



Dating the Sūrah Al-'Ikhlās (Sūrah Al-Tawhīd)

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Abstract

The Qur'anic sūrahs were gradually sent down to the Prophet of Islam (PBUH) during two periods of Mecca and Medina. In Qur'anic studies it's very important to know when and where a sūrah was revealed. Sūrah al-Tawhīd is one of the disputed ones, which in order to achieve the descending date of it, two categories of extra and intra-textual evidences must be studied. From this point of view, the present research, in a descriptive-analytical method, seeks to answer the question: "what is the dating of Sūrah al-Tawhīd based on the extra and intra-textual evidences?" Findings show that both the extra and intra-textual evidences indicate to its being as Meccan and accordingly, based on these evidences, its revelation is estimated to the third year of the Mission, coincided with the public invitation of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

Keywords: Sūrah al-Tawhīd; Dating, Extra-Textual Evidences; Intra-Textual Evidences

Introduction

The Qur'an has 114 *sūrahs* gradually sent down to Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) over 23 years of his prophecy. Information of the time when each *sūrah* has been revealed has many benefits in Qur'anic studies, including: to know the stages of the Prophet's mission, the gradual decreeing of the Islamic commandments (*aḥkām*), dating Qur'anic *sūrahs*, and discovering the events of the early Islam.

Some *sūrahs* were revealed in Mecca and some in Medina. Although, often, *sūrahs* can simply be recognized as Meccan (*Makkī*) or Medinan (*Madanī*), there are differences of opinion about being *Makkī* or *Madanī* (in terms of time and place of revelation) of some *sūrahs*. Sūrah al-Tawhīd is among the disputed ones (Suyūṭī, 1421 AH: 1:70; Zurqānī, nd: 1: 191; Ma'rifat, 1415 AH: 1: 162-163). Suyūṭī states that this disagreement is because of the existence of two contradictory *hadiths* on the descent of this *sūrah* (Suyūṭī, 1421 AH: 1: 70). Due to the different views of the time of this *sūrah*, attempt seems necessary to approximate the issuing date of its revelation. Hence, to identify the place and time of descent, we need to evaluate two categories of evidences: 1. extra-textual evidences such as Meccan or Medinan narrations,

traditions regarding the cause of descent (*asbāb al-nuzūl*), and the true history, 2. Intra-textual evidences such as the context (*sīyāq*) of the verses of Sūrah al-Tawhīd and other verses. No independent and comprehensive research has yet been done regarding dating this *Sūrah*. The present research, in a descriptive-analytical method, aims to answer the question: “according to its extra-textual and intra-textual evidences, what is the dating of Sūrah al-Tawhīd and how it can be analyzed”?

1- Extra-Textual Evidences

Extra-textual evidences are those materials beyond the Qur’anic verses, which are as follow: 1- traditions related to the order of descent, 2- traditions related to the causes of descent, 3- exegetes’ opinions. Having critical study, review, and evaluation of these evidences, someone can reach the date of sending down of Sūrah al-Tawhīd.

1-1. Traditions Regarding the Order of Descent

One of the most important traditional sources for the history of the Qur’an is a set of narrations that express the order of descent of Qur’anic *sūrahs*. According to the traditions of the order of descent, there are narrations in which the order of descending 114 *sūrahs* has been reported together. Sūrah al-Tawhīd is Makkī, based on most of these narratives, and Madanī on few other traditions.

1-1-1. Makkī Traditions

In most of the narratives of the order of descent, this *sūrah* is introduced Makkī, revealed after Sūrah al-Nās, ranked as the twenty second revealed *sūrah* to the Prophet (PBUH):

- 1- Tradition of Ibn Ḍurays on authority of ‘Aṭā’ from Ibn ‘Abbās (Ibn Ḍurays, 1408 AH: 33-34).
- 2- Tradition of Qatādah (Suyūṭī, 1421 AH: 1: 60).
- 3- Tradition of Ali ibn ‘Abi Ṭalḥa (Harawī, 1426 AH: 221)

1-1-2. Madanī Traditions

In the two narratives of Ibn ‘Abbās, reported by Naḥḥās (Naḥḥās, nd: 260; Suyūṭī, 1421 AH: 1:57), this *sūrah* is mentioned as *Madanī*.

1-1-2-1. Review and Evaluation

It is argued that narratives indicating the Sūrah al-Tawhīd as *Makkī* are more reliable than those traditions mentioning it as *Madanī*, for, in addition to the multiplicity of chains of transmitters, some of them have been reported through true chains (*sanads*), while the two *Madanī* traditions, in addition to their less amount, are quoted without *sanad*, so they would not be considered as authentic.

1-2. Traditions Regarding the Cause of Revelation (*asbāb al-nuzūl*)

The *asbāb al-nuzūl* traditions are used in order to know the exact time of revealing verses, and especially to recognize which part is *Makkī* and which one is *Madanī*. In the exegetical and *asbāb al-nuzūl* works, for this *sūrah*, many *asbāb al-nuzūl* traditions have been reported in various ways, which must be carefully examined, for the major reason for the disagreement of the time and place of sending Sūrah al-Tawhīd down is due to the difference in the traditions regarding the cause of revelation (*asbāb al-nuzūl*), some of which consider the *sūrah* as *Makkī* and some others as *Madanī*.

1-2-1. *Asbāb al-Nuzūl Traditions Introducing It As Madanī*

Madanī traditions indicate implicitly to the Madanī status of Sūrah al-Tawhīd, because these *asbāb al-nuzūl* traditions point to the descent of this *sūrah* as a result of the grandees of Jews' and Christians' question from the Prophet (PBUH) about the God, the Almighty. If we accept these reports, we are obliged to accept that the *sūrah* was revealed in Medina, for the confrontation of the Prophet (PBUH) with the Jews and Christians was most probably in Medina after the Migration, and not in Mecca where he was always conflicting with idolaters. These narratives have been cited in seven ways:

1. Muhammad ibn Muslim narrated from Imam Sādiq (AS) (the sixth Imam of Shī'as) that the Jews asked the Prophet (PBUH) to describe the attributes of God for them. He hesitated for three days and then this *sūrah* was revealed (Kulaynī, 1407 AH: 1:91; Ṣadūq, 1398 AH: 93; Ṭabrisī, 1372 AH: 10:859).
2. It has been quoted from Imam Hassan 'Askarī (AS) (the eleventh Imam of Shī'as) that Abdullah ibn Ṣūrīyā asked the Prophet (PBUH) a question and then said: "Tell me about your Lord, 'Who is He?'" In reply to the question, suddenly the Sūrah al-Tawhīd was sent down to the Prophet (PBUH). Ibn Ṣūrīyā then said: "You have just told truly, O Muhammad (PBUH)" (Imam Hassan 'Askarī (AS)'s exegesis, 1409 AH: 453).
3. Ibn Abbas said: "The Jews including Ka'b ibn Ashraf and Ḥayy ibn Akhṭab came to the Prophet (PBUH) and asked him to describe his God for them. Then the Sūrah al-Tawhīd was revealed" (Ibn Abi Ḥātam, 1419 AH: 10:3474; Suyūṭī, 1404 AH: 6:410; *ibid*, nd: 238).
4. Ibn Abbas said: "Seven Christians of the Najran from the tribe of Bani Ḥarth ibn Ka'b came to the Prophet (PBUH) with Sayed and 'Āqib, who were their chiefs, and asked: 'Define your God for us so that we know what is His kind (sex)?' The Prophet (PBUH) replied: 'My Lord is not an object and He is different from material things'. Then this *sūrah* was revealed." (Tha'labī, 1422 AH: 10:333; Meibudī, 1371 AH: 10:662).
5. Abu 'Āliyyeh narrated: "The leaders of 'Aḥdhāb (Confederates) said to the Prophet (PBUH) during the Battle of Khandaq (Moat): 'Tell us the origin of your Lord?'. Then the Angel Gabriel brought this *sūrah* to the Prophet (PBUH) (Ibn 'Aṭīyyah Andalusī, 1422 AH: 5:536; Abu Ḥayyān Andalusī, 1420 AH: 8:529; Suyūṭī, nd: 238).
6. According to Qatādah, Ḍaḥḥāk, and Muqātil, some of the Jews came to the Prophet (PBUH) and asked: "describe your Lord to us as He has described Himself in the Torah. Tell us what's His origin and what's His kind of sex? Is He gold, copper, or silver? Does He eat and drink? From whom did He inherit the world and for whom He will inherit it?" Then the Sūrah al-'Iklās, which is the chapter for introducing God, was revealed in response (Wāḥidī, 1411: 500; Ṭabrisī, 1372 AH: 10: 859; Meibudī, 1371 AH: 10:662; Suyūṭī, 1404: 6:410).
7. Qatādah said: "A group of Jews came to the Prophet (PBUH) and asked: 'Tell us about your Lord.' So the Sūrah al-Tawhīd was revealed (Ṭabarī, 1412 AH: 30:222 and Suyūṭī, 1404 AH: 6:411).

1-2-1-1. *Review and Evaluation of Madanī 'Asbāb al-Nuzūl Traditions*

In this section, *asbāb al-nuzūl* traditions which introduce the *sūrah* as Madanī are examined, firstly their chain of transmitters (*sanad*) and secondly their texts (*matn*).

1-2-1-1-1. *Review and Evaluation of Sanads*

The first narration with the chain of "Ahmad ibn 'Idrīs" from "Mohammad ibn Abdul Jabbār" from "Ṣafwān ibn Yaḥyā" from "Abu 'Ayyūb" from "Mohammed ibn Muslim" narrated from Imam Sādiq (AS). The narrators of this chain are all authentic (*thiqah*).

The second narrative is reported from the commentary attributed to Imam Hassan ‘Askarī (AS), which there is doubt in the issuance and attribution of this interpretation to him, because the narrators of the book are unknown in terms of reliability or weakness. In addition, the way of Ṣadūq to it is not clear and certain and there has been no definitive way of proving it so far. Therefore, many scholars consider this interpretation as unreliable (Hashemi, 1387 HS: 436). Moreover, Ali ibn Ibrahim Qumī and Mohammad ibn Mas’ūd ‘Ayyāshī (two early Shiite exegetes) did not mention of it in their commentaries, which could indicate a doubt about the validity of this interpretation to them (ibid). Additionally, most scholars who rely on this book, are Akhbārī Shiite scholars and exegetes (from the tenth century to the next). Their cause of relying is that Sheikh Ṣadūq quoted from it on the authority of the exegete Astarābādī in his book *Al-Faqīh* and other books. Here it must be considered that the mere quotation of Ṣadūq from another person does not imply his authentication (ibid: 437). Also, this narrative is merely narrated from this book and there is no other source for it.

The third tradition of Ibn Abbas was reported without mentioning *sanad*. Therefore, the hadith is *mursal* and weak.

The fourth narrative was quoted from “Jowayr ibn Sa’īd ‘Azdī” from “Ḍahḥāk ibn Muzāhim Hilālī” from “Ibn Abbas”. In this chain, “Jowayr ibn Sa’īd ‘Azdī” is a weak narrator (Bukhari, 1406 AH: 31; ‘Aqīlī, 1418 AH: 1:205; Mizzī, 1413 AH: 5:170). In addition, Ḍahḥāk who is among the narrators of this hadith, reported the cause of this *sūrah* directly from Ibn Abbas, while some of the great traditionists (hadith scholars) stated that he did not meet Ibn Abbas (Ibn Abi Ḥātam, 1371 AH: 4:458-459; Mizzī, 1413 AH: 13:293-294; Ibn Ḥajar, 1404 AH: 4:398). So, the *sanad* of this hadith is *munqaṭi’* (disconnected) and weak.

In the fifth narration, also referenced by “Ibn Ḥumayd” from “Mīhrān” from “Abu Ja’far Razi Tamīmī” from “Rabī” from “Abul ‘Ālīyah”, “Abu Ja’far Razi Tamīmī” is a weak narrator (Ibn Abi Ḥātam, 1371 AH: 6:280; Ibn Ḥajar, 1404 AH: 12:49; ‘Aqīlī, 1418 AH: 3:388). In addition, Abul ‘Ālīyah was a Successor and could not observe the descent of verses. Therefore, his reports of *asbāb al-nuzūl* would be interpreted as *mursal* (or weak); i.e. it is not acceptable to state the reasons for the descendant of the verses, except through self-observance or hearing from those who saw themselves the descendant and were aware of its causes and discussed it certainly (Wāḥidī, 1411 AH: 10).

The sixth narration, without mentioning the *sanad*, was reported from Qatādah, Ḍahḥāk, and Muqāṭil, all of them are from Successors. So the hadith is *mursal* and weak.

The seventh hadith from Qatādah was reported without a *sanad*. Qatādah is famous for changing weak hadiths to good ones (*tadlīs*) (Ibn Ḥajar, nd.: 43). In addition, Qatādah is a Successor and could not observe descending this *sūrah*. Accordingly, his narrative is *mursal* and weak.

1-2-1-1-2. Review and Examination of the Text

The text of these narratives have several drawbacks:

First, according to these narratives, the *Sūrah al-Tawḥīd* must be descended in Medina, while it is in conflict with the traditions of the order of the descent that introduces this *sūrah* among Makkīs and are more reliable.

Secondly, this *sūrah* inside itself - in terms of its composition and structure, the shortness of the *sūrah* and its verses - indicates to “Meccan” *sūrahs*. It also in terms of content is about Monotheism, one of the methods used by the Prophet (PBUH) in confronting polytheists and idolaters of Quraysh (Abu Zayd, 2000: 88). while the difference with the People of the Book, whether Jews or Christians, was not on

the origin of Monotheism and the Essence of God, but their disagreement with Christians was on the concept of Monotheism, and with the Jews on the issues of the Law (*sharī'ah*) and the rules of lawful (*ḥalāl*) and unlawful (*ḥarām*) (ibid). Therefore, one should not count on narratives regarding the Jewish question of the Prophet (PBUH), which made the supposition that this *sūrah* was revealed in Median. Hence, reports referring to the question of Jews, Christians, or 'Aḥdhāb (Confederates) of the Battle of Khandaq (Moat) about God, are taken out of authenticity. As for the narration of Imam Sādiq (AS), which was reported through a sound *sanad*, it should be confirmed that this *sūrah* was revealed in Mecca and then later, in reply to the question of the Jews or Christians in Medina from the Prophet (PBUH), it was recited to them.

1-2-2. *Asbāb al-Nuzūl Traditions Which Introduce It as Makkī*

The second category consists of the narrations referring either the idolaters or those who came to Mecca questioned the Prophet (PBUH) about God. These narratives prove that the *Sūrah al-Tawḥīd* was descended in Mecca. They are five narratives as follow:

1. Ibn Mas'ūd said: "Quraysh asked the Prophet (PBUH) to describe his Lord for them. Then the *Sūrah al-Tawḥīd* was revealed." (Ibn Kathīr, 1419 AH: 8:489 and Suyūṭī, 1404 AH: 6:410).
2. It was narrated from Jābir ibn Abdullah Ansārī (Haythamī, 1408 AH: 7:146; Ṭabarānī, 1415 AH: 6:25; Ṭabrisī, 1372 AH: 10: 859; Ṭabarī, 1412 AH: 30:222, Wāḥidī, 1411 AH: 501) and from 'Ubay Ibn Ka'b (Ibn Ḥanbal, nd: 5:134; Tirmidhī, 1403 AH: 5:121; Ibn Abi Ḥātam, 1419 AH: 10:3474; Ṭabarī, 1412 AH: 30:221; Tha'labī, 1422 AH: 10:332; Sam'ānī, 1418 AH: 6:303; Ibn Kathīr, 1419 AH: 8:488; Wāḥidī, 1411 AH: 501) that the polytheists told the Prophet (PBUH): "Describe your God for us?", then this chapter was revealed.
3. Abu Ḍabyān and Abu Ṣāliḥ narrated from Ibn Abbas: "Āmir ibn Ṭufayl" from "Arbad ibn Rabī'ah", brother of Labīd, came to the Prophet (PBUH). 'Āmir asked: 'O Muhammad (PBUH)! To what do you invite us?' 'I call you to my God', the Prophet (PBUH) answered. Then 'Āmir asked: 'Tell us, is your God of gold, silver, iron, or wood?' Afterward, this *sūrah* was sent down. When Arbad repeated these questions with mockery, a heat-lightning struck and burned him. 'Āmir was afraid of seeing that incident and fell asleep." (Tha'labī, 1422 AH: 10:332; Ṭabrisī, 1372 AH: 10: 859; Baghawī, nd: 4:544).
4. Muhammed ibn Ḥamzah ibn Yūsuf ibn Abdullah ibn Salām narrated: "Abdullah ibn Salām, a Jewish scholar, went to Mecca in order to see the Prophet (PBUH). When he came to him, the Prophet (PBUH) asked him and swore to God if he had seen his description in the Torah or not? Abdullah ibn Salām said: 'First, describe and define your God for me so that I will tell you what you asked'. Then this *sūrah* was revealed and the Prophet (PBUH) recited it for him. It caused Abdullah ibn Salām to accept Islam and became Muslim. However, he had for a time hidden his faith and Islam from the Jews until the Prophet (PBUH) immigrated from Mecca to Medina. At that time, Abdullah revealed his Islam." (Ibn Abi Ḥātam, 1419 AH: 10:3474; Ṭabrisī, 1372 AH: 10: 859; Haythamī, 1408 AH: 7:147).
5. 'Ikrimah reported: "The idolaters said: 'O Prophet! Inform us about your Lord! Tell us who is He and what is his gender (and sex)?' So God sent down the *Sūrah al-Tawḥīd*." (Ṭabarī, 1412 AH: 30:221; Suyūṭī, 1404 AH: 6:410).

1-2-2-1. *Review and Evaluation of Makkī 'Asbāb Al-Nuzūl Traditions*

Here at first the sands and secondly the texts of traditions are examined, as well:

1-2-2-1-1. *Review and Evaluation of Sanads*

In the first narration with the chain "Ubayd ibn 'Ishāq al-'Atṭār" from "Qays ibn al-Rabī" from "Āṣim" from "Abu Wā'il" from "Ibn Mas'ūd", "Qays ibn al-Rabī" was weakened by Bukhari, 'Aghīlī, Ibn Ḥibbān and Nasā'ī. (Bukhari, 1406 AH: 101; Nasā'ī, 1406 AH: 229; Aghīlī 1418 AH: 3:470; Ibn

Ḥibbān, nd: 2:217). Also, they weakened “‘Ubayd ibn 'Ishāq al-‘Attār”. (Bukhari, 1406 AH: 78; Nasā’ī, 1406 AH: 212; Aghīlī, 1418 AH: 3:115; Ibn Ḥibbān: nd: 172:2).

The second narrative has two *sanads*: the first *sanad* was quoted from “Muhammad ibn ‘Awf” from “Shurayḥ” from “Isma’il ibn Mujālid” from “Mujālid ibn Sa’īd” from “Sha’bī” from “Jābir ibn Abdullah Ansārī”. Here, “Mujālid ibn Sa’īd” has been weakened by *rijālī* scholars (Nasā’ī, 1406 AH: 236; ‘Aghīlī, 1418 AH: 4:23; Ibn Ḥibbān, nd: 3:10). “Isma’il ibn Mujālid” is another weak narrator of this *sanad* (‘Aghīlī, 1418 AH: 1:94; Mizzī, 1413 AH: 3:186).

The second *sanad* of the second narrative: “Muhammad ibn Muyassir al-Ṣāghānī” from “Abu Ja’far al-Rāzī” from “Rabī’ ibn ‘Anas” from “Abul ‘Ālīyah” from “‘Ubay ibn Ka’b”. “Muhammad ibn Muyassir al-Ṣāghānī” has been severely weakened by *rijālī* scholars (Mizzī, 1413 AH: 26:537).

For the third narration (of Ibn Abbas) and the fourth one (of Muhammad ibn Ḥamzah), the *sanads* were not mentioned, so these hadiths are *mursal* and weak.

The fifth narrative was reported with the chain of “Ibn Ḥamīd” from “Yaḥya ibn Wāḍiḥ” from “Hussein” from “Yazīd” from “Ikrimah”. The *sanad* of this hadith is weak as well, for “Ikrimah” has been weakened and accused of lying (*kidhb*) (Mizzī, 1413 AH: 20:277-299); It is quoted that ‘Ikrimah’s views were the same as Kharijites (ibid: 279-277). It is also said that he was lying on his master, Ibn Abbas (ibid: 280). Moreover, he was a Successor and had not the condition of reporting *asbāb al-nuzūl*. So here his hadith would be counted as *mursal* and weak, as well.

1-2-2-1-2. Review and Evaluation of the Text

Among the stories reported here, the narrative of Ibn Abbas and Muhammad ibn Ḥamzah has a problem, for in the story of accepting Islam by Abdullah ibn Salām it must be said that he went to Medina and asked the Prophet (PBUH) some questions. Getting complete answers by the Prophet (PBUH) and finding that he could truly be a prophet, then he accepted Islam (and confessed *shahādah*) (Dhahabī, 1413 AH: 2:413). Therefore, this story did not occur in Mecca. Also, the meeting of ‘Āmir ibn Ṭufayl and ‘Arbad ibn Rabī’ah took place in Medina (Tha’labī, 1422 AH: 5:276; Qurṭubī, 1364: 9:297).

But the rest of the narrations can be summed up: Sūrah al-Tawḥīd was revealed in response to the question of the idolaters in Mecca. Accordingly, it is compatible with the content of the *Sūrah* which is the same as Meccan *Sūrahs* in content, as well as, it is not contradictory to the narrations of the order of descent. Therefore, the problem of *sanads* of such hadiths do not take the acceptance of their content down.

1-3. Exegetes’ Views

Another extra-textual evidence for dating of Sūrah al-Tawḥīd is the viewpoints of earlier and later exegetes.

1-3-1. The Exegetes Who Believe in Being Madanī

None of the exegetes have accepted the opinion of considering this Sūrah as Madanī and Suyoutī is the only one who preferred it as Makkī according to the *asbāb al-nuzūl* narratives (Suyoutī, 1421 AH: 1: 70). It shows that the narrations indicating it is Madanī are not valid before exegetes.

1-3-2. The Exegetes Who Believe in Being Makkī

The exegetes who consider the *sūrah* as Makkī are divided into five groups:

- A) Those who believe in being Makkī, bringing no proof: Some commentators have accepted it as Makkī, without pointing out the reason and mentioning the disagreement in *sūrah*, such as: Abu al-Futūḥ Rāzī (1408 AH: 20:462), Ibn Kathīr (1419 AH: 8:488), Maḏharī (1412 AH: 10:369), Mulla Ḥuwaysh ʿĀli Qāḏī (1382 AH: 1:188), Sayed Quṭb (Shādhilī) (1412 AH: 6:4002), Ṭāliqānī (1362 HS: 4:299), Makārem (1374 HS: 27:427) and Qurashī (1377 HS: 12:402).
- B) Those who believe that there is disagreement on the *sūrah*, bringing neither proof nor preference: some exegetes such as Zamakhsharī (1407 AH: 4:817), Ṭabrisī (1372 AH: 10:854), Bayḏāwī (1418 AH: 5:347), Feyḏ Kāshānī (1415 AH: 5:390), Qumī Mashhadī (1368 HS: 14:497), Shubbar (1412 AH: 569), and Gonābādī (1408 Ah: 4:281) have quoted the disagreement on the *sūrah* without pointing out the reasons and preferring between the Makkī and the Madanī statements.
- C) Those who believe that there is disagreement on the *sūrah*, bringing proof but no preference: some other commentators such as Tūsī (nd: 10: 429), Ibn ʿAṭīyyah Andalusī (1422 AH: 5: 536), Qurtubī (1364 AH: 21:244), Abu Ḥayyān Andalusī (1420 AH: 10:570), Thaʿalabī (1418 AH: 5:638), and Shawkānī (1416 AH: 5:631) have pointed to the difference in the time and place of the *Sūrah*, bringing the reason but without any preference.
- D) Those who believe that there is disagreement on the *sūrah*, bringing no proof and preferring it as Makkī without proof: Among the commentators, Samarqandī (nd: 3:634), without mentioning the reasons, has expressed the difference in the *sūrah* and preferred it as Makkī.
- E) Those who believe that there is disagreement on the *sūrah*, bringing proof and preferring it as Makkī: some commentators have accepted it as Makkī and brought reasons. Ṭanṭāwī says that the consensus of the scholars is that this chapter is the twenty-second *sūrah* sent down to the Prophet (PBUH), but some consider it as Madanī, while the former is preferable because this *sūrah* is based on the principle of Monotheism, which is the dominant subject of most Meccan *sūrahs* (Ṭanṭāwī, nd: 15:539). Ṭabāṭabāeī believes that this *sūrah* could be revealed both in Mecca and Madinah. Then he added that, according to some of the traditions on the cause of its revelation, it is clear that it was revealed in Mecca (Ṭabāṭabāeī, 1417 AH: 20:387). Faḏlullāh states that it is possible to recognize it as Makkī and Madanī, but according to the traditions of the cause of the descent, it is famous as a Meccan *sūrah* (Faḏlullāh, 1419 Ah: 24:481). Ibn ʿĀshūr writes that the consensus of the scholars is its being as Makkī, but according to Qatādah, Ḍaḥḥāk, Suddī, Abul ʿĀlīyah, and Quraḏī, it is Madanī, and all these views go back to Ibn Abbas. Ibn ʿĀshūr states that the origin of this difference is because of the quoted narrations of *asbāb al-nuzūl* for this *sūrah*. Mentioning these narratives, then he continues: “It seems sound to consider it as Makkī, for its content is based on Monotheism, which is common between most of Makkī *sūrahs*. So, it is the twenty-second chapter after the *Sūrah al-Nās* and before the *Sūrah al-Najm*.” (Ibn ʿĀshūr, nd: 30:535).

1-3-2-1. Review and Evaluation

Among the exegetes, Suyoutī is the only one who believes in being the *Sūrah* as Madanī, while, in contrast, most commentators believe that it was descended down in Mecca. Even those who have expressed the disagreement of the *Sūrah* and have not preferred them, at the beginning of the interpretation of the *Sūrah*, introduced the *Sūrah al-Tawḥīd* as Makkī. Therefore, these exegetes are regarded as those who recognize it as Makkī, as well. The commentators who have accepted it as Makkī without bringing reasons, may have stated as such due to the structure and content of the *Sūrah*, just as those who have studied and analyzed it and then concluded that it was revealed in Mecca, mostly paid attention to the form and content of the *Sūrah*.

2. Intra-Textual Evidences

In *Sūrah al-Tawḥīd*, there are certain criteria and attributes that place it in Makkī *sūrahs*:

- A) The shortness of verses and Sūrahs is a feature of Makkī Sūrahs. In these Sūrahs, addressing the people of Mecca, the method of concise speaking is observed. Such Sūrahs are short with short verses. For, Meccan people were men of oratory; their art was rhetoric speech and emphasized on the fluency of speech; therefore, the observance of concise and short statements, and avoidance of long and detail speech are of their words features (Zurqānī, nd: 1:196). The Sūrah al-Tawḥīd has only 4 short verses, written in 2 lines of the Qur'an, according to "Uthmanī calligraphy". Therefore it is one of the shortest Sūrahs in the Qur'an.
- B) "Repeating the distance" that is one of the criteria for the identification of Meccan Sūrahs (Hussein Ahmad, 1420 AH: 1:168) is clearly visible in this chapter.
- C) In Makkī Sūrahs, there is talk of misconceptions of Meccan people, as a result of their insistence on polytheism (Zurqānī, nd: 1: 195). The Sūrah al-Tawḥīd was also a general response to the idolaters who dived into Polytheism and Idolatry and believed that angels were the daughters of God.
- D) This chapter is about Monotheism in its content, a method used by the Prophet (PBUH) in confronting pagans and idolaters. (Abu Zayd, 2000: 88).

3. Dating And Estimating The Descending Time Of Sūrah Al-Tawḥīd

According to the above arguments, it is possible to approach the time range of Sūrah al-Tawḥīd: Based on the study of narratives in the order of descent, it is proved that this Sūrah was Makkī, has been descended in the order of first Makkī Sūrahs, after Sūrah al-Nās and before Sūrah al-Najm. As well as, based on Sunni and Shi'a exegetes' statements, who consensually have accepted the Sūrah as Makkī, the view of considering this Sūrah as Makkī is strengthened.

Based on the *asbāb al-nuzūl* traditions of Sūrah al-Tawḥīd, the narrations recognizing it as Madanī were not authentic in order to reach a sound dating. If we accept this group of traditions, it can only be said that firstly the Sūrah al-Tawḥīd was revealed in Mecca and then later in Medina it was recited again in response to the question of the People of the Book.

Therefore, due to the existence of some *asbāb al-nuzūl* traditions indicating the Sūrah as Makkī, the shortness of lack of the Sūrah and the repetition of the distance, as well as the meaning of the Sūrah and its contents, which is about Monotheism and was issued in answer to the polytheistic misconceptions concerning God, it could be concluded that this Sūrah has been sent down in Mecca. With regard to the fact that the Sūrah al-Tawḥīd was descended before the Sūrah al-Najm, which according to the exegetes it is the first Sūrah that the Prophet (PBUH) was commissioned to recite openly and publicly to everyone (Ṭabāṭabāeī, 1417 AH: 19:26 and Makārem, 1374 HS: 22:473), and the fact that the beginning of the public invitation was formed in the third year of the Mission (Alviri, 1383 HS: 49 and Zargarinezhad, 1384 HS: 237-241), it is deduced that the Sūrah al-Tawḥīd has revealed in the early years of the Prophet's (PBUH) Mission, almost coincided with his public invitation.

Conclusion

In order to date the Sūrah al-Tawḥīd, two categories of extra and intra-evidences were used, mostly are extra-evidences including: 1- traditions of the order of descent, 2- '*Asbāb al-Nuzūl* traditions, 3- Exegetes' Views. The '*Asbāb al-Nuzūl* traditions introducing it as Madanī are not acceptable. In contrast, the '*Asbāb al-Nuzūl* traditions introducing it as Makkī, are compatible with the form, structure, and content of the Sūrah al-Tawḥīd. Furthermore, based on two other extra-evidences (narratives of the order of descent and exegetes' views), as well as inter-evidences, which were taken into account in the meaning of the verses of the Sūrah, it was found that the Sūrah al-Tawḥīd is one of the Makkī Quranic Sūrahs. Finally, in the traditions of the order of descent, this Sūrah is argued as the twenty-second one,

being descended after Sūrah al-Nās and before Sūrah al-Najm, in Mecca. So, it is estimated that its revelation dates back to the third year of the Mission, almost coincided with the public invitation of the Prophet (PBUH).

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