Typology of *Ijtihād* in the *Qummī Ma'thūr* (Narrative) Exegesis

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Abstract

The Exegesis known as the *Qummī* exegesis is attributed to *Ali ibn
Ibrāhīm ibn Hāshim Qummī*. This exegesis dates back to the fourth
century and is regarded as a narrative commentary among Shi'a
exegesiss. The numerous traditions quoted in this exegesis lead any
audience to conclude its narrative nature; however, a thorough and
critical examination does not support this judgment. In this exegesis,
attention has also been paid to the Quranic exegesis method, along
with the interpreter's use of contemporary knowledge to understand
the verses, as well as significant literary resources. This indicates that
the *Qummī* exegesis departs from solely being narrative. The present
study aims to briefly present examples of what distinguishes this

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exegesis from purely narrative commentaries and to demonstrate the various and recurring literary and rhetorical knowledge utilized by the interpreter to provide evidence of *Ijtihād* within the *Qummī* exegesis.

Keywords: Literary *Ijtihād*, *Ijtihād* in Exegesis, *Qummī* Exegesis, *Ali ibn Ibrāhīm Qummī*.

Introduction

One of the methods of Quranic exegesis is the narrative and transmitted approach, in which the key to understanding the Quran lies in the reports from the impeccable Imams (AS). In the author's view, the interpreter in the *Qummī* exegesis, like all interpreters of narrative commentaries, possesses scientific principles and systematic methods for understanding the verses. These principles and methods are derived from intellectual efforts and *Ijtihād*. Since introducing *Qummī* and the exegesis attributed to him, as well as examining the position of the *Qummī* exegesis among Quranic researchers and interpreters, and understanding the beliefs and knowledge of the author, paves the way for understanding the conditions of *Ijtihād* and the factors influencing it, this research will first introduce the exegesis attributed to *Qummī* and then address the grounds for *Ijtihād* in this exegesis. Next, we will provide evidence of the literary *Ijtihād* of the interpreter to substantiate the hypothesis of the *Qummī* exegesis being *Ijtihādī*.

1. Background of the Research

The *Qummī* exegesis is attributed to the famous Shi'a narrator, *Ali ibn Ibrāhīm Qummī*, who is recognized as one of the early scholars with

significant diversity and Abūndance in scientific works. Consequently, the *Qummī* exegesis has attracted attention on various fronts, especially in recent decades. In the article "*Qummī* Exegesis on the Scale of Critique," published in the Journal of Quranic Research (1996 AD/1375 SH), Hasan Sharifi et al., have endeavored to critique the existing narratives within this exegesis both in terms of their chain of transmission and their textual content.

In this context, Diyari Bidgoli has written in his article "Contextual Critique of the Narratives in the Exegesis Attributed to *Ali ibn Ibrāhīm Qummī*" in the Journal of Ahl al-Bayt Exegesis (2014 AD/1393 SH). Another article by Mostafa Pourkerman titled "The Influence of Extremists on the Narratives of the Exegesis Attributed to *Ali ibn Ibrāhīm Qummī*" appeared in the Journal of Hadith Research (2012 AD/1391 SH), and an article by Javad Gholamrezaei titled "Abbreviating Hadith Books with Theological and Jurisprudential Presuppositions in Critique" was published in the Journal of Hadith Sciences (2023 AD/1401 SH). Together, these studies take a critical look at this exegesis.

Of course, several writings in recent years have been produced, each addressing different aspects of the exegesis; among them is an article by Mohammad Kazem Rahman Setayesh titled "Recovering the Sources of the *Qummī* Exegesis" in the Journal of Hadith Research (2013 AD/1392 SH), and an article "Bibliography of the *Qummī* Exegesis" by Mohammad Amin Rabbani in Ahl al-Bayt Exegesis (2013 AD/1392 SH), as well as an article titled "Text Arrangement Challenges in the *Qummī* Exegesis" by Pouran Mirzaei in the Journal

of Book and Sunnah (2014 AD/1393 SH). None of these valuable works address *Ijtihād* in the *Qummī* exegesis, however. The author has previously attempted in the quarterly journal of Quranic and Hadith Studies (2007 AD/1386 SH) with a study titled "*Ijtihād* in the Narrative Exegesis of *Qummī*" to show that this exegesis is closer to Ijtihād-based exegesis than purely narrative exegesis. As far as the author's investigation indicates, apart from this article, not much serious work has been done regarding the *Ijtihād* nature of the *Qummī* exegesis. Therefore, the background of the research clearly distinguishes this article from other valuable works.

2. Research Methodology

The method of this paper is qualitative-library and is written with a descriptive-analytical method.

Given the hypothesis, the interpreter refers to his literary knowledge to interpret some of the verses. In this regard, we first extracted evidence from the exegesis and then separated the linguistic, grammatical, and rhetorical references extracted from the exegesis under separate titles to highlight the interpreter's reliance on literary knowledge in the presented evidence.

3. Qummī and an Exegesis Attributed to Him

Ali ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Hāshim Qummī was a Shi'a jurist, hadith scholar, and interpreter in the 3rd and 4th centuries. Although the exact date of his birth and death is unknown, it is known that he lived until the year 307 AH. According to *Shaykh Aqa Buzurg Tehrni*, *Shaykh Ṣadūq* narrates from Hamza ibn Aḥmad ibn Ja'far in "Uyun Akhbar al-

Ridha," where *Ḥamza ibn Aḥmad ibn Ja'far* states that he heard this narration from *Ali ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Hāshim* in the year 307 AH. *Ṣadūq* also mentions in his "Amālī" that:

Ḥaddathanā Ḥamzah ibn Muḥammad ilā Qawlihī bi Qum fī Rajab 339 Qāla Akhbaranā Ali ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Hāshim fīmā Katabahū ilayy fī Sanati Sab'a wa Thalāth minhu (Ṭihrānī, 1982 AD/1403 AH: 4, 302; Shaykh Ṣadūq, 1989 AD/1410 AH: 210; Shaykh Ṣadūq, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 1, 170).

In the year 307 AH, roughly 47 years after Imam *'Askarī*'s martyrdom and 53 years after Imam *Hādī*'s martyrdom, *shaykh Ṭūsī* introduced *Ali ibn Ibrāhīm* as one of the companions of Imam *Hādī* (Ṭūsī, 1961 AD/1381 AH: 420). Therefore, prior to Imam *'Askarī*'s era, *Ali ibn Ibrāhīm* must have had an appropriate age to be considered a transmitter. Given the natural lifespan, it is likely that he did not survive long after 307 AH, but he certainly lived through most of the Minor Occultation, passing away in the first half of the fourth century (Sistānī, 2004 AD/1425 AH: 543).

The diversity of his scholarly works, the abundance of hadiths attributed to him, and the testimony of some scholars in the field of hadith confirm his reliability, highlighting *Ali ibn Ibrāhīm*'s prominent status in the history of Shi'a hadiths. As Najāshī states, "*Thiqatun fil Ḥadīth, Thabtun Mu'tamid, Ṣaḥīḥul Madhhab Sami'a Fakthar wa Ṣannafa Kutuban wa Aḍarahū fī Wasaṭi 'Umrihī*." (Najāshī, 1987 AD/1408 AH: 2, 86; Shūshtarī, 1994 AD/1415 AH: 7, 264; and cf. Ḥillī, 1981 AD/1402 AH: 100)

The variety of his works indicates that he had various scholarly

orientations, reflecting a multi-dimensional personality. Notable texts attributed to him include "*al-Tawḥīd wa al-Shirk*," *"Qurb al-Isnād," "al-Ḥayḍ," "al-Sharāyiʻ," "al-Tafsir," "al-Nāsikh wa al-Mansūkh," "al-Manāqib al-Anbīyāʼ," "al-Maghāzī al-Mushdhir," "Faḍāʼil Amir al-Muʼminīn,"* and *"Risālatun fī Maʻnā Hishām wa Yunus",* as well as *" Jawābātu Masāʼil Saʻalahū ʻanhā Muḥammad ibn Bilāl."* (Ṭūsī, n.d.: 89; Khuʼī, n.d.: 11, 194; Najāshī, 1987 AD/1408 AH: 260)

The volume of hadiths narrated by *Qummī* reflects the confidence hadith scholars had in him and showcases his industriousness in the field. According to "*Muʻjam al-Rijāl*," *Ali ibn Ibrāhīm* is linked in the chain of transmission to 7,140 hadiths, with 6,214 narrated from his father, *Ibrāhīm ibn Hāshim* (Khuʼī, n.d.: 11,195). Ayatollah *Maʻrifat* identified 6,214 narratives from *Qummī* in the Four Books, asserting that all were transmitted from his father (Maʻrifat, 1997 AD/1418 AH: 2, 184).

As previously discussed, among *Qummī*'s works, there is the exegesis of the Quran, "*Ikhtīyār al-Quran"* as well as "*Nāsikh wa Mansūkh."* Najāshī (d. 450 AH) notes: "He has a book of exegesis," (Najāshī, 1987 AD/1408 AH: 197) and Shaykh Ṭūsī (d. 460 AH) confirms this by stating, "He has written books, including a book of exegesis." (Ṭūsī, 1960 AD/1380 AH: 115)

Ibn Nadīm has also attributed the book "*Ikhtīyār al-Quran*" to him (Ibn Nadīm, 1994 AD/1415 AH: 241). *Dhahabī* and *Ibn Ḥajar* have mentioned his commentary (Ibn Ḥajar, 1969 AD/1390 AH: 4, 191; Dhahabī, 1962 AD/1382 AH: 3, 111). Furthermore, *Sayyid ibn Ṭāwūs* (d. 664 AH) cited multiple exegetical narrations from *Qummī*'s

commentary in his work "*Sa'd al-Su'ūd lil Nufūs*." (Ibn Ṭāwūs, 1943 AD/1363 AH: 75-80) *Kamāl al-Dīn* (d. 676 AH) summarized *Qummī*'s commentary and named it "*Mukhtaṣar Tafsir Ali ibn Ibrāhīm al-Qummī*," while *Kaf'amī* (d. 905 AH) also summarized it and titled it "*Ikhtiṣār Tafsir Ali ibn Ibrāhīm*." *Sharaf al-Dīn Istarābādī*, a scholar from the 10th century AH, utilized this commentary in "*Ta'wīl al-Āyāt al-Ẓāhirah fī Faḍā'il al-'Itrah al-Ṭāhirah*." (Ostadi, 2004 AD/1383 SH: 127; Sistānī, 2004 AD/1425 AH: 544)

Qummī's commentary existed in manuscript form in libraries until 1313 AH, when it was first published in lithographic form in Najaf. Subsequently, it was offset printed in Iran from the lithographed edition of Najaf. It was printed for the third time in Iran in 1315 AH, alongside the commentary attributed to Imam *'Askarī*. In 1367 SH, the *Dār al-Kitāb* Institute in Qom published this commentary with an introduction, corrections, and footnotes by Sayyid Tayyeb Mousavi Jazayeri, in two large volumes spanning 886 pages (Sharifi and Moballegh, 1996 AD/1375 SH: 325). In 1426 AH, once again, *Dār al-Ḥujjah* Publications in Qom printed *Qummī*'s commentary in two large volumes with footnotes.

Undoubtedly, *Ali ibn Ibrāhīm al-Qummī* is the author of a commentary; however, there is some doubt as to whether the well-known commentary attributed to *Qummī*, which is currently available, is indeed the commentary of *Ali ibn Ibrāhīm*.

Some scholars, such as *Shaykh Ḥurr Āmilī* and Ayatollah *Khu'ī*, consider the existing commentary to be reliable and fully authentic. *Ḥurr Āmilī* interprets a statement in the introduction of the

commentary as *Qummī*'s testimony to the trustworthiness of its narrators (Ḥurr Āmilī, 1947 AD/1367 AH: 68). In the introduction to *Qummī*'s commentary, it states: "We are recalling and reporting what has reached us from our scholars and trustworthy individuals regarding those upon whom Allah has made obedience obligatory." Ayatollah *Khu'ī* supports *Ḥurr Āmilī*'s view, arguing that it is not necessary for *Qummī* to authenticate each individual narrator of his commentary, as his general confirmation is sufficient (Khu'ī, n.d.: 1, 50).

From the perspective of some other Quran researchers, this commentary is seen as a combination of the exegesis of *Ali ibn Ibrāhīm al-Qummī* and *Abūl Jārūd*, and that it was authored by *Qummī*'s student, *Abūl Faḍl al-'Abbās ibn Muḥammad ibn Qāsim ibn Ḥamzah ibn Mūsā ibn Ja'far* (Sobhani, 1989 AD/1410 AH: 313; Tehrani, 1982 AD/1403 AH: 304; Ma'rifat, 1964 AD/1384 AH: 757).

While some attribute the discussed commentary to *Ali ibn Ḥātam Qazwīnī* (Shobayri, 1997 AD/1376 SH: 48; Behboudi, 1984 AD/1363 SH: 174), evidence suggests that the entire existing commentary is not solely from *Qummī*; rather, the author has quoted part of it through intermediary sources from *Qummī* (Sistānī, 1865 AD/1245 SH: 570).

The following evidence supports this claim:

1. In the exegesis of *Basmala*, the commentator states: "In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful, *Abūl Faḍl al-'Abbās ibn Sistānī Muhammad ibn al-Qāsim ibn Ḥamzah ibn Mūsā ibn Ja'far* told me, *Abūl Ḥasan Ali ibn Ibrāhīm* told me, my father (may Allah have mercy on him) told me from *Muhammad ibn Abī 'Umayr*" (Qummī:

1, 39). This phrase indicates that the author has cited *Qummī* through *Abūl Faḍl al-'Abbās*.

2. After quoting *Abī al-Jārūd*'s narration, the commentator uses phrases such as "Back to the exegesis of *Ali ibn Ibrāhīm*," "Back to the narration of *Ali ibn Ibrāhīm*," "Back to the hadith of *Ali ibn Ibrāhīm*," "The hadith Back to *Ali ibn Ibrāhīm*," and "Back to the exegesis of *Ali ibn Ibrāhīm* in saying" (ibid: 278, 270, 271, and 314). This implies that the commentator and narrator are distinct from *Ali ibn Ibrāhīm*.

3. In some books, such as "*Sa'd al-Su'ūd*" by *Sayyid ibn Ṭāwūs*, there are differences between the exegetical narrations attributed to *Qummī* and those present in the current exegesis of *Qummī* (Ibn Ṭāwūs, 2001 AD/1422 AH: 173-179; Qummī, 1963 AD/1383 AH: 1, 30, 140, 301, 306). Additionally, in some exegesis, there are narrations that do not appear in the widely-known exegesis attributed to *Qummī*, but are reported from *Qummī* (Baḥrānī, 1915 AD/1295 SH: 1, 32-36, 55-57, 60, 77, 82).

4. The author has narrated hadiths from more than 20 of his teachers, none of whom have been cited in any hadith collection like the works of *Ṣadūq* or *Uṣūl Kāfī*, as they all lived after *Ali ibn Ibrāhīm* and could not be *Qummī*'s teachers (Tehrani, 1982 AD/1403 AH: 4, 304; Sistānī: 552). Occasionally, the time gap between them and *Qummī* reaches thirty years. Among these individuals are *Ibn 'Uqdah* (d. 333 AH), a *Zaydī* hadith scholar who is one of the narrators of *Abūl Jārūd*'s exegesis, and *Muhammad ibn Hammām Skāfī al-Baghdādī* (d. 326 or 332 AH) and *Aḥmad ibn Idrīs* (d. 330

AH), who are renowned teachers of *Kulaynī* and notable scholars of Tafsir. These figures lived after *Ali ibn Ibrāhīm*. Scholars like Ayatollah *Khu'ī*, who consider the commentary in question to be the original exegesis of *Ali ibn Ibrāhīm*, mistakenly refer to *Ali ibn Hammām* and *Aḥmad ibn Idrīs* as *Qummī*'s teachers (Mousavi, 1990 AD/1369 SH: 88).

5. In the existing commentary, approximately 700 narrations are presented, of which 60% are from *Qummī*, 30% from *Abūl Jārūd*, and the remaining 10% from other sources (Sharifi and Muballigh, 1996 AD/1375 SH: 351). After mentioning the verses, the commentator cites *Qummī*'s opinion with phrases such as "*Ali ibn Ibrāhīm* said in his exegesis" or "He narrated to me from my father." (Qummī, 2005 AD/1426 AH: 1, 371; 2, 236, 237) Following some verses, the phrase "My father narrated to me" is mentioned, which may suggest that the word "Said" has been omitted (ibid: 1, 116, 117, 370, 143; 2, 84, 128). The commentator never uses the phrase "*Ali ibn Ibrāhīm* narrated to me"; however, when quoting from his teachers, he employs terms like "Narrated to us" or "Informed us," without using the word "Said" (ibid: 2, 233, 276, 309, 354, 386, 402). The use of the expressions "Narrated to us (*Ḥaddathanā*)" and "Informed us (*Akhbaranā*)" in this book indicates that the commentator is quoting directly from his teachers, while the use of "Said" shows that the commentator is quoting indirectly from *Ali ibn Ibrāhīm*.

6. Sometimes, the author narrates with two intermediaries from *Ibrāhīm ibn Hāshim* (ibid: 2, 329). Consequently, the author must be

182

someone other than *Ali ibn Ibrāhīm*, because a narration from *Ali ibn Ibrāhīm* with two intermediaries from his father does not make sense: "*Abūl ʿAbbās* narrated to us, saying: *Muhammad ibn Aḥmad* narrated to us, saying: *Ibrāhīm ibn Hāshim* narrated from *al-Nūfalī* from *al-Sakūnī...*"

7. In this commentary, narrations from important teachers of *Ali ibn Ibrāhīm*, such as *Aḥmad ibn Muhammad ibn ʿĪsā*, *Muhammad ibn ʿĪsā ibn ʿUbayd*, and *Aḥmad ibn Abī ʿAbdillāh Barqī*, have been conveyed through contemporary figures of *Ali ibn Ibrāhīm* or through *Ibrāhīm ibn Hāshim Qummī*, the father of *Ali ibn Ibrāhīm*, with two intermediaries. Likewise, there are narrations from his contemporaries, such as *Muhammad ibn Yaḥyā* and *Saʿd ibn ʿAbdullāh*, conveyed through intermediaries, which demonstrates that the entire commentary is not solely from *Ali ibn Ibrāhīm* (ibid: 339, 344). Rather, the author has selected narrations and opinions from various exegeses to shape his own commentary.

4. Typology of *Ijtihād* in the Commentary Attributed to *Qummī*

The term *Ijtihād* refers to intellectual effort to choose. A commentator who selects only a portion of the sources or accepts only some narrations while also utilizing their own knowledge to achieve the intended meanings of the verses in their commentary has acted with *Ijtihād*. Here, we will explore the grounds for *Ijtihād* in the commentary attributed to *Qummī*:

4.1. *Ijtihād* in the Selection of Sources

The author of the book specifies three sections regarding what is cited

as narration:

1. Narrations of Ali ibn Ibrāhīm Qummī

2. Narrations of Abūl Jārūd

3. Miscellaneous Narrations from the impeccable Imams

4.1.1. Narrations of *Ali ibn Ibrāhīm Qummī*

So far, the narrations from *Qummī* in the entire commentary have not been precisely counted. Even if a count has been conducted, due to the mixture of narratives from various narrators and the blending of narrations with non-narrations, the discrepancy in the count of *Qummī*'s narrations is significant. For instance, some scholars believe that 75% of the existing narrations in the commentary are from *Qummī* (Mousavi, 1949 AD/1369 SH), while others place this figure at 60% (Sharifi and Moballegh, 1996 AD/1375 SH: 349).

Most of *Qummī*'s narrations are mentioned from his father, *Ibrāhīm ibn Hāshim*, and from *Ibn Abī 'Umayr*, often with a chain of transmission (Qummī, 2005 AD/1426 AH: 1, 148). In some cases, the narrations cited from *Qummī* are found *Mursal* (ibid: 59, 160 and 306) and among the transmitted hadiths from *Qummī*, there are som *Marfū'* hadiths (ibid: 53 and 75).

4.1.2. Narrations of *Abūl Jārūd*

Abūl Jārūd, Zīyād ibn Mundhar 'Abdī, was a companion of Imam *Zayn al-'Ābidīn*, from Imam *Bāqir*, and from Imam *Ṣādiq*. After the death of Imam *Bāqir*, Abūl Jārūd changed his belief and accepted the Imamate of *Zayd ibn Ali*, about seven years after the Imam's passing (during the Zaydi uprising). He is associated with the *Jārūdiyya*, a sect

within the Zaidiyya. *Abūl Jārūd* was a scholar of the Zaidiyya from Khorasan, whom Imam *Ṣādiq* cursed, saying he was both blind and blind-hearted.

A commentary titled "*Tafsir Abūl Jārūd*" is mentioned in exegetical sources, and his biography is referenced in *Rijālī* sources. *Najāshī* mentions after describing his life: "He has a book of Quranic exegesis which he narrates from *Abū Jaʿfar*" (Qummī, 1962 AD/1382 AH: 302; Tehrani, 1982 AD/1403 AH: 4, 308; Najāshī, 1992 AD/1413 AH: 170).

Shaykh Ṭūsī also writes after outlining his biography: "*Zīyād ibn al-Mundhir*, known as *Abal Jārūd*, is of Zaydi sect, and the *Jārūdiyya* refers to him. He has a source and a book of exegesis from *Abū Jaʿfar al-Bāqir*." (Ṭūsī, 1935 AD/1356 AH: 72)

The author's chain to Abul Jārūd is as follows: "Aḥmad ibn Muhammad al-Hamdānī narrated to us, saying: Jaʿfar ibn ʿAbdullāh narrated to us, saying: Kathīr ibn ʿAyyāsh narrated from Zīyād ibn Mundhir Abil Jārūd, from Abū Jaʿfar Muhammad ibn Ali (AS) regarding His saying..." (ibid: 1, 110).

The interpreter has also narrated some hadiths through *Ali ibn Ibrāhīm* from *Abul Jārūd*, as in the case of, "My father narrated to me from *Ṣafwān ibn Yaḥyā*, from *Abul Jārūd*, from *ʿImrān ibn Haytham*, from *Mālik ibn Dhumurah*, from *Abī Dharr*." (ibid: 1, 11).

4.1.3. Miscellaneous Narrations from the Impeccable Imams (AS)

This refers to the narrations that have not been reported from either *Ali ibn Ibrāhīm* or *Abul Jārūd* but can be found scattered throughout the

entire commentary. These narrations fall into two categories. The first type includes narrations, for which no chain of transmission has been provided, and the name of no narrator is mentioned, yet they are attributed to one of the impeccable Imams (Qummī, 2005 AD/1426 AH: 1, 282, 214, and 250).

The second type consists of narrations that interpreters convey through their scholars, mentioning the chain of transmission (ibid: 231, 277, and 206).

Based on the aforementioned points, the author of the *Qummī* commentary has selected narrations first from the Tafsir of *Ali ibn Ibrāhīm Qummī* and from the Tafsir of *Abul Jārūd*. Secondly, he has narrated from his scholars, whose names have been mentioned. Therefore, the interpreter was not merely engaged in collecting narrations but has drawn from the Tafsir of *Ali ibn Ibrāhīm Qummī*, *Abul Jārūd, Abū Ḥamzah Thumālī, Furāt Kūfī, Nawādir Aḥmad ibn Muhammad ibn ʿĪsā, the Maḥāsin of Aḥmad ibn Abī ʿAbdillāh Barqī, Nawādir al-Ḥikmah, Muhammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā ibn ʿImrān Ashʿarī, the Tafsir of Ali ibn Mahzīyār, the Tafsir of Muʿallā ibn Muhammad*, the anonymous *Tafsir of ʿAbdul Ghanī ibn Saʿīd al-Thaqafī* that concludes with the *Tafsir of Ibn ʿAbbās*, and the *Tafsir al-Bāṭin of Ali ibn Ḥassān al-Hāshimi*, who was a *Ghālī* and thus weakened. He has selected narrations from the *Tafsir of Ḥasan ibn Ali ibn Abī Ḥamzah*, that he and his father were from *Wāqifī* heads, as well as from the book of *Ṭalḥa ibn Zayd, from the Tafsir of Ibn ʿAbbās*, through the ways of *ʿAṭā and Ḍaḥḥāk ibn Muzāḥim*, and from *Ḥasan ibn Ali ibn Mahzīyār*, from the *Shaykhs of Ibn Qūlawayh*, since

some of the primary sources selected by the author, such as the *Tafsir of Furāt Kūfī*, are currently available. By comparing the transmitted narrations from it with the original Tafsir, it can be seen that the author of the commentary did not include all of the narrations from *Furāt Kūfī* in his work but rather selected from them (Mousavi, 1990 AD/1369 SH; Qummī, n.d.: 2, 40, 234, 245, 286, 292, 351, 422; Shubayri, 1997 AD/1376 SH: 702; 'Asqalānī, 1994 AD/1415 AH: 3, 291; Najāshī, 1987 AD/1408 AH: 251; Kashshī, 522; Ḥillī, n.d.: 261).

In other words, the volume of the *Qummī* commentary indicates that the author has not included all the narrations found in the *Tafsirs of Furāt Kūfī, Abul Jārūd, Qummī, Baṭā'inī,* and *Ḥamzah Thumālī.* For instance, the total number of narrations in the *Tafsir Kūfī* is 775 (Furāt Kūfī, 1989 AD/1410 AH: 621), whereas all the narrations found in the commentary attributed to *Qummī* amount to 700, which indicates that the author has selectively chosen from the *Tafsir Kūfī.*

On the other hand, the author rarely presents varying exegesis of the same verse; for most verses, he suffices with noting a single interpretative narration from one commentary. If his intention in exegesis was solely to compile interpretative narrations, he should have included all existing narrations from the commentaries in his work. What is transmitted from the *Qummī* commentary in the existing exegesis indicates that the *Qummī* commentary is a combination of narrations and the *Ijtihādī* opinions of *Qummī*, and the author has selected both the narrations from the *Qummī* commentary and his opinions, many of which are his own exegesis, based on his inclinations and beliefs (Qazizadeh, 1996 AD/1375 SH: 125; and see

187

also Qummī, 1962 AD/1382 SH: 1, 48, 50, 77, 82, 140, 145).

4.2. Ijtihād in Explaining the Quran with the Quran

Sometimes the interpreter presents only part of a verse and interprets it, and other times he analyzes the entire verse but focuses on a portion of it. When interpreting a verse or part of it, he draws from the Quran itself; this type of exegesis is referred to as interpreting the Quran with the Quran. Examples of the Quran with the Quran exegesis in the *Qummī* commentary include:

- *Māliki Yawmi al-Dīn* (al-Ḥamd/4): The interpreter, citing *Qummī*, interprets *Yawm al-Dīn* as *Yawm al-Ḥisāb* (Day of Judgment) and bases this reasoning on the verse *Waqālū waīlanā Hādhā Yawm al-Dīn* (al-Ṣāffāt/20) (Qummī, 2005 AD/1426 AH: 1, 41; also see 2, 270, 371, 401, 413, 441).

- *Alladhīna Yaẓunnūna annahum Mulāqū Rabbihim wa annahum ilayhi Rājiʿūn* (al-Baqarah/46): The author, citing *Qummī*, considers the term *Ẓann* (assumption) in the Quran in two ways: As certainty and as doubt. He believes that the *Ẓann* in the discussed verse is understood as certainty and suggests that the *Ẓann* in the verse: *...Anna Naẓunnu illā Ẓannā wa mā Naḥnu Bimuṭayqinīn* (al-Jāthīya/32) signifies doubt (Qummī, 2005 AD/1426 AH: 2, 270). Thus, through the two verses in Surah *al-Baqarah* and al- *Jāthīya*, he establishes differing meanings regarding the term *Ẓann*.

It appears that *Ẓann* in Surah al-*Jāthīya* is considered, based on the phrase *Wa mā Naḥnu Bimuṭayqinīn*, to signify doubt. However, *Ẓann* in Surah al-Baqarah is interpreted as certainty, based on the preceding

verse (al-Baqarah/45); because humility is the result of certainty in God's meeting (and also cf. Qummī, 2005 AD/1426 AH: 1, 68, 72, 88, 59, 155, 114, 243, 140, 255; and 2, 371, 401, 234, 413, 441).

4.3. *Ijtihād* Based on Contemporary Knowledge

There is another type of *Ijtihād* in the exegesis attributed to *Qummī*, which, with some leniency, we can call contemporary *Ijtihād*. This is because the interpreter has utilized his contemporary knowledge— despite the fact that the falsehood of this knowledge is now evident— for the exegesis of the Quran. For example:

- *Thumma Laqaṭaʿnā minhul Watīn* (al-Ḥāqqah/46): He said: *ʿAraqa fil Ẓahr Yakūnu minhul Walad* (Qummī, 2005 AD/1426 AH: 2, 372). Then we would cut his jugular vein. The interpreter interprets *Watīn* in this verse as a vein located in the back of a person from which a child is conceived. The conception of a child, according to the ancients, entirely depended on the man, while the woman merely delivered and nurtured the small fetus (Meythami and Estilaei, 1992 AD/1371 SH: 224). Additionally, it was believed that a child originates from a vein in the back of the man. The interpreter has based his exegesis of the verse on this belief, interpreting *Watīn* as the vein in the back, even though it has been stated that "*al-Watīn Yanāṭu al-Qalb wa Idhā Inqaṭaʿa Māta al-Insān*," meaning that *Watīn* is a vein in the heart that, if cut, results in death (Ṭabrisī, 1970 AD/1390 AH: 9, 349). The interpreter expresses his belief regarding the creation of man from the seed of the male and his formation in the womb of the female in relation to the verse "*Wa Laqad Khalaqnākum thumma Ṣawwarnākum*."(al-Aʿrāf/11)

- *Allāhulladhī Khalaqa Sabʿa Samawātin wa minal Arḍi Mithlahunna Yatanazzalul Amri Baynahun…* (al-Ṭalāq/12). It is evidence that under every sky there is an earth... God is the one who created seven heavens and from the earth, something similar (Qummī, 2005 AD/1426 AH: 2, 359). The interpreter refers the pronoun in *Mithlahunna* to the heavens, as have other interpreters, but there is disagreement on what the exegesis of the verse is. Our interpreter interprets the verse according to the astronomical knowledge of his time, which believed that the earth is the center of the universe and that there are seven heavens, each considered lower than the one above it. Therefore, the seven heavens correspond to seven earths. The interpreter substantiates this astronomical teaching of his age with this verse, considering the verse to reflect this theory, whereas most contemporary interpreters, although they also refer the pronoun *Mithlahunna* to the seven heavens, interpret *Mithlahunna* as the seven layers of the earth or as seven pieces of the earth, or they consider *Min al-Arḍi Mithlahunna* as pertaining to the creation of man, stating that *Min al-Arḍi* means something created from the earth like the heavens (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1966 AD/1346 SH: 19, 657; Makarem, n.d.: 24, 272).

- *Sakhkharahā ʿalayhim Sabʿa Layālin wa Thamānīyata Ayyāmin Ḥusūman…* (al-Ḥāqqah/7). "The moon was ominous with Saturn for seven nights and eight days until they perished." (Qummī, 2005 AD/1426 AH: 2, 317). According to ancient astronomical belief, the bitter and sweet events on Earth were dependent on the position of the moon in the sky. For example, if the moon was positioned opposite Saturn,

it would cause bitter events on Earth. The *Thamūd* people, who were destroyed by a cold wind for seven nights and eight days, faced this calamity at a time when the moon was in opposition to Saturn.

- *Faman Yuridillāh an Yahdīyahū Yashraḥ Ṣadrahū lil Islam wa man Yurid an Yuḍillahū Yaj'al Ṣadrahū Ḍayyiqan Ḥarajā* (al-An'ām/125). The term *Ḥaraj* refers to a situation that has no escape, while *Ḍayyiq* (tightness) refers to something that has a small escape route. In the exegesis of *Ka'annamā Yaṣṣa''adu fī al-Samā'*, it states that branches of trees surrounded by many other trees cannot move to the left or right, thus they are compelled to find a passage upward toward the sky. This condition is called *Ḥaraj* and has become a metaphor for anyone feeling pressured from their surroundings. If the interpreter has defined *Ḥaraj* in this way, it reflects the prevalent knowledge of his time. Although the interpreter understands does not deviate much from the example given, if he had had knowledge of the conditions for ascending to the sky and the conditions for breathing outside of Earth's atmosphere, as is now understood, he would likely have presented the exegesis differently. However, the interpreter has explained *Ḍayqi Ṣadr* using the terminology common to his era.

- *Min Nuṭfatin idhā Tumnā* (al-Najm/46). He said, "The drop transforms into blood, first forming as blood and then becoming a drop that resides in the brain in a vein called *al-Warīd*, and it moves through the vertebrae of the back until it continues through each vertebra until it reaches the ureters (and becomes white). As for the woman's drop, it descends from her breast." (Qummī, 2005 AD/1426 AH: 2,

316). Based on what was understood in ancient times, the interpreter considers the location of the drop to be the vein, and he associates the vein with the human brain, claiming that the drop moves within the vertebrae of the back and gradually transitions into two tubes, turning white. However, the woman's drop exits from her breast. In this way, he interprets the drop utilizing the contemporary knowledge of his time.

4.4. Rational Jurisprudence

Reason is sometimes referred to as the capacity and tool of understanding, and at other times it indicates a collection of specific sciences that constitute the innate and instinctual knowledge of reason (Mullā Ṣadrā, 2004 AD/1383 SH: 453; Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1996 AD/1417 AH: 144; Ḥillī, 1998 AD/1419 AH: 1, 226; Ṭūsī, n.d.: 169).

In this section, examples will be presented where the author of the Tafsir *Qummī* uses reason as a source. Just as the interpreter utilized reason as a light in previous sections, he also applies it here:

- *Wujūhun Yawma'idhin ilā Rabbihā Nāẓirah* (al-Qīyāmah/22-23). "They look at the face of Allah, at the mercy and grace of Allah; on that day, their faces will be radiant and happy because they are gazing at their Lord." The interpreter explains *ilā Rabbihā Nāẓirah* (looking at her Lord) as looking at God's countenance, and God's countenance is interpreted as His mercy and bounty (Qummī, 2005 AD/1426 AH: 1, 417).

- *Fakāna Qāba Qawsayni aw Adnā* (al-Najm/9). "It was from Allah, as the distance is from the grip of a bow to its tip (I was favored by Him

with His grace and mercy ...)." (ibid: 2, 311) The interpreter adds the phrase *Kamā Bayna* illustrates that the Prophet's (PBUH) closeness to God on the night of the Ascension is similar to the proximity of the tip of an arrow to the bowstring. The addition of *Kamā* (like) is meant to clarify doubts, and *Aw Adnā* (or closer) is explained as the Prophet (PBUH) getting closer to God's bounty and mercy so as to eliminate the limitation of God to a specific place, which contradicts rational principles.

- *Wa man Nu'ammirhu Nunakkishu fil Khalqi Afalā Ya'qilūn* (Yāsīn/68). "Whoever We grant long life, We reverse him in creation." This verse refutes the claims of heretics who deny monotheism. They say that when a man marries a woman and the drop (sperm) is placed in her womb, the drop takes shape from food and the rotation of celestial bodies, meaning that a human is the result of food and the cycles of day and night. God counters their argument in one statement, saying: "Whoever We grant long life, We reverse him in creation." The implication is that if the heretics' words were correct, then a person should continuously increase (both quantitatively and qualitatively) because the cause of human creation from the drop still exists. Therefore, the journey of the drop into a human should continue indefinitely. However, despite the existence of the cause, why does the person, who is the effect, decline and loses hearing, sight, knowledge, strength, and reasoning? Thus, it becomes evident that the cause of human creation is not the rotation of the heavens and earth (Qummī, 2005 AD/1426 AH: 1, 191). The interpreter, based on the rational principle that "The separation of cause and

effect is impossible," has formulated an exceptional deduction and then inferred a conclusion from denying the consequence, leading to the denial of the premise. If what they say were true, then it should be that a person continuously increases… But in reality, a person does not continuously increase. Therefore, what they claim is incorrect. This means that if the celestial bodies and food were the cause of human creation from the drop, the human state would never change, and a person would always increase. However, the human state does change, and a person does not continuously increase.

- *Wa Ḍaraba lanā Mathalan wa Nasīya Khalqah Qāla man Yuḥyī al-'Iẓām wa Hīya Ramīm* (Yāsīn/78). God, the Exalted, said: "Say, O! Muhammad, *Qul Yuḥyīhā Alladhī Ansha'ahā Awwala Marratin wa Huwa bi Kulli Khalqin 'Alīm*." (Yāsīn: 79).

The interpreter said: "If a person reflects on his own creation, it will lead him to recognize his Creator, for every person knows he is not eternal because he sees himself and others as created beings. He knows he did not create himself because every creator exists before his creation. If he were his own creator, he would ward off harm, pain, illness, and death from himself. Thus, it becomes evident that he has a Creator who is God, the One, and the Subduer." (Qummī, 2005 AD/1426 AH: 2, 192) For us, it is said: "Who will revive these rotting bones?" God said: "O! Muhammad, say: He who first gave them life is the One who is knowledgeable and capable of doing this."

It is said that if a person thinks about his own creation, he will

realize that his Creator is God. Because a person knows he is not

eternal since he sees himself and others as created beings. He also knows he did not create himself, because every creator exists before their creation. If he were his own creator, he would eliminate all harms, diseases, pains, and death from himself. Thus, it is established that the Creator and Manager is the One God. The interpreter has also relied on several self-evident rational principles to provide the argument.

1. Every creator exists before the created;

2. Every human is not eternal;

3. He sees himself and others as created beings;

4. He knows he did not create himself (the advancement of something over itself is impossible). He also utilizes theological terms such as "Eternal" and "Created" and employs an exceptional syllogism.

If he created himself, he would ward off harm from himself... but he does not ward off harm from himself, so he did not create himself.

4.5. Literary *Ijtihād*

Another aspect of the *Ijtihād* in *Qummī*'s exegesis is literary *Ijtihād*, which refers to all instances where the interpreter has explicated verses based on his knowledge of Arabic literature without using even a single narration. Thus, the literary *Ijtihād* of the interpreter includes the meanings of words based on context and cohesion, determining the precedence or postponement of verses or sentences, identifying the referents of pronouns, and entails analysis and effort in literary compositions. Here, we will extract and present examples from the interpretive text for each of the cases.

4.5.1. Meaning of Vocabulary

In the exegesis under review, the interpreter's linguistic viewpoints are numerous. Sometimes he posits that a word is Syriac, as seen in what follows the phrase "and was God," where it states: "He said: it is a Syriac word." (Qummī: 2, 121) Other times he clarifies the meaning of a letter, such as the exegesis he provides after "That you may be guided," where he states "Meaning, when you are guided." (Qummī: 2, 254; see also 247) The interpreter often provides meanings that transcend the superficial layer of meaning; he says that from the phrase "The first ignorance," we understand that the world will experience a secondary ignorance in the future. "And do not display yourselves as [was] the display of [the time of] ignorance." He said: "This means there will be another ignorance."(Qummī: 2, 168)

Or when explaining the meaning of words, he refers to the phrase "Knowledge establishes the place of vision" and in connection with "Here you are" gives the phrase "O! You."(Qummī: 2, 268 and 284)

Alongside such statements that stem from the interpreter's literary perspective, the presentation of the meaning of vocabulary is also significant. Examples of this include:

1. *Kullan Numiddu Hā'ulā'i wa Hā'ulā'i min 'Aṭā'i Rabbik,* meaning, those who desire worldly affairs from the Hereafter, and the meaning of "extend" is "we give." (Qummī: 1, 408)

2. *Faman Yuridillāh an Yahdīyahū Yashraḥ Ṣadrahū lil Islām wa man Yurid an Yaj'al Ṣadrahū Ḍayyiqan Ḥarajā.* The constriction that has no entrance (to it) is the one that is tight without an entrance. (Qummī: 1, 222)

3. *Wa lā Yuẓlamūna Fatīlā.* It means the thin skin that is on the back of

the date pit. (Qummī: 1, 413; see also 1, 419, 201, 203, 231, 238, 250 and 2, 451, 446, 444, 417, 415, 407, 308, 355).

4.5.2. Analysis of Literary Compositions

This type of literary *Ijtihād* refers to the combinations of phrases based on which the interpreter has performed the exegesis. The following examples illustrate this:

- *Wa 'Indahum Qāṣirātu al-Ṭarfi 'Īn* (al-Ṣāffāt/48). This means that the *Ḥūrī* have eyes that restrain their glances from looking at them due to their purity. For them are women whom their spouses have made their eyes delighted. The interpreter, contrary to the well-known interpretive view, interprets "Restraining [their] Glances" as "Restrained from looking at them," meaning women whose extreme beauty captivates the gaze of the viewers. Most interpreters take "Restraining [their] Glances" as an adjective for the women's eyes (Zamakhsharī, 1946 AD/1366 AH: 4, 453; Suyūṭī, 2009 AD/1430 AH: 7, 89 and 71), while our interpreter considers it an adjective for the viewers of the women. In the following verses, he provides a similar exegesis: "In them are restrained [their] glances..." (al-Raḥmān/56) He says: "The *Ḥūrīs* restrain [their glances] from [the glow of] their light... and this is a mention, and indeed for the righteous is a good return - until the statement... Restrained [their] glances (38 and 52). And [they are] *Ḥūrīs* restrained in pavilions" (al-Raḥmān/72). Another kind of this *Ijtihād* can be seen in cases where the interpreter believes one word to stand in place of another... "And wherever you are, turn your faces towards it, so that

the people will not have an argument against you except for those who have wronged among them..." (al-Baqarah/150) "Meaning, and not those who have wronged among them (and this) is not an exception." Wherever you are, direct your faces towards the Sacred Mosque so that the people do not have a pretext against you except for the wrongdoers (do not fear them, and fear Me). The interpreter does not see "Except" as an exception, while others view it as a distinct exception and interpret the verse by saying the Jews discovered from their books that the *Qibla* of the promised Prophet is the *Ka'ba*; therefore, when they saw that the Muslims prayed towards Jerusalem, they made an excuse, claiming that you are not on the truth because one of the signs of the truth of the promised Prophet is praying towards the Kaaba. In this verse, it says: Pray towards the *Ka'ba* to take away their excuse, except for the wrongdoers. Even with your turning towards the Kaaba, they will never cease from making excuses (Ṭabāṭabā'ī 1944 AD/1364 AH: 1, 458). However, based on the exegesis attributed to *Qummī*, which takes "Except" as "not," it would mean: wherever you are, turn to the Kaaba so that you neither give an excuse to the people nor to the wrongdoers (Qummī, 2005 AD/1426 AH: 1, 155 and 305; 2, 102).

4.5.3. Identification of the Antecedent of a Pronoun

In every language, there are words whose understanding and explanation require comprehending other words; that, by understands the antecedent, one can understand those words. Therefore, being aware of the process of reference and the semantic relationships of words is a prerequisite for

198

understanding a text. Differences in recognizing the antecedent of a pronoun lead to differences in exegesis.

"Our Lord, raise amongst them an apostle from among them, who will recite to them Your signs and teach them the Book and wisdom and purify them. Indeed You are the All-mighty, the All-wise." (al-Baqarah/129) It means from the offspring of Ishmael, which is why it is said that the Messenger (PBUH) said: I am the invocation of my father Ibrāhīm (Qummī, 2005 AD/1426 AH: 1, 71).

The interpreter takes the antecedent of the pronoun in "From them" to be the offspring of Ishmael. Based on this, the meaning of the verse becomes: O! God, raise a messenger among the people of Mecca from the descendants of Ishmael... *Qummī* cites the narration "I am the invocation of my father Ibrāhīm" in support of his exegesis. However, if we take the antecedent of the pronoun to be the people of Mecca, the meaning would be: O! God, raise a messenger from among those people... (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1944 AD/1364 AH: 1, 524; see also 2, 407).

Conclusion

The well-known exegesis attributed to *Qummī* is a combination of the exegesis of *Ali ibn Ibrāhīm Qummī* and others, organized by a student of *Qummī.* This exegesis cannot be purely narrative; it involves *Ijtihād* in the selection of sources, choosing the types of narrations, employing rational principles, and utilizing knowledge of literary elements, including vocabulary, grammar, morphology, and eloquence, as well as contemporary knowledge extensively. According to what has been presented in this article, this exegesis

attributed to *Ali ibn Ibrāhīm Qummī* involves genuine *Ijtihād* in organizing the meanings of the verses.

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