



The Semantic Core and Its Interpretive Potentials in Understanding Qur'anic Vocabulary: A Comparative Exegetical Study Based on the Perspective of 'Allāma Ḥasan Muṣṭafawī

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Abstract

A precise understanding of the vocabulary of the Qur'an is among the most important prerequisites for interpreting its verses and discerning the divine intent. One of the fundamental issues in this regard is the identification of the semantic core of Qur'anic words—that is, the underlying meaning to which all the uses and derivatives of a particular lexical root ultimately return. In his *al-Taḥqīq fī Kalimāt al-Qur'ān al-Karīm*, 'Allāma Ḥasan Muṣṭafawī adopts this premise and posits a central and unified meaning for each Qur'anic root, regarding many of the meanings proposed in lexical sources as instances, implications, or consequences of that semantic core.

Using a descriptive-analytical method and a comparative approach, the present study examines Muṣṭafawī's account of the semantic core of Qur'anic vocabulary in comparison with the views of Muslim lexicographers, particularly Ibn Fāris in *Mu'jam Maqāyīs al-Lughā*, as well as selected Shi'i exegetical works. To this end, the corpus of Qur'anic words addressed in *al-Taḥqīq* was examined in general terms, and a number of representative lexical items were selected for comparative analysis. The findings indicate that attention to the semantic core not only establishes greater coherence among the diverse uses of Qur'anic vocabulary but, in many cases, also facilitates the discovery of new semantic nuances that have received comparatively limited attention in earlier lexicographical and exegetical works. Moreover, analysis of the selected examples demonstrates that, by placing the semantic core at the center of his approach, Muṣṭafawī offers interpretations that diverge in numerous instances from the prevailing views of lexicographers and exegetes, thereby providing novel readings of certain Qur'anic lexical items. Accordingly, an approach grounded in the semantic core can reveal overlooked dimensions of Qur'anic lexical studies and open new avenues for identifying less-recognized layers and semantic nuances in the process of Qur'anic interpretation.

Keywords: semantic core; 'Allāma Muṣṭafawī; *al-Taḥqīq fī Kalimāt al-Qur'ān al-Karīm*; Qur'anic vocabulary; Qur'anic semantics; Qur'anic exegesis.

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1. Introduction

The Qur'an, as the most important source of Islamic knowledge and doctrine, has consistently occupied a central position in the scholarly endeavors of exegetes, linguists, and Qur'anic studies researchers. Since an accurate understanding of divine purposes and messages depends fundamentally on a proper understanding of Qur'anic words and expressions, the study of Qur'anic vocabulary occupies a foundational position in the process of exegesis. Throughout the history of Qur'anic interpretation, many exegetical disagreements have stemmed from divergent understandings of the meanings of Qur'anic words. Accordingly, attaining a precise understanding of Qur'anic vocabulary constitutes one of the most essential prerequisites for a sound interpretation of the Qur'an.

Despite extensive scholarly efforts in the fields of lexicography, Qur'anic exegesis, and Qur'anic studies, numerous semantic subtleties of Qur'anic vocabulary still require further investigation and critical examination. The Qur'an encompasses multiple layers of meaning, and access to its profound purposes requires a precise understanding of the semantic structure of its vocabulary and the relationships among its lexical elements. For this reason, determining the precise meaning of Qur'anic vocabulary has consistently been a major concern of exegetes and lexicographers, each of whom, drawing upon particular methodological and theoretical foundations, has sought to elucidate the meanings of Qur'anic words and discern the divine intent.

Among the fundamental issues in the semantics of the Qur'an is the question of the semantic core of its vocabulary. By the semantic core is meant the central and foundational meaning to which all the uses, derivatives, and applications of a given lexical item ultimately return. The significance of this issue lies in the fact that any error in identifying the semantic core may result in a misunderstanding of a word and, consequently, in an erroneous interpretation of Qur'anic verses. Conversely, identifying the semantic core of lexical items makes it possible to understand the underlying coherence among their various uses and plays an important role in resolving apparent discrepancies among the multiple meanings attributed to a given word. Accordingly, determining the semantic core may be regarded as one of the most significant stages in the process of Qur'anic interpretation and the identification of divine intent.

Among contemporary scholars, 'Allāma Ḥasan Muṣṭafawī, through his *al-Taḥqīq fī Kalimāt al-Qur'ān al-Karīm*, has proposed a distinctive approach to the semantics of Qur'anic vocabulary. He maintains that every lexical root in the Qur'an possesses a single semantic core and that all derivatives and uses associated with that root ultimately derive from the same foundational meaning. From his perspective, many of the meanings presented in lexicographical

sources are, in fact, instances, implications, or consequences of that semantic core rather than independent meanings. This approach has contributed to establishing *al-Taḥqīq fī Kalimāt al-Qur'ān al-Karīm* as an important and influential work in contemporary Qur'anic semantic studies, granting it a distinctive position within modern scholarship on the Qur'an.

Against this background, the present study seeks to elucidate Muṣṭafawī's account of the semantic core of Qur'anic vocabulary and, by comparing it with the views of lexicographers and exegetes, to clarify the extent to which attention to the semantic core contributes to a more accurate understanding of Qur'anic vocabulary and the identification of divine intent. To this end, the Qur'anic lexical items addressed throughout *al-Taḥqīq fī Kalimāt al-Qur'ān al-Karīm* were examined and compared with major Arabic lexicons, particularly Ibn Fāris's *Mu'jam Maqāyīs al-Lughā*, as well as several prominent Shi'i exegetical works. From this extensive examination, a number of lexical items were selected as representative cases for comparative analysis in order to demonstrate the role and effectiveness of attending to the semantic core in elucidating Qur'anic concepts, resolving semantic ambiguities, and attaining a more precise understanding of Qur'anic verses.

The significance of this study derives from the fact that an accurate understanding of the Qur'an is to a considerable extent dependent upon a precise comprehension of its vocabulary and the identification of the foundational meanings underlying its lexical items. Many exegetical disagreements throughout history have their roots in divergent views concerning the meanings of Qur'anic words and the determination of their central semantic content. Thus, identifying the semantic core of each lexical item is not merely a matter of lexicographical inquiry; rather, it plays a fundamental role in understanding divine purposes, resolving ambiguities in Qur'anic verses, and achieving a more accurate interpretation of the Qur'an.

Al-Taḥqīq fī Kalimāt al-Qur'ān al-Karīm is among the works that have approached the question of the semantic core from a distinctive perspective, seeking to provide a comprehensive and foundational meaning for each Qur'anic lexical item. Examining this approach and comparing it with the views of lexicographers and exegetes can open new horizons in Qur'anic semantic studies and contribute to a clearer understanding of the role of semantic-core identification in the process of Qur'anic interpretation.

The primary objective of this study is to examine the role of the semantic core in understanding Qur'anic vocabulary and to elucidate its contribution to identifying the divine intent conveyed by Qur'anic verses. By analyzing Muṣṭafawī's approach in *al-Taḥqīq fī Kalimāt al-Qur'ān al-Karīm* and comparing it with the views of lexicographers and exegetes, the study seeks to

demonstrate that the potential for discovering new meanings and semantic implications within Qur'anic vocabulary remains open and that the reconsideration of the semantic core of lexical items can provide new avenues for Qur'anic semantics and exegesis. The study also seeks to clarify the position of *al-Taḥqīq* as one of the significant contemporary works in the fields of Qur'anic lexicology and the semantics of Qur'anic vocabulary.

The present study employs an analytical-comparative method. First, Muṣṭafawī's views concerning the semantic core of Qur'anic lexical items are identified, extracted, and analyzed. These views are then compared with those of lexicographers and exegetes, and their implications for understanding Qur'anic verses and elucidating divine intent are examined.

2. Literature Review

A review of the existing literature indicates that, to date, no independent study has been conducted specifically under the title and approach of "The Impact of Identifying the Semantic Core on Understanding Qur'anic Vocabulary, with Reference to *al-Taḥqīq fī Kalimāt al-Qur'ān al-Karīm*." Nevertheless, a number of studies have addressed issues directly or indirectly related to the subject of the present research. The most significant of these include the following:

1) "Al-Ma'nā al-Miḥwarī wa-Atharuhu fī Tawjīh al-Naṣṣ al-Qur'ānī (*al-Taḥqīq fī Kalimāt al-Qur'ān* as a Case Study)", by Ḥaydar al-Zaydī. This doctoral dissertation examines the concept of the central meaning and its role in guiding and interpreting the Qur'anic text.

2) "Al-Ma'nā al-Miḥwarī wa-'Alāqatuhu bi-l-Ishtiḳāq (*al-Taḥqīq fī Kalimāt al-Qur'ān al-Karīm* as a Case Study)", by Khamīs 'Abd Allāh al-Tamīmī and Ḥaydar Shanāwah al-Zaydī. This article, derived from the aforementioned dissertation, examines the relationship between central meaning and derivation in light of 'Allāma Muṣṭafawī's approach.

3) "Manhaj al-Sharḥ wa-al-Tafsīr 'inda Ḥasan al-Muṣṭafawī fī Kitāb *al-Taḥqīq fī Kalimāt al-Qur'ān*," by 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Ṣāliḥī. This paper, presented at the Fourth World Conference of Researchers in the Qur'an and Qur'anic Sciences in Fez in 2017, examines 'Allāma Muṣṭafawī's exegetical and explanatory methodology in *al-Taḥqīq*.

4) "*Al-Taḥqīq fī Kalimāt al-Qur'ān al-Karīm*: A Transformation in the Methodologies of Qur'anic Lexicology in the Contemporary Era," by Muḥammad Malkī Nahāvandī. This article examines the position of *al-Taḥqīq fī Kalimāt al-Qur'ān al-Karīm* in the development of contemporary studies of Qur'anic lexicology and semantics and elucidates 'Allāma Muṣṭafawī's methodological innovations, particularly his approach to identifying the

semantic core of Qur'anic lexical items. The principal focus of the study is to explain the significance of the semantic core and its role in understanding Qur'anic vocabulary and transforming approaches to Qur'anic lexicology during the contemporary period.

The present study, however, approaches the subject from a different perspective. Rather than focusing primarily on the theoretical foundations of the semantic-core approach and its position within Qur'anic semantics, it examines the exegetical implications of this theory. Through a comparison of Muṣṭafawī's views with those of lexicographers, exegetes, and other scholars, the study evaluates the extent to which identifying the semantic core contributes to a more precise understanding of Qur'anic vocabulary and the elucidation of divine intent. Despite the existence of these studies, a comprehensive and systematic investigation of the impact of identifying the semantic core on the understanding of Qur'anic vocabulary and its implications for the interpretation of Qur'anic verses—particularly through a comparative examination of the perspectives of Muṣṭafawī, lexicographers, and exegetes—remains to be undertaken.

Since the principal conceptual issues underlying the present discussion—including an introduction to *al-Taḥqīq fī Kalimāt al-Qur'ān al-Karīm* and its author, 'Allāma Ḥasan Muṣṭafawī; an exposition of the theory of the “semantic core” and its evidentiary basis; and a discussion of Ibn Fāris's approach and his *Mu'jam Maqāyīs al-Lughā*—have already been examined in detail in the article “From *al-Taḥqīq fī Kalimāt al-Qur'ān*: A Transformation in the Cognitive Approaches to Qur'anic Vocabulary in the Contemporary Era” (Malkī Nahāvandī, 2023), those discussions are not repeated here. The present article is intended as a continuation and further development of that study. Readers seeking a more detailed account of its theoretical and conceptual foundations are therefore referred to the aforementioned article.

3. The Semantic Core

One of the most fundamental issues in Arabic semantics is the question of the semantic core, or central meaning, of lexical items. The semantic core refers to the underlying and foundational reality shared by all the derivatives, usages, and semantic developments of a lexical root, to which they ultimately return. Other meanings are, in essence, instances, effects, implications, or extensions of that single underlying reality (Ibn Fāris, 1399 AH, vol. 1: 51; Muṣṭafawī, 1368/1989, vol. 1: 10–12). According to this theory, although a word may convey different meanings in different contexts, such diversity of usage does not necessarily entail multiple underlying meanings of the lexical form. Rather, these various usages may be understood as deriving from a single semantic nucleus (Ibn Manẓūr, 1414 AH, vol. 1: 32; al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, 1412 AH: 54).

Among Arabic lexicographers, Ibn Fāris may be regarded as the earliest scholar to have employed the theory of the semantic core systematically in his *Muʿjam Maqāyīs al-Lughā*. In the introduction to his work, he states that every lexical root possesses one or more fundamental principles and that all of its derivatives should be understood in relation to those principles (Ibn Fāris, 1399 AH, vol. 1: 51–53). Although he accepts more than one underlying principle for certain roots, his method of reducing multiple meanings to a limited number of fundamental principles represents a significant turning point in the history of Arabic lexicography (Malkī Nahāvandī, 1402/2023: 83–87).

ʿAllāma Ḥasan Muṣṭafawī developed this premise further in *al-Taḥqīq fī Kalimāt al-Qurʾān al-Karīm* and employed it as a principal methodological basis for understanding Qurʾanic vocabulary. He maintains that every Qurʾanic lexical root has a single underlying semantic reality and that what lexicographers have presented as multiple meanings are, in most cases, instances, effects, implications, or semantic extensions of that reality rather than independent meanings (Muṣṭafawī, 1368/1989, vol. 1: 10–15). In his view, conflating the essential meaning of a word with its implications is responsible for a significant portion of the disagreements found in lexicographical and exegetical scholarship. Only by identifying the semantic core, therefore, can semantic coherence be established among the various Qurʾanic usages of a given lexical root (Muṣṭafawī, 1368/1989, vol. 1: 14; al-Zaydī, 2021: 78–83).

This approach differs fundamentally from the prevailing method of many Arabic lexicons. Whereas most lexicographers have recorded multiple meanings alongside one another, ʿAllāma Muṣṭafawī seeks to reduce them to a single shared semantic reality. Consequently, in numerous cases, the semantic core proposed by Muṣṭafawī differs from the established positions of lexicographers and exegetes. These differences have, in turn, led to new exegetical interpretations of certain Qurʾanic verses; evaluating such interpretations constitutes the principal focus of the present study (Muṣṭafawī, 1368/1989, vol. 1: 12–15; al-Ṣāliḥī, 2017: 125–136; al-Tamīmī & al-Zaydī, 2020: 249–261).

An examination of *al-Taḥqīq fī Kalimāt al-Qurʾān al-Karīm* demonstrates that, with respect to numerous Qurʾanic lexical items, Muṣṭafawī's position differs from the established views of lexicographers, exegetes, and other scholars. Drawing upon his theory of a single semantic core, he proposes a foundational meaning for many lexical items that is sometimes broader and sometimes narrower than their commonly recognized meanings, thereby departing substantially from conventional analyses. Since examining all such cases is beyond the scope of the present study, a limited number of lexical items have been selected as representative examples in order to clarify Muṣṭafawī's semantic methodology and the differences between its results and those of other

scholarly approaches.

For each lexical item examined in this section, Muṣṭafawī's proposed semantic core is presented first. This is followed by an examination and comparison of the views of selected lexicographers—particularly Ibn Fāris—as well as those of exegetes and other scholars concerning the same lexical item. The purpose of this comparison is not merely to document differences of opinion; rather, it is to demonstrate the implications of adopting a single semantic core for understanding Qur'anic vocabulary and interpreting Qur'anic verses. The selected examples can therefore provide a basis for evaluating Muṣṭafawī's exegetical approach and the explanatory efficacy of the theory of the single semantic core in Qur'anic studies. The examples are examined sequentially below.

3.1 The Root 'R-K (أَزَكَ)

Muṣṭafawī's View: The root 'R-K (أَزَكَ) occurs five times in the Qur'an, consistently in this lexical form (ʿAbd al-Bāqī, n.d.: 33). ʿAllāma Muṣṭafawī maintains that the semantic core of the root 'R-K is tranquility, stillness, reassurance, and the removal of anxiety. In his view, *arīka* (أَرِيكَ) denotes something characterized by tranquility and comfort. Accordingly, when the Qur'an refers to *al-arā'ik* (الْأَرَائِك), the term should not be understood merely as referring to a couch, throne, or physical seat; rather, it encompasses anything that provides a human being with complete tranquility and comfort (Muṣṭafawī, vol. 1: 79). Thus, in the verse “*‘alā al-arā'iki muttaki'ūn*” (“reclining upon couches”), the reference is not merely to reclining upon heavenly couches, but to a state characterized by complete comfort, security, and tranquility.

Ibn Fāris identifies two fundamental roots or semantic principles for 'R-K: first, the *arāk* tree, and second, residing or remaining in a particular place (Ibn Fāris, vol. 1: 84). Al-Zamakhsharī likewise connects the lexical item with meanings associated with the *arāk* tree and with residence or staying in a place (al-Zamakhsharī, vol. 1: 25). Al-Fayyūmī states that the expression *araka bi-l-makān* means “he stayed or resided in a place,” whereas *arakat al-ibil* means “the camels grazed on the *arāk* tree” (al-Fayyūmī: 5). Al-Jawharī defines *arīka* as an adorned couch located within a tent or chamber and understands 'R-K in the sense of residing or remaining in a place (al-Jawharī: 36). Al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī likewise defines *arīka* as a bridal chamber or enclosure situated upon a couch and suggests that the term may derive either from the *arāk* tree or from the concept of residence and permanence (al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī: 16).

Accordingly, most lexicographers have associated this root with concepts such as residence, permanence, or a couch and bridal chamber, whereas ʿAllāma Muṣṭafawī proposes a deeper and more fundamental meaning, namely

tranquility and stillness.

The exegetical interpretations of this lexical item are particularly noteworthy. In commenting on the verse “*muttaki’ina fihā ‘alā al-arā’ik*” (“reclining therein upon couches”) (Qur’an 76:13), ‘Allāma Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabā’ī identifies *arā’ik* as the plural of *arīka* and describes it as something upon which one reclines (Ṭabāṭabā’ī, vol. 20: 141). In his interpretation of “‘*alā al-arā’iki yanẓurūn*” (“upon couches, they will look on”) (Qur’an 83:23), he understands *arīka* as an adorned couch or seat (Ṭabāṭabā’ī, vol. 1: 264). Al-Shawkānī likewise interprets *arā’ik* as couches situated within bridal chambers or enclosed chambers (al-Shawkānī: 1228). Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, citing the views of several exegetes, identifies the term with cushions, couches, and heavenly bridal chambers (al-Ṭūsī, vol. 8: 468).

Most lexicographers and exegetes have therefore interpreted *arā’ik* in terms of a couch, bridal chamber, cushion, or place of reclining. ‘Allāma Muṣṭafawī, however, maintains that all these referents ultimately derive from a single foundational reality: tranquility and reassurance. From this perspective, *arā’ik* in the Qur’an does not refer exclusively to a physical object; rather, it signifies a state and environment of complete comfort, security, and heavenly tranquility.

3.2. The Root D-Y-N (دين)

The root D-Y-N (دين) and its various derivatives—including *al-dīn*, *dayn*, *yadīnūn*, *tadāyantum*, and *lamadīnūn*—occur 101 times in the Qur’an (‘Abd al-Bāqī, n.d.: 269). ‘Allāma Muṣṭafawī identifies the semantic core of this root as “submission and compliance with a specified program, law, or set of regulations.” In his view, concepts such as obedience, worship, subjection, religion, requital, reckoning, and humiliation are all instances or consequences of this semantic core rather than independent meanings of the root (Muṣṭafawī, 1368/1989, vol. 3: 310).

Ibn Fāris likewise identifies the fundamental principle of this root as “submission and subjection” and maintains that all its derivatives ultimately return to this meaning. From his perspective, *dīn* denotes obedience; *madīna* refers to a place in which the commands of rulers are implemented; and *yawm al-dīn* denotes the Day of Judgment, reckoning, or requital—all of which involve some form of submission or subjection (Ibn Fāris, 1404 AH, vol. 2: 319–320). Other lexicographers, however, have enumerated multiple meanings for this root. In addition to obedience, al-Khalīl ibn Aḥmad identifies *dayn* as a debt, *dīn* as requital, and *madīn* as a servant or one subjected to another (al-Khalīl, 1409 AH, vol. 8: 72–73). Al-Jawharī likewise attributes meanings such as debt, indebtedness, humiliation, servitude, and requital to this root (al-Jawharī, 1407 AH: 396–397). Al-Fayyūmī, in addition to its financial

usage, refers to meanings such as religious devotion, worship, and requital (al-Fayyūmī, 1414 AH: 78). Thus, whereas most lexicographers have treated debt, requital, obedience, and religion as distinct meanings of the root, ‘Allāma Muṣṭafawī reduces all these usages to the single semantic core of “submission and compliance with a specified system.”

This difference is also evident in the interpretation of Qur’anic verses. In the verse “*idhā tadāyantum bi-daynin*” (“when you contract a debt with one another”) (Qur’an 2:282), most exegetes interpret *tadāyantum* as referring to deferred transactions, loans, or financial dealings involving indebtedness (al-Ṭabarī, 1412 AH, vol. 2: 180; al-Ṭabrisī, 1372/1993, vol. 2: 177; al-Zamakhsharī, 1407 AH: 155; Ṭabāṭabā’ī, 1417 AH, vol. 2: 438; al-Shawkānī, 1414 AH: 192). Likewise, in the verse “*hādhā yawmu al-dīn*” (“This is the Day of Judgment”) (Qur’an 37:20), most exegetes understand *dīn* to mean requital and reckoning (al-Ṭabarī, 1412 AH, vol. 6: 299; al-Zamakhsharī, 1407 AH: 906; al-Zajjāj, 1408 AH, vol. 4: 301; al-Ṭabrisī, 1372/1993, vol. 8: 229; al-Shawkānī, 1414 AH: 1237). In the verse “*wa-lā yadīnūna dīna al-ḥaqq*” (“nor do they submit to the religion of truth”) (Qur’an 9:29), exegetes likewise understand *dīn* as obedience to and adherence to the true religion (al-Ṭabarī, 1412 AH, vol. 4: 98; al-Ṭabrisī, 1372/1993, vol. 5: 32). Similarly, in the verse “*a-innā la-madīnūn*” (“Are we then to be requited?”) (Qur’an 37:53), the expression has been interpreted as referring to those who are subjected to punishment or held to account (al-Ṭabrisī, 1372/1993, vol. 8: 234). Al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī also identifies obedience, requital, and revealed law (*sharī‘a*) among the meanings of *dīn* in its various usages, explaining that *sharī‘a* is called *dīn* because it is founded upon obedience and submission (al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, 1412 AH: 175).

In sum, although most lexicographers and exegetes have identified multiple meanings for the root D-Y-N, including debt, requital, obedience, and revealed law, ‘Allāma Muṣṭafawī regards all these usages as manifestations of a single semantic core. From his perspective, the essential reality of *dīn* consists in submission and compliance with a specific law and system. Accordingly, debt represents a form of obligation and compliance with financial conditions; religious devotion signifies submission to divine commandments; and requital constitutes the consequence or implication of a system of obligation and compliance. On this basis, in verses such as “*wa-lā yadīnūna dīna al-ḥaqq*”, the meaning is that they refuse to submit themselves to the true religion. Likewise, in “*wa-man aḥsanu dīnan mimman aslama wajhahu li-llāh*” (“Who is better in religion than one who submits himself entirely to God?”) (Qur’an 4:125), *dīn* denotes complete submission to the divine commandments and order. Thus, from Muṣṭafawī’s perspective, meanings such as debt, obedience, and requital do not constitute the primary meaning of the word; rather, they are

consequences and manifestations of the fundamental reality of submission and compliance.

3.3. The Root R-B-W (رَبَّو)

The root R-B-W (رَبَّو) occurs twenty times in the Qur'an in various forms, including *rabat*, *yarbū*, *rabbayānī*, *nurabbika*, *rābiyyan*, *rābiya*, *al-ribā*, and *rabwa* ('Abd al-Bāqī, n.d.: 300). 'Allāma Muṣṭafawī identifies the semantic core of this root as "swelling or protrusion accompanied by increase." In his view, *ribā* does not signify mere increase; rather, it involves an initial swelling, expansion, or protrusion within the thing itself, followed by increase and growth. Accordingly, in the verse "wa-tarā al-arḍa hāmidatan fa-idhā anzalnā 'alayhā al-mā'a ihtazzat wa-rabat wa-anbatat min kulli zawjin bahīj" ("You see the earth lifeless, but when We send down water upon it, it stirs, swells, and brings forth every delightful kind of plant") (Qur'an 22:5), *rabat* represents a stage between *ihtazzat* ("stirs") and *anbatat* ("brings forth vegetation"): the earth first swells and rises as a result of receiving rain, after which vegetation emerges from it (Muṣṭafawī, 1368/1989, vol. 4: 39).

Ibn Fāris identifies the fundamental principle of this root as "increase, growth, and elevation" and traces all its derivatives—including the growth of wealth, the elevation of the ground, shortness of breath, the raising of a child, and financial usury—back to this underlying principle (Ibn Fāris, 1404 AH, vol. 2: 483–484). Al-Khalīl ibn Aḥmad likewise defines *ribā* in terms of increase, growth, elevation of the ground, and increase in wealth, and considers *tarbiya* ("nurturing" or "upbringing") to derive from the same root (al-Khalīl, 1409 AH, vol. 8: 283). Al-Jawharī, in addition to the meaning of increase, defines *rābiya* as elevated ground, *rabw* as shortness of breath, and *rabā al-faras* as the swelling of a horse as a result of running or fear (al-Jawharī, 1407 AH: 415). Al-Fayyūmī likewise associates this root with increase, growth, nurturing, and elevation of a place (al-Fayyūmī, 1414 AH: 83). Thus, whereas most lexicographers identify increase and growth as the fundamental meaning of this root, 'Allāma Muṣṭafawī argues that increase is itself a consequence of the more fundamental meaning of swelling accompanied by increase.

This distinction is also reflected in the interpretation of Qur'anic verses. In the verses "wa-mā ātaytum min ribā li-yarbūwa fī amwālī al-nās fa-lā yarbū 'inda Allāh" ("Whatever you give as interest so that it may increase through the wealth of others does not increase with God") (Qur'an 30:39), "wa-akhdhihim al-ribā wa-qad nuhū 'anhu" ("and for taking usury, although they had been forbidden from it") (Qur'an 4:161), and "yamḥaqu Allāhu al-ribā wa-yurbī al-ṣadaqāt" ("God obliterates usury and causes charitable deeds to grow") (Qur'an 2:276), most exegetes understand *ribā* as an increase demanded over

and above the principal amount in financial transactions and loans—an unjustified increase that places economic pressure upon the debtor (Ṭabāṭabāʾī, 1417 AH, vol. 2: 415; al-Ṭūsī, 1365/1986, vol. 2: 339, 359; al-Rāzī, 1420 AH, vol. 7: 91; al-Ṭabarī, 1412 AH, vol. 2: 170–171).

In interpreting the verse “fa-idhā anzalnā ‘alayhā al-mā’a ihtazzat wa-rabat” (“when We send down water upon it, it stirs and swells”) (Qur’an 22:5), exegetes understand *rabat* as the increase, swelling, and protrusion of the earth as a result of rainfall (al-Ṭūsī, 1365/1986, vol. 7: 293; al-Rāzī, 1420 AH, vol. 23: 10). Al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī defines *rabwa* as elevated land, *ribā* as increase and superiority, and *yurbī al-ṣadaqāt* as referring to spiritual increase and divine blessing (al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, 1412 AH: 340). Likewise, in the verse “ka-mathali jannatin bi-rabwat” (“like a garden situated on elevated ground”) (Qur’an 2:265), exegetes interpret *rabwa* as elevated and fertile land (al-Ṭabarī, 1412 AH, vol. 2: 156; al-Ṭūsī, 1365/1986, vol. 2: 339; al-Zamakhsharī, 1407 AH: 150; al-Rāzī, 1420 AH, vol. 7: 58). In the verse “wa-qul rabbi irḥamhumā kamā rabbayānī ṣaghīran” (“and say: My Lord, have mercy upon them, just as they raised me when I was young”) (Qur’an 17:24), *tarbiya* denotes the growth and nurturing of a child (al-Rāzī, 1420 AH, vol. 20: 193). Similarly, in the verse “fa-iḥtamala al-saylu zabadan rābiyan” (“the torrent carried rising foam”) (Qur’an 13:17), exegetes interpret *rābiyan* as foam that has risen, swollen, and floated upon the surface of the water (al-Rāzī, 1420 AH, vol. 19: 37).

Overall, most lexicographers identify the fundamental meaning of *ribā* in terms of increase, growth, and elevation, while exegetes, taking the context of the verses into account, have interpreted its various occurrences as referring to increase, elevated ground, nurturing, and swelling. ‘Allāma Muṣṭafawī, however, reduces all these usages to a single semantic core and maintains that the essential reality of this root is “swelling accompanied by increase.” On this basis, in the verse “fa-iḥtamala al-saylu zabadan rābiyan,” the expression refers to the swelling and rising of the foam as a result of the forceful movement of the torrent. In “ka-mathali jannatin bi-rabwat,” *rabwa* denotes land that is naturally elevated and consequently suitable for the growth of vegetation. In “fa-idhā anzalnā ‘alayhā al-mā’a ihtazzat wa-rabat wa-anbatat,” *rabat* refers to the stage at which the earth, after receiving water, swells and becomes prepared for the emergence of vegetation. Muṣṭafawī thus distinguishes semantically between *rabat* and *anbatat*, regarding this distinction in the analysis of the verse’s semantic progression as one of the notable features of his semantic approach.

3.4. The Root Ṣ-N-‘ (صنع)

The root ṣ-n-‘ and its derivatives, including *ṣana’a*, *yaṣna’u*, *iṣna’*, *ṣun’an*,

ṣanʿa, *iṣṭānaʿtuka*, and *maṣānīʿ*, occur 20 times in the Qurʾan (ʿAbd al-Bāqī, n.d., p. 415). ʿAllāma Muṣṭafawī considers the semantic core of this root to be “performing an action with skill, awareness, and precision.” According to him, these three qualifications are present in all derivatives of the root, while the differences among the derivatives are determined by their morphological structures. Thus, *ṣunʿ* denotes performing an action skillfully, *taṣnīʿ* indicates greater intensity and precision in carrying out the action, and *muṣānaʿa* signifies the continuation of this characteristic (Muṣṭafawī, 1368, vol. 6, p. 346).

Ibn Fāris likewise identifies the basic meaning of this root as “doing something,” while associating it with skill and proficiency. In his view, words such as *ṣunnāʿ* (a skilled person), *ṣanīʿa* (a good deed), *faras ṣanīʿ* (a well-trained horse), *maṣānīʿ* (constructed water reservoirs and facilities), and even *muṣānaʿa* (conciliation or bribery) all derive from the same root (Ibn Fāris, 1404 AH, vol. 3, p. 313). Khalīl ibn Aḥmad likewise defines *ṣunʿ* in terms of doing, craftsmanship, skill, benevolence, water reservoirs, and constructed buildings (Khalīl, 1409 AH, vol. 1, pp. 304–305). Al-Jawharī mentions meanings such as doing, profession, skill, bribery, water reservoirs, and fortresses for this root (al-Jawharī, 1407 AH, pp. 658–659). Al-Fayyūmī also defines *ṣināʿa* as a profession, *ṣanīʿa* as benevolence, *maṣnaʿ* as a place for storing water, and *ṣunʿ* as skill in performing an action (al-Fayyūmī, 1414 AH, p. 133). Thus, although lexicographers have identified various applications for this root, a common feature among most of them is the performance of an action accompanied by skill. The difference is that ʿAllāma Muṣṭafawī additionally regards “knowledge” and “precision” as components of the essential meaning of the word.

Al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī likewise defines *ṣunʿ* as “performing an action well” and maintains that every *ṣunʿ* is an act, but not every act is *ṣunʿ*, because *ṣunʿ* is always accompanied by proficiency and skill. Accordingly, the term is used more particularly in relation to God and human beings rather than inanimate or involuntary beings. He also interprets *ṣanīʿa* as benevolence, *maṣānīʿ* as sturdy constructions, and *iṣṭināʿ* as an intensified form of correction and cultivation (al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, 1412 AH, p. 493).

Most exegetes, taking the context of the Qurʾanic verses into account, have interpreted *ṣunʿ* as action, construction, or doing. In the verses “وَاصْنَعِ الْفُلْكَ بِأَعْيُنِنَا” and “وَيَصْنَعِ الْفُلْكَ” (Hūd: 37–38), *ṣunʿ* refers to the construction of the Ark (al-Ṭabarī, 1412 AH, vol. 12, p. 263; al-Ṭabāṭabāʾī, 1417 AH, vol. 10, p. 215). Al-Ṭabrisī likewise considers *ṣunʿ* to mean creating or producing something intentionally and skillfully, and defines *ṣināʿa* as a profession or craft (al-Ṭabrisī, 1372, vol. 5, p. 208). In the verses “وَاصْطَنَعْتُكَ لِنَفْسِي” and “وَلِئُصْنَعَ عَلَيَّ عَيْنِي” (Tā Hā: 39 and 41), most exegetes interpret *lituṣnaʿa* as being nurtured and

receiving divine care, and *iṣṭanaʿtuka* as being selected, specially designated, and receiving God’s particular favor, referring to Moses (al-Ṭabāṭabāʾī, 1417 AH, vol. 14, pp. 150–152; al-Ṭabarī, 1412 AH, vol. 16, pp. 195–196; al-Ṭabrisī, 1372, vol. 7, pp. 17–18; al-Zamakhsharī, 1407 AH, vol. 3, p. 67). Likewise, in the verse “صُنِعَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي أَتَقَنَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ” (al-Naml: 88), al-Zamakhsharī interprets *ṣunʿ* as referring to the wise and orderly system of creation (al-Zamakhsharī, 1407 AH, p. 792). In the verse “وَعَلَّمْنَاهُ صَنْعَةَ لَبُوسٍ لَكُمْ” (al-Anbiyāʾ: 80), *ṣanʿa* refers to the craft of making armor (al-Ṭabarī, 1412 AH, vol. 17, p. 271). Furthermore, in the verse “لَبِئْسَ مَا كَانُوا يَصْنَعُونَ” (al-Māʾida: 63), al-Ṭabrisī points out that although *ṣunʿ* means action, unlike the more general term *fiʿl*, it often indicates an action accompanied by quality, skill, or benevolence (al-Ṭabrisī, 1372, vol. 3, p. 304).

In sum, Ibn Fāris identifies the basic meaning of this root as “doing something,” while lexicographers have mentioned various meanings for its derivatives, including profession, skill, benevolence, bribery, construction, and facilities. Exegetes, likewise, have interpreted it according to the context of the verses as construction, doing, nurturing, selecting, and craftsmanship. By contrast, ʿAllāma Muṣṭafawī reduces all these applications to the single semantic core of “performing an action on the basis of skill, knowledge, and precision.” Accordingly, in the verse “وَهُمْ يُحْسِبُونَ أَنَّهُمْ يُحْسِنُونَ صُنْعًا” (al-Kahf: 104), the intended meaning is not merely the performance of an act, but rather the performance of an action that its agent considers to be precise, skillful, and correct, even though it may not actually be so. Thus, in Muṣṭafawī’s view, *ṣunʿ* differs from *ʿamal*: not every action can be called *ṣunʿ*; rather, the term denotes an action accompanied by awareness, skill, purposiveness, and precision. This analysis distinguishes his position from those of many lexicographers and exegetes.

3.5. The Root *F-T-R* (فطر)

The root *f-t-r* and its derivatives, including *faṭara*, *faṭarakum*, *faṭaranā*, *faṭaranī*, *fāṭir*, *fiṭra*, *fuṭūr*, *infaṭarat*, *yatafaṭṭarna*, and *munfaṭir*, occur 20 times in the Qurʾan (ʿAbd al-Bāqī, n.d., p. 523). ʿAllāma Muṣṭafawī considers the semantic core of this root to be “bringing about a transformation that causes something to depart from its initial state.” In his view, all applications of this root—including creation, origination, splitting, opening, revealing, milking, kneading dough, and breaking the fast—indicate in some way the creation of a new state and the alteration of the previous condition. Accordingly, the two elements of “transformation” and “change relative to the previous state” are present in all derivatives of this root (Muṣṭafawī, 1368, vol. 9, p. 123).

Ibn Fāris identifies the basic meaning of this root as “opening and making manifest,” and traces applications such as breaking the fast, milking, and *fiṭra* back to the same meaning (Ibn Fāris, 1404 AH, vol. 4, p. 510). Khalīl ibn

Aḥmad also uses *faṭr* in the senses of creation, origination, splitting, breaking the fast, and the splitting apart of the heavens and the earth (Khalīl, 1409 AH, vol. 7, pp. 417–418). Al-Azharī considers the basic meaning of the root to be “splitting” and identifies meanings such as initiating, creating, splitting the heavens, rising, milking, *fiṭra*, and Islam as manifestations of this root (al-Azharī, 1421 AH, vol. 13, pp. 325–330). Al-Jawharī likewise interprets *faṭr* as splitting, initiating, creating, breaking the fast, and *fiṭra* (al-Jawharī, 1407 AH, pp. 892–893). Thus, most lexicographers identify “splitting” or “initiating” as the basic meaning of this root, whereas ‘Allāma Muṣṭafawī reduces all of these applications to a broader principle, namely “bringing about a transformation and causing something to depart from its initial state.”

This difference is also observable in the interpretation of Qur’anic verses. In the verse “الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ فَاطِرِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ” (Fāṭir: 1), al-Ṭabāṭabā’ī, citing al-Rāghib, understands *fāṭir* as a creator who brought existence into being without a prior model, as though He split open the veil of non-existence and brought the universe into being (al-Ṭabāṭabā’ī, 1417 AH, vol. 17, p. 6). Al-Ṭūsī and al-Zajjāj likewise interpret *fāṭir* as the creator and originator of the heavens and the earth (al-Ṭūsī, 1365, vol. 8, p. 483; al-Zajjāj, 1408 AH, vol. 2, p. 232). In the verse “فَأَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا فِطْرَةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا” (al-Rūm: 30), ‘Allāma al-Ṭabāṭabā’ī interprets *fiṭra* as the divinely created disposition and special constitution through which human beings are guided toward the true religion (al-Ṭabāṭabā’ī, 1417 AH, vol. 16, p. 183). Al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī likewise understands *fiṭra* as a mode of creation in which God has placed within human beings the capacity to recognize faith and truth (al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, 1412 AH, p. 640). In the verses “كَادَ السَّمَاوَاتُ يَنْفَطَرْنَ مِنْ فَوْقِهِنَّ” (al-Shūrā: 5) and “تَكَادُ السَّمَاوَاتُ يَنْفَطَرْنَ مِنْهُ” (Maryam: 90) most exegetes interpret *yatafaṭṭarna* as meaning that the heavens are splitting apart (al-Ṭabāṭabā’ī, 1417 AH, vol. 18, p. 10; al-Zamakhsharī, 1407 AH, p. 648). Likewise, in the verse “وَمَا لِيَ لَا أَعْبُدَ الَّذِي فَطَرَنِي” (Yā Sīn: 22), al-Ṭūsī interprets *faṭaranī* as “He created me,” while noting that the original meaning of the root is splitting (al-Ṭūsī, 1365, vol. 8, p. 88). Al-Zajjāj likewise sees no contradiction between the meanings of “creating” and “splitting,” maintaining that creation itself can be understood as a kind of splitting open and bringing forth from non-existence (al-Zajjāj, 1408 AH, vol. 2, p. 232).

In sum, most lexicographers and exegetes have interpreted *faṭr* in terms of splitting, initiating, creating, and originating, while Ibn Fāris identifies its basic meaning as “opening and making manifest.” By contrast, ‘Allāma Muṣṭafawī analyzes all these applications under the single semantic principle of “bringing about a transformation and disrupting the initial state.” Accordingly, in the verse “تَكَادُ السَّمَاوَاتُ يَنْفَطَرْنَ مِنْهُ”, the intended meaning is not merely the splitting apart of the heavens, but rather a transformation that disrupts their previous order.

Likewise, in the verse “إِنْ أَجْرِيَ إِلَّا عَلَى الَّذِي فَطَرَنِي” (Hūd: 51), *faṭaranī* does not merely mean “created me,” but refers to a fundamental transformation through which the human being was brought from non-existence or an initial state into existence. Thus, Muṣṭafawī maintains that the concept of transformation constitutes the connecting element among all applications of this root in the Qur’an, and that many of the meanings proposed by lexicographers and exegetes are manifestations and consequences of this semantic core.

3.6. The Root Z-H-Q (زَهَقَ)

The root z-h-q and its derivatives, including *zahaqa*, *tazhaqa*, *zāhiq*, and *zahūqan*, occur five times in the Qur’an (‘Abd al-Bāqī, n.d., p. 543). ‘Allāma Muṣṭafawī considers the semantic core of this root to be “disappearing and departing compulsorily and involuntarily.” In his view, the fundamental difference between *zahq* and *dhahāb* lies precisely in this compulsory and unavoidable character. Accordingly, in the verse “وَقُلْ جَاءَ الْحَقُّ وَزَهَقَ الْبَاطِلُ إِنَّ الْبَاطِلَ كَانَ زَهُوقًا” (al-Isrā’: 81), the destruction of falsehood is the inevitable consequence of the emergence of truth, and falsehood is removed compulsorily and against its own will (Muṣṭafawī, 1368, vol. 4, p. 102).

Ibn Fāris identifies the basic meaning of this root as “moving forward, passing beyond, and going farther,” and traces applications such as the departure of the soul, the destruction of falsehood, a horse overtaking another, an arrow passing beyond its target, the depth of a well, and even becoming fat to the same root (Ibn Fāris, 1404 AH, vol. 3, p. 67). Lexicographers have likewise identified various meanings for this root. Al-Azharī defines *zahq* as the departure of the soul, destruction, nullification, overtaking, and perishing (al-Azharī, 1421 AH, vol. 6, pp. 274–276). Al-Jawharī lists the meanings of the departure of the spirit, destruction, an arrow passing beyond its target, a vessel becoming full, and the depth of a well (al-Jawharī, 1407 AH, p. 968). Al-Fayyūmī also defines *zahq* in terms of the departure of the soul, destruction, disappearance, passing beyond a target, and overtaking (al-Fayyūmī, 1414 AH, p. 176). Thus, most lexicographers associate this root with meanings such as departure, destruction, nullification, annihilation, and passing beyond, whereas ‘Allāma Muṣṭafawī reduces all these applications to the single principle of “compulsory and involuntary departure.”

This difference is also evident in the interpretation of the Qur’anic verses. In the verse “إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُعَذِّبَهُمْ بِهَا فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَتَزْهَقَ أَنْفُسُهُمْ وَهُمْ كَافِرُونَ” (al-Tawba: 55), al-Zajjāj interprets *tazhaqa anfusuhum* as meaning that their souls depart amid extreme hardship and suffering (al-Zajjāj, 1408 AH, vol. 2, p. 469). Al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī likewise interprets *zahq al-nafs* as the departure and loss of the soul (al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, 1412 AH, p. 390).

In the verse “وَقُلْ جَاءَ الْحَقُّ وَزَهَقَ الْبَاطِلُ” (al-Isrā’: 81), al-Ṭabrisī interprets *zahūq* as destruction and nullification, maintaining that just as the soul departs from the body, falsehood likewise disappears (al-Ṭabrisī, 1372, vol. 6, p. 660). Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī also interprets *zahāqa al-bāṭil* as the destruction and disappearance of falsehood (al-Rāzī, 1420 AH, vol. 21, p. 37). Likewise, in the verse “بَلْ نَقْذِفُ بِالْحَقِّ عَلَى الْبَاطِلِ فَيَدْمَغُهُ فَإِذَا هُوَ زَاهِقٌ” (al-Anbiyā’: 18), ‘Allāma al-Ṭabāṭabā’ī interprets *zāhiq* as destroyed and perished, considering this one of the common applications of the root in Arabic (al-Ṭabāṭabā’ī, 1417 AH, vol. 14, p. 264).

In sum, Ibn Fāris identifies the basic meaning of this root as “passing and going beyond,” while lexicographers have mentioned meanings such as the departure of the soul, destruction, nullification, annihilation, passing beyond a target, and overtaking. Exegetes, according to the context of the verses, have interpreted it in terms of destruction, disappearance, and the departure of the soul. By contrast, ‘Allāma Muṣṭafawī reduces all these applications to the single semantic core of “compulsory and involuntary departure.” Accordingly, in the verse “وَتَزَهَقَ أَنْفُسُهُمْ”, the intended meaning is not merely death, but rather the inevitable and involuntary loss of life. Likewise, in “وَزَهَقَ الْبَاطِلُ”, falsehood does not leave by its own choice; rather, as a consequence of the emergence of truth, it is inevitably removed from the scene of existence. Therefore, from Muṣṭafawī’s perspective, the qualification of “compulsoriness” constitutes the principal and distinctive semantic element of this root in all its Qur’anic applications.

3.7. The Root *Th-L-L* (ثُلَّةٌ)

The term *thulla* occurs three times in the Qur’an, all of them in Sūrat al-Wāqī’a (‘Abd al-Bāqī, n.d., p. 160). ‘Allāma Muṣṭafawī maintains that the semantic core of this term consists in the disappearance of individual characteristics and the relinquishment of personal distinctions. In his view, when the Qur’an speaks of “ثُلَّةٌ مِنَ الْأَوَّلِينَ”, it does not merely refer to a group or community; rather, it denotes a group whose individual attachments and worldly distinctions have been set aside and whose members have gathered around a common path (Muṣṭafawī, vol. 2, p. 28).

Ibn Fāris identifies two distinct semantic principles for this term: the first is “gathering and coming together,” and the second is “falling, destruction, and annihilation” (Ibn Fāris, vol. 1, pp. 368–369). Al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī defines *thulla* as a group or community and traces this usage to the concept of gathering (al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, p. 81). Al-Jawharī likewise defines it as a group of people or a flock of sheep (al-Jawharī, pp. 150–151). Khalīl ibn Aḥmad also defines *thulla* as a large group of people (Khalīl, vol. 8, p. 216).

Most exegetes have interpreted the term *thulla* in the verses of Sūrat al-Wāqī'a as meaning "group" or "community." Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, in interpreting the verse "ثُلَّةٌ مِنَ الْأَوَّلِينَ وَثُلَّةٌ مِنَ الْآخِرِينَ", states that it refers to a group of earlier generations and a group of later generations, and that the term *thulla* denotes a portion of a larger collective (al-Ṭūsī, vol. 2, p. 498). 'Allāma al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī likewise interprets *thulla* as meaning "a large group" (al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī, vol. 19, p. 129). The same meaning is found in the commentaries of al-Ṭabarī and al-Ṭabrisī (al-Ṭabarī, vol. 6, p. 204; al-Ṭabrisī, vol. 8, p. 281).

Whereas most lexicographers and exegetes understand *thulla* simply as a group or community, 'Allāma Muṣṭafawī maintains that the term fundamentally denotes transcending individuality and relinquishing personal distinctions. From his perspective, the application of *thulla* to the believers in the Qur'an is due to the fact that they have set aside individual attachments and gathered around a shared truth. This interpretation reveals a fundamental difference between Muṣṭafawī's theory and the dominant views of lexicographers and exegetes.

3.8. The Root *H-B-R* (حبر)

The root *h-b-r* and its derivatives occur six times in the Qur'an, including *yuhbarūn*, *al-aḥbār*, and *aḥbāruhum* ('Abd al-Bāqī, n.d., p. 193). 'Allāma Muṣṭafawī maintains that the semantic core of the root *h-b-r* consists of blessing, prosperity, and expansiveness in life. In his view, meanings such as joy, happiness, honor, beauty, adornment, and magnificence are all consequences and implications of enjoying blessings and a life of comfort (Muṣṭafawī, vol. 2, p. 182). Accordingly, whenever this root occurs in the Qur'an, attention should first be given to this semantic core, while the other concepts should be understood as its consequences and manifestations.

Ibn Fāris maintains that the root *h-b-r* has a single semantic principle, namely "a good effect, beauty, and magnificence." From this principle, he derives other meanings such as writing ink, beauty, adornment, and embellishment (Ibn Fāris, vol. 2, p. 127). Al-Fayyūmī interprets *hibr* as writing ink, a religious scholar, and also a color or mark appearing on the teeth (al-Fayyūmī, p. 46). Al-Jawharī likewise defines *hibr* in terms of ink, effect, beauty, magnificence, and signs of blessing, and in interpreting the verse "فَهُمْ فِي رَوْضَةٍ يُحْبَرُونَ", he understands it as enjoying blessings, honor, and happiness (al-Jawharī, p. 219). Al-Zamakhsharī also associates the root *h-b-r* with concepts such as beauty, goodness, effect, adornment, and joy, and regarding *yuhbarūn*, he states that it means "they become joyful and delighted" (al-Zamakhsharī, vol. 1, p. 164). Thus, most lexicographers have sought the semantic core of this root in beauty, a good effect, adornment, or joy, whereas 'Allāma Muṣṭafawī regards all these meanings as consequences and implications of "blessing and prosperity."

The views of some exegetes are also noteworthy in this regard. ‘Allāma al-Ṭabāṭabā’ī and Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, in interpreting the verse “اتَّخَذُوا أَحِبَّاءَهُمْ” (al-Tawba: 31), identify *aḥbār* as the plural of *ḥabr* and interpret it as the scholars and religious learned men of the Jews (al-Ṭabāṭabā’ī, vol. 9, p. 252; al-Rāzī, vol. 12, p. 42). Likewise, in interpreting the verse “فَهُمْ فِي رُوضَةٍ يُحْبَرُونَ” (al-Rūm: 15), ‘Allāma al-Ṭabāṭabā’ī interprets *yuhbarūn* as joy and happiness whose manifestations of blessing become visible on the face and in the being of the individual (al-Ṭabāṭabā’ī, vol. 16, p. 165).

Other exegetes have also interpreted this term as meaning “becoming joyful and delighted” (al-Zamakhsharī, p. 827; al-Rāzī, vol. 25, p. 104; al-Shawkānī, p. 1130). Al-Ṭabrisī interprets *yuhbarūn* as enjoying blessings, joy, and divine honor (al-Ṭabrisī, vol. 8, p. 40). Al-Zajjāj maintains that *ḥibra* in Arabic refers to any form of good blessing and that *taḥbīr* therefore means making something beautiful and adorning it (al-Zajjāj, vol. 4, p. 180).

There is a fundamental difference between the position of ‘Allāma Muṣṭafawī and that of most lexicographers and exegetes. Lexicographers have generally emphasized concepts such as beauty, adornment, a good effect, knowledge, joy, and happiness, whereas Muṣṭafawī regards all these meanings as consequences and implications of a single semantic core, namely “blessing and prosperity in life.” Accordingly, *aḥbār*, from his perspective, does not merely mean scholars; rather, it refers to individuals who occupy a particular social position and enjoy special privileges and resources. Likewise, *yuhbarūn* denotes a life filled with blessing and comfort, of which joy and happiness are natural consequences.

3.9. The Root *Dh-R-* (ذ ر ء)

The root *dh-r-* and its derivatives occur six times in the Qur’an, including *dhara’a*, *dhara’nā*, *yadhra’ukum*, and *dhara’akum* (‘Abd al-Bāqī, n.d., p. 270). ‘Allāma Muṣṭafawī maintains that the semantic core of this root consists of expansion, dispersion, and dissemination following creation. In his view, *dhur* represents a stage subsequent to *khalq* and *takwīn*: once a being has been created, it is subsequently dispersed and extended throughout the realm of existence (Muṣṭafawī, vol. 3, p. 327). For example, in the verse “وَجَعَلُوا لِلَّهِ مِمَّا ذَرَأَ مِنَ الْحَرْثِ وَالْأَنْعَامِ نَصِيبًا” (al-An‘ām: 141), *dhara’a* refers to that which God has spread and extended throughout the realm of existence.

Ibn Fāris identifies two semantic principles for this root: the first is whiteness and a color tending toward white, and the second is sowing seeds, dispersing, and creating (Ibn Fāris, vol. 2, p. 353). Al-Fayyūmī interprets *dhara’a* *Allāhu al-khalq* as “God created the creatures” (al-Fayyūmī, p. 79). Al-Jawharī likewise defines *dhara’a* as creating and considers *dhurriyya* to derive from the same root (al-Jawharī, p. 403). Khalīl ibn Aḥmad also interprets the root in terms

of creating and bringing creatures into existence (Khalīl, vol. 8, p. 193). Al-Zamakhsharī, in addition to the meaning of creation, points to the concepts of sowing and dispersal (al-Zamakhsharī, p. 310).

Most exegetes have interpreted *dhur*’ in the Qur’anic verses as meaning “creating” and “bringing into existence.” In the verse “وَجَعَلُوا لِلَّهِ مِمَّا ذَرَأَ مِنَ الْحَرْثِ” (al-An’ām: 136), al-Ṭabarī, Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, al-Ṭabāṭabā’ī, and al-Shawkānī interpret *dhara*’a as creating and bringing into existence (al-Ṭabarī, vol. 3, p. 355; vol. 4, p. 506; al-Ṭūsī, vol. 5, p. 36; al-Ṭabāṭabā’ī, vol. 8, p. 339; al-Shawkānī, p. 513). In the verse “يَذْرُؤُكُمْ فِيهِ” (al-Shūrā: 11), al-Zamakhsharī interprets *yadhra*’ukum as “He multiplies and disperses you” (al-Zamakhsharī, p. 975). ‘Allāma al-Ṭabāṭabā’ī likewise understands it as the multiplication and expansion of the human race (al-Ṭabāṭabā’ī, vol. 18, p. 26).

Most lexicographers and exegetes have regarded *dhur*’ as synonymous with *khalq* (creation), but ‘Allāma Muṣṭafawī distinguishes between the two. In his view, *khalq* concerns the act of bringing something into existence, whereas *dhur*’ refers to a subsequent stage involving the expansion, dissemination, and extension of created beings throughout the world. Accordingly, in verses such as “وَهُوَ الَّذِي ذَرَأَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ”, its more precise meaning is “He dispersed and spread you throughout the earth,” rather than merely “He created you.”

3.10. The Root S-H-R (سهر)

This root occurs only once in the Qur’an, in verses 13 and 14 of Sūrat al-Nāzi’āt: “فَإِذَا هُمْ بِالسَّاهِرَةِ”. ‘Allāma Muṣṭafawī considers the semantic core of the root *s-h-r* to be the absence of sleep and heedlessness, accompanied by awareness and attentiveness. In his view, not every state of wakefulness constitutes *sahar*; rather, *sahar* refers to a state in which a person is awake, conscious, and attentive (Muṣṭafawī, vol. 5, p. 297). Accordingly, he understands *al-sāhira* as a realm in which there is no sleep, heedlessness, or material veil; that is, a postmortem realm in which realities become manifest and beings exist in a state of complete awareness and presence.

Ibn Fāris maintains that most applications of this root relate to the concept of sleeplessness and the disappearance of sleep. He also considers *al-sāhira* to be a designation for the earth, because living beings on it remain continuously active and in motion (Ibn Fāris, vol. 3, p. 109). Al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī understands *al-sāhira* sometimes as the surface of the earth and sometimes as the land of the Resurrection (al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, p. 430). Al-Jawharī defines *sahar* as sleeplessness and *al-sāhira* as the surface of the earth (al-Jawharī, p. 567). Al-Fayyūmī likewise interprets *sahar* as the absence of sleep throughout all or part of the night (al-Fayyūmī, p. 111). In *Tahdhīb al-Lughā*, *al-sāhira* is also interpreted as the surface of the earth and the place where living beings reside

(*Tahdhīb al-Lughā*, vol. 6, pp. 120–121).

Most exegetes, in interpreting the verse “فَإِذَا هُمْ بِالسَّاهِرَةِ”, have understood *al-sāhira* to mean “the surface of the earth.” Al-Shawkānī states that after being resurrected, the dead will appear upon the earth, and that *al-sāhira* refers to the visible surface of the earth (al-Shawkānī, p. 1581). Al-Zajjāj, al-Qurṭubī, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, and al-Ṭabāṭabāʾī likewise accept this interpretation and maintain that the term refers to the surface of the earth or the land of the Resurrection (al-Zajjāj, vol. 5, p. 279; al-Qurṭubī, vol. 22, p. 51; al-Rāzī, vol. 31, p. 38; al-Ṭabāṭabāʾī, vol. 20, p. 203).

Most lexicographers and exegetes understand *al-sāhira* as the earth or the realm of the Resurrection; however, ‘Allāma Muṣṭafawī, by returning to the root of the word, interprets it as a realm in which there is neither sleep nor heedlessness nor any material veil. According to him, the use of *al-sāhira* in the verse of Sūrat al-Nāzi‘āt refers to the human condition after the Resurrection, a state in which all realities become manifest and there is no longer any possibility of heedlessness. Thus, compared with the prevailing interpretation, his reading offers a deeper interpretation grounded in the semantic core of the word.

Conclusion

The findings of this study demonstrate that attention to the semantic core of words has a significant impact on the reinterpretation and understanding of the Qur’anic vocabulary. An examination of selected Qur’anic terms and a comparison of the views of ‘Allāmah Muṣṭafawī with those of lexicographers and exegetes revealed that placing the semantic core at the center of analysis, in many cases, leads to new interpretations and semantic extensions that have received relatively little attention in earlier lexicographical and exegetical works. Accordingly, it can be argued that focusing on the semantic core of a word, in addition to establishing coherence among its various usages, provides an opportunity to uncover new layers of meaning that can contribute to the interpretation of Qur’anic verses and to a more precise understanding of Qur’anic concepts.

The findings also indicate that, in *al-Taḥqīq fī Kalimāt al-Qur’ān al-Karīm*, ‘Allāmah Muṣṭafawī, by relying on a single semantic core for each lexical root, arrives in numerous instances at analyses that differ from the prevailing views of lexicographers and exegetes and that open up new semantic horizons for Qur’anic studies. This suggests that if the semantic core is regarded as a central principle in lexical and exegetical research, exegetes may, in many cases, encounter new meanings, connotations, and semantic extensions that have received limited attention in conventional Qur’anic commentaries. In fact, what can be observed in the methodological approach of ‘Allāmah Muṣṭafawī and in

al-Taḥqīq is a systematic attention to the latent potential embedded in the semantic core of Qur'anic vocabulary. The examples examined in the present study demonstrate that this potential has been underutilized in many exegetical works and that it can provide a basis for more precise readings of Qur'anic vocabulary and verses.

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