



A Typology of the Ahl al-Bayt's Contemplation of Qur'anic Stories

Jalaledin Mahmoudi¹ , Hossein Moradi^{2*} , Seyed Mohammad Razavi³ 

1. Department of Quran and Hadith Sciences, Faculty of Law and Political Science, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran. Email: Ja.mahmoudi@iau.ac.ir

2. Corresponding Author, Department of Quran and Hadith Sciences, Faculty of Law and Political Science, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran. Email: hosseinmoradi@iau.ac.ir

3. Department of Quran and Hadith Sciences, Faculty of Law and Political Science, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran. Email: seyedmohammad.razavi@iau.ir

Article Info

Article type:

Research Article

Article History:

Received 10 September 2025

Revised 18 December 2025

Accepted 15 January 2026

Published Online 21 May 2026

Keywords:

Ahl al-Bayt (PBUT),

Tadabbur,

Qur'anic Stories,

Typology,

Qiṣaṣ al-Qur'ān.

ABSTRACT

This article explores the exegetical traditions of the Ahl al-Bayt in relation to the Qur'anic Stories. It demonstrates that, in certain instances, the Prophet (PBUH) and the Imams did not rely solely on their infallibility and divinely endowed knowledge, but rather attained subtle insights through contemplative reflection on the wording and structure of the Qur'anic stories. At times, they reproached their companions for neglecting such meanings, posing questions such as: "Do you not recite this verse?!"—thereby urging greater attentiveness to the Qur'an. These reports represent examples of the *Ma'šūmīn's* contemplative engagement (*tadabbur*) with the Qur'an, rather than formal exegesis (*tafsīr*) or esoteric interpretation (*ta'wīl*). Identifying such traditions is significant, as they provide practical models and exemplary methods for those devoted to Qur'anic reflection. Adopting an exploratory-analytical approach and surveying transmitted exegetical sources, the article introduces various forms of *tadabbur* within the Qur'anic narratives. These include: contemplation of linguistic and literary structures, reflection aimed at explicating the *sīrah* and practices of the Ahl al-Bayt (PBUT), theological contemplation of doctrinal concepts, elucidation of the positions of *Imāmah* and *Wilāyah* through narrative verses, extraction of ethical lessons, derivation of legal rulings, uncovering divine wisdom (*ḥikmah*), and devotional application of the narratives in supplication.

Cite this article: Mahmoudi, J.; Moradi, H. Razavi, M. (2026). A Typology of the Ahl al-Bayt's Contemplation of Qur'anic Stories. *Classical and Contemporary Islamic Studies (CCIS)*, 8 (2), 237-250. <http://doi.org/10.22059/jcis.2026.406072.1452>



© The Author(s).

Publisher: University of Tehran Press.

DOI: <http://doi.org/10.22059/jcis.2026.406072.1452>

Introduction

In certain traditions transmitted from the *Ma'ṣūmīn* (PBUT), the meanings of Qur'anic words and phrases are explained and clarified; specific instances are cited, without any particular argumentation or reliance on the wording of the verses themselves. In another group of traditions, Qur'anic words, phrases, and verses are subjected to *ta'wīl*, whereby their inner meanings and external realities are revealed. Here, again, no reasoning or textual reference to the Qur'anic expressions is made; rather, the *Ma'ṣūmīn*, relying on their particular knowledge of Imamate, articulate such traditions. In yet another category, unlike the two preceding groups, the *Ma'ṣūmīn* derive subtle insights by attending carefully to particular words, phrases, and sentences of the Qur'an, engaging in reflection (*tadabbur*) upon them. In other words, in the first group (exegetical traditions), the Imams engage in *tafsīr*; in the second group (interpretive traditions), they undertake *ta'wīl*; and in the third group (contemplative traditions), they practice *tadabbur* upon the Qur'an, thereby providing their followers with the methods and paradigms of reflection upon its verses.

This article seeks to demonstrate the distinction between contemplative traditions and the other two categories, and to identify examples of the former within Shi'i transmitted exegesis. It further aims to recognize certain rules and techniques employed therein and to introduce them as appropriate models for deriving meaning from the Qur'an. Accordingly, the central question of this study is: what forms of *tadabbur* in the Qur'an can be identified in the traditions of the *Ma'ṣūmīn*?

In recent years, the discourse of Qur'anic reflection has gained increasing prominence. The necessity of *tadabbur* in the Qur'an has been emphasized and encouraged by a number of scholars and researchers, leading to the establishment of schools devoted to Qur'anic contemplation. Various segments of society, particularly the youth, have expressed interest in this practice and, occasionally, adopted methods for engaging in it. Therefore, it is imperative to investigate more thoroughly the traditions of the *Ma'ṣūmīn* concerning *tadabbur* in the Qur'an, and to present sound methods and paradigms of reflection.

With respect to the scholarly background of this study, two categories of research may be noted: (1) writings on *tadabbur* and its methods, and (2) writings on the typology of exegetical traditions. Regarding the first category, numerous works have been produced; however, none of them cover the specific subject of this article. For example, 'Abd al-'Alī Bāzargān's *Methodology of Tadabbur in the Qur'an* offers certain rules for the correct understanding of Qur'anic words, phrases, and verses, as well as for deriving insights from them; however, it does not commit to identifying types of *tadabbur* as practiced by *Ma'ṣūmīn*. Similarly, Walī Allāh Naqīpūrfar's *A Study on Tadabbur in the Qur'an* discusses contexts, keys, principles, foundations, and methods of reflection, with occasional references to traditions, but without classifying the instances of *tadabbur* in the sayings of the Imams. Muḥammad Bīstūnī's *Tadabbur in the Qur'an: Contexts, Keys, Principles, Methods, Stages, and Examples* is essentially a condensed version of the previous work and likewise does not overlap with the subject of this article. A ten-volume series, entitled *Teaching Methods of Tadabbur in the Qur'an*, by Aḥmad Riḍā Akhūwat, despite its detail, focuses mainly on

principles, stages, and methods of study and comprehension, without introducing types of *tadabbur* practiced by the Ma'šūmīn. Research studies such as Muḥammad 'Alī Lisānī Fashārakī and Ḥusayn Murādī Zanjānī's *Thematic Research in the Qur'an* and *Structural Research in the Qur'an* provide methodological frameworks for investigating Qur'anic subjects or concepts within a sūra; however, they do not address the typology of traditions of the Ma'šūmīn concerning *tadabbur*.

As for the second category, numerous works have been authored on the typology of exegetical traditions. These classify traditions from various perspectives and provide examples, including traditions on the virtues of verses and sūras, lexical explanations, explanatory traditions, juridical traditions, narrative and story-based traditions, traditions describing the circumstances of revelation, traditions elucidating the wisdom and rationale of divine legislation, and traditions identifying referents. Several articles and dissertations have introduced types of exegetical traditions, such as those conducted by Basīratī Barzakī (2015), Pūrkabīrīāni (2015), Jalālī Kandari and Amīnī (2014), Mīthāqī (2011), Khākpūr (2012), Khālidī (2017), Khushdūnī (2017), Rustamnejād (2009), Šafarī (2008), 'Ābidī and Khākpūr (2011), Kūhī et al. (2014), Maḥfūzī and Bostani Bajinasra (2015), Mišlā'ī Pūr Yazdī and Dīmāh Kārgarāb (2010), Mihrīzī (2010), Mūsawī and Khalīlī (2016), Nāših and Bahrāmī (2016), and Nūrūzī and Barādarān (2014).

The methodology of this article is exploratory and analytical. Data were collected through library and documentary research. Since the study aims to identify specific instances of traditions, an exploratory method was employed. Additionally, since the discovered traditions serve as the basis for presenting new perspectives on Qur'anic reflection, an analytical method was applied. To this end, by consulting Shi'i transmitted exegeses, such as *al-Burhān* and *Nūr al-Thaqalayn*, as well as other narrative sources, we have extracted traditions in which the Ma'šūmīn, by attending to Qur'anic words and phrases—not merely by relying on their personal knowledge and the source of Imamate—arrive at subtle insights. These traditions have been analyzed and classified, and ultimately, types of contemplative traditions have been introduced along with selected examples.

Tadabbur in Lexical and Terminological Usage

The term *tadabbur* is derived from the Arabic root *dabara*, which stands in semantic contrast to *qabala*, meaning “to face” or “to begin” (Ibn Manzūr, 1985, vol. 5; Rāghib, n.d., vol. 1). Accordingly, *tadabbur* signifies a cognitive and spiritual process that transcends the initial and apparent aspects of a subject, directing attention toward its continuation, outcome, and deeper implications.

In Qur'ānic discourse, *tadabbur* refers to a contemplative engagement with the divine text that aims to uncover its inner meanings and spiritual wisdom. It involves refraining from superficial reading and, instead, pursuing the deeper layers of meaning embedded within the verses. This process is not limited to scholars; rather, it is accessible to all believers seeking to internalize the Qur'ān's guidance.

Scholars have identified various semantic dimensions of *tadabbur* in their exegetical and linguistic works, including reflection and meticulous scrutiny of words and meanings

(Baydāwī, 1997, vol. 2), contemplation of a verse in relation to its subsequent counterpart (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1996, vol. 20), continuous tracing of thematic and structural connections across verses (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1997, vol. 5), positioning words and verses to interpret the Qur'ān through its own framework (Ṣādiqī Tehrānī, 1998, vol. 10), penetrating beyond surface meanings and events to grasp deeper realities (Mudarrisī, 1998, vol. 6), listening to the Qur'ān with precision and full attention (Ibn Abī Ḥātim, 1998, vol. 3), reflecting on the objectives and intentions of divine discourse (Marāghī, n.d), seeking guidance and uncovering implications within the text (Niyshābūrī, 1995, vol. 2), deriving profound meanings through deep contemplation and inference (Qushayrī, n.d., vol. 1), realizing deliberation and choice, and reflecting upon purposive messages within the Qur'ān (Mustāfavī, 2001, vol. 6).

Collectively, these perspectives reveal that *tadabbur* is a dynamic and multifaceted process of spiritual reflection, intellectual inquiry, and moral engagement with the Qur'ān. It serves as a bridge between the divine message and the human heart, enabling believers to uncover the transformative wisdom of revelation.

The Distinction between Tafsīr and Tadabbur

The distinction between *tafsīr* and *tadabbur* in relation to the Qur'ān rests upon several foundational principles. *Tafsīr* is a specialized scholarly discipline devoted to explicating the meanings of verses, resolving ambiguities, identifying referents, as well as clarifying linguistic, legal, and theological dimensions of the text. Mastery in *tafsīr* requires advanced proficiency in Arabic linguistics, classical literature, and narrational sciences, rendering it a domain primarily accessible to qualified scholars and exegetes (Qushayrī, n.d.).

By contrast, *tadabbur* represents a more universally accessible mode of engagement. It involves deep reflection upon Qur'ānic verses, pondering over their messages, deriving insights, and perceiving subtle spiritual and ethical points—without necessitating formal scholarly training. While *tafsīr* often focuses on the apparent meanings and textual details, *tadabbur* seeks to uncover the consequences, implications, and inner wisdoms embedded within the divine discourse. It encourages believers to internalize Qur'ānic guidance, transforming textual understanding into spiritual realization and practical application (Murādī Zanjānī, 2019).

Moreover, traditions transmitted from the Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) and the *Ahl al-Bayt* (PBUT) illustrate that refined insights are not always derived solely from infallibility or divine knowledge, but often emerge through contemplative engagement with the Qur'ān's wording. These traditions, frequently marked by interrogative or emphatic expressions, such as “Have you not read this verse?” or “Do you not understand what God is saying?” demonstrate a pedagogical model that challenges followers to reflect more deeply. In this framework, the Qur'ān becomes a source of deduction, inference, questioning, and reasoning, even for the infallibles themselves.

Such narrations serve as exemplary models of Qur'ānic contemplation, significantly contributing to the development of *tadabbur* methodologies. Through careful examination of these reports, one gains access to a profound and practical understanding of the Qur'ān,

transcending superficial commentary and conventional interpretation, and instead, embodying a nuanced, penetrating, and spiritually transformative approach to divine revelation.

Qur'ānic Stories (*Qiṣaṣ al-Qur'ān*)

The Arabic term *qiṣṣah*, plural *qiṣaṣ*, denotes narration and the sequential recounting of events. This usage is reflected in the Qur'ān itself, as in the verse: “*Naḥnu naquṣṣu ‘alayka aḥsana al-qaṣaṣ*”—“We narrate to you the best of stories” (Qur'ān 12:3). In classical Arabic literature, *qiṣṣah* may appear in either prose or poetry and should follow a coherent and continuous sequence, whether the account is factual or fictional. However, in both cases, it must adhere to compositional norms and narrative integrity (Fa'āl 'Irāqī, 1997; Jawharī, 1989).

Within the Qur'ānic framework, *qiṣaṣ* specifically refers to truthful, historical accounts revealed by divine knowledge. These narratives are not mere chronicles of past events; rather, they are purposeful, instructive, and morally charged stories intended to awaken the intellect and guide human behavior. Qur'ānic stories are distinguished by their foundation in truth, free from exaggeration, myth, or error, and characterized by sincerity, clarity, and divine intent.

The pedagogical function of these narratives is emphasized throughout the Qur'ān. They serve to illustrate theological principles, ethical values, and spiritual lessons through the lived experiences of prophets and communities. Chapters such as *Sūrat al-A'rāf*, *Sūrat Yūsuf*, and *Sūrat Ṭā-Hā* contain extensive narrative sections that invite readers to reflect deeply on the consequences of belief, disbelief, obedience, and transgression. The Qur'ān repeatedly calls upon its audience to engage in *tadabbur* to ponder over the stories, extract wisdom, and apply their lessons to personal and communal life.

Therefore, *qiṣaṣ al-Qur'ān* are not simply historical records; they are divinely orchestrated accounts designed to cultivate insight, inspire transformation, and reinforce the moral and spiritual foundations of Islamic thought. Their contemplative potential makes them a central locus for *tadabbur*, particularly in the interpretive tradition of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (PBUT), who consistently drew upon these narratives to illuminate theological, ethical, and jurisprudential truths.

A Typology of the Ahl al-Bayt's Tadabbur of Qur'ānic *Qisas*

The contemplative engagement (*tadabbur*) of the Ahl al-Bayt (PBUT) with Qur'ānic narratives (*qiṣaṣ*) reveals a multifaceted hermeneutical approach that transcends conventional exegesis. Their method is not limited to explicating verses in a linear or literal fashion; rather, it encompasses a spectrum of reflective practices through which they derive theological, ethical, legal, and spiritual insights from the narrative verses of the Qur'ān. This section outlines a typology of these modes of *tadabbur* based on transmitted traditions, highlighting how the Imāms (PBUT) employed narrative verses as foundations for reasoning, inference, and moral instruction.

Contemplation of the Linguistic Structure and Literary Features of the Verses

The infallible Imāms (PBUT) engaged in profound contemplation of the Qur'ānic text, paying meticulous attention to its linguistic architecture and literary eloquence. Through reflective analysis of vocabulary, syntactic arrangement, verse sequencing, and rhetorical devices, they

uncovered subtle meanings and conveyed refined dimensions of divine wisdom to their followers.

One illustrative example is found in the response of Imām al-Şādiq (PBUH) to a question regarding the historical practice of pilgrimage (*ḥajj*) prior to the prophetic mission of Muḥammad (PBUH). Reflecting on the Qur’ānic verse (28:27), he noted that Shu‘ayb (PBUH) described the duration of Mūsā’s (PBUH) service as “eight pilgrimages” (*thamāniya ḥijaj*) rather than “eight years” (*thamāni sinīn*). This linguistic choice, he argued, indicates that the ritual of ḥajj was already established and practiced by earlier prophets, affirming its pre-Islamic origin and sacred continuity (Majlisī, 1982, vol. 64).

In another instance, Imām al-Bāqir (PBUH) offered a nuanced interpretation of the Qur’ānic verse (22:26), where the Ka‘bah is referred to as “My House” (*baytī*). He drew a parallel between this divine attribution and the Qur’ānic description of Adam’s creation, wherein God breathed “My Spirit” into him. According to the Imām, both the Ka‘bah and Adam’s spirit are uniquely honored through their association with God, signifying their elevated status and sanctity (Kulaynī, 1968, vol. 1).

A third example involves Imām al-Şādiq’s (PBUH) reflection on the Qur’ānic verse (21:84), which recounts the restoration of Prophet Ayyūb’s (PBUH) family. The verse states: “and the like of them with them” (*wa mithlahum ma‘ahum*). The Imām interpreted this phrase to mean that God not only returned the children who had perished during Ayyūb’s affliction but also resurrected other family members who had died previously. This interpretation underscores the boundless mercy of God, who restored Ayyūb’s family in full, beyond what had been lost in the calamity (Kulaynī, 1968, vol. 8).

The reasoning in each case proceeds from precise lexical choice, syntactic framing, and rhetorical patterning—indicating that contemplative engagement (*tadabbur*) yields disciplined, text-anchored conclusions distinct from mere lexical explanation (*tafsīr*) or esoteric disclosure (*ta’wīl*). Consequently, these reports function as methodological models: they teach readers to read for structure and eloquence, and to translate those features into coherent doctrinal claims about ritual continuity, sacred status, and divine compassion.

Contemplation Aimed at Explicating the Sīrah and Practices (Sunan) of the Ahl al-Bayt (PBUT)

In their elucidation of conduct and tradition, the Ahl al-Bayt (PBUT) consistently referred to Qur’ānic verses, aligning their own sayings and actions—as well as those of the Prophet’s household—with the divine text. This approach underscores the Qur’ān’s role as the primary source of guidance and the definitive criterion for discerning the correct path in the behavior of the infallibles.

This perspective is well established in Islamic scholarship, wherein the Ahl al-Bayt (PBUH) are recognized as possessing comprehensive knowledge of the Qur’ān’s meanings. They are divinely entrusted with guiding humanity toward its true understanding and safeguarding its interpretation from distortion. Their exegetical role includes offering authoritative insights grounded in spiritual depth, ensuring the continuity of prophetic teachings, and mentoring scholars in the proper comprehension of revelation. The intrinsic

link between the Ahl al-Bayt (PBUT) and the Qur'ān highlights their indispensable function in preserving and conveying the authentic message of Islam through their exemplary lives.

These foundational principles are widely documented in both classical and contemporary sources, reflecting the Ahl al-Bayt's enduring engagement with Qur'ānic interpretation and spiritual leadership.

One illustrative example is found in a narration from Imām al-Ṣādiq (PBUT), who explained the practice of apparent criticism directed at certain companions of the Ahl al-Bayt. He clarified to 'Abdullāh ibn Zurārah that his criticism of Zurārah's father was a strategic measure intended to protect him from persecution by hostile forces due to his loyalty to the Imāms. This form of apparent fault-finding served as a protective mechanism to safeguard the lives of their supporters. Imām al-Ṣādiq, citing the Qur'ānic verse (18:79)—the story of Khidr (PBUT) damaging a ship—illustrated that the damage was not due to a flaw, but rather a deliberate act to protect the vessel from seizure by a tyrannical king (Majlisī, 1982, vol. 2).

Another example is provided by Imām al-Riḍā (PBUH), who reflected on Q 12:55 and drew a parallel between his own political circumstances and the life of Prophet Yūsuf (PBUH). Despite Yūsuf's elevated status as a prophet, he accepted the responsibility of managing Egypt's treasuries out of necessity. Similarly, Imām al-Riḍā accepted the position of heir apparent to al-Ma'mūn not out of desire, but as a means of preserving his life and preventing assassination (Ṣadūq, 1993, vol. 2).

Regarding these cases, it could be concluded that the Ahl al-Bayt's *sīrah* and practices were not arbitrary but consciously aligned with Qur'ānic paradigms. Their actions embodied a hermeneutical method: interpreting lived circumstances through scriptural precedents, thereby ensuring continuity of prophetic tradition while safeguarding their followers and themselves. This contemplative approach highlights the Qur'ān as the ultimate criterion for behavior, and the Imāms as exemplars who translated divine guidance into practical strategies for survival, leadership, and spiritual preservation.

In sum, the contemplation of the Qur'ān served as the lens through which the Ahl al-Bayt explicated their *sunan*, offering believers both theological assurance and practical models of resilience and fidelity to divine truth.

Contemplation of Doctrinal Matters and the Explication of Theological Concepts through the Qisas

The Ahl al-Bayt (PBUT) approached Qur'ānic narratives not merely as historical accounts but as profound vehicles for theological reflection and doctrinal clarification. Their contemplative engagement with these verses reveals a deep commitment to extracting metaphysical truths, clarifying divine attributes, and elucidating the nature of faith, divine will, and human responsibility.

One example is found in the interpretation of the Qur'ānic verse (16:99) by Imām al-Ṣādiq (PBUH), who explained that while Satan may afflict the bodies of believers—as he did with Prophet Ayyūb (PBUH)—he cannot penetrate their faith or compromise their spiritual integrity. This distinction between physical suffering and spiritual steadfastness underscores the inviolability of sincere belief (Kulaynī, 1968, vol. 8).

In another instance, Imām al-Bāqir (PBUT) reflected on the verse 18:82, recounting the story of two orphans whose father was righteous. He narrated from the Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) that God rewards a righteous servant even after death, extending divine favor to their children and wealth regardless of the children's conduct. This interpretation affirms that the merit of righteous deeds transcends generational boundaries and that divine reward is not contingent upon the behavior of descendants (Majlisī, 1982, vol. 68).

A third example involves Imām al-Riḍā (PBUH), who offered a nuanced theological framework regarding divine will. He distinguished between two types of divine intent: *irādah muḥkamah* (decisive will) and *irādah tāmm* (conditional will). Drawing upon the stories of Adam's fall and Abraham's near-sacrifice of his son, the Imām explained that God may forbid an action while simultaneously willing its occurrence, or command an act without necessitating its actualization. This duality reflects the complexity of divine decree and human agency, emphasizing that God's will encompasses both legislative command and existential permission (Majlisī, 1982, vol. 4).

These examples illustrate that the contemplative engagement of the Ahl al-Bayt transforms Qur'ānic narratives into doctrinal paradigms. Their method shows how stories of prophets and righteous figures serve as vehicles for theological clarification, illuminating the resilience of faith, the continuity of divine favor, and the complexity of God's will. Therefore, these traditions provide believers with models for reading the Qur'ān not only as history but also as a living source of theological insight and spiritual guidance.

Elucidation of the Positions of Imāmah and Wilāyah with Reference to the Qisas Verses

The Ahl al-Bayt (PBUT) frequently employed Qur'ānic narratives to clarify the theological foundations of *imāmah* and *wilāyah*. These narratives, recounting the lives and missions of earlier prophets, served as a rich source for drawing analogies and establishing doctrinal continuity between the prophetic legacy and the Imāmate.

One such example is found in a narration from Imām Mūsā al-Kāzīm (PBUH), who referred to the lineage of Prophet 'Īsā (PBUH) to affirm the legitimacy of the Ahl al-Bayt's descent through Fāṭimah al-Zahrā' (PBUH). He explained that just as 'Īsā is considered among the progeny of the prophets through his mother Maryam (PBUH), despite lacking a paternal lineage, so too are the Imāms regarded as the progeny of the Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) through his daughter Fāṭimah (PBUH), not through 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (PBUH) (Ṭabrisī, 1982, vol. 2). This analogy underscores the legitimacy of matrilineal descent in establishing spiritual inheritance and authority.

Another significant example is provided by Imām al-Bāqir (PBUH), who pointed to the verse "*And Sulaymān inherited from Dāwūd*" (Qur'ānic 27:16) in defense of Lady Fāṭimah's (PBUH) claim to the property of Fadak. When Abū Bakr denied her right by asserting that prophets do not leave material inheritance, she responded by invoking this verse as evidence that prophetic inheritance includes both knowledge and property. With the testimonies of 'Alī (PBUH) and Umm Ayman, she established her rightful claim. This interpretation affirms that prophets, like other humans, possess material assets that can be inherited, thereby reinforcing the legitimacy of her demand (Majlisī, 1982, vol. 29).

Accordingly, our argument reaches a clear conclusion: the Ahl al-Bayt's use of Qur'ānic narratives was not incidental but deliberate, serving to anchor the doctrines of *imāmah* and *wilāyah* in scriptural precedent. Their method demonstrates that the Imāmate is both genealogically legitimate and materially substantiated, while also embodying the continuity of prophetic mission. Therefore, these traditions provide a doctrinal framework in which Qur'ānic stories function as proofs of authority, inheritance, and divine appointment, ensuring that the leadership of the Ahl al-Bayt is firmly rooted in revelation.

Extraction of Ethical Points from the Qisas

The Ahl al-Bayt (PBUH), through contemplative engagement with Qur'ānic narratives, consistently extracted and emphasized ethical teachings as central to divine revelation. Their reflections reveal a deep concern for cultivating moral virtues such as patience, humility, compassion, sincerity, and hope—values that form the bedrock of Islamic spiritual life.

One example is found in Imām al-Šādiq's (PBUH) interpretation of the verse 2:260, where Prophet Ibrāhīm (PBUH) requests to witness the resurrection of the dead. Although his faith was unwavering, he sought reassurance for his heart. Imām al-Šādiq (PBUH) explained that this verse teaches the importance of expressing love and care openly. Just as Ibrāhīm desired visible affirmation, human relationships also benefit from the explicit expression of affection, bringing tranquility and strengthening emotional bonds (Kulaynī, 1968, vol. 2).

Imām 'Alī (PBUH) offered another ethical insight based on the verse 27:44, narrating the story of the Queen of Sheba. He advised that one should maintain hope even in the least expected circumstances, noting that the Queen, initially an unbeliever, ultimately embraced faith after witnessing the signs of divine power by Sulaymān (PBUH). This transformation illustrates that divine mercy can manifest even in seemingly hopeless situations, encouraging believers to remain optimistic and spiritually receptive (Majlisī, 1982, vol. 13).

In a similar reflection, Imām 'Alī (PBUH) cited the verse 20:10, where Mūsā (PBUH) seeks fire for his family but instead encounters divine revelation. The Imām explained that within despair, often lies hidden hope, and that God's grace may emerge unexpectedly. This perspective invites believers to trust in divine wisdom and remain hopeful even in moments of uncertainty (Šadūq, 1982, vol. 1).

Based on these examples, the conclusion is clear: the Ahl al-Bayt's contemplative readings of Qur'ānic narratives consistently extract ethical principles—patience, compassion, sincerity, and hope—forming the foundation of Islamic spirituality. Their method demonstrates that ethical cultivation is inseparable from Qur'ānic engagement, and that believers are called to embody these virtues in daily life as reflections of divine guidance.

Contemplation of the Qisas to Derive Islamic legal rulings

The Ahl al-Bayt (PBUH), through precise and contemplative engagement with Qur'ānic narratives, also derived Islamic legal rulings (*aḥkām fiqhīyyah*) that reflect the depth of their interpretive insight. Their method of *tadabbur* demonstrates how narrative verses can serve as foundations for legal reasoning and the clarification of religious obligations.

One example is found in the interpretation of the verse 19:32 by Imām al-Ṣādiq (PBUH), who addressed the gravity of disobedience to parents. He explained that the verse, praising ʿĪsā (PBUH) for being dutiful to his mother and not tyrannical, implies that mistreatment with parents is a major sin. According to the Imām, one who disobeys or harms their parents walks the path of injustice and moral corruption, making filial piety a crucial ethical and legal obligation (Ṣadūq, 1982, vol. 3).

Another juridical insight is offered by Imām al-Bāqir (PBUH), who reflected on the story of Maryam (PBUH) (Qurʾān 3:35). In response to a question about whether menstruating women are required to perform *qaḍāʾ* (make-up) prayers, he cited the vow of the wife of ʿImrān, who dedicated her child to the service of the mosque. Since Maryam remained in the mosque until reaching maturity and then departed, the Imām argued that if *qaḍāʾ* prayers were obligatory, she would have been required to remain indefinitely to fulfill them. This interpretation led him to conclude that menstruating women are not obligated to make up missed prayers, establishing a foundational ruling in Islamic jurisprudence (Majlisī, 1982, vol. 78).

Reasoning from these examples, the conclusion is that the Ahl al-Bayt's contemplative engagement with Qurʾānic narratives integrates ethical, theological, and legal dimensions. Their approach shows that the stories of prophets and righteous figures are not merely illustrative but can also serve as authoritative foundations for Islamic law. This method underscores the depth of their interpretive insight and affirms the Qurʾān's role as a comprehensive source for guiding both spiritual conduct and juridical rulings.

Derivation of Divine Wisdom (Ḥikmah) from the Qisas

Among the most profound dimensions of *tadabbur* practiced by the Ahl al-Bayt (PBUT) is the extraction of divine wisdom (*ḥikmah*) from Qurʾānic narratives. Their reflections reveal how seemingly simple stories contain layers of metaphysical insight, theological depth, and spiritual guidance, transcending time and context.

Imam Ali (PBUH), interpreting the Qur'an 2:40, emphasized a significant point: that God's reproach or 'favor' upon the Children of Israel was warranted only because of their ingratitude for His blessings. Were the Children of Israel truly thankful and appreciative, God would not have expressed this reproach or reminder. According to Imam Ali, this divine 'favor' serves as a warning and admonition aimed at reforming behavior and returning to gratefulness. Their ingratitude had caused them to fall into disobedience and sin, which brought divine wrath upon them. This demonstrates how God's 'favor' in this context was a call to awakening and moral rectitude (Majlisī, 1982, vol. 2).

Imām al-Ṣādiq (PBUH) offered another layer of wisdom by reflecting on the Qurʾān's mention of prophetic lapses, such as the story of Prophet Yūnus (PBUH) in the Qurʾān (37:139–148). He explained that these accounts serve a deliberate theological purpose: to prevent the deification of prophets and to affirm the absolute perfection of God alone. By portraying prophets as fallible yet divinely guided, the Qurʾān teaches humility, accountability, and the primacy of divine mercy over human status (Ṭabrisī, 1982, vol 1).

These contemplations demonstrate that the Ahl al-Bayt's contemplative engagement with

Qur'ānic narratives transforms them into the sources of *ḥikmah*. Their method teaches believers to read beyond the surface of stories, discerning lessons about gratitude, humility, divine perfection, and moral responsibility. Therefore, Qur'ānic narratives serve as enduring frameworks for ethical awakening and theological clarity, guiding the community toward deeper spiritual consciousness.

Devotional Application of the Narratives in Supplication and Spiritual Practice

Beyond the contemplation of theological, ethical, and Islamic legal rulings, the Ahl al-Bayt (PBUH) also integrated Qur'ānic narratives into their devotional life, particularly within the framework of supplication (*du'ā'*) and spiritual practice. This dimension of *tadabbur* reflects a deeply personal and experiential engagement with the Qur'ān, wherein stories of the prophets and righteous are invoked as vehicles for praise, humility, and connection with the Divine.

One prominent example is *Du'ā' al-Simāt*, attributed to Imām al-Bāqir (PBUH), which incorporates numerous Qur'ānic narratives as part of its structure. The supplication references the trials and triumphs of figures such as Mūsā (PBUH), Ibrāhīm (PBUH), Nūḥ (PBUH), and 'Īsā (PBUH), invoking their experiences to magnify God's attributes and seek divine mercy. These stories are not merely recounted; rather, they are spiritually reactivated, transforming historical memory into a living prayer (Ṭūsī, 1990, vol. 1).

In this context, the Qur'ānic narrative becomes a medium for spiritual elevation. The Imāms (PBUH) model a form of supplication that is both reflective and relational—drawing upon divine interventions in history to inspire hope, cultivate gratitude, and reinforce trust in God's justice and compassion. Through this devotional *tadabbur*, the believer is invited to see their own struggles mirrored in the lives of the prophets, and to find solace and strength in the continuity of divine care.

This approach exemplifies the holistic methodology of the Ahl al-Bayt (PBUH), wherein Qur'ānic narratives serve not only as sources of knowledge and law, but as pathways to intimacy with the Divine. Their contemplative use of scripture in supplication reveals the Qur'ān's enduring relevance to the inner life of the believer and its transformative power in spiritual practice. Based on these examples, it can be concluded that devotional *tadabbur* integrates Qur'ānic narratives into the rhythm of spiritual life, elevating supplication into a dynamic encounter with revelation. The Ahl al-Bayt's method demonstrates that prayer is not only petition but also reflection, remembrance, and re-living of divine history—an approach that deepens faith and sustains the believer's connection with God.

Conclusion

The present study has explored the concept of *tadabbur* as a distinct and multifaceted mode of engagement with the Qur'ān, particularly as exemplified in the exegetical and contemplative practices of the Ahl al-Bayt (PBUH). Unlike *tafsīr*, which is a specialized scholarly discipline requiring technical mastery, *tadabbur* is a spiritually accessible process that invites all believers to reflect deeply on the divine message, uncover its inner meanings, and integrate its guidance into their lives. Through a typological analysis of the Ahl al-Bayt's engagement with Qur'ānic narratives, this study has demonstrated that their method of *tadabbur*

encompasses a wide range of interpretive dimensions: contemplation of the linguistic structure and literary features of the verses, contemplation aimed at explicating the *sīrah* and practices (*Sunan*) of the Ahl al-Bayt (PBUT), contemplation of doctrinal issues and the explication of theological concepts through the narratives, elucidation of the positions of *imāmah* and *wilāyah* with reference to the narrative verses, extraction of ethical points from the narratives, contemplation of the narratives to derive Islamic legal rulings, derivation of divine wisdom (*Hikmah*) from the narratives, devotional application of the narratives in supplication and spiritual practice.

Taken together, these dimensions reveal that the Imāms (PBUT) did not treat the Qurʾān as a static text but as a dynamic, living source of wisdom, guidance, and transformation—one that speaks simultaneously to the intellect, conscience, and the soul of believer. Their contemplative approach demonstrates that Qurʾānic stories are not merely historical accounts but instruments for moral cultivation, doctrinal clarification, juridical reasoning, and spiritual elevation.

The holistic hermeneutic modeled by the Ahl al-Bayt bridges the gap between revelation and lived experience. It offers a paradigm of Qurʾānic engagement that is intellectually rigorous, spiritually enriching, and practically applicable. By situating ethical, theological, legal, and devotional insights within the framework of *tadabbur*, the Imāms provided believers with enduring methods for encountering the Qurʾān as a guide for both thought and action.

Ultimately, this study underscores the necessity of renewed attention to *tadabbur* in contemporary Qurʾānic scholarship and practice. In a time when believers seek meaningful ways to connect with revelation, the contemplative models of the Ahl al-Bayt (PBUT) present a timeless methodology—one that integrates reflection, devotion, and praxis, ensuring that the Qurʾān remains a living source of divine wisdom across generations.

References

Holly Qur'ān.

- Ābidī, A., Khākpūr, H. (2011). Types and methods of Imam 'Alī's Qur'ānic exegesis in Sunni Tafsīr narrations. *Alavi Research Journal*, 2(3), 21-40. (In Persian)
- Basīratī Barzakī, M. (2015). Typology and validation of Tafsīr narrations [Unpublished master's thesis]. University of Tehran. (In Persian)
- Baydāwī, 'A. (1997). *Anwār al-tanzīl wa-asrār al-ta'wīl* (Vol. 2). Dār al-Fikr. (In Arabic)
- Bāzargān, A. (1995). *Methodology of tadabbur in the Qur'ān*. Sherkat-e Sahami Enteshar. (In Persian)
- Bīstūnī, M. (1958). *Tadabbur in the Qur'ān: Contexts, keys, and principles*. Bayān-e Javān. (In Persian)
- Fa'āl 'Irāqī, 'A. (1997). *Qiṣṣah dar adabiyāt-i 'Arab*. Nashr-i Ney. (In Persian)
- Ibn Abī Ḥātim, 'A. (1998). *Tafsīr Ibn Abī Ḥātim* (Vol. 3). Maktabat Nizār Muṣṭafā al-Bāz. (In Arabic)
- Ibn Manzūr, M. (1985). *Lisān al-'Arab* (Vol. 5). Dār Ṣādir. (In Arabic)
- Jalali Khandari, S., Amini, F. (2014). Typology of the narratives of Imam Hasan Mujtaba (AS). Year 6, Spring and Summer, 11, 240-260. (In Persian)
- Jawharī, I. (1989). *Al-Ṣiḥāh*. Dār al-'Ilm lil-Malāyīn. (In Arabic)
- Khakpour, H. (2012). Typology of interpretive narratives of Imam Sadiq (AS). *Quran Research Hasna*, 12, 91-121. (In Persian)
- Khaledi, H. (2017). Documentary review and typology of interpretive narratives of Surah Al-Isra (Verses 1 to 14) and their educational teachings. Master's thesis, University of Qom. (In Persian)
- Khushdūnī, M. (2017). Analytical typology of tafsīr narrations of al-thiqah al-Islām al-Kulaynī in al-Kāfī [Unpublished master's thesis]. University of Tehran. (In Persian)
- Kūhī, A. et al. (2014). Typology of semantic narrations of Qur'ānic vocabulary. *Ahl al-Bayt Tafsīr Journal*, 2(2), 120-141. (In Persian)
- Kulaynī, M. (1968). *al-Kāfī* (Vols. 2 & 8). Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmiyyah. (In Persian)
- Maḥfūzī, S.Y., & Bostani Bajinasra, Q. (2015). Typology and methodology of Tafsīr narrations of Imam al-Bāqir ('a). *Siraj Munir*, 6. (In Persian)
- Majlisī, M. B. (1982). *Biḥār al-Anwār* (Vols. 2, 4, 13, 29, 64, 68, 78). Dār Ihya' al-Turāth al-'Arabī. (In Arabic)
- Marāghī, A. M. (n.d.). *Tafsīr al-marāghī*. Maṭba'at al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī. (In Arabic)
- Mehrizi, M. (2010). Interpretive narratives: Shiite typology and authority. *Hadith Sciences*, 15, 4-34. (In Persian)
- Misaqhi, A. (2011). Types of interpretive narratives of Imam Sajjad (AS) in the field of specifying instances. *Quran and Hadith Studies*, 4(8), 27-66. (In Persian)
- Mosalai Pour Yazdi, A., & Dimeh Kargarab, M. (2010). Typology of interpretive narratives of Imam Reza (AS). *Hadith Research*, 3, 75-96. (In Persian)
- Mousavi, S. M., & Khalil, M. (2016). Typology of interpretive narratives in the virtue of Imam Hussein (AS). *Hadith Hawzah*, 13, 93-114. (In Persian)
- Murādī Zanjanī, H. (2019). *Methods and approaches of tadabbur in the Qur'ān*. Research Institute of Hawzah and University. (In Persian)
- Muṣṭafavī, Ḥ. (2001). *Al-Tahqīq fī kalimāt al-Qur'ān al-karīm* (Vol. 6). Mu'assasah-yi Nashr-i Islāmī. (In Persian)
- Mudarrisī, M. H. (1998). *Tafsīr Hādī* (Vol. 6). Dār al-Hādī. (In Arabic)

- Nasih, A. A., & Bahrami, F. (2016). Typology of interpretive narratives of Ahlulbayt (AS) in Surah Luqman. Volume 8, 29-30, 193-214. (In Persian)
- Naqīpūrfar, V. (2013). *A study on tadabbur in the Qur'ān*. Osveh. (In Persian)
- Niyshābūrī, M. (1995). *Tafsīr al-naysābūrī* (Vol. 2). Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah. (In Arabic)
- Norouzi, M., & Baradaran, M. (2014). Typology and methodology of interpretive narratives of Lady Fatimah (Peace Be Upon Her). *Safīna*, 43, 26-44. (In Persian)
- Purakbiryani, Z. (2015). Typology and analysis of interpretive narratives under verses 51 to 75 of Surah An-Nisa. Master's thesis, University of Isfahan. (In Persian)
- Qushayrī, ‘A. (n.d.). *Laṭā’if al-ishārāt* (Vol. 1). Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah. (In Arabic)
- Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī. Ḥ. (n.d.). *Mufradāt al-fāz al-Qur’ān* (Vol. 1). Dār al-Ma’rifah. (In Arabic)
- Rustamnejād, M. (2009). Typology of tafsīr narrations. *Hasna*, (1), 48–60. (In Persian)
- Şafarī, A. (2008). *An analysis of tafsīr narrations of Sūrat Āl ‘Imrān in the major Shi‘i and Sunni traditional exegeses* [Unpublished master's thesis]. Tarbiat Modares University. (In Persian)
- Şādiqī Tehrānī, M. (1998). *Tafsīr al-furqān* (Vol. 10). Markaz-i Farhangī wa Ma’ārif-i Islāmī. (In Persian)
- Şadūq, I. B. (1993, 1982). *‘Uyūn akhbār al-Riḍā and al-Amālī* (Vols. 1–3). Mu’assasah-yi Imām; Dār al-Ma’rifah. (In Arabic)
- Saroukhani, B. (2001). *Encyclopedia of social sciences*. Keyhān. (In Persian)
- Ṭabrisī, F. (1982). *Majma‘ al-bayān fī tafsīr al-Qur’ān* (Vol. 2). Dār Iḥyā’ al-Turāth al-‘Arabī. (In Arabic)
- Ṭabāṭabā’ī, M. Ḥ. (1996). *Tafsīr al-Mīzān* (Vols. 5 & 20). Mu’assasah-yi Nashr-i Islāmī. (In Arabic)
- Ṭūsī, M. (1990). *Miṣbāḥ al-mutahajjid* (Vol. 1). Dār al-Du‘ā’. (In Persian)