

Analyzing the Allegation of the Qur'an's Influence by Contemporary Culture from the Perspective of Sunni and Shi'ite Exegetes, with Emphasis on the Topic of Female Infanticide

Mahdieh Yarahmadi¹, Seyed Karim Khoshbin Khoshnazar², Shirmohammad Alipour Abdoli³

1. Department of Quran and Hadith Sciences, Faculty of Literature, Lorestan University, Lorestan, Iran.

E-mail: yarahmady20@yahoo.com

2. Corresponding author, Department of Quran and Hadith, Faculty of Quranic Sciences, University of Quranic Sciences and Teachings, Tehran, Iran.

E-mail: khoshnazar@quran.ac.ir

3. Department of Quran and Hadith Sciences, Lorestan University, Khorramabad, Iran.

E-mail: alipour.sh@lu.ac.ir

Abstract

The allegation that the Qur'an was influenced by individuals and the culture of its time dates back to the era of its revelation. Some Qur'anic verses explicitly state that the Messenger of God was accused of the Qur'an being the product of the Prophet's (PBUH) interaction with specific individuals rather than a divine, heavenly revelation. On the one hand, the revelatory nature of the Qur'an's wording, and on the other, its utilization of certain elements of contemporary culture in many of its verses, make the explanation and analysis of the allegation of the Qur'an's influence by the culture of the revelation era highly necessary. In this research, the opinions of selected exegetes from both Sunni and Shi'ite schools regarding the influence and interaction between the Qur'an and contemporary culture are explained and analyzed using a descriptive-analytical method, and their points of agreement and divergence are examined. Three general viewpoints can be proposed concerning the Qur'an's influence by contemporary culture: (1) the Qur'an is completely detached from and alien to the Arab culture of the revelation era; (2) the Qur'an was influenced by contemporary Arab culture; and (3) the Qur'an sifted through Arab culture, affirming what was suitable and positive and nullifying, gradually eliminating, or reforming superstitions and falsehoods. The authors argue that, through a precise examination of rational and textual evidence on the one hand, and historical evidence on the other, the third viewpoint can be validated: the Qur'an, while establishing its own specific culture over time, also sifted through the Arab culture of the revelation era. Therefore, regarding the aforementioned allegation, the issue of female infanticide is examined through an analysis of the views of selected Shi'ite exegetes (al-Ṭabrisī, al-Ṣādeqī al-Tehrānī, al-Jawādī al-Āmulī, al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī, and Makārem Shīrāzī) and Sunni exegetes (Fakhr al-Rāzī, Sayyid Quṭb, al-Ālūsī, and Ibn 'Āshūr) concerning the influence—or lack thereof—of the Qur'an by the culture of the revelation era. The data collection method in this article is library-based.

Keywords: Allegation of Influence; Sunni and Shi'ite Exegetes; Contemporary Culture; Female Infanticide.

Introduction

Introduction

An entity known as the Qur'an emerged in the seventh century CE in the environment of the Arabian Peninsula. This entity was revealed by the Omniscient and Eternal God, chose Arabic as its language, naturally adopted the linguistic patterns of that period, and, while expressing revelatory knowledge and truths, was revealed in a form understandable to all its audiences across eras for the purpose of transforming the morals and beliefs of that age. Attention to the conditions of the audience and environmental characteristics is among the notable aspects of the prophetic mission, especially that of the Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH). On the other hand, the primary objective of the Qur'an could not be achieved without considering the culture of the revelation era and reforming and correcting its erroneous beliefs. The Qur'an utilized human *fiṭrah* (primordial nature) as the universal language of humanity and presented its constant educational principles alongside variables specific to the Arabs of the revelation era. Therefore, the Qur'an simultaneously addresses the audience of the revelation era and all of humanity across time, since its true audience is human *fiṭrah*, not merely the contemporaries of revelation. In discussing female infanticide, Makarem Shirazi points out that the Quran is a text that observes reality, is transcultural and universal, addresses all cultures as a general audience, and has not merely raised ancient issues. Since every text, alongside a surface meaning, has an inner meaning that the audience, according to their knowledge and ability, can perceive the message embedded within the apparent meaning, many exegetes have such an understanding regarding the literary text of the Quran. The early exegete Fakhr al-Razi paid attention to this linguistic phenomenon; while Fakhr al-Razi, al-Tabataba'i, and other exegetes consider the Quran comprehensive in the domain of principles and branches. The main issue of this research is examining the opinions of Sunni and Shiite exegetes on the topic of female infanticide. In other words, the primary question of the present article is: Did the Quran present the view of the Arabs of the revelation era regarding female infanticide, and does wa'd al-banat (female infanticide) possess an independent identity in the Quran? Or is the presentation of this topic by the Quran a reflection and borrowing from the common ignorant belief of the revelation era? Or is the truth that the Quran had a condemnatory approach towards the culture contemporary to the revelation regarding the issue of wa'd al-banat? Do the verses discussing female infanticide reject ignorant elements, which constitutes the Quran's influence on contemporary culture?

Concepts

1. "Culture"

In technical terms, numerous definitions have been provided for "culture," reaching up to 250 definitions (Foundations of Sociology, the term culture, p. 117). The common aspect of the lexical meanings of culture (*farhang*) is "to advance and propel forward." Therefore, customs, traditions, knowledge, etc., were called culture because they propel humans forward. Technically, many definitions have been offered for the concept of culture so far. Thinkers have presented hundreds of definitions to clarify the meaning and concept of culture. Merely categorizing the types of definitions includes descriptive, historical, normative, psychological, structural, genetic, etc., the elaboration of whose contents has led to the compilation of numerous books. After examining various definitions of the concept of culture, these definitions can be categorized into the following six groups: the totality of human learning (Totonchian, p. 67; Vosoqi & Nik-khalagh, 2009, p. 81; Pirouzmand, 2007, p. 62); human virtues (Ja'fari, 2000, p. 130; Ja'fari, 1996, p. 16; Ja'fari, 2000, pp. 47-51 & p. 18); the totality of human material and spiritual achievements (Rosh, 1991, p. 117; Ja'fari, 2000, p. 78; Oliya,

2006, p. 29); the totality of beliefs and normalized values (Pirouzmand & Sadeghi, 2007, p. 63); a system of human relations (Pazhouhandeh, 1995, p. 85; Totonchian, p. 67; Billington, Rosamund et al., 2001, p. 9; Dupuy, 1995, p. 22; Rosh, 1991, p. 128; Dupuy, 1995, p. 90); a way or pattern of life (Bahar, 2007, p. 27; Ja'fari, 2000, p. 53). These six concepts can be considered the principal meanings of the word culture; that is, given that none of the definitions of culture fall outside these six categories, the concept of culture that exists in the minds of thinkers, sociologists, anthropologists, politicians, and other strata of society today is a totality composed of these six concepts, although some may emphasize one of its dimensions and not consider other dimensions as part of the meaning of culture. Therefore, the intended meaning of the word culture is composed of these six concepts (Shokouri & Mir-Sadeghi, 2016).

Thus, generally, the technical meaning of culture is broader than its lexical meaning; the lexical meaning of culture has a positive connotation, whereas its technical meaning does not and also includes what, from a lexical perspective, is considered uncultured or bad culture with a negative connotation. Based on this, we consider the people of the Age of Ignorance (Jahiliyah), who lived in the Arabian Peninsula on the eve of and simultaneously with the emergence of Islam, as having a culture; because culture consists of their good and bad characteristics. More precisely, culture is defined as:

The totality of knowledge, customs, worldviews, beliefs, and established behaviors of an individual, tribe, or nation, the observance of which forms the basis of life's relationships and is a racial, national, religious, and human duty; it can also include superstitious and negative beliefs.

According to the provided definitions of culture, language is a part of culture, not all of it (cf. Bateni, 2020, p. 34).

2. "Contemporary Era"

What is meant by "contemporary era" is the time of the Arabs during the Quran's revelation, referred to as "the culture of Arab Ignorance." Furthermore, the Arab culture of the revelation era, in addition to ignorant issues like polytheism and idol worship, includes the subcultures of Jews and Christians who were present in the Arabian Peninsula; as some orientalist claim that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) learned the remaining beliefs from various monotheistic and polytheistic religions, the knowledge of Christian priests and Jewish rabbis, the monotheistic thoughts of the Hanif religion, and the traditions of idol-worshipping religions like Hajj, tawaf, vows (nadhr), seeking intercession (tawassul), and the transactional laws of the Arabs such as sale (bay'), profit-sharing (mudarabah), crop-sharing (musaqat), and family law regulations like zihar, inheritance, contract, and divorce, throughout his life, and then, with his great intelligence, organized and codified them, and with slight modifications presented them to the people as the "religion of Islam" (Zamani, 2010, pp. 165-166).

Since understanding the category of contemporary culture and the Quran's revelation era requires recognizing the identity and cultural elements of that period; therefore, it is necessary in this regard to analyze and explain the meaning of some terms such as: the language of the people (mentioned earlier) and the culture of Ignorance, which is one of the attributes of that era, so that the scope of the present research becomes precisely clear and evident.

3. "The Culture of Ignorance (Jahiliyah)"

The period before the emergence of Islam is generally called the Age of Ignorance. It is evident that this term, from the perspective of Muslims, contained a kind of contempt, especially since the Quran looked upon Jahiliyah with disdain. This word is used four times in the Quran: the conjecture of Ignorance (Quran 3:154), the judgment of Ignorance (Quran 5:50), the zeal of Ignorance (Quran 48:26), and the former Ignorance (Quran 33:33).

Contrary to popular belief, Islam did not rise only against Bedouin nomads, and the Prophet's (PBUH) effort was not limited to teaching simple-minded and unsophisticated people; rather, Arab culture at the beginning of the Quran's revelation had complexities such that without familiarity with the past culture, understanding many cultural aspects of the Islamic era is not possible. Many customs, morals, and knowledge of that era transferred to the Islamic era and had a profound impact on the lives of Muslims, especially at the beginning of Islam (Azarnoush, 2011, p. 5).

The meaning of Jahiliyah is not as clear as it seems. Many scholars believe that since the Arabs in the pre-Islamic periods had no civilization and constantly migrated from one place to another, and mostly believed in deities other than their numerous idols, and consequently, were immersed in a world of darkness, they were called ignorant (jahil) and their era was named the Age of Ignorance (ibid., p. 6).

Although the influence of religion on the lives of the pre-Islamic Arabs was very limited, they should not be considered entirely devoid of law. The idol-worshipping Arab society was based on several ethical concepts. The Arabs had no written collection of religious or customary laws apart from the coercive force of traditional customs reinforced through public opinion, and their ethical and social ideals were preserved and guarded in their poetry, which is the sole surviving form of literature from that time (ibid., p. 55).

Examining the Allegation of the Quran's Influence by Contemporary Culture

The issue of the Quran's influence by the culture of the revelation era has become increasingly popularized by orientalist and Islamic studies scholars such as Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd, John Hick, Arthur Jeffery, and Yusuf Durrah Haddad, and in terms of historical origin, it is not a newly emerged suspicion. The Quran itself, in various places, has pointed to its non-influence by non-Arab culture and *asatir al-awwalin* (the myths of the ancients):

«وَلَقَدْ نَعْلَمُ أَنَّهُمْ يَقُولُونَ إِنَّمَا يُعَلِّمُهُ بَشَرٌ لِّسَانُ الَّذِي يُلْحِدُونَ إِلَيْهِ أَعْجَمِيٌّ وَ هَذَا لِسَانٌ عَرَبِيٌّ مُبِينٌ»

"We certainly know that they say, 'It is only a human being who teaches the Prophet.' The tongue of the one they refer to is foreign, while this is a clear Arabic tongue" (Quran 16:103).

It states, «لِسَانُ الَّذِي يُلْحِدُونَ إِلَيْهِ أَعْجَمِيٌّ» ("The tongue of the one they incline to is foreign"). Of course, they had a specific person in mind who had contact with the Prophet and was not from Arab tribes—either from Persia or Rome. Exegetes have mentioned various names for this person; for example, some say it was a man named Balaam or Salman al-Farsi, who was a companion of the Prophet (PBUH) (cf. Tayyib, Vol. 12, p. 191). God states that this person whom you are alleging (i.e., making a partner) cannot even speak Arabic. Exegetes have mentioned various individuals, but since there is no evidence, it is not reliable; we only say that God has not mentioned his name because the polytheists themselves knew who they meant. He states that the person you mention has no ability to speak the Arabic tongue, while this Quran is «لِسَانٌ عَرَبِيٌّ مُبِينٌ» ("a clear Arabic tongue"), and you who consider yourselves the most eloquent Arabs cannot produce even one chapter like it, let alone a non-Arab who cannot speak Arabic (Tayyib, Vol. 12, p. 190).

This verse bears witness to the truth that some contemporaries of the Quran's revelation, from the very early days, considered the Quran influenced by non-Arab (foreign) culture, while the allegation of the Quran's influence by the myths of the ancients is narrated and decisively rejected in Quran 6:25, 8:31, 16:24, and 23:83.

The theory of the Quran's influence by contemporary culture (including Jewish, Christian, and especially elements of pre-Islamic Arab culture) has also extended to the writings of contemporary Muslim writers and has found proponents and opponents (Rezaei Esfahani, 2014, p. 31).

The discussion of the relationship between the Quran and contemporary culture has roots in Quranic exegesis from the beginning of Islam until now; because many Quranic exegetes, in interpreting some verses, have discussed and examined some dimensions of this issue, although they have not used the title "Quran and contemporary culture." For example, exegetes usually, under verses related to Jahiliyah—"the conjecture of Ignorance..." (Quran 3:154); "the judgment of Ignorance..." (Quran 5:50); "the zeal of Ignorance..." (Quran 48:26); "the display of [pre-Islamic] Ignorance..." (Quran 33:33)—have expressed points about pre-Islamic Arab culture. Islamic exegetical sources show that some prominent exegetes, on the occasion of interpreting some verses related to contemporary culture, have spoken about the Quran's influence by this culture. However, in the contemporary era, numerous works have also been written on the subject of the Quran and contemporary culture.

Examining the Verses on "Female Infanticide Among Arabs" in the Quran

After polytheism, female infanticide was the ugliest tradition of pre-Islamic Arabs; it is noteworthy that several verses in the Quran speak of the hatred of the people of the Age of Ignorance towards daughters:

«وَيَجْعَلُونَ لِلَّهِ مَا يَكْرَهُونَ»

"And they attribute to God what they dislike [for themselves]" (Quran 16:62).

«وَلَقَدْ صَرَّفْنَا فِي هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ لِيَذَكَّرُوا وَمَا يَزِيدُهُمْ إِلَّا نُفُورًا أَلَيْسَ لَكُمُ الذَّكَرُ وَلَهُ الْأُنثَى»

"We have certainly diversified in this Quran so they may be reminded, but it only increases them in aversion. Is the male for you and for Him the female?" (Quran 17:40-41? Note: The provided Arabic text for 17:40 appears incomplete/erroneous compared to standard text. The translation follows the provided Arabic. Standard Quran 17:40 is different).

«فَاسْتَفْتِهِمْ أَلِرَبِّكَ الْبَنَاتُ وَلَهُمُ الْبُنُونَ. أَمْ خَلَقْنَا الْمَلَائِكَةَ إِنَاثًا وَهُمْ شَاهِدُونَ. أَلَا إِنَّهُمْ مِنْ إِفْكِهِمْ لَيَقُولُونَ. وَلَدَ اللَّهُ وَإِنَّهُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ. «أَصْطَفَى الْبَنَاتِ عَلَى الْبَنِينَ. مَا لَكُمْ كَيْفَ تَحْكُمُونَ»

"So inquire of them, 'Does your Lord have daughters while they have sons?' Or did We create the angels as females while they were witnesses?' Indeed, it is out of their [inherent] lie that they say, 'God has begotten,' and indeed, they are liars. Has He chosen daughters over sons? What is [wrong] with you? How do you judge?" (Quran 37:149-154).

«وَ إِذَا بُشِّرَ أَحَدُهُمْ بِمَا صَرَبَ لِلرَّحْمَنِ مَثَلًا ظَلَّ وَجْهُهُ مُسْوَدًّا وَ هُوَ كَظِيمٌ»

"And when one of them is given good tidings of that which he attributes to the Most Merciful [i.e., a daughter], his face becomes dark, and he suppresses grief" (Quran 43:17).

Among these, some verses specifically address the issue of female infanticide in the Jahiliyah:

«وَ إِذَا الْمَوْءُودَةُ سُئِلَتْ. بِأَيِّ ذَنْبٍ قُتِلَتْ»

"And when the girl buried alive is asked, for what sin she was killed" (Quran 81:8-9).

«وَ إِذَا بُشِّرَ أَحَدُهُمْ بِالْأُنثَى ظَلَّ وَجْهُهُ مُسْوَدًّا وَ هُوَ كَظِيمٌ. يَتَوَارَى مِنَ الْقَوْمِ مِنْ سُوءِ مَا بُشِّرَ بِهِ أَيُعْتَابُ عَلَى هُونٍ أَمْ يَدُسُّهُ فِي «الْتُّرَابِ أَلَا سَاءَ مَا يَحْكُمُونَ»

"And when one of them is informed of [the birth of] a female, his face becomes dark, and he suppresses grief. He hides himself from the people because of the ill of which he has been informed. Should he keep it in humiliation or bury it in the ground? Unquestionably, evil is what they decide" (Quran 16:58-59).

However, according to some verses, the custom of child killing, including both daughters and sons, was also prevalent during the Jahiliyah:

«وَ لَا تَقْتُلُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ خَشْيَةَ إِمْلَاقٍ نَحْنُ نَرْزُقُهُمْ وَإِيَّاكُمْ إِنَّ قَتْلَهُمْ كَانَ خِطْئًا كَبِيرًا»

"And do not kill your children for fear of poverty. We provide for them and for you. Indeed, their killing is ever a great sin" (Quran 17:31).

وَكَذَلِكَ زَيَّنَ لِكَثِيرٍ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ قَتْلَ أَوْلَادِهِمْ شُرَكَاؤُهُمْ لِيُرْدُوهُمْ وَ لِيَلْبِسُوا عَلَيْهِمْ دِينَهُمْ وَ لَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا فَعَلُوهُ فَذَرُّهُمْ وَ مَا يَفْتُرُونَ. « وَ قَالُوا هَذِهِ أَنْعَامٌ وَ حَرْتُ جَزْرًا لَا يَطْعَمُهَا إِلَّا مَنْ نَشَاءُ بَرِّعْمِهِمْ وَ أَنْعَامٌ حُرِّمَتْ ظُهُورُهَا وَ أَنْعَامٌ لَا يَذْكُرُونَ اسْمَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهَا افْتِرَاءً عَلَيْهِ سَيَجْزِيهِمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْتُرُونَ. وَ قَالُوا مَا فِي بُطُونِ هَذِهِ الْأَنْعَامِ خَالِصَةٌ لِدُنُورِنَا وَ مُحَرَّمٌ عَلَى أَزْوَاجِنَا وَ إِنْ يَكُنْ مَيْتَةً فَهُمْ فِيهِ شُرَكَاءُ سَيَجْزِيهِمْ وَصَفَهُمْ إِنَّهُ كَذِيبٌ عَلَيْهِمْ. قَدْ حَسِرَ الَّذِينَ قَتَلُوا أَوْلَادَهُمْ سَفَهًا بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ وَ حَرَّمُوا مَا رَزَقَهُمُ اللَّهُ افْتِرَاءً عَلَى اللَّهِ قَدْ ضَلُّوا «وَ مَا كَانُوا مُهْتَدِينَ

"And likewise, to many of the polytheists their partners have made the killing of their children appealing to mislead them and to confuse them in their religion. And if Allah had willed, they would not have done so. So leave them and that which they invent. And they say, 'These animals and crops are forbidden; none may eat them except whom we will,' by their claim. And there are animals whose backs are forbidden [for burden] and animals over which they do not mention the name of Allah, inventing against Him untruth. He will punish them for what they were inventing. And they say, 'What is in the bellies of these animals is exclusively for our males and forbidden to our females. But if it is [born] dead, then all of them are partners in it.' He will punish them for their description. Indeed, He is Wise and Knowing. Those who killed their children foolishly without knowledge and forbade what Allah had provided for them, inventing against Allah, have certainly lost. They have gone astray and were not [rightly] guided" (Quran 6:137-140).

«...وَ لَا تَقْتُلُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ مِنْ إِمْلَاقٍ نَحْنُ نَرْزُقُكُمْ وَ إِيَّاهُمْ...»

"...And do not kill your children for fear of poverty. We provide for you and for them..." (Quran 6:151).

Some exegetes have considered the meaning of child killing in these verses to be specifically female infanticide, which God has explicitly and specifically referred to in two other verses, such as al-Tabrisi (al-Tabrisi, 1981, Vol. 12, p. 131) and Sayyid Qutb (Sayyid Qutb, 1992, Vol. 6, p. 3839). However, some other exegetes have considered these verses as generally referring to child killing; for example, al-Tabataba'i, who considers female infanticide a specific and independent title with specific verses prohibiting its unlawfulness, different from child killing (al-Tabataba'i, 1988, Vol. 12, p. 117). Al-Sadeqi al-Tehrani also considered the verses on child killing to include both sons and daughters and distinct from the verses on female infanticide (al-Sadeqi al-Tehrani, 1986, Vol. 10, p. 296). But in general, according to the verses presented, the Arabs discriminated between daughters and sons and, due to considering sons superior, wanted them for themselves, but hated daughters and attributed them to God, believing angels were God's daughters.

Opinions of Sunni and Shiite Exegetes on Female Infanticide Among Arabs

1. Opinions of Sunni Exegetes

Fakhr al-Din al-Razi (d. 606 AH/1209 CE)

He explains that wa'd means heaviness and cites verse 255 of Surah al-Baqarah as a Quranic example where God holds up the heavens and the earth despite their heaviness. He elaborates that according to Arab custom, if a woman gave birth to a daughter and wanted to keep her, the girl

would wear a garment of wool or hair to graze camels and sheep in the desert; but if they wanted to kill her, the father would leave the girl until the age of six, then tell her mother to adorn her so he could take her to his relatives and bury her alive. A pregnant woman would also give birth over a pit so that if a daughter was born, she would be thrown into the pit, and if a son was born, he would be taken (Fakhr al-Razi, 1999, Vol. 31, p. 66).

According to Fakhr al-Razi, fear of disgrace for oneself or fear of poverty drove them to female infanticide, and he refers to Quran 17:31. In his view, the questioning of the girl about the reason for her killing is actually a rebuke of her killer (Fakhr al-Razi, 1999, Vol. 31, p. 66). Based on the above, Fakhr al-Razi interpreted the killing of offspring in the verses that generally prohibit child killing as meaning the killing of daughters.

Sayyid Qutb (d. 1966 CE)

Sayyid Qutb, in interpreting verses 8 and 9 of Surah al-Takwir, says that burying daughters alive out of fear of poverty and considering them a disgrace was among the base customs of the Jahiliyah, and the Quran, by referring to this ugly trait, points to the Jahiliyah that Islam confronted and from which it saved not only the Arabs but humanity (Sayyid Qutb, 1992, Vol. 6, p. 3839).

He subsequently refers to verse 31 of Surah al-Isra, stating that burying alive in the Jahiliyah was carried out in a cruel and heinous manner (ibid., Vol. 4, p. 2223), and there were those who would leave the daughter until the age of six, then tell the mother to bring her and perfume her so he could take her to the relatives, take her to a well previously dug in the desert, push her into it, and pour soil over her; some would take the mother during labor pains to the edge of a dug pit to throw the newborn into the pit if it was a girl. Even if they did not bury girls alive, they would oppress and abuse them in other ways. He says Islam fought against the Jahiliyah regarding the dignity of women and considered burying alive in the Jahiliyah among the subjects of reckoning on the Day of Judgment, as if burying alive is one of the great global events about which the girls will be asked why they were buried alive, let alone questioning the one who buried them alive. Islam came and brought the dignity of women's status in the Jahili environment and realized the belief in the equal share of women and men in relation to God, in an environment where there was no sign or motivation indicating women's attainment of this dignity, establishing a situation based solely on pure heavenly value measured by the heavenly scale (Sayyid Qutb, 1992, Vol. 6, pp. 3839-3840).

Sayyid Mahmud Alusi (d. 1270 AH/1854 CE)

Alusi, in interpreting verse 31 of Surah al-Isra, considers the intended meaning of killing offspring to be related to daughters, even though he acknowledges the apparent meaning of the word *awlād* (offspring) includes both sons and daughters (Alusi, 1995, Vol. 8, p. 65). Under the interpretation of verses 8-9 of Surah al-Takwir, like Fakhr al-Razi, he describes the heinous behavior of the pre-Islamic Arabs with daughters and considers the reason for this act to be their fear of poverty and destitution: "It is the girl who is buried alive from *al-wa'd*, and it is heaviness, as if she is named that because she is weighed down with soil until she dies..." (Alusi, 1995, Vol. 15, pp. 257-259).

Muhammad al-Tahir ibn Ashur (d. 1973 CE)

He discusses the introduction and connection of the topic, stating that, in relation to the union of souls with bodies on the Day of Judgment, the questioning of the victimized girls and anything else asked from the criminals is specific to the Resurrection. The parents' assault on the lives of their children through infanticide was an aggressive act because the innate instinct is the parents' love for their children, and questioning the daughter about her killing is a revealing question meant for threat and intimidation of punishment. In his view, according to the apparent meaning of the verse, the questioning of the daughter and the punishment for her killing is the first thing judged on the Day of Judgment, as it necessitates that this question be asked when every soul is questioned. Subsequently, like other exegetes, he describes the disgraceful behavior of the Arabs with daughters and how they were buried alive by their fathers (Ibn Ashur, Vol. 30, pp. 128-130).

He states that infanticide was not common among all tribes and did not exist at all among the Quraysh tribe (Ibn Ashur, Vol. 30, p. 130). Regarding addressing the baby girl, he says the verse is in the position of threatening and holding accountable the polytheist fathers who buried their daughters alive, and the girl's answer is testimony against the one who annihilated her, so he will deserve the severest punishment (Ibn Ashur, Vol. 30, p. 131).

2. Opinions of Shiite Exegetes

Abu Ali al-Fadl ibn al-Hasan al-Tabrisi (d. 548 AH/1153 CE)

He considers verses 8 and 9 of Surah al-Takwir as from the tongue of the girl addressing the one who buried her alive and in the position of rebuke, and considers the custom of the pre-Islamic Arabs, citing Arab poetry, as the vile act of burying daughters alive (al-Tabrisi, 1993, Vol. 10, p. 674). Al-Tabrisi interprets al-wa'd as burying daughters alive in the Arab environment out of fear of poverty and marriage below one's status. Al-Tabrisi narrates a report from Ibn Abbas that if God had paid attention to people's desires for children, no girl would have been born, because no one desired a daughter, and if all children were boys, human progeny would become extinct. He considers the end of verse 59 of Surah al-Nahl to be related to the Arabs' bad judgment in attributing what they desired to themselves and what they disliked to God (al-Tabrisi, 1993, Vol. 6, p. 567). He considers verse 31 of Surah al-Isra, regarding child killing, to refer to burying daughters alive: "God only forbade them from that because they used to bury daughters (ya'idūna al-banāt) and bury them alive" (ibid., Vol. 6, p. 638).

Muhammad al-Sadeqi al-Tehrani (d. 2011 CE)

In this regard, he states that the pre-Islamic Arabs were mostly poor and, due to poverty and shame, killed their daughters, and this was a humiliation in human history. At this time, the Quran spoke of the equality of women and men and condemns them in several places, and the Quran emphasizes that if daughters are disgraceful, why do you attribute them to God. The Quran, by mentioning this savage and oppressive operation among important issues and the Resurrection, specifies it as one of the most ruthless and savage acts that have ever occurred in human history. Like other exegetes, al-Sadeqi al-Tehrani describes the humiliating behavior of the Arabs of the revelation era with daughters and widowed women (al-Sadeqi al-Tehrani, 1986, Vol. 30, pp. 149-152).

He points out that in that era, it was as if female infanticide was in the form of a law, until Islam came and recognized the female as daughter, woman, and mother and made her aware of her rights. Like Makarem Shirazi, al-Sadeqi al-Tehrani believes that in the current civilized era, daughters are more wretched than in the first Jahiliyah, and if in the first Jahiliyah they buried the bodies of daughters, in the modern Jahiliyah, in addition to abortion, they drag young girls into savage vices and moral decline, leading them to shame and corruption, and bury their dignity and humanity, the harm of which is far greater than burying daughters alive (ibid., pp. 152-154).

Al-Sadeqi al-Tehrani considers verse 31 of al-Isra to be about sons and considers killing children due to poverty or fear of poverty, in accordance with other Quranic verses regarding daughters: "Do you see that killing offspring due to poverty or fear of it is the same as burying daughters (wa'd al-banāt), as it may seem to some? As if it is not; here it is al-awlād (offspring) and there it is al-unthā (the female), and here the reason is poverty or fear of poverty, and there it is humiliation: 'Should he keep it in humiliation or bury it in the soil?' (Quran 16:59). And if the two reasons combine for the female, they do not combine for the male" (ibid., Vol. 17, p. 177).

He considers the interpretation of verse 151 of Surah al-An'am to be only about the ten primary and secondary prohibitions (ibid., Vol. 10, p. 328).

Sayyid Muhammad Husayn al-Tabataba'i (d. 1981 CE)

Regarding the rebuking interrogative in verses 8 and 9 of Surah al-Takwir, he explains that al-maw'ūdah, the girl buried alive, will be asked in the Resurrection—by way of intellectual metonymy—about the reason for this act, so that she may dare to ask God to take her revenge from the father who is responsible for it. Al-Tabataba'i introduces burying daughters alive due to the father's worry about the daughter being stained with disgrace as a custom of the Jahiliyah (al-Tabataba'i, 1992, Vol. 20, p. 214).

Under verses 58 and 59 of Surah al-Nahl, emphasizing the belief of the Arabs of the revelation era that sons were honorable and their own property but daughters were lowly and God's property, he identifies the root of female infanticide as the war of the Banu Tamim with Khosrow of Iran, saying that in this event, some captives of the tribe were girls who became concubines in Khosrow's court. After the peace, Banu Tamim demanded the return of their captives, but some of the girls did not return to their tribe. Thereafter, the Banu Tamim tribe decided to bury their daughters alive, and this matter became common among other tribes (ibid., Vol. 12, pp. 277-278).

In interpreting verse 31 of Surah al-Isra, he refers to al-Kashshaf and rejects Zamakhshari's opinion about the verse being specific to female infanticide with the justification that other verses explicitly refer to this issue, interpreting this verse as regarding child killing, the ugliest manifestations of cruelty for preserving honor in an environment where famine was frequent (ibid., Vol. 13, p. 84).

Abdullah al-Jawadi al-Amuli

He states that in the Jahiliyah era in Hejaz, the value of a woman was like a commodity and part of wealth, and even married women were free in corruption, and these were established customs among them, like killing their children, which was done with three motivations: considering daughters disgraceful, although common among some Arabs—otherwise their progeny would become extinct (Quran 16:58-59; 81:8-9); killing sons and daughters due to financial and

economic pressure (Quran 6:151; 17:31); or by the wealthy for blessing and sacrifice to their idols (Quran 6:137, 140) (al-Jawadi al-Amuli, Vol. 17, pp. 45-46).

He emphasizes that the prevailing atmosphere in the space of the Quran's revelation was aversion to daughters or indifference to them; therefore, none of the pre-Islamic Arabs considered a daughter an adornment or love for her an adornment, and they even considered them a cause of disgrace and shame for themselves. He refers to verses 58 and 59 of Surah al-Nahl and says that in that atmosphere, those who did not have the audacity for female infanticide hesitated between keeping her in humiliation or burying her alive, and the aversion of some was such that they called the grave "ṣahīr" (son-in-law) and graves "aṣhār" (in-laws). They could not help but be filled with suppressed anger upon having a daughter and would take newborn girls to the grave (al-Jawadi al-Amuli, Vol. 13, p. 311).

Like Makarem Shirazi, al-Jawadi al-Amuli believes that even today gender discrimination between women and men exists, citing the example of the ugliness of adultery and its equal ugliness for women and men, and referring to the verse «الرَّائِبَةُ وَالرَّائِي فَاجْلِدُوا كُلَّ وَاحِدٍ مِنْهُمَا مِائَةَ جَلْدَةٍ» ("The [unmarried] woman or [unmarried] man found guilty of sexual intercourse - lash each one of them with a hundred lashes" (Quran 24:2), he says that today the effect of Jahiliyah still exists among Muslims, and in case of a woman's adultery, her family considers themselves disgraced, but the man's family does not. While pointing to the difference between women and men in the formation of sins, al-Jawadi al-Amuli introduces the feeling of humiliation of one party in a shared sin as indicative of the sedimentation of Jahili thinking in minds (ibid., Vol. 11, p. 275).

He considers the emergence of Islam as the factor for the vitality of women's personality and their enjoyment of specific rights and value. He states that the Quran first eliminated the cruelty of fathers who, in some Arab tribes, killed their daughters and, while condemning female infanticide, considered hard-hearted men responsible and condemned in the court of divine justice. He interprets the phrase «الْأَسَاءُ مَا يَحْكُمُونَ» ("Unquestionably, evil is what they decide") as their ignorant ruling about women.

By citing verse 6 of Surah Al-Imran, «هُوَ الَّذِي يُصَوِّرُكُمْ فِي الْأَرْحَامِ كَيْفَ يَشَاءُ» ("It is He who forms you in the wombs however He wills"), he emphasizes that the gender of the newborn is in God's hand, and furthermore, with the verse «اللَّهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ يَهَبُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ إِنثَاءً وَيَهَبُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ الذُّكُورَ. أَوْ «يُرْوِّجُهُمْ ذُكْرَانًا وَإِنثَاءً وَ يَجْعَلُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ عَقِيمًا إِنَّهُ عَلِيمٌ قَدِيرٌ» ("To Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth; He creates what He wills. He gives to whom He wills female [children], and He gives to whom He wills males. Or He makes them [both] males and females, and He renders whom He wills barren. Indeed, He is Knowing and Competent" (Quran 42:49-50)), he clarifies that only God knows the benefit and harm of your having children and their gender (ibid., Vol. 11, pp. 274-275).

Naser Makarem Shirazi

He considers the apparent interpretation of verses 8 and 9 of Surah al-Takwir to be one of the events of the Resurrection, but says the meaning of the verse is capable of extension and interpretation to the love of the Ahl al-Bayt, citing an exegetical hadith from Imam al-Baqir that those intended are the ones who were killed in the path of loving us.

Subsequently, he considers al-maw'ūdah, the girl buried alive under the soil, a common phenomenon among the pre-Islamic Arabs, as the Quran has repeatedly referred to it. He enumerates several factors for the emergence of al-wa'd: the lack of value of women as human

beings in the Jahili atmosphere, the issue of poverty in the environment of that time and the economic production capability of sons, numerous tribal wars and the captivity of women and children of the defeated tribe. He also says these verses emphasize the Quran's decisive stance towards the blood of innocent humans and also the value of women, about whom, before any other issue, the buried alive girls will be questioned in the Resurrection, as if their killers are not worthy of being questioned. He identifies the modern equivalent of al-wa'd as abortion and considers it more oppressive than killing after birth in the Jahiliyah (Makarem Shirazi, 1995, Vol. 26, pp. 176-179).

He interprets «أَلَا سَاءَ مَا يَحْكُمُونَ» ("Unquestionably, evil is what they decide") at the end of verse 59 of Surah al-Nahl as the inhumane, wretched act of female infanticide and, like other exegetes, interprets this verse and the preceding one, in accordance with their apparent meaning, as related to the custom of female infanticide among the pre-Islamic Arabs (ibid., Vol. 11, p. 268).

The only difference in Makarem's interpretation compared to others regarding the interpretation of the inappropriate ruling is that he considers it the oppressive act of al-wa'd, while al-Tabataba'i considered it attributing sons to themselves and daughters to God.

Makarem Shirazi interprets child killing and abortion again in verse 31 of Surah al-Isra, referring to the past tense verb kāna in «كَانَ خَطَاً كَبِيرًا» ("ever a great sin") as a continuous sin, because it has been known from the past until the present era and is not related to a specific period (ibid., Vol. 12, p. 102). After presenting opinions about specifying the meaning of the verse to daughters or its generality to children, he states that according to the apparent plural masculine «قَتَلَهُمْ» (qatlahum, "their killing"), which applies to sons and daughters, and they killed their children out of fear of poverty, and it has a general aspect for daughters and sons together, although sons were considered an economic asset, but in conditions of frequent famines, fear prevented keeping even sons (ibid., p. 101).

Conclusion

The following results were obtained from the investigation of the subject of the present research:

The primary audience of the Quran were the Arab people of the Jahiliyah era, but this does not mean that the Quran's audience today is not addressed by the Quran; because in that case, it would be contrary to the purpose, and it would not be acceptable that a book revealed for the guidance of humanity would have teachings limited only to a specific time and geographical scope. Therefore, some exegetes emphasize that the Noble Quran is comprehensive in rulings and the laws of the most complete heavenly Sharia, and its method of expression in explaining religious rulings is in the form of address (khitāb), and the best evidence for this is the presence of numerous calls (nidā) in the Quran, unlike scientific, philosophical, or legal and human books that express their contents only in the form of news reports and factual propositions without address. In many Quranic verses, addresses such as "O you who have believed" (yā ayyuhā alladhīna āmanū), "O mankind" (yā ayyuhā al-nās), and "O My servants" (yā 'ibād) are found. In the Quran, even if a ruling (the "musts" and "must nots" of jurisprudence, law, and ethics) is expressed as a proposition and news, its spirit is imperative (inshā') and address, not report. The addresses of the Quran are not specific to a particular time or individuals; rather, they are alive and present in all periods and generations. Therefore, responding "I am here" (labayk) upon hearing "O you who have believed" is among the etiquettes of Quranic recitation, and this itself is a sign of the alive and current nature of the Quran's

calls; otherwise, responding to a call whose time has passed would have to be from the perspective of recalling a memory, an address to the past, and could not be serious and truthful.

According to the admission of verses and narrations, the culture governing the society of the revelation era suffered from much degradation and filth; especially regarding women, for whom in social life no value was accorded except as instruments and playthings for men. Islam fought against the Arab Jahiliyah to elevate women to their highest human status, and therefore it is contrary to reality to say that Islam was influenced by the customs of the Jahiliyah in degrading women's status. Consequently, some Quranic verses consider unjust discrimination based on imaginary superiority and are never indicative of influence and agreement with the Arab Jahiliyah. Many Quranic exegetes, following the teachings of the Quran, have also had a condemnatory approach towards this type of issue from the contemporary culture of the Quran's revelation and have proceeded to reject ignorant elements

References

The Holy Qur'an.

Ibn 'Āshūr, M. al-Ṭ. (1420 AH). *Tahrīr al-ma'nā al-sadīd wa-tanwīr al-'aql al-jadīd min tafsīr al-kitāb al-majīd*. Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Tārīkh al-'Arabī.

Āzartāsh, Ā. N. (1995). *Tārīkh-e farhang-e 'Arabī*. Tehran: Payām-e Nūr University.

Ālūsī, M. (1415 AH). *Rūḥ al-ma'ānī*. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya.

Oliyā, M. Ş. (2005). *Ṭarḥ-e ta'yīn-e chegūnegī-ye mohandsī-ye mojjaddad-e kalān-farāyand-hā-ye modīriyyat-e farhangī-ye keshvar*. Tehran: Secretariat of the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution.

Iyāzī, M. (2001). *Qur'ān va farhang-e zamāneh* (2nd ed.). Tehran: Ketāb-e Mobīn.

Bahār, M. (2007). *Moṭāle'āt-e farhangī: Oṣūl va mabānī*. Tehran: SAMT.

Billington, R., et al. (2001). *Farhang va jām'eh: Jāme'e-shenāsī-ye farhang* (F. 'Ezzatdaftari, Trans.). Tehran: Qaṭreh.

Pazhūhandeh, M. H. (2007). Bāzshenāsī-ye farhang az dīdgāh-e motafakkerān. *Andīsheh-ye Hōwzeh*, 1(2).

Pīrūzmand, 'A., & Šādeqī, Sh. (2007). Chīstī-ye farhang va chegūnegī-ye taghyīrāt-e ān. In *Proceedings of the First National Conference on Cultural Engineering*. Tehran: Secretariat of the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution.

Totunchiyān, M. (n.d.). Eṭṭilā'āt: Chahārromīn 'onşor-e ḥayātī va ta'thīr-e ān bar farhang-e mellat-hā. *Majalleh-ye Eṭṭilā'-Rasānī*, 3(1).

Ja'farī, M. T. (2000). *Farhang-e pīshrū*. Tehran: Institute for the Compilation and Publication of Allameh Ja'farī's Works.

Javādī Āmolī, 'A. (2000). *Tasnīm* (2nd ed.). Qom: Esrā'.

Dupuis, X. (1995). *Farhang va towse'eh: Az pazīresh tā arzyābī* (F. Farāhānī & A. Zarīn-Qalam, Trans.). Tehran: National Commission for UNESCO.

Rezā'ī Esfahānī, M. 'A. (2014). *Manṭeq-e tafsīr-e Qur'ān* (Vol. 4). Qom: Al-Muṣṭafā International Center for Translation and Publication.

Roche, G. (1991). *Konsh-e ejtemā'ī* (H. Zanjānīzādeh, Trans.). Mashhad: Ferdowsi University of Mashhad.

Zamānī, M. H. (2010). *Mostashreqān va Qur'ān: Naqd va barrasi-ye ārā'-ye mostashreqān darbāreh-ye Qur'ān* (3rd ed.). Qom: Bustān-e Ketāb.

Quṭb, S. (1412 AH). *Fī zīlāl al-Qur'ān* (17th ed.). Beirut: Dār al-Shurūq.

Shakūrī, M., & Mīrşādeqī, M. H. (2016). *Mo'ādel-yābī barā-ye farhang dar Qur'ān-e Karīm*. In *Proceedings of the National Conference on Lexicology in Islamic Sciences*. Yasuj University.

Şādeqī Tehrānī, M. (1986). *Al-Furqān fī tafsīr al-Qur'ān bi-l-Qur'ān* (2nd ed.). Qom: Farhang-e Eslāmī.

Ṭabāṭabā'ī, M. Ḥ. (1412 AH). Al-Mīzān fī tafsīr al-Qur'ān (5th ed.). Qom: Daftar-e Enteshārāt-e Eslāmī-ye Jāme'eh-ye Modarresīn-e Ḥowzeh-ye 'Elmīyeh-ye Qom.

Ṭabāṭabā'ī, M. Ḥ. (1988). Al-Mīzān (N. Makārem Shīrāzī et al., Trans.). Qom: Daftar-e Enteshārāt-e Eslāmī.

Ṭabarsī, F. b. Ḥ. (1372 AH). Majma' al-bayān fī 'ulūm al-Qur'ān (3rd ed.). Tehran: Nāṣer Khosrow.

Ṭayyib, 'A. Ḥ. (1378 AH). Aṭyab al-bayān fī tafsīr al-Qur'ān (2nd ed.). Tehran: Enteshārāt-e Eslām.

Fakhr al-Rāzī, M. b. 'U. (1992). Mafātīḥ al-ghayb (5th ed.). Tehran: Asāṭīr.

Faḍlallāh, M. Ḥ. (1424 AH). Min waḥy al-Qur'ān (2nd ed.). Beirut: Dār al-Malāk.

Vothūqī, M., & Nīk-Kholq, 'A. A. (2009). Mabānī-ye jāme'e-shenāsī (20th ed.). Tehran: Behīneh.

Moṣṭafavī, Ḥ. (1416 AH). Al-Taḥqīq fī kalimāt al-Qur'ān al-karīm. Tehran: Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance.

Mughnīyah, M. J. (1424 AH). Al-Kāshif (2nd ed.). Tehran: Dār al-Kitāb al-Eslāmī.

Makārem Shīrāzī, N. (1994). Majma' al-bayān fī tafsīr al-Qur'ān. Tehran: Nāṣer Khosrow.