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## The Semantic Development of the Verses About the Ignorance Era Customs in the Shī'a and Sunnī Commentaries: The Case Study of Wa'd Custom in the Qur'ān 81:8-9

Somayyeh Pakdaman<sup>1\*</sup>  | Ruhollah Shahidi<sup>2</sup> 

1. Corresponding Author, Department of Quran Sciences and Hadith, Faculty of Quran Sciences, University of Quran and Hadith, Tehran, Iran. Email: [60pakdaman@gmail.com](mailto:60pakdaman@gmail.com)

2. Department of Qur'ān and Hadīth Sciences, faculty of theology, College of Farabi, University of Tehran, Qom, Iran. Email: [shahidi@ut.ac.ir](mailto:shahidi@ut.ac.ir)

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### ABSTRACT

The Qur'ān entails verses that address the Arabic customs of the Ignorance Era. In the first glance, the people of the Ignorance Era are the addressees of these verses. Nonetheless, the Divine Speech provides general and comprehensive guidance for the humans in all eras, and each and every verse of it is imbued with the eternity and guidance attributes. Reflection in this direction requires extracting and analyzing the factors that limit a verse. In this article, the critical examination of the Shī'a and Sunnī exegesis about the Qur'ān 81:8-9 is done through a descriptive-analytical method to shed light on the wa'd custom. To this end, the way exegetes have used the semantic capacities of the terms and their solutions for the expansion of the meaning of the verse – i.e., semantic development method – are extracted. The findings of the study show that solutions such as deduction via refinement of attributes as well as the annulment of particularities and reliance on the generality of the terms and interpretive narrations have been used by the Shī'a and Sunnī exegetes to remove the limitations of the verses and expand the signification of the verses in accordance with their original meaning. Moreover, the eternity of the Qur'ān, its transtemporality and transcendence, and its guiding of all humans in all eras are also corroborated.

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## Introduction

The customs of the Arabs of the Ignorance Era that lasted up until and even after the advent of Islam in the Arab society have an extensive representation in the Qur'ān. In suchlike verses, God disapproves the Ignorance Era culture and prohibits doing them. Nonetheless, these customs are not found apparently in the life of today's civilized human. The main question of this article is that how the verses about the Ignorance Era Arab customs – e.g., the wa'd custom as mentioned in the Qur'ān 81:8-9 – are compatible with the universality and eternity of the Qur'ān and its guiding of the humans in all eras? To answer this question, the application of the semantic development rule to these two verses in the Shī'a and Sunnī commentaries were examined. Moreover, the solutions used by the exegetes to interpret the foregoing verses were also extracted.<sup>1</sup>

## Literature Review

With regard to the literature related to this topic, the book “Sāyihā wa lāyihāyi ma'nā'ī: Darāmadī bar nazariyyiyi ma'nā shināsīyi farāzhāyi qur'ānī dar partuwi riwāyāti tafsīrī” written by Muḥammad As'adī can be pointed out. In this book, he has deduced the independent theoretical semantic principles of the qur'ānic phrases in the light of interpretive narrations. Moreover, the article “Ḥajjīyyati mufāddi farāzhāyi mustaqillī Qur'ān: Rahyāfthā wa zamīnihā” by 'Āṭifih Muḥammadzādih is somewhat related to the topic of this study in terms of addressing the semantic development. The two articles “tusi'i padhīriyi ma'nā dar tafsīr Qur'ān karīm” and “mabāniyi nazarīyyiyi shumūl padhīriyi āyāti Qur'ān” by Tahmīni Pārsāyī are among the studies done in this regard. More recently, the articles “Bāz shināsīyi mafhūmi tusi'iyi ma'nāyī” by Ilāhīh Hādīyān and “Barrisīyi taḥbīqīyi adilliyi nazarīyyiyi tusi'iyi ma'nāyī alfāzi Qur'ān az dīdgāhi Fayḍ Kāshānī wa 'Allāma Ṭabāṭabā'ī” by Muḥammad Jawād Maṣṣūr Samāyī have been done, which are the closest works to the topic of this study.

The innovation of this study is the identification of the semantic development process and the amount of attention paid by the exegetes to this rule as well as the evaluation of their solutions for the interpretation of these specific verses. On the other hand, the study is a novel one in terms of the cases it analyzes.

## Explaining the Semantic Development Rule

In order to understand the Qur'ān in the modern era, we need certain rules that clarify the meaning of the verses that are seemingly useless for the contemporary human. It can be said that some terms have different semantic layers; however, in the revelation era and after it, only the first layer of meaning has been addressed or due to the lack of reflection and underdeveloped status of human knowledge, a superficial grasp of their meaning has been made. Even sometimes, the effect of certain cultural suppositions or the understandings coming from natural or social sciences have blocked the achievement of the deeper layers of meaning (Pārsāyī, 2012). Accordingly, the concept of semantic development regards the extension of a term to meanings congruent with the original meaning of a verse (Hādīyān Rasnānī, 2020). In other words, the term “semantic extension” in the qur'ānic interpretation discussions is a kind of development of the meanings of the noble Qur'ān statements such that the new meaning is related to the original meaning of the statement provided that the statement has the linguistic capacity to accept the new meaning. Similarly, avoiding the outward appearance of the statement needs strong evidence (Ayāzī, 2007). The different methods used by the exegetes believing in the semantic extension of the qur'ānic verses shows that any development of the meaning of the verses beyond the outward appearance of the statement and the conventional understanding existing in the Qur'ān revelation era is considered as semantic extension. Some also take semantic extension as addressees' understanding from the revelation era onward that can be inferred based on the comprehension rules. Moreover, if it relies on the vocabulary and linguistic context, it is regarded as the signification and the opinion of the Revelation Owner (Ayāzī, 2007). It should be noted that the semantic development of the statements is often possible in the scientific and social verses of the noble Qur'ān. (Pārsāyī, 2012)

1. It should be noted that everything that can break the limiting walls of meaning is deemed as semantic development, with the exegete expressing a new instance taken from either the narrations or the modern life.

### **Explaining the Revelation-Era Meaning of the Verse**

The divine speech has been revealed in certain temporal and spatial conditions and scope. Therefore, in order to accord with the perceptions of the early addressees, the content of some verses paid attention to the culture and customs of those addressees. This is clearly visible in the Qur'ān 81:8-9 where a description of the Resurrection Day is given: "When the buried female infant is asked - for what crime she was slain?!" In order to illustrate the scope and the quality of occurrence of events in the Resurrection Day, sublime Allāh in this verse refers to the wa'd custom (burying alive the female infants) and uses the mental perceptions of the early addressees to make verses understandable for them.

Now that the preliminary concepts have been explained, we address two issues to help understand the meaning of these two verses in the revelation era.

### **The Essential Keyword for Understanding the Verse**

The pivotal word that forms the basis of the meaning of the Qur'ān 81:8 is "al-maw'ūda" (female infant). In the following section of this article, the semantic development of the verse in some commentaries is also given based on the meaning of *al-maw'ūda*. Thus, the examination of the meaning of this word is one of the means for understanding the revelation-era meaning of this verse and its semantic development.

This word is derived from the root word *wa'd* and is inflected as *wa'ada*, *ya'idu*, *wa'dā*.<sup>1</sup> In the dictionaries, *wa'd* is defined as burying alive. Because of the femininity of the word *al-maw'ūda*, this word here refers to the girls buried alive. However, since the requirement for alive burial was pouring soil on the girl so as to kill her using the heaviness of soil, the word *wa'd* has the heaviness connotation in it as well (Farāhīdī, n.d.; Ibn Fāris, 1979; Ibn Manẓūr, 1994; Zamakhsharī, 1987; Zubaydī, n.d.). This heaviness included both physical and spiritual meanings and can be examined from two different angles. First, as noted above, it has been regarded by linguists from the viewpoint of the heaviness of soil on body. On the other hand, the femaleness of girls in its nature was a kind of burden on others from various aspects, including the extra burden they put on the expenses of the family or the defamation they brought for the family (which were nothing but wrong perceptions). (Muṣṭafawī, 1989)

The word *al-maw'ūda* is used only once in the Qur'ān, and since it is linguistically feminine, no meaning other than "a girl buried alive" is mentioned for it. Similarly, in most commentaries it has been expressed as "buried alive". (Muqātil b. Sulaymān, 2002; Ṭabarī, 1992; Tha'labī, 2011; Tūsī, n.d.)

### **Identifying the Historical Background of the Revelation of the Two Verses (Wa'd Custom)**

The history of Ignorance Era Arabs is filled with superstitious and unwise customs, each common in one tribe and clan. The wa'd custom as one of the unhuman customs common in the Ignorance Era was practiced in some tribes. The first tribe that established the wa'd custom was Rabī'a tribe (Ālūsī, 1994; Ibn 'Ashūr, 1999). According to historical evidences, the wa'd custom was common in tribes such as Kinda, Tamīm, Qays, Huzayl, Bakr, Quraysh, and Khuzā'i (Sālim, 2004). Nevertheless, the universality of this practice among all Arabs of the Ignorance Era is not historically supported. The reason is that although after the advent of Islam, the common method used by new converts to Islam was confession to their sins and repentance, only a few confessed to practicing this custom (Ṭāliqānī, 1983). Nonetheless, since none of them objected to this practice during its commonality, they have been described by it in general. (Ṭanṭāwī, 1997)

The manner of doing this custom is more or less given in the commentaries and historical books. Arabs buried their daughters alive through various methods. Sometimes the father dug a hole (similar to a grave or a well) and threw his daughter in it and then pour soil on her, while at other times, if the daughter was very young and small, he put her face on the soil and buried her. (Ibn 'Aṭīyya, 2001)

The other method was to take the pregnant women at the time of their child delivery to the brink of a hole so as to bury the newborn baby in the same hole if it was female and happily keep it alive if it was male (Ālūsī, 1995; Makārim Shīrāzī, 1992 Quṭb, 2004; Ṣādiqī Tihirānī, 1986; Zamakhsharī, 1987). In case they did not bury the daughter alive at the time of her burial, they let her to live up to the age

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1. The word *al-maw'ūda* is a verbal feminine noun, and from the inflection viewpoint it is an object noun. This very objective meaning is its figurative meaning that is a synonym to its literal meaning as well.

of six. Then, they took her to the desert without her mother's knowledge, and then threw her on her back into a hole. Another version was to keep her alive with disgrace and send her to be a camel shepherd while wearing woolen clothes. (Ālūsī, 1995; Ibn 'Āshūr, 2000; Quṭb, 2004; Ṭabarānī, 2008; Šādiqī Tihirānī, 1986; Zamakhsharī, 1987)

### **Challenges Facing the Semantic Development of the Verse**

Taking into account the linguistic context of the verse and referring to the historical records of wa'd custom, the cases by which the verse is limited semantically are identified. These limitations have caused the meanings and references of the verse to be understandable only in the temporal context of the revelation era and the time before it. According to the hypothesis of this article, in the words of the contemporary exegetes, the semantic and referential scopes of the verse have stretched beyond what is understandable in the temporal-spatial context of revelation era. However, the limitations of the verse have brought about challenges for the exegetes and have caused them to seek solutions in this regard. The requirement for the explication of the exegetes' methods in the face of these challenges is the precise consideration of the content of the verse and the meticulous examination of it to extract the limiting factors. These could be deemed as being comprised of three components.

### **Individual Component**

Since the word al-maw'ūda is feminine, it refers to the girls, and so the scope of individuals referred to in the verse gets limited to females. Moreover, the historical analysis shows that the referents of this word were in their childhood. Thus, the two limiting conditions of the verse regarding the referent individuals are femaleness and childhood. On the other hand, the agent practicing this custom has also been addressed in the verse.

### **Thematic Component**

The theme of the verse is condemning the burial of an alive, innocent female person under soil. This act is murder and leads to the physical destruction of a person. Thus, it entails two limiting conditions. One is murdering (i.e., destroying the body and causing the separation of soul from the body) and the other is its method of execution (alive burial of one under soil).

### **Temporal Component**

Practicing this act was limited to the Ignorance Era, although according to historical records, even then it was performed only in some tribes.

### **Semantic Development in Narrative Commentaries**

The *jary and taṭbīq* (application and correspondence) principle has long been used in the narrations and exegetic methods of Imāms (a), and some exegetes such as 'Allāma Ṭabāṭabā'ī have considerably used this principle in their interpretation of the qur'ānic verses. 'Allāma's definition of this principle as Imāms' method in corresponding the correspondable cases in the verse with the existing external instances is based on the semantic development of the meanings that are similar to the original referent of the verse (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1970). It is noteworthy that the word *jary* in this verse expresses the eternity of the Qur'ān and the development of the content of the verse and the word *taṭbīq* shows the correspondence of the developed meaning of the verse with other referents in terms of audience, theme, and time (Riḍāyī Kirmānī et al., 2016). With regard to the philosophy behind this principle, it can be said that Imāms (a) always referred to the eternity of the qur'ānic message and did not deem permissible to suffice to the outer appearance of the verses, because the Qur'ān is current like night and day and continues to live. Thus, Qur'ān has novel points for people of different eras, and its messages continue through correspondence with new movements (Nafīsī, 2014). According to this principle, the narrations that express the referents of the word al-maw'ūda and the wa'd custom can be deemed as the semantic development in the narrative commentaries. The found narrations can be classified into three groups.

### **‘Azl as an Instance of Wa’d**

An instance that has been mentioned in narrations for the wa’d custom is ‘azl, i.e., pouring the semen out of womb. A related narration from the Prophet (s) that has been narrated in various Sunnī and some Shī‘a sources expresses, “The Prophet (s) was asked about ‘azl. He answered: “‘azl is covert wa’d”” (‘Alam al-Hudā, 2010; Ṭabarānī, 2008; Ṭabrisī, 1993). It seems that here the Infallible has acted upon the *jary* principle and has proposed this tradition about the *wa’d* custom that is adopted from the word *al-maw’ūda*, and has expressed another instance for the verse with the consideration of the common quality of ‘azl and wa’d, i.e., tyrannical murder. That is to say, in the same way that a child was killed through wa’d, a cell that has the ability to become a child is destroyed in ‘azl.

### **The Ones Killed on the Path of Love to Ahl Al-Bayt (A) as Instances of Al-Maw’ūda**

Another instance mentioned for the word *al-maw’ūda* regards the ones killed on the path of love to Ahl al-Bayt (a). For example, a narration from Imām Ṣādiq (a) mentions “the one killed on the path of love to us” as an instance of *al-maw’ūda* (Kūfī, 1990). Most narrations in Shī‘a sources about the Qur’ān 81:8 have provided this referent. (Ashkiwarī, 1994 Fayḍ Kāshānī, 1995; Ḥuwayzī, 1995; Qumī Mashhadī, 1989; Zubaydī, 2007)

### **Imām Ḥusayn (a) as an Instance of Al-Maw’ūda**

Another group of narrations mentions Imām Ḥusayn (a) as an instance of the intention of the verse (Astarābādī, 1989; Qumī Mashhadī, 1989; Zubaydī, 2007). In the light of the occasion of the revelation of the verse – i.e., the girls buried alive – the use of *jary* principle for the foregoing cases can be considered as leading to the expansion of the instances of the verse, because Imām Ḥusayn (a) and those who are killed on the path of love to Ahl al-Bayt (a) are both common with *al-maw’ūda* in their innocence and their tyrannical murder. Therefore, the Infallible (a) uses this principle to expand the word *al-maw’ūda* to other external instances beyond the original time and place of the verse. This action has been done through separating the verse from the spatial and temporal conditions existing at the time of its revelation.

### **Semantic Development in Non-Narrative Commentaries**

The contemporary Shī‘a and Sunnī exegetes holding social and sometimes mystic tendencies have expanded the meaning of the verses in accordance with their original meaning. When the orientations of these commentaries are taken into account, it gets clear that the meaning of the verses has been extended in the arena of social issues, and this has set the ground for the identification of the criteria of the verses and the expression of their instances in human societies. That is to say, focusing on the word *al-maw’ūda*, relying on solutions such as deduction via refinement of attributes<sup>1</sup>, annulment of particularities<sup>2</sup> and consideration of the generality of the term, and using the possibility of extending the meaning, the commentators have enlarged the semantic scope of the verse beyond the scope imposed by the limiting conditions. This way, they have given novel interpretations and explanations of the verse that are in accordance with the original meaning of it.

### **Shī‘a Commentaries**

With regard to the foregoing topic, some points can be extracted from Shī‘a commentaries, as follows.

#### **The First Point: Woman’s Dignity**

With regard to the Qur’ān 81:8-9, Faḍlullāh has provided a discussion on the dignity of the woman. Considering the limiting conditions, the process of developing the meaning of the verse shows that he has remained committed to the individual component (i.e., the femaleness of the individuals), and has disregarded the two other components (theme and time). According to the limiting conditions of the

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1. Tanqīḥ manāṭ means identifying the cause of the ruling from the words of the legislator through the removal of the qualities ineffective on the ruling; it is one of the terms common in the Principles of Jurisprudence science and one of the methods for the inference of rulings. (Hāshimī Shāhrūdī, 2006)

2. Annulment of particularities is the removal of the features and qualities that accompany the issue in the reason of the ruling, but have no role in the corroboration of the ruling in that issue because of conventions or other reasons. Its outcome is the extension of issues in the ruling to matters that are void of those qualities. (Ibid)

verse, the thematic qualities of the verse should be regarded in its analysis, including the femaleness of the individuals, their innocence, the way they are killed, its occurrence during the Ignorance Era, and the condemnation of the perpetrators.

In every part of his discussion of the verse, Faḍlullāh disregards some qualities and takes into account the effective point to generalize the universal ruling to farther issues. In part of his words, he takes the disapproval existing in part of the verse against damaging the body of the female human as the effective attribute in the ruling and does not deem any role for other qualities in the ruling. Thus, he generalizes the murdering of girls to any type of disdain and damage to the female and gender bias (Faḍlullāh, 1999). In another part of his interpretation, he does not take the Ignorance Era, type of murder, and even the femaleness of the victim as the effective attributes in the ruling of the verse and believes that the reason for performing the wa'd custom in the Ignorance Era was not lack of civilization and urbanization. Rather, he believes that in the present era, despite the advancement of the human civilization, the massacre of innocent humans including women, children, and the elderly by the colonists, Zionists, etc., with the intention of compiling wealth can be observed, too. Thus, the ruling of the verse, i.e., condemning the murder of innocent people, is also true today. (Ibid)

It seems that the educational and social orientations of Faḍlullāh have been effective on his view to the two verses, and so he has set out to mention some instances appropriate to the conditions of present-day societies.

From among the attributes effective on the ruling of the verse, Ṣādiqī Tihirānī has annulled the particularities of the murder through alive burial, the temporal context of the wa'd custom, and the condemnation of murdering the innocent, and has attained his criteria based on the topic of the verse. Sticking to the femaleness attribute of the individuals mentioned in the verse, he achieves semantic development based on the expression of the essential dignity of the woman and then mentions the instances of breaching her dignity and disdaining her character. From his viewpoint, the main ruling of the verse is condemning any type of damage to the body and spirit of the woman, which means the necessity of preserving the dignity of the woman in every era and time. On the other hand, he believes that the verse has not remained limited to the Ignorance Era time, and the attributes of Ignorance can extend to any time and place. Thus, Ṣādiqī Tihirānī takes the modern Ignorance in the urbanization era of human history similar to, and even harsher than, the former Ignorance in terms of doing blind and ignorant acts. In part of his words about this verse, he states that today woman has lost his human distinctions as if she is an animal created for the satisfaction of the male gender. The criterion for valuing humanity has degraded from piety to trivial criteria such as beauty. In his mind, the Ignorant era humans buried the bodies of their daughters under soil due to the fear that one day their daughters would stain their fame, while the modern Ignorance buries the young woman through defaming, moral corrupting, and transforming her to the man's toy; this is the simultaneous burial of the woman's body and soul as well as her human dignity. (Ṣādiqī Tihirānī, 1986)

Through an argumentative process and based on the Qur'ānic and narrative significations, Ṣādiqī Tihirānī takes the alive burial of the girls the same as killing the spirit, while the modern-day victims are physically alive. To this end, he first compares the word *fitna* (in its meaning as deceiving) with murder based on two the verses "for fitna is worse than slaughter" (Qur'ān 2:191) and "fitna is worse than slaughter" (Qur'ān 2:217). He then mentions the verse "if any one slew a person - unless it be for murder or for spreading mischief in the land - it would be as if he slew the whole people" (Qur'ān5:32), and under it presents a narration from Imām Bāqir (a) and Imām Ṣādiq (a) that suggests that the meaning of the word "slew" in this verse is killing the soul. Next, he refers to another verse from these two Imāms (a) based on which leading people away from the path of guidance is equal to killing them. (Ṣādiqī Tihirānī, 1986)

Based on these introductory points, it can be said that misleading a human means killing his spirit, and it is equal to killing the spirits of all humans. This murder is much larger than killing the body.

In the light of what was said about the damage to the dignity and character of the woman in the purely materialistic view to her in today's societies, the factors that lead to the murder of the women's spirit are generally identified. It seems that the comparison made by the foregoing exegete between killing the spirit and killing the body and the confirmation of the latter as being bigger is to clarify the

point that if God so strongly condemns the alive burial of the girls, then killing the spirit (i.e., misleading the female humans) will certainly be prone to a bigger and harsher condemnation.<sup>1</sup>

### **The Second Point: Human Dignity (Condemning the Obliteration of Any Living Being)**

Sharī'atī and Ṭāliqānī have observed the same requirements of social exegesis but via a novel approach and have given in a more extensive meaning of the verse through a different method. Both exegetes have set the basis of the semantic development of the verse on the generality of the word "al-maw'ūda." Although in the first glance, some significations and references can be seen that show the particularity of the meaning of the word and reject its generality, a careful analysis helps remove the semantic accidents and accidental associations to attain the universal and absolute essence of the word. That is, the verse can be taken to refer to all cases, people, and conditions. Through the annulment of the particularities related to individuals and instances, the verse can be extended to all innocent children who have been murdered or all women who have undergone tyranny (Sharī'atī Mazīnānī, n.d.). Ṭāliqānī (1983) has even stepped further and has generalized the meaning of the word al-maw'ūda to any alive, capable being who has died under the tyranny of a tyrant and his/her flame of life and talent has extinguished.

It is noteworthy that in his novel interpretation, Sharī'atī takes the message of the verse to be related to murdering the innocent children at any time and through any means, thus developing the meaning of the verse. Although the verse condemns the burying the girls alive, any type of murdering children at any other time is also intensely forbidden and condemned. He then enumerates the present instances of wa'd, including abortion, sexually transmitted diseases that lead to the death of the embryo in the womb of mother, and infanticide due to the fear of poverty or for the attainment of inheritance (Sharī'atī Mazīnānī, n.d.).

The *Qur'ān mihr* commentary, with its social orientation, has taken into account the contemporary discussions and the relationship between the Qur'ān and the social lives of people (Riḍāyī Iṣfahānī, 2008). Likewise, as an example of free investigation commentary, *Tafsīr nimūna* uses the rules of the Principles of Jurisprudence science to express the messages of the various verses. In this regard, Riḍāyī Iṣfahānī and the authors of *Tafsīr nimūna* have adopted a method similar to those of others. They have taken the femaleness of the individuals, the type of murder, and the time as ineffective attributes of the ruling. Moreover, they have taken the condemnation in the verse to regard the modern Ignorance in which the human who boasts of culture and civilization disregards the human dignity and does not even allow the embryo in mother's womb to come to this world and kill it before birth. (Makārim Shīrāzī, 1992; Riḍāyī Iṣfahānī, 2008).

In *Tafsīr hidāyat*, Mudarrisī more or less takes the human dignity as the pivotal point and believes that femaleness, type of murder, innocence of the victim, and the time (i.e., Ignorance Era) do not have the eligibility of causality in the ruling and should be annulled. Removing these attributes, he has achieved a general, legally unwritten rule that can be applied to various individuals and instances. Thus, he generalizes the topic of the verse to the condemnation of all false values in any place and time where Ignorance is dominant. He then expresses the universal instances of the verse in the current era, including trading the children, enslaving them, exploiting them to produce and export underage porn videos, killing them to use their bodies for making certain material, letting the children die from hunger and malnutrition while the technical and financial capability for saving them exists in the world, and killing the female infants and burning the widowed along with her deceased husband in India (Mudarrisī, 1999).

### **Sunnī Commentaries**

Sunnī exegetes have also extracted some messages from the verses that are discussed below.

#### **The First Message: Woman's Dignity**

From among the attributes of the verse mentioned in the previous parts, Sayyid Quṭb takes only the condemnation of any damage to the body and spirit of the woman – which means the necessity of preserving her dignity – as the main attribute of the verse. Then, focusing on this pivotal point, he

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1. This point is expressed through the author's use of a principle called the Priority Comparison.

compares the dignity of woman in the Ignorance Era and after the advent of Islam. With no role given to the environmental factors, he takes it as a result of Islam. Moreover, he emphasizes the equality of the divine spirit in man and woman and the valuation of both genders based on it (Quṭb, 2004).

Obtaining his criteria from the verses under discussion, Ibn ‘Āshūr, too, has taken the message of the verses to be the woman’s dignity and has not deemed other attributes and components of the verses to be effective on their ruling. He has addressed the instances of breaching the dignity of women and girls from another viewpoint. He believes that the initial ignorance that was spread among the Ignorant Era Arabs has been being inherited to the subsequent nations up until now. Examples include disinheriting the daughters from their father’s wealth, forcing them to leave their inheritance to their brothers, or giving all properties to one’s sons in the name of gifts before his death. He generalizes the Arab ignorance of the dignity of the girls to all eras (Ibn ‘Āshūr, 2000).

### **The Second Message: Human Dignity (Condemning the Obliteration of Any Living Being)**

In his interpretation of this verse, Ālūsī has annulled all attributes and components other than murder, as his explanation implies condemning the murder of an innocent creature or one with a potential talent. Under the discussion of the Qur’ān 81:8-9, he mentions a narration and then enters a jurisprudential discussion and examination of the ‘azl ruling, which is not pertinent to our discussion. (Ālūsī, 1995)

*Bayān al-ma‘ānī* commentary has presented more or less the same understanding mentioned in the *Rūḥ al-ma‘ānī* commentary, with the difference being that in the former book the exegete has explained meanings beyond the text of the verse using the principles of semantic development and relying on the interpretation of the Qur’ān by the narrations. Mullā Ḥuwaysh refers to a tradition by the Prophet (s) that says “‘Azl is the same as covert wa’d” and removes the unnecessary attributes to express the basis of the ruling to be the prohibition of using medication after the formation of embryo and before the breathing of the spirit and using it after the breathing of the spirit; he takes killing an embryo in these ways as murder and a crime (Āl Ghāzī, 1963).

### **The Third Message: Reference to the World of Soul**

Due to his mystic orientations in exegesis, Ḥaqqī in *Rūḥ al-bayān* commentary has created a different context for the development of the meaning of the verse. He has interpreted this verse based on its reference to the World of Soul. That is, he has corresponded the outer appearance of the verse with a mystic interpretation and has shown that the events of the World of Horizons have equivalents and examples in the human soul and macrocosm. In the course of this act of correspondence, an extremely extensive semantic development has occurred that has gone beyond all limiting conditions, especially in the individual component where he has directed the topic of discussion from girls and even humans away to the rational soul due to the similarity of the words and the mystic meaning (Ḥaqqī Burūsawī, n.d.).

## **An Analysis of the Ways to Employ Semantic Development Solutions**

### **Shī‘a commentaries**

Under the verse in discussion, Tāliqānī uses the generality of the term to move beyond its outer meaning and correctly removes the accidental associations of the terms to extend its meaning and expand its referents. His use of the semantic essence of the term is by itself a corroboration of the accuracy of the developed meaning, and the preservation of the logical relationship between the outer meaning and its extended referent is evidence for this. It should be noted that he has done the semantic development of suchlike verses in a very scholarly manner and has been successful within the social exegesis domain through corresponding the content of the verses with the life matters of the contemporary human.

The author of *Tafsīr nuwīn*, too, has more or less acted like the author of *Partuwī az Qur’ān* commentary. Paying attention to the main intention of the verse, he has expressed a signification of the word that is not limited to the understanding of the exegete, and its correspondence with the text of the verse is logical and reasonable.

Ṣādiqī Tihirānī has written his commentary based on the interpretation of the Qur’ān-by-Qur’ān method while using the interpretive narrations and argumentation as well. His argumentative exegesis in line with the pivotal Qur’ān by Qur’ān method has representations in his interpretation of the



Qur'ān 81:8, as he refers to the verses of the Qur'ān 2 to correspond the verses of Qur'ān 81 with the problems of the contemporary human community and explain social issues. Removing the ineffective attributes, he has expanded the semantic scope of the verse, and identifying the bases of the ruling of the verse, he has generalized the ruling to the cases not mentioned in the text of the verse. His evidences for the semantic development of the verse are not merely his mental thoughts; rather, he has used the verbal indications and semantic components of the word as well as the qur'ānic and interpretive indications. Thus, imposition of meaning onto the verse and subjective correspondences are not seen in his statements. That is, he has logically taken the referents of the verse beyond the outer meaning of the verse. It is evident that what Ṣādiqī Tihirānī has given in regarding the interpretation of this verse is in line with the realistic and social interpretations of other exegetes in this domain.

In the first glance to what Faḍlullāh has expressed about the verse, it seems that in a part of the semantic development, he suggests a subjective understanding of the verse that is not related to the referent of the verse. However, he later obtains some criteria from the verse that help him adopt a logical process in extending the meaning of the verse. His lack of reference to a certain indication in the semantic development of the verse shows that the start point for the generalization of the ruling of a verse to the cases not mentioned in the text of the verse and its correspondence with modern day instances is the mind of the exegete.

In the *Qur'ān mihr* and *Nimūna* commentaries, adopting messages from the text of the Qur'ān 81:8-9 is done in line with other social commentaries. In these commentaries, the outer meaning of the verse is not totally abandoned and there exists a logical relationship between the developed meaning and the outer meaning of the verse.

*Hidāyat* commentary has precisely and comprehensively used the deduction via refinement of attributes principle and has acted systematically in identifying and annulling the ineffective attributes of the verse. Thus, it has come to unravel the main cause and has generalized the ruling of the verse to all arenas, beyond any other exegete. The origin of the semantic development of this verse has been the mind of the exegete and his interpretive approach that has been carried out through the implementation of the deduction via refinement of attributes method. He has not relied on any specific indication to move beyond the outer, text-based ruling of the verse.

### **Sunnī Commentaries**

In *Rūḥ al-bayān* commentary, the exegete has used the method of Corresponding Horizons on Souls. This has made his statements in the semantic development of the verse to be very complicated such that understanding his content is difficult and demanding. It is evident that because of the idiosyncratic manner of expression that does not match the outer appearance of the verse and is limited to the understanding of the exegete himself and the lack of an accurate reference to logical and reasonable discussions, this type of semantic development would be under criticism in terms of principles and rules. Moreover, the congruence and similarity of the developed interpretation of this verse with the main objectives of the divine speech is also under question.

With regard to the Qur'ān 81:8, Sayyid Quṭb has first correctly identified and expressed the bases of the ruling of the verse. However, it seems that he then combines subjective matters with the meaning of the verse, which has led to the removal of the main bases of the ruling of the verse from the focus of discussion and the deviation of the course of argument. Thus, in this case, he has distanced from the initial systematic development and has not acted in line with other exegetes. That is to say, unlike other exegetes, he has not corresponded the verse with the conditions of women in the contemporary human community.

In his semantic development method, Ibn 'Āshūr has acted more or less similar to other exegetes, but has not extended the scope of the meaning of the verse like them and has only addressed a certain aspect of the women and girls' dignity. Ālūsī has expressed his jurisprudential understanding of the Qur'ān 81:8 and has not extensively developed the meaning of the verse.

Mullā Huwaysh has moved beyond the outer appearance of the verse based on narrative evidences and has taken the word *al-maw'ūda* as an embryo that is aborted using medications. His reference to narrative evidence makes his argumentation seem robust and sound. However, although compared to

other exegetes favoring this meaning he moves beyond the semantic meaning of the word, his development is not so extensive.

### **Conclusions**

Reviewing the commentaries for their semantic development of the Qur'ān 81:8-9 indicates that the contemporary Shī'a and Sunnī exegetes have more or less deemed and embarked upon extending the meaning of the verse based on certain principles and rules. Overall, they have had different concerns; have relied on the universality of meaning; and have adopted the deduction via refinement of attributes, annulment of particularities, and consideration of the generality of the meaning of the word to move the intended verses beyond the limitations. By annulling the attributes ineffective on the ruling and obtaining criteria from the related verses, they have extended the meaning of those verses to the modern era matters. Moreover, they have expressed the harms and problems related to this domain, which is beneficial for the clarification and attainment of solutions for the social problems. The performance of the exegetes regarding these verses corroborates the eternity of the Qur'ān, its transtemporality and transcendence, and the guiding role of the Divine Book for all humans in all eras.

The critical view to the text of the commentaries related to the verses under study indicates that the majority of Shī'a and Sunnī exegetes have systematically implemented the principles such as the deduction via refinement of attributes. Nonetheless, each of them has addressed a certain aspect of the discussion in the expansion of the meaning of the verse and has discussed a part of a general meaning in line with the original meaning of the verse. This way, through a comprehensive viewpoint and by juxtaposing the pieces of information, we figure out that most of these cases not only do not disagree with the appearance of the verses, but also complement each other and are free from contradiction and conflict. On the other hand, these developed meanings accord with the realities of the human societies in the contemporary era.

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