

AL-TAWRIYAH* IN THE QUR’AN: RHETORICAL EFFECTS IN THE MATERIALIZATION OF ABSTRACT CREEDAL CONCEPTS IN *JUZ 30

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Abstract

Al-Tawriyah is a rhetorical device in which a single word carries two meanings: a closer meaning that is not intended and a distant meaning that is contextually intended. A key issue concerning its use in the Qur’an is the scholarly claim that *al-tawriyah* occurs even in *juz 30*, a chapter predominantly concerned with core creedal themes. This appears to contrast with the view that verses relating to the Islamic creed are expected to convey clear and unambiguous meanings. In response, this study examines selected creedal verses in *Juz 30* in which the distant meanings of *al-tawriyah* evoke concrete and perceptible elements. Drawing on Ibrahim et al.’s (2023) revised definition of *al-Tawriyah* as well as the analytical frameworks of Yahya (2018) and al-Hajjaj and ‘Ali (2013), the study investigates the rhetorical effects of this device and its role in shaping textual meaning. Methodologically, the

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study adopts a descriptive-analytical approach, utilizing a comprehensive Arabic dictionary, linguistic exegeses of the Qur’an, and classical rhetorical scholarship. Four verses are selected, addressing such themes as the recording of deeds, the minuteness of actions, human attachment to wealth, and the depiction of the Hereafter. The findings demonstrate that *al-tawriyah* functions as a rhetorical mechanism through which abstract creedal concepts are materialized, understood here as being rendered concrete and cognitively perceptible, through indirect lexical expression. This process not only preserves the overall clarity of the verses but also enhances their semantic depth, producing significant cognitive and affective engagement in addressees.

Keywords: *Al-Tawriyah*; Qur’anic discourse; Arabic rhetoric; rhetorical effects; materialization; Islamic creed.

Khulasah

Al-Tawriyah ialah suatu gaya retorik iaitu satu perkataan membawa dua makna: makna dekat yang tidak dimaksudkan dan makna jauh yang dikehendaki berdasarkan konteks. Isu utama berkaitan penggunaannya dalam al-Quran ialah dakwaan sarjana bahawa *al-tawriyah* turut berlaku dalam Juz 30 iaitu bahagian yang secara dominan memfokuskan tema-tema asas akidah. Hal ini kelihatan bertentangan dengan pandangan bahawa ayat-ayat berkaitan akidah Islam sepatutnya menyampaikan makna yang jelas dan tiada kesamaran. Sebagai respons, kajian ini meneliti ayat-ayat akidah terpilih dalam Juz 30 iaitu makna jauh *al-tawriyah* yang menimbulkan unsur-unsur konkrit dan dapat ditanggapi. Berdasarkan definisi Ibrahim *et al.*'s (2023) serta kerangka analitikal oleh Yahya (2018) dan al-Hajjaj dan ‘Ali (2013), kajian ini meneliti kesan retorik gaya tersebut serta peranannya dalam membentuk makna teks. Dari segi metodologi, kajian ini menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif-analitikal dengan memanfaatkan kamus

Arab yang komprehensif, tafsir linguistik al-Quran serta pandangan retorik klasik. Empat ayat dipilih merangkumi tema-tema seperti pencatatan amalan, kehalusan perbuatan, keterikatan manusia terhadap harta, dan gambaran tentang hari akhirat. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa *al-tawriyah* berfungsi sebagai suatu mekanisme retorik yang melaluinya konsep akidah yang abstrak dimaterialisasikan iaitu diterjemahkan kepada bentuk yang konkrit dan dapat ditanggapi secara kognitif melalui ungkapan leksikal tidak langsung. Proses ini bukan sahaja mengekalkan kejelasan keseluruhan ayat, malah memperkaya kedalaman semantik serta menghasilkan penglibatan kognitif dan afektif yang signifikan dalam kalangan khalayak.

Kata kunci: *Al-Tawriyah*; wacana al-Quran; retorik Arab; kesan retorik; materialisasi; akidah.

Introduction

General Background

Muslims render due reverence for their holy book; the Qur’an, to which they refer to in matters appertaining to the world and the hereafter. The Qur’an is a Muslims’ holy book, or scripture, revealed to the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him (PBUH), who was the last of all the prophets and messengers, through the angelic mediation of the archangel Gabriel. The Qur’an is divinely inspired, written in the Arabic language, embedded within it all sorts of knowledge in the world, the jurisprudence and legislations, moral guidance, as well as the historical narratives from which Muslims are admonished to attain everlasting felicity.

The Qur’an was miraculously revealed with its exclusive *faṣāḥah* (eloquence) and *i’jāz* (inimitability) that could not be vanquished, especially by the eloquent Arabs and rhetoricians, no matter how powerful the eloquence and the breadth of Arabic sciences they acquired. It is regarded as the most valuable Arabic text ever, and none of the

humans and the jinn could challenge its speech, neither its phonetic nor semantic aspects. Allah had challenged the Arabs to bring about ten chapters, then, if they could not do so, one chapter just like the Qur’an, as He said:

قُلْ فَأْتُوا بِعَشْرِ سُورٍ مِّثْلِهِ

Say: “Then produce ten invented suras like it”.¹

And:

قُلْ فَأْتُوا بِسُورَةٍ مِّثْلِهِ

Say: “Then produce a surah like it.”²

Nevertheless, when their attempts failed, they resorted to accusing the Qur’an of being nothing more than magic, poetry, and narratives derived from ancient legends.³ Although the Qur’an consists of letters and words which centrally figure in their lives and to which they were accustomed, they are unable to compose the like. They would, had the Qur’an was not from within such familiarity and its linguistic units were not recognized by them, have saved from the challenge.⁴ And for a thing to be miraculous, three conditions must be fulfilled; it is extraordinary, being challenged, yet challenging resistance.⁵ Therefore, the Qur’an, which is conclusively a miracle in which those three conditions are fulfilled, remains an immortal book, preserved from any corruption until the Judgment Day, as recorded below:

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ ﴿٥﴾

¹ Surah Hud 11:13.

² Surah Yunus 10:38.

³ Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān fī ‘Ulūm al-Qur’ān*, (n.p.: Mu’assasah al-Risālah Nāshirūn, 2015), 646.

⁴ Muḥammad ‘Abd al-‘Azīm al-Zarqānī, *Manāhil al-‘Irfān fī ‘Ulūm al-Qur’ān* (Beirut: Al-Maktabah al-‘Aṣriyyah, 2018), 2: 278.

⁵ Al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān fī ‘Ulūm al-Qur’ān*, 645.

We have sent down the Qur’an Ourselves, and We Ourselves will guard it.⁶

The Arabic scholars and linguists always take interest to study the Qur’anic texts and compose various sciences that stemmed from their understanding of the texts to demonstrate the mysteries laid behind the texts and their functions, content, and significance, which made Arabic a rich language that is unparalleled by other natural languages and charming in terms of its composition, melody, style, and language use.⁷ Amongst those sciences through which the facets of Arabic styles and aesthetics are made known is the science of *balāghah* (rhetoric).

Al-Tawriyah (coined in English as ‘paronomasia or pun’), as one of the figures being discussed in the science of *badī’* (embellishment) in the areas of Arabic rhetoric, has long attracted the sphere of interest of Arabs from the east and west sides of the world, especially amongst the Arab writers and poets. One will realize that the books of rhetoric contain discussions of *al-tawriyah*, whether in concise or greater detail. The poets from Egypt and the Levantine region in the sixth, seventh, and eighth centuries A.H. (the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries A.D.), especially amongst the late scholars of *badī’*, inordinately employed *al-tawriyah* and came up with its beauties that vindicate their perfect mastery of language and the spontaneous ability to sophisticate a discourse.⁸

In addition, one of the motives underlying the extravagant and licentious use of *al-tawriyah* in their poetry and ornate prose is the desire to display the rhetorical

⁶ Surah al-Hijr 15:9.

⁷ ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Budrā’, *Al-Khiṭāb al-Qur’ān wa Manāhij al-Ta’wīl (Naḥwa Dirāsah Naqdiyyah li al-Ta’wīlāt al-Mu’āshirah)* (Morocco: Markaz al-Dirāsāt al-Qur’āniyyah al-Rābiṭah al-Muḥammadiyyah li al-‘Ulamā’, 2013), 101.

⁸ ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ‘Atīq, *Fī al-Balāghah al-‘Arabiyyah: ‘Ilm al-Badī’* (Beirut: Dār al-Naḥḍah al-‘Arabiyyah, 2002), 132.

acrobatics and the purity of language they possessed. Thus, by this means of rhetorical embellishment, they hide the meaning of words from being clearly made known to one by resorting to another way, which is still pragmatically acceptable and concomitantly persuasive⁹.

Problem Statement

The Qur’anic verses, in their entirety, consist of verses which are *muḥkamāt* (definite) in meaning and *mutashābihāt* (ambiguous), as glossed in the following verse:

هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ مِنْهُ آيَاتٌ مُحْكَمَاتٌ هُنَّ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ
وَأُخَرُ مُتَشَابِهَاتٌ فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ زَيْغٌ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ مَا تَشَبَهَ مِنْهُ ابْتِغَاءَ
الْفِتْنَةِ وَأَبْغَاءَ ثَأْوِيلِهِ وَمَا يَعْلَمُ تَأْوِيلَهُ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَالرَّاسِخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ
يَقُولُونَ ءَامَنَّا بِهِ كُلٌّ مِّنْ عِنْدِ رَبِّنَا وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ إِلَّا أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿٧﴾

It is He who has sent this Scripture down to you [Prophet]. Some of its verses are definite in meaning - these are the cornerstone of the Scripture - and others are ambiguous. The perverse at heart eagerly pursue the ambiguities in their attempt to make trouble and to pin down a specific meaning of their own: only God knows the true meaning. Those firmly grounded in knowledge say, ‘We believe in it: it is all from our Lord’ - only those with real perception will take heed.¹⁰

Definite verses convey clear and unambiguous meanings, while the ambiguous ones require further interpretation or reflection upon them,¹¹ typically grounded

⁹ Abū Ja‘far Aḥmad bin Khātimah al-Anṣārī al-Andalusī, “Rā’iq al-Taḥliyah fi Fā’iq al-Tawriyah,” *Majallah Kulliyah al-Adāb bi Qenā* 21 (2007), 328.

¹⁰ Surah Alī ‘Imran 3:7.

¹¹ Al-Zarqānī, *Manāhil al-Irfān fi ‘Ulūm al-Qur’ān*, 249.

in the definite verses as a primary point of reference.¹² This distinction has traditionally been approached from a theological perspective. However, this classification also raises important questions at the linguistic and rhetorical level, particularly regarding how meaning is accessed and interpreted within Qur’anic discourse.

Within the domain of Arabic rhetoric, *al-tawriyah* is recognized as a stylistic device in which a single lexical item conveys two meanings: a closer, apparent meaning that is not intended, and a distant, hidden meaning that is intended. As noted by such classical scholars as al-Sakkaki, most of *al-tawriyah* originated from ambiguities in discourse as it bears more than one meaning, and he remarks on the abundance of its presence, that is, from *al-tawriyah*¹³ as follows:

وأكثر المتشابهات من هذا القبيل

And most ambiguities are of this kind.¹⁴

Additionally, one of the natures of the definite verses of the Qur’an is firmness of meaning and touches on issues appertain to the foundations of the Islamic creed which were formulated with clear words without recourse to any interpretation or extraneous evidence. It is a firm belief in these clear-formulated verses that ensure the safety of Muslims’ belief and guidance to the favored path.¹⁵ By the same token, *Juz 30* of the Qur’an is widely characterized by

¹² Aḥmad ‘Abd al-Mājid Muḥammad Khalīfah, “Balāghah al-Tawriyah wa Atharuhā fi Ta’wīl al-Āyāt al-Qur’āniyyah,” *Jāmi‘ah al-Zagazig* 56 (2011), 3-45.

¹³ Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad bin ‘Abd al-Raḥmān bin ‘Umar bin Aḥmad bin Muḥammad al-Khaṭīb al-Qazwīnī, *al-‘Īdāh fī ‘Ulūm al-Balāghah: al-Ma‘ānī wa al-Bayān wa al-Badī‘* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 2003), 268.

¹⁴ Abū Ya‘qūb Yūsuf bin Muḥammad bin ‘Alī al-Sakkākī, *Miftāḥ al-‘Ulūm* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 2014), 537.

¹⁵ Mannā’ al-Qaṭṭān, *Mabāḥith fī ‘Ulūm al-Qur’ān* (Beirut: Mu’assasah al-Risālah, 1998), 191.

its strong emphasis on core creedal themes, including the signs of Allah and His might in the universe of reviving, resurrecting, and causing death.¹⁶ Given this general characterization, one might expect the language of these verses to be predominantly straightforward. However, such lexical items as “نُرَّةٌ” in the following verse from the same *Juz 30*:

فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُ ﴿٧﴾ وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُ ﴿٨﴾

Whoever has done an atom’s weight of good will see it. But whoever has done an atom’s weight of evil will see that.¹⁷

have been interpreted by Ibn Manzur in his *Lisān al-‘Arab* (of the most prominent dictionaries being referred to in Arabic language studies) and further supported by various exegetes as referring to either small red ants or dust,¹⁸ with the interpretation of ‘dust’ being supported by al-Zamakhshari,¹⁹ al-Shawkani,²⁰ Ibn ‘Atiyyah,²¹ Ibn

¹⁶ Sayyid Quṭb, *Fī Zilāl al-Qur’ān* (Cairo: Dār al-Shurūq, 2003), 3801.

¹⁷ Surah al-Zalzalah, 99:7-8.

¹⁸ Abū al-Faḍl Jamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad bin Mukrim Ibn Manzūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab* (Beirut: Dār al-Ṣādir, 1883), 4: 304.

¹⁹ Jār Allāh Abū al-Qāsim Maḥmūd bin ‘Amrū bin Aḥmad al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf ‘an Ḥaqā’iq al-Tanzīl wa ‘Uyūn al-Aqāwīl fī Wujūh al-Ta’wīl* (Beirut: Dār al-Ma’rifah, 2009), 1216.

²⁰ Muḥammad bin ‘Alī bin Muḥammad al-Shawkānī, *Faḥḥ al-Qadīr al-Jāmi‘ bayn Fanna’i al-Riwāyah wa al-Dirāyah min ‘Ilm al-Taḥsīr* (Beirut: Dār al-Ma’rifah, 2007), 1646.

²¹ Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Ḥaq bin Ghālib Ibn ‘Atiyyah, *al-Muḥarrir al-Wajīz fī Taḥsīr al-Kitāb al-Azīz* (Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 2001), 5: 512.

Kathir,²² al-Baydawi,²³ Ibn ‘Abbas,²⁴ Ibn ‘Ashur,²⁵ and Ibn Qutaybah²⁶ but addressees may interpret the word as referring to atom due to its widespread contemporary usage.

However, such an interpretation may not fully correspond to the contextually intended meaning and therefore requires further examination. This gives rise to an interpretive tension between the assumption that definite verses convey clear and unambiguous meanings and Ibn Manzur’s indication of semantic layering through *al-tawriyah*. The verses in question, situated within *Juz 30* and addressing fundamental creedal themes, are generally regarded as conveying clear doctrinal messages. Nevertheless, the presence of lexically layered expressions suggests that clarity at the level of overall meaning does not preclude complexity at the level of individual lexical items. This, in turn, points to the possible operation of *al-tawriyah*, whereby the intended meaning is not immediately apparent from the surface structure, allowing a text to remain accessible while simultaneously embedding deeper rhetorical effects.

In light of this, the current research identifies instances of *al-tawriyah* in *Juz 30* of the Qur’an, particularly those in which the distant meanings imply concrete elements, and analyzes rhetorical mysteries (*asrār balāghiyah*), understood here as the rhetorical effects and

²² Abū al-Fidā’ Ismā‘īl bin ‘Umar Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-‘Azīm* (Riyadh: Dār Ṭayyibah li al-Nashr, 1999), 8: 464.

²³ Nāṣir al-Dīn Abū al-Khayr ‘Abdullāh bin ‘Umar bin Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī al-Shāfi‘ī al-Bayḍāwī, *Anwār al-Tanzīl wa Asrār al-Ta’wīl al-Ma’rūf bi Tafsīr al-Bayḍāwī* (Beirut: Dār Ihyā’ al-Turāth al-‘Arabī, 1998), 5: 330.

²⁴ ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Abbās, *Tanwīr al-Miqbās min Tafsīr Ibn ‘Abbās* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1992), 656.

²⁵ Muḥammad al-Ṭāhir Ibn ‘Āshūr, *Tafsīr al-Tahrīr wa al-Tanwīr* (n.p.: al-Dār al-Tūnisīyyah li al-Nashr, 1984), 30: 494.

²⁶ Abū Muḥammad ‘Abdullāh bin Muslim Ibn Qutaybah, *Tafsīr Gharīb al-Qur’ān* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1978), 535.

functions, it bears which are not made known to the extent of how it would influence meaning. More importantly, it aims to examine the extent to which such a rhetorical device influences the understanding of Qur’anic verses traditionally regarded as clear and unambiguous.

The current research will redound to the benefit of the educational sector. Teachers of Arabic rhetoric in religious schools, on what the researchers observed, they have previously immersed in religious and Arabic stream in such school system, did not intelligibly explain the rhetorical effects of any rhetorical figures in the curriculum designed by the Ministry of Education to students, thereby making the Arabic rhetoric subject deemed stagnant. It should be noted that the nature of rhetoric itself is not like any other Arabic sciences, including grammar and morphology, where one would be satisfied with a sole explanation of definitions, rules, and examples, coupled with a few hands-on exercises afterward. Rhetoric is established based on a subtle literary taste that needs to be instilled and developed, as practiced by the predecessors of Arabic rhetoric. Thus, the process of instilling such literary appreciation justifies the need for teachers to revisit their teaching approach by explaining the effects, thereby enabling students to develop a closer engagement with the Qur’an.

Muslims could also, from the findings, approach the Qur’an and appreciate an important aspect they often did not pay attention to, namely the beauty of the Qur’an’s stylistics, including the use of *al-tawriyah*. This could be achieved by studying the Arabic language, by and large, and *al-tawriyah*, in particular. This research will be able to make them, by understanding the rhetorical effects implied behind the use of indirect words, efficient in contemplating upon the Qur’anic verses revolving around the subjects of Islamic creed, amongst which are the origin of mankind, eternal life, fearful scenes of the end-time, and equitable process of reckoning and retribution. Such a deeper level of

understanding may foster heightened ethical awareness and reflective engagement amongst readers, reinforcing the recognition of divine accountability of human actions as highlighted by Qutb.²⁷

Literature Review

Definition of *al-Tawriyah*

Al-Tawriyah is one of the prominent rhetorical devices discussed in Arabic *balāghah*, particularly regarding semantic layering and deliberate ambiguity in discourse. Classical rhetoricians generally describe *al-tawriyah* as a rhetorical technique in which a single expression carries two possible meanings: a nearer meaning, immediately accessible to the listener, and a more distant meaning, actually intended by the speaker. Amongst the influential definitions frequently cited in the literature is that of al-Hamawi, who defines *al-Tawriyah* as follows:

أن يذكر المتكلم لفظاً مفرداً له معنيان حقيقيان أو حقيقة ومجاز أحدهما قريب ودلالة اللفظ عليه ظاهرة والآخر بعيد ودلالة اللفظ عليه خفية فيريد المتكلم المعنى البعيد ويوري عنه بالمعنى القريب فيتوهم السامع أول وهلة أنه يريد القريب وليس كذلك ولأجل هذا سمي هذا النوع إيهاماً.

When a speaker mentions a single word that has two *haqīqah* (real) meanings or a real and a *majāz* (trope) meaning, one of which is closer (punned with), and the signification of the word is visible while the other is distant (punned to), and the signification of the word is hidden. But the speaker intends the distant meaning by concealing it with the closer meaning. Thus, the listener presupposes at first glance that the speaker verily intends the

²⁷ Qutb, *Fī Zilāl al-Qur’ān*, 3800.

closer meaning, but it is not. This justifies the naming of this type as deliberate ambiguity.²⁸

The definition proposed by al-Hamawi appears to conflate *al-tawriyah* with the notion of trope, particularly in his inclusion of the phrase: “or a real and a trope.” It should be noted that *al-tawriyah* is not only confined to a word having two meanings; it could be more than two, as the main cornerstone of *al-tawriyah* is *al-mushtarak al-lafẓī* (polysemy), defined as a word with the same pronunciation but having two or more different meanings.²⁹ The phenomenon of polysemy emerged, according to al-Suyuti, since words are finite in number while meanings are infinite, including the word عين (‘*ayn*), which could convey different meanings: water fountain, rain, money, and the eyes.³⁰ But it is worth highlighting here that polysemy, despite carrying several meanings, and *al-tawriyah*, despite having polysemy as its roots, the latter does only consider the closest meaning which comes to the mind of the addressee at first glance, and the farthest perceived after contemplating.

As regards trope, it is not based on polysemy but on figurative transfer, as exemplified by the use of the word “moon” to denote a beautiful woman. The trope is the transfer of the moon’s beauty to something that resembles it. Therefore, “moon” was not used to denote a beautiful woman, which was formulated by the Arabs at the outset, but rather as a trope. The trope is but a mere transfer of a meaning that deviates from the original.

²⁸ Ibn Hġjjah Taqī al-Dīn Abī Bakr ‘Alī al-Ĥamawī, *Khizānah al-Adab wa Ghāyah al-‘Arb* (Beirut: Dār wa Maktabah al-Hilāl, 2004), 295.

²⁹ Faḍl Ḥasan ‘Abbās, *al-Balāghah Funūnuhā wa Afnānuhā: ‘Ilm al-Bayān wa al-Badī‘* (Oman: Dār al-Furqān li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzī‘, 2007), 286.

³⁰ Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *al-Muzhir fī ‘Ulūm al-Lughah wa ‘Anwā’ihā* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1998), 295.

Accordingly, trope is defined as:

اللفظ المستعمل في غير ما وضع له لعلاقة مع قرينة تمنع إيراد المعنى الحقيقي على حد تعبير عباس.

A word being used that does not literally denote due to a relation that prevents the real meaning from being mentioned,” according to ‘Abbās.³¹

For instance, the use of the word “lion” in “the lion is in the forest” is true and conveys the real meaning of a predatory animal living in the forest as its own original habitat, while in “the lion is in the class” is a trope, as the lion here refers to a bold man. A man whose boldness resembles that of a lion. The prepositional phrase “in the class” acts as a clue that prevents the real meaning of a “true” lion from being conveyed, therefore turning the original sense into a figurative one. The use of trope here is correct with regard to a resemblance between the boldness of the lion and the boldness of the man.

While the trope will have a clue as its company, which prevents the conveyance of a word's real meaning, the clue should be sufficiently strong to enable one to properly distinguish the real meaning from the figurative. The strength of such a clue lies in its ability to eliminate any vague or indeterminate resemblance between the entities involved, as well as in the attested and widespread usage of the trope amongst the Arabs themselves. The latter is considered the more decisive condition, given that native speakers possess the highest level of linguistic competence and intuitive understanding of the language they grew up with.

Hence, a trope deals with both real and figurative meanings, but the case is not the same with *al-tawriyah*, which deals only with real meanings that are closer but

³¹ ‘Abbās, *al-Balāghah Funūnuhā wa Afnānuhā: ‘Ilm al-Bayān wa al-Badī*, 134.

unintended, and with distant meanings that are intended. By this, it cannot be said that a bold man is the distant meaning of the word lion due to the clear relation between the two entities amongst the Arabs, while *al-tawriyah* is keen to hide the relation between the closer and distant meanings that cannot be easily perceived by the mind. The act of hiding intended meanings is another important factor that differentiates *al-tawriyah* from trope.

On the other hand, al-Suyuti argues that *al-tawriyah* is defined as:

أن يذكر لفظ له معنيان – إما بالاشتراك، أو التواطؤ، أو الحقيقة والمجاز – أحدهما قريب والآخر بعيد، ويورى عنه بالقرب، فيتوهمه السامع من أول وهلة.

A word that has two meanings – either by the means of polysemy, agreement, or real and trope – one is closer (punned with) and the other is distant (punned to), and the distant is concealed by the closer meaning, thereby the addressee presupposes the closer at first glance.³²

He proposes three possible ways in which *al-tawriyah* may occur: polysemy, agreement, and real and trope. However, this account lacks precision as it does not clearly establish the principal mechanism of *al-tawriyah* nor adequately clarify the concept. In the same vein, another comparable definition of *al-tawriyah* is also provided by Matlub in his dictionary of Arabic rhetoric as follows:

أن يذكر المتكلم لفظاً مفرداً له معنيان حقيقيان أو حقيقة ومجاز، أحدهما قريب ودلالة اللفظ عليه ظاهرة، والآخر بعيد ودلالة اللفظ عليه خفية،

³² Al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān fī ‘Ulūm al-Qur’ān*, 585.

فيريء المتكلم المعنى البعيد ويوري عنه بالمعنى القريب فيتوهم السامع مع أول وهلة أنه يريد القريب وليس كذلك، ولذلك سمي هذا الفن إيهاما.

When a speaker mentions a single word that has two *haqīqah* (real) meanings or a real and a *majāz* (trope) meaning, one of which is closer (punned with), and the signification of the word is visible while the other is distant (punned to), and the signification of the word is hidden. But the speaker intends the distant meaning, by concealing it with the closer meaning. Thus, the listener presupposes at first glance that the speaker verily intends the closer meaning, but it is not. This justifies the naming of this art as deliberate ambiguity.³³

Matlub likewise maintains that the closer and distant meaning of *al-tawriyah* may consist of either two real meanings or a real and a trope,³⁴ in line with what al-Hamawi has defined.³⁵ The phrase “a real and a trope,” along with al-Suyuti’s mention of *al-tawriyah* as both a real and a trope, may lead to conceptual ambiguity in discerning the concepts of *al-tawriyah* and trope. Furthermore, Matlub’s definition does not substantially differ from al-Hamawi’s, offering little in the way of additional theoretical refinement.

This study argues that the two meanings of *al-tawriyah* should be confined to real meanings as its fundamental basis, polysemy, carries meanings that have been conventionally established and recognized by native

³³ Aḥmad Maṭlūb, *Muʿjam al-Muṣṭalahāt al-Balāghiyah wa Taṭawwuruhā* (Beirut: Al-Dār al-ʿArabiyyah li al-Mawsuʿāt, 2006), 383.

³⁴ Maṭlūb, *Muʿjam al-Muṣṭalahāt al-Balāghiyah wa Taṭawwuruhā*, 383.

³⁵ Al-Ḥamawī, *Khizānah al-Adab wa Ghāyah al-ʿArb*, 295.

speakers of Arabic. The Arab rhetoricians’ view³⁶ on this issue is in tandem with this position and is consistent with al-Razi’s assertion that polysemy involves two or more different real referents.³⁷ Accordingly, *al-tawriyah* operates within the domain of real meanings since polysemy itself does not extend to figurative usage. A polysemy, in addition to its function in carrying real meanings within a single lexical item, also renders the intended meaning less immediately perceived,³⁸ thereby further enabling *al-tawriyah* to conceal meanings beyond the reach of the mind and contributes to the aesthetic quality of its rhetorical effects.³⁹

The example of polysemy, as previously mentioned, is the word عَيْن, which could mean a source of water, rain, money, and the eyes with which one sees. All these meanings are true to be attributed to the word ‘ayn due to the tradition of Arabs in referring to many entities with only a single word, as stressed by al-Suyuti.⁴⁰ Moreover, while every instance of *al-tawriyah* is polysemous, not every polysemous word constitutes *al-tawriyah*, provided that the meanings carried by a polysemous word are widely known and used by natives of that language.⁴¹ The two illustrations below gloss the relationship between *al-Tawriyah*, polysemy, and trope:

³⁶ Mahdī Ṣāliḥ al-Sāmūrā’i, *al-Majāz fī al-Balāghah al-‘Arabiyyah* (Beirut: Dār Ibn Kathīr, 2015), 183.

³⁷ Fakhr al-Dīn, Muḥammad bin ‘Umar bin al-Husayn al-Rāzī, *al-Maḥṣūl fī ‘Ilm ‘Usūl al-Fiqh* (Beirut: Mu’assasah al-Risālah, 1992), 352.

³⁸ Jamāl Ibrāhīm Qāsim, *al-Balāghah al-Muyassarah* (Cairo: Dār Ibn al-Jauzī, 2012), 61.

³⁹ Al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān fī ‘Ulūm al-Qur’ān*, 598.

⁴⁰ Al-Suyūṭī, *al-Muḥir fī ‘Ulūm al-Lughah wa Anwā’ihā*, 292.

⁴¹ ‘Atīq, *Fī al-Balāghah al-‘Arabiyyah: ‘Ilm al-Badī’*, 133.

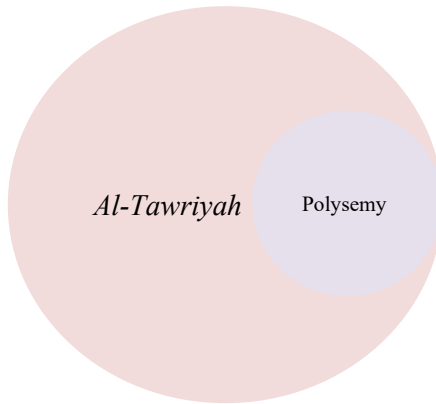


Figure 1: The Relationship between *al-Tawriyah* and Polysemy

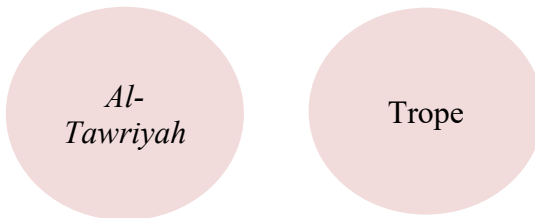


Figure 2: The Relationship between *al-Tawriyah* and Trope

Figure 1 demonstrates a relation of a more general and more specific, without exception, which is, according to al-Taftazani, the general universal concept (in this case, *al-tawriyah*) includes all members of another specific universal concept (in this case, polysemy), and the latter includes only some members of the former. In other words, all *al-tawriyah* should be polysemous, and not the contrary, while Figure 2 demonstrates a non-equivalent relation, where neither of the two members is under the other. The

trope cannot be applied to any of the members of *al-tawriyah*, and *al-tawriyah* also cannot be applied to any of the members of the trope. Further, *al-tawriyah* and trope are not related. They are formulated by different rhetorical manners and should be kept apart.⁴²

Summarizing, the distinction between *al-Tawriyah* and trope can be articulated along two principal dimensions. First, in terms of semantic basis, trope involves a shift from the literal to a figurative meaning grounded in such relations as resemblance, whereas *al-tawriyah* operates within the domain of polysemy, where multiple meanings are already lexically established. Second, in terms of interpretive process, trope requires the presence of a contextual indicator that prevents the literal meaning, while *al-tawriyah* deliberately withholds such an indicator, allowing the nearer meaning to remain plausible and thereby creating rhetorical ambiguity.

Having critically reviewed the prominent theories on *al-tawriyah*, this study adopts the revised framework proposed by Ibrahim et al. (2023), which is regarded as the most comprehensive to date, as follows:

ذكر لفظ مفرد له معنيان على سبيل الاشتراك ويكون المعنى القريب
الظاهر المورى به منه غير مقصود والبعيد الخفي المورى عنه هو المقصود
بقريئة خفية

Stating a single word that has two meanings by means of polysemy, where the closer apparent meaning (punned with) behind it is unintended and the hidden distant meaning (punned to) away behind it is what is meant by a hidden clue.⁴³

⁴² Mas‘ūd bin ‘Umar bin ‘Abdullāh Sa‘d al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-‘Imām al-Sa‘d al-Taftāzānī ‘alā al-Shamsiyyah fī al-Mantiq li al-‘Imām al-Kātibī* (Oman: Dār al-Nūr al-Mubīn, 2018), 175.

⁴³ Syazwan Naim Ibrahim, Mat Taib Pa & Mohammad Seman, “Wamḍāt Tafriqiyyah baina al-Tawriyah wa al-Mushtarak al-Lafzī wa al-

A single word is confined to two meanings: the closer apparent but unintended, and the distant hidden, which is intended. Importantly, the word involved is not arbitrary but must be polysemous, as polysemy constitutes the fundamental basis of *al-tawriyah*, for without polysemy, the phenomenon cannot be realized, as argued by Hassan.⁴⁴ For this reason, the phrase “and more” is excluded from the definition to avoid potential confusion, particularly the assumption that *al-tawriyah* may involve more than two meanings. Furthermore, the meanings conveyed are real rather than figurative since *al-tawriyah* does not operate within the domain of trope. Additionally, the accompanying clue may be either linguistic or non-linguistic, albeit contextual cues are generally the most effective and perceptible in guiding addressees towards the intended meaning.⁴⁵ Beyond the role of context, al-Habashah asserts that the process of decoding the hidden intended meaning of an utterance would be enhanced by having a broad lexical repertoire.⁴⁶

***Al-Tawriyah* and Its Rhetorical Effects**

A number of studies have examined *al-tawriyah* in the Qur’an, albeit limited attention has been given to its rhetorical effects. These studies have primarily adopted a qualitative approach to identify instances of *al-tawriyah* within specific chapters. For instance, fourteen instances

Majāz,” *Al-Hikmah: International Journal of Islamic Studies and Human Sciences* 6(2) (2023), 80-116.

⁴⁴ Tamām Ḥassān, *Ijtihādāt Lughawīyyah* (Cairo: ‘Ālam al-Kutub, 2007), 179.

⁴⁵ ‘Abd al-‘Āl Sālim Makram, *al-Mushtarak al-Lafzī fī Daw’i Gharīb al-Qur’ān al-Karīm* (Cairo: ‘Ālam al-Kutub, 2009), 23; Ḥassān, *Ijtihādāt Lughawīyyah*, 181.

⁴⁶ Ṣābir al-Ḥabāshah, “al-Mushtarak al-Lafzī fī al-Dirāsāt al-‘Arabiyyah al-Mu‘āshirah,” *Majallah Hauliyyat al-Turāth* 9(7) (2007), 163-179.

have been identified in the Surah of al-Anbiya’,⁴⁷ ten across the Qur’an as a whole,⁴⁸ thirteen in al-Nisa’,⁴⁹ and sixteen in al-Hadid.⁵⁰

With a focus on analyzing the rhetorical effects that *al-tawriyah* may have, Yahya argues that this device serves to awaken the cognitive and emotional engagement of addressees, prompting them to actively interpret the intended meaning of what is being communicated to them (in this case, the Qur’an) rather than relying on direct expressions. The consonance between the closer apparent meaning and distant hidden meaning produces a striking rhetorical effect on the addressees as they read the Qur’an, even if they were not there at the time of its revelation.⁵¹ Similarly, al-Luhaibi, in his study of the rhetorical effects of *al-tawriyah* in poems composed during the Mamluki era, an era in which poets were known for their deliberate use of this rhetorical art, suggests that its use reflects the artistic ability they possessed.⁵² However, while Ibn al-Zaghdah and Karhah have contributed to the analysis of rhetorical effects, their study is limited to selected verses in the Surah al-Nisa’, thereby restricting the broader applicability of their findings to other places in the Qur’an.

⁴⁷ Miftāh al-Mufid & Muḥammad Zākīr al-Dīn, “Taḥlīl Ṣīghah al-Tawriyah fī Sūrah al-Anbiyā’ (Dirāsah Taḥlīliyyah Balāghīyyah),” *Al-Naṣ* 3(1) (2019), 16-28.

⁴⁸ Yuangga Kurnia Yahya, “Gaya Bahasa Tawriyah Dalam al-Qur’an,” *Arabiyatuna: Jurnal Bahasa Arab* 2(1) (2018), 35-48.

⁴⁹ Ibtisām Ibn al-Zaghdah & ‘Aqīlah Karḥah, “Balāghah al-Tawriyah fī al-Qur’ān al-Karīm: Sūrah al-Nisā’ Unmūzajan,” *Jijel: Jāmi’ah Muḥammad al-Ṣiddīq Ibn Yaḥyā* (2015).

⁵⁰ Millah Mawlidāwātī, “Uslūb al-Tawriyah fī Sūrah al-Ḥadīd (Dirāsah Taḥlīliyyah Balāghīyyah),” Yogyakarta: Jāmi’ah Sunan Kalijaga al-Islamiyyah al-Ḥukumiyyah (2010).

⁵¹ Yuangga Kurnia Yahya, “Gaya Bahasa Tawriyah Dalam al-Qur’an,” 35-48.

⁵² Ḥusayn ‘Abd al-‘Āl al-Luhaybī, *Zāhirah al-Tawriyah fī Shi’r al-‘Aṣr al-Mamlūkī wa Atharuhā fī Ta’miq al-Ma’nā* (Damascus: Dār Tammūz Dīmūzī, 2018), 61-90.

While the accounts proposed by Yahya and al-Luhaibi remain relatively general, al-Hajjaj and ‘Ali offer a more detailed classification of the rhetorical purposes of *al-tawriyah*. They identify three principal functions, namely the construction of aesthetic domains, the achievement of brevity and conciseness, and the creation of intentional vagueness and/or ambiguity. They went further to state other subsidiary purposes branched off the main, which are to materialize abstract entities, add forcefulness to the details of expressions used, emphasize and exaggerate certain shades of meaning contained, and produce humor, wittiness, bitterness, and irony.⁵³

It can thus be inferred here that only a few studies have moved beyond the mere identification of instances of *al-tawriyah* to examine its rhetorical effects in depth. In response to this gap, the current research analyzes the rhetorical dimensions of *al-tawriyah*, drawing upon the theoretical perspectives of Yahya and al-Hajjaj and ‘Ali. Since Yahya has drawn particular attention to the effects in the Qur’an in general and al-Hajjaj and ‘Ali have accounted them in a much more detailed functional classification, this study integrates both approaches to develop a refined analytical framework.

The selection of *Juz 30* as the focus of analysis also warrants justification. As noted by Qutb, the verses in this section are characterized by a distinctive stylistic composition in which meanings are conveyed through a subtle and aesthetically rich interplay of language, not straightforwardly presented by means of direct words⁵⁴. This stylistic indirectness suggests the presence of implicit intended meanings that may not be immediately accessible at first glance. Noting that *al-tawriyah* is a form of indirect

⁵³ Hāmid Ḥusayn al-Ḥajjāj & Mayyadah Nazar ‘Alī, “Pun in Arabic Classical Rhetoric with Reference to Translation,” *Al-Fatih Journal* 54 (2013), 1-48.

⁵⁴ Qutb, *Fī Zilāl al-Qur’ān*, 3802.

use of words to convey distant, hidden, but intended meaning, what has been underscored serves as an important impetus to hypothesize its occurrence in *Juz 30*.

Research Methodology

The present study adopts a qualitative research design and employs a descriptive-analytical approach. This approach facilitates an in-depth examination of the aesthetic qualities of a given linguistic phenomenon (in this case, *al-tawriyah*).⁵⁵ The data are drawn from the primary and most authoritative textual source, the Qur’an (*Juz 30*). As regards identifying verses bearing *al-tawriyah*, the study draws on Ibrahim et al.’s⁵⁶ newly revised theory of *al-tawriyah*, focusing on the concrete elements implied by the distant, hidden meaning. The selected verses are then translated into English in light of Abdul Haleem’s *The Qur’an*⁵⁷. Subsequently, the analysis is conducted using a newly integrated framework combining the perspectives of Yahya and al-Hajjaj and ‘Ali as outlined below:

⁵⁵ Muḥammad Sarḥān ‘Alī al-Maḥmūdī, *Manāḥij al-Baḥṭh al-‘Ilmī* (Ṣan‘ā’: Dār al-Kutub, 2019), 47.

⁵⁶ Ibrahim, Pa & Seman, “Wamḍāt Tafriqiyyah baina al-Tawriyah wa al-Mushtarak al-Lafẓī wa al-Majāz,” 80-116.

⁵⁷ Muhammad Abdel Haleem, *The Qur’an* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 405.

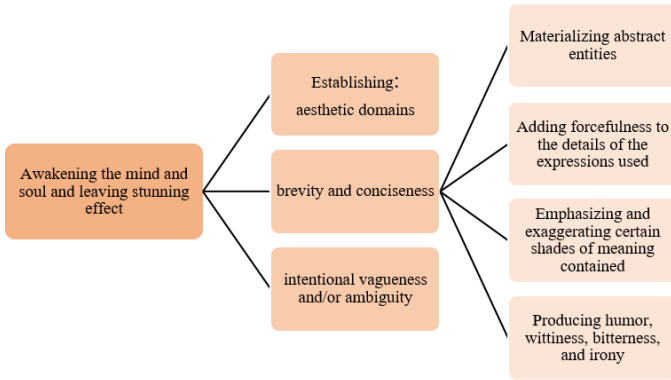


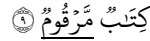
Figure 3: The Analytical Framework of Analyzing Rhetorical Effects of *al-Tawriyah*

In identifying both the overt, more readily apparent meanings and the underlying, more concealed meanings, this study relies on the authoritative Arabic lexicon *Lisān al-‘Arab* by Ibn Manzur, given its extensive coverage of Arabic lexica frequently referenced in Arabic linguistic studies. This dual identification serves to guide addressees from the commonly attested lexical meanings of a word towards its implied or intended semantic depth, ultimately enabling inference of the rhetorical rationale between the two levels of meaning. The study also draws on a wide range of Qur’anic exegetical works as well as the scholarly opinions of Arabic rhetoricians, which collectively contribute to a more comprehensive analysis of the rhetorical subtleties and embedded semantic effects.

Findings and Discussion

The study identifies four verses in *Juz 30* in which *al-tawriyah* transforms abstract creedal messages into concrete imagery, thereby enhancing psychological and spiritual impact.

1.



A clearly numbered list.⁵⁸

The word *مرقوم* initially activates its nearer meaning of “numerically inscribed” or “clearly enumerated,” which is more immediately accessible to addressees due to its common association with visible markings or figures. However, within the Qur’anic context of recording human deeds performed by the righteous and sinful, which is not absent from Allah,⁵⁹ this closer apparent meaning is subtly displaced by a more distant meaning, namely the writing of clear-cut letters with distinctive dotted marks, as stated by Ibn Manzur.⁶⁰ This interpretive shift occurs not through an explicit contextual indicator but through engagement with the broader semantic field of divine record-keeping, thereby exemplifying the mechanism of *al-tawriyah* in concealing the intended meaning behind a more immediately accessible one.

Exegetical discussions further reinforce this interpretation. The ledger of deeds of the wrongdoers in verse 9, states Ibn ‘Abbas, is written on a green rock placed below the seven earths, whereas the ledger of the virtuous in verse 20 is inscribed upon green chrysolite tablets placed above the seven heavens.⁶¹ The permanence of these records is emphasized by the notion that no amendments could be made to what has been written,⁶² resembling the firmness of tightly woven garments.⁶³ Such descriptions

⁵⁸ Surah al-Mutaffifin, 83:9 & 20.

⁵⁹ ‘Abd al-Malik Amrullah Hamka. *Tafsir al-Azhar* (Jakarta: Pustaka Panjimas, 1985), 83.

⁶⁰ Ibn Manzūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab*, 248.

⁶¹ Ibn ‘Abbās, *Tanwīr al-Miqbās min Tafsīr Ibn ‘Abbās*, 640.

⁶² Quṭb, *Fī Zilāl al-Qur’ān*, 3857.

⁶³ Abū al-Qāsim al-Ḥusayn bin Muḥammad al-Rāghib al-Aṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt fī Gharīb al-Qur’ān* (n.p.: Maktabah Nizār Muṣṭafā al-Bāz, 2009), 266.

intensify the imagery of irrevocable inscription and divine precision in recording human actions. Al-Buqa’i makes it clear that the number in the ledgers is like a white mark in the body of a black bull, as it becomes clear to whoever sees it, even at a remote distance, connotating how extremely good and evil deeds both believers and sinners respectively did.⁶⁴

Rhetorically, *al-tawriyah* in this verse contributes to the materialization of abstract entities. The otherwise intangible notion of divine record-keeping is rendered perceptible through the evocation of physical inscription on such solid surfaces as rock or tablet. The nearer meaning (numbering) prepares the mind of the addressees for precision and order, while the distant meaning (engraving) intensifies this perception by suggesting permanence and immutability. At the same time, the absence of an explicit clue sustaining only one meaning allows both interpretations to coexist momentarily, producing a degree of intentional vagueness that invites deeper contemplation. This rhetorical suspension enhances the cognitive engagement of the addressees as their minds transition from a superficial understanding of enumeration to a more profound realization of irrevocable inscription. The phonetic strength of the word, particularly the letter ق (*qāf*), one of loudly clearly voiced and strong sounds,⁶⁵ reinforces the rhetorical force of the expression. The strength of pronunciation thus commensurate with the strength of meaning.

2.

فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُ ﴿٥٠﴾ وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُ ﴿٥١﴾

⁶⁴ Burhān al-Dīn Abū al-Ḥasan Ibrāhīm bin ‘Umar al-Buqā’ī, *Naẓm al-Durar fī Tanāsib al-‘Āyāt wa al-Suwar* (Cairo: Dār al-Kitāb al-Islāmī, 1984), 208.

⁶⁵ Abū al-Faṭḥ ‘Uthmān Ibn Jinnī, *Sirr Ṣinā’ah al-I’rāb* (Cairo: Al-Maktabah al-Tawfiqiyyah, 2012), 1: 82.

Whoever has done an atom’s weight of good will see it. But whoever has done an atom’s weight of evil will see that.⁶⁶

At the initial level of interpretation, the nearer meaning of the word ذرة as “atom,” the smallest part of an element,⁶⁷ is readily activated due to its familiarity and sensory accessibility. However, the word denotes such extremely minute entities within the Arabic linguistic and cultural horizon as “tiny red ants or dust”⁶⁸ with the latter being supported by al-Zamakhshari,⁶⁹ al-Shawkani,⁷⁰ Ibn ‘Atiyyah,⁷¹ Ibn Kathir,⁷² al-Baydawi,⁷³ Ibn ‘Abbas,⁷⁴ Ibn ‘Ashur,⁷⁵ and Ibn Qutaybah,⁷⁶ In addition, al-Tha’labi asserts that small ants in Arabic are referred to as الذرة.⁷⁷ As a matter of fact, small ants and dust have no weight, or a hundred ants are approximately the weight of a grain of barley, as mentioned by Tha’lab (cited in Ibn Manzur).⁷⁸

Some exegetical opinions also associate the word with a mosquito, as mentioned by Quṭb through narrations

⁶⁶ Surah al-Zalzalah, 99: 7-8.

⁶⁷ Ibrāhīm Anīs et al., *al-Mu’jam al-Wasīf* (Beirut: Maktabah al-Shurūq al-Duwaliyyah, 2004), 310.

⁶⁸ Ibn Manzūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab*, 4: 304.

⁶⁹ Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf ‘an Haqā’iq al-Tanzīl wa ‘Uyūn al-Aqāwīl fī Wujūh al-Ta’wīl*, 1216.

⁷⁰ Al-Shawkānī, *Fath al-Qadīr al-Jāmi‘ bayn Fanna’i al-Riwāyah wa al-Dirāyah min ‘Ilm al-Tafsīr*, 1646.

⁷¹ Ibn ‘Atiyyah, *al-Muharrir al-Wajīz fī Tafsīr al-Kitāb al-‘Azīz*, 5:512.

⁷² Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-‘Azīm*, 464.

⁷³ Al-Baydāwī, *Anwār al-Tanzīl wa Asrār al-Ta’wīl al-Ma’rūf bi Tafsīr al-Baydāwī*, 330.

⁷⁴ Ibn ‘Abbās, *Tanwīr al-Miqbās min Tafsīr Ibn ‘Abbās*, 656.

⁷⁵ Ibn ‘Āshūr, *Tafsīr al-Taḥrīr wa al-Tanwīr*, 494.

⁷⁶ Ibn Qutaybah, *Tafsīr Gharīb al-Qur’ān*, 535.

⁷⁷ Abū Manṣūr ‘Abd al-Mālik bin Muḥammad bin Ismā‘īl al-Tha’labī, *Fiqh al-Lughah wa Sirr al-‘Arabiyyah* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 2013), 65.

⁷⁸ Ibn Manzūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab*, 304.

attributed to earlier exegetes.⁷⁹ However, the meaning appears anomalous, as all linguistic exegeses of the Qur’an and the key Arabic dictionary referred to are devoid of such an opinion. Moreover, the interpretation is presented without detailed linguistic justification or identification of its primary transmitters. If the meaning were to be conveyed by the word, it would then have to be included in the dictionary to which the Arabs are conventionally accustomed.

Al-Tawriyah in this verse rhetorically functions to materialize abstract entities, whereby an otherwise intangible concept is cognitively rendered accessible through concrete imagery. In this case, the abstract notion of the minimal moral weight of human actions is expressed through reference to such perceptible entities as dust particles or tiny ants, which represent the smallest observable units within the experiential world of the addressees. Rather than purely understanding smallness in an abstract sense, the addressees are guided towards tangible referents that intensify both comprehension and rhetorical impact. As regards the atom, albeit the Arabs were not supposed to have such scientific knowledge at the time the verse was revealed (the verse is liable to serve as a primary incentive to the discovery of the atom), *al-tawriyah* here implies how immensely small something that carries weight. Any small good or wrong deeds deemed by a man as not a big deal, worth much value in the sight of Allah, and they will be justly weighed on the Day of Resurrection.⁸⁰ Thus, believers are encouraged to perform good deeds, no matter how little or small they are, perhaps they will be improved, and wrongdoers are discouraged

⁷⁹ Quṭb, *Fī Zilāl al-Qur’ān*, 3955.

⁸⁰ Sayyid Quṭb, *Mashāhid al-Qiyāmah fī al-Qur’ān* (Beirut: Dār al Shurūq, 1994), 77.

from wrong deeds, perhaps they will be lessened. Each of them will be rewarded or punished accordingly.⁸¹

3.

وَأِنَّهُ لَخَبِيرٌ لَشَدِيدٌ ﴿٨٢﴾

He is truly excessive in his love of wealth.⁸²

The word *الخير* conventionally denotes “the opposite of evil”⁸³ which constitutes the nearer meaning readily activated in the mind of the addressees. However, within the Qur’anic context, the intended meaning shifts to “wealth”, state ‘Umar⁸⁴ and Bint al-Shati’,⁸⁵ in line with the following verse:

كَيْبَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذَا حَضَرَ أَحَدَكُمُ الْمَوْتُ إِنْ تَرَكَ خَيْرًا الْوَصِيَّةُ
لِلْوَالِدَيْنِ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ حَقًّا عَلَى الْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٧٥﴾

When death approaches one of you who leaves wealth, it is prescribed that he should make a proper bequest to parents and close relatives – a duty incumbent on those who are mindful of God.⁸⁶

Exegetes further note that *الخير* is typically associated with money or abundant wealth.⁸⁷ Some scholars, such as al-Mahalli and al-Suyuti, interpreted the

⁸¹ Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī bin Aḥmad al-Wāḥidī, *Asbāb Nuzūl al-Qur’ān* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1991).

⁸² Surah al-‘Adiyat 100:8.

⁸³ Ibn Manzūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab*, 4: 264.

⁸⁴ Aḥmad Mukhtār ‘Umar, *Mu’jam al-Lughah al-‘Arabiyyah al-Mu’āṣirah* (Cairo: ‘Ālam al-Kutub, 2008), 712.

⁸⁵ ‘Ā’ishah ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Bint al-Shāṭi’, *al-Tafsīr al-Bayānī li al-Qur’ān al-Karīm* (Cairo: Dār al-Ma’ārif, 1977), 1: 113.

⁸⁶ Surah al-Baqarah, 2:180.

⁸⁷ Al-Aṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt fī Gharīb al-Qur’ān*, 213.

word in another Qur’anic context as referring to horses favored by the Prophet Solomon (PBUH).⁸⁸

فَقَالَ إِنِّي أَحْبَبْتُ حُبَّ الْخَيْرِ عَنْ ذِكْرِ رَبِّي حَتَّى تَوَارَتْ بِالْحِجَابِ ﴿٣٠﴾

He kept saying, ‘My love of fine things is part of remembering my Lord!’ until [the horses] disappeared from sight.⁸⁹

Nevertheless, this interpretation does not contradict the word's broader semantic field, since horses were culturally regarded as a form of wealth and prestige. In this sense, the semantic movement between “goodness” and “wealth” remains contextually coherent within the Arabic linguistic worldview. The verse also reflects the social realities of pre-Islamic Arab society. As noted by Ibn ‘Ashur,⁹⁰ acts of miserliness towards the needy and the unjust consumption of orphans’ property were amongst the customs practiced by the Arabs during *jāhiliyyah* (the time of ignorance). Wealth was frequently used for social prestige through extravagant spending on such activities as gambling and alcoholic consumption. In this context, actions socially perceived as “good” or honorable were, from a moral and theological perspective, deeply problematic. Similarly, al-Qurtubi recounts Ibn Zaid’s explanation that Allah refers to wealth as “good” as mankind universally considers it good,⁹¹ yet something

⁸⁸ Jalāl al-Dīn al-Maḥallī & Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn bi Hāmish al-Qur’ān al-Karīm* (Damascus-Beirut: Dār ‘Ibn Kathīr, 2013), 455.

⁸⁹ Surah Sad, 38:32.

⁹⁰ Ibn ‘Āshūr, *Tafsīr al-Taḥrīr wa al-Tanwīr*, 505-506.

⁹¹ Abū ‘Abdullāh bin Muḥammad bin Aḥmad bin Abī Bakr al-Qurṭubī, *al-Jāmi’ li Ahkām al-Qur’ān wa al-Mubayyin limā Taḍammanah min al-Sunnah wa Āy al-Furqān* (Beirut: Mu’assasah al-Risālah, 2006), 440.

praised and desired⁹² even at the expense of shedding blood.⁹³

Rhetorically, *al-tawriyah* in this verse exposes the ethical tension between the positive connotations of “goodness” and the negative implications of excessive attachment to wealth. The nearer meaning initially directs the addressees towards a favorable moral understanding, yet the intended meaning gradually redirects the interpretation towards criticism of human greed and material attachment. This deliberate semantic overlap creates a form of intentional ambiguity that intensifies the rhetorical warning embedded in the verse. This also may be understood as a form of materialization of abstract value, whereby the abstract concept of “goodness” is concretized in the socially recognizable form of wealth. However, this materialization is not neutrally presented. Instead, the verse problematizes the human tendency to equate material abundance with moral goodness, thereby exposing a deeper cognitive and ethical distortion.

4.

فَأْمُرْهَا وَهِيَ

Will have the Bottomless Pit for his home.⁹⁴

The word أم conventionally denotes “mother”,⁹⁵ a meaning immediately activated in the mind of the addressees due to its primary and widely established usage. However, within the Qur’anic context, the intended meaning shifts to “dwelling”.⁹⁶ This semantic movement exemplifies *al-*

⁹² Jamāl al-Dīn Abū al-Farj ‘Abd al-Rahmān al-Jawzī, *Nuzhah al-‘Ayun al-Nawāzīr fī ‘Ilm al-Wujūh wa al-Nazā‘ir* (Beirut: Mu’assasah al-Risālah, 1987).

⁹³ Quṭb, *Fī Zilāl al-Qur’ān*, 3958.

⁹⁴ Surah al-Qari’ah, 101:9.

⁹⁵ Ibn Manzūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab*, 28.

⁹⁶ Majd al-Dīn Muḥammad bin Ya‘qūb al-Fayrūzābādī, *al-Qāmūs al-Muḥīṭ* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 2013), 1088; ‘Abd al-Rāḥman bin al-Kamāl Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *Tafsīr al-Durr al-*

tawriyah, whereby a familiar and emotionally charged meaning conceals a more contextually intended interpretation that is less immediately apparent on the surface.

Some scholars describe Hell as surrounding its inhabitants in a manner comparable to how the womb surrounds the fetus,⁹⁷ emphasizing complete encompassment and helplessness as though the wrongdoers originate from and remain confined within it. Thus, a profoundly disturbing relationship between the wrongdoers and their final abode in Hell is drawn. Just as a mother whose role is as custodian for her children, so does the Hell for the unbelievers.⁹⁸ Just as the fetus remains enclosed within layers of darkness and is unable to independently escape, the inhabitants of Hell are portrayed as being entirely subjected to its torment unless Allah wills otherwise. This imagery corresponds with the Qur’anic description of creation within “threefold depths of

Manthūr fī al-Tafsīr al-Ma’tūr (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 2011), 606; Abū Ḥayyān Muḥammad bin Yūsuf al-Andalusī, *al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ fī al-Tafsīr* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 2010), 533; al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf ‘an Haqā’iq al-Tanzīl wa ‘Uyūn al-Aqāwīl fī Wujūh al-Ta’wīl*, 1218; al-Shawkānī, *Faṭḥ al-Qadīr al-Jāmi’ bayn Fanna’i al-Riwāyah wa al-Dirāyah min ‘Ilm al-Tafsīr*, 1650; ‘Alī bin ‘Uthmān al-Mārdīnī, *Bahjah al-‘Arīb fī Bayān Mā fī Kitāb Allāh al-‘Azīz min al-Gharīb* (al-Naḡrah: Dār Ibn Qutaybah li al-Ṭibā’ah wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzī’, 2007) 276; Qutb, *Fī Zilāl al-Qur’ān*, 3961; Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah, *al-Muḥarrir al-Wajīz fī Tafsīr al-Kitāb al-‘Azīz*, 517; Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-‘Azīm*, 468; al-Bayḏāwī, *Anwār al-Tanzīl wa Asrār al-Ta’wīl al-Ma’rūf bi Tafsīr al-Bayḏāwī*, 333; Ibn ‘Abbās, *Tanwīr al-Miqbās min Tafsīr Ibn ‘Abbās*, 657; Ibn ‘Āshūr, *Tafsīr al-Tahrīr wa al-Tanwīr*, 514; Ibn Qutaybah, *Tafsīr Gharīb al-Qur’ān*, 537.

⁹⁷ Abū al-Faḍl Shihāb al-Dīn Maḥmūd al-Alūsī, *Rūḥ al-Ma’ānī fī Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-‘Azīm wa Sab’ al-Mathānī* (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā’ al-Turāth al-‘Arabī, 1850), 30: 222.

⁹⁸ Badr al-Dīn Muḥammad bin ‘Abdullāh al-Zarkashī, *al-Burhān fī ‘Ulūm al-Qur’ān* (Cairo: Dār al-Ḥadīth, 2006), 476.

darkness” advanced way before the discovery by embryologists in modern science:

خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ ثُمَّ جَعَلَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَأَنْزَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ
الْأَنْعَامِ ثَمَانِيَةَ أَزْوَاجٍ يَخْلُقُكُمْ فِي بُطُونِ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ خَلْقًا مِّنْ بَعْدِ خَلْقٍ
فِي ظُلُمَاتٍ ثَلَاثٍ ذَٰلِكُمْ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ قَاتِي
نُصْرَفُونَ ﴿٦١﴾

He created you all from a single being, from which He made its mate; He gave you four kinds of livestock in pairs; He creates you in your mothers’ wombs, in one stage after another, in threefold depths of darkness. Such is God, your Lord; He holds control, there is no god but Him. How can you turn away?⁹⁹

The three veils of darkness surrounding the fetus are further clarified by Qutb as the first layer being the darkness of the envelope that covers the fetus, the second the darkness of the uterus in which that envelope resides, and the third the darkness of the abdomen in which the uterus resides¹⁰⁰. Similarly, prophetic traditions describing Hell portray it as an intensely dark and terrifying realm. Al-Mubarakfuri narrates a tradition transmitted by al-Tirmidhi¹⁰¹ as follows:

حَدَّثَنَا عَبَّاسُ بْنُ مُحَمَّدٍ الدُّورِيُّ البَغْدَادِيُّ، أَخْبَرَنَا يَحْيَى ابْنُ أَبِي بُكَيْرٍ،
أَخْبَرَنَا شَرِيكٌ عَنْ عَاصِمٍ، عَنْ أَبِي صَالِحٍ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ

⁹⁹ Surah al-Zumar 39:6.

¹⁰⁰ Qutb, *Fi Zilāl al-Qur’ān*, 3039.

¹⁰¹ Abū al-‘Alī Muḥammad bin ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥīm al-Mubārakfūrī, *Tuḥfah al-Aḥwadhī bi Sharḥ Jāmi’ al-Tirmidhī* (Damascus: Dār al-Fikr li al-Ṭibā‘ah wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzī’, 1940), 294.

قَالَ: أَوْقَدَ عَلَى النَّارِ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ حَتَّى احْمَرَّتْ ثُمَّ أَوْقَدَ عَلَيْهَا أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ حَتَّى ابْيَضَّتْ، ثُمَّ أَوْقَدَ عَلَيْهَا أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ حَتَّى اسْوَدَّتْ فَهِيَ سَوْدَاءٌ مُظْلِمَةٌ

It has been narrated by ‘Abbas ibn Muḥammad al-Duri al-Baghdadi, Yahya ibn Abu Bukair, Sharik from ‘Asim, Abu Salih, and Abu Hurairah narrated that Prophet Muḥammad PBUH said: “The Fire was kindled for one thousand years until it reddened, then it was kindled for one thousand years until it whitened, then it was kindled for one thousand years until it became blackened, so it is dark black”.

The prophetic tradition outlines that Hell itself is as very dark as the mother’s womb is, in addition to the heat of Hell that reaches an unimagined degree and is unparalleled by any other forms of heat. There is no refuge for the wrongdoers on that day except that frightening abode¹⁰². The word “اسودت”, which its morphological metric is “أَفْعَلَّتْ” denotes the increase in the intensity of the color.¹⁰³

The rhetorical force of the verse lies in the tension between the nearer meaning and the intended meaning. The nearer meaning (mother) evokes associations of origin, intimacy, protection, and comfort, whereas the intended meaning (abode in Hell) conveys confinement, punishment, and inescapability. This juxtaposition produces a form of intentional ambiguity, momentarily directing the addressees towards a positive and comforting image before abruptly redirecting them towards a deeply unsettling reality. This may also be understood as the materialization

¹⁰² Muḥammad ‘Alī al-Ṣābūnī, *Ṣafwah al-Tafāsīr* (Beirut: Dār al-Qur’ān al-Karīm, 1981), 596.

¹⁰³ Aḥmad al-Ḥamlāwī, *Shazhā al-‘Arf fi Fann al-Ṣarf* (Cairo: Maktabah Ibn Sinā li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzī’, 2010), 38.

of existential fate, whereby the abstract notion of one’s ultimate destiny is rendered through a deeply embodied and relational concept, namely, that of “mother”. The addressees are thus led to conceptualize Hell not merely as a place but as an all-encompassing environment that surrounds and contains its inhabitants, much like the fundamental association implied by the nearer meaning. This semantic interplay contributes to an emphatic intensification of meaning as the verse does not simply state that Hell is the final abode but frames it through a term that inherently carries strong emotional resonance. The resulting effect is both cognitive and affective as the verse compels the addressees to confront the severity of divine punishment through a highly embodied and emotionally resonant expression.

Conclusion

This study has examined selected Qur’anic verses in which *al-tawriyah* operates within a creedal (*‘aqīdah*) context, particularly in relation to divine judgment, moral accountability, and human attachment to worldly wealth. The findings demonstrate that *al-Tawriyah* functions not merely as a lexical ornament but as a systematic rhetorical device through which abstract theological concepts are cognitively rendered accessible through concrete and perceptible expressions. By activating a nearer meaning while directing interpretation towards a more contextually intended meaning, *al-tawriyah* facilitates a layered interpretive process that intensifies meaning and enhances rhetorical impact.

The study further shows that the effectiveness of *al-tawriyah* lies not solely in the coexistence of multiple meanings but in the strategic interaction among these meanings within specific discursive contexts. Although verses in *Juz 30* are often regarded as direct and unambiguous in presenting core creedal messages, the presence of *al-tawriyah* demonstrates that rhetorical depth

may coexist with apparent clarity. In this sense, Qur’anic discourse simultaneously operates at literal and deeper interpretive levels. By integrating the perspectives of Yahya and al-Hajjaj and ‘Ali, this study also proposes a more systematic framework for examining the rhetorical functions of *al-tawriyah* in Qur’anic discourse.

From a pedagogical perspective, the findings suggest the importance of strengthening the teaching of Arabic rhetoric, particularly in religious educational settings where rhetorical devices are often insufficiently explored. Greater attention to the rhetorical and semantic dimensions of Qur’anic discourse may enhance students’ literary sensitivity and encourage deeper engagement with the aesthetic and rhetorical richness of the text beyond surface-level interpretation.

The concentration of such rhetorical features within Meccan chapters further reflects their role in reinforcing core theological messages through heightened cognitive and emotional engagement. The recurring use of polysemous and rhythmically patterned expressions appears to attract attention, stimulate reflection, and strengthen the persuasive and affective force of the discourse within the historical context of early Islamic preaching. This observation also corresponds with findings in modern psychological studies suggesting that repetition and rhythmic structuring enhance attention, retention, and cognitive engagement in communicative discourse. Rather than purely functioning as stylistic embellishment, these features contribute to the emphatic presentation of foundational creedal principles.

Nevertheless, this study is limited to a small number of selected verses and primarily focuses on creedal themes. Future research may extend the analysis to other Qur’anic texts and explore the applicability of the proposed framework to other rhetorical devices within Arabic *balāghah*. Further refinement of the framework may also

enhance its potential as a systematic tool for analyzing rhetorical phenomena in both classical and contemporary Arabic discourse.

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