



## Examining the Positive Innovations in the Field of Qur'ānic Sciences in Qom Seminary During the Last Century\*



Muḥammad 'Alī Riḍā'ī Iṣfahānī<sup>1</sup>

Abstract

Promotional Article

The Qur'ānic Sciences is a hundred years old and it was usually discussed in the introductory part of the Qur'ānic exegeses but thereafter, independent books were written on this subject and it became an independent science. In Qom Seminary, there has been significant progress in the field of Qur'ānic Sciences in the last hundred years, and with the presence of Ayatollah Ma'rifat (d. 1385 S.H.) in the last forty years, the field of Qur'ānic Sciences is revived in the Shia academic circle.

Of course, this scientific leap in the traditional Qur'ānic Sciences (such as the history of the Qur'ān, the esoteric aspect of the Qur'ān, decisive and ambiguous verses, abrogating and abrogated verses, the foundations and principles of Qur'ānic exegesis, the sciences and techniques of recitations, etc.) and also in the new Qur'ānic Sciences (such as the language of Qur'ān, semantics and semiotics, methodology, hermeneutics, philosophy of Qur'ānic Sciences, Qur'ānic arts, etc.) has brought about publication of several books, encyclopedias, research papers in this regards, while academic courses have been initiated, and even new disciplines and specializations have been approved.

In this article, using the library method and the author's field research experiences, the history of Qur'ānic Sciences and the areas of its significant progress in the Qom Seminary during the last hundred years have been discussed.

**Keywords:** Qur'ān, Qur'ānic Sciences, Seminary, Qom, Last Century.

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1 . Professor, Higher Education Complex of Quran and Hadith, Al-Mustafa International University: Rezaee@Quransc.com, (Corresponding author).



## Introduction

The Qur'ānic Sciences, which include a wide range of old and new sciences, related to the Qur'ān, have been taught in the Shia seminaries since ancient times and were normally discussed in the introductory parts of the books on the Qur'ānic exegeses. However, it was revived in the Qom Seminary in the last hundred years and it has experienced rapid development.

In this article, we shall discuss this topic using the library method as well as the author's field research experiences.

### 1. Conceptual Framework

There are several key concepts in this article. These include:

#### 1.1. Qom Seminary [Hawza 'Ilmiyyah]

Qom Seminary means a religious academic center that was revived in Qom since the time of the late Sheikh 'Abdul Karīm Ḥā'irī (1238-1315 SH) (even though the Shia Seminaries have a history of a thousand years (see Muvahid Abṭāḥī, 1986) and the Qom Seminary has also been in existence with ups and downs in the past ages (ibid).

In the present era, the conventional concept of Qom Seminary is not limited to the traditional Seminary, focusing mainly on courses such as "jurisprudence" (*fiqh*) and the "principles of jurisprudence" (*uṣūl-i fiqh*) and the fundamental courses), but it encompasses a wide range of educational, research, propagational and religious management centers located in Qom, which train students in conformity with the school of *Ahl-al-Bayt* (a). Therefore, the field of Qur'ānic Sciences at the modern academic centers of the Seminary such as Al-Muṣṭafā International University, Imam Khomeini Research Institute, and other specialized Qur'ānic centers is also discussed in this article.

#### 1.2. Qur'ānic Sciences

This term has two usages:

**a) Traditional Qur'ānic Sciences:** It is a collection of sciences relating to the Qur'ān (such as the history and compilation of the Qur'ān, the miracles of the Qur'ān, the esoteric aspect (*batn*) and the inner level of meanings (*ta'wīl*), the “definitive” (*muḥkam*) and the “metaphorical” (*mutashābih*), the “abrogating” (*nāsikh*) and the “abrogated” (*mansūkh*) verses, the Meccan and the Medinan verses, the occasion of revelation, the sciences and techniques of recitation, the Qur'ān's manuscript, the preservation of the Quran from distortion, and so forth) which has a history of more than a thousand years among Muslims, and important books such as “*Al-Burhān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*” by Zarkashī (794 AH), “*Al-Itqān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*” by Suyūtī (910 AH) and “*Al-Tamhīd fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*” by Muḥammad Hādī Ma'rifat (1385 Sh) and dozens of other books and research papers have been written in this regard.

**b) Modern Qur'ānic Sciences:** In recent decades, some new topics and issues have entered into the discussions of the field of Qur'ānic Sciences, such as foundations and principles of Qur'ānic exegesis, methodologies and approaches of Qur'ānic exegesis, the language of the Qur'ān, hermeneutics, semiotics and semantics, Oriental studies about the Qur'ān, cultural practices and the Qur'ān, and new dimension of the miracles of the Qur'ān, and so forth. Some of these issues are rooted in Islamic culture and traditional Qur'ānic Sciences, but new issues have been added to them. Anyway, this new range of subjects is called the new [or modern] Qur'ānic Sciences.

## 2. Literature Review

No independent book or article was found on the topic of this research (i.e., the Qur'ānic Sciences in Qom Seminary during the last Century), but in some books and research papers, this same topic or some aspects of it are mentioned:



1. “*Dānishnāme-ye ‘Ulūm-i Qur’ān*” [Encyclopedia of Qur’ānic Sciences] by Ali Akbar Rashad et al. and published in 1398 Sh by Research Institute of Islamic Culture and Thought. In this book, which deals with traditional and new Qur’ānic sciences, the historical background of each discussion is usually mentioned.

2. The research paper titled “*Nawāvarī-hā-ye Shi‘a dar Tafṣīr va ‘Ulūm-i Qur’ān*” [Shia innovations in Qur’ānic exegesis and sciences] by Muḥammad ‘Alī Riḍā’ī Iṣfahānī, a collection of works of the Congress on the role of Shi‘a in the emergence and expansion of Islamic sciences, 1397 Sh.

3. “*Ravesh-shināsī-ye Tadrīs va Taḥṣīl-i dānish-hā-ye Qur’ān*” [Methodology of teaching and studying Qur’ānic Sciences], Muḥammad ‘Alī Riḍā’ī Iṣfahānī, currently in press.

### 3. Traditional Qur’ānic Sciences

In the last hundred years in Qom Seminary, there have been many positive innovations in the field of traditional subjects of the Qur’ānic Sciences. In some cases, the experts of the Qur’ān and the Qur’ānic exegetes have presented new theories or structures and literary works. The most important of which are mentioned here:

#### 3.1. Reviving the Shia Qur’ānic Sciences

Shia scholars usually discuss the Qur’ānic Sciences in the introductory part of their Qur’ānic exegesis (such as the introductions to *tafsīrs* of “*al-Tibyān*” and “*Majma‘ al-Bayān*” and detailed introductions to *tafsīr* of “*al-Ṣāfi*,” and so forth) and sometimes they wrote monographs on the subjects of Qur’ānic Sciences, such as the “history of the Quran” (*Tārīkh-i Qur’ān*) by Abu ‘Abdullah Zanjānī (1360 AH). However, Ayatollah Ma‘rifat became the revivalist of Shia Qur’ānic Sciences and compiled all the subjects of traditional Qur’ānic Sciences in a single collection by stating, analyzing, and criticizing the sayings of Shia and Sunni scholars of the

Qur'ān, he could express his scholarly opinions reasonably. The precious work “*Al-Tamhīd fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*” was written in more than ten volumes by Ayatollah Muḥammad Hādī Ma'rifat (d. 1385 SH) and published in Qom in recent decades. This work can be considered as the first complete book of Shia's Qur'ānic Sciences.

### 3.2. Defending the Qur'ān's lack of distortion

The compilation of numerous works on the incorruptibility of the Qur'ān and the emphasis on this subject from the Shia perspective are among the most important functions of the Qur'ānic Sciences in recent decades. Ayatollah Muḥammad Hādī Ma'rifat (d. 1385 Sh) wrote a book entitled “*Ṣiyānat al-Qur'ān 'an al-Taḥrīf*” (*Preservation of the Qur'ān from distortion*) in Qom and stated the basic position of Shia regarding the non-distortion of the Qur'ān with sound reasons and dispelled the doubts created against Shia in this regard. Thereafter, Ḥujjat al-Islām Fethullāh Najjārzādīgān (Muḥammadī) wrote a book entitled “*Salāmat al-Qur'ān min al-Taḥrīf*” (*The Safety of the Qur'ān from distortion*) and Ayatollah 'Abdullāh Javādī Āmulī wrote a book entitled “*Nizāhat-i Qur'ān az Taḥrīf*” (*The Qur'ān's freedom from distortion*) and dozens of research papers were written on this subject.

### 3.3. Consolidating the Qur'ānic recitation with Successive Chains of Narrator

In the past centuries, the seven styles of Qur'ānic recitations were popular and were trusted, but one of the theories that was proposed and consolidated in Qom in recent decades and which gradually became the general theory of the Qur'ānic scholars is that only the Qur'ānic recitation with successive chains of narrators is valid. (“*Tawātur*” means there are many narrations about the recitation throughout the ages in such a way as to ensure that there is no possibility of unanimity in lying about it since the “*tawātur*” brings about certainty, it proves that each verse is the Qur'ān).



However, the narrations about the seven, ten, and fourteen styles of Qur'ānic recitation are all singular narrations, which at most is based on conjecture (in addition to the fact that some of their chains of the narrator are doubted and do not link to the Infallibles). Therefore, one cannot establish [based on the singular narrations] that the words and verses are Qur'ān and it is not convincing evidence. Of course, in the contemporary era, the Qur'ān in Islamic countries are generally written and printed based on the recitation of Ḥafṣ as reported by 'Āṣim. However, this recitation is also a singular narration, but its validity is due to its compatibility with the recitation with successive chains of narrators among the Muslims.

The above theory was proposed by Ayatollah Muḥammad Hādī Ma'rifat (d. 1385 Sh) (see Ma'rifat, "Al-Tamhīd fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān" vol. 2), and it was strengthened thereafter by other scholars of the Qur'ān, and it is the dominant view of the Qur'ān studies in the present era in Qom.

### **3.4. Theorizing on the Esoteric Aspect of the Qur'ān**

The esoteric aspect of the Qur'ān (*batn*) has been raised since the advent of Islam in the hadiths of the Prophet and *Ahl al-Bayt* (a) and has been the focus of the Qur'ānic exegetes throughout the ages, but the views on the quiddity of the esoteric aspect of the Qur'ān are different. In the last hundred years, new theories about the esoteric aspect of the Qur'ān have been presented in Qom which have influenced the fate of the contemporary Qur'ānic exegesis. Among these theories are:

#### **3.4.1. Ontological Theory**

According to this theory, the Qur'ān has various levels of existence, the highest level of which is with the Almighty God, where it is not about words and meanings, but the real existence that was revealed by Gabriel to the Prophet (s), but the words and the meanings were revealed at the lowest level and communicated to the people through the Prophet. Some Qur'ānic exegetes can reach the highest levels of existence of the Qur'ān (i.e., the esoteric aspect) through a spiritual wayfaring towards God.



According to this theory, “*baṭn*” (the hidden) is not in the category pertaining to words and meanings, but it is based on real existence, which is available in divine knowledge.

This viewpoint can be noticed in some of Imam Khomeini’s writings, for example, he says:

The truth of the Divine Holy Qur’ān, before being sent down to the stages of creation and before undergoing practical modes (*aṭwār*), is of the affairs of His Essence and of the facts of Knowledge in His Unity (*ḥaḍrat-i wāḥidiyyat*). It is the truth of a “Self-Speech” (*kalām-i nafsī*), which is the “Essential Argument” (*muqāri ‘ah-ye dhātiyyah*) in His Names. This truth appears to no one, neither by means of formal sciences or cordial knowledge nor by unseen disclosure, except through complete divine revelation to the blessed person of the Final Prophet (s), in the intimacy of “*qāba qawsayn*” (at the distance of two bows’ length), or even in the secret privacy of “*aw adnā*” (or nearer). The hand of hope of the human species is short of that, except, that of the sincere of Allah’s friends who, according to the spiritual lights and the divine facts, share in the spirituality of the Prophet’s sacred essence and, through their complete subordination, they vanished in him. They receive the disclosing knowledge by inheriting it from him, and the truth of the Qur’ān may be reflected in their hearts, with the same luminosity and perfection with which it appeared in the heart of that great personality, without its descending to stations and taking forms. That Qur’ān is without change and alteration, and it is of the book of divine revelation. The one capable of carrying this Qur’ān is the noble person of the absolute friend of Allah, ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (a). Others cannot take this fact in, unless it descends from the station of *ghayb* (the invisible) to the station of visibility and takes the seen form, wearing the apparel of mundane words and letters. This is one of the meanings of “distortion” (*tahrīf*) or alteration which has occurred in all Divine Scriptures as well as the Qur’ān, changing all the noble verses, which, with a change, or rather many changes,



according to the stations and stages which continue from His “Names” to the last of the worlds of vision and visibility, are placed within the reach of man. The number of the stages of the change corresponds to the number of the stages of the “*buṭūn*” (inner levels) of the Qur’ān exactly. The meaning of *tahrīf* here is the descent from absolute invisible to absolute visibility, in accordance with the degrees of the worlds, whereas the *buṭūn* is the return from absolute visibility to absolute invisibility. So, the beginning of the change, and the beginning of the *buṭūn* are opposed. Whenever a wayfarer (*sālik*) attains a stage of the *buṭūn*, he gets rid of a degree of the change. When he arrives at the absolute *buṭūn*, which is the seventh, according to the general classification, he absolutely gets rid of the distortion (*tahrīf*).<sup>2</sup> (Mousavi Khomeini 1993, pp. 181-182)

The above viewpoint expresses a nice theory which can be seen in verses 21-22 of *Sūrat al-Burūj*: “*Rather it is a glorious Quran, in a preserved tablet*”<sup>3</sup> (Quran 85:21-22) and verse 79 of *Sūrat al-Wāqī‘ah*: “*No one touches it except the pure ones*”<sup>4</sup> (Quran 56:79) and the verses of the Qur’ān revealed by Gabriel to the Prophet is a witness to it.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> . In another place, Imam Khomeini while explaining the reason for using the plural form of “*Innā*” and “*Anzalnā*” [i.e., We sent down] in *Sūrat al-Qadr*, says: The point here is to aggrandize the state of Allah, the Exalted, as the revealer of this noble Book. It may be that this plurality refers to a nominal plurality denoting that Allah, the Exalted, with all the affairs of His Names and Attributes, is the originator of this noble Book. For this reason, this noble Book is the image of the Collective Oneness of all the Names and Attributes, and is the introducer of the Holy state [*maqām*] of Allah in all affairs [*shu‘ūn*] and manifestations. (see Mousavi Khomeini, *Ādāb al-Ṣalāt*, pp. 320-321).

3. ﴿بَلْ هُوَ قُرْآنٌ مَّجِيدٌ\* فِي لَوْحٍ مَّحْفُوظٍ﴾ (البروج/ ٢١-٢٢)

4. ﴿لَا يَمَسُّهُ إِلَّا الْمُطَهَّرُونَ﴾ (الواقعة/ ٧٩)

<sup>5</sup> . Of course, if the objections raised concerning the meaning of verse 79 of *Sūrat al-Wāqī‘ah* in the discussion



### 3.4.2. Cognitive Concept Theory

Some experts consider the esoteric aspect of the Qur'ān (*batn*) to be in the category of concepts (not existence), such as:

**a) Allamah Ṭabāṭabā'ī's point of view:** The *batn* of the Qur'ān is the deep meanings of the verse, which are obtained through the exegetical methodology of Qur'ān by the Qur'ān:

After analyzing the hadith of “*batn*,” ‘Allāma Ṭabāṭabā'ī writes: “The Manifest (*ẓahr*) is the same as the apparent and the basic meaning which is obtained from the verse. The Hidden (*batn*) is the hidden meaning, whether that meaning is one or more, close to the apparent meaning or far from it and there is an intermediary between them (Ṭabāṭabā'ī 1996, 3:74).

While citing an example, Allamah Ṭabāṭabā'ī writes: “The Glorious Qur'ān has a Manifest and a Hidden aspect.”

Almighty God says in His words: “*Worship Allah and do not ascribe any partners to Him*”<sup>6</sup> (Qur'ān 4: 36) and the manifest meaning of this statement is a prohibition of normal worship of idols just as He also says: “*So avoid the abomination of idols*”<sup>7</sup> (Qur'ān 22: 30). However, with reflection and analysis, it becomes clear that worshipping idols is forbidden because it is submission and humility before other than God, and there is no peculiarity for the worshipped being an idol, as God Almighty has considered obedience to Satan to be his worshipping: “*Did I not exhort you, O children of Adam, saying, 'Do not worship Satan*”<sup>8</sup> (Qur'ān 36: 60). And based on another analysis, it becomes clear that there is no

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on allegorical interpretation (*ta'wīl*) are resolved, the interpretation of the verse to mean the essence of the Qur'ān is correct.

6. ﴿وَأَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَلَا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا...﴾ (النساء/ ٣٦)

7. ﴿... فَاجْتَنِبُوا الرِّجْسَ مِنَ الْأَوْثَانِ...﴾ (الحج/ ٣٠)

8. ﴿أَلَمْ أَعْهَدْ إِلَيْكُمْ يَا بَنِي آدَمَ أَنْ لَا تَعْبُدُوا الشَّيْطَانَ...﴾ (يس/ ٦٠)



difference in the obedience and submission of a person to himself and others. Just as one should not obey others, one should not obey and follow the desires of his soul in disobedience to God Almighty, as He mentions: “*Have you seen him who has taken his desire to be his god*”<sup>9</sup> (Qur’ān 45: 23).

With a more accurate analysis, it becomes clear that one should not pay attention to anyone other than God Almighty but neglect Him; because paying attention to other than God is giving independence to him and showing humility and smallness before him, and this belief alone is the actual worship. Almighty God says: “*Certainly We have winnowed out for hell many of the jinn and humans: they have hearts with which they do not understand, they have eyes with which they do not see, they have ears with which they do not hear. They are like cattle; indeed, they are more astray. It is they who are the heedless*”<sup>10</sup> (Qur’ān 7: 179).

As it can be observed, it is initially understood from the holy verse, “*do not ascribe any partners to Him*”<sup>11</sup> (Qur’ān 4: 36) that one should not obey idols. In a broader view, it is understood that a person should not obey others without God’s permission. In a broader view, it means that man should not obey even his own desires, and still in a broader view than that, it means that he should not neglect God and pay attention to other than Him.

This order, that is, a manifestation of a simple basic meaning of the verse and then a manifestation of a broader meaning follows and likewise, a manifestation of a deeper meaning is prevalent throughout the Qur’ān. And by reflecting on these meanings, the meaning of the famous hadith

9. ﴿أَفَرَأَيْتَ مَنِ اتَّخَذَ إِلَهَهُ هَوَاهُ...﴾ (الجاثية/ ٢٣)

10. ﴿وَلَقَدْ ذَرَأْنَا لِجَهَنَّمَ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنسِ لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ بِهَا وَلَهُمْ أَعْيُنٌ لَا يُبْصِرُونَ بِهَا وَلَهُمْ آذَانٌ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا أُولَئِكَ كَالْإِتْعَامِ بَلْ هُمْ أَضَلُّ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْغَافِلُونَ﴾ (الأعراف/ ١٧٩)

11. ﴿...﴾ وَلَا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا...﴾ (النساء/ ٣٦)



which was narrated from the Holy Prophet (s) and documented in the books of hadith and Qur'anic exegesis will become obvious: “Indeed for the Qur'ān, there are manifest and hidden meanings, and its hidden meaning has seven depths of hidden meaning”<sup>12</sup> (Tafsīr al-Ṣāfi, Introduction; *Safīnat al-Biḥār*, the term “*baṭn*”)

The Glorious Qur'ān possesses manifest (*ẓāhir*) and hidden (*baṭn*) meanings, both of which are intended, except that these two meanings are concurrently together, not opposite each other. Neither does the intended meaning of the manifest negate the intended meaning of the hidden nor does the intended meaning of the hidden interfere with the manifest. In the analysis of the hadiths on *baṭn*] meaning, he says: “From here it appears, firstly: that the Qur'ān has levels of intended meanings based on the ranks and positions of its audience... and secondly: that the manifest and the hidden meanings are relative matters, so every manifest has a hidden aspect in relation to it and vice versa”<sup>13</sup> (Ṭabāṭabā'ī 1996, 3:73).

**b) Ayatollah Muḥammad Hādī Ma'rifat (d. 1385 Sh):** says about the esoteric or hidden (*baṭn*) meaning of the Qur'ān: “What is meant by the hidden (*baṭn*) meaning of the Qur'ānic verse is a broad and wide-ranging concept that is hidden behind the veil of the manifest meaning (that is, the manifest meaning is in the section relating to the revealed) which under the conditions of this broad concept should be extracted from the hidden (*baṭn*) meaning of the verse (Ma'rifat 2010, 91)

He considers the “hidden or esoteric aspect (*baṭn*) of the Qur'ān” as a broad, long-lasting, permanent and eternal meaning that the content of the verses should be used in a general, universal, wide meaning, as wide as the time and as wide as the world (Ma'rifat 1997, 65; Ma'rifat 2009, 3:28).

12. «ان للقرآن ظهراً و باطناً و لبطنه بطناً الى سبعة ابطن». (تفسير صافي، مقدمه؛ سفينة البحار، ماده «بطن»)

13. «و من هنا يظهر اولاً: ان للقرآن مراتب من المعاني المرادة بحسب مراتب اهله و مقاماتهم... و ثانياً: ان الظهور البطن امران نسبيان، فكل ظهر بطن بالنسبة الى ظهره و بالعكس».



He considers the hidden or Esoteric aspect (*batn*) of the Qur'ān to mean the interpretation of the inner level of meanings (*ta'wīl*) and he writes: "The other term for *ta'wīl* is the explanation of the general concept hidden behind the veil of the word that appears peculiar based on the revelation"<sup>14</sup> (Ma'rifat 2004, 1:30).

Then he brings the narrations of Hidden meaning (*batn*) as a witness and writes:

Accordingly, the Qur'ān has a manifest meaning based on the revelation (*tanzīl*) and a hidden meaning based on the *ta'wīl*, which is rather expressed as the hidden or esoteric aspect (*batn*), because this general concept was extracted from the content of the verse in a general way, by eliminating the aspects of the verse that are related to occasions of revelation and which make the verse peculiar to them based on the apparent meaning of the revelation, so that they make the general aspect of the verse after canceling its peculiarities. This general meaning has been concealed from those who limit their gaze to the circumstances of revelation of the verse, but the one who looks deeply and ponders on it will find the verse with a broad concept and breadth of horizons, which makes the Qur'ān - in every verse - an eternal message.<sup>15</sup> (Ma'rifat 2004, 1:31)

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14. «والمصطلح الآخر للتأويل هو: تبين المفهوم العام الخايب وراء ستار اللفظ الذي يبدو خاصاً حسب التنزيل». (التفسير الاثرى الجامع، ج ١، ص ٣٠)

15. «و عليه فللقرآن ظهر حسب التنزيل و بطن حسب التأويل، انما عبّر عنه بالبطن، لان هذا المفهوم العام انما استخلص من فحوى الآية استخلاقاً، بالغاء جوانب الآية المرتبطة بالمناسبات و التي تجعل الآية خاصة بها حسب ظاهر التنزيل، ليجعلوا وجه الآية العام بعد الغاء الخصوصيات السائرة لقد بطن هذا المعنى العام لمن قصر نظره على ملاسبات الآية حسب تنزيلها، اما الذي تعمق النظر و تدبّر، فيجد الآية ذات مفهوم واسع سعة الافاق، الامر الذي يجعل القرآن - في جميع آية - ذات رسالة خالدة». (التفسير الاثرى الجامع، ج ١، ص ٣٠)

Thereafter, he gives an example of the verse “Ask the People of the Reminder if you do not know”<sup>16</sup> (Qur’ān 16: 43) which was revealed about the polytheists who doubted the prophethood of Prophet Muhammad (s) and instructed them to ask *Ahl al-Dhikr*, i.e., the people of the Book. However, the content of the verse is general and encompasses the consultation of an ignorant person to a knowledgeable person in the principles and branches of religion. This is a universal rule and mission (Ma’rifat 2004, 1:31). That is, it is necessary to cancel the peculiarities of the occasion of revelation and the purpose of the verse should be expressed as a general rule in the consultation of an ignorant to the scholar, which can be applied to new manifestations at any time.

He further mentions that the indication of the verses on Hidden meaning (*baṭn*) is in the form of “unclear associative signification” (*dilālat-i iltizāmī-ye ghayr-i bayyin*). Therefore, understanding the hidden meaning (*baṭn*) of the verse requires deep insight (ibid, pp. 31-32).

In addition, he explains the method of understanding hidden meaning (*baṭn*) (which includes: understanding the purpose of the verse, cancellation of the peculiarities of the verse and extracting a general rule, application of the verse to new instances, etc.) and enumerates its conditions (ibid, pp. 32-37)

This method is very visible in the exegetical hadiths of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (a) and Ayatollah Ma’rifat has mentioned and explained many examples of these hadiths. For instance, “the balance” (*al-mīzān*) in verses, “He raised the sky and set up the balance, declaring, Do not infringe the balance! Maintain the weights with justice, and do not shorten the balance!”<sup>17</sup> (Quran 55:7-9), has been interpreted to indicate Imam ‘Alī (a).

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16. ﴿... فَسَأَلُوا أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ﴾ (النحل/ ٤٣)

17. ﴿وَالسَّمَاءَ رَفَعَهَا وَوَضَعَ الْمِيزَانَ \* أَلَّا تَطْغَوْا فِي الْمِيزَانِ \* وَأَقِيمُوا الْوَزْنَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا تُخْسِرُوا الْمِيزَانَ﴾  
(الرحمن/ ٧-٩)



The “flowing water” in verse, “Say, Tell me, should your water sink down [into the ground], who will bring you running water?”<sup>18</sup>(Quran 67: 30) has been interpreted to indicate the knowledge of the Imam.

### 3.5. Conditional, Preparatory and Gradual Abrogation

The issue of abrogation (*naskh*) of some Qur’ānic verses has been raised since the advent of Islam, and the scholars of the Qur’ān have usually classified the abrogation into three types (1. Abrogation of the ruling and the verse, 2. Abrogation of the verse without the ruling, 3. Abrogation of the ruling without verse) and they have unanimously accepted the last type.<sup>19</sup>

However, Ayatollah Muḥammad Hādī Ma’rifat (d. 1385 Sh) proposed three other types of abrogation<sup>20</sup> which, although shares the same wording as the traditional types of abrogation, opens a new phase in the Qur’ānic research. These are three types of abrogation, whose common feature is that they are not similar to the famous and traditional terms. It can rather be said that it is a new meaning of abrogation, in which its rulings change based on the change in the subject and the conditions. In other words, there is a kind of effect of time, location, and compliance with the interests of the subject and accordingly in the rulings.

#### 3. 5.1. Conditional Abrogation (*Naskh-i Mashrūf*)

In this case, the legislator [i.e., Almighty God] gives a ruling [legislation] in certain circumstances subjected to certain conditions but when those conditions change, He therefore changes the ruling. For instance, the

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18. ﴿قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَصْبَحَ مَاؤُكُمْ غَوْرًا فَمَنْ يَأْتِيكُمْ بِمَاءٍ مَعِينٍ﴾ (الملك/ ٣٠)

19. See Books on the Quranic Sciences, such as “*Al-Itqān fī ‘Ulūm al-Qur’ān*” by Suyūfī, “*Al-Tamhīd fī ‘Ulūm al-Qur’ān*” by Ayatullah Ma’rifat, under the topic of “Abrogation” (*Naskh*).

20. See “*Shubuhāt wa Rudūd*” (Doubts and Responses), Muḥammad Hādī Ma’rifat, under the topic of wife-beating and slavery.



'Verses of War and Peace,' which commanded peace and tolerance with the infidels and polytheists during the weak conditions of the Muslims in Mecca, but in the conditions of Medina when the Muslims became powerful, the order of war and fighting with the infidels and polytheists was issued. In other words, in the conditions of Medina, the rules of peace and tolerance with infidels and polytheists are somehow changed (i.e., became ineffective) and canceled. And whenever the conditions of the Muslims in any era are like the conditions of Medina, the decree of war and defense will be implemented (see Ma'rifat 2010, the topic of "Abrogation"; Havāsī 2016, 118).

### 3. 5.2. Preparatory Abrogation (*Naskh-i Tamhīdī*)

In this case, the legislator [i.e., Almighty God] wants to change a tradition or a wrong ruling that is prevalent in society. However, since He cannot change that ruling all at once due to the special conditions prevailing in human society, He provides the prerequisites to gradually remove this wrong tradition or wrong ruling from the scene of society. Like how the Qur'ān, the Prophet (s), and the *Ahl al-Bayt* (a) dealt with slavery, which had become a habit and an integral part of the social, economic, and military system in human society at the same time as the advent of Islam. Therefore, incorporating solutions such as freeing slaves as atonement for sins and encouraging their freedom, etc., gradually prepared the ground for the cancellation of this wrong ruling and tradition from society. The ruling on slavery is erased and canceled in a way that after hundreds of years, no traces of slavery can be seen in Islamic society.

### 3. 5.3. Gradual Abrogation (*Naskh-i Tadrījī*)

In this case, the legislator [i.e., Almighty God] wants to implement a strict order of ruling and remove a wrong custom from society, but it is not possible due to the prevailing conditions in society. Hence, He initially declares weak degrees of the ruling and He presents and executes the more severe degrees step by step. Like how the Qur'ān handles the issue of drunkenness, which at first, places a person at the crossroads between good



provision and intoxicating wine in Mecca<sup>21</sup> (Qur'ān 16: 67). Thereafter, at the early stage in Medina, He mentions the sin and harm of drinking wine<sup>22</sup> (Qur'ān 2: 219). In addition, He declares the prohibition of drunkards from entering the mosque<sup>23</sup> (Qur'ān 4: 43), and at last, He declares a strict ban on alcohol<sup>24</sup> (Qur'ān 5: 90).

21. ﴿وَمِنْ ثَمَرَاتِ النَّخِيلِ وَالْأَعْنَابِ تَتَّخِذُونَ مِنْهُ سَكَرًا وَرِزْقًا حَسَنًا إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ﴾ (النحل/٦٧)

“And of the fruits of date palms and vines, from which you draw wine and goodly provision. There are indeed signs in that for a people who apply reason” (Quran 16:67)

22. ﴿يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْخَمْرِ وَالْمَيْسِرِ قُلْ فِيهَا إِثْمٌ كَبِيرٌ وَمَنَافِعُ لِلنَّاسِ وَإِثْمُهُمَا أَكْبَرُ مِن نَّفْعِهِمَا وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ مَاذَا يُنْفِقُونَ قُلِ الْعَفْوَ كَذَلِكَ بَيَّنَّ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ الْآيَاتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَفَكَّرُونَ﴾ (البقرة/٢١٩)

“They ask you concerning wine and gambling. Say, ‘There is a great sin in both of them, and some profits for the people, but their sinfulness outweighs their profit.’ And they ask you as to what they should spend. Say, ‘All that is surplus.’ Thus does Allah clarify His signs for you so that you may reflect” (Quran 2:219)

23. ﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَقْرُبُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَنْتُمْ سُكَارَى حَتَّى تَعْلَمُوا مَا تَقُولُونَ وَلَا جُنُبًا إِلَّا عَابِرِي سَبِيلٍ حَتَّى تَغْتَسِلُوا وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ مَرْضَى أَوْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ أَوْ جَاءَ أَحَدٌ مِنْكُمْ مِنَ الْغَائِطِ أَوْ لَامَسْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَلَمْ تَجِدُوا مَاءً فَتَيَمَّمُوا صَعِيدًا طَيِّبًا فَامْسَحُوا بِوُجُوهِكُمْ وَأَيْدِيكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَفْوًا غَفُورًا﴾ (النساء/٤٣)

“O you who have faith! Do not approach prayer when you are intoxicated, [not] until you know what you are saying, nor [enter mosques] in the state of ritual impurity except while passing through until you have washed yourselves. But if you are sick or on a journey, or any of you has come from the toilet, or you have touched women, and you cannot find water, then make your ablution on clean ground and wipe a part of your faces and your hands. Indeed, Allah is all-excusing, all-forgiving” (Quran 4:43)

24. ﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّمَا الْخَمْرُ وَالْمَيْسِرُ وَالْأَنْصَابُ وَالْأَزْلَامُ رِجْسٌ مِنْ عَمَلِ الشَّيْطَانِ فَاجْتَنِبُوهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ﴾ (المائدة/٩٠)

“O you who have faith! Indeed wine, gambling, idols and the divining arrows are abominations of Satan's doing, so avoid them, so that you may be felicitous” (Quran 5:90)





In this new type of abrogation, the wrong custom of drinking alcohol and the illusion of its permissibility were negated and social conditions were controlled. Finally, the ruling of not allowing drinking alcohol is implemented and even drunkards are physically punished<sup>25</sup> (see Ja'farī 2019, pp. 89-90).

### 3. 6. Systematization of Qur'ānic Exegesis

Through the expansion in the methodological issues (which include, the fundamentals, principles, methodologies and approaches), one of the outstanding academic works in the field of Qur'ānic Sciences in recent decades in Qom Seminary was the organization and expansion in the methodology of Qur'ānic exegesis, to the extent that it became one of the important branches of Qur'ānic Sciences and it is taught as independent courses in the Qur'ānic disciplines. Even as a Qur'ānic discipline at the Fourth Level [of the Seminary], it was placed in the content tree of the Seminary and approved in the doctoral courses of Al-Mustafa International University under the title “Methodology and Philosophy of Qur'ānic Exegesis.” Previously, these topics used to be discussed sporadically in the Qur'ānic exegeses.

In the methodology of Qur'ānic exegesis, several important branches of Qur'ānic Sciences are discussed:

a) The Basics of Qur'ānic Exegesis: That is, the presuppositions of Qur'ānic exegesis, such as the definition of “*tafsīr*” (Quranic exegesis), “*ta'wīl*” (inner level of meanings), “*baṭn*” (inward aspects of the Quran) and resolving their relationship, as well as the conditions of the Qur'ānic exegete, sources of Qur'ānic exegesis, etc. Many books have been written

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25 . See the article entitled: “*Naskh-i Mashrūf, Tamhīdī va Tadrījī*” by Muḥammad 'Alī Riḍā'ī Iṣfahānī in a Collection of articles of Ayatollah Ma'rifat's anniversary congress under the title “Knowledge of the Quran” edited by 'Alī Naṣrī, Islamic Culture and Thought Research Institute Publications.



and published in this field in recent decades, including: “*Ravesh Shināsī-ye Tafṣīr*” (The Methodology of Qur’ānic Exegesis) by ‘Alī Akbar Bābā’ī et al, “*Mantiq-i Tafṣīr-i Qur’ān*” (The Logic of Qur’ānic Exegesis [vol. 1]) and “*Mabānī va Qawā’id-i Tafṣīr-i Qur’ān*” (The Basics and Principles of Qur’ānic Exegesis) by Muḥammad ‘Alī Riḍā’ī Iṣfahānī, “*Mabānī Tafṣīr Qur’ān*” (The Basics of Qur’ānic Exegesis) by Sayyid Riḍā Mu’addab, etc.

b) The Principles of Qur’ānic exegesis: This includes general literary, linguistic, and special principles such as the context, application, and adaptation [of verses], etc. Many books have been written in this regard in recent decades, including the aforementioned first and second sources, as well as “*Qawā’id al-Tafṣīr lada al-Imāmiyyah wa ahl al-Sunnah*” (The Principles of Qur’ānic exegesis in the view of the Imami school and the Sunni school of thought) by Muḥammad Fākīr Maybudī, etc.

c) The methodologies of Qur’ānic exegesis: This includes the methodologies of interpreting the Qur’ān by the Qur’ān, hadith-based, intellectual, scientific, allusive, as well as criticism of the interpretation based on opinion (*tafṣīr bi ra’y*). Many books have been published in this regard, including: “*Al-Tafṣīr wa al-Mufasssīrūn fī thawbih al-Qashīb*” by Ayatollah Muḥammad Hādī Ma’rifat; “*Rawish-hā-ye Tafṣīr-i Qur’ān*” (The Methodologies of Qur’ānic Exegesis) by Sayyed Riḍā Mu’addab; “*Ravish-hā va girāyish-hā-ye Tafṣīr-i Qur’ān*” (The Methodologies and Approaches in the Qur’ānic Exegesis) by Ḥusayn ‘Alawī Mihr; “*Mantiq-i Tafṣīr-i Qur’ān*” (The Logic of Qur’ānic Exegesis [vol. 2]) and “*Rawish-hā va girāyish-hā-ye Tafṣīr-i Qur’ān*” (The Methodologies and Approaches in the Qur’ānic Exegesis) by Muḥammad ‘Alī Riḍā’ī Iṣfahānī, in which last book has been translated into Arabic, Urdu, English, and published and taught in some countries.

d) Approaches and Schools of Qur’ānic Exegesis: This includes traditional approaches, such as mystical exegesis, theological exegesis, philosophical exegesis, jurisprudential exegesis, as well as the new

approaches such as social exegesis, and some branches of the scientific exegesis (such as medical exegesis, astronomical exegesis, educational-based exegesis, etc.) and the criticism of some schools of Qur'anic exegesis such as the Quranists, etc.

In this case, many books (apart from the books mentioned in section c above) have been written in recent decades, including: “*Makātib-i Tafsīrī*” (The Schools of Qur'anic Exegesis) by 'Alī Akbar Bābā'ī and “*Mantiq-i Tafsīr-i Qur'ān*” (The Logic of Qur'anic Exegesis [vol. 5]) and “*Qur'ān va 'Ulūm-i Ṭabī'ī*” (The Qur'ān and Human Sciences) by Muḥammad 'Alī Riḍā'ī Iṣfahānī.

e) Emergence of New methodologies of Qur'anic Exegesis: Although new exegetical methods are expressed in exegetical innovations since exegetical methods are related to discussions surrounding the Quran, they fall under the category of Quranic sciences (in a general sense). Therefore, we refer to them here:

### 3.6.1. Comparative Thematic Qur'anic Exegesis

Although this exegetical style has been used in an unorganized manner in the books of jurisprudential verses (*ayāt al-aḥkām*) and the beliefs (*'aqā'id*), it was methodically popularized in the 1380s in Qom by Hojjat al-Islam wa al-Muslimin Faṭḥullāh Najjārzādīgān (Muḥammadī), who wrote a book [in Persian] entitled “*Mabānī-ye Tafsīr-i Taṭbīqī*” (The Basics of Comparative Qur'anic Exegesis) in the Qur'ān and Hadith Higher Education Complex of Al-Mustafa International University. Thereafter, other books in the same direction on the Verses of *wilāyah* (guardianship) and Mahdism (*Mahdawiyyah*) were written. In this exegetical style, verses are collected around a topic, and the viewpoints of Shi'a and Sunni Qur'anic exegetes are analyzed and criticized comparatively. In the present era, comparative exegesis appeared as a course of study, then a discipline in Comparative Qur'anic Exegesis at the doctoral level of Al-Mustafa International University and other academic



centers was introduced and dozens of theses have been written using this method.

### 3.6.2. Interdisciplinary Thematic Qur'anic Exegesis

Interdisciplinary Thematic Interpretation of Qur'ān and sciences is one of the exegetical styles that have been proposed in Qom Seminary in the last two decades. This theory was proposed by Muḥammad 'Alī Riḍā'ī Iṣfahānī in the country's theorizing chairs and was approved as one of the successful chairs after the Islamic Revolution in 1394 Sh. Thereafter, in the form of research papers and the book entitled "*Naẓariyyeh-ye Tafṣīr-i mawḍū'ī-ye miyān reshte'ī-ye Qur'ān va 'Ulūm*" (The Theory of Interdisciplinary Interpretation Between the Qur'ān and Sciences) edited by 'Abdul Ḥusayn Shūrche was published under the supervision of the proponent of the theory.<sup>26</sup> This theory was the genesis of the emergence of the discipline of "Qur'ān and Sciences" with ten specializations (including education, politics, management, psychology, sociology, astronomy, etc.) in Al-Mustafa International University and the Fourth Level of Qom Seminary. In addition, the journal, "The Qur'ān and Science"<sup>27</sup> was initiated in this regard, and so far, dozens of theses have been written in this field while numerous monographs and thematic *tafsīrs* have been formed in this regard, including "*Tafṣīr mawḍū'ī-ye miyān rishti'ī-ye Qur'ān va Tarbiyat*" (The Interdisciplinary Thematic Exegesis Between the Qur'ān and Education) in six volumes and "*Tafṣīr mawḍū'ī-ye Qur'ān va Jāmi'ih*" (The Thematic Exegesis of the Qur'ān and Society) in seven volumes by Muḥammad 'Alī Riḍā'ī Iṣfahānī.

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26. See *Manṭiq-i Tafṣīr-i Qur'ān* [The Logic of Qur'anic Exegesis] vol. 3 from the author.

27. <http://qve.journals.miu.ac.ir>



### 3.6.3. Quranic Exegesis based on the Chronological Order of Revelation

This style of *tafsīr* has a long history, but in the Qom Seminary in the last two decades, Ḥujjat al-Islam wa al-Muslimīn 'Abdul Karīm Bahjatpūr<sup>28</sup> is considered one of the pioneers of this exegetical style by writing numerous books in this field, including “*Tafsīr Hamgām bā Wahy*” and the explanation of the basics and the methodology of *tafsīr* based on the chronological order of revelation [i.e., *Tafsīr-i Tanzīlī*] (see 'Aṭṭār Ābkinārī 2023, 172).

*Tafsīr Tanzīlī* is an interpretation of the Qur'ān according to the chronological order of revelation (not based on the arrangement in the present *Muṣḥaf* at hands) and usually starts from Qur'ān 96 (*Sūrat al-'Alaq*) and ends with Qur'ān 110 (*Sūrat al-Naṣr*).

The interpretation of the Qur'ān based on the chronological order of revelation is one of the styles of *tafsīr* in which the Qur'ānic exegete bases his understanding along with the gradual revelation of the Qur'ān. He tries to understand the internal relationships of the parts of a verse and the context of the verses in a *sūra* while taking into account the time and environmental and societal conditions of the revelation of each *sūra* or collection of verses, and then to discover the relationships and the epistemological and guidance system of the *sūras* in the 23-year chain of the gradual revelation of the Qur'ān.

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28. Ḥujjat al-Islam wa al-Muslimīn 'Abdul Karīm Bahjatpūr was born in 1344 Sh in Dizfūl, the city of Khūzistān Province. He joined the Seminary in 1360 Sh. He studied in Dizfūl, Qom, and Tehran. He is one of the students of Ayatollah Ma'rifat. He graduated from the 4th level in the field of Quranic Exegesis and Sciences from the specialized center of Quranic Exegesis and Sciences of Qom Seminary in 1380 Sh. He has many works on the field of *tafsīr* based on the chronological order of revelation (*tafsīr-i tanzīlī*), including the *Tafsīr* entitled “*Hamgām bā Wahy*” in several volumes and likewise a book on “*The Basics of Tafsīr-i Tanzīlī*.”



### 3.6.4. Reflectional Exegetical Method

The origins of this style of *tafsīr* can be traced back to the Qur'ān's recommendation to reflect and the attention of the Qur'ānic exegetes and Qur'ānic scholars of the past towards contemplation on the Qur'ān. However, in the present era, Ḥujjat al-Islām wa al-Muslimīn Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ilāhī Zādih<sup>29</sup> and 'Alī Subbūḥī Ṭasūjī are among the pioneers of this style of Qur'ānic exegesis by writing works in this field.

What is meant by contemplation is to discover the divine wisdom in the Holy Qur'ān. One of the most important aspects of contemplation is the reflection on the words and verses in the sūras that make up the text of the sūras of the Qur'ān. Several books have been written in this regard, including:

1. “*Pazhūhishī Pīrāmūn-i Taddabur*” (A research on Reflection) by Valiyullāh Naqīpūr, Tehran: Endowment and Charity Organization, Osweh Publications, 1387 Sh.

2. “*Ravish-i Taddabur dar Qur'ān: Taddabur-i Tartībī va Mawḍū'ī*” (Method of Reflection in the Qur'ān: Chronological and Thematic Reflection) by Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ilāhī.

The outcome of this academic effort on the methodology of the Qur'ānic exegesis, and the determination of its criteria, principles, methods, and approaches has led to the systematic development of Quranic

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29. Ḥujjat al-Islām wa al-Muslimīn Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ilāhī Zādih was born in 1341 Sh in the city of Beshravieh, the Khorasan Province of Razavi. After going through the primary stages of education in Beshravieh, from the year 1361 Sh, he studied seminary and university courses at the Razavi University of Islamic Sciences in Mashhad and benefited from the lessons of Ayatollah Ma'rifat, thereafter, he benefited from the lessons of Ayatullāh Javādī Āmulī and other great scholars in the Qom Seminary.

exegesis knowledge in Qom. This has led to the development of many courses in the field of Quranic studies.

### 3.7. Systematization of Qur'ānic Translation

The translation of the Qur'ān into different languages, including Persian, has a history of a thousand years, and during this period, hundreds of translations were published, and sometimes issues on the methodology of translation were discussed under the preface of the translations. However, the theoretical topics relating to the Qur'ānic translation (for example: the basics, the principles, methodologies, the rules of translation) have been given attention in recent decades in the Qom Seminary, in such a way that the Qur'ānic Translation Center was established by Hujjat al-Islām wa al-Muslimīn Naqdī and even the Journal of “*Tarjumān-i Waḥy*” [in Persian] as a promotional academic journal started publishing research papers related to the translation of the Qur'ān, of which 46 issues have been published so far. Thereafter, the field of “Mutarjim-i Waḥy” (The translator of the Quran) is included in the content tree of doctorate courses of Al-Mustafa International University, and the course under the title “Translation of the Qur'ān” was defined and implemented as a part of the courses of some Qur'ānic disciplines. In this regard, numerous theses have been completed in scientific centers in Qom, many articles have been written, and numerous books have been authored, including:

1. “*Manṭiq-i Tarjumih-ye Qur'ān*” (The logic of Qur'ānic translation) by Muḥammad 'Alī Riḍā'ī Iṣfahānī, Al-Mustafa International Publisher, 1386 Sh.

2. “*Darsnāmih-ye Tarjumih: 'Uṣūl, Mabānī va Farāyand-i Tarjumih-ye Qur'ān*” (Textbook of Translation: The Principles, Basics and Process of Qur'ānic Translation) by Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥasan Javāhirī, Research Institute of Hawza and University, 1390 Sh.

### 3.8. Introduction of New Disciplines and [traditional] Centers of Qur'ānic Sciences



One of the innovations in the field of the Qur'ānic Sciences after the victory of the Islamic Revolution in the Qom Seminary was the introduction of the special disciplines and centers of the Qur'ānic Sciences and its sub-branches. Before the Islamic Revolution (1357 Sh), there was no special discipline and center for Qur'ānic Sciences in Qom, but this has been realized in recent decades, including:

a) Specialized Center for Qur'ānic Exegesis and Sciences (established in the year 1370 Sh) under the supervision of Ayatollah Nāṣir Makārim Shīrāzī.

b) The Master's degree in Qur'ānic Sciences (around the year 1365 Sh) was introduced in the Imam Khomeini Research Institute under the supervision of Ayatullāh Muḥammad Taqī Miṣbāḥ Yazdī (1400 Sh).

c) Bachelor in the field of Qur'ānic and Hadith Sciences and Master in the Qur'ānic Exegesis and Sciences (year 1380 Sh) at the Qur'ān and Hadith Higher Education Complex of Al-Mustafa International University were introduced by Muḥammad 'Alī Riḍā'ī Iṣfahānī and colleagues.

d) PhD course in the field of "Qur'ān and Orientalists" with three specializations (in the year 1388 Sh), the same as above.

e) Master degree and Level Four in Recitation Sciences and Techniques (in the year 1390 Sh) were introduced by Professor Muḥammad Riḍā Shahīdīpūr at the Qur'ān and Hadith Higher Education Complex of Al-Mustafa International University and a doctorate in this field with three specializations was approved by the Ministry of Science of Iran in 1400 Sh.

f) Level Three and Four in the field of the "Qur'ān and Orientalists" were introduced at the 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib Qur'ān Specialist Center in Qom in 1396 Sh by Dr. Muḥammad 'Alī Riḍā'ī Iṣfahānī and colleagues.

Note: Some new branches of Qur'ānic Sciences (such as the miracles of the Qur'ān, methodology and philosophy of Qur'ānic exegesis, etc.)



have been approved in the content tree and transformation plan of the Al-Mustafa International University, which have not yet been implemented.

#### 4. New Qur'ānic Sciences in Qom Seminary

The new issues of the Qur'ānic Sciences are under the title of “New Qur'ānic Sciences” (contrary to the traditional Qur'ānic sciences), which are also sometimes referred to as “new issues of the science of the Qur'ānic exegesis.” These topics include a wide range of modern and influential topics towards the understanding and interpretation of the Holy Qur'ān, such as hermeneutics, the language of the Qur'ān, semiotics and semantics, and the philosophy of the Qur'ānic sciences and the philosophy of Qur'ānic exegesis, which sometimes opens up new spaces in the interpretation of the Qur'ān for scholars. Although some of these issues still need to be investigated and validated in order to prove their validity in the field of Qur'ānic Sciences and Qur'ānic Exegesis. The most important of these issues are:

##### 4.1. Hermeneutics

The term “hermeneutics” comes from the Greek word “*hermeneuein*” which means “to interpret.” This term has been used since the time of Plato and it means to understand something or an ambiguous situation. Aristotle used this term to name a part of the book “Organon” (which is about the logic of issues). Usually, in the hermeneutic lexical root search, they establish a clear connection between the word “Hermes, the messenger god of the Greeks. Before the 17th century, we did not know of a special branch of knowledge called hermeneutics. It was from the 17th century onwards, that hermeneutics became a branch of human knowledge (Vā'izī 2001, pp. 22-24). Hermeneutics officially started in the 17th century AD.<sup>30</sup> J.C.

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30. Although it was stated that hermeneutics was introduced as a scientific branch in the 17th century, some hermeneutic topics are also mentioned in the books of scholars before the 17th century, which are discussed under the title of “Nameless Hermeneutics,” such as St. Augustine, a Christian philosopher and theologian (430-



Dann Haver is the first person who include the word hermeneutics in the title of his book, the name of his book was “Holy Hermeneutics or the Method of Interpretation of holy texts” (ibid, 75).

Some experts consider the religious reform movement as the starting point of hermeneutics, but consider Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834) as the founder of new hermeneutics (ibid, 72). For the first time, about a hundred years ago, Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911) wrote that hermeneutics was a way of thinking, whose purpose was to raise the value of human sciences and align them with experimental sciences. Until now, hermeneutic scholars emphasized the author’s intention in understanding the text. But after them, another viewpoint was found in hermeneutics, which was founded by Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) and Gadamer (1900) and emphasized the philosophical exploration of the subject of understanding and the role of the author’s intention in the text.

However, there are discussions among Muslim scholars in the Qur’ānic exegesis (*tafsīr*) and the principles of jurisprudence (*uṣūl fiqh*) similar to hermeneutic theories, that is, some discussions of the principles of jurisprudence deal with the principles of understanding the text, and likewise the Qur’ānic exegetes in the Qur’ānic exegesis discuss issues related to the understanding and interpretation of the Qur’ān. In addition, the discussion of methodologies of the Qur’ānic exegesis is considered a type of hermeneutic discussion, including allusive interpretations (cryptic, allegorical, etc.) (ibid, 47-48).

Some Egyptian scholars, such as Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Sharīf in the book “*Ittijāhāt al-Tajdīd fī Tafsīr al-Qur’ān*” (Trends of Renewal in Qur’ānic exegetes) and ‘Iffat Muḥammad Sharqāwī in the book “*Al-Fikr*

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454 AD) who considered the confusion of the real meaning with the metaphorical meaning to be the main reason for the ambiguity of the Holy Scriptures.



*al-Dīnī fī Muwājihāt al-'Aṣr*” (Religious Thought in the Face of the Age) and Naṣr Ḥāmid Abū Zayd in the book “*Naqd al-Khiṭāb al-Dīnī*” (Critique of Religious Discourse) adopted the use of hermeneutics in the interpretation of the Qur'ān. Thereafter, scholars like Muḥammad Mujtahid Shabistarī in Iran mentioned it in the book “*Hermenūtīk Kitāb wa Sunnah*” (Hermeneutics of the Qur'ān and Sunnah) and the Qom Seminary in the 1380s-1990s, Ḥujjat al-Islām wa al-Muslimīn Aḥmad Vā'izī wrote the book “*Darāmadī bar hermenūtīk*” (An Introduction to Hermeneutics) which introduced different methods of hermeneutics. In addition, volume four of the book “*Manṭiq Tafṣīr al-Qur'ān*” (The Logic of Qur'ānic Exegesis), which includes discussions on hermeneutics and the language of the Qur'ān was written by the author in the form of a textbook and has also been translated into Arabic. Of course, the topic of hermeneutics (with its different meanings and criticisms) was gradually included among courses in the Qur'ānic disciplines of Qom Seminary in the last two decades, to the extent that it has been considered as an independent course in the doctoral degree of the Qur'ān and Hadith Higher Complex of Al-Mustafa International University and likewise the Fourth Level of the Qom Seminary.

In the content tree of the Qom Seminary, the “Methodology and Philosophy of Qur'ānic Exegesis” was included as an independent discipline and it was approved by the Ministry of Science in the year 1401 Sh through the Al-Mustafa International University, in which discussion on hermeneutics is one of its pillars.

#### 4.2. The Language of the Qur'ān

In a literal sense, the Persian term “*Zabān*” means a “tongue” which is said to be a moving organ inside the mouth [which is the most important tool of speech] and it also means a “language of a nation or community” (Dihkhudā 1988, 11130).

From the perspective of linguistics, the Persian term “*Zabān*” is the special ability and talent of humans to produce speech, communicate and



transmit a message, which has an abstract and impersonal aspect, and is the basis of speech. However, “speech” is the phonetic expression and practical application of this ability when speaking and understanding sentences (Şafavī 1981, 34). Saussure, a Swiss linguist, defines language as follows: “Language is a connected set (structure, system) of signs, whose parts are completely dependent on each other, and the value of each unit is subject to its combination status” (Sa’īdī Rawshan 2016, 226).

What is meant by the “Language of the Qur’ān” is not the language (i.e., Arabic) from which the Qur’ān is composed, but it means the characteristics of the Qur’ān in terms of its words, propositions, and sentences? Do the words used in the Qur’ān have the same meanings as the common meaning among humans or do they point to real truths? And what are the style and methodology (general, emotional, scientific, allusive, etc.) has the Qur’ān used in conveying the message? (Rashād 2004, 101)

Some aspects of the language of Qur’ān have long been of interest to lexicographers, writers, and people of eloquence, consequently, many literary works have been produced in this regard (see *Mufradāt* of Rāghib Işfahānī; *Kitāb al-‘Ayn* of Khalīl ibn Aḥmad; *Asrār al-Balāghah wa Dalā’il al-Ījāz* of Abdul Qāhir Jurjānī). In the contemporary era, the “Modern Science of Language” started from the thoughts of the Swiss linguist, Ferdinand de Saussure (1913) (Şafavī 1981, 68).

The discussion on the “Language of the Qur’ān” started from the book “God and Man in the Qur’ān” by the Japanese scholar Toshihiko Izutsu, which was translated into Persian by Aḥmad Ārām. Thereafter, in the 1380Sh-1390Sh, the book entitled “*Tahlīl-i Zabān-i Qur’ān va ravish-shināsī-ye fahm-i ān*” (The Analysis of the Language of the Qur’ān and the Methodology of its Understanding) by Ḥujjat al-Islām wa al-Muslimīn Muḥammad Bāqir Sa’īdī Rawshan and “*Zabān Dīn va Qur’ān*” [The Language of Religion and the Qur’ān] by Ḥujjat al-Islām wa al-Muslimīn Abulfadl Sājīdī can be mentioned at the Qom Seminary. Of course, this

subject has also been discussed on occasion in some books, such as Muḥammad Kāzīm Shākīr in the book *“Mabānī va ravish-hā-ye Tafsīrī”* (The Basics and Methodologies of Qur'ānic Exegesis), and likewise, the author [Dr. Riḍā'ī Iṣfahānī] in a book titled *“Manṭiq-i Tafsīr-i Qur'ān”* (The Logic of Qur'ānic Exegesis [vol. 4]) wrote about the hermeneutics and the language of the Qur'ān in the form of a textbook which has also been translated in Arabic.

The discussion about the language of Qur'ān (just like the hermeneutics) was included as one of the courses of the Qur'ān and Hadith Higher Education Complex of Al-Mustafa International University in the last ten decades and was taught along with criticism and positive innovation. Among the positive innovations of the contemporary Qur'ānic scholars regarding the “Language of the Qur'ān” is the theory of “Language of Guidance” proposed by Ḥujjat al-Islām Muḥammad Bāqir Sa'īdī Rawshan in the book entitled *“Tahlīl-i Zabān-i Qur'ān va ravish-shināsī-ye fahm-i ān”* as well as the theory of “Special Language of the Qur'ān” (contrary to the common language and special scientific language, etc.) from the author of *“Manṭiq-i Tafsīr-i Qur'ān”* (vol. 4).

### 4.3. Philosophy of Qur'ānic Sciences and Exegesis

One of the new sciences that has attracted attention in recent decades in the Qom Seminary is “additional philosophy” (*falsafī-ye muḍāf*) which deals with the “what,” “why,” and “how” of that science in the fields of the Qur'ān, the philosophy of Qur'ānic exegesis and the philosophy of science.

Several research papers have been written about the “Philosophy of Qur'ānic exegesis” until when Ḥujjat al-Islām wa al-Muslimīn Muḥammad Amīnī Tihirānī wrote and defended his doctoral dissertation on the topic “The Philosophy of Qur'ānic exegesis” in the Qur'ān and Hadith Higher Education Complex of Al-Mustafa International University and it was submitted to the country's Council Chair on Transmitted



Sciences as a theorizing chair (for the introduction of a new science) in 1400 Sh, whose deliberations are currently going on.

In addition, several research papers have been written on the philosophy of Qur'ānic sciences and a doctoral dissertation on the topic is in progress. Of course, the courses "Philosophy of Qur'ānic exegesis" and "Philosophy of Qur'ānic Sciences" have been included in the last decade in the doctoral degree of Al-Mustafa International University and the Fourth Level of Qur'ānic disciplines in the Qom Seminary, and the discipline "Methodology and Philosophy of Qur'ānic exegesis" has been included and approved in the content tree of Qom Seminary and PhD programs of Al-Mustafa International University.

#### 4.4. Semiotics and Semantics

One of the branches of science that has been raised in Qom Seminary in recent decades and has been noticed in Qur'ānic discussions is semiotics and semantics. Dozens of research papers, books, and theses have been written in this field using these methods. Sometimes the method has been criticized and the need to validate these methods has been noticed.

One of the pioneers of these discussions in Qom is Ḥujjat al-Islām 'Alī Riḍā Qā'imī Niyā, who has written numerous books and research papers in this field and even presented the chair of theorizing "Cognitive Miracles of the Qur'ān" in this regard, and seeks to write "Semiotic *Tafsīr* of the Qur'ān." Some of his works in this regard include: "*Ma'nā-shināsī-ye shinākhtī-ye Qur'ān*" (Cognitive Semantics of the Qur'ān), "*Bīyūluzhī-ye Naṣṣ*" (Biology of Text), "*Isti'ārih-hā-ye Maḥmūmī va faḍā-hā-ye Qur'ānī*" (Conceptual Metaphors and Qur'ānic Spaces), and likewise, Mr. Nuṣratī and Rukka'ī wrote the book "*Ma'nā-shināsī-ye shinākhtī dar Kārbast-i mutūn-i Waḥyānī*" (Cognitive Semantics in the Application of Revelation Texts) and also "*Ma'nā-shināsī Qalb dar Qur'ān*" (The Semantics of Heart in the Qur'ān) was written by Mr. Nuṣratī.

Of course, semiotics and semantics were included in the list of courses of the doctorate degrees of Al-Mustafa International University and the Fourth Level of Qom Seminary in recent years, and likewise, the discipline “Methodology and Philosophy of Qur’ānic exegesis” (which was approved in the doctorate level of Al-Mustafa International University and included in the curriculum of the Seminary) has been one of the pillars of the course.

## Conclusion

In the last hundred years, especially in the decades after the Islamic Revolution of Iran (1357 Sh), the traditional Shiite Qur’ānic Sciences were revived in the Qom Seminary by Ayatullāh Muḥammad Hādī Ma‘rifat, and it grew significantly through the efforts of the contemporary Qur’ānic scholars. Also, the new issues of Qur’ānic Sciences (such as Hermeneutics, Language of Qur’ān, Philosophy of Qur’ānic Sciences, Semantics and semiotics, etc.) had significant critical growth in Qom Seminary and numerous theories were presented in the field of traditional and new Qur’ānic Sciences.

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