



## Prominent Figures in Quranic Sciences in the Qum Seminary in the Recent Century: Ayatullah Muḥammad Hādī Maʿrifat\*



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Abstract

Promotional Article

Ayatullah Muḥammad Hādī Maʿrifat (1309-1385 SH) is one of the renowned scholars of Quranic exegesis (*tafsīr*) and Quranic sciences in the Qum Seminary in the recent century. He received his primary education in the seminaries of Karbala and Najaf and completed the latter part of his higher education in the Qum Seminary after migrating to Qom. Most of his scholarly activities and works have been focused on Quranic sciences within the Qum Seminary. Alongside numerous Quranic studies, he is the author of the encyclopedia “*Al-Tamhīd fī Ulūm al-Qurʿān*,” which is well-recognized in the Islamic world. The Quranic works of Ayatullah Maʿrifat have distinctive features including subject-centeredness, necessity-centeredness, school-orientedness, comprehensive outlook and foresight, free-thinking and innovation. His influential perspectives and opinions have contributed significantly to various Quranic topics such as compilation and arrangement of the Quran, Quranic readings, abrogation in the Quran, interpretation of the Quran, and safeguarding the Quran from distortion, attracting the attention and reference of researchers in Islamic and Quranic studies. In addition to his valuable research and creation of works in the field of Islamic sciences, particularly Quranic sciences, Ayatullah Maʿrifat also devoted himself to educating a generation of young students in Quranic sciences and played a key role in establishing multiple educational and research centers in this field in Qum and Iran.

**Keywords:** Muḥammad Hādī Maʿrifat, personality analysis, Quranic sciences, Qum Seminary, Kitāb al-Tamhīd.

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## Introduction

Research on the scientific personalities and luminaries of Islamic sciences, in addition to honoring and commemorating their names, has valuable academic impacts on the approach and mindset of current and future researchers and scholars. This is because presenting these luminaries' academic biography, research characteristics, and unique scientific perspectives and opinions can serve as a classroom for young researchers and provide a suitable platform for their experiential learning towards entering various scientific fields and understanding how to conduct research in those areas. The current article delves into the scientific personality of the late Muḥammad Hādī Maʿrifat and endeavors to outline a general overview of his academic life, introduce his works, and provide a brief overview of some of his prominent and influential perspectives and opinions in Quranic sciences, highlighting the outstanding aspects of his scholarly character in this dimension and field.

The sources used in this article, besides the written works listed in the bibliography, include interviews conducted by the author with Miss Vajīhīh Thaqafī, the wife of Ayatullah Maʿrifat, and ʿAbdul-karīm Bahjatpūr, a student of Ayatullah Maʿrifat. Additionally, the author's oral recollections of Grand Ayatullah Maʿrifat have also been incorporated into the research.

### 1. The Academic Life of Ayatullah Maʿrifat

#### 1.1. An Overview of Ayatullah Maʿrifat's Life in Brief

The late Ayatullah Muḥammad Hādī Maʿrifat, born into a scholarly family in the year 1309 Sh (1348 AH), opened his eyes to the world in Karbala, Iraq. His father, a renowned scholar and preacher in Karbala, had migrated from Isfahan's "Sidih" (present-day Khomeyni Shahr) to Karbala when he was fifteen. His mother was the daughter of a pious merchant from Rasht residing in Karbala. His ancestors up to three generations back were all part of the illustrious lineage of clergy and scholars, tracing their lineage



to Sheikh ‘Abdul-‘Ālī Maysī. He began his education in elementary sciences and then pursued religious studies in Karbala. After his father’s passing, at the age of 31 in the year 1340 Sh, he migrated to the seminary in Najaf to continue his studies. During his stay in Najaf, alongside his studies and teaching, he engaged in writing, editing, and copying books to support his family due to financial difficulties. In 1351 Sh, Ayatullah Ma‘rifat was forced to leave Iraq by the Ba‘th regime and entered Iran, settling in the holy city of Qum. For 35 years, he dedicated himself to teaching, research, and writing in the seminary of Qum. Ayatullah Ma‘rifat passed away on the 29th of *Dey* [in the Persian calendar] in the year 1385 Sh (29th of *Dhil-Hajjah*, 1427 AH) due to heart complications, finding peace beside the luminous tomb of Lady Fatimah Ma‘sumah (peace be upon her).

## 1.2 .The Academic Journey and Activities of Ayatullah Ma‘rifat

Ayatullah Muḥammad Hādī Ma‘rifat began his general education at the age of five by enrolling in a primary school. By the age of thirty, he successfully completed a comprehensive course in *uṣūl al-fiqh* (Principles of Jurisprudence) and a significant portion of the course in *fiqh* (Jurisprudence) under the guidance of scholars in Karbala. In the year 1340 Sh, he migrated to Najaf to benefit from the knowledge of eminent scholars and jurists such as Ayatullahs Sayyid Muḥsin Ḥakīm, Sayyid ‘Abul-Qāsim Khu‘ī, Mirzā Bāqir Zanjānī, Shaykh Ḥusayn Ḥillī, and Sayyid ‘Alī Fānī Iṣfahānī. Upon Imam Khumaynī’s arrival in Najaf, Ayatullah Ma‘rifat added the honor of being Imam’s student to his academic record.

Ayatullah Ma‘rifat’s specialized education has been in the field of jurisprudence and principles of jurisprudence. He never participated in a course specifically titled “Quranic Sciences.” This was because, at that time, there was no formal specialized teaching chair or course on Quranic Sciences available. Any knowledge Ayatullah Ma‘rifat acquired in this field was the result of his personal studies, research, and occasionally scholarly discussions with other experts.

While pursuing his studies in Karbala and Najaf, Ayatullah Maʿrifat had a particular interest in teaching and conducting scholarly research. Although his teaching primarily focused on jurisprudence, he also delved into general religious topics during his lectures.<sup>1</sup>

Ayatullah Maʿrifat's first work in the field of Quranic sciences was an article titled "Translation of the Quran: Possibility, Critique, and Necessity" in Arabic, which was published during his presence in Iraq in Karbala. This work seemingly marked the beginning of his attention to the importance of Quranic sciences and interpretation, prompting the need for discussion and examination of such topics in seminaries. We will later refer to how this work influenced his scholarly pursuits in Quranic sciences and interpretation.

During his time in Najaf in the year 1386 AH (1345 Sh), Ayatullah Maʿrifat began writing a Quranic exegesis titled "*Al-Tafsīr al-Wasiṭ*." However, after three years of writing, despite having interpreted up to verse 227 of *Sūrat al-Baqarah*, he discontinued the work and turned

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<sup>1</sup> Ayatullah Maʿrifat was among the first seminary scholars to collaborate as a professor with the "Jamiʿat al-Najaf," established around 1375 AH through the efforts of the late Kalāntar. From the outset, Ayatullah Maʿrifat was actively involved in authoring works. He was a consistent contributor to the influential and widely-read magazine "*Ajwibah Masāʿil al-Diniyyah*," published in Karbala al-Mualla under the auspices of the late Sayyid ʿAbdul Riḍā Ḥusaynī Shahrīstānī (passed away in 1418 AH), addressing the questions and doubts of that era. During that time, he wrote and published independent works such as "*Tanāsukh al-Arwāḥ*" in *kalām* and "*Tamhīd al-Qawāʿid*" in jurisprudence. Upon relocating to the seminary in Qum, Ayatullah Maʿrifat continued extensive research in jurisprudential matters and spent years teaching the highest level of jurisprudence and producing works on this topic. At the request of some scholars, he compiled a portion of his jurisprudential views under the title "*Aḥkām-i Sharʿī*."



towards writing the book “*Al-Tamhīd fī ‘Ulūm al-Qur’ān.*” The manuscripts of “*Al-Tafsīr al-Wasīṭ,*” consisting of six volumes, are preserved in his library. However, he never showed any inclination to publish it. It appears that the reason for Ayatullah Ma’rifat’s withdrawal from continuing this *tafsīr* was his realization during the work that there was a significant gap in the introductory aspects of *tafsīr*. As long as these introductory issues, referred to as the “Quranic sciences” (*‘ulūm al-Qur’ān*) remained unaddressed, the exegetical discussions would face various challenges and doubts. For this reason, he named his recent book “*Al-Tamhīd,*” meaning introduction.

After benefiting from the most prominent scholars in Najaf for approximately eleven years, Ayatullah Ma’rifat, enriched with a wealth of knowledge and wisdom, was compelled to leave Najaf in 1351 Sh and arrived in Qum to embark on a new chapter in his academic life. The writing of his valuable book “*Al-Tamhīd fī ‘Ulūm al-Qur’ān*” had commenced in Najaf and was completed and presented in Qum following his expulsion from Najaf. Simultaneously with the glorious victory of the Islamic Revolution in 1357 Sh, the third volume of “*Al-Tamhīd*” in Qum was published.

Migration from Najaf to Qum was considered a pivotal point in the academic life of Ayatullah Ma’rifat. After settling in Qum, he began teaching Quranic sciences for the first time at the *Ḥaqqānī Madrasa* upon the invitation of the late martyr Ayatullah Quddūsī (martyred in 1360 Sh). Subsequently, he was assigned a similar teaching chair at the *Ayatullah Gulpāyigānī Madrasa*. It would not be an exaggeration to say that his teaching chair was not only one of the few in Quranic sciences at that time but also stood out for its innovation and richness of content. His teaching was highly welcomed by young students and led to the cultivation of a generation of specialized and influential students in Quranic sciences in Qum. He taught the notes he had prepared for the initial writing of the book “*Al-Tamhīd.*” Consequently, “*Al-Tamhīd*” underwent several rounds of

teaching and scholarly discussions before being published, enriching its content further.

Ayatullah Maʿrifat continued teaching Quranic sciences in various seminary and university centers, many of which he played a significant role in establishing. He prepared works for teaching in these centers, including “*Talkhīṣ al-Tamhīd*” in two volumes for seminary education and “*Tārīkh-i Qurʾān*” (The History of the Quran) for university instruction. The six volumes of “*Al-Tamhīd fī ‘Ulūm al-Qurʾān*” (Introduction to the Quranic Sciences) were published in 1411 AH (1369 Sh) by the Publications of the Society of Seminary Teachers in Qum. Subsequently, Ayatullah Maʿrifat went on to write “*Ṣiyānat al-Qurʾān min al-Taḥrīf*” (Preservation of the Quran from distortion) and “*Al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufasssīrūn fī Thawbih al-Qashīb*” (The exegesis and the exegetes in its new form) and in two volumes each, along with “*Shubuhāt wa Rudūd*” (Doubts and Responses). By adding these works to the initial six volumes, the total volumes of “*Al-Tamhīd*” reached ten.

After completing his extensive work on “*Al-Tamhīd*,” which spanned over 30 years of his scholarly life, Ayatullah Maʿrifat turned to writing *tafsīr* from the early days of 1379 Sh. He transitioned from the introduction to the main content and began working on a completely different *tafsīr*. Instead of continuing his previous unfinished *tafsīr* entitled “*Al-Tafsīr al-Wasīf*” (Intermediate *Tafsīr*), he started a new and distinct *tafsīr*. Ayatullah Maʿrifat’s final scholarly work was this new *tafsīr* entitled “*Al-Tafsīr al-Atharī al-Jāmi*” (The Comprehensive hadith-based *Tafsīr*) of which only the first volume was published during his lifetime. The first volume includes several important introductory discussions and the interpretation of *Sūrat al-Fātiḥah*, and it was released in 1383 Sh. He completed the following five volumes, covering up to the end of *Sūrat al-Baqarah*, but their publication took place after his passing in 1387 Sh.

In addition to the mentioned works, Ayatullah Maʿrifat had other writings in the field of Quranic sciences. Some of these include “*Al-Taʿwīl*



*fī Mukhtalif al-Madhāhib wa al-Āra*” (Interpretation in Various Sects and Opinions), “*Ahl al-Bayt (a) wa al-Tafsīr,*” “*Tanāsub al-Āyāt*” (Proportionality of the Verses) and “*Ulūm-i Qur’ānī*” (Quranic Sciences). Furthermore, he authored dozens of scholarly articles published in various journals. A collection of these articles is compiled in the second volume of “*Ma’rifat-i Qur’ānī*” (Quranic Knowledge) by the Publications of the Institute of Cultural and Islamic Thought. Another work with the same title was published by Mufid University.

Apart from his research and writing in the field of Quranic sciences, Ayatullah Ma’rifat also conducted extensive research in jurisprudential matters. He spent years teaching “*uṣūl al-fiqh*” (principles of jurisprudence) and authored numerous articles in this field. Due to the significant deficiencies he observed in the field of the Quranic sciences, he did not enter the realm of “*Marja’iyya*” (religious authority). However, to familiarize scholars and seekers with his jurisprudential views, he decided to write a concise compilation of his legal opinions under the title “*Aḥkām-i Shar‘ī*” (Religious Rulings), not as an exhaustive legal manual but as a collection of his jurisprudential opinions.

## **2. Ayatullah Ma’rifat’s crucial role in the expansion of Quranic sciences**

When he began his research in Quranic sciences, he was alone, but gradually he initiated a massive movement and, over thirty-four years of influential presence in Qum (1351-1385 Sh), transformed this city into a hub of Quranic sciences in the Islamic world.

Before the publication of Ayatullah Ma’rifat’s works in Quranic sciences, the Shia community did not have an independent and comprehensive work on Quranic sciences. To access Shia views on Quranic sciences, one had to refer to introductions or texts of *tafsīrs* such as “*Al-Tibyān*” and “*Majma’ al-Bayān.*” However, Ayatullah Ma’rifat meticulously compiled the most detailed book on Quranic sciences in the



Islamic world under the title “*Al-Tamhīd fī ‘Ulūm al-Qur’ān*” and, through the teaching chairs he held, promoted this field. As a result, the seminaries in Qum, at the time of his passing, not only possessed the most comprehensive work on Quranic sciences in the Islamic world but also had generated thousands of research works by a new generation of scholars.

When Ayatullah Maʿrifat entered the seminary of Qum, there were only a few scattered Quranic exegesis classes. However, after his arrival, a teaching chair in Quranic sciences was established, leading to the training of the first specialized generation of researchers in the field of Quranic sciences in the Qom seminary. Ayatullah Maʿrifat had significant involvement and effective collaboration in the establishment of various specialized centers of Quranic sciences. By the time of his passing, several specialized centers for Quranic sciences and *tafsīr* had been founded, engaging hundreds of Quranic scholars in education. The academic and intellectual foundations of numerous Quranic sciences and *tafsīr* centers in seminaries and universities benefitted from the contributions of Ayatullah Maʿrifat. It is fair to say that following the Islamic Revolution, Ayatullah Maʿrifat played a crucial role in the establishment and progress of virtually every new center dedicated to Quranic sciences and *tafsīr*.

Although the establishment of the Islamic Republic provided a very favorable environment for the founding of scientific centers, its fulfillment depended on the presence of knowledgeable scholars like Ayatullah Maʿrifat. He was influential in designing curricula, developing resources, and training capable educators.

### **3. Freedom of thought and innovation of Ayatullah Maʿrifat**

One of the distinctive features of Ayatullah Maʿrifat was his freedom of thought and innovation. He never confined himself within the boundaries of established norms and popular opinions. Wherever he felt that the prevailing trend contradicted reality, he distanced himself and preferred the correct path. This approach resulted in the emergence of fresh and original perspectives in Ayatullah Maʿrifat’s works. One example is his





stance on the issue of “abrogation” (*naskh*); initially, he adhered to the popular viewpoint (for reference to his initial perspective, see “*Al-Tamhīd*,” published by Jāmi‘ah al-Mudarrisīn, 1990, 2: 267). However, after years of contemplation and reflection, he realized that the issue of abrogation was not as presented in the mainstream discourse. In other words, he could not accept that some Quranic verses had very short-lived applicability and were abrogated forever. For this reason, he adopted a new perspective, rejecting abrogation according to the conventional view and proposing the theory of “conditional” (*mashrūf*) and “gradual” (*tadrījī*) abrogation. (For further details, see “*Al-Tamhīd*,” published by the Institute of Al-Tamhīd, 2007, 2: 270 onwards). Subsequently, an explanation of these two terms will be provided.

One aspect of Ayatullah Ma‘rifat’s freedom of thought can be seen in his views on the Companions of the Prophet. While the opinions of the Companions hold a similar position among many scholars to that of other exegetes (See: Bābā’ī, *Makātib-i Tafṣīrī*, 2002, 1:188), Ayatullah Ma‘rifat considers the Companions as the first generation of Muslims who were directly trained by the Prophet Muhammad, participated in the revelation of the Quranic verses, and were the most familiar with the nuances of the Arabic language. Therefore, their opinions should not be equated with those of other exegetes; rather, they should be given a higher status (See: Ma‘rifat, *Tafṣīr wa al-Mufasssīrūn*, 1997, 1: 279; *Al-Tafṣīr al-Atharī al-Jāmi‘*, 2008, 1: 98). Ayatullah Ma‘rifat’s inclusive and global outlook led him to emphasize the statements of the Companions in his works. It could be said that Ayatullah Ma‘rifat extensively refers to the companions’ opinions in this regard.

Although Ayatullah Ma‘rifat holds an unparalleled position regarding the Companions compared to other exegetes, he also rejects extremism. He explicitly states that firstly, not all Companions held such a high status, and only a specific group of the Prophet’s close associates deserve to be called “Companions” in the true sense. Secondly, despite their superiority,

the Companions were fallible individuals who could make mistakes, and their statements should never be considered on par with the sayings of the infallible Imams (Maʿrifat, *Ṣaḥābih az Manẓar-i Ahl-i Bayt* (a) [The Companions from the Perspective of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (a)] 2008, 17). Additionally, he emphasizes that the Companions, despite their excellence, were scholars who could err, and their statements should not be equated with the hadiths of Infallibles (See: Maʿrifat, *Tafsīr wa al-Mufasssirūn*, 1997, 1: 222 & 307; *Al-Tafsīr al-Atharī al-Jāmiʿ*, 2008, 1: 98; *Ṣaḥābih az Manẓar-i Ahl-i Bayt* (a), 2008, entire book). In this way, Ayatullah Maʿrifat has adopted a middle path where, on the one hand, he benefits from the valuable opinions of the Companions, and on the other hand, he avoids unwarranted sanctification of the Companions and the unwarranted extension of specific qualifications of some Companions to all the Companions.

#### **4. The prominent and influential views of Ayatullah Maʿrifat in the field of Quranic sciences**

Ayatullah Maʿrifat was a thoughtful and innovative scholar who delved into every issue, analyzing it thoroughly and, if necessary, completing, modifying, or refuting it. As a result, his works are rich in new and noteworthy discussions. Below are some of his notable contributions to the field of Quranic sciences.

##### **4.1. Compilation and authorship of the Quran and the unification of the manuscripts**

In the issue of the compilation and authorship of the Quran and the unification of the manuscripts, Ayatullah Maʿrifat believes that the writing and compilation of the Quran were realized during the lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad, but the compilation of the Quran, meaning the arrangement of the entire Quran between two covers, was completed after the Prophet's passing (Maʿrifat, *Al-Tamhīd*, 2007, 1: 285). It is a well-known belief among Sunni scholars that this task was carried out under the supervision of the first and second caliphs and was accomplished by Zayd



ibn Thābit (Zarqānī, *Manāhil al-'Irfān*, 1: 242). Ayatullah Ma'rifat attributes the first compilation to Imam Ali (a) (Ma'rifat, *Al-Tamhīd*, 2007, 1:292), and contrary to the popular Sunni belief (Zarqānī, *Manāhil al-'Irfān*, 1:246), he does not advocate for a special or superior status for the manuscript of the first caliph compared to the manuscripts of other Companions (Ma'rifat, *Al-Tamhīd*, 2007, 1: 205-306). Ayatullah Ma'rifat also argues that the unification of the manuscripts during the time of the third caliph was based on consultation and collaboration with many of the Prophet's Companions, challenging the sole authority of Zayd ibn Thābit's version (Zarqānī, *Manāhil al-'Irfān*, 1: 250; Ma'rifat, *Al-Tamhīd*, 2007, 1: 336).

The interpretation that Ayatullah Ma'rifat holds regarding the compilation, writing, and unification of the manuscripts is characterized by a high degree of compatibility with historical reports. On one hand, it ensures the protection of the Quran from distortion and alteration. On the other hand, it refrains from unwarranted glorification of individuals. Additionally, some shortcomings and weaknesses in the issue of the compilation of the Quran, which arise from the omission of the Quran of Imam Ali (a), are discussed (Ma'rifat, *Al-Tamhīd*, 2007, 1: 343 onwards), and of course, he does not consider it as meaning the distortion of the Quran.

#### 4.2. Quranic Readings (*qirā'āt*)

Ayatullah Ma'rifat, like most Shia scholars, believes that the Quran does not have multiple readings, and the differences in readings arise from the reciters. According to Ayatullah Ma'rifat, none of the seven or more readings have a higher frequency, and the consensus on the Quran, which is an established fact, is not related to the frequency of readings (Ma'rifat, *Al-Tamhīd*, 2007, 2: 43 onwards).

#### 4.3. Abrogation (*Naskh*)

One of the key theories in Ayatullah Maʿrifat's Quranic studies is the theory of "conditional abrogation" (*naskh-i mashrūf*) (See: Maʿrifat, *Al-Tamhīd*, 2007, 2: 270 onwards). Conditional abrogation means that the abrogated verses have been abrogated due to changing circumstances, and if the conditions revert to their previous state, those abrogated verses will regain validity and become the criterion for action once again (See: Ḥavasī 2016, 118).

Ayatullah Maʿrifat introduces another type of abrogation known as "gradual abrogation" (*naskh-i tadrījī*) or "preparatory abrogation" (*naskh-i tamhīdī*) (See: Maʿrifat, *Al-Tamhīd*, 2007, 2: 270 onwards). Gradual abrogation implies that for changes and transformations in certain social issues, one must progress step by step, and one cannot abruptly issue a ruling contrary to societal norms. Gradual abrogation means that in such matters, God progresses gradually and initially presents a temporary ruling that is acceptable to society. Through the issuance of complementary regulations, conditions are arranged in a way that gradually leads society towards the final and correct ruling. This process is akin to the legislative steps taken regarding the issue of alcohol consumption. Conditional and gradual abrogation, when examined by social reformers, can provide the best model and method for social changes and transformations.

#### **4.4. Inner level of meanings (*taʿwīl*) and inner aspects (*baṭn*) of the Quran**

Another significant innovation in Ayatullah Maʿrifat's Quranic studies pertains to the inner level of meanings (*taʿwīl*) and inner aspects (*baṭn*) of the Quran. Ayatullah Maʿrifat believes that *taʿwīl* means obtaining the general meaning of the verses that can be applied to various instances, also referred to as *baṭn* of the verse (Maʿrifat, *Al-Taʿwīl*, 2006, the entire book; *Al-Taḥsīn al-Atharī al-Jāmiʿ*, 2008, 1: 29; Ḥamid Maʿrifat, *Guzārish-i Taḥṣīlī az Kursī-ye Nazariyah-ye Baṭn, Maʿrifat-i Qurʾānī*, 2016, 35).

He considers the concept of the inner aspect of a verse to be derived from the implications of the verse that through "unclear signification by



association” (*dilālat-i iltizāmī-ye ghayr-i bayyin*) indicates it. Ayatullah Ma‘rifat has also elaborated on the method of accessing the inner aspects of the verses, summarizing it as the identification of the subject’s characteristics, the elimination of irrelevant characteristics, and ultimately reaching a general understanding.

Ayatullah Ma‘rifat’s theory of the inner aspect provides a logical, conventional, and principled justification for the esoteric hadiths of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (a), which have always been a subject of doubt and criticism by Sunni researchers, considering such esoteric interpretations as imposed on the Quran and equating them with Sufi interpretations.

#### 4.5. The Distortion of the Quran (*Tahrīf-i Qur’ān*)

Ayatullah Ma‘rifat, in the matter of the distortion of the Quran, apart from elucidating the arguments refuting the distortion of the Quran (See: Narīmānī 2016, 47) and critiquing the evidence of distortion proponents, emphasizes two particular issues: Firstly, the exoneration of the scholars known as Shia from the accusation of believing in the distortion of the Quran (Ma‘rifat, *Ṣiyānat al-Qur’ān min al-Tahrīf*, 2007, 55). Secondly, justifying numerous hadiths that convey the similarity between the events of past nations and the Islamic community, asserting that whatever occurred among the Children of Israel, including the distortion of the holy book, will undoubtedly occur within the Islamic community as well (ibid, 107).

Shia scholars have generally responded to this doubt through major premise (*kubrawī*) by asserting that this sameness does not imply complete and comprehensive similarity. From a particular perspective, Ayatullah Ma‘rifat has addressed this doubt through minor premise (*ṣughrawī*), debating the root of the distortion of the Torah (ibid, 107). In Ayatullah Ma‘rifat’s opinion, what happened to the Torah was not merely alteration, deletion, or addition; rather, the Torah has been rewritten several times in different languages. Through these rewritings and language changes, the



original version of Torah has been completely lost. What is available today is not the original Torah but multiple rewritings and translations of the Torah. Naturally, there are significant differences from the original version (ibid, pp. 115-129).

Therefore, comparing the Bible, including the Old and New Testaments, with the Noble Quran, is an “analogy with a point of difference” (*qiyās maʿa al-fāriq*). If we were to create this sameness, we would have to claim that the Islamic community has also completely lost the original Quran and has rewritten the Quran multiple times in new languages. This assertion is inaccurate and does not require proof.

This justification through minor premise, alongside the justification through major premise, provides a definitive and strong response to the doubt of the inevitability of similarity of destiny in terms of susceptibility to distortion between the Quran and the.

## Conclusions

In this article, by examining the role of Ayatullah Maʿrifat in the recent developments in the seminaries of Qum in the field of Quranic sciences, the following points have been highlighted:

1. Although Ayatullah Maʿrifat studied in the seminaries of Karbala and Najaf, the majority of his extensive scientific and research activities in teaching Quranic sciences, educating seminary students and scholars in this field, as well as authoring research works in the field of Quranic sciences, have been carried out and established in the seminary of Qum. Therefore, he should be recognized as one of the most prominent and influential figures in the field of Quranic sciences in the seminaries of Qum in recent centuries.

2. Ayatullah Maʿrifat’s motivation for entering the field of Quranic sciences stemmed from the lack of comprehensive and complete Shia works on this subject, as well as the incomplete and sometimes incorrect



descriptions by some Sunni scholars regarding the status of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (a) and their followers in the field of Quranic sciences and *tafsīr*.

3. The Quranic works of Ayatullah Maʿrifat are characterized by being subject-centered, necessity-centered, school-oriented, comprehensive and foresighted, free-thinking and innovative.

4. Ayatullah Maʿrifat played a highly influential role in expanding Quranic sciences in the seminaries of Qum and the Shia world. By authoring outstanding works in Quranic sciences and educating a generation of specialized students and researchers in this field, he had a central role in transforming the seminaries of Qum into a pole of Quranic sciences in the Islamic world.

5. Ayatullah Maʿrifat has multiple and innovative theories in the field of Quranic sciences, among which his perspectives on the compilation and authorship of the Quran, variant readings (*qirāʾāt*), inner level of meanings (*taʾwīl*), and distortion (*tahrīf*) are noteworthy.

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