

An Analysis of the Role of Ado, Prophet Lot's Wife, in the Quranic Representation of Civilizational Decline

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Introduction

Combining Quranic-exegetical analysis, particularly within the Shi'i exegetical tradition, with modern sociological frameworks, this study examines the position of the family in relation to contemporary social, cultural, and sexual and gender transformations. Focusing on the story of the people of Lot and, especially, Lot's wife, the study offers a discursive rereading of the Quranic narrative and places it in critical dialogue with Giddens's structuration theory and Merton's strain theory. Its aim is to develop a complex and balanced understanding of family crises as phenomena shaped not only by religious and moral considerations, but also by social structures and diverse sexual and gender identities. Through an analysis of Quranic language, the interdiscursive role of Lot's wife, and patterns of moral and civilizational collapse, the study seeks to provide a basis for intercultural dialogue concerning moral boundaries, individual rights, and family stability in the contemporary world.

Materials and Methods

This qualitative study employs an interpretive-critical method to examine the Quranic account of Lot's wife and her symbolic role in contemporary familial and moral crises. Its theoretical framework is based on Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional model of critical discourse analysis, comprising the levels of description, interpretation, and explanation. At the descriptive level, Quranic verses concerning the people of Lot and Lot's wife, including passages in Surahs Hud, al-Shuara, al-Hijr, al-Anbiya, and al-Tahrim, were treated as discursive texts and subjected to linguistic and syntactic analysis. This stage identified key terms, semantic structures, identity oppositions, and patterns of discursive action. The corpus included verses directly and indirectly related to the subject, revealing such discursive themes as sexual deviance, the breakdown of the family institution, discursive betrayal, and civilizational warning. At the interpretive level, the verses were examined with reference to authoritative Shi'i and Sunni commentaries, including Al-Mizan, Al-Tafsir al-Kabir, Al-Manar, Tafsir Nemuneh,

Tafsir Nur, Tasnim, and Fi Zilal al-Quran. This analysis sought to identify Lot's wife as a negative familial exemplar and an intermediary of corrupt discourse in opposition to prophetic discourse and the discourse of the righteous. At the explanatory level, the findings were placed in dialogue with modern sociological theories, including Giddens's structuration theory and Merton's strain theory, in order to clarify the connections among individual deviance, the reproduction of defective structures, and contemporary civilizational crises. The study's trustworthiness was strengthened through internal validity, based on joint coding by two researchers; external validity, based on comparison with authoritative exegetical sources; and transferability, supported by a documented and precise account of the analytical process and its textual evidence.

Results and Findings

The Quranic story of the people of Lot is not merely a retelling of a historical event; it is a systematic representation of the moral and civilizational collapse of a society in which the institution of the family has eroded from within. Fairclough's three-dimensional model of description, interpretation, and explanation, together with authoritative commentaries such as Al-Mizan, Tasnim, Fi Zilal al-Quran, Al-Manar, and Tafsir Nemuneh, demonstrates how the Quran explains the process through which divine values decline by means of language, syntax, and semantics. At the descriptive level, expressions such as 'fahishah' and 'a criminal people' indicate that deviance has become institutionalized in society. At the interpretive level, the story of Lot forms part of the discourse of 'civilizational corruption,' in which prophetic discourse stands in opposition to a discourse governed by desire. Within this framework, Lot's wife is portrayed not as an isolated figure but as an 'interdiscursive subject' who, despite living in a prophet's household, aligns herself with her society's corrupt discourse. The expression 'except his wife; she was among those who remained behind' (Hud 11:83) indicates her semantic separation from the axis of guidance. At the explanatory level, and in light of Giddens's theory of social structuration and Merton's strain theory, the conduct of the people of Lot exemplifies the reproduction of deviant structures. Lot's wife, as an actor situated within these structures, contributes to their continuation by accepting the discourse of corruption. Her story therefore symbolizes 'discursive betrayal': a betrayal rooted in the absence of shared belief and in ideological alignment with corrupt discourse, rather than merely in individual or sexual conduct. The narrative constitutes a divine warning about crises of moral identity in societies where cultural hegemony dissolves the boundaries of family and faith.

Conclusion

By integrating Fairclough's discourse analysis, the theories of Giddens and Merton, and analytically rich Quranic commentaries, this study rereads the story of Lot's wife beyond traditional, primarily moralizing approaches. Whereas earlier studies have often treated her solely as a symbol of disobedience or deviant sexuality, the present study identifies her as an 'interdiscursive subject' within a family crisis: a person who outwardly belongs to a sacred institution but inwardly aligns herself with society's corrupt discourse. The findings show that betrayal signifies the breakdown of semantic fidelity and accommodation to social hegemony, rather than merely an individual transgression. The narrative thus presents a pattern of civilizational collapse that begins with an epistemic rupture and

ultimately confronts readers with an existential question concerning their own alignment with the discourse of guidance in the present age.

Keywords

Ado, Prophet Lot's wife; civilizational decline; Fairclough's discourse analysis; the people of Lot; familial deviance.

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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