



Prominent Scholars of the Qum Seminary in Recent Century:

Ayatullah Nāṣir Makārim Shīrāzī*

Muhammad Hadi Mansouri¹/Ali Alvandi²



Abstract

Promotional Article

Since the establishment of seminaries, special attention has been paid to interpreting the Holy Quran which has experienced significant growth in recent centuries. Consequently, it is rare to find a book written with as much detail and explanation as the Quran. Many scholars and interpreters have delved into the interpretation of the Quran, among whom Ayatullah Nāṣir Makārim Shīrāzī stands out as a prominent figure in the field. His exegetical and Quranic works have garnered attention from various sectors, significantly impacting Quranic activities and research in the present era. Research findings indicate that in Ayatullah Makārim's tafsīr, areas such as addressing both thematic and sequential tafsīrs, reviving the methods of Shia exegetes, employing a rational style in processing verses, addressing contemporary issues and doubts, and attention to the *ijtihādī* method have been highlighted.

Keywords: Exegetical figures, prominent exegetes of the fourteenth century, Qum Seminary, Nāṣir Makārim Shīrāzī.

* This article has been authored with the support of the secretariat of the International Conference on the Centenary of the Re-establishment of the Qom Seminary and as a tribute to the late Grand Ayatullāh Ḥājj Shaykh 'Abdul Karīm Ḥā'irī and his achievements.

¹. Assistant Professor in the Department of Quranic Sciences and Hadith at the University of Islamic Sciences, Qum, Iran, mansouri@maaref.ac.ir.

². Level 3 Seminary Student and Master's Degree Student in Quranic and Hadith Studies, Qum, Iran.

Introduction

In light of the blessings of the infallible Imams and adherence to moderate rationality, the Shia seminaries have had a distinguished record in educating Islamic scholars in various fields, including Quranic exegesis and propagation. It is known that there has always been a great interest in Quranic exegesis among the followers of the Shia seminaries, but among them, the number of educated exegetes who have had notable works in tafsīr and whose works are available and accessible is limited. Ayatullah Nāṣir Makārim Shīrāzī is one of those figures who have been educated in the seminaries of Qom and has presented numerous Quranic exegeses and Quranic studies. This research aims to investigate the exegetical personality of Ayatullah Makārim Shīrāzī and his role and influence in the developments related to Quranic studies and exegesis in the recent century in the seminaries of Qom.

Prior to this, articles such as “The Position of Scientific Exegesis and its Criteria in Nemouneh Commentary” (2016) by Mawlavī and Khalīlī and “Makarem Shirazi and Marvan Sha’aban with An Emphasis on Scientific Miracles” (2022) by Himmatyān [both in Persian] have been published about the exegetical works of Ayatullah Makārim. The current article specifically focuses on his exegetical personality and the impact of his exegetical works on Quranic studies, which sets it apart from the mentioned articles and other works.

1. A Brief reference to the academic life of Ayatullah Makārim Shīrāzī

Ayatullah Nāṣir Makārim Shīrāzī was born in the city of Shiraz in 1305 Sh, into a religious family. After completing his preliminary studies in Shiraz, he moved to the seminary of Qom and later to the seminary of Najaf. Throughout his academic journey, he engaged in teaching, preaching, and writing in the field of religion. Up to the end of the fourteenth century AH, his works amount to over a hundred publications.



Ayatullah Makārim Shīrāzī has had a long-standing presence in the field of writing scholarly works on various Islamic topics. He has independently authored valuable books in various fields. He has also collaborated with groups of scholars and experts in compiling and writing numerous works, especially in the areas of tafsīr and Quranic topics. The number of his works has reached over a hundred publications to date (until the end of the 1390s Sh). Some of his exegetical works include “*Tafsīr-i Nimūnih*” (exemplary exegesis) [27 volumes], “*Payām-i Qur’ān*” (The Message of the Quran) [12 volumes], “*Akhlāq dar Qur’ān*” (Ethics in the Quran) [3 volumes], “*Mithāl-hāy-i Zībāy-i Qur’ānī*” (Beautiful Quranic Examples) [2 volumes], “*Sawgand-hāy-i Qur’ān*” (Oaths in the Quran) [1 volume], “*Āyāt-i Wilāyat dar Qur’ān*” (Verses of Guardianship in the Quran) [1 volume], “*Tafsīr of Sūrat al-Aḥzāb*” [1 volume], “*Wālātarin Bandigān*” (The Highest Servants) [1 volume], “*Qahramān-i Tawḥīd*” (The Champion of Monotheism) [1 volume], and “*Zindigī-ye pur-mājarā-ye Nūḥ (a): Āmūzih-hā wa ‘Ibrat-hā*” (The Eventful Life of Prophet Noah (a): Teachings and Lessons) [1 volume].

2. The characteristics of the Quranic works of Ayatullah Makārim Shīrāzī

Ayatullah Makārim Shīrāzī has presented notable works in both sequential and thematic tafsīr to lovers of the Quran and scholars of Quranic exegesis. Additionally, he has authored Quranic monographs. His collection of exegetical works, often in collaboration with a group of esteemed seminary scholars, exceeds 10 titles published in 51 volumes.

Sequential *tafsīr*, also known as analytical tafsīr, refers to an approach where the *tafsīr* is based on the order of the chapters and verses of the Quran. This type of tafsīr has been the most common method of interpreting the Quran that scholars have initiated (Ma‘rifat 1998, 2:503). It is also referred to by other names such as analytical part-by-part (*tajzī’ī*)

*tafsīr*³ (Ṣadr 2012, pp. 20-25; Muslim 2009, 41), analytical *tafsīr*⁴ (Muslim 2009, pp. 27-28), and position-based (*mawḍiʿī*) *tafsīr*⁵ (Muslim 2009, pp. 40-41).

In contrast to sequential *tafsīr*, thematic *tafsīr* involves elucidating the teachings related to a specific subject, considering various verses of the Quran in one or more chapters or the entire Quran (Muslim 2009, 16). Early commentators primarily adopted a sequential approach in interpreting the Quran, with only a few individuals focusing on a thematic approach, albeit not addressing all issues and topics comprehensively. According to some scholars like Allamah Majlisī (Subḥānī 2004, 1:27; Maʿrifat⁶ 2000, 2:531) or Allamah Ṭabāṭabāʿī (a group of authors, 2010, 8:365), they are considered pioneers of the method of thematic *tafsīr*.

³ . In part-by-part *tafsīr*, the exegete dissects the verse into several sentences, interpreting word by word and sentence by sentence. On the other hand, in thematic *tafsīr*, the exegete gathers all verses related to a particular belief, social issue, or area of knowledge, considering them as a unified whole. Subsequently, he extracts the facts and indications in those verses regarding the specific subject (Ṣadr 1434/2012, pp. 20-25; Muslim 1431/2009, 41).

⁴ . In this *tafsīr*, the exegete pauses to analyze each verse, delving into its detailed and extensive analysis. Furthermore, he discusses various topics and issues in the realms of beliefs, linguistic aspects, literary elements, rhetoric, ethics, legal rulings, and more within the context of that verse (Muslim 1431/2009, pp. 27-28).

⁵ . The reason for this naming is that the exegete pauses at a specific position and focuses on a verse or sūrah and does not move on to interpret other verses before completing the interpretation of that section, unlike thematic *tafsīr* where a specific theme is considered, and all related verses throughout the Quran are examined to understand the Quranic perspective on that theme without pausing at a particular point in the Quran (Muslim 1431/2009, pp. 40-41).

⁶ . Certainly, Ayatullah Marefat considers Allameh Majlisī's thematic interpretation as the most precise and comprehensive categorization of Quranic verses regarding various Islamic teachings, which he believes is still unparalleled.



However, none of them have comprehensively and in detail examined all subjects from the perspective of the Quran.

2.1. Interpreting the Quran through two methods: sequential and thematic

Ayatullah Makārim has delved into the interpretation of the Holy Quran in several valuable works using both sequential and thematic methods. In his *Tafsīr-i Nimūnih* (27 volumes), he interprets all the verses of the Quran based on their order in the Quran. In addition, in his works “*Payām-i Qur’ān*” [The Message of the Quran] (12 volumes) and “*Akhlāq dar Qur’ān*” [Ethics in the Quran] (3 volumes), he has almost covered the interpretation of all verses related to belief and ethics, presenting a comprehensive *tafsīr* of the Quran to his audience using both thematic and sequential methods.

Ayatullah Makārim Shīrāzī, regarding his book “*Payām-i Qur’ān*” [The Message of the Quran], which he has compiled using a thematic method, states: “One of these methods of thematic interpretation is to first gather all the verses related to a particular topic throughout the Quran without any prior judgments, then arrange these verses together and interpret them one by one. Afterward, we consider the relationship between these verses, as a whole, and arrive at a general understanding. This is the method we have chosen in *Payām-i Qur’ān*” (Makārim Shīrāzī 1992, 1: 29-30).

Some advantages of these two great works can be highlighted as follows:

A. Structural Coherence

Both of these works have been compiled with a coherent structure in the writing process. There is a coherence around presenting topics, with a prelude about each chapter at the beginning of every surah in the interpretation, and in “*Payām-i Qur’ān*,” each discussion starts with a title

reference. Then, the verses are grouped and categorized, explanations and exegetical discussions are provided, followed by a conclusion and summary, presenting the necessary points for understanding the verses.

B) Guiding and Educational Orientation

One of the prominent and striking features of the aforementioned *tafsīr* is the orientation towards the “guiding and educational” aspects of the Quranic verses. According to them, “the Quran admonishes people, removes the rust of sin and ugly traits from their hearts, illuminates the hearts with the light of guidance, and bestows divine blessings upon individuals and society” (Makārim Shīrāzī 1992, 11: 219). Therefore, in interpreting the initial verses of *Sūrah Luqmān*, the author emphasizes that the purpose of the Quran’s revelation is guidance and mercy.

In *Tafsīr-i Nimūnih*, attention has been paid to the guidance and educational aspects of the Quran using historical indications, rational and traditional evidence, and precise hadiths. This *tafsīr* does not merely focus on deciphering meanings and explaining difficult words; rather, in presenting such content, efforts are made to demonstrate what conclusions should be drawn from the verses and what the Quran’s message is. Even in matters of beliefs, historical narratives, and practical laws, emphasis is placed on finding the message of the Quran and divine wisdom. Various sciences, including psychology, philosophy, ethics, and even empirical sciences are utilized to establish a connection and harmony between the content and the reader. This is because the Quran is “guidance for the people” (Quran 6:91) and, therefore, beyond scientific and literary discussions, the primary principle in *Tafsīr-i Nimūnih* is to guide people towards the happiness of this world and the hereafter (Makārim Shīrāzī 1992, vol. 1, *Introduction*). Acceptance of such a fundamental principle has led to an emphasis on this aspect in explaining certain topics.

For example, in elucidating the purpose of storytelling and recounting the stories of the prophets and the histories of past nations and



communities, it is stated: “The purpose of the stories in the Quran is the growth and perfection of humanity, the goal is to bring light and enlightenment to the souls, to control rebellious desires, and ultimately, the objective is to combat injustice, oppression, and deviation” (Makārim Shīrāzī 1992, 15:342). Furthermore, in explaining the story of Prophet Joseph, the educative aspect of the story has been highlighted, where God has combined precision in expression with chastity and modesty, incorporating all principles of ethics and chastity into the narrative (ibid, 9: 378).

Moreover, the purpose of the repetition of certain Quranic content such as principles of beliefs and the stories of the prophets is explained as follows: “The reason for this repetition and similarity is that the Quran is not a historical book but a book of education and humanization. In matters of education, sometimes circumstances dictate that an event be recalled repeatedly and viewed from different perspectives” (Makārim Shīrāzī 1992, 15:502).

One of the topics that has been emphasized in the discussions of the *Tafsīr-i Nimūnih* is presenting a comprehensive view of the religion of Islam. In their view, the authors of this exegesis introduce Islam as the superior and life-giving religion and way of life. By relying on Quranic verses, they present Islam as broader than it appears and believe that all individuals on earth and in the heavens are Muslims (ibid, 2: 491). Based on this perspective, they consider the invitation of Islam to be an invitation to spiritual, material, cultural, economic, political, ethical, and social life, and ultimately life in all aspects. Therefore, according to the authors’ belief, *Tafsīr-i Nimūnih* views guardianship and connection with the prophets as achievable only through faith and following them, and no one can claim closeness to them based on kinship or race. The closest individuals to the prophets and the divine guardians are those who follow their school and remain loyal to their goals (ibid, 2: 462).

C) A contemporary perspective on interpreting the Quran

The phrase under the main title of *Tafsīr-i Nimūnih* that states: “Interpreting and examining the Noble Quran with consideration of the needs, desires, questions, schools, and contemporary issues” indicates that one of the main objectives of the authors is to base their tafsīr on contemporary issues and the needs of their time. Their specific goal in this regard is to translate the scientific and cultural heritage of Islam into modern language and to implement all those noble concepts through contemporary language in the spirit, soul, and mind of the current generation. Additionally, they aim to deduce the specific needs and demands of this time from the general principles of Islam. Therefore, their effort is to make their tafsīr provide a more comprehensive understanding of the Quran to everyone, enabling all to take a step towards rescuing Muslims from the current challenging situation, drawing inspiration from the living and profound teachings of the Quran (Makārim Shīrāzī 1992, vol. 1, *Introduction*).

For this purpose, in the *Tafsīr-i Nimūnih*, only explanations have been provided that are referenced within the Quran itself, and the use of new sciences has also been employed to establish a connection between Quranic teachings and contemporary human findings and beliefs. Therefore, the authors of *Tafsīr-i Nimūnih* have taken into account the spiritual conditions of the audience, their questions, and ultimately the generation of the audience and their youth. They have made extensive efforts to elucidate the message of the Quran in modern language and to present humans, caught up in contemporary constraints and time limitations, in the refreshing breeze of Quranic verses, free from technical and classical discussions (Makārim Shīrāzī 1992, vol. 1, *Introduction*).

This has led them to present a suitable and contemporary rational argumentation in explaining the foundations of belief and ethics and to depict an effective and harmonious image of the Quran with the times. The presence of this *tafsīr* in academic, cultural, religious gatherings, and



mosques, apparently indicates their success. However, as no *tafsīr* can claim to be the “final *tafsīr*,” awareness of our successes and shortcomings guides us in choosing a better path and more effective steps. Because at all times, there are needs, doubts, and issues that prompt a thoughtful Muslim to address them. Of course, the title of “contemporary” should not lead to extremism or negligence in expressing issues, to the extent that one relies on any matter to attract the audience, or even attributes inventions and discoveries to the Quran. The *Tafsīr-i Nimūnih* has, indeed, observed the aspect of moderation.

It is necessary to remind that the attribute of “contemporaneity” inevitably leads to the social orientation of the exegete, who does not view individuals as separate from society in terms of social issues and does not consider individual happiness separate from societal happiness. Based on this, in the *Tafsīr-i Nimūnih*, the discussion of “human social life” and its various dimensions holds a significant place (See: Subject Index of the *Tafsīr-i Nimūnih*, p. 416). In these discussions, efforts have been made not only to address individual and social ethical issues, but also to invigorate Islamic communities and provide them with further awareness to take effective steps towards their Islamic commitments and responsibilities in this particular era. In this regard, in *Tafsīr-i Nimūnih*, we encounter topics such as “human rights, governance, political and social systems, and contemporary issues,” which were not addressed in older *tafsīrs*.

D) The Use of Written Language

The writing style of *Tafsīr-i Nimūnih* and *Payām-i Qur’ān* (The Message of the Quran) is simple, fluent, and pleasant. It can rightfully be considered one of the noteworthy features and merits of the *Tafsīr-i Nimūnih*. As previously mentioned regarding the scientific and intellectual characteristics of Ayatullah Makārim, he emphasizes “simplicity in writing” and considers it a merit in his writing. This approach is evident in all his scholarly works, and perhaps one of the reasons for attracting a large

audience is the simplicity of the language used in explaining the exegetical content.

In this style, words carry their own specific semantic meanings, and scientific terms are easily interpreted. Therefore, the content is not wrapped in verbosity or expressed in cryptic language. The reader engages in reading the *tafsīr* without mental strain and quickly immerses himself in the discussion, easily reaching conclusions in line with the topics presented. The arguments are simple and tangible to the reader, and even in cases where the content may seem difficult, it is immediately simplified with clearer explanations and the help of simple examples. This is because the goal is for the reader to grasp the message of the Quran.

The authors of *Tafsīr-i Nimūnih* have addressed the topics with particular elegance by combining rational and customary language. However, it should be noted that in some instances, this principle has not been adhered to, and colloquial expressions that are not relevant to scientific topics have been employed (See: Makārim Shīrāzī 1992, 11:17). Additionally, in some cases, unnecessary content that is not suitable for *tafsīr* and is redundant has been included (ibid, 6:135), and this repetition is also observed in some volumes of the work.⁷

E) Presentation of Thematic Discussions

In terms of presenting and examining various topics and expressing diverse subjects, *Tafsīr-i Nimūnih*, “The Message of the Quran,” and “Ethics in the Quran” are considered to be among the good *tafsīrs* of the recent century. The abundance of these discussions in different volumes is quite evident. They can be considered a concise encyclopedia of doctrinal,

⁷. For example, the topic of the creation of the seven heavens is discussed in *Tafsīr-i Nimūnih* in Vol. 1, p. 165, Vol. 20, p. 229, and Vol. 24, p. 261.



ethical, legal, and scientific topics related to the Quran. For example, the depiction of human identity, expression of various states of humans, explanation of the existential dimensions of humans and the purpose of creation, different stages of human life, and explicit responses to human mental preoccupations in this regard are presented with simple analysis based on the Quranic verses.

In *Tafsīr-i Nimūnih*, the Islamic doctrinal foundations have been proven with the help of scientific, philosophical, and theological arguments, and doubts have been answered in a balanced manner and with simple language. The principles of Shia beliefs and the defense of their foundations, from which the authors have never deviated, have been presented reasoned, considering its aspects. The discussion of “intercession” (*shafā‘ah*), “concealing one’s true opinion” (*taqiyyah*), “return” (*raj‘at*), “Imamate,” “guardianship” (*wilāyah*), “infallibility” (*‘iṣmah*) of the Imams, and other topics have been thoroughly examined in this *tafsīr* and proven. The topic of Mahdism has also been well depicted and responded to the allegations of Shia opponents.

F) Valid Interpretation of Scientific Verses

According to Ayatullah Makārim, “miraculousness” (*i‘jāz*) or “miracle” (*mu‘jizih*) is to disable others and is used in cases where a person prevents another from doing something, escapes from someone’s grasp, brings someone to their knees, or places themselves in safety. He rejects the exclusivity of the Quranic miracle in eloquence and rhetoric, believing that constantly new aspects of the Quranic miracle are revealed. He then enumerates the proven aspects of the Quranic miracle as follows: miracle in terms of eloquence and rhetoric, legislative miracle, miracle in expressing beliefs and doctrinal issues, setting laws, scientific unknowns, news from the unseen, lack of inconsistency among Quranic verses, and so on. However, since he considers one of the most important aspects of the Quranic miracle to be the scientific miracle, he strives to elucidate this

type of miracle in multiple verses. From Ayatullah Makārim's perspective, attention to the scientific aspect of the Quran has not only been of interest to Muslims, but also Western scientists have shown interest in this aspect of the Quran (Mawlawī & Khalīlī 2015, 144). Ayatullah Makārim himself states in his *Tafsīr-i Nimūnih* that "Of course, we know that the Quran is not a book of natural sciences; rather, it is a book of human development, and therefore, one should not expect details of these sciences such as issues related to evolution, anatomy, embryology, botany, and the like to be discussed in the Quran. However, this does not prevent brief references to certain parts of these natural sciences in the Quran in line with educational discussions" (Mawlawī & Khalīlī 2015, 145).

Criteria for a Valid Interpretation of Scientific Verses

According to Ayatullah Makārim Shīrāzī, a valid interpretation of scientific verses of the Quran should adhere to or possess the following characteristics:

1. Emphasis on Certain Sciences, Not Hypotheses

Ayatullah Makārim, in explaining the correct method of interpreting scientific verses, which he has selected in the *tafsīr* of the Quran, believes that issues and sciences that can be the basis of *tafsīr* should be 100% proven, certain, or perceptible, as hypotheses change and evolve over time, and the Quran cannot be applied to changing hypotheses. This viewpoint is also endorsed by many other contemporary scholars. For example, according to Ayatullah Ma'rifat, the Quran is certain, but sciences are mostly uncertain; therefore, sciences should be applied to the Quran, not vice versa (Mawlawī & Khalīlī 2015, 145).

2. Observance of Rules and Regulations of *Tafsīr*

Another important criterion for interpreting scientific verses, according to Ayatullah Makārim, is the observance of the rules and regulations of *tafsīr*. Otherwise, the work of the exegete will lead to "opinion-oriented



exegesis,” (*tafsīr bi ra’y*) which is the most dangerous method of interpreting the Quran because instead of being a follower in the school of the Quran, the exegete becomes a teacher in front of this great celestial book, and instead of using the Quran, they try to impose their own thoughts on the Quran (Mawlawī & Khalīlī 2015, 147).

3. Considering the Language of the Quran in Scientific Verses as Real

Ayatullah Makārim believes scientific verses’ language is real, and he criticizes those who consider these verses symbolic. He expresses that if such interpretations and explanations are imposed on the Quran, it can lead to not only denying the miracles of the prophets but also denying most historical discussions in the Quran and considering them as mere “allegory” or symbolic (ibid, 148). In this case, all historical discussions in the Quran would lose their value (ibid, 149).

4- Focus on the Guidance and Humanization Aspect of the Quran

Mentioning scientific topics and examples in the Quran is not the main purpose of the Quran; rather, the primary aim of the Quran is to guide humans towards God. However, sometimes real and accurate scientific examples are also used to achieve this goal. As the author of *Tafsīr-i Nimūnih* considers the Quran as a life plan for guiding humans, he adheres to this principle when considering the scientific verses of the Quran and highlights their educational aspect. Based on this, he believes the Quran strives to create a special thought, system, and society. It aims to establish a distinctive community on Earth that assumes the leadership role of humanity; a community that serves as an unparalleled example in shaping an exceptional life (ibid, 149).

5. Interpreting Scientific Verses Based on Certain Reason

Another source of Quranic exegesis is the application of reason and rational self-evident truths (*badīhiyyāt-i ‘aqlī*). Intellectual data play an influential role in understanding Quranic verses in two ways: firstly,

intellectual data serve as clues in determining the meanings of verses and justifying their apparent meanings, and secondly, intellectual data serve as tools for understanding the Quran, determining the principles of understanding, inference, and deriving meanings from the verses. Ayatullah Makārim considers reason as the determining factor of human felicity or wretchedness, likening this world to a marketplace where the absence of reason leads to losses. Therefore, adhering to the above criteria in interpreting scientific verses of the Quran has led Ayatullah Makārim to present a systematic interpretation of these types of verses. This has ensured that unsubstantiated and baseless content does not find its way into his scientific references (ibid, 150).

2.2. Reviving the Method of Shia Exegetes

In the formulation and method of developing exegetical discussions, various groups have always taken extremes. Some have engaged in purely opinion-oriented *tafsīr*, while others have adhered strictly to hadith-based *tafsīr*. However, a group has referred to the verses of the Quran, the hadiths of the infallibles, and employed reason and sound thinking to reach the correct understanding, explanation, and elucidation of Quranic verses. This method is known as the rational-*ijtihādī* method. The unique position of this exegetical method has led many scholars, from the early days of Islam to the present, to employ this approach in their *tafsīrs*. Many Shia *tafsīrs* are also based on this method (See: ‘Amīd Zanjānī 1989, 331; Ayāzī 1993, 14).

The method of interpretation used by the early exegetes of Islam and the companions of the Prophet Muḥammad (s), including prominent figures like Ibn ‘Abbās, Ibn Mas‘ūd, Mujāhid, and others, clearly indicates that the first group of renowned exegetes were followers of the *ijtihādī* method of *tafsīr*. Despite their significant attention to exegetical hadiths, they emphasized contemplation, reflection, and independent reasoning as the foundation for understanding the Quranic verses and extracting their meanings (See: ‘Amīd Zanjānī 1989, 331). If we do not acknowledge this



historical background, at the very least, it should be noted that the practice of *ijtihād* in *tafsīr* emerged from the earliest days in the era of the *Tābi ‘ūn* (followers of the companions of the Prophet). One of the characteristics of the *tafsīrs* of the *Tābi ‘ūn* was the opening up of the door to *ijtihād* and its subsequent expansion. This method was then followed by subsequent scholars, and its scope continued to widen (Ma‘rifat 2000, 2:224).

Considering the points mentioned, the rational-*ijtihādī tafsīr* is a method that relies more on insight and reason rather than narration and hadith (ibid, 2:221). This method, based on rational and definitive principles, aims to explain the meanings of the Quran through reflection and contemplation of its explicit and implicit content (Ayāzī 1993, 40). However, it is important to note that within this method, there is a possibility of extremism and negligence. “*Tafsīr-i Nimūnih*” and “*Payām-i Qur’ān*” are not solely reliant on reason, but with sound *ijtihād* and *ijtihādī* method, they have also benefited from hadiths, affirming their authority in *tafsīrs*.

2.3. Creating a rational style in the processing of exegetical discussions

Creating a rational style in the processing of exegetical discussions is essential for ensuring a proper and logical approach to understanding the meanings of the Quranic verses. It is important to follow a logical method in examining and deducing the meanings of the Quranic verses in order to avoid deviation or reaching biased interpretations. In the collection of exegetical discussions by Ayatullah Makārim Shīrāzī, the progression of discussions is structured as follows:

Using the Quran to understand the intention of God from the Quranic verses involves determining the context of sentences and words,⁸

⁸ . For example, in order to understand who “*Ulū Baqiyyah*” are, he refers to other verses in which there is “*Baqiyyah*”, i.e. verse 248 of *Sūrat al-Baqarah* and 86 of *Sūrah Hūd*, and finally, he puts forward this:

understanding the implications of the verse (such as the term “عالمین” [all the worlds] in *Sūrat al-Ḥamd*, verse 31), exploring verses that are relevant to the discussed verse (discussing “فساد” [corruption], Makārim Shīrāzī 1992, 10: 201), defining the meanings of terms,⁹ and determining the correct recitation of the Quranic verses.¹⁰

Tafsīr-i Nimūnih benefits from Sunna and sayings of the Prophet Muḥammad (s) and the infallible Imams (a). In this regard, it elucidates the authority of the exegetical hadiths from the Prophet and the *Ahl al-Bayt* while refuting the authority of the exegetical narrations from the companions and scrutinizing the authority of single reports. It employs rational criteria for critiquing and examining the narrations and deciding on their acceptance or rejection. *Tafsīr-i Nimūnih* outlines three methods for the interpretation of the Quran and the presentation of the Quranic

“These individuals are bountiful beings and a divine reserve, who have been kept to dismantle the oppression and tyranny in the world and to raise the flag of justice and among the exemplars of such individuals is His Excellency, Imam Mahdi (may Allah hasten his reappearance)” (*Tafsīr-i Nimūnih*, vol. 9, pp. 276-277).

⁹. For instance, the concept of “*Muqarrabūn*” is addressed in verse 21 of *Sūrat al-Muṭaffifīn* (*Tafsīr-i Nimūnih*, Vol. 6, p. 273).

¹⁰. One of the rare and noteworthy aspects in *Tafsīr-i Nimūnih* is the determination of the correct reading of “*Il-Yāsīn*,” where the authors discuss refuting the theory of it being “*Āl-i Yāsīn*”: “There are clear indications within the Quran itself that confirm the initial meaning, that the intended meaning of ‘*Il-Yāsīn*’ is, indeed, ‘Elias,’ as after the verse, (*Salāmūn ‘alā Il-Yāsīn*): ‘Peace be to Elias,’ (Quran 37:130) within a single verse gap, it states: ‘He is indeed one of Our faithful servants’ (Quran 37:132). The return of the singular pronoun to ‘*Il-Yāsīn*’ is evidence that he was not someone additional, meaning he is, indeed, Elias. Another reason is that these four verses at the end of the story of Elias are exactly the same verses found at the end of the stories of Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Aaron. When we place these verses together, we see that the salutation mentioned by God in these verses is for the same prophet mentioned at the beginning of the discourse” (Makārim Shīrāzī 1992, Vol. 19, p. 145).



message: conformity to the Quran, consistency with the context of the verses, and coherence with rational and traditional certainties.

One of the topics emphasized by the authors of *Tafsīr-i Nimūnih* and *Payām-i Qur'ān* is intellect. In *Tafsīr-i Nimūnih*, the authors repeatedly rely on rational proofs present in the verses to explain their content. (For example: the discussion of the “Throne” (*‘Arsh*) in verse 54 of *Sūrat al-A‘rāf*, Makārim Shīrāzī 1992, 6: 204).

In understanding and interpreting the Quran, another method used is the use of vocabulary and literature. It is not possible to comprehend the meaning of a verse without understanding the meanings of the words and the purposes for which they are used. Scholars have paid special attention to the meanings of words and have adopted various methods for this purpose.

Tafsīr-i Nimūnih also employs different methods to understand the verses, although it should be acknowledged that this method is not commonly used for all verses. In some instances, attention to the explanation and expansion of words is crucial, and in many cases, focusing on the meanings of words and their explanations is necessary for proving or arguing a point, which is more prevalent in the first volume. Authors have adopted various methods to understand the meanings of words, which can be categorized in this way. However, the predominant method relies on the vocabulary of Rāghib Iṣfahānī.

2.4. Reviving the method of group research

One of the initiatives of Ayatullah Makārim in the compilation of his exegetical books and other scholarly works is the use of a specialized group in writing and editing. This method, which was not widely accepted by many scholars, was a revival of group work similar to the compilation of *Biḥār al-Anwār* by Allamah Majlisī along with a group that assisted him. Many scientific and research services were carried out in the office

of the Grand Ayatullah in a group manner, and it can almost be claimed that the *Tafsīr-i Nimūnih* revived the tradition of team and group work that had been forgotten.

In his introduction to the first volume, he states that various daily engagements did not allow for independent work on the deep sea of the Quran, on the one hand, the necessity of work became more apparent every day until the idea of group work emerged as a solution to break out of this impasse. For this purpose, a group of dedicated, knowledgeable, and sincere young individuals were chosen as companions on the path, and with round-the-clock efforts mixed with sincerity, this seedling bore fruit in a short time.

He describes the quality of this group work as follows:

“Initially, the Quranic verses were divided among the esteemed brothers, and with the necessary previous guidance, various *tafsīrs* written by the main sources of *tafsīr* and penned by the great scholars of this field, encompassing both Shia and Sunni perspectives (whose names are mentioned in the sources), were examined. Then, the findings that matched the needs and demands of the time were collected, and presented in the general sessions of this assembly, which convened daily, and any new insights from the Quran that needed to be added were incorporated during the same session. After discussion, dialogue, and consultation on various topics and referencing diverse sources, I dictated the content, while friends took swift notes. We, then, revisited the material, patiently reviewed, corrected, and prepared it for publication. After printing and before distribution, we examined, reviewed, and made further corrections.” (Makārim Shīrāzī, *Tafsīr-i Nimūnih*, 1371/1992, vol. 1, *Introduction*)

In the compilation of this work, approximately ten other scholars participated in shaping the *tafsīr* and accompanied Ayatullah Makārim. They systematically engaged in discussing, gathering information, presenting in sessions, and summarizing to transform the outcome of their work into a *tafsīr* of a portion of the Quran.



Among the collaborators of Ayatullah Makārim, we can mention the esteemed scholars of Islam: Muḥammad Riḍā Āshtiyānī, Dāvūd Ilhāmī, Muḥammad Ja‘far Imāmī, Asadullāh Īmānī, Muḥsin Qarā‘atī, Sayyid Nūrullāh Ṭabāṭabā‘ī Nijād, Maḥmūd ‘Abdullāhī, ‘Abdulrasūl Ḥasanī, Sayyid Ḥasan Shujā‘ī, and Muḥammad Muḥammadī Ishtihārdī (Makārim Shīrāzī, *Tafsīr-i Nimūnih*, 1371/1992, vol. 1, *Introduction*).

2.5. The impact of *Tafsīr-i Nimūnih* on subsequent exegetical works

In addition to drawing from both ancient and contemporary *tafsīrs*, *Tafsīr-i Nimūnih* has also influenced interpretations that came after it. For example, *Tafsīr-i Nūr* by Ḥujat al-Islam Qarā‘atī was influenced by the *Tafsīr-i Nimūnih*, and after the successful experience of *Tafsīr-i Nimūnih*, it entered the field of writing.

What is important is the acknowledgment of the fact that the authors of *Tafsīr-i Nimūnih* have selected material from previous *tafsīrs* and succeeded in reorganizing and explaining them better. This process was not merely for affirming or transferring these materials but also involved engaging with, appropriating, critiquing, and examining these contents.

According to the authors of *Tafsīr-i Mihr-i Qur‘ān*, they have also undertaken the compilation and writing of this *tafsīr* in 22 volumes with inspiration and influence from *Tafsīr-i Nimūnih*. Subsequently, they have published a translation of the Quran, an educational translation of the Quran, and a concise *Tafsīr* (*Tafsīr-i Qur‘ān-i Majīd*). (See: Mūḥammad ‘Alī Riḍā‘ī Iṣfahānī and others, *Tafsīr-i Mihr-i Qur‘ān*, vol. 1, *Introduction*)

Conclusion

In recent centuries, many scholars from the Qom seminary have made significant contributions to sequential and thematic *tafsīrs*, leaving commendable works for future generations. One of the prominent figures

in the field of *tafsīr* in the Qum seminary in this century is Ayatullah Nāṣir Makārim Shīrāzī, who has produced notable works in both sequential and thematic *tafsīr*, such as *Tafsīr-i Nimūnih*, *Payām-i Qurān*, and *Akhlāq dar Qur'ān*.

While incorporating the influences of his predecessors and teachers, Ayatullah Makārim has also established significant impacts on the studies of the Quran by contemporary and future scholars through his unique approach, methods, and exceptional characteristics.

Regarding the characteristics of Ayatullah Makārim's exegetical works, one can point out aspects such as engaging in both sequential and thematic *tafsīr* of the Quran, reviving the style of Shia exegetes, revitalizing the rational style in the formulation and processing of *tafsīr*, reviving the method of scientific group research, and influencing future generations of exegetes through a collective approach in *Tafsīr-i Nimūnih*. In all the mentioned areas, Ayatullah Makārim's movement, personality, and Quranic works have led to a remarkable change in the approach of future Quranic studies. The establishment of specialized centers for *tafsīr* and Quranic sciences, various associations and groups for the examination of Quranic topics, and *tafsīrs* can be counted as fruits of the efforts of Ayatullah Makārim and his group.

References

The Holy Quran.

ʿAmid Zanjānī, ʿAbbās ʿAlī. (1368 Sh/1989). *Mabānī wa rawish-hāye tafsīr-i Qurān* (3rd ed.). Tehran: Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance.



- Ayyāzī, Sayyid Muḥammad ‘Alī. (1414 AH/1993). *Al-Mufasssīrūn ḥayātuhum wa minhājūhum*. Tehran: Organization of Printing and Publications of the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance.
- Himmatyān, Maḥdī, & Fātimī, Sayyidah Ma‘šūmih. (1401Sh/2022). Makarem Shirazi and Marvan Sha’aban with An Emphasis on Scientific Miracles. *The Qur’an And Science*, 16(30), 217-238. doi: 10.22034/qve.2022.7231
- Makārim Shīrāzī, Nāṣir. (1371 Sh/1992). *Tafsīr Nimūnih* (10th ed.). Tehran: Dār al-Kutub al-Islamiyyah.
- Makārim Shīrāzī, Nāṣir. (1377 Sh/1998). *Akhlāq dar Qur’ān*. Qum: Madrasa of ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib.
- Makārim Shīrāzī, Nāṣir. (1386 Sh/2007). *Payām-i Qur’ān* (9th ed.). Tehran: Dār al-Kutub al-Islamiyyah.
- Makārim Shīrāzī, Nāṣir. (1421 AH/2000). *Al-Amthal fī tafsīr-i kitāb Allah al-Munzal*. Qum: Madrasa of ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib.
- Makārim Shīrāzī, Nāṣir. (1425 AH/2004). *Āyāt-i wilāyat dar Qur’ān*. Qum: Madrasa of ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib.
- Makārim Shīrāzī, Nāṣir. (1426 AH/2005). *Amthāl al-Qur’ān*. Qum: Madrasa of ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib.
- Makārim Shīrāzī, Nāṣir. (1426 AH/2005). *Nafahāt al-Qur’ān*. Qum: Madrasa of ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib.
- Makārim Shīrāzī, Nāṣir. (1428 AH/2007). *Mukhtaṣar al-Amthal*. Qum: Madrasa of ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib.
- Ma‘rifat, Muḥammad Hādī. (1379 Sh/2000). *Tafsīr va mufasssīrān*. Qum: Al-Tamhīd Institute.
- Ma‘rifat, Muḥammad Hādī. (1419 AH/1998). *Al-Tafsīr wa al-mufasssīrūn fī thawbih al-ghashīb*. Mashhad: Al-Jami‘ah al-Riḍawīyyah lil-Ulūm al-Islamiyyah.



Muhammad Hadi Mansouri / Ali Alvandi

Mawlavī, Muḥammad, & Khalīlī, Maʿṣūmih. (1391Sh/2016). The Position of Scientific Exegesis and its Criteria in Nemouneh Commentary. *Science and Religion Studies*, 7(13), 137-158.

Muslim, Muṣṭafā. (1431 AH/2009). *Al-Tafsīr al-mawḍūʿī li-suwar al-Qurʾān al-Karīm*. UAE: University of Sharjah, College of Graduate Studies and Scientific Research.

Riḍāʾī Iṣfahānī, Muḥammad ʿAlī and others. (1389 Sh/2010). *Tafsīr-i Qurān-i Mihr*. Qom: ʿAsr-i Zuhūr.