



## A Critical Analysis of the *Batn* (Esoteric Meaning) Theory in *Tafsīr al-Mīzān*, with Regard to *Tafsīr al-Furqān*

Zohreh Narimani

Assistant professor, University of the Sciences and Teachings of the Holy Qur'ān, Iran

<http://dx.doi.org/10.18415/ijmmu.v8i7.2686>

### Abstract

The commentators and traditionists have long focused on the theory that Qur'ān has multiple *Buṭūn* (esoteric meanings). Most of the commentators believe that the *Batn* can be revealed by the exegetical narrations. Therefore, in interpreting Qur'ān, they have referred to narrations to express these *Buṭūn*. In their commentaries on some of the Qur'ānic verses, the contemporary Shiite commentators have referred to the *Buṭūn* of the verses based on the available narrations and have mentioned different types of *Buṭūn* and *Ta'wīls* (Hermeneutic Interpretation). There were some fundamental and practical disagreements among commentators about these narrations as well. This study investigates the *Batn* theory in *Tafsīr al-Mīzān* with regard to *Tafsīr al-Furqān*.

**Keywords:** *Buṭūn*; *Ta'wīl*; *Tafsīr al-Mīzān*; *Tafsīr al-Furqān*

### Introduction

One of the important factors for understanding a *ḥadīth* is to extract its general truth, i.e., the general and final views about the *ḥadīth*, which help the reader to gain a correct understanding. In exegetical narrations, sometimes the focus of *ḥadīth* is on the general meaning and implication of a verse which limits the meaning of the verse into one single case and makes the audience think that the *ḥadīth* has specifically restricted the meaning of the verse. However, whilst accepting and confirming the *ḥadīth*, the narrator determines its general truth and *manāṭ* (the underlying reason) by such principles and criteria as examples, *Jary* (denotation) and *Taṭbīq* (collation), *Ta'wīl* and considering *Istihbāb* (Highly recommended), *Ibāḥah* (permission), and *Taqiyyah* (prudence) and presents a better understanding.

This problem results from the fact that the Holy Qur'ān has layered deep meanings and that everyone understands it based on his own understanding capacity. According to the famous expression "multidimensional nature of the Quran"<sup>1</sup>, the Infallibles provide different interpretations for the Qur'ānic verse based on the requirements of the context. Thus, reading these *ḥadīths* may result in incorrect judgment and misunderstanding about the truth of the verse. Therefore, by developing and explaining

<sup>1</sup> Alī ibn 'Umar Dāraquṭnī, *Al-Sunan Dāraquṭnī* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1994), V. IV, p. 82, Hadith, 4232.

some *manāṭ* and principles, the Infallibles and, consequently, the narrators and commentators have organized these *tafsīrs* (interpretations) and put them into a specific framework. The differences in understanding the verses and the importance of the interpretive *ḥadīths* originate from the narrations which assign exoteric aspect and esoteric aspect to Qur'ān, each of which is based on some *Usūl* (principles) and *Furū'* (sub-principles). For example, Imam 'Alī (AS) states, "No verse is in the Qur'ān but it possesses four meanings: *zāhir* (exoteric), *bāṭin* (esoteric), *ḥadd* (limited), and *maṭla'* (highest)."<sup>2</sup>

In another narration, Imam Kazim (AS) about the verse "إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ رَبِّيَ الْفَوَاحِشَ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَّنَ"<sup>3</sup> (Say, 'My Lord has only forbidden indecencies, the outward among them and the esoteric ones') states that Qur'ān has *zāhir* and *bāṭin*. Whatever that is deemed forbidden in Qur'ān is *zāhir* and its *bāṭin* is the oppressive leader. Whatever is considered lawful in Qur'ān is *zāhir* and its *bāṭin* is the right leader.<sup>4</sup>

There are plenty of such narrations which have explicitly stated that Qur'ān has *bāṭin*. Some of them, including the above-mentioned *ḥadīth*, give an example of this *bāṭin*.

Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī as one of the contemporary theorists and developers of the *baṭn* theory in exegetical narrations has focused on this theory in his *Tafsīr*. Despite its importance and appropriate processing, His approach is not free of shortcomings and weaknesses which need to be investigated and discussed. Therefore, the aim of the present study was to criticize Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī point of view through content analysis and comparative study.

### **Baṭn from Sunni Commentators' Viewpoint**

Shiite commentators and narrators take the *bāṭin* of Qur'ān for granted, but what about the Sunni narrators? Is there any reference to the *baṭn* of Qur'ān in Sunni narrations?

Quoting from Ibn Mas'oud, Ibn 'Asākir stated, "'Alī Ibn Abi Tālib holds the knowledge of *zāhir* and its *bāṭin*".<sup>5</sup>

Similarly, in his interpretation, Ṭabarī frequently acknowledges the *baṭn* by offering firm reasons, arguments, and proofs and rejects any *bāṭin* interpretation which, in his view, is not based on a firm Qur'ānic or narrative reason and proof. This indicates that Ṭabarī believes in the *baṭn* of Qur'ān, based of course on specific criteria.<sup>6</sup>

Moreover, quoting Ibn 'Abbas, Suyūṭī says, "*zāhir* of the Qur'ān is its recitation, while *bāṭin* of Qur'ān is its *ta'wīl*".<sup>7</sup>

Ghazālī explicitly considers the *baṭn* of Qur'ān as certain and argues, "Anyone who thinks that there is no other meaning for Qur'ān than the exoteric meaning, which is the meaning of the words, demonstrates his limited knowledge since it is mentioned in the narrations and the [Islamic] works that Qur'ān has a wide range of meanings which can only be understood by the wise ones".<sup>8</sup>

However, there are some Sunni scholars who deny the *baṭn* of Qur'ān and attribute it to the Shiites<sup>9</sup>. For example, al-Dhahabi states, "the *baṭn* to that the Holy Prophet refers and commentators have accepted, is the same *ta'wīl* which the words of Qur'ān don't show directly, rather refer to it indirectly.

<sup>2</sup> Mullā *Muhsin* Feiḍ kāshānī, *Al-Tafsīr al-Ṣāfi* (Tehran: al-Ṣadr, 1995), V. I, p. 31.

<sup>3</sup> Qur'ān: 33:7.

<sup>4</sup> *Muhammad Ibn Hassan Hurr al-Āmili, Wasā'il al-Shi'a ilā taḥṣīl masa'il al-Sharī'a* (Theran: Maktaba al-Islamiyyah, 1964), V. XXV, p.11.

<sup>5</sup> 'Alī Ibn Hassan *Ibn 'Asakir*, *Tārīkh Maīnata Damishq wa dhikr Faḍluha*, researched by 'Alī Shīrī (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1995), V. XXXXII, p. 400.

<sup>6</sup> Abū Ja'far Muhammad Ibn Jarīr Ṭabarī, *Jami' al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān* (Beirut: Dār al-ma'rifa, 1992), V. XIII, p. 109; V. IX, p. 95; V. X, p. 197; etc., Jalāl al-Dīn Suyūṭī, *Al-Durr Al-Manthur Fi Tafsīr Bil-Ma'thur* (Qom: Āyat Allāh Mar'ashī Library, 1984), V. II, p. ١٥٠.

<sup>7</sup> Jalāl al-Dīn Suyūṭī, *Al-Itqān fi 'Ulum Al-Qur'an* (Beirut: Dār al-kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 2000), V. II, p. 487.

<sup>8</sup> Muhammad Ibn Muhammad Ghazālī, *'Ihya' al-Dīn Rub' 'Ibādāt* (Tehran: 'Ilmi wa Farhangī publication, 1958), V. I, p. 405.

<sup>9</sup> Muhammad Ḥusayn, *Dhahbī. Al-Tafsīr wal-Mufsi'rūn. NP: Dār al-Kitāb al-Ḥadīth, 1976. V. II, p. 32).*

However, the *baṭn* in which the Shi'as believe is based on their own virtues and ideas, and that the *zāhir* of the words don't imply them. Discussing this issue and its criticism is beyond the scope of the present study. Here, suffice it to say that most of the narrations focusing on the *zāhir* and *bāṭin* of the Qur'ān (whether in terms of proving it or listing its numerous cases) are generally Shiite narrations. This is because only the pure and specific ones, the obvious example of whom are *Ahl al-Bayt*, can understand the *bāṭin* of the Qur'ān. Therefore, because of these Infallible Ones, Shiites have the opportunity to understand the *bāṭin* of Qur'ānic verses. The other reason is the existence of various narrations which are considered as examples of the *bāṭin* of the Qur'ān, and their contents apply to *Ahl al-Bayt*, Shiites, and their opponents. Therefore, it is very difficult to mention and accept these narrations in the Sunni narrative and exegetical sources.

### **The Terms Related to the Bāṭin**

Regarding the *zāhir* and *bāṭin* of the Qur'ān, there are other terms which are almost consistent with these two terms, including *tanzīl* (Revelation), *ta'wīl* (Hermeneutic Interpretation), *miṣḍāq* (example), *jary* (denotation) and *taṭbīq* (collation). The words *tanzīl* and *ta'wīl*, like *zāhir* and *bāṭin*, are used widely in the Shiite and Sunni narrations, but *miṣḍāq*, *jary* and *taṭbīq* are widely used in the exegeses. Have these terms been sorted out correctly and their meanings specified precisely, or have their meanings been confused in Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī's *al-Mīzān* and other contemporary commentaries, particularly *al-Furqān*? In general, what *manāṭ* (the underlying reasons) have been presented by the commentators in this regard?

### **Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī's Viewpoint on the Baṭn**

Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī, one of the most prominent influential teachers of the author of *al-Furqān*, argues that at first glance, it seems that there is a difference between "*jary* and *taṭbīq*" and "*baṭn* and *ta'wīl*". This is concluded from his comments on some of the narrations, for example, "و هو من قبيل الجرى أو" <sup>10</sup> (this narration is about the *jary* or in terms of the *baṭn* of the verse).

In this statement, Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī differentiates between *jary*, *baṭn*, and *ta'wīl*. However, he believes that *jary* and *taṭbīq* are the same as *miṣḍāq* since in various cases, he states that "... من باب المصداق" <sup>11</sup> (as a matter of *miṣḍāq* and *jary*, as a matter of *jary* and expressing the *miṣḍāq*).

Seemingly, Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī uses them interchangeably or where he assigns different meanings to them, he does not express himself explicitly. For example, in his commentary on "يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَابْتَغُوا إِلَيْهِ الْوَسِيلَةَ" <sup>12</sup> (O you who have faith! Be wary of Allah, and seek the means of recourse to Him), after quoting a number of narrations which state that "the means of recourse to God" is Imam, Allāmah argues that this verse indicates that by following Imam, one can achieve the recourse to God. This statement is an example of *jary* and *taṭbīq*.<sup>13</sup> Then, he quotes two narrations from Imam 'Alī, which show that "means" in this verse refers to Imam 'Alī. He finally says, "ويمكن أن يكون الروايتان من قبيل" <sup>14</sup> (these two narrations can be considered a *ta'wīl*. Therefore, ponder about them.)

These two narrations which have similar themes have been first considered as examples of *jary* and *taṭbīq* and then, as examples of *ta'wīl*. In one place, Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī considers *ta'wīl* the same conventional *tafsīr* known among early and contemporary commentators. After presenting his

<sup>10</sup> Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Al-Mīzān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān* (Qom: Enteshārāt-e Jāme'eh Mudarrisīn-e Ḥawze-ye 'Imiyyah, 1996), V. II, p. 199; V. XIX, p. 140.

<sup>11</sup> Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Al-Mīzān*, V. I, pp. 86, 124, 153.

<sup>12</sup> Qur'ān, 5:35.

<sup>13</sup> Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Al-Mīzān*, V. 5, p. 191.

<sup>14</sup> Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Al-Mīzān*, V. XIII, p. 159.

commentary on the verse "وَلَا تُطِعْ مَنْ أَغْفَلْنَا قَلْبَهُ عَن ذِكْرِنَا" <sup>15</sup> (And do not obey him whose heart We have made oblivious to Our remembrance), Allāmah states, "و لا حاجة إلى تكلف التأويل كقول من قال إن المراد بقوله: «أغفلنا قلبه» عرضناه للغفلة أو أن المعنى صادقناه غافلاً... (there is no need to *ta'wīl* the verse and, like some, to say that the phrase "*Ighfalnā qalbahu*" means "*Arḍinah qalbahu lil-ghāfilan*", Which means "expose his heart to the negligence", or say, "it means "*ṣādiqana ghāfilan*"...we met him while he was negligent. <sup>16</sup>

It can be seen that by *ta'wīl*, Allāmah means neither *jary and taṭbīq and Miṣdāq* nor *baṭn* since in the quoted view which he has criticized, there is no *baṭn*, rather only a *tafsīr* and understanding different from that of Allāmah's is presented, criticized, and rejected.

In other cases, in his commentary, "*ta'wīl*" is used to mean *tafsīr*. Even in some cases, this word can only mean *tafsīr* and exoteric understanding of the verses. In discussing the merits of torment and suspicions about it, Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī explains the way Qur'ān addresses the public and says the way Qur'ān talks to the public is such that explicitly state the issue of Resurrection Day is much bigger than people can imagine. Therefore, Almighty God lowers the level of His speech to the level of understanding of the people so that they can understand *ta'wīl* of this Holy Book to the extent that God intends. As God says, "وَالْكِتَابِ الْمُبِينِ إِنَّا جَعَلْنَاهُ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ" <sup>17</sup> (By the Manifest Book. We have made it an Arabic Qur'ān so that you may apply reason).<sup>18</sup>

Additionally, Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī considers *ta'wīl* and *baṭn* to be the same, saying:

In his commentary on Muḥammad Ibn Muslim, Qomi quotes this narration from him. Similarly, in al-Kāfī, Zayd ibn Abi 'Abdullah narrates the same narration. The issue of guardianship is mentioned in these narrations either to show that the guardianship of the prophets is like other *Sharā'i* or most of the *Sharā'i*, or to perform *ta'wīl* and refer to the *baṭn*.<sup>19</sup>

Of course, Allāmah briefly explains *ta'wīl* (but not *tafsīr*) in his commentary on *Āl-i 'Imrān*, verse 7. It can be understood from his explanation that by *ta'wīl* he means the *baṭn*. In brief, Allāmah argues that *ta'wīl* means the truth of the event based on which the Qur'ānic statements, including the rulings, sermons, or wisdom, are documented. This applies to all Qur'ānic verses, whether *Muḥkam* (Precise) or *Mutashabeh* (Ambiguous), and it is not like the concepts which the words imply.<sup>20</sup>

In explaining *baṭn*, he specifies that *baṭn* is not *tafsīr* of the verse.<sup>21</sup> Yet, he uses *baṭn* and *ta'wīl* in another place as opposed to *tanzil* and *zāhir* (considering *baṭn* and *ta'wīl* the same) and states that "*ta'wīl* is not the meaning".<sup>22</sup>

According to the use of *baṭn*, *ta'wīl*, *jary*, *taṭbīq*, and *miṣdāq* in *tafsīr al-Mizān*, it is concluded that he considers *jary*, *taṭbīq*, and *miṣdāq* the same and does not differentiate them (*jary* and *taṭbīq*=*miṣdāq*). However, regarding the relationship between *jary* and *taṭbīq* and *ta'wīl*, he sometimes views them the same and uses them together and assigns them the same meaning (*jary* and *taṭbīq* = *ta'wīl*), while sometimes differentiates them and assigns them different meanings (*jary* and *taṭbīq* ≠ *ta'wīl*). Moreover, under the entry of *ta'wīl*, he sometimes presents *ta'wīl* as the conventional *tafsīr* (*ta'wīl*=*tafsīr*) and sometimes as *baṭn* (*ta'wīl*=*baṭn*). Furthermore, in his view, *jary* and *taṭbīq* and *baṭn* are two distinctive concepts (*jary* and *taṭbīq* ≠ *baṭn*).<sup>23</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Qur'ān, 18:28.

<sup>16</sup> Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Al-Mizān*, V. XIII, p. 159.

<sup>17</sup> Qur'ān, 43:2-3.

<sup>18</sup> Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Al-Mizān*, V. II, p. 100.

<sup>19</sup> Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Al-Mizān*, V. VI, p. 315.

<sup>20</sup> Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Al-Mizān*, V. V, p. 333.

<sup>21</sup> Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Al-Mizān*, V. XIX, p. 302.

<sup>22</sup> Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Al-Mizān*, V. I, p. 3.

<sup>23</sup> Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Al-Mizān*, V. XIX, p. 257.

It is said that in cases in which Allāmah considers *jary* and *taṭbīq* identical to *ta'wīl*, by *ta'wīl*, he refers to *baṭn*. However, this is in contrast with the cases in which he views *jary* and *taṭbīq* different from *ta'wīl*.

From Allāmah's ideas in *Tafsīr al-Mīzān*, it follows that in determining and explaining the scope and meaning of the given terms some of which he himself, inspired by the narrations, initiatively coined (for example *jary* and *taṭbīq*), Allāmah confuses them and sometimes considers them distinctive and independent of each other, while occasionally views them interwoven and identical. Since Allāmah does not directly discuss these terms in detail, except in very rare cases, it is not possible to correctly and convincingly say what he means by his comments on the exegetical narrations.

### Ṣādiqī Tehrānī's Viewpoint on the Baṭn

In *Tafsīr al-Furqān*, following the style of his teacher, Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī, Ṣādiqī Tehrānī uses Qur'ān by Qur'ān method and the Pure *Sunnah*. He, further, follows his teacher in dealing with the exegetical narrations. He frequently makes use of the terms used in *al-Mīzān*, including *jary*, *taṭbīq*, *Miṣdāq*, *ta'wīl*, and *baṭn*. In this section, his employment of the above terms and his understanding and perception of them will be discussed and his views will be critically evaluated, if necessary.

### Zāhir and Bāṭin in Tafsīr al-Furqān

According to *al-Furqān*, meaning is in accordance with the word and is inferred based on the law of words. However, *bāṭin* is based on three principles: 1. *Ishārāt* (allusions), 2. *Laṭā'if* (subtleties) and 3. *Ḥaqā'iq* (Truths). These principles have been adapted from Imam 'Alī's (AS) ḥadīth, which is as follows: "كتابُ اللَّهِ على أربعة أشياء: على العبارة والإشارة واللطائف والحقائق. فالعبارة للعوام والإشارة للخواص واللطائف للأولياء والحقائق للأنبياء" (the Book of God is based on four principles: *'Ibārāt* (phrases), *Ishārāt* (allusions), *Laṭā'if* (subtleties), and *Ḥaqā'iq* (Truths). *'Ibārāt* is for the general public, *Ishārāt* are for the elites, *Laṭā'if* are for 'Aulia Allah (the friends of God), and *Ḥaqā'iq* are for the prophets".<sup>24</sup>

The author considers *Ḥaqā'iq* as *ta'wīlāt* (sources and results) and *'Ibārāt* as the exoteric meaning. After the exoteric meaning, it comes to the *Ishārāt* which prepare the elites to understand the *Laṭā'if* which, in turn, guide one to the truths. The last stage is specific to the men of revelation, *Ahl al-Bayt* of the Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH).

Therefore, the esoteric meanings are a set of the *Ishārāt*, then, *Laṭā'if*, and, then, *Ḥaqā'iq* all of which emanate from the exoteric meanings. However, they are understood only by those whom God has expanded their hearts (*sharḥ al-ṣadr*), whose heart has lived with the Qur'ān and, thus their hearts are the house of the Qur'ān, and who are companions of the Qur'ān. Thus, *Ishārāt* are nothing but the broad semantic signs for those whose hearts have been expanded by God. Similarly, *Laṭā'if* are nothing but what are achieved through the *Ishārāt*; they are like steps of a ladder which the person ascends step by step using foresight, reflection, and expanded heart. Therefore, the first *baṭn* of the verse is to consider it apart from the cause of its revelation. The second *baṭn* is to separate the verse from the limited meanings to which the minds are accustomed. The third *baṭn* is to expand and explain the verse by referring to similar verses. The fourth *baṭn* is to separate the verse from its context and other side-issues. Seemingly, it applies to the other *Buṭūn* (pl. of *Baṭn*), i.e., considering the literal meaning as a basis and then, at the same time, focusing on the other Qur'ānic arguments and reasons.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Muḥammad Ṣādiqī Tehrānī, *Al-Furqān fī Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān bil-Qur'ān* (Qom: Frahang-i Islāmi, 1986), V. I, p. 51.

<sup>25</sup> Ṣādiqī Tehrānī, *Al-Furqān*, V. I, p. 51.

1. *Ishārāt*, *Laṭā'if*, and *Ḥaqā'iq* are the *Buṭūn* of Qur'ān.
2. *zāhir*, *Ishārāt*, *Laṭā'if*, and *Ḥaqā'iq* are like the steps of a ladder each of which facilitates ascending to the next step.
3. Ordinary people can understand the *zāhir* of the verses, but the *Baṭn* of Qur'ān can only be understood by the elites who have a hierarchy.
4. The elites can understand the *Baṭn* of Qur'ān only when they acquire a certain level of sensual and spiritual development.
5. *Ḥaqā'iq*, the highest stage of the *Baṭn* of Qur'ān, which belong to the Prophets are what is meant by *ta'wīl*.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the Qur'ān has *zāhir* and *Baṭn* and that the *Baṭn* of the Qur'ān is *ta'wīl*. Ṣādiqī Tehrānī argues that knowledge of the *Baṭn* plays an important role in *tafsīr* to the extent that if, in addition to the Qur'ānic sciences, the person is not aware of the *Baṭn* of the Qur'ān, he cannot be considered as the Qur'ān scholar.<sup>26</sup>

Here, the knowledge of the *Baṭn* means the knowledge of the revelatory narrations and *ḥadīths* from the Pure *Iṭrat* (Immediate Family of Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH)). In their categorization, the first stage of the *Baṭn* is *Ishārāt* and *Laṭā'if*, since *Ḥaqā'iq* are exclusive to the Infallibles who are *Ahl al-Bayt*.<sup>27</sup> Of course, this exclusiveness is considered as a kind of gnosis of God (*ma'rifat Allah*) in the discussion of *ta'wīl* and, in some cases, *ta'wīl* of the *Muḥkam* or *Mutashabeh* verses.<sup>28</sup> Parts of *ta'wīl* are only known for those firmly grounded in knowledge, i.e., the Holy Prophet, his Infallible *Ahl al-Bayt*, and then *'Aulia Allah* (the friends of God). On the other hand, parts of *ta'wīl* are only known for God and no one even the Holy Prophet is aware of it. Those firmly grounded in knowledge just say, "أَمَّا بِهِ كُلُّ مَن عِنْدَنَا" (We believe in it; all of it is from our Lord).<sup>29</sup> In fact, the virtue of those firmly grounded in knowledge is that God has taught them some parts of the *ta'wīl*, such as the rulings, the Origin, and the Resurrection. However, they are ignorant of *ta'wīl* which is only known by God. In interpreting the rulings, those firmly grounded in knowledge have inferences which are not explicitly mentioned in the text of the Qur'ān, rather have inferred them from the verses. Accordingly, *ta'wīl* is exclusive to the Infallibles. Therefore, those firmly grounded in knowledge neither know *ta'wīl* of the whole verses nor are they completely deprived of *ta'wīl* of Qur'ān; rather, they have the middle ground. They know *ta'wīl* of the verses which God has considered it is necessary for them to know and *has* taught them. However, they are ignorant of *ta'wīl* of the verses that the knowledge of which belongs merely to God.<sup>30</sup>

### Characteristics of *Baṭn* in *al-Furqān*

So far, it can be inferred that the Qur'ān basically has *zāhir* and *Baṭn*. There are seven *Buṭūn* in *Baṭn* of the Qur'ān, including *Ishārāt*, *Laṭā'if*, and *Ḥaqā'iq*.<sup>31</sup> *Ḥaqā'iq* are considered as *ta'wīl* of the verses. Furthermore, by focusing on the verse apart from its cause of revelation, its limited meaning known to the mind, and by deepening its meaning and separating it from its context, one can discover the *Baṭn* of each verse, each of which has its own *miṣḍāq*, *jary*, and *taṭbīq*.

<sup>26</sup> Ṣādiqī Tehrānī, *Al-Furqān*, V. I, p. 20.

<sup>27</sup> Ṣādiqī Tehrānī, *Al-Furqān*, V. I, p. 51.

<sup>28</sup> Ṣādiqī Tehrānī, *Al-Furqān*, V. V, p. 34.

<sup>29</sup> Qur'ān, 3:7.

<sup>30</sup> Ṣādiqī Tehrānī, *Al-Furqān*, V. V, p. 38.

<sup>31</sup> Ṣādiqī Tehrānī, *Al-Furqān*, V. V, p. 38.

When *Baṭn* explains the truth, approves the opposite of the established *ẓawāhir* (pl. of *ẓāhir*), abstracts the verse from its characteristics and accords it with other *maṣādīq* (pl. of *miṣdāq*) to increase its *manāṭ*, then it is considered as *ta'wīl*.<sup>32</sup>

When the verse is separated from its cause of revelation and context, it is viewed as *miṣdāq*.<sup>33</sup> When the verse is expanded and deepened and its reason is generalized, it is referred to as *jary* and *taṭbīq*.<sup>34</sup> In fact, *Baṭn* basically includes *ta'wīl*, *miṣdāq*, and *jary* and *taṭbīq*, which form three *Buṭūn* of the seven *Buṭūn* identified for the Qur'ān.<sup>35</sup> Moreover, Iḥsānī Langarudī in his book titled *Asbāb al-ikhtilāf al-ḥadīth* argues that *ta'wīl* includes *baṭn* and that *baṭn* is one of the aspects of *ta'wīl*. However, not everyone possesses the knowledge and understanding of *baṭn* and *ta'wīl*, in particular, which are the regression of the word to the truth, and parts of them are only known by God and will not be revealed until the Day of Judgment. Some parts of *baṭn* and *ta'wīl* have been revealed for special companions of Qur'ān through revelation and inspiration. Needless to say that this understanding resulted from God's teachings. The third type of knowledge of the *baṭn* belongs exclusively to God and will eternally be in His absolute possession.<sup>36</sup>

Ṣādiqī Tehrānī considers the existence of *ta'wīl*, for both *muḥkam* and *mutashabeh* verses, not in conflict with the existence of other *Buṭūn* (i.e., *miṣdāq*, and *jary* and *taṭbīq*). A verse can have one or two *ta'wīls*, which are exclusively known by God or the elites, and, at the same time, other *Buṭūn*, as well since *Mutashabeh verses have two ta'wīls*, while *Muḥkam verses have only one*. Moreover, each of them may have various *Buṭūn*.<sup>37</sup>

### **Baṭn in the Shiite Narrative Texts**

According to the above-mentioned explanations, it seems that Ṣādiqī Tehrānī's view is supported by the Shiite narrative texts. In Shiite, and even Sunni, narrative texts, *baṭn* means *ta'wīl*, and all the commentators and narrators have confirmed those narrations. For example, Ḥamrān Ibn e- 'A'yan quotes from Imam Bāqir (AS), saying, "ظَهَرَ الْقُرْآنَ الَّذِينَ نَزَلَ فِيهِمْ وَ بَطْنُهُ الَّذِينَ عَمِلُوا بِمِثْلِ أَعْمَالِهِمْ" (*ẓāhr* of Qur'ān are those about whom Qur'ān was revealed and *baṭn* of Qur'ān are those who act upon it).<sup>38</sup>

The following narration is an example of using *ta'wīl*. The Messenger of God told about Imam 'Alī, "إِنَّ مِنْكُمْ مَنْ يُعَاتِلُ عَلَى تَأْوِيلِ الْقُرْآنِ كَمَا قَاتَلْتُ عَلَى تَنْزِيلِهِ" (among you there is one who fights based on *ta'wīl* of Qur'ān just I fight according to the revelation of Qur'ān).<sup>39</sup> In this ḥadīth, *ta'wīl* means to apply the verse to other examples without considering the cause of its revelation. The Holy Prophet fights against the polytheists or infidels or the *Ahl al-kitāb* (People of the Book) based on the revelation of the verses, whilst the *ta'wīl* of the verse occurred in Imam 'Alī's (AS) time.<sup>40</sup> It is what is meant by "بطنه الذين عملوا بمثل أعمالهم" (*baṭn* of Qur'ān are those who act upon it). In this narration, *ta'wīl* and *baṭn* are consistent with each other, and, *ta'wīl* is considered an aspect of *baṭn*. In another ḥadīth, Faḍīl Ibn Yasār Quotes Imam Bāqir (AS), saying, "... وَ بَطْنُهُ تَأْوِيلُهُ، مِنْهُ مَا مَضَى وَ مِنْهُ مَا لَمْ يَكُنْ بَعْدُ، يَجْرِي كَمَا تَجْرِي الشَّمْسُ وَ الْقَمَرُ ..." (... the *baṭn* of Qur'ān is its *ta'wīl*. Parts of *ta'wīl* have been realized and some parts have not been taken place. The Qur'ān, just like the sun and the moon, is constantly flowing ...).<sup>41</sup> In this narration, there is explicitly an

<sup>32</sup> Ṣādiqī Tehrānī, *Al-Furqān*, V. I, pp. 48, 55; Muḥammad Hādī Ma'rīfat, *Al-Tamhīd fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān al-Karīm* (Qom: Al-Tamhīd institute, 2007), V. III, p. 23.

<sup>33</sup> Ṣādiqī Tehrānī, *Al-Furqān*, V. VII, p. 51.

<sup>34</sup> Ṣādiqī Tehrānī, *Al-Furqān*, V. VII, p. 162.

<sup>35</sup> Muḥammad Iḥsānī Langarudī, *Asbāb al-ikhtilāf al-ḥadīth*. (Qom: Dār al-ḥadīth, 2006), p. 590.

<sup>36</sup> Ṣādiqī Tehrānī, *Al-Furqān*, V. III, p. 33.

<sup>37</sup> Ṣādiqī Tehrānī, *Al-Furqān*, V. III, p. 41.

<sup>38</sup> Muḥammad 'Alī Ibn al- Ḥusayn Ṣaduq, *Ma'ānī al-Akḥbār* (Qom: Enteshārāt-e Jāmi' ih Mudarrīsīn-e Hawze-ye 'Imiyah, 1981), p. 259, on the meaning of *ẓāhr* al-Qur'ān wa *baṭnuh*.

<sup>39</sup> Muḥammad Ibn Muḥammad Ibn Nu'mān Mufīd, *Al-Amālī* (Mashhad: Āstān Quds Raḍavī research center, Nd), Session 8, ḥadīth 7.

<sup>40</sup> Faṭḥ Allah Najjār Zadeḡān, *Comparative Analysis of the basics of Tafsīr of Qur'ān from Shiite and Sunni's view point* (Qom: *ḥuwzah and Dānīshgah* research Center, 2009), p. 8.

<sup>41</sup> Muḥammad Ibn Mas'ud 'Ayyāshī, *Al-Tafsīr* (Tehran: 'Ilmiyyah, 1961), V. I, p. 86, ḥadīth 36.

equal relationship between *batn* and *ta'wīl*. According to this narration, along with other narrations, it can be inferred that *ta'wīl* is an aspect of *batn*. The phrase "تَجْرَى الشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ", refers to *jary*, and *taṭbīq* which are used by the contemporary scholars and are considered as another aspect of *batn*.

In another narration, 'Abd al-Rahmān states, "I asked Imam Ṣādiq (AS) about the verse of *Taṭhīr* (purification)<sup>42</sup>, he said," this verse is about the Prophet, 'Alī, Hassan, Ḥusayn, and Fatimah. When the Messenger of God, Imam 'Alī, Imam Hassan, and Imam Ḥusayn passed away, the *ta'wīl* of the verse " وَأُولُو الْأَرْحَامِ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلَىٰ بِبَعْضٍ فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ <sup>43</sup>" (The blood relatives are more entitled to inherit from one another in the Book of Allah) applied to 'Alī Ibn Ḥusayn (AS) and, then, his successions. So obeying them is like obeying God, and transgressing their orders is as if one has transgressed God's orders.<sup>44</sup> In this narration, the *ta'wīl* of the verse is explained by its obvious *miṣdāq*, i.e., 'Alī Ibn Ḥusayn and, then, by its *jary*, and *taṭbīq*, i.e., his successions.

In determining the *miṣdāq* of *batn* of the verses, one may also refer to a *ḥadīth* from Imam ṣādiq (AS) about the verse " ثُمَّ لِيَقْضُوا تَفَثَهُمْ وَلِيُوفُوا نُذُورَهُمْ وَ لِيَطُوفُوا بِالْبَيْتِ الْعَتِيقِ " <sup>45</sup> (Then let them do away with their untidiness, and fulfill their vows, and go around the Ancient House). 'Abdullah Ibn Sanān asked Imam about the meaning of " لِيَقْضُوا تَفَثَهُمْ ". Imam Ṣādiq (AS) replied, "It means to trim mustache, cut the nails and the like". While surprised, 'Abdullah Ibn Sanān asked, "Dharīḥ is right, and you are also right. Indeed, the Qur'ān has *zāhir* and *bāṭin*. Who can understand what Dharīḥ understands (from the *bāṭin* of Qur'ān)?<sup>46</sup>

Moreover, 'Abi Ḥamzah states, "I asked Imam Bāqir (AS) about the verse " وَكَانَ الْكَافِرُ عَلَىٰ رَبِّهِ تَفْسِيرُهَا فِي بطنِ الْقُرْآنِ عَلَى " <sup>47</sup> (and the faithless one is ever an abettor against his Lord). Imam replied: " (ع) هو ربه في الولاية و الرب هو الخالق الذي لا يوصف (Bāṭin of this verse refers to 'Alī. He is the Lord in Guardianship, but the (Absolute) Lord is the Creator who cannot be described).<sup>48</sup> In this *ḥadīth*, Imam Bāqir (AS) explains and identifies *the batn* with its prim *miṣdāq*, i.e., Imam 'Alī (AS).

In another narration, Salama ibn al-Mustanīr asks Imam Bāqir (AS) about the verse " يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا " <sup>49</sup> (O you who have faith! Do not render your charities void by reproaches and affronts...), saying, "is this verse considered *ta'wīl* for Muḥammad and his households?" Imam replies: "this verse was revealed about Uthmān". Therefore, in this *ḥadīth*, Uthmān, one *miṣdāq* of the verse, is presented as the owner of the *ta'wīl*.<sup>50</sup>

### ***Evaluation of Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī and Ṣādeqī Tehrānī's Theories Based on the Narrative Texts***

The fact is that the content of *Tafsīr al-Furqān* is theoretically more supportable than that of *al-Mizān*. Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī has not presented his own ideas in *al-Mizān*. Therefore, we have focused on his practical conduct and his approach to the exegetical narrations in general and narrations about *batn*, *miṣdāq*, *jary*, *taṭbīq*, and *ta'wīl* in particular. In addition, we found that he had used fallacy and that he didn't have a specific principle or a fixed strategy in dealing with the narrations. In the next section, we will discuss Ṣādeqī Tehrānī's approach and practical conduct regarding the narrations about *batn*, *miṣdāq*, *jary*, *taṭbīq*, and *ta'wīl* in *Tafsīr al-Furqān* to understand his viewpoints and strategies.

<sup>42</sup> Qur'ān, 33:33.

<sup>43</sup> Qur'ān, 33:6.

<sup>44</sup> 'Abd al-'Alī Ibn Jum'a 'Arusī Ḥuwaizī, *Tafsīr Nūr al-Thaqalayn* (Qom: Ismā'īlīān, 1995), V. IV, p. 297.

<sup>45</sup> Qur'ān, 22:29

<sup>46</sup> Muḥammad Ibn Yaḥyā Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfi* (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.), researched by 'Alī Akbar Ghaffārī (Tehran: Dār al-kutub al-Islāmīyyah, 1988), V. IV, *al-Hujjah kitab*, p. 549, *ḥadīth* 4.

<sup>47</sup> Qur'ān, 25:55.

<sup>48</sup> 'Arusī Ḥuwaizī, *Tafsīr al-Nūr*, V. IV, p. 25.

<sup>49</sup> Qur'ān, 2:264.

<sup>50</sup> 'Arusī Ḥuwaizī, *Tafsīr al-Nūr*, V. I, p. 317.



### **Combinations of the Terms Used with the *Baṭn* in *Tafsīr al-Furqān***

A careful analysis of the content of *Tafsīr al-Furqān* showed that Ṣādeqī Tehrānī's has used these terms in different combinations which are as follows:

1. *ta'wīl* and *miṣdāq*
2. *ta'wīl* and *jary*
3. *ta'wīl* and *baṭn*
4. *miṣdāq* and *jary*
5. *jary*, *ta'wīl*, and *baṭn*
6. *ta'wīl*, *jary*, and *miṣdāq*

Ṣādeqī Tehrānī has employed all the possible combinations of *baṭn*, *miṣdāq*, *jary*, *taṭbīq*, and *ta'wīl*. This confirms what was mentioned at the beginning of the section, that is "in the first place, the Qur'ān has *zāhir* and *bāṭin* and that in the *baṭn* of the Qur'ān, there are seven other *Buṭūn*, including *Ishārāt*, *Laṭā'if*, and *Ḥaqā'iq*. *Ḥaqā'iq* are considered as *ta'wīl* of the verses. Every *baṭn* can be discovered by parting the verse from the cause of its revelation, its limited conventional meaning and its context and expanding and deepening its meaning, each of which has its own *miṣdāq*, *jary*, and *taṭbīq*.

When *Baṭn* explains the truth, approves to be the opposite of the established *zawāhir*, abstracts the verse from its characteristics and accords it with other *maṣādīq*, then it is called *ta'wīl*. When the verse is separated from its cause of revelation and context, it is viewed as *miṣdāq*. When the verse is expanded and deepened and its reason is generalized, it is referred to as *jary* and *taṭbīq*.

Since these are *Buṭūn* of the verses and that a verse can have seven *Buṭūn*, and according to some narrations, up to seventy *Buṭūn*, every exegetical narration which has been presented for a special case can express one *baṭn* of its *Buṭūn*, of course in another aspect.

The first combination, i.e., *ta'wīl* and *miṣdāq*, has been used numerously in *Tafsīr al-Furqān*. After his commentary on the verse "لَقَدْ أَوْحَىٰ إِلَيْكَ وَإِلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ لَنْ أَشْرَكَتَ لِيَحْبُطَنَّ عَمَلُكَ وَ لَتَكُونَنَّ مِنْ" <sup>51</sup> (Certainly, it has been revealed to you and to those [who have been] before you: 'If you ascribe a partner to Allah your works shall fail and you shall surely be among the losers) and removing the ambiguities of the *zāhir* of the verse, Ṣādeqī Tehrānī states, "ascribing a partner to Allah is deemed to failure". He, further, adds that ascribing a partner to the Messenger of God and the Infallibles are *ta'wīl* of the verse and its hidden *Miṣdāq*.<sup>52</sup> Here, Ṣādeqī Tehrānī refers to a *ḥadīth* from Imam Ṣādiq (AS) about ascribing a partner in Guardianship.

In his commentary on the verse "وَلَوْ لَا دَفَعُ اللَّهُ النَّاسَ بَعْضُهُمْ بِبَعْضٍ لَفَسَدَتِ الْأَرْضُ" <sup>53</sup> (Were it not for Allah's repelling the people by means of one another, the earth would surely have been corrupted), Ṣādiqī Tehrānī quotes a *ḥadīth* from Imam Ṣādiq (AS), saying "وَهُوَ قَوْلُ اللَّهِ عَزَّوَجَلَّ «وَلَوْ لَا دَفَعُ اللَّهُ النَّاسَ بَعْضُهُمْ بِبَعْضٍ» (And this is the saying of God Almighty: "Were it not for Allah's repelling the people by means of one another, the earth would surely have been corrupted". I swear by God, this verse has revealed about no one but you, and no one is meant but you) and adds, "by 'you', which God means all the righteous in all the periods of the prophecy of the Prophets, is interpreted

<sup>51</sup> Qur'ān, 39:65.

<sup>52</sup> Ṣādiqī Tehrānī, *Al-Furqān*, V. XXII, p. 380.

<sup>53</sup> Qur'ān, 2:251.

as the Shiite righteous' in Imam Imam Ṣādiq's (AS) *ḥadīth* since 'the Shiite righteous' are considered as the best *miṣḍāq*.<sup>54</sup>

In these two narrations and others which he has quoted in his commentary, the author has considered *miṣḍāq* a sub-set of *ta'wīl*.<sup>55</sup>

The same holds true about the second combination, i.e., *ta'wīl* and *jary*. In his commentary on the verses " إِنَّهُ لَقَوْلُ رَسُولٍ كَرِيمٍ \* ذِي قُوَّةٍ عِنْدَ ذِي الْعَرْشِ مَكِينٍ " (it is indeed the speech of a noble apostle, powerful and eminent with the Lord of the Throne), after narrating several *ḥadīth* showing that the given verses are about Gabriel or the Holy Prophet, Ṣādiqī Tehrānī concludes that " it is not necessary to relate the narrations which interpret the verses which are about Gabriel. We think they are about *ta'wīl* and *jary*. The verse is about the Messenger of God, and whoever has carried it –i.e., the verse- down is aware of it, the first of whom is Gabriel.<sup>57</sup>

Another example is the verses " قَالَ فَإِنَّكَ مِنَ الْمُنْظَرِينَ \* إِلَى يَوْمِ الْوَقْتِ الْمَعْلُومِ " (Said He, 'you are indeed among the reprieved. until the day of the known time'). In his commentary on ' the day of the known time', Ṣādiqī Tehrānī states the saying that at the time of his advent, Imam Mahdī (AS) will behead the Satan is *ta'wīl* and *jary*.<sup>59</sup> He, further, explains that Satan has two kinds of deadlines, the first one is the end of his life, just like other creatures, and the second one is when his freedom and reign come to an end by the advent of Imam Imam Mahdī (AS). He explains that at the time of his advent, Imam Mahdī (AS) deprives Satan of his freedom and power.

In the second narration, Ṣādiqī Tehrānī explains the narration by discussing the quality of *jary* and generalizing its cause and, accordingly, changes it-as a *tafsīr* of the *zāhir* of Qur'ān- into *ta'wīl* which is considered as one the *Buṭūn* of Qur'ān. Of course, he has implicitly done the same in the first narration too.

Regarding the third and the fifth combinations, i.e., *ta'wīl* and *baṭn* and *jary*, *ta'wīl*, and *baṭn*, the most obvious example is the *ḥadīth* quoted in the commentary on the verse " إِنَّا أَنْذَرْنَاكُمْ عَذَابًا قَرِيبًا يَوْمَ يَنْظُرُ " (Indeed We have warned you of a punishment near at hand—the day when a person will observe what his hands have sent ahead and the faithless one will say, 'I wish I were dust!'). According to the *ḥadīth*, the last part of the verse refers to the "Shiites who follow Imam 'Alī (AS)". In the end, the commentator says "this is *jary*, *ta'wīl*, and *baṭn*, not *tafsīr*. This narration is an example for Muslims to attach the Guardianship of Imam 'Alī, just as they do regarding the Holy Prophet. Ṣādiqī Tehrānī adds Sharaf al-Din Najafī presents the *ḥadīth* "the *baṭn* of the verse refers to Ahl al-Bayt" as evidence confirming this *ta'wīl*.<sup>61</sup>

In this narration, the commentator confirms Sharaf al-Din Najafī's idea and, based on his own knowledge, concludes that in this *jary* and *taṭbīq* verse, there is a *taṭbīqo ta'wīl* which shows it is esoterically about *Ahl al-Bayt*. In fact, he considers *jary* and *taṭbīq*, *ta'wīl*, and *baṭn* identical.

Regarding the fourth combination, i.e., *miṣḍāq* and *jary*, which is used far more widely than the other combinations, presenting two examples would suffice. In his commentary on the verse " ... وَيَقْتُلُونَ... " (and kill the prophets unjustly...), Ṣādiqī Tehrānī quotes a narration from Imam Ṣādiq (AS). According to the narration, Children of Israel did not kill the prophets, rather they heard and transmitted their *ḥadīths*, but the enemies heard the *ḥadīths* and killed the prophets. Therefore, there were

<sup>54</sup> Ṣādiqī Tehrānī, *Al-Furqān*, V. II, p. 179.

<sup>55</sup> Ṣādiqī Tehrānī, *Al-Furqān*, V. XX, p. 302.

<sup>56</sup> Qur'ān, 81:19-20.

<sup>57</sup> Ṣādiqī Tehrānī, *Al-Furqān*, V. XXX, p. 168).

<sup>58</sup> Qur'ān, 15:37-38.

<sup>59</sup> Ṣādiqī Tehrānī, *Al-Furqān*, V. XVI, p. 183; see also V. I, p. 267.

<sup>60</sup> Qur'ān, 78:40.

<sup>61</sup> Ṣādiqī Tehrānī, *Al-Furqān*, V. XXX, p. 63.

<sup>62</sup> Qur'ān, 2:61.

murder, assault, and sin". Finally, he remarks, "هذا من باب التطبيق و بيان مصداق خفى ..." (this is about *taṭbīq* and expression of hidden *miṣdāq* ...).<sup>63</sup>

Moreover, in his commentary on the verse "وَ أَنْ هَذَا صِرَاطِي مُسْتَقِيمًا فَاتَّبِعُوهُ"<sup>64</sup> (This indeed is my straight path, so follow it ...), Ṣādiqī Tehrānī first narrates some *ḥadīths* which indicate that the straight path is the path of *Ahl al-Bayt* and Imam 'Alī (AS), then states, "there are many similar narrations which indicate that *jary* and *taṭbīq* correspond to the second *miṣdāq* of the path. In addition, this verse also applies to the scholars who fully know the Holy Book and the Messenger's tradition."<sup>65</sup>

The sixth combination is *ta'wīl*, *jary*, and *miṣdāq*. This combination is not widely used since its components are frequently used in other aspects, i.e., *miṣdāq-jary*, *jary-ta'wīl*, and *ta'wīl* and *miṣdāq*. However, because we sought to evaluate all the independent aspects of *baṭn* and since there was an example of this type of combination in *Tafsīr al-Furqān*, we thus briefly discuss it. In his commentary on the verse "وَأَقْسَمُوا بِاللَّهِ جَهْدَ أَيْمَانِهِمْ لَا يَبْعَثُ اللَّهُ مَنْ يَمُوتُ بَلَىٰ وَعْدًا عَلَيْهِ حَقًّا وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ"<sup>66</sup> (They swear by Allah with solemn oaths that Allah will not resurrect those who die. Yes indeed [He will], it is a promise binding upon Him, but most people do not know), Ṣādiqī Tehrānī states, "along with the denial of the Day of Judgment, they deny the regression at the time of Imam Mahdi's (AS) advent. This is confirmed according to the *jary-based ta'wīl* by an '*adnā* (lower-level) *miṣdāq*. Both of the denials are the same, only their types are different; the infidels deny the Day of Judgment, while some of the Muslims deny the issue of regression".<sup>67</sup> Another example refers to the commentary of the verse "وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَتَّخِذُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أَنْدَادًا ... يُحِبُّونَهُمْ كَحُبِّ اللَّهِ ..."<sup>68</sup> (Among the people are those who set up compeers besides Allah, loving them as if loving Allah...). Here, the commentator quotes a *ḥadīth* from *al-Kāfī* which introduces some people as the *tafsīr* of the verse and considers them and their followers as the oppressive leader and concludes that this is based on *jary* and *ta'wīl* and an '*adnā miṣdāq*.<sup>69</sup>

In addition to the theoretical area which was discussed in detail, Ṣādiqī Tehrānī seems to have also met his criteria in practice and has avoided fallacy and deviation from his theoretical framework. An important point regarding the combination of the terms is the widespread use of the term "*miṣdāq*". The commentator uses this term in various combinations each of which has a specific connotation, for example, hidden *miṣdāq*<sup>70</sup>, *tafsīr* for the second *miṣdāq*<sup>71</sup>, *Aḥad*(the most obvious) *al-maṣādīq*<sup>72</sup>, *akmal* (the most perfect) *al-maṣādīq*<sup>73</sup>, *Afḍal*(the best) *al-maṣādīq*<sup>74</sup>, *Ba'd* (some) *al-maṣādīq*<sup>75</sup>, *Aḥad al-maṣādīq al-ba'ī* (an unlikely *miṣdāq*)<sup>76</sup>, *Ba'd al-maṣādīq zāhira* (some exoteric *maṣādīq*)<sup>77</sup>, *Aham* (important) *al-maṣādīq*<sup>78</sup>, *al-miṣdāq al-Aham wal-Atam* (important and perfect)<sup>79</sup>, expressing its different *maṣādīq*<sup>80</sup>, *Aḥarī maṣādīqā wa 'ulā wa 'alā wa aqwā* ( the first, the best, and the strongest)<sup>81</sup>, *miṣdāq al-ajlī* (instantaneous)<sup>82</sup>.

It is worth mentioning two points about *ta'wīl*. The exegetical narrations which are based on *ta'wīl* are mostly about the virtues of *Ahl al-Bayt* or their enemies and this is because most of these

<sup>63</sup> Ṣādiqī Tehrānī, *Al-Furqān*, V. I, p. 436.

<sup>64</sup> Qur'ān, 6:153.

<sup>65</sup> Ṣādiqī Tehrānī, *Al-Furqān*, V. VII, p. 341.

<sup>66</sup> Qur'ān, 16:38.

<sup>67</sup> Ṣādiqī Tehrānī, *Al-Furqān*, V. XVI, p. 339.

<sup>68</sup> Qur'ān, 2:165.

<sup>69</sup> Ṣādiqī Tehrānī, *Al-Furqān*, V. II, p. 267.

<sup>70</sup> Ṣādiqī Tehrānī, *Al-Furqān*, V. I, p. 175.

<sup>71</sup> Ṣādiqī Tehrānī, *Al-Furqān*, V. XXII, p. 24.

<sup>72</sup> Ṣādiqī Tehrānī, *Al-Furqān*, V. XXVII, p. 404.

<sup>73</sup> Ṣādiqī Tehrānī, *Al-Furqān*, V. XXII, p. 464.

<sup>74</sup> Ṣādiqī Tehrānī, *Al-Furqān*, V. XXVII, p. 73.

<sup>75</sup> Ṣādiqī Tehrānī, *Al-Furqān*, V. XXX, p. 163.

<sup>76</sup> Ṣādiqī Tehrānī, *Al-Furqān*, V. I, p. 175.

<sup>77</sup> Ṣādiqī Tehrānī, *Al-Furqān*, V. XXX, p. 148.

<sup>78</sup> Ṣādiqī Tehrānī, *Al-Furqān*, V. XX, p. 153.

<sup>79</sup> Ṣādiqī Tehrānī, *Al-Furqān*, V. XXI, p. 191.

<sup>80</sup> Ṣādiqī Tehrānī, *Al-Furqān* V. VIII, p. 78.

<sup>81</sup> Ṣādiqī Tehrānī, *Al-Furqān*, V. XX, pp. 302-303.

<sup>82</sup> Ṣādiqī Tehrānī, *Al-Furqān*, V. I, p. 385.

narrations are about this area. The second point refers to the fact that various phrases are used to describe *ta'wīl*, as it is the case for *mīšdāq*. Sometimes the focus is on the *ta'wīl*-based revelation of the narration for the verse, not its exoteric meaning. Here the author uses "قد يعنى نزول التأويل دون التنزيل" (the verse was revealed as *ta'wīl* and its *ẓāhir* was not meant).<sup>83</sup> Of course, he presents this explanation for the narrations which use the phrase "هكذا انزلت" (it has been revealed so).

Ṣādiqī Tehrānī sometimes uses phrases such as *ta'wīl al-Laṭīf* (allusive)<sup>84</sup> and *ta'wīl al-'Alīl* (imperfect)<sup>85</sup> and, accordingly, evaluates the narration. In *jary* discussion, he uses the phrase "يجرى بصورة" (it denotes slightly)<sup>86</sup> which may indicate that he did not fully and certainly accept the narration.

Another point about *ta'wīl* is that Ṣādiqī Tehrānī, unlike other commentators, needs a reason to accept *ta'wīl* and *bāṭin*-based *tafsīr* and considers those who perform *ta'wīl* without reason and knowledge as the *mīšdāq* of "زيغ في قلوبهم"<sup>87</sup> (those in whose hearts is deviance), and, accordingly, thinks, "فهو مخصص بمن يحيط علماً بمبادئ القرآن و نتائجه" (they are specific to those who have complete hold of the principles of Qur'ān and its results).<sup>88</sup> Therefore, Ṣādiqī Tehrānī argues that "كما أن تأويل القرآن - ككل - مختص ، بالله فانه الذى يعلم من التأويل من هو أهله كالراسخين فى العلم بمختلف درجاتهم" (*ta'wīl* of the whole Qur'ān only belongs to God and that God has taught *ta'wīl* to those firmly grounded in knowledge according to their levels through either revelation or inspiration).<sup>89</sup>

He draws a square for *ta'wīl*, one side of which is specific to those firmly grounded in knowledge who should engage in *ta'wīl*, its second side belongs to the Holy Prophet and *Ahl al-Bayt* who learn *ta'wīl* through revelation and inspiration. The third side is for *ta'wīl* which will be revealed on the Day of Judgment. The last side which will never be revealed is known only by God. Then he provides Qur'ānic evidence for them. Needless to say, *ta'wīl* discussed in this paper is not limited to the *ta'wīl* of the words of Qur'ān since in Qur'ān, *ta'wīl* is not just specific to the words, rather it is also used in practice. In commenting on the verses, sometimes Ṣādiqī Tehrānī refers to their *ta'wīl* while observing the principles and *manāṭ* of *ta'wīl* and even *jary* and *taṭbīq*. For example, consider his commentary on the verse (13:21) "وَالَّذِينَ يَصِلُونَ مَا أَمَرَ اللَّهُ بِهِ أَنْ يُوصَلَ"<sup>90</sup> (and those who join what Allah has commanded to be joined). After narrating a ḥadīth from Imam Ṣādiq (AS) about the revelation of the verse about maintaining social and civil relationships with the family of Muḥammad (PBUH), Ṣādiqī Tehrānī states, "all the relationships which we are to maintain in the religion of God (whether the main or *subsidiary, doctorial or scientific*) ... include the relationship with the Prophet and the Infallibles, and then, the *'Ulama* and the believers and distant relatives".<sup>91</sup>

Cases of this kind, although limited, are found in this commentary.

## Conclusion

*Al-Mīzān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān* and *Tafsīr al-Furqān* as two contemporary Shiite Tafsīrs that have many similarities and difference in terms of dealing with *ta'wīl* and *baṭn*. The most important similarity between them is their widespread use of *ta'wīl* and *baṭn*. However, the ways they use them and related *ta'wīl*, *baṭn*, *jary* and *taṭbīq*, and *mīšdāq* differ.

In *Tafsīr al-mīzān*, Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī considers *jary* and *taṭbīq* and *mīšdāq* the same (*jary* and *taṭbīq*= *mīšdāq*). However, regarding the relationship between *jary* and *taṭbīq* and *ta'wīl*, he sometimes

<sup>83</sup> Ṣādiqī Tehrānī, *Al-Furqān*, V. III, p. 104.

<sup>84</sup> Ṣādiqī Tehrānī, *Al-Furqān*, V. XXX, p. 306.

<sup>85</sup> Ṣādiqī Tehrānī, *Al-Furqān*, V. I, p. 451; V. V, p. 31.

<sup>86</sup> Ṣādiqī Tehrānī, *Al-Furqān*, V. IX, p. 231.

<sup>87</sup> Qur'ān, 3:7.

<sup>88</sup> Ṣādiqī Tehrānī, *Al-Furqān*, V. IX, p. 231V. III, p. 32.

<sup>89</sup> Ṣādiqī Tehrānī, *Al-Furqān*, V. III, p. 32.

<sup>90</sup> Qur'ān, 13:21.

<sup>91</sup> Ṣādiqī Tehrānī, *Al-Furqān*, V. XII, p. 309.

considers them alike and assign similar meaning to them (*jary* and *taṭbīq* = *ta'wīl*) and sometimes argues they are distinct concepts and have different meanings (*jary* and *taṭbīq* ≠ *ta'wīl*). Of course, under the entry of *ta'wīl*, he sometimes views *ta'wīl* as the conventional *tafsīr* (*ta'wīl*=*tafsīr*) and sometimes as *baṭn* (*ta'wīl*=*baṭn*). Furthermore, in his view, *jary* and *taṭbīq* and *baṭn* are two distinctive concepts (*jary* and *taṭbīq* ≠ *baṭn*).

In *Tafsīr al-Furqān*, Ṣādiqī Tehrānī argues that Qur'ān basically has *zāhir* and *baṭn*. There are seven *Buṭūn* in *Baṭn* of Qur'ān, including *Ishārāt*, *Laṭā'if*, and *Ḥaqā'iq*. *Ḥaqā'iq* are considered as *ta'wīl* of the verses. Moreover, he believes every *baṭn* can be discovered by parting the verse from the cause of its revelation, its limited conventional meaning and its context and expanding and deepening its meaning, each of which has its own *miṣdāq*, *jary*, and *taṭbīq*.

When *baṭn* explains the truth, approves to be the opposite of the established *zawāhir*, abstracts the verse from its characteristics and accords it with other *maṣādīq*, it is called *ta'wīl*. When the verse is separated from its cause of revelation and context, it is viewed as *miṣdāq*. When the verse is expanded and deepened and its reason is generalized, it is referred to as *jary* and *taṭbīq*.

Since these are *Buṭūn* of the verses and that a verse can have seven *Buṭūn*, and according to some narrations, up to seventy *Buṭūn*, every exegetical narration which has been presented for a special case can express one *baṭn* of its *Buṭūn*, of course in another aspect.

In addition to evaluating the ways Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī makes use of the exegetical narrations about *baṭn* in his *Tafsīr*, the present study has shed some light on the logical methods of dealing with and applying the exegetical narrations and the verses with esoteric meaning, which are approved by the *Ahl al-Bayt*.

Finally, it is suggested to the future researchers to replicate the present study's approach in studying various Shiite and Sunni *Tafsīrs* of Qur'ān to gain a complete understanding of the application of the exegetical narrations about *Baṭn* in interpreting the Qur'ānic verses.

### Acknowledgment

Hereby, I would like to express my special thanks to my respected teachers Dr. Muhammad Kazam Rahman Setayesh, Qom University, and Dr. Ali Nasiri, Elm-o-San'at University, for their scientific assistance in conducting the present study.

### References

- The Holy Qur'ān, English Translation by Sayyid 'Alī Qulī Qarāī.
- 'Arusī Ḥuwaizī, 'Abd al-'Alī Ibn Jum'a. *Tafsīr Nūr al-Thaqalayn*. Qom: Ismā'īlīān, 1995.
- 'Ayyāshī, Muḥammad Ibn Mas'ud. *Al-Tafsīr*. Tehran: 'Ilmiyyah, 1961.
- Dāraqūṭnī, Alī ibn 'Umar. *Al-Sunan Dāraqūṭnī*. Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1994.
- Dhabbī, Muḥammad Ḥusayn. *Al-Tafsīr wal-Mufsirūn*. NP: Dār al-Kitāb al-Ḥadīth, 1976. Feiḍ kāshānī, Mullā Muhsin. *Al-Tafsīr al-Ṣāfi*. Tehran: al-Ṣadr, 1995.
- Ghazālī, Muḥammad Ibn Muḥammad. 'Iḥya' al-Dīn Rub' 'Ibādāt. Tehran: 'Ilmī wa Farhangī publication, 1958.

- Ḥurr al-ʿĀmili. Muḥammad Ibn Hassan. Wasā'il al-Shī'a ilā taḥṣīl masa'il al-Sharī'a. Theran: Maktaba al-Islamiyyah, 1964.
- Ibn 'Asakir, 'Alī Ibn Hassan. Tārīkh Maīnata Damishq wa Dhikr Faḍluha, researched by 'Ali Shīrī. Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1995.
- Iḥsānī Langarudī, Muḥammad. Asbāb al-ikhtilāf al-ḥadīth. Qom: Dār al-Ḥadīth, 2006.
- Kulayni, Muḥammad Ibn Yaḥyā. Al-Kāfī (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.), researched by 'Alī Akbar Ghaffārī. Tehran: Dār al-kutub al-Islāmīyah, 1988.
- Ma'rifat, Muḥammad Hādī. Al-Tamhīd fī 'Ulūm al-Qurān al-Karīm. Qom: Al-Tamhīd Institute, 2007.
- Mufīd, Muḥammad Ibn Muḥammad Ibn Nu'mān. Al-Amalī. Mashhad: Āstān Quds Raḍavī Research Center, Nd.
- Najjār Zadeḡān, Faṭḥ Allah. Comparative Analysis of the basics of Tafsīr of Qurān from Shiite and Sunni's Viewpoint. Qom: ḥuwzah and Dānīshgah research Center, 2009.
- Šādiqī Tehrānī, Muḥammad. Al-Furqān fī Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān bil-Qur'ān. Qom: Frahang-i Islāmi, 1986.
- Šaduq, Muḥammad 'Alī Ibn al- Ḥusayn. Ma'ānī al-Akḥbār. Qom: Enteshārāt-e Jāmi'ih Mudarrisīn-e Ḥawze-ye 'Imiyyah, 1981.
- Suyūṭī, Jalāl al- Dīn. Al-Durr Al-Manthur Fi Tafsir Bil-Ma'thur. Qom: Āyat Allāh Mar'ashī Library, 1984.
- Suyūṭī, Jalāl al- Dīn. Al-Itqān fī 'Ulum Al-Qur'an. Beirut: Dār al-kutub al-'Imiyyah, 2000.
- Ṭabāṭabā'ī, Muḥammad Ḥusayn. Al-Mīzān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān. Qom: Enteshārāt-e Jāmi'ih Mudarrisīn-e Ḥawze-ye 'Imiyyah, 1996.
- Ṭabāṭabā'ī, Muḥammad Ḥusayn. Shī'a dar Islām. Qom: Quds Raḍavī, 2004.
- Ṭabarī, Abū Ja'far Muḥammad Ibn Jarīr. Jami' al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān. Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rifa, 1992.

## Copyrights

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with first publication rights granted to the journal.

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).