

Al-wahda al-binā'iyya li-l-Qur'ān: A Methodology for Understanding the Qur'ān in the Modern Day

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*This paper is concerned with the Qur'ānic methodology of *Al-wahda al-binā'iyya li-l-Qur'ān* and its impact in the arena of religious sciences and beyond. I provide a concise overview of the classical and contemporary debates concerning the genealogy of this method, including examples and a brief analysis of the works of a number of modern scholars who have contributed to the development of this methodology. Approaching the Qur'ān as a unitary structure, as a consistent hermeneutic, contributes to our understanding of critical issues not only in the Qur'ān and Sunna, but also in other religious disciplines, such as Islamic law. More importantly, I argue that this method provides an important hermeneutic resolution to critical debates surrounding Islam's moral and ethical framework. I conclude by stressing that *Al-wahda al-binā'iyya li-l-Qur'ān* is essential for enhancing religious scholarship in general and for advancing the spheres where Islamic knowledge is applied.*

Keywords: Qur'ān, Exegesis, Tafsir, Sunna, Sira, Islamic law, Hadith, Apostasy in Islam.

Introduction

This paper is concerned with the Qur'ānic methodology of *Al-wahda al-binā'iyya li-l-Qur'ān* (the Qur'ān's structural unity) and its impact in the arena of religious sciences and beyond. I provide a concise overview of the classical and contemporary debates concerning the genealogy of this method, including examples and a brief analysis of the works of a number of modern scholars who have contributed to the development of this methodology. I propose reading the Qur'ān through its structural unity, *al-wahda al-binā'iyya li-l-Qur'ān*,ⁱⁱ a term coined by Taha Jabir al-Alwani, as the framework for a systematic methodology of Qur'ānic interpretation.ⁱⁱⁱ Approaching the Qur'ān as a structural unity, as a consistent hermeneutic, contributes to our understanding of critical issues not only in Qur'ānic Studies, but in other religious disciplines as well. More importantly, I argue that this method provides an important hermeneutic resolution to critical debates surrounding Islam's moral and ethical framework, specifically in areas of Islamic law dealing with difficult issues such as apostasy, family matters, marriage and divorce. It is my hope that a broader and more consistent application of this method to the Qur'ān will allow Muslim scholars to approach legal rulings more holistically by connecting them to the Qur'ān's spiritual and ethical framework. In doing so, it can provide a means for developing a shared understanding among scholars, thereby advancing more constructive conversations among scholars.

A consistent feature of Qur'ānic interpretation throughout the last fourteen hundred years of Islamic history has been the multiplicity of interpretations. Scholarly consensus, however, suggests that interpreting the Qur'ān intra-textually (*tafsir al-Qur'ān bi-l-Qur'ān*) is the most accepted method of interpretation. Qur'ānic scholars have expressed this notion with the maxim, "*al-Qur'ān yufassiru ba'dahu ba'dan*" (different parts of the Qur'ān explain each other).^{iv} Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328) in his *Introduction to The Principles of Exegesis (Muqaddima fī Uṣūl al-Tafsīr)* emphasized that

tafsīr al-Qur'ān bi-l-Qur'ān is “the most correct method of *tafsīr* [*aṣaḥḥ al-ṭuruq*],” explaining that “where the Qur'ān sums up [a point], the same point is elaborated in another place.”^v While this concept in Qur'ānic Studies may have existed for centuries, it has been significantly developed in the last two centuries, as scholars have proposed new methods of reading the Qur'ān as an integrated unity.

In the twentieth century, significant developments occurred in the interpretation of the Qur'ān. Muslim exegetes began to approach individual chapters holistically and discuss them in terms of overall themes and general structure rather than as merely a concatenation of verses, as noted by scholars such as Mustansir Mir.^{vi} This trend in modern exegesis calls for a critical examination that emphasizes the idea of the organic unity of the Qur'ān. Building upon pre-existing classical and modern methods, I suggest a set of methods that researchers and scholars need to explore and develop in order to understand the Qur'ān effectively, alongside those under development by other scholars. In this article, I bring attention to the method of reading the Qur'ān through its structural unity, *al-waḥda al-binā'iyya li-l-Qur'ān*, as the framework for a systematic methodology of Qur'ānic interpretation. *Al-waḥda al-binā'iyya li-l-Qur'ān* is one of the most important methods in interpreting the Qur'ān through the Qur'ān intra-textually (*tafsīr al-Qur'ān bi-l-Qur'ān*). This method conceives of the Qur'ān's unity through its linguistic, structural, and conceptual elements, such that the Qur'ān in its entirety represents an integrated whole. I argue that reading the sura as a unity also means reading the Qur'ān as a unity, attempting to find connections (which are already present) between the Qur'ān's letters, words, verses, and chapters, linguistically, structurally, and thematically. Within the Islamic tradition, this method carries a level of unparalleled legitimacy, at least conceptually, because it is based on how Prophet Muhammad discussed the revelation with his companions.

To illustrate the way this proposed methodology envisions a holistic relationship between the Qur'ān, the sunna/hadith, and the *sīra*, I will analyze Al-Alwani's original analysis of the laws on apostasy, which overturn the traditional view of apostasy laws. For context, I proceed with a concise overview of the classical and contemporary debates concerning the genealogy of this method, including examples and a brief analysis of the works of a number of modern scholars who have contributed to the development of this methodology.

First, despite the history of classical and modern approaches to reading the Qur'ān holistically, it is important to note that this method of interpretation dates back to the Prophet himself. In *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* under the chapter of *tafsīr*, Ibn Mas'ud reports:

When the following verse was revealed: “Those who have attained to faith, and who have not obscured their faith by wrongdoing—it is they who shall be secure, since it is they who have found the right path!” (6:82), the companions of the Messenger were very concerned and asked the Prophet, “Which of us has not confused belief with wrongdoing?” The Prophet said, “The verse does not mean this. Didn't you hear Luqman's statement to his son: “Verily, joining others in worship with God is a great wrongdoing indeed” (31:13). The Prophet used the verse from Sūrat Luqman to interpret the verse from Sūrat al-An'ām.^{vii}

In another occasion reported in al-Bukhari:

The Prophet recited, “And with Him are the keys of the unseen; none knows them except Him” (6:59); and he explained that “The keys of the Unseen are five.” And then he recited the following verse from Sūrat Luqman to clarify: “Verily, the knowledge of the Hour is with God (alone). It is He Who sends down rain, and He Who knows what is in the wombs. Nor does anyone know what it is that he will earn tomorrow; nor does anyone know in what land he is to die. Verily with God is full knowledge and He is acquainted (with all things) (31:34).”^{viii}

Both of these examples portray the Prophet as explaining Qur’ānic verses by drawing on material from elsewhere in the Qur’ān. Interestingly, the traditional exegesis with a different scriptural canon that gradually began to emerge did not enforce or implement this methodology. Nonetheless, a few classical exegetes articulated a theory for reading the Qur’ān holistically through the philological genres of *naẓm* and *‘ilm al-munāsaba*, as I will describe below.

Coherence in the Qur’ān: Arabic as a Divine Language

In the early and medieval Islamic period, some classical exegetes with a linguistic focus primarily investigated the elements of coherence within the Qur’ān. One of the first in this field was Abu ‘Ubayda (d. 209/824), a philologist in Kufa who collected materials that dealt with the history and culture of the Arabs, and organized it all systematically. Abu ‘Ubayda’s pioneer works, especially *Majāz al-Qur’ān*, contributed to the development of the field of *balāgha* (eloquence and Arabic literary criticism), and planted the seed for the theory of *naẓm*.^{ix} He explained the meaning of “*majāz*” as the Qur’ānic styles (*asālib*) and ways of using its words to provide deeper meanings. He emphasized that *majāz* is the process of transferring from the close or familiar meaning of the word as seen in the desert Arab’s everyday language to the deeper meaning of the word in the Qur’ānic language. It is important to observe that when the reader reflects deeply on the Qur’ānic word, the meaning that was once simple in the mundane Arab language transforms into a comprehensive divine language.

Linguists and theologians like Abu ‘Uthman ‘Amr ibn Bahr al-Jahiz (d. 255/869),^x Abu Bakr ‘Abd al-Qahir ibn ‘Abd al-Rahman al-Jurjani (d. 471/1078),^{xi} and Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn al-Tayyib al-Baqillani (d. 403/1013)^{xii} later developed this notion into a full-fledged concept called *ījāz al-Qur’ān* (inimitability). Ibn Qutayba al-Dinawari (d. 276/889) presented another important work in this field, *Mushkil al-Qur’ān*, where he examined the richness of the Qur’ānic words and the text’s ability to produce different meanings for them. He applied his methodology to words/concepts such as *dīn*, *umma*, *hūdā*, and others. Although the book was only forty-five pages, it served as a proposal for a dictionary system for Qur’ānic concepts. Two centuries later, another profound work by al-Raghib al-Isfahani (d. 502/1108), perhaps inspired by the early work of Ibn Qutayba, offered a renewed focus on thematic, literary, and structural elements in the Qur’ān that characterize the approaches of many modern and contemporary Muslim exegetes as a strategy for uncovering religious meanings in the Qur’ān beyond those discerned by medieval commentators.

Al-Raghib al-Isfahani’s classical work, *al-Mufradāt fī Gharīb al-Qur’ān*, contributed to the development of *al-mafāhīm al-Qur’āniyya*, a sub-field in the realm of philology by which links are established between different words and their meanings to show the structural unity and coherence

of the vocabulary of the Qur'ān.^{xiii} More than sixty books were published related to Qur'ānic words/terms before this text, but al-Isfahani's book transformed the tenor of these studies based on two important methodological points: 1) his emphasis on reading the Qur'ānic words from within the Qur'ān itself, a holistic method done by tracing the word and its meaning throughout the Qur'ān; and 2) his successful application of this methodology. Al-Isfahani proved that Arabic words used by the Arabs before the revelation had been transformed into a new concept by the Qur'ān. His work set the stage for a very important field of Qur'ānic conceptual reading which begins with the premise that every Qur'ānic word carries a deeper meaning and should be read and studied as a *concept*, not merely as a simple *term*. Al-Isfahani also endeavored to compile a Qur'ānic dictionary to explain the meanings of words located in the Qur'ān itself, not based on pre-Islamic Arabic poetry. Unfortunately, to this day, his methodology has still not been utilized as a comprehensive exegetical methodology. Although there have been a few attempts during the past two decades, there remains a serious need to develop an encyclopedia of Qur'ānic concepts.^{xiv}

One approach to a text-based analysis of the Qur'ān that did get somewhat popularized exists in *'ilm al-munāsabāt*, where medieval exegetes explored the connections between verses and chapters. Two major exegetical texts have used this method: *Māfatih al-Ghāyib* by Fakhr al-Din al-Razi (d. 604/1209)^{xv} and, *Nazhm al-Durar fī Tanasub al-Ayat wa al-Suwar* by Burhan al-Din ibn 'Umar al-Biqā'i (d. 885/1480).^{xvi} Al-Razi did not include in his book a clear definition of his view of the *munāsabāt*, nor did he introduce the theoretical grounds for his analysis of verses with regard to their relations or their order, a possible indication that this method was not widely used by scholars at that time.^{xvii} Later, though, al-Zarkashi (d. 794/1391) in his *Burbān* devoted a whole chapter to it, and so did al-Suyuti (d. 911/1505) in his *Itqān*, a revision of al-Zarkashi's work.^{xviii} Al-Zarkashi emphasized the importance of this method and identified a few types of *munāsabāt* found in the Qur'ān.^{xix} These works, however, did not lead to the development of further study on the structural unity of the Qur'ān. For centuries, the theory of *nazm* and *'ilm al-munāsabāt* did not bring a significant change to mainstream *tafsīr*. I will now move on to mention some scholars who have explored *al-wahda al-binā'iyya li-l-Qur'ān* and have proven that it can be used to help evince the unity of the Qur'ānic structure.^{xx}

Twentieth Century Developments

The twentieth century witnessed significant changes in Muslim exegetes' approach to the Qur'ān. A significant trend in modern exegesis calls for a critical examination that emphasizes the idea of the organic unity of the Qur'ān. It stresses that passages in the Qur'ān are used to clarify other passages, and that this hermeneutic strategy takes precedence over all others. This trend has been documented by scholars such as Mustansir Mir, who identified six different modern exegetes in different parts of the Muslim world who organically developed the idea of a central theme that links the unrelated passages of a given *sūra* together: Hamiduddin Farahi (d. 1930),^{xxi} Ashraf 'Ali Thanavi (d. 1943), Sayyid Qutb (d. 1966), Amin Ahsan Islahi (d. 1997),^{xxii} 'Izzat Darwaza (d. 1984), and Muhammad al-Tabataba'i (d. 1981). Muhammad 'Abd Allah Draz (d. 1958)^{xxiii} is another important scholar who contributed to this methodology. These scholars suggest this methodological principle to guide the interpreter to a holistic understanding.^{xxiv} This modern approach was called "organic-holistic"^{xxv} and was a rejection of reading the Qur'ān in a fragmented way. The Qur'ān itself recommends against tearing apart its text: "And say: 'I am indeed he that warns openly and without

ambiguity,' (Of just such wrath) as We sent down on those who divided (Scripture into arbitrary parts), (So also on such) as have made Qur'ān into shreds (as they please)" (Q. 15:89–91). To read a chapter as one unit suggests that the *sūra's* central theme can be extracted. Amin Ahsan Islahi of Pakistan and the Egyptian Sayyid Qutb both stressed that each *sūra* has a central theme as its unique message, and around this idea every theme or topic within the *sūra* revolves to elaborate, detail, exemplify, or explain the main focus. Islahi referred to this idea as an '*amud* (pillar) and Qutb used the term *mihwar* (axis). To find this theme and draw from it, Islahi suggested six principles for legitimate interpretation.^{xxvi} As Bassam Saeh has argued, the Qur'ānic word is of matchless linguistic perfection that must be understood by the Qur'ān itself. Each *sūra* has its own personality which can be discovered through words found in that *sūra*.^{xxvii}

According to this "analytic-synthetic approach"^{xxviii} to exegesis, exegetes would "first, determine the central theme and divide a *sūra* into sections, and then establish links between those sections. One writer's sectional division may differ from another's, but the underlying assumption is always that the sections can be knit into a connected discourse."^{xxix} In his conclusion, Mir notes his hope to see this method developed in a way that provides broader authentic interpretation of the Qur'ān, especially in law and literature. It is refreshing to see such a new macroscopic approach. It ought to be encouraged to complement, not replace, the traditional microscopic.

One of the most important questions that Mir raised on the methodology of reading the Qur'ān as a "unity" is its ultimate practical relevance. As he wrote, "the real test of the organic reading thesis, is whether it gives rise to new methods for the study of the Qur'ān. Is its thesis capable of generating techniques that will help derive meanings that cannot otherwise be generated? What difference does this method make?"^{xxx} I argue that the methodology of reading the Qur'ān as a "unity" maintains the Qur'ān's relevance by allowing scholars to continue developing its ability to provide answers to difficult questions and challenges especially in the field of language, philology, and Islamic law.

The literary school of tafsīr which emerged in the twentieth century has roots in a premodern Qur'ānic hermeneutics that focused on the rhetoric (*balāgha*) of the Qur'ān and contributed to evolving a concept of the Qur'ān's linguistic inimitability. Muḥammad 'Abduh's (d. 1905) intended in his critical edition of the two major works of the classical philologist and rhetorician 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī (d. 471/1078)^{xxxi}, to revive an appreciation of the Qur'ān's eloquence (*bayān*). Later, Amin Al-Khūlī (d. 1966) who coined the term *al-tafsīr al-adabī*, emphasized the relation between tafsīr and literature into an exegetical approach to the Qur'ān.^{xxxii} In al-Khūlī's writings, there is a sustained attention to psychological impact, which becomes elaborated into a concept of contextuality: the historical and cultural background of the text's first hearers is examined to discover what it meant in their context, in order to assess its impact on them.

Al-Khūlī's textual analysis affirms that to have a proper understanding of the words, a commentator should examine lexicographical entries for the word that s/he wants to interpret in order to have the most probable definition of the word. Al Khuli's aim was to establish the development of the word's meanings (*tārīkh ḡuhūr al-ma'ānī*) by applying the methods of historical philology. Al-Khūlī even attempted, with limited success, to produce a lexicon that dates Arabic and Qur'ānic connotations. He considered the thematic approach as part of the hermeneutic methodology. Since the Qur'ān was arranged neither in chronological order nor in a sequence of

unitary topics, a commentator who intends to write Qur'ānic exegesis has to take into consideration all verses in which the Qur'ān discusses a topic, and not limit him/herself to a single surah or a single part of the Qur'ān, while neglecting other surahs whose verses discuss the same topic. As a result, reading the Qur'ān holistically will allow Muslim scholars and jurists to restore the Qur'ānic-Prophetic tradition by developing the holistic moral/ethical and spiritual aspects to rulings rather than remaining restricted to pure legal rulings.

Since my aim is to reveal the ongoing efforts in analyzing *al-wahda al-binā'iyya li-l-Qur'ān*, I will provide a brief analysis of the *tafsīr* of 'Ā'isha 'Abd al-Rahman Bint al-Shati'. It is an example of a female scholar's productive dynamic debates that were necessary to integrate reading the sura as one unit as a methodology into the public exegetical field.

***Tafsīr* 'Ā'isha 'Abd al-Rahman Bint al-Shati'**

'Ā'isha Bint al-Shati' (d. 1998), a professor of Arabic literature at the University College for Women at Ain Shams University in Cairo, introduced some elements of *al-wahda al-binā'iyya li-l-Qur'ān* into a Qur'ānic exegesis she composed under the alias Bint al-Shati'. Her methodology was based on a holistic, intra-textual, thematic, and literary style of interpretation, *al-manhaj al-adabi fi al-tafsīr*.^{xxxiii} Bint al-Shati' adopted Amin al-Khuli's (d. 1966) school of thought, which called for a holistic reading of the Qur'ān focusing on the literary approach.^{xxxiv} Amin al-Khuli held the view that the Qur'ān is the greatest book in the Arabic language and has had the greatest literary influence. Approaching the Qur'ān as a unified text in this way allows readers of her *tafsīr* to understand specific verses in light of the larger "spirit" of the text rather than in a piecemeal, de-contextualized way. Therefore, *asbab al-Nuzul*, "occasion of revelation," as she understands it, refers to no more than the situation relating to specific passages of the Qur'ān. Indeed, she upholds the famous principle of the Muslim jurists that the decisive factor (in determining the meaning of the verse) is the universality of wording and not its specific cause.

The important point in her implementation of the literary method is that Bint al-Shati' consistently refused the idea of imposing the rules of grammar to judge the Qur'ān where there appeared to be a contradiction between the rules of grammar and the Qur'ān.^{xxxv} She argued for a very precise examination of the Qur'ān itself. It is from this consideration that she insisted, like al-Khuli, that the Qur'ān should be treated as not only the authoritative source on grammar, but that it is above those rules it creates. She criticized the grammar of exegetes who hold that the particle *bi-* (with) in Surat al-Qalam (68:2) is only an extraneous particle. After examining the style of the Qur'ān concerning that particle, she concluded that the particle *bi-*, which comes with a negative predicate of a nominal clause, is not otiose, but is used specifically to emphasize denial and rejection. She consistently used the Qur'ān as a criterion to judge differences among exegetes.^{xxxvi} She remarked that exegetes must not limit the meaning of the Qur'ān and that they should seek a decision from the text of the Qur'ān by *iḥtikām* (judgment). "And We have revealed to you, [O Prophet], the Book in truth, confirming that which preceded it of the Scripture and as a criterion over it" (5:48).^{xxxvii} *Al-iḥtikām ilā'l-Qur'ān* is suggestive of a reciprocal agency, whereby the exegete surrenders herself to the text and the text.^{xxxviii} Bint al-Shāṭi' used the term *istiqrā'* (literally, 'denoting a request for a reading') in referring to the cross-examination of Qur'ānic terms, expressions, and stylistic phenomena to systematize *al-iḥtikām*.^{xxxix}

In specifically qualifying her literary approach as *tafsīr bayānī* – and not *tafsīr adabī* – Bint al-Shāṭi’ can thus be seen to be doing more than reviving the classical Arabic term for the art of eloquent speech. *Al-bayān*, so conceived, can be said to stand for hermeneutics in its philosophical sense of the human endeavor to grasp and articulate meaning as encountered in texts and language. She encoded the rubric of her exegesis with a new understanding of the Qur’ān’s religious ontology, where a hermeneutic that incorporates the aesthetic is what the divine text expects of the human being to fully realize his/her humanity.^{xi}

Al-Waḥda al-Binā’iyya li-l-Qur’ān: Meaning and Application

Building upon existing holistic readings of the Qur’ān, I illustrate a reading that recognizes the Qur’ān’s complete and total structural and linguistic unity, *al-waḥda al-binā’iyya li-l-Qur’ān*. As articulated by T.J. al-Alwani (d. 2016), this term conceptualizes the Qur’ān as a perfect structure, in all its *sūras*, verses, words, letters and parts; it is one unit as in how God perfected the universe and described the sky and the stars, “in full harmony with one another” (Q. 67:3). The Qur’ān clearly describes its own structure as possessing *ihkām* (perfection, precise execution, solidity^{xli}): “Alif, Lam, Ra. [This is] a Book whose verses are perfected and then presented in detail from [one who is] Wise and Acquainted” (Q. 11:1); the structure is solid and does not allow to any penetration: “God abolishes that which Satan throws in; then God makes precise His verses” (Q. 22:52). It is a “clear book” (Q. 26:2) for which Allah “will be its guardian” (Q. 15:9). The element of the protected perfection of the Qur’ān’s structural unity being so present within the scriptural text itself, it seems fitting to apply to it the methodology used to explore and extract meaning from the text. In my article “al-Maqāṣid al-Qur’āniyya” (“The Objectives of the Qur’ān”),^{xlii} I explored the nature and the scope of the comprehensive systematic methodology developed by al-Alwani.

The basic concern that al-Alwani attempted to address in his work is a methodological one. His aim was to propose a systematic methodology of reading the Qur’ān that minimizes errors in understanding the truth of its message. Al-Alwani asserted that *al-waḥda al-binā’iyya li-l-Qur’ān* is important for developing methods that advance the intertextual reading of the Qur’ān in terms of *tafsīr al-Qur’ān bi-l-Qur’ān*, and thematic and conceptual readings.^{xliii} Within this context, he presented his critical approach regarding the relationship between the Qur’ān and sunna. He emphasized that the Qur’ān should be the primary source for legal rulings, whereas the sunna is a secondary source that explicates the Qur’ānic text.^{xliiv} He critiqued scholarly methods that elevated the status of hadith from clarifying and explicating the Qur’ān to making it equal or parallel to it. As in the case example of apostasy below, al-Alwani argued that misinterpretations of Islamic law arose due to scholars allowing hadiths to reign supreme over the Qur’ān. The sunna, a body of knowledge which presents a model for the Qur’ān’s application to real-life situations, remains a practical experience at the highest level of human capability as practiced by the Prophet. Rejecting the employment of foreign sources to understand the Qur’ān, Al-Alwani’s methodology emphasized that “[a] genuine reading of the Qur’ān gets rid of interpretive elements that control the open nature of the Qur’ān, such as *isrā’ ilīyyāt* (apocryphal interpretations), and *naskh* (abrogation) in the Qur’ān in all its types.”^{xliiv}

The Methodology of *al-Wahḍa al-Binā'iyya li-l-Qur'ān* in Practice

Believing in the holistic reading of the Qur'ān allowed Taha Jaber Al-Alwani as a legal theorist and thinker to re-think traditional perspectives on controversial issues, such as apostasy, in a way that is more consistent with the Qur'ān's overall paradigm.

As a case example of al-Alwani's practical employment of *al-Wahḍa al-Binā'iyya li-l-Qur'ān*, I will illustrate his unique reading of the Qur'ānic verses on apostasy, which led him to challenge the dominant legal understanding of apostasy's prosecution in Islamic law. In one of his most influential studies, *Apostasy in Islam: Historical and Scripture Analysis*, he rejected the earthly capital punishment for individuals who apostate from Islam.^{xlvi} In his analysis of legal rulings on capital punishment for those who apostate from Islam, Al-Alwani addressed the issue as a dialectic that invited scholars to discuss and evaluate his method and conclusions.^{xlvii} The aim of this study was to provide a methodology to serve as a model by which one can place the Islamic tradition under the authority of the Qur'ān, thereby bringing it into full conformity with Qur'ānic teachings.

Qur'ānic Arabic tongue (*lisān al-Qur'ān*)

The design philosophy for the *al-wahḍa al bina'yab* methodology reveals its ability to complement some proven effective methods developed throughout the history of Islamic thought, such as al-Raghib al-Isfahani's philological method of analyzing Qur'ānic words and proving the significant difference between the Divine Arabic tongue (*lisān al-Qur'ān*) and the human Arabic language.^{xlviii} Al-Alwani argued that reading the Qur'ān according to the Qur'ānic Arabic tongue, as opposed to human understandings of language, would allow scholars to overcome misconceptions and derive comprehensive meanings in their quest for legal injunctions.

In seeking to determine the meanings of linguistic terms which appear in the Qur'ān, the first criterion al-Alwani identified is the Qur'ān's own usage of such terms. The second criterion he used are the Prophet's explanatory statements in the sunna, and third, the Arabs' customary usage of such terms in their various dialects, literary styles, and rhetoric. By following this order of priority, one ensures that Arabs' linguistic usages of terms are not the sole factor in determining the meanings of the Qur'ān. Rather, one must first consider the Qur'ān's own usage of the words.

Al-Alwani's re-examination of the legal rulings on apostasy entailed a close linguistic examination of two terms: *budūd* (plural of *hadd*) and *ridḍa*. To arrive at the Qur'ānic definition of the terms, Al-Alwani applied the above-described method in his book *Apostasy in Islam*.

The terms employed by Muslim jurists and scholars of the methodology of jurisprudence have tended to be dominated not by 'the Qur'ānic tongue' but, rather, by 'the Arabic tongue.' A salient example of this may be seen in the use of the term *hadd* and its plural, *budūd*. The term *hadd*, linguistically, means prevention or prohibition. This term occurs in fourteen verses of the Qur'ān. In two of these, it is used in the sense of God's law and commands. For example: "These are the bounds set by God (*budūd Allāh*); do not, then, offend against them – [for] it is thus God makes clear His messages unto humankind, so that they might remain conscious of Him." (2:187)

It is clear from the preceding verses (183-186) that the bounds set by God regard to the practices of fasting, marriage and divorce, and inheritance. For example in 2:230, God says: “So if a husband divorces his wife (irrevocably), he cannot, after that, re-marry her until after she has married another husband and he has divorced her. In that case there is no blame on either of them if they re-unite, provided they feel that they can keep the limits ordained by Allah. Such are the bounds set by God, which He makes plain to those who understand.”

In none of the verses does *hudūd* refer to punishment, but instead affirms the necessity of adhering to God’s ordinances and laws. Rather, al-Alwani argued that the term *uqubah* is more fitting for punishments. *Hudūd*, as it is mentioned in the Qur’ān, in fact is hardly associated with any kind of punishment. It mostly deals with problems associated with family affairs. In fact, *hudūd* carries a wider meaning in the general law and ordinance set up by God. The Qur’ān stresses the importance of adhering to God’s laws having to do with family-related issues, so one wonders how Muslim jurists shifted the use of this Qur’ānic term, restricting its meaning to the realm of the penal system. It must be further noted that the penalties mentioned in the Qur’ān for theft and sexual misconduct do not use the term *had* either. What lies behind this blatant contravention of Qur’ānic usage?

Another example of al-Alwani’s unique approach was his analysis of the term *al-ridda*. The terms *al-ridda* and *al-irtidad* in the Qur’ānic understanding represent a return to something one had left from something one had reached. However, none of the varied Qur’ānic contexts referring to apostasy speak of it as a withdrawal from Islam alone, or as a withdrawal relating to the spiritual plane alone. Rather, the Qur’ān uses the term inclusive of both the spiritual and the material, in combination with the verb *radda* (to avert or turn away). *Riddah* in the Qur’ān is an explicit retreat from and abandonment of Islam to unbelief. While warning against disbelief, these verses also urge everyone who has entered Islam to cling to it steadfastly because it is the true guidance: the most authoritative, solid basis for life and living.

Riddah has been used over the centuries to refer unambiguously to a retreat from religion, and specifically, from the religion of Islam. Al-Alwani listed twelve verses to shed light on the fundamental meaning of the concept of apostasy as presented in the Qur’ān.^{xix} For example, in the following ayah, God emphasizes that for those who commit apostasy, their deeds in this life and the hereafter become worthless. “If any of you should turn away from his faith and die as a denier of the truth- these it is whose deeds will go for nought in this world and in the life to come; and these it is who are destined for the fire, therein to abide” (2:217).

None of the verses referred to above – which include everything the Qur’ān has to say concerning either *riddah* or *irtidad* – make any mention of an earthly punishment for the sin or crime of apostasy; nor do they refer, whether explicitly or implicitly, to the need to force an apostate to return to Islam or to kill him if he refuses to do so. As portrayed in the Qur’ān, the term *riddah* reflects the psychological and mental state that brought the individual concerned to the point of apostasy. Given this clarification of the concept of apostasy, or *riddah*, in the Qur’ān, we can see how the Qur’ān has put this linguistic term to convey a variety of meanings by employing it as a verbal noun related to the religion. The verbal noun *al-riddah* is used to refer to a retreat from Islam, although the Qur’ān does not prescribe an earthly punishment for this spiritual betrayal, according to al-Alwani. A person abandons his faith if he denies the truth after having surrendered himself to God through Islam.

Apostasy: Reading the Sunna in the light of *al-Wahda al-Binā'iyya*

Al-Alwani asserted that the philosophy of *al-Wahda al-Binā'iyya* illustrates the Qur'ān and the Sunna as mutually supporting sources of evidence. There can be no conflict, contradiction, inconsistency, or disagreement between them, nor could any part of the Sunnah abrogate or nullify what is stated in the Qur'ān. The Sunnah, taken as a whole, offers the methodology of emulation of the Prophet. The Qur'ān, ultimately endorses and legitimizes but invariably supersedes the other available sources, including the Sunna.ⁱ Al-Alwani highlighted the following four approaches to analyzing the Sunna: a) Its unity and language, b) the combined reading of the Qur'ān and the Sunna, c) the reading of the Sunna and the universe, and, finally, d) the conceptual reading of the Sunna, which helps clarify the circumstances and places of the Prophet's time and mission.ⁱⁱ This is what enables Muslims to connect any reality with the Qur'ān, regardless of time and place.

In the case of apostasy, al-Alwani argued that capital punishment for apostasy was not found either in the Qur'an nor in the actions of the Prophet. Rather, it can be found in the verbal Sunnah. One of the most salient hadiths that mention the command to kill the apostate, and the most widely cited among Muslim jurists, states, "If anyone changes his religion, put him to death" (a hadith on the authority of Mu'adh ibn Jabal).ⁱⁱⁱ Al-Alwani comprehensively analyzed this hadith in its varied chain of narrations and in all its different versions, as well as the textual evidence in support of it and what scholars have had to say about it.ⁱⁱⁱⁱ In so doing, he explained that one will be able to see how scholars have put it to use, bringing it out from the realm of that which merely explicates the Qur'ān into the realm of that which rules over it and issues verdicts which are not found in the Qur'ān itself nor in the practice of the Prophet. According to Al-Alwani, the frequent habit of jurists placing the hadith, at least on the level of practice, above that which is stated explicitly in the Qur'an is what has caused the lasting confusion. In doing so, the hadith was elevated from the status of clarifying and explicating the Qur'ān (that which clarifies being subordinate to that which is clarified) to the status of that which is equal or parallel to it. The end result of this process has been to allow hadiths to reign supreme over the Qur'ān and pass judgment on it.

Al-Alwani argued that if the Prophet had been aware of such a penalty, he would not have hesitated to carry it out, since he was forthright in calling for punishment for specific crimes in other cases. The Prophet's era witnessed literally hundreds of those who believed, who then later became hypocrites or committed apostasy. In fact, their apostasy reached the point where it represented a source of harm to the Messenger of God and the Muslim community. However, the Prophet refrained from doing them any harm lest it be said that "Muhammad kills his Companions,"^{liv} imposes his doctrine on people, or forces them to embrace his religion. In no case did the Prophet respond by calling for death, unless an individual was accused of a separate crime warranting such punishment.

Furthermore, nearly two hundred verses of the Qur'ān reject the principle of coercion in matters of faith and stipulate absolute human freedom to choose what one believes. As has been seen, the Qur'ān affirms there is no earthly penalty whatsoever for the decision to change one's religion (so long as the individual concerned is not guilty of some other crime, especially in terms of treason). On the contrary, the Qur'ān affirms that the right to declare the penalty belongs to God alone. When one views this hadith in light of Qur'ānic verses whose meanings are definitive and clear, it presents no difficulty. However, when the various versions of the hadith are cited in isolation from the Qur'ān, and when some narrators connect these accounts with other events and

stories, the hadith may become incomprehensible. In addition, chains of narration may be incomplete and/or weak, and therefore such hadiths are not reliable sources. One finds, for example, that this hadith implies approval of destruction of the human life that the Qur'ān takes great care to preserve and safeguard, and whose destruction it seeks to prevent by all means possible.

Muslim Jurists: The Penalty for Apostasy

Al-Alwani discussed thoroughly the foundational arguments of the most prominent schools of thought and provided his analysis in the light of his reading of the Qur'ānic-Prophetic model on the issue. Applying this method led him to explain the reason and the context that led Muslim jurists to affirm the death penalty for apostasy. Generally, in its historical context, apostasy was frequently the result of a comprehensive shift away from allegiance to the Muslim community and rejection of its associated system, laws and culture. Confusion between political treason and religious apostasy arose in an oral culture that was prevalent in the Hejazi environment; further, the influence of the Jewish culture of oral tradition played a role which viewed it necessary to kill anyone who left Judaism. Also, the Islamic conquests brought many new nations – all with their own systems, customs, cultures, and laws – within the jurisdiction of the Muslim nation. Such laws related, for example, to the shifting of allegiances, rebellion against the political and legal order, and so forth. The Byzantines, the Persians and others all had well-established laws and regulations that generated customs and cultures in the conquered lands, and which in turn pervaded the Muslim environment. These laws, regulations, customs and cultures thus came to color the Muslim juristic mindset. Therefore, transmitters of Islamic jurisprudence promoted the claim that there was a consensus among the majority of fiqh scholars that the apostate must be compelled to return to Islam on pain of death. The purpose behind this ruling was to protect the religion from attempts to undervalue it or to undermine its function as the foundation upon which the Muslim Umma came into being, the foundation of the state's legitimacy, and the source of Islamic doctrine, law, and all related life systems within the Muslim state. Apostasy was also a major threat for the need to maintain loyalty and uniformity in the Muslim armies.

Al-Alwani raised serious concerns about the issue of apostasy and brought forward various examples in the past and the present to prove the validity of his concerns. The ruler looks upon the penal system as the most important means of imposing order, commanding respect, and achieving aims. The most formidable penal system is one whose authority can be attributed to God, since it is through this type of system that the ruler can reap the greatest benefit for his regime. Consequently, pious scholars such as Imam Malik, Abu Hanifa, Al Shafi, Ahmad ibn Hanbal and Sufyan al-Thawri, and others frequently denounced rulers for misusing the penal system and exploiting it for their own tyrannical and capricious ends. The written corpus of Muslim heritage contains such denunciations in jurists' sermons and exhortations to rulers, as well as in their epistles, lessons, and juristic writings. Indeed, in our own age some proponents of political Islam reduce Islam and Islamic law in their entirety to the penal system alone. Consequently, when many such individuals speak of applying Islamic law, what they mean by Islamic law is nothing but its associated penalties. Likewise, some regimes are quick to apply certain penalties in order to demonstrate their religious rigor and their commitment to the shari'ah. Recently, the hideous acts of violence committed by members of ISIS against any who oppose them is obnoxious from the perspective of both Islamic law and human rights law alike.^{lv} The question is: what is the best way to address this issue in the current context where many Muslims are driving away from their religion?^{lvi}

Since no reading can be definitive, al-Alwani saw interpretive multiplicity as inevitable. The future exegetical community is therefore required to continuously critically engage with its past. Al-Alwani thus conceived understanding as a cumulative effort that cannot be achieved by a single reading. He called for Muslims to study thoroughly the Islamic intellectual heritage in light of the Qur'ān. This call was advocated by many early scholars, such as Abu Hamid al Ghazali (d. 505 AH), Ibn Hazm Al Dhari (d. 456AH), Fakhr al Razi (d.606 AH), Ibn 'Taymiah (d.728AH), and Ibn Khaldun (d. 808 AH). Al-Alwani's aim was to provide a systematic methodology to serve as a model, which one can use to place the Islamic intellectual heritage under the authority of the Qur'ān, thereby bringing it into full conformity with Qur'ānic teachings. "And We have revealed to you, [O Prophet], the Book in truth, confirming that which preceded it of the Scripture and as a criterion over it" (5:48). A serious dialogue with the tradition and its intellectual and spiritual inclusiveness is what permits expansion and transformation.

Conclusion

Given the preceding discussion, it is important to continue searching for systematic methodologies of approaching the Qur'ān and Sunna. In the light of implementing *al-wah̄da al-binā'iyya li-l-Qur'ān*, we should push forth more discussion and strategies about the method of reading the Qur'ān in its unity and interpreting the Qur'ān intertextually (*tafsīr al-Qur'ān bi-l-Qur'ān*). Since the Qur'ān is an eternal guide for humanity, all the problems Muslims face can be addressed via a comprehensive vision based on Qur'ānic principles in conjunction with the examples provided by the sunna. The Qur'ān states that the Prophet is a role model for humanity (33:21). Thus from the perspective of Islamic jurisprudence, the sunna explains, clarifies, and demonstrates how to implement Qur'ānic teachings (75:16–19). The sunna represents the ethics, morals, and behaviors outlined in the sharī'ah. Muslims scholars need to construct a methodology that enables them to understand how to relate the teachings of the revelation to the lives of Muslims living today. In other words, one should not read the hadith separately from the Qur'ān or focus only on the sunna's legal rulings, but rather on its reasoning as discussed in this paper. Doing so will release it from being just a collection of particular responses to specific questions and circumstances.

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END NOTES

ⁱ Taha Jabir al-Alwani, *Al-Wahda al-bina'iya lil-Qur'an* (Cairo: Maṭba'at al-Shurūq al-Dawliya, 2006).

ⁱⁱ Taha Jabir al-Alwani, *Al-Wahda al-bina'iya lil-Qur'an* (Cairo: Maṭba'at al-Shurūq al-Dawliya, 2006).

ⁱⁱⁱ In the interest of full disclosure and an attempt to make clear any possible bias, it should be noted that late Dr. Taha Jabir al-Alwani is my father. Al-Alwani earned his Ph.D. at Egypt's Al-Azhar University. His dissertation, a comprehensive six-volume study of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's *Mabsūl fī 'ilm al-usūl*, is a systematic review of the classical literature on *usūl al-fiqh* (Islamic legal theory). He examined 700–800 scholars' arguments on different areas of classical Islamic thought. See Muhammad b. 'Umar al-Ra'zī, *al-Mabsūl*, ed. T. J. al-Alwani (Riyadh: Imam Muhammad University Press, 1400 AH). He studied the juristic *usūl* hierarchal structure of *al-bukm al-sha'i* (the sources of rulings) and the intensive discussions among early scholars concerning *qiyās* (analogical reasoning) and its elements, *'illa* (cause/reason), *maslaha* (interest/welfare), and other related issues. The determination of the *'illa* in *usūl al-fiqh* is of the utmost importance to its legal system. See the details in Taha J. al-Alwani, *Shaykh Taha Jabir al-Alwani: Issues in Contemporary Islamic Thought* (London and Washington: IIIT, 2005). This collection of articles first appeared in the *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* and mostly were translated by Yusuf Talal DeLorenzo. In his more than thirty books, al-Alwani has written extensively about the need for *ijtihad* (legal reasoning) and has called for the critical examination of the *turāth* (the Islamic legacy) by Muslims themselves. For the last three decades of his life, he focused on the Qur'ānic Methodology and published more than ten books and numerous articles discussing this issue.

^{iv} Muḥammad 'Alī al-Ṣābūnī, *Mukhtaṣar Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, v.1.28, *al-Muḥaddith Program*. v. 11.36 available at www.muhammadith.org. There are only a few *tafsīrs* which bear the title of *tafsīr al-Qur'an bi al-Qur'an*, two of which are *Adwa' al-bayan fī idāha al-Qur'an bi al-Qur'an* by Muḥammad al-Shinqīṭī, and *Al-Tafsīr al-Qur'ānī li al-Qur'an* by 'Abd al-Karīm Khaṭīb. However, upon close reading, these two *tafsīrs* are not really *tafsīr al-Qur'an bi al-Qur'an* as the titles seem to suggest. However, Al Farahi-Islahī's Urdu exegeses, *Tadabbur-i-Qur'an* is one of the important references in this regard.

^v Ibn Taymiyyah, *Muqaddimah fī usul al-tafsīr*, ed. Adnan Zarzour, 2nd edition (Beirut, AH 1392), 93. See also his book: *Majmū'at al-rasa'il wal-masa'il* (Beirut Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 1983), 363.

^{vi} See Mustansir Mir, *Coherence in the Qur'an*, (Indianapolis, IN: American Trust Publication, 1986), 10–15.

^{vii} Sahih al Bukhari, Vol. 6, Book 60, Hadith 299. Arabic reference: Book 65, Hadith 4776. USC-MSA web.

^{viii} Sahih al Bukhari, Vol. 6, Book 60 Hadith 301. Arabic reference: Book 65, Hadith 4778. USC-MSA web.

^{ix} Abū Ubaydah, *Majāz al-Qur'an*, ed. Muhammad Fū'ad Sazgīn (Cairo: Maktabat al Khanji, 1954–1962).

^x Abu 'Uthman' Amr ibn Bahr Al-Jahiz, *Al-Bayan wa al-Tabayin* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khanji, 1975).

^{xi} 'Abd al-Qahir al-Jurjani, *Dala'il I'jaz fī al-'Ilm al-Ma'ani*, ed. al-Sayyid Muhammad Rashid Rida (Beirut: Dar al-Ma'rifah, 1998).

^{xii} See Mustansir Mir, *Coherence in the Qur'an*, (Indianapolis, IN: American Trust Publication, 1986), 10–15.

^{xiii} Al Raghīb al asfahani, *Al-Mufradat fī Gharīb al-Qur'an*, ed. Muhammad Seyd Kaylani. (Beirut: Dar al M'arifa, n.d).

^{xiv} There are different scholars and institutions that produced important work in this area, for example, in Morocco, al-Shaikh al shahid Al-bushikhi, in Fez at the Institute of Qur'anic Concepts. He was the academic advisor for several studies for Masters and Ph.D. The Institute published about fifty five studies focusing on Qur'anic concepts.

^{xv} Fakhr al-Dīn Al-Razi, *Tafsīr Mafatih al- Ghāy*, (Beirut Dar al Fikr, 1981).

^{xvi} Burhan al-Dīn ibn Umar al-Bīqāī, *Nazm al-Durar Fī Tanasub al-Āyāt wa al-Suwar*, ed. 'Abd al-Raziq al-Mahdī, (Beirut, Dār al-Kutub al-ʿilmiyya, 1995).

^{xvii} See Salwa M. El-Awa, *Textual Relations in the Qur'an: Relevance, Coherence and Structure*. London-New York: Routledge, 2006. P 9–22.

^{xviii} Jalāl al-Dīn al-Khuḍayrī al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqan fī 'Ulum al-Qur'an* (Egypt: Idara Shaikh 'Uthman 'Abd al-Razzaq, 1206 A.H), Vol. 2

^{xix} Badr al Din Al-ZarkashiBadr al_Dīn, *al-Burhān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'an*, ed. Muhammad Abū al-Fadl Ibrāhīm, ,(Cairo: Dar al Turath,n.d.), Vol. 1, pp. 39-52.

^{xx} See El-Awa. Salwa M. *Textual Relations in the Qur'an: Relevance, Coherence and Structure*.

^{xxi} Hamiduddin Farahi (1863–1930) was an Islamic scholar of South Asia known for his groundbreaking work on the concept of *Nazm*, or Coherence, in the Qur'an. For a brief life-sketch of Farāhī, see Mir, Mustansir, *Coherence in the Qur'an: A Study of Islāhī's Concept of Nazm in Tadabbur-i-Qur'an*, (Indianapolis: 1986), 6–8. Farāhī's views on the subject are found in two of his works: *Im'an fī Aqsam al-Qur'an*, (Cairo: 1349 A.H.) in which he states his theory, and *Majmu'ah-i-Tafasir-i-Farāhī*, (Urdu translation by Amīn Aḥsan Islāhī (Lahore: 1393/1973) which is a collection of his commentaries on a small number of the Qur'anic sūrāt.

^{xxii} Amin Ahsan Islahi (1904–1997) was famous for his Urdu exegeses of Qur'ān, *Tadabbur-i-Qur'an*—an exegesis that he based on Hamiduddin Farahi's (1863–1930) idea of thematic and structural coherence in the Qur'an. See Taha Jabir al-Alwani, *Al-Wahda al-bāyāniya al-Qur'ān al-majīd* (Cairo: Maṭba'at al-Shurūq al-Dawliya, 2006).

^{xxiii} Muhammad 'Abdullah Draz, *The Qur'an: An Eternal Challenge: Al Naba Al Azīm* (London: Islamic Foundation, 2007).

^{xxiv} Salwa M. S. El-Awa, "Linguistic Structure," in *The Blackwell Companion to the Qur'an*, ed. Andrew Rippin (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 55-57.

^{xxv} Salwa M. S. El-Awa, "Linguistic Structure," in *The Blackwell Companion to the Qur'an*, ed. Andrew Rippin (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 57.

^{xxvi} Islāhī wrote a eight-volume Qur'ān commentary, *Tadabbur-i-Qur'ān*, (Lahore: 1967–1980) according to the exegetical principles laid down by Farāhī.

^{xxvii} Saeh Bassam, *The Miraculous Language of the Qur'an: Evidence of Divine Origin* (London: IIIT, 2015).

^{xxviii} Mustansir Mir, "The Sura as a unity," 204.

^{xxix} Mustansir Mir, "The Sura as a unity;," 217.

^{xxx} Mustansir Mir, "The Sura as a unity: A Twentieth-Century Development in Qur'an Exegesis," in *Approaches to the Qur'an*, eds G. R. Hawting and Abdul-Kader A. Shareef (London: Routledge, 1993), 220.

^{xxxi} Asrār al-balāgha and Dalā'il al-i'jāz

^{xxxii} See Shuruq Naguib, Bint al-Shāṭi's Approach to tafsīr: An Egyptian Exegete's Journey from Hermeneutics to Humanity. *Journal of Qur'anic Studies*. 2015, Vol. 17 Issue 1, p45-84.

^{xxxiii} See 'Ā'isha Abd al-Raḥmān Bint al-Shati', *al-Tafsīr al-bayānī lil-Qur'ān al-kaṛīm* (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1971 & 1981) and Issa J. Boullata, "Modern Qur'ān Exegesis: a study of Bint al-Shati's method," *The Muslim World* 64 (1974): 103. See Shuruq Naguib, Bint al-Shāṭi's Approach to tafsīr: An Egyptian Exegete's Journey from Hermeneutics to Humanity. *Journal of Qur'anic Studies*. 2015, Vol. 17 Issue 1, p45-84..

^{xxxiv} See his methodology in his book: Amin al-Khuli, *Manahij Tajdid* (Cairo: Dar al-Ma'rifah, 1961).

^{xxxv} Bint al-Shati', *al-Tafsīr al-bayānī lil-Qur'ān al-kaṛīm*. Vol. 2. pp. 46, 53–54.

^{xxxvi} Ibid., *al-Tafsīr al-bayānī lil-Qur'ān al-kaṛīm*. Vol.1, pp.11.

^{xxxvii} Naguib, Bint al-Shāṭi's Approach to tafsīr: An Egyptian Exegete's Journey from Hermeneutics to Humanity. p 60.

^{xxxviii} Ibid., p 61.

^{xl} See Shuruq Naguib, Bint al-Shāṭi's Approach to tafsīr: An Egyptian Exegete's Journey from Hermeneutics to Humanity. *Journal of Qur'anic Studies*. 2015, Vol. 17 Issue 1, p45-84. 40p.

^{xli} J. M. Cowan, *The Hans Wehr Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic* (1976), 195–197.

^{xlii} Zainab Alwani, "Maqasid Qur'aniyya: A Methodology on Evaluating Modern Challenges and Fiqh al-Aqalliyat," *The Muslim World* 104 (2014): 465-487.

^{xliii} T.J. al-Alwani, 2006.

^{xliv} T. J. al-Alwani, *Reviving the Balance: The Authority of the Qur'ān and the Status of the Sunnah*, Translate Nancy Roberts (London/ Washington: The International Institute of Islamic Thought, 2017) p XI. See I. D. Khalil, *The Qur'ān and the Sunnah: The Time-Space Factor*, 28.

^{xlv} Taha Jabir al-Alwani, *Nahwā muqif qur'āni min al-naskh towards a Qur'ānic Approach on Abrogation* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Shurūq al-Dawliyya, 2007)

^{xlvii} Taher Jabir al-Alwani, *Apostasy in Islam: A Historical and Scriptural analysis* (Herndon, VA: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 2012).

^{xlviii} Al-Raghib al-Asfahani (d. 502 AH/1108) was an eleventh-century Muslim scholar of Qur'ānic exegesis and the Arabic language. One of his most famous works was *Al-Mufradat fi Gharib al-Qur'ān*, Dar Ihya Turath al-Arabi; 1st edition (2013).

^{xlix} Al-Alwani, *Apostasy in Islam: A Historical and Scriptural analysis*, 25-28.

^l Al-Alwani, *Issues in Contemporary Islamic Thought*, 39-41.

^{li} See T. J. al-Alwani, *Lisān al-Qur'ān wa mustaqbal al-ummah al-qutub* [The Tongue of the Qur'ān and the Future of the Ummah] (Cairo: Maktabat al-Shurūq al-Dawliyya, 2006).

^{lii} See the chain of narration in al-Alwani, *Apostasy in Islam: A Historical and Scriptural analysis*, 67-69

^{liii} *Ibid.*, *Apostasy in Islam: A Historical and Scriptural analysis* 67-97

^{liv} *Ibid.*, *Apostasy in Islam: A Historical and Scriptural analysis*, 60-61

^{lv} Jonathan Brown, "The Issue of Apostasy in Islam," Yaqeen Institute for Islamic Research <https://yaqeeninstitute.org/en/jonathan-brown/apostasy/>

^{lvi} *Ibid.*, "The Issue of Apostasy in Islam," 26.