel7.com/eng) numerous articles and has also produced video tapes on number- and science-based Qur’anic inimitability. Among his major publications are *Secrets of the Qur’ān Miracles: 70 Proofs* and *Secrets of the Universe Between Science and the Qur’ān: New Scientific Miracles*.

European scientists have also expressed their views with regard to the scientific phenomena that have occurred in the Qur’ān:

Maurice Bucaille (19 July 1920–17 February 1998) was a French medical doctor and former chief of the Surgical Clinic, University of Paris. In 1976, Bucaille published his book *The Bible, The Qur'an and Science* in which he argued that the Qur'ān contained no statements contradicting established scientific facts. Bucaille aims to prove the Qur'ān is in agreement with scientific facts, while the Bible is not. He claims that in Islam, science and religion have always been 'twin sisters'. Maurice Bucaille addressed the French Academy of Medicine in 1976 concerning the existence in the Qur'ān of certain statements concerning physiology and reproduction. His reason for doing that was that:

. . . our knowledge of these disciplines is such that it is impossible to explain how a text produced at the time of the Qur'ān could have contained ideas that have only been discovered in modern times. . . . The above observation makes the hypothesis advanced by those who see Muḥammad as the author of the Qur'ān untenable. How could a man, from being illiterate, become the most important author, in terms of literary merits, in the whole of Arabic literature? How could he then pronounce truths of a scientific nature that no other human-being could possibly have developed at that time, and all this without once making the slightest error in his pronouncement on the subject?

(al-Zindāni 1982)

Keith L. Moore is Professor Emeritus and a distinguished embryology, Department of Anatomy and Cell Biology, University of Toronto. Moore stated:

I was astonished by the accuracy of the statements that were recorded in the 7th century AD, before the science of embryology was established. Although I was aware of the glorious history of Muslim scientists in the 10th century AD, and some of their contributions to Medicine, I knew nothing about the religious facts and beliefs contained in the Qur'ān. . . . Because the staging of human embryos is complex, owing to the continuous process of change during development, it is proposed that a new system of classification could be developed using the terms mentioned in the Qur'ān. The proposed system is simple, comprehensive, and conforms to present embryological knowledge.

(al-Zindāni 1982)

E. Marshall Johnson is Chairman of the Department of Anatomy and Developmental Biology, Thomas Jefferson University, Pennsylvania, USA. Professor Johnson began to take an interest in the scientific aspects of the Qur'ān, especially the ayahs that refer to development of the foetus. Johnson states:

In summary, the Qur'ān describes not only the development of external form, but emphasises also the internal stages, the stages inside the embryo,

of its creation and development, emphasising major events recognised by contemporary science.

(al-Zindāni 1982)

Joe Leigh Simpson was Chairman of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Baylor College of Medicine, Houston, Texas, USA. He was also the President of the American Fertility Society. Simpson states:

[N]ot only is there no conflict between genetics and religion [Islam] but in fact religion [Islam] may guide science by adding revelation to some of the traditional scientific approaches . . . There exist statements in the Qur'ān shown centuries later to be valid which support knowledge in the Qur'ān having been derived from God.

(al-Zindāni 1982)

Gerald C. Goeringer is Professor and Co-ordinator of Medical Embryology in the Department of Cell Biology, School of Medicine, Georgetown University, Washington DC, USA. Goeringer states:

In a relatively few āyahs [Qur'anic verses] is contained a rather comprehensive description of human development from the time of commingling of the gametes through organogenesis. No such distinct and complete record of human development such as classification, terminology, and description existed previously. In most, if not all instances, this description antedates by many centuries the recording of the various stages of human embryonic and foetal development recorded in the traditional scientific literature.

(al-Zindāni 1982)

Yushidi Kusan is Director of the Tokyo Observatory, Tokyo, Japan. Kusan states:

I say, I am very much impressed by finding true astronomical facts in Qur'ān, and for us modern astronomers have been studying very small piece of the universe. We have concentrated our efforts for understanding of very small part. Because by using telescopes, we can see only very few parts of the sky without thinking about the whole universe. So by reading the Qur'ān and by answering to the questions, I think I can find my future way for investigation of the universe.

(al-Zindāni 1982)

Scientific exegesis works include *The Miracle of Human Creation* of Harun Yahya, *al-I'jāz al-ʿIlmī fī al-Qur'ān* of Zakariyah Hamīmī, *al-Mafhūm al-ʿIlmī lil-Jibāl fī al-Qur'ān al-Karīm* of Zaghlūl al-Najjār, *al-Jawāhir fī Taḥsīn al-Qur'ān al-Karīm* of Ṭanṭāwī Jawhari, *Min ʿIlm al-Ṭibb al-Qur'ānī* of ʿAdnān

al-Sharīf, *al-Qur'ān wa Fjāzuhu al-ʿIlmi* of Muḥammad Ismāʿīl Ibrāhīm, and *The Bible, The Qur'an and Science* of Maurice Bucaille. Recent publications by Abdeldā'em Al-Kaheel include *Encyclopaedia of Numeric Miracle*, *The Miracle of the Koran in the Digital Age*, and *Secrets of the Qur'ān Miracles: 70 Proofs*, as well as his website *Asrār al-Fjāz fī al-Qur'ān wal-Sunnah* (www.kaheel7.com/eng).

There are also television programmes such as those on the satellite channel Iqra' which provides science-oriented tafsīr of Qur'anic passages. Among Shī'i exegetes who are interested in scientific Qur'anic exegesis are the Iranian exegete Ayatollah Maḥmūd Taleqani (d. 1980), and the Iranian scholar Abdolkarim Soroush, a chemist by profession and training, has lectured and written extensively on the Qur'ān and sciences (Amirpur 2005, pp. 337, 339).

It is worthwhile to note that scientist Qur'ān exegetes argue that the occurrence of a particular creation such as the universe, planets, mountains, insect, plants, or fruits in some āyahs is to achieve specific goals, such as:

- (i) to remind the reader of God's omnipotence;
- (ii) to remind the reader of the unique characteristics of these particular creations;
- (iii) to admonish the reader to ponder upon these creations which are employed as signals, i.e. signs (āyāt), that point to God's existence;
- (iv) to enable the reader to arrive at the logical conclusion through these creations which must have a divine source;
- (v) to urge the reader to investigate the scientific value to human kind of these creations.

2.3.6.2 Science-oriented and number-oriented approaches to Qur'anic exegesis

In the school of scientific exegesis, we encounter two major approaches to explaining the many aspects of terrestrial human and earthly phenomena. These two approaches, however, are inimitability-oriented. For more details, see [Chapter 3](#) (Sections 3.6, 3.6.1). In other words, due to the notion of inimitability, the school of scientific Qur'anic exegesis is correlated to the stylistic inimitability approach. Thus, the school of scientific Qur'anic exegesis is an offshoot of the school of linguistic Qur'anic exegesis. Proponents of science and number-oriented approaches to Qur'anic exegesis believe that all the marvels and data of modern science can be found in the Qur'ān. This premise has made this school inimitability-oriented with regard to Qur'anic discourse. The school of scientific Qur'anic exegesis is hinged upon two approaches, the first is number-based and the second is science-based:

- (i) Number-oriented Qur'anic exegesis: This approach deals with numerical facts and is concerned with the notion of numerical inimitability of Qur'anic discourse. This is referred to in Arabic as *al-iʿjāz al-ʿadadi* (numerical inimitability). Modern Qur'ān scholars have started a new approach to the analysis of Qur'anic discourse based on mathematics and the notion of numbers (*al-aʿdād*).

For instance, the number 7 enjoys a particular significance in inimitability-oriented Qur'anic exegesis. The number 7 occurs in Q15:87 (*walaqad ātaināka sabʿan min al-mathānī wal-qurʾāna al-ʿẓīm* – We [God] have certainly given you, O Muḥammad, seven of the often repeated verses [i.e. Q1]); the number of āyahs of Q1 is 7; the number of heavens is 7, the number of the layers of the earth is 7; the number of weekdays is 7; the number of circles around the Kaʿbah when performing ḥajj is 7; the number of times a pilgrim walks between the two hills Ṣafā and Marwah is 7; pilgrims throw 7 pebbles at each of the walls representing Satan; the number of doors of hell fire is 7; the word (*jahannam* – hell fire) occurs 77 times in the Qurʾān (7×11); the number of the letters of the language of the Qurʾān is 28 (7×4); there are 7 letters that have not occurred in Q1 (th, j, kh, z, sh, ẓ, and f), thus, the number of letters of the alphabet in Q1 is 21 (7×3). There are 29 sūrahs that begin with cryptic letters (*al-ḥurūf al-muqattaʿah*). The number of these cryptic letters without the repeated ones is 14 (7×2); these unrepeatd 14 letters all occur in Q1; these unrepeatd 14 letters occur 119 times in Q1 (7×17). The word (*allāh* – God) is made up of three letters (*alif, lām, hāʾ*), i.e. the Arabic word (*ilāh*). These three letters occur 49 times in Q1 (7×7).

- (ii) Science-oriented Qur'anic exegesis: This approach is concerned with scientific facts and aims to verify the premise of scientific inimitability (*al-iʿjāz al-ʿilmi*) in Qur'anic discourse. Inimitability-oriented Qur'anic exegesis is also based on scientific factual evidence related to various sciences. For instance, Q2:233 (Mothers breastfeed their children two complete years for whoever wishes to complete the breastfeeding period). For instance, scientists claim that breastfeeding gives babies the best start in life. Also, the Department of Health recommends breastfeeding. Kathleen Doheny, Health Day News, reports on the benefits of breastfeeding and what promotes health. Medical studies have shown that the benefits of breastfeeding are many: (1) It helps a baby's later performance in school because breast milk contains DHA (docosahexaenoic acid). (2) Breastfeeding reduces the odds of problem behavior. (3) It helps kids cope with stress. (4) It benefits mothers later on as well. (5) Not least, breast milk is loaded with health-promoting nutrients. 'It's not just one mechanism', says Melinda Johnson, a spokeswoman for the American Dietetic Association, a lecturer in nutrition at Arizona State University and a dietician in private practice in nearby Chandler, Arizona. 'The nutrition [provided by breastfeeding] is perfect for the growing child,' Johnson claims. Take, for example, DHA, an omega-3 fatty acid. 'DHA is critical for brain development and also for nervous system development', Johnson says. The presence of DHA in breast milk, she argues, might explain the finding that breast-fed kids do better academically. (6) Breast milk also contains the amino acid taurine, considered important for neurological development, says Dr Ruth Lawrence, who chairs the American Academy of Pediatrics' section on breastfeeding and is a Professor of pediatrics and obstetrics-gynecology at the University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry in New York. 'Newborns and preemies

cannot manufacture taurine', Lawrence says, although adults do. 'Taurine is one of the amino acids needed for brain growth. The brain will double in size in the first year of life'. That makes it critical to have nutrients that help brain growth. 'We, in the breast-feeding field, have been focusing on brain growth [and its importance] for a number of years', she says. Those who manufacture formula, Lawrence says, focus more on how much weight babies can gain with their product. (7) Breastfeeding helps to jump-start a baby's immune system due, in part, to a protein called soluble CD14 found in breast milk. (8) Breast milk also contains live and active organisms that can never be duplicated in formula and experts believe that breast-fed babies' guts have different bacteria than those of formula-fed babies, and that the breast-fed babies' gut bacteria appears to be healthier; research has found that the intestinal bacteria present early in life play a role in whether a person will suffer from allergies, have an overactive immune system or tend to put on excess weight later in life. (9) Breast-feeding also has emotional and bonding benefits; although a mother who bottle-feeds also holds her baby, the child has actual physical attachment while breast-feeding (CNN website, <http://health.msn.com/nutrition/articlepage.aspx?cp-documentid=100252048>).

In the following practical Qur'anic scientific and numerical exegesis, we shall provide examples of āyahs that refer to some creations whose occurrence alludes to distinctive scientific characteristics due to either their scientific value or their unique physiological features. One can only appreciate the scientific distinctiveness of such cases through scientific details which are provided for each example.

2.3.6.2.1 EXAMPLES OF SCIENCE-BASED QUR'ANIC EXEGESIS

The following discussion illustrates science-based āyahs whose constituent words represent scientific facts. According to modern Qur'ān scholars, the following scientific details of some Qur'anic expressions feed into the notion of inimitability of Qur'anic discourse:

- 1 Q2:26: (Indeed, God is not shy from drawing comparisons even with something as small as a mosquito or larger). For Yahya (2003, p. 14), the Qur'ān summons people to investigate nature and see the signs therein. There are about 3,500 species of mosquitoes found throughout the world. These insects have been around for more than 30 million years. Mosquitoes are a vector agent that carries disease-causing viruses and parasites from person to person without catching the disease themselves. Mosquitoes have mouthparts that are adapted for piercing the skin of plants and animals. Both male and female mosquitoes feed on the nectar from flowers, but only female mosquitoes suck blood. The reason for this is their need for the proteins found in blood, not for themselves, but to help their eggs to develop. In other words, the female mosquito sucks blood just to secure the perpetuation of its species. The developmental process is one of the most amazing and admirable traits

of the mosquito – the short story of the transformation of a living being from a tiny larva through many different phases into a mosquito. The mosquito's technique of blood-sucking depends on a complex system in which unbelievably detailed structures work together. After the mosquito lands on its target, it first detects a spot by means of the lips in its proboscis. The syringe-like 'sting' of the mosquito is protected by a special sheath, which is stripped back during the blood-sucking process. The mosquito does not pierce the skin, as assumed, by thrusting its proboscis into it with pressure. Here, the main task falls to the upper jaw, which is as sharp as a knife, and the mandible on which there are teeth bent backwards. The mosquito moves its mandible forwards and backwards like a saw and cuts the skin with the help of the upper jaws. When the sting, inserted through this cut in the skin, reaches to the blood vessel, the drilling ends. Now it is time for the mosquito to suck blood. Yahya (2003, pp. 14–23) also investigates the extraordinary blood-sucking process of the mosquito: Before the mosquito starts sucking blood, it injects a special liquid secreted in its body into the cleavage opened in the living being it has stung. This liquid neutralizes the enzyme that causes the clotting of blood. Thus, the mosquito sucks the blood it needs without the problem of clotting. The itching and swelling formed on the spot bitten by the mosquito is caused by this liquid that prevents clotting. The mosquito's head is specialized for acquiring sensory information and for feeding. It contains the eyes and a pair of long, many-segmented antennae. The antennae are important for detecting host odours as well as odours of breeding sites where females lay eggs. In all mosquito species, the antennae of the males in comparison to the females are noticeably bushier and contain auditory receptors to detect the characteristic whine of the female. The mosquito's eyes are distinctly separated from one another. Their larvae only possess a pit-eye ocellus. The head also has an elongated, forward-projecting 'stinger-like' proboscis used for feeding, and two sensory palps. The maxillary palps of the males are longer than their proboscis, whereas the females' maxillary palps are much shorter. The female mosquito is equipped with an elongated proboscis that she uses to collect blood to feed her eggs. Mosquitoes are also equipped with extremely sensitive heat receptors. They perceive the things around them in different colours depending on their heat. As its perception is not dependent on light, it is quite easy for the mosquito to spot blood vessels even in a dark room. The heat receptors of the mosquito are sensitive enough to detect heat differences as small as $1/1,000^{\circ}\text{C}$. The mosquito has nearly one hundred eyes. As compound eyes, these are placed on the top of its head (Freudenrich 2010, p. 6; Yahya 2003, pp. 14–23).

- 2 Q2:184: (Fast for a specific number of days). Scientists have confirmed that periodic fasting and following a healthy nutritious diet can prevent 90 per cent of physical and psychological diseases. Scientists also confirm that fasting plays a vital role in activating the brain cells. Thus, fasting can prevent dementia which is a cognitive disorder. Hanz Vasman, Director of the Department of Neurosurgery at University of Münster hospital, confirms that

'healthy nutrition and periodic fasting activate the brain and that calories restriction prevents disorders in the brain's functions and reduces the possibility of dementia'. Experts believe that healthy lifestyle can be achieved through periodic fasting for a number of reasons: (i) While fasting, the whole organism has an opportunity to cure itself, due to an intensification of natural repair processes. (ii) If you are aiming for an 1800 kcal daily average and fasting 100 days per year, then on the other days you do not need to restrict yourself to 1800 kcal a day; you can eat a 'normal' 2,500 kcal ration of daily meals, although you need to eat healthy and high-quality food). (iii) After the second day of fasting, you normally do not feel hungry. However, if you are on a calorie-restricted diet, it is not uncommon to feel hungry every day. Usually, after a couple of days, you get used to fasting and it becomes much easier. Fasting in Islam is compulsory for the physically able in the month of Ramaḍān. One has to abstain completely from food, drink, and sexual activity from dawn (al-fajr) to sunset (al-maghrib). Fasting is optional during the rest of the year. However, Muslims celebrate the end of Ramaḍān for one day and are encouraged to fast six days after that and also are urged to fast two days a week, on Mondays and Thursdays (Al-Kaheel 2004).

- 3 Q2:233: (Mothers may breastfeed their children two complete years for whoever wishes to complete the breastfeeding period). Reference to breastfeeding has also been made in Q4:23, Q22:2, Q28:7, 12, and Q65:6. Yahya (2003, p. 61) provides interesting details about the value of breastfeeding and claims that the feeding of a new human being, which has grown from the transformation of a sperm to a baby, is a miracle on its own. Human milk is the best nutrition possible, and it is produced neither by the mother's help nor by anyone else's. Thanks to the substances in its composition, mother's milk is both an excellent food-source for the new-born and a substance that increases the resistance of the mother as well as the baby to diseases. Doctors agree that artificial baby food should only be preferred if the milk of the mother is not adequate, and that babies should be fed with mother's milk, especially in the first months. Now, let us look at the features of this milk:

- The most interesting aspect of mother's milk is that its concentration changes according to the developmental phases of the baby. The amount of calories and the food content change according to whether the baby's delivery was premature or on time. If the baby is premature, the fat and protein concentration is higher in the mother's milk than a baby would normally need, because the premature baby needs more calories.
- Immune system elements that the baby needs, such as antibodies or defence cells, are given to the baby ready-made in the mother's milk. Just like professional soldiers, they defend the body to which they do not belong and protect the baby from its enemies.
- It is antibacterial. Although bacteria are produced in normal milk if it is left at room temperature for six hours, no bacteria are produced in mother's milk if left for the same period.

- It protects the baby against arteriosclerosis.
- The baby quickly digests it.

Yahya (2003, p. 61) argues that none of the artificial baby food produced in modern laboratories by expert dieticians is as beneficial as the natural mother's milk.

- 4 Q2:266: (Would any of you like to have a garden of palm trees and vines . . . struck by a fiery whirlwind and burnt down? God makes His message clear to you so that you may reflect on them). This āyah refers to a scientific phenomenon called a whirlwind or the fire whirl which strikes and burns down the trees of a garden of palm trees and vines. A whirlwind is a weather phenomenon in which a vortex of wind (a vertically oriented rotating column of air) forms due to instabilities and turbulence created by heating and flow (current) gradients. Whirlwinds occur all over the world and in any season. Whirlwinds are subdivided into two main types: the great (or major) whirlwinds and the lesser (or minor) whirlwinds. The first category includes tornadoes, water spouts, and land spouts. The range of atmospheric vortices constitutes a continuum and are difficult to categorize definitively. Some lesser whirlwinds may sometimes form in a similar manner to greater whirlwinds with related increase in intensity. These intermediate types include the gustnado and the fire whirl. Other lesser whirlwinds include dust devils, as well as steam devils, snow devils, debris devils, leaf devils, and shear eddies such as the mountainado and eddy whirlwinds. A major whirlwind (such as a tornado) is formed from supercell thunderstorms (the most powerful type of thunderstorm) or other powerful storms. When the storms start to spin, they react with other high-altitude winds, causing a funnel to spin. A cloud forms over the funnel, making it visible. A minor whirlwind is created when local winds start to spin on the ground. This causes a funnel to form. The funnel moves over the ground, pushed by the winds that first formed it. The funnel picks up materials such as dust or snow as it moves over the ground, thus becoming visible. Major whirlwinds last longer because they are formed from very powerful winds, and it is hard, though not impossible, to interrupt them. Minor whirlwinds are not as long-lived; the winds that form them do not last long, and when a minor whirlwind encounters an obstruction (a building, a house, a tree, etc.), its rotation is interrupted, as is the wind flow into it, causing it to dissipate (*Wikipedia*, online encyclopaedia).
- 5 Q16:45: (Do those who have planned evil deeds feel secure that God will not cause the earth to swallow them . . . ?); Q17:68: (Do you feel secure that instead God will not cause a part of the land to swallow you . . . ?); Q28:81: (We [God] caused the earth to swallow him). The Qur'ān makes reference to the geological phenomenon of a crevice where the earth splits open. The most recent example of a crevice was in March 2006 and took place in the Afar Triangle of Ethiopia near the horn of Africa. In recent months, hundreds of crevices have split the desert floor and the area has sunk in parts by up to 100 metres. According to the geophysicist Tim Wright 'the ground is still splitting open and

sinking' (*Metro* 2006, p. 13). This scientific phenomenon of parts of the earth being claimed by the sea or ocean has been reported by geophysicists. This phenomenon is reported in the Qur'ān: (We [God] reduce earth from its borders, Q13:41). On Thursday 6 August 1988, the British *Daily Express* newspaper published on its front page under the headline LET BRITAIN SINK SAY MPs an interesting report: 'Experts believe the sea level around Britain will rise by up to three feet every century and that hundreds of square miles of coastline will be eaten away over the next 50 years alone.' Similarly, Q86:12 (By the earth which cracks open) can be related to the phenomenon of cracks found in some parts of the world, some of which can be 1,300 kilometres long.

- 6 Q22:5: (God created you from dust, then from a sperm drop, then from a clinging clot, and then from a lump of flesh, formed and unformed, that We may show you. We settle in the wombs whom We will for a specific term, then We bring you out as a child, and then We develop you that you may reach time of maturity); Q23:12–14: (We certainly created man from an extract of clay. Then We placed him/her as a sperm drop in a firm lodging [the womb]. Then We made the sperm drop into a clinging clot, and We made the clot into a lump of flesh, and We made from the lump the bones, and We covered the bones with flesh; then We developed him/her into another creation); Q39:6: (God creates you stage by stage in your mothers' wombs in a threefold darkness. That is God, your Lord); Q40:67: (God has created you from dust, then from a sperm drop, then from a clinging clot; then He develops you that you reach your time of maturity, then further that you become elders); Q71:14: (God has created in stages); and Q96:2: (God created mankind from a clinging substance [clot]). The first chapter in the Qur'ān (chapter 96) in terms of its gradual revelation makes reference in the second sentence (āyah) to the scientific fact of the embryonic development of human kind in the womb (the clinging clot or substance). However, the other āyahs in different chapters discuss the three stages of embryonic development. Even within hours of the time when it is fertilized by the sperm, the egg divides and grows very quickly. Today we know that the baby undergoes three stages of embryonic development while it is in the mother's womb. For Yahya (2010), in the period of time between the formation of the sperm and the egg and their meeting, every event that occurs is a miracle. The changes that occur after these two cells unite, and the all-encompassing preparations made in the woman's body will show us other wondrous occurrences.
- 7 Q29:41: (The spider's house is the frailest of all houses). Spiders have been in existence for 400 million years, spread over every continent, and have mastered nearly every environment on earth. There are about 40,000 known spider species, and potentially thousands more we haven't discovered yet. There are spiders that swim, spiders that jump from branch to branch and spiders that can kill a person. Spiders share a basic set of characteristics:
 - (i) They have eight legs, made up of seven segments each.
 - (ii) They feed primarily on insects.
 - (iii) They can inject venom into their prey.

- (iv) They can produce silk.
- (v) They have a pair of small appendages on the head, called **pedipalps**.
- (vi) Their bodies are divided into two sections, the **cephalothorax** and the **abdomen**, joined by the thin **pedicel**.

Spiders have the ability to spin silk, an extremely strong fibre. A few insects produce similar material (silkworms, for example), but nothing comes close to the spinning capabilities of spiders. Scientists don't know exactly how spiders form silk, but they do have a basic idea of the spinning process. Spiders have special glands that secrete silk proteins (made up of chains of amino acids), which are dissolved in a water-based solution. The spider pushes the liquid solution through long ducts, leading to microscopic **spigots** on the spider's **spinnerets**. Spiders typically have two or three spinneret pairs, located at the rear of the abdomen. Each spigot has a valve that controls the thickness and speed of the extruded material. Most spiders have multiple silk glands, which secrete different types of silk material optimized for different purposes. By winding different silk varieties together in varying proportions, spiders can form a wide range of fibre material. Spiders can also vary fibre consistency by adjusting the spigots to form smaller or larger strands. Some silk fibres have multiple layers, for example, an inner core surrounded by an outer tube. Silk can also be coated with various substances suited for different purposes. Spiders might coat fibre in a sticky substance, for example, or a waterproof material. Spider silk is incredibly strong and flexible. Some varieties are five times as strong as an equal mass of steel and twice as strong as an equal mass of Kevlar (Harris n.d.).

- 8 Q31:20: (Do you not see that God has subjected to you everything in the heavens and earth and has showered His blessings upon you, both outwardly and inwardly? Yet there are people who argue about God without knowledge or guidance or any illuminating Book). In the view of Yahya (2003, pp. 187–203), when the earth is compared with other planets, it becomes even more evident that it is especially designed for the living of man. Water, for instance, is a compound that is very rarely found in space. The liquid form of water exists only on our planet out of all the planets in the solar system. Moreover, 70 per cent of the world is covered with water. Millions of varieties of living beings live in this medium. The freezing of water, its capacity to attract and store heat, the existence of very large masses of water in the form of oceans, and the even distribution of heat across the world are all exclusive characteristics of the earth. No other planet has such a liquid mass in constant circulation. In his attempt to rebut the materialist philosophy, Yahya (2003, pp. 187–203) provides detailed scientific exegesis to Q31:22. He adds:

The axis of the earth makes a 23-degree inclination to its orbit. Seasons are formed due to this inclination. If this inclination were a little more or less than it is now, temperature differences between seasons would reach extremes and unbearably hot summers and

extremely cold winters would take place on the earth. The earth's rotation around its axis is at the most appropriate speed for living beings. When we look at other planets in the solar system, we see that they also experience night and day. However, because the time differences are far bigger than those in the world, the temperature differences between day and night are very high. The fierce wind activity in the atmospheres of other planets is not experienced in the world's atmosphere thanks to this balanced rotation. The gases making up the atmosphere and their concentration in the atmosphere are extremely important for the existence not only of human beings but also of all living beings on the earth. The formation of the gasses in the atmosphere in just the right proportions that remain constant is made possible by the co-existence of numerous delicate balances. Also, the existence of the atmosphere has great importance for the continuation of life on earth. A number of astrophysical conditions have to co-exist for the atmosphere to be maintained. The earth's surface has to remain at a certain moderate temperature, within definite limits. A layer is needed to prevent the dispersion of generated heat. On earth, there are certain structures maintaining the balance of heat between the poles and the equator.

(Yahya 2003, pp. 187–203)

- 9 Q35:11: (God created you from dust and then from a drop of sperm and then made you into pairs. No female gets pregnant or gives birth except with His knowledge. And no living thing lives long or has its life cut short without that being in a Book. That is easy for God). This āyah is intertextually related to a number of science-based āyahs such as Q56: 57–59: (We [God] created you so why do you not confirm the truth? Have you thought about the sperm that you ejaculate? Is it you who create it or are We [God] the Creator?), Q76:1–2: (Has man ever known a point of time when he was not something remembered? We [God] created man from a mingled drop to test him, and We [God] made him hearing and seeing): Q32:8: (. . . then He [God] produced his seed from an extract of base fluid); Q96:1–3: (Recite: In the Name of your Lord Who created man from a blood clot. Recite, and your Lord is the Most Generous); Q75:36–39: (Does man reckon he will be left to go on unchecked? Was he not a drop of ejaculated sperm? Then a blood clot, which He [God] created and shaped, making from it both sexes, male and female?); Q39:6: (God creates you stage by stage in your mothers' wombs in a three-fold darkness. That is God, your Lord. Sovereignty is His. There is no god but Him [God]. So what has made you deviate?) . . .); and Q77:20–21: (Did We not create you from a base fluid? Then place it in a secure repository?)

It is obvious, Yahya (2003, pp. 53–61) argues, that both the substances, that coming from the man and that from the woman, are created in accordance with one another. The creation of these two substances, their union and transformation into a human being are indeed great miracles. Sperm, which constitutes the first step in the creation of a new human being, is produced

'outside' the man's body. The reason for this is that sperm production is only possible in an environment two degrees cooler than normal body temperature. In order to stabilize the temperature at this level there is special skin on the testicles. It shrinks in cold weather and expands in hot weather, keeping temperature constant. Does the male himself 'regulate' and arrange this delicate balance? Certainly not. The male is not even aware of this. Produced in the testicles at the rate of 1,000 per minute, sperm has a special design made for its journey to the female ovaries, a journey that progresses as if it 'knows' the place. The sperm is composed of a head, a neck and a tail. Its tail helps it move in the uterus like a fish. Its head part, containing a portion of the baby's genetic code, is covered with a special protective shield. The function of this shield is revealed at the entrance to the mother's uterus: here, the environment is very acidic. It is clear that the sperm is covered with a protective shield by 'someone' who is aware of this acidity. (The purpose of this acidic environment is the protection of the mother from microbes.) It is not only millions of sperm that are ejaculated into the uterus. Semen is a mixture of various kinds of fluid. In the Qur'ān, this fact is emphasized in Q76:1–2: (Has man ever known a point of time when he was not something remembered? We [God] created man from a mingled drop to test him, and We [God] made him hearing and seeing). These fluids within the semen, Yahya (2003, pp. 53–61) states, contain sugar, which is to provide the energy needed by the sperm. Besides, its basic composition has various tasks such as neutralizing the acids at the entrance to the mother's uterus, and maintaining the slippery medium for the movement of the sperm. (Here, we again see that two different and independent beings are created in accordance with each other). The spermatozoa make a difficult journey within the mother's body until they reach the ovum. No matter how much they defend themselves, approximately only a thousand out of the 200–300 million spermatozoa reach the ovum. The Qur'ān also describes this stage in a very interesting way. In the Qur'an, it is stated that a human being is made from an extract of base fluid, that is, the semen: (. . . then He [God] produced his seed from an extract of base fluid, Q32:8). As the āyah informs us, it is not the fluid itself carrying the spermatozoa that fertilizes the egg, but only an 'extract' of it. A single sperm within it is the fertilizing agent, and moreover, the chromosomes in the sperm which are 'an extract' of it.

Yahya (2003, pp. 53–61) moves on to discuss the clot clinging to the uterus. When the sperm of the male unites with the ovum of the female as described above, the essence of the baby to be born is formed. This single cell known in biology as the 'zygote' will instantly start to grow by division and eventually become a 'piece of flesh'. The zygote, however, does not spend its developmental period in a void. It clings to the uterus just like roots that are firmly fixed to the earth by their tendrils. Through this bond, the zygote can obtain the substances essential to its development from the mother's body. Such a detail could not be known without a sound knowledge of physiology. It is obvious that no one possessed such knowledge fourteen centuries ago.

Interestingly enough, God always refers to the zygote developing in the mother's womb as 'a clot of blood' in the Qur'an: (Recite: In the Name of your Lord Who created man from a blood clot. Recite: And your Lord is the Most Generous, Q96:1–3), (Does man reckon he will be left to go on unchecked? Was he not a drop of ejaculated sperm? Then a blood clot, which He created and shaped, making from it both sexes, male and female?, Q75:36–39). The Arabic meaning of the word 'blood-clot' is 'a thing that clings to some place'. The word is used literally to describe leeches that cling to a body to suck blood. It is obviously the best possible word to describe the zygote clinging to the wall of the uterus and absorbing its sustenance from it.

(Yahya 2003, pp. 53–61) goes on to discuss Q39:6 (He creates you stage by stage in your mothers' wombs in a three-fold darkness. That is God, your Lord. Sovereignty is His. There is no god but Him. So what has made you deviate? . . .) with regards to the three dark regions which, in his view, are stated by the Qur'an:

- (i) the fallopian tube: this is the region where the egg and the sperm unite and the where the ovarium connects to the uterus;
- (ii) inside the uterus wall to which the zygote clings for development;
- (iii) the region where the embryo starts growing in a sack full of a special liquid.

The Qur'an, Yahya (2003, pp. 53–61) adds, has more to disclose about the zygote. Perfectly clinging to the uterus, the zygote starts to develop. The uterus of the mother, meanwhile, is filled with a fluid called the 'amniotic liquid' that surrounds the zygote. The most important function of the amniotic liquid in which the baby develops is to protect the baby against blows from outside. In the Qur'an, this fact is revealed by Q77:20–21 (Did We [God] not create you from a base fluid? Then place it in a secure repository?) (Yahya 2003, pp. 53–61).

- 10 Q38:33: (Solomon said: 'Return the horses to me.' And he set about striking their legs and necks). The exegesis of this āyah shows the discrepancy in exegetical opinions among classical exegetes of the formative phase. Solomon was infatuated with horses and when he was shown some horses during the afternoon, he was carried away with them until the sun set; as a result, he missed the afternoon prayers and was outraged as he was a Prophet. He is described as (an excellent pious servant of God, Q38:30). According to al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, Qatādah, and al-Suddī, Solomon's rage led him to sever the horses' legs and cut off their heads as a punishment to them which he thought were the reason for missing his afternoon prayers (Ibn Kathīr 1993, 4, p. 35). However, for al-Ṭabarī (2005, 10, p. 579), the exegesis of Q38:33 should be: (Solomon said: 'Return the horses to me.' And he set about stroking their legs and necks). This meaning, in the view of Ibrāhīm (n.d.), is compatible with modern veterinary views of about horses which need to be stroked on the head, the neck, and the legs to calm them down and reassure them.
- 11 Q39:6: (God creates you in the wombs of your mothers creation after creation within three darknesses). This āyah shows that three distinct stages

occur in the development of a human being while it is in the mother's womb. Modern biology has established that the baby in the mother's womb does go through three different stages of development, just as is stated in this āyah. This is a matter of basic information in all the books on embryology required to be read as textbooks today in medical faculties. For example, *Basic Human Embryology*, a standard basic work of reference on embryology, makes the following statement:

The life in the uterus has three stages: (i) pre-embryonic: first two and a half weeks; (ii) embryonic: until the end of the eighth week, and (iii) fetal: from the eighth week to labour.

These stages comprise the various developmental phases of the baby. The salient features of these three stages can be summarized as follows:

- Pre-embryonic stage: In this first stage the zygote (the newly fertilized cell) multiplies. Within the first three weeks, after it has become a cluster of cells, it embeds itself in the wall of the uterus. As the cells continue to multiply, they form three layers.
- The embryonic stage: The second stage lasts a total of five and a half weeks, during which the baby is called the embryo. In this stage the basic organs and systems of the body take shape from the cell layers.
- The foetal stage: Entering the third stage of pregnancy, the embryo is now called the foetus. This stage begins from the eighth week of pregnancy and continues to birth. In this stage, as distinct from the earlier ones, the face, hands and feet of the foetus become distinguishable and it takes the external appearance of a human being. At the beginning of this stage, all the organs of the 3 cm. foetus are in place. This stage lasts for thirty weeks and development continues until the week of birth.

(Yahya 2010; see also al-Sharīf 2001; Hamimi 2002; *Saheeh International Translation of the Qur'ān* 2010, pp. 719–725)

- 12 Q39:5: (God created the heavens and earth in truth. He wraps the night over the day and wraps the day over the night); Q13:3: (He causes the night to cover the day); Q15:19: (And the earth, We [God] have spread it and cast therein firmly set mountains); Q79:30 (And after that, God spreads the earth); Q88:20: (. . . and the earth, how it is spread out?). In these āyahs, reference is made to the shape of the earth. The shape of the earth is very close to that of an oblate spheroid, a sphere flattened along the axis from pole to pole such that there is a bulge around the equator. This bulge results from the rotation of the earth, and causes the diameter at the equator to be 43 km larger than the pole-to-pole diameter. The Qur'ān refers to the earth as a major sign of God: (Another of God's signs is the creation of the heavens and earth, Q30:22) and (Among God's signs is the creation of the heavens and earth, Q42:29). The earth has magnificent scientific distinctiveness. It is the third

planet from the sun, and the densest and fifth-largest of the eight planets in the solar system. It is also the largest of the solar system's four terrestrial planets. Home to millions of species including humans, the earth is currently the only place where life is known to exist. The planet formed 4.54 billion years ago, and life appeared on its surface within a billion years. The earth's outer surface is divided into several rigid segments, or tectonic plates, that migrate across the surface over periods of many millions of years.

The Qur'ān also refers to the rotation of the earth: (Praise belongs to God who created the heavens and the earth and made darkness and light, Q6:1). The earth's rotation period relative to the sun, its mean solar day, is 86,400 seconds of mean solar time. The earth's rotation period relative to the fixed stars is 86,164.098903691 seconds of mean solar time. The earth orbits the sun at an average distance of about 150 million kilometres every 365.2564 mean solar days, or one sidereal year. Because of the axial tilt of the earth, the amount of sunlight reaching any given point on the surface varies over the course of the year. This results in seasonal change in climate, with summer in the northern hemisphere occurring when the North Pole is pointing toward the sun, and winter taking place when the pole is pointed away (*Wikipedia*, online encyclopaedia 2010).

- 13 Q51:47: (We [God] constructed the heaven with strength, and indeed, We are its expander). It was only after the development of the radio telescope in 1937 that the expansion of the universe was observed and established. The American astronomer Edwin Hubble discovered, while observing the sky with a telescope, that the stars and galaxies were constantly moving away from each other, and that the stars emit a light that turns redder according to their distance. This means that the stars and galaxies are not only moving away from us but also from each other. This explains the meaning of Q51:47 that the universe is constantly expanding (*Saheeh International Translation of the Qur'ān* 2010, p. 708).
- 14 Q52:6: (By the ocean filled with fire); Q81:6: (When the seas boil over). We are informed by these āyahs that there is 'fire' in the sea depths. Semantically, the word (*masjūr*) means 'on fire, extremely hot temperatures' which is usually employed in the Arab culture for the clay oven when baking bread. According to The National Science Foundation (27/11/2006), underwater volcanic eruption has been in action in the Pacific Ocean depths. This underwater volcanic eruption is on a large scale and has resulted from a 2,500-metre-long crack in the Pacific Ocean bed. 'One can feel that the Ocean is on fire.'
- 15 Q55:19–20: (God released the two bodies of fresh and salt water. They meet, yet there is a barrier between them which they do not cross). We are informed by this āyah that there are two bodies of water: fresh and salt. Satellite pictures have also shown that when two seas meet, there water barriers between them so that the water of one sea cannot flow over the water of the other sea (Barbara Tylor 1993; Hamimi 2002; Al-Kaheel 2004).
- 16 Q56:68–70: (Have you thought about the water that you drink? Is it you who sent it down from the clouds or are We the Sender? If We wished We could

have made it bitter, so will you not give thanks?). According to Yahya (2003, p. 195), each moment, millions of cubic metres of water are carried from the oceans to the atmosphere and then to the land. Life depends on this giant water cycle. If we had attempted to arrange this cycle, we would not have been able to succeed even if we had used all the technology in the world. Through evaporation, however, we obtain water, the first and foremost condition of life, without any extra cost or energy. Each year, 45 million cubic metres of water evaporate from the oceans. The evaporated water is carried by winds over the lands in the form of clouds. Each year, 3–4 million cubic metres of water are carried from oceans to lands, and therefore to us. Simply put, water, over whose cycle we have no control, and without which we cannot live more than a few days, is sent to us in a very special way.

- 17 Q65:12: (God has created seven heavens and a similar number of earths). This āyah refers to two scientific facts: (i) that there are seven atmospheres: troposphere, tropopause, stratosphere, ozone layer, mesosphere, thermosphere (aurora), and exosphere; (ii) that the earth also consists of seven layers: crust, asthenosphere, Mohorovičić discontinuity, mantle, Gutenberg discontinuity, outer core, and inner core (Al-Kaheel 2004).
- 18 Q76:17: (wayusqawna fihā ka'san kāna mizājūhā zanjabilā – They will be given a drink infused with ginger). The word ginger (zanjabil) occurs once in the Qur'ān and reference to it can be scientifically justified. Ginger is a tuber which can be consumed whole as a delicacy, medicine, or spice. According to scientific research, ginger has several medicinal benefits. The medical form of ginger historically was called *Jamaica ginger*; it was classified as a stimulant and carminative and used frequently for dyspepsia, gastroparesis, slow motility symptoms, constipation, and colic. Ginger can also be employed to disguise the taste of medicines. Ginger is on the US Food and Drug Administration's 'generally recognized as safe' list, though it does interact with some medications, including warfarin. Ginger may also decrease pain from arthritis, though studies have been inconsistent, and may have blood thinning and cholesterol lowering properties that may make it useful for treating heart disease. Ginger compounds are active against a form of diarrhoea which is the leading cause of infant death in developing countries. Ginger has been found effective in multiple studies for treating nausea caused by seasickness, morning sickness, and chemotherapy. Ginger has a sialagogue action, stimulating the production of saliva, which makes swallowing easier. Ginger can also be useful for motion sickness. Ginger can be made into candy, act as a useful food preservative, and can be used for flavouring dishes. In laboratory animals, ginger oil has been shown to prevent skin cancer in mice, and a study at the University of Michigan demonstrated that gingerols can kill ovarian cancer cells (*Wikipedia*, online encyclopaedia).
- 19 Q81:15–16: (I swear by the retreating stars. Those that run their courses and disappear). For scientist Qur'ān exegetes, this āyah is related to the cosmic phenomenon of the supermassive yet invisible black holes in space which are

in galaxies and the size of each one is four million times double the sun. Scientists have found out that these black holes are in our galaxy known as Milky Way. Scientists claim that black holes are dead stars. This is referred to in Q81:16 as (al-jawāri al-kunnasi – these stars have run their course, receded, and disappeared). Scientists also claim that these dead stars are the cemetery of other stars. Once the active stars get closer to a black hole, they get swept inside and swallowed by the black hole. The enormous gravity of the black hole can even swallow light. More surprisingly, the black hole neither reflects light nor allows it to leave (Al-Kaheel 2004; Hamimi 2002, p. 179).

- 20 Q95:1–5: (By the fig, by the olive, by Mount Sinai, by this safe town, We created man in the finest state then reduce him to the lowest of the low, except those who believe and do good deeds, they will have an unfailing reward). Muslim scientists claim that Q95 includes scientific facts through reference to figs and olives. The word (tīn – fig) occurs once in the Qur’ān (Q95:1) while the word (zaitūn – olives) occurs seven times (Q6:99, 141, Q16:11, implicitly in Q23:20, Q24:35, Q80:29, Q95:1). For scientist Qur’ān exegetes, this ratio of the lexical occurrence of these two words has a scientific value. Scientist Qur’ān exegetes claim that a team of Japanese scientists has recently discovered that the best medicinal formula for the human body is to take one fig and seven olives. One may also wonder why in Q95:5 reference is made to old age, i.e. ageing, and whether there is a correlation between ageing and the allusion to the nutritional value of figs and olives through the earlier reference in Q95:1. Figs are scientifically proven for their nutritional and medical benefits. Biologically, a single fig contains over 1,000 tiny fruits (what are thought of as the seeds). Figs are high in natural and simple sugars, minerals and fibre, and are amongst the most highly alkaline. Dried figs contain an impressive 250 mg of calcium per 100g, compared to whole milk with only 118 mg. The health benefits of figs include treatment of constipation, indigestion, piles, diabetes, cough, bronchitis, asthma, and sexual weakness. Health benefits of figs can be attributed to the presence of fibre, minerals and vitamins like A, B1, B2, calcium, iron, phosphorus, manganese, copper, sodium, potassium, and chlorine. Figs also help in gaining weight after illness. The fibre in figs helps to reduce weight and is recommended for obese people. Figs also help in reducing cholesterol, preventing coronary heart disease, colon cancer, and hypertension. Figs can protect against post-menopausal breast cancer. Figs are good for diabetic patients. They can strengthen bones. The potassium content in figs helps to avoid urinary calcium loss and also helps to regulate blood pressure. The high mucilage content in figs helps to heal and protect sore throats. Figs also prevent macular degeneration: Vision loss in older people is due to macular degeneration. Figs are low in fat and sugar but are rich in flavonoids and polyphenols which are antioxidants (Organicfacts.net; Corinne Lutton 2007; www.eattheseasons.com).
- 21 Q95:1 also makes reference to olives which, in the view of scientist Qur’ān exegetes alludes to the potential nutritional and medical benefits of olives. Olive oil has been used since 3,000 BC. The olive is a fruit whose nutritional

medical value has been scientifically proven. Olives have nutrients including fat, cholesterol, sodium, carbohydrate, calories, protein, iron, vitamin E, dietary fibre, copper, fatty acids, and amino acids. Olives also have many health benefits such as: The mono-saturated fats present in olives/olive oil, when combined with the antioxidant protection offered by vitamin E, lower the risk of damage and inflammation. Olive/olive oil contains active phyto-nutrient compounds, including polyphenols and flavonoids, which have been found to have significant anti-inflammatory properties. The vitamin E present in olives/olive oil has been known to offer cellular protection against free radicals present in the body. Olives/olive oil prevents the oxidation of cholesterol in the body and thus, helps reduce the risk of having a heart attack or stroke. Since they help the body in neutralizing free radicals, the nutrients in olives/olive oil also lead to prevention of colon cancer. Olives/olive oil are said to be effective in reducing the frequency and/or intensity of hot flashes in women going through the menopause. Regular consumption of olive oil has been associated with decrease in systolic (maximum) as well as diastolic (minimum) blood pressure. Those who consume olives/olive oil are at a lesser risk of developing diabetes at later stages in life. Good quality olive/olive oil contains a natural chemical that acts like a painkiller. Olives/olive oil is also beneficial for people suffering from ailments like asthma, osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, arteriosclerosis, stomach problems, constipation, and diabetes (lifestyle.iloveindia.com/.../benefits-of-olive-1574.html).

For more details on science-oriented discussion of some āyahs, see the appendix of *Saheeh International Translation of the Qur'ān* (2010, pp. 706–732).

2.3.6.2.2 EXAMPLES OF NUMBER-BASED QUR'ANIC EXEGESIS

The following discussion illustrates examples of numer-based Qur'anic exegesis and tends to provide evidence for numerical consonance in Qur'anic discourse which is also interrelated to the notion of inimitability in Qur'anic studies:

- 1 Q114 is the last sūrah in the Qur'ān which admonishes the reader, represented by the word (al-nās – mankind), to seek refuge in God from Satan's evil plots. Thus, this notion can be related to the 7 pebbles which pilgrims throw at each of the walls representing Satan, the total of which is 49 pebbles (7×7). For scientific Qur'ān exegetes, the number 7 plays a significant role in their numerical inimitability-oriented Qur'anic exegesis. The pivotal word in Q114 is (al-nās) which is repeated five times, more than any other word. The constituent Arabic letters of the word (al-nās) are (alif – /a/), (lām – /l/), (nūn – /n/), and (sīn – /s/). Counting the number of occurrences of each of these letters of each word in the whole sūrah, we find that the letter (alif) occurs 18 times, the letter (lām) 12 times, the letter (nūn) 9 times, and the letter (sīn) 10 times. Thus, the total number of occurrences of the constituent letters of the word (al-nās) is 49, or 7×7 . The premise of this mathematical approach is that there is correlation between the 49 pebbles which the pilgrims throw

at the walls representing Satan and the 49 of occurrences of the constituent letters of the word (al-nās).

The school of modern Qur'anic exegesis adopts the consonance-based linguistic analysis of the Qur'ān (for more details, see Sections 2.3.5 and 2.3.6.2.1 above). One may wonder whether there is a thematic and numerical consonance between the first sūrah and the last sūrah of the Qur'ān. Thematic consonance between Q1 and Q114 is established according to the following factors:

- (i) We have observed that the focus of Q114 is the word (al-nās) and we can also observe that the focus of Q1 is the word (allāh – God). This is based on the textual analysis of Q1 where a description is provided of who God is. The Lord is explained to the reader through listing God's major epithets like (al-raḥmān – the most gracious), (al-raḥīm – the most merciful), (rabb al-‘ālamīn – the Lord of the worlds), and (mālik yawm al-dīn – master of the day of judgement). Thus, the thematic consonance is established between Q1 and Q114 since the reader is now aware of who his/her Lord is through Q1 and that it is God that one has to ask for help (iyyāka nasta‘īn – we ask You [God] for help, Q1:5).
- (ii) The reader in Q114 has also become aware of Satan's danger to him/her and that he/she needs to seek refuge in the Lord as he/she is instructed by Q1:5.
- (iii) The pivotal word of Q1 is (allāh – God) and the pivotal word of Q114 is (al-nās – mankind). Thus, thematically, one can argue that the Qur'ān is God's message to mankind.

But what about the numerical approach to the word (allāh – God) in Q1? If we adopt the same numerical approach and count the constituent letters of (allāh – God), we will find out that the result is mathematically the same. The constituent letters of the word (allāh – God) are (alif – a), (lām – l), and (hā' – h). Counting the number of occurrences of each of these letters of each word in the whole sūrah, we find that the letter (alif) occurs 22 times, the letter (lām) 22 times, and the letter (hā' – h) 5 times. Therefore, the total number of occurrences of the constituent letters of the word (allāh) is 49 (7×7).

Based on the number of the constituent words of Q1 and Q114, we can find another interesting numerical consonance between the first sūrah and the last sūrah of the Qur'ān: The number of the constituent words of Q1 is 29, taking into consideration that (bism allāh al-raḥmān al-raḥīm – in the name of God, the most gracious, the most merciful), known in Arabic as (al-basmalah), is an independent āyah in Q1 according to Qur'anic studies. However, the number of the constituent words of Q114 is 20, taking into consideration that (al-basmalah) is not counted as an independent āyah in Q114, according to Qur'anic studies. Thus, the total number of the constituent words of both Q1 and Q114 is 49 (7×7) (Nawfal 2003; Al-Kaheel 2009b).

- 2 Nawfal (2003) provides interesting mathematical details about the number of times an expression occurs in the Qur'ān. For examples, the word (al-dunya – the life of this world) occurs 115 times, and the word (al-ākhirah – the hereafter)

also occurs 115 times. The words (al-shayāṭīn – Satan) and (al-malā'ikah – angels) occur 68 times each, the words (al-ḥayāt – life) and (al-mawt – death) occur 71 times each, and the words (al-qur'ān – the Qur'ān) and (al-malā'ikah – the angels) occur 68 times each.

Among the other āyahs which scientist Qur'ān exegetes claim to be science-oriented and are compatible with modern scientific theories include: Q7:100 (Is it not clear to those who inherit the land from former generations that We [God] can punish them too for their sins if We will? But We seal over their hearts so they do not hear), which refers to the heart and hearing; Q16:68–69 (Your Lord inspired to the bee: 'Take for yourself among the mountains hives and among the trees and in that which they construct. Then eat from all the fruits and follow the ways of your Lord laid down for you.' There emerges from their bellies a drink, varying in colour, in which there is healing for people. Indeed in that is a sign for a people who give thought), which talks about the bees and the benefits of honey; the two āyahs of Q16:78 (It is God who brought you out of your mothers' wombs knowing nothing and gave you hearing and sight and minds), and Q46:26 (God gave them hearing, sight, and minds), are both references to the medical and physiological facts that hearing precedes seeing, and seeing precedes cognition; in other words, in the brain of the foetus, hearing develops first, once born, seeing starts, then after some years, the cognition system develops; Q21:30 (Are the disbelievers not aware that the heavens and the earth used to be joined together and that We [God] ripped them apart, that We made living thing from water), refers to two scientific facts: the big bang scientific theory of the creation of the universe, and the fact that water is a component of every living thing, i.e. if there is no water, there is no life; Q32:5 (God runs everything, from the heavens to the earth, and everything will ascend to Him in the end, on a day that will measure a thousand years in your reckoning), which refers to the speed of light which is 299,792,458 metres per second; the āyahs of Q36:36–40 (Glory be to God who created all the pairs of things . . . The night is also a sign for them: We strip the day light from it . . . The sun, too, runs its determined course laid down for it by God the almighty, the all-knowing. We have determined phases for the moon until finally it becomes like an old date-stalk [i.e. like a C-shape (a crescent)]). The sun cannot overtake the moon, nor can the night outrun the day; each floats in its orbit), inform the reader about a number of science-oriented principles such as the pair theory which states that creatures are in pairs, the scientific fact that the universe was in a state of darkness; thus, the daylight is only a part of darkness, the fact that although the earth moves round the sun, the sun is also in motion rather than static, and the relationship between the sun and the moon; Q75:4 (Yes, We [God] are able even to reshape his fingertips), which refers to fingerprints; Q86:1–3 (By the sky and the night comer. What can make you know what the night comer is? It is the piercing star), which talk about a kind of star that produces ear-piercing noise and gamma (electromagnetic) radiation known as gamma rays of high frequency.

3 School of linguistic exegesis

3.1 Introduction

The school of linguistic Qur'anic exegesis has been the most robust exegetical technique that has evolved since the formative phase in the first/seventh century, spanning to the twenty-first century. This chapter provides a detailed and explicated discussion of the evolution of linguistic exegesis and how it was linked to the notion of inimitability of Qur'anic discourse. The inimitability-oriented analysis of Qur'anic genre is hinged upon linguistic and para-linguistic levels of analysis. Although the levels of numerical inimitability and scientific inimitability are para-linguistic, i.e. not purely linguistic, we believe they are relevant to our discussion at this stage while we are investigating the stylistic notion of inimitability. Through expounded discussion, the present chapter provides an insight in the syntactic, semantic, stylistic, and phonetic features of Qur'anic genre which are employed by linguist exegetes in their exegetical analysis. The present account also investigates the different approaches of the linguistic school of exegesis, what it has been primarily concerned with, the analysis by the linguist exegetes of grammatical, semantic, rhetorical, and phonetic problems involved in Qur'anic discourse and their impact on the meaning of the āyah, the evolution of modes of reading as a major exegetical technique in Qur'anic exegesis, the distinction between the phonetically oriented and semantically oriented modes of reading, the overlap between the seven dialectal differences and modes of reading, and the impact of modes of reading on Qur'anic exegesis and theological cleavages. The use of the curly brackets applies only to the āyahs and expressions that are not compatible with the 'Uthmanic master codex. The exegetes of the school of linguistic exegesis involve both mainstream and non-mainstream schools of thought. Most importantly, the linguistic approach to Qur'anic exegesis is based on linguistic facts which are applied to the Qur'anic text. However, exegetes have expressed wide-ranging rational linguistic analyses to various Qur'anic expressions and āyahs. For this reason, we classify the school of linguistic exegesis as non-mainstream due to the following reasons:

- (i) The grammatical analysis is, at times, hinged upon linguistic personal opinion where different grammarians appoint different grammatical functions to the

same grammatical constituent. Thus, Arabic grammar has not regulated grammar-based Qur'anic exegesis. There is always room for grammatical maneuverability through which an exegete can prove a given theological point of view which may be contrary to the canons of exegesis.

- (ii) The stylistic analysis of the modern phase is based on hypothetical judgement (al-dirāyah) and textual artistic taste.
- (iii) The consonance-based analysis of the modern phase is purely hypothetical. Different linguist exegetes appoint distinct units and themes to the same sūrah.

Having stated the above three reasons, it is worthwhile to note that the school of linguistic exegesis falls within permissible Qur'anic interpretation (ta'wīl maḥmūd). However, when controversial theological issues are linguistically justified, linguistic exegesis is dubbed by mainstream scholars as innovative and heretical (bid'i) and is classified as objectionable interpretation (ta'wīl madhmūm).

3.2 The evolution of linguistic exegesis

The historical development of linguistic exegesis can be traced back to the early stages of the formative phase during the first/seventh century where both the Madīnah school of exegesis founded by Ubai b. Ka'b and the Kūfah school of exegesis founded by Ibn Mas'ūd showed interest in the linguistically and phonetically based variant modes of reading approach to Qur'anic exegesis. However, it was during the early decades of the second/eighth century that linguistic exegesis took a new turn. During this stage, interest in linguistic exegesis was more evident. Exegetes of the Andalus school (third/ninth to eighth/fourteenth century) were also interested in linguistic exegesis. During the twentieth and the twenty-first centuries, the majority of scholarship in Qur'anic exegesis by both mainstream and non-mainstream exegetes has been linguistically oriented. From the period of the Andalus school up to the twenty-first century, we can observe two trends in scholarship:

- (i) Qur'anic exegetical works have been either quasi-linguistically oriented or purely linguistically oriented.
- (ii) Qur'anic exegetical works have been either in volume form and āyah-by-āyah (musalsal) exegesis, or in one- (or two-) book form and not āyah-by-āyah (ghair musalsal) exegesis.

3.2.1 *Forms of linguistically based scholarship in Qur'anic exegesis*

There have been three major research forms in linguistically based Qur'anic exegesis. These include:

- 1 Exegetical works that deal with Qur'anic grammatical and rhetorical features: Qur'anic rhetorical features were listed by grammarians such as

Yaḥyā b. Ziyād b. ʿAbd Allāh known as al-Farrāʾ (d. 207/822) who wrote *Majāz al-Qurʾān* (*Maʿānī al-Qurʾān*), and al-Aṣmaʿī (d. 211/826) who wrote a book on the rhetorical feature of paronomasia (al-jinās) in which he also referred to various rhetorical features including the linguistic/rhetorical feature of shift (al-iltifāt). Abu ʿUbaidah Maʿmar b. al-Muthannā (d. 210/225) wrote *Majāz al-Qurʾān*. Although this book was mainly concerned with Arabic grammar, it referred briefly to Arabic rhetorical aspects such as the rhetorical feature of metaphor (al-majāz, al-istiʿārah). Thus, the foundation of the rhetorical discipline of figures of speech (ʿilm al-bayān) could be traced back to Ibn al-Muthannā whose ideas attracted the interest of other future rhetoricians.

Linguistically based and glossary-form exegetical works are those by Wāṣil b. ʿAṭāʾ (d. 131/748), Abān b. Taghlab b. Rabāḥ (d. 141/758), Yūnus Ibn Ḥabīb (d. 182/798), Abu Jaʿfar al-Ruʾāsi (d. 187/802), al-Farrāʾ (d. 207/822), Abu ʿUbaidah (d. 212/827), al-Akhfash (d. 215/830), Abu ʿUbaid al-Qāsim b. Salām (d. 224/838), Ibn Qutaibah (d. 276/889), al-Mubarrad (d. 285/898), Thaʿlab (d. 291/903), Ibn Kaisān (d. 299/911), al-Faḍl b. Salamah (d. 300/912), and al-Zajjāj (d. 311/923). Exegetical works of the formative phase feature grammatical problems and the textual variants of some Qurʾanic expressions that lead to different meanings, different grammatical inflections, and different modes of reading. Among early stylistic and philological Qurʾān exegetes of the formative phase who adopted this category of exegesis were al-Farrāʾ (d. 207/822) in his *Maʿānī al-Qurʾān* and Abu ʿUbaidah Maʿmar b. al-Muthannā (d. 210/825) in his *Faḍāʾil al-Qurʾān*. This approach was also represented by *Maʿānī al-Qurʾān* of Abān b. Taghlab al-Kūfi (d. 141/758), *Maʿānī al-Qurʾān* of Muḥammad b. ʿAlī b. Sārah al-Ruʾāsi (d. 187/802), *Maʿānī al-Qurʾān* of Abu al-Ḥasan b. Ḥamzah al-Kisāʾi (d. 187/802), *Maʿānī al-Qurʾān* of Muḥammad b. al-Mustanir Quṭrub (d. 206/821), and *Maʿānī al-Qurʾān* of al-Akhfash al-Awsaṭ (d. 215/830).

There were also exegetical works that dealt with the syntactic analysis of āyahs and expressions that have more than one grammatical analysis which leads to different meanings, such as *Maʿānī al-Qurʾān wa l-rābuhu* of al-Zajjāj (d. 311/923), *l-rāb al-Qurʾān* of ʿAlī b. Saʿīd al-Ḥawfi (d. 430/1038), *al-Taḥṣīl Liḥawāʾid al-Taḥṣīl al-Jāmiʿ Liʿulūm al-Tanzīl* of Abu al-ʿAbbās Aḥmad b. ʿAmmār al-Mahdawi (d. 440/1048), and *al-Bayān fī Gharīb l-rāb al-Qurʾān* of Abu al-Barakāt ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. al-Anbārī (d. 577/1181) which is a practical application of Arabic grammar on the Qurʾanic text.

Then, we witness the emergence of the Andalus (Spain and Portugal) school of exegesis in the third/ninth century which was either grammar- or jurisprudence-based. Linguistic tafsīr works of the Andalus school included *Kitāb al-Hidāyah ilā Bulūgh al-Nihāyah* of Makki b. Abī Ṭālib al-Qaisi (d. 437/1045), *al-Muḥarrar al-Wajīz fī Tafsīr al-Kitāb al-ʿAzīz* of ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq b. ʿAṭīyyah (d. 546/1151), *al-Tashīl fī ʿUlūm al-Tanzīl* of Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. al-Juzzi al-Kalbi (d. 741/1340), and *al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ fī Tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-Karīm* of Muḥammad b. Yūsuf Abu Ḥaiyān (d. 754/1353). The

early decades of the third/ninth century witnessed the evolution of the stylistically based approach to Qur'anic exegesis and the emergence of the notion of stylistic inimitability of Qur'anic discourse. (For more details, see Sections 3.6 and 3.6.1.)

During the modern phase of Qur'anic exegesis, interest in quasi-grammar-based and rhetorical features exegesis has continued. A representative example of this kind of research is *al-Taḥrīr wal-Tanwīr* of the modern exegete al-Ṭāhir Ibn ʿĀshūr. Examples of purely grammatical and stylistic analysis of Qur'anic discourse are *ʿRāb al-Qurʾān wa Bayānuhu* of Muḥyi al-Dīn al-Darwīsh, *al-Tafsīr al-Balāghī lil-Istifhām fi al-Qurʾān al-Ḥakīm* of ʿAbd al-ʿAzīm Ibrāhīm al-Miṭʿani, *Dirāsāt li-Islūb al-Qurʾān al-Karīm* of Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Khālīq ʿAḍīmah, *al-Tafsīr al-Bayānī lil-Qurʾān al-Karīm* of ʿĀʾishah Bint ʿAbd al-Raḥmān (Bint al-Shāṭiʿ), and *al-Bayān fi Rawāʾiʿ al-Qurʾān* of Tammām Ḥassān. Consonance-based analysis (al-munāsabah) of Qur'anic discourse is a text-based analysis of the Qur'anic text that has also featured in the modern phase of Qur'anic exegesis, such as Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāḥī (1903–1997) and Saʿīd Ḥawwa (d. 9 March 1989). A recent example of this exegetical approach is *Consonance in the Qur'an: A Conceptual, Intertextual, and Linguistic Approach* of Hussein Abdul-Raof (2005a). A quasi-consonance approach to Qur'anic discourse is also found in *Fī Riḥāb al-Qurʾān* of the Ibāḍī exegete Ibrāhīm b. ʿUmar b. Bābā Baiyūḍ where he briefly refers to the conceptual and thematic chaining between consecutive sūrahs.

- 2 Exegetical works that deal with semantic and stylistic problems: Semantically and stylistically based analysis of ambiguous āyahs and Qur'anic expressions developed during the second/eighth century. Linguistic exegesis which dealt with the semantic analysis of Qur'anic expressions was represented by the works of Muqātil b. Sulaimān al-Balkhī in his *al-Ashbāh wal-Nazāʾir* which deals with Qur'anic polysemy and semantic collocation, and al-Kisāʾī (d. 187/802) in his *Mushtabihāt al-Qurʾān* which featured the grammatically similar but stylistically distinct āyahs and their contextually different meanings. This exegetical category is also concerned with the prototypical stylistic and literary features of Qur'anic discourse such as *Majāz al-Qurʾān* by Abu ʿUbaidah (d. 210/825) which focuses on the notion of iʿjāz from a rhetorical perspective and *Taʾwīl Mushkil al-Qurʾān* of Ibn Qutaibah (d. 276/889). For Wansbrough (1977, p. 215), however, the exegetical procedures symbolized by the terms wujūh, nazāʾir, and mutashābihāt were derived from a view of scripture as self-contained and self-explanatory.

Early Muslim linguists and exeges also researched in polysemy of Qur'anic expressions. Polysemous words are those that are orthographically similar but have multiple meanings in different contexts (al-wujūh). This was represented by the wujūh exegetical works such as *al-Taṣārīf* of Yaḥyā b. Sallām (124/742–200/815), *Kitāb al-Wujūh wal-Nazāʾir* and *al-Ashbāh wal-Nazāʾir* of Muqātil b. Sulaimān (d. 150/767), *Taʾwīl Mushkil al-Qurʾān* of Ibn Qutaibah (d. 276/889), *Majāz al-Qurʾān* of Abu ʿUbaidah (d. 210/825),

Mattafaqa Lafzuhi Wakhtalafa Ma'nāhu min al-Qur'ān al-Majid of Abu al-°Abbās al-Mubarrad (d. 285/898), and *al-Wujūh wal-Nazā'ir li-Alfāz Kitāb Allāh al-°Azīz* of Abu °Abd Allāh al-Ḥusain b. Muḥammad al-Dāmaghāni (d. 478/1085).

- 3 Exegetical works that deal with the problems of the variant modes of reading: Research in the modes of reading began during the second half of the first/seventh century. Among the first scholars who wrote on the modes of reading were Yaḥyā b. Ya'mur (d. 90/708), Abān b. Taghlab (d. 141/758), Muqātil b. Sulaimān (d. 150/767), Hārūn b. Mūsā al-A'war (d. around 170–180/786–796), and Abu °Ubaid al-Qāsim b. Sallām (d. 224/838). (For more details on the modes of reading, see Section 3.5 and its sub-sections.)

3.2.2 Forms of linguistic exegesis

The evolution of the stylistic approach to Qur'anic hermeneutics which started during the formative phase during the early decades of the second/eighth century and continued to flourish up to the twenty-first century has taken one of the forms discussed below. Rippin (1988) in his article 'Lexicographical texts and the Qur'ān' deals with how the Qur'anic lexicographical tradition developed. He refers to various approaches of dictionaries of the Qur'ān and provides an interesting analysis of the approaches to Qur'anic vocabulary and the medieval Arab lexicography. The linguistic school of Qur'anic exegesis developed through the following approaches:

- (i) Semantically ambiguous expressions (gharīb): This approach is concerned with the collection of words in sūrah order of Qur'anic expressions that are semantically ambiguous due to their rare use (gharīb), such as foreign words, tribal dialect words, and lexical oddities, as in the less commonly used (garīb) expressions (fāṭir – creator, Q6:14) and (abban – grass, Q80:31). The word (gharīb) literally means 'strange, unusual', i.e. 'of ambiguous or hidden meaning'. However, for al-Zajjāji (d. 311/923), al-Āmidī (d. 371/981), al-Baṭṭayūsī (d. 521/1127), and Ibn al-Athīr (d. 637/1239), the word (gharīb) in Qur'anic exegesis refers to expressions that are not often used by native speakers. Thus, they are 'strange' words. Gharīb works include *Tafsīr Gharīb al-Qur'ān* of Zaid b. °Ali (d. 120/737), *Gharīb al-Qur'ān* of Abān b. Taghlab b. Rabāḥ (d. 141/758), *Gharīb al-Qur'ān* of Mu'rij b. °Amru al-°Ijli al-Sadūsī (d.195/810), *Tafsīr Gharīb al-Qur'ān* of Ibn Qutaibah (d. 276/889), and *Ma'āni al-Qur'ān wa l-rābūhu* of al-Zajjāj (d. 311/923). However, a unique example of gharīb tafsīr works that deals with Qur'anic expressions that may have more than one syntactic analysis, where of course each bears a distinct meaning, is *al-Bayān fī Gharīb l-rāb al-Qur'ān* of Abu al-Barakāt °Abd al-Raḥmān b. al-Anbārī (d. 577/1181) which is a practical application of Arabic grammar on Qur'anic discourse. The second type of gharīb tafsīr works is those which also deal with the collection of semantically difficult words but are arranged in an alphabetical

order, like a dictionary system. These works include *Nuzhat al-Qulūb fī Gharīb al-Qur'ān* of al-Sijistānī (d. 330/942), *al-Gharībain* of Abu ʿUbaid Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Harawī (401/1011), *al-Mufradāt fī Gharīb al-Qur'ān* of al-Rāghib al-Aṣbahānī (d. 502/1108), as well as works by other scholars such as *Tafsīr Gharīb al-Qur'ān* of Zain al-Dīn b. ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Rāzī (d. 666/1267).

- (ii) Polysemy and semantic collocation (wujūh, naẓāʾir, and ashbāh): This linguistic approach is concerned with Qurʾānic words that have multiple senses or shades of meaning. We also encounter other titles, such as (al-wujūh wal-naẓāʾir), (al-naẓāʾir), or (al-alfāẓ al-mushtarakah). However, wujūh works deal with Qurʾānic expressions that are orthographically similar but have different shades of meaning in different contexts, such as the word (hudā) which has 17 contextually distinct meanings, such as (Islam, Q2:120), (prophets, Q2:38, Q20:123), (the Qurʾān, Q3:138, Q18:55, Q12:111), (the Old Testament, Q17:2, Q32:23), (to explain, Q20:128), (to increase in belief, Q19:98), (to invite, Q21:73), and (to know the path, Q21:31). However, al-ashbāh works deal with expressions that are orthographically distinct but semantically similar, i.e. that are synonymous. Works of al-naẓāʾir represent the first step in Arabic lexicographical studies. Examples of wujūh works are *al-Taṣārif* of Yaḥyā b. Sallām (124/742–200/815), *Kitāb al-Wujūh wal-Naẓāʾir* and *al-Ashbāh wal-Naẓāʾir* of Muqātil b. Sulaimān (d. 150/767), *Taʾwīl Mushkil al-Qur'ān* of Ibn Qutaibah (d. 276/889), *Majāz al-Qur'ān* of Abu ʿUbaidah (d. 210/825), *Mattaḥaḥ Lafẓuhu Wakhtalafa Maʿnāhu min al-Qur'ān al-Majīd* of Abu al-ʿAbbās al-Mubarrad (d. 285/898), *Taḥṣīl Naẓāʾir al-Qur'ān* of al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī (d. 285/898), *Iṣlāḥ al-Wujūh wal-Naẓāʾir fī al-Qur'ān al-Karīm* of al-Damaghānī (d. 478/1085), and *Nuzhat al-Nawāẓir fī ʿilm al-Wujūh wal-Naẓāʾir* of al-Jawzī (d. 597/1200). Other Qurʾān scholars who have shown interest in wujūh studies include ʿIkramah (d. 105/723) (cf. Abdus Sattar 1978).
- (iii) Stylistically different but grammatically similar āyahs and phrases (al-mutashābihāt): This linguistic approach is based on the linguistic exegesis of āyahs or a section of an āyah (noun phrase) in order to illustrate the different exegetical meaning generated by the different linguistic pattern of the same āyah found in a different sūrah. Examples of this linguistic approach are the work that is known under two titles *Kitāb al-Mutashābihāt fī al-Qur'ān* and *Kitāb al-Mushtabihāt* which are ascribed to the Qurʾān reciter ʿAlī Ibn Ḥamzah al-Kisāʾī (d. 187/802), *Durrat al-Tanzīl wa Ghurraṭ al-Taʾwīl fī Bayān al-Āyāt al-Mutashābihāt fī Kitāb Allāh al-ʿAzīz* of al-Iskāfī (d. 420/1029), and *al-Burhān fī Mutashābih al-Qur'ān* of al-Karmānī (d. 500/1106).
- (iv) Variant modes of reading (al-qirāʾāt): Linguist exegetes have also shown interest in expressions that have textual variants. This approach is linguistically and phonetically based. An example of this approach is *Maʿāni al-Qur'ān* of ʿAlī Ibn Ḥamzah al-Kisāʾī (d. 187/802).

- (v) Exegetical works that deal with the syntactic analysis of āyahs and expressions that have more than one grammatical analysis which leads to different meanings, such as *Ma'āni al-Qur'ān wa I'rābuhu* of al-Zajjāj (d. 311/923), and *al-Bayān fī Gharīb I'rāb al-Qur'ān* of Abu al-Barakāt 'Abd al-Rahmān b. al-Anbārī (d. 577/1181) which is a practical application of Arabic grammar on the Qur'anic text.
- (vi) Quasi-syntactic analysis of āyahs where the exegete provides a brief grammatical analysis of selected expressions of a given āyah with or without further exegetical details. Examples of this linguistic approach are *I'rāb al-Qur'ān* of al-Naḥḥās (d. 338/949), *al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ* of Abu Ḥaiyān (d. 745/1344), and *al-Taḥrīr wal-Tanwīr* of the modern exegete al-Ṭāhīr Ibn 'Ashūr.
- (vii) The syntactic analysis of āyahs with particular attention to Arabic grammatical structures and grammatical rules. In his *I'rāb al-Qur'ān*, 'Alī b. Sa'īd al-Ḥawfī (d. 430/1038) provides extensive grammatical details of the āyahs and takes his exegesis work as a platform for the Baṣrah school of grammar to rebut the grammarians of the Kūfah school of grammar. Modern exegetes have also shown interest in this approach such as *I'rāb al-Qur'ān wa Bayānuhu* of Muḥyi al-Dīn al-Darwīsh.
- (viii) Stylistically based analysis of Qur'anic discourse which involves the discussion of the rhetorical and linguistic aspects of the āyah, such as *al-Balāghah al-Qur'āniyyah* and *al-Kashshāf* of al-Zamakhsharī (d. 538/1143). Representative examples of this approach by modern exegetes are *al-Tafsīr al-Balāghī lil-Istifhām fī al-Qur'ān al-Ḥakīm* of 'Abd al-'Azīm Ibrāhīm al-Miṭ'ani, *I'rāb al-Qur'ān al-Karīm wa Bayānuhu* of Muḥyi al-Dīn al-Darwīsh, *Dirāsāt li-Islūb al-Qur'ān al-Karīm* of Muḥammad 'Abd al-Khālīq 'Aḍimah, *al-Tafsīr al-Bayānī lil-Qur'ān al-Karīm* of 'Ā'ishah Bint 'Abd al-Rahmān (Bint al-Shāṭi'), and *al-Bayān fī Rawā'ic al-Qur'ān* of Tammām Ḥassān.
- (ix) Inimitability-oriented stylistic analysis of Qur'anic genre. This is correlated to the notion of stylistic inimitability of Qur'anic discourse where the archetypal Qur'anic features are analysed such as grammatical, rhetorical, and phonetic features. This approach evolved during the third/ninth century and has been also adopted by modern linguists. Scholars of this linguistic approach include Ibn Qutaibah (d. 276/889) (*Tā'wīl Mushkil al-Qur'ān*), 'Alī b. 'Īsā al-Rummānī (d. 386/996) (*al-Nukāt fī I'jāz al-Qur'ān*), Aḥmed b. Muḥammad al-Khaṭṭābī (d. 388/998) (*al-Bayān fī I'jāz al-Qur'ān*), Abu Bakr Muḥammad b. al-Ṭaiyib al-Bāqillānī (d. 403/1012) (*I'jāz al-Qur'ān*), Abu Muḥammad 'Abd Allāh Ibn Sinān al-Khafāji (d. 466/1073) (*Sirr al-Faṣāḥah*), and 'Abd al-Qāhir b. 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Jurjānī (d. 471/1078 or 474/1081) who wrote two books (*Dalā'il al-I'jāz*) in which he introduced his theory of word order (al-naẓm) in Qur'anic discourse and (*Asrār al-Balāghah*), al-Zamakhsharī (d. 538/1143) who put al-Jurjānī's theory into practice in his tafsīr book *al-Kashshāf*, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1209)

(*Nihāyat al-Ījāz fī Dirāyat al-Ījāz*), Sirāj al-Dīn Yusuf al-Sakkāki (d. 626/) (*Muftāḥ al-ʿUlūm*), and Ibn Qaiyim al-Jawziyyah (d. 751/1350) (*al-Fawā'id al-Mushawwiq ilā ʿUlūm al-Qurʾān wa ʿUlūm al-Bayān*). Among linguists of the modern phase who have adopted this linguistic approach are al-Rāfiʿi (*Ījāz al-Qurʾān*), ʿĀʾishah ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Bint al-Shāṭiʿ (*Ījāz al-Bayāni lil-Qurʾān*) whose approach is similar to that of al-Zamakhshari, Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Khāliq ʿIḍimāh (*Dirāsāt li-Islūb al-Qurʾān al-Karīm*), Muḥammad Muḥammad Abu Mūsā (*al-Balāghah al-Qurʾāniyyah fī Tafsīr al-Zamakhshari wa Atharuhā fī al-Dirāsāt al-Balāghiyah*), and Tammām Ḥassān (*al-Bayān fī Rawāʾi al-Qurʾān*). (For more details on this linguistic approach, see Section 3.6.)

3.2.3 Features of the school of linguistic exegesis

The linguistic approach to Qurʾanic exegesis is characterized by prototypical features. The discussion of these features is based on the textual investigation of exegetical views and tafsīr works that have emerged throughout the marathon journey of the linguistic approach to the Qurʾān starting from the companion-successor stages of the formative phase during the first/seventh and second/eighth centuries, the recording phase that started during the first quarter of the second/eighth century, and ending with the modern phase.

In their analysis of Qurʾanic discourse, exegetes of the school of linguistic exegesis have focused on the following grammatical, semantic, phonetic, stylistic, and textual problems:

- 1 The semantic analysis of Qurʾanic expressions: The linguistic approach to Qurʾanic exegesis by Muslim grammarians and philologists dealt with the semantic analysis of the rarely used Qurʾanic Arabic expressions (*gharīb*) which, therefore, constituted semantic ambiguity due to their being not so commonly used by the native speakers of Arabic. The major representative linguistic tafsīr works were *Maʿāni al-Qurʾān* of Abān b. Taghlab al-Kūfi (d. 141/758), *Maʿāni al-Qurʾān* of Muḥammad b. ʿAlī b. Sārah al-Ruʾāsi (d. 187/802), *Maʿāni al-Qurʾān* of Muḥammad b. al-Mustanīr Quṭrub (d. 206/821), *Majāz al-Qurʾān* of al-Farrāʾ (d. 207/822), *Majāz al-Qurʾān* of Abu ʿUbaidah Maʿmar b. al-Muthannā (d. 210/825), *Maʿāni al-Qurʾān* of al-Akhfash al-Awsaṭ (d. 215/830), and *Tafsīr Gharīb al-Qurʾān* of Zain al-Dīn b. ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Rāzi (d. 666/1267).
- 2 Variant modes of reading: The analysis of the variant modes of reading (*al-qirāʾāt*) was linguistically and phonetically based and was employed as an exegetical technique. *Maʿāni al-Qurʾān* of Abu al-Ḥasan b. Ḥamzah al-Kisāʾi (d. 187/802) is an example of this approach. Scholarship in the modes of reading was also undertaken by others such as Yaḥyā b. Yaʿmur (d. 90/708), Abān b. Taghlab (d. 141/758), Muqātil b. Sulaimān (d. 150/767), Ḥārūn b. Mūsā al-Aʿwar (d. around 170–180/786–796), Abu ʿUbaid al-Qāsim b. Sallām (d. 224/838).

- 3 The syntactic analysis of āyahs and expressions that have more than one grammatical analysis which has a semantic impact on the exegesis of the āyah or expression such as *Ma'āni al-Qur'ān wa Frābuhu* of al-Zajjāj (d. 311/923), and *al-Bayān fī Gharīb Frāb al-Qur'ān* of Abu al-Barakāt 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. al-Anbārī (d. 577/1181) which is a practical application of Arabic grammar on the Qur'anic text.
- 4 The quasi-syntactic analysis of āyahs where the exegetes provide a brief grammatical analysis of selected expressions of an āyah with or without further exegetical details. Examples of this linguistic approach are *Frāb al-Qur'ān* of Ibn al-Naḥḥās (d. 338/949), and *al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ* of Abu Ḥaiyān (d. 745/1344).
- 5 The syntactic analysis of āyahs with particular attention to Arabic grammatical structures and grammatical functions of Qur'anic sentence constituents. Modern exegetes have shown particular interest in this approach, such as *Frāb al-Qur'ān wa Bayānuhu* of Muḥyi al-Dīn al-Darwish.
- 6 Stylistically based analysis of Qur'anic discourse which involves the discussion of the rhetorical and linguistic aspects of the āyah. Examples of the stylistic works are *al-Balāghah al-Qur'āniyyah* and *al-Kashshāf* of al-Zamakhshari. Representative examples of stylistically based tafsīr works by modern exegetes are *al-Taḥrīr wal-Tanwīr* of Muḥammad b. al-Ṭāhir Ibn 'Āshūr, *al-Tafsīr al-Balāghī lil-Istifhām fī al-Qur'ān al-Ḥakīm* of 'Abd al-'Azīm Ibrāhīm al-Miṭ'ani, *al-Tafsīr al-Bayānī lil-Qur'ān al-Karīm* of 'Ā'ishah Bint 'Abd al-Raḥmān (Bint al-Shāṭi'), and *al-Bayān fī Rawā'ī al-Qur'ān* of Tammām Ḥassān.
- 7 The analysis of polysemous Qur'anic expressions, i.e. words that are orthographically similar but have multiple meanings in different contexts (al-wujūh). This is represented by the wujūh tafsīr works such as *al-Taṣārīf* of Yaḥyā b. Sallām (124/742–200/815), *Kitāb al-Wujūh wal-Nazā'ir* and *al-Ashbāh wal-Nazā'ir* of Muqātil b. Sulaimān (d. 150/767), *Ta'wīl Mushkil al-Qur'ān* of Ibn Qutaibah (d. 276/889), *Majāz al-Qur'ān* of Abu 'Ubaidah (d. 210/825), *Mattaḥaqa Lafzuhi Wakhtalafa Ma'nāhu min al-Qur'ān al-Majīd* of Abu al-'Abbās al-Mubarrad (d. 285/898), and *al-Wujūh wal-Nazā'ir li-Alfāz Kitāb Allāh al-'Azīz* of Abu 'Abd Allāh al-Ḥusain b. Muḥammad al-Dāmaghāni (d. 478/1085). These tafsīr works are context-based, i.e. they usually deal with Qur'anic expressions that are orthographically similar but have different shades of meaning in different contexts, such as the word (ḡalama, or ḡālim) which has nine contextually distinct meanings such as: (to be a polytheist, Q7:44, Q11:18), (polytheism, Q6:82, Q31:13), (the Muslim who does injustice to himself/herself through a sin committed without polytheism, Q2:35, Q21:87, Q65:1), (to be unjust to people, Q4:10, Q17:133), (to decrease, Q18:33, Q21:47, Q7:160), (to do injustice to oneself through polytheism and disbelief, Q43:76), (to disbelieve, Q7:9, 103, Q17:59), (a burglar, Q5:39, Q12:85), and (to do harm to oneself, Q2:57). Early Qur'ān scholars of the formative phase such as 'Ikramah (d. 105/723) of the Makkah school also showed interest in the semantic notion of polysemy.

- 8 The analysis of synonymous Qur'anic expressions, i.e. words that are orthographically different but semantically similar (al-naẓā'ir). Works of al-naẓā'ir represented the first step in Arabic lexicographical studies. Examples of al-naẓā'ir works are *Taḥṣīl Naẓā'ir al-Qur'ān* of al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī (d. 285/898), *Iṣlāḥ al-Wujūh wal-Naẓā'ir fī al-Qur'ān al-Karīm* of al-Damaghānī (d. 478/1085), and *Nuzhat al-Nawāẓir fī 'ilm al-Wujūh wal-Naẓā'ir* of al-Jawzī (d. 597/1200).
- 9 The analysis of stylistically different but syntactically similar āyahs (al-mutashābihāt). Representative examples of mutashābihāt tafsir works are *Kitāb al-Mutashābihāt fī al-Qur'ān* and *Kitāb al-Mushtabihāt* which are ascribed to the Qur'ān reciter 'Alī Ibn Ḥamzah al-Kisā'i (d. 187/802), *Durrat al-Tanzīl wa Ghurra al-Ta'wīl fī Bayān al-Āyāt al-Mutashābihāt fī Kitāb Allāh al-ʿAzīz* of al-Iskāfī (d. 420/1029), and *al-Burhān fī Mutashābih al-Qur'ān* of al-Karmānī (d. 500/1106).
- 10 Consonance-based analysis (al-munāsabah) of Qur'anic discourse is a text-based analysis of the Qur'anic text. Early Muslim exegetes referred briefly to how consecutive āyahs and sūrahs dovetail with each other, such as Qatādah (d. 117/735) of the Baṣrah school of exegesis and Abū Ḥaiyān (d. 745/1344) of the Andalus school of exegesis. Modern exegetes such as Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāḥī (1903–1997) and Saʿīd Ḥawwa (d. 9 March 1989) also provided consonance-based exegesis in terms of sūrah structure and the units involved in each sūrah. Modern text linguistics and discourse analysis have also influenced Qur'anic text analysis in terms of the text linguistic notion of coherence as a standard of textuality, i.e. one of the constituents of the text. Thus, coherence has been investigated at the various levels of language such as the grammatical, semantic, stylistic, and phonetic levels. *Consonance of the Qur'an: A Conceptual, Intertextual, and Linguistic Approach* of Hussein Abdul-Raof (2005a) is a representative example of this methodological text linguistic approach to the textual analysis of Qur'anic genre at both the macro and micro levels. Abdul-Raof's (2005a) consonance-oriented analysis involves the following text linguistic criteria:
 - (i) the conceptual chaining between consecutive āyahs of a given sūrah;
 - (ii) the conceptual chaining between consecutive sūrahs;
 - (iii) the consonance of a given grammatical structure within a given āyah (the grammatical level);
 - (iv) the consonance of a given expression within a given āyah (the semantic level);
 - (v) the consonance of a given grammatical structure of a given āyah (the stylistic level);
 - (vi) the consonance of a given sound of an expression within a given āyah (the phonetic level);
 - (vii) the impact of co-text and context on the occurrence of a given expression within a given āyah.

It is worthwhile to note that the above seven text linguistic criteria constitute the premise of the order system (al-naẓm) in Qur'anic discourse and the notion of inimitability of Qur'anic genre. (For more details on the relevance of context and co-text to Qur'anic exegesis, see [Chapter 5](#) of this work.)

3.3 Text linguistic approach to Qur'anic discourse

Qur'anic discourse has been approached from two different angles: (i) The exegetes of the recording phase, in particular the exegetes of the Andalus school, are interested in the micro-level thematic relatedness and conceptual chaining of the consecutive āyahs within a given sūrah; (ii) the exegetes of the modern phase, however, have shown interest in both the micro level and the macro level. The macro level is concerned with dovetailing of consecutive sūrahs and, most importantly, the thematic structure of the sūrah.

3.3.1 The linguistic approach of sūrah structure

Text structure is a text linguistic notion which, from a Qur'anic text point of view, is primarily concerned with the theme-based notion of consonance, i.e. coherence, and conceptual chaining within a given sūrah. This is an exegetical approach adopted by some modern exegetes such as Amin Aḥsan Iṣlāḥī (1903–1997) and Sa'īd Ḥawwa. In his nine-volume tafsīr work in Urdu which took him 55 years to finish, Amin Aḥsan Iṣlāḥī argues that each sūrah is hinged upon a theme around which its constituent āyahs rotate. In order to capture the structure of the sūrah, it is divided into units. However, there is no unanimous agreement among exegetes or non-Muslim Qur'ān scholars as to what constitutes a unit or on the number of units a given sūrah may have. For instance, Q32 is divided into three parts by Iṣlāḥī:

- Unit one: Q32:1–14, whose theme is God's omnipotence, disbelievers' approach towards God;
- Unit two: Q32:15–22, whose theme is behaviour of believers and disbelievers towards their Lord;
- Unit three: Q32:23–30, whose theme is the consequences of the rejection of the Qur'ān.

However, for Ḥawwa, the structure of Q32 is divided into the following units:

- Prelude: Q32:1–3
- Unit one: Q32:4–9
- Unit two: Q32:10–22
- Unit three: Q32:23–30.

The sūrah structure approach is also theme-based and aims to divide the sūrah into distinct sections or parts based on different themes, i.e. leitmotifs, as well as

the four tenets of faith which are monotheism, prophethood, eschatology, and reward and punishment, as in Q27 which is thematically analysed below:

Q27:1–4 prophethood, Q27:5 reward and punishment + eschatology, Q27:6 prophethood, Q27:7–9 admonition + monotheism, Q27:10–23 admonition, Q27:24–26 monotheism, Q27:27–29 monotheism, Q27:30–31 monotheism, Q27:32–37 admonition, Q27:38 monotheism, Q27:39–41 admonition, Q27:42–44 monotheism, Q27:45 monotheism, Q27:46–58 admonition, Q27:59 monotheism, Q27:60–64 God's omnipotence + monotheism, Q27:65–68 eschatology, Q27:69–70 admonition, Q27:71–72 eschatology, Q27:73–75 admonition, Q27:76–81 prophethood, Q27:82–85 eschatology, Q27:86 prophethood, Q27:87 eschatology, Q27:88 God's omnipotence, Q27:89–90 reward and punishment, Q27:91 monotheism, Q27:92 prophethood, Q27:93 admonition.

Robinson (1996), however, provides a different sūrah structure. For instance, the surah structure of Q83 includes the following units:

- Unit one: polymic (Q83:1–5)
- Unit two: eschatology (Q83:6)
- Unit three: polemic (Q83:7–14)
- Unit four: eschatology (Q83:15–17)
- Unit five: polymic (Q83:18–21)
- Unit six: eschatology (Q83:22–3)
- Unit seven: polymic (Q83:36).

Netton (2000), however, provides a semiotic analysis for the structure of Q18. Robinson (2000, p. 69) divides Q18 into constituent units, although, for him, this division is artificial but aids the reader to understand the complexity of the sūrah. Q18 is divided into principal archetypes which are examples for mankind:

- (i) sleepers of the cave, whose story signals the supreme power of God over the whole of human existence;
- (ii) the just critic in the story of the vineyards, whose story signals the need for balance and a right ownership in the possession of worldly goods;
- (iii) Moses and al-Kiḍr, whose story signals the idea that if we knew the unseen, we would leave everything as it is;
- (iv) Dhu al-Qarnain, whose story (action) signals piety and righteousness.

3.3.1.1 *Consonance approach*

This text linguistic approach aims to establish intertextual links within the same sūrah, among consecutive sūrahs, and within the whole Qur'anic text. These links are thematic and concerned with the common leitmotifs (themes) and it is through these thematic links that conceptual chaining is realized. (For more details, see

Chapter 5.) Thus, consonance is primarily concerned with conceptual chaining which is a form of dovetailing where thematic links and intertextuality are established. Conceptual chaining is also referred to as ‘conceptual sequentiality’ and ‘thematic relatedness’. Thus, consonance approach is theme-based. Most importantly, the consonance approach to Qur’anic exegesis is based on the notion of textual coherence of Qur’anic discourse. The consonance approach provides exegetical analysis at a micro level, i.e. at an āyah, word, or sound level, or at a macro level, i.e. at text level such as the entire sūrah or the entire Qur’anic text. At the micro level, conceptual chaining and thematic links can establish intertextuality, i.e. dovetailing, between āyahs and also attain textual coherence at the word, grammatical, and phonetic levels.

3.3.1.1.1 MACRO-LEVEL CONCEPTUAL CHAINING

At the macro level, conceptual chaining and thematic links establish intertextuality, i.e. dovetailing, between consecutive sūrahs, within the same sūrah, and within the entire Qur’anic text. These intertextual links are illustrated below:

- (i) Conceptual chaining and thematic links between consecutive sūrahs, as in Q53, Q54, and Q55. These three consecutive sūrahs dovetail through a number of thematic links, such as (a) the theme of destruction of past disbelieving nations in Q53:50–53 and Q54:9–42, and (b) the theme of shunning the unbelievers which is referred to by Q53:29 and Q54:6. Conceptually, these two sūrahs are also chained by the introductory statements of prophethood in both Q53:2–4 and Q44:6 where reference is made to Muḥammad. Thus, a head–head rhetorical consonance between the two sūrahs is achieved. However, a tail–tail rhetorical consonance is established between the two sūrahs through the concluding statements of Q53:59–62 and Q54:54 where reference is made to the theme of disbelievers. Conceptual chaining moves on to the following sūrah Q55 where we encounter thematic links between Q54 and Q55, such as the theme of hell fire and paradise, which represents the tenet of faith of reward and punishment represented by Q54:47 and Q55:54. The opening statements of Q54:3 and the concluding statements of Q55:43 refer to eschatology and reward and punishment. Thus, a head–tail rhetorical consonance is established between the two sūrahs. However, a tail–head rhetorical consonance is achieved between the two sūrahs through sharing the same theme of God being the sovereign omnipotent in the concluding āyah of Q54:55 and the opening āyah of Q55:1 which refers to God as the most gracious. We also encounter tail–tail conceptual chaining between Q54 and Q55 through reference to the righteous in the closing statement of Q54:54 and the closing statement of Q55:76.
- (ii) Conceptual chaining and thematic links within the same sūrah, as in Q22 where we encounter reference to the leitmotif of ‘universalism’ through either the expression (al-nāss – mankind, people) which occurs 14 times in Q22:1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 11, 18, 27, 40, 49, 65, 73, 75, and 78, or the generic expressions

(ʿabid – servants of God, Q22:10) and (ummah – a nation, Q22:67) which, semantically speaking, also refer to ‘people’. The leitmotif of ‘universalism’ is highlighted because the ceremonies of ḥajj attract people from all over the world. Thus, we are told: (waʿadhdhin fi al-nāsi bil-ḥajji yaʿtūka rijālan waʿalā kulli ḍāmīrin yaʿtīna min kulli fajjīn ʿamīq – proclaim to the people the pilgrimage; they will come to you on foot and or on every lean camel; they will come from every distant pass, Q22:27). Also, the theme of (naṣr – support, victory) is also reiterated throughout Q22, as in Q22:15, 39, 40, 60, 71, 78, and through statements which semantically entail the theme of victory, as in Q22:18, 38, 40, and 74.

- (iii) Conceptual chaining and thematic links within the entire Qurʾānic text, as in Q1 and Q114. For instance, the Qurʾān begins with Q1 which highlights the leitmotif of ‘lordship’ (al-rubūbiyyah) where (rabb al-ʿālamīn – the Lord of the worlds) is introduced in Q1:2, and ends with Q114 that highlights the leitmotif of ‘divinity’ (al-ilūhiyyah) where (ilāh al-nāss – the God of mankind) is introduced in Q114:3.

3.3.1.1.2 MICRO-LEVEL CONCEPTUAL CHAINING

At the micro level, consonance approach is concerned with contextual and co-textual semantic, grammatical, and phonetic factors which influence the occurrence of a specific expression, a syntactic structure, or a sound form. This is to do with the stylistic mechanism and stylistic variation of Qurʾānic discourse and its relatedness to exegesis. Conceptual chaining and thematic links establish intertextuality, i.e. dovetailing, between consecutive āyahs, between āyahs in different sūrahs, within the same āyah, within a word, or with regards to the phonetic form of a given word. These intertextual links are illustrated below:

- (i) Conceptual chaining and thematic links between consecutive āyahs, i.e. inter-āyah consonance, as in Q3:123–129 which talk about the battle of Badr (2nd/624) in which the Muslim army was poorly equipped and fewer in number compared to the army of Quraish. Thus, patience and piety are stressed by these āyahs and that all affairs of this life belong to God who will reward people according to their deeds. Accordingly, Q3:123–129 have set the scene for the next āyah, Q3:130, which, to the unaware reader of context and consonance, seems to have made a U-turn from the previous seven āyahs. We are warned by Q3:130 against the bad effect of accepting interest (ribā) which has been made illegal according to Islamic law (Q2:278). The exegetical meaning of Q3:130 is related to the fact that the unbelievers’ army is better equipped but that their equipment is paid for by money gained from interest, that the unbelievers are for the spoils of war, and that they have love for this life. By logical conclusion, Q3:130 establishes thematic consonance with Q3:123–129. The esoteric exegetical meaning of Q3:130 represents a moral instruction to the believers that they need to follow Muḥammad’s orders and not to go to war for the purpose of gaining spoils because they are

as bad as interest. (For more details on inter-āyah consonance, see Abdul-Raof 2005a, Ch. 4, Sect. 4.2.)

- (ii) Conceptual chaining and thematic links between āyahs in different sūrahs, as in Q10:104 (Say, O Muḥammad: ‘O people, if you are in doubt as to my religion, then I do not worship those which you worship besides God, but I worship God who causes your death. I have been commanded to be of the believers’) which semantically explains Q109 (Say: ‘O disbelievers, I do not worship what you worship, nor are you worshippers of what I worship, nor will I be a worshipper of what you worship, nor will you be worshippers of what I worship. Your religion is for you, and my religion is for me). Also, (walā taḥzan ‘alaihim – Do not grieve over them, Q15:88) is semantically illuminated by Q5:68 (falā ta’sa ‘ala al-qawmi al-kāfirīn – Do not grieve over the disbelieving people), Q16:127 (walā taḥzan ‘alaihim walā taku fī ḍaiqin mim mā yamkurūn – Do not grieve over them and do not be in distress over what they conspire), Q18:6 (falā ‘allaka bākhi‘un nafsaka ‘alā āthārihim in lam yu’minū bihādha al-ḥadīthi asafā – Then perhaps you would kill yourself through grief over them [O Muḥammad], if they do not believe in this message, and out of sorrow), Q26:3 (la‘allaka bākhi‘un nafsaka allā yakūnū mu’mīnīn – Perhaps, O Muḥammad, you would kill yourself with grief that they will not be believers), and Q35:8 (falā tadhab nafsuka ‘alaihim ḥasarat – Perhaps [O Muḥammad], you would kill yourself with grief that they will not be believers).

Conceptual chaining and thematic links between āyahs in different sūrahs can also be represented through stylistic mutashābihāt, i.e. āyahs that are linguistically and thematically alike but stylistically different, as in: (Who is more unjust than one who invents about God a lie or denies His āyahs? Indeed, the wrongdoers will not succeed, Q6:21) and (Who is more unjust than one who invents about God a lie or denies His āyahs? Indeed, the criminals will not succeed, Q10:17). More examples of conceptual chaining and thematic links between āyahs in different sūrahs are: Q7:73 and Q11:64; Q7:81 and Q27:55; Q16:36 and Q27:69; Q27:12 and Q28:32. Conceptual chaining and thematic links between āyahs can also occur in the same sūrah, as in: Q6:112 and Q6:137; Q7:61 and Q7:67; Q17:9 and Q18:2.

- (iii) Conceptual chaining and thematic links within the same āyah, as in Q30:55 (wayawma taqūmu al- sā‘atu yuqsimu al-mujrimūna mā labithū ghaira sā‘ah – On the day that the hour of reckoning will be established, the transgressors will swear that they had remained but an hour) where the expression (sā‘ah) occurs twice, one meaning (the hour of reckoning, i.e. the day of judgement) and the other meaning (an hour). Thus, the rhetorical function of the pun is realized. Another interesting semantic observation related to conceptual chaining at the word level within a given āyah is the employment of the word (yuqsim – to take an oath, to swear) which semantically entails telling the truth. Q30:55 is a statement by the disbelievers who used to describe their relevant Prophets as ‘liars’ which has occurred in the Qur’an 281 times

in its different morphological forms, as in Q3:137, Q56:51, Q77:15, and Q85:19. However, it is the unbelievers in Q30:55 who are the ‘liars’ since they are not telling the truth and claim that ‘they had only remained an hour’. Another example of word-level consonance is (wa’innī laḡhaḡḡārūn liman tāba wa’āmana wa’amila ṣāliḡan thumma ihtadā – But indeed, I [God] am the perpetual forgiver of whoever repents and believes and does righteousness and then continues in guidance, Q20:82), the occurrence of the word (ḡhaḡḡārūn – perpetual forgiver) occurs in a context listing the prerequisites of forgiveness (tāba – to repent), (āmana – to believe), and (ihtadā – to continue in guidance). Thus, the consonance of collocation of the expression (ḡhaḡḡārūn) is achieved. We also encounter different types of God’s epithets at the end of some āyahs. An in-depth analysis of the occurrence of such epithets reveals that they are in fact context-sensitive, as in Q2:181 where the epithets (samī’un ‘alimūn – to hear well and to know all things) occurs in an āyah which warns against anyone who dares to change the bequest after hearing it. Thus, the lexical consonance is achieved through the two epithets which have occurred in the context of hearing and knowing the bequest. Also, the epithets (ḡalimūn ḡhaḡūrūn – forbearing and much forgiving) in Q17:44 have occurred in the context which refers to ‘people fail to extol the limitless glory of God and also fail to understand that the earth, the seven heavens, all that they contain, as well as every thing glorify God’s limitless glory’. Because of the finite human faculty, the epithets (ḡalimūn ḡhaḡūrūn – forbearing and much forgiving) are employed.

When a statement aims to achieve a soothing positive psychological impact upon the reader/hearer, the sound effect is the ideal means for such an end to get the message across. This is a form of phonetic consonance at the āyah level, as in Q11:31 where we have the vowel lengthening /ā, ū, and ī/ for a communicative effect in the expressions (lā, aqūl, ‘indī, khazā’ in allāḡ, lā, lā, aqūl, innī, lā, aqūl, lilladhīna, tazdarī, allāḡu, allāḡu, bimā, fī, innī, al-khāsīrīn). Also, in Q20:108, we have the /sh/ sound which semantically entails ‘be quiet’ represented by the word (khasha‘at – to be hushed). Thus, ‘sounds are stilled in the presence of God the most gracious’ and the contextual imagery is further depicted through the other complementary /s/ sound in the expressions (tasma‘u – to hear) and (hamsā – a whisper). Thus, sound effect through phonetic consonance is achieved. In a similar vein, the onomatopoeic words (rujjat rajā – to be crumbled to atoms, Q56:4), the sound effect at the word level is realized through the voiced palatal affricate sound /j/ which alludes to the shaking motion of the earthquake and the sound of the earth when it is shaken convulsively.

Micro-level conceptual chaining can also be encountered at the grammatical level. For instance, in (wa’idh yamkur bika alladhīna kafarū . . . wayamkurūn wayamkur allāḡu wallāḡu khairu al-mākirīn – Remember, O Muḡammad, when those who disbelieved plotted against you . . . But they plan, and God plans and God is the best of planners, Q8:30) where the words

(yamkurūn – they plot), (yamkur – to plot, plan), and (al-mākīrīn – the plotters, planners) are morphologically related and have successfully established linguistic consonance and rhetorical consonance of the polyptoton (jinās al-ishtiqāq). (For more details on consonance at the grammatical level, see Abdul-Raof 2005a, Ch. 6, Sects 6.3, 6.8, 6.8.1, and 6.8.2.)

3.3.1.2 *Sūrah structure approach*

Modern exegetes have shown interest in the text linguistic notion of text structure. This notion, however, is interrelated with the notion of linguistic iʿjāz (inimitability) of the Qurʾān and is also directly linked to the text linguistic notion of consonance. Like the consonance approach (see Section 3.4.1.1 above, also Section 2.3.6.2.1), the sūrah structure approach is also theme-based and aims to divide the sūrah into distinct sections or parts based on different themes, i.e. leit-motifs. In his nine-volume tafsīr work in Urdu, Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāḥī (1903–1997) argues that each sūrah is hinged upon a theme around which its constituent āyahs rotate. Iṣlāḥī calls the ‘theme’ (‘amūd – pillar) which is the same as the expression (maqṣad – purpose) employed by al-Biqāʿī (d. 885/1480). Iṣlāḥī divides the sūrah into parts by taking the themes of a number of āyahs as the component for each part. For example, in his analysis of the structure of Q32, Iṣlāḥī divides this sūrah into three parts: part one includes āyahs 1–14 whose themes are God’s omnipotence, disbelievers’ approach towards God, part two includes āyahs 15–22 whose themes are the behaviour of believers and disbelievers towards their Lord, and part three includes āyahs 23–30 whose theme is the consequence of rejecting the Qurʾān. For Ḥawwāh (2003, 8, p. 4353), however, the structure of Q32 is made up of: (i) introduction (āyahs 1–3), (ii) first group (āyahs 4–9), (iii) second group (āyahs 10–22), and (iv) third group (āyahs 23–30).

The text linguistic approach of sūrah structure can be illustrated by [Figure 4](#).

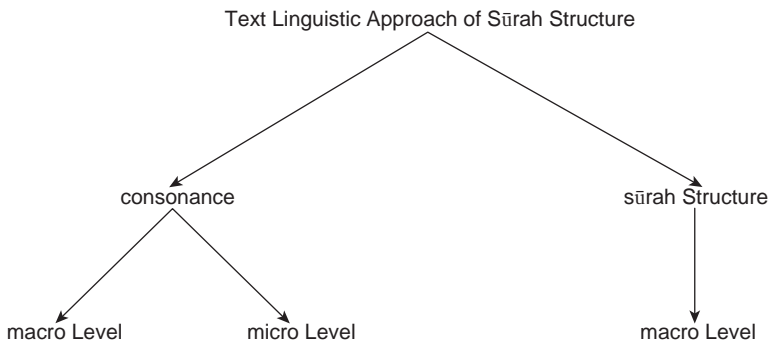


Figure 4 The different text linguistic approaches to sūrah structure.

3.4 Linguistic problems in Qur'anic exegesis

The linguist exegete elucidates Qur'anic discourse through special reference to grammatical, semantic, rhetorical, and phonetic problems involved in a given Qur'anic expression or statement which have an impact on the meaning of the āyah (al-Ṭabari 2005; al-Qurṭubi 1997; Ibn ʿAṭīyyah 1991; Abu Ḥaiyān 2001; al-Zamakhshari 1995; al-Ṭaiyār 2001; al-Sulīm 2006). Among the linguistic problems which are highlighted by linguist exegetes are:

- (1) Co-referentiality: This is the most recurrent grammatical feature of Qur'anic discourse that has a significant impact on the exegesis of a given āyah. It is referred to in exegesis as (ʿawdat al-ḍamīr), as in the following examples.

(ulā'ika yu'minūna bihī – They are the ones who believe in it, Q2:121) where the attached pronoun (-hi – it) may have four different referents:

- (i) The attached pronoun may refer to (al-kitāb – the Book).
- (ii) The attached pronoun may refer to (al-nabi – the Prophet).
- (iii) The attached pronoun may refer to (God).
- (iv) The attached pronoun may refer to (al-hudā – guidance).

(allāhu alladhī rafaʿa al-samāwāti bighairi ʿamadin trawnahā, Q13:2) where the co-referential pronoun (-hā) attached to the verb (tarawna – to see) can refer either:

- (i) to the noun (al-samāwāti – the heavens) where the meaning is: (God has raised up the heavens without any supports as you can see); or
- (ii) to the noun (ʿamadin – supports, pillars) where we get uncommended exegesis meaning: (God has raised up the heavens with invisible supports). In other words, there are pillars which are used to raise up the heavens but these pillars cannot be seen by humans).

Although the second exegetical meaning (tafsīr gharīb) is uncommended, it has been adopted by modern scholars such as Ali (1983, p. 602) who considers it as scientifically appropriate for the meaning of this āyah. For him (Ali 1983, p.602), the heavens are supported on no pillars that we can see. What we see is the blue vault of heavens, but there are invisible forces or conditions created by God, which should impress us with His power and glory.

(. . . millata abikum ibrahīma huwa sammākum al-muslimīna min qablu waḥī hādhā – . . . He named you 'Muslims' before and in this, Q22:78) where linguist exegetes have expressed two different opinions: (i) that the pronoun (huwa – he) refers to (God) because it was He (God) who called them Muslims in the previous Scriptures; this linguistic analysis is backed up by intertextuality in the last part of the same āyah: (min qablu waḥī hādhā – before [i.e. in former Scriptures] and in this [revelation, i.e. the Qur'ān]); (ii) that the pronoun (huwa – he) refers to (ibrahīma – Abraham) in the same āyah and that this linguistic analysis is backed up by intertextuality in

Q2:128 (Our Lord, make us Muslims in submission to You and from our descendents a Muslim nation in submission to You), where Abraham is claimed to have read this prayer after he had completed the construction of the Kaʿbah.

(2) Case ending, as in the following examples:

(i) A distinction in exegetical views that stems from the difference in case ending in the expressions (waʿarjulikum/waʿarjulakum – and your feet) in: (yā aiyuha alladhīna āmanū idhā qumtum ilā al-ṣalāti faghṣilū wujūhakum wa-aidiyakum ilā al-marāfiqi wamsaḥū biruʿusikum wa-arjulakum ilā al-kaʿbaini, Q5:6). The theological difference among mainstream and non-mainstream schools of exegesis is reflected in the difference in the case ending of the expression (wa-arjulakum – your two feet). For mainstream exegetes, this expression should have the mode of reading with an accusative case (al-naṣb) as shown above (wa-arjulakum). Therefore, the meaning is (and wash your feet). Thus, the exegesis of this āyah should be: (You who believe, when you are about to pray, wash your faces and your hands up to the elbows, wipe your heads, *wash* your feet up to the ankles). This exegetical view is based on the linguistic approach that adopts the mode of reading with an accusative case. Thus, the noun (arjula) is made coordinated to (maʿṭūf ʿalā) the first nouns in the same āyah (wujūha/aidiya – faces and hands (both in the accusative case)) which both have occurred with the accusative case represented by the words (wujūha/aidiya). However, the theological view based on Shīʿi non-mainstream exegesis projects a different meaning to the expression (wa-arjulakum) by reading it as (wa-arjulikum) meaning: (and pass your wet hands over your feet), i.e. the feet should not be washed in ablution. This exegetical view is based on the linguistic analysis which adopts the mode of reading with the genitive case (al-majrūr) where we get (wa-arjulikum) which makes this noun coordinated to the immediately preceding noun (bi-ruʿusikum – your head) which is also in the genitive case through the preposition (bi – with). Thus, Shīʿi linguistic approach makes the noun (arjuli – feet, genitive case) coordinated to the previous noun (ruʿusi – heads, genitive case). The meaning now stands as: (You who believe, when you are about to pray, wash your faces and your hands up to the elbows, wipe your heads, and *wipe* your feet up to the ankles).

(ii) A distinction in exegetical views that stems from the difference in ellipsis with regards to the expressions: (salāman peace, accusative case) and (salāman – peace, nominative case), as in: (wʿidhā khāṭabahum al-jāhilūna qālū salāman – When the ignorant address them harshly, they reply ‘peace’, Q25:63) and: (salāmun ʿalaikum lā nabtaghī al-jāhilīna – Peace be with you! We do not seek the company of ignorant people, Q28:55). In Q25:63, the expression (ʿibād al-raḥmān – the servants of the Lord of Mercy) is described by a number of characteristics, among which is:

(w'idhā khāṭabahum al-jāhilūna qālū salāman) whose grammatical analysis requires the ellipsis of the nominalized noun (qawlan – speech, i.e. words). In other words, the original non-elliptical sentence should be: (w'idhā khāṭabahum al-jāhilūna qālū {qawlan} salāman) where the nominalized noun (qawlan) occurs in the accusative case (-an) as an object of the verb (qālū – [they] said). Because the absolute object (salāman – peace) is related to the ellipted nominalized noun (qawlan), it also requires the accusative case (-an). Thus, the expression (salāman) occurs in the accusative case for the pragmatic function of praise (al-madh) to the good manners of the servants of the Lord of Mercy who reply with 'peaceful', i.e. nice and polite, words (qawlan salāman) to the foolish who speak to them with harsh and impolite words. As part of intertextual exegesis, āyah Q25:63 is intertextually related to: (idfa^c billatī hiya aḥsanu al-saiyi'ata – Repel evil with that which is best, Q23:96) and: (idfa^c billatī hiya aḥsan fa'idha alladhī bainaka wabainahū 'adāwatun ka'annahū waliyyun ḥamīm – Repel evil with what is better; and thereupon, the one whom between you and him is enmity will become as though he was a devoted friend, Q41:34).

However, in Q28:55, the expression (salāmun – peace) occurs in the nominative case because it is directly related to its context of revelation in which a group of the People of the Book came to see the Muḥammad in Makkah and embraced Islam. They were mocked and ridiculed by the unbelievers. Therefore, Q28:55 refers to the statement which should be adopted by the Muslim as a social etiquette and as part of good manners towards those who mock them. In other words, it refers to al-hajr al-jamīl (ignoring others with politeness). The believers are urged to reply: (lanā a^cmālunā walakum a^cmālukum. salāmun 'alaikum – We have our deeds and you have yours. Peace be with you). Therefore, the word (salāmun) occurs sentence-initially and has the grammatical function of mubtada' (inchoative). The pragmatic function of the occurrence of (salāmun) as an inchoative which requires the nominative case is because it signifies supplication (du^cā') by the believers to the unbelievers 'to be in peace'. This exegetical account of Q28:55 is intertextually related to: (waṣbir 'alā mā yaqūlūna wahjurhum hajran jamīlan – Patiently endure what they say, ignore them politely, Q73:10).

(iii) A distinction in exegetical views that stems from the difference in either:

- (a) the ellipsis of the inchoative third person plural pronoun (hum – they) in: (ṣummun bukmun 'umyun – deaf, dumb and blind, Q2:18); thus, the nouns appear in the nominative case (-un) and the sentence structure is: ({hum} ṣummun bukmun 'umyun – {They} are deaf, dumb and blind); or
- (b) the change from the negative form: (lā yubṣirūn – they could not see) to the negative form: (ghair mubṣirīn – they could not see) which requires the nouns to be in the accusative case (-an); thus, for this

mode of reading, we get: { . . . watarakahum ghaira muḅṣīrīn {ṣumman bukman ʿumyan} – He [God] left them unable to see: {deaf, dumb and blind}. This is the mode of reading by ʿAbd Allāh b. Masʿūd (d. 32/653) and Ḥafṣah (d. 45/665), Muḥammad's wife.

- (3) Foregrounding of the musnad ilaihi (something that is attributed to someone or something): Foregrounding (al-taqdīm) in Arabic rhetoric aims to achieve the pragmatic function of confirmation and stress, as in: (allāhu alladhī rafaʿa al-samāwāti biḡhairi ʿamadin – It is God who erected the heavens without pillars, Q13:2), (allāhu yaʿlamu mā taḥmilu kullu unthā – God knows what every female carries, Q13:8) where the musnad ilaihi (allāhu – God) is foregrounded. The rhetorical function of stress can also be realized through the foregrounding of the pronoun such as (huwa – He [God]) followed by the relative pronoun (alladhī – who), as in: (huwa alladhī yurīkum al-barqa khawfan waṭamaʿan – It is He who shows you lightening causing fear and aspiration, Q13:12) where the third person pronoun (huwa – He [God]) is foregrounded and followed by the relative pronoun (alladhī – who) to achieve affirmation (tawkīd).
- (4) The grammatical problem of adjective expressions, as in: (al-ḥamdu lillāhi alladhī anzala ʿalā ʿabdihi al-kitāba walam yajʿal lahū ʿiwajan. qaiyiman – All praise is due to God who has sent down upon His Servant [Muḥammad] the Book and has not made therein any deviance. [God has made it] straight, Q18:1–2) where the grammatical exegetical analysis of the adjectives (ʿiwajan – deviant) and (qaiyiman – straight) are pivotal to the meaning and linguistic cohesion and coherence of the two āyahs. The negative phrase (lam yajʿal lahū ʿiwajan – [God] has not made therein any deviance) is parenthetical placed between the noun (al-kitāba – the Book) and the adjective (qaiyiman – straight). The pragmatic function of the parenthetical phrase (lam yajʿal lahū ʿiwajan) is to rebut the scepticism and misconceptions of Qurʾān critics who claimed that the Qurʾān is merely (asāṭir al-awwalin – legends of the former peoples, Q23:83), (qawl shāʿir – the word of a poet), (qawl kāhin – the word of a soothsayer, Q69:42), and that Muḥammad (iftarāh – [Muḥammad] invented [the Qurʾān], Q10:38) because the speech of the poets, the speech of the soothsayers, and the legends of the former peoples have all involved discourse deviance (ʿiwaj). Through the negation of the verb (lam yajʿal lahū – has not made therein), the adjective (ʿiwajan – deviance) is semantically turned into a positive-meaning expression, i.e. the negation of the verb also negates from the noun (al-kitāb – the Book) the feature of 'deviance', and the adjective (qaiyiman – straight) is employed with the rhetorical function of hyperbole and infinite continuity of this feature. The adjective (qaiyiman) occurs in (al-ḥai al-qaiyūm – the ever living, the ever watchful, Q2:255). It is also worthwhile to note that:
 - (i) the phrase (lam yajʿal lahū ʿiwajan – [God] has not made therein any deviance) is coordinated to (maʿṭūf ʿalā) the verb (anzala – to reveal);
 - (ii) that there is an ellipsis of the word (wajaʿalahu – and made it) that occurs before the adjective (qaiyiman). Thus, Q18:1–2 can be given a

simpler grammatical structure taking into account the above two grammatical facts: (. . . walam yaj'al lahū 'iwajan {waja'alahū} qaiyiman – [God] has not made in it any deviance {and made it} straight). The other grammatical analysis of Q18:1–2 is that the second adjective (qaiyiman) is an apposition to (badal min) the phrase (lam yaj'al lahū 'iwajan). Thus, we can have: {al-ḥamdu lillāhi alladhī anzala 'alā 'abdihi al-kitāba qaiyiman – All praise is due to God who has sent down upon His Servant [Muḥammad] the straight Book}.

- (5) The grammatical function of an expression, as in: (lākin al-rāsikhūna fi al-'ilmi minhum wal-mu'minūna yu'minūna bimā unzila ilaika wamā unzila min qabluka wal-muqimīna al-ṣalāta wal-mu'tūna al-zakāta – But those who are well grounded in knowledge among them and the believers believe in what has been revealed to you [Muḥammad], and what was revealed before you. And those who perform the prayers and pay the prescribed alms . . . , Q4:162) where the expression (al-muqimīna – those who perform [prayers]) may assume two different grammatical functions, either:

- (i) as a noun in the accusative case (al-muqimīna) because it is conjoined to (ma'ṭūf 'alā) the phrase (bimā unzila ilaika – in what has been revealed to you) and the accusative case is employed to perform the pragmatic function of praise (al-madh) in order to highlight the value of prayers; or
- (ii) as a noun in the nominative case (al-muqimūna) because it is in a resumption position (isti'nāf), i.e. the sentence comes to an end at the word (qabluka – before you) and a new resumptive sentence starts with the word (al-muqimūna) that has to be in the nominative case.

Similarly, in Q54:5 (famā tughni al-nudhur – The warnings do not avail [the unbelievers]), the particle (mā) in (famā) can have two different grammatical functions, thus two distinct meanings:

- (i) (mā) acts as a negative particle, i.e. it signifies negation. Thus, the meaning is: (These warnings do not help them). In this case, this phrase is a prelude to the following āyah: (fatawalla 'anhum – So, [Prophet] leave them, Q54:6); or
 - (ii) (mā) acts as an interrogative particle. Thus, the meaning is: (What would the warnings benefit them?!).
- (6) The grammatical form of a word decides its inherent componential semantic features, as in: (lā yaḥillu laka al-nisā'u min ba'du walā an tabaddala bihinna min azwājīn walaw a'jabaka ḥusnuhunna, Q33:52) where we have different exegetical views due to the different forms of the word (tabaddala) which can be either:
- (i) (to divorce (your wife) and get married again). In other words, (tabaddala) has the rhetorical function of metonymy which signifies the underlying meaning of (to divorce). This exegetical view is adopted by Abu

Razīn (d. 85/704), Mujāhid (d. 104/722), al-Dhaḥḥāk (d. 105/723), al-Ṭabari (d. 310/922). Thus, the meaning of the āyah is: (Not lawful to you [Muḥammad] are any further wives after this nor is it for you to divorce them and get married again even if their beauty were to please you); or

- (ii) (to swap, to exchange your wife with someone else's). This is the exegetical view of Ibn Zaid (d. 182/798). Thus, the meaning of the āyah is: (Not lawful to you [Muḥammad] are any further wives after this nor is it for you to exchange them with other men's wives even if their beauty were to please you). However, Ibn Zaid's view is semantically flawed and discredited by al-Ṭabari since the meaning (to swap, to exchange your wife with someone else's wife) requires the grammatical form of the word (tubaddila) or (tubādila) but not (tabaddala). Thus, the first meaning holds (al-Ṭabari 2005, 10, pp. 318–320). Similarly, the verb (ẓanna) means either (to know, to be certain) as in Q2:46, Q69:20, and Q83:4, or (to think, assume, suspect) as in Q17:52, Q18:35, Q28:38, Q33:10, and Q41:50.

- (7) Conceptual chaining between consecutive sūrahs, as in Q25 and Q26. Consonance is achieved at the macro textual level through the conceptually related themes that constitute logical links between these two sūrahs and make them hang and dovetail together:

- (i) The beginning of Q25 and the beginning of Q26 are linked by the same theme of prophethood where reference to the Qur'ān is made (al-furqān – the Qur'ān, Q25:1) and (al-kitāb – the Qur'ān, Q26:2), as well as reference to Muḥammad is made (ʿabdiḥī – his servant [Muḥammad] Q25:1) and (laʿallaka bākhiʿun nafsaka . . . – Perhaps you [Muḥammad] would kill yourself with grief that . . . , Q26:3). While the beginning of Q25 in āyahs 3 and 7 refers to the pagans' futile beliefs and their demands to Muḥammad to bring about a sign as a proof of his prophethood, the beginning of Q26 in āyahs 7–8 furnishes information about God's omnipotence, which is a stylistic Qur'anic technique, as a response to the pagans' scepticism and encouraging them to employ their reason to arrive at the logical conclusion of the existence of God as Creator of the universe.
- (ii) The beginning of Q25 and the end of Q26 are also conceptually chained. These two sūrahs are dovetailed through the prefatory theme of prophethood and that the Qur'ān is the revealed Word of God (Q25:1) and the concluding part of Q26:210–227 which reiterates the same theme of prophethood, i.e. reference to Muḥammad as an addressee, and that the Qur'ān is not poetry.
- (iii) The end of Q25 and the beginning of Q26 are thematically related. The concluding āyah of Q25:77 refers to the theme of prophethood represented by reference to disbelieving the revelation, i.e. the Qur'ān (Q25:77). However, the prefatory āyahs of Q26:2–6 confirm the theme of prophethood.

- (iv) The end of Q25 and the end of Q26 are both thematically chained. In both Q25:63–76 and Q26:227, reference is made to the disbelievers. Reference to disbelievers is an implicit reference to the theme of prophethood. By the same token, the concluding part of Q25 refers to idle talk (Q25:72) which dovetails with the concluding part of Q26:224 which also deals with the theme of idle talk depicted polemic and obscene poetry which is regarded as anti-social and lacks etiquette.
- (8) Conceptual chaining between consecutive āyahs of a given sūrah, as in Q4:42 (yawma idhin yawaddu alladhīna kafarū waʿaṣaw al-rasūla law tusawwā bihim al-arḍu walā yaktumūna allāha ḥadīthā – That day, those who disbelieved and disobeyed the Messenger will wish they could be covered by the earth. They will not conceal from God a single statement) and Q4:43 (yā aiyuha alladhīna āmanū lā taqrabu al-ṣalāta wa antum sukārā ḥattā . . . – O you who believe, do not approach prayer while you are intoxicated until . . .) where, on the surface level, there seems to be a U-turn in statement and lack of consonance, i.e. Q4:43 is not conceptually related to Q4:42. A deeper exegetical account of Q4:43 provides an insight into the conceptual chaining and logical thematic link between the two āyahs. While we are told about the agony and hopelessness of the unbelievers on the day of judgement by Q4:43, we are told about a number of Islamic legal rulings with regards to prayer and what to do in preparation for it. Thus, one may conclude that the two āyahs are unrelated thematically. However, considering the larger context, such as Q4:40–41, we are informed about God’s justice, that our good deeds will be multiplied on the day of judgement, reference to prophethood is made, the horrors on the day of resurrection, and the despair and disappointment of the disbelievers on this day. Thus, the reader is psychologically prepared and alarmed. The second step, in terms of Qur’anic presentation technique, is to provide the admonition to the reader. Thus, Q4:43 refers to the importance of prayer and good deeds in order to be fully prepared for the day of judgement in order to avoid the fate of the unbelievers. In a similar vein, Q4:42 and Q4:43 are thematically linked through the theme of prophethood through the expressions (kafarū – disbelieved, al-rasūla – the Prophet, Q4:42) and (yā aiyuha alladhīna āmanū – O you who have believed [in the prophethood of Muḥammad], Q4:43). At the macro textual level, consonance is established through the thematically related expressions (lā yazlimu – [God] does not do injustice, Q4:49) and (ʿafuwwan ghaḥūrān – [God] is ever pardoning and forgiving, Q4:43) where the two expressions in both āyahs are synonymous. Thus, lexical and textual cohesion is achieved.
- (9) The consonance of a given grammatical form in a given āyah (the grammatical level): In order to justify the selection of a given grammatical form rather than a different one, the linguistic process aims to attain a pragmatic

function. Thus, coherence at the sentence level is achieved through the grammatical form. For instance, in Qur'anic discourse, the permanent epithet (al-ṣifāh al-mulāzimah) is selected on the grammatical patterns of (fa'īl) and (fa'īla), as in: (thumma innakum ba'da dhālika lamaiyitūn – Then, indeed, after that you will be dead, Q23:15) where the expression (maiyit – dead) signifies a permanent feature of someone, i.e. someone is dead. However, the achievement of the pragmatic function of a temporary epithet (al-ṣifāh al-mu'aqqatah) can only be attained through the selection of the grammatical pattern (fā'īl), as in: (wamā kunnā 'an al-khalqī ghāfilīn – We have never been unmindful of Our creation, Q23:17) where the expression (ghāfil – unmindful of) denotes a temporary feature of someone. Since the expression (ghāfil – unmindful of) expresses a temporary feature that is contrary to God's attributes, Qur'anic discourse resorts to another linguistic technique through the employment of the negation particle (mā – never have been) which is a particle of deanthropomorphism (adāt tanzīh).¹ Thus, grammatical consonance is maintained through the negation of a negative feature (the temporary feature) in order to achieve a positive feature that is 'permanent' that suits the divine status of God.

By the same token, consonance is realized through the selection of a particular grammatical form of a word, as in: (bal hum qawmun khaṣimūn – But in fact they are a people prone to dispute, Q43:58) where (khaṣimūn – prone to dispute), an active participle form (ism al-fā'īl), is selected instead of the verb form (yakhtaṣimūn – they are prone to dispute) in order to achieve the pragmatic function of continuity which the verb cannot do. Thus, consonance is achieved through grammatical form. However, in Q2:15, it is the verb that is used, although in Q2:14 the active participle occurs: (innamā naḥnu mustahzi'ūn. allāhu yastahzi'u bihim – We were only mockers. But God mocks them) where the active participle (mustahzi'ūn – mockers) is used in the first part to signal the pragmatic function of continuity in their action of mocking but the second part a verb (yastahzi'u – to mock) is selected to signify that God sends calamities upon them intermittently rather than continuously at an hourly or a daily basis which in this case requires the use of an active participle.

- (10) The consonance of a given grammatical structure of a given āyah (the stylistic level): The grammatical structure of the sentence plays a major role in linguistic exegesis. In Qur'anic linguistics, the pragmatic function of the sentence can be attained through the syntactic process of sentence structure. In other words, a Qur'anic statement can be either verbal, i.e. having a verb, or nominal, i.e. without a verb. Although stress (al-tawkid) is a rhetorical feature of Qur'anic discourse that is usually realized through the employment of stress particles such as (inna, laqad, qad), this stylistic phenomenon can be fulfilled through the grammatical mechanism of sentence structure. In Qur'anic linguistics, stress at the grammatical level can be attained through the nominal sentence to highlight a given pragmatic meaning, as in:

(lā yajzī wālidun ʿan waladihī walā mawlūdun huwa jāzin ʿan walidihi shaiʿan – No father will avail his son, nor will a son avail his father at all, Q31:33) where we have a verbal sentence (lā yajzī wālidun ʿan waladihī – No father will avail his son) followed by a nominal sentence (walā mawlūdun huwa jāzin ʿan walidihi shaiʿan – Nor will a son avail his father at all). The linguistic exegete justifies this shift in grammatical process from verbal structure to nominal structure for the pragmatic function of highlighting the Islamic notion of parents’ rights for care by their sons/daughters. Thus, the nominal sentence stresses the admonition that a son/daughter is morally obliged towards respecting and supporting his/her parents. Thus, in Qur’anic linguistics, the verb signifies lack of duration (negative continuity), while the noun expresses infinite duration (positive continuity).

- (11) The consonance of a given expression within a given āyah (the semantic level), as in (inna allāha sarīʿu al-ḥisāb . . . inna allāha ʿalimun bidhātī al-ṣudūr . . . inna allāha khabīrun bimā taʿmalūn – For God is swift in taking account . . . For God knows well the secrets of your hearts . . . For God is well-acquainted with all that you do, Q5:4, 7, 8) where consonance at the semantic level is achieved through the selection of semantically interrelated expressions (sarīʿu al-ḥisāb – swift in taking account), (ʿalimun bidhātī al-ṣudūr – knows well the secrets of your hearts), and (khabīrun bimā taʿmalūn – well-acquainted with all that you do) whose meanings feed into and complement each other. By the same token, In Q1:2, we find the epithets (al-raḥmān – the entirely merciful) and (al-raḥīm – the especially merciful) are sandwiched between two expressions: (rabb al-ʿālamīn – the Lord of the worlds, Q1:1) and (yawm al-dīn – the day of judgement, Q1:4). Linguistically speaking, we can claim that this semantic arrangement is not haphazard but rather for a consonance reason. The epithet (al-raḥmān – the entirely merciful) is part of the universal Qur’anic message which entails that the Qur’ān is a Scripture for humanity and thus God is ‘merciful to all mankind’. Therefore, this epithet occurs immediately after the expression (rabb al-ʿālamīn – the Lord of the worlds). However, according to the Qur’anic message, God, on the day of judgement, will be kind only to those who believed in the Qur’ān. Thus, the epithet (al-raḥīm – the especially merciful) is immediately followed by the expression (yawm al-dīn – the day of judgement). By the same token, consonance at the semantic level is demonstrated by: (ayaḥṣabu an lam yarahū aḥad. alam najʿal lahū ʿainain – Does he/she think that no one observes him/her? Have not We given him/her eyes?, Q90:7–8) where the employment of the expression (ʿainain – eyes) achieves consonance with the previous expression (yara – to see, observe). Āyah-final epithets in Qur’anic discourse are also examples of this text linguistic phenomenon.
- (12) The consonance of a given sound of an expression within a given āyah (the phonetic level), as in (al-qārīʿah ma al-qārīʿah – The striking calamity. What is the striking calamity?, Q101:1–2) and (aṣṣākhkhah – the deafening blast, Q80:33) where both expressions involve phonetically intensive consonants. In (al-qārīʿah), we have the uvular stop consonant / – q/ plus the pharyngeal

fricative / – ʕ/. Similarly, in (aṣṣākhkhah), we have the velarized alveolar fricative / – ṣ/ plus the uvular fricative / – kh/ plus the doubling (tashdid) of these two sounds. Thus, the marriage between sound and meaning has been achieved. These phonetically strong sounds aim to deliver the pragmatic function of depicting vividly the horrors of the day of judgement.

- (13) The impact of co-text on the occurrence of a given expression within a given āyah: Co-text is the linguistic environment of an expression. Thus, the occurrence of an expression is conditioned by its co-text, as in: (tukhriju al-ḥaiya min al-maiyiti watukhriju al-maiyita min al-ḥai – You bring the living out of the dead, and you bring the dead out of the living, Q3:27, Q10:31, Q30:19) and its counterpart: (inna allāha fāliqu al-ḥabbi wal-nawā yukhriju al-ḥaiya min al-maiyiti wamukhriju al-maiyita min al-ḥai – It is God who causes the seed-grain and the date-stone to split and sprout. He causes the living to issue from the dead, and He is the One to cause the dead to issue from the living, Q6:95) where in the first example we have a sentence dominated by verbs (tukhriju – to to cause something to issue from). The occurrence of the two verbs in this sentence is attributed to the macro co-text surrounding this sentence where we have verb-dominated statements in Q3:27 and Q10:31, and Q30:19–20. However, in the second example, we encounter the occurrence of the active participle (fāliqu – the one who causes something to split) and (mukhriju – the one who causes something to issue from) due to the co-text where the active participles have also occurred in Q6:95–96.
- (14) The impact of context on the occurrence of a given theological notion. For instance, when Islamic legal rulings are pronounced, we encounter statements highlighting reward and punishment to promote good deeds, as in: (yas'alūnaka 'an al-khamri wal-maisiri . . . mādhā Yunfiqūn . . . al-yatāmā . . . lā tunkihū al-mushrikāti ḥattā . . . al-maḥīd . . . nisā'ukum ḥarthun lakum . . . They ask you concerning wine and gambling . . . how much they are to spend . . . the orphans . . . do not marry unbelieving women until . . . women's courses . . . Your wives are your fields . . . , Q2:219–223) where this set of āyahs presents a set of Islamic legal rulings about alcohol, gambling, orphans' rights, marrying unbelieving women, women's menstruation, and the sexual relationship between the husband and wife. This set of Islamic legal rulings is followed by an āyah highlighting the Qur'anic notion of God's reward and punishment: (wattaqu allāha wa'lamū annakum mulāqūhu wabashshir al-mu'minīn – And be mindful of God: remember that you will meet Him in the hereafter, and [Muḥammad] give good news to the believers, Q2:223). The admonition provided by Q2:223 is contextually conditioned by Q2:219–223.
- (15) Stylistically distinct but structurally similar sentences (al-mutashābihāt):² linguistic exegetes expressed interest in the analysis of āyahs that are stylistically different but are grammatically similar, as in (dhālikum allāhu rab-bukum lā ilāha illā hū khāliqu kulli shai'in – That is God, your Lord. There is no god but He, the Creator of all things, Q6:102) and its counterpart

(dhālikum allāhu rabbukum khāliq kulli shai'in lā ilāha illā hū – That is God, your Lord. The Creator of all things, there is no god but He, Q40:62) where the stylistic difference between Q6:102 and Q40:62 lies primarily in the word order but the structure of the phrases remains unchanged. Thus, the phrase {lā ilāha illā hū – There is no god but He} occurs before {khāliq kulli shai'in – The Creator of all things} in Q6:102 in order to account for monotheism and highlight it. Thus, Q6:102 is conditioned by its co-text where reference is made to polytheistic expressions such as (ashraktum – you associated others with God, Q6:81, iftarā 'ala allāhi kadhīban – to invent a lie about God, Q6:93, shurakā' – partners with God, Q6:100, banīna wabanāt – sons and daughters, Q6:100). Thus, highlighting the notion of monotheism is paramount in this stylistic pattern. However, the other stylistic structure places the phrase {khāliq kulli shai'in – The Creator of all things} before {lā ilāha illā hū – There is no god but He}. This is due to the co-text of this āyah where reference to God's omnipotence is made in Q40:57 and 61. Thus, co-text requires the placement of {khāliq kulli shai'in – The Creator of all things} first as it deals with the notion of God's omnipotence (al-khalq – creation).

3.5 Modes of reading and Qur'anic exegesis

Although the 'Uthmanic master codex became the official copy of the Muslim countries during the rule of 'Uthmān b. 'Affān (d. 35/656) who abrogated all the personal codices which were kept by some companions, the modes of reading continued to be in circulation during and after his rule. The companions and the successors continued to read some Qur'anic expressions with different modes of reading from the official canonical codex. Variant modes of reading were either phonetically oriented which involved vocalic and diacritic differences, or semantically oriented which involved within-the-text exegetical expressions. The variant modes of reading had become one of the vital techniques of Qur'anic exegesis and played a role in substantiating an ad hoc theological exegetical point of view. Below is an explicated discussion of the development of modes of reading, the criteria of an acceptable mode of reading, the distinction between the phonetically based and semantically based modes of reading, the phonetic and linguistic differences among the modes of reading, the impact of modes of reading on Qur'anic exegesis, and the justification of a given theological view based on an ad hoc mode of reading. We have employed curly brackets to indicate the other modes of reading (al-Ṭabari 2005; al-Qurṭubī 1997, 1, p. 77; Ibn 'Aṭīyyah 1991; al-Ṣaghīr 1999; Ibn al-Jazari n.d.; al-Barqīnī 1985; al-Ṣaghīr 1999; Qamḥāwī 2003; Ibn 'Āshūr n.d.).

3.5.1 *The evolution of modes of reading*

During the early formative phase of Qur'anic exegesis which began during the lifetime of Muḥammad, there were no modes of reading. There was no need

for a master codex, since the spokesman of revelation, Muḥammad, was still alive. During the last decade of the first half of the first/seventh century, the two major cities which were concerned with the teaching of modes of reading were Madīnah and Kūfah. The phase of scholarship in and recording of the modes of reading began during the second half of the first/seventh century. Among the first scholars who wrote on the modes of reading were: Yaḥyā b. Yaʿmur (d. 90/708), Abān b. Taghlib (d. 141/758), Muqātil b. Sulaimān (d. 150/767), Hārūn b. Mūsā al-ʿawar (d. around 170–180/786–796), Abu Zakariyyā al-Farrāʾ (d. 207/822), and Abu ʿUbaid al-Qāsim b. Sallām (d. 224/838). It was during the last half of the first/seventh century that the differences among modes of reading began to emerge. However, during the evolution of the four schools of exegesis in Makkah, Madīnah, Kūfah, and Baṣrah, two major approaches to the modes of reading developed. The seven modes of reading (al-qirāʾāt al-sabʿ) are believed to have been established by the successors who met the companions and were taught by them. The seven major Qurʾān reciters (al-qurrāʾ al-sabʿ) lived in either Makkah, Madīnah, Kūfah, Baṣrah, or Shām (currently Syria, Lebanon, Israel/Palestine, and Jordan). The seven Qurʾān reciters were: Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1372) (Makkah), Nāfiʿ (d. 169/785) (Madīnah), Ḥamzah (d. 156/772), ʿĀṣim (d. 127/744), and al-Kisāʾi (d. 187/802) (Kūfah), Abu ʿAmru (d. 154/770) (Baṣrah), and ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿĀmir (d. 128/745) (Shām). It is most likely that the seven modes of reading are passed on from one reciter to another (mutawātir) in a teaching–learning chain, i.e. the linguistic and phonetic techniques are passed on from the teacher to his student(s) from one generation to another. Thus, it is a multiple-source mode of reading. For this reason, it can be claimed that the modes of reading are not passed on (ghair mutāwatir) from Muḥammad himself. These seven modes of reading are the correct or acceptable ones. For a mode of reading to be acceptable, it had to meet three major criteria:

- (i) compatibility with the orthography of the ʿUthmanic master codex (khaṭṭ or rasm al-miṣḥaf al-ʿuthmāni);
- (ii) compatibility with Arabic grammar;
- (iii) being authentically passed on from Muḥammad. However, the third criterion is not taken into consideration by the majority of Qurʾān scholars.

We may, however, encounter ten, rather seven, Qurʾān reciters. The other three reciters are: Yaʿqūb (d. 205/820) (Baṣrah), Khalaf (d. 229/843) (Baghdād), and Abu Jaʿfar b. al-Qaʿqāʾ (d. 130/747) (Madīnah). Therefore, a mode of reading was classified as irregular (shādhah) if:

- (i) It was adopted by one reciter only, i.e. it was not mutawātir (it was not passed on from one of the seven or ten reciters).
- (ii) It was not one of the seven or ten modes of reading.
- (iii) Most importantly, it was not compatible with Arabic grammar or Arabic language.

Thus, one can claim that even the companions such as Ibn ʿAbbās, Ibn Masʿūd, Ubai b. Kaʿb, and Anas b. Mālik read some Qurʾānic expressions with an irregular mode of reading. It is also important to note that:

- (i) All the irregular modes of reading were abrogated by the ʿUthmanic master codex.
- (ii) They were not allowed to be used in any prayer.
- (iii) They could not be accepted as evidence to substantiate any jurisprudential matter.

It is also of value to note that the two expressions (al-aḥruf al-sabʿah – the seven dialects) and (al-qirāʾāt al-sabʿah – the seven modes of reading) do not overlap. In other words, they are two different notions and have different criteria. It is worthwhile to note a number of matters with regards to ‘the seven dialects’:

- (i) At times, a dialect (ḥarf) may represent a mode of reading (qirāʾah) but it is not always the case and is not conversely true.
- (ii) The expression ‘seven dialects’ occurs in the prophetic tradition: (unzila al-qurʾānu ʿalā sabʿati aḥrufin – The Qurʾān was revealed with seven dialectal forms). The major Arabic dialects were represented by the major Arab tribes of Quraish, Hadhil, Tamim, Hawāzin, al-Yaman, Kinānah, and Rabīʿah. However, the expression (sabʿah – seven) does not necessarily mean ‘seven’ as it was customary among the Arabs to use (sabʿah) for hyperbole to mean ‘many’ but not specifically ‘seven’.
- (iii) Qurʾānic Arabic was the dialect of the Quraish tribe as this was the dialect of Muḥammad and his people, and most importantly, it was the most advanced dialect linguistically and stylistically. This view was supported by ʿUthmān’s claim: (nazala al-qurʾānu bilisāni quraish – The Qurʾān was revealed in the dialect of Quraish). For instance, other Arabic dialects suffered from phonetic and syntactic irregularities. The tribe of Hadhil, for example, could not pronounce the voiceless pharyngeal fricative / – ḥ/ and replaced it with the voiced pharyngeal fricative / – ʿ/, as in: (ḥattā ḥin – for a while, Q37:178) which Hadhil speakers pronounced as: {ʿattā ʿin}. Similarly, the tribes of Tamim and Asad could not pronounce the initial glottal stop (al-hamzah) represented by the letter /a/ and used to change it to the voiced pharyngeal fricative / – ʿ/, as in: (anna – indeed) which was pronounced as: {ʿanna}. In a similar vein, the tribe of Asad used ungrammatical forms of language, as in: {tiʿlamūn} instead of the grammatical form (taʿlamūn – you [plural] know).
- (iv) The expression (sabʿah – seven) also means: ‘seven topics or seven disciplines which the Qurʾān recurrently refers to, such as: monotheism, prophethood, eschatology, reward and punishment, the allowed and prohibited, parables and similitudes, admonition, clear and ambiguous, abrogating and abrogated, and jurisprudential matters’.
- (v) The claim that one can exchange the āyah-final set of epithets with another set of epithets since all the epithets are descriptive expressions of God and are all His names. Thus, there is no harm in replacing the āyah-final set of

epithets (ghafūrun raḥīm – forgiving and merciful) by (samī‘un baṣīr – hearing and seeing). This claim is linguistically and stylistically flawed. An in-depth text linguistic analysis of Qur’anic discourse can reveal that the āyah-final set of epithets are context-sensitive and do not occur haphazardly at the end of the āyah. Each epithet is semantically tied to its context. For more details, see Abdul-Raof (2005a).

There are two modes of reading:

- (1) Multiple-source mode of reading (qirā’ah mutawātirah) which is considered as authentic, is common among the Qur’ān reciters, and most importantly is the mode of reading that has been passed on from one reciter to another.
- (2) Irregular mode of reading (qirā’ah shādhah) which may be rejected by a given school of exegesis. This is a form of reading which is adopted by one reciter only and, thus, it is ad hoc and may be rejected by other schools of exegesis. The irregular mode of reading can be either (a) phonetically based, i.e. a change in vocalic form or a doubling of a sound in an expression, or (b) semantically based which is a form of within-the-text exegetical information (qirā’ah ‘ala al-tafsīr or qirā’ah mudrajah) that has been adopted by some companions but failed to acquire recognition and has not been passed on from one generation of reciters to another. For this reason, the irregular mode of reading does not constitute a Qur’anic form, i.e. it is rejected and considered as a non-Qur’ān because it accepts lexical addition to disambiguate something within a given āyah. It is also important to note that all the irregular modes of reading are abrogated by the ‘Uthmanic master codex, they are not allowed to be used in any prayer, and they cannot be accepted as evidence to substantiate any jurisprudential matter. However, there has been no unanimous agreement among exegetes on whether a given mode of reading is multiple-source or irregular. Thus, theological cleavages emerged as a result of different views on this matter.

3.5.2 The irregular modes of reading

Scholarship in the irregular modes of reading (al-qirā’āt al-shādhah) began to emerge during the second half of the second/eighth century. Hārūn b. Mūsā al-A‘war (d. around 170–180/786–796) was the first scholar who showed interest in following up the irregular modes of reading, their narration, and circulation. For al-Ṭabarī (d. 311/923) (2005, 1, p. 51), a prayer would not be accepted if the āyahs were read in an irregular mode of reading even if this reading was adopted by a companion. An irregular mode of reading is classified as being:

- (i) Incompatible with Arabic syntax, as in: {inna ibnaka surriq – Your son is charged with stealing} where the expression {surriq} is employed to mean (the action of stealing has been attributed to him) instead of the grammatically correct form (saraq – to steal): (inna ibnaka saraq – your son has stolen,

Q12:81). Similarly, the expression (ṣaiḥatan – blast, Q36:29) is replaced by an irregular mode of reading by a synonymous expression (zaqyatan – a loud shout). However, grammatically, this word is not morphologically sound since the verb of (zaqyatan) should be (zaqā, yazqū) meaning (to shout loud), and even if the verb (zaqā) is to be accepted as a synonym, the word morphological form has to be compatible with Arabic grammar and, thus, change to (zaqwatan) rather than (zaqyatan). In a similar vein, the expression (ummatin) in: (waddakara baʿda ummatin – and remembered after a long time, Q12:45) has four other modes of reading, either: {immatin – a blessing}, {amatin – forgetfulness}, {amahin – forgetfulness}, or {amhin – forgetfulness}. Although all the four modes of reading are irregular, it is the last one {amhin} by Mujāhid that is incompatible with Arabic grammar as a nominalized noun (maṣdar) of the verb (amiha – to forget) (Abu Ḥaiyān 2001, 5, p. 313). In a similar vein, the mode of reading: {wajaʿalnā lakum fihā maʿāʾish – We made for you therein ways of livelihood, Q7:10) is irregular due to the violation of Arabic grammar where the word {maʿāʾish – livelihood} occurs with a glottal stop (hamzah – /ʾ/) instead of the voiced palatal semi-vowel /y/ because the letter /y/ is an original letter in (maʿāyish) rather than an extra one to get {maʿāʾish} and that (maʿāyish) is morphologically derived from the noun (al-ʿaish – living). Similarly, the expression (likullin wijhatun – for each religion there is a direction of prayer to which its followers turn, Q2:148) where the word (likullin) ends with nunation (tanwīn) to express the meaning: (each religious group has) acting as a foregrounded predicate (khabar muqaddam) then followed by the backgrounded inchoative (mubtadaʾ muʾakkkhar) which is (wijhatun). However, the irregular mode of reading: {likulli wijhatin – for each direction of prayer} makes the āyah ungrammatical because the expression has become a construct noun phrase (jār wamajrūr) and without nunation. As a result, the predicate is incomplete and thus the meaning is incomplete, too.

- (ii) Incompatible with the ʿUthmanic master codex, as in: {ulāʾika ʿalaihim laʿnatu allāhi wal-malāʾikatu wal-nāsi ajmaʿūn} where {ajmaʿūn} is employed instead of (ajmaʿīn – all): (ulāʾika ʿalaihim laʿnatu allāhi wal-malāʾikatu wal-nāsi ajmaʿīn – Upon them will be the curse of God and of the angels and all the people, Q2:161). Most of this category mode of reading is also considered as inconsistent with the consensus (al-ijmāʿ) of major reciters and as based on a single recitation (qirāʾah uḥādiyyah), as in {muṭṭaliʿūnī} which is read by Ibn Masʿūd instead of (muṭṭaliʿūn – to look, Q37:54), and {waʾin kāda} which is read by Ibn ʿAbbās where {kāda} is used instead of (kāna): (waʾin kāna – even if, Q14:46). Also, in: (yā māliku – O Mālik, Q43:77), the spelling is changed by Ibn Masʿūd to: {yā mālu – O Mālik}. Similarly, the word (ashāʾ – to will) in: (qāla ʿadhābī uṣību bihī man ashāʾ – God said: ‘I bring my punishment on whoever I will’, Q7:156) is read by al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī as: {asāʾ – to do wrong deeds}. Thus, the meaning of Q7:156 changes to: {God said: ‘I bring my punishment on whoever does wrong deeds’}.

- (iii) Incompatible with the consensus of the canonical Qur'ān reciters: In this mode of reading, the reciters of a given city read Qur'anic expressions in a different way from the rest of reciters in other major cities, as in the irregular mode of reading: {fal-yawma nunaḥḥika bibadanika – We will move you as a corpse, Q10:92} where the expression {nunaḥḥika – to move you} is derived from the verb {naḥā – to move or turn something towards}. However, this mode of reading is counter to the consensus of the major Qur'ān reciters: {fal-yawma nunajjika bibadanika – We will save you as a corpse}. Similarly, we encounter: {innahā – it is, Q6:109} where the initial vowel /i/ is used by Ibn Kathīr, Ibn ʿĀmir, Khalaf, and Abu ʿAmru. The consensus of canonical reciters in other cities was to read it as {annahā} as it was compatible with the spelling of the ʿUthmanic master codex. Similarly, the word {hudnā} in Q7:156 is read with the short vowel /u/ for the initial letter /h/ by all the major reciters, meaning {to repent, to turn back to God}. However, the Madīnan reciter Yazīd Abu Wajzah (d. 130/747) read it as {hidnā}, i.e. with the short vowel /i/ for the initial letter /h/ meaning {to urge ourselves towards God's obedience}.

It is interesting to note that although the mode of reading of ʿĀṣim of Kūfah (illā an takūna tijāratun ḥāḍiratan – except when it is an immediate transaction, Q2:282) was adopted only by the reciters of this city and was compatible with the ʿUthmanic master codex where the accusative case /-an/ was used, the consensus of other major reciters in other cities had a different mode of reading which was in the nominative case /-un/: (illā an takūna tijāratun ḥāḍiratun – except when it is an immediate a transaction). For al-Ṭabari (2005, 3, pp. 132–133), the mode of reading with the accusative case (ḥāḍiratan) was irregular and that the acceptable mode should be in the nominative case (ḥāḍiratun).

- (iv) Adopted by one or two reciters of a given city but not by the majority of reciters in other cities: This is referred to as single-source mode of reading (qirāʾāt al-āḥād), as in the reading {ḥaṣīratan} by al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī of Baṣrah: {aw jāʾukum ḥaṣīratan ṣudūruhum} instead of the regular mode of reading {ḥaṣīrat – strained}: {aw jāʾukum ḥaṣīrat ṣudūruhum – or those who came to you, their hearts strained, Q4:90}. Another example of a single-source mode of reading is: {laʾuqsimu} which is read by al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī and Ibn Kathīr instead of {lā uqsimu – by, Q75:1} which is adopted by the major reciters.

3.5.3 Approaches to modes of reading

There were two major traditional approaches to modes of reading. The first was concerned with the manner of articulation of an expression and the rhythmical phonetic symmetry (al-tanāsuq al-ṣawṭi fi al-iqāʿ) of words within a given sūrah or consecutive āyahs. The second was concerned with paraphrastic additions to a given expression to eliminate semantic ambiguity. These two approaches to the modes of reading are discussed below.

3.5.3.1 *Phonetically based mode of reading*

This approach was developed by the Madinah school established by Ubai b. Ka'b (d. 20/640) and was concerned mainly with the articulatory phonetics of Qur'anic expressions. The companions read some Qur'anic expressions differently from the canonical 'Uthmanic recension. The phonetically oriented variant modes of reading involved vocalic or diacritic differences. Thus, this mode of reading focused on the different phonetic forms which a given Qur'anic word might have. In other words, a word could be pronounced differently with or without a change of meaning. This included phonetic problems such as double sound (mushaddad) or a vowelless consonant (sukūn) as well as case sounds such as the accusative (manṣūb), the short vowel /a/ (faṭḥah), the nominative (marfū'), and the short vowel /u/ (ḍammah). An example of an ordinary mode of reading that takes into account the criteria of articulatory phonetics is: (waqur'ānan faraqnāhu – It is a Qur'ān which We have revealed in parts, Q17:106) which has another mode of reading in terms of articulatory phonetics: (waqur'ānan farraqnāhu), where the letter /r/ in (farraqnāhu) is doubled (farraqnāhu), and (fi 'amadin mumaddadah – in towering columns, Q104:9) which has a different mode of reading: (fi 'umudin mumaddadah), where the faṭḥa, i.e. the short vowel /a/ in ('amadin), is replaced by the ḍammah represented by the short vowel /u/ in ('umudin). The phonetically oriented mode of reading can be represented by several phonetic forms of the same expression. For instance, the verb ('abada – to worship, Q5:60) has 16 modes of reading, all of which are irregular and are nominalized nouns of the verb ('abada), and the verb (darasta – to study, Q6:105) has 12 irregular modes of reading.

The phonetically oriented mode of reading is also concerned with the phonetic symmetry (al-tanāsuq al-ṣawṭi fī al-īqā') of āyah-final sounds which can either occur in an āyah-final word or in a refrain which is a rhyme phrase at the end of the āyah that refers to God's epithets such as (ghafūran raḥīmā – ever forgiving and merciful), (al-samī' al-'alīm – the hearing, the knowing). Thus, this phonetically based mode of reading aims to achieve consonance of sounds (tanāghum al-aṣwāt) and their rhythmical phonetic symmetry at āyah-final level. Linguist exegetes, such as al-Farrā' (d. 207/822) for instance, have dealt with interesting phonetic features of Qur'anic words with regards to the phonetically oriented mode of reading. In his *Ma'āni al-Qur'ān*, al-Farrā' talks about phonetic ellipsis and refers to why the final sound /i/ of the word (yasr – to pass, Q89:4) is ellipted, i.e. dropped, and the word ends with a final sound /r/. Thus, stylistically, (wal-laili idhā yasr – By the night when it passes, Q89:4 should have a different mode of reading which is adopted by other Qur'ān recitors: (wal-laili idhā yasrī) because the spelling of the word (yasrī) is with a final letter /i/. However, the sound /i/ is ellipted in order to achieve rhythmical phonetic symmetry and phonetic consonance in Q89 which is dominated by āyah-final words that end with the sound /r/, as in Q89:1–3 and 5. We can conclude that the phonetically based mode of reading aims to achieve melodic sounds and musical tone within consecutive āyahs through the process of phonetic ellipsis, as in (lakum dīnukum waliya dīn – You

have your religion and I have mine, Q109:6) where the word (*dīn* – religion) is pronounced with a final sound /n/ in order to achieve symphonious phonetic consonance with the other āyah-final words (*al-kāfirūn* – disbelievers) and (*taʿbudūn* – you worship) in Q89:1–2, respectively. The same phonetic rule applies to Q26:78, where the word (*yahdīn* – to guide me) ends with the nasal sound /n/ rather than with the vowel /i/. The reason for this phonetically oriented mode of reading is to achieve rhythmical phonetic symmetry with the overall phonetic environment of the sūrah, where āyah-final words predominantly end with the sound /n/ as in Q26:39–57, 60–62, 64–67, 70–84, 87–88, 90–100, 102–103, 105–121, 123–134, 136–139, 141–147, 149–154, 157–158, 160–174, 176–181, 183–188, 190, 192–196, 198–200, 202–216, 219, 221, 223–227.

However, we also encounter two phonetically different words in two different āyahs with different final sounds, where in one case the āyah-final word occurs without undergoing phonetic ellipsis of the final sound, as in Q77:36, while in the other case, the āyah-final word does undergo phonetic ellipsis of the final sound, as in Q35:36. In (*walā yuʿdhanu lahum fayaʿtadhīrūn* – They will be given no chance to offer any excuses, Q77:36) the word (*fayaʿtadhīrūn* – to offer excuses) ends with a nasal sound /n/ rather than dropping the sound /n/ to get {*fayaʿtadhīrū*}. The major reason for having (*fayaʿtadhīrūn*) with a final sound /n/ is to achieve rhythmical phonetic symmetry through a word-final sound /n/ that phonetically matches the other āyah-final words which also end with a final sound /n/, as in Q77:34–35 and 37–50. However, in (*lā yuqḍā ʿalaihim fayamūtū* – They will neither be finished off by death, Q35:36), the word (*fayamūtū* – to die) ends with the long vowel /ū/ and occurs in the middle of the āyah. Yet, this word is expected to appear with a final sound /n/ (*fayamūtūn*). Instead, this word has undergone phonetic ellipsis where the sound /n/ is dropped in order to achieve rhythmical phonetic consonance with an earlier word in the same āyah (*kafarū* – they disbelieved). Thus, melodic sounds within the same āyah are achieved.

3.5.3.2 *Semantically based mode of reading*

This approach was developed by the Kūfah school of exegesis established by Ibn Masʿūd (d. 32/653) as a new exegetical technique in Qurʾanic exegesis and was concerned with the elimination of semantic ambiguity of expressions through various linguistic processes such as synonymy, deletion, and addition that aim to demist the semantic or grammatical complexity involved in a given āyah. As it is a disambiguating technique, it is, therefore, an exegetical mode of reading (*al-qirāʾah al-tafsīriyyah*). However, the disambiguating words employed in this mode of reading are not part of the master codex of the Qurʾān, which is the master ʿUthmanic codex. Thus, it is regarded as an irregular mode of reading (*qirāʾah shādhah*). Usually, the exegetical mode of reading involves the addition of a word or more to disambiguate an āyah or a word within the āyah. For instance, Q5:89 is read as: {*faṣīyāmu thalāthati aiyāmin mutataʿbiʿāt* – to fast for

three consecutive days} according to the exegetical mode of reading by Ibn Mas'ūd where the word {mutatābi'āt – consecutively} is inserted in order to provide exegetical clarification. Similarly, Q5:38 (wal-sāriqu wal-sāriqatu faqṭa'ū aidiyahumā – The thief, male and female, amputate their hands) constituted a jurisprudential problem as to which hand to be cut off, the right or the left. This problem was resolved by Ibn Mas'ūd's exegetical mode of reading: {wal-sāriqūna wal-sāriqātu faqṭa'ū aimānahum – the thief, male and female, amputate their right hands}. Explaining a Qur'anic word can be achieved through lexical substitution by means of the exegetical mode of reading, as in Q66:4 (faqad ṣaghat qulūbukumā – your hearts have deviated) which has Ibn Mas'ūd's exegetical mode of reading as: {faqad zāghat qulūbukumā – your hearts have deviated} where the word (ṣaghat – to lean towards [to listen to] falsehood) is replaced by {zāghat – to deviate}. It can be safely claimed that the semantically oriented mode of reading can be represented by no more than three different exegetical modes inserted either as a substitution or an addition of an expression.

It is worthwhile to note the following developments during the formative phase:

- (1) The companions did not object to the use of modes of reading and they occasionally relied on the semantically based mode of reading, such as 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb in: (idhā nūdiya lil-ṣalāti min yawm al-jumu'ati fas'aw ilā dhikr allāh – When the call to prayer is made on the day of congregation, hurry towards the remembrance of God, Q62:9) which he read as: {idhā nūdiya lil-ṣalāti min yawm al-jumu'ati {famḍū} ilā dhikr allāh – When the call to prayer is made on the day of congregation, proceed to the remembrance of God, Q62:9} where he replaced the expression (fas'aw – hurry) by its synonym {famḍū – proceed}, 'Ali b. Abī Ṭālib in: (ṭalḥin manḍūd – clustered acacia, Q56:29) which he read as: {ṭal'in manḍūd – banana trees layered with fruit} where he replaced the word (ṭalḥin) by its synonym {ṭal'in}, Ibn 'Abbās in: (fanādathu al-malā'ikatu wahwa qā'imun yuṣalli fī al-miḥrāb – The angels called him while he was standing in prayer in the chamber, Q3:39) which he read as: {{fanādāhu jibrīlu} wahwa qā'imun yuṣalli fī al-miḥrāb – {Gabriel} called him while he was standing in prayer in the chamber} where he replaced the noun (al-malā'ikah – the angels) which is a feminine noun by {jibrīl – Gabriel} which is a masculine noun; thus, the verb form changes to the masculine form {fanādāhu – to call him}, Ibn Mas'ūd in: (mā aṣābaka min ḥasanatin famin allāh wamā aṣābaka min saiyyi'atin famin nafsik – What comes to you of good is from God, but what comes to you of evil, is from yourself, Q4:79) which he read as: {mā aṣābaka min ḥasanatin famin allāh wamā aṣābaka min saiyyi'atin famin nafsik {wa'annamā qaḍaituhā 'alaik} – What comes to you of good is from God, but what comes to you of evil, is from yourself {but I have decided it for you}}, and which Ubai b. Ka'b read as: {mā aṣābaka min ḥasanatin famin allāh wamā aṣābaka min saiyyi'atin famin nafsik {wa'anā qaddartuhā 'alaik} – What comes to you of good is from God, but what comes to you of evil, is from yourself {but I have decided it for you}}.

- (2) Although the Madīnah school of exegesis was primarily concerned with phonetically oriented modes of reading, its founder, Ubai b. Ka'b occasionally relied on semantically oriented mode of reading, as in: (inna al-sā'ata ātiyatun akādu ukhfihā – Indeed, the hour is coming though I choose to conceal it, Q20:15) which is given a different mode of reading by Ubai: {inna al-sā'ata ātiyatun akādu ukhfihā {min nafsī fakaifa uẓhirakum 'alaihā} – Indeed, the hour is coming though I choose to conceal it {from myself so why would I reveal it to you}}, and in: (mā aṣābaka min ḥasanatin famin allāh wamā aṣābaka min saiyyi'atin famin nafsik – What comes to you of good is from God, but what comes to you of evil, is from yourself, Q4:79) which he reads as: {mā aṣābaka min ḥasanatin famin allāh wamā aṣābaka min saiyyi'atin famin nafsik {wa'anā qaddartuhā 'alaik} – What comes to you of good is from God, but what comes to you of evil, is from yourself {but I have decided it for you}}.
- (3) Although the Makkah school of exegesis was not concerned with modes of reading, Ibn 'Abbās, at times, relied on semantically oriented modes of reading, as in: (kāna ya'muru ahlahū bil-ṣalāti – He used to command his people to pray, Q19:55) which he read as: {kāna ya'muru {qawmahū} bil-ṣalāti – He used to command his {people} to pray} where he substituted the noun (ahlahū) by the synonym {qawmahū}. The word (ahlahū), however, means (household, family). Thus, Ibn 'Abbās's technique of substitution aims to disambiguate the word (ahlahū) which according to the āyah's context means (people).

However, we still have not witnessed the emergence of a class of seven or ten reciters during the early successors' phase. The seven or ten reciters began to emerge during the early second/eighth century. It is worthwhile to note that scholarship in the modes of reading was revived by the linguist exegetes of the Andalus school such as Ibn 'Aṭīyyah (d. 546/1151), Abu Ḥaiyān (d. 754/1353), and al-Qurṭubī (d. 671/1272) whose tafsīr works were marked by the discussion of modes of reading.

3.5.4 Linguistic and phonetic differences in modes of reading

There are several major linguistic and phonetic differences in the modes of reading some Qur'anic expressions, such as:

- (1) The word form and its meaning remain the same, although there is a change in the case marking of the two expressions, as in (aṭhar – purer) which may occur in the nominative case: (hunna aṭharu lakum – They [my daughters] are purer for you, Q11:78). The phonetic change is represented by the short vowel /u/, i.e. (ḍammah) at the end of the word. However, according to the phonetically based mode of reading, the expression (aṭhar) can also occur in the accusative case: {hunna aṭhara lakum – They [my daughters] are purer for you}, i.e. the phonetic change is represented by the short vowel /a/, i.e.

(faṭḥah) at the end of the word. Similarly, the verb (yaḍīq – to be depressed) can either end with a short vowel /u/ as (yaḍīqu); thus, we get: {yaḍīqu ṣadri – I shall be depressed, Q26:13}, or end with a short vowel /a/ as (yaḍīqa); thus, we get: {yaḍīqa ṣadri – I shall be depressed}.

- (2) The word form remains the same but the meaning changes due to change in its grammatical function, as in: (rabbanā bā'id baina asfārinā – Our Lord, lengthen the distance between our journeys! Q34:19) where in this mode of reading, the verb (bā'id – to lengthen the distance) occurs in the imperative. However, in another mode of reading, this verb form occurs as a past tense: {rabbanā bā'ada baina asfārinā – Our Lord lengthened the distance between our journeys}.
- (3) The word form remains the same but the meaning changes due to change in spelling, as in: (unẓur ila al-ʿiẓāmi kaifa nunshizuhā, Q2:259) where the expression (nunshizuhā) means (to raise the bones); thus, the meaning is: (Look at the bones how We develop them). The other mode of reading, which is phonetically based, changes the consonant letter /z/ to /r/; thus, we get {nunshiruhā} and the meaning becomes: {Look at the bones how We re-create them}. Other examples of change in spelling are: (māliki – master, Q1:4) and {maliki – king}; (al-nabiyyu – the Prophet, 3:68) and {al-nabi'ū – the Prophet}; (al-munādi – the caller, Q50:41) and {al-munādī – the caller}; and (al-ṣirāṭ – path, Q1:5) and {al-sirāṭ – path}.
- (4) The doubling of consonants, as in: (yaṭhurna, Q2:222), where the voiceless velarized alveolar stop /ṭ/ occurs as a single letter; thus, the meaning is: (their menstruation has finished). However, in the alternative phonetically based mode of reading, this expression occurs with doubling the voiceless velarized alveolar stop /ṭ/ and the voiceless glottal fricative /h/: {yaṭṭaharna}; thus, the meaning is: {their menstruation has finished and they have taken a complete bath}. Similarly, in Q15:15, the expression (sukkirat – to have been dazzled) occurs with a double consonant /k/ and the initial letter /s/ is given the short vowel /u/; thus, it is a verb in the passive voice form (mabni lil-majhūl). However, in another mode of reading, this verb occurs in an active voice form (mabni lil-ma'ālūm) with a single /k/ as (sakarāt – to neutralize something, to stop it from functioning) and the initial letter /s/ is given the short vowel /a/. Similarly, in: (tusāqit – to drop, Q19:25), the voiceless alveolar fricative /s/ occurs as a single letter meaning (the dates will drop) while in the other mode of reading: {tassāqit – to drop}, the /s/ is doubled meaning {the dates will drop in large quantities}.
- (5) The word form changes but the meaning remains the same, i.e. synonyms are employed, as in: (al-ʿihn al-manfūsh – fluffed up wool, Q101:5), where (al-ʿihn) occurs but in another mode of reading, the synonymous expression {al-ṣūf} is used instead: {al-sūf al-manfūsh – fluffed up wool}. Also, (fas'aw – to proceed, Q62:9) is replaced by a synonym {famḍū – to go}. In a similar vein, (anẓurūnā – to wait for us, Q57:13) has three other modes of reading which employ the synonyms {amhilūnā – to grant us a respite}, {akhkhirūnā – to

delay us}, and {arqibūnā – to wait for us}. Also, Q19:90: (takādu al-samāwātu yatafaṭṭarna minhu – The heavens almost rupture therefrom) has an irregular mode of reading due to the replacement of (tafaṭṭara – to rupture) by its synonym {taṣaddaʿa – to crack, rupture}: {takādu al-samāwātu yataṣaddaʿna minhu}. Similarly, Q36:26 has two distinct modes of reading: (in kānat illā ṣaiḥatan wāḥidatan – There was just one blast, Q36:29) where we have (ṣaiḥatan – blast). However, in a different, i.e. irregular, mode of reading, we encounter the synonymous expression {zaqyatan – a loud shout}; thus we get: {in kānat illā {zaqyatan} wāḥidatan – There was just one loud shout}. Similarly, in Q15:15 (sukkirat abṣārunā – our eyes have been dazzled), the verb (sukkirat – to be dazzled) is replaced by the synonym (suḥḥirat – to be coaxed, enchanted, allured). However, the alternative modes of reading are rejected for a number of reasons:

- (i) It is incompatible with the ʿUthmanic master codex.
 - (ii) It is not morphologically sound since the verb of {zaqyatan} should be {zaqā, yazqū} meaning (to shout loud).
 - (iii) Even if we were to accept the verb {zaqā}, the word form has to change to {zaqwatan} rather than {zaqyatan}.
- (6) Both the word form and the meaning change, as in: (ṭalḥ manḍūd – clustered acacia, Q56:29) where we have (ṭalḥ – acacia, bananas) but in another mode of reading this expression changes to {talʿ – fruit}; thus, we get: {talʿ manḍūd – clustered fruit}.
- (7) The foregrounding and backgrounding of an expression, as in: (jāʿat sakratu al-mawti bil-ḥaqqi – The intoxication of death will bring the truth, Q50:19) where (al-mawti – death) is foregrounded, i.e. occurs first, but in the alternative mode of reading, (al-mawti) is backgrounded, i.e. it is placed at the end of the sentence: {jāʿat sakratu {al-ḥaqqi} {bil-mawti} – The intoxication of the truth will bring death.} Also, in: (fayaqtulūna wayuqtalūn – They kill and are killed, Q9:111) and {fayuqtalūna wayaqtulūn – They are killed and kill}, and in: (faʿadhāqaha allāhu libāsa al-jūʿi wal-khawfi – God made it taste the envelopment of hunger and fear, Q16:112) whose alternative mode of reading is: {faʿadhāqaha allāhu libāsa al-khawfi wal-jūʿi – God made it taste the envelopment of fear and hunger}.
- (8) The addition, deletion, and substitution by synonyms, as in: (thumma khalaqna al-nuṭfaṭa ʿalaqatan fakhalaqna al-ʿalaqata muḍghatan fakhalaqna al-muḍghata ʿizāman fakasawna al-ʿizāma laḥman – We made the sperm-drop into a clinging clot, and We made the clot into a lump of flesh, and then We made from the lump bones, and We covered the bones with flesh, Q23:14). In another mode of reading, a number of linguistic changes have taken place:
- (i) the word (khalaqa – to make, create) is replaced by the synonym {jaʿala};
 - (ii) the conjunction (fa – then) in (fakhalaqna) is replaced by the synonymous conjunction {thumma – then};

- (iii) the addition of {waʿaṣaban – and nerves};
- (iv) the addition of a co-referential pronoun {-hu – it} referring to {ʿaṣaban – nerves};
- (v) the deletion of (al-ʿiẓāma – the bones)

The new mode of reading is: {thumma jaʿalna al-nuṭfaṭa ʿalaqatan fajjaʿalna al-ʿalaqata muḍghatan thumma jaʿalna al-muḍghata ʿiẓāman waʿaṣaban fakasawnāhu laḥman – We made the sperm-drop into a clinging clot, and We made the clot into a lump of flesh, and then We made from the lump bones and nerves, and We covered them with flesh}.

The new mode of reading can involve the addition only of an expression, as in: (inna ḥādhā akhī laḥū tisʿun watisʿūna naʿjatan waliya naʿjatun – Indeed, my brother has ninety-nine ewes and I have one ewe, Q38:23) but in a different mode of reading, we have: {inna ḥādhā akhī laḥū tisʿun watisʿūna naʿjatan {unthā} waliya naʿjatun – Indeed, my brother has ninety-nine {female} ewes and I have one ewe} where the adjective {unthā – female} is added for stress. Also, in: (amma al-ghulāmu fakāna abwāhu muʿminaini – As for the boy, his parents were believers, Q18:80) but the alternative mode of reading adds the expression {kāfiran – [he was] a disbeliever} to specify the noun (al-ghulāmu – the boy) and the addition of (wakāna – and were); thus, we get: {amma al-ghulāmu fakāna {kāfiran} {wakāna} abwāhu muʿminaini – As for the boy, {he was a disbeliever} {and} his parents {were} believers}. It is worthwhile to note that deletion of a letter can also take place, as in: (wamā ʿamilathu aidhim – and what their hands have made, Q36:35) whose alternative mode of reading deletes the letter /hu/ of (ʿamilathu – to make); thus, we get: {wamā ʿamilat aidhim – and what their hands have made}.

- (9) Masculine versus feminine word form, as in: (lā tuqbalu – not to be accepted, Q2:48) which is in the masculine form, while its alternative mode of reading occurs in the feminine form: {lā tuqbalu – not to be accepted}.
- (10) Change in morphological form, as in: (yaʿrishūn – they are building, Q7:137) whose verb form is (ʿarusha – to build) but the other mode of reading is: {yaʿrushūn – they are building} whose verb form is {ʿarisha – to build}.

3.5.5 *Impact of modes of reading on Qurʿanic exegesis*

A different mode of reading can lead to a divergent exegetical view. This, however, applies primarily to the phonetically oriented mode of reading, since the semantically oriented mode of reading is a disambiguating mechanism. The phonetically based mode of reading is concerned with articulatory phonetics and vocalic changes within a given word. These phonetic processes can lead to changes in grammatical functions which ultimately lead to a semantic change, as in the following cases:

- (1) The nominative case /u/ versus the genitive case /i/, as in: (inna waliyyi allāhu alladhī nazzala al-kitāba – Indeed, my friend is God who has sent

down the Book, Q7:196) where the noun (waliyiya – my protector) is in the accusative case /a/ because it is the noun of the auxiliary (inna – indeed) and (allāhu – God) occurs in the nominative case /u/ since it is the predicate of (inna). Based on this grammatical analysis, (waliyiya allāhu) is a noun phrase made up of a foregrounded predicate (waliyiya) and a backgrounded subject (allāhu). Thus, the original grammatical structure is (allāhu waliyiya). Thus, the meaning of the āyah is that ‘God is my friend and He is the one who sent down the Qur’ān. However, the alternative mode of reading is {inna waliyiya allāhi alladhī nazzala al-kitāba – Indeed, God’s friend has sent down the Book} where although the noun (waliyiya) occurs in the accusative case /a/ because it is considered as the noun of the auxiliary (inna – indeed), it has the grammatical function of muḍāf and {allāhi – God} occurs in the genitive case /i/ because grammatically it acts as muḍāf ilaihi. According to this grammatical analysis, the whole noun phrase {waliyiya allāhi – God’s friend}, which is made up of the muḍāf {waliyiya} plus the muḍāf ilaihi {allāhi}, acts as one unit whose exegetical meaning is: {jibrīl – Gabriel}. Thus, the meaning of the āyah is: {Indeed, God’s friend, i.e. Gabriel, has sent down the Book}.

- (2) The active voice versus the passive voice, as in: (inna awwala baitin wuḍi’a lilnāsi lilladhī bibakkata – Indeed, the first house of worship that was established for mankind was that at Bakkah, Q3:96) where the verb (wuḍi’a – that was established) is a passive voice whose implicit subject is (allāh – God). Thus, the exegetical meaning with a passive voice verb and its implicit subject is: ‘It was God who established the first house of worship at Bakkah’. However, the alternative mode of reading is: {inna awwala baitin waḍa’a lilnāsi lilladhī bibakkata – Indeed, the first house of worship established for mankind was that at Bakkah} where the verb {waḍa’a – to establish} occurs in the active voice whose implicit subject is {ibrāhīm – Abraham}. Thus, the exegetical meaning with an active voice verb and its implicit subject is: ‘It was Abraham who established the first house of worship at Bakkah’.

Similarly, in: (mā kāna yanbaghī lanā an nattakhidha min dūnika awliyā’ – It was not for us to take any allies other than You [God], Q25:18) where the verb (nattakhidha – to take) is in the active voice; thus, the exegetical meaning of the āyah is: (We would never take any allies other than God). However, the other mode of reading is: {mā kāna yanbaghī lanā an {nuttakhadha} min dūnika awliyā’ – It was not for us {to be taken} as allies other than You [God]} where the verb {nuttakhadha – to be taken as} is in the passive voice; thus, the exegetical meaning is: {We would never allow ourselves to be taken by other people as allies but would urge them to take You as their ally}. In a similar vein, the verb (nujāzī – we punish) occurs in the active voice in: (hal nujāzī illa al-kafūr – Would We punish anyone but the ungrateful?, Q34:17) but in the alternative mode of reading, it occurs in the passive voice {yujāzā – to be punished}: {hal yujāzā illa al-kafūr – Would anyone be punished but the ungrateful?}.

- (3) The short vowel /u/ + short vowel /a/ + doubled consonant versus a short vowel /a/ + vowelless consonant (sukūn) + no doubling, as in: (nuḥarriq, Q20:97) which means (to burn someone to death). However, the alternative mode of reading is: (naḥriq) which means (to cut someone to death with a file). The other meaning of the verb (naḥriqa) is (to burn someone, but not necessarily to death).
- (4) Doubling the sound versus single sound, as in: (sukkirat, Q15:15) meaning (shut, closed), but the other mode of reading is: {sukirat} meaning (influenced by magic).
- (5) Plural versus the singular, as in: (kutubihi – [God's] Books, Q2:285), i.e. all the previous Scriptures. However, in the other mode of reading, we get the singular {kitābihi – [God's] Book}, i.e. the Qur'ān.
- (6) Change in spelling where a letter is replaced by another, as in (ashā' – to will) in: (qāla 'adhābī uṣību bihī man ashā' – God said: 'I bring my punishment on whoever I will', Q7:156) is read by al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī as: {asā' – to do wrong deeds}. Therefore, the meaning of Q7:156 changes to: {God said: 'I bring my punishment on whoever does wrong deeds'}. This change of meaning is due to the change of spelling from (ashā') with the letter /sh/ to (asā') with the letter /s/.
- (7) Nunation (tanwīn) versus without nunation (bilā tanwīn). For instance, the word (likullin) occurs with the expression: (likullin wijhatun – for each religion there is a direction of prayer to which its followers turn, Q2:148) where (likullin) ends with nunation (tanwīn) to express the meaning: (each religious group has) syntactically acting as a foregrounded predicate then followed by the backgrounded inchoative which is (wijhatun – a direction of prayer). Thus, (likullin wijhatun) is a complete meaningful grammatical sentence. However, the irregular mode of reading: {likulli wijhatin – for each direction of prayer} grammatically acts as a construct noun phrase (jār wamajrūr) in which the word (likulli – for each) occurs in the genitive case without nunation which leads to a different meaning: (for each direction of prayer). This irregular mode of reading makes the āyah ungrammatical because the expression {likulli wijhatin} has changed to a construct noun phrase (jār wamajrūr) and without nunation. As a result, the expression (likulli wijhatin) is only a phrase, i.e. it is an incomplete grammatical sentence because the predicate is incomplete and therefore the meaning is incomplete, too.

3.5.6 *Modes of reading and theological cleavages*

The companions and later exegetes read some Qur'ānic expressions differently from the canonical ʿUthmanic master codex. These variant modes of reading were either phonetically based, i.e. they involved vocalic or diacritic differences, or semantically based, i.e. exegetical mode of reading, which aimed at disambiguating a given āyah or an expression, as in the following examples:

- (1) (faghsilū . . . wa-arjulakum – wash . . . and your feet, Q5:6) where the noun (arjula – feet) occurs in the accusative case with a short vowel /a/ (faṭḥah) which means that washing the feet is compulsory during the ablution for the prayers. The accusative case (arjula) with a short vowel /a/ mode of reading is based on the grammatical analysis that this noun is co-ordinated to the previous nouns (wujūhakum – your faces) and (aidiyakum – your hands) which are also in accusative case with a short vowel /a/. However, for the Shīʿī exegetes, washing the feet is not suggested by Q5:6, and the feet can be only wiped by the wet hands. This exegetical meaning is based on their mode of reading: { . . . wa-arjulikum – and [wipe] your feet [with your wet hands]}. This mode of reading makes the noun {arjuli – feet} into the genitive case (majrūr), where we have the genitive marker /-i/ due to the previous preposition (bi – with) which is prefixed to the first noun (ruʿūsī – heads). Thus, grammatically, the noun {arjuli} is co-ordinated with the noun (wujūhi).
- (2) (kallama allāh mūsā taklīmā, Q4:164). This āyah is theologically controversial in Qurʾānic exegesis as it has two modes of reading that lead to two theologically divergent views:
 - (i) It means that (God spoke to Moses directly). Thus, it should be read as: (kallama allāhu mūsā taklīmā), where the noun (allāhu – God) occurs in the nominative case with the short vowel /u/ and makes (mūsā) as the direct object of the verb (kallama – to speak to). Grammatically, the absolute object (taklīmā – directly) acts as a confirmation that the act of (taklīm – speaking) has indeed taken place and eliminates the esoteric meaning that this act is allegorical.
 - (ii) For Muʿtazilī exegetes, Q4:164 means that the act of ‘speaking’ denoted by the verb (kallama) is allegorical and that (allāh) did not speak to Moses directly since God is free from (munazzah) the epithets of speaking and making sounds and uttering words. Thus, it should be read as: {kallama allāha mūsā taklīmā}, where the noun {allāha} occurs in the accusative case with the short vowel /a/ that makes it the direct object and the noun (mūsā) is the grammatical subject. Thus, (mūsā) is the one who does the act of ‘speaking’ and {allāha} is listening to him.
- (3) (wamā yaʿlamu taʿwīlahū illa allāhu wal-rāsikhūna fī al-ʿilmi yaqūlūna āmannā bihī – No one knows the true interpretation except God. But those who are firm in knowledge say: ‘We believe in it’, Q3:7.) This is classified as a stylistically mutashābih āyah. There are two exegetical views with regards to the meaning of Q3:7. The first is that: ‘No one knows the in-depth meaning of the Qurʾān except God since it is His Book, and that the Qurʾān scholars have firm belief in it as a Scripture.’ Thus, the ‘scholars’ have no idea what the true meanings of the Qurʾān are. The mode of reading for this meaning suggests the placement of a pause after the expression (allāhu – God). However, the second meaning is that: ‘No one knows the in-depth meanings of the Qurʾān except God and the Qurʾān scholars who have firm

belief in it as a Scripture.’ Thus, the ‘scholars’ have an equal weighting to God in terms of knowledge of the true meanings of the Qur’ān. The mode of reading for this meaning suggests the placement of a pause after the expression (al-‘ilmi – knowledge). This is the mode of reading by Mujāhid (d. 104/722).

In order to eliminate this theological confusion, two semantically based modes of reading were devised:

- (i) The mode of reading by Ibn ‘Abbās (d. 68/687): (wamā ya‘lamu ta’wilahū illa allāhu {wayaqūl} al-rāsikhūna fī al-‘ilmi āmannā bihī – No one knows the true interpretation except God. And those who are firm in knowledge, {they say}: ‘We believe in it’), where a verb {yaqūl – they say} is inserted to eliminate the second meaning above and confirm the first one. This exegetical mode of reading suggests that a pause is necessary after the expression (allāhu – God) and that a new sentence starts from the expression (wayaqūl – and they say).
 - (ii) The mode of reading by Ibn Mas‘ūd (d. 32/653): ({wa’in} ta’wilahū illa {‘inda} allāhi wal-rāsikhūna fī al-‘ilmi yaquluna āmannā bihī – Its true interpretation is only {with} God. But those who are firm in knowledge say: ‘We believe in it’) where an initial particle (in) is inserted and then a preposition {‘inda – with} is also placed before (allāhi – God), thus making it in the genitive case (-i) but the following noun (al-rāsikhūna – those firm in knowledge) remains in the nominative case (-ū) which is a clear syntactic signal indicating that this noun is neither affected by the preposition (‘inda) nor is it coordinated to the first noun (allāh). Therefore, the particle (wa – and) is grammatically a resumptive particle and not a co-ordination particle. In a similar vein, this exegetical mode of reading is to substantiate the first meaning discussed above. This exegetical mode of reading suggests that a pause is necessary after the expression (allāhi – God) and that a new sentence starts from the expression (wayaqūl – and they say).
- (4) As there are two different modes of reading to Q2:158, there are two jurisprudential interpretations:
- (i) The first mode of reading is: (an yaṭṭawwafa bihimā – to walk between them, Q2:158). This means that among the rites of pilgrimage, it is compulsory to perform the (ṭawāf), i.e. walking between the two little hills of Ṣafā and Marwah in the city of Makkah.
 - (ii) The second mode of reading is based on the addition of the expression {lā}: {an {lā} yaṭṭawwafa bihimā – {not} to walk between them, Q2:158}. This means that walking between the two little hills of Ṣafā and Marwah is not compulsory and is not one of the rites of pilgrimage.
- (5) The two modes of reading for Q5:89 entail two different Islamic legal rulings with regards to expiation due to breaking a legally binding oath which is deliberately and intently made:

- (i) The first mode of reading is: (faman lam yajid faṣiyāmu thalāthati aiyāmin – Whoever cannot afford it, then a fast of three days is required, Q5:89) which entails the injunction that if someone breaks an oath which he/she deliberately made with intent, then he/she has to make an atonement for the breaking of the intended oath through a number of ways such as either feeding ten poor people, or clothing them, or setting free a slave. If one cannot do any of these, the expiation for the oath is fasting for three days, but not necessarily consecutively.
- (ii) However, in an alternative mode of reading based on the addition of an expression {mutatābi‘āt – consecutively}, we get: {faman lam yajid faṣiyāmu thalāthati aiyāmin mutatābi‘āt – Whoever cannot afford it, then a fast of three {consecutive} days is required}. This entails that the expiation for the oath is fasting for three days that have to be consecutive.

Similarly, Q2:184 has two modes of reading that entail two different injunctions:

- (i) (faman kāna minkum mariḍan aw ‘alā safarin fa‘iddatun min aiyāmin ukhar – Whoever among you is ill or on a journey during them, then an equal number of days are to be made up);
 - (ii) {faman kāna minkum mariḍan aw ‘alā safarin fa‘iddatun min ayyāmin ukhar {mutatābi‘āt} – Whoever among you is ill or on a journey during them, then an equal number of days are to be made up {consecutively}}.
- (6) The two modes of reading for Q2:222 entail two different Islamic legal rulings with regards to when a wife can be ready after her menstruation ends to have sexual intercourse with his husband. The husband is instructed about this matter by Q2:222 but different theologians expressed two different exegetical views based on two different modes of reading:
- (i) (ḥaṭṭā yaṭhurna – until their menstruation has finished) which instructs the husband to refrain from sexual intercourse with his wife until her menstruation has finished. In other words, once the menstruation is finished, the wife does not need to have a complete bath (ghusl) and her husband is allowed to have sexual intercourse with her.
 - (ii) {ḥaṭṭā yaṭṭahharna – until their menstruation has finished and have taken a complete bath} where the verb occurs with doubled letters and sounds for the pragmatic function of hyperbole. Accordingly, this mode of reading instructs the husband to refrain from sexual intercourse with his wife until her menstruation has finished, and she has washed her body, i.e. she has cleansed herself by taking a shower.

3.6 Stylistic inimitability and Qur’anic exegesis

Linguistically, the expression i‘jāz is a nominalized noun derived from the transitive verb (a‘jaza – to make someone unable to do something) and is also morphologically

related to the expression *mu'jizah* (a miracle). For Muslim linguists, Qur'anic genre is free from any form of stylistic, linguistic, or phonetic incongruities which are commonly found in non-Qur'anic discourses. Theologically, *i'jāz* denotes the miraculous nature of the Qur'ān and its divine source. Thus, the translation of *i'jāz* is given as 'inimitability' since it is related to the notion that no one can imitate what God makes. Scholastic (*al-mutakallimūn*), i.e. Mu'tazili, theologians also view the notion of *i'jāz* differently. The major differences, from a stylistic perspective, between Mu'tazili and non-Mu'tazili linguists with regards to *i'jāz* are: (i) whether the inimitability of Qur'anic style is attributed to its eloquence (*al-faṣāḥah*) or to its order system (*al-naẓm*), and (ii) whether the Arabs are able to imitate the style of the Qur'ān but God has discouraged them to do so, or the Arabs are unable to imitate the style of the Qur'ān. However, it is important to note that in terms of *i'jāz* and rhetorical studies, the two jargon words 'eloquence' (*al-faṣāḥah*) and 'order system' (*al-naẓm*) have been employed by Mu'tazilites, i.e. scholastics, and non-Mu'tazilites interchangeably, i.e. they are synonymous expressions.

The notion of stylistic inimitability of Qur'anic discourse (*i'jāz*) has been a controversial issue among Muslim and non-Muslim scholastics since the third/ninth century. Occasional debates took place between the Syriacs, Buddhists, and Magians with the Muslim scholastic theologians and linguists. The notion of stylistic inimitability was also controversial among Muslim scholastics and non-scholastics. Stylistic inimitability is correlated to the linguistic (grammatical and semantic), phonetic, and rhetorical architecture of Qur'anic genre, in other words, what makes Qur'anic discourse unique and of divine origin rather than man-made (*walaw kāna min 'indi ghair allāhi lawajadū fīhi ikhtilāfan kathīran* – If the Qur'ān had been from any other than God, they would have found within it much contradiction, Q4:82). Since the early decades of the third/ninth century, linguists and rhetoricians expressed particular interest in the notion of stylistic inimitability (*i'jāz*) of Qur'anic genre. Thus, the early years of the Abbasid era (132–655/749–1257) was characterized by the emergence of the notion of *i'jāz* around which there was debate between linguists and the scholastics. As a result, we witness the evolution of *al-ṣarfah* (dissuasion, discouraging) notion which was introduced by Ibrāhīm b. Saiyār al-Nazzām (d. 231/845), a Mu'tazili linguist. As a matter of fact, the notion of *al-ṣarfah* was first coined by the Mu'tazili theologian Wāṣil b. 'Aṭā' (d. 131/748) and then adopted by Ibrāhīm al-Nazzām. Later on, the notion of *al-ṣarfah* was challenged by linguists such as Abu 'Uthmān 'Amru b. Baḥr b. Maḥbūb al-Jāḥiẓ (d. 255/868) who was a Mu'tazili linguist, the founder of Arabic rhetoric, and a student of al-Nazzām. Other linguists who opposed *al-ṣarfah* notion were Abu Bakr Muḥammad b. al-Ṭaiyib al-Bāqillāni (d. 403/1012), 'Abd al-Qāhir b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Jurjāni (d. 471/1078 or 474/1081), and Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzi (606/1209).

The inimitability-oriented linguistic approach was led by the iconic rhetorician al-Jurjāni who wrote *Dalā'il al-I'jāz* in which he introduced his theory of word order (*al-naẓm*) in Qur'anic discourse, and al-Zamakhshari (d. 538/1143) who put

al-Jurjānī's theory into practice in his tafsīr book *al-Kshshāf*. The controversy began during the third/ninth century when Muslim scholastics (al-mutakallimūn) and linguists responded to the claims by Qur'ān critics that the language of the Qur'ān was imitable. In response to the sceptics of stylistic inimitability of the Qur'ān, al-Jurjānī wrote *Dalā'il al-I'jāz* which was about the innate linguistic and rhetorical characteristics of Qur'anic discourse. During the modern phase of Qur'anic exegesis, scholarship in the notion of stylistic inimitability continued. However, the approach to the notion of i'jāz has taken two different forms of scholarship: the first is an extension of the linguistic scholarship that evolved during the recording phase (third/ninth century onwards), while the second form of research was developed during the twentieth century and is scientifically based. In the subsequent sections, we are going to discuss the two approaches to Qur'anic stylistic inimitability from the third/ninth century up to the twenty-first century. These two approaches are based on two different levels of Qur'anic genre analysis. These two approaches are either (i) linguistically oriented, or (ii) scientifically oriented.

3.6.1 Linguistically oriented approach to Qur'anic stylistic inimitability

During the third/ninth century, linguists expressed particular interest in the notion of stylistic inimitability (i'jāz) of Qur'anic discourse. As a result, this notion took centre stage in linguistic scholarship and became controversial. This linguistic controversy led to the birth of the theological notion of al-ṣarfah (dissuasion, aversion) which was adopted by Ibrāhīm b. Saiyār al-Nazzām (d. 231/845) who claimed that Qur'anic discourse was inimitable, but the Arabs could not challenge its genre and match its style because God dissuaded them from challenging Qur'anic style. In other words, the Arabs could have produced a discourse similar in style to that of the Qur'ān but God discouraged them from doing so. al-Nazzām's proposition is intertextually related to Q7:146 (sa'aṣrifu 'an āyāti alladhīna yat-akbbarūna fī al-arḍi biḡhairi al-ḥaqqi – I will keep distracted from my signs those who behave arrogantly on earth) and Q9:127 (ṣarafa allāhu qulūbahum – God has turned away their hearts). This claim is echoed in Qur'anic exegesis as (ṭaba'a allāhu 'alā qulūbihim – God has sealed the Arabs' hearts from imitating the Qur'ān) with reference to statements such as Q4:155, Q7:101, Q9:87 and 93, Q16:108, Q47:16, and Q63:3.

The inimitability-oriented linguistic approach is hinged on the premise that although the contemporary Arabs at the time of the revelation of the Qur'ān reached the peak of their linguistic proficiency and competence, they found it impossible to compose sentences that could match Qur'anic genre. Classical and modern inimitability-oriented linguists hold the view that the Qur'ān has came up with unparalleled discourse features such as stylistic patterns, linguistic structures, and textual chaining of consonance which the Arabs were unaware of and, thus, were unable to emulate. The inimitability-oriented premise is referred to by Q10:38 (Do they say about Muḥammad: 'He invented the Qur'ān?' Say: 'Then, bring forth a sūrah like it and call upon for assistance whomever you can besides

God, if you should be truthful') and Q11:13 (Do they say about Muḥammad: 'He invented the Qur'ān?') Say: 'Then, bring ten sūrahs like it that have been invented and call upon for assistance whomever you can besides God, if you should be truthful). Most importantly, the major argument of the notion of inimitability is hinged upon: (walaw kāna min 'indi ghair allāhi lawajadū fīhi ikhtilāfan kathīran – If the Qur'ān had been from anyone other than God, they would have found much inconsistency in it, Q4:82).

Mu'tazili linguists such as al-Rummāni and Ibn Sinān believed in the theological notion of al-ṣarfah and that āyah-final expressions (fawāṣil al-āyāt), assonance (al-saj'), and eloquence (al-faṣāḥah) represented features of Qur'anic stylistic inimitability. However, non-Mu'tazili linguists such as al-Bāqillāni, al-Jurjāni, and al-Rāzi and some Mu'tazili linguists such as al-Jāḥiẓ and al-Zamakhshari, disagreed and argued that Qur'anic stylistic inimitability was attributed to the order system (al-naẓm) of Qur'anic discourse. For al-Jurjāni, the notion of i'jāz was attributed primarily to the order system of Qur'anic genre and to Qur'ān-specific stylistic and grammatical prototypical features rather than to its individual lexical items or their meanings. The notion of i'jāz, in the view of al-Jurjāni, cannot be attributed to the lexical items' linguistic, semantic, or phonetic features only. Thus, some Mu'tazili linguists such as al-Jāḥiẓ and al-Zamakhshari and non-Mu'tazili linguists rejected the notion of al-ṣarfah. This is because to believe in the theological notion of al-ṣarfah is to dismiss the linguistic notion of i'jāz. The well-known exegete al-Ṭabari (d. 310/922) was also against al-ṣarfah notion and was an advocate of i'jāz based on the order system (al-naẓm) of Qur'anic sublime style. For modern linguists and exegetes such as Muṣṭafā Ṣādiq al-Rāfi'ī (1880–1937), the notion of i'jāz is attributed to euphony represented by cadence and the phonetic order system. For Saiyid Quṭb (1906–1966), i'jāz is based on artistic imagery (al-taṣwīr al-fanni) that abounds in the Qur'ān and argues that if the imagery changes, meaning will change, too.

The inimitability-oriented linguistic analysis of Qur'anic genre is primarily concerned with the exegesis of expressions, stylistic patterns, and āyahs. This analysis is concerned with the linguistic/stylistic order system (al-naẓm al-lughawi/al-islūbi) and the phonetic order system (al-naẓm al-ṣawti). The linguistic/stylistic and phonetic order system is concerned with unlocking the Qur'anic context through the analysis of the multi-faceted linguistic, phonetic, and textual features of Qur'anic discourse. The Qur'anic order system is the outcome of a number of linguistic/stylistic and phonetic dynamics, such as word order change of expressions or phrases, change in morphological form, and change in grammatical form, which are attributed to contextual and co-textual factors.

The inimitability-based linguistic analysis of Qur'anic discourse takes place at one of the following micro and macro linguistic and phonetic levels:

- (i) Word level: The order system at the word level is the most common linguistic analysis in Qur'anic exegesis which is concerned with the innate grammatical, semantic, and phonetic features of a given lexical item. Proponents

of this approach claim that the Qur'ān has no synonymy. In other words, although there are Qur'anic expressions which may share similar shades of meaning, any two expressions which seem to be synonymous are not semantically or stylistically interchangeable. For instance, although the word (ḍizā) in Q53:22 means (ẓālimah – unjust) as the nearest synonym, we cannot replace it with the word (ẓālimah) as this will disturb the stylistic effect and the rhythmical phonetic symmetry of the āyah. The analysis of the grammatical function of a given word is another approach to Qur'anic exegesis which is inimitability-oriented. For instance, the linguist explains why a lexical item, whether a verb or a noun, occurs in the passive voice, the active participle, or the passive participle. This linguistic approach to Qur'anic exegesis claims that context in Qur'anic discourse plays a major factor in this linguistic phenomenon. Exegetes also claim that had the same word been employed with a different grammatical function, the intended pragmatic function of the āyah would not have been achieved. For instance, (wa'idhā unzilat sūratun an āminū billāhi wajāhidū ma'a rasūlihī ista'dhanaka ulu al-ṭawli minhum waqālū dharnā nakun ma'a al-qā'idīn. raḍū bi'an yakūnū ma'a al-khawālifi waṭubi'a 'alā qulūbihim fahum lā yafqahūn – When a sūrah was revealed asking them to believe in God and fight with his Messenger, their wealthy asked your permission to stay behind and said: 'Allow us to stay behind with the others'. They prefer to be with those who stay behind. Their hearts have been sealed. They do not comprehend, Q9:86–87). In this example, the verb (unzilat – was revealed) at the beginning of the āyah is employed in the passive voice followed by another verb (ṭubi'a – have been sealed) which also occurs in the passive voice. Stylistically, the linguistic structure of the last section of this āyah is expected to be with a verb in the active voice which is (ṭaba'a – to seal) or (faṭaba'a – to seal). Another interesting example is the employment of the verb (razaqa – to give provision) with the pragmatic meaning of either (1) an effort is required by the individual to earn his/her provision, or (2) no effort is required by the individual to earn his/her provision. In Q27:64, we are informed that God gives provision to people. However, they need to make an effort and work to gain their provision; thus, the verb (razaqa) should occur in the active participle, as in (man yarzuqukum min al-samā'i wal-arḍi – Who provides for you from the heaven and earth?). However, in Q2:25, we are told that God gives provision to the residents of the garden, who do not need to make any effort or work to obtain it. Thus, the verb has to be in the passive voice to deliver the communicative function of this āyah, as in (kullamā ruziqū minhā min thamaratīn rizqan qālū hādhā alladhī ruziqnā min qablu – Whenever they are provided with a provision of fruit therefrom, the residents of the garden will say: 'This is what we were provided with before.') Similarly, the verb (taraka – to leave alone) occurs in the passive voice in Q9:16, Q26:146, Q29:2, and Q75:36 because it is through this grammatical function that the intended pragmatic functions of denial and rebuke can be achieved. In a similar vein,

we encounter in (falā takhḍaʿna bil-qawl – Women should not be soft in speech to men, Q33:32) the employment of the expression (takhḍaʿna – to be soft in speech) rather than the expression (talyīna – to be gentle in speech) which is employed in Q20:44 (faqūlā lahū qawlan laiyyinan – You [Moses and Aaron] speak to Pharaoh with gentle speech). Since the context is different between Q33:23 and Q20:44, so is the selection of expressions. In Q33:23, there is a religious obligation on the part of the lady that she should not speak softly with men lest the man she is talking to should covet her. However, the context of Q20:44 requires a specific diplomatic etiquette which is that of gentle speech and also it is directed towards men. Thus, the order system selects different expressions for different contexts. The order system at the word level is also manifest in the selection of an expression rather than another, as in (qālat rabbi innī waḍaʿtuhā unthā – She said: ‘My Lord, I have delivered a female’, Q3:360) where the word (rabb – Lord) is used rather than (ilāh – God) since the context is concerned with the one who possesses, provides the provision, and protects, unlike (ilāh) which requires the context of divinity and worship. The order system is also related to the selection of a given grammatical form of an expression, as in (waʾantum sāmidūn – while you are heedless, Q53:61), where the word (sāmidūn – heedless) occurs in the active participle form (ism fāʿil) because most people are lost in vain amusements and are heedless. Thus, to achieve a unique order system, the grammatical form of the active participle (sāmidūn) is employed to express continuity of an action. In other words, the action of being ‘heedless’ is continuous throughout people’s life. This is unlike the actions of wondering (yataʿajjab) and laughing (yaḍhak) in Q53:59–60. In these two āyahs, the verbs (taʿjabūn – you wonder) and (taḍhakūn – you laugh) semantically express non-continuous actions. One may wonder or laugh but not continuously. Therefore, the order system selects a verb form to denote the non-continuity of an action. At the word level, the order system is also manifested by the occurrence of the subject noun (allāhu – God) at sentence-initial position rather than the verb in order to achieve the rhetorical function of affirmation, as in Q2:15, Q14:32, Q16:19, 65, 70–72, 78, 80, 81, and 101. The order system (al-naẓm) at the word level is also manifested by the occurrence of āyah-final epithets (adjectives) such as (ʿalīm ḥakīm – [God is] knowing and wise, Q60:10). The occurrence of these two epithets is conditioned by the context of this āyah in order to achieve consonance. Q60:10 talks about a number of themes such as testing the female emigrants when they want to join Islam, God is most knowing of their genuine faith, there must be some wisdom in decision-making as to whether to send them back to their families or not, compensation should be made to the families of these female emigrants, marriage bonds, and expense. These themes condition the occurrence of the epithets (ʿalīm ḥakīm – [God is] knowing and wise). Similarly, the epithets (ghafūr raḥīm – forgiving and merciful, Q60:12) occur at the end of the āyah whose theme is concerned with the pledges made by the believing women: to abandon polytheism, not to steal, not to commit unlawful sexual

intercourse, not to kill their children, not to slander. Thus, Q60:12 is sealed with the epithets (ghafūr raḥīm – forgiving and merciful) that are semantically most suitable for the sins mentioned earlier. The order system is also manifested by the occurrence of specific conjuncts, i.e. conjunctive elements/discourse connectors, (adawāt al-rabt). For instance, in Q11:58 and Q11:94, the conjunctive element (wa – and) is employed: (wa lammā jā'a amrunā najjainā hūdan – And when Our [God's] command came, We [God] saved Hūd, Q11:58), (wa lammā jā'a amrunā najjainā Shu'aiban – And when Our [God's] command came, We [God] saved Shu'aib, Q11:94). However, in Q11:66, a different discourse connector (fa – which also means (and) in English) occurs: (fa lammā jā'a amrunā najjainā Šāliḥan – And when Our [God's] command came, We [God] saved Šāliḥ, Q11:66). The reason behind this change in conjunctive elements is due to contextual factors. The context of Q11:58 and 94 is concerned with admonition and advice delivered by the three Prophets Hūd, Shu'aib, and Šāliḥ to their relevant people. The change in the use of conjuncts is therefore related to the length of time of their preaching and the timing of God's wrath that has followed as a result of people's heedlessness and disbelief in the three Prophets' messages. The change of conjuncts unlocks the context: The conjunctive element (wa) is employed in Q11:58 and 94 to express the long period of time that preceded God's wrath upon the peoples of Hūd and Shu'aib. In Q11:57 and Q11:93, we are informed about the delay in taking action by God against these two disbelieving nations. In other words, God's wrath to the two heedless nations was inflicted after a while. Stylistically, this requires the employment of the discourse connector (wa). However, in Q11:66, the context of situation of the employment of the discourse connector (fa) has changed. Although Prophet Šāliḥ preached to his people for a long time, God's wrath to Šāliḥ's people was immediately after they disobeyed him and killed the she-camel. Stylistically, this requires the use of the discourse connector (fa) which signals an immediate action. This is backed up by Q11:65 which also applies to the story of Prophet Lot, whose context of situation is Q11:81 which also refers to the short period of time that preceded God's punishment to Lot's people, also signalled by the employment of the conjunctive element (fa). The order system of the conjunctive element (fa) can also be attributed to co-textual factors. The āyahs Q11:61, 63–65, and 67 constitute the co-text for Q11:66. In other words, the occurrence of the discourse marker (fa) in Q11:61, 63–65, and 67 has a stylistic impact on Q11:66 in order to achieve stylistic symmetry on the conjunct level. This argument on the order system and the employment of different conjunctive elements is further encountered in Q37:91 (fa qāla alā ta'kulūn – He [Abraham] said [to the idols]: 'do you not eat?') and Q51:27 (qāla alā ta'kulūn – He [Abraham] said [to the angels]: 'Do you not eat?'), where in Q37:91 we have the conjunct (fa), while in Q51:27 this conjunct is not used. Stylistically, the macro co-text represented by Q37:87–103 is dominated by the occurrence of the conjunctive element (fa) which has impacted the occurrence of the same conjunctive element in

Q37:91. Also, in Q37:91, Abraham asked the idols to consume his offerings immediately after he placed them before the idols. Stylistically, this immediate action requires the use of the conjunct (fa) in both (farāgha – He [Abraham] turned upon) and (faqāla – He [Abraham] said). Thus, exegetically, there is an atmosphere of challenge on the part of Abraham who wanted to discredit the idols and for this reason asked them without delay. However, in Q51, there is an atmosphere of apprehension and mistrust, as we are informed by Q51:28. Abraham is apprehended by the sudden appearance of the angels in his house. Thus, in Q51:25, we have (. . . faqālū salāman qāla salāmūn . . . – They [the angels] said: ‘We greet you with peace.’ He [Abraham] answered . . .) and also in Q51:27 (faqarrabahū ilaihim qāla . . . – He [Abraham] placed [the roasted calf] near the angels. He said . . .) Thus, the apprehensive atmosphere has led to delay in taking an action: In Q51:25, Abraham responded after a while with his greeting to the angels, and in Q51:27, after Abraham placed the meal before the angels, he did not ask them to eat straight away but after a while. This delay in action by Abraham does not require the employment of the discourse marker (fa).

- (ii) Phrase level: This is concerned with the collocation of a lexical item with another in a noun phrase pattern, such as the occurrence of an epithet (adjective) with a given noun or with another epithet. For instance, in Q6:102, we have (lā ilāha illā hū khāliq kulli shai’ – there is no deity except Him [God], the creator of all things), where the phrase (lā ilāha illā hū – there is no deity except Him [God]) occurs first and is then followed by the second phrase (khāliq kulli shai’ – the creator of all things). However, in Q40:62, the order of these two phrases is reversed: (khāliq kulli shai’ lā ilāha illā hū – the creator of all things, there is no deity except Him [God]). This is a unique example of the order system where in Q6:102 the phrase (lā ilāha illā hū – there is no deity except Him [God]) which refers to monotheism occurs first because it is preceded by Q6:100, which also refers to monotheism. However, in Q40:62, the phrase (khāliq kulli shai’ – the creator of all things) which refers to God as being the creator occurs first because it is preceded by Q40:57 and 62, which also refer to God as being the creator of the heavens and the earth and the night and the day. Similarly, in (awalam yaraw annā khalaqnā lahum mim mā ‘amilat aidinā an‘āman fahum lahā mālikūn – Do they not see that We [God] have created for them what Our [God’s] hands have made, grazing livestock, and then they are their owners?, Q36:71), the phrase (mim mā ‘amilat aidinā – what Our [God’s] hands have made) can be taken out from the āyah without damaging its grammatical structure. Thus, we can have a sound grammatical structure without (mim mā ‘amilat aidinā): {awalam yaraw annā khalaqnā lahum an‘āman fahum lahā mālikūn – Do they not see that We [God] have created for them grazing livestock and then they are their owners?}. However, stylistically, this phrase is conditioned by the macro context in which it has occurred. This phrase is employed as a rebuttal to the sceptics of eschatology (Q36:48–54), reward and punishment (Q36:55–65), monotheism (Q36:74), and God’s omnipotence (Q36:77–81).

Thus, the phrase (mimmā ‘amilat aidinā – what Our [God’s] hands have made) is embedded in a context that requires further affirmation of who actually the creator of the grazing livestock is. The phrase (mimmā ‘amilat aidinā – what Our [God’s] hands have made) stylistically affirms the subject pronoun (innā – We [God]). The repetition of specific formulas which are fixed phrases are meant to highlight exhortation and achieve the rhetorical function of affirmation, as in Q55 (fabi’ aiyyi ālā’i rabbikumā tukadhdhibān – so which of the favours of your Lord would you deny?), in Q54 (fakaifa kāna ‘adhābī wanudhurī – and how severe were My [God’s] punishment and warning), in Q77 (wailun yawma’ idhin lil-mukadhdhibīn – woe, that day, to the deniers), and also in Q7, Q54, Q49, where fixed phrases have occurred frequently.

- (iii) āyah level: This is concerned with the conceptual chaining, i.e. thematic connectivity through which consecutive āyahs dovetail conceptually with each other. In other words, it is to do with the logical cohesion of āyahs. The focus of this linguistic approach is to highlight the textual feature of consonance between consecutive āyahs. In spite of the considerable number of āyahs in the Qur’ān (6218 āyahs), a text linguist can find a logical sequence between these āyahs. For instance, in Q37:125–126 (atad‘ūna ba‘lan watadharūna aḥsana al-khālīqīn allāha rabbakum warabba ābā’ikum al-awwalīn – Do you call upon the idol Ba‘l and leave the best of creators, God, your Lord and the Lord of your forefathers?), where the object noun (allāha – God) should have come after the verb (tadharūna – to leave). However, the order system would have been disturbed because the object noun (allāha) is placed at the beginning of Q37:126 followed by its modifiers (rabbakum – your Lord) and (rabba ābā’ikum al-awwalīn – the Lord of your forefathers). Further, the phrase (aḥsana al-khālīqīn – the best of creators) is also a modifier (adjectival) of the object noun (allāha) but is placed at the end of Q37:125 and before the other two modifiers in order to highlight the notion of (allāh – God) being the creator and then bring in the notion of lordship. At the āyah level, the linguistic order system is similarly evident in the word order of the similar āyahs, such as Q2:62 (al-naṣārā wal-ṣābi’ina – the Christians and the Sabeans), where the expression (al-naṣārā – the Christians) occurs first. However, in Q5:69 and Q22:17, we encounter (al-ṣābi’ūna wal-naṣārā – the Sabeans and the Christians), where the expression (al-ṣābi’ūna – the Sabeans) occurs first. This order system is required in order to elevate the status of the Christians in Q2:62 as they are People of the Book and have a divine Scripture, while the Sabeans are not considered as People of the Book. Thus, the expression (al-naṣārā – the Christians) occurs first to be compatible with the context of this āyah. However, in Q5:69 and Q22:17, the context is different and is concerned with historical facts. The expression (al-ṣābi’ūna – the Sabeans) occurs before (al-naṣārā – the Christians) from a historical point of view since the Sabeans existed before Christianity. At the āyah level, the order system (al-naẓm) is also manifested by the grammatically similar but stylistically dissimilar structures (al-mutashābihāt). (For more details on this matter, see Abdul-Raof 2004.)

- (iv) *Sūrah level*: This is concerned with the textual feature of consonance either within a single *sūrah* or between two or more consecutive *sūrahs*. Inimitability-oriented Qur'anic exegesis illustrates the text linguistic feature of logical cohesion between two or more *sūrahs*. According to this approach, consonance runs throughout Qur'anic discourse in terms of the initial or final theme of the consecutive *sūrahs*. Types of consonance between Qur'anic *sūrahs* include: (a) consonance between beginning and end of a Qur'anic *sūrah*, as in Q11 where the beginning and the end of this *sūrah* is about monotheism: (A.L.R. This is a Book whose āyahs are decisive, and have been set forth in detail in the presence of Someone Who is Wise, Informed so that you will serve only God alone: 'I am a warner, a herald from Him to you,' Q11:1–2) and (God holds the Unseen in Heaven and earth, and unto Him does every matter return; so serve Him, and rely on Him. Your Lord is not unmindful of what you [all] are doing, Q11:123); (b) logical sequence between the end of a *sūrah* and the beginning of the following *sūrah*, as in Q56 whose end is attuned to the beginning of Q57: (Therefore, O Muḥammad, praise the name of your Lord, Q56:96) and (All that is in the heavens and the earth glorify God; and He is the Mighty, the Wise, Q57: 1), where both the end of Q56 and the beginning of Q57 are about praising and glorifying God; (c) logical sequence between two consecutive *sūrahs*, as in Q51 and Q52, where both are characterized by similar linguistic structures and both refer to the state which the righteous are promised to enjoy: (The righteous will be in gardens and springs, Q51:15) and (The righteous will be in gardens and bliss, Q52:17); and (d) logical sequence between two consecutive *sūrahs* where the latter provides elaboration for matters raised in the former, as in Q2 and Q3. Q3 elaborates on what has been mentioned briefly in Q2 such as the Book, i.e. the Qur'ān, other divine Books, i.e. the Torah and the Bible, the battle of Uhud, those who are killed in battles for the sake of God, interest, pilgrimage, and the process of creation of man.

There is also inimitability-oriented phonetic analysis of Qur'anic genre which is concerned with the phonetic order system (*al-naẓm al-ṣawti*) and therefore deals with the exegesis of expressions at the phonetic level of Qur'anic discourse, as illustrated by a number of examples here. For instance, in Q7:115 the āyah ends with the expression (*al-mulqīn* – the ones to throw) which is an active participle. However, in Q20:65 the same āyah ends with the expression (*alqā* – to throw) which is a verb. This phonetic change in the final vowels (/ī/ to /ā/) is attributed to the macro phonetic environment of Q7, where the final nasal sound /n/ is dominant, while in Q20 the phonetic environment is based on the long vowel sound /ā/. Thus, the phonetic order system, in other words assonance (*al-sajʿ*), is achieved in both *sūrahs* at the āyah-final word level. The same applies to the final words of examples such as Q7:122 which ends with the noun (*ḥārūn*) and Q20:70 which ends with the noun (*mūsā*), Q17:9 which ends with the word (*kabīrā* – great), and Q18:2 which ends with (*ḥasanā* – good), and Q20:4 and Q6:1. In some cases, the phonetic order system dictates the selection of a lexical item and its morphological form according

to the surrounding phonetic context in order to achieve a given pragmatic function through the phonetic effect of an expression. For instance, in: (inna baṭsha rabbika lashadīd – Indeed, the vengeance of your Lord is severe, Q85:12), the nominalized noun (baṭsha – vengeance) is chosen rather than other equally powerful alternative synonyms such as (ʿadhāb – punishment) or (intiḳām – vengeance). The word (baṭsha) is selected in order to achieve the rhetorical effect of onomatopoeia at the phonetic level through the velarized alveolar stop sound /ṭ/ and the palate-alveolar fricative sound /sh/ which are not available in the available synonyms. In a similar vein, the sound effect of onomatopoeia as a requirement of the phonetic order system is also demonstrated through the selection of other expressions such as (al-ṣākhkhah – the deafening blast, Q80:33), (al-ṭāmmah – the greatest overwhelming calamity, Q79:34), and (al-qāriʿah – the striking calamity, Q101:1). It can, therefore, be argued that through the linguistic/stylistic and phonetic order system, Qurʿanic discourse has become free of bombast (al-ḥashu or al-taṣannuʿ al-balāghī). In a similar vein, through the phonetic order system, cadence and assonance are highly maintained but, unlike poetry, not at the expense of meaning and consonance.

The premise of the order system (al-naẓm) of Qurʿanic discourse is interrelated with the text linguistic notion of consonance (al-munāsabah), i.e. the logical cohesion and conceptual chaining at micro and macro levels. Thus, in a textual Qurʿanic analysis, we encounter seven text linguistic criteria which constitute a major aspect of the Qurʿanic order system and which also provide further support to the notion of inimitability of Qurʿanic stylistics:

- (1) the conceptual chaining between consecutive āyahs of a given sūrah;
- (2) the conceptual chaining between consecutive sūrahs;
- (3) the consonance of a given grammatical structure within a given āyah (the grammatical level);
- (4) the consonance of a given expression within a given āyah (the semantic level),
- (5) the consonance of a given grammatical structure of a given āyah (the stylistic level);
- (6) the consonance of a given sound of an expression within a given āyah (the phonetic level);
- (7) the impact of co-text and context on the occurrence of a given expression within a given āyah.

For more details on the above seven text linguistic criteria, see Abdul-Raof (2004, 2005a).

3.6.2 Scientifically oriented approach to Qurʿanic stylistic inimitability

This is a modern approach to the notion of stylistic inimitability of Qurʿanic discourse. Scientific exegesis is a form of thematic tafsīr genre which is selective, i.e. non-musalsal (not āyah-by-āyah), and is concerned with the scientific aspects of some āyahs that demonstrate God’s omnipotence, on the one hand, and that the two canonical sources of Islam, i.e. the Qurʿān and the sunnah (the customary

practice of Muḥammad) are compatible with the modern age of sciences. Historically, scientific exegesis began in the fifth/eleventh and sixth/twelfth centuries when Qur'an exegetes such as Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna) (d. 428/1036) and al-Rāzī (d. 604/1207) expressed interest in the scientific meanings of some āyahs such as the cosmic ones. Their scientific exegetical details echoed the Greek sciences. It was during the closing decades of the nineteenth century that Muslim scholars such as Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī (1839–1897) called for reform in Qur'anic exegesis and urged exegetes to include scientific factual details in the analysis of āyahs that refer to scientific facts. The modern exegete Muḥammad 'Abdu (1848–1905) was influenced by his teacher Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī. Thus, he refers to the theory of gravity in the exegesis of Q91:5 and to chickenpox in his exegesis of Q105. Among other modern scientific exegetes are Ṭaṇṭāwī Jawhārī (1870–1940) who refers in his exegesis of Q2:66–72 to the science of conjuring up the dead and to statistics, Ḥanafī Aḥmad, a graduate of Durham University, who refers to physics when analysing cosmic āyahs, 'Abd al-Razzāq Nawfal who talks about electricity, protons, and electrons when he analyses Q7:189, and Harun Yahya who investigates medical and scientific matters. The second approach to scientific exegesis is number-based exegesis of Qur'anic discourse. Both 'Abd al-Razzāq Nawfal and Abdeldā'em Al-Kaheel have widely written about this mathematical approach. This scientific approach involves mathematical details about the number 7. The inimitability-oriented scientific analysis of Qur'anic genre has been conducted at two para-linguistic levels, the number level and the scientific facts level:

- (i) Numerical facts (al-i'jāz al-ʿadadi – numerical inimitability): Modern scholars have started a new mathematical approach to the analysis of Qur'anic discourse based on the notion of numbers (al-ʿdād). This approach pays particular attention to the number 7 in Qur'anic exegesis. For more details, see [Chapter 2](#), Section 2.3.6.2, Point (i).
- (ii) Scientific facts (al-i'jāz al-ʿilmi – scientific inimitability): Inimitability-oriented Qur'anic exegesis is also based on scientific factual evidence related to various sciences. For more details, see [Chapter 2](#), Section 2.3.6.2, Point (ii).

3.6.3 Historical development of Qur'anic stylistic inimitability

Based on the discussion above in Sections 3.7.1 and 3.7.2, the historical development of the inimitability-oriented approach to Qur'anic exegesis can be outlined below:

- (i) Although the Madīnah and the Kūfah schools of Qur'anic exegesis had linguistic leanings towards Qur'anic exegesis, they were not involved in the inimitability-oriented approach as this approach to Qur'anic genre analysis had not evolved yet.
- (ii) The inimitability-oriented approach began during the recording phase in the second/eighth century and was stylistically based.

- (iii) The inimitability-oriented approach of the early and late recording phase was primarily stylistically based. It was concerned with the notion of sub-line style of Qur'anic genre. Proponents of the stylistic approach to inimitability were interested in the architectural value of Qur'anic Arabic. For them, Qur'anic genre is characterized by stylistic architecture on both the rhetorical and the linguistic levels. Inimitability, in their view, is hinged upon the rhetorical features and grammatical structures (word order patterns) of the Qur'ān.
- (iv) Proponents of the rhetorically based approach to inimitability were concerned with the analysis of paronomasia (al-jinās or al-tajnīs),³ refrains that are rhyme phrases that occur at the end of the āyah, assonance, and other rhetorical features. However, proponents of the grammatically based approach to inimitability were concerned with the syntactic patterns and word order of the Qur'ān.
- (v) This approach was led by both non-mainstream and mainstream linguists.
- (vi) The notion of inimitability of Qur'anic style (al-i'jāz) was first related to the notion of al-ṣarfah (dissuasion) developed by Ibrāhīm al-Nazzām (d. 231/845) and rejected by al-Jāḥiẓ (d. 255/868) and al-Jurjānī (d. 471/1078 or 474/1081).
- (vii) It was first led by Muslim scholastics represented by Mu'tazili linguists such as Ibrāhīm al-Nazzām (d. 231/845), al-Jāḥiẓ (d. 255/868), al-Rummānī (d. 386/996), 'Abd al-Jabbār Ābādī (d.415/1024), and al-Zamakhshari (d. 538/1144), and by anti-scholastic non-mainstream linguists such as al-Sharīf al-Raḍī (d. 406/1015).
- (viii) The inimitability-oriented approach was also led by anti-scholastic mainstream linguists such as Ibn Qutaibah (d. 276/889), al-Bāqillānī (d. 403/1012), al-Jurjānī (d. 471/1078 or 474/1081), and al-Rāzī (d. 604/1207).
- (ix) Shī'i linguists and exegetes were not interested in the inimitability-oriented approach. The Shī'i linguist al-Sharīf al-Raḍī (d. 406/1015), for instance, was only concerned with practical rhetorical studies. In his two books *Talkhīṣ al-Bayān fī Majāzāt al-Qur'ān*, and *al-Majāzāt al-Nabawiyyah*, al-Raḍī did not provide critical or analytical analyses of rhetorical features nor of effective style in Arabic. He adopted a practical approach to Qur'anic rhetoric and provided a comprehensive list of metaphors and similes in the Qur'ān arranged according to their place in the sūrah and āyahs. The metaphors and similes are also listed from a selected 360 ḥadīths. However, his practical approach was not related to the notion of inimitability.
- (x) Although the Andalus school of Qur'anic exegesis was partly linguistically oriented, the linguist exegetes of this school were not interested in the inimitability-oriented approach.
- (xi) The inimitability-oriented approach to Qur'anic exegesis re-emerged during the modern phase of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.
- (xii) The modern phase of the inimitability-oriented approach has been based on two different ways of analysing the Qur'anic language.

- (xiii) Modern Muslim linguists have been influenced by the second to fifth century linguistic and rhetorical approaches and have dealt with the linguistic and stylistic inimitability (al-i'jāz al-lughawi and al-i'jāz al-islūbi) of Qur'anic discourse.
- (xiv) Modern Muslim scientists have developed a scientifically oriented approach to substantiate the inimitability of Qur'anic genre.
- (xv) Modern Muslim scientists have employed modern scientific facts on medicine and physics and matched them with Qur'anic āyahs that refer to the same scientific discoveries. This is called scientific inimitability (al-i'jāz al-ʿilmi).
- (xvi) Modern Muslim mathematicians claim that Qur'anic Arabic is of a divine source. Their argument is hinged upon the number 7. This is called numerical inimitability (al-i'jāz al-ʿadadi).

This can be summed up by [Figure 5](#).

3.6.4 Inimitability, revelation and compilation of the *Qur'ān*

The notion of inimitability of Qur'anic Arabic is also correlated to the notion of piecemeal revelation (al-tanjīm). The argument that Qur'anic discourse is unparalleled and matchless can also be attributed to the different stages and amount of revelation through which the Qur'ān as a text has taken shape. Piecemeal revelation provides further support to the argument that Qur'anic Arabic is distinctive and incomparable to the Arabic language used during the revelation of the Qur'ān. This premise is hinged upon the following two factors:

- 1 Although it took 23 years to complete the Qur'ān, its transcendent style remained unique. In the view of the inimitability-oriented premise, this long

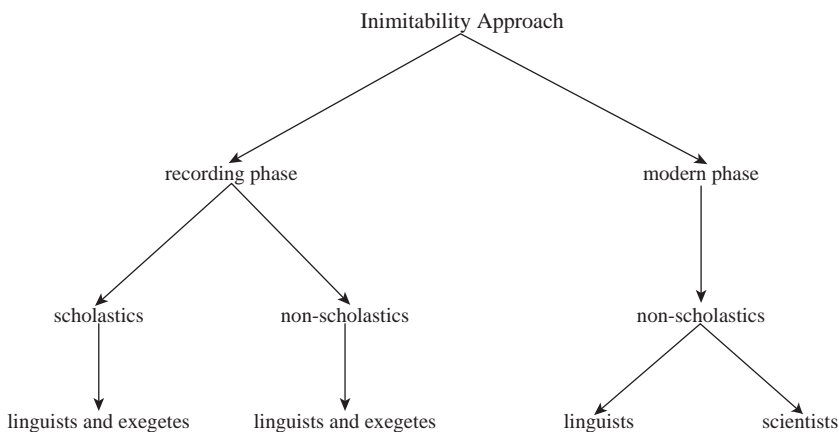


Figure 5 Inimitability-oriented approach to Qur'anic exegesis

period of time is impractical for any human faculty. The human mind, practically speaking and under the circumstances, cannot produce statements with accurate and sophisticated linguistic and stylistic consistency. It is impractical to deliver a large text that enjoys textual and stylistic precision over a period of 23 years, especially under extremely difficult circumstances, harsh environment, and hostile opposition. Such circumstances exert psychological pressure on the author and, thus, can derail one's focus and cognitive skills. However, the aesthetic effects remained unchanged, the stylistic splendour was maintained, and the sublime word order (*al-naẓm*) was preserved throughout. Similarly, it is impractical for a human to produce a large text with logical cohesion and stylistic precision while relying mainly on his memory rather than writing down what was said 3 or 16 months ago.

- 2 Although Qur'anic statements (*āyahs*) and chapters evolved (i) in a piecemeal form, and (ii) in two different phases, i.e. the Makkan and Madinan phases, and there were long, medium, and short time intervals, sometimes 3–16 months, between some statements or chapters, Qur'anic discourse maintained its logical cohesion and consonance.

3.6.5 Stylistic inimitability problems

Stylistic inimitability of Qur'anic discourse involves the innate linguistic and rhetorical problems inherent in Qur'anic Arabic. The following are representative samples of stylistic inimitability of Qur'anic discourse:

- 1 *al-jinās* or *al-tajnīs* (*paronomasia*) which involves two words which orthographically look alike but they have slight spelling dissimilarity, as in (*yuḥsin* – to do good deeds) and (*yaḥsib* – to think, believe) in Q18:104. For linguist exegetes, *al-jinās* is a unique rhetorical feature of Qur'anic sublime style.
- 2 *āyah-final* words can be of two categories, either (i) lexically alike, as in (*wal-ṭūr wakitābin maṣṭūr* – By the mount. And by a Book inscribed) in Q52:1–2 where the words (*al-ṭūr* – the mount) and (*maṣṭūr* – inscribed) are lexically alike, or (ii) phonetically close, such as (*qāf wal-qur'ān al-majīd. bal 'ajībū an jā'ahum mundhirun minhum faqāla al-kāfirūna hādhā shai'un 'ajīb – Qāf, by the honoured Qur'ān. But they wonder that there has come to them a warner from among themselves, and the disbelievers say: 'This is an amazing thing' Q50:1–2*), where, in terms of place of articulation, the word (*majīd* – honoured) is close together with the word (*'ajīb* – amazing). Thus, these two words are described as phonetically close.
- 3 Foregrounding and backgrounding, as in (*lā raiba fihī* – about which there is no doubt, Q2:2) where the negated noun (*lā raiba* – no doubt) is foregrounded and the prepositional phrase (*fihī* – in it) is backgrounded in order to: (i) provide substantiation to the claim that the Qur'ān is the truth, and (ii) provide a rebuttal to the polytheists' claim about its falsehood. Had we changed the word order to (*fihī la raiba*), the meaning would have been that (another Book has falsehood in it, not this Book).

- 4 The interrelation between word order and consonance, as in (dhālika al-kitābu/lā raiba fihī/hudan lil-muttaqīn – This is the Book/about which there is no doubt/a guidance for those conscious of God, Q2:2) which are separate grammatical structures chained semantically and conceptually to each other without the use of conjunctive particles, i.e. they are asyndetic constructions.
- 5 Rhetorical consonance among adjacent sentences. For instance, one can observe rhetorical consonance among these three separate sentences. In (hudan lil-muttaqīn), for instance, we find the following syntactically based rhetorical observations:
 - (i) the word (hudan – guidance) used as a nominalized noun and not as an active participle (hādīn – something that provides guidance) to signify that (this Book is the embodiment of guidance itself);
 - (ii) the ellipsis of the inchoative (al-mubtada') to consolidate the meaning;
 - (iii) the occurrence of (hudan) in the indefinite form to signify that 'it is great guidance whose reality cannot be recognized';
 - (iv) the occurrence of (al-muttaqīn) rather than the employment of an alternative grammatical pattern which involves a relative pronoun plus a verb (alladhīna ittaqaw – those who fear God) in order to achieve succinctness which is the bedrock of Arabic rhetoric.
- 6 Various categories of ellipsis, the occurrence of nouns in the definite or indefinite form, co-ordination (al-^ʿaṭf), conjunction (istikhdām adawāt al-rabṭ), zero conjunction (^ʿadam istikhdām adawāt al-rabṭ), verbal and nominal sentences, exception (al-istithnā'), shift (al-iltifat), and grammatical problems related to word order and effective style, such as (wa'ulā'ika hum al-mufliḥūn – it is those who are the successful, Q2:5) where the explicit pronoun (hum – who they) is employed to assert specificity (al-ikhtīṣāṣ) and to indicate that (al-mufliḥūn – the successful) is a predicate (khabar) of (ʿulā'ika – those) and not an adjective.
- 7 Violation of selectional restriction rule, as in: (fabashshirhum bi'adhābin alīm – Give them tidings of a painful punishment, Q3:21) where the verb (bashshir – to give glad tidings) normally does not collocate with the word (^ʿadhāb – punishment).
- 8 Lexical congruity: A well-formed sentence must include lexical items that are lexically related. This can be sub-classified into the following rhetorical aspects:
 - (a) al-jinās (or al-tajnīs), as in (wahum yaḥsabūna annahum yuḥsinūna ṣun^ʿā – they think that they are doing well in work, Q18:104) which is achieved by (yaḥsabūna – to think) and (yuḥsinūna – to do well),
 - (b) reversed order, as in (raqīb – observer) and (qarīb- near),
 - (c) complex assonance, as in (inna al-abrāra lafi na'im wa'inna al-fujjāra lafi jaḥīm – indeed, the righteous will be in pleasure, and the wicked will be in hell fire, Q82:13) which is also a form of parallelistic structures whose words have similar morphological form and enjoy assonance; this is represented by (al-abrāra – the righteous) and (al-fujjāra – the wicked), and by (na'im – pleasure) and (jaḥīm – hell fire).

4 Comparative-contrastive exegesis

4.1 Introduction

The present chapter is a holistic and methodical comparative-contrastive practical exegetical analysis of copious examples of āyahs and sūrah̄s that can vividly mirror the differences in exegetical opinion among the various schools of Qur'anic exegesis and their relevant theologians. This chapter will provide linguistic, stylistic, jurisprudence, and historical informative details with regard to a given āyah or sūrah̄. The school of scientific exegesis will also be referred to whenever deemed necessary according to the āyah or sūrah̄ under investigation. We shall also explain, within a historical context, the influence of the Judeo-Christian milieu, known as the Jewish anecdotes (al-isrā'iliyyāt) upon Qur'anic exegesis. The comparative-contrastive exegetical views represent a rich blend of the miscellaneous approaches of the schools of Qur'anic exegesis of the formative, the recording, and the modern phases. The following discussion is, thus, based on the exegetical works of classical and modern exegetes who are listed in the bibliography. The present exegetical account is based on major mainstream and non-mainstream exegetes such as Abu al-Su'ūd (1999); Abu Ḥaiyān (2001); al-°Aiyāshi (n.d.); al-°Ālūsī (2001); al-°Āmili (1993); °Arābi (2006); al-°Askari (n.d.); al-Baiḍāwī (1999); Baiyūḍ (2005); al-Balkhī (2007); al-Biqā'ī (1995); al-Farrā' (1989 and 2002); al-Ghazālī (2004); al-Ḥallāj (2004); Ḥawwāh (2003); Ibn °Abbās (2005); Ibn °Ajībāh (2002); Ibn °Arabi (1978); Ibn °Āshūr (n.d.); Ibn °Aṭīyyah (1991); Ibn Kathīr (1993); Iṭfaiyish (1994); al-Jaṣṣāṣ (1994); al-Jubbā'ī (2007); al-Kāshānī (1959); al-Khalīlī (1988); al-Khāzin (1995); al-Māturīdī (2005); Muqāṭil (2003); al-Naḥḥās (2001); al-Nasafī (1996); al-Qinnūjī (1995); al-Qummi (1983); al-Qurṭubī (1997); Quṭb (1996); al-°Šādiq (2002); al-°Šan°ānī (1999); al-Ṭabarānī (2008); al-Ṭabari (2005); al-Ṭabarsi (1997); al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī (1962); al-Ṭa°mi (2007); al-Ṭūsī (n.d.); al-Wahbī (1993); and al-Zamakhsharī (1995).

4.2 Micro Qur'anic exegesis

This is a comparative-contrastive exegetical analysis of single āyahs which reflect diverse theological and doctrinal systems of the schools of Qur'anic exegesis.

- 1 (man dha alladhī yashfa‘u ‘indahū illa bi’idhnih – Who is it that can intercede with God except by His permission, Q2:255). This āyah constitutes a theological controversy that raged between mainstream and non-mainstream exegetes about the doctrine of intercession (al-shafā‘ah). The āyah involves the fate of the grave sinner (murtakib al-kabīrah, i.e. the individual who commits a serious sin) and whether on the day of judgement someone will be able to intercede with God to save the grave sinner from the hell fire. This jurisprudential controversy is explored by Abdul-Raof (2010, pp. 64, 74). For more details on the fate of the grave sinner and the notion of intercession, see Abdul-Raof (2010, Ch. 3, Sect. 3.3, points (2) and (25) respectively). The heated debate is represented by the exegetical views of al-Zamakhshari who is a non-mainstream Sunni Mu‘tazili, the Ibāḍi exegete al-Wahbi, and al-Baiḍāwī and al-Rāzi who are also Sunnis. The Mu‘tazilah, the Khawārij, and the Ibāḍiyyah argue that a grave sinner will not be granted intercession if he/she dies without seeking repentance and that he/she will have a perpetual punishment in the hell fire (mukhallad fī al-nār). This is part of the Mu‘tazili doctrine of reward and punishment (al-wa‘d wal-wa‘d). The grave sinner for the Mu‘tazilah is neither a disbeliever nor a believer, i.e. he/she is at a level that is between these two levels (manzilah baina al-manzilatain). The grave sinner, in their view, is neither a disbeliever (kāfir) nor a believer (mu‘min). The grave sinner, for them, is called fāsiq (licentious). As the Mu‘tazilah, the Khawārij, and the Ibāḍi reject intercession for the grave sinner, they claim that Q2:255 means that God accepts intercession by the Prophets and the allies of God (awliyā’ allāh) for those who have done good deeds and have not been admitted to the fire. In support of this, al-Wahbi (1993, 2, p. 24) mentions the ḥadīth: (laisat al-shafā‘ha li’ahl al-kabā’ir – Intercession is not for the grave sinners). They also claim that Q2:48 (wattaqū yawman lā tajzī nafsun ‘an nafsīn shai’an walā yuqbalu minhā shafā‘atun – Fear a day when no soul will suffice for another soul at all, nor will intercession be accepted from it) is in support of their theological position. For the Ibāḍi exegete Iṭfaiyish (d. 1914) (1994, 1, p. 159), Q2:81 (balā man kasaba saiya’atan wa aḥāṭat bihī khaṭī’atuhu fa’ulā’ika aṣḥābu al-nāri hum fīhā khālidūn – Yes, whoever earns evil and his sin has encompassed him, those are the companions of the fire; they will abide therein eternally) refers to the perpetual punishment in the hell fire of the grave sinner who even his/her belief in monotheism (al-tawḥīd) will not save him/her from the perpetual punishment in the hell fire (al-Shahrastāni 1986, 1, p. 114). However, for mainstream and Shī‘i exegetes, both Q2:48 and Q2:255 as well as Q26:100–101 (famā lanā min shaffī’in walā ṣadiqin ḥamīm – Now we have no intercessor and no true friend) and Q74:48 (famā tanfa‘uhum shafā‘atu al-shāfi‘in – No intercessor’s plea will benefit them now) imply intercession for the grave sinner who is a believer, i.e. a monotheist, and Q2:48, Q2:255, Q26:100–101, and Q74:48 refer to the unbelievers and the idolaters.

For the Ash‘aris, who are non-mainstream Sunnis, the grave sinner, unlike the unbelievers, will not be a perpetual resident in the hell fire. Instead, the

Muslim grave sinner, in their view, will be forgiven and taken back to the garden, al-jannah (al-Shahrastāni 1986, 1, p. 101). For mainstream theologians, the grave sinner has an incomplete belief (nāqīṣ al-īmān) and he/she is subject to God's will (taḥta al-mashī'ah), where he/she may be forgiven or may be punished according to the will of God. The sins of the grave sinner, for mainstream exegetes, can be forgiven by repentance. Even without repentance, the sins can also be forgiven by means of shafā'ah (intercession) and the mercy of God. For them, Q2:48 is contextually related to the disbelievers rather than to the believers who have committed grave sins. Thus, for them, the believer's grave sins will be pardoned through intercession. Also, in their opinion, the grave sinner will not have a perpetual punishment in the hell fire but will be discharged due to his/her tiny belief in God. Their view is based on Q39:53 and Q4:48 and 116. This view is held by Ibn Kathīr and al-Shawkāni who rely on the prophetic tradition narrated by al-Bukhārī: (yakhruju min al-nār man kāna fī qalbihi adnā mithqāl dharrah min imān – Whoever has got a tiny particle of belief will be discharged from the fire). Similarly, the mainstream Murji'ah theologians hope for pardon for all the Muslims, since they are 'people of the qiblah' – facing Makkah when performing their prayers, i.e. believing in the prophethood of Muḥammad.

On the question of those who have committed grave sins, al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110/728) has taken the view that although they are considered as 'hypocrites' (munāfiqūn), i.e. nominal Muslims, they should not be excluded from the community, they are in great danger of hell, and they should be encouraged and aided to amend their ways (Watt 1962, p. 32). For the non-mainstream Murji'i theologians, they believe in suspended judgement (irjā' al-ḥukm). In other words, on the membership of the community for those who commit a grave sin, the Murji'ah believe that the judgement whether a grave sinner belongs to 'the people of paradise' or 'the people of hell' can neither be answered by ordinary men nor by jurists but must be left (yurja') to God's decision on the day of judgement (Watt 1962, p. 33; al-Shahrastāni 1986, 1, p. 139). The Murji'ah's theological stance is based on Q9:106 (wa'ākharūna murjawna li-amr allāh immā yu'adhdhibuhum wa'immā yatūbu 'alaihim – There are others deferred until the command of God, whether He will punish them or whether He will forgive them). As for the Shī'ah, they believe that God may forgive all kinds of sin, with or without repentance, except polytheism, which cannot be forgiven. The Shī'i stance on this matter is, therefore, similar to that of the Sunni theologians.

Similarly, for the Mu'tazilah, the Khawārij, and Ibāḍī theologians, those who do not perform ḥajj are classified as unbelievers and refer to Q3:97 (walillāhi 'alā al-nāsi ḥijju al-baiti man istaṭā'a ilaihi sabīlā waman kafara fa'inna allāha ghaniyyun 'an al-'ālamīn – Due to God from people is a pilgrimage to the house, for whoever is able to find thereof a way. But whoever disbelieves, then indeed, God is free from need of the worlds) to substantiate their claim. For them, every fāsiq (licentious) is a disbeliever. Their exegetical view is based on Q64:2 (huwa alladhī khalaqakum faminkum kāfirun

waminkum mu'minin – It is He who created you, and among you is the disbeliever, and among you is the believer).

- 2 (wujūhun yawma idhin nāḍirah ila rabbihā nāḍirah – Some faces, on that day, will be radiant, looking at their Lord, Q75:22–23) and (inna alladhīna yashtarūna bi'ahdi allāhi wa'imānīhim thamānan qalīlan ulā'ika lā khalāqa lahum fī al-ākhirati walā yukallimuhum allāhu walā yanẓuru ilaihim yawma al-qiyyamah – Indeed, those who exchange the covenant of God and their own oaths for a small price will have no share in the hereafter, and God will not speak to them or look at them on the day of resurrection, Q3:77). These āyahs represent the theological cleavage with regard to whether one will be able to look at his/her Lord in the hereafter. The different exegetical meanings are due to the dichotomy between exoteric (ḥaqīqī – non-allegorical, surface) and esoteric (majāzī – allegorical, hidden) meaning. Mainstream exegetes who espouse the exoteric meaning, and the non-mainstream Sufi exegetes, claim that the believer will certainly be able to see God and look at Him. However, non-mainstream exegetes such as the Shī'ah, Mu'tazilah, and Ibādīyyah who adopt an esoteric approach to exegesis argue that no one, a believer or an unbeliever, will be able to see God on the day of resurrection because, for them, the notion of 'seeing' will impose space, time, direction, colour, width, and length limitations on the essence of God. Similarly, for them, the expression (nāḍirah, Q75:23) has an esoteric meaning which is: (awaiting for their Lord's hope (rajā') and blessing (ni'mah)), while the same verb (yanẓur) in Q3:77 means: (their Lord will treat them with contempt and will be angry with them). The Shī'i exegete al-Ṭabarsi (1997, 10, p. 156) goes even further and adopts a linguistic interpretation (ta'wīl lughawī) in which he claims that, semantically, the word (ilā – to) is not a preposition but a singular noun meaning (ni'mah – a blessing) whose plural form is (ālā' – blessings). Thus, for him, Q75:23 (ilā rabbihā nāḍirah) means (looking at the blessing of their Lord). The Shī'i exegete al-Ṭūsī (n.d., 10, p. 197) provides a different mode of reading to (nāḍirah, Q75:23) which is (nāḍirah – is about to obtain God's reward); thus, for al-Ṭūsī, Q75:22–23 should read: (wujūhun yawa'idhin nāḍirah. ilā rabbihā nāḍirah – Some faces, on the day of judgement, will be radiant. They are about to obtain God's reward). Exegetes who espouse the claim that God will not be seen in the hereafter also substantiate their premise by Q6:103 (lā tudrikuhu al-abṣāru – No vision can take Him in). For mainstream exegetes and non-mainstream Sufi exegetes (Ibn 'Arabi 1978; 'Arābi 2006) as well as non-mainstream philosophical exegetes (al-Ghazālī (cf. al-Jumaili 2005), al-Rāzī 1990), this āyah means that the human faculty of vision cannot perceive the essence and true nature of God, and that the human eye cannot perceive God because He is pure light. For Ibn 'Arabi (1978, 1, p. 394), the verb (tudrik) means (to comprehend); thus, the āyah means: (No vision can comprehend what God is). For al-Ṭabari (2005, 5, p. 295), although the believers will be able to see their Lord on the day of judgement, they will not be able to comprehend His essence. For him, God is (yurā walā yudrak – can be seen but will not be perceived). Accordingly,

in their view, the āyah does not contradict the seeing of God on the day of judgement (‘Arābi 2006, 1, p. 210). Mainstream exegetes substantiate their doctrine of seeing God through intertextual reference to (lilladhīna aḥsanū al-ḥusnā waziyādah – For them who have done good is the best reward, and extra, Q10:26), (lahum mā yashā’ūna fihā waladainā mazīd – They will have whatever they wish therein, and with Us is more, Q50:35), (taḥiyyatuhum yawma yalqawnahū salām – Their greeting the day they meet Him will be: ‘Peace’, Q33:44), and (kallā innahum ‘an rabbihim yawma’idhin lamahjūbūn – No! Indeed, from their Lord, that day, they will be partitioned, Q83:15). For Mu‘tazili, Ibāḍi and Shī‘i exegetes, Q6:103 is evidence of their shared doctrine that the seeing of God will not take place (al-Jubbā’i 2007, p. 222; al-Ṭabarsī 1997, 4, p. 100; Itfaiyish 1994, 3, p. 410). However, for mainstream exegetes, Q6:103 refers to the faculty of vision in this world; human vision in the hereafter will be different, enabling them to see their Lord.

- 3 (faman shā’a falyu’min waman shā’a falyakfur – Let those who wish to believe in it do so, and let those who wish to reject it do so, Q18:29) and (walā tuṭī‘ man aghfalnā qalbahū ‘an dhikrinā wattaba’a hawāhu – Do not obey one whose heart We have made heedless of Our remembrance and who follows his desire, Q18:28) which, for the Mu‘tazilah, are in support of their doctrine of free will, i.e. the individual is responsible for his/her bad deeds, and that since the Lord is Just, i.e. the Mu‘tazili principle of faith (al-‘adl – justice of God), God cannot be responsible for our bad deeds. Thus, these āyahs are muḥakamah (clear) for the Mu‘tazilah. However, for mainstream theologians, these āyahs are mutashābiha (ambiguous). Anti-Mu‘tazili mainstream exegetes such as al-Qaṣṣāb (2003, 2, p. 204) resort to linguistic exegesis to contest the doctrine of free will. He argues that Q18:28 mentions the verb (aghfalnā – to make the heart of someone heedless from doing something) in the form (aghfala) rather than in the form of (ghafalū – they themselves have become heedless on their own accord), and similarly, Q18:28 mentions the expression (wattaba’a hawāhu – and follow his/her desire) rather than saying (wa’atba’nāhu hawāhu – and We [God] coerced him/her to follow his/her own desire); thus, the semantics of Q18:28 does not involve any free will. For al-Ghazālī (2004, 1, p. 144), an anti-Mu‘tazili non-mainstream philosophical exegete, ‘human deeds are created’. In the same vein, al-Rāzi (1990, 21, p. 102), another anti-Mu‘tazili non-mainstream philosophical exegete, narrates on the authority of ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib that Q18:29 refers to a threat (tahdīd) rather than a choice (takhyīr) and claims that ‘any human being is compelled but in the form of free to choose’ (al-insān muḍṭarr fi šūrat mukhtār). Mainstream exegetes also refute the Mu‘tazili premise of free will through intertextual reference to Q76:30 (wamā tashā’ūna illā an yashā’ allāh – You do not will except that God wills. Indeed, God is ever knowing and wise) and claim that it is evidence against the doctrine of free will and that Q76:30 is muḥakamah but for the Mu‘tazilah, it is mutashābiha.
- 4 (hal lanā min al-amri min shai’ qul inna al-amra kullahū lillāh – ‘Is there anything for us to have done in this matter?’ Say: ‘Indeed, the matter belongs

completely to God', Q3:154). For the Mu'tazilah, the expression (al-amra – the matter) is given an esoteric meaning (al-naşra – victory). Thus, for them, the āyah (inna al-amra kullahū lillāh – Is there anything for us to have done in this matter?) means (victory is from God alone). However, for mainstream exegetes, this āyah substantiates that the doctrine of free will is invalid and that the individual's good and bad deeds are predestined by God. Mainstream exegetes further their refutation through Q4:78 (wa'in tuşibhum ḥasanatan yaqūlū hādhihi min 'ind allāh wa'in tuşibhum saiyi'atan yaqūlū hādhihi min 'indika. qul kullun min 'ind allāh – If good comes to them, they say: 'This is from God;' and if evil befalls them, they say: 'This is from you.' Say: 'All things are from God') and Q4:79 (mā aşābaka min ḥasanatin famin allāh wamā aşābaka min saiyi'atin famin nafsika – What comes to you of good is from God, but what comes to you of evil, is from yourself).

- 5 (kallama allāhu mūsā taklimā – God spoke to Moses directly, Q4:164). For mainstream exegetes, this āyah means that God indeed talked to Moses directly and that there is no allegory involved. However, Mu'tazili, Shī'i and Ibāḍī exegetes provide an esoteric meaning to the verb (kallama) and claim that it is derived from the noun (al-kalam – the wound); thus, for them, Q4:164 allegorically means: (God wounded Moses with the claws of trials and afflictions, i.e. God tested Moses with problems). For Sufi exegetes, Q4:164 means: (God communicated with Moses through the signs of His power). Also, Q9:6 (. . . ḥattā yasma'a kalām allāh – . . . so that he may hear the word [the Qur'ān] of God) represents an integral part of the doctrinal system of the Mu'tazilah and the Ibāḍiyyah which is based on the premise that 'the speech of God is not old' (kalām allāh muḥdath), i.e. the Qur'ān is not old but rather made of sounds and words which were being uttered and listened to by people at any time (al-Jubbā'i 2007, p. 276; al-Wahbi 1993, 7, p. 23; İtfaiyish 1994, 1, p. 216). The current Qur'ān in its sounds and words, for them, is not the same as the old version of the Qur'ān, i.e. the word of God is different from the new one. However, mainstream and non-mainstream philosophical exegetes, such as al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111) and al-Rāzī (d. 604/1207), argue that the Qur'ān as the speech of God is old and the same in both its sounds and words and that these sounds and words that are taking place substantiate the speech of God (al-Rāzī 1990, 15, pp. 181–182; al-Ghazālī 2004, 1, pp. 144, 150; al-Ghazālī (cf. al-Jumaili 2005, p. 168).
- 6 (wa'ashraqat al-arḍu binūri rabbihā – The Earth will shine with the light of its Lord, Q39:69). Mainstream exegetes provide an exoteric meaning for this āyah, i.e. that the light of God will shine on Earth. However, for Mu'tazili exegetes, the word (nūr – light) is allegorically accounted for and means (the truth, the Qur'ān, and the proof). For Sufi exegetes, Q39:69 means (the land of the soul will shine with the Lord's light of justice and truth during the time of Imām al-Mahdi). However, for Shī'i exegetes, the word (nūr) is also allegorically accounted for and means (justice) or that (God will create a special light to shine on Earth).

- 7 (wal-arḍu jamī'an qabḍatuhu yawma al-qiyāmah wal-samāwātu maṭwiyyātun biyamīnih – The Earth entirely will be within God's grip on the day of judgement and the heavens will be folded in His right hand, Q39:67). For Mu'tazili, Sufi, Shī'i, and Ibāḍi exegetes, this āyah represents an imagery of God's might and it is not concerned with any concrete things such as the physical body parts, e.g. (qabḍah – grip) and (yamīn – the right hand). For them, the expressions (qabḍah) and (yamīn) have the esoteric meaning (qudrah – power).
- 8 (thumma ba'athnākum min ba'di mawtikum – Then, We revived you after your death that perhaps you would be grateful, Q2:56). Shī'i exegetes take this āyah to substantiate the doctrine of the return (al-raj'ah) of their twelfth Imām from his occultation (al-ghaibah) who was Abu al-Qāsim Muḥammad al-Ḥasan known as al-Mahdī al-muntaẓar (born in 255/869) and disappeared in (260/874) or (264/878). Shī'i exegetes claim that the return of their Imām al-Mahdī al-muntaẓar will be similar to the return of Ezra (ʿUzair) after he was dead for a hundred years and then was brought back to life. Mainstream, Mu'tazili, Sufi, and Ibāḍi exegetes do not share this view.
- 9 (mā nansakh min āyatin aw nunsihā na'ti bikhairin minhā aw mithlihā – We do not abrogate an āyah or cause it to be forgotten except that We bring forth one better than it or similar to it, Q2:106). The premise held by the Mu'tazilah and the Ibāḍiyyah that the Qur'ān was created (makhlūq) had led them to argue that the abrogating and abrogated āyahs (al-nāsikh wal-mansūkh) were not old, since they were being revealed to fit in the socio-political context during the period of revelation. Thus, they substantiated their claim by Q2:106. For them, therefore, abrogation necessitated 'the beginning, to start doing something' (al-badā'). However, the Shī'i theologian al-Khū'i (d. 1992) claimed that there was no abrogation in the Qur'ān and was especially against the textual abrogation and warned that the latter was unacceptable and that it was a kind of falsification of the Qur'ān (taḥrīf) (Ayoub 1988, p. 191).¹ The mainstream exegete al-Māturīdī (d. 333/944) (2005, 1, p. 532) argued against scholars who espoused the doctrine of 'the Qur'ān was being revealed and created' (al-qur'ān ḥādith makhlūq) (al-Wahbi 1993, 7, p. 23; Itfaiyish 1994, 1, p. 216) and scholars who disallow abrogation. For the Sufi exegete al-Baqli (d. 606/1209) (2008, 1, p. 57), the expression (nansakh – to abrogate) refers to the abrogation of a feature in Muḥammad's character, and that if a feature is taken out, God replaces it with a better one. However, the Sufi exegete al-Ṭa'mi (2007, 1, p. 45) holds the view that there is no abrogation in God's knowledge, that His knowledge is as old as creation, and that abrogation in the Qur'ān is a mercy for mankind to make life easier for the believer. Generally, however, mainstream, Shī'i, and Sufi exegetes espouse the same theological and dogmatic view that the Qur'ān does not necessitate the notion of 'the beginning, to start doing something' (al-badā') (al-Ṣan'āni 1999, 1, p. 285; al-Zarkashi 2000, 3, p. 150; al-Ṭabari 2005, 1, p. 521–525; Ibn Kathīr 1993, 1, p. 143; al-Ṭabarsi 1997, 1, p. 266; Ibn ʿArabi 1978, 1, p. 75).

- 10 (al-rahmānu ʿala al-ʿarshi istawā – The Lord of mercy established on the throne, Q20:5, Q7:54). The notion of God’s establishment on the throne (al-istiawā) demarcates the mainstream from the non-mainstream doctrinal and theological systems. While the companion and the majority of the successor exegetes of the formative phase of the evolution of Qur’anic exegesis eschewed the discussion of the notion of (al-istiawā) as it was a theological mutashābih notion,² later exegetes of the recording phase indulged in the their polemic discussion of rebuttal of each other’s views. For the Andalus school³ exegete Abu Ḥaiyān (2001, 4, p. 310), the expressions (al-ʿarsh) and (al-istiawā) are both semantically polysemous. The semantic nature of polysemy, however, cannot be the main cause of the contentious debate between mainstream and non-mainstream exegetes. The word (al-ʿarsh) means: (i) the seat of authority; (ii) the ceiling, or whatever is high and can provide a shade; (iii) dominion, authority; (iv) the planks of wood used to line the sides of the water well; (v) the four tiny stars in the universe. The word (istiawā) means: (i) to settle down, to rest on; (ii) to be on the top of; (iii) to move towards, to head for; (iv) to make equal; (v) to be equal; (vi) to control.

For Muʿtazili, Shīʿi, Ibāḍi, Sufi, and philosophical exegetes, Q20:5 should be accounted for allegorically in terms of its esoteric meaning and that only rational, i.e. personal opinion, exegesis should be invoked. Their theological view is hinged on the premise that God had been a Lord and had no throne and had not been limited by space, God was not a body, and since He was not, He should not have been limited to a space, i.e. sitting on His throne, since to be seated on a throne implies the occupation of a space. Pro-esoteric exegesis claim that the expression (istawā) is employed allegorically whose meaning is (al-mulk, al-ṭaḥakkum, al-tamakkun – dominion, control). The philosophical Ashʿari exegete al-Rāzi (1990, 22:6) asserts that the exoteric meaning of (istawā) is counter to the intellect (bāṭilun bil-ʿaql). This view is also echoed by other Ashʿari, but not philosophical, exegetes such as Ibn ʿĀshūr (n.d., 8, p. 162; Ibn ʿĀshūr n.d., 16, p. 187) who espoused an allegorical meaning, i.e. (al-iʿtilāʾ wal-irtifāʿ – to be on the top of, to be above). As for the Shīʿi exegete al-Ṭabarsi (1997, 1, p. 102; al-Ṭabarsi 1997, 4, p. 209; al-Ṭabarsi 1997, 7, p. 5), he relies on the views of Muʿtazili scholars such as al-Jubbāʾi (d. 321/933) and provides a semantic analysis of the expression (istawā) which, for him, means either: (to move towards); thus, Q20:5 means: (God intended and moved for the creation of the throne), or: (to take control of); the āyah means: (God took control of the throne) (al-Zamakhshari 1995, 3, p. 50; al-Jubbāʾi 2007, p. 244; al-Rāzi 1990, 14, p. 83; al-Rāzi 1990, 22, pp. 6–7; al-Ṭaʿmi 2007, 1, p. 363; ʿArābi 2006, 1, p. 574; Baiyūḍ 2005, 1, p. 200; Ibn ʿAjibah 2002, 4, p. 261; Heer 1999, p. 242). Most interestingly, the Sufi exegete Ibn ʿArabi (1978, 2, p. 33) provides a mystical and symbolic interpretation of the expression (istawā) and claims that Q20:5 means: (God the most merciful is embodied in the person of Muḥammad, that the divine trait of mercy has appeared in the Prophet, and, thus, God has done (istawā) on the throne of Muḥammad’s heart through the appearance of

all God's attributes. For this reason, Muḥammad has become a mercy to all people, and his prophethood is universal and final).

However, mainstream exegetes espouse an exoteric meaning of (istawā) and argue that like the other attributes of God, such as (descending – al-nuzūl) and (coming – al-majī'), the notion of (al-istiwā' – to be established on the throne) is another attribute of God which a Muslim is obliged to believe in but is not recommended to ask about how the (istawā') took place. In their discussion of the notion of (istawā'), mainstream exegetes usually refer to Imām Mālik b. Anas's (d. 179/795) famous statement when he was asked about this notion. Imām Mālik replied: (al-istiwā' ghair majhūl wal-kaif ghair ma'qūl wal-īmān bihi wājib wal-su'āl 'anhu bid'ah – The establishment on the throne is not unknown, the how is beyond the intellect, the belief in it is obligatory, and asking about it is an innovation). This has become to be known in Islamic studies as the notion of 'without asking how' (bilā kaif). Mainstream exegetes also argue that the expression (istawā) means (istaqarra – to be above His throne, to be seated on, to settle down, to rest on) and substantiate their meaning by the intertextual reference to Q11:44 where the same word occurs in the context of Noah's ship when it came to rest after the flood water was swallowed by the earth (Ibn 'Abbās 2000, p. 169 and p. 328; al-Ṭabari 2005, 1, pp. 227–228; al-Ṭabari 2005, 8, p. 391; al-Qaṣṣāb 2003, 1, p. 427). Due to the exoteric analysis of (istawā) by mainstream exegetes which involves the human feature of 'being seated', non-mainstream exegetes call them anthropomorphists (mushabbihūn) because God is made similar to humans, and corporealists (mujassimūn) because God has been given body parts and shape, thus, making God similar to humans (al-Nasafi 1996, 2, p. 55). It is worthwhile to note, however, that some mainstream exegetes, such as al-Māturīdī (d. 333/944) (2005, 4, p. 444) and al-Nasafi (d. 710/1310) (1996, 2, p. 55), have expressed their objection to the exoteric meaning of (istawā) espoused by other mainstream exegetes.

- 11 (innā anzalnāhu qur'ānan 'arabiyyan – Indeed, We have sent it down as an Arabic Qur'ān, Q12:2). The exegetical analysis of this āyah can be captured through the intertextuality approach through which the exegete lists the relevant āyahs which are thematically linked to this one, such as (Thus, We have revealed it as an Arabic legislation, Q13:37), (This Qur'ān is in a clear Arabic language, 16:103), (Thus, We have sent it down as an Arabic Qur'ān, Q20:113), (In a clear Arabic language, Q26:195), (It is an Arabic Qur'ān, Q39:28), (If We had made it a non-Arabic Qur'ān, they would have said: 'Why are its verses not explained in detail in our language?', Q41:44), (Thus, We have revealed to you an Arabic Qur'ān that you may warn Makkah, Q42:7), and (Indeed, We have made it an Arabic Qur'ān that you might understand, Q43:3).
- 12 (wakuntum azwājan thalāthah – You will be sorted into three classes, Q56:7). Intertextuality as an exegetical approach to the analysis of an āyah can be found within the same sūrah as in Q56:7, which is explained by the following āyahs 8–10 which tell us who these three different classes of people are on

the day of judgement: (fa'aṣḥābu al-maimanati mā aṣḥābu al-maimanati – Those on the right, what people they are!), (wa'aṣḥābu al-mash'amati mā aṣḥābu al-mash'amati – Those on the left, what people they are!), and (wal-sābiqūna al-sābiqūn – Those in front, ahead indeed!).

4.3 Macro Qur'anic exegesis

The following is a wide-ranging exegetical discussion of extended Qur'anic passages through which we aim to tease out the divergent exegetical and dogmatic views and the different exegetical approaches adopted by different exegetes from different schools of Qur'anic exegesis.

4.3.1 *Rationale of comparative-contrastive exegetical analysis*

The present holistic comparative-contrastive exegetical account is based on the miscellaneous exegetical approaches of the divergent schools of Qur'anic exegesis. It aims to capture the diverse views and techniques of the schools of Qur'anic exegesis and their relevant dogmatic systems. The following exegetical analysis is based on a variety of extended Qur'anic passages of either a whole sūrah or a set of āyahs of a given sūrah. In our present exegetical analysis, we shall provide an insight into how best a given Qur'anic text can be investigated and how wide-ranging an exegete can be. Hence, all the exegetical techniques shall be employed whenever a given text is exegetically analysed. In order to achieve this objective, the intertextual, jurisprudential, linguistic, historical, philosophical, modern, and scientific approaches to Qur'anic exegesis will be invoked. Through one or more of these exegetical techniques, the dichotomy between mainstream and non-mainstream schools of exegesis can be best highlighted. Mainstream exegesis is a traditional Sunni approach. Non-mainstream exegesis, however, is a rational and personal opinion approach which is a blend of Sunni and non-Sunni Islam. The non-mainstream Sunni exegesis is represented by the Mu'tazili, Ibādī, and Sufi scholars while the non-mainstream non-Sunni exegesis is represented by Shī'ī scholars.

It is worthwhile to note that there is no exegesis work, classical or modern, which embodies all the schools of Qur'anic exegesis and all the exegetical approaches since such a task requires dozens of volumes and usually falls outside the scope of a given exegesis work. It should be noted, therefore, that a classical or modern mainstream or non-mainstream exegete focuses on one or some approaches in Qur'anic exegesis but not all, and that a classical or modern mainstream or non-mainstream exegete is primarily concerned with his own school of exegesis and dogmatic tendencies with little or no reference to the views of other exegetes of a different school of exegesis or different doctrinal views. Therefore, controversial Qur'anic passages remain without an informative and thorough exegetical investigation that encapsulates all the schools of Qur'anic exegesis, their variegated techniques, and doctrinal cleavages. Due to space limitations, the long Qur'anic passages will be given in English only.

4.3.2 *Qur'anic passages for comparative-contrastive exegetical analysis*

In order to put our rationale into practice, the following samples of passages are either a set of āyahs of a given sūrah or a whole sūrah of a short to medium length. Through our samples, we shall highlight exegetical approaches and doctrinal views through semantic problems, syntactic problems, intertextuality, modes of reading, jurisprudential problems, theological problems, circumstances of revelation, Judeo-Christian anecdotes, and modern exegetical problems.

4.3.2.1 *Sūrat al-Baqarah (Q2:102)*

- (i) Judeo-Christian anecdotes: These are referred to in Arabic as al-isrā'iliyyāt which is the plural of isrā'iliyyah and is related to the Children of Israel (banū isrā'īl). Judeo-Christian anecdotes are folklore details influenced by the Judeo-Christian milieu. According to exegetical sources, the word isrā'īl (Israel) is the name for the Prophet Ya'qūb (Jacob) who is the father of the Prophet Yūsuf (Joseph). According to Muslim scholars, the Children of Israel were the children of Jacob until the lifetimes of Moses, Jesus, and Muḥammad. Judeo-Christian anecdotes represent the exegetical views of both the Jews and the Christians on specific Qur'anic subject matters. However, these views are often of the converts from these two faiths. Among the major sources of the Judeo-Christian anecdotes were the Torah (the written Old Testament) and the Talmud (the orally transmitted Old Testament which included oral narratives, exegesis, legal religious rulings, commandments, and moral instructions). These anecdotes are one of the exegetical techniques in Qur'anic exegesis. Jewish anecdotes are employed by both schools of exegesis: traditional, i.e. al-tafsīr bil-ma'thūr, and hypothetical opinion, i.e. al-tafsīr bil-ra'i. Muḥammad gave permission to his companions to ask the People of the Book (ahl al-kitāb), especially the Jews, about clarifications regarding certain Qur'anic expressions and parables (qaṣaṣ al-anbiyā') but he also warned them not to take their views completely for granted. However, Muḥammad left this matter to the companion's common sense. It is worthwhile to note that Jewish anecdotes have acquired a negative connotation in Qur'anic exegesis. Thus, a work of tafsīr which is heavily dependent on these anecdotes is not taken as a reliable tafsīr source. Judeo-Christian anecdotes are classified into: (1) those that are true, (2) those that are untrue, and (3) those that are in between (maskūtun 'anhu – literally meaning 'to be quiet about them'), i.e. neither true nor untrue, but the exegete is allowed to quote the 'in between' Jewish anecdotes. Many Judeo-Christian anecdotes were falsely attributed to Muḥammad and to some companions and successors such as 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, Ibn 'Abbās, Ibn Mas'ūd, Mujāhid, and al-Suddi, which surprisingly al-Ṭabari refers to in his tafsir without verification. The iconic companion Ibn 'Abbās showed interest in Judeo-Christian anecdotes. However, due to the expansion of the Muslim state, sound narration from Muḥammad became weaker and contact with the

outside world led to the spread of scholastic views that seeped into Qur'anic exegesis. Thus Judeo-Christian anecdotes were attractive to many successor and late successor exegetes. This can be attributed to a number of factors:

- (a) The presentation technique of Qur'anic discourse is distinct from that of the Old Testament and the Bible. For instance, the Qur'ān refers to Prophets' parables for the purpose of admonition, establishment of firm belief, and urging the believer to persevere and take a moral lesson from the stories of past nations.
- (b) Qur'anic parables are context-based, i.e. whenever there is a good reason to substantiate a tenet of faith such as monotheism, prophethood, eschatology, and reward and punishment, a detailed or brief parable is introduced.
- (c) The Qur'anic parable does not touch upon minor details such as the type of tree which Eve was commanded by God not to eat from, the area to which Adam and Eve were sent to after they were asked to leave paradise, the colour, size, or type of the dog which was with the companions of the cave, and the type of wood and size of Noah's ark. This is due to the fact that information of this kind is irrelevant to the admonition value of the parable. However, more details are encountered in the other two Scriptures.

However, the exegetes of the formative phase of Qur'anic exegesis who were the companions, successors, and late successors were selective in their exegetical investigation with regards to Judeo-Christian anecdotes. We can note the following observations about their approach to Judeo-Christian anecdotes:

- (a) The companion, successor, and late successor exegetes did not ask the Jewish and Christian converts about jurisprudential matters.
 - (b) They did not ask the Jewish and Christian converts about matters that had been already explained by Muḥammad.
 - (c) They did not ask the Jewish and Christian converts about insignificant details such as the colour and type of dog of the companions of the cave or the type of wood Noah used in his ark.
 - (d) They did not ask the Jewish and Christian converts about the theological *mutashābihāt* such as the names and attributes of God, and the description of the garden and the fire.
 - (e) Most importantly, the companion, successor, and late successor exegetes did not take everything from the Jewish and Christian converts at face value but rather took exegetical details that were compatible with common sense.
- (ii) Historical details: The Judeo-Christian anecdote we encounter in Q2:102 is that of the two angels, Hārūt and Mārūt. This anecdote is narrated by al-Ṭabari (2005, 1, pp. 490–509), al-Rāzi (1990, 3, pp. 185–201), and al-Khāzin (1995, 1, pp. 63–66). According to al-Ṭabari (2005, 1, p. 501), al-Rāzi (1990, 3,

p. 199) and al-Khāzin (1995, 1, p. 65), this anecdote is reported by Ibn ʿAbbās: {When the sins of mankind were rampant and polytheism and disbelief were spreading fast, the angels complained to God: 'O our Lord, You created this universe to be worshipped and obeyed. Look what people are doing on earth. They are killing each other, accepting illegal money, committing acts of theft and fornication, and consuming alcohol.' The angels, forgetting the fact that people are fallible and not immune to abandon these acts, could not forgive people and began to curse all mankind for their evil deeds. God replied: 'People are in a state of the unseen' (fī ghaib – they cannot see what the angels can see such as paradise and the hell fire). God did not accept the angels' argument. He told them: 'Had you been in their position, you would have done the same sins.' The angels responded: 'Praise be to You our Lord. We shall never do these acts of evil.' God said: 'Fine! Choose two angels who will be able to obey and do what they are told and never to disobey me.' The angels chose Hārūt and Mārūt. God ordered Hārūt and Mārūt to descend to earth and live there as humans and were also given the human sexual desire. They were also told that they should not practise polytheism, kill a human, accept illegal money, and should not do any act of theft, fornication or consumption of alcohol. They lived for a very long period of time as pious and just rulers. However, there was a beautiful lady living in the community. The beautiful woman was called al-Zuhrah (Venus) in Arabic, Baidhakht in Nabatean, or Anāhidh in Persian. As humans, Hārūt and Mārūt asked her for sex but she refused unless they became apostates, i.e. to leave their monotheistic faith and accept her polytheistic religion. When they asked her about her faith, she showed them an idol which she worshipped. They told her that they would neither worship her idol nor accept her faith. A few months later, they came back to her and asked her again for sex. She repeated the same condition but they declined her offer. Having realized that they were determined not to abandon their monotheistic faith, the beautiful lady proposed three conditions and they could choose one only: (i) to worship the idol, (ii) to kill someone, or (iii) to consume alcohol. Hārūt and Mārūt considered these conditions and thought that the easiest one of the three was to consume alcohol, at least just for once. She immediately served them wine and they both got drunk and each had his sexual desire fulfilled. The beautiful lady took advantage of their drunken state and asked them about the password through which she could ascend to heavens and be in the company of the angels. A man passed by while Hārūt and Mārūt were drinking and having sex with the lady. Having realized they were seen by the man, they ran after him and killed him. They went home and after they woke up in the morning, they realized what they had done. They felt remorse and wanted to go back to the heavens to their fellow angels. However, Hārūt and Mārūt could not ascend to the heavens as a result of their evil deeds and because the link with the angels had been terminated. God asked Hārūt and Mārūt: 'Would you like your punishment to be in this life or in the hereafter?' They replied: 'We want to be punished in this life as life here is shorter and

the punishment of the hereafter is perpetual.’ God decided to punish them in Babylon. The two angels Hārūt and Mārūt are still in Babylon in the Kūfah area of Iraq flapping their wings but folded with iron and hung by their feet. The rest of the angels found out about what Hārūt and Mārūt committed and now realized that whoever is in a state of the unseen is fallible and liable to become heedless of God. After that, the angels in heaven began to seek God’s forgiveness to mankind. As for the beautiful lady, she attempted to go to the heavens using the password she learned from Hārūt and Mārūt. Once she was ascending to heavens, God deformed her and she was made a planet in recognition of her beauty. She was made into planet Venus.} The Judeo-Christian anecdote ends.

4.3.2.2 *Sūrat al-Baqarah (Q2:213–216)*

- (i) Periphrastic exegesis: This is to provide brief semantic details of some expressions in the ayahs; this exegetical approach is neither a musalsal (word-for-word exegesis) nor an āyah by āyah exegesis.

Q2:213 (kāna al-nāsu ummatan wāḥidatan – Mankind was of one religion): For Ubai b. Ka’b of the Madīnah school of exegesis, this means that all nations were Muslims by instinct but they differed among themselves, as is intertextually backed up by Q10:19 (wamā kāna al-nāsu illā ummatan wāḥidan fakhtalafū – Mankind was not but one community united in religion but then they differed). However, for Ibn ‘Abbās of the Makkah school of exegesis, it means all nations were one disbelieving nation and then God sent Prophets giving them the glad tidings of paradise and warning them of the hell fire. According to al-Ṭabari (2005, 2, p. 347), the expression (ummatan – nation) means the people who lived between the lifetime of Adam and Noah were all followers of the truth and that this period of time lasted for ten centuries. However, they differed among themselves and followed different beliefs. Consequently, in the view of Mujāhid (al-Ṭabari 2005, 2, p. 348), ten Prophets were sent to those people in the space of ten centuries. For Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah of the Andalus school of exegesis, Q2:213 means Noah⁴ and his companions on the ship were all Muslims but soon after the death of Noah, his companions differed among themselves. Q2:213 (liyahkuma baina al-nās – to judge between the people) means every Prophet will judge by the Scripture revealed to him. In Q2:213 (wa’anzala ma’ahum al-kitāba), for Muqātil, the word (al-kitāba) means the tablets of Abraham, but for al-Ṭabari, (al-kitāba) means the Tora (al-tawrāt – the written Old Testament).

Q2:213 (fīmā ikhtalafū fihi – concerning that in which they differed): For al-Ālūsī, this means that people differed about a number of religious matters such as (a) the final day of the week where the Jews have Saturday, the Christians have Sunday, and the Muslims have Friday; (b) the direction you face when performing the daily prayers (al-qiblah); (c) the prayers, where in some faiths people bow but do not prostrate, others prostrate but do not bow,

others bow and prostrate, others pray while he/she can still talk, and others pray while walking; (d) fasting, where some people fast the whole day and night, others fast by abstaining from eating a certain kind of food, while others fast from dawn to sun set without eating anything, (e) Abraham, where the Jews claim that he was a Jew, the Christians claim that he was a Christian, and the Muslims believe that he was a Muslim; (f) Jesus, where the Jews disbelieved him and called him a liar, the Christians gave him a divine status as a God and a son of God, while the Muslims call him a Prophet and a human.

In Q2:214 (*ḥattā yaqūla al-rasūlu* – until the Prophet says . . .), for Muqātil, the word (*al-rasūlu*) refers to Prophet al-Yasaʿa, but for al-Shawkāni it refers to Muḥammad.

- (ii) Sufi-philosophical exegesis: For ʿArābi (2006, 1, p. 42), the five categories of people listed in Q2:215 (Whatever you give should be for parents, close relatives, orphans, the needy, and travellers) allude to esoteric meanings: ‘parents’ means ‘the spirit and the self’, ‘close relatives’ means ‘the five senses’, ‘orphans and needy’ mean ‘the hearts that have come down to the world of sensation’, and travellers’ means ‘the son of Adam [human-kind] searching for the truth through all available means’. For Ibn ʿArabi (1978, 1, p. 131), however, (*kutiba ʿalaikum al-qitālu* – fighting has been enjoined upon you, Q2:216) means ‘fighting the self and Satan’.
- (iii) Intertextuality: Q2:214 (Do you think that you will enter paradise while such trial has not yet come to you as came to those who passed on before you? They were touched by poverty and hardship and were shaken until even their messenger and those who believed with him said: ‘When is the help of God?’ Unquestionably, the help of God is near) is intertextually related to Q3:142 (Or do you think that you will enter paradise while God has not yet made evident those of you who fight in His cause and made evident those who are steadfast?) and Q29:2 (Do the people think that they will be left to say: ‘We believe’ and they will not be tried?). Also, Q2:214 is intertextually related to Q33:10 (*wabalaghat al-qulūbu al-ḥanājira* – and the hearts reached the throats). Q2:214 is intertextually related to the ḥadīth: (There were people before you on whose heads the saw was placed cutting through their bodies until it reached their feet but stood firm and did not give up their faith, and their bodies were combed with an iron comb which went between their flesh and bones but they stood firm and did not gave up their faith (Ibn Ḥajar 1979, 7, p. 202). Q2:213 (*wallāhu yahdī man yashāʾu ilā ṣīrāṭin mustaqīm* – God guides whom He wills to a straight path) is intertextually related to Q1:6 (*ihdinā al-ṣīrāṭa al-mustaqīm* – Guide us to the straight path).
- (iv) Linguistic exegesis: Q2:214 (*ḥattā yaqūla al-rasūlu walladhīna āmanū maʿahu matā naṣru allāh alā inna naṣra allāhi qarīb* – until the messenger and those who believed with him said: ‘When is the help of God?’ unquestionably, the help of God is near) where we have foregrounding and backgrounding (*taqdīm wataʾkhīr*). In other words, the grammatical structure of this āyah should be: {*ḥattā yaqūla alladhīna āmanū matā naṣru allāhi fayaqūla*

al-rasūlu alā inna naşra allāhi qarīb – until those who believed say: ‘When is the help of God?’ then the messenger will say: unquestionably, the help of God is near} (Ibn ʿAṭīyyah 1991, 2, p. 214; al-Ṭabarsī 1997, 2, p. 54; Abu Ḥaiyān 2001, 2, p. 149). However, al-Shawkānī (1996, 1, p. 270) is opposed to this linguistic analysis and considers it as a linguistic hypothetical opinion.

The use of the verb (ūtūhu – they were given it, i.e. the Scripture) in Q2:213 is employed in the passive voice to relay the pragmatic function of surprise (al-taʿajjub) and to expose the disbelievers’ evil action of rejecting the truth since the person who knows the truth is expected to act upon it rather than denying it.

- (v) Modes of reading: Since there is a disagreement on whether the word (al-rasūl – the messenger, Q2:214) refers to Muḥammad or to al-Yasaʿa, we encounter a mode of reading in which the verb (liyaḥkuma – to judge, Q2:213) is read in the second person singular masculine (litaḥkuma – you [singular masculine] judge) in order to make the word (al-rasūlu – the messenger) refer to Muḥammad.

In the codex of Ubai b. Kaʿb, we find in (kāna al-nāsu ummatan wāḥidatan – Mankind was of one religion, Q2:213) an irregular mode of reading in which the word (al-nāsu – mankind) is substituted by (al-bashar – mankind). This is a periphrastic or exegetical mode of reading, where a word is substituted by a synonym. However, Ibn Masʿūd provides an irregular mode of reading in (kāna al-nāsu ummatan wāḥidatan fakhtalafū – Mankind was of one religion, and then they differed, Q2:213), where he adds to the āyah an extra word (fakhtalafū – then they differed). This shows that he is influenced by Q10:19 (wamā kāna al-nāsu illā ummatan wāḥidatan fakhtalafū – Mankind was not but one community united in religion but they differed). Ibn Masʿūd also provides another irregular mode of reading in Q2:214 (wazulzilū thumma zulzilū wayaqūlu al-rasūlu – They were shaken and shaken until the messenger say . . .), where the verb (zulzilū – they were shaken) is repeated to provide a hyperbole of the harsh circumstances. Also, his mode of reading takes out the word (ḥattā – even) (Abu Ḥaiyān 2001, 2, p. 149).

- (vi) Historical exegesis: Q2:214 has different circumstances of revelation. For al-Khāzin (1995, 1, p. 143), al-Ṭabarsī (1997, 2, p. 53), and al-Ālūsī (2001, 1, p. 498), the reason for revelation of this āyah is related to the battle of the trench (al-khandaq) in 5/627 which is also called the battle of the confederates (al-aḥzāb). We are also told by these exegetes that the circumstance of revelation for this āyah is the battle of Uḥud in 3/625 when some of the Muslim hypocrites such as ʿAbd Allāh b. Ubai complained to the other Muslim fighters that had they not been asked by Muḥammad to join this battle, they would not have been going through these difficult circumstances. The true believers replied: ‘we believe in paradise as a reward for this battle’. The hypocrites responded; ‘This is wishful thinking’. The third circumstance of revelation of this āyah is related to ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān and his friends. For Muqātil, Q2:214 is related to Prophet al-Yasaʿa. During the lifetime of Prophet al-Yasaʿa, there was a king called Ḥazqiya who accepted

the faith advocated by Prophet al-Yasa'a. However, the king's son, prince Misha did not join his father. Prophet al-Yasa'a was killed by prince Misha during the battle.

(vii) Jurisprudential exegesis: There are two interesting jurisprudential problems:

- (1) Q2:216 refers to fighting (al-qitāl) which is also referred to as jihād. Muslim scholars have two different opinions about jihād. If a Muslim nation is attacked or occupied: (a) jihād is a communal obligation, i.e. it is optional (farḍ kifāyah); in other words, if some Muslims have already volunteered to fight the enemy, jihād is no longer compulsory for the rest of the Muslims to join them, and (b) jihād is an individual obligation, i.e. it is compulsory (farḍ 'ain); in other words, jihād is like general mobilization and every single Muslim should volunteer to fight the enemy. However, for Sufi exegetes such as Ibn 'Arabi (1978, 1, p. 131), (kutiba 'alaikum al-qitālu – fighting has been enjoined upon you, Q2:216) means 'fighting the self and Satan'.

In his *al-Mughni*, Ibn Qudāmah (1992, 13, pp. 7–8) claims that jihād was compulsory for every Muslim during the early phase of Islam because the Muslims were fewer in number than their antagonists. This view is also held by the successor exegete Sa'īd b. al-Musaiyab. However, the majority of Muslim exegetes hold the view that jihād is optional. Let us read Q4:95: (Not equal are those believers remaining at home (al-qā'idūn), other than this disabled, and those who join the jihād (al-mujāhidūn) who strive and fight in the cause of God with their wealth and their lives. God has preferred al-mujāhidūn through their wealth and their lives over those who remain behind, by degrees. To both God has promised the best reward). Thus, one can shape up a premise based on Q4:95 that the two categories of Muslims this statement refers to are both promised (al-ḥusnā – the best reward). Had the second category of Muslims (al-qā'idūn – the believers remaining at home) known that they had abandoned an obligatory duty, they would not have been promised 'the best reward' (al-Khāzin 1995, 1, p. 145). Muḥammad, for instance, at times, did not join a military campaign against the enemy and used to send the army without him. This substantiates the fact that jihād was optional. Otherwise, the Muslims would have been in the state of jihād for the rest of their lives leaving their families and work behind. Thus, on the socio-economic level, jihād would have been counter productive.

When is jihād compulsory, i.e. individual obligation?

- (a) Jihād is obligatory for every Muslim if the enemy occupies a Muslim country as we are told by Q9:123. In this case, people of the occupied Muslim country as well as the Muslims close to the occupied country have to join jihād against the occupier. This is confirmed by Q9:41 (Go forth (jihād) young or old, riding or walking, in ease or in hardship, in all circumstances and

conditions, and strive with your wealth and your lives in the cause of God).

- (b) Jihād is compulsory on every Muslim who is already in the battle front as we are told by Q8:15. No one is allowed to desert the Muslim army on a mission of jihād. Deserting the army is one of the grave sins.
- (c) Jihād is obligatory if the ruler of the Muslim country under threat calls for it as we are told by Q9:38.

Historically, however, jihād was made compulsory either during the second/eighth century when Q22:39 (Permission to fight has been given to those who are being fought because they were wronged) was revealed, or when Q2:216 (Fighting has been enjoined upon you while it is hateful upon you) was revealed.

Linguistically, the expression jihād occurs 34 times in the Qur'ān in different morphological forms. It is also worthwhile to note that the expression (jihād) occurs in the Qur'ān as in Q22:78, Q25:52, and Q29:69 but not in the meaning of 'military jihād' or 'fighting'. The meaning of jihād in these āyahs refers to 'debate with the opponents wisely'. Among other forms of non-military jihād are fighting in a peaceful manner against one's ego, selfishness, corruption, injustice, wrong deeds, hypocrisy, falsehood, and impatience.

It is also important to note that the āyahs in Q2:190–193 are muḥkam (clear) and not abrogated statements which command the Muslims to undertake jihād to defend their country against any occupation by an enemy and that the major objective of jihād is to protect their country and put an end to the enemy threat. Thus, jihād is to defend a Muslim country and repulse an aggression or to liberate from occupation. Consider Q4:91: (If they [the enemy] do not withdraw from you or offer you peace or restrain their hands, then seize them and kill them whenever you overtake them) and Q60:8–9: (God does not forbid you from those who do not fight you because of religion and do not expel you from your homes from being righteous toward them and acting justly toward them. Indeed, God loves those who act justly. God only forbids you from those who fight you because of religion and expel you from your homes and aid in your expulsion, forbids that you make allies of them). Therefore, both Q4:91 and Q60:8–9 regulate the socio-political relations between the Muslim the non-Muslim countries. However, there are some Muslim theologians who argue that Q9:29 has abrogated all other āyahs related to jihād. In other words, for them, jihād is compulsory and a never-ending task. Q9:29 is referred to as the sword statement (āyat al-saif): (Fight those who do not believe in God or in the last day and who do not consider unlawful what God and His Messenger have made unlawful and who do not adopt Islam from those who were given the Scripture, fight until they give the tax (al-jizyah) willingly while they are humble).

- Those who are exempt from jihād are women, the non-Muslim community within the Muslim state, the mentally disabled, the very young boy, the sick person, and the person who takes care of his elderly parents.
- (2) Q2:215 (yas'alūnaka mādḥā yunfiqūn qul mā anfaqtum min khairin falilwālidaini – They ask you [O Muḥammad], what they should spend. Say: 'Whatever you spend of good is to be for parents'). This is about the spending of charity (nafaqatu al-taṭawwu') on certain people, especially the parents when they are unable to work and have no income: The interrogative expression (mādḥā yunfiqūn) can either mean (i) what should one spend in charity? or (ii) on whom should one spend his/her charity? The āyah Q2:215 was revealed in response to the query made by a wealthy old companion 'Amru b. al-Jamūḥ al-Anṣārī who asked Muḥammad: 'O Prophet, how much do we spend in charity and on whom?' This āyah is intertextually related to and is answered by Q2:19 through the expression (al-ʿafwa – the excess beyond needs). Thus, we are informed by the last part of Q2:19 (wayas'alūnaka mādḥā yunfiqūn qul al-ʿafwa – They ask you what they should spend. Say: 'The excess beyond needs'). Linguistically, the expression (al-ʿafwa) means (al-ziyādatu wal-kathratu – the excess beyond needs). This jurisprudential meaning is based on the ḥadīth: (ummaḥ wa'abāk wa'ukhtak wa'akhāk thumma adnāk adnāk – [Spend your charity on] your mother, your father, your sister, your brother, and so on and so forth) (Ibn Kathīr 1993, 1, p. 239). However, for al-Ṭabarsī (1997, 2, p. 54), the expression (al-wālidain – parents) includes not only the parents but also the grandparents.

4.3.2.3 *Sūrat Āl 'Imr n (Q3:27–41)*

This set of āyahs is exegetically analysed through the major exegetical techniques adopted by classical and modern mainstream and non-mainstream schools of exegesis:

- (i) Focus of Q3:28–41: The focus of this set of āyahs is on God's warning to mankind, His mercy (allāhu ra'ūfun bil-ibād – God is kind to His servants, Q3:30) and ability and willingness to pardon their sins (yaghfir lakum dhunūbakum – God will forgive you your sins, Q3:31), and His knowledge of people's actions in private and in public (Q3:29). These āyahs stress God's response to the prayers made by the virtuous person such as Mary and Zachariah (innaka samī' al-du'ā' – You [God] are the hearer of supplication, Q3:38). We are urged to follow the standard practice of Muḥammad (ittabi'ūnī yuḥbibkum allāhu – follow me so God will love you, Q3:31), and are advised to remember God constantly (wadhkur rabbaka kathirā – remember your Lord much, Q3:41).

What is the moral lesson of Q3:36? The reader is admonished by Q3:36 (see point (ii)(2)(b) below where Ḥannah, 'Imrān's wife, had a wish) that we

may wish for something but we fail to get it and instead we get something different. There is a choice between either accepting divine wisdom or rebelling against it. The underlying moral lesson of Q3:36 is that one may wish for something but eventually the outcome of one's aspiration turns out to be either not in our best interest or for the good and best interest of others in due course. For instance, 'Imrān's wife Ḥannah wished she had a baby boy, but she gave birth to a baby girl (Mary). Hence, the divine wisdom lies and God's knowledge of the unseen unveils: Mary in good time gives birth to a boy who becomes a unique Prophet, Jesus.

(ii) Historical exegesis: There are a number of historical events involved in the following āyahs:

(1) Q3:31. There are three different circumstances of revelation for this āyah:

- (a) We are informed by Q5:18 that the Jews and the Christians told Muḥammad that they were (the children of God and His beloved people). Thus, Q3:31 was sent down.
- (b) We are also told by Q5:18 that the Christians of the city of Najrān also told Muḥammad that they were (the children of God and His beloved people). Thus, Q3:31 was sent down.
- (c) The third circumstance of revelation is related to the Quraish who were at the holy mosque (al-Ka'bah) worshipping their idols and prostrating to them. Muḥammad advised them to worship God alone instead of these statues. They responded by saying that they worshipped them in order to get closer to God and that the idols were a means to this end.

(2) Q3:33–41. This set of āyahs involves a number of historical events:

- (a) Who is 'Imrān?: There is no agreement among historical exegetes on whether the name ('Imrān) was ('Imrān b. Yaṣḥar b. Qāhith b. Lāwi b. Ya'qūb) who was the father of Moses and Aaron, and who also had a daughter called Mary, or was ('Imrān b. Māthān b. Sulaimān b. Dāwūd) who was the father of Mary who was the mother of Jesus, and that 'Imrān b. Māthān's wife was called Ḥannah.⁵ According to context, the name ('Imrān) refers to 'Imrān b. Māthān the father of Mary, Jesus' mother. It is interesting to note that 1,800 years separate 'Imrān b. Yaṣḥar and 'Imrān b. Māthān. It is also worthwhile to note that both 'Imrāns had a daughter called Mary. Hence, we have Mary who was the daughter of 'Imrān b. Yaṣḥar and had two younger brothers, Moses and Aaron, and the second Mary who was the daughter of 'Imrān b. Māthān and who was the mother of Jesus. Based on context, Q3:33–41 refers to the second Mary because (i) there is reference to the name Zachariah in Q3:37 who was contemporary to 'Imrān b. Māthān, and (ii) there is reference to the name (al-masīḥ – the Messiah) in Q3:45. Historically, 'Imrān b. Māthān and Zachariah got married to two

sisters, Ḥannah and Imshā° (or Īshā°): °Imrān b. Māthān married Ḥannah, and Zachariah married Imshā°. It is to be noted that the family of Māthān were notables, well educated and the Kings of the Children of Israel (al-Khāzin 1995, 1, p. 239; Abu Ḥaiyān 2001, 2, p. 453).

- (b) Ḥannah, °Imrān b. Māthān's wife, was unable to produce children and got very old. Once, while she was sitting under the shade of a tree, she noticed a bird feeding its chick. This scene moved her and constantly prayed that she could have a baby boy. In her supplication, Ḥannah made a pledge that if she had a baby boy, she would consecrate him for the service of the church in Jerusalem (Q3:35). It is worthwhile to note that °Imrān b. Māthān was a Prophet and it was customary among the Prophets of the Children of Israel to select one of their children to be consecrated for the church, and the Rabbis used to take charge of these children while they were being raised in the church. It was customary then that only boys could be consecrated for the church, and when they become adults, they were free either to continue with their service to the church or leave. Ḥannah became pregnant but her husband died before she gave birth. Ḥannah gave birth to a baby girl who was named Mary. Ḥannah wrapped the baby girl, Mary, in a cloth and took her to the church in Jerusalem and handed her in to the Rabbis who admired her as the daughter of their chief Rabbi °Imrān b. Māthān. A disagreement erupted among the 27 Rabbis as each Rabbi wanted to take charge of her, including Zachariah, who argued that he had more right to look after her as she was his niece. However, the other Rabbis refused and wanted to throw lots, i.e. to play a lottery, by throwing their pens in the river Jordan. The Rabbis went to the river and threw three times their pens with which they used to write the Old Testament. All the pens sank except Zachariah's which kept afloat. Thus, Zachariah won and was able to take charge of Mary. When Mary became mature, he built a small room (al-miḥrāb – praying chamber, Q3:37) as a sanctuary for her in the church and took her to live there on her own. The room had a door in the middle and was built at a height that no one could reach without a ladder. Zachariah also used to lock the door and kept the key with him. When Mary was on her period, he used to take her home to stay with her aunt Imshā° and took her back to the church after her menstruation stopped. We are also told by Q3:37 that Mary used to have out-of-season fruits which the angels brought her from heaven throughout the year. Mary was known for her extensive piety, chastity,⁶ and fasting at the age of nine, and was infallible (ma°ṣūmah) (wa'anbatahā nabātan ḥasanān – God made Mary grow in constant piety) (al-Khāzin 1995, 1, p. 241).

- (c) Zachariah was either 99 or 120 years old and his wife Imshā^c was 98 years old and was sterile. He was struck by the miracle of the fruits which Mary had from the angels and was encouraged to pray to his Lord for a boy as he had no children (Q3:38). His prayers were answered and Gabriel broke the news to him in the church (inna allāha yubashshiruka biyaḥyā – God gives you good tidings of John, Q3:39). Thus, his wife, Imshā^c, became pregnant and gave birth to a boy called John (yaḥyā) (Q3:39). Therefore, John and Jesus were cousins. Yaḥyā was either six months or three years older than Jesus and was the first one to believe in his prophethood (muṣaddiqan bikalimatīn min allāh – confirming a word [i.e. the Prophet Jesus] from God, Q3:39). John was known for his wisdom, rigorous piety, asceticism, constant praying, and chastity, i.e. lack of interest in women; due to his sincere fear of God, he was crying during the day and the night. He was a vegetarian and lived entirely on herbage (al-Khāzin 1995, 1, pp. 242–243).
- (d) Zachariah asked God to show him a sign of his (Zachariah's) wife's pregnancy so that he reciprocates God's favour by increasing his prayers and remembrance of God (Q3:41). Zachariah was told that the sign would be that he would not be able to speak to people for three days except that he would only be able to say his prayers and remembrance of God. Besides the pregnancy of his elderly wife, this is another miracle: although Zachariah was physically fit and sound, he was unable to communicate with people other than being able to say his prayers and the words of remembrance of God (al-Khāzin 1995, 1, p. 243).
- (e) Q3:28 (illā an tattaqū minhum tuqāt – except when taking precaution against them in prudence): Musailamah, known as 'the liar' (Musailamah al-kadhdhāb), claimed that he was the prophet of the tribe of Ḥanīfah, that Muḥammad was the prophet of the tribe of Quraish, and that he had received revelations from God; thus, he became a rival to Muḥammad. This āyah, therefore, is related to the story of Khubaib b. 'Udai and 'Ammār b. Yāsir who were taken hostages by Musailamah. When Musailamah asked 'Ammār: 'Do you testify that Muḥammad is the messenger of God?', 'Ammār replied: 'Yes'. Musailamah asked him: 'Do you testify that I am the messenger of God?' 'Ammār replied: 'Yes'. Musailamah immediately released 'Ammār. However, when Musailamah asked Khubaib: 'Do you testify that Muḥammad is the messenger of God?', Khubaib replied: 'Yes'. Musailamah asked him: 'Do you testify that I am the messenger of God?' Khubaib replied: 'I am deaf'. Musailamah repeated the question three times and Khubaib gave the same response. In the end, Musailamah executed Khubaib by cutting his head off. In this case, Khubaib did not choose the

license of dissimulation (*al-taḳiyyah*) and preferred to declare his true faith (see point (iv)(1) below). Musailamah was defeated and killed at the extremely bloody battle of ‘Aqrabā’ in 12/633 by a Muslim force led by Khālīd b. al-Walīd (d. 21/641) (al-Jaṣṣāṣ 1994, 2, p. 13; al-Rāzī 1990, 8, p. 12; al-Ālūsī 2001, 2, p. 118; Netton 1997, p. 182).

(iii) Circumstances of revelation: These are related to the context in which an āyah or a set of āyahs were revealed, as in the following examples:

- (1) Q3:28. The circumstance of revelation is related to Ḥaṭīb b. Abī Balṭu‘ah and some other new Muslims who used to show friendship and affection towards the unbelievers of Madīnah. They are admonished by this āyah that they should abstain from this, have genuine faith, and establish closer friendship ties with their fellow Muslims. They are told that they can have friendship with the unbelievers of Madīnah if they feel that their security is in peril. It is also possible that the reason for revelation of Q3:28 is related to ‘Ubādah b. al-Ṣāmit who was a Muslim and had Jewish friends. ‘Ubādah told Muḥammad that he could recruit 500 Jews to join the battle of al-Aḥzāb (the confederate clans or tribes; this is also known as the battle of al-Khandaq – the trench, the ditch) in 5/627 when the clans or tribes of Makkah and Madīnah banded together to besiege the Muslims in Madīnah. The siege lasted about two weeks, and despite many assaults, the encroaching tribes of the unbelievers failed to penetrate the trench which was dug by the Muslims as a defensive shield (Netton 1997, p. 145).
- (2) Q3:34 whose circumstance of revelation is related to the Jews of Madīnah who claimed that they were the descendents of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and that they were following their forefathers’ religion (al-Khāzin 1995, 1, p. 239).

(iv) Theological cleavages among exegetes:

- (1) The notion of dissimulation of one’s faith (*al-taḳiyyah*) occurs in Q3:28 in which a circumstance of revelation is involved. Dissimulation of one’s religion, especially in time of persecution or danger, is to show lip service, i.e. not genuine, friendship and affection to others for fear of one’s security and to ward off their harm. Although all mainstream and non-mainstream exegetes authorized the practice of dissimulation, this had remained a contentious jurisprudential doctrine. The difference among exegetes of different schools of exegesis lies in whether dissimulation is still valid and in which circumstances. In terms of dissimulation, the only major theological cleavage among exegetes is that between the Shī‘i and non-Shī‘i exegetes. As dissimulation is a constituent of Shī‘ism, Shī‘i exegetes such as al-Ṭūsī (n.d., 2, p. 435), al-Ṭabarsī (1997, 2, p. 212), al-Kāshānī (1959, 1, p. 325), and al-Ṭabāṭabā‘ī

(1962, 3, pp. 163–164) have been in favour of the practice of dissimulation by a Shīʿi Muslim in time of persecution or danger by non-Shīʿi Muslims or unbelievers. For al-Ṭūsī (n.d., 2, p. 435), dissimulation is ‘compulsory (wājibah) in Shīʿism when a Shīʿi Muslim fears for his/her life. Companion and successor exegetes of the formative phase expressed diverse opinions with regard to dissimulation. Ibn ʿAbbās, Ibn Masʿūd, al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, Abu al-ʿĀliyah, Mujāhid, al-Dhaḥḥāk, Muqātil, and al-Khāzin allowed dissimulation if it was a matter of lip service, i.e. by words only, but genuine faith remained intact (billisān dūna al-qalb – with the tongue but not with the heart) (Ibn ʿAbbās 2000, p. 59; Mujāhid 2005, p. 38; al-Dhaḥḥāk 1999, 1, p. 243; Muqātil 2003, 1, p. 164; al-Khāzin 1995, 1, p. 237; al-Ṭabari 2005, 3, p. 228; al-Māturīdī 2005, 2, p. 351). However, al-Jaṣṣāṣ, a Ḥanafī jurist (d. 370/980), was of the opinion that dissimulation was merely a license (rukḥṣah) granted by God but not a compulsory duty and, therefore, it would be better to abandon it (1994, 2, p. 12). In the view of the Ibāḍī exegete al-Wahbī (1993, 4, p. 62), Saʿīd b. Jubair (d. 95/714) was against the practice of dissimulation as Islam had become well-established. In a similar vein, al-Ālūsī (2001, 2, pp. 119–121) is highly critical of dissimulation as a Shīʿi doctrine and claims that this theological notion has been abused by Shīʿi jurists who misquoted ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib and abused dissimulation. Exegetes, however, unanimously agree that the practice of dissimulation should not incur murder, unlawful matters, unlawful sex, unlawful money, consumption of alcohol, giving a false witness, polytheism, and false accusation of married women. In this case, if Ḥāṭib and others were still living among the unbelievers in Makkah, they would have been allowed to show them ‘lip service’ friendship to avoid their harm.

Linguistically, the word (tuqāt – taking precaution against someone, Q3:28) is a nominalized noun (maṣḍar) which morphologically derived from the verb (ittaqa). Orthographically, however, the word (tuqāt) is spelt (wuqāt), i.e. it begins with the vowel (wu – the /wāw/ letter) which is in the nominative case. Because it is phonetically difficult to pronounce the (wu) in the nominative case, this is replaced by the letter /t/; thus, we get (tuqāt).

- (v) Linguistic exegesis: This includes different modes of reading, the text linguistic feature of consonance, the particle (idh), and tense shift:

- (1) Variant modes of reading: Variant modes of reading can be encountered in Q3:28, Q3:36, and Q3:39, as explained below.

In Q3:28, the word (tuqāt – dissimulation) has another mode of reading as (taḥiyyah – dissimulation) by al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī and Mujāhid.

Q3:36 has three different modes of reading:

- (a) (wallāhu aʿlamu bimā waḍaʿat – God was most knowing of what she [Ḥannah, ʿImrān b. Māthān’s wife] delivered): This is the common

mode of reading that occurs in the ʿUthmānic codex. In this mode of reading, the verb (waḍaʿat – to deliver) occurs in the third person singular, in the feminine form, and has the short vowel /a/ which is (al-faṭḥah) on the first three letters (w + ḍ + ʿ), while the fourth letter (t) occurs with a vowelless consonant (sākin). Thus, this verb form gives the exegetical meaning that this is part of God’s speech and that it provides glorification to the value of the baby girl, Mary, who is Jesus’ mother. This mode of reading also denotes an implicit meaning that ‘God knows well what Ḥannah, ʿImrān b. Māthān’s wife, has given birth to’.

- (b) (wallāhu aʿlamu bimā waḍaʿtu – God was most knowing of what I [Hannah] delivered): This is ʿĀṣim’s mode of reading which provides the exegetical meaning that this is a statement said by Ḥannah, ʿImrān b. Māthān’s wife, when she gave birth to Mary. In this mode of reading, the verb (waḍaʿtu – [I, i.e. Ḥannah] delivered) occurs in the first person singular, in the feminine form, and has the short vowel /a/ on the first two letters only (w + ḍ) while the third letter (ʿ) remains as a vowelless consonant (sākin) and the fourth letter (t) occurs in the short vowel /u/ (al-ḍammah). The exegetical meaning this mode of reading conveys is that Ḥannah is implicitly apologizing to God that she will not be able to accomplish her promise she made to Him that if it was a boy, she would have given him to the temple in Jerusalem.
- (c) (wallāhu aʿlamu bimā waḍaʿti – God was most knowing of what you [Hannah] delivered): This is Ibn ʿAbbās’s mode of reading which provides the exegetical meaning that it is a statement by God and that God knows well what Ḥannah has delivered and what a valuable baby girl she is. In this mode of reading, the verb (waḍaʿti – [you, i.e. Ḥannah] delivered) occurs in the second person singular, in the feminine form, and has the short vowel /a/ on the first two letters only (w + ḍ) while the third letter (ʿ) remains as a vowelless consonant (sākin) and the fourth letter (t) occurs with the short vowel /i/ (al-kasrah).

Q3:39 (fanādathu al-malāʾikatu – The angels called [feminine] him): This is the most common mode of reading among Qurʾān reciters where the verb is used in the feminine form. This is similar to (qālat al-aʿrābu – The bedouins say [feminine], Q49:14) where the verb (qālat – say) also occurs in the feminine form although its noun (al-aʿrābu – the bedouins) is masculine. The other less common mode of reading is {fanādāhu al-malāʾikatu – The angels called [masculine] him} which is adopted by Ḥamzah and al-Kisāʾi. However, in the codex of Ibn Masʿūd, we have an exegetical mode of reading {fanādāhu jibrīlu – Gabriel called [masculine] him} where he inserts the word (jibrīlu – Gabriel). This is because the plural noun (al-malāʾikatu – the angels) refers to one angel only,

who is Gabriel. In the view of al-Farrā' (207/822) (2002, 1, p. 149), Arabic grammar allows this stylistic form in which one can use the plural form to refer to a singular noun.

(2) Consonance and conceptual chaining:

- (a) Co-text and word morphological form: The modern text linguistics approach to Qur'anic exegesis can be applied to Q3:27, where co-text, which is the linguistic and textual environment in which a word or sentence occurs, has stylistic impact on the morphological form of the word, as in (tukhriju – to bring out). The occurrence of this verb is attributed to the lexical co-text: In order to achieve stylistic symmetry with the adjacent sentences, the word form needs to be taken into consideration. Since the lexical co-text of the surrounding sentences as in Q3:24–29 employs verb forms such as (yaftarūn – they were inventing), (tu'ti – you give), (tanza^c – you take away), (tūlij – you cause something to enter something), (yattakhidh – take as), (tukhfū – conceal), similarly in Q3:27 the word form has to be in the verb form as well: (tukhriju al-ḥaiya min al-maiyiti watukhriju al-maiyiti min al-ḥai – You bring the living out of the dead, and You bring the dead out of the living). However, Q3:27 is intertextually linked to Q6:95 (yukhriju al-ḥaiya min al-maiyiti wamukhriju al-maiyiti min al-ḥai – He brings the living out of the dead and brings the dead out of the living) in which the expression (mukhriju – the one who can bring out) occurs in the morphological form of an active participle (ism fā'il) because of the lexical co-text surrounding Q6:95 which is dominated by expressions with an active participle form (Abdul-Raof 2004, p. 56).
- (b) The occurrence of the word (rabbi – my Lord) in Q3:36 is semantically more suitable than (ilāhi – my God) because (rabbi) signifies (al-milkiyyah – ownership), that God possesses everything, and is the sustainer of mankind. Thus, contextually, (rabb – the Lord, the Master, the Controller) is more appropriate since it signifies lordship while (ilāh) signifies divinity which is not required in this context. This is backed up by Q1:2 in which (rabb) occurs then followed by Q1:4 in which the expression (mālik – Master, Sovereign) occurs.
- (c) Āyah-final epithets (al-samī^c al-ʿalīm – the Hearing, the Knowing, Q3:35) are context-sensitive, i.e. the occurrence of these epithets is conditioned by the context. The expression (al-samī^c – the Hearing) means that the Lord has heard the supplication and prayers made by Ḥannah, ʿImrān b. Māthān's wife, and has even heard the heartbeats of her broken heart yearning for a baby boy. However, the expression (al-ʿalīm – the Knowing) means that the Lord knows well Ḥannah's genuine intention and wish of having a baby boy. To achieve symmetrical lexical consonance and lexical cohesion with the following āyah, the expression (aʿlamu – to know) occurs in Q3:36.

- (3) The particle (*idh*) in Q3:35: For Abu ‘Ubaidah Ma‘mar, this is a redundant particle with no grammatical function. However, this grammatical view is rejected by other grammarian exegetes such as al-Akhfash, al-Zajjāj, al-Mubarrad, and al-Zamakhshari who claim that this particle represents an ellipted verb (*idhkur* – remember) that occurs before this particle and that (*idh*) has the grammatical function of a temporal adverb particle that signifies past tense (al-Rāzi 1990, 8, p. 22; al-Darwīsh 1992, 1, p. 496). For them, there is no grammatical redundancy in the Qur’ān.
- (4) Tense shift: In Q3:36, we encounter a shift from the past tense in the verbs (*waḍa‘a* – gave birth) and (*sammā* – named) to the present tense (*u‘īdhū* – to seek refuge). This tense shift is attributed to the fact that the actions denoted by the first two verbs took place in the past and has already elapsed, while the verb (*u‘īdhū*) denotes continuity as it represents a pressing and constant human need that is: ‘seeking refuge in God against the evil deeds of Satan’. This exegetical meaning is backed up by Q114:1 in which the verb (*a‘ūdhu* – to seek refuge in the Lord) co-occurs with the expression (*al-waswās al-khannās* – the retreating whisperer) which is a metonymy for ‘Satan’.

(vi) Intertextuality: This linguistic feature involves the following cases:

- (1) Q3:27 (*tukhriju al-ḥaiya min al-maiyiti watukhriju al-maiyita min al-ḥai* – You bring the living out of the dead, and You bring the dead out of the living) is intertextually related to Q6:95, Q10:31, and 30:19.
- (2) Q3:28 (*illā an tattaqū minhum tuqāt* – except when taking precaution against them in prudence) is intertextually linked to Q16:106 (*illā man ukriha waqalbuhū muṭma’inun bil-īmān* – except for one who is forced to renounce his/her religion while his/her heart is secure in faith).
- (3) Q3:28 (*lā yattakhidh al-mu’mīnūna al-kāfirīna awliyā’a min dūn al-mu’mīnīn* – Let not believers take disbelievers as protectors rather than the believers) is intertextually explained by Q3:118 (*lā tattakhidhū biṭānatan min dūnikum* – O who you have believed, do not take as intimates those other than the believers), Q5: 51 (*lā tattakhidhū al-yahūda wal-naṣārā awliyā’* – O you who have believed, do not take the Jews and the Christians as protectors), Q9:71 (*al-mu’mīnūna wal-mu’mīnātu baḍḥum awliyā’u b’aḍ* – The believing men and believing women are allies of one another), Q58:22 (*lā tajidu qawman yu’mīnūna billāhi wal-yawmi al-ākhirī yuwāddūna man ḥadda allāha warasūlah* – You will not find a people who believe in God and the last day having affection for those who oppose God and His Messenger), and Q60:1 (*yā aiyuha alladhīna āmanū lā tattakhidhū ‘aduwwī wa‘aduwwakam awliyā’* – O you who have believed, do not take My enemies and your enemies as allies).

(vii) Allegorical meaning: Q3:27 provides an interesting example of allegorical exegesis adopted by Sufi exegetes such as Ibn ‘Arabi (1978, 1, p. 176). For

him, the section: (tūliju al-laila fi al-nahāri watūliju al-nahāra fi al-laili – You cause the night to enter the day, and You cause the day to enter the night) alludes to: (God inserts the darkness of the self (ḡulmāt al-naḡs) in the heart’s light (nūr al-qalb) until it is extinguished and the heart becomes dark. God also inserts the heart’s light in the darkness of the self until it is illuminated). In the same vein, the section: (tukhriju al-ḡaiya min al-maiyiti watukhriju al-maiyita min al-ḡai – You bring the living out of the dead, and You bring the dead out of the living) alludes to: (God takes out the heart’s life from the self’s death, and takes out the soul’s death from the heart’s life). For the Sufi exegete al-Qushairi (2000, 1, p. 140), Q3:27 alludes to: (domination and victory of the light of monotheism over the darkness of the soul). Similarly, al-Baqli (2008, 1, p. 138) claims that Q3:27 alludes to: (the introduction of the smoke of humanity in the serenity of monotheism, the extinction of the darkness of the self in the light of the soul, the extermination of the darkness of habits in the serenity of the heart, when the fountains of knowledge dries out in the hearts, the bitter fruits of polytheism will come out). In the view of ʿArābi (2006, 1, p. 69), the expression (al-lail – night) alludes to (al-rūḡ – the soul) and (al-nahār – day) alludes to (the world of matter – ʿālam al-māddah) and then (al-nahār – day) alludes to (al-rūḡ – the soul, the self) because, in his view, there is no soul/self without matter, and no matter without soul/self, and that both expressions (al-lail wal-nahār – the night and the day) represent God’s exoteric and esoteric attributes.

4.3.2.4 *Sūrat al-Anʿ m (Q6:1–39)*

- (i) Exegetical outline: This sūrah was revealed at night in Makkah in one scoop while Muḡammad was riding his camel. Qurʿān exegetes claim that when this sūrah was revealed, the companions with Muḡammad at the time could hear the clicks of the bones of his camel due to the heavy weight of its message and that it was accompanied by seventy thousand angels. It is worthwhile to note that in terms of revelation, Q6 was the fifty-fifth surah. Q6 firmly establishes the tenets of faith of monotheism, prophethood, and reward and punishment. It provides a counter argument rebutting the sceptics who are occasionally rebuked. Thus, we encounter the recurrent employment of the word (kadhdhaba – to disbelieve) and its morphologically related words as in āyahs 5, 21, 24, 27, 28, 31, 33, and 34, as well as the shades of meaning of this verb such as (yaʿdilūn – equate others with God), (tamtarūn – is still in dispute), (muʿriḡīn – turn away), and (yastahziʿūn – to ridicule) in āyahs 1, 2, 4, and 5, respectively. This sūrah demonstrates the relationship between the individual and his/her creator, on the one hand, and between the individual and the universe around him/her. It explains the role of the individual in the present worldly life and informs the reader what the major purpose of this life is. We are told in āyah 32 that this worldly life is ‘nothing but amusement and diversion’ and is compared to the hereafter as ‘best for those who fear God’. The major purpose of Q6 is to consolidate

faith and the certainty of faith (ta^ʿziz al-īmān wal-yaqīn); thus, it confirms the theological notion of God being the creator of everything including help, defeat, wealth, and poverty. Also, Q6 sets the scene for certainty about the unseen, resurrection, and meeting the Lord. It consolidates the belief in the unseen through God's signs in the universe and on earth. Thus, the āyahs that refer to God's omnipotence are abundant as a means to consolidate the certainty about eschatology. This sūrah also confirms the theological notion that the major criterion of preference between people is righteousness. In Q6, we encounter cultural details about pre-Islamic Arabia as in āyahs 136 and 140.

- (ii) Periphrastic exegesis: The expression (al-ḥamdu lillāh – all praise is due to God) in āyah 1 means 'gratitude and divinity is due to God alone' (alladhī khalaqa al-samāwātī – who created the heavens) on Sunday and Monday, (wal-arḍa – and the earth) on Tuesday and Wednesday. For Muqātil, the phrase (al-ḥamdu lillāh) refers to monotheism and that 'God guides people to monotheism through His creation', i.e. the creation of God is a manifestation of monotheism. The phrase (ja^ʿala al-ẓulumātī wal-nūr) means either 'created belief and disbelief' or 'created day and night'. The phrase (khalaqakum min ẓīn) in āyah 2 means 'he created you from Adam and Adam is from clay'. The phrase (thumma qaḍā ajalān) means 'God created this world and specified its destiny as its destruction, and created mankind and made their death as their destiny'. The phrase (wa'ajalun musamman 'indahū) means the specified time of the day of judgement is known to God alone'. The word (ajal – a specified time) implicitly refers to eschatology and it means the last period rather than the beginning of a specified time. Ibn 'Abbās is reported to have said that God has specified two times for each individual: the first is from one's birth to his/her death, and the second is from one's death to his/her resurrection. The word (tamtarūn) means 'you are sceptics about eschatology and God'. The meaning of (wahuwa allāhu fī al-samāwati wafī al-arḍi) in āyah 3 means 'God is the deity of whoever is in heavens and the deity of whoever is on earth'. The phrase (faqad kadhhabū bil-ḥaqqi lammā jā'ahum) in āyah 5 means 'the disbelievers of Makkah disbelieved the Qur'ān, the miracle of the splitting of the moon in two, and Muḥammad'. The word (fasawfa – will definitely) is a threatening particle that signifies a future punishment due to the Makkan disbelievers' sarcasm. This was demonstrated by their defeat in Badr in 2/624, Uḥud in 3/625, and the battle of the trench in 5/627. Āyah 7 means 'even if we revealed the Qur'ān in full as requested by the Makkan disbeliever 'Abd Allāh b. Abī Umayyah al-Makhzūmī and his friends so that they could touch it, read it, and verify it for themselves, they would have still argued that this was an act of magic'. Āyah 8 tells us that 'even if an angel is sent down to talk to them, he would have been in the form of a human because human beings are unable to look at an angel and would have been shocked to death. Thus, when an angel is sent down to speak to them, he would be in a human form and the disbelievers would still be confused thinking that he is merely a

human and not an angel. Therefore, they are as confused as before'. The phrase (al-samī'u al-ʿalīmu) in āyah 13 means 'God is able to hear what the disbelievers of Makkah are saying to Muḥammad and also knows about their punishment and about the sustenance of people'. In āyah 38, the word (umam) means: (a) for Qatādah, 'like humans, birds constitute a nation', and (b) for al-Suddi, 'birds are creatures like you'. Āyah 25 (waminhum man yastami'u ilaika – Among them are those who listen to you) refers to some Makkan disbelievers who used to come at night secretly listening to your recitation of the Qur'ān such as al-Naḍar b. al-Ḥārith, al-Walid b. al-Maghīrah, and Abu Sufyān b. Ḥarb. In āyah 30, the question (alaysa hādha bil-ḥaqq – Is this not the truth?) means 'Are the punishment and resurrection after death the truth?'. The word (yasma'ūn – to hear) in āyah 36 means 'those who employ their mental faculties effectively are the actual living people because they use their brains' while the word (al-mawtā – the dead) means 'those who do not use their brains and ponder upon the creation around them are in fact dead although they are alive'. The phrase (ṣummun wabukmun fi al-ẓulumāt – deaf and dumb within darkness) of āyah 39 means 'the disbelievers are like a dead person who cannot hear the message, cannot speak, and did not make use of his/her hearing and speaking talents. Thus, they are leading a chaotic life'.

- (iii) Reasons for revelation: The circumstance of revelation of āyah 26 is related to Muḥammad's uncle Abu Ṭālib who had double standards, where he used to defend his nephew Muḥammad and guard him against harm from the tribe of Quraish to which Abu Ṭālib belonged. However, Abu Ṭālib at the same time refused to accept Islam just to appease Quraish. The reason for the revelation of āyah 14 is related to the disbelievers of Quraish who wanted to persuade Muḥammad to give up his prophetic mission. They talked to him about the idols they were worshipping such as al-Lāt, al-ʿIzzā, and Manāt and that they were also worshipped by his late father ʿAbd Allāh and his uncle ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib as well as by the dignitaries of Quraish. They also told him that if he was in need of anything, they would be happy to help and would be willing to pay him a large amount of money. For āyahs 19–20, the disbelievers of Makkah challenged Muḥammad to bring a witness as evidence of his prophethood, and they asked the People of the Book about him but they were told that there was no reference to his mission in their Scriptures. Āyah 19 tells them that God was his only witness. Muḥammad asked them: 'Are there other gods beside God?'. They replied: 'Yes'. The āyah, on behalf of Muḥammad, tells them: 'I myself do not bear witness to any such thing and that there is only one God and I disown whatever you associate with Him'. Āyah 33 is related to al-Ḥārith b. ʿĀmir b. Nawfal who accepted Islam in secret and was concerned for his life due to the threats from Quraish. During the daytime and when he was among other people, al-Ḥārith used to disbelieve Muḥammad. However, when he used to meet Muḥammad in secret at night or when he was with his family, al-Ḥārith used to speak highly of Muḥammad and describe him as a genuine Prophet.

- (iv) Linguistic exegesis: We have a pronoun shift between āyahs 1 and 3, where the third person plural pronoun (*alladhina kafarū* – those who disbelieved), i.e. (hum – they), in āyah 1 is changed to the second person plural pronoun (*khalaqakum* – created you), i.e. (antum – you [second person plural]). The pragmatic function of this pronoun shift is to achieve rebuke (*al-tawbikh*) to the disbelievers of Makkah. In āyah 2, we have the use of resumption (*al-isti'nāf*) for the pragmatic function of rebutting the sceptics' disbelief in eschatology in spite of the clear evidence around them which they fail to ponder upon. In āyah 2, we also have the foregrounding (*taqdīm*) of the inchoative (*al-mubtada'*) which is (*ajalun musamman* – a specified time) and backgrounding (*ta'khīr*) of the predicate (*al-khabar*) which is (*'indahū* – known only to him). The communicative function of foregrounding the inchoative (*ajalun musamman*) is to highlight the horror of the day of judgement and magnify (*ta'ẓīm*) its status, i.e. (*ajalun 'aẓīmun 'indahū* – a grand specified time known to Him only). According to Arabic grammar, we usually encounter the prepositional phrase (the predicate) (*'indahū*) at the beginning of the sentence. Thus, we say: (*'indī kitābun* – I have a book). The expected grammatical structure of this phrase in the second āyah should be: (*'indahū ajalun musamman*) but the predicate (*'indahū*) is backgrounded to magnify the notion of eschatology.

The use of the verb (*ja'ala* – to make) in āyah 1 rather than the verb (*khalaqa* – to create) in (*waja'ala al-ẓulumāti wal-nūr* – and made the darkness and the light): Although the two verbs (*khalaqa*) and (*ja'ala*) are synonyms, the verb (*ja'ala*) makes its direct object (*al-ẓulumāti wal-nūr* – the darkness and the light) belong to something else, that they are created for another purpose, and that they are the result of something else, i.e. the result of the turning round of the sun. In other words, the darkness and the light are created to provide a vital service to mankind and other creatures such as animals and plants, and they are brought into existence as a result of something else such as the sun and moon, i.e. they are the result and that there is a cause for their existence. It is also worthwhile to note that the word (*al-ẓulumāt* – darkness) always occurs in the plural, while its antonym (*al-nūr* – light) occurs in the singular. This can be related to the theological notions of polytheism and monotheism, where the former is demonstrated by plural objects such as idols, other deities, while monotheism is associated with one God.

The use of the conjunction particle (*thumma* – then, yet) in āyah 1 is stylistically better than the conjunction particle (*wa* – and). This is due to the stylistic and semantic values of (*thumma*) which denotes the rhetorical function of rebuke (*al-tawbikh*), i.e. rebuking the Makkan disbelievers which the particle (*wa*) fails to achieve. This is demonstrated by the Arabic example: (*yā sālīm 'allamtuka wa'akramtuka wa'aqrāṭuka al-māla thumma takhūnani* – Salim, I taught you, I have been generous to you, I lent you money, yet you betray me!).

Āyah 2 starts with the pronoun (*huwa* – he [God]) which, in Arabic rhetoric, functions as *al-musnad ilaihi* (the subject in Arabic grammar or the inchoative

in Arabic rhetoric, literally meaning ‘that to which something is attributed’) while the rest of the āyahs act as al-musnad (the predicate in Arabic rhetoric, literally meaning ‘that which is supported by the inchoative’). The musnad ilaihi (huwa) has the pragmatic function of restriction (al-ḥaṣr or al-qaṣr) which means: ‘He is the creator of mankind and no one else’ and that ‘mankind is created from clay only and nothing else’. Stylistically, therefore, the pronoun (huwa) cannot be taken out. The other function of restriction through the pronoun (huwa) is to substantiate resurrection and rebut the sceptics who are in denial of it and in denial of the first creation of mankind from clay. The Qur’ān considers resurrection as the second form of creation. Thus, whoever denies the first creation does not believe in the second creation. This notion is stylistically linked to āyah 3 in which the pronoun (huwa) is repeated.

In āyah 25, the particle (an) means (likai lā – in order not to, lest); thus, (an yafqahūhu) means (so they do not understand it [the Qur’ān]). We also encounter this meaning in Q4:176 (yubaiyinu allāhu lakaum an taḍillū – God makes this clear to you so that you do not go astray) where (an) has the same meaning (in order not to). In āyah 38, the passive voice is employed to denote the ability of the doer of the action who is God to make the resurrection of the dead and to hold the disbelievers accountable for their deeds. Also, the word (bijanāḥaihi – with its two wings) is employed with the expression (ṭā’irun yaṭīr – a bird flies) and may lead to tautology and semantic redundancy: {a bird flies with its two wings}. However, the major pragmatic function of the word (bijanāḥaihi) is to establish: (1) the rhetorical function of affirmation (al-tawkid), and (2) the semantic function of disambiguation because the word (ṭā’ir) is polysemous which means either a bird, or a person who can run as fast as the speed of a bird.

In terms of the linguistic notion of consonance, Q6 is the sixth sūrah in the Qur’ān in terms of arrangement and we also find reference to livestock six times. We also encounter consonance between Q5 and Q6. For instance, there is a thematic link between the end of Q5 (to God belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth and whatever is within them) and the beginning of Q6 (all praise is due to God who created the heavens and the earth). The word (within) in Q5 is explained in Q6 by (the darkness and the light) and more elaboration is provided through reference to the creation of mankind in āyah 2. There is also inter-āyah consonance between āyahs 37 and 38 which depict a unique Qur’anic argumentation technique: In āyah 37, the disbelievers of Makkah demand a proof from Muḥammad to substantiate his prophethood. Their request is rebutted by āyah 38 in which they are reminded to ponder upon the vast amount of evidence around them which is a demonstration of the infinite power of God and the certainty of the day of judgement which they deny. Āyah 38 reminds the Makkans of the birds and animals which are nations like them and that although they are non-humans, they worship God day and night but humans cannot comprehend their language. The logical conclusion of this is that these animals and birds are better than the Makkan polytheists.

- (v) Theological problem (Q6:38): Will non-humans, i.e. birds and animals, be resurrected on the day of judgement? For Abu Dharr al-Ghafari, Abu Hurairah, and al-Hasan al-Basri, the Shi'i exegete al-Tabataba'i, and the Ibadi exegete Itfaiyish (1994, 3, p. 291), non-humans will be resurrected on the day of judgement. This exegetical view is based on the hadith: 'Rights will be given back to their owners on the day of judgement, even the horned sheep will be made accountable for any harm it had done to the hornless sheep'. However, for Ibn 'Abbās, non-humans will not be resurrected and that the resurrection of non-humans is their death only. For al-Qurtubi (1997, 6, p. 386), the first claim is more acceptable because it is based on Qur'anic intertextuality (wa'idha al-wuḥūshu ḥushirat – When the wild beasts are gathered, Q81:5) and that after God has punished the guilty animals, they will be told: 'Be dust'. This is backed up by intertextuality (yā laitanī kuntu turābā – I wish that I was dust, Q78:40). The non-humans will then say: 'praise is due to God who did not make us like humans. We do not aspire for a garden and we do not fear a fire'. On hearing the beasts' statement, the disbelievers will wish to be dust.
- (vi) Scientific exegesis: The word (al-ẓulumāt – darkness) in āyah 1 occurs before the word (al-nūr – light) because of the scientific fact that during the creation of the universe, darkness precedes light, i.e. light came into existence after the creation of the universe.
- (vii) Sectarian exegesis: (ulā'ika alladhīna ātaināhum al-kitāba wal-ḥukma wal-nubuwwata fa'in yakfur bihā hā'ulā'i faqad wakkalnā bihā qawman laisū bihā bikāfirīn – Those are the ones to whom We gave the Scripture and authority and prophethood. But if the disbelievers deny it, then We have entrusted it to a people who are not therein disbelievers, Q6:89). According to the Shi'i exegete al-Qummi (1983, 1, p. 209), this āyah refers to the disbelievers of Makkah and those who reject the allegiance to 'Ali b. Abi Tālib; in other words, it alludes to the political and religious Imāmat. For him (1983, 1, p. 210), the phrase (faqad wakkalnā bihā qawman laisū bihā bikāfirīn – We have entrusted it to a people who are not therein disbelievers) refers to the Shi'i people who believe in the political and religious Imāmate of 'Ali.
- (viii) Features of al-naẓm (order system): Linguists and rhetoricians of the third/ninth century have defended the notion of inimitability of the Qur'ān. Their premise is hinged upon the theory of order system of Qur'anic Arabic (al-naẓm) which is concerned with the unique stylistic features of the the Qur'ān. For more details, see Abdul-Raof (2006), and [Chapter 3](#), Sections 3.6 and 3.6.1, of this work.

There are many examples of the inimitability-oriented Qur'anic stylistics that illustrate the unique Qur'anic order system, such as:

- (1) The occurrence of the word (al-ẓulumāt – darkness) followed by the word (al-nūr – light) illustrates an order system that is science-based: 'darkness precedes light', i.e. light came into existence after the creation of the universe.

- (2) The occurrence of (huwa – He [God]) as a resumptive pronoun (ḍamīr al-isti'nāf) at the beginning of the second āyah is employed to achieve: (a) the pragmatic function of rebuttal to the sceptics of eschatology, and (b) the rhetorical function of restriction (al-ḥaṣr or al-qaṣr). Without the use of the linguistic mechanism of resumption (isti'nāf), rebuttal would not have been achieved. Similarly, without the employment of the rhetorical tool of restriction, the two in-built meanings: (a) (it is God who has created you and no one else), and (b) (you are created from clay) would not have been achieved.
- (3) The occurrence of the word order of (mubtada' – inchoative) followed by (khabar – predicate) in the second āyah (ajalun musamman 'indahū – an appointed time for one's death): In this word order, the inchoative (ajalun – a term, time) occurs sentence-initially and also in the indefinite form in order to achieve the pragmatic function of magnification and eminence (al-tafkhīm) of and frightening from the central notion of eschatology in Q6. However, the expected word order is ('indahū ajalun musamman).
- (4) The employment of context-sensitive words. For instance, the employment of the verb (ja'ala – to make) in the first āyah instead of the verb (khalāqa – to create) is for contextual reasons. The verb (ja'ala) denotes that the object (al-ẓulumāti wal-nūr – the darkness and the light) are created for a purpose and that this object takes place as a result of something else, i.e. due to the sun.
- (5) The employment of the conjunction particle (thumma – then, yet) in the first āyah achieves the pragmatic function of rebuke (al-tawbīkh) to the sceptics of Makkah about eschatology. The counterpart conjunction particle (wa – and) is stylistically unable to achieve the same pragmatic function.
- (6) (inna allāha fāliqū al-ḥabbi wal-nawā yukhriju al-ḥaiya min al-maiyiti wa mukhriju al-maiyiti min al-ḥai . . . fāliqū al-iṣbāḥi . . . – Indeed, God is the cleaver of grain and date seeds. He brings the living out of the dead and brings the dead out of the living . . . He is the cleaver of day-break . . ., Q6:95–96). These two āyahs are an interesting example of the linguistic architecture in Qur'anic discourse and provide further stylistic evidence of the unique order system (al-naẓm) in Qur'anic Arabic. Āyah 95 can be divided into three units: (inna allāha fāliqū al-ḥabbi wal-nawā), (yukhriju al-ḥaiya min al-maiyiti), and (wa mukhriju al-maiyiti min al-ḥai). We need to observe a number of stylistic and linguistic features: (i) in the first unit, we have the expression (fāliqū – the cleaver) which occurs as an active participle (ism fā'il); (ii) the second unit begins with a verb (yukhriju – to bring out); (iii) in the third unit, we have the expression (mukhriju – the one who brings something out) which occurs as an active participle; (iv) in the third unit, the conjunction particle (wa – and) occurs before the word (mukhriju); and (v) the expression (fāliqū – the cleaver) occurs at the beginning of āyah 96 as

an active participle. Without this intricate order system, the meaning could not have been delivered. Let us consider the linguistic analysis of āyahs 95–96: (i) the active participle (mukhriju) in the third unit of āyah 95 is coordinated to the active participle (fāliq) in the first unit of this āyah; therefore, the expression (mukhriju) is not coordinated to (maʿṭūf ʿalā) to the verb (yukhriju) of the second unit; this is because the second unit is a verbal phrase acting as an explanatory note (ʿibārah shāriḥah) to the first unit (inna allāha fāliq al-ḥabbi wal-nawā); (ii) the occurrence of the active participle (fāliq) at the beginning of āyah 96 is to achieve stylistic symmetry so that the two āyahs 95 and 96 have an identical stylistic pattern.

- (7) On the macro level, one can also argue that this sūrah is the number 6 in which reference to the livestock (al-anʿām) is also made six times.

4.3.2.5 Sūrat al-Isr' (Q17:70–80)

- (i) Periphrastic exegesis: This aims to provide semantic details of selected expressions in this set of āyahs:

Q17:70 (walaqad karramnā banī ādam) means 'We favoured the children of Adam over other creations such as animals but not over angels. Humans, for instance, eat with their hands while animals and birds eat with their mouths or beaks'. (waḥamalnāhum fi al-barri wal-baḥr) means 'We carried them on animals on land and on ships in sea'. (wafaḍḍalnāhum tafḍilā) means 'we favoured them by giving them better shapes, features, and sustenance'.

Q17:71 (yawma nadʿū) means 'On the day of judgement, We shall summon.' The expression (imām) in (kulla unāsīn bi'imāmihi) means: (a) their respective Prophet, (b) their record of deeds, (c) spiritual leader who guides or misguides them, and (d) their Scripture.

- (ii) Theological cleavages:

- (1) Q17:70 refers to humans and that they are preferred over other creations. However, the theological difference among schools of exegesis with regards to the notion of preference of a category of creation over another category also lies in the expression (kathīr – many). In other words, does this mean that mankind is preferred over 'all' or 'some' creations? If it means 'all' creations, then mankind is favoured over angels as well. However, if it means 'some', then it means that mankind is favoured over animals, but not over angels. For Muʿtazili exegetes, the angels are favoured over mankind including the Prophets (al-Zamakhshari 1995, 2, p. 654). Thus, in their view, the angels are preferred over Muḥammad. For Ibāḍi exegetes such as Itfaiyish (1994, 7, p. 222), the angels are preferred over ordinary people but Muḥammad is favoured over the angels. Similarly, for the Sufi exegete Ibn ʿArabi (1978, 1, p. 723), Prophets are preferred over the angels but the angels

are preferred over ordinary people. Ibn ʿArabi supports his position by the āyah (innī aʿlamu mā lā taʿlamūn – I [God] know that which you [angels] do not know, Q2:30) which, in his view, shows that God is more knowledgeable than the angels with regards to Adam’s status and qualities. Q17:70 can also mean that mankind is preferred over all creations including the majority of angels except the arch angels such as Jibrīl, Mikāʾīl, Isrāfīl, and ʿIzrāʾīl (al-Khāzin 1995, 3, p. 138). However, al-Khāzin (1995, 3, p. 138) is of the view that among mankind, the category of Prophets are favoured over all the angels including the arch ones mentioned above, that the angels are preferred over ordinary, i.e. non-Prophet, people, and that the true believer is preferred over ordinary angels. The last part of al-Khāzin’s claim is supported by the ḥadīth narrated by Abu Hurairah: (al-muʾmin akram ʿinda allāh taʿālā min al-malāʾikah alldhina ʿindahū – The believer is more honoured by God than the angels who are with Him). Ibn Kathīr (1993, 3, p. 51) disagrees with this ḥadīth. This is because the angels are created in such a way that they can obey God and that they have intellect without a sexual desire, while humans have both intellect and a sexual desire, and a human who can overcome his/her sexual desire and rules by his/her intellect is favoured over ordinary angels. For al-Ṭabarānī (2008, 4, p. 125), al-Rāzī (1990, 21, p. 14), al-Qurṭubī (1997, 10, p. 255) and Abu al-Suʿūd (1999, 4, p. 146), humans cannot be preferred over the angels and their position is supported by the intertextual reference in Q4:172 (walā al-malāʾikati al-muqarrabūn – nor would the angels who are close to Him [God]). Abu Ḥaiyān (2001, 6, p. 59) is undecided. For Shīʿi exegetes such as Imām al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī al-ʿAskari (d. 260/873) (n.d., p. 383), ʿAlī’s supporters only are preferred over (afḍal) the angels. In the view of al-Shīrāzī (1992, 9, p. 65), human beings are preferred over the angels. However, for al-Ṭabarsī (1997, 6, p. 217), the angels are preferred over ordinary human beings. This exegetical view is also held by al-Ṭabāṭabāʾī (1962, 13, p. 157) who argues that humans are preferred over animals and jinn only and that the angels are excluded because they do not belong to this world where humans, animals and jinn live.

- (2) Q17:71 (yawma nadʿū kulla unāsin biʾimāmihi – Mention, O Muḥammad, the day We will call forth every people with their record of deeds.) For Shīʿi exegetes such as al-Kāshānī (d. 1091/1680) (1959, 3, p. 206), the word (imām) does not mean (record of deeds) but (the spiritual leader of his time – qāʾimu ahli zamānihi). Similarly, the Shīʿi scholar Jaʿfar al-Sabḥānī (n.d., 5, pp. 345, 408) holds this position. al-Kāshānī (1959, 3, p. 206) also refers to a Shīʿi ḥadīth on the authority of the Shīʿi Imām Abu Jaʿfar al-Bāqir (d. 114/732) in which, according to narration, Muḥammad said: ‘I am the messenger of God to all mankind but there will be after me Imāms from my household appointed for people and will be in charge of. However, some people will disbelieve them and persecute them together with their supporters (ashyāʿahum).

Whoever supports them and believes them will be my follower and will enter the garden, but whoever disbelieves them will enter the fire and I will be innocent of him/her'. However, al-Kāshāni does not mention the chain of authorities (*isnād*) of this *ḥadīth*. More interestingly, al-Kāshāni (1959, 3, p. 207) contradicts himself when he claims that the meaning of Q17:71 according to 'Ali b. Abī Ṭālib is that 'Muḥammad is our Imām', i.e. Muḥammad only is the Imām of the Muslim nation and none of his household. Also, the Shī'ī Imām Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (d. 148/765), according to narration, said: 'On the day of judgement, the Imām will hurry to Muḥammad and you (people) will hurry in fear to us; then, we (the Imāms) will lead you to the garden'. Thus, al-Kāshāni (1959, 3, p. 207) equates the Shī'ī Imāms with Muḥammad in terms of the notion of intercession (*al-shafā'ah*). However, for Ibn 'Abbās, al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, Qatādah, and al-Ḍaḥḥāk, the expression (*imām*) means 'the record of deeds' which is intertextually related to Q84:7 (*fa'ammā man ūtiya kitābahū . . .* – and whoever his record of deeds is given to him in his right hand . . .) (al-Qinnūji 1995, 7, p. 427). However, for Mujāhid, (*imām*) means (Prophet) (al-Ṭabarāni 2008, 4, p. 125).

- (3) Q17:79 (*maqāman maḥmūdān* – praised status) refers to the high status of Muḥammad in the hereafter where he will be able to intercede (*yas-hfa'*) for the believers. According to Muḥammad's exegesis, this phrase means (the position which I will be granted and by which I will intercede for my nation) (al-Ṭabari 2005, 8, pp. 131–134; Ibn Kathīr 1993, 3, p. 58). For Mu'tazili exegetes, however, Muḥammad cannot provide intercession on the day of judgement. The other exegetical meaning of (*maqāman maḥmūdān* – praised status) is 'God will ask Muḥammad to sit with Him on the throne on the day of judgement' which is falsely attributed to Mujāhid (al-Ṭabari 2005, 8, p. 132). The Ibāḍī exegete Ifaiyish (1994, 7, p. 238) also rejects this meaning.
- (4) Infallibility of Prophets (*'iṣmat al-anbiyā'*): Q17:73–75 involve the theological problem of whether Muḥammad was infallible (*ma'ṣūm*). In terms of Qur'anic intertextuality, Q5:67 (*wallāhu ya'ṣimuka min al-nāsi* – God will protect you, i.e. make you infallible, from the people) substantiates Muḥammad's infallibility. However, the circumstance of revelation of these two āyats was related to the delegation of the tribe of Thaḳīf in Arabia who came to Muḥammad after they accepted Islam asking him to allow them to continue worshipping their idol al-Lāt for a year, and that if the other tribes found out about this arrangement, you could tell them that your Lord allowed you to do so. Then, Q17:73–74 were revealed. Muḥammad was only listening to al-Thaḳīf's delegation and did not speak for a while. The delegation also started writing down an agreement to this effect while Muḥammad was not responding. Thus, the section of Q17:74 (*laqad kidta tarkanu ilaihim shai'an qalīlā* – You would have almost inclined to them a little). In other words, this is interpreted as an implicit agreement by Muḥammad to the Thaḳīf

delegation's request and that his intention was merely to appease them and then win them back to Islam later on in the following year. Thus, Muḥammad is believed to have been rebuked by Q17:75. Q17:75 refers to God's punishment to Muḥammad had he (Muḥammad) accepted the tribe of Thaḳīf's request and signed the agreement they were writing. It is worthwhile to note that when Muḥammad did not respond to the Thaḳīf's delegation request, this was taken as an implicit acceptance but God saved him from saying anything or signing the agreement with them. In other words, Muḥammad was about to accept as the expression in the āyah states: (laqad kidta). This is the major reason for some scholars that Muḥammad was fallible because he was about to betray the message of God just to please the tribe of Thaḳīf. However, other scholars held a different view, namely that God had protected Muḥammad from falling into the trap set for him by the tribe of Thaḳīf and this was evidence of Muḥammad's infallibility (ʿiṣmat al-nabi). This exegetical and theological point of view is linguistically based (see (iii), linguistic exegesis, point (4) below). The grammatical particle (kāda) means 'the imminent fall into temptation', i.e. 'about to happen but it has not happened'. Thus, Muḥammad did not agree or sign anything allowing the Thaḳīf tribe to continue their practice of polytheism represented by their worship of their idol al-Lāt. This is similar to saying: (kāda sālimun an yaqtula ṣadiqahu – Sālim was about to kill his friend) which does not mean that Sālim actually killed his friend; rather, Salim was about to kill his friend but he did not do so. Linguistically, the particle (kāda) means (intifā' al-shai' lithubūt ghairihi – something does not exist because something else has taken place). For instance, (lawlā ʿaliyyun lahalaka ʿumar – ʿUmar would have been perished without ʿAli) which means that ʿAli's existence has made it impossible for ʿUmar to perish. This is identical to the meaning of Q17:74 (walawlā an thabbatnāka laqad kidta tarkanu ilaihim shai'an qalilā – If We had not strengthened you, you would have almost inclined to them a little.) This āyah, therefore, semantically implies that Muḥammad was 'strengthened' by God, i.e. he was made infallible, otherwise he would have given his consent to Thaḳīf's demands. The last point related to this theological problem is related to the implicit rebuke to Muḥammad by Q17:75. It should be pointed out that rebuke to Muḥammad in the Qur'ān occurred on three similar occasions, such as in Q33:1 (do not obey the disbelievers), Q39:65 (If you should associate anything with God, your work would surely become worthless), and Q69:44–46 (If Muḥammad had made up about Us [God] some false sayings, We would have seized him by the right hand [i.e. God would have exacted revenge with might and power], then we would have cut from him the aorta [i.e. causing immediate death to him]). However, the occurrence of a rebuke does not entail that 'something has taken place' but rather it is a warning to Muḥammad. For Ibn ʿAbbās, Muḥammad was infallible but Q17:73–75 is meant to

alarm the Muslims and fill them with fear lest no one would dare to compromise his/her faith with the disbelievers in any religious matter (al-Ṭabarānī 2008, 4, p. 127). Shī'ī exegetes such as al-Qummi (1983, 2, p. 24) and al-Kāshānī (1959, 3, p. 206), however, provide a different analysis to Q17:73. For them, this āyah is to do with the Shī'ah and it means: (Indeed, they [anti-Shī'ī companions] were about to tempt you [Muḥammad] away from that which We revealed to you about the right of 'Alī to be the first caliph after you die . . . and then they [anti-Shī'ī companions] would have taken you as a friend if you appointed one of them other than 'Alī as your legitimate successor).

In his discussion of Q11:45–46 where Noah appeals to God to save his (Noah's) son from drowning, al-Rāzi (1990, 18, p. 4) provides details about whether the Prophets are infallible. Q11:45 reads: (Noah called to his Lord and said: 'My Lord, indeed my son is of my family, and indeed, Your promise is true, and you are the most just of judges'). Then we have Q11:46 (God said: 'O Noah, indeed he [your son] is not of your family; indeed, he is one whose work was other than righteous; so, do not ask me for that about which you have no knowledge. Indeed, I advise you, lest you be among the ignorant'). In this āyah, we can observe that Noah's appeal is repulsed by expressions such as: (innahū laisa min ahlika – indeed, he [Noah's son] is not of your family), (innahū 'amalun ghairu ṣāliḥ – indeed, he is one whose work was other than righteous), and (innī a'izuka an takūna min al-jāhilin – I [God] advise you lest you be among the ignorant) and then Noah is advised to re-consider his appeal which is described as ('amal ghair ṣāliḥ – work which is not righteous). Thus, we encounter some kind of debate between Noah and God in which Noah argues that: (inna ibnī min ahli – my son is of my family) and God rebuts Noah's claim by: (innahū laisa min ahlika innahu 'amalun ghairu ṣāliḥ . . . – Indeed, he [your son] is not of your family; indeed, he is one whose work was other than righteous; so, do not ask me for that about which you have no knowledge. Indeed, I advise you, lest you be among the ignorant).

The exegetical analysis of Q11:45–47 leads to many factors which may support the premise that the Prophets were not infallible, such as:

- (a) Before one can discuss Q11:45–46 and the theologically controversial issue of whether the Prophets were infallible, one needs to investigate the grammatical problem of co-referentiality ('awadat al-ḍamīr) involved in the word (innahū – it is) of (innahū 'amalun ghairu ṣāliḥ – indeed, he is one whose work was other than righteous). Grammatically, the attached pronoun (-hū) of (innahū) refers to Noah's statement (inna ibnī min ahli – my son is of my family). Thus, the pronoun (-hū) of (innahū) gives Q11:46 the meaning that what Noah has said is ethically unacceptable and righteously incorrect because Noah's appeal is an act and that this act is not righteous

and represents ignorance. Therefore, Noah must have made an error which makes him fallible (ghair maʿṣūm). This is due to the fact that asking God to save someone who has disbelieved and rejected the prophethood of Noah is not a righteous act to do; in other words, the act of asking is an act of someone who is (jāhil – ignorant, foolish).

- (b) Noah's act of asking is an act of sin and disobedience because God has ordered Noah not to ask such a question (falā tas'alnī – do not ask Me [God]).
- (c) Noah asks God out of ignorance (Do not ask me for that about which you have no knowledge, Q11:46). Asking out of ignorance is an act of sin according to Q2:169 (To say about God what you do not know).
- (d) Noah's request represents pure ignorance and God's response is a harsh rebuke to Noah. Thus, one can infer from God's statement (Indeed, I advise you, lest you be among the ignorant) that ignorance in this āyah is employed as a metonymy (kināyah) for an act of sin. This exegetical view is backed up intertextually by Q4:17 (ya'malūna al-sū'a bijahālah – those who do wrong in ignorance).
- (e) Noah admits that he has committed a sinful act and disobeyed God in his request to save his son, as we are told by Q11:47 (Noah said: 'My Lord, I seek refuge in You from asking that of which I have no knowledge; and unless You forgive me and have mercy upon me, I will be among the losers').
- (f) Noah asks his son to join him on board the ark: (O my son, come aboard with us and do not be with the disbelievers, Q11:42). However, his son remains defiant and replies: (I will take refuge on a mountain to protect me from the water, Q11:43). Thus, Noah already knows that his son has disobeyed him but he (Noah) appeals to God to save him (Noah's son). This may amount to a sinful act. For more details on the infallibility of Muḥammad, see al-Sabḥānī (n.d., 5, pp. 39, 319).

(iii) Linguistic exegesis:

- (1) Ellipsis (al-ḥadhf) in Q17:72 (waman kāna fī ḥādhihī a'mā – those who were blind in this life) involves an ellipted expression (al-ni'am – blessings, favours). Thus, the āyah should grammatically read as (waman kāna fī ḥādhihī {al-ni'am} a'mā – those who were not able to see {these blessings}). The elliptical ayah means 'The Lord has bestowed upon people many blessings and favours in this life. Whoever cannot see for himself/herself these blessings and favours which the individual enjoys daily, lives with them, and senses them, then he/she must be blind, since he/she cannot appreciate the status of his/her Lord, shows ingratitude to God, and is not able to be a monotheist. As a consequence, such an individual will be "blind" in the hereafter, too, since he/she has been negligent, i.e. "blind" of the day of his/her resurrection, the garden and the fire' (author's paraphrase).

- (2) The word (kathīrin – many) in (wafaḍḍalnāhum ‘alā kathīrin mimman khalaqnā – We favoured them specially above many of those We have created, Q17:70) is not semantically redundant. In other words, stylistically, (kathīrin) can be taken out (wafaḍḍalnāhum ‘alā mimman khalaqnā – We favoured them specially above those We have created), i.e. God has favoured humans above His other creations. However, the word (kathīrin) is employed to give the meaning that God favoured mankind over ‘some’ but ‘not all’ His creations since angels are favoured above mankind.
 - (3) It is grammatically wrong to claim that the word (imām) in Q17:71 is the plural of the noun (umm – mother), rather the plural form of (umm) is (ummaḥāt – mothers) (al-Zamakhshari (1995, 2, p. 655; Itḥaiyish 1994, 7, p. 224). The reason why it is believed by some exegetes to be the plural of (umm) is because it is to honour, on the day of judgement, the mother of distinguished characters such as Jesus who will be called by the name of his mother Mary, and al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusain who will be called by the name of their mother Fāṭimah. Also, for them and for al-Qurṭubi (1997, 10, p. 255), the meaning of (imām) is ‘the record of deeds – kitāb al-a‘māl’. This meaning is backed up by Qur’anic intertextuality in Q36:12 (wakulla shai’in aḥṣaināhu fī imāmin mubīn – We have enumerated all things in a clear register) (Itḥaiyish 1994, 7, p. 147). However, for Abu al-Su‘ūd (1999, 4, p. 146), the word (imām) is the plural of (umm) which is similar to the noun (khuff – a slipper) whose plural form is (khifāf – slippers).
 - (4) Linguistically, the grammatical particle (kāda – about to) Q17:73, cannot be taken as evidence for Muḥammad being fallible (ghair ma‘ṣūm). This is due to the fact that, semantically, (kāda) means ‘the imminent fall into temptation’, i.e. ‘something about to happen but it has not’. Thus, it does not semantically entail that someone has committed or made something; rather, it means that someone is about to do something but has not done it. Thus, the notion of Muḥammad’s infallibility remains intact.
 - (5) The third person plural pronoun (-u – they) in the grammatical particle (kādū – they were about to) in Q17:76 refers either to: (a) the Jewish community in Madīnah, or (b) the unbelievers in Makkah (Quraish).
- (iv) Historical exegesis: Exegetes provide two circumstances of revelation of Q17:76. (See (iii), linguistic exegesis, point (5).) The first is that the Jewish community in Madīnah did not like the growing influence of Muḥammad and his military muscle. They tried to convince him to move out of Madīnah with his companions. They visited him and told him: ‘Madīnah is neither the land of Prophets nor the land of resurrection, rather it is al-Shāmm (today’s Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Israel/Palestine) which is a sacred land. If you are a true Prophet, you should have settled in al-Shāmm. If you are concerned that the Romans will defeat you militarily, then your Lord will reveal this matter to

you soon and will protect you from them'. Thus, Muḥammad took their advice on board and left for al-Shāmm in his military campaign to fight the Romans. Muḥammad left Madīnah and camped in an area called Dhu al-Ḥalifah waiting for his companions to join him and form an army. Consequently, the battle of Tabūk took place in 9/630 and Q17:76 was revealed. We believe that this circumstance of revelation is flawed and therefore the grammatical analysis of attributing the third person plural pronoun (-u – they) to the Jews of Madīnah is not acceptable for the following reasons:

- (1) Muḥammad could not have trusted this political ploy by the Jewish community which aimed to free Madīnah from the rising influence of Islam in Arabia and put an end to the nascent Islamic state in Madīnah.
- (2) Muḥammad could not have believed the Jewish community's flawed theological argument about the land of Prophets and the resurrection land.
- (3) Q17:76 is a Makkān āyah and not a Madīnan āyah. Thus, the circumstance of revelation outlined above is flawed.
- (4) The area of Dhu al-Ḥalifah where Muḥammad was alleged to have camped was not on the same road leading to al-Shāmm where the Romans were. Thus, he must have camped on the wrong road of his intended journey.
- (5) Muḥammad launched his military campaign against the Romans in the battle of Tabūk as a response to God's command represented by Q9:123.
- (6) Muḥammad went to war with the Romans in the ninth/fifteenth century after the Roman Emperor executed Muḥammad's delegation sent to him to discuss peace relations with the Romans. The Muslim delegates were executed in the eighth/fourteenth century in the city of Mu'tah on the Saudi Arabian-Jordanian border.
- (7) Q17:76 was revealed in Makkah. Thus, the plural third person pronoun (-ū – they) in (kāḏū – they were about to) refers to Quraish. This is supported by the last section of the same āyah (wa'idhan lā yalbathūna khilāfaka illā qalīlā – Then, when they [Quraish] do [drive you from Makkah], they will not remain there after you except for a little). This section of the āyah which predicts the defeat of Quraish in fact took place in the battle of Badr in 2/624. Also, the expression (yastafizzūnaka – to provoke you and drive you out) refers to the plot hatched by Quraish in al-Nadwah house in Makkah to murder Muḥammad.

4.3.2.6 *Sūrat al-Ḥajj (Q22)*

- (i) Focus of surah: Q22 highlights eschatology, rebuts the sceptics as in āyahs 6–7, and states that eschatology is certainly going to take place. It also provides evidence of God's omnipotence as in āyah 5.

Time of revelation: It is worthwhile to note that Q22 was revealed before ḥajj was established as one of the pillars of Islam. Instead, the ḥajj was introduced by Q2 and Q3.

Place of revelation: There has been a disagreement among exegetes about the place of revelation of Q22, i.e. whether it is a Makkan or a Madīnan sūrah. Among exegetes who believe that Q22 is Makkan are Ibn ʿAbbās, Muqātil, al-Zamakhshari, al-Khāzin, al-Rāzi, al-Ṭabarsi, and Ibn ʿĀshūr. For Ibn ʿAbbās, Q22 is Makkan except for five āyahs (Q22:11–12, 39–40, and 77). However, Ibn ʿAbbās' is reported by Ibn ʿĀshūr (n.d., 17, p. 181) to have said that Q22 is Madīnan for two reasons: (a) the expression (yā aiyuha al-nāsu – O mankind) refers to the disbelievers of Madīnah, and (b) the āyahs 25 and 39 are more compatible with Madīnan revelations. For Muqātil, Q22 is Makkan except for nine āyahs (Q22:1–2, 11, 25, 39–40, 54, 58–59). For al-Zamakhshari, al-Khāzin, and al-Rāzi, Q22 is Makkan except for six āyahs (Q22:19–24). For al-Ṭabarsi, Q22 is Makkan based on Ibn ʿAbbās' view, and for Ibn ʿĀshūr, Q22 is Makkan due to its style and discourse. Among exegetes who believe that Q22 is Madīnan are al-Ḍaḥḥāk, Qatādah, al-Ṭabāṭabā'i, and al-Shīrāzi who classify Q22 as Madīnan except for four āyahs (Q22:52–55) and al-Biqā'i who considers all Q22 as Madīnan. However, we believe that Q22 is a mix of both Makkan and Madīnan āyahs. The other source of disagreement among exegetes is whether Q22 has one or two prostration āyahs. For Sufyān al-Thawri and the Ibāḍī exegete Jābir b. Zaid, there is only one prostration in Q22. However, for the majority of exegetes, there are two prostrations, one in āyah 18 and the other in āyah 77.

(ii) Major thematic features: Based on our textual analysis of Q22, we can provide the following thematic features:

- (a) calling upon mankind in general by using the expression (yā aiyuha al-nāsu – O people, Q22:1, 5, 49, 73); however, the expression (al-nāss – people, mankind) has occurred 15 times;
- (b) reiteration of monotheism as in āyahs 17, 19, 25, 26, 31, 34, 55, 57, and 72;
- (c) reiteration of eschatology as in āyahs 1, 5, 6, 17, 55, 66, and 69, the notion of victory (al-naṣr) as in āyahs 15, 39, 40, 60, 71, and implicitly in āyahs 18, 40, and 74;
- (d) commandments as in āyahs 26, 28, 30, 36, 67, 77, 78;
- (e) leadership traits as illustrated through the descriptive features of (al-mukhbitīn – the humble, Q22:34) which are listed in āyah 35;
- (f) details on how the individual is created (Q22:5),
- (g) details of what should a person do if he/she assumes power (Q22:41);
- (h) the benefits of pilgrimage in āyahs 28 and 33. Among the benefits of the rituals of pilgrimage are:
 - (1) Pilgrimage is a spiritual training camp (yadhkurū isma allāh – a celebration of God's name, Q22:28) during which the pilgrim enjoys closer religious bonds with his/her Lord.
 - (2) Physical exercise through walking: For instance, from Makkah to Minā is about 7 kilometres, from Makkah to Muzdalifah is about 10 kilometres, from Makkah to ʿArafāt is about 20 kilometres, from

°Arafāt to Muzdalifah is about 7 kilometres, circling round the Ka'bah seven times, and walking between the two hills of Şafā and Marwah seven times.

- (3) Sleeping rough for one night in Muzdalifah.
- (4) Exercise in perseverance, leadership, and self-denial.
- (5) Meeting people from several nations of various cultures, backgrounds, and social classes; this is a good social exercise during which racism and class division are eliminated.
- (6) Camping on the hill tops of °Arafah for a day achieves psychological tranquillity.
- (7) Camping in Minā is a spiritual relaxation exercise as it is a change in environment.
- (8) Drinking the water of Zamzam, one of the oldest wells in the world, has health benefits as it is very rich in minerals.
- (9) During the pilgrimage period of four days, the pilgrim has to observe cleanliness (ṭahārah) only during his/her circling of the Ka'bah, since going round it is a form of worship like praying. However, there is no unanimous agreement among exegetes as to whether it is obligatory to observe cleanliness when the pilgrim walks between the two hills of Şafā and Marwah seven times. If the pilgrim breaks his/her cleanliness, he/she can either carry on the exercise or renew his/her cleanliness.

It can also be argued that circling round the Ka'bah 7 times at the end of the pilgrimage rituals (ṭawāf al-ifāḍah) is semiotically linked to the value of number 7 in terms of the school of scientific exegesis as explained below:

God created 7 heavens, the earth is made up of 7 layers, the atom is made up of 7 elements, the weekdays are 7, the word (qiblah – the direction faced in prayer, i.e. facing the Ka'bah in prayer) occurs 7 times in the Qur'ān (Q2:142, 143, 144, 145, 145, Q10:87), the doors of hell fire are 7, and the pilgrim circles round the Ka'bah 7 times. Thus, the pilgrim is in a synchronization process with the rest of the macro universe he/she is part of. During his/her circling round the Ka'bah, he/she is in harmony with the rest of the macro universe where planets circle round the sun, stars circle round the centre of a given galaxy, some galaxies circle round other galaxies, the electrons of the atom circle round the nucleus. In terms of Qur'anic exegesis, all these elements including the pilgrim are in a process of glorifying the name of the creator of the universe and mankind: (Everything in the heavens and earth glorifies God, Q62:1). Similarly in Q17:44, Q24:36, Q57:1, Q59:1, 24, Q64:1.

- (iii) Sūrah structure: There are four major units, each beginning with the expression (yā aiyha al-nāsu): unit one is Q22:1–4, unit two is Q22:5–48, unit three is Q22:49–72, and unit four is Q22:73–78.

(iv) Linguistic exegesis: Among the grammatical problems are:

- (1) Morphological form: In Q22:2, the expression (*murḍiʿah* – the mother who is now breast-feeding her baby) designates the process of breast-feeding as taking place just before the moment of resurrection takes place. This expression is employed in this linguistic form to reflect the strong emotional bond between the mother and her baby when both are united through the process of suckling. However, regardless of how much the mother is emotionally attached to her baby and especially during the moments of breast-feeding, she will throw away her baby as a result of the enormous horror of the deafening noise of the trumpet and the chaotic scenes of resurrection. The employment of the expression (*kull* – every) is to achieve the generic sense and that this situation will apply to every individual mother and not only to one mother. In Q22:3, the expression (*marīd* – rebellious) means ‘a rebellious and an unjust person who can do no good to any one and who does not have happiness’. Thus, Satan is described as (*marīd*). This expression is morphologically related to the verb (*marada*) whose meaning is linked to ‘a high land without any plantation’. It is also related to the adjective (*amrad*) meaning (a) ‘a tree without leaves’ and (b) ‘a young boy whose face has no hair at all’.
- (2) Different tenses: In Q22:25 we have two verbs in different tenses. The verb (*kafarū* – to disbelieve) occurs in the past tense, while the verb (*yaṣuddūn* – to avert, to prevent) occurs in the present tense. The past tense of (*kafarū*) is employed because their disbelief has become an attribute, i.e. a characteristic feature, to them. However, the present tense is employed to designate the repetition of their action which is their preventing other people from going to the sacred mosque and that this action has become a habit.
- (3) The co-ordination particle (*al-wāw*): the conjunctive particle (*al-wāw*) in Q22:27 of the phrase (*wa ʿalā kullī ḍāmīrin*) does not have the grammatical function of co-ordination (*al-ʿaṭf*) meaning (and) but it has the function of co-ordination meaning (*aw* – or). The meaning of (*wa ʿalā kullī ḍāmīrin*) means (or on every lean camel). The plural noun (*manāfiʿ* – benefits, Q22:28) occurs in the indefinite form for the pragmatic function of magnifying the worldly and religious benefits of ḥajj. However, other nouns such as (*al-abṣār* – eyes), (*al-qulūb* – hearts), and (*al-ṣudūr* – breasts) in āyah 46 have occurred in the definite form because they signify the generic meaning in order to include all people. The rhetorical question in āyah 46 conveys the pragmatic function of astonishment (*al-taʿajjub*) because the disbelievers have not benefited from the admonition lesson relayed by the fate of past disbelieving nations. The notion of financial aid (*al-rizq*) and divine support (*al-naṣr*) are substantiated through the stylistic technique of stress. The stylistic pattern employed for this purpose involves the combination of the stress tools (*inna + la + huwa*) meaning

(it is He [God] who . . .) or the pattern (inna + allāh) meaning (indeed God is . . .). This stylistic pattern occurs in Q22:61–64.

- (4) Coreferential pronoun (‘awdat al-ḍamīr): In Q22:78 (. . . millata abikum ibrahīma huwa sammākum al-muslimīna min qablu wafī hādhā – . . . He named you ‘Muslims’ before and in this) where linguist exegetes express two different opinions: (a) that the pronoun (huwa – he) refers to [God] because it was He [God] who called them Muslims in the previous Scriptures; this linguistic analysis is backed up by intertextuality in the last part of the same āyah (min qablu wafī hādhā – before [i.e. in former Scriptures] and in this [revelation, i.e. the Qur’ān]); (b) that the pronoun (huwa – he) refers to (ibrahīma – Abraham) in the same āyah and that this linguistic analysis is backed up by intertextuality in Q2:128 (Our Lord, make us Muslims in submission to You and from our descendents a Muslim nation in submission to You), where Abraham is claimed to have read this prayer after he had completed the construction of the Ka‘bah.
- (v) Modern stylistic exegesis: Based on our stylistic textual approach, we have found the effective employment of the stylistic feature of imagery (al-taṣwīr) which vividly mirrors eleven imageries:
 - (1) the imagery of an earthquake to depict the convulsion of the day of judgement (Q22:1);
 - (2) the imagery of a mother breast-feeding her baby: As a result of the horrific noise of the earthquake, the mother abandons her baby in the middle of the breast-feeding process and runs away for her life in a state of confusion, not knowing what to do (Q22:2);
 - (3) the imagery of people walking drunkenly, although they are not drunk, as a result of their tremendous fear (Q22:2);
 - (4) the imagery of garments of fire worn by the disbelievers: Scalding water is poured upon their heads, the scalding water melts whatever is in their bellies and badly burns their skins, and they are sat in maces of iron (Q22:19–21);
 - (5) the imagery of the believers wearing silk garments, and bracelets of gold and pearl (Q22:23);
 - (6) the imagery of the believers enjoying the scenic gardens and the rivers (Q22:23);
 - (7) the imagery of a polytheist falling from the sky like a parachute jump that has gone wrong; during his/her steep and high-speed fall, the birds of prey tear his/her flesh to pieces (Q22:31);
 - (8) the imagery of a polytheist being blown away by a violent gale to a far-flung place (Q22:31);
 - (9) the imagery of the fly as a weak insect and the the imagery of a person who tries unsuccessfully to retrieve what the fly has taken from his/her food; thus, through these contrastive images, the weakness of the human individual is vividly exposed (Q22:73);

- (10) the imagery of an inoperative well and abandoned mansions which mirror an economic superpower being turned bankrupt and its economy and welfare system become useless (Q22:45);
 - (11) the imagery of a cliff through the expression (*ḥarf* – edge, cliff). This expression refers to the person who worships God with scepticism, hypocrisy, and heedlessness. This kind of lip-service faith is compared to standing by the very edge of faith rather than in the middle of it to benefit from its spiritual message. The slightest push, i.e. any simple problem, would lead to his/her fall: (If he/she is touched by good, he/she is reassured by it; but if he/she is struck by trial [problem], he/she turns his/her face [to the other direction, i.e. will abandon his/her faith]).
- (vi) Modern socio-political exegesis: In Q22, we can draw a distinction between social, political, and divine justice. For instance, on the social level, we are admonished by āyahs 25, 28, and 36 to share with the poor and the needy what one has got: the indigenous residents of Makkah have equal rights with the visitors from outside, to give some of the meat of the slaughtered animals during the season of ḥajj to the unfortunate and the poor, and also to give some of it to the needy and the beggars. However, on the level of divine justice, God is described as ‘never unjust to people’ while the injustice of man is highlighted in āyahs 45, 48, and 53 and the expression (*ẓālim* – one who commits injustice) is employed. On the political level, we are admonished by āyah 41 that when one assumes power or authority, he/she has to be humble, to be just, not to boast, and not to avenge his/her opponents.
- (vii) The anecdote of the nice-looking idols (*al-gharānīq*): This is in connection with Q22:52. Only Sunni exegetes refer to this anecdote, although there is no reference to it by either companion or successor exegetes, and in spite of the fact that it was historically groundless. It is sometimes strangely attributed to Ibn ʿAbbās. When exegetes analyse Q22:52, they make an intertextual reference to Q53:19. The anecdote claims that Muḥammad became very annoyed when he saw his people, the tribe of Quraish, turn away from him and disbelieve his prophethood. As he loved to see his people accept the message of Islam, Muḥammad went one day to meet some dignitaries and other people of Quraish to establish good friendly relations with them. While he was sitting with them, he wished that no revelation would be sent down to him during these sensitive moments as this would agitate them and turn them more hostile to him. However, God made a new revelation to him which was Q53. Then, Muḥammad had to read the new revelation while he was in the company of the disbelievers of Quraish. When he reached Q53:19 (*afara’aitum allāta wal-ʿuzzā wamanāta al-thālithata al-ukhrā* – So have you considered al-Lāt and al-ʿUzzā? And the third one, Manāt?), it was claimed that Satan influenced him to read something extra which was not Qur’anic. This was a six-word rhymed prose: (*tilka al-gharānīqu al-ʿulā minha*

al-shafā'atu turtajā – these are the nice-looking idols from which we hope to get the intercession). When Quraish heard these six words, they were ecstatic. Muḥammad went on reading the rest of the the new revelation Q53. In other words, he mixed up the non-Qur'anic six words with the Qur'anic words of Q53. Having finished reading Q53, Muḥammad, his companions who were with him, and the disbelievers of Quraish prostrated together. The friendly gathering came to an end. Quraish felt elated thinking that Muḥammad acknowledged overtly their idols as intercessors with God and as worthy of worship. Later on in the night, Gabriel came to rebuke him for the words he added to Q53. Muḥammad acknowledged his grave error and was extremely upset. For this reason, Q22:52 was revealed. This is the end of the anecdote.

Ibn ʿAbbās and Ibn Masʿūd are reported to have said that when Muḥammad read Q53, he prostrated and so did whoever was with him for its splendid qualities and stylistic elegance. None of them had reported anything more than that. The 'nice-looking idols' was an imaginary anecdote that was made up several decades after the death of Muḥammad to discredit him.

However, our critical assessment is that:

- (1) The chain of narration of this anecdote is weak.
- (2) Its narrators are not genuine, i.e. the names are fabricated by disbelievers during later centuries.
- (3) The content of the anecdote is inconsistent and has several wordings. For instance, some non-Muslim narrators claimed that Muḥammad said these six-word rhymed prose while he was praying; other narrators claim that he said these words while he was sitting among the disbelievers of Quraish in Makkah; other narrators claim that Muḥammad said the six-word rhymed prose while he was having a short sleep; other narrators claim that he said these words because Satan influenced him to do so; other narrators claim that Muḥammad said these words while talking to himself; other narrators claim that Satan himself said these six words; other narrators claim that the disbelievers of Quraish said these words.

Refuting the anecdote: The argument of the anecdote of the nice-looking idols can be rebutted by the following premises:

- (1) Qur'anic intertextuality: There are several āyahs which can be considered as counterarguments against the claim that Muḥammad had forgotten and added the six-word rhymed prose to Q53. Among these are: (He does not speak from his own desires, Q53:3), (And if he [Muḥammad] had made up about Us [God] some false sayings, We would have seized him by the right hand, then We would have cut off his lifeblood, and none of you could have defended him, Q69:44–47), and (We shall teach you the Qur'ān and you will not forget, Q87:6).

- (2) Inconsistency: Q53 is polemic of idolatry and of all the idols worshipped by Quraish as we are informed by Q53:23: (They [the idols al-Lāt, al-ʿUzzā, and Manāt] are not but mere names you have named them, you and your forefathers, for which God has sent down no authority). It is, therefore, illogical that Q53 makes a U-turn and praises the idols.
- (3) The standard practice of Muḥammad (al-sunnah): One can argue that:
 - (a) There is neither a tradition (ḥadīth) nor a story in Muḥammad's standard practice or biography that refers to the anecdote of the nice-looking idols.
 - (b) Muḥammad fought against polytheism and was a vehement opponent of the idols worshipped by Quraish.
 - (c) Muḥammad was head-hunted by the unbelievers of Quraish. Had he gone to see them at the Kaʿbah, they would have killed him.
 - (d) It was not Muḥammad's practice during his prophetic mission in Makkah to go to Kaʿbah and pray in daylight nor was it possible for him to read the Qur'ān in Quraish's presence.
 - (e) It was not reported by any biographer of Muḥammad that he fell asleep during any of his compulsory or voluntary prayers. Biographers had reported that he was always alert and fully conscious when performing his prayers. Thus, the claim that Muḥammad said the phrase of the nice-looking idols by mistake because he was exhausted and overwhelmed by sleep was illogical due to the fact that Muḥammad was used to performing late-night prayers (tahajjud or qiyām al-lail) regularly and mostly with one of his companions without being reported to have made a mistake in his reading of the Qur'ān or to have been overcome by sleep.
- (4) Common sense: In terms of common sense, we can argue that:
 - (a) It is irrational to claim that Satan said the six-word rhymed prose about the idols and people around Muḥammad thought it was Muḥammad who said them.
 - (b) It was customary for Muḥammad to pause when he finished an āyah and then he would start another one until the whole surah was read. However, the claim that when Muḥammad paused after he read Q53:19, Satan immediately said the phrase of the nice-looking idols making people believe that it was said by Muḥammad and that it was a Qur'anic revelation.
 - (c) It is irrational to claim that Satan forced Muḥammad to say the phrase of the nice-looking idols.
 - (d) It is illogical to claim that Muḥammad said this phrase in order to appease Quraish and win their hearts but later on he withdrew it after he realized he was wrong.

(viii) Exegesis of Q22:52 (We have never sent any messenger or prophet before you [Muḥammad] into whose wishes Satan did not insinuate something, but God removes what Satan insinuates and then God affirms His message. God is all knowing and wise): The pivotal word in this āyah is the verb (tamannā – to have a wish or a vanity) which has different meanings:

- (a) As a human, Muḥammad used to have a wish for something. However, Satan takes this opportunity of Muḥammad's having a wish and starts whispering in his heart encouraging him to do what he should not do. God, however, overrules this wish which Satan took advantage of and guides Muḥammad to abandon the wish of appeasing Quraish. Like other Prophets before him, Muḥammad was infallible (maʿṣūm) from committing sins. However, he was not infallible from having a wish, being vulnerable to Satan's whisper and minor errors like other humans. However, Prophets are protected by God and enabled to stand firm towards their faith.
- (b) The expression (tamannā) means that Muḥammad wishes the Qur'ān to be revealed in full at once rather than in piecemeal over a long period of time. However, God overrides this wish as the revelation was gradual according to the needs of the current situation.
- (c) The meaning of (tamannā) is 'to read' (yaqra') or (yatlū) as it has been used in pre-Islamic poetry; thus, the word (umniyyatihi) means 'his reading'.
- (d) The word (tamannā) means 'to speak'; thus, the meaning of (umniyyatihi) is 'his speech'.

(ix) Q22:52 with a different exegesis: Shī'i exegetes do not approve of the above reason for revelation of this āyah. For al-Qummi (1983, 2, pp. 85–86), Q22:52 was sent down when Muḥammad was very hungry and went out looking for someone to feed him. He went to a companion from the helpers (al-anṣār) and asked him whether he could be given some food. The man welcomed him, slaughtered a young she-goat, and roasted it for him. When Muḥammad was about to start eating, he wished that Fāṭimah, ʿAli, al-Ḥasan, and al-Ḥusain were with him to eat, too. Suddenly, two hypocritical men arrived and Satan wished (tamannā) that these two men would share the meal with Muḥammad; after a moment, however, ʿAli suddenly arrived, too. Then immediately Q22:52 was revealed. Thus, the two hypocritical men could not eat and left. Therefore, in the view of al-Qummi (1983, 2, pp. 85–86), Satan's wish was not fulfilled and God abolished (yansikh) Satan's wish through the arrival of ʿAli to the scene. Also, for al-Qummi (1983, 2, pp. 85–86), the final phrase of this āyah (yuḥkimu allāhu āyātihi – God affirms His message) means (God will make ʿAli victorious) and also the initial phrase (liyajʿala mā yulqi al-shaitānu fitnatan – So God may make what Satan throws in, Q22:53) means (the two hypocritical men).

The exegetical views of al-Qummi go further. He (1983, 2, pp. 85–86) provides Shī'i-oriented exegesis to Q22; for instance, the expression

(al-*ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm* – the straight path, Q22:53) refers to the *Shī'i Imām al-Mahdi*, (*walā yazālu alladhīna kafarū fī miryatīn minhu* – Those who disbelieve will not cease to be in doubt of it [the *Qur'ān*], Q22:55) means [Those who disbelieve will not cease to be in doubt of *Imām 'Alī*], (*wal-ladhīna kafarū wakadhdhabū bi'āyātīnā . . . lahum 'adhābun muḥīn* – Those who disbelieve and reject Our revelations [the *Qur'ān*] . . . will receive a humiliating torment, Q22:57) means [Those who disbelieve and reject *'Alī's* allegiance and the allegiance to all the *Shī'i Imāms*. . . will receive a humiliating torment]. As for Q22:40 (*alladhīna ukhrijū min diyārihim bighairi ḥaqqin* – Those who have been evicted [by the unbelievers] unjustly from their homes [because they believed in monotheism]), *al-Qummi* (1983, 2, pp. 85–86) is undecided and it can either mean: [*al-Ḥusain* was evicted from his home unjustly by *Yazīd*] or [When *Imām al-Mahdi* comes out, he will leave his home looking for the killers of *Imām al-Ḥusain*]. *Yazīd* is also cursed by *al-Qummi* during the exegesis of these *āyahs*.

- (x) Scientific exegesis: Q22:5 refers to several stages of human creation (We created you from dust (*turāb*), then from a sperm drop (*nuṭfah*), then from an embryo (*'alaqah*), and then from a lump of flesh, formed and unformed, that We may show you. We settle in the wombs whom We will for a specified term, then We bring you out as a child, and then We develop you that you may reach time of maturity. Among you is he who is taken in early death, and among you is he who is returned to the most decrepit old age so that he knows, after once having knowledge, nothing). Thus, we are informed about the seven stages of the creation of a human: stage one is where a human is merely dust; stage two is the sperm; stage three is the embryo; stage four is the foetus taking the shape of a lump of flesh; stage five is infancy after birth; stage six is maturity; and stage seven is old age. Q22:5 is also intertextually related to: (Then, We [God] formed the drop into (an embryo (*'alaqah*), and formed *'alaqah* into a lump and formed the lump into bones and clothed the bones in flesh, thus bringing forth another creature. Blessed be God, the Best of Creators! Q23:14). *Harun Yahya* (2010) argues that in the period of time between the formation of the sperm and the egg and their meeting, every event that occurs is a miracle. Based on Q39:6 (God creates you in the wombs of your mothers, creation after creation, within three darknesses [i.e. the belly, the womb, and the amniotic membrane]), *Yahya* (2010) claims that three distinct stages occur in the development of a human being while it is in the mother's womb. For him, modern biology has established that the baby in the mother's womb does go through three different stages of development, just as is stated in Q39:6. According to *Yahya* (2010), the life in the uterus has three stages: (i) pre-embryonic: first two-and-a-half weeks; (ii) embryonic: until the end of the eighth week; and (iii) foetal: from the eighth week to labour. Cells continue to divide and multiply over a period of time, forming eye cells sensitive to light, nerve cells to perceive bitterness, sweetness, pain,

heat and cold, ear cells to sense sound waves, cells of the digestive system to process food, and many others. After the embryo's first three weeks, the multiplying cells take on the appearance of a lump. In the Qur'ān, this development is revealed as a change from an embryo (ʿalaqah) to a 'lump of flesh' (muḍghah).

4.3.2.7 *Sūrat al-Nūr* (Q24:1–25)

- (i) Focus of the sūrah: There is a correlation between the sūrah's title (al-nūr – light) and the major focus of the sūrah. The expression 'light' is one of the attributes of God (allāhu nūr al-samāwāti wal-arḍ – God is the light of the heavens and the earth, Q24:35). Thus, God is the source of our enlightenment. Q24 highlights the influence of God's light upon one's social behaviour in the community and how the absence of such light can lead to the deterioration of the social fabric and the disintegration of the societal cohesion which the Qur'ān aims to achieve. We are admonished by Q24 that God's light should be the source of our spiritual ideals. Light dissipates darkness. While slander and false accusations of other individuals are hatched in darkness, light can expose the false slanderers who invade the privacy of the innocent individual and especially the chastity of women. Q24 is a red light to the reader to stop and ponder on the danger of following the footsteps of Satan who urges us to immorality and wrongdoing, as we are warned by Q24:21. Q24 is a clear message to the reader that there is no room in Islam for concocting lies, spreading rumours, and false charges against others, especially against women. The major objective of Q24 is educational. Q24 highlights the sanctity of one's reputation, relationship among family members, social etiquettes, husband-and-wife relationship, and the slander of women. The dominant theme of Q24 is falsehood (al-ifk). The Arabic word (al-ifk) means 'the worst kind of lying'. The dominant story of Q24 is that of ʿĀ'ishah, Muḥammad's wife, the story of the companion Ṣafwān b. al-Muʿaṭṭal al-Salami, and the story of the gang of slanderers: ʿAbd Allāh b. Ubai b. Maslūl, Ḥassān b. Thābit, Miṣṭah b. Uthāthah, and Ḥamnah Bint Jaḥsh. Exegetical details illustrate to the reader ʿĀ'ishah's psychological trauma, her relationship with her husband, Muḥammad, during the critical period during which she was slandered by hypocrites, and the role of her parents. Muḥammad has recommended Q24 to be studied by women and Q5 to be studied by men.

In the view of the modern exegete Saʿīd Ḥawwa (2003, 7, p. 3681), the pivotal theme of Q24 is hinged upon Q2:208–209 (You who believe, enter wholeheartedly into submission to God and do not follow the footsteps of Satan, for he is your sworn enemy. If you slip back after clear proof has come to you, then be aware that God is almighty and wise). This is due to the following reasons:

- (a) Q24:1 refers to (āyāt baiyināt – verses of clear evidence) where the plural word (āyāt – verses) is described by the adjective (baiyināt – of

- clear evidence), i.e. these revealed verses are crystal clear in legislation and Islamic legal rulings.
- (b) Both Q24:34 and Q24:46 refer to (āyāt mubaiyināt – verses that can clarify matters), i.e. these distinct verses have been sent down to clarify to people the right path.
 - (c) The occurrence of the word (āyāt – verses) repeatedly in Q24 as in āyahs 18, 58, 59, and 61.
 - (d) Q2:208 calls upon people to accept Islam completely and wholeheartedly and admonishes them to avoid the path of Satan.
 - (e) Q2:209 admonishes the reader that in case they slip back after they have been made aware of the legislations and rules, they should realize that their Lord is mighty and wise.
 - (f) There is conceptual consonance between the āyah-final epithets of Q2:209 (ʿazīz ḥakīm – exalted in might and wise) and of Q24:18, 58, 59 (ʿalim ḥakīm – knowing and wise). Thus, Q2:208–209 and Q24 are thematically chained and conceptual interrelation is textually established.
- (ii) Different exegetical views: The major circumstance of revelation in Q24 is the story of falsehood, i.e. slander (qīṣṣat al-ifk) in which ʿĀ'ishah was falsely accused of fornication with a companion after the battle of Banū al-Muṣṭaliq in the sixth/twelfth century when the Muslim army was heading back to Madīnah. This has been a controversial exegetical issue between Sunni and Shī'i exegetes. The major controversy is concerned with whether the circumstance of revelation involved in Q24:11–20 is about ʿĀ'ishah or not. If it is about ʿĀ'ishah, then the Qur'ān has vindicated her of the false accusation made by the hypocrites. If an exegete attributes the circumstance of revelation to another wife of Muḥammad, i.e. the Coptic Māriyyah, then this implies that ʿĀ'ishah's name has never been referred to in the Qur'ān and her reputation is still in the balance. Consequently, a dichotomy emerges among different schools of exegesis. Exegetes who believe that ʿĀ'ishah is the central character referred to by Q24:11–20 are the mainstream Sunni exegetes such as Muqātil b. Sulaimān (2003, 2, pp. 411–414), al-Ṣanʿānī (1999, 2, p. 432), al-Ṭabarī (2005, 9, pp. 275–295), al-Ṭabarānī (2008, 4, pp. 405–418), al-Māturīdī (2005, 7, pp. 529–534), Ibn Kathīr (1993, 3, p. 260), non-mainstream Sufi exegetes such as ʿArābi (2006, 2, pp. 668–670), non-mainstream Ibāḍī exegetes such as Baiyūḍ (2005, 2, pp. 290–303) and Iṭfaiyish (1987, 9, pp. 73–90), non-mainstream Sunni Mu'tazili exegetes such as Abu ʿAlī al-Jubbā'i (2007, p. 395) and al-Zamakhsharī (1995, 3, pp. 212–215), and the Shī'i exegete al-Ṭabarsī (1997, 7, pp. 180–185). Although these exegetes belonged to different schools of thought and exegesis, they believed that Q24:11–20 were revealed in connection with the divine vindication of ʿĀ'ishah from any wrongdoing. However, other exegetes who abstained from reference to this controversial story include the Sufi exegete Ibn ʿArabi (1978, 2, p. 137) who provides an esoteric Sufi discussion to Q24:11–20 based on allusion, and the Mu'tazili exegete Abu al-Qāsim al-Ka'bi al-Balkhi (2007, p. 268). Similarly, al-Farrā' (2002, 2, pp. 148–149), a Shī'i exegete with Mu'tazili leanings, does not refer to Q24:11–20 in terms of this particular story.

Interestingly, Shīʿi exegetes such as al-Kāshāni (1959, 3, pp. 423–424), al-Shīrāzi (1992, 11, pp. 40–41), and al-Ṭabāṭabāʾi (1962, 15, p. 96) are sceptical about ʿĀʾishah being the lady referred to by Q24:11–20. Based on the Shīʿi exegetical views of al-Qummi, both al-Kāshāni (1959, 3, pp. 423–424) and al-Ṭabāṭabāʾi (1962, 15, p. 96) support a different circumstance of revelation that refers to the other wife of Muḥammad, namely the Coptic Māriyyah.⁷ The Shīʿi exegete al-Ḥuwaizi (n.d., 3, p. 467) goes further and claims that when the Shīʿi Imām al-Mahdi will come back, he will bring ʿĀʾishah to trial on charges of slander against Māriyyah and that al-Mahdi will punish ʿĀʾishah according to the Islamic legal ruling of slander stipulated by Q24.

(iii) Historical exegesis:

- (a) Q24:11–20: According to mainstream exegetes and the majority of non-mainstream exegetes, Q24:11–20 were revealed in connection with the story of falsehood in which Muḥammad’s wife, ʿĀʾishah, was accused of having sex with the companion Ṣafwan b. al-Muʿaṭṭal al-Sullami.⁸ Most importantly, Q24:11–20 is a vindication of ʿĀʾishah from the worst kind of lying against her and groundless accusation made against her by a group of Muslims of insecure faith nicknamed the hypocrites, such as ʿAbd Allāh b. Ubai b. Salūl, Ḥassān b. Thābit, Miṣṭah b. Uthāthah, and a lady called Ḥammah Bint Jaḥsh.

According to ʿĀʾishah, Muḥammad used to allow one of his wives to accompany him on an expedition. The name of the wife was decided through picking one of the names of Muḥammad’s wives in a lottery he used to make. This was after the ḥijāb (face cover) was implemented as a requirement in Islam. In the expedition of Banū al-Muṣṭaliq in the sixth/twelfth century ʿĀʾishah’s name came out and she accompanied Muḥammad in this battle. During the march of the army in this expedition, ʿĀʾishah sat in a sedan chair which was placed on the camel led by a man. It is worthwhile to note four important points:

- (1) ʿĀʾishah was very slim and light in weight.
- (2) The sedan chair was covered with cloth for privacy.
- (3) ʿĀʾishah’s sedan chair was placed on her camel without realizing that she was not sitting in it.
- (4) Before the ḥijāb was imposed on women, ʿĀʾishah’s face was seen by many companions including Ṣafwān b. al-Muʿaṭṭal.

The expedition was concluded and the Muslim army headed by Muḥammad began the return journey to Madīnah during the last hours of the night. ʿĀʾishah’s camel chair was taken from her tent, placed on her camel, and was led away with the rest of the marching army thinking that she was sitting in her chair. However, ʿĀʾishah left her tent a few minutes before her sedan chair was picked up and placed on her camel. ʿĀʾishah went to answer the call of nature. Women used to go out at

night if they needed to answer the call of nature. Also, ʿĀ'ishah thought it was a good idea to do that since the journey home would be long. When she came back to her tent she noticed that her necklace was missing; thus, she quickly went back to the same place looking for it and after a while she found it and headed back to her tent, only to find out that her camel chair had been taken from her tent. ʿĀ'ishah went to a few nearby tents looking for people but everyone had already gone. She went back to her tent but she was overcome by sleep. Ṣafwān b. al-Muʿaṭṭil was the person in charge of staying behind checking tents and possessions left behind and making sure that the enemy would not launch a counter attack on the Muslim army from the back. He saw from a distance someone sitting in a tent. When he approached it, he saw ʿĀ'ishah asleep and recognized her because he had seen her face before she started wearing the ḥijāb. ʿĀ'ishah woke up and immediately put on her ḥijāb. ʿĀ'ishah says: 'By God, he (Ṣafwān) did not speak to me nor did he say a single word. I only heard him saying: "innā lillāh wa'innā ilaihi rājiʿūn – We belong to God, and we shall all return to Him." Then Ṣafwān went back, brought a camel and made it kneel down. I sat on the camel and then Ṣafwān led it throughout the journey back home. We caught up with the Muslim army at noon.'

Having seen ʿĀ'ishah sitting on the camel led by Ṣafwān, ʿAbd Allāh b. Ubai b. Maslūl wrongly assumed that ʿĀ'ishah and Ṣafwān had a relationship and he spread the rumour and his false accusation to the rest of the Muslim community. Those who believed ʿAbd Allāh b. Ubai b. Maslūl were the hypocrites such as Ḥassān b. Thābit, Miṣṭaḥ b. Uthāthah, and a lady called Ḥammah Bint Jaḥsh. The story of falsehood continued to circulate in Madīnah for almost a month while ʿĀ'ishah had not heard anything about it. ʿĀ'ishah was exhausted from the journey and was not feeling well. However, at home, she could sense a different family atmosphere. The gentle and caring relationship on the part of her husband Muḥammad was not the same, especially when she did not feel well. Muḥammad was still very respectful to her and used to greet her when he entered the house. A few days later, she got better. One day, she went to answer the call of nature, at night usually, with Miṣṭaḥ's mother. Her name was ʿĀtikah Bint Abī Ruḥm b. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib b. ʿAbd Munāf. Miṣṭaḥ's mother was Abu Bakr's aunt. On their way back home, Miṣṭaḥ's mother tripped over and exclaimed: 'Damn Miṣṭaḥ.' ʿĀ'ishah was not happy to hear this against Miṣṭaḥ. However, Miṣṭaḥ's mother replied: 'Have not you heard of what he said about you?' ʿĀ'ishah replied: 'No. What did he say?' Miṣṭaḥ's mother told her of the falsehood story and the rumours in circulation against her. As a result, ʿĀ'ishah's health deteriorated. When her husband Muḥammad came in, he greeted her but she asked him to call her parents. Muḥammad agreed and he told her that he also wanted to see them to discuss the story of falsehood about her.

However, according to Masrūq b. al-Ajda^c, ʿĀ'ishah was at home when she was told about the false allegations against her by Miṣṭah's mother. ʿĀ'ishah then asked Miṣṭah's mother: 'Does Muḥammad know about this?' Miṣṭah's mother replied; 'Yes'. ʿĀ'ishah asked her again: 'Does Abu Bakr know about this?' Miṣṭah's mother replied; 'Yes'. Upon hearing this, ʿĀ'ishah collapsed and fell unconscious on the floor. She was shivery and developed a high temperature. Her mother covered her with a cloth. When Muḥammad came in, he was told of what had happened to her. He enquired: 'Was it probably because of something said against her?' ʿĀ'ishah's mother replied: 'Yes'. After a while, ʿĀ'ishah regained consciousness and went on explaining what had taken place. ʿĀ'ishah started crying profusely and could not sleep all night. The following day, Muḥammad called for ʿAli b. Abī Ṭālib and Usāmah b. Zaid. It is also important to note here that ʿAli has been reported to have been quiet about this matter and did not get involved. Thus, he was described as 'being impartial and quiet' (*musallaman*) (al-Qurṭubī 1997, 12, p. 177). Muḥammad asked them about the falsehood story and whether he would leave ʿĀ'ishah or not. Usāmah supported the view that ʿĀ'ishah was a virtuous lady, innocent of the rumours against her, and had no doubt about her attitude and good manners. ʿAli, however, said: 'O Messenger of God, your Lord gave you the permission to re-marry and there are many women like her. If you are still in doubt, ask the maid Barīrah'. Muḥammad asked Barīrah whether she had any doubts about ʿĀ'ishah. Barīrah replied: 'By God, No'. Muḥammad left home, went to the mosque, sat on the pulpit and said 'There was a man who made serious allegations against my family and sexual honour (*ʿird*) while no one has doubts about the reputation and behaviour of my family'. A noisy argument immediately developed in the mosque between the companions who demanded that whoever was responsible for spreading the false allegations against Muḥammad's family should be killed. Muḥammad appealed to them to be quiet and the argument came to an end. At home, ʿĀ'ishah was still crying for two nights and a day. Still, there was no revelation to vindicate her. Muḥammad went back home and, in her parents' presence, told her of what he heard. He also told her that if she was innocent, God will send down revelations vindicating her, but if she was guilty, she should repent and acknowledge her sin. ʿĀ'ishah asked her father Abu Bakr to respond on her behalf. Abu Bakr could not say anything. Then, she asked her mother to respond but her mother said the same thing. ʿĀ'ishah then responded: 'I am young and do not read the Qur'ān frequently. I know you've heard the rumours about me and believed them. If I claim to be innocent, you will not believe me, but if I say I'm guilty just to appease you and God knows well that I'm innocent, by God I cannot find anything better to tell than what Joseph's father said: "Patience is most fitting and God is the one sought for help against that which you describe".' Then, she stood up and laid on her

bed feeling more confident than ever before about her innocence but she wished that a revelation would be made to vindicate her. After a while, a revelation was sent down to Muḥammad vindicating ʿĀ'ishah (Q24:11–20). Muḥammad happily reported these newly revealed āyahs to ʿĀ'ishah. When her mother asked her to get up and sit next to Muḥammad, ʿĀ'ishah said: ‘No, by God, I shall not get up and will not thank anyone except God since He is the one who vindicated me’. However, some exegetes such as Furāt al-Kūfī (d. 352/963) (n.d.), do not deal with the set of āyahs (Q24:11–20) that deal with the above controversial historical circumstance of revelation. Other Shīʿī exegetes are sceptical about the above circumstance of revelation. According to Shīʿī exegetes such as al-Qummi (1983, 2, p. 99), al-Ḥuwaizi (n.d., 3, p. 581), al-Shīrāzi (1992, 11, pp. 40–41), and the Shīʿī scholar al-Mūsawī (n.d., p. 247), the circumstance of revelation of Q24:11–20 is not related to ʿĀ'ishah but to the other wife of Muḥammad called the Coptic Māriyyah whose father was the King of Egypt. According to al-Shīrāzi, this reason for revelation is based on the narration by the Shīʿī Imām al-Bāqir (d. 114/732): When Muḥammad's son, Ibrāhīm, from his wife Māriyyah, passed away as a child, Muḥammad was very upset. Having seen him sad, ʿĀ'ishah told him: ‘You need not be so upset. He [the child] was the son of the Coptic Ibn Jarīḥ’. Having heard this, Muḥammad got angry and ordered ʿAli b. Abī Ṭālib to kill him. ʿAli went straight away looking for Ibn Jarīḥ who was in a fenced orchard with a door. When ʿAli knocked at the door, Ibn Jarīḥ approached it but did not open it and ran away because he saw ʿAli very angry and had a sword in his hand. ʿAli climbed the orchard's wall and chased Ibn Jarīḥ who climbed a date palm. ʿAli climbed the same date palm and was about to catch him but Ibn Jarīḥ jumped for his life and fell on the ground. Upon falling, Ibn Jarīḥ was not covered by his clothes from the bottom up to his waist, and his private parts could be seen. ʿAli saw him in this state, went back to Muḥammad, and reported to him: ‘Ibn Jarīḥ does not possess what men have and does not possess what women have’. Muḥammad was relieved and said: ‘Thanks God for saving the reputation of my family’.

We can argue that the second circumstance of revelation based upon Shīʿī exegesis is invalid for the following reasons:

- (1) Having learned that what ʿĀ'ishah told him was a false accusation (ifk) and slander (qadhf) of his wife Māriyyah, one may wonder why Muḥammad did not punish ʿĀ'ishah for slandering Māriyyah and subject her to 80 lashes in public.
- (2) One may also wonder why Muḥammad passes his death sentence and orders ʿAli to kill Ibn Jarīḥ although he (Muḥammad) has one witness only, namely his wife ʿĀ'ishah.
- (3) If Muḥammad believes ʿĀ'ishah and falls under her influence but later on he finds out that her accusation was false and believes

‘Ali’s story, Muḥammad cannot be an infallible Prophet although Muslim scholars from all schools of thought unanimously believe that he was infallible.

- (4) Any claim that blemishes the character of ‘Ā’ishah will smear Muḥammad’s character and his status as a Prophet. The spiritual leader of Iran, Āyat Allāh ‘Ali Khāmānā’i denounced in his Friday sermon on 1 October 2010 such claims by some Shī‘i clerics which support the story of false accusation against ‘Ā’ishah and the Sunni iconic companions.⁹ It is also interesting to note that the major Shī‘i scholar and exegete of the fifth/eleventh century Abu Ja‘far Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī¹⁰ (d. 460/1067) (n.d., 7, p. 415) believes that the circumstance of revelation of Q24:11–20 is related to ‘Ā’ishah. Moreover, he supports his exegetical views by narrations from ‘Ā’ishah, too.
- (b) Q24:22 (Let not those of virtue among you and wealth swear not to give aid to their relatives and the needy and the emigrants for the cause of God, and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that God should forgive you? God is forgiving and merciful): According to Sunni mainstream exegetes and Ibāḍī non-mainstream exegetes, this āyah was sent down in connection with Abu Bakr al-Ṣiddīq who used to provide financial aid to his causin Miṣṭaḥ b. Uthāthah. However, after the revelation of Q24:11–20 which vindicated ‘Ā’ishah categorically, Abu Bakr swore that he would not help Miṣṭaḥ anymore. However, when Q24:22 was revealed, Abu Bakr changed his mind and decided to continue his financial aid to Miṣṭaḥ. However, according to Shī‘i exegetes, Q24:22 was sent down in connection with some believers but not Abu Bakr (al-Ṭabāṭabā’i 1962, 15, p. 102).
- (iv) Intertextual exegesis: In Q24:34, we are told that: (We have certainly sent down to you distinct statements [which explain Islamic legal rulings related to this sūrah] and examples from those [nations] who passed away before you and an admonition for those who are mindful of God). This Qur’anic statement refers to the word (mathal – an example [from the previous nations]). Since the major theme of Q24 is slander and false allegations, therefore, Q24:34 is intertextually related to Q4:156 and Q19:27, on the one hand, and to Q12:25, on the other, which are also statements about false allegations, defamation, and slander. The phrase (mathalan min alladhīna khalaw min qablikum – examples from those [nations] who passed away before you) of Q24:34 also alludes to the stories of past communities whose people also made defamatory allegations against virtuous characters. This conceptual relatedness and thematic intertextuality is explained below:
 - (a) Q24:34 is intertextually related to Q4:156 and Q19:27. (We [God] cursed them [the Jewish community] for their saying slanderous allegations [i.e. adultery] against Mary, Q4:156), (Mary came to her Jewish

- people carrying the child [Jesus Christ], and they said: ‘Mary! You have done something terrible [i.e. adultery]!’, Q19:27). These two āyahs Q4:156 and Q19:27 refer to the slander made by the Jewish community against Mary when she gave birth to Jesus Christ while she was not married. In other words, like ‘Ā’ishah, Mary was also falsely accused by her own people of adultery. Further intertextual relatedness between Q24:34 and Q4:156 and Q19:27 is illustrated by reference to the theme of vindication (al-tabri’ah) of both ‘Ā’ishah and Mary. We are informed by Q24:11–26 about ‘Ā’ishah’s vindication: (It was a group from among you that concocted the false accusation [i.e. against ‘Ā’ishah] every one of them will be charged with the sin he has committed . . . This is obviously a lie . . . When you heard the lie . . . God warns you never to do anything like this again, if you are true believers . . . A painful punishment waits in this world and the next for those who like indecency to spread among the believers . . . Those who accuse honourable women . . . are rejected by God in this life and the next. A painful punishment awaits them . . .). We are also informed about Mary’s vindication by Q19:17–22 (Then God sent Mary angel Gabriel and he represented himself to her as a man. . . Gabriel told her: ‘I am only the messenger of your Lord to give you news of a pure boy [i.e. son].’ Mary said: ‘How can I have a boy while no man has touched me and I have not committed adultery?’ Gabriel said: ‘Thus, it will be.’ Your Lord says: ‘It is easy for God, and God will make Jesus a sign to the people . . .’). Mary’s vindication is also stated by Q19:29–34 (Mary pointed to Jesus. The Jews said: ‘How can we speak to one who is a child?’ . . . Jesus responded: ‘Indeed, I am the servant of God. God has given me the Bible and made me a Prophet and has made me blessed . . .’ That is Jesus, the son of Mary, the word of truth about which the Jews are sceptical). Mary is also vindicated by Q3:59 (Indeed, the example of Jesus to God [regarding his creation] is like that of Adam. God created him from dust; then, God said to him: ‘Be’, and he was), Q21:91 (Mention Mary who guarded her chastity so We [God] blew into her garment through our angel Gabriel and We [God] made her son a sign for the worlds), and by Q66:12 (The example of Mary, the daughter of ‘Imrān, who guarded her chastity, so We [God] blew into her garment through our angel Gabriel, and she believed in the words of her Lord and God’s Scriptures and was devoutly obedient).
- (b) Q24:34 is intertextually related to Q12:25. We are informed by Q12:25 (Both Joseph and Zulaikhah raced to the door, and she tore his shirt from the back, and at the door they met her husband [al-‘Azīz]. She said: ‘What, other than prison or painful punishment, should be the reward of someone who tried to dishonour your wife [by having sexual intercourse with me]?’). Thus, this Qur’anic statement clearly deals with slander and false allegations of adultery made by Zulaikhah against Joseph. Zulaikhah, the wife of al-‘Azīz, the Minister of Supplies, falsely accused

Joseph of forcing her to have sex with him. Also, both Q24:2–4 and Q12:25 refer to ‘punishment’ which makes them even more intertextually related. Further intertextual relatedness between Q24:34 and Q12:25 is illustrated by reference to the theme of vindication (*al-tabri’ah*) of both ‘Ā’ishah and Joseph. We are informed by Q24:11–26 about ‘Ā’ishah’s vindication: (It was a group from among you that concocted the false accusation [i.e. against ‘Ā’ishah] every one of them will be charged with the sin he has committed . . . This is obviously a lie . . . When you heard the lie . . . God warns you never to do anything like this again, if you are true believers . . . A painful punishment waits in this world and the next for those who like indecency to spread among the believers . . . Those who accuse honourable women . . . are rejected by God in this life and the next. A painful punishment awaits them . . .) We are also told about Joseph’s vindication by Q12:26–28 (But Joseph said: ‘She tried to seduce me.’ . . . When the husband saw that Joseph’s shirt was torn at the back, he said: ‘This is another instance of women’s treachery . . . You [Zulaikhah] should ask for forgiveness for your sin. You have done wrong’). Zulaikhah later on admits her sin and that she falsely accused Joseph: (Now the truth [i.e. Joseph’s vindication] has become evident. It was I who tried to force him to have sex with me. Indeed, Joseph is an honest and truthful man). Thus, like ‘Ā’ishah, Joseph was also falsely accused of adultery by the family who adopted him.

- (v) Theological cleavages: Jurisprudential problems have been selected for analysis, such as:
 - (a) Q24:17 (God warns you against returning to the likes of this conduct ever if you should be believers). For Mu‘tazili exegetes, if a Muslim is engaged in slander (*al-qadhif*) or false accusation (*al-ifk*), he/she will be a disbeliever. Other schools of thought and exegesis do not hold this view. For them, the Mu‘tazili exegetical view is in contrast with Q24:11 (Indeed, those who came with falsehood (*al-ifk*) are a group among you) which means ‘those who have spread the story of falsehood are believers like you and although they have committed a serious wrongdoing, they are still believers’.
 - (b) Purgery of oath: (Let not those of virtue among you and wealth swear not to give aid to their relatives and the needy and the emigrants for the cause of God, and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that God should forgive you? God is forgiving and merciful, Q24:22). According to Sunni mainstream exegetes, Mu‘tazili and Ibāḍī non-mainstream exegetes, and one Shī‘ī exegete, who is Abu Ja‘far Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī (d. 460/1067) (n.d., 7, p. 421), this āyah was sent down in connection with Abu Bakr al-Ṣiddīq who used to provide financial aid to his causin Miṣṭaḥ b. Uthāthah. However, after the revelation of Q24:11–20 which vindicated ‘Ā’ishah categorically, Abu

Bakr swore that he would not help Miṣṭaḥ anymore. However, when Q24:22 was revealed, Abu Bakr changed his mind and decided to continue his financial aid to Miṣṭaḥ. According to Islamic law, this may be purgery of oath (al-ḥanath ʿan al-yamīn). However, according to this āyah, when someone makes an oath to withhold his/her aid to a needy person, and then goes back on his/her decision, this is not considered as purgery of oath since it is a continuation of doing a good deed for a good cause. The word (ya'tal) in this āyah means (to make an oath, to swear) which is negated by (lā – do not). Thus, it forbids cutting aid to a needy relative or person after an oath is made.

However, there are two different jurisprudential rules in connection with swearing not to do something. The first view is that whoever swears not to do something good but later on realizes that he/she was wrong can go back on his/her oath and carry on with doing the good thing he/she stopped doing, provided he/she pays an expiation, i.e. atonement (kaffārah). The other view is that he/she does not need to pay a kaffārah, since he/she is going to resume doing a good deed which has been terminated irrationally through an oath. The resumption of doing the good deed is considered as expiation. This view is supported by the ḥadīth: (Whoever swears to stop doing something but he/she finds out that the deed he/she stopped doing was good, he/she should resume doing the good deed and this is considered as his/her atonement).

- (c) Places and ways of lashing: In Q24:2, we are admonished about extramarital sexual intercourse between a man and a woman, whose punishment is 100 lashes (al-zāniyatu wal-zāni fajlidū kulla wāḥidin mihumā mi'ata jaldah – Lash the adulteress and the adulterer 100 lashes each). The verb (jalada – to lash, literally meaning 'to skin') occurs in the imperative form (fajlidū – lash). Stylistically, the /f/ letter (al-fā') is attached to the imperative verb because the āyah represents a legal injunction that has occurred in the present form in order to signify the punishment. Unless each of the four witnesses has seen the actual sexual intercourse between the man and the woman and most importantly has seen the penis in the pudendum of the female, his testimony is not accepted. For ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb and ʿAli b. Abī Ṭālib, the unmarried woman and the unmarried man found guilty of sexual intercourse should be given 100 lashes each. However, for ʿAṭā', Sufyān al-Thawri, Imām Mālik, and Imām Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, they should be given some advice and told about their mistakes (yu'addab). All Muslim scholars agree that the punishment of extramarital sexual intercourse by a married man is stoning without lashing, while it is lashing only for the unmarried man. For Imām Mālik and Imām al-Shāfi'i, the unmarried man is sent to exile (al-taghrīb) for a year after being lashed and should be kept under house arrest. Based on the textual evidence of Q24:2, al-Jaṣṣāṣ (1994, 3:334) holds the view that to exile the unmarried man is not part of the punishment. For him, exiling the unmarried adulterer

is regarded as a rebuke (taʿzīr).¹¹ However, the unmarried woman should not be sent to exile after being lashed.

In Q4:16 (You should punish [by dishonouring] the two who commit the unlawful sexual intercourse). Thus, earlier in Islam, the punishment for unlawful sex was dishonouring (al-taʿyīr) plus house confinement of the woman, and dishonouring the man. However, this injunction in Q4:16 was abrogated by Q24:2 for the unmarried man (ghair muḥṣan); as for the married man (muḥṣan), the punishment now has become stoning according to Q24:2.

The punishment of lashing is carried out by one of the most pious men in the community. A leather belt should be used in lashing. It should be tender and should not be wet. The adulterer should take off his clothes. However, Ibn ʿAbbās and al-Thawri disagree with this. However, the adulteress should keep minimal clothes on her. Lashing should not take place in mosques. For Imām Mālik, lashing should be on the back and for al-Shāfiʿi, the man should stand up during the lashing. For the punishment of falsely accusing (al-qadhf) someone of having a sexual intercourse, the accused should be lashed with his clothes on. The lashing for unlawful sex should be harsher than that for false accusation, while the lashing for false accusation should be harsher than that for consuming intoxicants. The person executing the lashing should not raise his hand high enough that his armpit might be seen during the lashing. The lashing should not cause death and should not be on sensitive parts of the body such as the head, the face, and the genitals. The lashing should be painful but it should not cause injuries or cracks in the skin.

It should also be noted that the punishment of lashing for falsely accusing someone of having unlawful sexual intercourse cannot be executed unless the victim brings four witnesses and asks the Imām to investigate the false accusation and execute the relevant punishment. If the victim does not have four witnesses but asks for the punishment of the person who falsely accused him/her, the victim should be lashed 80 lashes.

- (d) Q24:35 is referred to in Arabic as (āyat al-nūr – the statement of light): (God is the light of the heavens and earth. His light is like this: there is a niche, and in it a lamp, the lamp inside a glass, a glass like a glittering star, fuelled from a blessed olive tree from neither east nor west, whose oil almost gives light even when no fire touches it, light upon light, God guides whoever He will to His light). For Sunni exegetes, such as Muqātil b. Sulaimān (2003, 2, p. 419), ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Ṣanʿānī (1999, 2, p. 443), al-Māturīdī (2005, 7, pp. 563–570), al-Ṭabarānī (2008, 4, pp. 433–438), al-Ṭabari (2005, 9, pp. 320–328), Ibn Kathīr (1993, 3:280), and also for only one Shīʿi exegete, al-Ṭūsī (n.d., 7, p. 435–437), Q24:35 is provided with an esoteric meaning that refers either to the light of God, the Qurʾān, Muḥammad, or the believers.

However, Shī'ī exegetes provide esoteric meanings to Q24:35 that allude to their Shī'ī Imāms. For Shī'ī exegetes, this āyah refers to Muḥammad and the Shī'ī Imāms only: the niche (al-mishkāṭ) is Muḥammad's heart, the lamp (al-miṣbāḥ) is the light of knowledge, the glass (al-zujājah) refers either to ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib, his heart, his chest, or Muḥammad's bequest to ʿAlī to be the first caliph. According to another exegetical view based on the exegesis of the Shī'ī Imām Jaʿfar al-Šādiq, the niche is Fāṭimah (Muḥammad's daughter, ʿAlī's wife), the lamp is her son al-Ḥasan, and the glass is her son al-Ḥusain (al-Ṭabāṭabā'i 1962, 15, p. 141; al-Shīrāzi 1992, 13, p. 113). For al-Qummi (1983, 2, p. 103), the lamp refers to al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusain, and the glittering star (kuwkab durriy) refers to Fāṭimah who is a glittering star among all ladies of the world. For al-Qummi (1983, 2, p. 103), the phrase (God guides whoever He will to His light) refers to the Shī'ī Imāms and means: 'God guides whoever He will to the Shī'ī Imāms'. For al-Ṭabāṭabā'i (1962, 15, p. 141) and al-Shīrāzi (1992, 11, p. 103), the section of the āyah: (God is the light of the heavens and earth. His light is like this: there is a niche, and in it a lamp) refers to Muḥammad and Shī'ī Imāms who are signs of God and signs through which people are guided. For al-Ḥuwaizi (n.d., 3, p. 603), the section of the āyah: (a blessed olive tree from neither east nor west) refers to 'ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib who is neither a Jew nor a Christian'. For al-Shīrāzi (1992, 11, p. 110), the expression (zujājah – glass) refers to Muḥammad's bequest to ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib to be the first caliph.

For Sufi exegetes such as ʿArābi (2006, 2, p. 673), the human being possesses the grand divine secret; therefore, the body is the niche, the intellect (al-ʿaql) is the lamp, the spirit (al-rūḥ) is the glass which houses the intellect because the spirit represents the esoteric and exoteric name of God. ʿArābi (2006, 2, p. 673) also claims that God created first the spirit and intellect which both represent Muḥammad's light according to two ḥadīths he mentions narrated by Jābir: (O Jābir, the first thing God created was your Prophet's light) and (I [Muḥammad] am from God's light and the believers are an extension of my light). ʿArābi (2006, 2, p. 673) supports his argument by the Sufi view of ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Jili who is believed to have said: (God created the light of Muḥammad from His [God's light], and created the rest of the universe from the spirit of Muḥammad, which is what you can see outside in all forms of creation). ʿArābi (2006, 2, p. 673) also explains the nature of spirit: 'It originates from God, it has an impact on creation, it is a means and a mediator; the spirit without God cannot give light, the spirit is lit through God, it is the first thing that becomes attached to God; for these reasons, the spirit has become a secret beyond the human intellect to understand. The spirit's light is from God's light and that one of the attributes of light is the divine light, and the spirit guarantees the divine knowledge after its creation'. However, according to Shī'ī Sufism represented by the Shī'ī

Imām Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq (2002, pp. 125–126), there are different kinds of light, such as the light of keeping the heart, the light of fear, heart, hope, remembering, knowledge, shyness, blessing, generosity, and the light of divinity, monotheism, and eternity. Imām Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq (2002, p. 126) also claims that ‘the light of the believer is from the light of belief and Islam; the paths leading to God are lit by the light of Abu Bakr, ʿUmar, ʿUthmān, and ʿAli.’ He (2002, p. 126) also says that ‘God illuminated the earth by Abu Bakr, ʿUmar, ʿUthmān, and ʿAli’. It is worthwhile to note that Shīʿi exegetes neither refer to nor recognize the first three caliphs Abu Bakr, ʿUmar, and ʿUthmān.

Muʿtazili exegetes such as al-Zamakhshari (1995, 3, p. 234) provide exoteric meanings to the words niche, lamp, and glass. The word (mathal – like) for al-Zamakhshari (1995, 3, p. 234) refers to the extraordinary feature of illumination of God’s light. Early Muʿtazili exegetes such as Abu ʿAli Muḥammad al-Jubbāʾi (d. 303/915) and Abu al-Qāsim ʿAbd Allāh al-Kaʿbi (d. 319/931) have not dealt with the exegesis of Q24:35.

Ibāḍi exegetes such as Iṭfaiyish (1987, 9, pp. 112–113) and Baiyūḍ (2005, 2, pp. 343–346) are influenced by the Muʿtazili school of exegesis; thus, they avoid ascribing esoteric meanings to the expressions that have occurred in the āyah of light, Q24:35.

(vi) Modern exegesis: This includes the following features:

(a) Q24 as a macro text can be divided into three major textual units:

Unit one: Q24:1–34. There is semantic (word) and thematic consonance between the first and the last āyah of this unit: The unit starts with reference to the expression (anzalnā – We [God] sent down) and ends with the same word. The first āyah of this unit admonishes the reader and employs the expression (laʿallakum tadhakkarūn – that you might remember) and the last āyah of the unit (Q24:34) employs the expression (mawʿizatun lil-muttaqīn – an admonition for those who fear God). Unit one deals with Islamic legal rulings, moral instructions, and the social problems incurred by false accusation.

Unit two: Q24:35–46. There is thematic consonance between the first and the last āyah of this unit. Q24:35 refers to God’s light and guidance, and Q24:46 refers to God’s guidance that signifies His light (āyāt mubiyināt – āyahs that clarify the right path) and also refers to the straight path illuminated by God’s light. Unit two informs the reader about who the guided and misguided are. This unit also deals with Islamic creed (al-ʿaqidah), belief, disbelief, the universe, life and God’s creatures, and His omnipotence.

Unit three: Q24:47–64. This unit defines who the genuine believer is and why some Muslims are not guided properly and have insecure faith. It is concerned with: (a) overt and covert belief, (b) overt belief versus

covert disbelief, and (c) overt and covert disbelief. There is thematic consonance between the first and the last āyah of this unit. The prefatory āyahs of this unit (Q24:47–49) refer to the Muslims of insecure faith and to the judgement of God and His Prophet, and Q24:64 also refers to God's judgement. There is also thematic consonance between the last āyah of unit two (Q24:46) which refers to (āyāt mubiyināt – āyahs that clarify the right path) and unit three which provides a classification of people into three categories:

- (1) the genuine believers who embrace their faith overtly and covertly;
 - (2) the hypocrites who pretend to be true believers but covertly renounce their faith;
 - (3) the disbelievers who disbelieve overtly and covertly.
- (b) In terms of macro textual consonance, one can observe thematic sequentiality and conceptual chaining between Q22 and Q24 according to their arrangement in the current ʿUthmanic codex. The prefatory āyahs (Q22:1–2) warn the reader of the horror of the day of judgement which is vividly depicted through the employment of two forms of imagery: (i) a mother abandoning her baby while she is still breast-feeding it, and (ii) pregnant women having a miscarriage. However, if the reader is in doubt regarding resurrection, God's omnipotence is employed in āyah 3 to rebut this scepticism and substantiate the ability of the creator. Thus, the reader is left in doubt about the horrors of the awaited event of the day of judgement. These introductory āyahs have set the scene for Q24 whose prefatory āyahs warn the reader of the socio-religious consequences of slander, false accusation, and adultery. Having warned the reader of the horror of the day of judgement, it is hoped that he/she will heed and do good deeds. Thus, the beginning of Q22:1–5 and the beginning of Q24:1–4 are thematically linked. In a similar vein, the end of Q22 is thematically related to the end of Q24. Q22:76–78 admonish the reader of: (i) God's full knowledge of all overt and covert acts of each individual, and (ii) establishing prayer, paying charity, and seeking refuge in God. Thematic sequentiality moves on to the concluding āyahs of Q24:63–64 which admonish the reader: (i) not to go against God's order, and (ii) of God's full knowledge of all overt and covert acts of each individual.
- (c) One can also observe thematic sequentiality and conceptual chaining between Q22, Q24, and Q63 according to their revelation arrangement. According to their chronological revelation, Q24 was number 105, Q22 was number 106, and Q63 was number 107. However, in terms of macro textual consonance, the prefatory āyahs of Q22:1, 2, 7 serve as a warning and are a serious reminder of the horror of the day of judgement. This is an implicit call for piety and good deeds. Q22:9, however, warns of twisting the facts to mislead people. Again, this message is clothed with a warning of punishment on the day of resurrection. This introductory

theme dovetails with the prefatory section of Q24:1–23 and with Q24:34 which is the last āyah of unit one. In this introductory part of Q24, the reader is warned of slanderous allegations against other individuals in the community and of committing adultery. The reader is also advised in Q24:11, 16–17 not spread false allegations, to put allegations to the test, and to examine them closely. Similarly, we are admonished by Q24:34 to fear God and take note of the past nations whose conduct was not based on piety. In our contemporary life, we can describe Q22:1–2 and Q24:1–23 as a TV advert of a house on fire. The message is to warn the audience of the consequences of not having a fire alarm fitted in their homes. The two introductory themes of both Q22 and Q24 are also conceptually chained to the prefatory statement of Q63:1 which admonishes of hypocritical conduct which is the outcome of lack of piety. The conclusion of Q22:77–78 urges righteousness, the conclusion of Q24:63–64 is a warning of hypocritical conduct and a reminder of the day of resurrection. The conclusion of Q63:10–11 is a call for righteousness and a sharp reminder of everyone's inevitable death as a warning of the day of resurrection. In terms of thematic consonance and logical sequentiality at a macro textual level, one can observe that righteousness is the prescription for the spiritual therapy of hypocritical conduct. Hypocritical conduct is a symptom of weak belief. Thus, righteousness is prescribed as vitamins to strengthen the fragile body. This is a presentation technique unique to Qur'anic discourse.

(vii) Linguistic exegesis: This involves the following aspects:

- (a) Variant modes of reading involved in Q24. For instance, in Q24:1 we have (*faraḍnāhā* – to make it obligatory) where the letter (r) is not doubled (*mukhaffafah*) and has an open vowel. This mode of reading implies an ellipted object (*‘alaikum* – upon you). Thus, it should read as: (*faraḍnāhā ‘alaikum* – made it obligatory on you). The other mode of reading of the same word is (*farraḍnāhā*) where the letter (r) is doubled to signify hyperbole and reminding the reader of the several obligatory Islamic legal rulings that have occurred in Q24.

The first word (*sūrah*) in Q24:1 has also two modes of reading: (*sūratun*) in the nominative case acting as a predicate (*khavar*) whose inchoative (*muḩtada’*) is implicit represented by the demonstrative pronoun (*hādhīhī* – this); thus, (*sūratun*) should read as: (*hādhīhī sūratun* – This is a *sūrah*). For more details, see point (c) below of this section. The other mode of reading of (*sūrah*) is (*sūratan*) in the accusative case acting as the direct object of an implicit imperative verb (*atlū* – read); thus, we should have: (*atlū sūratan* – read a *sūrah*).

Q24:2 also has two modes of reading: (*walā ta’khudhkum bihimā ra’fatun fī dīn allāhī* – Do not be taken by mercy for them in the law of God) where the noun (*ra’fah* – mercy) occurs with a vowelless consonant (*sākin*), i.e. as a glottal stop /ʔ/ (*hamzah*), meaning (mercy).

However, the other mode of reading is: (walā ta'khudhkum bihimā ra'afatun fī dīn allāhi – Do not be taken by exaggerated mercy for them in the law of God) where the noun (ra'afah – extreme mercy) occurs with the short vowel /a/ (fatḥah) meaning (exaggerated mercy).

There are also two modes of reading for Q24:7, one of which is (anna la'nata allāhi 'alaihi – that the curse of God be upon him), where the word (la'nata – curse) occurs in the accusative case (manṣūb) whose grammatical function is the noun of the particle (anna), while the word ('alaihi – on him) is a prepositional phrase with the grammatical function of predicate of (anna); thus, it means: (the curse of God will be upon him). However, the second mode of reading is (an la'natu allāhi 'alaihi), where the undoubled particle (an) is followed by (la'natu) in the nominative case with the grammatical function of inchoative (mubtada') and ('alaihi) as the predicate; thus, it means: (a curse from God will be upon him).

In Q24:45, we have two modes of reading: (allāhu khalaqa kulla dābbatin min mā' – God has created every living creature from water) where the word (khalaqa to create) occurs as a verb and (allāhu – God) as its subject. However, the other mode of reading is: (allāhu khāliq kulla dābbatin min mā' – God is the creator of every living creature from water), where the word (khāliq – creator) has the grammatical function of an active participle (ism fā'il) and is the predicate (khabar) of the noun (allāhu – God) which is the inchoative (mubtada').

Other modes of reading include:

Q24:6 (arba'u shahādātīn – four testimonies) where the noun (arba'u – four) occurs in the nominative case because it acts as the predicate of the inchoative (fashahādatu aḥadihim – the witness of one of them shall be). However, the other mode of reading is (arba'a – four) in the accusative case because it can be the direct object of (fashahādatu aḥadihim – the witness of one of them shall be). Q24:7 (anna la'nata allāhi – the curse of God will be) and Q24:9 (anna ghaḍaba allāhi – that the wrath of God will be) where (anna) is doubled and (la'nata – curse) and (ghaḍaba – wrath) are both nouns in the accusative case. The other modes of reading are: (an la'natu allāhi – the curse of God will be) and (an ghaḍiba allāhu – that God will be angry), where (an) is not doubled (sākinah), (la'natu) occurs as a noun in the nominative case, and (ghaḍiba – to feel angry) occurs as a verb. Q24:15, where (talaqqawnahu – to take the news up with your tongues (rather than with your mind to verify it), i.e. to hasten in repeating and spreading the news carelessly, has four other modes of reading, such as: (tulqūnahu – to repeat the news carelessly), (tatalaqqawnahu – to repeat the news carelessly), (talaqqawnahu – to repeat the news carelessly), and as (taliqūnahu – to make a lie) which is derived from the verb (walaqa – to lie). Q24:21 (zakā – to be pure) is also read as (zakkā – to be made pure). In Q24:24 the verb (tashhadu – to bear witness against) occurs in the feminine form, while in the other mode of reading it occurs as (yashhadu – to bear witness against) in the

masculine form. In Q24:25, the expression (al-ḥaqqa – true) occurs in the accusative case because it is an adjective of the noun (dīnahun – their due, recompense), where (dīna – due) is also in the accusative case. However, in the other mode of reading, we have (al-ḥaqqu) in the nominative case because it functions as the adjective of (allāhu – God). In Q24:27, we have (tasta'nisū – to ask for permission to enter other people's houses). However, in the other mode of reading, this expression is replaced by (tasta'dhinū – to ask for permission to enter other people's houses). In Q24:32, the word (ʿibādikum – male slaves) is also read as (ʿabīdikum – male slaves). In Q24:33 (fa'inna allāha min ba'di ikrāhihinna ghafūrun raḥīm – God is to them, after their compulsion, forgiving and merciful). In the other mode of reading, we encounter the addition of (lahunna – to them); thus, we get: (fa'inna allāha min ba'di ikrāhihinna {lahunna} ghafūrun raḥīm – God is to them, after the compulsion {to them}, forgiving and merciful). In Q24:34, we have (mubaiyināt) as an active participle (ism fā'il) meaning 'these āyahs clarify the right path'. However, in the other mode of reading, we have (mubaiyanāt) as a passive participle (ism maf'ūl) meaning 'these āyahs have been made clear by God'. In Q24:35, the word (nūr – light) is also read as an active participle: (munawwir – the illuminating source); thus, the beginning of this āyah reads as: (allāhu munawwiru al-samāwāti wal-arḍi – God is the illuminating source of the heavens and the earth). In Q24:35, the word (nūr – light) has the mode of reading as a verb: (nawwara – to illuminate); thus, this initial section of the āyah reads: (allāhu nawwara al-samāwāti wal-arḍa – God illuminates the heavens and the earth), where (al-samāwāti wal-arḍa – the heavens and the earth) have the grammatical function of direct object of the verb (nawwara). According to this mode of reading, the exegesis of this part of the āyah can be either: (God illuminates the heavens and the earth through stars as well as through the sun and the moon) or (God illuminates the heavens through the angels and illuminates the earth through the Prophets and scholars) (al-Ālūsī 2001, 9, p. 357). The phrase (mathalu nūrihi – the example of His [God's] light is . . . , Q24:35) has two different modes of reading: (mathalu nūr al-mu'minīna – the example of the believers' light is . . .) and (mathalu nūr man āmana bihi – the example of the light of whoever believed in Him [God]) is . . .) (al-Ṭabarānī 2008, 4, p. 433). In Q24:35, the adjective (durriyun – glittering, pearly white) is also read as: (durri'un), (dirri'un), (darri'un), and (darriyyun). The verb (yūqadu – to be lit) has also other modes of reading, such as: (tūqadu) and (tawaqqadu) which refer to 'glass', and (tawaqqada), (yūqadu), and (yawaqqadu) which refer to 'lamp'. (lā sharqiyatin walā gharbiyatin – neither of the east nor of the west) occurs in the genitive case (majrūr) because it has the grammatical function of being coordinated to (ma'ṭūfah 'alā) the noun (zaitūnatin – olive tree) which also occurs in the genitive case. This phrase has another mode of reading: (lā sharqiyatun walā gharbiyatun)

because it has the grammatical function of an adjective. In Q24:36, we either have the verb (yusabbih – to praise [the name of God]) in its neutral form or in the passive form (yusabbah – [the name of God] to be praised). In Q24:40, the noun phrase (saḥābun ḡulumātun – clouds, darkness) where both the first and second nouns occur with a nominative nunation (tanwīn marfūʿ). This phrase is also read as: (saḥābun ḡulumātīn) where the second noun occurs in the genitive nunation (tanwīn maksūr) because it grammatically acts as an apposition (badal) to the previous noun (kaḡulumātīn – like darkness). The word (qawla – statement) in Q24:51 is also read as: (qawlu). The word (yattaqhi – to fear [Him]) in Q24:52 has other modes of reading such as (yattaqihī) and (yattaqih). In Q24:58, the noun phrase (thalāthu ʿawrātīn – three times of privacy) where the noun (thalāthu – three) occurs in the nominative case due to its initial position. However, in the other mode of reading, this noun occurs in the accusative case (thalātha ʿawratīn) because grammatically the noun (thalāthata) is an apposition to the previous noun (thalātha) of (thalātha marrātīn – three times). In Q24:61, the plural noun (mafātīḡahu – keys) is also read as: (mafātīḡahu – keys) and (miftāḡahu – key). Also, the verb (malaktum – to possess) is also read as: (mulliktum – to be made in possession of).

- (b) Polysemy: The verb (turfaʿ) in (Such houses of worship [i.e. mosques] which God has ordered to be raised . . . , Q24:36) occurs in the passive tense and has four meanings:
- (1) It means (tubnā – to be built) which is supported intertextually by (rafaʿa samkahā fasawwāhā – He raised its ceiling and proportioned it, Q79:28).
 - (2) It means (tuʿazzam wa tuṭahhar ʿan al-anjās waʿan al-laghwi – to be glorified, cleansed of uncleanness and idle talk).
 - (3) It means both (to be built and be glorified, cleansed of uncleanness and idle talk).
 - (4) It means (tukhlaq – to be created) according to Sufi exegetes such as ʿArābī (2006, 2, p. 674) and the word (buyūt) means (qulūb – hearts of human beings). Thus, Q24:36 means: (God has ordained that hearts are created so that His name be remembered in them).
- (c) Ellipsis: In Q24:1 (sūratun anzalnāhā wafaraḡnāhā – A sūrah which We have sent down and made it obligatory), we have an ellipted inchoative (mubtadaʾ maḡdhūf) which is (hādhīhi – this). Thus, this āyah should read: (hādhīhi sūratun anzalnāhā wafaraḡnāhā – This is a sūrah which We have sent down and made it obligatory).
- (d) Ellipsis of apodosis (jawāb al-shart): Q24:10 (walawlā faḡlu allāhi ʿalaikum waraḡmatuhū – If not for the favour of God upon you and His mercy) is a conditional sentence whose apodosis is ellipted which is implicitly understood as either (lakashafa al-zunāt bisuhūlah – He [God] would have exposed the adulterers easily) or (laʾakhadhahum biʿiqābin

min ʿindih – He [God] would have sent His wrath upon them). Thus, this āyah should read as: (walawlā faḍlu allāhi ʿalaikum waraḥmatuhū {lakashafa al-zunāt bisuhūlah / laʾakhadhahum biʿiqābin min ʿindih} – If not for the favour of God upon you and His mercy, {He [God] would have exposed the adulterers easily / He [God] would have sent His wrath upon them}).

- (e) Pronominal reference (ʿawdat al-ḍamīr): We encounter in Q24:35 an interesting example of pronominal reference in Qurʾanic exegesis. This linguistically based exegetical problem occurs in the beginning of this āyah: (allāhu nūru al-samāwāti wal-arḍi mathalu nūrihi . . . – God is the light of the heavens and the earth. The example of His light is . . .). The controversial linguistic problem lies in the noun phrase (nūrihi – His [God’s] light), where the pronoun (-hi – His [God’s]) attached to the noun (nūr – light) can refer to many other nouns rather than only to (allāh – God). Different exegetical meanings will emerge from different pronominal references. Thus, one may wonder whom the pronoun (-hi) of (nūrihi) semantically refers to (al-Ṭabari 2005, 9, pp. 320–322; Ibn ʿAṭīyyah 1991, 10, pp. 506–508; al-Rāzi 1990, 23, p. 202):

- (1) The pronoun (-hi) refers to (allāh – God).
- (2) The pronoun (-hi) refers to Muḥammad, which is intertextually backed up by (sirājan munīrā – an illuminating lamp, Q33:46). Thus, the āyah means: (allāhu nūru al-samāwāti wal-arḍi mathalu nūrihi muḥammad . . . – God is the light of the heavens and the earth. The example of His light is Muḥammad . . .). Thus, Muḥammad is the (mishkāṭ – niche), the (miṣbāḥ – the lamp) is his prophethood and his knowledge of his message, the (zujājah – glass) is Muḥammad’s heart, the (shajarah mubārakah – the blessed tree) is the revelation and the angels sent down to him, and the (zait – oil) of the blessed tree is his arguments, evidence, and Qurʾanic āyahs revealed to him.
- (3) The pronoun (-hi) refers to the believers, which is supported by Ubai b. Kaʿb’s mode of reading (mathalu nūri al-muʾmin – the example of the believer’s light . . .). Thus, the āyah means: (allāhu nūru al-samāwāti wal-arḍi mathalu nūrihi al-muʾminūn . . . – God is the light of the heavens and the earth. The example of His light is the believers . . .). Thus, the believer’s chest is the (mishkāṭ – niche), the (miṣbāḥ – the lamp) is his/her belief and knowledge of the Qurʾān, the (zujājah – glass) is his/her heart, the (shajarah mubārakah – the blessed tree) is the Qurʾān, and the (zait – oil) of the blessed tree is the Qurʾanic arguments and his/her wisdom.
- (4) The pronoun (-hi) refers to the Qurʾān, which is intertextually supported by (qad jāʾakum min allāhi nūr – There has come to you a light from God, Q5:15). Thus, the āyah means: (allāhu nūr al-samāwāti

wal-arḍi mathalu nūrihi al-qur'ān . . . – God is the light of the heavens and the earth. The example of His light is the Qur'ān . . .).

- (5) The pronoun (-hi) refers to the believers' awareness and knowledge of God, which is intertextually backed up by Q39:22 and Q65:11. Thus, the āyah means: (allāhu nūr al-samāwāti wal-arḍi mathalu nūrihi ma'rifatu al-mu'minīna lillāh . . . – God is the light of heavens and the earth. The example of His light is the believers' knowledge and full awareness of God . . .).
 - (6) For al-Ṭabari (2005, 9, p. 322), the pronoun (-hi) refers to (al-ṭā'ah – God's obedience). Thus, the āyah means: (allāhu nūr al-samāwāti wal-arḍi mathalu nūrihi al-ṭā'ah . . . – God is the light of the heavens and the earth. The example of His light is obedience to Him).
- (f) Ellipsis and pronominal reference: In Q24:41 (Do you not see that God is exalted by whoever is within the heavens and the earth and by the birds with wings spread in flight? Each of them has known its means of prayer and exalting Him, and God is knowing of what they do). The linguistic problem is involved in (kullun qad 'alima ṣalātahu watasbiḥahu) which involves three grammatically based exegetical meanings:
- (1) An ellipsis of the noun (allāh – God) as the subject of the verb ('alima – to know). Thus, we get: (kullun qad 'alima allāhu ṣalātahu watasbiḥahu – God has known the means of each bird's prayer and exalting Him). This meaning is backed up by the āyah-final section (wallāhu 'alimun bimā yaf'alūn – and God is knowing of what they do).
 - (2) The pronoun (-hu – its) attached to the nouns (ṣalātahu watasbiḥahu – [its] prayer and exalting) refers to the word (kullun – each) which refers to (al-ṭair – bird). Thus, (kullun qad 'alima ṣalātahu watasbiḥahu) means: (Each bird has known the means of its prayer and exalting Him [God]).
 - (3) The pronoun (-hu – its) attached to the nouns (ṣalātahu watasbiḥahu – [its] prayer and exalting) refers to (dhikr allāh – the praying to God and exalting Him), i.e., it refers to both human beings and birds who pray to God and exalt Him. Thus, (kullun qad 'alima ṣalātahu watasbiḥahu) means: (Each human being and each bird has known the means of their prayer and exalting God).
- The scholastics, however, reject the third exegetical meaning as they claim that birds do not have the same intellectual faculty of humans and therefore are not aware of God and do not pray or exalt Him.
- (g) Pronoun shift: In Q24:12 (lawlā idh sami'tumūhu ḡanna al-mu'minūna wal-mu'mināt . . . – Why, when you heard it, did not the believing men and believing women think . . .) there is a pronoun shift in (sami'tumūhu – you [second person plural] heard it) which occurs in the second person

plural to (ḡanna – they [third person plural] think) which occurs in the third person plural. Stylistically, this āyah should read: (lawlā idh sami^ctumūhu ḡanantum . . . – Why, when you heard it, did not you think . . .). The pragmatic function of pronoun shift in this āyah is to highlight rebuke to those whose belief is insecure and not as strong as the genuine believers. Therefore, the explicit form of the nouns (al-mu^cminūna wal-mu^cmināt – the believing men and believing women) is employed to raise their high status as believers. In other words, a true believer is considerate, always thinks well of others, and is not susceptible to believing gossip and baseless accusation which aim to achieve character assassination of good people.

- (h) Plural form: In Q24:22, the verb (yu^ctū – to give) occurs in the plural form rather than in the singular form (ya^ctī). The pragmatic function of the stylistic plural form is to raise the status of the individual to which this āyah is related, namely Abu Bakr al-Siddīq. The pragmatic function of the plural form which aims to glorify the person occurs frequently in the Qur^cān, as in (innā naḡnu nazzalnā al-dhikra – Indeed, it is We who sent down the message, Q15:9) and (innā a^cṡaināka al-kawthar – Indeed, We have granted you Muḡammad, Q108:1).
- (i) Word order: In Q24:2, the word (al-zāniyatu – the adulteress) refers to the unmarried woman found guilty of sexual intercourse and the word (al-zāni – the adulterer) refers to the unmarried man found guilty of sexual intercourse. The stylistic word order of this āyah places the feminine word (al-zāniyatu) before the masculine word (al-zāni). Culturally, prostitution was commonplace and an acceptable social practice in pre-Islamic Arabia. Prostitutes used to put flags on their house tops as a business sign. Thus, the occurrence of the feminine word (al-zāniyatu) first is to match the cultural norm of the time. The other possible interpretation of the occurrence of the female noun first is due to the cultural attitude of the time: the stigma that is attached to the prostitute is more severe than that attached to the male customer of the brothel. Similarly, the stigma attached to the lady who commits extramarital sexual intercourse is harsher than that attached to her male partner. It is also claimed that the lady is the source of attraction in a sexual activity (al-Qurṡubi 1997, 12, p. 144; al-Shīrāzi 1992, 11, p. 16).
- (j) Change of words: In Q24:7, we find the word (la^cnata – curse) is employed for the man who accuses his wife of committing extramarital sexual intercourse. However, in Q24:9, we encounter a different word (ḡhaḡaba – wrath) for the woman who falsely accuses her husband of committing extramarital sexual intercourse. The semantic interpretation is theologically based: the curse (al-la^cnah) is used for the husband who has only lied by falsely accusing his wife of extramarital sexual intercourse. However, the word (ḡhaḡab) is employed for the wife who has

committed extramarital sexual intercourse as well as lying (al-Qurṭubī 1997, 12, p. 144; Ibn ʿAṭīyah 1991, 10, p. 445).

- (viii) Qurʾanic intertextuality: Q24:21 (*lā tattabiʿū khṭuwāti al-shaiṭāni . . . faʾinnahū yaʾmuru bil-faḥshāʾi wal-munkari* – O you who believe, do not follow the footsteps of Satan . . . Indeed, he enjoins immorality and wrongdoing.) is intertextually related, i.e. can be understood through, Q2:168 (Indeed, Satan is a clear enemy to you), Q2:208 (Do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Indeed, he is a clear enemy to you) and Q6:142 (Do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Indeed, he is a clear enemy to you). In Q24:47–64, people are classified into three categories: believers, hypocrites, and disbelievers. These three categories are intertextually related to Q2:2–20.
- (ix) ʿĀʾishah’s marriage to Muḥammad: For Muslims, it has been an accepted fact that the age of ʿĀʾishah was nine when she got married to Muḥammad. This is based on what al-Bukhārī (d. 256/869) has narrated and which is reported by al-Dhahabī (1996, 2, p. 148). However, marriage for nine-year-old girls has never been a *sunnah* (the standard practice of Muḥammad) in Islam. In other words, (1) if Muḥammad married ʿĀʾishah when she was nine, one may wonder why the Muslims have never followed his practice as they usually do with regards to other actions or practices which have become to be known as *sunnah*, and (2) why is there no ḥadīth by Muḥammad about this important matter? Both the narration of the story and the age of ʿĀʾishah when she got married to Muḥammad have been questioned by an American journalist called Islam Baḥīrī (2008, p. 21). To invalidate these two points, one needs to consider:
- (a) specific historical years;
 - (b) ʿĀʾishah’s date of birth in comparison with other people’s dates of birth around her;
 - (c) most importantly, the authenticity of the narration made by Hishām b. ʿIrwah (d. 146/763) with regards to the statement made by ʿĀʾishah on her age when she got married to Muḥammad.

Let us consider these three points:

- (a) Years of historical significance:
 - (1) The beginning of Muḥammad’s prophetic mission was in 610 (*qabla al-hijrah* – before the migration to Madīnah). This means that the prophetic mission lasted for 13 years in Makkah.
 - (2) Muḥammad migrated to Madīnah in 623 (which marks the first Islamic hijri century) and lived for 10 years there.
 - (3) Muḥammad died in 633. This means that Muḥammad became engaged to ʿĀʾishah three years before his migration to Madīnah, i.e. in 620, which marks 10 years of his prophetic mission in Makkah.

- (4) Therefore, ʿĀʾishah was six years old.
- (5) Muḥammad got married to ʿĀʾishah in Madīnah at the end of the first hijri year, i.e. at the end of 623 when ʿĀʾishah was nine years old.
- (6) Thus, based on al-Bukhari, ʿĀʾishah was born in 614 which marks four years of Muḥammad's prophetic mission.

However, in the view of al-Baḥīrī (2008) and al-Bannā (2008), points (4)–(6) above constitute a flawed premise for ʿĀʾishah's correct age when she got married to Muḥammad. The rebuttal to classical sources such as al-Bukhārī and Muslim is based on other dates of birth of other people as illustrated by point (b) below.

al-Baḥīrī (2008) and al-Bannā (2008) claim that in his *al-Bid' yah wal-Nih' yah*, Ibn Kathīr (2005, 3, pp. 26–35), talks about the very young individuals such as Asmā' and ʿĀʾishah who accepted the new faith during the third year of Muḥammad's covert prophetic mission in Makkah which lasted for four years and which began in 610. This, for them, indicates that ʿĀʾishah accepted Islam in 613 and that she was not a baby then. This authenticates the facts that:

- (1) ʿĀʾishah was born four years before the start of the revelation of the Qur'ān (bad' al-waḥī) in 610, i.e. she was born in 606.
- (2) ʿĀʾishah was eight years old when the overt prophetic mission (al-jahr bil-da'wah) of Muḥammad began in 614.

However, upon checking the section in *al-Bid' yah wal-Nih' yah* of Ibn Kathīr (2005, 3, pp. 26–35) on the very young individuals who accepted Islam, we have not found the details mentioned above.

- (b) Dates of birth: In *Siyar A'lam al-Nubal* of al-Dhahabī (1996, 2, p. 288), we are told that Asmā', ʿĀʾishah's eldest sister, was 10 years older than ʿĀʾishah. In other words, Asmā' was born in 596, i.e. 27 years before Muḥammad's migration to Madīnah. Thus, when Muḥammad's prophetic mission began in 610, and which lasted for 13 years, Asmā' was 14 years old ($27 - 13 = 14$). Therefore, if Asmā' was 14 years old before the beginning of Muḥammad's prophetic mission and she was 10 years older than her sister ʿĀʾishah, then ʿĀʾishah's age was 4 years old before Muḥammad's prophetic mission began in Makkah. In other words, ʿĀʾishah was born in 606. This indicates that ʿĀʾishah was 14 years old when she got engaged to Muḥammad in Makkah before his migration to Madīnah in 623. Thus, their engagement was in 620. This also indicates that they got married after three years and a few months, i.e. in 624 which is the beginning of the second hijri year when they settled down in Madīnah. Therefore, ʿĀʾishah was 18 years old when she got married ($14 + 3 + 1 = 18$).

It is also interesting to note that Asmā', ʿĀʾishah's eldest sister, lived for 100 years and that she died after al-Ḥajjāj murdered her son ʿAbd

Allāh b. al-Zubair in 73/695. This verifies her date of birth as 596, i.e. 27 years before Muḥammad's migration to Madīnah (100 – 73 = 27). Since Asmā' was 10 years older than ʿĀ'ishah, this means ʿĀ'ishah's age was 17 before Muḥammad's migration to Madīnah, and ʿĀ'ishah's age was 18 when she got married, since they remained engaged for just over three years (two years in Makkah and over a year in Madīnah). Another interesting matter is Fāṭimah's date of birth. Fāṭimah, Muḥammad's daughter, was born in the same year of the construction of Kaʿbah when Muḥammad was 35 years old and she was five years older than ʿĀ'ishah. Therefore, when ʿĀ'ishah was born, Muḥammad was 40 which was the age in which he received the first revelation of the Qur'ān. This means that ʿĀ'ishah's age was 13 during the migration of Muḥammad to Madīnah and this was equal to the number of years of Muḥammad's prophetic mission in Makkah which lasted for 13 years.

- (c) The authenticity of the narration about the age of ʿĀ'ishah when she got married to Muḥammad: The narration (al-sanad) about ʿĀ'ishah's age when she got married to Muḥammad has occurred five times, all of which are established on one person called Hishām b. ʿUrwah. There has been some scepticism in terms of the authenticity and credibility of what Hishām was actually narrating. In his *Hadi al-S ri* (1979, p. 625) and *Tahdh b al-Tahdhib* (1918, 11, p. 50), Ibn Ḥajar claims that Imām Mālik did not accept Hishām's narration and that he was angry with him about his narration to the people of Iraq. In the view of Jamāl al-Bannā (2008), Hishām b. ʿUrwah was a truthful (ṣadūq) narrator in Madīnah. However, when he went to Iraq, Hishām's memorization of ḥadīth began to deteriorate and he started to narrate from someone from whom he had not in fact heard the ḥadīth directly but makes the reader feel that he has (yudallis), i.e. he began attributing a ḥadīth to a different narrator. For al-Bahiri (2008) and al-Bannā (2008) this is one of the forms of defects in the ḥadīth chain of authorities. Thus, in terms of criteria of ḥadīth authenticity, Hishām b. ʿUrwah became unreliable in Iraq because he suffered from lack of retentive memory and began saying (ʿan – from) instead of (samiʿtu – I heard it from) or (ḥaddathānī – someone told me) which are stronger terms than (ʿan – from) in ḥadīth studies. It is also worthwhile to note that the statement about ʿĀ'ishah's age when she got married to Muḥammad was not narrated or said by any narrator in Madīnah but in fact all the narrators of such statements were in Iraq. One, for instance, does not find such a statement about ʿĀ'ishah's age when she got married to Muḥammad in *al-Muwattaʿ* of Imām Mālik who had already met and directly heard ḥadīths from Hishām b. ʿUrwah in Madīnah. However, al-Dhahabi (1996, 6, pp. 35–36) supports Hishām b. ʿUrwah's authenticity of ḥadīth narration and disagrees with the scepticism about his lack of retentive memory. It can also be argued that Muslim sources do not provide any ḥadīth that refers to the age of ʿĀ'ishah when she got married.

However, on whether ʿĀʾishah was too young to get married to Muḥammad, it can be argued that there are three criteria that justify ʿĀʾishah's marriage at the age of nine:

- (1) Culturally, Western criteria on the age of marriage cannot be applied to a milieu 1,400 years ago where marriage of very young girls was practised and was neither regarded as odd nor repugnant as we may think of it in the twenty-first century. This form of marriage was culturally acceptable in pre-Islamic Arabia. In fact, the marriage of young girls is still an acceptable social practice in the twenty-first century in some parts of the Middle East, India, and Afghanistan. In the Yemen, for instance, a girl as young as six years old got married to a 25-year-old man (Synthia Gorni 2011, pp. 28–49). Had it never been practised in Arabia, the Arab disbelievers of Makkah and elsewhere would have harshly criticized Muḥammad for marrying ʿĀʾishah when she was nine years old. For instance, ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib was a very old man when he married Hālah. In fact, he got married on the same day his youngest son ʿAbd Allāh (Muḥammad's father) got married to a very young girl called Āminah Bint Wahab (Muḥammad's mother). Similarly, ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb was old when he married Umm Kulthūm who was ʿAli's youngest daughter. ʿUmar also offered his young daughter Ḥafṣah to Abu Bakr while the latter was old and there was a big age difference between Ḥafṣah and Abu Bakr. Also, ʿAmru b. al-ʿĀṣṣ got married when he was 10 years old and got his son ʿAbd Allāh known as ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAmru b. al-ʿĀṣṣ. It is also worthwhile to note that Muḥammad was not the only one who proposed to ʿĀʾishah. The first who proposed to ʿĀʾishah was Jubair Ibn Muṭʿim b. ʿUdai but for religious reasons the marriage proposal was called off because Jubair was a disbeliever and Abu Bakr had already accepted Islam. After this, Muḥammad proposed to ʿĀʾishah through a lady called Khawlah Bint Ḥakīm who was sent by Muḥammad to speak to ʿĀʾishah's father Abu Bakr about Muḥammad's interest in marrying ʿĀʾishah.

Culturally, therefore, one cannot deny the fact that the major factor in Muḥammad's marriage from ʿĀʾishah was to consolidate social and tribal relations with his right-hand man Abu Bakr. The same applies to Muḥammad's marriage from Ḥafṣah, ʿUmar's daughter, when she was widowed.

In a similar vein, culturally, a family with a young girl find themselves restricted when they are visited frequently by a male person. Due to the strong friendship bond between Muḥammad and Abu Bakr, the former used to visit his friend Abu Bakr on a daily basis. ʿĀʾishah was known to be as a pretty young girl with a fair complexion

and pink cheeks. To stem the gossip and scepticism of Quraish, Muḥammad proposed to marry ʿĀ'ishah.

- (2) Physiologically, the age of female sexual maturity cannot be linked to the age of the girl. A girl may be sexually mature while she is still very young; the signs of her maturity appear in the form of menstruation among other things, and the first menstruation (menarche) occurs between the ages of 9 and 15. Most importantly, girls in warm climates such as Arabia, especially 1,400 years ago, have early sexual maturity which usually can be at the age of 8 or 9, while the case is different in cold countries such as Europe in which girls may become sexually mature at the age of 15 and sometimes younger. According to Dupont (1994, pp. 108–109), Roman girls tended to marry very young, though the law prohibited them from marrying below the age of 12. In the view of Dupont (1994, pp. 108–109), such early marriages were even more premature than they might first appear, since girls reached puberty at an earlier age than they do today.
- (3) Islamically, if the marriage of a young girl can bring harm to her, this marriage becomes counter to Islamic law and parents should not endorse it. This is referred to as (al-muṭīqah lil-zawāj – the girl who can physically get married). For instance, when Abu Bakr proposed to Fāṭimah, Muḥammad's daughter, Muḥammad refused and told him: 'She was still too young'. Then, ʿUmar proposed to her after a while and Muḥammad said the same thing to him. However, after a longer period of time, Muḥammad allowed ʿAli to marry Fāṭimah although she was still very young. Muḥammad's decision was based on the fact that Fāṭimah's marriage would not cause her any harm.

4.3.2.8 *Sūrat al-Qamar* (Q54)

This sūrah is exegetically analysed through the major exegetical techniques adopted by classical and modern mainstream and non-mainstream schools of exegesis:

- (i) Periphrastic exegesis: This approach provides brief semantic details of some expressions in the āyahs; thus, it is not a word-for-word exegesis. It is also not an āyah-by-āyah exegesis:

Q54:1 (iqṭarabat al-sā'atu wanshaqqa al-qamar) means the day of judgement has come close. Among the signs of this day is the emergence of Muḥammad and the splitting of the moon in two. It is reported that the disbelievers of Makkah asked Muḥammad to show them a sign of his prophethood. Immediately after their query, the moon split in two parts. However, when the disbelievers saw this, they responded by saying: 'This act is of

magicians' and that 'Muḥammad has dazzled our eyes'. Q54:2 (wa'in yaraw āyah) means if they see the splitting of the moon. (yaqūlū siḥrun mustamirr) means this act of magic will not last long. Q54:3 (wakadhdhabū) means they disbelieved the splitting of the moon although it was a sign for them. Q54:3 (wakullu amrin mustaqarr) means every warning will be a reality. Q54:4 (walaqad jā'ahum min al-anbā'i mā fihi muzdajār) means the disbelievers of Makkah have learned about the revelation of the Qur'ān which has an admonition for them. Q54:6 (fatawalla 'anhum yawma yad'u al-dā'i ilā shai'in nukur) means O Muḥammad, leave the disbelievers of Makkah. Angel Isrāfīl will in the near future blow his trumpet for the second time while standing on the rock of Jerusalem. The blowing of the trumpet will be (shai'in nukur – something terrible). The word (nukur) means something which the human soul detests.

Q54:3 (They denied and followed their inclinations): The verb (kadhdhabū – they denied) means either (1) the disbelievers of Quraish rejected Muḥammad's warning about the hour, i.e. the day of judgement, coming near, or (2) the disbelievers of Quraish disbelieved the splitting of the moon in two as a sign of God's omnipotence and Muḥammad's prophethood. Instead, they thought it was no more than an ever-recurring delusion. By doing so, they followed their lusts and desires.

Q54:3 (But for every matter is a time of settlement). This means that everything has a true reality and a good purpose which will be revealed sooner in this world or later in the hereafter. The prevalence of sin and the persecution of truth may have its day but it must end at last (Ali 1983, p. 1454). The word (mustaqirr) also means that everything is known to God (al-Rāzi 1990, 29, p. 29). However (mustaqirr) in Q54:38 has three different exegetical meanings: (1) no one can ward off their punishment, (2) their punishment is continuous until the day of judgement after which they will also be punished in the fire perpetually, and (3) God's wrath is sent specifically to them only.

- (ii) Linguistic and stylistic exegesis: In Q54:1 (iqtarabat al-sā'atu wan-shaqqa al-qamar – The hour has come near, and the moon has split in two) we have foregrounding and backgrounding (al-taqdīm wal-ta'khīr) to achieve the pragmatic function of coherence of events. In other words, to place the events in the āyah coherently, the logical order of the news declared by the āyah needs to be made according to when each event has taken place. The fact that the hour (al-sā'ah, i.e. the day of judgement) is drawing near is a phenomenon that has been taking place every day before the event of the splitting of the moon in two. Thus, the splitting of the moon in two is an additional proof substantiating the approaching event of the hour. Therefore, the word (iqtarabat – to draw near) occurs before the the word (inshaqqa – to split in two). The expected stylistic pattern is (inshaqqa al-qamaru waqtarabat al-sā'ah – The moon has split in two, and the hour has come near). Q54:4 (muzdajār) means deterrence

and is a passive participle used to achieve hyperbole (*mubālaghah*) meaning that there is so much admonition for the disbelievers of Makkah which is sufficient to restrain them from carrying on with their disbelief and evil deeds. Q54:6 (*shai'in nukur* – horrific event) where the indefinite form is employed for the pragmatic function of maximizing the horror (*al-tahwīl*) of the day of judgement. Q54:5 (*ḥikmatun bālighatun famā tughni al-nudhur* – Extensive wisdom, but these warnings do not help) where we have a semantic ambiguity due to the particle (*mā*) which can have two different grammatical functions, each with a different meaning:

- (a) (*mā*) is a negation particle; thus, the āyah means 'the Prophets (*al-nudhur* or *al-mundhirūn*) were not sent to coerce people to accept their divine message. Rather they were merely (*nudhur* – warners). This exegetical view is backed up by the (*fatawalla 'anhum* – so leave them, Q54:6) meaning 'you should not force the disbelievers to accept Islam. If you have told them of the message, you have done what is required of you as a Messenger. Therefore, leave them if they do not respond to your call'.
- (b) (*mā*) is an interrogative particle; thus, the āyah's meaning is 'what can warners, i.e. Prophets, do more than this?'. Q54:7 (*khushsha'an*) means 'disgraced and humiliated' and that their eyes (*abṣāruhum*) cannot make eye contact with other people. This is a metonymy (*kināyah*) of the disclosure of their evil deeds and an allusion (*talmīḥ*) to their disgrace. Q54:7 (*yakhrujūna min al-ajdāthi ka'annahum jarādun muntashir*) means they will emerge from their graves like swarming locusts spreading chaotically in all directions. Q54:8 (*muḥṭi'ina ilā al-dā'i*) means racing forward towards Angel Israfil who has been calling them to come out of their graves. The word (*muḥṭi'*) depicts a panic attack and illustrates a person who stretches his/her neck while walking fast which is a sign of extreme fear and horror. Imagery (*al-taṣwīr*) has been achieved through the employment of the adjective (*khushsha'an*), the simile particle (*ka*) of (*ka'annahum* – they were like), and the adjective (*muḥṭi'*).
- (c) (*faltaqa al-mā'* – and the water met, Q54:12): The word (*al-mā'* – water) has another mode of reading as (*al-mā'ān* – the two waters) which occurs in the dual form to refer to the water of heavens and the water of earth.
- (d) (*fī yawmin naḥsin mustamirr* – on a day of continuous misfortune, Q54:19). There is a case of stylistic *mutashābihāt* here where the expression (*naḥsin* – misfortune) occurs in a different stylistic form as (*ḥusūmā* – in succession) in Q69:7 and the word (*yawmin* – a day) which in the indefinite singular form occurs as (*aiyām* – days) which is an indefinite plural form in Q69:7. This is because the expression (*yawmin*) in

Q54:19 refers to the time and place and therefore we need the indefinite form while the plural form (aiyām) is required because there is a number expression before it (thamāniyah – eight) (al-Rāzi 1990, 29, p. 41).

- (e) (sayuhzamu al-jam^u wayuwallūna al-dubur – Their assembly will be defeated and they will turn their back in retreat, Q54:45). There is a case of stylistic mutashābihāt here where the noun (al-dubur – back) occurs in the singular form in order to designate the meaning that these people are considered as one person and that they will all turn their backs; thus, the single group, presented as a single person, has ‘a single back’, so to speak. However, in Q3:111, Q8:15, Q33:15, and Q59:12, we encounter the plural form (al-adbār – backs) because they are considered as separate individuals (al-Rāzi 1990, 29, p. 60).

- (iii) Circumstances of revelation: The circumstance of revelation for Q54:1–2 was the response to the disbelievers of Makkah who asked Muḥammad to give them some evidence of his prophethood. As a result of their sceptical enquiry, the moon split in two. This took place in the area of Minā of Makkah five years before Muḥammad migrated from Makkah to Madīnah. Because Muḥammad was with some of his companions in Minā, this means that this incident took place during the pilgrimage season which was mainly attended by the disbelievers, among them were al-Walīd b. al-Maghīrah, Abu Jahal, al-ʿĀṣi b. Wāʿil, and al-Naḍar b. al-Ḥārith who met Muḥammad and asked him: ‘If you were a genuine Prophet, make the moon split in two’. For ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib, Ibn ʿAbbās, and ʿAbd Allāh b. Masʿūd, the moon immediately split in two. However, there are two exegetical views as to whether the revelation of Q54:1–2 was after or before the moon split in two. For Ibn ʿAbbās and Anas b. Mālīk, these ayahs were revealed after the moon split in two. However, for Ibn Masʿūd, al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, and ʿAṭāʾ, Q54:1–2 were revealed before the splitting of the moon. However, the majority of mainstream and non-mainstream exegetes are of the opinion that the revelation of these two āyahs took place shortly after the moon split in two. For Ibn ʿĀshūr (n.d., 27, p. 169), however, the splitting of the moon in two was either:

- (a) a major lunar eclipse which led to the appearance of what seemed to be a gap in the actual body of the moon which the spectator thought the moon had split in two with a dark gap between the two parts of the moon, or
- (b) a partial lunar eclipse which took place between the azimuth of the moon (samt al-qamar) and the ecliptic (the azimuth of the sun – samt al-shams) where one of the celestial objects, i.e. a star or a comet, passes between the sun and the moon, thus preventing part of the sun’s light from reaching the moon.

For Muslim exegetes, the splitting of the moon in two was a miracle because it took place immediately after the sceptics of Makkah

challenged Muḥammad of his prophethood. For them, this incident was a violation of natural law and was not a mere coincidence. According to the Saheeh International Translation of the Qur'ān (2010, p. 731), there is historical evidence that the moon had split in two. For instance, the Indian and Chinese calendars have recorded this incident. Also, it is recorded that the Indian King Chakrawati Farma of Malabar who was a Chera King, Cheraman Perumal of Kodungallure, saw the moon split (cf. India Office Library, London, manuscript reference number: Arabic, 2807, 152–173). Having learned about Muḥammad from a group of Muslim merchants who were passing by Malabar on their way to China, the Malabari King Chakrawati Farma decided to meet Muḥammad in person. In Arabia, the Malabari King accepted Islam based on the unusual incident of the splitting of the moon which he witnessed earlier in India.

- (iv) Intertextuality: In terms of Qur'anic intertextuality, the splitting of the moon in two is in fact the lunar eclipse which we are told by Q75:7–8 (*fa'idhā bariqa al-baṣāru. wakhasafa al-qamaru* – when eyes are dazzled and the moon eclipsed).
- (v) Sufi school of exegesis: Although the iconic Sufi exegete Ibn 'Arabi (d. 638/1240) (1978, 2, p. 561) considers the splitting of the moon in two as a sign of the hour (*al-sā'ah*) drawing near, he provides an esoteric exegesis. For him, the 'moon' alludes to the 'heart' because the latter is of two sides: a dark side which follows the desires of the self (*ahwā' al-nafs*), and a shining side which follows the soul (*al-rūḥ*). Ibn 'Arabi adds that the benefit which the light (*al-nūr*) gets from the soul is similar to the benefit which the moon gets from the sun. For al-Ṭa'mi (2007, 2, p. 655), the splitting of the moon is evidence of the beauty of Muḥammad. He claims that the moon has acknowledged that Muḥammad is more handsome and it has no alternative but to split in two as a gesture of acknowledgement to how perfect Muḥammad's beauty is. For the Sufi exegete 'Arābi (2006, 2, p. 1041), the 'moon' alludes to the 'heart' and that the heart is the 'moon of the person'.
- (vi) Modern exegetical techniques: These include the following approaches:
 - (a) Focus of Q54: The focus of Q54 is: (1) to warn the disbelievers in the prophethood of Muḥammad through reminding them of the fate of the past disbelieving nations of their relevant Prophets, (2) to remind the disbelievers of eschatology and reward and punishment, and (3) to reiterate the message that, like the past disbelieving nations, the present disbelievers will not heed this warning.
 - (b) Conceptual chaining through the tenets of faith (*mabādi' al-īmān*): This is a text linguistic approach that investigates the thematic links between consecutive āyahs within the sūrah itself and how the āyahs dovetail with each other. It also provides the conceptual chaining, i.e. thematic

links, between the beginning and the end of Q54 and the beginning and end of Q53 and Q55. There are four tenets of faith that are recurrently encountered in the Qur'ān: monotheism (al-tawḥīd), prophethood (al-nubuwwah), eschatology (al-ma'ād), and reward and punishment (al-thawāb wal-'iqāb). In our conceptual chaining approach, we also take into account other Qur'anic themes that are sandwiched within the āyahs that signify various tenets of faith. These themes include: admonition, Islamic legal rulings, and God's omnipotence, i.e. God's power. Usually, the āyahs that depict the omnipotence of God provide a scientific scenario. Such āyahs are often dealt with by modern scientific exegetes. It is also worthwhile to note that the four tenets of faith can be either implicit or explicit, and that they can be semantically signalled by specific words that denote a given implicit or explicit tenet of faith. It should be noted that reference to the theme of monotheism is achieved through words such as (lā ilāha illā hū – there is no deity except Him), (subḥān – praise or glory be to God), (min dūn allāh – other than God), and (yushrik – to associate others with God). Reference to prophethood is achieved through expressions such as (āmana – to believe), (mu'minūn – believers), (īmān – belief), (kadhdhaba – to disbelieve), the word Qur'ān and all the other names of the Qur'ān, and also through reference to Muḥammad if he is addressed through the second or third person. Reference to eschatology is achieved through words such as (al-sā'ah – the hour), (al-ākhirah – the hereafter), (al-yawm al-ākhir – the other day), (wa'd, m'ād, or maw'ūd – God's promised day), and (al-ḥisāb – the accounting). Reference to reward and punishment is achieved through words such as (jannah – the garden), (firdaws – paradise), (nār – fire), (jaḥīm – hellfire), and (ʿadhāb – punishment). It should also be noted that the tenet of faith of reward and punishment refers only to any reward or punishment that will take place in the hereafter. Thus, reference to the pleasure or joy during this world and reference to the punishment of the past disbelieving nations are not considered as references to the theme of reward and punishment. It is also worthwhile to note that one āyah may include more than one tenet of faith. The following is a thematic analysis of Q54 that illustrates the conceptual chaining within this sūrah and justification of each theme:

- Q54:1: eschatology (because of the word (al-sā'ah – the hour));
- Q54:2: continuation of the above theme;
- Q54:3: prophethood (because of the word (kadhdhabū – to disbelieve) which refers to disbelieving the prophethood of Muḥammad);
- Q54:3–5: admonition;
- Q54:6: prophethood (because this āyah addresses Muḥammad; thus, its theme is prophethood);

- Q54:7: eschatology (because it refers to resurrection);
 Q54:8: eschatology (because it refers to resurrection);
 Q54:9–16: admonition (because it provides details about what happened to Noah; thus, it gives advice and morality to the reader. It should also be noted that the word (*kadhhaba* – to disbelieve) does not signify prophethood because it refers to disbelieving Noah and not disbelief in Muḥammad’s message);
 Q54:17: prophethood (because of the word (*al-qur’ān* – the *Qur’ān*)),
 Q54:18–21: admonition;
 Q54:22: prophethood (because of the word (*al-qur’ān* – the *Qur’ān*));
 Q54:23–25: admonition;
 Q54:26: eschatology (because of the word (*ghadan* – tomorrow) which is an implicit reference to resurrection day);
 Q54:27–31: admonition (note that the word (*‘adhābī* – my punishment) refers to God’s wrath in this world that was inflicted upon the nation of Thamūd; thus, it is not a reference to reward and punishment);
 Q54:32: prophethood (because of the word (*al-qur’ān* – the *Qur’ān*));
 Q54:33–39: admonition (note that the word (*‘adhābī* – my punishment) refers to God’s wrath in this world that was inflicted upon the nation of Lot);
 Q54:40: prophethood (because of the word (*al-qur’ān* – the *Qur’ān*)),
 Q54:41–42: admonition;
 Q54:43: prophethood (because of the word *kuffār* – disbelievers in the prophethood of Muḥammad);
 Q54:44–45: admonition;
 Q54:46: eschatology;
 Q54:47–48: reward and punishment;
 Q54:49–51: admonition;
 Q54:52–53: eschatology (because it refers to the records and the actions recorded that will be made available on the day of judgement);
 Q54:54–55: reward and punishment.

At the macro level, there is an interesting conceptual chaining. At *sūrah* level, we observe the following exegetical details:

- (1) There is a thematic link between the beginning and the end of Q54 where both refer to a tenet of faith. The beginning of the *sūrah* (Q54:1) refers to eschatology and the end of the *sūrah* (Q54:54) refers to reward and punishment.
- (2) We also observe that Q53, Q54, and Q55 dovetail conceptually. Thus, at the textual level of consecutive *sūrahs*, we can observe more thematic details:
 - (1) The beginning of Q54 refers to eschatology and the beginning of Q53 (*āyah* 2) refers to prophethood through the expression (*ṣāhibukum* – your, which is an implicit reference to Muḥammad).

- (2) The beginning of both Q54 and Q53 refers to eschatology (Q53:57, *al-āzifah* – the imminent hour, the approaching day of resurrection).
 - (3) The beginning of both Q54 and Q55 refers to a tenet of faith (Q55:2, the *Qur'ān*).
 - (4) Both the end of Q54 (*āyah* 54) and of Q55 (*āyah* 76) refer to the same tenet of reward and punishment.
 - (5) We are informed by the end of Q54 (*āyah* 54) about the reward of the believers and that 'they are living securely among gardens and rivers'; we can also observe that the end of Q55 (*āyah* 76) continues the details of the believers' reward and that 'they are all sitting on green cushions and beautiful fine carpets'.
 - (6) The end of Q54 (*āyah* 55) ends with the epithets of God (*malikin muqtadir* – sovereign and all-powerful) which dovetails with the first *āyah* of Q55 that begins with the epithet of God (*al-raḥmān* – the Lord of mercy).
- (c) *Sūrah* structure: This is a literary exegesis approach where the *sūrah* is divided into thematic units. The structure of Q54 consists of three constituent units:
- Unit one: Q54:1–8, in which we are told that admonition is futile for stubborn and selfish people who follow their vanities and pleasures.
- Unit two: Q54:9–42, which focuses on the repetition of the notion of disbelief of the past disbelieving nations of their relevant Prophets and God's wrath, where reference is made to the people of Noah who were destroyed by the flood, the people of 'Ād whose Prophet was Hud and who were destroyed by a hurricane, the people of Thamūd whose Prophet was Ṣāliḥ and who were destroyed by a mighty blast, and the people of Pharaoh whose Prophet was Moses and who were destroyed by drowning in the Red sea.
- Unit three: Q54:43–55, which highlights eschatology and emphasizes reward and punishment.
- (d) Scientific exegesis: 'Abd al-Razzāq Nawfal (2003) has provided a scientifically based exegesis for Q54:1 (The hour [the day of judgement] has come near, and the moon has split in two). The moon has been approaching the earth at a very slow but steady speed and it is coming near an area which exceeds gravity. The first sign of entering the danger zone is the occurrence of an earthquake on the moon causing mass destruction. The destructive power of this earthquake will be much higher as the moon comes closer to the earth until the moon splits in two parts during the occurrence of the final gigantic earthquake. At this stage, the moon will fall down forming layers around the earth which will have an impact on the earth's gravity as well as on the gravity of

other planets which are held by the moon's gravity. As a result, gravity among big planets will be disturbed and, consequently, they will fall down to the earth. The fall of the big planets will disturb the gravity of other small planets which, in turn, will fall down to the earth, too. Consequently, the earth will fall down to the sun, and this is the sign of the day of judgement. Thus, the sign of the hour is marked by the splitting of the moon in two.

According to the Saheeh International Translation of the Qur'ān (2010, p. 732), Dawud Musa Pidcock is reported to have watched in 1978 a BBC programme where the host was talking with three American space scientists who talked about their research project which examined the similarities between the moon surface and the earth's surface. According to Mr Pidcock, the American scientists talked about how they were astonished to find a belt of molten rocks that cuts across the surface and deep into the core of the moon and that this information was given to their geologists to investigate. The geologists' examination of this information concluded that this unusual phenomenon could never happen unless the moon at one time was split and brought back together and the surface rocky belt is the resulting collision at the moment of this occurrence.

4.3.2.9 *Sūrat al-Ḥ qqah* (Q69)

Q69 is a Makkan sūrah that was sent down five years before Muḥammad's migration to Madīnah. It is the seventy-seventh sūrah in terms of revelation, i.e. not in terms of sūrah arrangement in the 'Uthmanic codex, and it was revealed after Q67 and before Q70. The general aims of this sūrah are: (1) to magnify the horrors of the day of judgement, (2) to rebut the sceptics of resurrection, (3) to verify the prophethood of Muḥammad, and (4) to provide admonition through reference to the fate of the past disbelieving nations.

- (i) Periphrastic exegesis: The word (al-ḥāqqah) has four different meanings: (a) the day of judgement, derived from the word (al-ḥaqq – confirmed truth, inevitable reality); in other words, it means 'the day of judgement is definitely going to take place'; (b) ascertainment and identification of matters (taḥqīq al-umūr), where every matter will be made absolutely clear in order to establish reward and punishment; (c) the hour (al-sā'ah); and (d) the hour will befall upon people (taḥuququ 'alaihim, i.e. taqa'u 'alaihim).

In Q69:4, the word (al-qāri'ah) has three different meanings: (a) the day of judgement because the noise of the crushing blow (al-qāri'ah) petrifies people, (b) punishment, and (c) the Qur'ān.

In Q69:5, the expression (al-ṭāghiyah) means either (a) (al-ṭuḡhyān – arrogance), or (b) sins; thus, this āyah means (they were destroyed because of their arrogance or sins). The word (ṣarṣar – screaming, violent) is derived

from the word (al-ṣarr – an ear-splitting noise). It means something that is very cold and can cause destruction due to very low temperature. The expression (rīḥ ṣarṣar) means (a violent hurricane with freezing temperature and a violent noise). The employment of the word (sakhkharahā – he imposed it upon them) denotes God's might to demonstrate that the cold violent hurricane that destroyed ʿĀd obeyed God's command.

In Q69:7, the expression (ḥusūmā) means: (a) consecutively, and (b) to obliterate something, i.e. the cold ear-splitting violent wind obliterated them.

In Q69:9, the word (al-khāṭi'ah) has four different meanings: (a) disbelief, (b) polytheism, (c) homosexuality, and (d) sins. The word (al-mu'tafikāt) means 'turned upside down, overthrown' and is derived from the verb (i'tafaka) meaning (to cave in). This word refers to the four cities where Prophet Lot preached: the city of Dāmūr, the city of Sābūr, the city of ʿĀmūr, and the city of Sodom. The word (al-khaṭi'ah) has four meanings: (a) disbelief in their Prophet Lot, (b) polytheism, (c) homosexuality, since it refers to the people of Lot, and (d) sins.

In Q69:10, the word (rasūl – messenger) has two meanings: it either refers to (a) Moses, or (b) Lot. See point (iv), stylistic analysis, below for more grammatical details. The word (rābiyah) means (severe) and is morphologically related to the word (ribā – interest); thus, the verb (yarbū) means (to increase, be bigger); therefore, (rābiyah) means (their punishment has become much bigger and more severe).

The word (bimā tubṣirūn – what you can see) in Q69:38 has three meanings: (a) heaven and earth, (b) the sun and the moon, and (c) Muḥammad. Similarly, the expression (mā lā tubṣirūn – what you cannot see) in Q69:39 has three meanings: (a) heaven and fire, (b) the throne, and (c) Gabriel.

The meaning of (mā huwa biqawli shā'ir – it is not the word of a poet, Q69:41) is: (You [the Arab linguists and men of letters] have reached the apex of your linguistic skills and know very well that the Qur'ān is not poetry; yet, you do not want to believe in its divine source). The meaning of (walā biqawli kāhin – This is not the word of a soothsayer, Q69:42) is: (You, [the Arabs of Quraish] are aware of the fact that the speech of the soothsayer lacks consonance, is unnaturally constrained, lacks context-based refrains, and stylistically the meaning is subservient to rhyme. You [The disbelievers of Quraish] also know that the soothsayers are Satan's allies, always praise him, that the soothsayer's speech is taken from the jinn, and that the Qur'ān attacks the jinn and rebukes them. Yet, you disregard these facts).

The sūrah employs four different punishment expressions: the people of Thamūd were destroyed by (al-ṭāghiyah – overpowering blast, Q69:5), the people of ʿĀd were destroyed by (al-ʿātiyah – violent wind, Q69:6), the people of Pharaoh and Lot were destroyed by (rābiyah – severe punishment, Q69:10), and the people of Noah were destroyed by (ṭaḡha al-mā' – water that overflows, i.e. flood, Q69:11).

- (ii) Allegorical exegesis: Q69:17 (yaḥmilu ʿarsha rabbika fawqahum yawma'idhin thamāniyah – On that day, eight [angels] will bear the throne of your Lord) has an exoteric, i.e. surface meaning, held by mainstream Muslim exegetes who claim that the throne of the Lord will be carried by eight angels on the day of judgement. Muḥammad is reported to have said that the throne is now being carried by four angels but on the day of judgement, four more angels will be added. For Ibn ʿAbbās, however, the number 'eight' means 'eight rows of angels and that God only knows how many angels there are in each row. Thus, the āyah for him means: 'The throne of your Lord will be carried by eight rows of angels'. Although this exegetical view of Ibn ʿAbbās is based on intertextuality with Q89:22 (wajā'a rabbuka wal-malaku ṣaffan ṣaffā – When your Lord comes with the angels, row after row), Q89:22 does not refer to the action of carrying the Lord's throne by the angels. However, for Muʿtazili, Shī'i, Ibāḍi, and philosophical exegetes, the word (ʿarsh) is allegorical and symbolic. In other words, it has an esoteric meaning that alludes to God's power and authority rather than to the tangible object 'thrown' which someone sits on. Thus, for them, the number of eight angels has no exegetical value. For the philosophical exegete Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna) (d. 428/1036), the word (ʿarsh) means (the ninth orbit – al-falak al-tāsiʿ) which for him is the major orbit (falak al-aflāk), and that 'the eight angels' means 'the eight orbits which are underneath the ninth orbit. Ibn Sīnā was influenced by Greek philosophy which held the view that there were nine orbits. Due to the mild impact of Jewish anecdotes upon Ibn ʿAbbās, he makes reference to the shape, height, form of face, and form of legs of the angels.
- (iii) General historical details: The Prophet of ʿĀd was Hūd (Q7:65). The people of ʿĀd, however, belonged to the people of Noah; they lived in the southern part of Arabia between Oman and the Yemen and were famous for their skilled manpower, construction skills, fine buildings, irrigation systems, and most importantly, their economic wealth. They were also well known for the oppression of the poor by the elite rich. They suffered a three-year famine and, as a result of their sin of oppression, disbelief in the message of Hūd, and being too much wedded to their evil way of life, they were destroyed by an ear-splitting very cold hurricane (a wind, within it a painful punishment, Q46:24). The violent hurricane lasted for seven days and during the eighth day, the people of ʿĀd were all obliterated; then, their bodies were swept by the wind and thrown into the sea.

The Prophet of Thamūd was Ṣāliḥ (Q7:73). The people of Thamūd were the ancestors and cousins of the nation of ʿĀd and lived in the north-west corner of Arabia between Madinah and Shamm (today's Syria, Lebanon, Palestine/Israel, and Jordan). They were well known for their fertile valleys, pastures, fine palaces and castles which they carved out in mountains (Q7:74). They were also well known for their economic prosperity, and oppression of the poor by the privileged class who prevented the access of

the poor and their cattle to the springs. The people of Thamūd suffered a similar fate; they experienced scarcity of water for some years; in the end, they were destroyed by an earthquake (Q7:78) which buried them and destroyed their boasted civilization (Ali 1983, pp. 358–361).

- (iv) Stylistic analysis: Why do we have the interrogative sentences (ma al-ḥāqqah? – What is the inevitable reality?, Q69:2) and (wamā adrāka ma al-ḥāqqah? – What can make you know what is the inevitable reality?, Q69:3)? The first interrogative stylistic structure is employed to magnify the event of the eschatology and to depict the horror of the day of judgement to the reader. However, the second time the interrogative question is employed to address the reader with a different meaning: ‘You do not appreciate the enormity of this event simply because you have not experienced it yet’.

The word (ṣarṣar – screaming, violent) is onomatopoeic, depicting the noise of the violent wind. The word (ṣarʿā) means dead and depicts imagery that fits in very nicely with the use of the verb (fatarā – you can see) in the second person singular to show that you can see for yourself what had befallen upon this nation.

Simile and imagery are employed through the word (kaʿannahum – as if they were) and the expression (aʿjāzu nakhlin khāwiyah – hollow trunks of palm trees) respectively. In a similar vein, the word (nakhl – date palms) is employed as imagery and symbolism of the tall and strong physique of the ʿĀd people. However, no matter how physically strong they were, they had been thrown on the ground as (ṣarʿā – dead). The expression (ṣarʿā) depicts: (a) the imagery of a wrestling ring on which a very tall but weak helpless wrestler is lying on the floor unable to defend himself, and (b) sarcasm. Although they were very strong physically, the hurricane knocked the people of ʿĀd down and they were dead. According to Muqātil (2003, 3, p. 392), the average height of a person from ʿĀd was more than 12 feet.

The word (rasūl – messenger) in Q69:10 has two meanings. It either refers to: (a) Moses, or (b) Lot. Each meaning is hinged upon what the plural pronoun (-him – their) attached to the word (rabb – Lord) in (rabbihim) refers to. If the pronoun (-him) refers to (firʿawn – Pharaoh), then the word (rasūl) means Moses. However, if the pronoun (-him) refers to (al-muʿtafikāt – the overturned cities, Q69:9), then the word (rasūl) refers to Lot.

In Q69:14, we have the imagery of an emerging new world where the earth and the mountains are crushed to powder with one stroke. Also, in Q69:16, imagery is used to illustrate how on the day of judgement, the sky will be torn apart and becomes flimsy. Similarly, in Q69:17, we have more imagery, where the āyah depicts the picture of eight angels carrying the throne of God. There are also two contrasting images:

- (a) The imagery of the righteous and the believers in the hereafter with the imagery of the garden and its fruits hanging in bunches ready to be picked. We have also the imagery of a happy and boasting believer

holding in his/her right hand his/her record of deeds and asking people to read his/her good deeds.

- (b) The imagery of a disappointed disbeliever lamenting his/her wealth, power and status. We also encounter the imagery of the blazing fire and the disbeliever being shackled and dragged by a 70-cubit chain to be thrown into the fire.

The word (al-malaku – the angel) in Q69:17 occurs in the singular form but it denotes a plural meaning (al-malā'ikah – angels). In Q69:31–32, we have the backgrounding of the verbs (ṣallūhu – to burn) and (islukūhu – to make him march) and foregrounding of the direct object (al-jaḥīm – the blazing fire) and the prepositional phrase (fī silsilatin dhar'uhā sab'ūna dhirā'an – a chain whose length is 70 cubits) respectively. The pragmatic function for this stylistic pattern in Q69:31–32 is to highlight the severity of punishment.

- (v) Modes of reading: the word (q-b-l) in Q69:9 has two modes of reading: (a) (qablahu) meaning (the past disbelieving nations), and (b) (qiblahu) meaning (and all his soldiers and supporters). However, there are two uncommended modes of reading which adopt the replacement of a word by another. The first is by Ubai b. Ka'b which involves the replacement of the word (qablahu – before him) by (ma'ahu – with him); thus, we get (wajā'a fir'awnu waman ma'ahu – and Pharaoh and those with him came, Q69:9). The second uncommended mode of reading is by Ṭalḥah b. Maṣraf which involves the replacement of the word (qablahu – before him) by (ḥawlahu – around him); thus, we get (wajā'a fir'awnu waman ḥawlahu – and Pharaoh and those around him came, Q69:9) (Ibn 'Aṭiyyah 1991, 15, p. 64).
- (vi) Modern exegesis: The structure of Q69 is divided into three units:

Unit one: Q69:4–12 (historical details).

Unit two: Q69:13–37 (eschatology + reward and punishment).

Unit three: Q69:38–52 (prophethood).

Thematically, Q69 presents three major themes:

- (a) eschatology and its features, where we are given three names (al-ḥāqqah – the inevitable reality), (al-qārī'ah – the striking calamity), and (al-wāqī'ah – the occurrence) all of which mean the resurrection day;
- (b) warning to the sceptics of the Qur'ān and eschatology through reference to the past disbelieving nations of 'Ād, Thamūd, and Pharaoh;
- (c) prophethood, and reward and punishment.

- (vii) Sectarian exegesis: For the Shī'i exegetes al-Qummi (1983, 2, p. 384) and al-Ṭabāṭabā'i (1962, 19, p. 401), Q69:17 means that the throne of the Lord will be carried by four people from the past, namely Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, and by four other people, namely Muḥammad, 'Alī, al-Ḥasan, and al-Ḥusain. Similarly, al-Qummi (1983, 2, p. 384) argues that in Q69:9 the meaning of the expression (al-mu'tafikāt – the overturned cities) signifies an

esoteric meaning that refers to Baṣrah, and that the meaning of (al-khāṭi'ah – sin) alludes to (fulānah – that lady), meaning (°Ā'ishah). Further, al-Qummi (1983, 2, p. 384) argues that the meaning of the expression (al-jāriyah – the sailing ship constructed by Noah) in Q69:11 refers to °Ali. However, neither Qur'anic nor ḥadīth intertextuality is provided to substantiate these exegetical views. Also, al-Qummi does not provide any statements by Shī'i Imāms to support these exegetical meanings.

5 Contextual and co-textual relevance in Qur'anic exegesis

5.1 Introduction

This is an account of the school of modern linguistic exegesis which is based on the text linguistic notions of cohesiveness and conceptual relatedness. A text, written or oral, is expected to be cohesive and thematically linked, i.e. its statements are intertextually related and hark back to each other. This is an intriguing textual criterion which needs to be incorporated into Qur'anic exegesis. The present discussion also provides a critical assessment of the views of Western Qur'ān scholars on the Qur'anic text and exegetical problems. These scholars include Washington Irving (1850), Hartwig Hirschfeld (1886, 1902), H. Grimme (1892), Theodor Nöldeke (1909), Margoliouth (1914), Sir William Muir (1923), Richard Bell (1932, 1937, 1953, 1991), Charles Torrey (1933), Lichtenstadter (1974), Wansbrough (1977), Adams (1987), Paret (1983), Bosworth and Richardson (1991), Robinson (1996), and Ohlander (2005).

Our major premise in the present discussion is that the textual analysis of the Qur'ān should be hinged upon the following linguistic criteria:

- (i) Context and co-text are of vital textual relevance to Qur'anic exegesis.
- (ii) Context and co-text are prerequisites of the sound textual analysis of thematic relatedness, notional sequentiality, and conceptual cohesiveness.
- (iii) Context and co-text are of major relevance in the decision-making of the linguist with regards to whether or not a text is fragmented, thematically chaotic, or of a fragmentary character, and whose sentences are haphazardly arranged.
- (iv) Sentences of a given text hark back to each other to achieve textual cohesion and thematic sequentiality.

For more details on the text linguistic approach to Qur'anic exegesis, see [Chapter 3](#), Section 3.4.

5.2 Textual cohesiveness

Cohesiveness is a major textual feature of any given text. The text linguistic notion of cohesiveness is not sentence-based. In other words, cohesiveness is not related

to the semantic or grammatical network of relations within a sentence or a group of sentences that form a text through a variety of cohesive devices, i.e. conjunctive particles, which are discourse connectors, such as (*ammā* . . . *aw* – either . . . or, *wa* – and, *lākin* – but, *lihādhā* – therefore) that are employed to keep the text grammatically and semantically cohesive. However, the Qur'anic text involves these linguistic discourse markers which are regulated by the pragmatic functions of *‘ilm al-ma‘āni* (word order) and argumentation techniques in Arabic rhetoric. For more details, see Abdul-Raof (2006, Ch. 4). Similarly, cohesiveness is neither related to rhyme nor to the length of sentences in a given text. However, from a text linguistics perspective, we can establish our argument in the present discussion on the fact that textual cohesiveness is directly related to context and co-text. Qur'anic genre, for instance, displays an intriguing textual phenomenon that is hinged upon contextual and co-textual factors. This phenomenon is referred to throughout this account as thematic relatedness, textual sequentiality, conceptual dovetailing, and notional allusion (intertextuality) which are intimately oriented and conditioned by either context or co-text or by both. In other words, context (in both its micro and macro facets) and co-text are of paramount relevance to textual and exegetical analysis. It is worthwhile to note that contextual and co-textual factors are more transparent and feature prominently in the *mutashābihāt āyahs* than anywhere else in Qur'anic discourse. This, however, is outside the scope of the present analysis. For a detailed and expounded discussion of contextually and co-textually conditioned cases of *mutashābihāt āyahs*, see Abdul-Raof (2004).

5.3 Views of Western Qur'ān scholars

To re-arrange the constituent units of a text, be it sentences or chunks of sentences, by a reader will drastically undermine its coherence, textual cohesiveness, thematic relatedness, notional sequentiality, and most importantly, the informativity and pragmatic intentionality of the text producer. This is exactly what Richard Bell's re-arrangement of Qur'anic āyahs has achieved. However, for Ohlander (2005, p. 138), Richard Bell's efforts were 'to restore the Qur'anic text to a more coherent form'. Paret (1983, p. 186) strikes a similar note and argues that the texts collected in the Qur'ān are not on the whole thematically arranged, but put together more or less arbitrarily. The thematic arrangement of the Qur'ān has also been raised by Sir William Muir (1923) who notes that the internal sequence at any rate of the contents of the several sūrahs cannot, in most cases, have been that intended by Muḥammad. In the view of Muir, the thematic non-relevance is attributed to

the constant chaotic mingling of subjects, disjoined as well by chronology as by the sense; a portion produced at Medina sometimes immediately preceding a passage revealed long before at Mecca; a command put in some places directly after a later one which cancels or modifies it; or an argument suddenly disturbed by the interjection of a sentence foreign to its purport.

(Ibid., p. xvii)

Thematic relevance has intrigued and puzzled other Qur'ān scholars such as Margoliouth (1914, p. 31). He enquires why the last revelation (al-yawma akmalu lakum dinakum – This day I have perfected for you your religion, Q5:3) 'is not put at the end but in the middle of the volume' and also why 'the verse which has every appearance of being the first revealed is stowed away not far from the end, and evidently short as is the sūrah wherein it is inserted, mixed with matter belonging to a different period'. 'We cannot say', Margoliouth (1914, p. 31) continues, 'either why in certain cases several texts are put together to form a chapter, whereas towards the end of the volume, we have a series of sūrahs limited to a very few verses apiece'. A more radical conviction is expressed by Lichtenstadter (1974, p. 7) who has also dealt with 'contradictions' in the Qur'ān in the *mutashābihāt* and abrogation *āyahs*. Lichtenstadter claims that 'certain discrepancies between various revelations uttered at different times . . . led to the revelation of the abrogation *āyahs* Q2:100 and Q87:6' (1974, p. 8). Wansbrough (1977, p. 18) on his part also refers to 'the fragmentary character of Muslim scripture'. He (1977, p. 19) observes in Q2:30, 34, 49–51, 53–55, 58, 60–61, 63, 67–72, 83–84, 93, 124–127 'a number of disparate topics, abruptly introduced and as abruptly dismissed, is mechanically linked. In his discussion of the structural unity and the internal relationship of the Qur'ān, Wansbrough (1977, p. 23) cites the story of Shu'aib that occurs in Q7:85–93, Q11:84–95, and Q26:176–190 and claims that, in terms of thematic cohesion, the story of Shu'aib in Q7:85–93 is 'the most coherent' while the other version in Q26:176–190 is 'the least'.

More interestingly, Adams (1987, p. 157) claims that the Qur'ān is repetitious and is not a straightforwardly organized treatise; rather it moves without transition from one subject to another, often returning after many pages to a subject discussed earlier.¹ Torrey (1933, p. 108) has advanced a similar premise. For Adams (1987, p. 157), 'Muḥammad was very far from being a skilful narrator' and 'the logical connection between successive episodes is often loose'. Torrey, however, has reached a radical conclusion. He (1933, p. 107) returns a verdict that Muḥammad 'should be charged with plagiarism' if 'he [Muḥammad] should merely reproduce the story of Joseph, or of Jonah, wholly or in part, from the Jewish tradition', but 'if he should tell the stories [of Prophets – *qaṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*] with any essential difference, he would be accused of falsifying'.²

5.4 A text linguistic approach to Qur'anic genre

A text hangs together through a network of thematically interrelated notions at both the micro and macro textual levels. Thematic relatedness is based on relevance and creates notional allusion. For Sperber and Wilson (1994, p. 119), people can consistently distinguish relevant from irrelevant information, or in some cases, more relevant from less relevant information. For them (1994, p. 118), comprehension involves the joint processing of a set of assumptions, and in that set some assumptions stand out as newly presented information being processed in the context of information that has itself been previously processed. Thus, we can argue that the absence of thematic relatedness within a given text leads to text processing

difficulties, ambiguity, confusion, and misunderstanding on the part of the reader. Thus, a text is a complete linguistic whole that serves a given communicative function and its text producer aims to get a given message across to the audience.

Our linguistic investigation and textual analysis will be backed up by numerous examples that are linguistically and exegetically expounded. The present discussion will be focused primarily upon the impact of context and co-text in the realization of textual cohesiveness and thematic relatedness. Context is concerned with the overall surrounding linguistic structures and situational elements. Thus, it represents the wider, i.e. macro, environment of the text. What is thematically appropriate in one environment may not be quite so appropriate in another. Context also influences the occurrence of specific details in a text. Co-text, however, is the linguistic and textual habitat of a given sentence, i.e. āyah, or word. Co-text enjoys an impact upon the occurrence of specific words or even the grammatical structures in a text. Therefore, it is imperative to note that an informative linguistic exegesis of the meaning of a word or an āyah can only be attained by relating each āyah to both its context and its co-text, on the one hand, and that the occurrence of a given āyah is conditioned by its surrounding context and co-text. Thus, Qur'anic āyahs cannot be haphazardly re-arranged.

It is worthwhile to note that the aim of the text linguist is to look for the thematic links that make consecutive texts hang together. In the present investigation, we are looking for consecutive sūrahs and āyahs. As a text linguistic approach, our investigation seeks to unravel the empirical constraints on the organization of Qur'anic āyahs and the relationship between organization, exegesis, context, and co-text. Thematic sequentiality and textual relatedness are explicated in the following sections.

5.4.1 Organization of Sūrahs

The arrangement of Qur'anic sūrahs has been a controversial issue in Qur'anic exegesis. Although the majority of Qur'ān scholars, such as al-Qurṭubī (1997, 1, p. 96), al-Suyūṭī (1976, p. 73), al-Zarkashī (1988, 1:64), and Ibn ʿĀshūr (n.d., 1, p. 87) are proponents of the view that the sūrahs are arranged by Muḥammad by a divine order which is referred to as *tawqīfī*, there are other scholars such as Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī (1997, 9, p. 50) who claim that the sūrahs are arranged by the independent judgement of the companions after Muḥammad passed away, i.e. *ijtihādi*. The *ijtihādi* arrangement thesis is based on the fact that a number of companions had their codices with the sūrahs arranged differently from the present ʿUthmanic codex. In these codices, such as that of ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib, ʿAbd Allāh b. Masʿūd, and Ubai b. Kaʿb, the sūrahs are arranged according to their chronological revelation. Thus, the Qur'anic macro text lacks thematic relatedness, sequentiality, and textual allusion. However, the *tawqīfī* premise is based on the following factors:

- (i) According to narration, Muḥammad said that Gabriel had revised with him the whole Qur'ān before he passed away.

- (ii) Zaid b. Thābit and ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān were among the best of those who had learned the Qur'ān by heart (ḥāfiẓ), and maintained the same sūrah organization they were familiar with during the lifetime of Muḥammad.
- (iii) Zaid b. Thābit, Muḥammad's secretary, so to speak, was tasked by Muḥammad with the writing of the revelation on a daily or monthly basis. Thus, Zaid was very familiar with the sūrah and āyah arrangements.

There are also other scholars, such as al-Bāqillāni (1994), who remain undecided about this controversial matter. Interestingly, however, there is a unanimous agreement among Muslim Qur'ān scholars that the arrangement of Qur'anic āyahs was done by Muḥammad himself; thus, it was a tawqīfī arrangement. By way of contrast, Western Qur'ān scholars have different views with regards to the arrangement of Qur'anic āyahs and sūrahs. Among the Western scholars who gave an independent chronological arrangement of the sūrahs are H. Grimme (1892), Theodor Nöldeke (1909), William Muir (1928), and Richard Bell (1953). Those scholars paid careful attention to the composite nature of the Qur'ān such as sound, rhyme, length of āyahs, phraseology, style, place of the revelations, and content of the revelations (cf. Robinson 1996, pp. 76–78). For Bell (1953, p. 100), there is no reliable tradition as to the historical order of the Qur'ān, and for this reason he feels that 'we are thrown back upon study of the book itself, and have to base any chronological arrangement upon internal evidence'.

5.4.2 Richard Bell and Qur'anic exegesis

Reverend Dr Richard Bell (1953, 1991) is a prominent Qur'ān scholar. He was a rigorous and accomplished scholar of the finest Scottish type. Of Dumfriesshire country origin, he was born in 1876 and after an outstanding academic career at Edinburgh University in divinity and Semitic studies he was licensed as a minister of the Church of Scotland in 1904 and ordained to the parish of Wamphrey in his native country in 1907. He had already, whilst at New College in Edinburgh, acted as assistant to the then Professor of Hebrew and Oriental Languages in the University of Edinburgh, A. R. S. Kennedy, and in 1921, after fourteen years in the parish ministry, Bell returned to his old University as Lecturer in Arabic, eventually becoming Reader in Arabic there in 1938 until his retirement in 1947. Bell died on 5 May 1952. His years as a member of staff at Edinburgh University were filled with academic activity, centred above all on the two topics of Christian influences on the nascent faith of Islam and on the structure and composition of the Qur'ān. Bell gave the Gunning Lectures at Edinburgh University in 1925, and these were published as his first book *The Origin of Islam in Its Christian Environment* (1926) (Bosworth and Richardson 1991, 1, pp. xiii–xiv). Bell took a line of scholarship similar to that undertaken by scholars such as Gustave Weil (1844), Theodor Nöldeke (1860), and Hartwig Hirschfeld (1886, 1902) whose research focused on the chronological ordering of the sūrahs of the Qur'ān by tying an understanding of the history of Muḥammad to the text and arriving at what is now the scholarly standard of the three Makkan periods and one Madīnan.

Hirschfeld (1902, p. 140) is of the opinion that some āyahs have been inserted between two āyahs causing thematic non-relatedness. For instance, āyah 2 of Q47 is wedged in between āyahs 1 and 3 of Q47 which, he claims, belong together, 'disturbing their logical connection' and that āyah 2 'was put in a place where it did not originally belong. This would, indeed, only prove that the āyah is misplaced' (Hirschfeld 1902, p. 140). However, Bell was quite extensively influenced by Jacob Barth's (1916) posthumous article 'Studien zur kritik und exegese des Qorāns'. It is interesting to note that Barth (1851–1914) was a student of H. L. Fleischer and T. Nöldeke.

Richard Bell has provided an interesting textual criticism of the structure of the Qur'ān, its chronology and stylistic features. His critical analysis is mainly concerned with the following textual aspects of Qur'anic discourse:

- (i) Thematic incongruity, i.e. non-relatedness, in Qur'anic discourse: Bells' comments focused primarily on philological and exegetical matters. Bell was also 'on the outlook explanations of confusions and displacement of āyahs' (Bell 1991, 1, p. xx). By closely examining the Qur'anic text āyah by āyah, observing the length of āyahs, their external and internal rhymes and assonance, Bell came to believe that the structure of the Qur'ān was far more complex than had hitherto been believed (Bosworth and Richardson 1991, 1, p. xv). The results of European scholarship at that time seemed for Bell to point to Muḥammad's dependence on some form of Christianity for the initiation and early content of his prophecy. However, Bell acknowledges that

quite suddenly, when one day I was verifying a reference to the Qur'ān, it dawned upon me that I was on the wrong track; that Muḥammad could never have been in close contact with any form of Christianity. The echoes of Christian language, which one hears occasionally in the Qur'ān, must have come to him in the course of his mission.

(Bell 1991, 1, p. xix)

- (ii) Bell (1953, p. 37) notes that Muslim scholars have always recognized that the present arrangement is not the order in which the passages of which it is composed were revealed. Bell (*ibid.*, p. 41) also claims that the order of the sūrah is different in each of the four editions of the Qur'ān which, in the interval between Muḥammad's death and the formation of a definitive text, seem to have acquired currency in different districts and to have been regarded as authoritative there. For Bell (*ibid.*, pp. 40–41), these are the readings of Ubai b. Ka'b, 'Abd Allāh b. Mas'ūd, Abu Mūsā al-Ash'ari, and Miqdād b. 'Amr. Thus, for him, the order of the sūrah was perhaps not fixed and the reading varied somewhat. Bell (*ibid.*, pp. 40–41) also admits that he has no evidence of other differences. For Bell (*ibid.*, p. 53), the sūrah, apart from Q1, are arranged roughly in the order of length which varies from many pages to a line or two. Bell, however, is not absolutely sure of how far this

arrangement goes back. He (*ibid.*, p. 97) later concludes that the present form of the Qur'ān, which is practically the form given to it at the revision in the reign of ʿUthmān, rests upon written documents which go back to the Prophet's lifetime. Bell (*ibid.*, p. 135) also maintains that the form in which the Qur'ān was left is probably much that of our present Qur'ān. As for the arrangement of the āyahs, Bell (*ibid.*, pp. 83ff) is of the opinion that rhyme is the determining factor of the order of passages in the Qur'anic text.

- (iii) Bell (1953, p. 87) has also dealt with what he calls the frequent amendments of the āyahs. Although Bell refers constantly to revision, alteration, and insertions in the Qur'anic text, he (*ibid.*, p. 87) admits that these examples suggest that the Prophet himself was responsible for them. In other words, Bell believed that all the revelations were written during the Prophet's lifetime (Robinson 1996, p. 85) and that the use of written documents was involved, under the Prophet's guidance, so that the Qur'ān as we now know it took shape in the last eight years or so of Muḥammad's mission at Madīnah, i.e. in the second/eighth century (624–632) (Bosworth and Richardson 1991, 1, p. xv). Thus, Bell supports the *ijtihādī* arrangement of the āyahs and sūrah.
- (iv) Bell refers to the abrupt changes of rhyme and stylistic variation within the same sūrah. In his view (1953, pp. 85, 88, 90–91), we encounter, throughout the Qur'ān, some unevenness and roughness in the style of the Qur'ān, alternative continuations, breaks in sense, breaks in grammatical constructions, the connection being not what immediately precedes but with what stands some distance back, sudden changes of subject, destruction of the balance of the preceding pieces which leads to the isolation of some āyahs within a given sūrah, and a series of disjointed pieces which have no connection with the context. For instance, Bell (1932, p. 45) argues that 'the āyahs Q7:44, 46, and 47 are not really consistent with the context, and may be set aside as a later insertion'.
- (v) Bell's attention was also called to 'the grammatical unevennesses and interruptions of sense which occur in the Qur'ān' (Bell 1991, 1, p. xx). It is just at these points, Bell (1953, pp. 93–94) claims, that the Qur'ān becomes most confused and some passages are unintelligible as they stand.
- (vi) Bell (1953, p. 91) is of the opinion that the āyahs were written on loose sheets and scraps of various kinds (due to the scarcity of writing materials), that two unrelated āyahs were sometimes recorded on either side of the same sheet, and that the redactors made mistakes by including passages which Muḥammad had meant to discard, wrongly placing fragments written on scraps, and reading the two sides of a sheet continuously when this was not intended (Robinson 1996, p. 85).

These are the major points which constitute the crux of Bell's hypothesis, which will be answered in the light of the text linguistic notions of context and co-text in order to demonstrate whether the Qur'anic text suffers from the textual ills listed above by Richard Bell.

5.4.2.1 *Bell's exegetical hypothesis*

Richard Bell's (1932, 1937, 1953, and 1991) critical assessment of the re-organization of āyahs is hinged upon four major criteria:

- (i) length of the āyah determines the āyah's sequential arrangement;
- (ii) rhyme, i.e. the assonance achieved through the āyah-final word;
- (iii) the scrap writing material where the āyah(s) are written on the back of the same scrap, or some āyahs are a discarded scrap on which other āyahs are written;
- (iv) context by which he means the thematic relatedness that determines the connection between consecutive āyahs.

Qur'ān scholars have stipulated a set of prototypical features of the two sūrah categories: Makkan and Madīnan. One of these features is the length of the āyahs which the reader usually encounters in one of the two categories. It has been an accepted opinion that Makkan sūrahs have shorter āyahs than their counterpart Madīnan sūrahs. However, this may not be always the case. For instance, long āyahs are encountered in Makkan sūrahs such as Q10:1–4, 18, 22–24, 31, 71; Q29:9–10, 17, 25, 40; Q30:9, 48; and Q31:15, 20, 29, 33–34. Similarly, short āyahs are also encountered in Madīnan sūrahs such as Q2:88, Q4:132, and Q13:32 which are sandwiched between long āyahs.

Bell also deals with the rhyme of āyahs as a criterion for his proposed re-organization. However, in Qur'anic genre, the meaning of a given āyah is given precedence over rhyme. Rhyme in Qur'anic genre is often disrupted because priority is granted to thematic sequentiality and textual connectivity between consecutive āyahs. This textual feature is encountered in both Makkan or Madīnan sūrahs. For instance, the Makkan sūrah Q13 is punctuated by different rhymes such as (-ūn), (-āb), (-ād), (-ār), (-āl), (-ā°), and (-āq), and the Madīnan sūrah Q5 displays various rhymes such as (-īd), (-āb), (-īm), (-īn), (-ūr), (-īl), and (-īr). According to al-Jurjāni (1984) and al-Rāfi'i (1990), Qur'anic genre is highly characterized by word order system (al-naẓm) rather than rhyme, and that rhyme, i.e. (fawāṣil al-āyāt) is secondary to meaning. Bell (1991, 1, p. 481) suggests that the word (qaiyiman – straight) in Q18:2 'is out of place at the beginning of Q18:2' and that it should be dislocated and placed at the end of Q18:1 since 'it is the original ending of Q18:1'. Bell (1991, 1, p. 481) also claims that in Q18 the word (qaiyiman) 'gives rhyme and is out of place at the beginning of Q18:2 and that it is the original ending of Q18:1'.

Let us consider these two āyahs. Bell's proposal to end Q18:1 with the word (qaiyiman) is both grammatically and semantically flawed for the following reasons:

(al-ḥamdu lillāhi alladhī anzala ʿalā ʿabdihi al-kitāba walam yajʿal lahū ʿiwajan. Qaiyiman – All praise is due to God who has sent down upon His servant the Book and has not made therein any deviance. Straight . . . , Q18:1–2). As far as textual progression is concerned, conceptual connectivity is realized between the two āyahs in Q18:1–2, since they are both referring to the Qur'ān, i.e. implicit prophethood,

and reward and punishment that has co-occurred with the initial tenet of faith. A grammatical and semantic investigation is required in order to understand why Bell has misunderstood the textual and semantic connection between the two āyahs and the necessary occurrence of the word (qaiyiman) at the beginning of Q18:2 (Abdul-Raof 2005b). First of all, it is important to realize that we have two grammatical units:

- Unit one: This grammatical unit is represented by (anzala ʿalā ʿabdihi al-kitāba . . . qaiyiman – He has sent down upon His servant the Book . . . straight). In other words, the grammatical process of backgrounding (al-ta'khīr) has moved the word (qaiyiman) away from its noun (al-kitāba). The underlying grammatical structure should be (anzala al-kitāba qaiyiman walam yajʿal lahū ʿiwajan).
- Unit two: This grammatical unit is represented by (lam yajʿal lahū ʿiwajan – He has not made in the Book any deviance).

In Q18:1, we have two verbs: (anzala – to send down) and (yajʿal – to make). It is also important to note the following grammatical properties:

- (i) The second verb (yajʿal) is coordinated to (maʿṭūf ʿalā) the first verb (anzala).
- (ii) The word (ʿiwajan – deviance) is part of the negated grammatical phrase (lam yajʿal lahū ʿiwajan – He has not made in the Book any deviance).
- (iii) The word (ʿiwajan – deviance) is the direct object of the verb (yajʿal – to make).
- (iv) The expression (lam yajʿal lahū ʿiwajan) is a circumstantial phrase (ḥāl) and a modifier describing the noun (al-kitāb – the Book, i.e. the Qurʾān).
- (v) The word (qaiyiman) does not belong to the negated grammatical phrase (lam yajʿal lahū ʿiwajan).
- (vi) The word (qaiyiman) is an apposition (badal) to the negated phrase (lam yajʿal lahū ʿiwajan).
- (vii) The word (qaiyiman) is an adjective acting as a circumstantial phrase which is semantically and grammatically related to the direct object noun (al-kitāb – the Book, i.e. the Qurʾān).
- (viii) The word (ʿiwajan) is phonetically marked by a brief pause without breathing (saktah yasīrah min ghair tanaffus) at the end of the word to indicate the underlying semantic separation between the word (ʿiwajan) and the following word (qaiyiman).
- (ix) An implicit verb (jaʿala – to make) occurs before the word (qaiyiman) which is why it is in the accusative case. In other words, the underlying structure is: (lam yajʿal lahū ʿiwajan {walakin jaʿalahu} qaiyiman – He [God] has not made it [the Qurʾān] deviant [but has made it] straight).
- (x) Most importantly, the second verb (yajʿal – to make) is negated by the negation particle (lam – not).

- (xi) The second āyah beginning with (qaiyiman) is a descriptive sentence providing details about the Book in the first āyah. These descriptive details continue until the fifth āyah, i.e. Q18:5.
- (xii) The second āyah whose verb is (liyundhira – to warn) is an elliptical sentence whose direct object (al-kāfirīn – the disbelievers) is ellipted.

Therefore, Bell's claim is inaccurate both grammatically and semantically. Since the verb (yaj'al) is negated by and semantically belongs to the circumstantial phrase (lam yaj'al lahū 'iwajan), Bell's proposal to place the word (qaiyiman) in Q18:1 adjacent to the word ('iwajan) will produce the following grammatical and semantic confusion:

- (i) The word (qaiyiman) will become part of the negated phrase (lam yaj'al lahū 'iwajan), and therefore has been made negated as well.
- (ii) The word (qaiyiman) will neither semantically modify the noun (al-kitāb – the Book) nor belong to the verb (anzala – to send down).
- (iii) The text producer's intended meaning will change dramatically. In other words, the new meaning, according to Bell's suggestion, will be (lam yaj'al lahū 'iwajan – [He] has not made in the Book any deviance and any straightness). However, the text producer's intended meaning is that when deviance is excluded, i.e. negated, straightness is affirmed. Thus, the separation of the two words is to achieve the rhetorical function of affirmation (Ibn 'Aṭīyah 1991, 9, p. 228; al-Qinnūji 1995, 8, p. 10; al-Darwīsh 1992, 5, p. 531; al-Zamakhshari 1995, 2, p. 675; al-Nasafi 1996, 3, p. 11; Abu Ḥaiyān 2001, 6, p. 94; al-Naḥḥās 2001, 2, p. 288). Therefore, Q18:1 cannot end with the word (qaiyiman) just because it has nunation (tanwīn) and it rhymes with the rest of the sūrah which is marked by the rhyme of nunation (-an).

Bell's hypothesis of the two sides of the scrap writing material is tied to his perception of Qur'anic context. Throughout his critical analysis of the āyah arrangement, Bell refers to context and argues that some āyahs 'seem to have no connection with the context', 'are not closely connected with the context', and 'it is more like a stray āyah, the back of which may have been used for the addition of another āyah' (1991, 1, pp. 111, 172; 1991, 2, pp. 39, 365). Bell also argues that some of the āyah(s) 'were written on the back of' the other āyah(s). As a result, he claims, an āyah is 'incomplete', 'in confusion', and 'to construe it is impossible as it stands, and to reconstruct it satisfactorily is difficult' because 'it seems to belong to the context of another āyah' (1991, 1, p. 402) such as Q13:33 and Q13:35.

For Bell, Q13:33 'is in confusion' (1991, 1, p. 402). Bell's confusion stems from the complex grammatical structure of Qur'anic Arabic. The following discussion explains this 'confusion' that has been caused by the initial clause of Q13:33 (afaman huwa qā'imun 'alā kulli nafsin bimā kasabat – Is He who is the maintainer of every soul and knows all that it does?, Q13:33) which, for Bell, 'is incomplete and it seems to belong to the context of āyah 16':

- (i) In terms of thematic relatedness, the text linguist is required to consult the macro text that extends beyond the āyah under investigation. The macro text is represented by Q13:30–32. Taking these āyahs as the context that sets the scene for Q13:33, one can put the thematic jigsaw together and conclude that Q13:30–32 are concerned with a set of tenets of faith such as prophethood (Q13:30), monotheism (Q13:30), prophethood (Q13:31), eschatology (Q13:31), and prophethood (Q13:32). In terms of Qur'ān-specific presentation and argumentation technique, the tenets of faith displayed by Q13:30–32 are usually backed up by God's omnipotence as substantiating statements.
- (ii) Thematic relatedness and textual allusion are well-established between Q13:33 and its macro context. For instance, the notion of polytheism (shurakā' – partners) is thematically related to the tenet of faith of monotheism (lā ilāha illā hū – there is no deity except Him, Q13:30), the textual allusion between (alladhīna kafarū – those who disbelieved) and (yakfurūn – they disbelieve, Q13:30, kafarū – they disbelieved, Q13:31–32), and the textual allusion between (hād – a guide) and (hadā – to guide, Q13:31).
- (iii) The initial clause of Q13:33 (afaman huwa qā'imun 'alā kulli nafsin bimā kasabat) that has confused Bell is a grammatical structure that has undergone ellipsis. In other words, it is grammatically well-formed but it is an elliptical clause which denotes God's omnipotence. Its non-elliptical structure is: (afaman huwa qā'imun 'alā kulli nafsin bimā kasabat (kashurakā'ihim allati lā taḍurru walā tanfa'u) – Is He who is the maintainer of every soul and knows all that it does (like their partners who can neither benefit nor harm)?). The ellipted answer is implied by the second clause (waja'alū lillāhi shurakā' – they have attributed partners to God),
- (iv) The grammatical structure of the initial clause of Q13:33 is identical to that of Q39:22 (afaman sharaḥa allāhu ṣadrahū lil-islāmi fahuwa 'alā nūrīn min rabbih – Is one whose heart God has opened to Islam so that he has received enlightenment from God?). The ellipted answer to Q39:22 is implied by the second clause of Q39:22 (fawailun lil-qāsiyati qulūbuhum min dhikri allāhi – Then woe to those whose hearts are hardened against the remembrance of God), and
- (v) The command clause (qul sammūhum – Say: 'Name them', Q13:33) is employed for sarcasm against the disbelievers and is thematically related to the preceding macro context.

Similarly, for Bell (1991, 1, p. 403), Q13:35 'is incomplete and unconnected'. He divides Q13:35 into two parts. Part one (Q13:35a) is: (mathalu al-jannati allati wu'ida al-muttaqūna tajrī min taḥtiḥā al-anhāru ukulāḥā dā'imun waẓilluhā – The example [i.e. description] of paradise, which the righteous have been promised, is that beneath it rivers flow. Its fruit is lasting, and its shade), and part two (Q13:35b) is: (tilka 'uqbā alladhīna ittaqaw wa'uqbā al-kāfirīna al-nār – That is the consequence for the righteous, and the consequence for the disbelievers is the fire). Bell suggests that part one 'may have been intended to follow (jannātu 'adnin) in āyah 23'. Thus, for him, Q13:23 should be followed by Q13:35a. Bell's

proposed division of Q13:35 into two units and his proposal to place Q13:35a after Q13:23 lead to the following thematic and textual confusion:

- (i) The division of Q13:35 undermines the āyah structure and will have exegetical and thematic disruption.
- (ii) To retain Q13:35b after Q13:34 will turn Q13:35b into an illogical statement due to the fact that its beginning (tilka 'uqbā alladhīna ittaqaw – that is the consequence for the righteous) refers to 'the righteous' with no thematic relatedness with the previous āyah Q13:34 which is concerned with the 'disbelievers'. In other words, as Q13:35b stands on its own, there is no textual allusion to 'the righteous' and 'paradise'. Thus, only the last part of Q13:35b (wa'uqbā al-kāfirīna al-nār – and the consequence for the disbelievers is the fire) is conceptually connected to Q13:34.
- (iii) Q13:35 is a thematically well-structured statement that has: (a) an intra-āyah thematic relatedness illustrated by the beginning of part one (mathalu al-jannati allatī wu'ida al-muttaqūna) which is conceptually and textually related to the beginning of part two (tilka 'uqbā alladhīna ittaqaw), and (b) an inter-āyah thematic relatedness demonstrated by its conceptual connectivity and textual allusion through reference to 'the disbelievers' and 'the fire' to the preceding āyah Q13:34 which also refers to the same notions.
- (iv) An exegetical account based on thematic relatedness uncovers the conceptual connectivity and textual sequentiality between Q13:35 and Q13:34 without the division of Q13:35 into two units. The beginning of Q13:35 refers to 'paradise' and 'the righteous'. Thus, the beginning of the second part of Q13:35 (tilka 'uqbā alladhīna ittaqaw) is well-connected to the beginning of the āyah. Also, the end of the second part of the Q13:35 harks back to Q13:34. Therefore, the āyah structure is well-preserved and thematically related to the preceding āyah.

Moreover, for Bell (1991, 1, p. 111), Q4:19–22 'seem to have no connection with the context'. He further adds that 'probably the passage owes its presence here to the back of it having been used for the writing of āyahs 23–25'. His sceptical views are discussed below:

- (i) Bell's objection (1991, 1, p. 112) to the use of 'the masculine gender' in (zawj – wife) in Q4:20 is unjustified since the word (zawj) refers to the plural, i.e. it is a generic noun, and most importantly, it is the accurate classical Arabic word for 'wife'. It is only modern standard Arabic that employs the feminine noun (zawjah) for 'wife' and (zawj) for 'husband'.
- (ii) In order to establish thematic relatedness and notional allusion between the set of āyahs Q4:19–22 to the context, the text linguist is required to investigate the wider context surrounding a set of āyahs. In this case, Q4:12–18 represent the context that sets the scene for the next set of āyahs Q4:19–22. In Q4:12–18, various Islamic legal rulings are introduced concerning the wife and her husband. The second set of āyahs Q4:19–22 introduces another set of Islamic

legal rulings concerning women's rights and what the husband is allowed or not allowed to do. Thus, thematic relatedness is firmly established between Q4:19–22 and its context. Q4:19–22 represent what is referred to as 'resumption of legislation' in women's legal rulings (Ibn ʿĀshūr n.d., 4, p. 282),

- (iii) The two sets of āyahs are concerned with family affairs and the husband–wife relationship in marriage.
- (iv) Q4:16–18 provide elaboration on the notion of (tawbah – repentance) and are thematically connected to the context Q4:15. The āyahs Q4:16–18 represent an example of Qur'anic presentation technique in which informative details are provided for a given notion when it is mentioned in a given āyah. This elaboration technique is a textual feature employed throughout the Qur'ān. Q4:16–18 act like parenthetical āyahs but have made Bell wrongly assume the lack of connection between Q4:19–22 and the preceding context.

Rhyme has taken Bell a step further. For him (1991, 1, p. 511), the rhyme of Q19:58 'suits that position' of Q17:107. His proposed re-arrangement is based on rhyme and lexical relatedness between the expressions (kharrū sujjadan – they fall in prostration) which occurs in both āyahs. Bell pays a great deal of attention to the notion of context in his re-organization of āyahs but he has failed to figure out the different contexts in which this expression occurs. In Q17:107, this expression alludes to (alladhīna ūtū al-ʿilma min qablihi – those who were given knowledge before it) which is a reference to the Jewish and Christian pious people. However, Q19:58 has a different context which refers to (al-nabiyyīna min dhuriyyati ādama waminman ḥamalnā maʿa nūḥin wamin dhuriyyati ibrahīma waʾisrāʾīla – the prophets of the descendants of Adam and of those We carried in the ship with Noah, and of the descendants of Abraham and Jacob) which is a reference to the Prophets as well as the descendants of Jacob and Abraham. Thus, we have two distinct contexts for the same expression (kharrū sujjadan). Most importantly, if we dislocate Q19:58 and place it after Q17:107, as Bell suggests, there will be no thematic relatedness between Q19:57 and Q19:59 and textual continuity will fall apart.

5.5 Context in Qur'anic discourse

It is worthwhile to note that at any point after the beginning, what has gone before provides an environment relevant for what is coming next. Therefore, every part of a text is at once both text and context. This means that one or more notions are expressed by a given text at some point and that, at another point, we encounter thematic reference and textual allusions to some of the notions that have occurred earlier in the text, i.e. the previous āyahs. Some of the notions, however, are dispersed into other parts of the same text whether in consecutive āyahs or in adjacent ones. Having dispersed notions that are thematically related plays a significant role in the realization of intertextuality which is another principal positive feature of textuality. Thus, a set of thematically relevant āyahs can be said to constitute a cohesive and coherent discourse. The influence of context

on a well-structured and coherent organization of āyahs is illustrated in the following examples:

- (i) Some Qur'anic āyahs may, on the surface, seem contradictory and logically irrelevant. In this case, the text linguist is required to investigate the wider context surrounding such examples. The macro context provides informative forward and backward textual allusion and thematic links with regards to a given leitmotif, as in Q2:35–39 and Q2:40–43, and Q3:123–129 and Q3:130.
- (ii) Thematic links and relevance between Qur'anic parables are established through context. Parable-specific formulas and expressions used in parables are context-sensitive, as in Q7:59, 65, 73, 85; Q26:8–9, 103–104, 121–122, 139–140, 158–159, 174–175, 190–191; and Q55.
- (iii) The occurrence of an epithet at the end of an āyah is dependent on its context. In other words, āyah-final epithets are context-sensitive, as in Q2:187 and 229, and Q5:4, 7 and 8.
- (iv) Monotheism occurs in an ad hoc context of:
 - (a) the tenet of reward and punishment, as in Q2:163, Q3:18 (twice), and Q37:35;
 - (b) eschatology, as in Q2:255, Q23:116, Q40:62 and 65;
 - (c) the tenet of prophethood, as in Q3:1 and 6, Q4:87, Q6:106, Q7:158, Q9:129, Q11:14, Q13:30, Q20:8, Q21:25, Q28:70 and 88, Q35:3, Q40:3, Q44:8, Q47:19, Q59:22–23, Q64:13, and Q73:9;
 - (d) God's omnipotence, as in Q2:162 and 163, Q11:2 and 6–7, Q16:2 and 3–16, Q20:98 and 105–107, Q21:25 and 30–33, Q31:19–20, Q40:62 and 64, and Q45:12–15;
 - (e) morality and admonition: the contexts of Qur'anic exhortation with which the leitmotif of monotheism occurs are:
 - (1) spending in charity and supporting the needy, as in Q2:254–255;
 - (2) reconciliation between the husband and wife, as in Q4:35–36;
 - (3) the social etiquette of greeting people, as in Q4:85–87;
 - (4) respect to parents, as in Q29:8;
 - (5) doing good deeds, tolerance, and forgiving people, as in Q18:4 and Q18:7, Q23:91 and Q23:97;
 - (f) cattle: reference to cattle also constitutes a context for the occurrence of monotheism, as in Q3:14–18, Q5:1, Q6:136 and 138, and Q16:5. In Q22:37, there is a reference to the sacrifice of animals which is a textual allusion to monotheism and reiterates the annual pledge which the Muslims make through the sacrifice of animals to God alone rather than to idols.

5.6 Notional allusion among sūrah

As Qur'anic sūrah are not arranged according to their chronological revelation, there must be a logical textual reason why they are in their present organization,

on the one hand, and whether there are logical links that constitute cohesive thematic bonds between consecutive sūrahs, on the other. This is explained in the following examples:

- (i) Q6 was revealed before Q2, and Q3 was revealed after Q8. However, Q3 is thematically interrelated, thus, contextually relevant to Q2 rather than to Q8. Therefore, to place Q8 before Q3 will make Q8 out of context and create a yawning thematic gap between Q8 and Q3. The major thematic links between Q2 and Q3 are: martyrdom, creation, bribing the authorities, abusing others' wealth, jihād, pilgrimage, tenets of faith, the scripturists, admonition, gratitude to God, concealment of truth, and covenant. All these links have occurred in both Q2 and Q3. Contextual and thematic links are more explicit between Q8 and Q9 since the latter is a continuation of the former in terms of notional allusion and thematic sequentiality. Among the thematic links that bind Q8 with Q9 are: fighting against the unbelievers, holding firm in the battlefield, prisoners of war, immigration, peace treaties, plotting, and obedience to God and the Prophet. In terms of revelation, Q8 was among the first sūrahs that were revealed in Madīnah, while Q9 was the last revelation of the Qur'ān. There is a massive temporal gap between the revelation of these two sūrahs.
- (ii) Q4 was revealed after Q60. Had Q4 been placed after Q60, there would have been thematic discontinuity and logical irrelevance between these two sūrahs. Thematically, Q4 harks back to Q3 and is also related to Q5. Among the thematic links between Q3 and Q4 are: hardship and perseverance, creation, love of women and sons, information about the truth, and Jesus. Also, the beginning of Q4, which refers to the notion of piety, harks back to the end of Q3, which refers to the same notion. Similarly, there are thematic links that make Q4 and Q5 hang coherently such as pledges and contracts, Islamic legal rulings, heeding the Lord, polytheism, judgement by equity, the notion of piety (referred to by the prefatory āyahs of both Q4 and Q5), and the motif of social equity highlighted by the final āyah Q4:176, which is thematically related to the first āyah Q5:1, which affirms the same leitmotif.
- (iii) Q18 was revealed after Q88. To reorganize these two Qur'anic sūrahs by placing Q18 immediately after Q88 will create notional non-relatedness and contextual irrelevance. In terms of thematic relatedness, Q18 is contextually related to Q19 and also harks back to Q17 through the leitmotifs shared between these sūrahs. For Q17 and Q18, we encounter the notions of disbelief, Satan's rebellion, straightness and healing, prophethood, polytheism, promise of the hereafter, contention, truth and falsehood, fogged minds and clogged ears, book of deeds, and miracles. Also, the beginning of both Q17 and Q18 refers to the same leitmotif of glorifying God, the end of both Q17 and Q18 refers to the leitmotif of monotheism, and the end of Q17 and the beginning of Q18 refer to the same theme of praising the Lord. Similarly, Q19 harks back to Q18 through the leitmotifs of monotheism, polytheism, and miracles.

Having set the scene for the sūrah organization, we now provide an example of thematic relatedness and textual sequentiality at the macro level of Qur'anic discourse which aims to illustrate the notional interrelationship, relevance, and intertextuality between consecutive Qur'anic sūrahs. This is demonstrated by Q73 and Q74. These two Makkan sūrahs hang together through the following thematic links:

1 Beginning of Q73 and Q74:

- (i) The two sūrahs begin with prophethood addressing Muḥammad with different but related attributes (Q73:1 and Q74:1).
- (ii) The two sūrahs make an intertextual reference to 'qum – stand up for prayer' (Q73:2 and Q74:2).
- (iii) The two sūrahs refer to the leitmotif of patience (Q73:10 and Q74:7).
- (iv) The two sūrahs refer to reward and punishment (Q73:11 and Q74:11).

2 End of Q73 and Q74:

- (i) The two sūrahs make an intertextual reference to 'tadhkirah – reminder' (Q73:19 and Q74:49, 54).
- (ii) The two sūrahs refer to the leitmotif of God's forgiveness.

5.7 Co-text in Qur'anic discourse

In our text linguistic analysis of Qur'anic discourse, the notion of co-text is of paramount importance to that of context. Co-text (*al-bi'ah al-lughawīyah lil-naṣṣ*) is the linguistic habitat of lexical items that co-occur with other lexical items within a given linguistic and textual environment. In other words, the surrounding co-text can be either of lexical or grammatical relevance to the text and its pragmatic function which is decided by the text producer. The re-arrangement of sentences in a given text by the reader may seriously undermine co-textual relevance and thematic relatedness among sentences. Linguistically, coherence, as a standard of textuality, among consecutive sentences will be jeopardized. For more details on contextual and co-textual factors determining the selection of words in the Qur'ān, see [Chapter 3](#), Section 3.7.1 of this work.

5.7.1 Thematic relatedness among *yahs*

The lengthy hypothesis put forward by Richard Bell (1953) will be discussed in terms of the inter-āyah and intra-āyah text linguistic approach which we have proposed. Our claim is hinged upon the text linguistic notions of context and co-text and their impact upon the linguistic and thematic interrelationships among consecutive sentences, i.e. āyahs, and also within the same sentence. The premise of the present analysis is that the length of a given sentence cannot be taken as a linguistic factor in the construction of a passage that is made up of a number of consecutive sentences. In other words, a passage may be constructed of a number of sentences of varying degrees of length. Therefore, the major decisive textual

criterion of a text is thematic relatedness that constitutes its cohesive bond between two consecutive sentences or within the same sentence. If a text lacks thematic relatedness, it does not constitute a text but rather jumbled up sentences put together in the form of a passage. Therefore, the length of an āyah is neither a cohesive linguistic element nor a textual factor in the creation of a text. The embedded elements of textuality are thematic relatedness and textual allusion which represent intertextuality. For this reason, we encounter a Madīnan āyah placed after Makkan āyahs or vice versa regardless of the place of revelation of the inserted āyah. The main reason for this kind of insertion in Qur'anic discourse is based on thematic relatedness, i.e. the inserted āyah contributes to the conceptual thrust and enjoys thematic relevance and textual allusion to the preceding or the following āyah(s). For instance, Q45 is a Makkan sūrah. However, Q45:13 is a Madīnan āyah. The inserted āyah (Q45:13) has been placed in the middle of the Makkan sūrah because of its thematic relatedness to Q45:14. Thus, textual connectivity is attained. Reference is made by Q45:13 to God's omnipotence. In Qur'anic discourse, this notion serves as a context for admonition. Therefore, Q45:14 introduces a set of moral etiquettes urging the believers to pardon and forgive people who disbelieve in eschatology. Similarly, Q13 is a Madīnan sūrah. However, Q13:31–32 are Makkan āyahs. Yet, there is thematic relevance among Q13:30 and Q13:31–32 through the textual allusion to prophethood and monotheism by Q13:30 and to prophethood and God's omnipotence by Q13:31–32. Thus, the conceptual thrust, thematic sequentiality, and textual cohesiveness are well preserved. However, Bell (1953, pp. 85, 87, 88, 90, 91) argues that examples like the ones we have provided here are no more than demonstrations of

insertions, alternative continuations, breaks in sense, the connection being not what immediately precedes but with what stands some distance back, sudden changes of subject, destruction of the balance of the preceding pieces which leads to the isolation of some āyahs within a given sūrah, and a series of disjointed pieces which have no connection with the context.

In the text linguistic analysis of Qur'anic āyahs, we encounter two categories of thematic relatedness and textual connectivity: (i) inter-āyah thematic relevance, and (ii) intra-āyah thematic relevance. These are explicated below:

- (i) Inter-āyah thematic relevance: This is the semantic relationship that holds between consecutive āyahs. The thematic relevance between any two āyahs is based on the underlying exegetical details, the reasons for revelation, and contextual factors, as in Q2:237 (wa'in ṭallaqtumūhunna min qabli an tamassūhunna – If you divorce them before having touched them . . .) and Q2:238 (ḥāfiẓū 'alā al-ṣalawāti wal-ṣalāti al-wuṣṭā waqūmū lillāhi qānitīn – Be ever mindful of prayers, and of praying in the most excellent way and stand before God in devout obedience) which, on the surface, are semantically unrelated and suffer from 'a sudden change of subject', 'a break in sense' and 'disjointed' āyahs, as Bell (1953) claims. However, Q2:237 furnishes the

context for Q2:238. In Q2:237, we have reference to the Islamic legal ruling concerning divorce which extends from Q2:226. However, Q2:238 makes a sharp thematic U-turn through reference to prayers, devout obedience, and humbleness (*al-qunūt*). The thematic relatedness between Q2:237 and Q2:238 lies in the underlying exegetical details embedded in Q2:237. The reader is reminded that he/she is bogged down in the busy life and in other family problems such as marriage, divorce and widowhood that may keep him/her distracted from the appropriate remembrance and worship of God, and may become forgetful about the more important religious duties. This exegetical analysis, based on thematic relatedness of Q2:238, is backed up by Qur'anic intertextuality of Q20:14 (*aqim al-ṣalāta lidhikrī* – Establish prayer for My remembrance) and Q29:45 (*aqim al-ṣalāta inna al-ṣalāta tanhā 'an al-faḥshā'i wal-munkar* – Establish prayer. Indeed, prayer prohibits immorality and wrongdoing). In fact, Q2:239 reiterates the same notion of the significance of performing one's prayers and urges the Muslim fighter that he should not overlook his prayers even in the battle front during fighting. Another interesting example is Q13:7 (*wayaqūlu alladhīna kafarū lawlā unzila 'alaihi āyatun min rabbih* – The unbelievers say: 'Why is not a sign sent down to him from his Lord?') and Q13:8 (*allāhu ya'lamu mā taḥmilu kullu unthā wamā taghīḍu al-arḥāmu wamā tazdādu wakullu shai'in 'indahū bimiqdār* – God does know what every female womb bears, by how much the wombs fall short of their time or number, or do exceed. Every single thing is before His sight, in due proportion). In Qur'anic discourse, prophethood co-occurs with the context of God's omnipotence. While the reader is informed by Q13:7 about the unbelievers who challenge Muḥammad to provide evidence of his prophethood, Q13:8 refers to God's omnipotence: God's knowledge of the wombs. We are told by Q13:7 about the unbelievers' curiosity and desire to see tangible proofs of the revelation. Q13:8 attempts to guide the sceptical minds of the unbelievers to other signs surrounding them which are substantiating evidence of God's omnipotence and the revelation. This is an identical case to Q6:37 and Q6:38. Similarly, Q22:60 (*dhālika waman 'āqaba bimithli mā 'ūqiba bihī thumma bughiya 'alaihi layanṣuran-nahu allāhu inna allāha la'afuwun ghafūr* – That is so. If one has retaliated to no greater extent than the injury he received, and is again set upon inordinately, God will help him; for God is One that bolts out sins and forgives again and again) seems, on the surface, to have been followed by Q22:61, which is semantically irrelevant and makes a sudden U-turn in subject-matter (*dhālika bi'anna allāha yūliju al-laila fī al-nahāri wayūliju al-nahāra fī al-laili wa'inna allāha samī'un baṣīr* – That is because God merges night into day, and He merges day into night, and verily it is God who hears and sees all things, Q22:61). We are told by Q22:60 about aggression and retaliation, while in Q22:61, we are told about the change of the day and the night. Having established the underlying exegetical account of Q22:61, this assumption is no longer valid. The thematic relevance that holds between Q22:60 and Q22:61 lies in the fact that Q22:60 refers to the victory that will

be granted by God to the person who is seriously abused by his/her opponent. Thus, this statement is followed by Q22:61, which makes reference to God's omnipotence in order to bring to the reader's attention that God is indeed able to bring about the victory promised to the victim. Thus, thematic relevance, thrust, and continuity are maintained between Q22:60 and 61.

- (ii) Intra-āyah thematic relevance: This is the semantic correlation that holds within the same individual āyah. On the lexical level, the textual analysis of an āyah is established through the semantic componential features of a given word. In other words, it deals with the word-level thematic relatedness within an āyah and whether the constituent words employed in a given āyah are suitable for the underlying communicative function of the āyah. For instance, in Q89:7 (irama dhāti al-ʿimād – Iram who had lofty pillars), the word (ʿimād – lofty pillars) is employed as a semiotic element that alludes to the people of ancient ʿĀd in southern Arabia, to whom Prophet Hūd was sent. The ʿĀd people were a tall race and had lofty stature. Thus, the word (ʿimād) establishes a textual allusion to the height of the people of ʿĀd. Also, in Q16:65 (wallāhu anzala min al-samā'i mā'an fa'ahyā bihi al-arḍa ba'da mawtiḥā inna fī dhālika la'āyatan liqawmin yasma'ūn – God sends down rain from the skies, and gives therewith life to the earth after its death; verily in this is a sign for those who listen), the word (ysma'ūn – to listen) is employed, while the reader may have expected the word (yubṣirūn – to see), since people can see the signs of the rain rather than 'hear a sign'. The macro text explains why the word (ysma'ūn) is used. Q16:65 is intertextually and thematically related to many āyahs such as Q2:7 (khatama allāhu ʿalā qulūbi-him waʿalā samʿihim – God has set a seal upon their hearts and upon their hearing), Q2:93 (qālū sami'nā wa'aṣainā – They said instead: 'We hear and disobey'), Q21:45 (qul innamā undhirukum bil-waḥyi walā yasma'u al-ṣummu al-duʿā'a idhā mā yundharūn – Say: 'I only warn you by revelation'. But the deaf do not hear the call when they are warned). Thus, the pagans, as deniers of the revelation, have been repeatedly described as 'deaf' as in Q6:39 and Q10:42. In Q16:65, they are urged to ponder upon the rain which is an evident manifestation of God's power and existence. Semiotically, the rain is a sign that can talk to people with reason and who listen. The rain is a loud message for those who can 'hear' it. The textual allusion in Q16:65 refers to the notion of eschatology. Rain is able to revive the dead land. Since God sends down the rain to revive the dead land, by analogy, He is also able to resurrect the dead on the day of judgement.

Intra-āyah thematic relevance is also encountered in āyah-final epithets (fawāṣil al-āyāt), as in Q2:181 (faman baddalahū ba'damā sami'ahū fa'innamā ithmahū ʿalā alladhīna yubaddilūnahu inna allāha samīʿun ʿalīm – If anyone changes the bequest after hearing it, the guilt shall be on those who make the change. For God hears and knows all things) where the epithets (samīʿun ʿalīm – God hears and knows all things) are used. However, in the following āyah, Q2:182, different epithets are employed: (faman khāfa min mūṣin janafan aw ithman fa'aṣṣala bainahum falā ithma ʿalaihi inna

allāha ghafūrun raḥīm – But if anyone fears partiality or wrong-doing on the part of the testators, and makes peace between the parties concerned, there shall be no sin on him. For God is Forgiving, Merciful), where the epithets (ghafūrun raḥīm – God is forgiving, most merciful) are used. Semantically, each set of epithets is co-textually oriented. In other words, in Qur'anic genre, the occurrence of an epithet is not haphazard but rather co-text-sensitive. The epithets (samī'un 'alim) are employed in Q2:181 to achieve lexical congruity within the same āyah in which the word (sama'a – to hear) occurs. In other words, God also 'hears' and 'knows' of any changes you may be tempted to make. In Q2:182, however, the epithets (ghafūrun raḥīm) are employed to match the lexical meaning of the word (ithm – sin). In other words, co-textual relevance necessitates the occurrence of the epithets (ghafūrun raḥīm) which need to collocate with the word (ithm – sin).

On the grammatical level, the textual analysis of an āyah is established through the investigation of the influence of co-text upon the occurrence of a given grammatical or morphological pattern within a given āyah, as in Q2:61 (yaqtulūna al-nabiyyina bighairi al-ḥaqqi – They kill the Prophets without right) and Q3:21 (yaqtulūna al-nabiyyina bighairi ḥaqqin – They kill the Prophets without right) where we have a definite noun (al-ḥaqq – the right) in Q2:61 but an indefinite noun occurs (ḥaqq – a right) in Q3:21. This stylistic variation is attributed to the noun's relevant co-text. The lexical co-text of Q2:61 is overwhelmed by the definite case of the same noun (al-ḥaqq) as in Q2:42, 71, 91, 109, 119, 121, 144, 146, 147, 149, 151, 176, 213, 252, and 282. To establish grammatical and stylistic symmetry throughout the macro text of Q2 with regards to this noun in particular, the definite form is the most suitable stylistic candidate for Qur'anic genre. The occurrence of the indefinite form (ḥaqq – a right) in Q3:21 is also attributed to grammatical co-text of āyah 21. The indefinite form has occurred to match the same indefinite noun that has occurred in Q3:112, 86, 102, and 181. Thus, a series of indefiniteness has established grammatical and stylistic harmony on a macro textual level. While the definite/indefinite form is influenced by co-text, it can also be conditioned by context as in Q2:126 and Q14:35 which will be discussed below.

Context can also influence the grammatical form of a word within an āyah as in Q2:126 (rabbī ij'al hādhā baladan āminan – My Lord, make this a secure city) and Q14:35 (rabbī ij'al hādhā al-balada āminan – My Lord, make this city secure) where the indefinite noun (baladan – a city) in Q2:126 is used, while the definite form (al-balada – the city) occurs in Q14:35. Although these two āyahs are revealed in two different places (the former is Madīnan and the latter is Makkan) they share a similar linguistic structure but distinct stylistic pattern due to the indefinite/definite form of the same noun. To account for this stylistic difference, the text linguist is required to investigate the relevant context of each āyah: The context of situation of Q2:126 refers to Makkah before it was built by Abraham who prayed for it to be a secure place for all its inhabitants who would live in it after it was

built. This textual analysis is confirmed by the demonstrative pronoun (hādhā – this) in Q14:35 which refers to Makkah as a city described as (biwādin ghairi dhī zarʿin ʿinda baitika al-muḥarram – in an uncultivated valley near Your sacred house, Q14:37). The demonstrative pronoun (hādhā) in Q2:126 does not refer to Makkah as such because it was not yet built.

The impact of context upon grammatical form is illustrated by Q16:24 (waʿidhā qīla lahum mādhā anzala rabbukum qālū asāṭīru al-awwalīn – When it is said to the unbelievers, ‘What is it that your Lord has revealed?’ They say: ‘Tales of the ancient!’), where the plural noun (asāṭīru – tales) is employed in the nominative case rather than the expected accusative case (asāṭīra). This is due to the context of situation of this āyah. The context is related to the unbelievers’ statement about the revelation. Thus, grammatically, Q16:24 is made up of an ellipted inchoative (mubtadaʾ maḥdhūf), which represents what the unbelievers say, plus the predicate (khabar). Therefore, we have: (al-waḥyu – the revelation) or (qawlu muḥammad – Muḥammad’s speech) which represent the ellipted inchoative plus the predicate, which is (asāṭīru – tales). However, its counterpart Q16:30 (mādhā anzala rabbukum qālū khairan – What is it that your Lord has revealed? They say: ‘That which is good’) where the noun (khairan – that which is good) occurs in the accusative case because the context of situation has changed. Reference is now made to the believers, who say their statement (khairan) as an object to an ellipted verb (anzala – to reveal). Thus, the grammatical structure of Q16:30 is: an ellipted verb (anzala) plus object (khairan). This is because the believers genuinely think that ‘what has been revealed is good’. Thus, the normal (verb plus subject plus object) grammatical structure is employed, while the unbelievers employ the unusual grammatical structure (an ellipted inchoative plus predicate).

5.7.2 Context, co-text and theological cleavages

Context and co-text can be employed as conclusive textual evidence to substantiate a given exegetical meaning. Q5:67 is a case in point: (Messenger [Muḥammad] proclaim everything that has been sent down to you from your Lord, if you do not, then you will not have communicated God’s message, and God will protect you from people). For Shīʿi exegetes such as al-Qummi (1983, 1, pp. 173–175), al-Ṭūsī (n.d., 3, p. 588), and al-Shīrāzi (1992, 4, p. 47), this āyah is an implicit reference to the political allegiance (al-mubāyaʿah al-siyāsiyyah) made by Muḥammad to ʿAlī. To rebut this claim, one needs to consider the pivotal expression around which context and co-text evolve. In Q5:67, we have the phrase (mā unzila ilaika min rabbika – everything that has been sent down to you from your Lord). Thus, exegetically, we can safely argue that the Shīʿi’s exegetical premise is invalid for the following contextual and co-textual factors:

- (i) Lexical co-text contradicts the Shīʿi exegetical argument where in Q5:66 and 68 we have similar expressions (mā unzila ilaihim – everything that has been

sent down to them [the Jews and the Christians]) and (mā unzila ilaikum – everything that has been sent down to you [the Jews and the Christians]). Thus, the context is about the revelation of Scriptures to the Jews and the Christians. In terms of thematic consonance and conceptual chaining, Q5:67 is intertextually linked to and dovetails with Q5:66 and 68 where Q5:67 refers to the Qur'ān and Q5:66 and 68 refer to the Torah and the Gospel. Thus, Q5:67 does not refer to 'Ali's political allegiance.

- (ii) The verb (unzila – was sent down) represents the lexical co-text of these three āyahs. It is, therefore, irrational to argue that it is 'Ali's political allegiance that was 'sent down' to Muḥammad, while the Torah and the Gospel were 'sent down' to Moses and Jesus, respectively.
- (iii) The expression (mā unzila ilaika – everything that has been sent down to you [Muḥammad]) in Q5:68 is contextual evidence of the meaning which this expression refers to, i.e. the Qur'an rather than 'Ali. The context of Q5:67 is about the Jews and the Christians (the People of the Book). The context is a reminder to them to follow what has been sent down to them. This exegetical meaning is backed up by the macro context in Q5:44, 46, 66, 68, and 104 where we have reference to the sending down of the Torah and the Gospel.
- (iv) The exegetical meaning of Q5:67 is also intertextually related to and exegetically dependent on Q5:15, 47, 48, 49, 59, 68, 84, 99, 101 where expressions such as (anzala allāhu – what God has sent down), (anzalnā ilaika al-kitāba – We [God] have sent down the Qur'ān to you [Muḥammad]), (unzila ilaika – what has been sent down to you [Muḥammad]), and (hīna yunazzalu al-qur'āna – while the Qur'ān is being sent down).
- (v) Q5:105 is further textual and contextual evidence that the exegetical meaning of the expression (mā unzila ilaika – what has been sent down to you [Muḥammad]) is concerned with the sending down of the Qur'ān rather than 'Ali's political allegiance. We are informed by Q5:105 that (lā yaḍurrukum man ḍalla idhā ihtadaitum – Those who have gone astray will not harm you when you have been guided), where reference is made to the three categories of people: the Jews, the Christians, and the Muslims. In other words, the Jews and the Christians have rejected the Qur'ān, while the Muslims have believed in it. Thus, the Muslims believe in (mā unzila ilaika – what has been sent down to you [Muḥammad]) which is obviously 'the Qur'ān' and not 'Ali's political allegiance.

It is worthwhile to note that other schools of exegesis such as the Mu'tazili, Ibāḍi, and the Sufi do not hold the exegetical argument put forward by Shī'i exegetes.

5.8 Organization, length and notional allusion of āyahs

We shall provide an empirical textual analysis of sample āyahs in order to investigate whether the organization of āyahs is haphazard or consistent, and whether the present āyah arrangement attains thematic relatedness and textual allusion regardless of their length. The present textual analysis is focused on the āyahs of Q73

(al-muzzammil – one who wraps himself in clothing) and Q74 (al-muddaththir – one who covers himself with a garment). Although Q73 is characterized by short āyahs of 2–8 words whose rhyme is (-an), the last āyah Q73:20 is made up of 75 words whose rhyme is (-īm). Thus, it is different in both length and rhyme. According to al-Thaʿlabi (cf. al-Qurṭubi 1997, 19, p. 31), Q73:20 is a Madīnan āyah. However, regardless of its length, Q73:20 is thematically related to the overall macro theme of the sūrah which is (qiyām – standing up for prayers and reading the Qurʾān late at night) which is introduced by the prefatory statement Q73:2. Also, there is thematic sequentiality and relatedness between Q73:20 and Q73:19, i.e. Q73:19 constitutes the context for Q73:20. In Q73:19, we are told about the Qurʾān as ‘tadhkirah – reminder’ and the reader is urged to ‘please his/her Lord’; then Q73:20 is introduced to provide details as to ‘how to please the Lord, how much reading of the Qurʾān is required late at night, and what kind of good deeds are required’. Thus, Q73:20 provides details for Q73:19 without which Q73 would have ended abruptly and Q73:19 left without elaboration. Although assonance, i.e. rhyme, is disrupted by Q73:20, in Qurʾanic discourse, unlike poetry, assonance is overridden by meaning. One should bear in mind that the meaning of a given āyah is given precedence over rhyme which is often disrupted due to thematic sequentiality and textual connectivity between consecutive āyahs. We have encountered this phenomenon in both Makkan and Madīnan sūrahs. The Makkan sūrah Q13, for instance, is punctuated by different rhymes such as (-ūn), (-āb), (-ād), (-ār), (-āl), (-āʿ), and (-āq). Similarly, the Madīnan sūrah Q5 displays various rhymes such as (-īd), (-āb), (-īm), (-īn), (-ūr), (-īl), and (-īr). However, when Richard Bell encounters a different rhyme, he labels it as ‘loose’ (1991, 1, p. 432) as in Q16:7 which ends with (-īm) unlike the surrounding rhyme (-ūn) which he is not happy with. For him (1991, 1, p. 524), ‘the rhyme is uncertain’ in Q20:25 because the rhyme in Q20:2–24 is (-ā) but changes to (-ī) in Q20:25–32. Bell (1991, 1, p. 509) is also sceptical of the rhyme in (nabiyyā – a prophet) in Q19:54 although it rhymes perfectly well with the surrounding āyahs.

All the āyahs of Q74 are Makkan and are characterized by short āyahs of 2–5 words. However, the length feature is disrupted by Q74:31 which is made up of 52 words. Although there is inconsistency in terms of length of āyah, thematic relatedness is maintained and textual allusion is intact. Q74:26–30 constitute the context for Q74:31. In Q74:26–30, textual reference is made to the hell fire, i.e. reward and punishment, the arrogance of the unbelievers in the hell fire, and the 19 hell’s angels. This set of āyahs is followed up by Q74:31 which elaborates on the hell’s angels, arrogance of the unbelievers in the hell fire, the hell fire, and the unbelievers in the hell fire. Thus, thematic sequentiality is uninterrupted and textual allusion is maintained.

Āyahs of a different place of revelation lend further support to our claim that the arrangement of āyahs has been made according to their contextual and co-textual relevance and irrespective of their length and rhyme. Contextual relevance and thematic relatedness override length of āyahs. We encounter Makkan āyahs placed adjacent to Madīnan āyahs and vice versa to achieve thematic relatedness, as in Q45, which is a Makkan sūrah, but within it we have Q45:14, which is a

Madīnan āyah that hangs together thematically with its surrounding Makkan āyahs. The Madīnan āyah 14 refers to admonition which usually occurs in the context of God's omnipotence. Āyahs 12–13 refer to God's omnipotence, āyah 15 also refers to admonition. Thus, āyahs 14 and 15 have common thematic grounds. Āyahs 15–17 refer to the Children of Israel, reminding them of God's blessings bestowed upon them. Thus, the preceding morality-oriented āyahs 14–15 have the pragmatic function of reminding the Children of Israel and therefore become contextually and thematically relevant to āyahs 15–17. Therefore, the Madīnan āyah Q45:14 is contextually relevant to its surrounding āyahs Q45:12–13 and Q45:15–17. Bell (1991, 1, p. 511) is also sceptical about the length of Q19:58, although it hangs thematically together with the surrounding āyahs.

5.9 Bell's dramatic re-organization

The most dramatic re-arrangement of āyahs by Richard Bell has been done to the introductory section of Q9 (sūrat al-tawbah). Bell (1937, pp. 235–240; 1991, 1, pp. 291–301) has proposed the following drastic re-organization of Q9:

- (i) Q9:2 does not connect with Q9:1.
- (ii) Q9:1 should be followed by Q9:4 because 'the latter having been written on the back of the former'.
- (iii) In Q9:2, the word (siḥū) should be replaced by 'the usual word (sirū)'.
- (iv) Q9:3 should be divided into two parts: Q9:3a (wa'adhānun min allāhi warasūlihi ilā al-nāsi yawma al-ḥajji al-akbari anna allāha barī'un min al-mushrikīna warasūluhu – It is an announcement from God and His messenger to the people on the day of the greater pilgrimage that God is disassociated from the disbelievers and so is His messenger) and Q9:3b (fa'in tubtum fahuwa khairun lakum wa'in tawallaitum fa'lamū annakum ghairu mu'jizī allāhi wabashshir alladhīna kafarū bi'adhābin alīm – So if you repent, that is best for you; but if you turn away, then know that you will not cause failure to God. And give tidings to those who disbelieve of a painful punishment).
- (v) The first part Q9:3a 'does not connect with the second part Q9:3b'.
- (vi) The first part Q9:3a is 'written on the back of Q9:3b and was inserted'.
- (vii) The second part Q9:3b 'is related rather to Q9:2, but does not continue it'.
- (viii) 'The continuation of Q9:2 is found in Q9:5'.
- (ix) Q9:2 plus Q9:3b plus Q9:5 should 'follow Q9:36'.³
- (x) The genitive case ending of the adjective (al-akbari – greater) in Q9:3 to be changed to the accusative case ending (al-akbara).
- (xi) 'It may be doubted whether Q9:5 and Q9:6 were originally connected'.
- (xii) Q9:16 should be followed by āyah 19.

According to Zaid b. Thābit, Q9 was the last sūrah in the revelation (Ibn ʿĀshūr n.d., 10, p. 95; al-Khāzin 1995, 2, p. 332; al-Baiḍāwī 1999, 1, p. 394; Ibn ʿAṭīyyah 1991, 6, p. 398). It was revealed in the ninth/fifteenth century, i.e. a year

before the fall of Makkah. When Muḥammad went to the battle of Tabūk in the ninth/fifteenth century, a number of Muslim hypocrites refused to march forth with the army and some polytheist tribes abrogated unilaterally the treaties with Muḥammad. As a result, on his return from the expedition, Muḥammad dissolved the peace treaties with the idolatrous Arabs who violated the peace treaties. Other pagan tribes also made treaties of mutual alliance with the Muslims, respected their treaty obligations, and did not break them at will like other pagan tribes. It is worthwhile to note that some of the treaties were open ended, others were for a specific period of time, the period of time of some of them was still valid, but the period of time of other treaties became invalid. For instance, the al-Ḥudaibiyyah treaty was for 4 or 10 years. When the Tabūk expedition (9/630) took place, the hypocrite Muslims spread rumours that the Muslim army was defeated. Accordingly, some idolatrous tribes, who had already made peace treaties with Muḥammad, abrogated the treaties. These were Banū Khuzā'ah, Banū Mudlij, Banū Khazimah (or Jadhīmah). Thus, Q9:1 specifically applies to these tribes.

Q9 lays down new guidelines for diplomatic relations, namely: a period of four months⁴ should be allowed by way of notice after the denunciation of a peace agreement. Q9 is also named *barā'ah* (a declaration of dissociation). In the view of Margoliouth (1914, p. 33), 'when Q9 was issued, the Koran had come to be considered as the Prophet's official utterances. So far as this manifesto is in the name of the Prophet, it should perhaps have found no place in the Koran'. His conviction is based on 'the lack of the invocation that is prefixed to all the other *sūrahs*' and 'the co-ordination of Allāh and the Apostle as the authors of the document' (Margoliouth 1914, p. 33).

Q9 has been given 14 names; among them are: *al-tawbah* (repentance) which, in the view of Ibn 'Abbās, is a reference to God's repentance for the three Muslims who stayed behind and did not join the Muslim army in the expedition of *tabūk*. Q9 is also named *barā'ah* as the first word of the *sūrah*, and *al-muqashshah*, meaning 'recovery from an illness', since this *sūrah* cleanses the person who believes in it from polytheism and hypocrisy. Ibn 'Abbās used to name it *al-fāḍiḥah* (the *sūrah* that uncovers someone's disgrace, i.e. the *sūrah* that names and shames the hypocrites). al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī called it *al-ḥāfirah* (the digger, since it digs deep into the hearts of the hypocrites and exposes their hypocrisy), and Qatādah called it *al-muthīrah* (that which exposes the hypocrites' deeds) (Ibn 'Āshūr n.d., 10, p. 95; al-Biqā'i 1995, 3, p. 255; al-Rāzi 1990, 15, p. 172).

At the macro textual level, thematic relatedness should be taken into account in conjunction with Q8. Due to contextual factors, Q8 is placed before Q9, although Q8 is significantly shorter than Q9. Thus, Q8 belongs to the *mathānī* category (repetitive *sūrahs*) in which some Qur'anic parables are referred to again. The *mathānī* are also characterized by similitudes (*al-amthāl*) and admonition. These include *sūrahs* 8, 13–15, 19, 22, 24–25, 27–36, and 38–48. However, Q9 belongs to the *mi'ūn* category (over 100 *sūrahs*) which include the *sūrahs* that are just over 100 āyahs, such as *sūrahs* 9, 11–12, 16, 18, 20–21, 23, 26, and 37 (Abdul-Raof 2003, p. 115). Although the two *sūrahs* are chronologically different (Q8 was revealed in the second/eighth century, i.e. seven years before Q9), in

terms of consonance Q8 is thematically related to Q9, and therefore the latter does not need to start with the usual basmalah (in the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful), i.e. the two sūrahs hang so well together that they could be one single sūrah where Q9 is a continuation of, i.e. merged into, Q8. Thus, conceptual sequentiality and textual cohesiveness are achieved.

Thematic relatedness between Q8 and Q9 is represented by the notion of al-‘ahd (treaty, contract): Q8 is concerned with treaties, while the major focus of Q9 is denunciation of treaties. This intertextual link between the two sūrahs is represented by statements such as (alladhīna ‘āhadta minhum thumma yanquḍūna ‘ahdahum fī kulli marratin – the ones with whom you made a treaty but then they break their pledge every time, and they do not fear God, Q8:56) and (wa’immā takhāfanna min qawmin khiyānatan fanbidh ilaihim ‘alā sawā’ – If you have reason to fear from a people betrayal, throw their treaty back to them, putting you on equal terms, Q8:58).

Given thematic relatedness, textual allusion, and contextual relevance, the above 12 points put forward by Richard Bell can be critically assessed below. The following details are based on the views of Ibn ‘Āshūr (n.d.), al-Rāzi (1990), Ibn Kathīr (1993), al-Biqā’i (1995), al-Nasafi (1996), and Abu Ḥaiyān (2001):

- (i) The tone of Q9 is a form of legal discourse demonstrated by its prefatory āyahs and the words employed in them. The indefinite noun (brā’atun) is a legal expression meaning: ‘I hereby declare my dissociation, on behalf of God, from any previous legal commitments required by previous treaties’. This legal word is adequately employed to denounce the previously made treaties with the pagans. In order not to be treacherous, the barā’ah (dissociation) has been made public and a grace period of four months has been granted to the other parties.
- (ii) Legal discourse requires disambiguating details. This is achieved through Q9:2 which is employed for elaboration (al-tafrī‘) on the notion of barā’ah. Thus, an imperative verb (fasīḥū – to travel freely) is employed whose implicit pronoun refers to (al-mushrikīn – the idolatrous Arabs) in Q9:1. Q9:2 employs a pronoun shift from the third person plural in (al-mushrikīn) to the second person plural in fasīḥū. Stylistically, the command verb (fasīḥū) in Q9:2 implies (falyasīḥū – so let the polytheists travel freely). The pragmatic function of the pronoun shift serves the communicative purpose of ‘the direct formal notification of the delivery note of warning and denunciation of treaties with the pagans’. Thus, the second person pronoun is employed through the imperative verb (fasīḥū). Q9:2 also harks back to Q9:1 through the grace period of four months. Therefore, Bell (1937, p. 235) is seriously mistaken to understand the verb (fasīḥū) as addressing the Muslims. Bell has misunderstood the linguistic process of pronoun change which is a rhetorical feature of Qur’anic Arabic referred to as iltifāt (pronoun shift) referring to the polytheists. It is due to this linguistic/rhetorical feature that the ‘abrupt change of address’ takes place. The pagans were formally informed by ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib who promulgated the first nine

āyahs to them in Minā on the sacrifice day (yawm al-naḥr) where both Muslims and pagans assembled from all parts of Arabia for Ḥajj.

- (iii) The employment of the verb (siḥū) in Q9:2 is stylistically and semantically relevant. The semantic componential features of this verb are: + Security, + Free movement in any direction, + Free movement at any time, and + Free movement for any distance. Thus, distance and time were unlimited and coupled with security. Therefore, there is a textual allusion and semantic relevance between the noun (barā'ah) and the verb (siḥū). Contextually, the verb (sirū – to walk) which is suggested by Bell will be stylistically and semantically inappropriate.
- (iv) The promise of security to the pagans pronounced through the verb (siḥū) establishes thematic relatedness between Q9:2 and Q9:1.
- (v) Although security has been granted for their movements, the disbelievers need to know for how long. Thus, Q9:2 stipulates the period of time, four months only. Therefore, thematic relatedness is achieved with Q9:1.
- (vi) The employment of the clause (i'lamū annakum ghairu mu'jizī allāh wa'anna allāha mukhzi al-kāfirīn – but know that you cannot cause failure to God and that God will disgrace the disbelievers) is another component of the logical connection between Q9:1 and Q9:2. Exegetically, it means: 'you can do whatever you want, you can prepare your military forces but you will be defeated in this world and in the hereafter'. Thus, the verb (i'lamū) is employed to achieve stylistic legal thrust and to achieve the pragmatic function of formal notice and legal notification (al-tanbīh).
- (vii) Q9:3 is thematically related to both āyahs 2 and 3. Grammatically, this āyah is co-ordinated to (ma'ṭūfah 'alā) the first āyah. The initial word (adhānun – a public announcement formally delivered) is a legal expression which enjoys an identical pragmatic function to (brā'atun) which is serving someone with a legally binding final notice. Thus, the idolatrous tribes who have violated their treaties are formally informed. The placement of Q9:3 after the second āyah is to elaborate on the matter of violation. Thus, thematic relevance is achieved. The disbelievers are advised that if they embrace Islam, it will be for their own good. The thematic connection and textual allusion between Q9:3 and 2 are established through expressions such as (ghairu mu'jizī allāh – you cannot cause failure to God) and (bashshir alladhīna kafarū bi'adhābin alīm – give tidings to those who disbelieve of a painful punishment), and through the repetition of the same verb (i'lamū) in the two āyahs. It is worthwhile to note that Q9:1–3 are concerned with the first category of polytheists who have abrogated their treaties such as Quraizah and Banū Bakr who attacked the tribe of Khuzā'ah who were the Muslims' allies.
- (viii) Q9:3 is not a repetition of Q9:1 because Q9:1 informs the polytheists that barā'ah will come into force and that the previous treaties have been denounced. Q9:3, however, informs the idolaters of the severing of previous friendly relations with them. Also, Q9:3 delivers the pragmatic and rhetorical functions of warning and rebuke.

- (ix) Bell's suggestion to divide Q9:3 into two parts is semantically and thematically flawed for linguistic reasons: (1) This āyah is a semantically and stylistically coherent piece whose first part (wa'adhānun min allāhi warasūlihi . . . anna allāh barī'un min al-mushrikīna warasūluhu – and it is an announcement from God and His messenger . . . and that God and His messenger are disassociated from treaty obligations to the idolaters) and second part (fa'in tubtum . . . bi'adhābin alimin – If you repent . . . will have a painful punishment) hang well together with each other. The first part of this āyah provides the legal proclamation, while the second part advises the polytheists to repent and embrace Islam, and also warns them of the consequences in the hereafter. This represents another instance of elaboration (al-tafrīṭ) which we encounter in Qur'anic discourse as a presentation technique. The second part is an elaboration on the first part. The two parts, therefore, cannot be separated as Bell suggests, nor can the second part be placed after Q9:2 and the first part be discarded. (2) The clause (wabashshir alladīna kafarū bi'adhābin alimin – Warn those who ignore God that they will have a painful punishment) of the second part of Q9:3 is co-ordinated to the initial clause (wa'adhānun min allāhi warasūlihi – and it is an announcement from God and His messenger) of the first part of Q9:3. Linguistically, therefore, one cannot divide Q9:3 into two parts.
- (x) Q9:4 sets the exception to what has been stipulated by Q9:2 and Q9:3. It differentiates between the two categories of pagans: the first category represents those who abrogate their treaties with the Muslims, while the second category represents those who have not violated these treaties. Thus, having finished with the first category of disbelievers, Q9:4 introduces legal details about the second category. It makes an important distinction from the first category of disbelievers referred to earlier by Q9:3 as (mushrikīn) and (alladhīna kafarū). Thus, thematic relatedness is well established between Q9:3 and Q9:4. Therefore, the denunciation of the peace treaties with the idolaters applies only to the first category rather than the second. The reasons for this exception are laid down by Q9:4 which are: (1) these idolaters have not failed to fulfil their obligations towards the Muslims, and (2) have not aided anyone against the Muslims. Therefore, peace treaties with them should be honoured until their date expires. These tribes include Banū Ḍamrah, Banū Judhaimah and Banū al-Dīl who endorsed the Ḥudaibiyyah treaty. Thus, Q9:4 ends with the phrase (inna allāha yuḥibbu al-muttaqīn – indeed, God loves the righteous who fear Him) urging the Muslims to honour the peace treaties with the second category of idolaters until the last day of each treaty.
- (xi) Q9:5 is an elaboration on Q9:2 and sets up new guidelines regulating the friendly relations with the first category of polytheists who abrogated their treaties or have had no treaty with the Muslims. This category of idolaters would be fought against and killed after the end of the four sacred months. Q9:5, however, exempts the second category of idolaters from being killed and fought against. The second part of Q9:5 advises the idolaters to

embrace Islam, repent, establish prayer and give zakāt. This part of the āyah is thematically related to the next āyah Q9:6 which is co-ordinated to (fa'in tābū wa'aqāmū al-ṣalāta wa'ātaw al-zakāta . . . – but if they should repent, establish prayer, and give zakāt, . . . Q9:5). Thematic relatedness is also backed up by the concluding phrase of Q9:5 (inna allāha ghafūrun raḥīm – indeed, God is Forgiving and Merciful) which urges the Muslims to forgive the idolaters after they have embraced Islam. Like Bell, Irving (1850, p. 169) does not differentiate between the two categories of idolaters in terms of the violation of covenants and makes a general statement that 'no alternative would be left to them but to embrace the faith, or pay tribute'.

- (xii) There is thematic relatedness between Q9:5 and Q9:6. Grammatically, Q9:6 is co-ordinated to the last part of the previous āyah (fa'in tābū wa'aqāmū al-ṣalāta wa'ātaw al-zakāta fakhallū sabīlahum inna allāha ghafūrun raḥīm – but if they should repent, establish prayer, and give zakāt, let them go on their way. Indeed, God is Forgiving and Merciful, Q9:5). The other grammatical reason for the logical connection of Q9:6 with the previous āyah is that āyah 6 is co-ordinated to āyah 5 (faqtulū al-mushrikīna ḥaithu wajattumūhum wakhudhūhum waḥṣurūhum waq'udū lahum kulla marṣad – then kill the idolaters wherever you find them, capture them and besiege them and sit in wait for them at every place of ambush) in order to specify and delimit the general rule (takhṣiṣ al-ʿumūm) of killing all idolaters. In other words, Q9:6 provides one condition according to which an idolater should not be killed after the end of the four sacred months if he/she has come to genuinely enquire about the new faith of Islam.
- (xiii) Bell's proposal to place Q9:2, 3, and 5 after Q9:36 will seriously disrupt thematic relatedness. Q9:4 will have to come after the first āyah and followed by Q9:6. Thus, thematic connectivity and the textual allusion will be chaotic and logical coherence will no longer be preserved.
- (xiv) Q9:36 is concerned with the ecclesiastical year which is now fixed as a lunar year and the months are calculated by the appearance of the moon. The āyah aims to specify accurately the four sacred months. It also refers to the four sacred months and fighting against all the polytheists. This āyah harks back to Q9:5 and is an elaboration on it. The most significant exegetical problem of Q9:36 and whether it should be followed by Q9:2, 3, and 5 as proposed by Bell (1937, 1991) lies in the clause (waqātilū al-mushrikīna kāffatan kamā yuqātilūnakum kāffatan – And fight against the idolaters collectively as they fight against you collectively). The employment of justification simile (al-tashbīh al-taʿlīlī) sheds enough exegetical light on the fact that Q9:36 is a thematically independent āyah that does not need to be followed by Q9:2, 3, and 5. Q9:36 simply informs the reader who may have misunderstood the Islamic legal ruling of fighting in the sacred months against the idolaters. The reader may have misunderstood that there should be no fighting against the pagans during the four sacred

months. Thus, the justification simile represented by (*kamā yuqātilūnakum kāffatan* – as they fight against you collectively) is employed to signify that the sacred months should be respected with good deeds and no acts of aggression against the idolaters unless they start the fighting against you. In this case, the Muslims are required to fight against them even during these sacred months.

- (xv) Placing Q9:2, 3, and 5 after Q9:36 will seriously disrupt the thematic relevance and logical connection between Q9:36 and Q9:37.
- (xvi) Bell's re-organization of some of the āyahs in Q9 has been based upon lexical connectivity that establishes intertextuality. For him, an āyah should follow another āyah if the same word occurs in the two āyahs. For instance, he suggests that Q9:2, 3b, and 5 should follow Q9:36. The main reason for this is because the words (*shahr/ashhur/shuhūr* – month/months), (*ḥurum* – sacred), and (*mushrikīn* – idolaters) have occurred in these āyahs. Similarly, his suggestion that Q9:4 is connected to Q9:1 is also based on the lexical connectivity between the expressions (*‘āhadtum min al-mushrikīn* – with whom you made a treaty) that has occurred in the two āyahs.
- (xvii) Bell (1937, p. 234; 1991, 1, p. 292) suggests that the short vowel /i/, i.e. the genitive case, (*kasrah*) of the adjective (*al-akbari* – greater) be changed to the short vowel /a/, i.e. to the accusative case (*fatḥah*). His suggestion is counter to Arabic grammar as (*al-akbari*) is part of a construct noun phrase (*muḍāf wamuḍāf ilaihi*) in which (*al-akbari*) acts as the (*muḍāf ilaihi*) which by grammatical necessity takes the short vowel /i/.
 Bell finds the grammar of Qur'anic Arabic difficult. For instance, he admits that 'the use of pronouns is rather difficult to understand' (1991, 2:239), he (1937, p. 235) misinterprets the co-referential pronoun implicit in the verb (*fasīḥū* – to travel freely, Q9:2), and he (1937, p. 504) is also confused about the pronouns in Q19:24, and is 'uncertain about the grammar' of Q19:58 (1937, p. 511). For the verb (*mattaʿtu* – to give enjoyment, Q43:29), he (1937, p. 241) also finds 'the first person singular, which must be Allāh, is curious'. This grammatical problem is attributed to the fact that Bell is not aware of stylistic symmetry which is achieved by co-text. The grammatical co-text for Q43:29 is Q43:26–28 in which the first person singular is employed. To achieve stylistic symmetry, a pronoun shift is applied to Q43:29. The pronoun shift is from the first person majestic plural (*naḥnu* – we) which is implicit in the verb (*intaqamnā* – We took retribution) in Q43:25 to the first person singular (*anā* – I) which is implicit in the verb (*mattaʿtu*).
- (xviii) Bell (1937, pp. 239–240) proposes the omission of Q9:17 and 18 since, in his view, their omission 'would give a better connection between v.16 and v.19, than that between v.16 and v.17', and that 'v.16 was written on the back of vv.17 and 18'. For Bell (1953, p. 104), 'phraseology is a more reliable criterion' and 'style is a useful criterion of relative date'. Although Bell (1953, 1991) adopts lexical connectivity as a textual strategy in his

re-organization of āyahs (see point xvi above), he has overlooked his proposed strategy in his re-arrangement of Q9:17, 18, and 19 which, we believe, exhibit this very lexical feature. For instance, we encounter a number of expressions repeated in these āyahs such as (ya^ʿmurū masājida allāhi – maintain the mosques of God), (āmana billāhi wal-yawmi al-ākhirī – believe in God and the last day), and (muhtadīn/yahdī – guided/guide). Most importantly, the two āyahs 17 and 18 exhibit contextual relevance to āyah 19. These three āyahs hang together thanks to their thematic sequentiality and notional allusion. In Q9:16, the reader is exhorted not to take the polytheists as intimates (walījah) although, Q9:17 continues, they (the polytheists) perform good deeds such as the maintenance of the mosques of God (ya^ʿmurū masājida allāh). The reason for this warning is due to their disbelief which makes their good deeds worthless (ḥabīṭat a^ʿmāluhum). Thematic connectivity progresses in Q9:18 in which the rhetorical feature of antithesis (al-muqābalah or al-ṭibāq) is introduced for the pragmatic function of informing the reader through a list of five characteristic features of the person who genuinely maintains the mosques of God. Textual progression and notional allusion continue uninterrupted in Q9:19 which draw the reader's attention to the distinction between two sets of actions: {the good deeds of maintaining al-masjid al-ḥarām plus providing water for the pilgrims plus disbelief} and {belief in God plus belief in the hereafter plus striving in the cause of God}.

5.10 Conclusion

Contextual and co-textual features are of paramount relevance to Qur'anic exegesis and corpus analysis. Although Bell occasionally refers to context, he has not investigated this text linguistic notion thoroughly in terms of the wider macro-text, thematic connectivity, notional sequentiality, and textual allusion. However, he refers to words that are repeated in different āyahs of the same sūrah and of other sūrahs. Bell, therefore, seems to have been considerably influenced by this intertextual reference of expressions and as a result has come to the wrong conclusion that some āyahs are or are not related to each other and should or should not be joined together. His hypothesis is primarily hinged upon his personal opinion that a given āyah or a set of āyahs were 'written on the back of another āyah' or āyahs without any reference to concrete evidence based on earlier Qur'ān manuscripts of some companions or successors. Bell's flawed argument becomes more transparent when he deals with grammatical problems and rhetorical features related to some expressions. Although he admits that 'there seems to be no such reading recorded' of the word (dīnahum – account, i.e. deserved recompense for one's deeds) in Q24:25, he suggests that this word should have been (dainahum – debt). His suggested word (dainahum) can neither be backed up by any school of exegesis nor by the text linguistic criteria of thematic connectivity and textual allusion. The same applies to his indecision (1937, p. 239) regarding the meaning of the verb (ya^ʿmurū – to maintain) in Q9:17–18 to which he

inaccurately attributes the meaning (to perform the ʿumrah). Thematic relatedness is not solely based on lexical connectivity, i.e. intertextuality, between consecutive āyahs. It is rather established upon exegetically justified conceptual relatedness, logical coherence, and textual sequentiality.

Although there is a disagreement over the sūrah arrangement among Muslim Qur'ān scholars, there has been a unanimous agreement among these and the majority of Western Qur'ān scholars over the āyah arrangement. The companions may have different personal codices of the Qur'ān which include different chronological organization of the sūrahs according to their time of revelation, but the companions' personal codices of the Qur'ān have the same āyah arrangement. Bell's conviction that all the revelations were written during Muḥammad's lifetime is an acknowledgement that the āyahs and sūrahs were arranged under Muḥammad's supervision rather than a task that was done by the companions after Muḥammad's death. In other words, Bell supports the tawqīfī arrangement of the Qur'ān. The thesis behind Bell's claim is to discredit Muḥammad's prophecy through the re-organization of the tawqīfī arrangement of āyahs and sūrahs. Richard Bell aims to put the blame entirely upon Muḥammad rather than on his companions. However, had Bell approved of the ijtihādī arrangement of āyahs and sūrahs, he would have implicated the companions of Muḥammad in what he claimed about 'the grammatical unevenness and interruptions of sense which occur in the Qur'ān' (Bell 1991, 1, p. xx). However, Bell's critical assessment and re-organization of the āyah arrangement has relied on al-Baiḍāwī's exegetical views. Although al-Baiḍāwī is a well-known exegete, he does not represent the school of exegesis that is most relevant to Bell's work. What is of great value to Bell's critical re-arrangement of the āyahs are exegetes such as Abu Ḥaiyān, al-Rāzi, and al-Biqā'i. The intertextual approach of this school of exegesis also dispels the scepticism expressed by Muir (1923), Hirschfeld (1902), and Paret (1983, p. 186) about thematic coherence in Qur'anic discourse. The intelligibility and thematic coherence of Qur'anic discourse is fully appreciated by a text linguistic approach that provides an insight into the textual constituents of the Qur'anic text, which include conceptual relatedness, inter- and intra-āyah/sūrah thematic connectivity, intertextual reference, linguistic factors at grammatical and semantic levels, phonetic textual criteria, and most importantly, contextual and co-textual linguistic and phonetic relevance factors. Combined together, these textual constituents play a significant role in the intelligibility of Qur'anic literary techniques and stylistic mechanisms. The reader is referred to Abdul-Raof (2005a, 2005b) for a detailed and explicated textual analysis of Qur'anic discourse and its grammatical, semantic, and phonetic network of relations that govern its thematic connectivity.

It is worthwhile to note that the two example āyahs given by Ilse Lichtenstadter (1974) have nothing to do with the notion of abrogation. As for the mutashābihāt āyahs, to which Lichtenstadter refers, I refer the reader to Abdul-Raof (2004) for a comprehensive linguistic-stylistic account of why the mutashābihāt āyahs occur in Qur'anic discourse. The mutashābihāt āyahs are linguistic constructions that are

best investigated in their contextual and co-textual habitat. A de-contextualization approach to a linguistic pattern of any text is an invalid approach in linguistic studies. As for Wansbrough's (1977, pp. 21–25) observation about the lack of thematic cohesion in the version of Shu'aib's story in Q26:176–190, the network of thematically linked notions at both the micro and macro textual levels should be approached from contextual and co-textual perspectives (cf. Abdul-Raof 2005a, 2005b). For Wansbrough's observation (1977, p. 19) about the occurrence or absence of the cohesive device (*idh* – when)/(*wa'idh* – and when) in Q2:30, 34, 49–51, 53–55, 58, 60–61, 63, 67–72, 83–84, 93, 124–127, the reader is referred to Abdul-Raof (2004) where an explicated account is provided for Qur'anic stylistics, the semantically oriented Qur'anic conjunctions, and their contextual and co-textual linguistic environment.

Bell suggests grammatical corrections to Qur'anic Arabic without realizing that different modes of reading have distinct case endings. For instance, he (1991, 2, p. 303) objects to the accusative case ending of the word (*qawma* – the people of, Q51:46) and suggests that 'one would have expected to be in the genitive as the others governed by (*fi*)'. It is worthwhile to note that seven of the Qur'ān recitors (*qurrā'*) read this word with the accusative case. The grammatical rule for this mode of reading is that there is an implicit verb (*ahlaknā* – to destroy). Thus, the accusative case is required for the object noun (*qawma*). This is a form of sentence co-ordination. However, the other three Qur'ān recitors, Abu 'Amru, Ḥamzah, and al-Kisā'i read this word with a genitive case ending (*qawmi*). The grammatical rule for this mode of reading is that this word is co-ordinated to the previous prepositional phrases in the previous āyahs Q51:38, 41, and 43 which start with a preposition. Thus, the second mode of reading is justified on the basis of grammatical co-text. Length of a given āyah and rhyme are not pertinent textual criteria for thematic relatedness, and contextual and co-textual relevance. Bell's attempt to make sense of the Qur'anic text in historical terms has become unsuccessful in the light of our text linguistic criteria of contextual and co-textual relevance, thematic connectivity, and textual allusion. Textual coherence and intelligibility which Bell has vigorously tried to establish through the re-arrangement of Qur'anic āyahs cannot be achieved by the re-organization of external historical events. In a similar vein, rhyme, length of sentences, and micro facet of context cannot be taken as criteria for our verdict on the thematic consistency and cohesiveness of any text.

Glossary

Abrogated āyah	آية منسوخة
Abrogation	النسخ
Absolute object	المفعول المطلق
Accusative case	حالة النصب
Active participle	اسم الفاعل
Active voice	مبني للمعلوم
Allegiance	المبايعة
Anthropomorphism	التشبيه ، التجسيم
Antithesis	المقابلة أو الطباق في البلاغة
Apodosis	جواب الشرط
Appearance of the Mahdi	ظهور المهدي
Arrogance	الكبر
Asceticism	الزهد
Assonance	السجع
Atonement	كفارة
Attached pronoun	ضمير متصل
Austere religiosity	الزهد
Authority	الولاية (عند الشيعة)
Awaited Mahdi	المهدي المنتظر
Āyah-by-āyah exegesis	تفسير مسلسل
Backgrounded inchoative	مبتدأ مؤخر
Bad things	الخبائث
Bequest	الوصية
Bombast	الحشو أو التصنع الأسلوبى
Cadence	تنسيق الإيقاع
Case endings	حركات الإعراب
Chain of authorities	الإسناد (في الحديث)
Charity	صدقة
Clue	دليل
Commendable interpretation	تأويل مقبول (محمود)
Communal obligation	فرض كفاية
Comparative jurisprudence	فقه المقارنة
Complete bath	غسل

- Conceptual chaining مفاهيم مترابطة أو متناغمة
 Conditional particle أداة الشرط
 Conjoined to معطوف على
 Conjunct أداة ربط
 Conjunction استخدام أدوات الربط
 Conjunctive element أداة ربط
 Consonance المناسبة
 Construct noun phrase المضاف والمضاف اليه
 Consultation شورى
 Co-ordination العطف
 Co-ordination particle أداة عطف
 Coreferentiality عودة الضمير
 Co-text البيئة اللغوية للنص
 Covert personal pronoun الضمير المستتر
 Covert prophetic mission الدعوة خفية (بالخفاء)
 Custom عرف
 Day of immolation يوم النحر
 Deanthropomorphism particle أداة تنزيه
 Deceptive world الدنيا الغرور
 Declaration of dissociation براءة
 Deduction استنباط
 Defiantly disobedient فاسق
 Denounce يلعن
 Detached pronoun ضمير منفصل
 Disappearance of the Mahdi غيبة المهدي
 Discourse marker أداة ربط
 Dishonouring التعيير
 Dissimulation التقية
 Divine essence الذات الإلهية عند الصوفية
 Dogmatic cleavages اختلافات عقديّة
 Doubled consonant حرف مُشدّد
 Doubling التشديد
 Ellipsis الحذف
 Esoteric meaning المعنى الباطن
 Establishment of authenticity or otherwise in ḥadīth تخريج الحديث
 Exception الإستثناء
 Exclusive jurisdiction ولاية خاصة
 Exegetical mode of reading قراءة على التفسير
 Exhortation الوعظ، موعظة
 Exhortative exegesis تفسير وعظي
 Exoteric meaning المعنى الظاهر
 Expiation كفارة
 Fabricated ḥadīth حديث موضوع
 Falsification (forgery) of the Qur'ān تحريف القرآن
 Five-level categorization of acts الأحكام الخمسة

- Foregrounded predicate خبر مقدم
 Free from منزّه
 Generic noun اسم جنس
 Genitive case حالة الجر
 Good things الطيبات
 Grave sinner مرتكب الكبيرة ، فاسق
 Greater pilgrimage الحج الأكبر
 Guardianship وصاية
 Guessing التخمين
 Habit عادة
 Harm ضرر
 Hashemite هاشمي النسب
 Heresy بدعة
 Holy house البيت الحرام
 Holy month الشهر الحرام
 Hūthis الحوثيون
 Hūthism الحوثية
 Hypothetical افتراضي
 Ibādism الإباضية
 Idol الصنم
 Idolatrous مشرك ، عابد أوثان
 Idolatry عبادة الأوثان
 Imagery التصوير
 Imāmate الإمامة عند الشيعة
 Imitation التقليد
 Inchoative المبتدأ
 Independent reasoning الإجتهد
 Individual obligation فرض عين
 Infallibility العصمة
 Infallible معصوم
 Inimitability إعجاز
 Innovation البدعة
 Inquisition المحنة
 Inserted mode of reading قراءة مدرجة
 Intellect العقل
 Inter-ayah consonance المناسبة بين الآيات المتتالية
 Intercession الشفاعة
 Intermediate position منزلة بين المنزلتين
 Introspective examination of the self مُحاسبة النفس
 Irregular mode of reading (أي عن طريق الأحاد) قراءة شاذة
 Islamic legal ruling abrogation نسخ الحكم
 Ismā'ilism الإسماعيلية
 Judaeo-Christian anecdotes الإسرائيليات
 Jurisprudence فقه
 Jurisprudential delimitter ضابط فقهي
 Jurisprudential maxims قواعد فقهية

- Jurist فقيه
 Justification simile التشبيه التعليلي
 Lash بجلد
 Lawful حلال
 Leitmotif مفهوم
 Linguistic interpretation التأويل اللغوي
 Linguistic order system النظم اللغوي
 Married man محصن
 Melodic sounds أصوات متناغمة
 Memorizer حافظ
 Misdeeds سيئات
 Multiple source متواتر
 Multiple source mode of reading قراءة متواترة
 Musical tone النغم الموسيقي
 Mu'tazilism الاعتزال
 Mysticism التصوف
 Narration السند ، النقل
 Necessity الضرورة
 Need الحاجة
 Neoplatonists الإفلاطونيون الجدد
 Nominalized noun المصدر
 Nominative case حالة الرفع
 Numerical inimitability الإعجاز العددي
 Objectionable interpretation تأويل مذموم
 Obligatory act فرض ، واجب
 One hundred + sūrahs المؤمنين
 Optional prayers نوافل
 Order system النظم (في أسلوب القرآن)
 Ostentation الرياء
 Overt personal pronoun الضمير المنفصل
 Overt prophetic mission الجهر بالدعوة
 Pagan practice رجس
 Pantheism وحدة الوجود (عند الصوفية)
 Passive participle اسم الفاعل
 Passive voice مبني للمجهول
 Payment of charity of 20% زكاة الخمس
 Permanent epithet الصفة الملازمة
 Permissible مباح
 Permissible interpretation تأويل مقبول (محمود)
 Perpetual punishment in fire مخلد في النار
 Phonetic order system النظم الصوتي
 Phonetic symmetry التناسق الصوتي
 Piecemeal revelation التنجيم (نزول القرآن منجماً)
 Piety تقوى
 Political allegiance الولاية السياسية (للأئمة الشيعة)
 Political leanings ميول سياسية

- Political maneuverability مناورة سياسية
 Predicate الخبر
 Pronominal reference عودة الضمير
 Pronoun shift الإلتفات
 Prophetic tradition الحديث النبوي
 Public jurisdiction ولاية عامة
 Purification of the soul تزكية النفس
 Qadarism القدر
 Quasi grammar-based exegesis تفسير شبه نحوي
 Qur'anic interpretation تأويل القرآن
 Rational عقلي
 Rebellion تمرد ، عصيان
 Reciter قاريء
 Referent الإسم العائد على الضمير
 Relationship by marriage المصاهرة
 Religio-legal verdict فتوى
 Religious allegiance (الله ولرسوله وللمؤمنين) الولاية الدينية
 Remembrance of God الذكر
 Repentance التوبة
 Repetitive sūrahs المثاني
 Resumption إستئناف
 Resumptive particle أداة إستئناف
 Rhyme الإيقاع الصوتي
 Rhythmic (Rhythmical) إيقاعي
 Rhythmical phonetic symmetry التناسق الصوتي في الإيقاع
 Rites of pilgrimage مناسك الحج
 Rule of the jurist ولاية الفقيه
 Sacred ḥadīths حديث قدسي
 Sacred mosque المسجد الحرام
 Sacred royal right theory نظرية الحق الملكي المُقدّس
 Sacred things حرّمات
 Sacred way marks المشعر الحرام
 Sacrifice day يوم النحر
 Sanctified month الشهر الحرام
 Scholastics المتكلمون
 Scientific inimitability الإعجاز العلمي
 Scientific interpretation التأويل العلمي
 Seeing of God رؤية الله
 Selective exegesis تفسير غير مسلسل
 Self-purification تزكية النفس
 Send to exile التغريب
 Shī'i sub-sects فرق الشيعة
 Shī'ism التشيع
 Short vowel /a/ الفتحة

- Short vowel /i/ الكسرة
 Short vowel /u/ الضمة
 Single source أحاد
 Single source mode of reading قراءة الأحاد
 Soul commands evil النفس أمارة بالسوء
 Specificity الإختصاص
 Spiritual aspiration (عند الصوفية) الهمة
 Spiritual leader المرشد الروحي
 Start of revelation بدء الوحي
 State of major ritual impurity الجنب
 Stoning الرجم
 Suffixed personal pronoun الضمير المتصل
 Supposition الافتراض
 Symphonia تناغم الأصوات
 Symphonious متناغم
 Temporary epithet الصفة المؤقتة
 Temporary marriage (عند الشيعة) زواج المتعة
 Textual abrogation نسخ التلاوة
 Thematic chaining ترابط أو تناغم المفاهيم
 Thematic exegesis تفسير المفهوم العام للسورة
 Theme مفهوم
 Tradition الحديث
 Traditionists أهل الحديث ، المحدثون
 Truthful صادق ، صادق
 Twelver Shi'is الشيعة الإثنا عشرية
 Unclean نجس
 Unlawful حرام
 Vicegerency (عند الشيعة) الوصاية
 Vicegerent (الإمام الشيعي) الوصي
 Vindication التبرئة
 Vowelless consonant حرف ساكن (السكون)
 Wars of apostasy حرب الردة
 Well-known mode of reading قراءة مشهورة
 Whirlwind الأعصار الناري
 Word order (في البلاغة) النظم
 Zaidis الزيديون
 Zaidism الزيدية
 Zero conjunction عدم استخدام أدوات الربط

Notes

1 School of traditional exegesis

- 1 The formative phase of Qur'anic exegesis includes three interrelated stages. Stage one of the formative phase includes the period of Muḥammad's lifetime, stage two extends from the death of Muḥammad and was led by the companions who established the schools of exegesis in Makkah, Madīnah, and Kūfah, and stage three was marked by the early and late successors and during which the Baṣrah school of exegesis was also established by the early successor al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110/728). It is worthwhile to note that it was during the third stage of the formative phase that Qur'anic exegesis started to be recorded and appear in written form. For more details, see Abdul-Raof (2010, Ch. 5, Sect. 5.2).
- 2 For more details on theological mutashābihāt, see Abdul-Raof (2010, Ch. 1, n. 9, and Ch. 4, n. 4).

2 School of rational exegesis

- 1 Judeo-Christian anecdotes are Scriptural interpretations which have recourse to Biblical material. They are referred to in Arabic as al-isrā'iliyyāt which is the plural of isrā'īliyyah and is related to the Children of Israel (banū isrā'il). Jewish anecdotes are folklore details influenced by the Judeo-Christian milieu. According to the Qur'ān, isrā'il (Israel) is the Prophet Ya'qūb (Jacob) who is the father of the Prophet Yūsuf (Joseph). Jewish anecdotes represent the exegetical views of both the Jews and the Christians on specific Qur'anic subject-matters. These views, however, are often of the converts from these two faiths. Jewish anecdotes are one of the exegetical techniques in Qur'anic exegesis. As a tool, Jewish anecdotes are employed by both schools of exegesis: traditional, i.e. al-tafsīr bil-ma'thūr, and hypothetical opinion, i.e. al-tafsīr bil-ra'i. Muḥammad gave permission to his companions to ask the People of the Book (ahl al-kitāb), especially the Jews, about clarifications regarding certain Qur'anic expressions and parables (qaṣaṣ al-anbiyā') but he also warned them not to take their views completely for granted. However, Muḥammad left this matter to the companion's common sense. It is worthwhile to note that Jewish anecdotes have acquired a negative connotation in Qur'anic exegesis. Thus, a work of tafsīr which is heavily dependent on these anecdotes is not taken as a reliable tafsīr source. Jewish anecdotes are classified into:
 - (i) those that are true;
 - (ii) those that are untrue;

- (iii) those that are in-between (maskūtun ‘anhu – literally meaning ‘to be quiet about them’), i.e. neither true nor untrue, but the exegete is allowed to quote the ‘in-between’ Jewish anecdotes.
- 2 For more details on the position of the Qur’ān on the notion of free will and determinism (al-qadar) and the theological cleavages among Muslim theologians, see Thomson (1950) and Rauf (1970).
 - 3 On the philological, theological, and exegetical origins of allegory, see Heinrichs (1991/1992).
 - 4 For more details on the notion of the createdness of the Qur’ān, see Watt (1950).
 - 5 For more details on Shī‘i esoteric exegesis, see Lawson (1988).
 - 6 Classical and modern mainstream Sunni theologians and exegetes have always disputed the doctrine of ‘free from error’, i.e. infallibility, of the Shī‘i Imāms. For more details on the Shī‘i dogma of infallibility of their Imāms, see Mohamed (2000) and al-Sabḥāni (n.d., 5, pp. 345, 408).
 - 7 For more details on the miracles performed by the Shī‘i Imāms, see Loebenstein (2003).
 - 8 For more details on temporary marriage, see Donaldson (1936).
 - 9 For more details on the integrity of the Qur’ān (taḥrīf al-qur’ān) and the Shī‘i claim that the ‘Uthmānic master codex of the Qur’ān was not the true Qur’ān as revealed to Muḥammad, see Bar-Asher (2004) and Eliash (1969). For Shī‘i scholars like al-Ṭabarsī, al-‘Āmili and al-Kūrānī, there are some sūrahs and āyahs that have been either added dropped or corrupted by the companions, especially by ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb (al-Kūrānī n.d., n.p.). However, modern Shī‘i theologians, such as the Iraqi Shī‘i scholar al-Khū‘i (d. 1992), rejected the Shī‘i long-held view of taḥrīf which questioned the canonical legitimacy of the ‘Uthmanic master codex of the Qur’ān (Ayoub 1988, pp. 190–191). However, for Shī‘i exegetes like al-Qummi (d. 307/919) and al-‘Aiyāshi (d. 320/932), there were āyahs or sections of āyahs that were left out by anti-Shī‘i compilers of the ‘Uthmanic master codex of the Qur’ān. In their view, the phrase (āl muḥammad ṣalawātu allāhi ‘alaihim – the household of Muḥammad (i.e. the descendants of ‘Alī and Fāṭimah and all the Shī‘i Imāms) may God bless them all) was dropped from the āyah Q3:33. Hence, for them this āyah was originally revealed as: (inna allāha iṣṭafā ādama wanūḥan wa’āla ibrahīma wa’āla ‘imrāna [wa’āl muḥammad ṣalawātu allāhi ‘alaihim] ‘ala al-‘ālamīn – Indeed, God chose Adam and Noah and the family of Abraham and the family of ‘Imrān [and the family of Muḥammad, i.e. the Shī‘i Imāms] over the worlds) (al-Kāshānī 1959, 1, pp. 328–329).
 - 10 The beginning anew (al-badā‘) refers to the renewal of knowledge about something which someone has not known before. Therefore, for Shī‘i scholars such as al-Ṭūsī, al-Qummi, and al-Jazā‘iri, abrogation in the Qur’ān justifies the notion of al-badā‘. In other words, when something was ordained earlier but abrogated at a later stage it shows that having known at the present time the harm or benefit of something, God has ordained the cancellation or the introduction of something else. Thus, God has begun anew to do and to learn something else. For Shī‘i scholars, to cancel something that has already been ordained and to begin something else anew is in the interest of mankind (al-Qummi 1983, 1, pp. 39–40).
 - 11 Ibn Kathīr (2005, 5, p. 285; 1993, 3, p. 346) refers to other ḥadīths mentioned in both al-Bukhārī and Muslim. We are told that Fāṭimah came to Abu Bakr after her father, Muḥammad, passed away, asking for her inheritance share but Abu Bakr did not agree and reminded her of the ḥadīth (lā nūrathu. māṭarknā ṣadaqah – We [Prophets] are not inherited. What we leave behind [after our death] is charity [for people]). Fāṭimah left

very upset and never talked to Abu Bakr again. For Shī'i scholars, Abu Bakr's response to Fāṭimah was counter to Islamic law. Shī'i scholars' argument on the inheritance of Muḥammad is based on Q27:16 (Solomon inherited David) and Q19:5–6 which refers to Zacharia, who prays to the Lord by saying: (. . . so give me from Yourself the gift of a successor who will be my heir as well as an heir to the dignity of the house of Jacob). For Ibn Kathīr (2005, 5, p. 290), the Shī'i's premise is flawed on contextual reasons since Q27:16 exegetically means:

- (i) The inheritance of prophethood, government of the Children of Israel, and the management of their affairs (al-mulka wal-nubuwwah) and therefore does not mean the inheritance of a Prophet's wealth.
- (ii) Solomon inherits prophethood and government from his father, David.
- (iii) David had a hundred sons from a hundred wives and, therefore, there is no logical reason why only Solomon is chosen from among the rest of his brothers to inherit his father's wealth.

If Q27:16 means 'the inheritance of wealth', this should have been distributed to the rest of the children. In Q19:5–6, however, we are told about Prophet Zacharia who was a carpenter and was known as being not wealthy and had no savings. Zacharia only prayed for a virtuous son, not to inherit his wealth, because he had none, but to inherit his prophethood and to look after the public affairs of the Children of Israel. This exegetical meaning is substantiated by the phrase (waliyyan yarithunī wayarithu min āli ya'qūb – the gift of a successor who will be my heir as well as an heir to the dignity of the house of Jacob). Linguistically, the ḥadīth (al-nabiyyu lā yūraṭhu – a Prophet cannot be inherited) verifies the above exegetical details since the expression (al-nabiyyu – a Prophet) occurs in the definite form and as a generic noun (ism jins) which means (all Prophets including Muḥammad). Thus, this ḥadīth means: (All Prophets, including Muḥammad, cannot be inherited).

- 12 Shī'i ḥadīth can be traced back to the first half of the second/eighth century. The Buwaihīd period (334/945–447/1055) is of fundamental significance in the history of Shī'i ḥadīth. It was during this period that the vast corpus of Shī'i ḥadīths were collected and systematized in the form of Shī'i ḥadīth books (Kohlberg 1983, pp. 299, 303).
- 13 There was a Zaidi community in the regions of the Caspian Sea. However, the extinction of Zaidism in these regions began in the early Safavid age. The Caspian region Zaidis enjoyed close relations with the Zaidi community in the Yemen (Madelung 1987, p. 11).
- 14 The expression (al-rāfiḍah) has been used by some Sunni scholars as derogatory, on the one hand, and as an umbrella for the Shī'is in general, on the other. Moreover, this expression has changed its original meaning. It now means 'the rejectors of Abu Bakr, 'Umar, and 'Uthmān' and no longer means 'the rejectors of Zaid'.
- 15 For more details on the formative phase of Qur'anic exegesis and the Baṣrah school of exegesis, see Abdul-Raof (2010, Ch. 5, Sect. 5.2, and Ch. 6, Sects 6.5, 6.5.1).

3 School of linguistic exegesis

- 1 In Qur'anic linguistics, there are four deanthropomorphism particles which are used to achieve negation (never, no). These deanthropomorphism negation particles aim to achieve the theological pragmatic function of eliminating anthropomorphism (al-tashbīh

or al-tajsim), i.e. the elimination of human epithets and features from the essence of God. These are: (i) (laisa), as in: (laisa kamithlihī shai'un – There is nothing such as Him, Q42:11), (ii) (lam), as in: (lam yalid walam yūlad – He begot no one nor was He begotten, Q112:3), (iii) (mā), as in: (mā kana rabbuka nasiyyā – Your Lord is never forgetful, Q19:64), and (iv) (lā), as in: (lā ta'khudhuhū sinatun walā nawm – Neither drowsiness overtakes Him nor sleep, Q2:255) and (lā ilāha illā hū – There is no deity worthy of worship except Him [God], Q2:163).

- 2 For more details on theological and stylistic mutashābihāt, see Abdul-Raof (2010, Ch. 4, n. 4).
- 3 This is referred to in Arabic rhetorical studies as paronomasia. This rhetorical feature involves two words which orthographically look alike but they have slight spelling dissimilarity, as in (yuḥsin – to do good deeds) and (yaḥsib – to think, believe) in Q18:104. For linguist exegetes, al-jinās is a unique rhetorical feature of Qur'anic sublime style.

4 Comparative-contrastive exegesis

- 1 Some Shī'i exegetes and theologians believed that the ʿUthmanic master codex of the Qur'ān underwent taḥrīf (alteration, corruption). For instance, Q105 and Q106, in the view of al-Ṭabarsī (d. 548/1153) (1997, 10, p. 358) and al-ʿĀmili (d. 1104/1692) (1993, 6, pp. 54–56), were one single sūrah. In his book *Tadwīn al-Qur'ān* (Recording the Qur'ān), the Shī'i scholar ʿAlī al-Kūrānī (n.d.) is critical of ʿUmar and blames him for corrupting the Qur'ān and that he was the prime suspect for adding and taking out some āyahs and sūrahs from the Qur'anic text.
- 2 For more details on the formative phase of the evolution of Qur'anic exegesis and the major characteristics of the companion and successor exegetes, see Abdul-Raof (2010, Ch. 5). For more details on theological mutashābihāt, see Abdul-Raof (2010, Ch. 4, n. 4).
- 3 For more details on the Andalus school of exegesis, see Abdul-Raof (2010, Ch. 5, Sect. 5.2.2.3).
- 4 Noah was the first Prophet but Adam was sent by God to his own family to teach them the true faith.
- 5 The grave of Ḥannah is on the outskirts of Damascus (Abu Ḥaiyān 2001, 2, p. 455).
- 6 Mary's nickname was (al-batūl) meaning (the lady who, due to her piety and asceticism, has no interest in getting married).
- 7 Muqawqas, the King of Egypt, sent his daughter Māriyyah to Muḥammad as a wife. Muḥammad married Māriyyah and got a son from her called Ibrāhīm. She is known as the Coptic Māriyyah.
- 8 Ṣafwān b. al-Muʿaṭṭal al-Sullami was known for his bravery in the expeditions he took part in. Ṣafwān was assigned the task by Muḥammad to stay in the camp after the Muslim army had left in each expedition to make sure that nothing was left behind by any member of the expedition, then he would join the army. He was martyred either in the expedition of Armenia in 19/640 during the rule of ʿUmar or in the expedition of the Romans in 58/677 during the rule of Muʿāwiyah (d. 60/679).
- 9 In October 2010, Kuwait was on the verge of civil sectarian war because the Shī'i scholar Yāsir al-Ḥabīb gave a speech in which he slandered ʿĀ'ishah. This was averted after the Kuwaiti government decided to strip him of his nationality, and he is now living in exile.

- 10 It is worthwhile to note that although al-Ṭūsī (d. 460/1067) is a major Shīʿī theologian and exegete, he has based a considerable amount of his exegetical views on mainstream Sunni narrators such as ʿĀʾishah, Ibn ʿUmar, Ibn ʿAbbās, Mālik b. Anas, Mujahid, Saʿīd b. Jubair, Saʿīd b. al-Musaiyab, ʿAṭāʾ, al-Ḥasan al-Baʿrī, Imām al-Shāfiʿī, and Ibn Kathīr.
- 11 It is worthwhile to note that, linguistically, providing advice (taʿdīb) overlaps with the punishment of rebuke (taʿzīr). Rebuke, for instance, may involve lashing with slippers or smacking the guilty person by hand, as a form of advice to achieve moral correction, while providing advice does not entail any form of punishment.

5 Contextual and co-textual relevance in Qurʾanic exegesis

- 1 For more details on polemics and mistranslations of the Qurʾān, see Hartmut Robzin (1996). Robzin (1996, p. 175) concludes that ‘many of such anti-Koranic polemics are deeply rooted in Christian theological controversies’. I join Robzin (1996, p. 175) in his valuable recommendation that a closer cooperation between Christian theology and Islamic scholarship is required in order to analyse this vast literature which in any case should no longer be regarded as an obstacle to mutual Islamic-Judeo-Christian understanding. The Qurʾān urges the Muslims to debate respectfully and courteously with the Jews, the Christians, and all other faiths (idʿu ilā sabīli rabbika bil-ḥikmati wal-mawʿizati al-ḥasanti wajādilhum billati hiya aḥsan – Call all people to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good teaching. Debate with them in the most courteous way, Q16:125).
- 2 Torrey (1933, p. 130) asserts that Muḥammad’s ‘Islam was still, and for all time, the faith of the Hebrew prophets’. Torrey’s claim is, in fact, supported by the Qurʾān where we encounter statements which reiterate Torrey’s argument that the Islam of Muḥammad is the same Islam of the previous Prophets prescribed by God who have been entrusted to advance the same and only message of Muḥammad, namely monotheism. This in fact is found in Q16:36 (walaqad baʿathnā fī kullī ummatin rasūlan an uʿbudū allāha wajtanībū al-ṭāghūta – We sent a messenger to every nation, saying: ‘Worship God and shun false gods’). The same leitmotif is also encountered in Q7:65, Q7:73, Q7:85, Q11:84, Q23:23, and Q29:16. However, Torrey goes further and claims with regards to Islamic legal rulings that Muḥammad’s ‘energy and sincerity . . . is ‘often somewhat childlike’ (p. 132). While Torrey argues that Muḥammad’s legal injunctions are reminiscent of the Old Testament through ‘his Jewish teachers who had taught him’ (p. 130), he concedes that ‘there is comparatively little evidence of Jewish influence on Muḥammad’s laws relating to marriage and divorce, concubines, adultery, and the various family relations’ (p. 148).
- 3 In his first re-arrangement of Q9, Bell (1937, p. 236) suggests that Q9:36a (inna ʿiddata al-shuhūri ʿinda allāhi ithnā ʿashara shahran . . . dhālika al-dīnu al-qaiyimū – Indeed, the number of months with God is twelve . . . that is the correct religion) should be followed by āyahs 2 and 5 only.
- 4 The four sacred months are Shawwāl, Dhū al-Qaʿdah, Dhū al-Ḥijjah, and al-Muḥarram.

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