

Studies on Quranic Rhetoric in al-Rayshahri's "Mizan al-Hikmah" Quranic Simile as a Case Study

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Abstract

Quranic Rhetoric is a unique style, distinct from general Arabic rhetoric known to all. Each rhetorical style in the Holy Quran serves a specific purpose. Accordingly, this research aims to reveal this rhetoric in one of the topics of rhetorical science: simile. Therefore, the research is divided into two sections and a conclusion. The first section addresses the general concepts of rhetoric and Quranic Rhetoric, along with a comprehensive introduction to the author of "Mizan al-Hikmah." The second section examines the most important instances where simile techniques are mentioned in "Mizan al-Hikmah," followed by the results containing the research's most important findings.

Keywords: Rhetoric, Quranic Rhetoric, Al-Rayshahri, Mizan al-Hikmah, Simile

Introduction

Praise be to Allah, and prayers and peace be upon the Messenger of Allah and his pure family...

The Holy Quran is not a discourse addressed to one group over another, nor a text confined to a specific intellectual level. Rather, it is a book that addresses human beings as humans; it reaches the heart of the educated just as it reaches the conscience of the illiterate, stirs the soul of the elder just as it awakens the thought of the youth, and addresses both woman and man with a single discourse, carrying within it the light of guidance and the grandeur of miraculousness.

Its verses follow one another with their wondrous melodies and precise structures, causing hearts to soften and souls to find solace; they elaborate to humans the stances of life and the Hereafter, leaving no heedless one unawakened, no disobedient one unalerted, no believer unassured, and no convinced one unblessed in his conviction. Were it not for the profound rhetoric of the Quran, with its wisdom, precision, and harmony, these values would not have converged in a single, comprehensive discourse.

From this standpoint, the eminent scholar Sheikh Muhammad al-Rayshahri (may his soul rest in peace), known for his high ambition and dedication to serving knowledge, undertook the authorship of his book titled "Mizan al-Hikmah." He derived its material primarily from the Holy Quran, then from the noble narrations, sensing the need for a book that combines the duality of the Book and the Progeny in a meticulous system, arranged in chapters and classified under precise headings to facilitate the reader's access to wisdom through the easiest path.

Based on this, the research is presented in two sections and a conclusion:

- In the first section, the general concepts of rhetoric and Quranic Rhetoric are presented, along with a comprehensive introduction to the author of "Mizan al-Hikmah".
- The second section is dedicated to studying the most prominent instances of simile techniques in the book, extracting their artistic and rhetorical significances.
- Finally, the conclusion outlines the key findings of the study.

Section One

First: The Concepts of Rhetoric and Quranic Rhetoric

Our Arabic language has sailed in the depths of beauty. At the beginning of its flourishing, beautiful expressions circulated, spreading their sublime fragrance along the paths of its golden rays, in addition to its uniqueness and distinction in perfecting everything with the least possible material components. This is clearly seen in pre-Islamic poetry, which became the cornerstone of that language. Afterwards, the Holy Quran made it a sweet spring for the aesthetics of speech and the arts of rhetoric. Thus, its rhetorical imagery appeared in the most splendid form possible, because it came in a style that combined prose and poetry; it is neither poetry nor prose, but Quran. This blessed book elevated the Arabic language to other realms brimming with beauty, creativity, argumentation, captivating minds, and directing them towards complete acceptance of what this discourse contained and initiated. This is due to the rich style of this book, with its innovative rhetorical arts, where rhetoric played a major role. Rhetoric is: "The conformity of speech to the contextual demands, along with its eloquence."¹ The meaning of conformity to the contextual

demands is that the speech should suit the context in which it is delivered, for every situation has its speech, and every occasion its appropriate discourse.

The term rhetoric is one that transcends arts, discourses, and texts. There are multiple types like: the rhetoric of poetry, the rhetoric of prose, and there is the rhetoric of the Quran. Texts are distinguished from each other based on their uniqueness and precision of formulation. This is called genre-specific rhetoric. Therefore, the rhetoric of poetry is not like the rhetoric of prose, and the rhetoric of the Quran is higher than both.

Rhetoric has degrees, some higher than others. Its highest rank is the rank of miraculous speech that no one can produce the like of. This rank is the rank of the speech of Allah, the Exalted—the Quran—before which the eloquent Arabs were unable to produce anything like it or like one of its verses. After this rank comes the rank of the speech of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him and his family), the most eloquent of the Arabs, who was given comprehensive speech. Then after this rank comes the rank of the Infallible ones from the Household of Prophethood, who were nurtured on the fountainhead of Prophethood and the mine of the Message. Then comes the rank of the eloquent Arabs from both the pre-Islamic and Islamic eras, and so on the ranks vary until descending to the rank of common, colloquial speech devoid of rhetoric. ²

Thus, Quranic Rhetoric is of a special kind, according to specific expressions, cast into precise, coherent molds intended to be distinguished by uniqueness, distinction, challenge, and inimitability. It differs from all other types of rhetoric known to the Arabs, as it does not stop at the limits of rhetorical arts dispersed in the volumes authored by the Arabs from their own intellects and good choice. Rather, it is the rhetoric of the Quran, which surpasses all that in beautiful composition, magnificent expression, and powerful harmony. The Quran presented it in a wondrous, astonishing manner that left everyone speechless and bewildered before these rhetorical structures. It combines authenticity and modernity, scientific depth, and keeps pace with cognitive development. It is renewed with the renewal of progress, considering that its words and molds are characterized by virtue and renewal. Every Quranic Rhetorical expression cannot be matched by any individual, nor can it be replaced by another, even if it has a synonym. This is due to the precise choice in crafting the structure, achieving the intended purpose, and proportionality with the demands of the situation and context. ³

Accordingly, we can say that Quranic Rhetoric is what this blessed book contained of creative, aesthetic, argumentative, and captivating elements that led the recipient to submit to everything the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) conveyed from revelation from Allah, the Blessed and Exalted. It is the set of elements whose combination achieved

uniqueness, beauty, and eternity in the Quranic text, and contributed to making this text an inimitable, eternal text with the eternity of this religion.

The Rhetorical Motive in the Quranic Text:

We observe that the Quranic text is replete with rhetorical topics, and this is due to the importance of language and its status among the Arabs. This is a clear and evident indication of the function performed by speech and the expressive language that achieves the communication process between the sender and the receiver. Speech has importance in transferring knowledge to the external world passing through it. Perhaps the most prominent virtue of speech mentioned by al-Jurjani is distinguishing between disbelief and faith, between wrongdoing and benevolence. This in itself re-bridges the shores between the Quran and the science of rhetoric. Al-Jurjani sees: "Speech is what gives sciences their ranks, names their degrees, condenses their forms, and harvests the varieties of their fruits."⁴

Among the motives for the rhetorical study of the Holy Quran, in addition to the virtues of speech and distinguishing between disbelief and faith, is providing further evidence for the Quran's inimitability. Abu Hilal al-Askari says: "If a person neglects the science of rhetoric and fails to know eloquence, his knowledge cannot establish the inimitability of the Quran from the aspect of the beautiful composition with which Allah distinguished His Book, the brilliance of its structures, and what it is filled with of wondrous inimitability and subtle brevity, among other beauties that creation has been unable to match; because rhetoric is one of the most important means of perceiving the Quranic inimitability, by mastering and excelling in it, and understanding its methods and arts."⁵

Among the motives for rhetorical studies is the centrality of the challenge regarding inimitability: the challenge to produce something like this wondrous speech with its various forms of expression. This challenge incapacitated the masters of Arabic eloquence, let alone others.

The Holy Quran is inimitable in multiple aspects: its eloquence, its styles, its arrangements, its rhetoric, the past and future news it contains, and the clear rulings it comprises. It challenged the Arabs with its rhetoric and words, just as it challenged them with the sound, complete meanings it contained. The style of Quranic speech does not resemble the speech of the Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) found in his noble hadiths; none of the Companions or those who came after them could speak with styles like his in eloquence and rhetoric.⁶

The purpose of rhetorical topics in the Holy Quran is to prove the inimitability of the Quran, demonstrate the aspects of aesthetic expression, and the splendor of its composition and marvels. Proving Quranic Rhetoric is part of the challenge, evidence of inimitability, and proof of the

impossibility of producing its like, even though it emulates the speech of the Arabs and is structured similarly in styles and expression. Therefore, Quranic Rhetoric became one of the important aspects of the Quranic inimitability, as the reader discerns the magnificent style and extreme precision in imagery in this great speech, making it evidence and proof of the truthfulness of the Messenger's message and the greatness of that message, by specifying it for the pillars of rhetoric, eloquence, and expression among the Arabs who were known for this art through their gatherings, divans, and competitions in their literary forums at that time.

Second: Al-Rayshahri, His Life and Upbringing

His Eminence Sheikh Muhammad Muhammadi al-Rayshahri was born in 1946 AD in the city of Rayy, west of the capital, Tehran and he is originally from the city of Semnan. His paternal grandfather was a companion of the scholar Sheikh Muhammad Taqi Bafqi (may Allah have mercy on him) and lived about one hundred and thirty years, passing away while reciting the Quran. His mother is from the city of Shemiran located in the capital, Tehran, and is a descendant of Sayyid Shakar Ab.

After finishing his primary education, his father prevented him from continuing secondary school due to the circumstances during the reign of the oppressive Shah and fear that entering secondary school and university would weaken his religious commitment. Because he was a religious man who loved religious scholars, he directed him after primary school to seek religious sciences. He first studied at the Burhan Religious School, and after a year of study there, he went to the city of Qom.

In 1965 AD, he was arrested in the city of Mashhad on charges of distributing a pamphlet issued by preachers and missionaries in Isfahan. The reason for this arrest was the Shah's security sensitivity towards religious seminary students in Qom. He remained in detention for forty-five days and fifteen days in the police directorate.

In 1966 AD, a year after his release, he failed to appear at the appellate court and went in hiding to Najaf province, staying there for eighteen months. He then returned to Tehran, then moved to Mashhad city, staying there for eighteen months, after which he returned to the city of Qom to continue studying and teaching until 1979 AD.

It should be noted that al-Rayshahri held several positions in the Islamic Republic system, including: Head of the Military Revolutionary Court, Minister of Security, Prosecutor General of the country, Representative of the Supreme Leader and Supervisor of Iranian Pilgrims, among other tasks and positions.⁷

His Teachers

Al-Rayshahri studied under a group of honorable teachers, including⁸:

- 1 .Mirza Ali al-Mushkini.
- 2 .Sheikh Muhammad al-Fadhil al-Lankarani.
- 3 .Sheikh Muhammad Ali al-Araqi.
- 4 .Sheikh Hussein Waheed al-Khurasani.
- 5 .Mirza Jawad al-Tabrizi.
- 6 .Sayyid Muhammad Reza al-Kalbaykani.
- 7 .Sheikh Murtadha al-Ha'iri.

His Works

When we mention the name of the eminent scholar al-Rayshahri, we recall an exceptional academic figure, known for the precision of his research, depth of investigation, and breadth of knowledge. The most prominent evidence of this stature is his prolific and encyclopedic output, which varied between hadith, history, ethics, and jurisprudence. For decades, the publications of Sheikh al-Rayshahri have formed an essential reference indispensable in academic centers. As a result, al-Rayshahri enriched the Islamic library with a series of valuable encyclopedias and books, representing intellectual and methodological sustenance for researchers and readers alike. Among the most prominent products of his thought, distinguished by meticulous compilation and verification, are:

- 1 .At-Tabligh fi al-Kitab wa as-Sunnah, Muhammad al-Rayshahri, verified by: Sayyid Hamid al-Hussaini, Dar al-Hadith, 1st ed., 1379 AH.
- 2 .Al-Jannah wa an-Nar fi al-Kitab wa as-Sunnah, Muhammad al-Rayshahri with the assistance of Rasul al-Mousawi, Qom: Dar al-Hadith, 1431 AH.
- 3 .Al-Hajj wa al-Umrah fi al-Kitab wa as-Sunnah, Muhammad al-Rayshahri, Dar al-Hadith, 1st ed.
- 4 .Al-Khayr wa al-Barakah fi al-Kitab wa as-Sunnah, Muhammad al-Rayshahri, verified by: The Research Center of Dar al-Hadith with the assistance of Muhammad at-Taqdeeri, Dar al-Hadith for Printing and Publishing, 1423 AH.
- 5 .As-Salah fi al-Kitab wa as-Sunnah, Muhammad al-Rayshahri, Dar al-Hadith, 1st ed., 1376 AH.

6 .Al-Aql wa al-Jahl fi al-Kitab wa as-Sunnah, Muhammad al-Rayshahri, Dar al-Hadith for Printing, Publishing, and Distribution, Lebanon, Beirut, 1st ed., 2000 AD.

7 .As-Sahih min Maqtal Sayyid ash-Shuhada wa Ashabih, Muhammad al-Rayshahri, with the assistance of Mahmoud Tabatabai, Dar al-Hadith for Printing and Publishing, Holy Qom - Iran, 1st ed., 1390 AH.

8 .Al-Ma'rifah fi al-Kitab wa as-Sunnah, Muhammad al-Rayshahri, Tehran, 1388 AH.

9 .Jawahir al-Hikmah li ash-Shabab, Muhammad al-Rayshahri, translated by: Mahdi Mahrizi, Qom: Dar al-Hadith, n.d., 1384 AH.

10 .Al-Mudhakirat as-Siyasiyah, Muhammad al-Rayshahri, Mu'assasat Dar al-Hadith ath-Thaqafiyah, 1st ed.

11 .Al-Mahabbah fi al-Kitab wa as-Sunnah, Muhammad al-Rayshahri, Dar al-Hadith for Printing, Publishing, and Distribution, Beirut - Lebanon, n.d., 2000 AD.

12 .Al-Qiyadah fi al-Islam, Muhammad al-Rayshahri, trans.: Ali al-Asadi, Mu'assasat Dar al-Hadith ath-Thaqafiyah, Qom - Iran, 1st ed., n.d.

13 .Ad-Dunya wa al-Akhirah fi al-Kitab wa as-Sunnah, Muhammad al-Rayshahri, with the assistance of Sayyid Rasul al-Mousawi, Qom, Dar al-Hadith, 1384 AH.

14 .Mizan al-Hikmah, Muhammad al-Rayshahri, Dar Ihya' at-Turath al-Arabi, Beirut - Lebanon, 1st ed., 1422 AH - 2001 AD. We have dedicated the research pages to this valuable book, focusing on the Quranic verses it contains, delving into their analysis within the noble Quranic Rhetorical topics, to reveal the aspects of expressive inimitability and the linguistic and structural beauty behind every wisdom and admonition.

His Methodology in authoring his book:

Undoubtedly, every author has a specific methodology he proposes for himself to prepare or author his book, a methodology called in contemporary times (the book's attributes). Accordingly, al-Rayshahri had a special methodology in authoring his book, derived from lessons he delivered to his students. Al-Rayshahri says: "During my research writing, something caught my attention: that the Holy Quran is interpreted by some parts by others. Therefore, someone who has encompassed its texts completely can interpret its verses by each other. Likewise for hadiths and narrations. I noticed that the process of compiling and classifying narrations and hadiths related to jurisprudential studies has been completed fully." Based on this, his methodology was built on the Holy Quran and the noble hadiths and narrations, with this combination placed under its own specific chapter. Therefore, al-Rayshahri formulated his methodology by collecting hadiths and narrations related to Quranic verses under specific chapters, saying: "So I found an urgent need for a book that gathers within its folds the hadiths of the Messenger and his Household (peace be upon

them) and arranges them according to a specific system." Hence, al-Rayshahri organized his book into a number of intellectual, ethical, social, and jurisprudential issues (worship, transactions). He places verses in a chapter on ethics, then follows them with noble hadiths and narrations pertaining to the same Shariah. The reader finds that there is proportionality and harmony, whether verbal or semantic, between the verse and the hadiths, or between the verses themselves, or the hadiths themselves.

Al-Rayshahri placed chapter headings akin to general concepts, whose instances are from the Quran, hadiths, and noble verses. For example, in the chapter on Faith, al-Rayshahri mentions a verse from the Wise Reminder urging faith and follows it with three sayings of Imam Ali (peace be upon him) in the same chapter or on the same topic, and so on in the remaining chapters. The chapters mentioned by the author in his book are arranged according to the Arabic alphabetical order (A to Y), and the division of the book was as follows:

First: The book contains thirteen chapters on the fundamentals and branches of religion, the Quran, the general principles of Islam, humanity, economics, politics, society, rights, the universe, and history. Under each chapter is a set of topics, as follows:

- 1 .Fundamentals of Religion: five topics.
- 2 .Branches of Religion: ten topics.
- 3 .The Quran: ten topics.
- 4 .General Principles of Islam: twelve topics.
- 5 .The Creator and the Creation: four topics.
- 6 .Ethics: two topics.
- 7 .Economics: three topics.
- 8 .Society: four topics.
- 9 .Rights: two topics.
- 10 .Politics: three topics.
- 11 .The Universe: five topics.
- 12 .Humanity: six topics.
- 13 .History: twelve topics.

Thus, al-Rayshahri's methodology or plan is based on (13) chapters, containing (78) topics, with each topic encompassing a number of verses, hadiths, and noble narrations. One can imagine the enormous volume of verses, hadiths, narrations, and subjects this encyclopedia contains, and also the effort al-Rayshahri exerted in collecting, verifying, scrutinizing, and classifying the hadiths and narrations in this manner, after reviewing the book's content, addressing some of its

shortcomings, correcting and amending the texts of the hadiths therein by comparing them with original copies and sources, or likewise replacing some repeated hadiths or those not matching the titles with other hadiths.

As for the sources and references he relied on, he openly relied on (152) sources, Sunni and Shiite, from books of exegesis, hadith, biographies, history, and jurisprudence. He selected the most reliable and esteemed sources among multiple sources for a single hadith, taking the hadith from its original sources, not via intermediaries. Based on this, the encyclopedia "Mizan al-Hikmah" by al-Rayshahri is a massive encyclopedia that gathers within its folds hadiths and verses in a modern, contemporary style far from traditionalism, where he collects all hadiths related to a single subject under one heading to facilitate the researcher's easy and smooth reference to them. This encyclopedia was also distinguished by comprehensiveness in selection, relying in that on reliable sources from both schools. It is truly a comprehensive book and a blessed work that has preserved for us part of the heritage of the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them).

Although al-Rayshahri did not give a reason for naming his book "Mizan al-Hikmah," upon reviewing and studying it, it can be said that the reason for the name is due to two reasons:

First: Because the book contains Quranic verses and noble hadiths of the Prophet and his family, as if al-Rayshahri placed the verses on one scale and the hadiths on the other, making it a scale from which wisdom and admonition are taken, since the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them) are the counterpart of the Quran.

Second: It is believed that the author named his book "Mizan al-Hikmah" because he wanted to gather in it the essence of the teachings of the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them) from hadiths, sayings, and positions related to human life in various aspects, so that these hadiths become a scale for wisdom, from which humans draw wisdom in their lives.

Section Two

Simile and Quranic Rhetoric in "Mizan al-Hikmah"

The Arabic language blended a set of linguistic and rhetorical styles that granted it uniqueness and achieved beauty, distinction, and captivating rhetoric for its texts. This uniqueness reached its completion with the revelation of the Holy Quran in it and what it bestowed upon it of precise discourse that poured onto the pages of the readers' reflections. Among these styles is the style of (Simile). The definitions of rhetoricians for simile have varied. Perhaps the first to define simile was al-Mubarrad (d. 285 AH), as evident in his saying: "Know that simile has a limit. Things resemble each other in aspects, but simile is considered from where it occurs."⁹ While Qudamah ibn Ja'far went to: "A thing is not likened to itself nor to another in all respects, for if two things

resembled each other in all aspects, and there was absolutely no difference between them, they would be united and become one. Therefore, simile occurs between two things that share meanings common to both and are described by them, and differ in things where each is distinct from its counterpart by its attributes. If that is the case, then the best simile is the one where the similarity between the two things in shared attributes is more than their distinctiveness in what brings them closer to the state of unity."¹⁰

Ar-Rummani (d. 386 AH) emphasized that simile is "establishing that one of the two things takes the place of the other in sense or intellect."¹¹

Simile is "a comparative relationship between two parties, due to their unity or sharing of a quality, state, or set of qualities and states. This relationship is based on a sensory similarity, or it may be based on a similarity in judgment or the mental requirement that links the two compared parties, without it being necessary for the two parties to share the physical form or many sensory qualities."¹²

Simile, then, constitutes a serious expressive, rhetorical attempt to refine form and develop wording. Its task is to bring meanings closer to the recipient's mind by making them tangible, living, and present, like other things he can perceive and depict, to be more integrated and interactive with that intended image to reach him.¹³ We would not be wrong to say that simile forms an enjoyable artistic depiction aimed at drawing meanings through the vast space of imagination. The more expressive images chosen to depict the intended things, the more beautiful, perfect, and complete the simile becomes in form and content.¹⁴ Its benefit is expanding the horizons of expression before the speaker, enabling him through imagery to transfer the meanings formed in his mind to the listener or reader; because it combines brevity with good expression, and hyperbole in affirming and establishing meanings.¹⁵ The occurrence of simile in Quranic expressions aims to bring images closer to the recipient's mind, making him feel that this speech has transformed into a panorama or a complete, comprehensive scene, with all its elements present before him.¹⁶ Accordingly, we notice that simile is that technique whose function is not limited to embellishment and beauty alone, but extends to other realms, as a persuasive tool used as evidence to convince the other party. Therefore, the Holy Quran used simile in some Quranic contexts as a persuasive tool, aiming to influence the recipient's soul, attract his attention, then win him over, and finally achieve the intended purpose: complete submission and acceptance. Thus, simile achieves that intentionality that seeks to convince the other party, aiming to influence the recipient.¹⁷

In this section, the researcher will attempt to trace the impact of this expressive style (simile) as it appears in the book "Mizan al-Hikmah" by al-Rayshahri.

Among the places carrying this type of expression is what came in his book "Mizan al-Hikmah" under the chapter (The Splitting of the Sky)¹⁸: The saying of Allah, the Exalted: "Then when the sky is split open and becomes rose-colored like oil"¹⁹.

This blessed Quranic verse deals with one of the scenes of the Day of Judgment, depicting clearly and precisely the changes that occur to this world and the severe disturbances leading to terrifying and horrifying events throughout existence. The planets, earth, and sky will witness unparalleled and unimaginable transformations. Among these changes is what is mentioned in the verse, such as the splitting and cracking of the sky, the fragmentation of celestial bodies, and their separation from each other. The sky, when it cracks, becomes like a rose or red like the color of a rose. It is said, like the color of a ward horse, which is a white horse tinged with redness or yellowness. Furthermore, a rose changes its color during the seasons of the year, tending towards yellowness in spring, reddening in winter, and its color darkening in extreme cold. Thus, likening the sky on the Day of Judgment to it is regarding the changes that occur in its colors: sometimes its color is like a blazing flame, burning red, sometimes yellow, and other times black, dark, and opaque. As for the word (duhan), it came meaning melted fat/oil and sometimes refers to the residual deposits of fatty material, often having multiple colors. Hence, this simile came where the color of the sky becomes like melted oil with the color of a red rose²⁰, or like red oil from the fire of Hell, considering the vastness and greatness of the sky. How then will the frail bodies be on that Day? This is what was narrated from the Commander of the Faithful, Ali (peace be upon him): He passed by a group of blacksmiths and said: "O assembly of blacksmiths, you are the most deserving people to take admonition and lesson. Do you not see the effect of this weak fire on this strong iron? So how is the effect of that great fire on these weak bodies?"²¹ In any case, these similes embody for us a picture from the scene of that great Day, for the reality of events on that Day has no likeness with any other events in our world. These scenes we cannot comprehend unless we see them.²²

Thus, the Quranic text used sensory simile to bring the image of the sky on the Day of Judgment closer to the recipient's mind. Humans often see with their own eyes the reddening of iron when placed in fire; all these scenes are sensory and have an impact on the viewer's soul. Therefore, we find that the Quranic text did not come with a non-sensory or unfamiliar image to humans, but rather with a familiar, clear sensory image of what the latter is accustomed to seeing, so that the simile is clear, evident, impactful, and closer to the recipient's mind. For a simile that comes in a mental (abstract) image may not be grasped by all people. Since those with a materialistic view see humans as material in their composition, this necessarily requires them to be materialistic in interaction, meaning they need material things to bring the image closer for interaction. In this manner, the Holy Quran used material things that humans interact with to bring closer the image of the sky on the Day of Judgment; because if issues are interpreted in a metaphysical way, it may not affect the counterpart unless they are perceivers of metaphysics, which cannot be achieved for any human. For we are dealing with peoples who, in terms of

disposition, have been immersed in and accustomed to having material attributes and anthropomorphism as a fundamental framework within which they operate. Moreover, the beginning of the call was an idea judged by the senses, then the cognitive system moved to tickle the intellect with argumentation, debate, and showing signs before the servants, in addition to the cinematic scene that spreads its sails of song before the recipient, so he sees beauty and uniqueness before him in the Quranic text.

Thus, Quranic simile worked to bring the image closer to the recipient's mind, to instill fear of that awesome Day, for which the Quran here depicted one of its portents: the reddening and melting of the sky, so that the simile entered the realm of persuasion. It was observed that the elements of simile mentioned in the verse came with material elements (the compared and the thing it is compared to); because the addressed human deals greatly with sensory and material issues, which are closer and more impactful on his soul. Accordingly, the Quranic text relied on this technique to influence the addressee, and thus simile entered the realm of persuasion as an element of evidence.

Accordingly, this simile, in its essence, is an indication of divine power and majesty. What is before it of harmonious cosmic laws, the primary mention of which is to demonstrate divine power versus the humble, weak servant.

Among the applications carrying this type of expression is what came in His saying, the Exalted: "Then He turned to the heaven while it was smoke"²³.

The exegesis of this verse states that "the heaven here means the height/elevation; because it had not yet been created, but it was like smoke, i.e., rising vapor. It is said: This rising vapor ascended from the water that existed before the earth was created; because Allah, the Exalted, said: 'And it is He who created the heavens and the earth in six days, and His Throne was upon the water.' So before the creation of the heavens and the earth, there was water above which was the Throne of the Most Merciful, may He be glorified and exalted. Then the earth was created, and from this water, a dense, rising vapor burst forth, becoming like smoke."²⁴

It is said that the word "smoke" refers to its dark, undifferentiated material, and therefore it was presented in the style of eloquent simile, i.e., the sky is like smoke, and the singular form 'sky' for that meaning.²⁵

In the exegesis of the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them) for this verse, we pause at the saying of Abu Ja'far al-Baqir (peace be upon him): "And He created the thing from which all things are, which is the water from which He created things, making the lineage of everything trace back

to water, and He did not give water a lineage to be attributed to. He created the wind from water, then He gave the wind authority over the water, so the wind split the surface of the water until foam rose from the water as much as He willed to rise. From that foam He created a pure white earth without crack, hole, elevation, depression, or tree. Then He folded it and placed it above the water. Then Allah created fire from water, so the fire split the surface of the water until smoke rose from the water as much as Allah willed to rise. From that smoke He created a pure, clear sky without crack or hole."²⁶

Supporting this statement is what al-Rayshahri mentioned in the narration reported from Imam al-Baqir (peace be upon him): "Everything was water, and His Throne was upon the water. Then Allah, glorified be His mention, commanded the water, and it burst into flame (became fire). Then He commanded the fire, and it subsided, and from its subsiding, smoke rose."²⁷

Thus, Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, likened the sky at its first occurrence to smoke in that it consisted of separate, unconnected parts devoid of light, as it has no form preserved by its composition. This is interpreted as simile because it is impossible for the intended meaning to be the literal reality of smoke, which is what rises from the flame of fire or the vapor rising from water.

From the above, it is understood that (smoke) is the thing it is compared to, and (the sky) is the compared. The point of similarity may be in elevation, or in darkness, or in the general sky resembling dense smoke. This simile is approximate, as the true material of the sky is not known to this day. It can be claimed that the sky intended here is the gaseous atmosphere surrounding the earth, as it is a mixture of gases and vapors; it is in reality (smoke).

Among the places where the style of (Representational Simile) is mentioned is what al-Rayshahri mentioned in the book "Mizan al-Hikmah" under the chapter (The Example of the Hypocrite)²⁸: What came in His saying, the Exalted: "Their example is that of one who kindled a fire, but when it illuminated what was around him, Allah took away their light and left them in darkness [so] they could not see."²⁹

The Holy Quran provides us through its precise depictions, using the technique of representational simile, likening therein the state of the hypocrites who showed faith to protect themselves and their wealth without truly believing, concealing polytheism, to the state of one upon whom night fell in a desert, so he kindled a fire that illuminated for him, revealing his surroundings, and he warmed himself by that fire. Then it quickly went out, returning him to the depths of darkness. The explanation of this example: "Allah, the Exalted, likened them in their sharing misguidance with guidance, and their turning after insight to blindness, to one who kindled a fire. When it illuminated his surroundings, he benefited from it, saw with it to his right and left, and

found solace in it. Then while he was in that state, it was extinguished, and he was left in intense darkness, not seeing or finding guidance. Moreover, he is deaf, not hearing; dumb, not speaking; blind - even if there were light, he would not see. Therefore, he does not return to what he was before. Similarly, these hypocrites in exchanging misguidance for guidance, preferring error over right guidance." This example indicates that they believed then disbelieved, as Allah, the Exalted, informed about them elsewhere.³⁰ Contemplating this speech, we find it closer to an example than a simile.

The meaning of kindling a fire here is lighting it for guidance by its light or illumination by it, as was done in ancient times. His saying: (Allah took away their light) refers generally to the apparent light from kindling the fire, and the abstract light which is Islam.³¹ I.e., their example in their hypocrisy and their strange state therein is like the state of a person who kindled a fire to warm himself and have light, but no sooner had it been kindled than it went out, leaving him in pitch darkness and intense fear, groping without guidance.³² This is the state of the waverer who does not know which direction he intends except to be guided by a guide. Al-Rayshahri supported this aforementioned Quranic meaning with a hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) which states: "The example of a hypocrite is like a stray sheep between two flocks, straying to this one time and to that one time, not knowing which one to follow."^{33 34} This means that the hypocrite is misguided in thought, indeed wavering between two matters: faith and disbelief. He is outwardly Muslim, yet inwardly a disbeliever. Therefore, he does not know where to go and settle; he is in a state of constant anxiety—not a wavering of faith, but fear of their matter being exposed. Therefore, the Messenger (peace be upon him) likened his state—the hypocrite's—to the state of this stray sheep between two flocks, not knowing which to follow. Al-Rayshahri employed this hadith for its appropriateness to the noble verse in terms of the rhetorical aspect through representational simile.

Faced with the splendor and precision of these words, a person stands in awe due to the brilliance of the Quranic depiction of the states of hypocrites, in addition to the wonders of rhetorical structures carried by the verse, "captivating his feelings, opening before him various channels of perception from abstract thought, sensory images in reality, and visible, living scenes."³⁵

What is noticeable is that the Holy Quran focused on emphasizing the sense of sight to create for us a comprehensive panoramic picture of its surroundings, due to the centrality of this sense. "Considering that the poetic memory of poets relied on the seeing eye in capturing, forming, and then composing images more than relying on other senses, and also because the sense of sight comes at the forefront of senses appreciating beauty."³⁶ The same is employed here in the Quranic discourse. The eye has its centrality among the senses, and utilizing it in artistic imagery is one of the effective ways to strengthen the simile's performance in Quranic discourse, combining two functions: artistic and religious. This was thanks to the technique of simile and what it possessed

of the element of movement, considered an advantage among the general advantages of simile, as they describe it as "among the marvelous and great similes; because capturing it while it is earnest in its movement and fluctuation indicates ability, awareness, and strong observation, then depicting it while it moves—meaning preserving this lively mobility that stirs the soul, freeing it from the boredom of stagnation."³⁷

Based on this, simile had its effect and profound impact on the recipient, working to create a psychological shock in transferring the reality of the hypocrite's state from darkness to light. Perhaps that scene depicted by the noble verse, with its kinetic and sensory embodiment, shows the extent of the incurred loss by awakening the recipient's consciousness. The speed of the journey and transition from one state to another creates a paradox in the contrast of the intended meaning and reveals the true fate and the crime of the apparent faith adopted by the hypocrite, in addition to the warning image reflected by the Quran filled with severity in punishment, and brimming with awe and fear.

Among the places carrying the style of representational simile is what al-Rayshahri mentioned in the book "Mizan al-Hikmah" under the chapter (The Example of One Who Acts Without Deed)³⁸: Allah, the Exalted, said: "The example of those who were entrusted with the Torah and then did not take it on is like that of a donkey carrying books. Wretched is the example of the people who deny the signs of Allah. And Allah does not guide the wrongdoing people."³⁹

We notice that the noble verse indicated, through representational similarity, to the Jews upon whom the Torah was revealed but who did not understand it, like a donkey that carries books but does not benefit from them. Note that the benefit intended by the Quran is the indication within it to the prophethood of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) and the allusion to his mission.⁴⁰ The point of similarity between the Jewish rabbis who were entrusted with the Torah and the donkey carrying books is the lack of benefit from what they carried, i.e., the Torah and the scriptures.⁴¹ So, "the point of similarity between the Jewish rabbis who were charged with acting upon what is in the Torah, then did not act accordingly, and the donkey carrying scriptures, is the deprivation of benefiting from what is most worthy of being benefited from, along with toil and hardship in accompanying it."⁴² This "state is intellectual, abstracted from several intellectual matters as well—except that the carrying on the side of the 'donkey' is sensory because the intended meaning is: carrying on the back—unlike it on the side of the 'Jews,' for the intended meaning is obligation and demand. The fact that some of the matters abstracted from are sensory does not affect the intellectual nature of the point."⁴³ Al-Jurjani says: "So the similarity is abstracted from the states of the donkey, which is that it carries scriptures that are vessels of knowledge and the repository of the fruits of intellects, yet it does not perceive what is in them, nor is aware of their content, nor distinguishes between them and other loads that have nothing to do with knowledge or indicating it in any way. It has no share in what it carries except that it is heavy upon it and tires its sides."⁴⁴

It is said: The example of those who were charged with acting upon it but did not fulfill its right nor acted upon its verses is like that of a donkey carrying scriptures. This animal does not feel what it carries of books except their weight and does not distinguish whether the load on its back is wood, stone, or books containing the most delicate secrets of creation and the best methodology in life. These people were content with reciting the Torah and sufficed with that without acting according to it... This address includes all Muslims who deal with the words of the Quran without perceiving its precious dimensions and wisdoms.⁴⁵ Al-Rayshahri supports this meaning with what is reported from Imam Ali (peace be upon him), saying: "Indeed, the scholar who acts without his knowledge is like the ignorant, perplexed one who does not recover from his ignorance. Rather, the proof against him is greater, regret is more binding upon him, and he is more blameworthy with Allah."⁴⁶ In this saying, there is a clear explanation and evident simile for the state of the scholar who acts without knowledge, as the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) described him as ignorant, and likened his action to the action of the ignorant who acts without understanding and cannot recover from his ignorance and take lesson from that. Here, the representational simile brought is not for the attribute of the acting scholar, but for his state, meaning that the state between the scholar acting without knowledge and the ignorant who does not recover is one and the same; there is no difference between them. The ignorant does not produce beneficial fruit, nor does the lazy scholar acting without knowledge produce fruit benefiting people. Accordingly, the state of the scholar acting without knowledge is accompanied by regret, the proof against him is greater, and blame from Allah upon him is closer and greater as well. Thus, we find that al-Rayshahri brought this hadith and matched it with the verse due to its agreement with it in terms of rhetorical style and intended meaning.

The intended effect left by the representational simile in the text on the recipient.

Among the applications carrying the style of Quranic simile is what al-Rayshahri mentioned in the book "Mizan al-Hikmah" under the chapter (The Example of the Spender in the Cause of Allah)⁴⁷: Also what came in His saying, the Exalted: "The example of those who spend their wealth in the cause of Allah is like that of a grain which grows seven spikes; in each spike is a hundred grains. And Allah multiplies [His reward] for whom He wills. And Allah is all-Encompassing and Knowing."⁴⁸

We notice that in the noble text, there is a simile struck by Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, for multiplying reward for those who spend in His cause and seeking His pleasure, and that a good deed is multiplied tenfold... This example is more effective on souls... For it contains an allusion that righteous deeds are increased by Allah for their doers just as crops are increased for one who sows in good soil.⁴⁹

In the noble Quranic verse, "Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, likened spending in the cause of Allah sincerely to planting seeds in blessed, good soil, where a grain grows seven spikes, each spike containing a hundred grains. Spending resembles the planting process, Allah's increase for it resembles good growth, and multiplying reward resembles the multiplication of spikes from a single grain and the multiplication of grains in each spike."⁵⁰ So the compared here "is the state of one who spends a little in the cause of Allah and then receives a great reward for it, and the thing it is compared to is the state of a sower of a seed that grew for him seven spikes, each spike containing a hundred grains. The point of similarity is the image of one who does a little and then reaps much from the fruits of his action."⁵¹ More precisely, "The compared is the spending human, the thing it is compared to is the blessed, abundant seeds, and the point of simile is growth and development... that the spending human grows and develops meaningfully and socially through that action and does not need any estimation."⁵²

Consequently, Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, through the style of representational simile, likened spending wealth in His cause and the result of spending to the result arising from the growth of (a plant seed), meaning that if a plant seed is cared for and watered, it yields seven spikes, each spike a hundred grains. The result is seven hundred grains from one grain. Hence, spending one dirham in the cause of Allah returns to you with seven dirhams if measured by monetary value, or the reward of spending returns to the spender multiplied over what he spent.

Considering the Quranic style that adopted representational similarity as a tool to demonstrate the correspondence and resemblance in the state of spending and its outcome, and in the state of growth and its outcome: the Quran did not liken the dirham to the grain, for they are different. Rather, it likened the state after spending to the state after growth. Al-Rayshahri supports this meaning with a hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him and his family): "The example of the miser and the charitable person is like two men wearing iron shirts. When the charitable person intends to give charity, it expands on him until it covers his traces. And when the miser intends to give charity, it constricts on him, and his hands are drawn to his collarbones, and every link tightens against its companion."⁵³ We find that al-Rayshahri relied exclusively on the rhetorical context in dealing with the hadith, seeking the appropriateness between the two texts (Quranic and Prophetic), due to the rhetorical, expressive purpose in the hadith, which is (representational simile) between the state of the miser and the charitable person. The charitable person, Allah opens for him and blesses him in his provision due to his charity, contrary to the miser upon whom his provision is constricted, and his hand remains shackled to his neck for fear of spending. This meaning is the same meaning mentioned in the aforementioned noble verse, where the Holy Quran used the style of (representational simile) to show the state of the spenders and others. From this, we understand that al-Rayshahri's selection of this verse alongside this hadith was based on rhetorical understanding, leading him to harmonize between them leaning on (representational simile).

Consequently, the representational simile here came to clarify the purpose of spending in the cause of Allah, in addition to demonstrating the greatness of Allah's generosity, the Exalted, which comes through giving much in return for little—the little spending from humans and the greater reward from the Creator, glorified and exalted. Then clarifying and bringing this idea closer in a mental and sensory manner simultaneously, making the process of growth and its outcome like the process of spending and its outcome.

Conclusion

After presenting what we could in the previous pages, we reach the following:

1 .Simile, in its various types, contributed by adorning the meaning realized from the inimitable text, or the text of the Infallible, with an aura of multiple meanings that contributed to opening the semantic horizon for those texts.

2 .Although simile is one of the earliest rhetorical elements specific to the science of expression (al-Bayan), deriving its raw material from the environment, the Quranic text and the Ahl al-Bayt text were aware of the share this element generates.

3 .The instances where simile occurred, whether in the Quranic text or the Ahl al-Bayt text, abound with creativity and uniqueness, and the similes were innovative and new, never approached by simile before.

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Footnotes:

¹ Talkhis al-Bayan, Al-Khatib al-Qazwini: 42.

² See: Mabathith fi al-Balaghah al-Qur'aniyah, Muhammad Isa Abu Najilah: 12.

³ See: Dalail al-I'jaz: 46.

⁴ Asrar al-Balaghah: 13.

⁵ As-Sina'atayn: 10.

⁶ See: Al-I'jaz al-Balaghi fi al-Quran al-Karim, Muhammad Hussein Salamah: 11-12.

⁷ See: Dialogue with Ayatollah Muhammadi al-Rayshahri about Dar al-Hadith Cultural Foundation, Hadith ash-Shab'ah website. Also see: Interview: Sheikh Muhammad al-Rayshahri: Dialogue of Wisdom and Love, published on the website of Baqiyyat Allah magazine for a reader seeking truth, 3 November 2025 corresponding to 12 Jumada al-Awwal 1447 AH.

⁸ See: Sheikh Muhammad al-Muhammadi al-Rayshahri, published on the website of the Center for Authentic Islam for Culture and Media, 2023.

⁹ Al-Kamil, Al-Mubarrad: 2/766.

¹⁰ Naqd ash-Shi'r: 109.

¹¹ Thalath Rasa'il fi I'jaz al-Quran al-Karim: 80.

¹² As-Surat al-Fanniyah fi at-Turath an-Naqdi wa al-Balaghi 'ind al-Arab: 172.

¹³ See: Usul al-Bayan al-Arabi: 63.

¹⁴ See: Talkhis at-Tamhid (Mawjaz Dirasat Mabsutah an Mukhtalif Shu'un al-Quran al-Karim), Muhammad Hadi Ma'rifah, Dar al-Qari', Beirut, Lebanon, 1st ed., 2010, Vol. 2: 331.

¹⁵ See: 'Ilm al-Bayan, Dirasah Tarikhiyah wa Fanniyah li Usul al-Balaghah wa Masa'il al-Bayan, Dr. Basyuni Abd al-Fattah Fayyad, Professor of Rhetoric and Criticism, Faculty of Arabic Language, Al-Azhar University, Al-Mukhtar Foundation for Publishing and Distribution, Cairo, Egypt, 2nd ed., 1998 AD: 28.

¹⁶ See: As-Suwar al-Qisar fi al-Quran al-Karim (Dirasah Balaghiyah) (Master's Thesis), Muhannad Abd al-Razzaq Abd al-Qadir al-Asfour, University of Basra - College of Education, 1423 AH - 2003 AD: 8.

¹⁷ See: Al-Hijaj fi Ayat al-Ahkam, Tha'ir Imran Shadhan al-Janabi (Master's Thesis), Al-Muthanna University, College of Education for Islamic Sciences - Iraq, 1437 AH - 2016 AD: 135.

¹⁸ Mizan al-Hikmah: 7/2885.

¹⁹ Surah Ar-Rahman: 37.

²⁰ Al-Amthal fi Tafsir Kitab Allah al-Munzal, Naser Makarem al-Shirazi: 27/82.

²¹ At-Tafsir al-Kabir, Tafsir al-Quran al-Azim (At-Tabarani): 6/176.

²² Al-Amthal fi Tafsir Kitab Allah al-Munzal: 17/413.

²³ Surah Fussilat: 11.

²⁴ Tafsir al-Quran al-Karim (Surat Fussilat), Muhammad ibn Salih al-Uthaymin: 75-76.

²⁵ At-Tafsir at-Tahlili li al-Quran al-Karim, Abbas Ali al-Fahham: 13/273.

²⁶ Al-Kafi, Al-Kulayni: 8/95.

²⁷ Mizan al-Hikmah, Vol.[?] .

²⁸ Mizan al-Hikmah: 9/3744.

²⁹ Surah Al-Baqarah: 17.

³⁰ Tafsir al-Quran al-Azim: 1/96.

³¹ See: Mawahib ar-Rahman fi Tafsir al-Quran, Sayyid Abd al-A'la al-Musawi as-Sabzawari: 1/100-101.

³² See: Safwat at-Tafasir, Muhammad Ali al-Sabuni: 37.

³³ Al-'A'irah: [translator's note: the original footnote marker is here without text. "Al-'A'irah" likely means "the stray sheep" as in the hadith].

³⁴ Mizan al-Hikmah: 9/36.

³⁵ At-Taswir al-Qur'ani lil-Qiyam al-Akhlaqiyah wa at-Tashri'iyah, Ali Ali Subh: 85.

³⁶ As-Surat al-Isti'ariyah fi ash-Shi'r al-Arabi al-Hadith, Wijdan al-Sa'igh: 27.

³⁷ At-Taswir al-Bayani - Dirasah Tahliliyah li Masa'il al-Bayan, Muhammad Abu Musa: 66.

³⁸ Mizan al-Hikmah, 9/3760.

³⁹ Surah Al-Jumu'ah: 5.

⁴⁰ See: 'Irab al-Quran wa Bayanuh, Muhyi al-Din Darwish: 10/90.

⁴¹ See: Miftah al-'Ulum: 349.

⁴² Miftah al-'Ulum: 349.

⁴³ Al-Minhaj al-Wadih li al-Balaghah, Hamed Auni: 5/44.

⁴⁴ Asrar al-Balaghah: 102.

⁴⁵ Al-Amthal fi Tafsir Kitab Allah al-Munzal: 18/325.

⁴⁶ Mizan al-Hikmah: 9/3628.

⁴⁷ Mizan al-Hikmah: 9/3757-3758.

⁴⁸ Surah Al-Baqarah: 261.

⁴⁹ Tafsir al-Quran al-Azim: 261-262. Also see: At-Tafsir al-Munir, Wahbah al-Zuhayli: 3/41.

⁵⁰ Al-Amthal al-Qur'aniyah: Dirasah wa Tahlil wa Tasnif wa Rasm li Usuliha wa Qawa'iduha wa Manahijjha, Abd al-Rahman Hussein al-Maidani: 27.

⁵¹ Asalib al-Bayan fi al-Quran, Sayyid Ja'far Baqir al-Hussaini: 330.

⁵² Al-Amthal fi Tafsir Kitab Allah al-Munzal: 2/292.

⁵³ Mizan al-Hikmah: 9/3758.