

«مقاله پژوهشی»

تناسب مفهومی سوره های فرقان و فاطر با تکیه بر سیر نزول

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چکیده

در این پژوهش سوره های فرقان و فاطر براساس ترتیب نزول، مورد بررسی و تحلیل قرار گرفته اند. هدف پژوهش این بود که مشخص شود ترتیب نزول و بافت تاریخی چه تأثیری بر تناسب مفهومی سوره ها دارد. در این نوشتار از روش تحلیل گفتمان با رویکرد توصیفی - تحلیلی استفاده شده است تا پس از گردآوری اطلاعات حول سوره های فرقان و فاطر و شناخت بافت تاریخی آنها، به واحدهای مفهومی آنها ذیل محورهای: قرآن، جهاد، مشرکان، کفار و چگونگی آن در آن بازه زمانی دست یازید. طبق یافته های تحقیق، ترتیب نزول نقش مهمی در کشف مضمون و محتوای سوره های فرقان و فاطر داشته است. که این نتیجه به دست آمد که مطابق ترتیب نزول، موضع قرآن در مقابل مشرکان قریش و یهود مکه در دو سوره فرقان و فاطر، در فاصله بین سال های ۶ و ۷ بعثت، موضعی خردمندانه و تربیتی بوده است. با این تفاوت که متناسب با شرایط اجتماعی مشرکان و کافران مکه، در برهه ای از زمان تلاش شد ذیل آیات سوره فرقان، محورهای هدایتی قرآن با کنش اقناعی و زبان نرم بیان شود. که تشدید استهزاء گروه های مزبور در ادامه روند نزول سوره فاطر، گفتمان قرآن را به کنش اظهاری و سخت تبدیل نمود.

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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Conceptual Appropriateness of the Surahs al-Furqān and Fāṭir Based on the Order of Revelation

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ABSTRACT

The present study aims to examine and analyze the Surahs al-Furqān and Fāṭir according to their order of revelation to determine how the order of revelation and the historical context affect the conceptual appropriateness of the Surahs. To this aim, a discourse analysis method with a descriptive-analytical approach was employed. After gathering information about Surahs al-Furqān and Fāṭir and understanding their historical contexts, we explored their conceptual units under the themes of: The Quran, Jihad, polytheists, disbelievers, and how these themes manifested during that time period. The results indicated that the order of revelation plays a significant role in uncovering the themes and content of Surahs al-Furqān and Fāṭir. It was discovered that, according to the order of revelation, the Quran's stance toward the polytheists of Quraysh and the Jews of Mecca in both Surahs, during the years 6 and 7 of the prophethood, was wise and pedagogical. However, in line with the social conditions of the polytheists and disbelievers in Mecca, there was an effort during a certain period, through the verses of Surah al-Furqān, to convey the guiding themes of the Quran with persuasive actions and soft language. The intensification of mockery from these groups in the subsequent revelation of Surah Fāṭir transformed the discourse of the Quran into declarative and harsh actions.

KEYWORDS

Conceptual Appropriateness, Surahs al-Furqān and Fāṭir, Order of Revelation, Context, Meccan Period.

Introduction

Time and place, as elements of historical context (order of revelation), play a vital role in uncovering the purposes and underlying layers of the Quranic text. Discourse analysis refers to the examination of the pathways to reach the underlying layers of speech and text, which, in addition to considering the context of the speaker, text, and audience, pays special attention to broader contexts such as historical, political, and social settings (cf. Richardson, 2007: 22-25).

In this regard, a more precise understanding of Surahs *al-Furqān* and *Fāṭir* as sacred texts of the Quran requires utilizing their historical context to become aware of the social realities of the time of revelation. This allows for the identification of key concepts such as the keywords of the Quran, phenomena, disbelievers, and polytheists within these two Surahs.

1. Problem Statement

The spiritual and social characteristics of the polytheists and disbelievers of Mecca in their encounters with the Prophet (PBUH) and the Quran in Surahs *al-Furqān* and *Fāṭir* were accompanied by mockery of the Prophet (PBUH), derision of the Quran, and comparisons of it to pre-Islamic poetry and myths. In this context, the best strategy of the Quran for addressing these groups during the intermediary phase of the Prophet's (PBUH) invitation was one of tolerance and concession.

Undoubtedly, the strategy of forgiveness and tolerance, considering the prevalence of mockery and derision among the polytheists in that oppressive situation, stems from the guidance of the Quran and its pedagogical and wise role. Accordingly, the polytheists had more opportunities to hear the divine message,

facilitating the necessary conditions for their guidance, as the Prophet (PBUH) and the divine messengers, according to Quranic teachings, must create all possible opportunities for the guidance of humanity. Therefore, this research will examine and conceptualize Surahs *al-Furqān* and *Fāṭir* with a focus on the order of revelation. As mentioned above, historical context explores and traverses the cultural, social, and political conditions of a region simultaneously, aiming for an accurate analysis and conceptualization of the text and the aforementioned two Surahs under the core concepts of the "Quran, disbelievers, phenomenology, and polytheists," and their equivalence.

Careful attention to the order of revelation of Surahs *al-Furqān* and *Fāṭir* reveals that these Surahs consist of a structured collection of concepts and attachments, all reflecting the reciprocal positions of the Prophet (PBUH) and his social environment. For this reason, Mr. Nekunam, who has devoted a substantial amount of his research to dating the Quran, states that the interpretation of the Quran, if not examined in the historical context of its revelation, will create an abstract and generalized understanding of it. This approach leads to an erroneous understanding that strays from the divine intent (Nekunam, 2003 AD/1382 SH: 63).

Therefore, he considers the units of revelation to be like the speech of a preacher who articulates them in accordance with the mind, intellect, and circumstances of the people at the time of revelation (Nekunam, 2001 AD/1380 SH: 123). Thus, the historicity of the Quranic text requires that its interpretation be evaluated based on the conditions and contexts, taking into account all relevant situational and contextual

clues throughout history (Nekunam, 2009 AD/1388 SH: 43).

Therefore, based on the subject of the research, the main questions are as follows:

1) What is the wisdom behind the conceptual correlation between Surahs *Fāṭir* and *al-Furqān*, and what message does it convey?

2) How does the order of revelation lead us to this conceptual correlation? These questions will be examined using discourse analysis and a descriptive-analytical approach.

2. Research Background

Many works have been written on the topic of "Conceptual Correlation of Surahs." Among them is the book "*Naẓm al-Durar fī Tanāsub al-Āyāt wa al-Suwar*" by *al-Baqā'ī*, which is a significant commentary that the author wrote to prove the content-related links between Surah and Surah, as well as between verses within Surahs. Another work is "*al-Burhān fī Tanāsub al-Suwar al-Quran*" by *Aḥmad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Zubayr al-Thaqafī*, which explores the relationships between the Surahs of the Quran.

The article "Examining the Views of Shi'a and Sunni Interpreters Regarding the Ordained or Juridical Nature of the Order of Surahs" by Mohammad Ali Akhawiyan and Rahman Zare (2019 AD/1399 SH) published in the journal "Comparative Commentary Studies," and the article "A Model for the Evolution of Knowledge on the Correlation of Surahs: A Case Study of the Correlation Between Surahs al-Faṭḥ and Muḥammad" by Sedigheh Jannati Firouzabadi and Kamal Sahraei Ardakani (2021 AD/1400 SH) published in the journal "Quranic Teachings." Additionally, the article "Validation of the Reasons and Criteria for Determining the Order of Revelation of the Quran" by Ayyoub Akrami (2019 AD/1398 SH) in the journal

"Quranic Researches" is aimed at addressing the topic of correlation between Surahs and associated views. However, none of these works aimed to examine the concepts of Surahs *al-Furqān* and *Fāṭir* with a focus on their historical contexts.

In the referenced writings, the authors accepted the presumption of the ordained nature of the Surahs and attempted to establish correlations between the final verses of one Surah and the initial verses of the next to achieve their relevance. As a result, the distinguishing feature of the present work compared to the previous studies is that it utilizes the criterion of the order of revelation, which is free from the theoretical problems associated with the ordained nature of the Surahs, to focus on the epistemic themes of Surahs *al-Furqān* and *Fāṭir*.

3. Importance of the Order of Revelation

Interpreting the Quran based on the order of revelation is the best method for understanding its verses; each verse was revealed within a specific context and under the prevailing conditions at the time of its revelation. This context allows the reader to gain a better understanding of the verse. In contrast, examining verses detached from the circumstances present at the time of revelation does not yield the same level of understanding (cf. Darwaza, 2002 AD/1421 AH: 1, 9). *Darwaza* argues that many issues in interpreting the Quran stem from the belief in the suddenness of its revelation. By emphasizing the connection between the Quran's revelation in various periods and external events, he opposes the idea of sudden revelation, similar to some Quranic scholars (Ma'rifat, 1992 AD/1371 SH: 1, 102-123; Zamakhsharī, 1986 AD/1407 AH: 1, 227; Shahr Āshūb, 1949 AD/1369 AH: 1, 63; Bayḍāwī, 1997 AD/1418: 1, 125; Darwaza, 2000

AD/1421 AH: 1, 257 and 25; 2, 132; 4, 537). He posits that recognizing the historical context of each Surah or section of it is contingent on the belief that each part of the Quran was revealed in accordance with the conditions of its time. Therefore, he considers the belief in gradual revelation as one of the foundations for his dating of the Quran.

Hence, the best approach to this issue is to consider the conceptual knowledge of the Surahs based on their order of revelation; since the call of Islam traversed stages of growth and development, the Wise God revealed Surahs and verses of the Quran in accordance with each stage. The Quran was revealed in a wise progressive manner, and the verses were distributed based on this progression (cf. Bahjatpour, 2013 AD/1392 SH: 77-84).

Instead of relying on some weak and forced correlations that others have drawn in refuting the connections between Surahs, it is better to compare adjacent Surahs and reflect on the points of similarity between them based on the order of revelation; as *Suyūṭī* states: "One of the principles upon which the Quran is based is that each Surah elaborates and clarifies the matters mentioned in summary in the previous Surah; this characteristic is evident in many of the short and long Surahs of the Quran." (*Suyūṭī*, 1985 AD/1406 AH: 65)

Muhammad Mahmoud Hejazi also claims regarding the relevance of Surah *al-An'ām* to Surah *al-Mā'idah*: "However, the connections are that in *al-Mā'idah* there is a debate with the People of the Book, and in this Surah, it concerns the polytheists and *al-Mā'idah* mentions the prohibitions in detail because it is one of the last Surahs to be revealed, while *al-An'ām* mentions this in summary." (Hejazi, 1982: 1, 258) Through this, a better and more accurate understanding of the Surahs of the Quran may be achieved, revealing additional

subtleties of the Quran. Therefore, under the model of the order of revelation, one can attain an understanding of the conceptual connections between the two Surahs, *al-Furqān* and *Fāṭir*, in such a way that these two Surahs reach conceptual harmony.

4. Validating the Order of Revelation Table

Early Islamic scholars exerted considerable effort to accurately depict the order of the Surahs based on criteria like: Sirah analysis, history in the Quran, narratives of the reasons for revelation, narratives regarding the order of revelation, abrogating and abrogated verses, Meccan and Medinan verses, etc. (*Ṭabāṭabā'ī*, 2006 AD/1385 SH: 127; *Suyūṭī*, 1943 AD/1363 AH: 1, 143; *Ma'rifat*, 1992 AD/1371 SH: 1, 254). As a result, according to these scholars, the only way to prove the order of revelation is through narratives of the causes of revelation and the order of revelation (*Ḥabanka al-Maydānī*, 2000: 1, 5; *Fārsī*, 1983 AD/1362 SH: 14; *Āl Ghāzī*, 2003 AD/1382 SH: 1, 71).

From the perspective of some contemporary Quran researchers, there are serious doubts about the validity of the order of revelation table based on the aforementioned criteria. Consequently, they have sought to compensate for these shortcomings by assessing the Quran thematically and ultimately aligning it with historical evidence and practices (*Darwaza*, 2000 AD/1421 AH: 1, 11; *Ṭabāṭabā'ī*, 2006 AD/1385 SH: 137). It seems that combining thematic and contextual criteria of the Quran with the narratives of the order of revelation is a prominent criterion that is less prone to error in recognizing the order of the Surahs; this is because the narratives concerning the order of revelation, and the reasons for revelation, along with the Meccan and Medinan narratives, do not possess strong documentation and, in some cases, suffer from severe textual inconsistencies.

Therefore, the best way to compensate for the deficiency of their documentation lies in the content evaluation of Quranic verses and Surahs, as well as the documentary and textual analysis of the narratives (Jaberi, 2008: 1, 8; Bazargan, 1995 AD/1374 SH: 13; Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 2006 AD/1385 SH: 186; Zurqānī, n.d.: 1, 86; Darwaza, 2000 AD/1421 AH: 1, 8).

Therefore, it can be said that the order of revelation table by *Muhammad Izzat Darwaza*, considering its use of textual and contextual criteria of the verses and historical evidence, is more reliable compared to other order of revelation tables. *Darwaza* himself, despite having access to some narratives of the order of revelation transmitted from *Jābir ibn Zayd*, *Ḥasan*, *ʿIkramah*, and *Ibn ʿAbbās*, or mentioned in the introduction of "*Tafsir Khāzin*" and the interpretation of "*Majmaʿ al-Bayān*," (Darwaza, n.d.: 2, 9) relies on the codex known as "*Muṣḥaf Qadrughlu*." He argues that this confidence is due to the oversight of a group of experts in selecting the correct order of the Surahs during the preparation of this list (Darwaza, 2000 AD/1421 AH: 1, 12-13). The description of this codex states: "This codex is recorded according to the narration of *Ḥafṣ ibn Sulaymān ibn al-Mughayrah al-Asadī al-Kūfī* from the recitation of *ʿĀsim ibn Abī al-Najūd al-Kūfī al-Tābiʿī* from *Abī ʿAbdillāh ibn Ḥabīb al-Sullamī* from *ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān*, *ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib*, *Zayd ibn Thābit*, and *Ubay ibn Kaʿb* from the Prophet (PBUH)." (Darwaza, 2000 AD/1421 AH: 1, 15-16)

The author proceeds to utilize the framework and paradigm of *Muhammad Izzat Darwaza*'s order of revelation table to depict the arrangement of the Surahs *al-Furqān* and *Fāṭir* in the mentioned table as follows: (First the name of the Surah, then its order of revelation

number, followed by the order number of each Surah in the Uthmanic codex).

Table (1.1) displays the order of Surahs *al-Furqān* and *Fāṭir* based on the *Muṣḥaf Qadrughlu* (Darwaza, 2000 AD/1421 AH: 1, 15-16).

Surah Name	Order of Revelation	Uthmanic Order
al-Jinn	40	72
Yāsīn	41	36
al-Furqān	42	25
Fāṭir	43	35
Maryam	44	19
Ṭāhā	45	3

5. Common Theme of the Surahs *al-Furqān* and *Fāṭir*

The Surahs *al-Furqān* and *Fāṭir* are based on a common theme, which forms the primary purpose of these two Surahs. This main purpose is manifested in the divine nature of the Quran and its guiding role (*al-Furqān*/1). People are encouraged to turn to it in the face of life's adversities to understand the three foundational concepts (Tawḥīd- Prophethood- Resurrection). This way, they would not, like the Jews, attempt to distort the Quran or create their own intellectual constructs. This important point is articulated in verse 42 of Surah *al-Fāṭir*: "O! Polytheists, this warning prophet has been sent to you with a firm and strong book." Therefore, it is not appropriate to disregard its commands; for if you turn away from the commands of this valuable book, your actions will resemble those of the Jews during the time of Prophet Musa (Moses). Similarly, in verse 30 of Surah *al-Furqān*, it states: "The polytheists, having ignored their oaths, have clearly demonstrated their indifference and false promises regarding the Quran; by mocking and disregarding its

commands, they have paved the way for their own inability to be guided." In verse 44 of Surah *Fāṭir*, the disbelievers and polytheists have chosen an even more misguided path concerning the Quran.

It is evident that calling for pure monotheism and dismantling the system of polytheism and idolatry at that time and in that environment was a difficult task. During the period of revelation in Mecca, it became apparent that some groups would rise to mock, and for this reason, God reassures His Prophet not to fear the multitude of enemies and mockers. Instead, he is to convey his message openly and publicly through the Quran and engage in a persistent and logical struggle in this regard. The Prophet himself, in response to the harassment and blatant mockery of the polytheists, would say, "Be patient, for I have not been commanded to fight." (Wahbah al-Zuhaylī, 1960: 115; Fayḍ Kāshānī, 1994 AD/1415 AH: 3, 380; al-ʿArūsī al-Ḥuwayzī, 1994 AD/1415 AH: 3, 501; Qummī Mashhadī, 1989 AD/1368 SH: 9, 101; Khuʿī, 1979 AD/1400 AH: 17, 367; Majlisī, 1982 AD/1403 AH: 19, 158)

5.1. Key Term of Quran in Surahs *al-Furqān* and *Fāṭir*

Based on studies of the chronological order of revelation, the word "*Furqān*" in the verse "Blessed is He who sent down the *Furqān* upon His Servant that he may be to the worlds a warner: (al-Furqān/1) is positioned as one of the attributes of the Quran instead of the word "Quran." This is because, amidst increasing pressures and mockery of the Islamic faith by the polytheists, the only cultural tool that could accurately clarify the distinction between truth and falsehood, and highlight the great good sent to creations, was the replacement of the attribute "*Furqān*" for its defined counterpart "Quran" in the opening verse of Surah *al-*

Furqān (cf. Ṭabāṭabāʾī, 1970 AD/1390 AH: 15, 173).

Then it further elucidates that this Quran, as a separator of truth from falsehood, bears no resemblance to poetry or poetic expression, as these verses possess unique characteristics in distinguishing truth from falsehood, and can, in no way, be a mental construct of the Prophet (PBUH) (al-Furqān/5). Therefore, the polytheists, who are aware of the Prophet's (PBUH) faith and morality, out of obstinacy against the sanctity of the infallibility and the clear Book, consider all those lofty themes to be mere magic and sorcery. Moreover, in his depiction concerning the aforementioned verses, *Darwaza* says: "These verses illustrate the position of the polytheists and the verbal and practical stances they adopted against the Prophet (PBUH) and the Quran; for this reason, God, under the cover of Quranic revelation, addresses them with conclusive and warning reasoning, and by mentioning the fate of past nations that suffered divine punishment due to obstinacy and ignorance, He advises the believers to engage in righteous deeds and good morals, encouraging them with the hope of a favorable outcome." (cf. *Darwaza*, 2000 AD/1421 AH: 3, 47) Thus, when the disbelievers perhaps expected to bring the Prophet's (PBUH) mission to an end with his defeat, God unveiled another truth, explaining that this Surah, along with Surah *al-Fāṭir* and the Surahs revealed until now, not only have the potential to bring about transformation and serve as a warning to the people of Mecca, but they also differentiate truth from falsehood (*Bahjatpour*, 2020 AD/1399 SH: 18).

5.2. Phenomenology in Surahs *al-Furqān* and *Fāṭir*

In verse 2 of Surah *al-Furqān*, God, through persuasive action, endeavors to convince the

polytheists. Thus, He asserts ownership of the heavens and the earth, and in line with His causative system, prompts minds to contemplate and reflect; with a conducive communication environment, He states: "If you claim that God is the owner of the heavens and the earth, how can you attribute to Him the false claim of having a son and partners, as this is tantamount to disregarding God's act of creation?"

Continuing, with a rational approach, it warns against the accusation by the polytheists that the Quran is of earthly origin. In response to them, it asserts: The Quran is not merely the fabrications of predecessors or a product of human learning; rather, it is a process of guidance through which, by adhering to it, a person can secure their happiness on the Day of Judgment. Consequently, the Quran is free from all the slanders you disbelievers have leveled against it; for the same God who entrusted the secret of the order and wisdom of creation and cause and effect within this realm of existence and is aware of its mysteries is the One who revealed the Quran (al-Furqān/6).

In the context of the revelation of Surah *Fāṭir*, aligned with the atmosphere of its descent and the thoughts of its audience, the message has accompanied an expressing action. By introducing the grandeur of His creation with a term like "*Fāṭir*," which denotes creation from nothingness, it aims to enlighten the ailing minds of disbelievers and polytheists. *Allamah Ṭabāṭabā'ī*, in the commentary on verse 1 of Surah *Fāṭir*, states: "If the term *Fāṭir* is applied to God, it is metaphorical, as if God has torn apart non-existence and brought forth the heavens and the earth from within it. Therefore, the implication of the verse is: Praise be to God, who is the creator of the heavens and the earth, with an initial creation and without a model."

(Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1970 AD/1390 AH: 17, 5) Hence, Surah *Fāṭir* serves as a reinforcement of Surah *al-Furqān*, and anyone with even a minimal familiarity with the Holy Quran and its style knows that the repetition of stories and themes across the Surahs relates to the subject and the main focus of each Surah from different perspectives (cf. Khamegar, 2007 AD/1386 SH: 24).

The crux of the matter is that understanding the characteristics of the audience is of significant importance, which is carried out in their specific intellectual domain. The impact of the audience's personality traits on establishing communication and conveying the message can be explained in the context of the Quran's communication with its polytheistic audience in Surahs *al-Furqān* and *Fāṭir* regarding the topic of phenomena as follows: In Surah *Furqān*, persuasive and gentle action is utilized to correspond with an audience that is in an initial state of mockery and obstinacy. For this reason, in introducing creatures and phenomena, it also takes into account the understanding and level of the audience, employing reasoning accepted by the audience in a common and comprehensible language so that the polytheists can cease their mockery of the Quran.

With the intensification of mockery towards the Quran, in Surah *Fāṭir*, the tone shifts from a soft and persuasive approach to a hard and declarative one. Therefore, to warn and admonish this obstinate audience, who have escalated their mocking and derision regarding the Quran; it is necessary to discuss the sudden creation of beings and its complexities. This discussion aims to awaken the polytheists to the wonders of creation and the method of their formation, guiding them toward the path of guidance.

5.3. The Conceptual Relationship Between the Quran and the Jews

As previously mentioned, in the opening verse of the Surah, God praises the Quran and its greatness. Then, in the second verse, He speaks of its divine descent, emphasizing that God is not only the source of the law and the Quran but that the dominion of the heavens and the earth is derived from His power. Therefore, He is free from any partners or offspring; He is the creator of all beings and phenomena, having designed the entire universe based on divine order, with no doubt or uncertainty in this regard. Hence, in this verse, He reprimands the disbelieving Jews for associating partners with God. This truth is supported not only by compelling phenomenological evidence but also by references to His attributes in the Torah.

Continuing with the process of the Surah's revelation, the verses employ a graceful argumentation style, shedding light on the Jews of the Prophet's (PBUH) era by requesting them to refer to the truth of the Quran and its rich teachings. They are urged to stop worshipping wooden and human likenesses that are mere creations of God.

In the commentary on this verse, *Ṭabāṭabā'ī* states: "And the context of the verses is not without reference to the idea that what is meant by 'another people' are some of the People of the Book. In narrations, it is mentioned that the last people refer to: 'Addās, a Mawla of *Huwayṭib ibn 'Abd al-'Uzzā*; *Yasār*, a Mawla of 'Alā' *ibn Ḥaḍramī*; and *Jabr*, a Mawla of 'Āmir, all of whom were People of the Book and read the Torah. After they became Muslims, the Prophet (PBUH) made a pact with them. As a result, the disbelieving Jews made these claims that these few people also assisted him in this slander." (cf. *Ṭabāṭabā'ī*, 1970 AD/1390 AH: 15, 253)

Additionally, some commentators have mentioned that *Naḍr ibn Ḥārith* and a group of Quraysh polytheists claimed that Muhammad had learned the Quran from some Jews or Christians living in Mecca; these individuals included prominent Jews and Christians such as *Jabr*, *Yasār* the Roman, and 'Ubayd *ibn Ḥaṣr*, an Ethiopian priest and prophet assigned to receive the Quran from their books (cf. Khāzin, 1995 AD/1415 AH: 3, 308; Ibn Kathīr, 1998 AD/1419: 6, 58; Ṭabarī, 1991 AD/1412 AH: 18, 136).

As a result, the Jews at the time of the revelation of the Surahs *al-Furqān* and *Fāṭir*, in addition to distorting the commandments of the Torah, confronted the ideas presented in these Quranic verses regarding monotheism by attributing the status of a son to 'Uzayr (Ezra) in relation to God, despite the episteme and phenomenological signs pointing to God's creation. This led to a rupture between legislative guidance (in this context, referring to the verses of Surahs *al-Furqān* and *Fāṭir*, which aim to establish the pure creation of God with ontological arguments to prevent the polytheism of the Jews) and existential guidance (the creatures and phenomena).

5.3.1. Religious and Cultural Leadership of the Jews

Although the polytheists of Quraysh, as the rulers of Mecca, were responsible for managing all affairs of governance in Mecca, the study of the early verses of Surah *al-Furqān* raises the question of what the reason was for the preference of the Jews in polytheism over the polytheists of Quraysh. It can be said that although the political leadership and major decision-making in Mecca and surrounding tribes were in the hands of Quraysh and the polytheists, the religious leadership and cultural guidance of Mecca were held by the Jews. Due

to the illiteracy of the polytheists and their divergence from the Abrahamic faith (Ḥanifiyyah)¹, it was impossible for them to provide any rational arguments against the Quran and the Prophet (PBUH). Consequently, to compensate for this religious and cultural deficit and to counter the logical arguments of the Quran in this Surah, they were compelled to culturally utilize the People of the Book who resided in Mecca.

Therefore, it can be inferred that a group of Jews lived in Mecca who served as a cultural and religious source for the polytheists. In other words, the idolaters or Jews of Mecca, while denying the divine origin of the Quran, acted as cultural and religious advisors to the Quraysh polytheists, claiming that the Quran was derived from a group of People of the Book in the peninsula, and ultimately, by attributing the Quran to the legends of the ancients (al-Furqān/5), they engaged in complete mockery

and ridicule alongside the polytheists regarding the Prophet (PBUH) and the Quran.

5.3.2. The Jews and the Process of Quran Revelation

"And those who disbelieved say, 'Why has the Quran not been revealed to him all at once?' Thus, We may strengthen your heart thereby, and We have spaced it distinctly." (al-Furqān/32) The structure and context of the verses, along with the semantics of the word "*Furqān*," indicating distinction and separation, alongside the circumstances of revelation, reflect the objections of the Jews at the time of the Surah's revelation to its gradual descent. Observing the gradual revelation of the Quran compared to the Torah's immediate revelation, the Jews criticized why the Quran, as a divine book, was not revealed all at once like the Torah but was sent down in parts (al-Furqān/2-32). Therefore, by creating this doubt and teaching it to the polytheists, they claimed that the gradual revelation of the Quran indicated its human authorship. In this context, the Quran was viewed as a creation of Muhammad (PBUH), and some Jews who had converted to Islam might have taught it to him. Consequently, in the phrase "And those who disbelieved say," it appears that the People of the Book, referring to the Jews and Christians, are meant, supported by the phrase: "Why has the Quran not been revealed to him all at once?" Just as all heavenly books were revealed to previous prophets "all at once," such as the scrolls of Adam, Seth, Abraham, the Torah of Moses, the Psalms of David, and the Gospel of Jesus (Tayyib, 1990 AD/1369 SH: 9, 612).

5.3.3. The Jews and the Fabrication Against the Quran

1. Contrary to the views of some interpreters and Quranic scholars who claimed that the disbelievers mentioned in Surah al-Furqān referred to the polytheists of Quraysh, and that the polytheists of Quraysh would ask questions about prophethood and the Quran by going to Medina and consulting the Jews (Ibn 'Aṭṭīyah, 2001 AD/1422 AH: 4, 200). Allamah Ṭabāṭabā'ī clearly speaks about the lack of interaction, or at least the absence of conflict, between the Prophet (PBUH) and the People of the Book during the Meccan period. He writes in his commentary on verses 90-91 of Surah al-Ḥijr: "This portion of revelation warns against socializing with the People of the Book, and it is evident that there is no mention of the Jews in the Meccan verses because the Prophet (PBUH) did not have interactions with them in Mecca; such interactions took place in Medina." (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1970 AD/1390 AH: 5, 367) Allameh Ṭabāṭabā'ī is not the only contemporary commentator who believes there was no interaction between the Jews and the Prophet (PBUH) during the Meccan period; rather, the authors of Tafsir Nemune emphasize this lack of connection in several instances regarding the Jews and the Prophet (PBUH) during → ← that time. Therefore, in their commentary on verse 91 of Surah al-An'ām, despite the coherence and consistent context, they assert that this verse was revealed in Medina, since the Prophet (PBUH) had direct encounters with the Jews there and not in Mecca (Makarim Shirazi, 1995 AD/1374 SH: 5, 338; Tabrisi, 1993 AD/1372 SH: 4, 777; Hosseini Hamadani, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 6, 34). Dear readers, for further reading, see (Ahmadnejad and Calbasi Ashtari, 2014 AD/1393 SH).

In verse 4 of Surah *al-Furqān*, "And those who disbelieved said, "This is not but a falsehood he invented, and another people assisted him therein." They have certainly come with injustice and falsehood," the Jews, being aware of the truth and divine nature of the Quran, were described as unjust actors. *Darwaza*, in his commentary on the verse, states: "God, by describing them as unjust and emphasizing this, provides some reassurance to the Prophet not to be upset by the injustice and oppression that has been inflicted upon the Quran and revelation; because the Quran is the divine revelation that knows the secrets of the heavens and the earth." (*Darwaza*, 2000 AD/1421 AH: 3, 49)

The Jews not only failed to meet the divine expectations in confirming the Quran, but in a competitive effort against other religions, particularly with Christians, they claimed that 'Uzayr (Ezra) was the son of God; such claims persisted not only in Mecca but also in Medina until the final years of revelation; so much so that until the last years of revelation, God condemned their negative actions, as mentioned in verse 30 of Surah *al-Tawbah*: "And the Jews say, 'Uzayr is the son of Allah, and the Christians said: The Messiah is the son of Allah. That is their statement from their mouths; they imitate the speech of those who disbelieved before them. May Allah destroy them; how are they deluded?" It seems that their most prominent immoral traits and reprehensible actions are the distortion and alteration of truths, severe racism, and ultimately, the expression of malice and animosity towards the Quran and the Prophet of Islam (PBUH) (*Diyari Bidgoli*, 2004 AD/1383 SH: 371).

The Quran continues to address the accusation that it is a mere myth or of human origin by stating: "So do not obey the disbelievers, and strive against them with it a great striving." (*al-Furqān*/52). The phrase "Strive against them with

it" refers to making efforts in arguing and warning the disbelieving Jews (cf. *Darwaza*, 2000 AD/1421 AH: 3, 90). *Ṭabrisī* also comments on "So do not obey the disbelievers" by saying: Do not obey the disbelieving Jews in what they ask of you to be soft towards them and to submit to them. "And strive against them with it a great striving"; engage in a severe struggle against them in the way of Allah with the Quran. Thus, this verse indicates that the best and greatest Jihad in the sight of Allah under those circumstances is the jihad of those who refute the doubts of the enemies of the faith (*Ṭabrisī*, 1993 AD/1372 SH: 17, 216). Therefore, in this verse, the Prophet (PBUH) is commanded to engage in a cultural confrontation with the Jews alongside their cultural activities in Mecca, using the Quran and its commandments in Surahs *al-Furqān* and *Fāṭir*.

5.3.4. Disbelief and Its Repetition

The repeated use of the term "Disbelief" in Surah *al-Furqān* indicates that the Jews, despite recognizing the truth of the Quran, did not hesitate to mock it and collaborate culturally with their polytheist allies, conveying the superiority of idols and polytheistic beliefs over it at various moments. Hence, the disbelievers and polytheists, following the desire of their souls as mentioned in verse 43 of *al-Furqān*, made their passions their gods and sought to ridicule the Quran and create and promote doubts about its various verses. The Prophet (PBUH) was commanded to confront this widespread and unjust deflection by using the Quran and its teachings to invite the Jews and polytheists to monotheism and steer them away from idols and persistent disbelief. However, instead of accepting the directives and prohibitions of the Quran, they remained steadfast in their disbelief and polytheism, trying to deny and oppose it (*Ra'fat Sa'īd*, 2002: 104).

5.4. The Jews in Surah *Fāṭir*

"And if they deny you, then already have the messengers before you had been denied. And to Allah belong all matters." (Fāṭir/4) This noble verse comforts the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) by saying that if people continue to disbelieve after hearing these clear proofs, do not be distressed, for their behavior is not something new. The tone of the verses in Surah *Fāṭir* is harsher than in Surah *al-Furqān*. In Surah *al-Furqān*, the introduction of the previous prophets is presented with great care, using soft language to guide the audience, by bringing forth a model of the known Semitic prophets in the land of Hijaz. In this persuasive model, it first introduces Moses and Aaron as a preliminary reminder to the Jews who deny the Quran, and then discusses the narrative of Noah and his denial by his people. It goes on to conclude the pattern of denial by introducing 'Ād, Thamūd, the people of Ra's, and the punishments that came upon their deniers.

In the declarative action of Surah *Fāṭir*, after mentioning the blessings and their greatness, it provides reassurance to the Prophet of Islam regarding their slander and mockery in verse 4.

Darwaza comments on this verse, stating: "The mentioned verse has a shared context with the other verses of this surah; just as the other verses are addressing people and justifying their actions, this verse serves to offer support and reassurance to the Prophet." (Darwaza, 2000 AD/1421 AH: 3, 117) Thus, this denial from the Jews of Mecca is not a new occurrence; the aforementioned prophets, namely Moses and Aaron, were also denied by past generations of the Jews. *Darwaza* further refers to this interpretive approach in his commentary on the above verse: The Jewish disbelievers, like the past nations of the Jews, rallied against the

Prophet (PBUH) and made efforts to prevent the propagation of the religion and the destruction of the Quran. Therefore, it is fitting for Allah to remind the Prophet (PBUH) with clear examples of the invitations of the previous prophets of the Jews through His best explanation (Darwaza, 2000 AD/1421 AH: 3, 117).

5.4.1. The Jews and the Intensification of Accusations

During the period of the revelation of Surah *Fāṭir*, the intensity of accusations and mockery from the Jews was so distressing that in verse 24, Allah establishes an intimate connection with the Prophet, appointing him as a bearer of glad tidings and a warner tasked with conveying the Quran and its commandments. It can be said that in response to the accusations from the Jews, Allah did not overlook His calming relationship with the revelation of the Quran without any disruption.

In verse 25 of Surah *Fāṭir*, similar to verse 4, it states: "O! Muhammad, do not be distressed or saddened by these falsehoods and slanders; indeed, other prophets have also faced similar hardships from their people." It then continues, with slight variation, to mention "Clear Signs (*Bayyināt*)" alongside references to the writings of the Jews, signaling the persistent spirit of denial and distortion among the Jews throughout all ages and regions.

5.5. The Polytheists in Surah *al-Furqān* and *Fāṭir*

Darwaza attributes the betrayal of the polytheists in the face of the Quran to their arrogant disposition. When the Prophet (PBUH) presented his thoughts and commands in the triad of "Monotheism—Prophethood—Resurrection," and they did not see this message

aligning with their materialistic and economic ideas, their anger and jealousy against the Prophet (PBUH) increased. As interpreters have mentioned in connection with verse 175 of Surah *al-A'rāf*, two prominent figures from Quraysh, namely *Umayyah ibn al-Ṣalt* and *Abū 'Āmir*, felt jealousy and animosity considering the conferral of Prophethood and the Quran upon a messenger who was not from their ranks, and they strived with all their might to oppose the Quran. Therefore, they considered the selection of Muhammad as a prophet to be much unexpected and expressed their disdain, asserting that the Quran should be revealed to a great man from the leaders of Quraysh or *Ṭā'if* (cf. Darwaza, 2000 AD/1421 AH: 3, 173).

In Surah *al-Furqān*, the negative propaganda of the Jews left adverse effects on the thoughts of the ignorant polytheists, to the point that they regarded the Quran as poetry and legends, similar to their cultural advisors. Then, in Surah *Fāṭir*, the severity of the Jew's fabrications and illusions are revisited under the assertion that "The messenger of the Quran must come from the affluent and privileged classes." In other words, the disbelieving Jews in Surah *al-Furqān* initially prepared the groundwork for mocking the Quran, creating conditions for the Quraysh polytheists to align with them during the mid-revelation years in Mecca. Subsequently, as the conditions for misleading the polytheists were set, corresponding to their aristocratic thoughts in Surah *Fāṭir*, they reached an identity and consensus that the messenger of the Quran should only be from a specific and wealthy class of society (*Fāṭir*/42-43).

Conclusion

As observed in the previous section, the order of revelation plays a significant role in uncovering the themes and content of Surah *al-Furqān* and Surah *Fāṭir*. It has been concluded

that according to the order of revelation, the Quran's stance towards the polytheists of Quraysh and the Jews of Mecca in both Surah *al-Furqān* and Surah *Fāṭir*, during the years 6 and 7 of the Prophethood, is one of wisdom and educational purpose. However, in accordance with the social conditions of the polytheists and disbelievers of Mecca, at one point, it was attempted to express the guiding principles of the Quran in a persuasive and gentle manner under the verses of Surah *al-Furqān*. The increasing mockery from the aforementioned groups, as the revelation progressed in Surah *Fāṭir*, transformed the discourse of the Quran into a more declarative and stringent one.

In this context, the key concept of the Quran, as a central theme of Surah *al-Furqān* and Surah *Fāṭir*, is redefined through historical context, producing and reproducing social realities around the concepts of "Disbelievers, Polytheists, and Manifestations." Consequently, during the revelation of Surah *al-Furqān*, the Quran attempted to relate both the legislative and created signs, by establishing a clear and persuasive argument to familiarize the disbelievers and polytheists with the guiding principles and the central role of the Quran; following the escalation of mockery from the disbelievers, the literature of Surah *Fāṭir* transitions from a preliminary phase into a harder phase. Influenced by this literature, while the Quran and its creations are depicted as novel, the rebellious and deniers are promised a severe punishment akin to that of past unruly nations.

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