



A Review of Influential Qur'ānic Scholarship from the Seminary of Qum in the Past Century*



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Abstract

Promotional Article

Qur'ānic studies constitute a field where the essential and unique characteristics of the Qur'ān are explored. This article uses textual and historical analysis to review influential scholarship from the Seminary of Qom regarding Qur'ānic studies over the past century. Research findings indicate that scholars and intellectuals within the Seminary of Qom, particularly after the Islamic Revolution of Iran, have produced remarkable research on various issues related to Qur'ānic studies. In addition to the work of scholars in the fields of jurisprudence (*uṣūl al-fiqh*), theology (*kalām*), and jurisprudence (*fiqh*) on relevant Qur'ānic issues, numerous comprehensive or relatively comprehensive works have emerged in the field of Qur'ānic studies. These include *Methodology of Qur'ānic Exegesis*, *Qur'ānic Exegetical Schools*, *History of Qur'ānic Exegesis*, *An Evaluation of Qur'ānic Exegetical Strands*, and *An Analysis of the Qur'ānic Language and a Methodology of Its Understanding*. Furthermore, the introduction of the *al-Mīzān* exegesis of the Qur'ān and a large portion of the first volume of the *Tasnīm* exegesis (encompassing ten chapters) are notable contributions. Within the comprehensive exegeses of the Qur'ān produced in the past century, including *al-Mīzān*, issues such as abrogation (*naskh*) and the miraculous nature of the Qur'ān have also been addressed under the relevant Qur'ānic verses.

Keywords: Qur'ānic monographs, Qur'ānic exegetical schools, Qur'ānic exegetical strands, works on Qur'ānic studies, Seminary of Qom, fourteenth century.

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Introduction

In general terminology, “Qur’ānic studies” or “Qur’ānic sciences” encompass all fields related to the Qur’ān, including those aimed at enhancing the reading and understanding of the Qur’ān (sciences for the Qur’ān), those derived from the Qur’ān (sciences within the Qur’ān), and those about the Qur’ān (sciences surrounding the Qur’ān) (Bāqirī 2020, 25-27). This definition includes Qur’ānic exegesis as part of Qur’ānic studies. However, this general terminology is now considered outdated.

In a specific sense, “Qur’ānic studies” or “Qur’ānic sciences” refer to a field of study with the Qur’ān as its subject, exploring this scripture from various aspects such as the manner of its revelation, its recitations, its connection to the events of its time, its clearness (*iḥkām*) and ambiguity (*tashābuh*), and more (Bāqirī 2020, 27). Some researchers define this field as follows: Qur’ānic studies discuss the states as well as essential and exclusive characteristics of the Qur’ān, with the Qur’ān being their central subject (Şālihī Kirmānī 1990, 18; for an elucidation of this definition, see Bāqirī 2020, 29). In this specific sense, “Qur’ānic studies” do not encompass Qur’ānic exegesis but serve as a preliminary to it. This article adopts this second, more specific sense.

The field of Qur’ānic studies offers numerous advantages that necessitate its exploration. These include establishing the divine origin of the Qur’ān, authenticating the extant text of the Qur’ān, gaining deeper insights into its content, and defending it against objections. This field is essential to Qur’ānic exegesis and interpretation, as it addresses fundamental issues such as the foundations and methodology of exegesis (see Bāqirī 2020, 80-84).



Since the Qur'ān is the primary source of Islamic teachings and doctrines, it has been the focus of attention and discussion by Muslim scholars from the dawn of Islam to the present day. Consequently, Shiite seminaries have dedicated themselves to Qur'ānic sciences in various periods, alongside issues of jurisprudence, theology, philosophy, and related fields. In the past century, especially following the triumph of the Islamic Revolution of Iran, the dedication to Qur'ānic studies in the Seminary of Qom has been particularly prominent.

Using a descriptive-historical method, this article reviews the contributions of scholars from the Seminary of Qom in the field of Qur'ānic studies. It identifies their unique contributions based on evidence and considers the position of these works within the broader context of Qur'ānic studies during the same period. Due to the scope of the article, we focus only on the most influential works.

Criteria of an Influential Work

A scholarly work is considered influential within its pertinent field in various respects:

1. Sometimes, a work influences the orientation of a field of study through a groundbreaking theory. For instance, if someone proposes a new model in the field of the principles of jurisprudence that is so powerful that it changes the structure of the field, this will constitute the most prominent evidence of the theory's influence. The same can hold true for works in Qur'ānic studies.

2. At other times, a work is considered influential due to its status as a reference book, marked by numerous scholarly or academic citations and references.

3. Sometimes, a work is influential because the material and views it proposes serve as foundations for other scholarly works.



4. If a work is used as a textbook over a short or long period of time, this also indicates its influence.

5. Sometimes, a research work is deemed influential if the theories it proposes are considered the best among average scholars who, without critical reflection, simply reiterate those theories.

6. A work that precedes others, serving as the pioneering research in a specific domain, typically counts as influential even if the quality of its research is average, as it has paved the way for further exploration in a new field of research.

The works introduced in this article are categorized as influential in one of the aforementioned senses, as will be indicated in their introduction.

Research Background

In several works addressing the history of Qur'ānic studies or sciences, some of the works produced in the past century have been introduced. For example, *Philosophy and History of Qur'ānic Sciences* by 'Alī Awsat Bāqirī (2020, 150-153), influential works such as Muḥammad Hādī Ma'rīfat's *al-Tamhīd fī 'ulūm al-Qur'ān* (A Prolegomenon to Qur'ānic Sciences) and Muḥammad Taqī Miṣbāḥ's *Introduction to the Qur'ān Studies* are reviewed. Additionally, in works written in tribute to certain prominent figures, some works on Qur'ānic studies in the past century have been briefly introduced, as in *Qur'ānic Knowledge* by Nasīrī (2008, 1: 182-202, 407-461). However, there is no single article or book that comprehensively introduces all influential works of Qur'ānic studies in the past century. Therefore, there is a need and utility in conducting a comprehensive review of these works in a research study.

Independent Books on Qur'ānic Studies

From the first Islamic century until the present day, a plethora of books have emerged in the field of Qur'ānic studies.

A. Comprehensive and Relatively Comprehensive Books



Some researchers and scholars have delved into various issues of Qur'ānic studies within a single book, and some have even attempted to address all relevant issues. Among the works introduced in this section, Ayatullah Ma'rifat's *al-Tamhīd* stands out as comprehensive, while others are categorized as relatively comprehensive.

The Qur'ān in Islam

The book *Qur'ān dar Islām* (The Qur'ān in Islam) by 'Allāma Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabā'ī (1904-1981) is structured into five sections, where various issues of Qur'ānic studies are succinctly addressed. These include discussions on the Qur'ān's comprehensiveness and eternity, its autonomous significance and denotation, methods of interpretation, revelation, the collection of the Qur'ān, Qur'ānic recitations, the inner dimensions of the Qur'ān and its esoteric interpretation (*ta'wīl*), the history of exegesis, the Qur'ān's script and diacritic marks, names of Qur'ānic chapters (*sūras*), occasions of revelation of various verses, and the impossibility of distortion of the Qur'ān (see Ṭabāṭabā'ī 2000).

A Prolegomenon to Qur'ānic Sciences

The book *al-Tamhīd fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān* (A Prolegomenon to Qur'ānic Sciences) is the culmination of extensive research and study by Ayatullah Muḥammad Hadī Ma'rifat (1931-2007), published in ten volumes.² This

² . The book was initially published in six volumes by the Managerial Center of the Seminary of Qom (Markaz-i Muḍiriyat-i Ḥawzih-yi 'Ilmiyyih-yi Qom) and later by the Publishing Office of the Society of Seminary Teachers of Qom (Jāmi'ih-yi Mudarrisīn). However, shortly before the author's death, revisions and additional materials were incorporated into the book. It was also supplemented with other works by the author on Qur'ānic studies, such as *Shayānat al-Qur'ān 'an al-tahrīf* (The Qur'ān's immunity to distortion), *Shubuhāt wa-rudūd* (Objections and replies), and *al-Tafsīr wa-l-mufasssīrūn fī thawbih al-qashīb* (Qur'ānic exegesis and exegetes in its new garment), which were independently published previously. The new edition of *al-Tamhīd* with these additions was published in ten volumes by the al-Tamhīd Cultural Institute.



book has filled a significant gap by providing a comprehensive encyclopedia of Qur'ānic studies from a Shia perspective.

When *al-Tamhīd* was initially published in six volumes, Ayatullah Ma'rifat summarized it and released it in two volumes titled *Talkhīṣ al-Tamhīd* (Summary of the Prolegomenon). Moreover, Ayatullah Ma'rifat summarized the six-volume version of *al-Tamhīd* and the book *Ṣiḡānat al-Qur'ān* 'an *al-taḥrīf* and paraphrased it in Persian, published under '*Ulūm Qur'ānī* (Qur'ānic sciences).³

Additionally, at the request of the Organization for Researching and Composing University Textbooks in the Humanities (SAMT), Ayatullah Ma'rifat authored a book in Persian titled *Tārīkh-i Qur'ān* (History of the Qur'ān), which is an adaptation of the first two volumes of *al-Tamhīd* along with certain additions (see Ma'rifat 1999).⁴ Structured into six chapters, this book delves into various issues, including the phenomenon of revelation (*wahy*), the descent of the Qur'ān, the collection and compilation of the Qur'ān, the seven reciters and recitations of the Qur'ān, responses to claims about the distortion of the Qur'ān, and translations of the Qur'ān.

A Glance at the Ten Volumes of *al-Tamhīd*

In the introduction of the first volume of *al-Tamhīd*, Ayatullah Ma'rifat outlines the characteristics of the Qur'ān and subsequently explores various names and titles attributed to it. Following this, he offers a definition of Qur'ānic sciences (*'ulūm al-Qur'ān*), and then proceeds to

³. It is noteworthy that this book exhibits slight differences from the six-volume version of *al-Tamhīd*, reflecting certain new views and theories of Ayatollah Marefat on various issues.

⁴. This book was published prior to the new edition of *al-Tamhīd*, and therefore it does not incorporate the most recent views of Ayatollah Marefat on issues of Qur'ānic studies.



provide a chronological overview of the major works on Qur'ānic sciences in a section titled "The History of Qur'ānic Sciences."

After the introduction, Ayatullah Ma'rifat revisits the definition of Qur'ānic sciences, providing further elaboration. He distinguishes Qur'ānic sciences from Qur'ānic teachings and elucidates their role in comprehending Qur'ānic doctrines. Proceeding, he explores the etymology of the word "Qur'ān" and establishes the revealed status of Qur'ānic words within a section titled "Formulation of the Qur'ān, Creation of Revelation." Additionally, he discusses the verbal structure of the Qur'ān in contrast to its written form, presenting the characteristics of Qur'ānic discourses and delving into the language of the Qur'ān. Additional topics addressed in the first volume of *al-Tamhīd* include discussions on revelation (*wahy*), the descent (*nuzūl*) of the Qur'ān, and the historical aspects of the Qur'ān.

Having elucidated the literal meaning of "*wahy*," Ayatullah Ma'rifat delves into the Qur'ānic usage of this term. He then endeavors to establish the possibility of revelation, thoroughly examining three types of "apostolic revelation" (*al-wahy al-risālī*) (see pages 94-108). Furthermore, he investigates two significant questions concerning the Prophet's relationship with Qur'ānic revelation: (1) How did the Prophet ascertain his appointment to a divine mission, and did he experience any doubts during the initial divine revelation? (2) Is it conceivable for the Prophet to err in receiving revelation and mistake false imaginings for revelation?

The second volume of *al-Tamhīd* covers two main topics: Qur'ānic recitations and abrogation (*naskh*). Concerning recitations, echoing his teacher Ayatullah Khoei, Ayatullah Ma'rifat contends that the seven recitations of the Qur'ān are not frequently transmitted (*mutawātir*) and are largely products of inferential efforts by the reciters. He provides numerous reasons to support his assertion that the seven recitations are not frequently transmitted.



In his discussion of abrogation, Ayatullah Ma'rifat delves into various aspects of the issue, addressing existing objections. In the six-volume version of *al-Tamhīd*, he challenges Ayatullah Khoei's view that, according to verse 82 of *Sūrat al-Nisā'*, the presence of an allegedly abrogating verse, which does not directly address the purportedly abrogated verse, implies a discrepancy within the Qur'ān.⁵ He critiques Ayatullah Khoei's perspective that abrogating and abrogated verses should be reconciled in cases that do not fulfill this requirement (Ma'rifat 1994, 2: 202-317). However, Ayatullah Ma'rifat later shifted his stance, ultimately rejecting the concept of abrogation altogether, even in cases like the *Najwā* Verse, which Ayatullah Khoei accepted as an instance of abrogation. In fact, Ayatullah Ma'rifat denied the existence of any abrogated verses in the Qur'ān. In the ten-volume version of *al-Tamhīd*, in addition to the conditional abrogation presented in the six-volume edition, he introduces another category called "preparatory abrogation" (*al-naskh al-tamhīdī*). Furthermore, he provides a list of purportedly abrogated verses in the sequence of Qur'ānic compilation, examining various viewpoints on the accuracy of their abrogation, along with his own perspective on the matter (Ma'rifat 2007, 2: 307-276). Finally, he enumerates all the verses deemed abrogated by early scholars in the order of Qur'ānic compilation, citing the allegedly abrogating verses (with the respective sūra and verse numbers), and then offers his considerations regarding each case (Ma'rifat 2007, 2: 377-390).

The third volume of *al-Tamhīd* delves into the issue of definitive (*muḥkam*) and ambiguous (*mutashābih*) verses. After providing definitions for these terms, Ayatullah Ma'rifat explores the wisdom behind the existence of ambiguous verses, the nature of esoteric interpretation

⁵. Ayatollah Khoei maintains that a verse can be considered to abrogate another only if the abrogating verse directly addresses the abrogated verse. He scrutinizes 36 purported cases of abrogation in the Qur'ān, rejecting the concept of abrogation in all instances except for verse 12 of Sūra al-Mujādila, which is abrogated by its subsequent verse, 13 (see Khoei 1974, 287-374).



(*ta'wīl*), the possibility of entities other than God having knowledge of the interpretation of the Qur'ān, and the Islamic denominations that contributed to external ambiguities within certain Qur'ānic verses under "A brief introduction to Salafi denominations that caused ambiguity in verses" (Ma'rifat 2007, 3: 42-70). He dedicates pages 71-368 of this volume to revisiting the proper understanding of ambiguous verses. Subsequently, within 64 pages, he examines the notion of "badā'" from the perspective of the Qur'ān and hadiths. Finally, he interprets the verses that seemingly negate the infallibility of prophets under the section titled "Purification of the Prophets" (*Tanzīh al-anbiyā'*), demonstrating that they do not contradict the prophets' immunity to sins and mistakes.

In the fourth volume, Ayatullah Ma'rifat begins by defining miracles (*i'jāz*), elucidating various kinds of miracles and the Qur'ānic characteristics related to them. He explores the necessity of miracles (2007, 4: 23-30), followed by an examination of the stage of the Qur'ānic inimitability challenge (*taḥaddī*) (4: 31-35). He then discusses various perspectives on the sense in which the Qur'ān is considered a miracle (4: 35-37), meticulously presenting the views of early and later scholars on the miracle of the Qur'ān (4: 39-136) and examining the concept of divine deterrence (*ṣarfa*) in relation to the miracle of the Qur'ān (4: 137-176). Under a section titled "Testimonies and Statements," he reviews the words of certain prominent figures in Arabic literature during the time of Qur'ān revelation about the nonhuman divine source of the Qur'ān (4: 180-197). In a subsequent section titled "Knocking and Suppressing" (*Qar'āt wa-Qam'āt*), he addresses the Qur'ānic verses regarding some opponents of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his household), who were metaphorically described as having their heads knocked like hammers and being humiliated and ashamed in a remarkable way. He explores various aspects of their unique effectiveness (4: 199-218). Ayatullah Ma'rifat devotes the majority of the fourth volume to an investigation of what was presented as challenges to the Qur'ān, including four sūras published



online under the titles “Faith,” “Muslims,” “Embodiment,” and “Wills” (4: 227-296).

In the fifth volume, Ayatullah Ma'rifat delves into the “expressive miracle” of the Qur'ān within twelve sections. These sections cover various aspects, including the subtlety of the Qur'ān's method and the peculiarity of its style, its proper arrangement and harmonious tones, the coherence and harmony of its unique and original content,⁶ and the excellence of its similes and depictions.

In the sixth volume, he explores the Qur'ān's scientific and legislative miracles. In the first section, after examining the Qur'ān's inclusion of all knowledge (2007, 6:19-30) and whether the Qur'ān's scientific miracles are also part of its challenge (*tahaddī*) (6:30-34), Ayatullah Ma'rifat studies instances of the Qur'ān's scientific miracles, including the beginning of life on Earth and the stages of human fetal development. In the second section, he investigates Qur'ānic laws and legislation in various fields and argues for their superiority.

The seventh volume is dedicated to addressing objections and skepticism raised by Orient'Alīsts and others regarding the Qur'ān. Within five sections, he addresses the following issues. First, he considers objections against the revelatory source of the Qur'ān. Next, he examines the relationship between the Qur'ān and the culture of the period of revelation, responding to objections about the Qur'ān's influence from that culture. Additionally, he addresses allegedly discrepant verses, demonstrating their consistency. Furthermore, he discusses cases claimed to contradict science or to contain historical errors and responds to these

⁶ . In this discourse, Ayatollah Marefat delves into the topic of coherence and consistency among the suras and verses of the Qur'an. He shared this particular section with Ezzatollah Mowlayinia in 1991, prior to its publication, with the intention of it being taught at the Theology Faculty of the University of Tehran. Mowlayinia then translated this section into Persian and it was subsequently published in 1994 as "Tanāsūb-i āyāt" (Coherence of Qur'anic verses) (Marefat 1994, 7).



claims. In the final section, he considers objections pertaining to Qur'ānic stories.

In the eighth volume of *al-Tamhīd*, subtitled “*Ṣiyānat al-Qur’ān min al-tahrīf*” (The Qur’ān’s Immunity to Distortion),⁷ Ayatullah Ma’rifat presents various intellectual and transmitted evidence to establish the Qur’ān’s immunity to distortion, while also responding to arguments suggesting its distortion.

The final two volumes of *al-Tamhīd* focus on the history of Qur'anic exegesis, specifically highlighting various Shia and Sunni approaches and methods. These volumes are titled “*Al-Tafsīr wa-l-mufasssīrūn fī thawbih al-qashīb*” (Quranic exegesis and exegetes in its new garment).⁸ The structure of these volumes follows that of al-Dhahabī’s renowned book, “*al-Tafsīr wa-l-mufasssīrūn.*” However, in order to incorporate the role of the Prophet's Household in Qur'anic exegesis, Ayatullah Ma’rifat includes detailed introductions of prominent Shiite exegetes to address the gaps in al-Dhahabī’s work.

Ayatullah Ma’rifat’s *al-Tamhīd* has filled the gap of a comprehensive Shiite work on Quranic sciences. His perspectives on various Quranic matters have been cited and analyzed in seminaries and universities alike. His influence is evident in the numerous articles discussing his theories, some of which are included in the book *Qur’ānic Knowledge*.⁹ Ma’rifat’s

7. The book was summarized and translated into Persian by Mohammad Shahrabi and published with Ayatollah Marefat’s endorsement in 1997 by the Publication Center of the Islamic Propagation Office. Additionally, the original book itself was translated into Persian by Ali Nasiri under Ayatollah Marefat’s supervision and published in 2000 by the Organization for Researching and Composing University Textbooks in the Humanities (SAMT) under the title “*Tahrīfnāpazīrī-yi Qur’ān*” (The Undistortability of the Qur’ān).

8. This work by Ayatollah Marefat was translated into Persian by some of his students and published by the al-Tamhid Cultural Institute in 2000.

9. This book, consisting of five volumes, was compiled under the supervision of the Department of Quranic



works are taught in both seminary and non-seminary scholarly communities, with the condensed version of *al-Tamhīd* being specifically taught at the Seminary of Qom.

Introduction to the Qur'ān

The book *Qur'ānshināsī* (Introduction to the Qur'ān) is a compilation of lectures given by Ayatullah Muḥammad Taqī Miṣbāḥ Yazdī (1935-2021) during his time teaching at Haqqanī School and Dar Rah-i Ḥaqq Institute. These lectures have been transcribed and edited by a group of scholars and are presented in two volumes (Miṣbāḥ Yazdī 2009, 1: 26).¹⁰

The first volume of *Qur'ānshināsī* is divided into four chapters, covering topics such as the characteristics and titles of the Quran, its descent and revelation, the reasons why the Quran is considered to be from God, and the concept of the Quran being free from distortion or alteration.

The second volume of *Qur'ānshināsī* explores various Qur'ānic issues, including the purposes of the Qur'ān, the possibility of understanding it, the spiritual conditions and obstacles related to its use, the scholarly requirements for Qur'ānic exegesis, the methodology of interpreting the Qur'ān, the distinction between clear and ambiguous verses, the concept of abrogation, the esoteric interpretation and exegesis of the Qur'ān, as well as the Qur'ān's inner layer, global scope, eternity, and comprehensiveness. These topics are thoroughly discussed, drawing upon intellectual and transmitted arguments, as well as rational principles.

This book does not attempt to encompass all aspects of Qur'ānic sciences. Its primary objective is to introduce the Qur'ān based on its own teachings, utilizing the method of thematic exegesis. This book is

Studies in the Islamic Sciences and Culture Academy.

¹⁰ .The first volume of the book was edited by Mahmoud Rajabi, with language editing handled by Hamid Arian. The second volume, on the other hand, was edited by Gholamali Azizikia.



categorized as a thematic exegetical book among Ayatullah Mesbah's works.

This book is a textbook for undergraduate students at the Imam Khomeini Education and Research Institute and is taught in other educational centers as well.

Madkhal al-Tafsīr

The book *Madkhal al-tafsīr* (Introduction to Qur'ānic Exegesis) consists of lectures by Ayatullah Muḥammad Fāḍil Lankarānī (1931-2007) concerning certain issues in Qur'ānic sciences as prolegomena to Qur'ānic exegesis. During the time he delivered the lectures, Ayatullah Fāḍil Lankarānī wrote summaries that were later formulated into the book (Fāḍil Lankarānī 1976, 13). After discussing the nature of miracles and their relationship with the principle of causation, as well as how miracles signify the truth of claims to prophethood, Ayatullah Fāḍil Lankarānī delves into the miracle of the Qur'ān and its various aspects, such as the Qur'ānic inimitability challenge (*taḥaddī*) and the ways in which the Qur'ān counts as a miracle. He elaborately discusses objections surrounding the Qur'ānic miracle and provides examples of responses to the Qur'ānic challenge both from the past and the modern day.

Regarding the issue of Qur'ānic reciters and recitations, Ayatullah Fāḍil Lankarānī primarily explores various perspectives on whether the seven recitations of the Qur'ān are frequently transmitted (*mutawātir*). Subsequently, he delves into the validity of these recitations and the permissibility of performing prayers using the various alternative recitations of the Qur'ān.

In a section titled "Principles of Qur'ānic Exegesis," he examines the validity of the apparent meanings (*ẓawāhir*) of Qur'ānic verses, the credibility of interpretations transmitted from the Infallibles (the Prophet, his daughter Fāṭima, and the Twelve Shiite Imams), and the evidential status of intellectual intuitions and inferences in exegesis. On the issue of



the undistortability of the Qur'ān, he begins with a definition of distortion and its varieties, then delves into arguments supporting why the Qur'ān has not been distorted, and finally addresses claims regarding the Qur'ān's distortion.

Many research articles on Qur'ānic issues have cited Ayatullah Fāḍil Lankarānī's views from this book, testifying to its influence within scholarly communities.¹¹

History and Sciences of the Qur'ān

The book *Tārīkh va 'Ulūm-i Qur'ān* (History and Sciences of the Qur'ān) is written by Ayatullah Sayyid Abulfaḍl MirMuḥammadī Zarandī. He begins by explaining his motivation for writing the book and the method he employs (MirMuḥammadī 1996, 4). In a section titled “The Qur'ān and How It Was Sent Down,” MirMuḥammadī discusses issues pertaining to the history and descent of the Qur'ān. The main topics in this section include: Gabriel's role in Qur'ānic revelation, how Gabriel met with the Prophet, the scribes of Qur'ānic revelation, the revealed status of Qur'ānic words, the openings of sūras, the hadith stating that the Qur'ān was revealed based on seven letters, the collection and compilation of the Qur'ān, punctuation and diacritics of the Qur'ān, codices (*muṣḥafs*) held by the Prophet's companions (*Ṣaḥāba*), and the seven recitations of the Qur'ān.

The author also discusses issues such as the miracle of the Qur'ān, abrogating and abrogated verses, clear and ambiguous verses, the lack of any distortions in the Qur'ān, and the Meccan and Medinan sūras of the Qur'ān.

¹¹ . For example, see Najjarzadegan 2019 and Jazaeri, Amini Tehrani, and Khademzadeh Yeganeh 2019.



The author himself translated the book into Arabic under the title *Buḥūth fī Tārīkh al-Qurʾān wa-ʿUlūmih* (Discussions in the History of the Qurʾān and Its Sciences) (MirMuḥammadi 1999).

Ayatullah MirMuḥammadi Zarandī finished writing the book in 1979. He served as the dean of the Theology Faculty at the University of Tehran, where he taught these materials for years. In the first decade following the victory of the Islamic Revolution of Iran in 1979, when works on Qurʾānic sciences were not flourishing, this book was used as a textbook in various educational centers and, at times, served as a source for admission to certain PhD programs.

Ārāʾ ḥawl al-Qurʾān

The book *Ārāʾ ḥawl al-Qurʾān* (Opinions Surrounding the Qurʾān) by Ayatullah Sayyid ʿAlī ʿAllāma Fānī is structured into eight sections, where the author considers various perspectives and establishes his own opinion through meticulous analyses. In the first section, Ayatullah ʿAllāma Fānī examines the authoritativeness (*ḥujjiyya*) of the apparent meanings of the Qurʾān. In the second section, he expounds on the purposes of the Qurʾān's descent, emphasizing its role in guiding the people and the necessity of reflection on the Qurʾān and its requirements. The third section tackles Qurʾānic exegesis, exploring its various concepts, its distinction from esoteric interpretation (*taʾwīl*), as well as the stages of exegesis and the background knowledge required for it.

The second chapter addresses Qurʾānic recitations, exploring various aspects of the issue, such as the frequency of the transmission of the seven or ten recitations. In the fifth chapter, the author discusses the issue of distortions and alterations in the Qurʾān, classifying and evaluating the hadiths cited in this regard. In the sixth and seventh chapters, he respectively examines the possibility of adding an exception case to a Qurʾānic rule through a single-transmitter hadith (*khabar al-wāḥid*) and the possibility of a Qurʾānic ruling being abrogated or revoked by such a



hadith. The eighth chapter is dedicated to how the Qur'ān was sent down, where the author reconciles the historical and Qur'ānic facts that the Qur'ān was sent down gradually with the Qur'ānic verses indicating that the Qur'ān was suddenly sent down on Qadr Night, discussing various views on the matter ('Allāma Fānī 1990).

Ayatullah 'Allāma Fānī was a teacher of Ayatullah Ma'rifat. He says about his teacher that Fānī was a profound and competent researcher and was dedicated to educational training of his students. In addition to weekday meetings, his students met him on Thursdays and Fridays from early in the morning until noon, discussing various issues, which were of great scholarly value (Nasīrī 2008, 1: 176).

Al-Qur'ān al-Karīm wa-Riwāyāt al-Madrasatayn

'Allāma Sayyid Murtidā 'Askarī (1914-2007) authored the book *Al-Qur'ān al-Karīm wa-Riwāyāt al-Madrasatayn* (The Noble Qur'ān and the Narratives of the Two Schools) in three volumes to address objections raised against the Shiite perspective on the Qur'ān as well as Orient'Alīst skepticism about the Qur'ānic text ('Askarī 1995, 1: 9, 10). The book thoroughly examines *Faṣl al-Khiṭāb fī Tahṛīf Kitāb Rabb al-Arbāb* (The Conclusive Word on the Distortion of God's Book) by al-Muḥaddith al-Nūrī and *al-Shī'a wa-l-Qur'ān al-Karīm* (The Shia and the Noble Qur'ān) by Ehsan Elahi Zaheer, critiquing the hadiths cited in these two works that purport to establish the distortion of the Qur'ān ('Askarī 1995, 1: 11).

The hadiths examined in this book encompass various categories, including: (1) those concerning the compilation of the Qur'ān, (2) those indicating additions or omissions in the Qur'ānic text, (3) those related to abrogation and bringing into oblivion (*insā'*) in the Qur'ān, (4) those about differences in the codices of the Qur'ān held by the Prophet's companions, (5) those regarding different recitations of the Qur'ān, and (6) those concerning the Qur'ān being sent down on seven letters ('Askarī 1995, 11-15).



In the first volume, ‘Allāma ‘Askarī delves into preliminary issues. Initially, he examines the characteristics of pre-Islamic Arabian society during the period of Qur’ānic revelation. Subsequently, he discusses aspects of Qur’ānic history during its revelation in both Mecca and Medina. In the two chapters of this section, he delineates the characteristics of Meccan verses, the compilation of the Qur’ān in Mecca and Medina, and the features of Medinan verses. Thirdly, the author provides definitions for the following terms: (1) revelation and descent, (2) Qur’ān, Book, and codex (*muṣḥaf*), (3) *sūra* and *āya* (verses), (4) *juz’* and *ḥizb* (specific sections of the Qur’ān), (5) recitation (*tilāwa*) and reading (*qirā’a*) of the Qur’ān, (6) *ḥāfiẓ* and *jāmi’*, (7) hymnody (*tartīl*) and elocution (*tajwīd*), and (8) abrogation (*naskh*).

‘Allāma ‘Askarī dedicates the second volume of the book to hadiths within the school of the caliphs (*khulafā’*) regarding the Qur’ān (‘Askarī 1996, 9). This volume encompasses seven issues. In the first six issues, the author examines hadiths implying distortions in the Qur’ān, those concerning the Basmala, contradictory hadiths related to the compilation of the Qur’ān, differences in codices of the Qur’ān held by the Prophet’s companions, implications of the Qur’ān being revealed in seven letters, construction recitations of the Qur’ān and their reciters, and abrogation of and causing to forget certain verses. In a subsequent section titled “An Examination of the Preceding Hadiths and a Mistaken Inference,” ‘Allāma ‘Askarī explores the characteristics of the Islamic community during the caliphate of Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthmān, and ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, as well as the Umayyad and Abbasid caliphates, providing an account of the history of the Qur’ān in all these periods. In the eighth issue, the author addresses Orientalists’ perspectives on the Qur’ān.

This volume focuses on al-Muḥaddith al-Nūrī’s book *Faṣl al-Khiṭāb*. Since al-Nūrī presents an issue in various parts of his book, ‘Allāma ‘Askarī gathers them together and then criticizes them (‘Askarī 1996, 15). Additionally, besides referencing the original sources of those hadiths,



when he finds a hadith or hadiths that are stronger than the ones cited by al-Nūrī, he mentions them and then criticizes their validity (‘Askarī 1996, 16). Regarding the hadiths of the school of c‘Alīphs about the Qur’ān, ‘Allāma ‘Askarī concludes that these fall into three categories: (1) those falsely attributed to God, the Prophet, and his companions by *zindīqs* (disbelievers), (2) the fabricated ones whose fabricator is unknown, and (3) the ones in which terms are used whose meanings gradually changed since the third Islamic centuries, leading to misinterpretations and false attributions such as distortion and different recitations of the Qur’ān or the companions’ codices with regard to the Qur’ānic revelation they contain. In re‘Alīty, they merely differed in expression rather than Qur’ānic revelation (‘Askarī 1999, 8).

The third volume of the book is dedicated to the examination of hadiths about the Qur’ān attributed to the school of the Prophet’s Household or Ahl al-Bayt (‘Askarī 1999, 9). Since Ehsan Elahi Zaheer cited the relevant hadiths of this school from al-Muḥaddith al-Nūrī’s *Faṣl al-Khiṭāb* and accordingly accused Shia of attributing distortion to the Qur’ān, this volume indirectly critiques *Faṣl al-Khiṭāb* as well (1999, 13-14).

The third volume addresses four preliminary issues: an introduction to the books *Faṣl al-Khiṭāb* and *al-Shī‘a wa-l-Qur’ān* (The Shia and the Qur’ān) as well as their authors, errors in certain manuscripts of the sources regarding the names of hadith transmitters and hadith texts, Usulist and Akhbarist approaches to hadiths, and the filtration process of the Prophet’s tradition within the school of *Ahl al-Bayt* (peace be upon them).

‘Allāma ‘Askarī proceeds to review the first three sections of Ehsan Elahi Zaheer’s *al-Shī‘a wa-l-Qur’ān*, where Zaheer claims to outline the Shiite view of the Qur’ān in various periods. He critiques this account by providing a chronological overview of the position of the school of *Ahl al-Bayt* regarding the Qur’ān. Additionally, he reviews the fourth section of Zaheer’s book, in which Zaheer refers to one thousand Shiite hadiths attributing distortion to the Qur’ān from the Shiite scholar of hadith, al-



Nūrī al-Ṭabarsī, in *Faṣl al-Khiṭāb*. ‘Allāma ‘Askarī meticulously examines the hadiths allegedly signifying Qur’ānic distortion in the order of the Qur’ānic text. He concludes that al-Shaykh al-Nūrī and Zaheer cite 1,062 hadiths to demonstrate distortions, alterations, and omissions in certain verses of the Qur’ān. However, upon examination of their chains of transmission and their texts, it becomes evident that they are either weak in their chains of transmission, involving exaggerative liars, unreliable figures, or unknown individuals in their transmission chains, or the text of these hadiths merely provides an interpretation of the verse rather than altering the main text of the Qur’ān. In many cases, the chain of transmission is weak and the text merely offers an interpretation of the verse, rather than indicating an omission therein (‘Askarī 1999, 847).

‘Allāma ‘Askarī’s works, particularly this book, have left an immense impact on reinforcing Shiite principles and responding to accusations leveled against the Shia. The book played a crucial role in defending the Shiite perspective on the undistortability of the Qur’ān and rejecting the accusation of Qur’ānic distortion to the Shia based on al-Muḥaddith al-Nūrī’s book *Faṣl al-Khiṭāb*.

Conclusion

In the past century, especially following the Islamic Revolution of Iran, the Seminary of Qom exhibited remarkable activity in the field of Qur’ānic studies. Scholars of jurisprudence not only endeavored to formulate and elucidate the rational principles of understanding the text but also produced works addressing specific Qur’ānic issues, notably Qur’ānic recitations, the undistortability of the Qur’ān, and its inner layers. Additionally, certain theological works of the past century have delved into various aspects of Qur’ānic studies, particularly focusing on the miracle of the Qur’ān. Moreover, within books of Islamic jurisprudence, one can find discussions on issues related to Qur’ānic recitations in the context of reciting the Qur’ān during prayers.



Qur'ānic exegetes of the past century have also addressed specific issues of Qur'ānic studies within the introductions to their works or throughout their interpretations of particular verses. Some of these introductions are extensive, spanning up to ten chapters.

Numerous independent books have also emerged, addressing diverse issues within Qur'ānic studies. Some of these are comprehensive, aiming to cover all aspects of the subject, while others focus solely on specific areas within Qur'ānic sciences. Additionally, there are monographs that delve deeply into singular issues. This demonstrates the active research landscape within the Seminary of Qum over the past century, with scholars dedicating their works to various related topics within Qur'ānic studies.

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