A Comparative Study of the Interpretation of Prophet Jesus' Verses Based on the Interpretation of Judge Numan and Al-Bahrani

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Abstract

The Book of Basis of Interpretation by Judge Numan is one of the most important Ismaili books that expresses its interpretative views on many verses. This study seeks to answer the important question of how do Judges Numan's interpretations coincide with the narrations of Allameh al-Bahrani in relation to the verses of Jesus (A.S)? This research is the documentary-analytical method and seeks to analyze the verses concerning Jesus (PBUH) in two books: The Basis of Interpretation and "Al-Burhan in the Interpretation of the Qur'an", the aspects of these two views being shared and differentiated. Explain and, through it, examine and criticize Judge Numan's intellectual foundations. The findings of this research show that Judge Numan, in his commentary and especially in his interpretations, has used his mental aptitudes more than he has expressed in a humorous way, except in very rare cases that he has not used the Ahlul-Bayt (A.S) narrations. Is and does not refer to its sources of interpretation. But an evaluation of the traditions in the book of Alburhan shows that more than half of all traditions are weak and less than a quarter of the relevant traditions are reliable. In this way, the narrations that Numan quotes from Alburhan cannot be cited. Despite Judge Numan's intellectual concessions to the issue of interpretation, there are serious drawbacks and ambiguities in his view that we will examine and critique in this article.

Keywords: Comparative Study; Interpretation of the Verses; Jesus; The Basis of interpretation of Numan; Al-Burhan in the Interpretation of the Qur'an of Al Bahrani

Introduction

"Interpretation" is one of the most complex Qur'anic debates and various views have been expressed in this regard throughout history¹ So that the commentators have explained what it is and that’s because of the widespread use of the "interpretation" in the Qur'an. Among the commentators, Judge Numan, who wrote an independent book on this subject and has expressed his opinion below each verse. The author of the book at the beginning of his speech in the book "Basis of Interpretation", mentioned his other books entitled "Pillars of Islam" And introduces it as a prerequisite for entering the topics of the
book "Basis of Interpretation" for the person “the respondent”. In the pillars of Islam, he says after the introductory statement: "... the first range of education and the lowest level of knowledge and understanding" (Judge Numan: 23). This phrase of the author means that the topics mentioned in this book are first step and the lowest level for understanding the topics of the book “the Basis of interpretation”. Examining the topics of Pillars of Islam, shows that these issues include the apparent rules of religion, which are related to practical worship. In this book, the judge first discusses the limits of interpretation and inside authority and how to raise the degree in this area then he started writing the book "Basis of Interpretation" and called it "the inner principle.

Judge Nu'man, has written the book “Pillars of Islam” on the subject of the apparent rules and regulations of religion and the book of the “Basis of interpretation” in the inner description and interpretation of the same book. But about the book Al-Burhan in the interpretation of Quran, which is one of the most important commentaries of Shiite narration which Compiled by Sayyed Hashem Bahrani, known as Allameh Bahrani, who is one of the Shiite jurists, muhaddithin and commentators in the 11th and early 12th centuries. In this commentary, in accordance with the verses of the Holy Quran, have been mentioned the jurisprudential issues, stories, prophetic hadiths and the virtues of the Ahl al-Bayt (AS). Bahrani is declarative and his commentary has been written with this approach. He in the introduction of his book has mentioned that His motivation for writing this commentary was to provide a source for understanding the interpretations of the Ahl al-Bayt from Quranic verses and the secrets of the Holy Quran and the necessity of knowing his views in order to understand this holy book. (Bahrani, 1416 AH, 1: 4).

Bahrani in this book, first mentions the name of the surah and the place of descent, the virtue of the surah and the number of verses, then indicates the verses that have an interpretive narration and he quotes the narrations related to each Qur'anic verse after it. (Khoramshahi, 1998: 475). Allameh Bahrani in Al-Burhan has only mentioned the narrations and a series of recorded hadith documents and the hadiths of the Sunnis has given separately at the end of each section. He knows his book of commentary as an expression of the interpretation of verses. (Bahrani 1414 AH 1: 4). His meaning of interpretation is "stating the hadiths narrated from the infallible Imams (AS) and mentioning their virtues (Same: 5-2). On the other hand, the subject matter “Basis of Interpretation” is the interpretation of the story of the prophets from the perspective of the Ismaili religion. The only independent book is "Basis of Interpretation" by judge Nu'man, which includes the interpretation of the inner meanings of the rules and the interpretation of some verses and stories of the Qur'an and he has used the narrative method in his interpretation and he has interpreted the verses of the Qur'an based on the sayings and hadiths of the Imams (AS).

This research intends to make a comparative comparison of verses related to Jesus (PBUH) in the books of the “basis of interpretation” and Al Burhan in the interpretation of the Qur'an that analyze these verses in order to clarify the ruling thought of the interpretation of the relevant verses. Therefore, the basic question of this research is that what are the differences and common bases between the two interpretations of Judge Nu'man and Al-Bahrani regarding the creation of Jesus (PBUH)? And based on the documentary method and analysis of texts, the findings indicate the existence of serious differences and few commonalities in this field.

A Brief of the Life, Thoughts and Works of Allameh Bahrani and Judge Numani

Sayyed Hashim ibn Sulayman Tubli Bahrani (1050-1107 or 1109 AH / 1019-1074 or 1076 AD) is known as Allameh Bahrani, one of the Shiite jurists, muhaddithin and commentators in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. He has been in charge of the religious and social authority of the people of Bahrain. The book “Al-Burhan in the interpretation of Quran” is from him. His full name is Hashem Ibn Sulayman Ibn Ismail Hosseini Tubli, a descendant of Sayyed Morteza Alam al-Huda. And his ancestry reaches Imam Musa ibn Ja'far (AS) through an intermediary (look: Effendi, Riyaz al-Ulama, vol. 5, p. 298). Abu
Hanifeh Muhammad ibn Nu'man, known as Judge Nu'man (d. 363), is one of the prominent Ismaili jurists and personalities (Daftari, 1996: 276). His efforts in writing and numerous writings have made him a hardworking character in the Fatemiyoun period. So that he has a first rank among the Ismaili’s jurists. He has forty dissertations which are about subject such as: interpretations, facts, jurisprudence and history (same, 287). It may be claimed that the system of Ismaili jurisprudence in the Fatemiyoun period was established by Judge Nu'man (same. 285). And his full name is Al-Qazi Abu Hanifeh Al-Nu'man Ibn Abi Abdulllah Muhammad Ibn Mansour Ibn Ahmad Ibn Hayun Al-Tamimi Al-Maghrebi.

**Research Background**

The interpretation of the Qur'an and the science of interpretation were important issues that were considered from the beginning of the revelation of the verses. Among the Islamic sects, the group that have a special view to the interpretation of the Qur'an are Ismailis. Quran has an important for the Ismailis as it is to other Muslims; but they emphasized more on the inner and symbolic meanings of the verses of the Qur'an and the rules rather than the apparent meanings. Therefore, by using interpretation which they consider to be a combination of reason and revelation and they have intended to compare their new-Platonic cosmology and the ascheretory with the Qur'an. They have believed that the success of achieving the interpretation and inner meaning of the Qur'an belongs to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and his guardian Ali ibn Abi Talib (A.S), and their children (A.S). And the narrations which left by the companions can’t use as a criterion for interpreting of the verses.

One of the Ismaili commentators who has taken steps in this field is Judge Nu'man. According to his high status in the Ismaili religion in the propagation and establishment of this religion and his view that has an effect on this group, it is necessary to examine and evaluate his views, ideas and principles in this field in order to verify the accuracy of this claim by the Ismailis. In this regard, several articles and books have been written, including the following:

The article "The conceptualization and adaptation and the esoteric of the Qur'an based on narrations" (2014) by Mansour Pahlavan, Qasem Faez and Abbas Khabiri, Article "Semantics of Interpretation in Narrations" (2004) by Mohammad Farjad, Article "Leveling and Innerization of Interpretive Narrations in the Expression of Imams (A.S)" (2014) By Mehdi Khoshdoni, Abdul Hadi Fiqhizadeh, the Article "consideration on the Interpretations of the Story of Joseph (A.S) in gnostic Texts Based on the Prepositions of the Texts of Order from the Sixth to the Ninth Century" (2014) Leila Modiri, Mohammad Ibrahim, Malmir, the article "Judge Numan and his religion" (2008) by the Javan Arasteh, In each of these articles, some aspects of the issue are considered. However, it can be said with certainty that in relation to the subject of the present research, ie: (A Comparative Study of the Interpretation of the Verses of Jesus (PBUH) in the basic interpretation of Judge Nu'man and Al-Burhan in the Interpretation of the Qur'an of Bahrani” not much research has been done.

**Semantics of the Interpretation**

Interpretation is one of the most used words in the Quran and narrations from the Ahl al-Bayt (A.S) and this indicates the high position of interpretation in the Qur'an and hadiths and requires accurate knowledge of it. Accordingly, the philologists have mentioned various meanings for the word "interpretation", that all of these meanings "return". Some philologists mentioned, interpretation means reference. (Ibn Manzoor, 1414 AH, 11:32), some have said that it means interpretation (Farahidi, 1409 AH, 8: 369; Fayumi, 1414 AH, 2:30), Interpretation means deliberation and gumption, and it also means retaliation. (Ibn Manzoor, 1414 AH, 11:32). The principle at the root of this word is precedence so that the end is arranged on it and interpretation means putting something first, so that the end is arranged on it and this includes both material and spiritual matters. (Mustafavi, 1989, 1: 175). It also means to interpret (Zamakhshari, 1417 AH, 1: 81). The main meaning of the word "interpretation" is "return". And because it goes to the Bab Tafeel, it means "return. Thus the interpretation of an object; means returning it to its
original place and source. And the interpretation of a similar word means: justifying its appearance so that it returns to its true and original meaning.

The terminological meanings of "interpretation" are numerous due to its application in jurisprudence, Quranic sciences, theology, interpretation, etc. And the scholars of Islamic sciences have offered various definitions for it according to their intellectual source. Jorjani says: "Interpretation" in Sharia "is to turn the word from its apparent meaning to a meaning that is hidden in the word and it’s agrees with the book and tradition. For example, in the verse "he brings forth the living from the dead" (Al-Rum / 19) If the bird is hatched from the egg: It is a commentary and if the believer is taken out of the infidel or the scientist out of the ignorant; this will be an interpretation. (Look. Jorjani, 1411 AH: 46).

Interpretation, referencing the word from the apparent meaning to a more hidden meaning. (Tarihi, 1375, 5: 312). The interpretation is to determine the reference of the word and its meaning and purpose and sometimes the meaning is hidden from people and the appearance of the word does not indicate it. In this case, it is necessary to know the purpose and meaning of the word. (Mustafavi, 1989, 1: 176). From the point of view of Marefat, expressing doubts is called "interpretation". (Marefat, 1387: 116) According to him, "interpretation" is used in cases where speech has doubt, astonishment and confusion. And the interpreter takes action to remove the doubt and returns the suspicious appearance of that speech to its original position (the same). Allameh Tabatabai also writes in this regard: "Interpretation is an outside affair that is refers to another foreign matter. Not the reference of God's word, Therefore, describing the verses of Quran because this word has an interpretation, so it indicates external meanings, is not a description of the verses, on the contrary, the description belongs to the verses. In the writings of the Qur'an, which is the work of Muslims, and in its news, which has foreign meanings. However, interpretation is a reference to which the owner of the interpretation returns to it but here return has a special meaning and every return isn’t an interpretation (Look. Tabatabai, 1417 AH, 3:2) by Examining the verses, this is understood that "interpretation" is not a concept or word. But, according to the explicit meaning of the verses of the Qur'an, "interpretation" is kind of external and objective matters. On the other hand, the above definitions of "interpretation" is in fact related to the appearance and esoteric of the Qur'an and is kind of the concepts and words. Therefore, this definition, the reference and interpretation of similarities to the indisputable verses of the Qur'an, which are different from "interpretation."

Despite the view of the Ismailis who have a serious believe to the esoteric and interpretation, Judge Nu'man explains the belief in interpretation along the text and tries to avoid other mistakes of the Ismailis. He considers the appearance of the Qur'an as the silence and miracle of the Prophet (PBUH) and the interpretation and esoteric of Quran as the miracle of the Imams (A.s). He considers interpretation and esoteric as a science that can be proved by using the verses of the Qur'an and rules. By the opinions of Judge Numan, the rules and conditions of interpretation can be deduced as follows: “Paying attention to the appearance; the conceptual relationship between interpretation and intellect, the effect of sincerity on the accurateness of interpretation, leading interpretation to the knowledge of the Imam (A.s) and the interference of faith in the verse.

The Comparison of Interpretation of Verses

The first verse: «When the angels said, ‘O Mary, Allah gives you the good news of a Word from Him whose name is Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, distinguished in the world and the Hereafter and one of those brought near [to Allah]. (Al Imran:45).

Maryam (A.S) as a Divine Authority

In the book “Basis of Interpretation”, there are many topics which are related to the divine authority. According to him, the divine authority not only belong to divine prophets and good natured human, but also belong to good natured women. In the story of Jesus (PBUH), Mary is introduced as the authority of Allah to Jesus (PBUH). The judge believes that Maryam was one of Later of Imran Sahib al-
Zaman and appointed Zakaria (A.S) as the Imamate, and the later who called her Maryam agreed with him to make him an authority. She was, but Zakaria was not his child, but Zakaria necessarily appointed him to Imamate, and since Maryam did not have the strength of Imamate; but she had the power of authority, so Zakaria appointed him to his own guidance (look Judge Numan, 301).

This matter is also explicitly mentioned in the narrations of the Ahl al-Bayt (A.S). It has been narrated from Imam Hassan Askari (A.S) that: We are the authority of Allah over His creatures and our ancestor Hazrat Zahra (A.S) is the authority of Allah over us. (Tayyib Sayyed Abdul Hossein, 1378, 12: 225). Also he has narrated: we are the authority over creature and the Hazrat Zahra (A.S) is the authority over us. (The worlds of sciences and knowledge and the situation of verses, news and sayings (Fatimiyeh’s secrets, 99, by Sheikh Muhammad Fazil Al-Masudi). It seems that the view of Judge Numan in explaining the position and dignity of the divine authority is matching with the narrations. Because both views have the same opinion about this matter.

Maryam as a Divine Mother

The divine mother is one of the prominent topics that discussed in the verses related to Jesus (PBUH). In other words, he believes in two types of physical birth and religious birth. So in the verse: (When the angels said, ‘O Mary, Allah gives you the good news of a Word from Him whose name is Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, distinguished in the world and the Hereafter and one of those brought near [to Allah].(Al Imran:45). He writes: Allah Almighty has announced of his name the name of the recipient and the name of his mother. And if the call in this verse is such that the people think that it means the same appearance that Allah will give you a son who is called Messiah(Jesus) the son of Maryam. This does not make sense because if they tell to a woman that you will give birth to a boy whose name is so-and-so, this statement is impossible, because if you tell to a woman that you will give birth to a boy she don’t need to this word because every woman knows that he/she is her child. So when he says: (of a Word from Him) it means that he will be a prophet and the prophets are the words of Allah. Because they speak to people with Allah permission, and for this reason they call the Qur'an and all the divine books as the word of Allah.

By studying the Al-Burhan and other books of Shiite narration, it is clear that such issues have not been in the explanation of the verses by the Ahl al-Bayt (A.S). And it is not clear and according to what basis he is expressing these thoughts. Such statements are in opposition to the culture of the Ahl al-Bayt (A.S) and Shiism and have no roots in the culture of Islam. It seems that these principles and speeches were made to strengthen and spread the Ismaili culture.

Second verse: I will create for you the form of a bird out of clay, then I will breathe into it, and it will become a bird by Allah’s leave. I heal the blind and the leper). (Al Imran: 49).

Below this verse, Judge Nu'man has explained some key words. One of these words is "clay". According to him, the meaning of clay is the creation of clay. That is, I stand for you from among yourselves, who will answer me. He mentions a narration from the Holy Prophet (PBUH): That is why the Messenger Mohammad (PBUH) nicknamed Ali (AS) Buturab when he introduced him to the Imamate and announced that he is the Abu al-Mu'minin (Imam) after me. And here the meaning of water is science when it mixes with the soil it become clay. As a result, the interpretation of the verse is that I will confirm some of you in order to reach the status of a missionary. And "chicken" is a parable for the missionary, when she reaches that position (look Judge Nu'man, 304). He writes further: (I heal the blind), I will give vision to whom become blind. And (the leper), and it is on the surface a pain that cannot be cured, and it is on the inside of someone whose doubts and opposition have affected her soul. And apparently it is a pain that cannot be cured, and it is on the inside someone whose doubts and opposition have affected on her soul. And (I will tell you what you have eaten), and about this part of the verse he says that I will
teach you what your souls will revived by it as your bodies are revived with food. (And what you have stored in your houses), the judge also says in this part of the verse: What it's in the hands of the followers is a reserve for those who deserve it, those who ascend to superiority ranks and they are like a shelter for the people who are lower than them. (Look, the same.304).

By Referring to the commentary of Al-Burhan, it appears that the thought of Judge Nu'man in the explanation, and interpretation of this verse is substantial different from the narrations of the Ahl al-Bayt (A.S). And there isn’t this kind of interpretations and it is not clear on what basis he brought these interpretations.

Third verse: (Indeed the case of Jesus with Allah is like the case of Adam: He created him from dust, then said to him, ‘Be,’ and he was. (Al -Imran: 59). Judge Nu'man believes that this means that you should make the upbringing of Jesus (as) a believer, as a result of which Alawi received his approval. And it was always with that confirmation that what God said, give birth to it, and because God wanted them to give good news of what was to come. When it is over, the man commands him to obey of the Imam. (Judge Nu'man, 305).

What is mentioned in Bahrani commentary is related to the story of the controversy between the Prophet (PBUH) and the Christians of Najran, in which the Holy Prophet (PBUH) contends for the creation of Jesus (PBUH) and his quality of life. And in this situation, the Christians of Najran are astonished and are forced to confirm the words of the Prophet of Islam (PBUH). What can be deduced from the comparison of these two views is that there is no communion between these two books about above verse, and each of them is on a separate intellectual and scientific way.

Fourth verse: Therat she pointed to him. They said, ‘How can we speak to one who is yet a baby in the cradle? (Maryam: 29). The interpretation of the verse is that the latter, who was called Mary, told Jesus (PBUH) to answer them because confirmation was with him. The word "cradle" in interpretation means education, that is, they said how to talk to someone who is not educated. At this time, Jesus (PBUH) spoke to them about a prophet and invited them to himself. He said, ‘Indeed I am a servant of Allah! He has given me the Book and made me a prophet. (Maryam: 30). (Judge Numan, 103)

Bahrani writes: Maryam (PBUH) pointed to Jesus (PBUH) in the cradle, [they] told her [Maryam] how to talk to a child in the cradle? At this time, Jesus spoke with Mary (AS) and said: ‘Indeed I am a servant of Allah! He has given me the Book and made me a prophet. (Maryam: 30). He then quotes a narration from Yazid Kanasi who said: I asked Aba Ja'far (AS): Was Jesus Ibn Maryam (AS) the authority of Allah over the people of his time when he spoke to the people in the cradle? He said: "On that day he was a prophet and the authority of God and he was not a messenger. Have you not listen to him when he said: I’m the servant of Allah who has brought the book and made me a prophet. I said: that day, when he was in the cradle, was he Allah's authority against Zakaria (AS)? He said: Jesus (PBUH) at that time was a sign for the people, and a blessing from God for Mary (PBUH). And when he talked, he spoke of him, and at that time for those who heard his words, he was a prophet and a proof (Bahrani, 1416 AH, 3: 709).

Fifth verse: When the Disciples said, ‘O Jesus son of Mary! Can your Lord send down to us a table from the sky?’ Said he, ‘be wary of Allah, should you be faithful. (Al maeedeh: 112). In the interpretation of this verse Judge Nu'man stated that the later ones told Jesus (AS) that he should bring proof for us from the upper world, as it has come to you. But Jesus (pbuh) forbade them from it and [said] Fear Allah. (Judge Numan, 312). Imam Baqir (A.S) said: The blessing that landed on the Bani Israel was hung on chains of gold and in it were placed nine kinds of food and nine forms of bread. Ammar ibn Yasir, narrates of the Prophet of Islam (PBUH) that the blessing was revealed in the form of meat and bread (Bahrani, 1416 AH, 2: 381).
Sixth verse: Peace to me the day I was born, and the day I die, and the day I am raised alive.’ (Maryam: 33). From the interpretive point of view of Judge Nu'man, the existence of Jesus (pbuh) in this verse is stated as "confirmation", so he says; Peace to me), that means hello to confirmation. That is, confirmation is with me all the times and will not be separated from me (Ghavi Numan, 312).

Yasir, the servant of Hazrat Reza (AS) says: The Imam said that in three positions, man is lonely than ever, or the most frightening situations for man are three situations: when he is born and comes out of his mother's womb and sees the world, and the day he dies and sees the Hereafter and people. And the day when he will be resurrected and see the rulings that he had not seen in the world, and Allah has sent greetings to Yahya in these three positions and has suppressed his fear. Allah says; Peace be to him, the day he was born, and the day he dies, and the day he is raised alive! (Maryam: 15) And Isa Ibn Maryam also greeted himself in these three positions and said: Peace to me the day I was born, and the day I die, and the day I am raised alive. Sheikh Saduq: 1373, vol. 1, p. 531; huvizi Wedding, 1409 AH, 3: 336).

The seventh verse: When Jesus sensed their faithlessness, he said, ‘Who will be my helpers [on the path] toward Allah?’ The Disciples said, ‘We will be helpers of Allah. We have faith in Allah, and you be witness that we have submitted [to Him]. Our Lord, we believe in what you have sent down, and we follow the apostle, so write us among the witnesses.’ (Al imran.L52, 53). In this verse, twelve apostles ask Allah to make them Imams, and the example of Imams is for witnesses, and the example of apostles is to the followers, and it is reported that these apostles were hunters. And its interpretation is that they were followers and in inviting those who had fled from the truth; they were hunted them and also said that they were Laundry man. It is also said to mean dyer. That is, they invite people from the state of disbelief to guidance and faith, and guided them from misguidance, just as the Laundry man and the dyer that return the society from one state to another. And these are the parables that God Almighty sets for the wise and the followers of the Imams to follow this path and know the truth.

Conclusion

By examining the mentioned verses in this article, it can be claimed that the opinions of Judge Nu'man are closely similar to the narrations from the Ahl al-Bayt (A.S) and show that he has adapted them from these narrations. Of course, this is not a reason that the verses are interpretive; His interpretations do not correspond to the narrations, and it is possible that he had reached to narrations which there are not in Shiite books. Judge Nu'man states the belief in interpretation alongside the text and tries to avoid the mistakes of the Ismailis. Despite Judge Numan's point on the issue of interpretation, there are serious ambiguities in his view. On the other hand, Bahrani expresses his opinion in a few cases, so his interpretation is completely narrative and his interpretations isn’t like the book “Basis of interpretation”. And Judge Nu'man, if he referred to these narrations in some cases, maybe it was only to confirm his interpretations, otherwise such interpretations are not mentioned from Ahl al-Bayt (A.S).

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