



## An Analysis of the ‘Verse of Preservation’ and its Connection with Desecration of the Holy Qur’ān with an Emphasis on the Statements of Imam Khamenei



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### Abstract

Safeguarding the sanctity of sacred things, including the Holy Qur’ān, has been regarded as an established principle throughout history. Today, as a result of the spread of mass media, the said principle has faced countless attacks, such as burning. In the meantime, it is important to examine the relationship between the ‘Verse of Preservation,’ which indicates that God is responsible for protecting the Qur’ān based on the statements of Imam Khamenei and its burning by the enemies of the truth. The purpose of the present research is to find a response to the question of whether God can prevent this act and whether the preservation of the Qur’ān by God is related to which layer?

The findings of the research -using the descriptive-analytical method based on library sources- explain this important point that God, according to the statements of His Eminence, in addition to notifying the people of being responsible for the preservation of the Qur’ān and punishing its opponents on the Day of Judgment, He is the only One responsible for the protection of its authority and the preservation of its truths among the people. The import of the ‘Verse of Preservation’ does not imply that the opponents would be incapable of burning the hardcopy of the Qur’ān and the like.

**Keywords:** Verse of Preservation, desecration, reality of the Qur’ān, opponents of the Qur’ān, revelation of the Qur’ān, Imam Khamenei.

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## 1. Introduction

To the Muslims, the Holy Qur'ān is in the first and highest rank in terms of value and credibility, due to its purity and being divinely revealed. They believe that the sanctity of the Holy Qur'ān should be respected and any form of disrespect to it is considered an unforgivable crime. Throughout the history of Islam, opposition and fighting against the Qur'ān has been carried out in various forms by the opponents, including the claims of its being poetry or soothsaying or the legends of the ancients, while after some time, the claim of distortion is attributed to it. As of late, the adversary has fallen short of their objectives. However, the West's control over mass media and the impact it has had on religious beliefs has led some European societies to engage in the burning of the Quran. This action can be seen as a display of their disorientation and defeat in the face of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The question which is raised now is, how can this type of action that led to the desecration of the Qur'ān be related to the provisions of verse 9 of *Sūrat al-Ḥijr*, "*Indeed, We have sent down the Reminder, and indeed We will preserve it*" which guarantees its protection by the divine power based on the statements of Ayatollah Khamenei? In addition, God's protection of the Qur'ān is related to which dimensions of the Qur'ān? In this article, an attempt is made to answer this basic question.

## 2. Literature Review

The scholars of the Qur'ān have written and published numerous literary works including books, dissertations, and articles on the 'Verse of Preservation' and its relation to the protection of the Qur'ān. Some of these articles are as follows:

Article 1: "*Ṣiyānat-i Qur'ān az tahrīf az manẓar-i muḥaqqiqān-i farīqayn bar midār-i Āyah-ye Ḥifẓ*," [Protecting the Qur'ān from distortion based on the viewpoint of scholars of the two schools of thought according to the verse of preservation], *Muṭāliāt-i Qur'ānī* journal, Volume 13, No. 50, pp. 31-46.

Article 2: “*Barrasī-ye taḥrīf-nāpadhīrī-ye Qurān-i Karīm az manẓar-i Fakhr-i Rāzī wa Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā’ī*,” [Investigation of the non-distortion of the Holy Qur’ān from the perspectives of Fakhr-i Rāzī and Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā’ī], *Madhāhib-i Islāmī Journal*, Volume 2, No. 2, pp. 64-90.

Article 3: “Adillih-ye ‘adam-i taḥrīf-i Qur’ān az manẓar-i Qur’ān,” [Proofs of non-distortion of the Qur’ān from the perspective of the Qur’ān], *Pajūhish wa Muṭāliāt-i Islāmī Journal*, fifth year, No. 49, pp. 1-9.

And other literary works that have been written in connection with the ‘verse of preservation’.

It can be observed that all the above writings are concerned with the explanation of the meaning of ‘Verse of Preservation’ based on the protective approach of the Holy Qur’ān itself in both its quantitative and qualitative dimensions. However, regarding the ‘Verse of Preservation’ (Qur’ān 15: 9) and how it is related to the issue of the desecration of the Qur’ān based on the statements of the Supreme Leader, no peculiar and independent literary work such as a book or a dissertation or an academic article has not been found in this regard by the author. Thus, there is room for a thorough discussion in this field to find out the intended meaning of the verse and what relationship it has to do with the desecration of the Qur’ān.

### 3. Conceptual Framework

In a literal sense, the Persian term “*Hatk*” means to rend or tear, defame, and cut, and it also means “insult, insolence and desecration” (Ibn Athīr Jazarī 2020, 5: 243; Fayyūmī 1976, 2: 633)

In a technical sense, the term gets a special meaning depending on the usage. For example, the term “*Hatk*” from a legal point of view means violating the rights of the people, dignity, and their property, and hurting the public opinion in such a manner that the aggressor is subjected to criminal provisions (Ja‘farī Langrūdī 2009, 5: 122).



The Persian term “*Hurmat*” in the literal sense means the impermissibility of disrespecting the value of something and honoring it, based on the specified limit (Farāhīdī 1987, 3: 222). For example, God has specified the adherence to the obligations and avoidance of prohibitions that every Muslim is obliged to observe (Qurashī 1996, 3: 124). In a technical sense, the meaning of the term “*Hurmat*” depends on what is affiliated with it. For example, God in verse 30 of Chapter 22 [*Sūrat al-Hajj*] says: «ذَلِكَ وَمَنْ يُعَظِّمْ حُرْمَاتِ اللَّهِ فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَهُ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِ وَ..» “*That, and whoever venerates the sacraments of Allah, that is better for him with his Lord*” in which the meaning of “*Hurumāt*” [sacraments] are all those matters for which God has specified their limits and request Muslims to observe them (Makārim Shīrāzī 1992, 14: 90). Sometimes, the term “*Hurmat*” is also interpreted to mean “sanctity.” What is meant by sanctity is any kind of spiritual and valuable thing that either an individual or the society respects and any kind of disrespect to it is considered a crime and punishment is assigned to such an individual.

The lexicographers have mentioned four meanings for the term “*Hifz*” [preservation or protection in English]:

**1. The opposite of ‘forgetfulness’:** It means not being oblivious and paying attention to something. In Persian, “Preserving the driving regulations” means “Paying attention to the driving regulations.” In the Qur’ānic usage, verse 44 of *Sūrat al-Māidah* says:

﴿إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا التَّوْرَةَ فِيهَا هُدًى وَ نُورٌ يَحْكُمُ بِهَا النَّبِيُّونَ الَّذِينَ أَسْلَمُوا لِلَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَ الرِّبَّانِيُّونَ وَ الْأَحْبَارُ بِمَا اسْتُحْفِظُوا مِنْ كِتَابِ اللَّهِ وَ كَانُوا عَلَيْهِ شُهَدَاءَ فَلَا تَحْسَبُوا النَّاسَ وَ أَحْسُونِ وَ لَا تَسْتَرْوْا بِآيَاتِي ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا وَ مَنْ لَمْ يَحْكَمْ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْكَافِرُونَ﴾ (المائدة/ ٤٤)

“*We sent down the Torah containing guidance and light. The prophets, who had submitted, judged by it for the Jews, and so did the rabbis and the scribes, as they were charged to preserve*



*the Book of Allah and were witnesses to it. So do not fear the people, but fear Me, and do not sell My signs for a paltry gain. Those who do not judge by what Allah has sent down—it is they who are the faithless” (Quran 5:44)*

This verse refers to the rabbis and the scribes who were asked to pay attention to the Torah while giving a judgment.

**2. Paying attention and sympathy:** In Persian usage: “Paying attention to the condition of the poor” means “sympathizing and rendering help to the poor.” In the Qur’ānic usage:

﴿أَرْسَلُهُ مَعَنَا غَدًا يَزْتَعُ وَيَلْعَبُ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ﴾ (يوسف/ ١٢)

“Let him go with us tomorrow so that he may eat lots of fruits and play, and we will indeed take [good] care of him.” (Qur’ān 12: 12)

**3. Protecting and safe-guarding:** In Persian usage: “Safe-guarding the revolution” means “Protecting the revolution”. In the Qur’ānic usage: ﴿وَوَٰ

﴿إِنَّ عَلَيْكُمْ لَحَافِظِينَ﴾ “Indeed, there are over you watchers” (Qur’ān 82: 10)

which means “watchers over your deeds.”

**4. Self-control:** In Persian usage: “Protecting yourself” means “Being patient in performing the obligations and abandoning the forbidden”. In the Qur’ānic usage: ﴿وَ الَّذِينَ هُمْ لِفُرُوجِهِمْ حَافِظُونَ﴾: “And those who guard their private parts” (Qur’ān 23: 5) means those who are capable of abstaining from illegal sexual relations...

The term “*Hifẓ*” in its technical usage has different meanings in different usages, but all of these are affected by its literal meaning. For instance, the phrase ‘*Hifẓ Qur’ān*’ when it is used in the general convention (*urf*), means preservation of the verses of the Qur’ān in the memory through its special methods. Various examples of the usage of the term *Hifẓ* [preservation or protection in English] are as follows:

1. The phrase *Hifẓ Qur’ān* by humans means learning and memorizing the Qur’ān.



2. The phrase *Hifẓ Māl* [keeping the property] means not wasting the property.
3. The phrase *Hifẓ Amānat* [keeping the trust] means not betraying the trust.
4. The phrase *Hifẓ Namāz* [keeping the ritual prayer] means not abandoning the observation of the ritual prayer.
5. The Persian phrase *Hifẓ Sawgand* [keeping the oath] means being committed to an attachment of the oath.

The intended meaning of the term “*Hifẓ*” in verse 9 of *Sūrat al-Hijr* is the care and protection of the Holy Qur’ān by God Almighty from destruction.

#### 4. The Scope of Preserving the Qur’ān

In verse 9 of *Sūrat al-Hijr*, ﴿إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَرِزُّنَا الذِّكْرَ وَ إِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ﴾: “Indeed We have sent down the Reminder, and indeed We will preserve it,” Allah informs about the preservation of the Qur’ān and uses the word “*al-Dhikr*” (the Reminder, in English). According to the Qur’ānic exegetes, the mentioned word is used with a definite article *Alif* and *Lam* (i.e. the) to indicate its being a remembrance on its own is not the basic reason for its preservation, so that it cannot be said that the Torah and the Holy Bible are also a remembrance “*Dhikr*,” but they are confused and distorted. The usage of a definite article (the) is to explain that it is only the Qur’ān that has been preserved by God. In addition, the expression “*Laḥāfīzūn*” in the verse is a subject noun which indicates its preservation in the future. Thus, God is responsible for the preservation and protection of the Qur’ān from any kind of circumstance (Ṭabāṭabāī 1970, 12: 101). Meanwhile, concerning the issues related to the preservation of the Qur’ān, the Qur’ānic exegetes have pointed out the following:

##### 4.1. Quantitative Preservation of the Qur’ān

Some Qur'ānic exegetes have explained that the intended meaning of preserving the Qur'ān is the protection of the Qur'ān from any form of increase, decrease, transformation and alteration of its words, verses and chapters about the original and the present volume and that God has undertaken the responsibility of quantitative protection of the Qur'ān (Khaṭīb 2003, 7: 218).

The reason for that assumption is the quantitative stability of the Qur'ān in the past fourteen centuries; because the copies of Qur'ān in different centuries do not show any changes from 1400 years ago until now, while, the Torah and the Gospels for example, have suffered from distortions and alterations during different centuries, according to verse 44 of Chapter 5 [Sūrat al-Ma'idah] (Zuḥaylī 1990, 14: 16).

#### 4.2. Qualitative Preservation of the Qur'ān

For the fact that the Qur'ānic teachings possess attributes such as (the most upright; the light; detailed, a cure, guidance, etc.) and on the other hand, based on verse 42 of Sūrah Fuṣṣilat: ﴿لَا يَأْتِيهِ الْبَاطِلُ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَلَا مِنْ خَلْفِهِ تَنْزِيلٌ﴾: *Indeed, it is an august Book, falsehood cannot approach it, at present or in future, a [revelation gradually] sent down from One all-wise, all-laudable* (Qur'ān 41:42), there is neither falsehood in all its forms nor wrongful speech in it, it will therefore remain forever throughout the history and will continue eternally and universally (Khuṭbī, n.d, 210). Thus, God has preserved the pristine Qur'ānic teachings against any form of annihilation and destruction until the end of the world and He has fortified it against the misleading anti-Qur'ānic logic. This is because, with this inherent and miraculous quality that has been embedded in its very existence, the Holy Qur'ān will automatically maintain its permanence or prevent the opponents from opposing it and trying to alter its teachings (Fakhr Rāzī 1999, 19: 124; Ṭabāṭabāī 1970, 12: 101; Ṣādiqī Tehrānī 1985, 16:126).



### 4.3: Quantitative and Qualitative Preservation of the Qur’ān

According to the majority of the Qur’ānic exegetes, what is meant by the preservation of the Qur’ān is its general meaning, including its quantity and quality. Therefore, according to these Qur’ānic experts, God does not only preserve forever the Qur’ān in terms of its original volume for all times and locations, but He also prevents anyone from altering its facts from what they are and consequently tampering with its attribute of being a source of guidance and happiness. This is because all its teachings are based on wisdom due to their conformity with the realities and truths of life, and there is no falsehood in them due to their realism, knowledge-based, and certainty (Ṭūsī, n.d, 6: 320; Ṭabrisī 1993, 6: 508; Ṭabarī 1991, 14: 7).

For this reason, no one can restrict the language of the Qur’ān to the emotional, symbolic, encoded, mythological, imaginative, and ironic languages and deny its knowledge-based and realism. All these claims are because the Holy Qur’ān has been described with attributes such as “detailed” (*tafṣīl*), “guidance” (*hudā*), “the light” (*nūr*), “a cure” (*shifā*), and so on. In such a manner that it has reserved for itself the path of being “the most upright” (*aqwam*) and “guardian” (*qayyim*), due to its ability to recognize the merits and demerits of affairs and present them to mankind to implement them in every aspect of their individual and collective lives and they continue to grow in their lives eternally and universally.

Imam Khamenei, after explaining the meaning of the Qur’ān being a reminder to mean a reminder of God, also described the Holy Qur’ān as follows: “Whenever we recite the Qur’ān, God is talking to us. This talk is not only related to the past generation, events, and the Qur’ānic stories, but it is related to our current situation which is expressed in that language; so that we can find our way and pay attention to the word of God” (Statements at the gathering on familiarity with the Qur’ān, 14/01/1401, <https://khl.ink/f/49983>).





## 5. The Levels of Preserving the Qur'ān

The Qur'ānic exegetes have six viewpoints in this regard:

### 5.1. The Descending (*nuzūlī*) Dimension of the Qur'ān

According to the statement of some Qur'ānic experts, preservation of the Qur'ān does not mean the preservation of the transcript or the hardcopy of the Qur'ān, but rather the preservation of its high-ranking status in the sight of Allah in each of its levels. Since these positions are related to the unseen world and far from human reach, human beings cannot therefore destroy those levels (Ṣādiqī Tehrānī 1985, 16: 127).

### 5.2. The Authoritative Position of the Qur'ān

According to the opinion of some other Qur'ānic exegetes, the intended meaning of the preservation of the Qur'ān is to safeguard its position as a source of reference and authority for all people in worldly life. There is no doubt that the Holy Qur'ān is a prescription for human life in scientific and non-scientific dimensions. The Holy Qur'ān presents things such as foundations, principles, and methods to the humanities and experimental sciences so that they become a means to serve humanity and lead people to know God, His Attributes (*ṣifāt*), and His Names (*asmā'*) (Faḍlullāh 1998, 13: 147).

### 5.3. The Words and Meanings of the Qur'ān

According to some Qur'ānic researchers, one of the ways of preserving the Qur'ān is the preservation of the Qur'ānic words and meanings within the people until the Day of Resurrection. The passage of time in the past indicates that the form and content of the Qur'ān will remain the same today and tomorrow as it was when revealed (Mudarrisī 1998, 5: 444).

According to Imam Khamenei, this is the great privilege of the holy religion of Islam, in which the divine revelation [the Qur'ān] is preserved until today and forever with the same letters and expressions it was revealed to the holy heart of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his



family) and it is made available to all those who want to learn and be guided from it. This is the fulfillment of God's promise when He said: *"Indeed We have sent down the Reminder, and indeed We will preserve it"* (Qur'ān 15: 9) (Manuscript based on non-distortion of the Holy Qur'ān, 01/02/1371, <https://khl.ink/f/16784>).

#### 5.4. The Qur'ān: A Reminder

Some Qur'ānic exegetes, such as the late Allamah Ṭabāṭabā'ī, believe that preservation of the Qur'ān means the preservation of its being a reminder through the eternity of its attributes, such as the light (*nūr*), guidance (*hudā*), a cure (*shifā'*), explanation (*bayān*), elaboration (*tafṣīl*), etc. The Holy Qur'ān has one special feature, and that is its being a reminder of God, His attributes, and Names to mankind. Whenever a person looks at this Heavenly Book, he sees the aforementioned attribute in this sacred Book, and this is based on the divine will that is connected to the preservation and protection of the said attribute. (Ṭabāṭabā'ī 1970, 12: 102).

#### 5.5. The Hidden and Spiritual Dimension of the Qur'ān

Some contemporary Qur'ānic exegetes have stated that the meaning of preserving the Qur'ān by God is that He safeguards it in the hearts of Muslims. This is a reality that is indestructible and cannot be destroyed by anything. The realities of the Qur'ān, which show the good and the bad to man and make him inclined to do good and avoid evils, are due to the Muslims's internal inclination to the above realities, which has made the Qur'ān remain throughout history in the past, and it will continue in the same way in the future just as witnessed in the present time (Javādī Āmūlī 2007, 1: 478).

According to Imam Khamenei, these spiteful acts against Islam and Muslims stem from the fact that since a few decades ago the light of Islam has been shining brighter than ever, its grip on the hearts and souls in the Muslim world and even in the West has been stronger than ever before. It

stems from the fact that the Islamic Ummah is now more awake than ever and is determined to free itself from the shackles of two centuries of colonialism and interference. The incident of insulting the Quran and the Great Prophet of Islam despite all its bitterness bears great tidings. The bright sun of the Quran will shine brighter than ever (The message of the Supreme Leader to the Islamic Ummah following the revolting incident of insulting the Holy Quran in America, 22/06/1389, <https://khl.ink/f/10117>).

### 5.6. The Firmness (*ustuwārī*) of the Qur'ānic Teachings

Some early Sunni exegetes believe that the purpose of Allah's preservation of the Quran is to preserve the integrity and indefeasibility of its concepts and teachings. Central to this are the fundamentality of inner nature as well as justice-seeking and God-seeking aspects, which are irrefutable truths manifested in all Quranic verses. As long as humans seek their humanity under divine commandments, nothing is required of them other than humility and submission to the Quran (Ṭabarānī 2008, 4: 42).

The late Mughniyah also writes in this regard: "What is meant by the preservation of the Qur'ān is that everything found in it is a truth that will be permanent and stable throughout time, and it is impossible to reject and criticize it based on reason, rather, new evidence to establish the authenticity and greatness of the Qur'ān appear as the knowledge and science progress" (Mughniyah 2003, 4: 468).

It is worth mentioning that, since the afore-mentioned viewpoints do not contradict each other, all of them could be accepted, although the viewpoints of Allamah Ṭabāṭabā'ī and Ṭabarī are closer to the context of the glorious verse, because God gives information about the position and stand of the opponents and polytheists against the Qur'ān in the previous verses [of the same Sūrah], as they did not believe that ordinary human beings can get access to the unseen realities from the unseen world and present them to humanity. Therefore, to soothe the Prophet's heart, God also commands His Prophet to leave them to engage in animal pleasures. It is established that the main reason for their opposition to the Prophet's



claim about the unseen world and their demand to see angels as a testimony to his truthfulness is the reminding nature of the Qur'ān; that is, the destruction of idolatry but worshiping of God instead and the replacement of polytheism with monotheism. They could not tolerate this clear attribute of the Holy Qur'ān, and therefore they wanted to oppose its bearer [the Holy Prophet] so that by removing him, they would succeed in destroying the Qur'ān (Ṭabāṭabā'ī 1970, 12: 90 onwards; Khaṭīb 2003, 7: 218).

## 6. The Manners of Preserving the Qur'ān

The experts of the Qur'ān have four viewpoints in this regard:

### 6.1. The Universal Miracle of the Qur'ān

Everyone who recites the Qur'ān realizes that this sacred Book is at the peak of beauty in terms of form and content, and no other book in the world can be compared to it. This Book will forever explain the realities which cannot be altered through the passage of time or the difference in location because it recounts the realities that humans face in their individual and collective lives. The most important of them are the questions: Where did we come from? Where are we returning to after death? For what reason have we been created into this world? No divine Book like the Holy Qur'ān can answer the above questions comprehensively and perfectly. In this regard, the Holy Qur'ān possesses attributes such as clarity, comprehensiveness, luminousness, cure, and guidance, all of which, in turn, work hand in hand to make this divine Book permanent and eternal for all times and locations.

From this, it is obvious that God has placed the above attributes in the holy essence of this Heavenly Book so that it [Holy Qur'ān] becomes a universal and eternal masterpiece through these attributes (Ṭabāṭabā'ī 1970, 12: 101). Therefore, the conspirators behind the scenes should also know that the sacredness and dignity of the Holy Qur'ān will increase day by day and the lights of its guidance will become brighter (The message of



the Supreme Leader of the Revolution following the insult to the Holy Quran in Sweden, 31/04/1402, <https://khl.ink/f/53400>).

## 6.2. God's Generative Will (*irādih takwīnī*) to Preserve the Qur'an

The only will that governs the world independently is the will of God alone. Therefore, whenever the human will is against God's generative will, it will be doomed to failure because God's will is not a legislative (*tashrī'ī*) one, such that man, with God-given authority, opposes it and consequently, he will be punished either in this world or the Hereafter. On the contrary, this will of God to preserve the Holy Qur'an is a generative one in the sense that the divine will is attached to its preservation. Therefore, whenever the human will is against its preservation, it will definitely be unable to resist God's will because the facts of the Qur'an are reality, and opposing these is futile (Fakhr Rāzī 1999, 19: 123).

Supporting evidence of this is verse 81 of *Sūrat al-Isrā'*: ﴿وَقُلْ جَاءَ الْحَقُّ﴾  
﴿أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَىٰ عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا فَإِنْ يَشَأِ اللَّهُ يَخْتِمْ عَلَىٰ قَلْبِكَ وَبَدَأَ اللَّهُ الضُّلْمَ وَالْجَبَلَ﴾  
“And say, ‘The truth has come, and falsehood has vanished. Indeed falsehood is bound to vanish’” or verse 24 of *Sūrat al-Shawrā*:

﴿أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَىٰ عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا فَإِنْ يَشَأِ اللَّهُ يَخْتِمْ عَلَىٰ قَلْبِكَ وَبَدَأَ اللَّهُ الضُّلْمَ وَالْجَبَلَ﴾  
يُحِقُّ الْحَقَّ بِكَلِمَاتِهِ إِنَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ ﴿الشورى/ ٢٤﴾

*Do they say, ‘He has fabricated a lie against Allah’? If so, should Allah wish He would set a seal on your heart, and Allah will efface the falsehood and confirm the truth with His words. Indeed, He knows well what is in the breasts.*

This is because according to the import of the first verse, falsehood does not last forever and is perishable, while based on the second verse, the continuation of the falsehood is against the will of God (Ṭabāṭabā'ī 1970, 13: 244; Zuḥaylī 1990, 25: 59).



Just as God destroyed King Abraha for standing against the worship of God as manifested in the pilgrimage to the holy House of God, anyone who wants to destroy the Qur'ānic teachings and question their authenticity will face a painful punishment in this world or the Hereafter. Therefore, God will make the opponents of the Qur'ān incapacitated of refuting and corrupting its teachings, and no one has the power to oppose its teachings (Khāzin 1994, 3: 49).

Imam Khamenei says in this regard: “Preservation of the Qur'ān, preservation of the divine teachings, preservation of the verses revealed to the holy heart of the Prophet, are not something that human temptations and conspiracies can fight against. Preservation of the Qur'ān is a duty of God, and His plan will make the Qur'ān popular. Of course, just like all other divine blessings, there is a condition for that. And its condition is that people seek to acquire this divine blessing with all their efforts and abilities” (Statements during a group meeting with young Qur'ānic memorizers and reciters of the country, 28/06/1380).

### 6.3. The Retention of the Qur'ān in the Hearts of Humans

Maybudi is among the Qur'ānic exegetes who believe that based on verse 49 of *Sūrat al-'Ankabūt*:

﴿بَلْ هُوَ آيَاتٌ بَيِّنَاتٌ فِي صُدُورِ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ وَمَا يَجْحَدُ بِآيَاتِنَا إِلَّا الظَّالِمُونَ﴾ (العنكبوت 49)

*“Indeed, it is [present as] manifest signs in the breasts of those who have been given knowledge, and none contests Our signs except wrongdoers”*

God has protected the Holy Qur'ān from any form of harm (Maybudī 1992, 5: 293). The meaning of “*manifest signs*” in this glorious verse is the realities such as monotheism, prophethood, resurrection, and the like, which are conveyed to the heart of a believer through hearing or reading in the form of words. Therefore, the meaning of “*knowledge*” is the realities derived from the verses of the Holy Qur'ān, which the believer



submits to; however, the oppressor refuses to accept because of his arrogance (Qurashī 1996, 8: 151). According to this glorious verse, God has planted the mentioned knowledge in the hearts of a believer and it is no longer possible to remove those realities from his heart.

Based on verse 96 of *Sūrah Yūnus*: “Indeed those against whom your Lord’s judgement has become due will not have faith” (Quran 10: 96), Almighty God knows that the unjust persons will not be willing to accept the truths of the Qur’an until they see divine punishment. And even based on the next verse: “Even though every sign were to come to them, until they sight the painful punishment” (Quran 10: 97), since the darkness of sin has covered their hearts, and they have no access to divine light, they will not accept the truth even if they witness all the miracles of God with their own eyes (Hijāzī 1992, 2: 89). The accumulated illness in their hearts is the reason why they did not submit to the truth based on verses 49 of *Sūrat al-Anfāl*, 125 of *Sūrat al-Tawbah*, 50 of *Sūrat al-Nūr*, and other related verses. It is well established that contamination of the heart; that is, the materialistic and sensual lifestyle prevents a person from identifying the truth and accepting it and turns a person into an arrogant person against the truth (Ṭanṭāwī 1997, 6: 123).

It is clear based on this that what is meant by the preservation of the Qur’an in the hearts of people is not its ordinary expressions or hardcopy, but its luminous and golden realities such as monotheism, prophethood, imamate, resurrection, justice, peace, opposing oppression, supporting the oppressed and the like magnetizes the heart of every fair and free person and bring about bravery and courageous sacrifice against the opponents of the truth (Ref. Javādī Āmulī 2007, 63).

In other words, it is through the implementation of the verses of the Holy Qur’an, such as enjoining good, forbidding evil, and forming an Islamic government, that the Qur’an is preserved. In this context, Imam Khamenei says: “It is by paying attention to different aspects, enjoining good and forbidding evil that does not allow the enemy to triumph. This is



﴿إنا نحن نزلنا الذكر وإن﴾  
﴿لحافظون: “Indeed, We have sent down the Reminder, and indeed We will preserve it” (Quran 15: 9); this is ﴿و لينصرن الله من ينصره﴾: “Allah will surely help those who help Him” (Quran 22: 40) and this is ﴿والذين جاهدوا فينا﴾: ﴿لتهديهم سبيلنا﴾ “As for those who strive in Us, We shall surely guide them in Our ways,” (Quran 29: 69); these are not a mere formality that God has made with us” (Statements during a meeting with clerics and missionaries, 26/02/1375, <https://khl.ink/f/2801>).

#### 6.4. The Recitation by the Reciters and Memorizers

Some Qur’ānic scholars, such as Rūzbihān Baqlī, believe that one of the ways through which God preserves the Qur’ān is the commandment of its recitation to the believers by God Himself. Supporting evidence to this claim is the verse 9 of *Sūrat al-Hijr*, which portrays that through the recitation of the Qur’ān by the reciters and the memorizers, the Holy Qur’ān is freed from any kind of obliteration and oblivion (Rūzbihān Baqlī 2008, 2: 276).

In addition, God Himself in verse 20 of *Sūrat al-Muzammil*: “...So recite as much of the Quran as is feasible... He knows that some of you will be sick, ...So recite as much of it as is feasible...” (Quran 73:20) has ordered the recitation of the Qur’ān as much as possible on two occasions. Undoubtedly, repeating such a commandment indicates the importance of reciting the Qur’ān during the ritual prayer and otherwise, so that the Holy Qur’ān remains safe from any harm.

Likewise, in verse 17 of *Sūrat al-Qamar*: “Certainly, We have made the Qur’ān simple for the sake of admonishment. So is there anyone who will be admonished?” (Quran 54: 17) and also verses 22, 32 and 40 of the same Sūrah, God has informed on four different occasions about the easiness of reading and reciting the Qur’ān and He thereafter enjoined its acceptance by its audiences. Of course, some among the contemporary



Qur'ānic exegetes have taken the word 'simple' in the verse to mean the simplicity of the interpretation of the Qur'ānic concepts and intended meanings in such a manner that normal and deep understanding of it could be attained (Ṭabāṭabā'ī 1970, 19: 69). Undoubtedly, a request to accept guidance through such a sacred Book also prepares the ground for its preservation because every believer should know that, if the Qur'ān is adopted as his constitution in life, he will not be satisfied with its destruction and disintegration (Ibn Kathīr 1998, 7: 443).

In addition to this, in verse 38 of *Sūrat al-Hajj*: “Allah will indeed defend those who have faith. Indeed Allah does not like any ingrate traitor” (Quran 22: 38), God has undertaken the responsibility of protecting and defending the believers in an absolute and general manner. This noble verse, due to its absoluteness and generality, includes all the believers as well as all their belongings. Certainly, one of the wishes of believers in their lives is to consult the Qur'ān, and it is impossible to consult or make reference to it if it is not being protected by God. God's protection which is also desired by a believer is to make the reading and recitation of the Qur'ān easy for him. Thus, based on the duty of defending the believer and his wishes, God makes the recitation of the Qur'ān easy so that its preservation is also guaranteed through this means.

According to the writer, the preservation of the Qur'ān by God Almighty can be achieved through all the aforementioned levels, therefore, there is no contradiction between the mentioned viewpoints. God may preserve the Qur'ān from all dangers through its inherent miracle, the generative will to its preservation, its preservation in the hearts of its subjects, and also through its reading and recitation by the reciters.

## **7. The Philosophy of Preserving the Qur'ān**

The Qur'ānic scholars have pointed out some very important points in this regard, including:

### **7.1. The Completeness of God's Evidence**



According to the statements of the theologians, doing something that brings a person closer to duty, such as a reward or punishment, or the result of a set goal, such as strength is obligatory for God. This work is called divine grace (Subhānī 1993, 3: 53). The explanation of this matter in line with the mystery of preserving the Qur’ān is that God created man so that his inner talents and capacities could be actualized. Therefore, God according to *Sūrat al-Kahf*: “Indeed, We have made whatever is on the earth an adornment for it that We may test them [to see] which of them is best in conduct” (Quran 18: 7) made what is in the earth an adornment for the earth so that man’s inclination to the earth increases because the necessity of the trial did not require anything else. (Ṭabāṭabā’ī 1970, 13: 240). However, to attain greater success by man towards gaining happiness and guidance, in addition to the creation of an important faculty called “intellect” in his essence, so that he can distinguish between good and evil, He has also sent “divine prophets” to assist him in this regard. This is because He (God) knew quite well that this person cannot move towards goodness with just inner strength.

In addition, He has revealed a coherent program in the form of a single Book called “Qur’ān” so that divine favour to mankind will be more complete than in the past. For if God did not reveal a sacred Book to man, there would be room for excuses for him on the Day of Judgment, and an excuse for non-revelation of the divine Book would be presented for not obeying the divine commandments and prohibitions. For this reason, God must forever protect this sacred Book from any kind of harm at all times and in all places, so that mankind does not come up with an excuse for their deviation from the right path due to the absence of the divine Book.

In this regard, a revered scholar, Javādī Āmulī writes: “Man by his will power and freedom of will shall be able to establish God's evidence so that everyone can face the decisive evidence” (Javādī Āmulī 2008, 4: 212). Therefore, the Holy Qur’ān must be protected by God or automatically by itself based on the power that God has deposited in it through the creation



of inherent miracles, so that man does not have an excuse for his deviation from God, and likewise, the believer also becomes more familiar, capable and powerful in his actions to the divine demands.

## 7.2. Introducing the Status of the Infallible Imams in Conveying the Qur'ān

Another reason why God should preserve the Qur'ān is that by safeguarding it, the position and status of the infallible Imams will become known to the people. This is because according to verse 79 of *Sūrat al-Wāqī'ah*: ﴿لَا يَمَسُّهُ إِلَّا الْمُطَهَّرُونَ﴾ “*And no one touches it except the pure ones*” (Quran 56:79), it indicates that only people who are cleansed from sin [infallible] can reach the peak of the Qur'ānic understandings. None except the infallible members of the Prophet's Household (*Ahl al-Bayt*) can claim and profess that they are infallible from sin so that they can claim the absolute knowledge of the broad and precise meanings of the Qur'ān (Makārim Shīrāzī 1992, 23: 268).

On the other hand, the revelation of the Qur'ān along with its conveyance, according to verse 28 of *Sūrat al-Jinn*: “*so that He may ascertain that they have communicated the messages of their Lord, and He encompasses all that is with them, and He keeps an account of all things*” (Quran 72: 28) can justify and complete the purpose of revelation of the Qur'ān. This conveyance of the Qur'ānic teaching was carried out in the first place by the Prophet himself, and thereafter, each of the infallible Imams was responsible for it in their own times (Javādī Āmulī 2019, 128).

According to verse 7 of *Sūrah Āl 'Imrān*:

﴿هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ مِنْهُ آيَاتٌ مُحْكَمَاتٌ هُنَّ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ وَأُخَرُ مُتَشَابِهَاتٌ فَأَمَّا  
الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ زَبْعٌ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ مَا تَشَابَهَ مِنْهُ ابْتِغَاءَ الْفِتْنَةِ وَابْتِغَاءَ تَأْوِيلِهِ وَمَا يَعْلَمُ تَأْوِيلَهُ  
إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَالرَّاسِخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ يَقُولُونَ آمَنَّا بِهِ كُلٌّ مِنْ عِنْدِ رَبِّنَا وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ إِلَّا أُولُو  
الْأَلْبَابِ﴾ (سوره آل عمران / ٧)



*“It is He who has sent down to you the Book. Parts of it are definitive verses, which are the mother of the Book, while others are metaphorical. As for those in whose hearts is deviance, they pursue what is metaphorical in it, courting temptation, and seeking its interpretation. But no one knows its interpretation except Allah and those firmly grounded in knowledge; they say, ‘We believe in it; all of it is from our Lord.’ And none takes admonition except those who possess intellect” (Quran 3: 7)*

The metaphorical verses are placed side-by-side with the definitive verses, and their understanding requires broad and firmly grounded knowledge. Certainly, the infallible Household of the Prophet [*Ahl al-Bayt*] are among the people who are firmly grounded in knowledge in the interpretation of the metaphorical verses (Ṭabrisī 1993, 2: 699; Ṭūsī, n.d, 2: 394).

From what has been said, it can be concluded that the reason why God always protects the Qur’ān is that people become aware of the necessity of the presence of an infallible Imam, the status of Imamate and know that the existence of an Imam, in addition to the existence of the Qur’ān, is considered one of the necessities of life in its individual and collective dimensions towards achieving happiness, perfection and proximity to God.

### **7.3. Human’s Need for Guidance**

One of the attributes of the Holy Qur’ān is guidance in both the generative and legislative aspects due to its being the most upright, and being guardian. The mentioned attribute indicates that human beings need both types of guidance in their lives, and this divine Book is responsible and a guarantor of it because the capacity of human intellect is limited and the only source that can answer human questions is the glorious Qur’ān.

If the Qur’ān is subjected to distortion and the like, the greatest repository and the only Heavenly and divine prescription will be lost because this Book is like bread and water to man, which should not be destroyed, for its destruction will be tantamount to the destruction of

humanity and morality from human life. Therefore, just as the presence of hunger is a sign of the existence of food outside, the existence of happiness and virtue in the human heart is also a sign of the presence and survival of the divine Book amid human beings.

## Conclusion

From what was stated, it is concluded that:

1. Preservation of the Qur'ān by God means taking care and preventing the Qur'ān from being destroyed, including its quantitative and qualitative dimensions and all its other dimensions.
2. The process of preserving the Qur'ān can be imagined at levels such as the inherent miracle, God's generative will, its memorization in the heart of the Muslims and acting by the contents of the Qur'ānic verses, as well as its recitation by the reciters and the Muslims.
3. The philosophy of preserving the Qur'ān can be evaluated as a means to block man's excuse on the Day of Judgment, introduce the noble status of the infallible Imams, and the necessity of guiding man towards happiness and virtue.
4. The preservation of the Qur'ān based on the 'Verse of Preservation' and the statements of Imam Khamenei, is related to the revealed realities and logical teachings that conform with the nature and conscience of healthy and pure individuals, and engraved in the heart of his lovers in such a manner that it cannot be burnt by any worldly fire and destroyed.

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