



## The Argumentative Interpretation in Imami Theological Discourse: Monotheism and Resurrection as a Case Study

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### Abstract

The significance of this research lies in highlighting the argumentative activities of Imami theologians in addressing their opponents from the dissenting groups, such as the Khawarij and the people of falsehood who emerged during the Umayyad era, with the conflict continuing to this day. The research problem lies in the following question: How did the argumentative communicative discourse of Imami theologians develop in response to their opponents from deviant sects and the people of falsehood? What were the interpretation strategies employed by Imami theologians in interpreting the fundamental texts of religion? The research was divided into an introduction, a preliminary section, a list of the sources and references, and two main sections, each addressing one of the research models.

**Keywords** – Argumentative, Dissenting, Response, Opponents, divided

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### Introduction:

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. Praise be to Allah, the Lord of all the worlds, and peace and blessings be upon the best of creation, Muhammad, the leader of the messengers and the Seal of the Prophets, and upon his pure and righteous family. The importance of this research lies in shedding light on the argumentative activities of the Imami theologians in their confrontation with their opponents from the skeptics, such as the Khawarij and the people of falsehood who emerged during the Umayyad period amidst the conflict between the just caliph Ali ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him) and Muawiya ibn Abi Sufyan. This intellectual and ideological dispute has continued to this day, creating a discourse that seems to reflect an eternal struggle between good and evil.

The research problem stems from the following question: How did the communicative and argumentative discourse of the Imami theologians develop in their confrontation with their opponents from deviant sects and false ideologies? What are the interpretative strategies employed by the Imami theologians in interpreting the texts of religion fundamentals?

The purpose of the research is to demonstrate that the interpretative methodology of the Imami theologians concerning the texts of the fundamentals of religion is an extension of the interpretations of the infallible Ahl Al-Bayt (the family of Abraham) (peace be upon them), which in turn is an extension of the interpretations of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). This methodology in the doctrine of monotheism is based on justice, which is linked to the Hereafter for the establishment of divine justice and the elimination of oppression. Hence, justice in monotheism and unity in justice are fundamental attributes of

perfection, majesty, and glory. To comprehend and teach these attributes to the people, a prophetic guidance that is infallible in argumentative and interpretative conduct is necessary, and therefore, the prophetic guidance must continue through infallible Imamate. The nature of the research necessitates that it be divided into a preface, followed by an introduction, a list of sources and references, and then a preliminary section. The preliminary section establishes the concept of interpretation and argumentative interpretation, including its conditions and outcomes. The main sections of the research are as follows:

1. First Section: Argumentative Interpretation in the Principle of Monotheism.
2. Second Section: Argumentative Interpretation in the Principle of the Hereafter.

### **Preliminary Section: The Concept of Interpretation and Argumentative Interpretation, Including Its Conditions and Outcomes:**

#### **Firstly: The Concept of Interpretation and Its Relation to Argumentation:**

1. The Concept of Interpretation: In theological terms, interpretation is defined as "the interpretation of sacred texts symbolically or figuratively revealing their hidden meanings." (Al-Sulaybi, 234/1) For example, the verse ( يُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ ) He brings forth the living from the dead" (Surah Al-An'am: 95). Al-Sharif al-Jurjani commented: "If this is understood as bringing a bird out of an egg, it is an explanation; if it is understood as bringing a believer out of a disbeliever, or a scholar out of an ignorant person, it is an interpretation." (Al-Jurjani, 40)

Ibn Rushd clarified the distinction between texts that require explanation and those that require interpretation. The former pertains to texts with a direct meaning, recognizable by their conformity to sensory or mental images or to logical proof, which is a form of reasoning that derives the unknown from the known. For example, in the statement: "All humans are mortal, and you are a human; therefore, you are mortal," both parts indicate the literal meaning of the terms or the statement.

On the other hand, texts with meanings that deviate from the direct sensory or mental image and do not align with logical proof require interpretation. Ibn Rushd defines interpretation as "the process of shifting the meaning of a term from its literal sense to a figurative sense, without disrupting the customary linguistic practices of the Arabs, such as naming something by its resemblance, subsequent association, or other similar categories listed in the definitions of various types of speech." (Ibn Rushd, 35)

This means that interpretation is linked to the activity of the recipient aimed at understanding texts. In other words, it is a type of specific reading of the text that differs from its apparent meaning. It is a term used in the Quranic context, as well as in the fields of Quranic exegesis, Hadith, and subsequently in the principles of jurisprudence, theology, philosophy, mysticism, and argumentation.

#### **The Relationship Between Interpretation and Argumentation:**

Argumentation is essentially a form of metaphorical dialogue because it involves the underlying intentions of the speaker, who aims to convince, refute, or mislead the listener, among other objectives. This means that the recipient does not remain passive; they may be persuaded, rejected, or engaged in debate, but importantly, they consider the consequences. Consequently, argumentation requires interpretation because it is metaphorical. Dr. Taha Abdel Rahman stated: "There is no speech without discourse, no discourse without argumentation, and no argumentation without metaphor." (Abdulrahman, 213)

Furthermore, human society is heterogeneous, which means it is divided according to the perceptions of different groups. Dr. Jamil Saliba noted: "If the Sharia is, as some say, composed of both apparent and hidden aspects due to the differing natural dispositions and varying inclinations of people in belief, it is necessary to extract the text from its apparent meaning to its hidden meaning through interpretation... The hidden meaning consists of the concealed meanings that are only revealed to those with intellectual insight." (Al-Sulaybi, 234)

Argumentative interpretation is closely related to the studies of Islamic theology due to the intense intellectual conflicts between Islamic sects concerning the fundamentals of faith. Each of these sects sought to find evidence and arguments from the Quran, considered the primary legislative source for these Islamic groups. The search for evidence and arguments was characterized by being both interpretive and argumentative because understanding and interpretation often compete among the parties concerning the same text. (Al-Amen, 87)

All of this is attributed to the use of thought in language, as it is a communicative tool and an interactive means that helps the recipient understand the speaker's intentions and objectives, which the speaker strives to conceal and which reveal the facets of their thinking. Thought requires argumentation in its persuasive and influential communication with the other party. Additionally, thought needs to interpret the recipient's discourse for understanding and reading in order to grasp the objectives of the discourse and its author. The need for argumentation and interpretation is supported by natural language and its inherent capabilities. (Kursho, 31)

### **Secondly: The Subjectivity and Objectivity of Argumentative Interpretation:**

Interpretation by its nature is subjective, but it becomes objective when the interpreter follows a systematic methodology. This section of the research explores when interpretation is subjective and when it is objective, as follows:

1. **The Interpreter's Inclination Toward Presuppositions:** This occurs when texts carry probabilistic meanings. In every analytical process, interpretation must end by confirming these presuppositions. (Sarhan, 25) The meanings of texts always tend to align with the presuppositions, which represent the foundational beliefs of the interpreter, as they form the basis of their doctrinal knowledge. Any interpretation that contradicts this doctrinal knowledge is reinterpreted to fit the existing beliefs. Therefore, differences in interpretation arise from variations in these presuppositions, whether they originate from rational thought or from the influence of knowledge acquired from others.
2. **The Necessity of Evidence for the Hidden Interpretive Meaning:** Anyone attempting to analyze argumentative discourse must not deviate from the meanings permitted by the text. "The translation of the text you provided is: "Interpretation is not a search for meanings whose secrets are known only to a brilliant interpreter; rather, it is governed by the realms that the text generates." (Bengrad, 26) Thus, every interpretation is constrained by the meanings that the text allows, whether implicit or probable. Interpretation involves "shifting the term from its original position to what requires evidence; otherwise, the apparent meaning of the term would not be left behind." (Ibn Manzur, 33/11)

We observe that the early scholars set boundaries for interpretation by restricting it to evidence to prevent it from straying from its goal of elucidating meaning. (Hemessi, 134) Furthermore, evidence serves as a criterion for the validity or invalidity of an interpretation. Thus, interpretive practice relies on "intentional argumentative plans to convince the interpreting self of the logical progression of this practice based on the text itself." (Washan, 2678) According to Perelman, what is "important for reasoning in argumentation is the choice between premises, including propositions, presuppositions, ideas, beliefs, and opinions, to the extent that they gain presence within the awareness of the audience." The same applies to argumentative interpretation based on reasoning. (Perelman, 1)

When choosing presuppositions as premises in interpreting a discourse, these should be derived from within the discourse itself, according to the conditions of its production. This means that the hypotheses should be among the implications provided by the discourse in light of the context of its utterance, to clarify the relationship between the hypothesis and the structure of the discourse. For instance, if we say, "I saw a lion in the university," the intended meaning is linked to the structure of the statement. It cannot be interpreted apart from the context of the utterance or situational context, as the statement is tied to its time and place.

Since a text consists of a set of signs, each sign must be capable of carrying a meaning. An interpreter should not attribute more meanings to a sign than it can bear. However, the meaning carried by a sign can

change with its contexts and situations. For example, the word "bahr" 'sea" can be included in an indefinite number of contexts and situations, but when it is specified to a particular context or situation, it contracts to a specific meaning. (Bengrad, 44)

3. Linking the Linguistic Component with the Situational Component: This is what (Dik) achieved in discourse analysis by integrating or linking two components. The first component is linguistic or grammatical, which restricts the potential linguistic uses of a statement according to what the language requires and constrains. The second component is the rhetorical or pragmatic component, which is realized through the use of a statement in a particular context, i.e., the pragmatic circumstances accompanying the statement, known as the context of utterance. These circumstances are guidelines or rules of discourse that embed the act of speaking into the spoken content and provide insight into it. (Dik 23, Al-Radi 217, and Al-Twansi, 178-167 )

When we begin studying any Quranic discourse, it is essential to examine all the verses related to a specific topic. These verses serve as guidelines, and these guidelines "are signs presented to those who seek to interpret a specific utterance, directing them to explore the context of the discourse for information that aids in reconstructing the intended meaning of the speaker." (Bengrad, 40)

#### **4. Acknowledging Diversity:**

The diversity of human languages and the variations among people are considered signs, natural and wondrous phenomena akin to the creation of the heavens and the earth. This is affirmed by Allah in the verse: *وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ خَلْقُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافُ أَلْسِنَتِكُمْ وَأَلْوَانِكُمْ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّلْعَالَمِينَ* "And among His Signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the difference of your languages and colours. Verily, in that are indeed signs for men of sound knowledge. " (Surah Ar-Rum: 22).

Similarly, the differences in interpreting discourses that reflect these natural and imaginative events conveyed by language are rooted in human nature, which is characterized by debate realized through communication. Thus, Dik describes the use of language by stating: "It may seem natural to think that the conflict among people (through language and debate)... is primarily a (discourse event). It should not be assumed that the utterance in itself, apart from its use, has any argumentative function or, more broadly, any specific intersubjective function. Only the act of uttering the statement and choosing it for a particular context can grant it such a value." (Dik, 49)

Allah, the Almighty, has depicted these events through words. Our study of the precise choice of words in the Quran, whether expressed explicitly or implicitly, shows that substituting one word for another would disrupt the meaning. Therefore, anyone interpreting Quranic discourse must consider the meaning of each word and its linguistic and situational context. This is what the proponents of argumentative theories emphasize. Dik builds his theory on the duality of the utterance and its context. He states: "It always concerns the relevance of the appearance of the utterance [the statement] to the meaning of this utterance [the statement]." (Dik, 15). He also stated an important idea: "The statement is imprinted in the utterance." The utterance hints at the context, indicating that the statements produced during our linguistic activity adapt to the nature of the linguistic act from which these utterances arise. (Al-Radi, 217)

Every interpretation represents the reader's understanding of the text, and the interpreter interprets what they grasp from the text. (Abbasi and Kersho, 100). Thus, multiple readings of the text exist. The researcher supports the idea of multiple readings, especially for religious texts with probabilistic meanings. Why is this the case? The answer is that the text creator intentionally built their discourse with probabilistic elements, intending for multiple interpretations so that the discourse remains relevant across all times. This endows it with vitality, as every living thing has the ability to adapt to the evolution of cognitive and intellectual life. This makes the Quran applicable to all times, distinguishing it from the miracles of previous prophets, which were temporal. We do not fault earlier readers of religious discourse because their interpretations align with the intellectual and cognitive context of the time and place in which the discourse was read, influenced by the intellectual currents of their era.

However, if these interpretations were left without boundaries, erroneous or corrupt interpretations might arise. Hence, theorists of interpretation, both ancient and modern, have sought to establish foundations for interpretation. These foundations are derived from within the text because the intended meaning is carried by the text, whether explicit or implicit. The words chosen by the creator in constructing their discourse convey meanings that cannot be carried by other words, especially in the Quranic discourse. Thus, precise selection is crucial in analyzing Quranic texts.

### Section One: Rhetorical Interpretation in the Origin of Monotheism

Monotheism is considered the primary foundation of religion. Al-Sharif al-Jurjani defined it as: "Monotheism consists of three things: knowing Allah the Almighty through His Lordship, acknowledging His Oneness, and negating any partners from Him altogether." Scholars of theology have explored the Oneness of Allah, His purity from corporeality and representation, and the negation of any attributes that superficially suggest inconsistency with His divine attributes, such as hand, face, vision, incarnation, and others. (Al-Jurjani, 69). They have also examined both essential and active attributes, debating whether they are eternal or created. This debate has led to disputes based on argumentation and dialectic among theologians, each seeking evidence and arguments from the Quran to support their doctrinal views. Thus, rhetorical interpretation has been pivotal in affirming and refuting these perspectives. (Al-Halabi, 15)

We have chosen to examine the contentious issue of the verse concerning the vision of Allah Almighty. There has been a divergence among Islamic theological schools regarding the interpretation of verses that suggest the concept of seeing Allah. This has been a significant point of contention, with some considering these verses as textual evidence supporting the view that Allah can be seen. The Ash'ari and corporealist schools argued for the possibility of seeing Allah, while the Mu'tazila and Imami schools rejected this possibility, deeming it impossible. Consequently, the differing goals reflect these doctrinal disputes. The Ash'aris endeavored to substantiate their belief through Quranic texts, while the Mu'tazila and Imami sought to refute this belief through interpretation.

The Imami theologians have included in their writings the arguments of those who affirm the vision of Allah, with the aim of refuting these proofs through interpretation. (Al-Hilli, 69). Among the most significant of these arguments are the Quranic verses that appear to support the concept of looking at Allah, such as the verse: "جُودَ يَوْمَئِذٍ نَّاصِرَةٌ\* إِلَىٰ رَبِّهَا نَاظِرَةٌ". Some faces that Day shall be Nâdirah (shining and radiant). Looking at their Lord (Allâh). (Surah Al-Qiyama: 22-23).

The Ash'ari interpretation of the word "nadara' 'looking" is understood to mean 'looking'. However, this interpretation is not without other possible meanings, which are then addressed and refuted. (Al-Ashari, 276). These alternative meanings include: The meaning of 'looking' as 'contemplation' or 'reflection' as in the verse: "فَلَا يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَىٰ الْآيَاتِ كَيْفَ خُلِقَتْ". Do they not look at the camels, how they are created? Surah Al-Ghashiya: 17), and " مَا يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا صَيْحَةً وَاحِدَةً. " They await only but a single Saihah (shout), which will seize them while they are disputing! (Surah Ya-Sin: 49). It may also be understood as showing mercy or compassion, as in the verse: "وَلَا يَنْظُرُ إِلَيْهِمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ". Neither will Allâh speak to them, nor look at them on the Day of Resurrection. (Surah Al-Imran: 77).

It is observed that the meaning of the word "nadara' look, consider" varies depending on the context in which it appears. Therefore, every interpreter must consider the context to determine what the statement implies; because the verb 'nazar' is a perfective verb that realizes an event in reality, whether this reality is material, imaginary, or hypothetical. The Ash'ari denies the meanings of contemplation and reflection because the Hereafter is not a realm for such considerations. He also denies the meaning of waiting because when "looking" is mentioned in relation to the face, it refers to the vision of the eyes. The Ash'ari does not accept the meaning of showing compassion, as it is inappropriate to describe the Creator in such a manner. Compassion, or mutual concern, is used in the context of interactions among creatures, and is not applicable between the Creator and the created. Thus, if these alternative interpretations are ruled out, the only remaining interpretation is that of looking, which is how the Ash'ari understands the verse. (Al-Ashari, 278), (Al-Yamani, 613)

As for the Mu'tazila, they countered the Ash'ari interpretation by asserting that "nadra" in this verse means "waiting". They interpret the verse as: "On that Day, faces will be waiting for their Lord's reward, with "looking" meaning "waiting". To support this interpretation, the Mu'tazila cite Quranic verses and poetic examples. (Mu'tazili, 345). For instance, they reference the verse: *فَنظِرَةٌ إِلَىٰ مَيْسَرَةٍ* .then grant him time till it is easy for him to repay". (Surah Al-Baqarah: 280), where "نظرة" is used to mean 'waiting'. Another example is " وَإِنِّي مُرْسِلَةٌ إِلَيْهِم بِهَدِيَّةٍ فَنَظِرَةٌ بِمَ يَرْجِعُ الْمُرْسَلُونَ " (Surah An-Naml: 35) and see with what (answer) the messengers return."

Those who argue that 'nadra" here means 'waiting' suggest that the faces are waiting for the reward of their Lord. The phrase 'eyes extended to Allah' would thus imply that the eyes are eagerly awaiting His goodness and benefit. Since the eyes are part of the face, the action associated with the eyes is extended to the face as a whole. (Al-Asam, 251)

We have presented the views of both the Ash'aris and the Mu'tazila to help us construct an understanding of how the Imami theologians interpret this verse. We will begin by examining the interpretation of Ibrahim ibn Nawbakht regarding this verse. He states: "The verse about looking is missing an implicit addition. Here, he does not specify whether the omitted term is 'reward' or something else. However, by proposing the idea of an omitted addition, he aims to exclude the interpretation of "nadra نظرة" as literal vision. (Nawbakht, 41)

When considering the addition "reward", it implies that the verse means waiting. If the omitted term is 'the blessing of her Lord', the interpretation would be 'visual sighting of Allah's blessings, such as Paradise and other divine favors. (Al-Hilli, 84)

As for Sheikh Al-Tusi, he argues that 'nadara' is not a category of 'looking'. He explains this by noting that people might say, 'I looked at the crescent but did not see it,' and 'I kept looking at it until I saw it. In these examples, 'looking' is affirmed while 'seeing' is denied. This suggests that 'looking' can occur prior to 'seeing', one might look at something and not see it, or eventually see it after persistent looking. Therefore, 'looking' might involve an attempt to achieve the act of vision through observation but does not always result in achieving vision. Thus, 'looking' is not considered the same as 'seeing.' (Al-Tusi, 146)

Through this inference, Sheikh Al-Tusi aims to establish his interpretation of the verse, stating: We said this because looking is the act of moving the healthy pupil toward the object in search of looking at it, which is known through observation, even if it is not known through vision. Here, Al-Tusi affirms that 'nadara 'looking' represents a preliminary act that can lead to 'seeing' (ru'ia), but does not necessarily result in seeing. He distinguishes between the act of looking and the act of seeing.

In response to the Ash'ari position, Al-Hilli employs a method of argumentation by examining the possible meanings of the term 'alnadar 'looking, seeing' and then seeking to affirm one meaning while rejecting the others. He says: 'Looking can either mean seeing, or moving the pupil toward the desired object in an attempt to see it. The latter is not intended here due to the impossibility of directionality concerning Allah. Therefore, the term must be taken metaphorically, indicating 'seeing', as it is an example of using a cause to refer to its effect.' (Al-Hilli, 84)

This text indicates that Al-Hilli rejects Sheikh Al-Tusi's interpretation. His argument is based on the impossibility of attributing directionality to Allah, as moving the pupil toward a specific direction implies spatial location, which is impossible for the Divine. Additionally, Al-Hilli does not support the Mu'tazila view that 'looking' means 'waiting. Instead, he upholds the first interpretation: 'looking' as 'seeing,' but not in a literal sense. Rather, it is a metaphorical use where 'looking' (alnadar) is used to represent its effect, 'seeing' (ru'ia), which is a form of 'metonymy' with a causal relationship. (Al-Qazwini and Hanbka, 257)

Another issue discussed by Allama al-Hilli is that 'when 'looking' is accompanied by the preposition "ila 'to", it indicates seeing in usage. This is one of the arguments used by the Ash'aris to support the notion of divine vision. The difference is that the Ash'aris interpret it literally, whereas Al-Hilli interprets it

metaphorically. He then addresses the various ways in which 'looking' combined with 'to' can indicate seeing. (Al-Hilli, 84, Al-Ashari, 280, and Al-Hilli, 85)

Al-Hilli addresses several points regarding the interpretation of 'nadara' looking" with the preposition 'ila' "to";

1. That the appended word (annexed) is omitted and its implied meaning is: "looking towards her Lord's blessing, i.e., looking."
2. "Nazira" can mean "waiting," and the implied meaning is: "waiting for her Lord's reward."
3. We cannot accept that "nadar" when connected to the preposition "ila" necessarily means "see". There are many linguistic examples to the contrary.
4. It is permissible to interpret "ila" as referring to one of the blessings, which is "ni'am" (favors). This is the interpretation of Sayyid al-Murtaza.
5. The concept of vision here contradicts the verse: *لَا تُدْرِكُهُ الْآبْصَارُ وَهُوَ يُدْرِكُ الْآبْصَارَ*، No vision can grasp Him, and He grasps all vision. (Surah Al-An'am: 103), which implies the impossibility of visual perception.

Through these points, Al-Hilli does not explicitly state his preferred interpretation, but since he considers 'see' to be metaphorical, the first explanation aligns with his view.

As for Al-Hilli, the investigator, he believes that the word "nazar" (to look or to see) in this verse does not convey the literal meaning of sight. In its linguistic usage, its true meaning is the movement of a healthy eyeball towards a visible object with the intention of seeing. If the literal meaning of sight is not applicable in this context, then we must resort to a figurative meaning, which is to expect or hope for the benefits of others. For example, when someone says, "I am looking at you," they mean "I am hoping for you." Therefore, in this context, "nadar" is attributed to the face rather than the eye. (Al-Hilli, 85)

Al-Hilli interprets the term metaphorically, suggesting that it refers to anticipating the favor and blessings of Allah upon His servants. An example given is 'Sayed Manzur: his favor is hoped for and all eyes are fixed on him. When I look at Allah and then at you, it means I anticipate Allah's favor and then your favor. Here, 'fixing one's eyes' implies extending one's gaze while contemplating the expectation of Allah's favor.

From the previous discussion, it is evident that Imami theologians differ in their interpretation of the term "nadra" between 'see and 'wait'. This indicates the multiple readings of the same text due to different understandings and perceptions. Since argumentation can only occur in contexts with multiple possibilities, the arguments presented by Imami theologians vary according to whether they seek to establish the meaning of 'see' or 'wait'.

After reviewing the opinions of scholars from different theological schools, we are left with two options: the first is to interpret the term according to its original linguistic meaning, and the second is to interpret it metaphorically. The researcher supports the second view, arguing that this metaphorical approach enriches language and allows expression of the cultural truths discovered by the human spirit, which ultimately are symbols and objective manifestations of thought. Furthermore, it is a conceptual phenomenon integral to our daily thinking. Typically, we look at things not for their own sake but for the good and benefit they provide. As it is said, "nedarat alardth' 'The earth yearned for its vegetation when it saw it." (Ibn Faris, 444/5) In this regard, Dr. Taha Abdul Rahman says, "There is no speech without discourse, no discourse without argument, and no argument without figurative language." (Abdulrahman, 213)

Interpreting the Quranic text should ultimately serve human interests. However, what has occurred is a division among Muslims into various sects, each striving to validate its own doctrinal views and refute those of others. Allah does not desire this division among Muslims; thus, any interpretation is acceptable if it avoids contradicting human interests and the fundamental principles of Sharia. The term "نظاره" (looking) signifies vision in its linguistic component. Therefore, we should consider whether "looking" refers solely to visual observation or if there are other meanings that the term might carry without convincing evidence for its interpretation.

Among the compelling interpretations is that of Sayyid al-Tabatabai, who suggests that “looking” refers to a real vision, but not visual sight; rather, it is a vision of the heart. What a person sees with their heart is as though they see it with their eyes. (Al-Tabatabai's, 209/20). This interpretation aligns with the verse: *فَإِنَّهَا لَا تَعْمَى الْأَبْصَارُ وَلَكِنْ تَعْمَى الْقُلُوبَ الَّتِي فِي الصُّدُورِ* Verily, it is not the eyes that grow blind, but it is the hearts which are in the breasts that grow blind. (Surah Al-Hajj: 46).

This interpretation is related to human perception, which can achieve a certain kind of certainty, similar to a mother's intuition about her child's well-being even if she does not see him directly, but rather through an inner vision. An example of such vision is found in the verse: *مَا كَذَّبَ الْفُؤَادُ مَا رَأَى* The (Prophet's) heart lied not in what he (Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) saw. (Surah An-Najm: 11), which describes the Prophet Muhammad's (peace be upon him and his family) perception during the Night Journey (Isra and Miraj).

From the preceding discussion, we can deduce that the Ash'aris, in their argument to establish divine vision, have attempted to frame vision by distinguishing it from perception. Perception is considered additional to vision because it involves a comprehensive understanding of an object from all directions, whereas Allah is not described in terms of direction. Therefore, it is permissible to believe that we can see Allah without specifying how, without likening Him to anything, and without defining Him in terms of spatial boundaries. (Al-Baklani, 177)

The Ash'aris' concept of vision is somewhat similar to the idea of vision of the heart because the eye encompasses what is visible. They deny the attributes of how, likeness, nothing is like Him, and definition as comprehensiveness. Thus, they interpret the term “nadra” literally as vision but struggle with defining this vision.

On the other hand, the Mu'tazilites interpret the term metaphorically, assuming an omitted term: to the reward. This approach reflects the Mu'tazilites' method of interpreting the text. Consequently, Imami theologians have varied in their interpretations. Some agreed with the Mu'tazilite view, understanding 'looking' to mean 'waiting' with the assumption of 'to the reward of her Lord', acknowledging that waiting is one of the real meanings of looking. Others aligned with the Ash'ari view of vision but also interpreted it metaphorically, assuming 'to the blessing of her Lord' to mean 'see' in a metaphorical sense rather than the literal meaning that the term might hold, as discussed in Al-Tabatabai's interpretation.

## **Chapter Two: The Argumentative Interpretation in the Doctrine of Resurrection**

Discussing resurrection involves addressing the second existence of bodies and their revival after death and disintegration. (Al-Muqdad, 86). Disputes have arisen among Islamic theologians and philosophers regarding the physical and spiritual aspects of resurrection, the possibility of reassembling the body, and various issues related to the afterlife, such as rewards, punishments, the intermediate state, grave punishment, repentance, and other matters. (Al-Bahrani, 389)

Each side of the debate has sought its evidence and arguments from the Quran. In this context, we have chosen to examine the issue of the punishment of the grave to highlight the arguments presented by Imami theologians that support their belief in the reality of grave punishment. This issue has continued to be a point of contention between those who affirm and those who deny the occurrence of grave punishment up to the present day. The Quran does not explicitly confirm whether the punishment of the grave is a reality or not. A review of the Quran reveals no clear statement on whether this punishment exists or not, leaving room for differing interpretations among Muslim scholars on this matter. Abu al-Hasan al-Ash'ari attributed the denial of grave punishment to the Mu'tazilites and the Khawarij. (Al-Ashari, 116/2)

The Mu'tazilite scholar, Al-Qadi Abdul-Jabbar, responded to what al-Ash'ari attributed to the Mu'tazilites and pointed out that there is no dispute among the Islamic community regarding the reality of grave punishment, except for what is attributed to Darar ibn Amr, who was initially a Mu'tazilite but later joined the Jabriyya. (Al-Mutazili, 730). Furthermore, among the Islamic sects that acknowledge the existence of

grave punishment, there are differing interpretations of some Quranic verses related to the concepts of resurrection and death in the grave. For instance:

كَيْفَ تَكْفُرُونَ بِاللَّهِ، وَكُنْتُمْ أَمْوَاتًا فَأَحْيَاكُمْ، ثُمَّ يُمَيِّتُكُمْ، ثُمَّ يُحْيِيكُمْ How can you disbelieve in Allâh? seeing that you were dead and He gave you life. Then He will give you death, then again will bring you to life (on the Day of Resurrection) and then unto Him you will return, (Surah Al-Baqarah: 28)

قَالُوا رَبَّنَا أَمَتْنَا اثْنَتَيْنِ وَأَحْيَيْتَنَا اثْنَتَيْنِ فَاعْتَرَفْنَا بِذُنُوبِنَا فَهَلْ إِلَى خُرُوجٍ مِنْ سَبِيلٍ They will say: "Our Lord! You have made us to die twice (i.e. we were dead in the loins of our fathers and dead after our life in this world), and You have given us life twice (i.e. life when we were born and life when we are Resurrected)! Now we confess our sins, then is there any way to get out (of the Fire) (Surah Ghafir: 11)

These verses are considered by Imami theologians as proof of the existence of grave punishment. However, other groups, such as the Mu'tazilites and Ash'arites, argue that these two verses cannot be used to support the notion of grave punishment. Each group interprets these verses in a way that aligns with their doctrinal views.

So, what is the nature of the disagreement among Islamic scholars regarding this issue, and what is the reason for their differing interpretations of the verses mentioning resurrection and death? Can these verses be considered evidence for the existence of the punishment of the grave, or not?

Imami theologians have used these two verses to argue for the existence of the punishment of the grave, or, more specifically, for the resurrection and death in the grave. For instance, Sheikh al-Saduq, in the section discussing the belief in questioning in the grave, mentioned a narration illustrating the actions of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in burying the dead, which is seen as an indication of the existence of the punishment of the grave. "When he mentions a narration about the actions of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his family) during the funeral of Fatima bint Asad, including a reference to the second life and death in the grave and the questioning of Munkar and Nakir."

He cites the verse from Surah Ghafir as evidence for the punishment of the grave, saying: And the confirmation of this in the Book of Allah is His statement: 'امتنا' You made us die...' (Al-Saduq, 59). This indicates that he considers this verse as proof for resurrection and death in the grave, interpreting it in a way that aligns with his doctrinal views and convincing his audience of this interpretation.

Similarly, Al-Hilli also used these two verses to argue for the punishment of the grave, interpreting their content in accordance with his belief in this matter. He said: Allah has informed us of its occurrence in His statement: كَيْفَ تَكْفُرُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَكُنْتُمْ أَمْوَاتًا How can you disbelieve in Allâh? seeing that you were dead and He gave you life. The mention of returning after two revivals can only be fulfilled with a third revival. (Al-Hilli, 297)

He then cited the verse: "قَالُوا رَبَّنَا أَمَتْنَا اثْنَتَيْنِ" They said, 'Our Lord, You made us die twice...and commented: It mentions two deaths: one in this world and the other in the grave, and two resurrections: one in this world and the other in the grave. The third resurrection is not mentioned because it is known and was discussed; the dead do not speak. It is said that they spoke of the two resurrections they experienced necessarily, one in the grave and the other in the Hereafter. That is why it concludes with: فَاَعْتَرَفْنَا بِذُنُوبِنَا we confess our sins. (Al-Hilli, 297)

We observe from this text that the scholar Al-Hilli interpreted the verse by stating that there were two deaths and three revivals. He justified the divine text's omission of the third revival by arguing that a dialogue took place during this revival, and the non-living cannot speak. Furthermore, he clarified that those who reported the two revivals had witnessed their occurrence, as evidenced by their confession of sins. Consequently, he considered these two verses as evidence for the existence of punishment in the grave, and they can only be reconciled with this concept through interpretation.

Sheikh Sadi Al-Din Al-Hamawi also referred to some skeptics who tried to disprove the existence of the punishment of the grave by placing grains on the body of the deceased at burial and then exhuming the body to find the grains in their original place. They used this observation to argue against the idea of the

punishment of the grave and the questioning by Munkar and Nakir, claiming that questioning can only occur if the body is revived and that punishment requires the return of the soul to the body, which would necessitate movement of the body and displacement of the grains. (Al-Homsi, 198)

This practical evidence supports the skeptics' view in interpreting the Quranic texts as denying the punishment of the grave. They argue their case through direct observation and the expectation of bodily movement after the soul's return. Sheikh Sadi al-Din countered the skeptics by stating that the texts concerning the questioning and punishment of the grave do not specify a particular time frame; the punishment might occur after a day, a month, or years. Therefore, the observation of the grains and their displacement or non-displacement after a period is not conclusive evidence. He emphasized that the knowledge of the questioning and punishment of the grave is established through legal evidence, not through physical observation. (Al-Homsi, 198/2)

And by proof from the Shari'ah, he means the transmitted texts concerning this matter, then he followed by saying: 'And it has been deduced from verses in the Qur'an as well' as in the verse "قَالُوا رَبَّنَا أَمَتْنَا اثْنَتَيْنِ" you made us die twice". He suggests that the two deaths mentioned can only be understood as involving resurrection in the grave, followed by death and resurrection, which implies either reward or punishment. He argues that this interpretation is preferable to the alternative view that one of the deaths refers to their creation as dead, and the other refers to the usual death, because creation as dead is not termed death. He further claims that this verse should not be considered evidence for this issue because he believes in the concept of return (raj'a), where some dead individuals, whether friends or enemies, are revived at the appearance of the Imam (may Allah hasten his reappearance). Therefore, he recognizes two lives and two deaths, but this does not include life in the grave. Al-Homsi, 198/2)

The author then asks, 'Wouldn't this imply three deaths?' He responds by arguing that not all the dead are resurrected, and the verse might be referring specifically to those who are not brought back to life. He further suggests that while the verse indicates two deaths, it doesn't rule out the possibility of more. After all, the statement 'You revived us twice' doesn't preclude a third revival for those who believe in life and death in the grave." (Al-Homsi, 199/2)

We conclude from the foregoing that there is a wide range of interpretations for the aforementioned verse. The interpreter seeks to make the Quranic text a proof for what he believes. We find him justifying each of these different interpretations. This is a result of the fact that the belief in this matter precedes the interpretation of the text, indicating that he interprets the text according to the pre-existing belief, which are pre-established judgments linked to the theological school of the interpreter, rather than interpreting the text in light of its linguistic and contextual framework.

### **Conclusion:**

The research has led to several key findings, which can be summarized as follows:

1. Interpretation, by its nature, is inherently subjective. The only way to transcend this subjectivity is by employing a methodological approach that transforms interpretation into a semiotic exercise, revealing the hidden meanings in texts. This prevents the imposition of interpretations based on preconceived notions without evidence, which might be erroneous. For instance, the Jahmites' misunderstanding of divine unity, where they denied attributes like life, generosity, and knowledge, affirming only God's power, creation, and activity, illustrates how preconceived ideas can lead to incorrect interpretations.

2. The approach of Imami theologians to interpreting texts related to fundamental religious beliefs extends from the interpretations of the infallible Imams (peace be upon them), which in turn are derived from the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family). As stated in the Quran: شَهِدَ اللَّهُ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ وَأُولُو الْعِلْمِ قَانِمًا بِالْقِسْطِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ Allâh bears witness that Lâ ilâha illa Huwa (none has the right to be worshipped but He), and the angels, and those having knowledge (also give this witness); (He always) maintains His creation in Justice. Lâ ilâha illa Huwa (none has the right to be worshipped but He), the All-Mighty, the All-Wise. (Surah Aali 'Imran: 18). Justice (qist) here relates to the afterlife and divine unity. Allah has testified to His justice in both His unity and His singularity,

encompassing the attributes of perfection, majesty, and grandeur. To grasp and teach these attributes accurately, a prophetic guidance that is infallible in its argumentative and interpretive methods is essential, necessitating an extension of prophecy in the form of infallible Imamate.

3- Imami theologians, alongside the Mu'tazilites, have resorted to interpretation in the foundational aspects of monotheism, particularly concerning the issue of the sensory vision of God on the Day of Judgment. This was done to counter the Ash'arite view, which posits the possibility of sensory vision based on Hadith reports. Both Imami and Mu'tazilite thinkers held a priori knowledge that sensory vision or sight of Allah is impossible because it would imply a limitation on His unity, which transcends time, space, and transient matter. They cited the Arabic usage of "looking" (nadar) to mean "waiting for a response or expecting mercy.

4 - Imami theologians and others employed argumentative interpretation in the doctrine of the hereafter, addressing whether it is corporeal or spiritual, the life of the grave, and other related issues. The disagreement among Islamic sects arose due to the lack of explicit Quranic texts defining these issues. The researcher argues that the problem lies not in the evidence itself but in how the evidence is employed through interpretation to support the interpreter's own preconceived beliefs and convictions. Disputes among opposing views often stemmed from isolating or extracting evidence or verses from their context and using them to substantiate the interpreter's beliefs.

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