

# An Analytical Study on the “*Tafsīr Mawḍūʿī* (Thematic Exegesis) of The Holy Quran,” Theorized by The Grand Ayatullah Martyr Sayyid Muḥammad Bāqir Ṣadr

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## ABSTRACT

Thematic exegesis (*tafsīr mawḍūʿī*), represents one of the contemporary approaches to Qurʾanic interpretation; however, its manifestation in the form of *tafsīr of Āyāt al-Aḥkām*<sup>1</sup> possesses a long-standing historical background that extends back to the earliest centuries of Islam. However, it has been considered a new method according to its special exegetical approach and inclusion of other Quranic subjects. In the method of thematic exegesis, the verses of the Quran are not cut, i.e., one should not attempt to understand a concept—such as justice, freedom, or divine norms—by isolating a single verse and interpreting it on its own. Rather, all verses related to that subject must be studied collectively, so that the holistic and integrated vision that the Quran offers can be properly understood. Additionally, they are not studied and pondered continuously and in sequential form; rather, a thematic exegete strives in his study to focus on a single subject expressed in the Quran. In an analytical method, this study tried to analyze the theory in diverse sections. Accordingly, the systematic coherence of Quranic doctrine and dependency on human experience are considered among the most significant fundamentals of the theory. Ayatollah Ṣadr applied a set of methods in the theory, such as following the correct exegetical principles and rules and benefitting from *Istiqraʿ* (induction), *Istinṭāq* (interrogation) from the Quran and dealing with particular subjects through theorization are among the particular features and elements of the theory. His novel theory has included several positive consequences in the realm of Quranic exegesis, e.g., responding to human needs in the beam of their vast subjects and amelioration of inter-sectarian discord.

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<sup>1</sup>. *Ayat al-Aḥkām* or *Fiqh al-Quran*, verses from the Qurʾan that express the *Sharīʿa* rules or from which the *Sharīʿa* ruling is inferred; *Sharīʿa* law refers to practical rules such as Prayer, Zakāt, and Jihad, not doctrinal and moral rules.

## Introduction

Undoubtedly, according to the various definitions regarding *tafsīr* stated by every thematic exegete, its special principles, rules, and purpose will be different. Although some common points can be found among the exegetical methods of thematic exegetes, it seems that, focusing on their exegetical methodology to present a comprehensive model of the specific principles and rules of “thematic exegesis,” no serious research has been done yet. In addition to the most important neglected issue in the methodology of thematic exegesis, there is a close relationship between the purpose presented by the exegete and the application of exegetical rules and principles.

Since Ayatullah Ṣadr is known as one of the originators of “thematic exegesis,” reflecting on his exegetical methodology is important, particularly in encountering the nature of his delineated purpose of thematic exegesis regarding the claim of discovering “Quranic theory” in its scientific meaning. Methods, schools, procedures, principles, and special rules of exegesis are a set of titles that have been studied in the field of “Interpretation of the Quran” and “Sciences of the Quran.” In a logical process, thematic exegesis of the holy Quran, theorized by Ayatullah Ṣadr, has been thoroughly analyzed in this study.

## Literature Review

Thematic exegesis, as a systematic method for extracting the Quran’s comprehensive perspective, owes its evolution to enduring works, each of which has turned a page in the history of this methodology. This section introduces some of these valuable contributions as follows:

- The book, *Al-Madrasat al-Qur’āniyyah* (2013), written by Muḥammad Bāqir Ṣadr: This work is a collection of his lessons on thematic exegesis. Utilizing his innate brilliance, keen insight, and innovative mind, and with a profound command of Islam and precise knowledge of Western schools of thought, he masterfully elucidates the Quran’s profound perspective on the laws of history, the constituent elements of society, and the role of humankind within the realms of history, nature, and social relations. While acknowledging the principled nature of human movement within society and history, he

firmly rejects any deterministic outlook in this context, thereby demonstrating the superiority of divine and religious thought in confronting atheistic ideologies.

- The book, *Tafsīr Mawḍū'ī (Thematic Exegesis) of the Quran* (2000), written by Grand Ayatullah Javādī Āmulī: This book is compiled in 18 volumes, each of which contains a certain subject, e.g., revelation and prophethood, epistemology, the monotheistic conduct of the prophets, the true life of humanity, etc.

- The book, *Tafsīr Mawḍū'ī (Thematic Exegesis) of the Quran* (2021), written by Muḥammad 'Alī Riḍā'ī Iṣfahānī et.al: In a section of this book, the author addresses the methods of composing Quranic exegesis, the most fundamental methodologies of *tafsīr*, the reasons why the Quran necessitates *tafsīr*, systematic *tafsīr*, interpreting based on *tafsīr bi ra'y* (personal opinion), and various schools or trends in *tafsīr*.

- The article *Ayatullah Ṣadr's Methodological Approach to the Quranic Theory* (2013) [in Persian], written by Muḥsin Qāsimpūr and Maryam Nazar Beigī: In this article, the authors have analyzed and examined the method employed by Ayatullah Ṣadr in elucidating the Quranic theory of historical traditions.

However, no scientific work has been found yet dealing with the analysis of the theory in a logical process, i.e., clarifying the theory's required concepts, history and background, need and position, fundamentals, presuppositions, and methods, particular features and elements, as well as the consequences. Hence, the thematic exegesis of the holy Quran, theorized by Ayatullah Ṣadr, has been thoroughly and innovatively analyzed in this study.

### Concise Biography of the Theorist

Ayatullah Sayyid Muḥammad Bāqir Ṣadr was born in Kāzīmāyn, Iraq, on the 25<sup>th</sup> of Dhū al-Qa'dah in 1353 AH, corresponding to 1934. His father, Sayyid Haydar Ṣadr, was a renowned Iraqi Shī'ī scholar, and his mother was the daughter of 'Abd al-Ḥusayn Yasin, a significant Iraqi scholar and religious figure. Ayatullah Ṣadr achieved the grade of

*Ijtihad*<sup>2</sup> when he was 17 and started teaching advanced courses to the students of the Islamic seminary when he was 25, where he got the top teaching title (‘Āmilī 2007, 1:7-11). Founding of the Islamic *Da‘wa* Party, collaboration with the *Jamā‘at al-‘Ulamā’* in Najaf, supporting the Islamic Revolution of Iran, and the boycott of the *Ba‘ath* Party were considered some of his most significant political and social acts (see Şadr 1986, 1:87-144).

Sayyid Mohammad Baqir Şadr has advanced new theories in various fields, including jurisprudence, the principles of jurisprudence, the philosophy of politics, and epistemology. Some outstanding ones come as follows:

- **The Theory of *Ḥaqq al-Ṭā‘ah* (the right of obedience):** Ayatullah Şadr stated it in contrast to *qubḥ-i ‘iqāb bi-lā bayān* (the abomination of punishment without in advance clear declaration). On this basis, when the possibility of obligation (primitive doubt or *shubḥah al-badwiyyah*) is considered but no proof is found, the intellect does not enjoin *Aṣl al-Barā‘ah* (the principle of exemption). Still, it considers *Aṣl al-Iḥtiyāt* (principle of precaution) as essential. He argued that Allah’s right to be obeyed is not confined to the obligations we are sure about, but rather encompasses all probable obligations (Islāmī 2006, 153; Lārījānī 2002, 12).

- ***Minṭaqat al-Farāgh* (Arabic: منطقة الفراغ; lit. blank area) in Islamic Economics School:** According to Ayatollah Şadr, the Islamic ruler is permitted to legislate in certain matters. The economic school of Islam consists of two parts: 1- It consists of rules that *shāri‘* (the legislator) has conventionalized and are not changeable. 2- The part in which *walī al-faqīh* (the Islamic Ruler) copes with the conventionalization of rules. He nominates the second part as the *Minṭaqat al-Farāgh* and notes that the Prophet (s) has also applied it (Hā’irī & Yūsufi 2001, 24).

He has compiled over 24 books on various subjects, including religious and social sciences. Following a protracted fight against the

<sup>2</sup>. An endeavor to deduce the rules of *sharī‘a* from the sources of jurisprudence with the use of proper methods. Indeed, it refers to the process of independent reasoning or intellectual effort by qualified scholars to derive rulings from the Islamic fundamental sources.

Ba'ath party in Iraq, he gradually gained popularity as a well-known leader. He was frequently arrested and imprisoned by the Iraqi government due to his opposition to the Ba'athist regime in Iraq. The last time, he was imprisoned in his home, so that people were seriously prevented from visiting him. Martyr Ṣadr was finally arrested and taken to Baghdad on April 5, 1980, with his sister, *Sayyidah bint al-Hudā Ṣadr*. They were martyred on *Saddam Hussein*'s order on April 9, 1980, after being severely tortured by Ba'athist captors (see Nu'mānī 2009, pp. 503-560).

## Conceptual Framework

### 1. Lexical and Technical Meaning of “Theory”

The term ‘Theory’ comes from the ancient Greek word ‘*Theo*’, which means God or Supreme Being, and the two words derived from it, ‘*Theoria*’ or ‘*Theorien*,’ imply thinking about ‘*Theos*.’ However, as the breadth and scope of science have expanded, this term has come to signify the examination and analysis of phenomena. According to Kerlinger, a theory involves a variety of elements such as concepts, variables, objective facts, and the measurement of their interactions, with the purpose of explanation and prediction. Social sciences rely heavily on theory to guide their study. One of its primary reasons is the lack of agreement in defining theory and other sociological concepts as a result of the various paradigms that have dominated sociology; it means, each paradigm has its definition of theory and other concepts, and of course, alternative paradigms are considered distinct due to their differing assumptions; for example, empiricists have their definition of “Theory.” They define “Theory” as “a practical effort to collect data and empirical discoveries, to identify links among them, and to explain them coherently” (Tavassulī 1997, 24).

### 2. *Tafsīr Mawḍū'ī* (Thematic Exegesis)

The term *Tafsīr* (Exegesis) lexically denotes the expression of something and its explanation, and thus the term *al-faṣr* means to unveil something covered (Ibn Manzūr 1993, 5:55). Zarkashī, concerning the

meaning of *tafsīr*; wrote, “*Tafsīr* is to unveil and reveal something perplexing and complicated through its term and to release what is imprisoned from understanding” (Zarkashī 1956, 2:147).

*Tafsīr*, as one of the oldest scientific disciplines that has attracted and engaged Islamic scholars, refers to the expression of the meanings of Quranic verses and the discovery of their purposes and significations (Ṭabāṭabā’ī 1996, 1:4). *Tafsīr* is to discover the meanings of the verses of the Quran and to present their aims (Suyūṭī 1995, 4:193).

Quranic thinkers and commentators have presented multiple definitions for *Tafsīr Mawḍū’ī* (thematic exegesis). Some of these come as follows:

A scholar, in thematic format, collects all the verses, no matter where they are in various chapters of the Quran, comprising the same conceptual topic, then categorizes them, and eventually clarifies and expounds the understandings (of the verses) regarding his intended topic (Qarḍāwī 1989, 4).

Zāhir ibn ‘Awāḍ al-Alma’ī wrote: “Thematic exegesis is to collect those verses of the Quran that consist of a single topic and purpose. In this method, the order of the verses is as much as possible according to their revelation. Then the commentator, masterfully and by dominating over all subjects stated in the Quran, summons his/her strength to explain, analyze, and expound the meanings of the verses and the philosophies that Allah has legislated them for” (Al-Alma’ī 1984, 7).

Thematic exegesis may be classified into the following two types:

A. At first, the issues raised in the Quran are divided one by one, then singularly collected the verses related to each other, and then examined the subject by considering the verses in the collective mode. Therefore, derived issues of the Quran are categorized and sequentially pondered in a normal order. Indeed, such a thematic exegesis listens to the Quran, so that it talks to us and conveys its message. Our role is merely to record and enroll the messages perceived in the Quran.

B. The issues and subjects are realized in terms of objectivity, and the actual needs within life are examined and collected. Then we inquire about receiving their responses from the Quran. Indeed, through believing in the Quran as forever responsive to the updated needs, we

talk to the Quran, inspired by the tangible needs of life. We ask the questions and ask the Quran for the responses. We offer the present troubles and ask the Quran to resolve them (Maʿrifat 2000, 2:527). This method is the same as what was stated by Amīr al-Muʿminīn (a), “That is the Qur’an; so, make it speak, though it will not speak. Yet I shall inform you of it. Indeed, within it lies knowledge of what is to come, discourse on what has passed, the remedy for your ailments, and the order that regulates what lies between you”<sup>3</sup> (Nahj al-Balāghah, Sermon No.158).

## History And Background

Although “thematic exegesis” is a newly emerged term, applied as a particular method in the commentary of the Holy Quran since the 14<sup>th</sup> century, and has received special attention as its new angles are revealed day by day in the Quranic culture-wide sphere, the Quran has been previously interpreted through this method. Referring to hadiths transmitted by the Holy Prophet (s) and the infallible Imams (a), we encounter their use of the thematic exegesis method. Namely, they have presented us with an important point and responded to one of the Quranic subjects, aiding the other verses with the same content. Two examples come as follows:

### 1. The Concept of *Wahy* (Revelation):

Imam Ali (a) has been asked regarding *wahy* (revelation) in the Quran. He expressed the various meanings and applications of *wahy* in a thematic method and indicated its non-limitation to the hidden message of Allah to the hearts of the prophets in the Quran, although most of its applications refer back to so (Makārim Shīrāzī 2007, 7:311-312). Some of them come as follows:

**1) Prophetic Revelation [Special for the prophets]:** “We have indeed revealed to you as We revealed to Noah and the prophets after

<sup>3</sup> «ذَلِكَ الْقُرْآنُ، فَاسْتَنْطِقُوهُ وَلَنْ يُنْطِقَ وَلَكِنْ أُخْبِرْكُمْ عَنْهُ. أَلَا إِنَّ فِيهِ عِلْمَ مَا يَأْتِي وَالْحَدِيثَ عَنِ الْمَاضِي وَدَوَاءَ دَائِكُمْ وَنَظْمَ مَا بَيْنَكُمْ».

him, and [as] We revealed to Abraham and Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob...”<sup>4</sup> (Quran 4:163).

**2) Instinctual Conductance:** “And your Lord inspired the bee [saying] ‘Make your home in the mountains, and on the trees and the trellises that they erect’”<sup>5</sup> (Quran 16:68).

**3) Predestination:** “Then He set them up as seven heavens in two days, and revealed in each heaven its ordinance...”<sup>6</sup> (Quran 41:12).

**4) Consciousness:** “We made them imams, guiding by Our command, and We revealed to them the performance of good deeds, the maintenance of prayers, and the giving of zakāt, and they used to worship Us”<sup>7</sup> (Quran 21:73).

## 2. The Concept of *Isṭifā'* (Appointing of The Infallible Imams [a])

Concerning *Āyāt al-Isṭifā'* (see Quran 35:32)<sup>8</sup> *Imam al-Ridā* (a) was questioned about their exegesis and *maṣādīq* (instances) in the Quran. Imam (a) replied, “God has explained the notion of selection (*al-Isṭifā'*) in its outward sense—apart from its inner dimension—in twelve instances and passages in the Quran”<sup>9</sup> (Ṣadūq 1984, 2:209-211). Notably, the thematic method in the Quran is applied. For instance, some come as follows:

4. ﴿إِنَّا أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ كَمَا أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَى نُوحٍ وَ النَّبِيِّينَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ...﴾ (النساء/ ١٦٣)

5. ﴿وَأَوْحَى رَبُّكَ إِلَى النَّخْلِ أَنْ اتَّخِذِي مِنَ الْجِبَالِ بُيُوتًا وَمِنَ الشَّجَرِ وَمِمَّا يَعْرِشُونَ﴾ (النحل/ ٦٨)

6. ﴿وَأَوْحَى فِي كُلِّ سَمَاءٍ أَمْرَهَا وَقَدَّرَ فِيهَا أَقْوَامَهُ...﴾ (فصلت/ ١٢)

7. ﴿وَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ أُمَّةً يَهْتَدُونَ بِأَمْرِنَا وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْهِمْ فِعْلَ الْخَيْرَاتِ وَإِقَامَ الصَّلَاةِ وَإِيتَاءَ الزَّكَاةِ وَكَانُوا لَنَا عَابِدِينَ﴾ (الأنبياء/ ٧٣)

8. ﴿ثُمَّ أَوْرَثْنَا الْكِتَابَ الَّذِينَ اصْطَفَيْنَا مِنْ عِبَادِنَا فَمِنْهُمْ ظَالِمٌ لِنَفْسِهِ وَمِنْهُمْ مُقْتَصِدٌ وَمِنْهُمْ سَابِقٌ بِالْخَيْرَاتِ يُأْتِنَ اللَّهُ ذَٰلِكَ هُوَ الْفَضْلُ الْكَبِيرُ﴾ (فاطر/ ٣٢)

“Then We made heirs to the Book those whom We chose from Our servants. Yet some of them are those who wrong themselves, and some of them are average, and some of them are those who take the lead in all the good works by Allah's will. That is the greatest grace [of Allah]!” (Quran 35:32)

9. فاخبرنا هل فسر الله عز وجل الاصطفاء في الكتاب؟ فقال الرضا عليه السلام: «فسر الاصطفاء في الظاهر سوى

الباطن في اثنا عشر موطنًا وموضعًا».

1) “Warn the nearest of your kinsfolk”<sup>10</sup> (Quran 26:214).

2) “...Indeed, Allah desires to repel all impurity from you, O People of the Household, and purify you with a thorough purification”<sup>11</sup> (Quran 33:33).

3) “Should anyone argue with you concerning him, after the knowledge that has come to you, say, ‘Come! Let us call our sons and your sons, our women and your women, our souls, and your souls, then let us pray earnestly, and call down Allah’s curse upon the liars”<sup>12</sup> (Quran 3:61).

The extension of the Prophet’s soul, as mentioned in the above verse, refers to Imam ‘*Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib* (a).

### Need and Position

Ayatullah Ṣadr emphasizes the necessity of thematic exegesis by addressing objections that question the need to formulate comprehensive Islamic theories when neither the Prophet nor the Quran presented them systematically. He argues that although early Muslims, due to their social and intellectual context, could intuitively grasp these concepts, contemporary Muslims face complex intellectual challenges—especially in comparison with Western thought—that require clear, articulated Islamic perspectives across various fields. In the face of diverse global theories and ongoing civilizational encounters, Muslims must understand Islam’s positions by deeply engaging with Qur’anic teachings to discern how Islam resolves fundamental human issues. Therefore, he concludes that thematic exegesis is the most effective method for deriving these essential doctrinal frameworks (Ṣadr 2013, pp. 33-36).

Respecting the necessity of “Thematic Exegesis,” the late Ayatullah Sayyid Muḥammad Baqir Ḥakīm wrote, “Indeed, the need for thematic exegesis in the current era has arisen from the need for a comprehensive

<sup>10</sup>. ﴿وَ أَنْذِرْ عَشِيرَتَكَ الْأَقْرَبِينَ﴾ (الشعراء / ٢١٤)

<sup>11</sup>. ﴿...إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا﴾ (الأحزاب / ٣٣)

<sup>12</sup>. ﴿تَعَالَوْا نَدْعُ أَبْنَاءَنَا وَ أَبْنَاءَكُمْ وَ نِسَاءَنَا وَ نِسَاءَكُمْ وَ أَنْفُسَنَا وَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ ثُمَّ نَبْتَهِلْ فَنَجْعَلْ لَعْنَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَى الْكَاذِبِينَ﴾

(آل عمران / ٦١)

presentation of Islam's theory & thought and Quranic concepts, which consists of whole other explanations, rules, and disciplines" (Ḥakīm 1996, 346).

### **1. *Tafsīr Mawḍūʿī* (Thematic Exegesis) According to the Theorist**

Grand Ayatullah Sayyid Muḥammad Bāqir Ṣadr, in his definition of thematic exegesis, states that in the method of thematic exegesis, the verses of the Quran are not cut. Additionally, they are not studied and pondered continuously and in sequential form. But a thematic commentator strives in his study to focus on a single subject expressed in the Quran, e.g., life, belief, society, and the universe, and takes advantage of it on that subject. For instance, one can study about believing in monotheism, traditions of history, the quality of the creation of the earth and heaven, etc. Thematic exegesis is implemented when one of the issues associated with life, belief, society, or the world is raised, then we intend to ponder and evaluate it based on the perspective of the Quran and obtain its view (Ṣadr 2013, 13).

Unlike the sequential method, a thematic interpreter must pay enough attention and concentrate on the subjects and must study subjects such as social, universal, ideological, and life issues, etc. Additionally, one has to be aware of others' experiences and thought-provoking ideas, and study and know the problems and solutions posed by other human thoughts. Eventually, one has to know the probable deficiencies and the questions raised by the "Historical Comparative Method." When he examines a verse of the Quran with these backgrounds, he is no longer just an exanimate listener and an effortless receiver of its reports, but rather starts to converse with the context of the Quran to raise a subject, presented to the Quran, which deals with the vast human thoughts and studies. The exegete asks, and the Quran answers. The exegete, in the beam of the collection of experiences gained out of human studies and explorations, endeavors to achieve the Quran's perspective on that subject, and then comprehends that through comparing the context of the Quran with his findings, thoughts, and insights. Thematic exegesis is a conversational work with the Quran and getting its reply, not a passive reaction. Thematic exegesis is an active

and purposeful practical matter so that, eventually, the text of the Quran is applied to one of the great truths of life. Therefore, in this kind of exegesis, the Quran is associated and joined to objectivity because exegesis starts from objectivity and ends with the Quran, not one that starts from the Quran and ends with no relation to life and reality. The Quran is our guardian and refuge by which the realities of life must be led in the light of its guidance. That is why the realities of life are exposed in the Quran. Thematic exegesis finds fast evolution and promotion because human experiences continuously make it fruitful. When Quranic studies are done according to human experiences, a discovery, as the noble Islamic insight and true understanding, is found by accompanying human experiences with taking advantage of the Quran (Ṣadr 2013, pp. 92-96).

## 2. Fundamentals, Presuppositions, and Methods

### 2.1. Fundamentals & Presuppositions

Fundamentals of *tafsīr* refer to those presuppositions and theological or scientific doctrines by which a *mufasssīr* (author of a *tafsīr*) deals with exegesis of the Quran when he admits and believes them as bases. In the thematic exegesis of the Quran, Ayatullah Ṣadr believes in a set of principles and presuppositions by which he is distinguished from other thematic commentators. Some of the most important ones come as follows:

#### 2.1.1. The Systematic Coherence of Quranic Doctrine

Ayatullah Ṣadr considered the Quran as an inexhaustible divine blessing by which man, contrary to human experiences, can take up divine positions and theories. In undertaking *istinṭāq* (the extraction of question-driven themes) from the Quran, one should seek to apprehend the authentic perspective of Islam, regardless of whether the resulting insights appear favorable or critical, and employ them to address complexities and resolve emerging problems. Emphasizing the Qur'ān's capacity to encompass knowledge of both past and future, he argued that, when approached through the method of thematic exegesis, the text retains a continual potential for intellectual vitality and innovation across all times and contexts (Ṣadr, 2013, p.23).

Of course, it should be emphasized that although Ayatullah Şadr has admitted ‘the comprehensiveness of the Quran’ as his exegetical base, he merely considered it in the human conduction sphere. Hence, it shall not be expected of the Quran, like a historical book, to state all its laws in detail or to hold various scientific deductions. Although the Quran touches on some scientific subjects, it does not mean that the Quran has expressed all the details of various laws and scientific discoveries (Şadr 2013, 51).

### **2.1.2. Dependency on Human Experience**

Human experience plays an essential role in the process of thematic exegesis. Ayatullah Şadr explicitly states that human experience provides valuable material to the Quran so that the exegete can receive the appropriate responses from the Quran. Therefore, innovation in thematic exegesis is possible, and it indicates mutual comprehension and conversation between the empirical method and the teachings of the Quran. Pondering the perspectives of thinkers, the rightfulness and consistency of Ayatullah Şadr’s view are more clarified. Most scholars believe in the same ratio of scientific and religious propositions to the objective world. Namely, on the one hand, the scientists of human sciences believe in the scientific theories that represent the objective world’s events, not only as means of seizure, prediction, and control. On the other hand, Islamic thinkers and exegetes do not deny the objectivity of scientific propositions, just as they consider the Hereafter, Paradise, Hell, Reward, and Punishment as concepts that denote the existence outside of the mind and are based on objectivity. Therefore, there is consensus concerning the objectivistic principle of religion and science’s propositions because mutual converse is probable in the beam of having an equal ratio with objectivity (Jalīlī 1994, pp. 187-189).

According to Ayatullah Şadr, those authors of *tafsīr*, who have merely relied on subjects whose meanings exist in the text of the Quran, are unable to present a comprehensive theory since they have not considered human knowledge in the process of exegesis and have not presented human learning to the Quran. A thematic exegete must first engage deeply with intellectual tensions and the accumulated body of human knowledge and experience. Exposure to diverse perspectives

enables the interpreter to approach the Quran with a broad intellectual horizon. Equipped with this reservoir of scholarly insights and guided by carefully formulated questions, the exegete then turns to the Qur'anic text and enters into a reflective dialogue with it. Through this process, the thematic method allows for the exploration and articulation of meanings embedded within the verses, including dimensions that may not be immediately apparent on the surface (Şadr 2013, pp. 16-18).

Ayatullah Şadr posits a dynamic, reciprocal relationship between the Quran as an internal, foundational source and human experience as its external counterpart. For this reason, he designates thematic exegesis as monotheistic exegesis, underscoring the inherent unity and mutual reinforcement between human intellectual experience and the teachings of the Holy Quran. Thus, topics in thematic exegesis are as wide as human questions, needs, and experiences throughout history. Given that new questions and demands continually emerge in human life over time, it may be concluded that corresponding responses—aligned with the evolving needs of society—can be continually discovered and systematically derived from the Quran. Additionally, raising questions in the mind of the exegete and his presentation of subjects are always based on his preconceptions. The exegete, who is aware of experiences in his era and multiple aspects of social life, normally raises many questions in his mind. Therefore, the more he is scientifically aware of the teachings and knowledge of his age, the more he will benefit from the Quranic percepts.

## 2.2. Method

“Method” is to apply a particular means or source in the exegesis of the Quran, which clarifies the meanings and objectives of the verse and presents definite outcomes (Riḍā'ī Işfahānī 2006, 21). Ayatullah Şadr has applied a set of methods in thematic exegesis that have made him distinguished in comparison to other thematic commentators. Some of the most prominent ones come as follows:

### 2.2.1. *Istiqrā'* (Induction)

In its literal sense, *istiqrā'* encompasses a range of meanings, including pursuing something, searching for it, moving from one place to another,

disseminating information about it, and investigating it (Dihkhudā 1994, 2:1841). One of the key factors contributing to the flourishing of Islamic civilization in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries AH, as well as the advancement of Western civilization in more recent centuries, has been the application of the method of *istiqrā'* (induction) in uncovering the laws of nature. In contrast, the systematic use of empirical and inductive methods experienced a prolonged period of decline and limited revitalization in many Eastern societies, especially Iran (Dhakiyānī & Jān-Nīthārī 2010, 10).

Ayatullah Ṣadr defines "*istiqrā'*" (induction) as a form of reasoning in which the process of inference proceeds from "*khāṣ*" (the particular) to "*āṁ*" (the general). From Martyr Ṣadr's perspective, this definition encompasses both scientific inference grounded in examination and experimentation, and inference based on observation. By "observation," he refers to the direct perception of objective phenomena in the world without intervening in them, whereas "experiment" denotes the systematic study of phenomena that involves analysis, reflection, and deliberate intervention in order to examine their properties and relationships (Ṣadr 2007, 25). One of the primary implications of *istiqrā'* as a methodological approach is its reliance on sensory data, supported by rational analysis, to verify and validate empirical findings. Ayatullah Ṣadr views this method as one that the Quran itself endorses. He notes that certain Quranic verses, such as (Quran 47:10), encourage the use of *istiqrā'* in examining historical events. These verses call for reflection, deliberation, and careful consideration so that truths concerning history and its underlying patterns may be elucidated through inductive reasoning, the principles of nature, and the historical laws governing the world (Ṣadr 2013, 70).

In several other verses—for example, (Quran 53:23)—the Quran encourages drawing lessons from past events and demonstrates a strong orientation toward historical induction. The *istiqrā'* of past occurrences constitutes a scientific practice aimed at identifying underlying patterns or governing principles. Such inductive inquiry requires a careful investigation of historical details in order to uncover the broader regularities embedded within them (Ṣadr 2013, 54). In his inductive

analysis (*istiqrāʾ*) of nations that have adopted inferior or purely material ideals in place of genuine, higher ones—the instances referenced in the verse above—Ayatullah Ṣadr argues that such societies tend to fall into repetitive patterns of behavior. Consequently, when one examines, reflects upon, and observes their conditions, it becomes evident that these nations rapidly lose their attachment to these lesser ideals and ultimately prove unable to sustain or fulfill them (Ṣadr 2013, 159).

### 2.2.2. Following the Correct Exegetical Principles and Rules

Adherence to sound exegetical principles and methodological guidelines is affirmed by the consensus of Quranic exegetes, each of whom is expected to uphold a coherent exegetical approach. The following principles, drawn from the exegetical writings of Ayatollah Ṣadr, exemplify this methodological framework:

#### - Taking the *Mafhūm* (Conceptual Meaning) of Terms into Consideration

Expressing the path of all beings towards absolute perfection, for instance, he cited the following verse:

“O man! You are laboring toward your Lord laboriously, and you will encounter Him”<sup>13</sup> (*Quran* 84:6).

Regarding the literal meaning of the term *kadh* (Arabic: كَذَّحٌ, lit. “to labor strenuously”), he states that it is a continuous movement marked by hardship, effort, and exertion (Ṣadr 2013, pp. 179-181). Indeed, this is the same meaning stated in lexical sources of the Holy Quran concerning the mentioned term (see Rāghib Iṣfahānī 1991, 704).

#### - Taking the *Siyāq* (Context) of the Verses into Consideration

*Siyāq* (context) is a trait of terms, phrases, or speeches that are generated due to their association with other vocabularies and sentences (Bābāʾī 2000, 120). In some instances, Ayatullah Ṣadr, within his exegetical method, makes use of the *siyāq* (contextual flow) of the verses. In explaining the distinction between individual and collective action in the Quran, he maintains that just as there are two records of deeds presented on the Day of Judgment—one pertaining to the

<sup>13</sup> «يَا أَيُّهَا الْإِنْسَانُ إِنَّكَ كَادِحٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ كَدْحًا فَمُلَاقِيهِ» (الإنشقاق/٦)

individual and the other to the *Ummah* (the Islamic community)—there are likewise two forms of return or summons to the Lord corresponding to these two dimensions. With regard to the summoning of the *Ummah* to the Lord, he cites the following verse: “*And you will see every nation fallen on its knees. Every nation will be summoned to its book: ‘Today you will be requited for what you used to do. This is our book, which speaks truly against you. Indeed, We used to record what you used to do’*”<sup>14</sup> (Quran 45:28-29).

Martyr Ṣadr states: “There is, in addition to the individual presence before God, another form of presence situated within the collective sphere—the presence of the community before God, exalted is He. Just as there exists an individual record of deeds, there likewise exists a collective record that is brought forth. ... This collective summons, as indicated by the contextual flow (*siyāq*) of the verses, is for the purpose of restoring the *Ummah*’s past relations to their rightful bounds and standards. For it is possible that many of the bonds and relations within the community were not established upon the foundation of truth, and that the oppressed human being was rendered powerless within them; therefore, this *Ummah* will be called back so that those relations may be returned to their proper, truthful measure” (Ṣadr 2013, pp. 97-98).

#### - Taking the *Dalālah* (Significations) of The Word into Consideration

*Dalālah* lexically means that by which one arrives at the knowledge of a thing, such as the indication of words toward their meaning (Rāghib Iṣfahānī 1991, 316), and its technical meaning is “the existence of something in a state that when one learns of its existence, his mind proceeds towards knowing the existence of something else” (Muẓaffar 2006, 33).

It is necessary to consider the *dalālah* (signification) of the verses in the exegesis of the Quran. Thereafter, to obtain the words’ conceptual signification and applicable objective, we have to pay our attention to ‘*ām* (the general) and *khāṣ* (the Particular), *muṭlaq* (the absolute) and

<sup>14</sup>. «وَتَرَى كُلَّ أُمَّةٍ جَاتِيَةً كُلُّ أُمَّةٍ تُدْعَى إِلَى كِتَابِهَا الْيَوْمَ تُجْرَوْنَ مَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ \* هَذَا كِتَابُنَا يَنْطِقُ عَلَيْكُمْ بِالْحَقِّ إِنَّا كُنَّا نَسْتَنسِخُ مَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ» (الجاثية/ ٢٨-٢٩)

*muqayyad* (the conditional), and the *muḥkam* (the definitive) and *majāz* (the metaphorical) to achieve a certain objective and then the final objective of Allah and to perform the process of exegesis accordingly (Ridā'ī Isfahānī 2022, 316).

For instance, Ayatullah Ṣadr, when stating the path of every creature, including human acts and endeavors, towards the absolute ideal (perfection) considered some *maṣādīq* (instances) in the verses of the Quran such as *Sabīl Allah* (Allah's way), *Ṣirāṭ* (path) and *Ṣirāṭ Allah* (Allah's path) as indicating the existence of a way where man should move in. In this regard, Ayatullah Ṣadr maintains that the human journey is defined by a constant striving toward the Divine. It is through this exertion that the human being ascends the levels of perfection, realizes spiritual evolution, and attains a superior ontological status. This strenuous and sustained course necessitates a clear path—one that originates in human agency and extends toward the ultimate Divine objective. This framework is what the Quranic text frequently identifies through terms such as *Sabīl Allah* (the Way of Allah) and *Ṣirāṭ* (the Path) (Ṣadr 2013, 180).

### 3. Particular Features and Elements

Although Ayatullah Ṣadr has not stated a precise definition of thematic exegesis in his discussions, following the content of his words, we can realize the particular features and elements of his thematic exegesis. They will come as follows:

#### 3.1. *Istintāq* (Interrogation) From the Quran

*Istintāq* refers to reflecting upon and examining the words of the Quran in such a way that, by placing related verses alongside one another, meanings that are not apparent when the verses are considered in isolation become clarified. Imam 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (a) said, "...the Book of God, through which you gain insight, through which you speak, and through which you hear; a Book whose parts speak to one another and whose verses bear witness to one another..."<sup>15</sup> (Nahj al-

<sup>15</sup>. «...كتاب الله تبصرون به و تتلقون به و تسمعون به و ينطق بعضه ببعض و يشهد بعضه على بعض...».

Balāghah, Sermon No.133). Some verses which are not self-evident become so when resting beside appropriate and related ones, and some testify to the others so that their significations are clarified.

According to Ayatullah Ṣadr, the principle of *istintāq*—the “interrogation” or elicitation of meaning from the Quran—constitutes the primary criterion for distinguishing thematic exegesis from sequential exegesis. Sequential exegesis is concerned with understanding the meaning and content of verses in the order in which they appear in the written text. By contrast, thematic exegesis aims to uncover the Qur’an’s response to a specific problem or issue confronting society, drawing together dispersed verses to articulate that response. Additionally, the thematic exegete approaches the Quran from this perspective and interprets its verses accordingly. Thus, thematic interpretation rests on two fundamental features. First, the thematic exegete privileges the divine word itself as the primary source for discovering answers, rather than relying on external frameworks. Second, unlike the sequential exegete, the thematic exegete actively infers and deduces a coherent response from the Quran. By contrast, in sequential exegesis the interpreter occupies a largely passive position. The sequential exegete examines one or more verses without a prior conceptual plan, interpreting them in light of the lexical meanings of the terms. This approach is grounded solely in the *naṣṣ* (Quranic text), and the interpreter remains passive before it; the Quran discloses meaning only to the extent that the exegete is able to perceive and understand it. The thematic exegete, however, assumes an active role. Engaging the Quran through the method of *istintāq*, the exegete approaches the text having already focused on a particular human issue and having attained a degree of familiarity with that issue through human experience, intellectual inquiry, and available solutions. In this mode, the exegete is not a passive listener or a mere recorder of information. Rather, they interact with the Quranic text intentionally: they pose questions informed by prior knowledge, and the Quran, in turn, provides the answers (Ṣadr 2013, pp. 16-20).

To apprehend the exact meaning of *istintāq*, it is appropriate to illustrate it through the following example, presented in four steps:

**1. Posing the Question (Subject) from the Quran:** What is the Quran's perspective on the importance of *'ilm* (knowledge) and how it evaluates it?

**2. Gathering Relevant Verses:** We find some verses that directly or indirectly address the theme of knowledge, learning, reasoning, and wisdom. For example:

- "Read in the Name of your Lord who created"<sup>16</sup> (Quran 96:1).

- "...Say, 'Are those who know equal to those who do not know?'"<sup>17</sup> (Quran 39:9).

- "...Allah will raise in rank those of you who have faith and those who have been given knowledge, and Allah is well aware of what you do"<sup>18</sup> (Quran 58:11).

- "Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of night and day, there are signs for those who possess intellect"<sup>19</sup> (Quran 3:190).

### 3. Analysis

- Based on the 1<sup>st</sup> above-mentioned verse, the foundational command of Islam is based on reading and the pursuit of knowledge.

- Based on the 2<sup>nd</sup> above-mentioned verse, knowledge and ignorance are in no way equal; knowledge is a fundamental distinction.

- Based on the 3<sup>rd</sup> above-mentioned verse, as a consequence of this distinction, God grants people of faith and knowledge a special rank and elevated status.

- Based on the 4<sup>th</sup> above-mentioned verse, knowledge is not confined to religious sciences alone, but uncovering the laws of nature and contemplating creation is also a form of worship and a means to know God.

### 4. Result

Knowledge is central; it grants distinction, it leads to elevation in status with God, and it is a tool for recognizing the Creator.

<sup>16</sup> «أَقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ» (العلق/ ١)

<sup>17</sup> «...فَلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ إِنَّمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ» (الزمر/ ٩)

<sup>18</sup> «...يَرْفَعُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ دَرَجَاتٍ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ» (المجادلة/ ١١)

<sup>19</sup> «إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ لَآيَاتٍ لِأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ» (آل عمران/ ١٩٠)

### 3.2. Dealing With Particular Subjects Through Theorization

According to Ayatullah Şadr, the delimitation of a clearly defined topic constitutes one of the most significant features of thematic exegesis and serves as a primary point of distinction from sequential exegesis. In the sequential method, the exegete reflects on the Quranic text without any prior conceptual framework, devoting their efforts to interpreting the meanings and implications of the verses on the basis of lexical analysis and contextual indicators (*qarīnah*). By contrast, the thematic exegete begins the interpretive process only after first concentrating on a particular aspect of life, ideology, or a social issue, and after becoming acquainted with that issue through the insights and experiences of others. Equipped with this prior understanding, the thematic exegete then turns to the Quran and poses a series of topic-oriented questions. In this mode of engagement, the exegete asks—and the Quran provides the response (Şadr 2013, 19).

However, Ayatullah Şadr’s understanding of selecting a particular topic differs from that of many other exegetes. He does not regard the mere collection of verses with similar themes from across the Quran, followed by their arrangement and interpretation, as constituting thematic exegesis. In his view, such efforts amount only to the extraction and compilation of certain subjects from within sequential exegesis and therefore should not properly be classified as thematic interpretation. Rather, for Martyr Şadr, a “topic” refers to a question or issue that emerges from engagement with human thought, lived experience, and the intellectual and social challenges faced by human beings (Şadr 2013, pp. 21-22).

In the view of Ayatullah Şadr, the exegetical motion in the thematic studies of the Quran starts within human life and its contained intellectual realities, not by choosing a subject from the Quran and its related verses. Thematic exegesis begins its work by acquainting and learning the outcome of human intellectual experience, receiving its thoughts and contents, and then asking the Quran about so (Şadr 2013, pp. 25-30).

According to Ayatullah Şadr, thematic exegesis comes into being only when the theory of Islam and the Qur’an—one that is responsive

to concrete social realities and specific topics—is uncovered and derived from the verses. Consequently, in his assessment, exegetical works that lack theoretical formulation, and that merely organize verses according to shared content or focus only on understanding a topic, do not rise above the level of compilation and verse-by-verse interpretation. Such works, having failed to articulate a Quranic theory, cannot be classified as thematic exegesis. For Martyr Ṣadr, a “theory” denotes an explanatory viewpoint grounded in a defined principle and conceptual framework. Several factors underscore the need for such theorization: the emergence of competing intellectual perspectives in the Islamic and Western worlds, the exposure of Muslims to a wide range of ideas across multiple fields, and, simultaneously, the presence of a rich Quranic heritage that informs every domain of Islamic thought. These conditions compel one to identify the Quran’s theoretical position vis-à-vis these diverse viewpoints—whether in affirmation, critique, or reconfiguration—and to determine Islam’s stance on the subject in question (Ṣadr 2013, pp. 29-31).

#### **4. Consequences**

One of the most important issues is to recognize the consequences and advantages of Ayatullah Ṣadr’s theory of thematic exegesis. In the process of explaining the theoretical foundations of thematic exegesis and its importance, Ayatullah Ṣadr has not neglected to express the consequences. Some of which are mentioned come as follows:

##### **4.1. Amelioration of Inter-Sectarian Discord**

Emergence of various Islamic sects necessitated each one to take hold of some verses to prove and justify its sect, neglecting those verses that were in contrast or did *Ta’wīl* (interpretation) and justified them to its interest. Accordingly, it led to the emergence of various and partially contradictory sects in the *Ummah* (Islamic community). However, if they had not been satisfied with this amount of exegesis and had taken a step forward and pondered all the verses of the Quran through the thematic method, the *Ummah* would have been united and integrated, and many contradictions and conflicts would have been prevented

rather than converging on many doctrines. The two well-known theological groups, i.e., *Mu'tazila* and *Ash'ari*, are the best evidence of this claim. *Asharite*, known also as *Jabriyah*, considers human beings and their actions created by God, i.e., humans are controlled by predestination, without having choice or free will (Rāzī 1999, 26:343). In contrast, the *Mu'tazila*, known also as *Mufawadah*, considers human actions as their own creation, not done by God (see Qāḍī, 2005, p.354).

For example, we begin by citing verse 17 of *Sūrat al-Anfāl*, followed by the exegetical interpretations provided by each of the aforementioned groups: “*You did not kill them; rather, it was Allah who killed them; and you did not throw when you threw, rather, it was Allah who threw...*”<sup>20</sup> (*Quran 8:17*).

Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, a prominent Ash‘arite scholar and renowned author of Quranic exegesis, wrote: “Our scholars have cited this verse as proof that human actions are created by God, exalted is He. The reasoning is as follows: God says, ‘*You did not kill them; rather, it was Allah who killed them*’ (*Quran 8:17*). Yet it is known that they themselves inflicted the wounds. This indicates that the occurrence of those actions ultimately proceeded from God” (Rāzī 1999, 15:466).

‘Abd al-Jabbār al-Qāḍī, a prominent Mu‘tazilite scholar and noted author of Quranic exegesis, wrote: “How can this be considered valid if one maintains that God, Exalted is He, does not create the actions of human beings? Our response is that the Prophet—peace and blessings be upon him—cast the throw on the day of Badr, while God, Exalted is He, caused that throw to reach the combatants. For this reason, He attributed it to Himself, just as He first attributed the act of throwing to the Prophet in His statement, ‘*when you threw.*’ Thus, the discourse is coherent (Qāḍī 2005, 159).

However, such disputes would not have arisen if *Mu'tazila* and *Ash'arite*, to clarify the truth, had done the thematic exegesis of the Quran with no dogma to a particular belief, had collected all the verses associated with each subject, and drawn conclusions out of them all.

<sup>20</sup> «فَلَمْ تَقْتُلُوهُمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ قَتَلَهُمْ وَمَا رَمَيْتَ إِذْ رَمَيْتَ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ رَمَى...» (الأنفال/ ١٧)

In some verses, the Quran considers Almighty Allah as the omnipotent of the universe and relates the creation and management of affairs entirely to Him. Some come as follows:

A. "...Rather all dispensation belongs to Allah..."<sup>21</sup> (Quran 13:31).

B. "Allah expands the provision for whomever He wishes and tightens it..."<sup>22</sup> (Quran 13:26).

At first glance, the apparent meaning of the aforementioned verses seems to affirm *jabr* (predestination)—namely, that God is the agent of all actions in the universe, including human guidance and faith, while human beings are merely obliged to follow. However, other verses clearly indicate human free will in their actions while simultaneously affirming the influence of God. A number of such verses are as follows:

A. "Corruption has appeared in land and sea because of the doings of the people's hands, that He may make them taste something of what they have done, so that they may come back"<sup>23</sup> (Quran 30:41).

B. "Make war on them so that Allah may punish them by your hands and humiliate them, and help you against them, and heal the hearts of a faithful folk"<sup>24</sup> (Quran 9:14).

By considering and synthesizing the two aforementioned groups of verses, the apparent meaning of the first group is set aside, leading to the conclusion that human free will operates alongside God's influence over the universe. This notion is eloquently expressed in a hadith by Imām Ṣādiq (a): "There is neither compulsion (*jabr*) nor delegation (*tafwīd*); rather, there is a matter between the two. I said, 'What is meant by a matter between the two?' He [Imam Ṣādiq (a)] replied, 'Its example is that of a man whom you see committing a sin, and you forbid him from it, but he does not desist. You then leave him, and he proceeds to commit that sin. His failure to accept your admonition, and your leaving

<sup>21</sup> «...بَلْ لِلَّهِ الْأَمْرُ جَمِيعًا...» (الرعد/٣١)

<sup>22</sup> «اللَّهُ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَن يَشَاءُ وَيَقْدِرُ...» (الرعد/٢٦)

<sup>23</sup> «ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِي النَّاسِ لِيُذِيقَهُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِي عَمِلُوا لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ» (الروم/٤١)

<sup>24</sup> «قَاتِلُوهُمْ يُعَذِّبُهُمُ اللَّهُ بِأَيْدِيكُمْ وَتُخْزِهِمْ وَنُصِرْكُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ وَيُشْفِ صُدُورَ قَوْمٍ مُّؤْمِنِينَ» (التوبة/١٤)

him, does not mean that you commanded him to commit the sin”<sup>25</sup> (Şadūq 1995, 362). Accordingly, a careful consideration of the statements of Ayatullah Şadr indicates that, in his view, thematic exegesis is not confined to topics internal to the text aimed merely at resolving doctrinal tensions by interpreting one verse in light of others.

#### 4.2. Meeting Human Needs

One of the most significant features of thematic exegesis—distinguishing it from sequential exegesis—is its capacity to address human needs and contemporary problems, and to resolve issues that the sequential method is unable to untie. As noted earlier, the modern world is characterized by diversity and complexity. Human knowledge is rapidly expanding, exerting substantial influence on collective life and reshaping human existence. These transformations inevitably give rise to numerous new questions. Consequently, Muslims seek to understand the Quran’s perspective on these continually emerging issues. Sequential exegesis, however, does not provide exegetes with the tools necessary to offer comprehensive answers to such questions; rather, this goal can be achieved only through the thematic method. The strength of thematic exegesis lies in its ability to examine doctrinal, social, or scientific issues related to the universe from the vantage point of the Quran (Şadr 2013, 12).

In addition to elucidating the interconnections among specific concepts, the thematic method seeks to derive a comprehensive Quranic theory that integrates all relevant meanings and ideas. In effect, it aims to address the challenges of human life through systematic theorization. Ayatullah Şadr explicitly underscores this point, stating that the thematic method is the only approach capable of providing the foundational Islamic and Quranic theories pertaining to the various domains of human life (Şadr 2013, 33).

<sup>25</sup>. حَدَّثَنَا عَلِيُّ بْنُ أَحْمَدَ بْنِ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ عَمْرَانَ الدَّقَاقُ رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ الْكُوفِيُّ عَنْ خُنَيْسِ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ بَحْيَى الْحَرَّازِ عَنِ الْمُفْضَلِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ قَالَ: «لَا جَبْرَ وَلَا تَقْوِيصَ وَ لَكِنْ أَمْرٌ بَيْنَ أَمْرَيْنِ قَالَ قُلْتُ وَ مَا أَمْرٌ بَيْنَ أَمْرَيْنِ قَالَ مَثَلُ ذَلِكَ مَثَلُ رَجُلٍ رَأَيْتَهُ عَلَى مَعْصِيَةٍ فَتَهَيْتُهُ فَلَمْ يَنْتَهَ فَنَزَعْتُهُ فَفَعَلَ تِلْكَ الْمَعْصِيَةَ فَلَيْسَ حَيْثُ لَمْ يَقْبَلْ مِنْكَ فَتَرَكْتَهُ أَنْتَ الَّذِي أَمَرْتَهُ بِالْمَعْصِيَةِ».

## Conclusion

In conclusion, this analytical study has elucidated the sophisticated and pioneering theory of *al-Tafsīr al-Mawḍūʿī* (Thematic Exegesis) as conceptualized by the Grand Ayatollah Muḥammad Bāqir al-Ṣadr. The investigation reveals that Ṣadr's methodology is not merely a procedural shift but a profound epistemological reorientation in engaging with the Quran. Moving beyond the traditional *Tartībī* (sequential) approach, his model is distinguished by its dynamic, interrogative, and systematic character, aimed at extracting comprehensive "Quranic theories" to address the multifaceted questions of human existence. The analysis confirms that Ṣadr's theory is built upon robust fundamentals, primarily the integration of human experience as a vital component for understanding the Quran, the inherent systematicity of Quranic concepts, and a firm belief in the Quran's comprehensive guidance for human life. His distinctive methodological framework—which combines rigorous adherence to classical exegetical principles with the systematic application of *istiqrāʾ* (inductive reasoning)—ensures both scholarly precision and intellectual coherence. Furthermore, the study highlights the distinctive features that define Ṣadr's theory: a focus on externally-derived, life-oriented topics, an active process of *istintāq* (interrogation) of the Quranic text, and the ultimate goal of theorizing. These elements collectively transform the exegete's role from a passive recipient to an active interlocutor in dialogue with divine revelation. The significant consequences of this approach are its potent capacity to meet contemporary human needs by providing Islam's perspective on modern challenges and its potential to reduce intra-religious conflicts by presenting a holistic, rather than selective, view of Quranic teachings. Ultimately, Ayatullah Ṣadr's theory of Thematic Exegesis stands as a monumental contribution to Quranic sciences. His work lays a foundational blueprint for future generations of scholars to continue the vital task of deriving divine wisdom for the evolving circumstances of human society.

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