

THE RHETORICAL REASONS BEHIND THE QURANIC EXPRESSION IN THE LETTERS OF MEANING (MAJMA' AL-BAYAN FI TAFSIR AL-QURAN) AS A MODEL

AS RAZÕES RETÓRICAS POR TRÁS DA EXPRESSÃO CORÂNICA NAS «CARTAS DE SIGNIFICADO» (MAJMA' AL-BAYAN FI TAFSIR AL-QURAN) COMO MODELO

Article received on: 1/23/2026

Article accepted on: 4/24/2026

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The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest

Abstract

The science of Qur'anic exegesis is a discipline dedicated to uncovering the linguistic secrets of the Noble Qur'an, including its clarity, eloquence, and rhetorical artistry, as well as other linguistic manifestations that surpass any other discipline in this field. This discipline focuses on the study of the words of the Noble Qur'an and their meanings, making it a jewel in its magnificent setting. This science continues at a consistently high and expressive level, conveying numerous meanings within a realm that is beyond human comprehension, for the Qur'anic text has come with the broadest meaning, the most precise expression and the most beautiful, along with the marvellous harmony between meaning, phrasing and rhythm. Alongside these qualities of expression, we find precision of meaning at the same time, for no word can be substituted for another in its place, and beauty takes precedence over precision, yet precision does not take precedence over beauty; and in all this it reaches a level where no one can fathom the secret of its miraculous nature, so that the believer stands in contemplation, pondering its verses, and his faith is increased along with his belief.

Keywords: Qur'anic Exegesis. Qur'anic Linguistics. Rhetorical Artistry. Semantic Precision. Miraculous Nature of the Qur'an.

Resumo

A ciência da exegese do Alcorão é uma disciplina dedicada a desvendar os segredos linguísticos do Nobre Alcorão, incluindo a sua clareza, eloquência e arte retórica, bem como outras manifestações linguísticas que superam qualquer outra disciplina neste campo. Esta disciplina centra-se no estudo das palavras do Nobre Alcorão e dos seus significados, tornando-a uma joia no seu magnífico contexto. Esta ciência mantém-se num nível consistentemente elevado e expressivo, transmitindo inúmeros significados num domínio que está além da compreensão humana, pois o texto do Alcorão surgiu com o significado mais abrangente, a expressão mais precisa e a mais bela, a par da maravilhosa harmonia entre significado, fraseologia e ritmo. A par destas qualidades de expressão, encontramos simultaneamente a precisão do significado, pois nenhuma palavra pode ser substituída por outra no seu lugar, e a beleza prevalece sobre a precisão, mas a precisão não prevalece sobre a beleza; e em tudo isto atinge um nível em que ninguém consegue compreender o segredo da sua natureza milagrosa, de modo que o crente fica em contemplação, ponderando os seus versículos, e a sua fé aumenta juntamente com a sua crença.

Palavras-chave: Exegese do Alcorão. Linguística do Alcorão. Arte Retórica. Precisão Semântica. Natureza Milagrosa do Alcorão.



1 INTRODUCTION

Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds, who has enlightened our hearts with the Qur'an, and may the best of prayers and peace be upon His Messenger, Muhammad, the truthful and trustworthy (may Allah bless him, his family, and all his companions), Now then, Allah, the Exalted, has revealed His Noble Book as a miracle for all mankind in their own languages and speech. Its miraculous nature is evident in its presentation, style and choice of words, harmonising with the meanings of the blessed verses. For Qur'anic expression is a tapestry of words and structures intended to lead, through their arrangement and understanding, to a higher and nobler meaning, namely the understanding of the meanings of the Noble Qur'an, acting upon it, and elucidating the secrets of its linguistic miraculousness.

From this, we realise that the principles of Qur'anic expression constitute a comprehensive and important subject, as it explores the noble meanings of the Qur'anic text and reveals the secrets of its structure, which form the basis of Arabic studies. Therefore, the goal of those engaged with the Qur'anic text—scholars, exegetes and researchers alike has been to uncover the linguistic miracles of this wise Book, which has received a level of attention and study unmatched by any other book. Its study has spanned various linguistic, jurisprudential, scientific and semantic fields, and the efforts of researchers in studying Qur'anic expression among exegetes and scholars of Qur'anic sciences have continued; this field is as old as the study of the Holy Qur'an itself. The study of the principles underlying the Qur'anic text and modes of expression has evolved, gradually moving towards specialisation to eventually become a new discipline known as the principles of Qur'anic expression; This is because the Noble Qur'an has a specific rationale for every word within it, indeed for every letter and every diacritical mark (Qur'anic Expression by Dr Fadel al-Samara'i: 10). The scholars and exegetes of the Muslim community have therefore endeavoured to elucidate this precision and its patterns, and this diligence has manifested itself in uncovering its rationales within the Noble Qur'an. Among the most renowned of these was Abu Ali al-Fadl ibn al-Hasan al-Tabrisi (d. 548 AH), who excelled in his exegesis of the Noble Words of God with a linguistic interpretation that examined the miraculous nature of the Qur'an in most of its

linguistic aspects, and observed the superior ability of the text to convey meaning and the eloquence of the rhetorical style that forms the pillar of Qur'anic expression.

Hence, the title of this research is 'The Reasons Behind Qur'anic Expression in the Letters of Meaning (The Majma' al-Bayaan Exegesis of the Qur'an as a Model)', the aim of which is to explain al-Tabrisi's rationale for the choice of letters in the Noble Qur'an, for the Qur'an influences letter by letter, word by word, and phrase by phrase; this includes the preference for apparent or semantic explanations, which al-Tabarsī was able to demonstrate through his profound scholarly insight and extensive knowledge of the Qur'anic system. As for the reason for our choice of this topic, it is distinguished by several factors, including:

Firstly, in terms of its importance in the Book of Allah, it constitutes one of the many aspects of its miraculous nature.

Secondly, it examines a prominent phenomenon in the Holy Qur'an, namely the preference of certain letters over others.

It has been divided into three sections:

First: The reasons for the expression in prepositions:

Second: The reasons for the expression in conjunctions:

Third: The reasons for the expression in oath-taking particles:

This is followed by the conclusion, which outlines the most significant findings of the research, and thereafter a list of the sources we have drawn upon in completing this study.

2 EXPLAIN THE QUR'ANIC EXPRESSION IN TERMS OF THE 'AMMĀ' (GENERAL MEANINGS)

Letter: In linguistics, it refers to an end or a side; hence the term 'letter' is used for the letters of the alphabet. It also refers to a preposition, so called because it connects a noun to another noun or a verb to a verb. Furthermore, it denotes a linguistic or phonetic sound pronounced in a particular way (*Lisan al-'Arab* by Ibn Manzur: 837) (the letter is the boundary of a thing) (Maqāyīs al-Lughā by Abu al-Husayn Ahmad ibn Fāris ibn Zakariya: 945). Every word constructed with a preposition in speech is called a letter, and every word read in the Qur'an in different ways is called a letter; and alteration in the

Qur'an means changing a word (Kitab al-'Ayn by al-Khalil ibn Ahmad al-Farahidi: 1/305). And it is stated in Mukhtar al-Sahah under the entry, The letter of everything is its edge, its unit, and the single letter of the letters of spelling. And His saying, the Exalted: }And of the people are those who worship Allah upon a letter{ [Al-Hajj: 11] They said: in a single sense, which is to worship Him in times of ease rather than in times of hardship; 'harif' with a heavy kasrah refers to that which stings the tongue with its sharpness; 'harfa' with a kasrah is an adjective; and 'tahrif' means to alter speech from its proper place, and 'tahrif al-qalam' means to cut it) (Mukhtar al-Sahah by al-Razi: 55).

As for Sibawayh (d. 180 AH), he said: 'A particle is that which conveys a meaning without being a noun or a verb,' whilst al-Zamakhshari (d. 538 AH) defined it by saying: 'A particle is that which denotes a meaning in relation to something else; consequently, it is inseparable from a noun or verb accompanying it, except in specific instances where the verb is omitted, and it is confined to the particle, functioning as a substitute, as in their saying: "Yes", "Indeed", and "Any"' (Al-Mufassal fi San'at al-I'rab by Al-Zamakhshari: 394).

A particle is a word that conveys meaning in relation to something else, not in itself; therefore, it neither describes nor is described by anything. It is called a particle because it deviates from its counterparts, the noun and the verb, in that it conveys meaning only through context, and accepts none of the markers of nouns or verbs. For a particle is that which cannot be accompanied by the markers of a noun or a verb (Al-Ajrumiyah in Grammar by Al-Sanhaji: 5).

Although grammarians agree that a letter has no meaning in and of itself, they differ greatly amongst themselves regarding whether a single letter denotes multiple meanings or denotes no meaning at all. This difference may or may not negate the principle of context in determining its precise meaning (Al-Tasheel fi Sharh Ibn Aqil: Lessons and Applications, Dr Hadi Nahr: 17). This view is refuted by the works of the classical scholars themselves, for whilst they assigned meanings and connotations to the letters, when these appeared in a context with a different meaning, they applied the term 'implication' (tadhamin), which Ibn Hisham (d. 761 AH) defined by saying 'They may imbue a specific word with another word, thereby giving it its ruling' (Al-Mughni al-Labeeb fi Kitab al-A'arib by Ibn Hisham al-Ansari: 2/685)., The Holy Qur'an is distinguished by unique linguistic characteristics in its stylistic beauty; a letter may stand

in for another, or a word for another, and this possesses great elegance that cannot be achieved by using the literal meaning. The early scholars were divided on this matter into two groups: The first: the Basrians, who assigned a literal meaning to every letter and established rules against substituting one letter for another; yet they found more than one way to account for implication, saying: ‘Whatever seems to imply this is either based on the verb implying a meaning that extends beyond that letter, or on the unusual substitution of one letter for another, or on necessity’ (The second group are the Kufans, who permitted substitution of letters by analogy, and expanded upon the meanings and number of letters (The Kufan School of Grammar and its Methodology in the Study of Language and Grammar, Dr Mahdi al-Makhzumi: 284). Hence, Ibn Hisham said: ‘Their approach is less arbitrary’ (Mughni al-Labeeb fi Kitab al-A’arib: 2/133.) .

As for the Qur’anic text, we infer that letters do not substitute for one another, as it is said that the letter ‘ala’ denotes elevation and the letter fi denotes a container, as in our saying, ‘Zayd is in the house and ‘Umar is on his horse’, and this is evident in the words of the Most High: }And indeed, we or you are either upon guidance or in manifest error{ [Saba’:24] The novelty in the intended meaning lies in the contrast between the two propositions here, for they are distinguished in relation to the true and the false. The truth is as if one were riding a steed, galloping wherever one wishes, whilst the falsehood is as if one were immersed in darkness, not knowing where to turn. This is a subtle meaning rarely observed in speech (Al-Balaghah al-‘Aliyah fi ‘Ilm al-Ma’ani, ‘Abd al-Muta’al al-Sa‘idi: 114).

3 FIRST TOPIC: THE RATIONALE BEHIND THE USE OF PREPOSITIONS IN THE QUR’AN PREPOSITIONS

These are the particles that convey the meanings of verbs to nouns, whether those nouns are explicit or implied (Sharh al-Razi ‘ala al-Kafiya by al-Istrabadi: 2/354).), and they are called prepositions because they connect a verb to a noun, such as: ‘I passed by Zayd’, or a noun to a noun, such as: ‘The money is for Zayd’. They are also called ‘letters of addition’ because they are placed to convey the meanings of verbs to nouns, and they are called ‘letters of attributes’ because they introduce an attribute to the noun (Letters of Meaning: Between the Subtleties of Grammar and the Nuances of Jurisprudence,

Mahmoud Saeed: 199) Prepositions came to stand in for verbs with similar meanings; for instance, the ‘ba’ stands in for ‘al-shaq’ and the ‘kaf’ for ‘ashbah’, and so on with the other letters of meaning (Letters of Meaning: Between the Subtleties of Grammar and the Nuances of Jurisprudence: 14). As for Sibawayh, he called them letters of addition because they add the meanings of verbs to nouns; for some verbs, the object is not reached except through these letters (The Book by Sibawayh, Abu Bishr ‘Amr ibn ‘Uthman ibn Qanbar: 3/496). (These particles are the link between nouns and verbs; that is, they accompany nouns and verbs to convey meaning, serving as substitutes for sentences and conveying their meaning in the most concise terms. Thus, all particles of meaning convey their semantic function with brevity and conciseness) (Particles of Meaning: Between the Subtleties of Grammar and the Subtleties of Jurisprudence: 14).

The lām: (a preposition indicating exclusivity, as in the words of the Exalted: ﴿ Say: ‘Perhaps some of that which you hasten for yourselves will be a burden upon you’ ﴿ [An-Naml: 72] or denoting the completion of a purpose, merit, or emphasis when used in the genitive case) (Al-Tasheel fi Sharh Ibn Aqil: 19). (It may also be used for explanation, in which case it is appropriate in place of ‘so that’, as in the words of Allah ﴿ And indeed, he is intense in his love of good ﴿ [Al-Adiyat: 8]) (Letters of Meaning Between the Subtleties of Grammar and the Subtleties of Jurisprudence: 228.), and grammarians have attributed numerous meanings to it, particularly in its function as a substitute for other prepositions such as (fi), as in the words of Allah: ﴿ He says, ‘Oh, would that I had prepared for my life’ ﴿ [Al-Fajr: 24] or (‘ala), as in the words of Allah: ﴿ And they fall prostrate on their chins, weeping, and it increases their humility ﴿ [Al-Isra’: 109] (Letters of Meaning by Al-Zajjaji: 63, and Letters of Meaning: Between the Subtleties of Grammar and the Nuances of Jurisprudence: 14). In His saying: Lord of the heavens and the earth and all that is between them, so worship Him and be patient in His worship. Do you know of any equal to Him? ﴿ [Maryam: 65], al-Tabrisi observes that the Qur’anic expression favours the letter ‘lam’ over the preposition of superposition (‘ala) to encourage endurance of the hardships of worship (Majma’ al-Bayaan: 6/606).. The transitive form of ‘istabir’ uses the letter ‘lam’ rather than the preposition ‘ala’ because the ‘lam’ implies steadfastness in worship and the bearing of its hardships, for worship has many levels (Tafsir al-Kashshaf ‘an Haqa’iq al-Tanzil wa ‘Uyun al-Aqawil fi Wujuh al-Tanzil by al-Zamakhshari: 642). Al-Razi (d. 604 AH) said (Worship brings upon you

hardships and trials, so persevere in it) (Tafsir al-Fakhr al-Razi, known as al-Tafsir al-Kabir, and Mafatih al-Ghayb by al-Imam al-Razi: 2/241)., and this was the correct transitive form (for his worship) relating to (persevere) with (in) because of its connection, as in the words of the Exalted: ﴿ And be patient with it ﴾ [Taha: 132] but it implies the meaning of steadfastness, for worship entails burdens, and few are steadfast in it; thus it is as if it were said, ‘Be steadfast in it with patience’ (Al-Durr al-Masun fi ‘Ulum al-Kitab al-Muknun by Al-Samin al-Halabi: 7/616).

The letter ‘lam’ is counted among the letters of meaning because it connects the meanings of verbs to nouns, and we find this in al-Tabarsi’s commentary on the words of the Almighty: Say: ‘Believe in it or do not believe. Indeed, those who were given knowledge before it, when it is recited to them, fall prostrate upon their chins in worship. ﴿ [Al-Isra’: 107] Here, the lām serves to convey the meaning of ‘falling’ to the chins, as he states: ‘He specifically mentioned the chin because, for one who prostrates, the part of the body closest to the ground is the chin; thus, they prostrate themselves weeping, out of remorse for their shortcomings in worship, longing for the reward, and fear of punishment.’ (Majma’ al-Bayaan: 6/423). (The choice of the lām is to indicate that the lowering is specific to the chin; this explains what is understood from His saying, the Exalted: ﴿ Say: ‘Believe in it or do not believe’ ﴾ regarding indifference to this matter) (Tafsir Abi al-Sa’ud, entitled ‘Irshaad al-‘Aql al-Saliim ila Mazaaya al-Qur’an’ by Abi al-Sa’ud al-Amadi: 5/199). It may be that the choice of the letter ‘lam’ in ‘lill-adhqān’ was intended to indicate exclusivity, as if they had reserved their chins for the act of bowing or reserved the act of bowing for their chins. (Fath al-Qadīr: The Comprehensive Work Combining the Arts of Narration and Knowledge from the Science of Tafsīr by al-Shawkanī: 3/377).

‘Alā’ (a trilateral preposition based on the implied silence on the alif, indicating elevation, as in the words of the Exalted ﴿ So when you and those with you have settled yourselves upon the ship ﴾ [Surah Al-Mu’minun: 28] (Kitab al-‘Ayn: 8/356). Meanwhile, Sibawayh (d. 175 AH) states: ‘As for ‘ala, it denotes physical elevation; one says: “He is on the back of the mountain” and “She is on its summit.”’ This is literal elevation; as for the figurative sense, Sibawayh alluded to it by saying: ‘As for “I passed by so-and-so,” these functions like a proverb.’ (Al-Kitab: 4/230–231). It may also convey a circumstantial meaning, equivalent to ‘in’ or ‘by’ or ‘from’ (Al-Tasheel ‘ala Sharh Ibn

‘Aqil: 18). The author of Al-Jani has listed more than eight meanings for which this letter is used (Al-Jani al-Dani fi Huruf al-Ma’ani by Al-Muradi: 475).

Thus, in His saying, the Exalted: ﴿ Say: ‘We believe in Allah and in what has been revealed to us, and in what was revealed to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac and Jacob’ ﴾ [Al-Imran: 84], Al-Tabarsi holds that the letter (‘ala) here conveys the meaning of superiority (as one addresses the leader of a people, speaking on his own behalf and that of his followers), that is, the address is from Allah, the Exalted, to the Prophet (ﷺ), commanding him to say of himself and his community that he believes in what has been revealed to him and in what was revealed to Ibrahim (peace be upon him) before him (Majma’ al-Bayaan: 2/465). Thus, the particle here indicates superiority, for the command is directed from Allah, the Exalted, to His noble Prophet.

From: A preposition whose most common meaning is ‘from...to...’, as in the phrase ‘I travelled from Basra to Kufa’. It may also be used to indicate a place, as in the verse: ﴿ So avoid the abomination of idols ﴾ [Al-Hajj:30] (Al-Mufassal fi San‘at al-I‘rab:35.) meaning ‘avoid the abomination because it is from the idols’; thus, it clarifies this. However, it may also appear in an extended form, such as (No one has come to me) so we could say ‘No one has come’, and it has many other meanings. Ibn Hisham (d. 761 AH) mentioned that it has four uses: for the beginning of a sentence, for partiality, for specifying the genus, and for addition and emphasis (Al-Mughni al-Labeeb fi Kitab al-I‘rab: 1/318.), whilst al-Muradi (d. 749 AH) described it as being for partiality or certainty, as in the words of Allah: ﴿ Allah has promised those of you who believe ﴾ [An-Nur: 55] (Al-Jani al-Dani in Haruf al-Ma’ani: 308.), and among the evidence for its preference is what is stated in the words of Allah: ﴿ Our Lord, make us Muslims to You and from our descendants a Muslim nation ﴾ [Al-Baqarah: 128] Al-Tabrisi explains ﴿from our descendants﴾ as ‘make from our descendants, that is, from our children’, and the word ‘from’ here indicates partiality; He singled out some of them because He, the Exalted, informed Ibrahim (peace be upon him) that among his descendants there were those who would not attain His covenant – the wrongdoers – due to the injustice they commit. On the other hand, some view this as referring to all Arabs; al-Tabarsi favours the first interpretation, as the latter contradicts logic. The use of ‘some’ here is appropriate to the context and reflects the justice of God, the Exalted, in that not all of Ibrahim’s (peace be upon him) descendants for if He had said ‘our descendants’ or ‘all our descendants’, the

intended meaning would have contradicted reality (Majma' al-Bayaan: 1/507). Ibn Shahr Ashub (d. 588 AH) supported al-Tabrisi's view by saying: 'What is meant by this is some of our descendants', and this is what the Wise Reminder indicates through the words of the Almighty: ﴿ He said: 'My covenant shall not reach the wrongdoers' ﴾ [Al-Baqarah: 124] (Al-Mutasabih wa al-Mukhtalif fi al-Qur'an by Ibn Shahr Ashub: 2/387). The conjunction with the letter 'kaf' indicates 'some of my descendants' (Anwar al-Tanzil wa Asrar al-Ta'wil, known as Tafsir al-Baydawi: 1/104). From the views of the exegetes, it becomes clear to us that the Wise Reminder chose the letter 'alif' over the letter 'waw'; for if He had said 'and my descendants', the meaning would have encompassed all the descendants of Ibrahim (peace be upon him), and that is impossible, for among them are the righteous and the wicked.

Similarly, in His saying: ﴿ So bring a surah like it ﴾ [Al-Baqarah: 23]. Al-Tabarsi holds that the choice of the letter here implies several meanings:

1- The beginning or the start of the journey, as when we say: 'I set out from Basra to Kufa'. The 'ha' in 'like him' refers to 'our servant', so the meaning becomes 'a surah from a man like him'.

2- In the sense of partiality, as when we say: 'I took a measure of food', in which case it qualifies the sentence that follows.

3- In the sense of clarification, as in the words of the Exalted: 'So avoid the filth of idols' [Al-Hajj: 30], in which case it qualifies the sentence that precedes it.

4- It may be used with an additional element: such as 'what came to me from a man'. Al-Tabarsi inclines towards the view that 'from' here denotes partiality, and the implied meaning is 'they brought some of what is like him, namely a surah' (Majma' al-Bayaan: 1/159). It may be that 'min' here is explanatory, relating to an omitted attribute of a surah, i.e., a surah that is of the same rank and clarity as it; on the other hand, it may be superfluous, as indicated by the words of Allah: "Say: 'Then bring a surah like it'" [Yunus: 38] and His saying: ﴿ Say: 'Then bring ten surahs like it' ﴾ [Hud: 13] (Tafsir al-Qasimi, entitled Mahasin al-Tawil, by Muhammad Jamal al-Din al-Qasimi: 72.) As for His saying: ﴿ And a leader, a guardian, and a prophet among the righteous ﴾ [Al-Imran: 39], the word 'min' here indicates a quality and not a partiality, for a prophet can only be righteous (Majma' al-Bayaan: 2/393.) As for al-Shawkani (d. 1250 AH), he held a contrary view; he considers that 'min' here denotes partiality, for in his view it means

‘from among the righteous’, i.e. one who has emerged from the righteous, being a descendant of the prophets, or one who is counted among the righteous, as in the words of Allah ﷻ)And indeed, in the Hereafter he is among the righteous﴿ [Al-Baqarah: 130] (Fath al-Qadir: 216).

“‘Ila” is a preposition indicating an ultimate goal, as in the words of Allah: “ Do not consume their wealth along with your wealth” [An-Nisa: 2]. (Haruf al-Ma’ani by al-Zajjaji: 127; Al-Mufasssal fi San’at al-I’rab: 396).

Ibn Hisham mentioned that it has eight meanings, the most well-known of which is indicating the completion of a temporal limit, where what follows it is considered part of what precedes it, as in the words of Allah: “Then complete the fast until the night” [Al-Baqarah: 187], and a spatial limit, as in His saying: “Glory be to Him who took His servant by night from the Sacred Mosque to the Farthest Mosque” [Al-Isra: 1].

It may also mean “with,” as in His saying: “He said: Who are my supporters with Allah?” [Al-Imran: 52], meaning “with Allah.” (Al-Mughni al-Labeeb fi Kutub al-A’arib: 498).

The particle “ila” is used in the sense of “with” only when one thing is attached to another, as in the Arabic expression: “The camels are with the camels,” meaning “along with the camels.” (Ma’ani al-Qur’an by al-Farra’: 1/218).

According to Sibawayh, this is due to the complete realization of the endpoint, whether in time or place. (Al-Kitab by Sibawayh: 2/310).

It may also carry the meaning of astonishment or preference (i.e., “more beloved” or “some”), as in His saying: “He said, ‘My Lord, prison is more beloved to me than that to which they invite me’” [Yusuf: 33].

It may also be redundant, as in the words of Allah: “Make the hearts of the people incline toward them” [Ibrahim: 37].

(Al-Mufasssal fi San’at al-I’rab: 396). In the Qur’anic usage, the preposition ‘ilā’ is preferred over ‘al-lām’ in the verse where Allah says) lory be to Him who took His servant by night from the Sacred Mosque to the Furthest Mosque, whose surroundings We have blessed, so that We might show him some of Our signs ﴿ [Al-Isra’: 1] He considers that the words of Allah: ﷻ) to the Farthest Mosque ﴿ refers to the Holy House, and that He said this because of the distance between it and the Sacred Mosque; for if the distance were short, it would have been possible to say ‘to the Al-Aqsa Mosque’ (to

indicate the specific destination). However, the Qur’anic expression uses ‘to’ to denote the destination (Majma’ al-Bayaan: 6/304). And ‘Al-Aqsa’ means ‘the furthest’, and what is meant by this is its distance from Mecca, as indicated by the fact that the end of the Night Journey was at the Sacred Mosque; this is a revealing description necessitated here to emphasise the miracle of the Night Journey, and the fact that it was extraordinary in covering such a long distance in a single night) (Tafsir: Tafsir al-Tahrir wa al-Tanwir, Muhammad al-Tahir ibn Ashur: 15/14).

The fact that the preposition “to” *ilā* signifies the complete attainment of a temporal endpoint led to its usage in the words of Allah: “We decreed to the Children of Israel in the Scripture” [Al-Isra: 4] (Majma’ al-Bayan fi Tafsir al-Qur’an: 6/309).

Al-Tabrisi explained this by noting that God’s decree concerning the Children of Israel came after mention of what had already happened to them and the events that had taken place. Thus, His saying “*wa qaḍaynā ilā*” means “We informed them and made them aware (in the Scripture),” i.e., in the Torah. The particle “*ilā*” here indicates the completion of the temporal purpose by conveying knowledge to them of what concerned them.

He further clarified that God did not say “We decreed upon them” or “We decreed their corruption,” but rather “We decreed to them,” meaning that this decree was recorded in the Torah, and here “decree” refers to divine determination and creation.

The verb “decreed” is inherently transitive, as in His saying: “So when Moses had completed the term” [Al-Qasas: 29].

In this context, it becomes transitive with the preposition “*ilā*” to convey the meaning “We carried out and revealed,” i.e., “We executed upon them the inevitable divine decree.” (Al-Durr al-Masun: 7/312). ‘*Ila*’: This is one of the prepositions that has several meanings. Ibn Hisham (d. 761 AH) mentioned that it has ten meanings, most of which are circumstantial (Al-Mughni al-Labib ‘an Kitab al-‘A’arib: 2/513, Al-Mufassal fi San‘at al-I‘rab: 397, and Al-Zajjaji’s Huruf al-Ma‘ani: 13). These meanings are either locative or temporal, and they are combined in the words of Allah: Alif Lam Mim. The Romans have been defeated in the lowest part of the earth, but they will prevail in a few years. ﴿ [Al-Rum: 1–4]. In the phrase ‘in the lowest part of the earth’, the spatial meaning is emphasised, and in the phrase ‘in a few years’, the temporal meaning is emphasised

(The Letters of Meaning: Between the Subtleties of Grammar and the Nuances of Jurisprudence, p. 246).

(The Basrians—the school of Sibawayh—have established that the preposition ‘in’ is used only for true adverbial meaning, as in His saying: ﴿And remember Allah during a few days﴾ [Al-Baqarah: 203], or figuratively, as in: ﴿And for you in retribution is life, O people of understanding﴾ [Al-Baqarah: 179] ﴿﴾ (), and it may be used to convey a cause, as in ﴿A great punishment has befallen you for what you have taken﴾ [Al-Anfal: 68], or to indicate accompaniment, as in: ﴿He said, ‘Enter among nations that have passed away before you’﴾ [Al-A’raf: 38]. It may also convey several meanings associated with other prepositions, functioning as ‘on’ as in the words of the Almighty: ﴿And I will surely crucify you on the trunks of the palm trees﴾ [Taha: 71], or with the meaning of the preposition of assistance, as in His saying: ﴿He will place you therein; there is nothing like Him, and He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing﴾ [Ash-Shura: 11] (Al-Jani al-Dani fi Huruf al-Ma’ani: 252). (It may be used for a vessel, as in saying ‘it is in the pouch’ or ‘in the bag’, whilst it is in its mother’s womb) (Haruf al-Ma’ani bayn Daqaiq al-Nahw wa Latif al-Fiqh: 248).

Thus, in His saying: ﴿And I will crucify you on the trunks of the palm trees﴾ [Taha: 71], al-Tabarsi holds that the preposition (fi) here indicates a spatial adverbial relationship; this is permissible because the trunk has encompassed them and their bodies have become part of it. This is a clear preference for the preposition (fi) over (‘ala), as the trunk encompasses the one crucified upon it, and the crucified one has become part of it (Majma’ al-Bayaan: 7/53–2/415). It may also be that the preference for the word ‘in’ is to indicate their prolonged retention, likening their continued presence to the stability of the contained object within the containing container) (Tafsir Abu al-Sa’ud: 6/29; see also: Ruh al-Ma’ani fi Tafsir al-Qur’an al-‘Azim wa al-Sab’ al-Muthani by al-Alusi: 16/231). Or (the preference here is to indicate their stability upon it, like the stability of the contained within the container) (Tafsir: Fath al-Qadir: 7/537.), and ‘in’ may not mean ‘on’ here, for the school of the Basrians holds that letters may not be substituted for one another; whatever suggests this is, in their view, interpreted in a manner acceptable to the text. Therefore, in’ here does not mean ‘on’, but is akin to the crucified one, as it is attached to the trunk in the object (Al-Mughni al-Labeeb ‘an Kitab al-‘A’arib: 2/123).

The letter ‘in’ may also affect the ‘ba’ in His saying, the Exalted: } Those are the ones who will have nothing but fire in their bellies { [Al-Baqarah: 174], Al-Tabarsi holds that what they ate will become fire in their bellies on the Day of Resurrection; he mentioned this to remove any ambiguity, and he clarified the mention of the belly to indicate that the fire enters their insides and remains there, since the particle (fi) indicates the completion of the spatial and temporal destination, settling in their bellies (Majma’ al-Bayaan: 1/620). However, al-Shawkani (d. 1250 AH) holds that Allah’s statement: (In their bellies) means ‘their bellies are filled’, and this is the ultimate punishment, indicating the end of the temporal goal; the mention of the bellies serves as an indication and confirmation that this eating is a reality (Fath al-Qadir: 111). It should be noted that the spatial limit of the fire is in their bellies, whilst the temporal limit is that the fire remains in their bellies whilst they abide eternally in Hell.

The letter ‘Bā’: a preposition that conveys several meanings, such as ‘attachment’, as in the phrase: ‘He has a disease’ (meaning it has attached itself to him); it may also imply ‘using’—as in ‘I wrote with a pen’—or ‘accompanying’—as in ‘He went out with his clan’. It is often doubled in the accusative case, as in the verse: }And do not throw yourselves into destruction{ [Al-Baqarah: 195], and in the nominative case, as in the words of Allah: }And Allah is sufficient as a witness{ [Al-Fath: 28] (Al-Mufassal fi San‘at al-I‘rab: 397–398.), (The letter ‘ba’ is a particle specific to the noun, always functioning as a preposition; it has two forms: added and non-added. As for the non-added form, grammarians have listed thirteen meanings for it, whilst the added form indicates transitivity, as in His saying: }Allah has taken away their light{ [Al-Baqarah: 17] {) (Al-Jani al-Dani in Letters of Meaning: 36.) Whilst Sibawayh mentioned the letter ‘ba’ by saying: ‘The ‘ba’ of the genitive case is for attachment and mingling, as in your saying: “I went out with Zayd, I entered with him, and I struck him with the whip.” And you have made striking him with the whip obligatory; whatever is encompassed by this statement is its origin) (Al-Kitab: 2/403).

Among the indications of its occurrence in Qur’anic expression, as noted by Al-Tabarsi in his exegesis of the words of the Exalted: } And if Allah should afflict you with harm, there is none who can remove it except Him { [Al-An’am: 17], for he holds that ‘affliction’ is an attribute of physical bodies; so how could He have said: } And if Allah should afflict you with harm { The reason is that the ‘ba’ (preposition) indicates

transitivity, and what is meant is that Allah afflicts you with harm, i.e. causes harm to befall you; the action pertains to the harm, even though outwardly it is attributed to the name of Allah the Exalted (Majma' al-Bayaan: 4/29). And (if harm befalls you, for true touching does not occur between two bodies), and that is not permissible; but when the 'ba' of transitivity is introduced, it functions as if He were saying 'He causes harm to befall you'. As for when it is not transitive to two objects, it is like His saying: }Indeed, harm has befallen me{ [Al-Anbiya': 83] (Similarities and Differences in the Qur'an: 1/326-327). It may be that 'touching' literally means placing one's hand on something or directly, or it may be figurative and used metaphorically to convey the idea of bringing one thing to another; thus, it is often accompanied by what is being metaphorically conveyed, and the preposition 'ba' is inserted, as here, so that there are two successive metaphors: one in the verb and one in the preposition, as in the words of Allah) and do not touch it with evil { [Al-A'raf: 73] (Tafsir al-Tahrir wa al-Tanwir: 7/163). The letter 'ba' may also affect other elements, as in His saying:} do not sell My verses for a small price [Al-Baqarah: 41]. Al-Tabarsi explained this by noting that the letter 'ba' is omitted in the verses concerning 'thaman' here, whereas it is included in Surah Yusuf regarding 'thaman', as in His saying: }And they sold him for a paltry price—a few dirhams{ [Yusuf: 20] For goods, which are all things other than dirhams, you have the choice of saying, 'I bought the garment for a garment' or the reverse; both are permissible. As for dirhams, everything is valued by them. The meaning is: do not exchange My verses for a meagre price, that is, a trifling thing in this world (Majma' al-Bayaan: 1/238). It has also been said (Al-Muharrar al-Wajiz fi Tafsir al-Kitab al-Aziz by Ibn 'Atiyah al-Andalusi: 1/135).

4 SECOND REQUIREMENT: EXPLAIN THE RATIONALE BEHIND THE USE OF CONJUNCTIONS IN THE QUR'AN

The meaning of the conjunction in Arabic is to link and connect (Lisan al-'Arab: 2997–2998). "Conjunction in speech is when one of two separate elements is linked to the other in accordance with its grammatical function, or when one of two clauses is linked to the other by a causal relationship" (Al-Jani al-Dani in Haruf al-Ma'ani: 21). Ibn Jinni stated therein: 'They all share the function of introducing the second element into

the inflection of the first, whilst each particle has a specific meaning.’ (Al-Lama’ fi al-Arabiyya by Ibn Jinni: 174, and Al-Mukhtasar by Abu al-Abbas al-Mubarrad: 149). The early Arab grammarians studied them in the chapter on separation and connection, the purpose of which is to understand the positions of conjunctions and resumption, and to know how to use them or omit them when they are not needed (Dala’il al-I’jaz, by ‘Abd al-Qahir al-Jurjani: 170)., and conjunctions introduce the second clause into the same grammatical category as the first (Al-Mukhtasar: 149).

(Since conjunctions are fixed particles, they do not require a limit; and conjunctions indicate an additional meaning in their conjunction) (Ham’ al-Hawam’ fi Sharh Jam’ al-Jawami’ by al-Suyuti: 5/223) (And all conjunctions are used in place of conjunction) (Sharh al-Tasheel by Ibn Malik: 14). This conjunction holds great significance in Qur’anic expression and in the process of linking the parts of the text, a matter which has attracted the attention of exegetes in general and our exegete in particular. Among the most important conjunctions are:

The letter waw: Sibawayh defined it by saying: ‘It is for the absolute plural’ (Al-Kitab: 1/218). The waw signifies the inclusion of the second in what the first has entered into, and there is no indication as to which comes first, as in the words of the Exalted: ﴿ O Maryam, be devout to your Lord, and prostrate yourself and bow with those who bow ﴾ [Al-Imran: 43] (Al-Mukhtasar: 148). , and prostration follows bowing. The letter ‘waw’ is the root of the conjunctions that necessitate the conjunction of two things under a single ruling, whereas the remaining conjunctions necessitate an extension of the ruling beyond what this ‘waw’ requires (Sharh al-Mufassal by Ibn Ya’ish: 8/90). The Basrians have specified that it denotes absolute conjunction, i.e. the meeting of the action without restriction as to whether it occurs from both, simultaneously or one preceding the other, as in saying ‘Zayd and ‘Umar came’; it is possible that they came together or one after the other (Sharh Ibn ‘Aqil: 2/208). Whereas (the Kufans hold that it is for order only, which is also reported from Qatrab) (Al-Jani al-Dani in Haruf al-Ma’ani: 158.), but Ibn Malik holds that the waw stands alone in the rule of preceding infrequently and following frequently, which contradicts the view of Sibawayh and others who hold that the element joined by the waw must correspond to what precedes it (Sharh al-Tashil: 3/343, and al-Jani al-Dani fi Huruf al-Ma’ani: 160.), and some grammarians held that the waw is a substitute for the ba’, saying: because they are similar in place of articulation and

meaning, as the lips produce both; the ba' is for attachment and the waw for gathering. They cited as evidence for this that the waw does not enter the implied form, because implication refers things back to their roots (Tawīl Mushkil al-Qur'ān by Ibn Qutaybah: 153).

Al-Tabarsi explained the reasons for the use of the letter 'waw' over other conjunctions through his exegesis of the words of the Exalted: }And indeed, we bestowed upon David and Solomon knowledge, and they said, "Praise be to Allah" { [An-Naml: 15]. The Qur'anic expression connects the stories of Moses and David, peace be upon them both, with knowledge of the decree among creation and the speech of birds and animals.

They shared in the knowledge from Allah, the Exalted, and thus the use of the letter 'waw' (و) instead of the letter 'fa' (ف) was preferred, as the 'waw' necessitates the sharing of two things in a single ruling. As for the 'waw' in (And they said), its use takes precedence over the 'fa' for the same reason of sharing (i.e., our choice from among creation in making them prophets), and the omission of the word 'knowledge' indicates that he intended knowledge they required, which points to their sincerity, since the 'wa' necessitates the sharing of two things in a single ruling (Majma' al-Bayaan: 7/513). Or that the reason here is their sharing in the inspiration from Allah the Exalted, for He is the source of knowledge regarding the laws (Anwar al-Tanzil wa Asrar al-Ta'wil: 4/156), whilst al-Zamakhshari (538 AH) held: that the reason for preferring the conjunction 'wa' in the two phrases (Dawud wa Sulayman) and (wa qālā) over the conjunction 'fa' is to indicate that what they said was part of what had occurred in the knowledge that came to them; this was implied, and the expression of praise was appended to it (Tafsīr al-Kashshāf: 3/139).

It may be that the use of the waw in the phrase }We certainly gave David{ is connected to }When Moses said to his family, 'Indeed, I perceive a fire' [An-Naml: 7]. (for this reason, this statement relates to the letter 'waw' rather than the letter 'fa', because it is not praise merely for the sake of gratitude, but rather for the bestowal of knowledge) (Tafsir al-Tahrir wa al-Tanwir: 19/234).

Then: (a conjunction indicating sequence and delay) (Ma'āni al-Qur'ān by al-Faraa': 2/69). It may also indicate a connection in ruling and sequence with a pause, meaning that the conjunct is delayed relative to the main clause (Sharh Ibn 'Aqīl by Ibn

‘Aqīl al- ‘Aqīlī al-Masrī al-Hamadānī: 2/209). Sibawayh said: ‘An example of this is: “I passed by a man, then a woman”; the passing is twofold, and I made the first “then” the starting point and linked them with the genitive case’ (Al-Kitab: 1/218). Thus, “then” shares in the ruling and indicates sequence with a pause; it may also function like the letter waw, as in the words of the Exalted: ﴿ He created you from a single soul, then made from it its mate ﴾ [Az-Zumar: 6] (Al-Jani al-Dani in Haruf al-Ma’ani: 427). The author of Rasaf al-Mabani held that the particle ‘thumma’ in speech has two functions: firstly, to act as a conjunction linking a singular to a singular, or a clause to a clause; and secondly, to function as a particle of initiation, meaning that it is followed by the subject and predicate, as in the words of Allah ﴿ Then you associate others with Him ﴾ [Al-An’am: 64] (Rasaf al-Mabani in the commentary on Haruf al-Ma’ani by Ahmad Abd al-Nur al-Maliki: 81–82).

Whereas the author of Al-Mufassal fi San‘at al-I‘rab holds that it indicates a sequence with a pause, as in the words of Allah: “indeed, I am surely Most Forgiving to whoever repents, believes, does righteous deeds, and then is guided.” [Taha: 82] (Al-Mufassal fi San‘at al-I‘rab: 425).

Al-Tabarsi examined the reasons behind this, explaining the rationale in the words of Allah: ﴿ He created you from a single soul, then made from it its mate ﴾ [Az-Zumar: 6], he observes that the Qur’anic expression uses ‘thumma’ (then) instead of ‘wa’ (and) because ‘thumma’ implies a lapse of time and a pause. Regarding the creation of the parents, there are three views: one is that it is a conjunction requiring the second statement to follow the first, akin to saying, ‘I have seen what you were today, and then what you were yesterday.’ The second view is that it is a conjunction conveying a single meaning, as if He had said: ‘He created you from a single soul, which He brought into being alone, and then created her mate from it.’ The third view is that He created the progeny of Adam (peace be upon him) and brought them forth from his back, and then created Eve. (Majma’ al-Bayaan: 8/529). All of this implies a pause in creation and a sequence of events; the conjunction ‘then’ is clear. Had he said, in her husband’s, it would have been a joint conjunction now of creation; the sequence is that ‘then’ connects it, indicating the independence of the joined clause by signifying a chronological delay (Tafsir al-Tahrir wa al-Tanwir: 23/331).

Al-Faraa' (d. 207 AH) explained that the conjunction 'then' in this blessed verse serves two purposes: (One is that when the Arabs narrate two actions concerning a man, they introduce the second with 'then' if it follows the first in meaning; and they may use 'then' to indicate precedence, making 'then' part of the speaker's narrative. The other interpretation is: that 'his creation' (the spouse) is made to refer back to 'one', as if he had said: 'He created you from a single soul, then created her spouse from it, so in meaning, her creation is one' (*Ma'an al-Qur'an* by al-Faraa': 2/415). Al-Zamakhshari (d. 538 AH) clarified that 'the nature of the conjunction here is the distinction in merit and virtue, and the difference in status and rank, not a difference in creation and existence' (*Tafsir al-Kashshaf* 4/114)., The word 'then' (thumma) indicates a temporal sequence as well as an order of creation: the order of creation began with Adam (peace be upon him), and after him Allah, the Exalted, created Eve. (*Al-Mutasabih wa al-Mukhtalif fi al-Qur'an*: 2/415). , and 'then' here denotes a temporal sequence according to the order of the discourse, for the address is to all mankind, and what is meant by 'the single soul' is supported by analogous verses – Adam, the father of mankind – and what is meant by his spouse is his wife, who is of her own kind and resembles him in humanity; the meaning is that He, the Exalted, created this species and multiplied its members from a single soul and its spouse (*Al-Mizan in the Exegesis of the Qur'an* by Sayyid Muhammad Husayn al-Tabatabā'i: 17/104).

The letter 'fa': a conjunction indicating sequence and succession (Al-Jani al-Dani in *Haruf al-Ma'ani*: 121; *Ham'at al-Hawam'i*: 20/130–131), and it may indicate causality (Rasaf al-Mabani: 377). On this, Sibawayh said: 'An example of this is when you say, "I passed by Zayd then 'Amr," or "I passed by a man then a woman"; the fa' links the two instances of passing and makes the first the starting point' (*Al-Kitab*: 1/438.), and the most notable feature of the fa' in terms of meaning is that, unlike other conjunctions, it is characterised by the indication of connection, and the absence of a pause between the conjuncts. Al-Sirafi (d. 368 AH): 'The fa' is for conjunction, and its function is that the meaning shared by the conjunct and the conjunction-upon carries the conjunct after it has occurred with the conjunction-upon without a pause, and its occurrence with the second follows its occurrence with the first, as in your saying, "Ali, I will come to you and speak to you." And if one wishes to report two pieces of news about a person, both of which occurred to him in a single instance, it is not permissible to connect one to the other with

the ‘fa’ because they occurred at the same time; the ‘fa’ necessitates that the time of one follows the time of the other, so if it is inserted, the meaning is corrupted) (*Sharh Ayyat Sibawayh*, by Abu Muhammad Yusuf al-Marzban al-Sirafi: 1/100)., (The ‘fa’ necessitates that the second must occur immediately after the first) (*Al-Mufasssal fi San‘at al-I‘rab*: 425.).

The ‘fa’ is one of the letters that shares functions in syntax and grammar, and its meaning is succession; so if you say: ‘Zayd stood up, then ‘Umar’, it indicates that ‘Umar’s standing up followed Zayd’s without a pause, so the ‘fa’ shares the function of ‘thumma’ in indicating sequence, but differs from it in that it indicates connection whilst ‘thumma’ indicates separation; this is the view of the Basrians (Ta’wil Mushkil al-Qur’an: 60), It may also be used for an absolute conjunction, and this is the view of al-Jarmi (*Ibid.*: 62), (and the letter ‘fa’ connects things just as the letter ‘waw’ does, except that it makes them follow one another in sequence) (*Al-Kitab*: 1/218). We find this in al-Tabarsi’s exegesis of the words of the Exalted: } So Our punishment came upon them by night, whilst they were asleep { [*Al-A‘raf*: 4]. He holds that the ‘fa’ is for succession, and the Qur’anic text has preferred it over the waw to convey this meaning, whereas the waw implies the conjunction of two things. If one were to say, ‘I struck the people whilst they were standing and sitting’, the waw would necessitate that one struck them whilst they were in both these states. But if you said, ‘I struck them whilst they were standing and sitting, the meaning would be that you struck them once whilst they were standing and once whilst they were sitting, and the sequence is clear with the coming of the calamity. (*Majma’ al-Bayaan*: 4/290). As for the cause being indicated by the conjunction ‘fa’ (and), this is for the purpose of threatening the stubborn listeners and warning them that the wrath of Allah may befall them, thereby increasing their destruction; hence, the respite was made short for them, lest they delay in rectifying their affairs and hastening to repent (*Tafsir al-Tahrir wa al-Tanwir*: 8/20–21).), but Al-Qurtubi (d. 671 AH) sees in this verse that ‘the fa’ is used in the sense of the waw, so the sequence is not required’ (*Al-Jami’ li-Ahkam al-Qur’an wa al-Mubin li-ma Tadhmannahu min al-Sunnah wa Ayat al-Qur’an* by al-Qurtubi: 7/143)., whilst al-Samin al-Halabi (d. 756 AH) holds that it was mentioned for the sake of commentary, as stated in (*Al-Durr al-Masun*: 5/250).

The letter “fa” implies that the second event follows the first, and that the two are closely related’ (*Al-Mukhtasar*: 148). This is evident in Al-Tabarsi’s commentary on the

verse: } So they set out until, when they met a boy, they killed him { [Al-Kahf: 74]. He holds that the 'fa' indicates the sequence and succession of events; for after they emerged from the sea, they set off walking on land (whereupon they met) the boy playing and killed him. Thus, the events occurred in sequence; had he said 'and killed him', the time of the killing would not have been specified within the sequence (Majma' al-Bayaan: 6/516.). The 'fa' was inserted before the verb to indicate the act of killing; here, it conveys causality, meaning that when it functions as a conjunction, it indicates a cause (Mutashabih al-Qur'an wa al-Mukhtalif fi-hi 4/439). Al-Suhayli (d. 581 AH) noted that the indication of cause and sequence refers to the meaning of commentary (Results of Thought in Grammar by Al-Suhayli: 196). There is no contradiction between causation and conjunction; the fa' may indicate causation whilst functioning as a conjunction linking one clause to another (Al-Radhi's Commentary on Al-Kafiya: 4/388). Whereas Al-Zamakhshari (d. 538 AH) identifies the cause here by stating: 'If you ask why it was said 'Until, when they boarded the ship, he tore it' [Al-Kahf: 71] without the 'fa' and: 'Until, when they met a boy, they killed him' with the 'fa'?' I say: He made the tearing of the ship the consequence of the condition and made the killing of the boy part of the condition, appended to it; and the consequence is expressed by 'killed'. If you ask: 'Why then is there a difference between them?' I say: 'Because the tearing of the ship did not follow the boarding, whereas the killing followed the encounter with the boy' (Tafsir al-Kashshaf: 626), and this was also stated in (Tafsir al-Tahrir wa al-Tanwir: 15/377).

Or: (a conjunction indicating two things or more) (Sharh al-Mufassal by Ibn Ya'ish: 8/97). Sibawayh said: "An example of this is when you say, 'I passed by a man or a woman'; here, 'or' joins them in the genitive case, confirms the passing by one of them without the other, and equates them in the address." (Al-Kitab: 1/218). It is defined as a conjunction that joins in grammatical function and meaning, for what follows it shares the meaning of what precedes it. The Kufans added another meaning to 'or', namely the accusative case for the present tense verb (Al-Jani al-Dani fi Huruf al-Ma'ani: 230). And 'or' may refer to one of two things (Al-Khasa'is by Abu al-Fath 'Uthman ibn Jinni: 2/457). This is what led grammarians to ascribe numerous meanings to 'or', including doubt, as in saying, 'Did Zayd or 'Umar stand up?', and choice, as in the words of Allah }And they said, 'Be Jews or Christians' { [Al-Baqarah: 135], or division, or

permissibility; whereas Ibn Malik (d. 672 AH) said, ‘Division by mere distinction suffices for the preceding meanings’ (Sharh al-Tashil: 176).

Al-Tabarsi drew attention to the reasons for the use of this particle in the Qur’anic text, and one example of this is found in the words of Allah: ﴿After any bequest he may have made or any debt﴾ (An-Nisa’: 11].

He holds that the particle ‘or’ (aw) refers to one of the two things or objects and does not necessitate a specific order; it is as if he had said ‘after one of these two’, whether mentioned separately or implied by the other. Similarly, when they say, ‘Jalis al-Hasan’ or ‘Ibn Sireen’, it means ‘sitting with one of them’, whether mentioned separately or implied by the other (Majma’ al-Bayaan: 7/45). ‘or’ here is used to indicate permissibility in place of the ‘and’, and to signify their equality in obligation and their precedence in the division, whether taken together or separately (Tafsir Abu al-Sa’ud: 2/150.), and ‘or’ may be used to indicate permissibility without the ‘wa’, which indicates that they are equal in existence and take precedence in the division, whether combined or separate (Anwar al-Tanzil wa Asrar al-Ta’wil: 2/63.) As for Abu al-Baqa’ (d. 616 AH), he holds that it does not indicate order, nor is there any difference between ‘Zayd or ‘Umar came to me’ and ‘‘Amr or Zayd came to me’, because ‘or’ refers to one of two things, and there is no order in a single thing; Thus, the argument of those who say ‘after debt or a bequest’ is invalid; rather, the order applies only if both are present, in which case the debt takes precedence over the bequest (Al-Tibyan fi I’rab al-Qur’an by Abu al-Baqa’ al-Akbari: 335).

Al-Zamakhshari (d. 385 AH) interprets it as permitting the two, and that the will takes precedence over the debt because it is given precedence in Islamic law. After all, it is like inheritance in that it is taken without compensation; its payment is a hardship on the heirs, unlike the debt, for which they are at ease regarding its settlement. Therefore, the word ‘or’ to reconcile the two in terms of obligation (Tafsir al-Kashshaf: 508).

(Grammarians hold that the conjunction ‘or’ conveys several meanings, including choice and division) (Al-Mughni al-Labeeb ‘an Kitab al-A’arib: 1/62). Or the ‘conjunctive waw’ as in His saying, the Exalted: ﴿So as for those that cast down a reminder, an excuse or a warning﴾ [Al-Mursalat: 5-6] (Ta’wil Mushkil al-Qur’an: 543)., and these are meanings understood from the context in which they appear. We find this in al-Tabarsi’s commentary on the words of Allah: ﴿ Or like him who passed by a town

which had fallen into ruin upon its foundations, and said, ‘How will Allah bring this to life after its death?’{ [Al-Baqarah: 259], for he considers that ‘or’ is a conjunction linking the meaning of the first statement, and its implied meaning is: ‘Have you seen the one who argued with his Lord, or the one who passed by a village?’ Here, the choice and distinction are evident, for the meaning of Allah’s words: }Or like one who passed by{ If you wish, look at the story of Ibrahim (peace be upon him), and if you wish, look at the story of the one who passed by the village; the choice is clear between the two to demonstrate knowledge of His Almighty power to bring the dead back to life (Majma’ al-Bayaan: 2/237-238)., and the conjunction may be interpreted as indicating a choice (Nazm al-Durar fi Tanasub al-Ayat wa al-Surah by Abu al-Hasan al-Baqai: 4/54). , whilst Ibn Qutaybah (276 AH) holds that the conjunction ‘or’ (aw) does not appear in exegesis except with the meaning of the coordinating ‘wa’, and thus he says: ‘This is not as they have interpreted it, but rather it has the meaning of ‘wa’ in all instances’ (Tawīl Mushkil al-Qur’ān: 544).

5 THIRD REQUIREMENT: EXPLAIN THE RATIONALE BEHIND THE QUR’ANIC EXPRESSION IN THE LETTERS OF THE OATH

These are the letters that introduce the oath, and there are four of them: (waw, ba’, ta’, and lām). The ba’ is the original form, the waw is its substitute, and the ta’ is a substitute for the waw (Ma’āni al-Nahw, Dr Fadhil al-Samara’i: 160). The letter B is specific to the oath of supplication, the response to which is a request; whereas the letter L is known as the introductory L of the oath, which precedes the conditional particle, whilst the W precedes every apparent subject of the oath. The B is the root of the letters of the oath and is thus preferred over the other three letters for several reasons, one of which is that its verb need not be omitted with it, but may be expressed explicitly, as in ‘I swear by God’; secondly, that it indicates an implied verb, as in ‘by you, I will not do it’; and thirdly, that it is used in requests and other contexts, unlike the other letters of the oath. It may also accompany the oath and other constructions, unlike the waw and the ta, which do not govern it except in the oath; The waw governs the explicit without the implied. As for the issue of substituting one for the other, since they are similar in pronunciation and meaning, they deduced this from the principle of returning things to

their roots (Al-Jinn al-Dani in Haruf al-Ma'ani: 153, Tafsir al-Mushkil al-Qur'an: 44). Al-Akhfash has narrated (Tarb al-Ka'bah), and the 'ta' is used only with nouns; some have reported that they said 'Tal-Rahman', but this is an anomaly (Al-Jani al-Dani fi Huruf al-Ma'ani: 56).

The letter 'tā': Among the examples cited by al-Tabrisi is what is stated in the words of the Exalted: }They said, "By Allah, you know well that we did not come to cause corruption on earth, nor were we thieves" { [Yusuf: 73]. He explained the use of the letter 'Tā' here, rather than other letters of oath, by saying: 'Tāllāh' means 'By Allah', except that the letter 'Tā' is specific to the Name of Majesty, and it is not permissible 'Tal-Rahman' or 'Tal-Rabbi', as it is a substitute for the waw; therefore, it is only used with the name of the Most Exalted, or 'Rab' when referring to the Ka'bah, or 'Al-Rahman' in a weak narration. If one were to say 'Tal-Rahim', it would not be permissible. It has been said that it is a substitute for the ba', and it has been said that it is an independent root; whatever the case, it conveys astonishment. (Majma' al-Bayaan: 5/583).

It is ruled that it is not permissible to say 'Tal-Rahman' or 'Tal-Rahim' (Al-Muharrar al-Wajiz: 9/343). The 'ta' here is for exclamation, as if they were astonished by their Lord regarding this matter (Al-Bahr al-Muhit: 5/330, and Tafsir al-Kashaf: 524). We find that al-Tabrisi also speaks of exclamation, as in the words of the Exalted: } قَالَ } الْتَزْدِينَ كَذَّبَتْ إِنَّ تَأَلَّهُ (As-Saffat: 56). The oath here is one of astonishment, meaning that you almost destroyed me with what you said to me (Majma' al-Bayaan: 8/421) This is also stated in: (Al-Durr al-Masoon: 9/313, and Tafsir Abu al-Sa'ud: 7/194).

it has been said that the oath here is one of astonishment, meaning that he was denying his faith to him (Aysar al-Tafasir li-Kalam al-'Ali al-Qadir by al-Jaza'iri: 4/409)., and the letter 'ta' is specific to introducing the Name of Majesty, as in His saying: } By Allah, you will surely be questioned about what you used to invent { [An-Nahl: 56]. Al-Tabarsi affirmed that Allah, the Exalted, swore that He would question the polytheists in the Hereafter, and the oath was introduced with the letter 'tā' because it is specific to the sacred name, making it the greatest oath, and the 'tā' here is adjacent to the Divine Name (Majma' al-Bayaan: 6/232).

The letter 'waw': Among the examples of an oath beginning with the letter 'waw' is what is stated in His words: }By the dawn, and by ten nights, and by the even and the odd, and by the night when it departs, is there in that an oath for one of understanding?{

[Al-Fajr: 1–5], Al-Tabarsi explained the use of the oath with the letter ‘waw’ here as being due to the succession of conjunctive clauses and the fact that the oath is based on ordered quantities.

Thus, Allah, the Exalted, swore by the dawn of the day, which is the breaking of the morning, then followed it with an oath by the ten nights, which are the ten days of Dhu’l-Hijjah, and then followed the oath with the even and the odd, meaning the pair and the single number, as a reminder of the calculation and the great benefit therein. On the other hand, al-Tabarsi holds that the ‘shaf’ (pairs) refer to creation, as they mate, whilst the ‘witr’ (odd numbers) refer to Allah, the Exalted. The repetition of the oath with the letter ‘waw’ here serves to emphasise and magnify the objects of the oath, as a reminder to those of understanding, for the things by which the oath is sworn contain wonders and signs of the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, and illustrate the wonders of His creation and the marvels of His wisdom. An example of this is His saying, the Exalted: ﴿وَالطَّارِقِ وَالسَّمَاءِ﴾ [Al-Tariq: 1], where the Qur’anic oath with the letter ‘waw’ is used for the same reason, whilst Al-Tabatabai (d. 1981) explained the oath here by saying: “His saying, the Exalted: ﴿وَالْفَجْرِ﴾ is an oath by the dawn, and the same applies to what is appended to it—the even and the odd, and the night—and these are the creations of God). He added: ‘The odd is Adam (peace be upon him), and the even is Eve (peace be upon her), and that Allah, the Exalted, swears by a command, and He swears only by that which has honour and status; and it was a statement of truth whose veracity is beyond doubt, and the omission of the response and the reference to it is more effective and provides greater emphasis in the context of warning and glad tidings). As for His saying: ﴿By the sky and the Night Visitor, He swore by them to emphasize their significance, as they are among His creations, to establish the argument against those upon whom the oath is sworn (Al-Mizan: 20/334, 322). Bint Al-Shati (d. 1998) holds that the surah begins with an oath using the letter ‘waw’, and that this Qur’anic oath conveys a sense of glorification of the One by whom the oath is sworn; for the oath by the letter ‘waw’ is often a rhetorical device to convey meanings through sensory perceptions; and because of the grandeur it contains, it is intended to draw attention strongly, and the choice of the object of the oath takes into account the attribute that suits the situation. It is this sensory-semantic explanation that the Qur’anic oaths by the letter ‘waw’ can encompass, so they are accepted without forced interpretation or strained exegesis (Al-Tafsir al-Bayani, Dr Aisha Abdul-Rahman bint al-

Shati: 1/25). Thus, Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyya (d. 751 AH) says: ‘His swearing by some of His creatures is evidence that they are among His greatest signs’ (Al-Tibyan fi Aqşam al-Qur’an, Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyya: 1).

The letter ‘B’: As for the oath beginning with the letter ‘B’, it appears alongside the name of God in His words: ﴿They swore by God with the utmost solemnity of their oaths﴾ [Al-Ma’idah: 53, Al-An’am: 109, An-Nahl: 38, An-Nur: 53, Fatir: 32], Al-Tabarsi explained that the oath here is the most solemn of oaths, namely the oath by Allah, the Exalted. They swore with great zeal, striving hard and displaying their loyalty; yet, on the other hand, he considers that they went to extremes in their oaths (Majma’ al-Bayaan: 3/492, 4/181, 6/217). The oath using the Divine Name here indicates that the hypocrites swore boastfully regarding the salvation bestowed upon them by God Almighty, and the most solemn form of faith is the oath by the Divine Essence (Anwar al-Tanzil wa Asrar al-Tawil: 2/131).

Whereas the Qur’anic expression makes it clear to us that Allah, the Exalted, swore by the wonders of His creation, as in His saying: I swear by the Day of Resurrection, Nor do I swear by the self that reproaches itself﴿ [Al-Qiyamah: 1-2], Al-Tabarsi sees that the oath here has several aspects. The first is that ‘la’ is a conjunction, meaning: ‘I swear by the Day of Resurrection’; the second is that ‘la’ is a response to those among the polytheists who denied the Resurrection and the Gathering, as if He were saying: ‘No, as you suppose,’ then he began the oath by saying, ‘I swear by the Day of Resurrection that you will be resurrected,’ to distinguish between an oath of denial and an oath of affirmation. The third interpretation is that it means, ‘I do not swear by the Day of Resurrection,’ because it is evident through rational and auditory proofs.

The fourth is it means, ‘I do not swear by the Day of Resurrection, for you do not acknowledge it.’ As for His saying, ﴿And I do not swear by the self-reproaching soul﴾, Al-Tabarsi sees two interpretations here: the first is that it is an address to people, stating that they do not acknowledge that the soul will reproach its owner on the Day of Resurrection; the second is that it means, ‘I swear by the Day of Resurrection, but I do not swear by the self-reproaching soul’; He swears by the former, but does not swear by the latter.

Al-Tabarsi considers this interpretation weak because it deviates from the structure of the speech; it is more likely that there are two separate oaths. The response

to the oath is omitted here, and its implied meaning is: 'The matter is not as you imagine that you will be resurrected or that you will be resurrected.' Al-Tabarsi mentions that some read 'I swear' as the response to an oath, and the 'n' was omitted because it was intended to indicate the state (Majma' al-Bayaan: 10/269), And that Allah, the Exalted, swore by the Day of Resurrection as a reminder of its greatness, which belongs to Him, and swore by the self that reproaches its owner for neglecting obedience; it is thus praiseworthy, and for this reason Allah, the Exalted, swore by it (Tafsir al-Tha'alabi: 5/519).

From these examples, it is clear that the preference of one letter over another in the context of Qur'anic expression—which selects letters based on their significance to the verse to which they belong in all semantic and syntactic respects—is not as Ibn Jinni stated: 'That is because they say that "to" (ilā) means "with" (ma'a), and they cite the words of the Exalted: }Who are my supporters? To Allah{ [Al-Saff: 14], meaning 'with Allah'; and they say that 'fi' (in) is used to mean 'on', citing the words of the Almighty: }Nor shall We crucify you on the trunks of the palm trees{ [Taha: 71], meaning 'on them') (Al-Khasais by Ibn Jinni: 2/307). Indeed, alongside what he said: 'We do not deny that it may be as they say, but we would say that it takes the meaning of "in" in some contexts and "on" in others, depending on the circumstances that call for it and justify it.'

6 RESULTS

1- The subject of Qur'anic expression—which aims to utilise the expressive features of the Arabic language—is intrinsically linked to the Qur'anic context, which encompasses knowledge that goes beyond what the language itself, its modes of expression, its styles, and the characteristics of its structures and syntax can contain.

2- Every verse in the Wise Remembrance, indeed every word or every letter, is placed in its appropriate position and cannot be replaced by another, however similar they may be in meaning to some extent.

3- The variety of preferences and their reasons in the Qur'anic expression within a single text gives us a broader view of the Qur'anic text and allows us to examine it from multiple angles, thereby leading us to the intended meaning.

4- The phenomenon of preference or choice and its numerous reasons in the Qur'anic text were not limited to the early exegetes; indeed, some modern exegetes have put forward other reasons that are more sound and closer to the text than those offered by the early exegetes in general. If this indicates anything, it indicates that the reasons for Qur'anic expression will endure if reflection on the Book of Allah the Exalted endures.

5- These reasons may vary according to the ideas of the exegetes, despite their linguistic consistency, and they are not the only or unique ones; indeed, it is possible for another exegete to offer other reasons for the same text that may be more profound and closer to the meaning, even if the time period differs.

6- This study has highlighted some of the aspects of the Qur'an's rhetorical miraculousness in its noble surahs and verses through al-Tabarsi's exceptional scholarship; he has delved into the reasons behind the Qur'anic expression with a broad linguistic capability and proficiency, enabling the researcher and the reader to benefit and gain further insight.

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