

An Analytical Study of the Methods Used by the Infallibles in Referencing the Qur'an to Promote Qur'anic Culture in Society

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Introduction

The status of the Qur'an and the Ahl al-Bayt (a), the two legacies of the Prophet (s), and the importance of adherence to both in order to avoid misguidance after him are well-established among Muslims. The Prophet is introduced in the Qur'an as the "best exemplar" (uswatun ḥasanah), and accordingly, the Ahl al-Bayt (a), as his successors and trustees, share in this exemplary status. The verbal and practical conduct (sunnah) of the Ahl al-Bayt, alongside the Qur'an, forms a foundational source of Islamic law, supplemented by reason and consensus. All disciplines of Sharī'ah, tariqah, and haqīqah originate from these sources. Moreover, the speech and actions of the infallibles (a) were grounded in the Qur'an, and they cited the Qur'an in specific ways, which this article seeks to examine and explain.

Methodology

This study aims to identify the various types and methods of Qur'anic citation employed by the Infallibles (a) through a descriptive-analytical method. Data were collected using both library research and digital search of ḥadīth sources. The target community for this study comprises religious adherents-those above the level of the general public-who possess the intellectual and hermeneutical capacity to understand and interpret the Qur'an. The study does not focus on those without a sound grasp of religion or those unable to derive arguments from the Qur'an.

Findings

After the Prophet (s), some of his companions insisted on the authority of the Ahl al-Bayt (a) and their sayings alongside the Qur'an, refusing to accept a caliphate based solely on the Qur'an. Others, relying on a claimed consensus (ijmā') of the ummah, insisted on slogans such as "The Book of God is sufficient for us," reducing the Prophet's legacy to the Qur'an alone. For this second group-which constituted the majority-the Qur'an was the sole valid source. In such a context, the insistence of the Ahl al-Bayt (a) on grounding their words and actions in the Qur'an, especially when others claimed to adhere to the Qur'an but acted contrary to it, demonstrated the falsity of those claims and the truthfulness of the Ahl al-Bayt (a) and their followers.

For instance, when a man commented on Imam Ṣādiq's (a) elegant cloak, the Imam responded that such clothing was permissible, citing the example of Imam Ḥusayn (a), who wore a similar garment at the time of his martyrdom. The Imam also referred to the case of Ibn 'Abbās, whom Imam 'Alī (a) sent to debate the Khawārij. Ibn 'Abbās wore fine clothes and rode a fine steed, which provoked criticism from the literalist Khawārij, who asked why he came dressed like the arrogant. In response, Ibn 'Abbās recited the verse: "Say, who has forbidden the adornment of God which He has produced for His servants and the good things of provision?" (al-A'raf: 32).



His reply, grounded in the Qur'an, was directed at those who claimed to follow the Book yet failed to practice it. Imam Sādiq (a) concluded the narration by saying: "Wear good clothes and adorn yourself, for God is beautiful and loves beauty-as long as it is lawful." Thus, the Ahl al-Bayt (a) established a Qur'anic culture of interpretation, usage, and observance through both word and deed.

Among the most critical aspects of their practice was their consistent reference to the Qur'an in all speech and action. True followers of the Ahl al-Bayt (a) have always emphasized emulating this pattern. This article finds that the extensive citation of the Qur'an by the Infallibles was part of a broader cultural project: to normalize Qur'anic grounding in all aspects of life-both behavior and speech-among the Shi'i faithful.

Conclusion

- 1.The Infallibles (a) sometimes cited the apparent meaning (zāhir) of the Qur'an-including its prohibitions, generalities, specificities, implied meanings, and exceptions-and at other times its inner meanings (bāṭin). In some cases, they extended Qur'anic meanings or cited collections of verses on a specific theme.
- 2.Their citations occurred in different contexts: sometimes as an initiating reference, sometimes in debate and dialogue, and sometimes in response to questions-always grounding their speech, rulings, or actions in the Qur'an.
- 3.The volume and diversity of their Qur'anic citations reflect an established, undeniable tradition of engagement with the Qur'an-contrary to accusations from opponents that the Ahl al-Bayt (a) and their followers were distant from the Qur'an.
- 4.Their insistence on citing the Qur'an and aligning their words and deeds with it served as a model for cultural formation and Qur'anic orientation among the Shi'ah.
- 5.A proper explanation of this tradition for followers of the Ahl al-Bayt (a) can serve as a powerful incentive to make the Qur'an the axis of life, and to root speech and action in its guidance.

Keywords

Qur'anic Citations, Citing the Qur'an, Methods of Qur'anic Citation, Qur'anic Culture, Interpretive Traditions, Typology of Tafsīr Narratives, Narrated Exegesis.

Ethical Considerations

Compliance with research ethics. The authors observed the ethical principles in conducting and publishing this scholarly research, and this is confirmed by all of them.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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