

Exploring the Civilizational Approach in Quranic Exegesis

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Introduction

Islamic civilization today faces numerous challenges, each requiring answers and solutions. Although some answers have been provided, it is essential that these responses be derived from the guiding idea of Islamic civilization, the Quran, in order to establish a Quran-centered monotheistic civilization. Therefore, there is a need for a systematic reading of the Quran that addresses civilizational issues and derives civilizational responses from it. Such a reading is called a "civilizational reading" and can be classified as one of the interpretive approaches. However, a key issue in the realm of interpretive approaches, including the civilizational approach, is the lack of a theoretical framework and methodological mechanism. To ensure that the civilizational approach leads to an effective exegesis of the Quran and responds to civilizational issues, it must first be introduced, and its foundations clarified, followed by the development of its methodological steps in the future.

Methodology

In the civilizational approach, the knowledge of civilization is considered as the level of analysis, showing the interpreter's perspective on the Quran. Therefore, the method of this research is to first explore the definitions of civilization based on its theoretical framework, which is the knowledge of civilization, and to arrive at a comprehensive definition of civilization. In the next step, based on the definition of civilization, the civilizational approach is defined, reflecting the civilizational concerns of the interpreter. Finally, by studying the works of interpreters who have had civilizational concerns and civilization scholars who have referred to the Quran as the text or guiding idea of civilization, this research seeks to extract the assumptions, fundamental principles, or beliefs that researchers have accepted in order to derive a civilizational understanding of the Quranic verses.

Findings

This study defines civilization as an organized process at a macro level that, with the growth of human relations, creates a foundation for the flourishing of latent potentials. Based on the proposed definition, the civilizational approach is a macro, organized, human-relations-oriented, process-based, and action-oriented approach. This interpretive approach seeks to view and read the Quran not as a theoretical and doctrinal source but as an active agent in the scene. Based on this definition and by studying exegetical and civilizational works, three distinct and specific

foundations of the civilizational approach can be identified. The first foundation is that the goal of the Quran is to establish a monotheistic path on Earth. It should be noted that among the various goals proposed for the revelation of the Quran, the primary goal in the theoretical realm is "monotheism," and in the practical realm, it is "the establishment of a monotheistic path" on Earth, or the creation of a monotheistic civilization. These two goals are one and the same, placed in two different realms. The second foundation is the existence of a relationship between the Quran and civilization. The question of the civilizational approach is meaningless without understanding the relationship between these two realms. In a general view of the relationship between the Quran and civilization, based on the categories presented in the theory of the "comprehensiveness of the Quran," a classification of thinkers in this field can also be found. Thinkers who believe in the absolute comprehensiveness of the Quran or its guiding comprehensiveness acknowledge a relationship between the Quran and civilization. Those who believe in the minimal comprehensiveness of the Quran limit its scope to matters of the afterlife and, thus, do not see a relationship between the Quran and civilization. This study, however, believes that the relationship between the Quran and civilization is one of theory and practice, and Islamic civilization is one that brings the Quran's theory closer to the practice of civilization. In this view, the Quran is a phenomenon or event or text of civilization, and the goal is not to change its level to a civilizational one through civilizational reading. Rather, in the civilizational reading, the latent capacity of the Quran is actualized, and one of its levels of meaning is revealed. The third foundation is the dual nature of the Quran, consisting of both textual and active aspects. On one level, the Quran is a source for understanding religion and religious knowledge, and on another level, it is a source for changing human culture and civilization. In the second realm, the Quran acts as an agent to change human relations and the culture of its time. It is important to note that the Quran's natural aspect and its interaction with reality and its active role in society are not limited to the reality of the time of revelation but are in relation to the present reality and engage in dialogue with it.

Conclusion

This research, concerned with the fact that the civilizational approach is not a well-defined and systematic approach among interpretive approaches but rather a general and vague concern among interpreters, seeks to introduce this approach and clarify its foundations. This way, in the future, this approach can be transformed into an effective method for reading the Quran and bring us closer to the Quran's primary goal of realizing its teachings on Earth. Thus, this paper, based on the definition of civilization, introduces the civilizational approach as one of the interpretive approaches and clarifies its foundations. As a result, the framework of this interpretive approach is clarified, and its distinction from other approaches is defined. In the civilizational approach, civilization is viewed as a perspective and approach in studying the Quran, formed with the concern of realizing the Quran's ultimate goal on a macro level. This article emphasizes three interpretive foundations that are specifically applicable in this approach. Other interpretive foundations are explained in other approaches and do not need to be separately addressed in this one. These specific foundations are as follows: first, "the goal of the Quran," which in the civilizational reading is the establishment of the monotheistic path on Earth and on a macro level; second, the existence of a relationship between the Quran and civilization, emphasizing the necessity of understanding this relationship before offering a civilizational

understanding of the Quran; and third, the emphasis on the Quran's active role alongside its textual and doctrinal aspects. Based on these three foundations, a new interpretive approach titled "Civilizational Approach in Quranic Exegesis" can be defined. This approach, in addition to its definition and foundation, requires methodology, which will be addressed in future research.

Keywords: Civilizational Approach, Civilizational Reading, Civilizational Exegesis, Foundations of Interpretation, Civilization Studies, Quran.

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