



## **Discourse Analysis of the "*Gharrā*" Sermon of Nahj al-Balāghah Based on Norman Fairclough's Theory**

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### **Abstract**

Nahj al-Balāghah is an exalted masterpiece in Islamic literature and Arabic rhetoric, profoundly influenced by the revelatory teachings of the Holy Quran. The "*Gharrā*" sermon within it stands as a refined

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example of the integration of linguistic elements, religious hegemony, and Islamic-epistemological ideology, which, in discourse analysis, manifests as a social thought and identity-building process. This study aims to explore the discursive structures and content layers within the sermon, adopting a descriptive-analytical approach within the framework of Fairclough's theory across three domains: "Description, interpretation, and explanation." It delves into the rhetorical-syntactic, intertextual, situational, and dominant ideological mechanisms. The findings, in the descriptive and interpretative levels, indicate that Imam Ali (AS) speaks from the depth of his being, employing rhetorical devices and robust syntactic arrangements in his sentences. Through pure and sometimes harsh truths and admonitions about the afterlife, he brings the listener into the hidden recesses of their soul, such that in the context of a funeral procession, his words create a spiritual resonance with the divine verses, making the listener not only overwhelmed with emotions and feelings but also transcending their rational faculties. Ultimately, this results in tears of sorrow and comprehension, physically manifesting as tremors in the listener. In the explanatory domain, with a critical outlook on human negligence and the pursuit of carnal desires and satanic temptations, the sermon emphasizes the necessity of reminders and warnings for the heedless, with the dominant hegemony being based on the ideology of warning, awakening, and the remembrance of the origin and resurrection.

**Keywords:** Hadith thoughts, Imam Ali (AS), Nahj al-Balāghah, Gharrā' Sermon, Critical Discourse, Norman Fairclough.

## Introduction

Discourse analysis of religious and hadith texts is a crucial endeavor in the field of theological studies, as this methodological approach, through the examination of semantic layers, discursive structures, and the mechanisms of meaning production and reproduction, can significantly contribute to uncovering intellectual systems, ideological contexts, and the formation and transformation of meanings within historical, social, and cultural settings. This approach, utilizing linguistic, semiotic, and critical discourse analysis tools, provides an opportunity to elucidate the interaction between the text and the audience, the methods of persuasion, the processes of signification, and the ideological impacts of sacred texts. Through such analyses, it offers a deeper and more systematic understanding of the objectives of Sharia, the nature of religious norms, and the role of dominant discourses in the interpretation and exegesis of sacred scriptures. Nahj al-Balāghah, as a valuable source and a precious droplet of religious and metaphysical meanings and concepts, stands out due to its literary richness, content, and coherent expressions, representing a symbol of eloquence and rhetorical finesse that has consistently invited readers to reflection and contemplation throughout history. Sermon 83, known as "*Gharrā*" (meaning "Brilliant, Precious") (Makarem Shirazi, 2007 AD/1386 SH: 3, 459), is one of the most remarkable sermons of this eternal work. Its impact on the audience has been described as follows: "This sermon has brought them to tears and caused trembling in their bodies" (Hosseini Khateeb, 1985 AD/1405 AH: 2, 107). The sermon contains moral and mystical advice regarding the interaction

with the world, humanity, and life's issues. In this sermon, Amīr al-Mu'minīn emphasizes the realities that accompany human life and addresses topics such as worship, death, the afterlife, and the concept of resurrection, as well as the relationship between humans, the world, and God. This sermon is not only recognized as a historical address but also as a valuable literary and artistic masterpiece in the history of Arabic literature (Allamah Jafari, 1980 AD/1399 AH: 1776-1777).

The adoption of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is among the innovative methods that have gained significant importance in the deeper understanding of literary texts. Among these methods, Norman Fairclough's theory of CDA presents an analytical, text-centered perspective based on three fundamental aspects: "Description, interpretation, and explanation." The description level focuses on the superficial analysis of the literary text, examining its linguistic and rhetorical structures, including vocabulary, syntactic arrangements, and stylistic devices. The interpretation level looks at the context in which the text is produced, its positioning, and its relationship with other texts. Meanwhile, the explanation level is centered on analyzing why the text is shaped the way it is, the ideology behind it, and the dominant hegemony prevailing in the target society and the text itself. Fairclough's CDA theory, as a methodological tool, provides the means for a deep intellectual analysis of the Gharrā' sermon in Nahj al-Balāghah. Examining the implicit concepts within this sermon opens the possibility of uncovering the deepest layers of its social, political, and philosophical messages. Through this approach, a new perspective on the intellectual system of Imam Ali (AS) can be

constructed, allowing for a more precise exploration of the epistemological, identity-building, and ideological foundations embedded in his discourse.

The present study aims to investigate the religious, political, social, and cultural thoughts embedded in the *Gharrā'* sermon using a descriptive-analytical approach within the framework of Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis. The study seeks to address the following central question :

- How do the three levels of description, interpretation, and explanation in Fairclough's method correspond to the ideological concepts embedded in the Gharrā' sermon?

## 1. Literature Review

Given the ultimate goal of the present study, this section will focus solely on research that has utilized Norman Fairclough's discourse theory in relation to the Gharrā' sermon. Mohseni et al. (2016 AD/1395 SH), in their descriptive-analytical article, examined the depiction of the Kufans from the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) in Imam Ali's sermons. This research focuses on the linguistic interactions and psychological factors within the oppressive political conditions of the time and analyzes how these factors influenced the reactions of the Kufans. The findings show that Imam Ali (AS), as a prominent cultural and political leader, significantly impacted the behavior and attitudes of the Kufans through his sermons. Ghahramani et al. (2019 AD/1398 SH) analyzed Imam Ali's sermons during the Khawarij rebellion using Fairclough's CDA

theory. Their research revealed that Imam Ali (AS) sought to divert public opinion from supporting the Kharijites by exposing their ideological errors. This study also elaborates on the ideological conflict between Imam Ali (AS) and the Kharijites and the role of his discourse in this conflict. Khuddami Atashani (2021 AD/1400 SH) also analyzed the Qasa'a sermon of Nahj al-Balāghah in her master's thesis using Fairclough's CDA theory. The main goal of the critical discourse analysis in this sermon was to uncover the power relationships and the ideology of the ruling class within the structure of the sermon. In her study, she thoroughly analyzed all aspects of the sermon, leading to a comprehensive analysis of the text and its social structures. Fatima Dastaranj et al. (2021 AD/1400 SH) conducted a descriptive-analytical study, utilizing John Searle's Speech Act Theory, to examine the Gharrā' sermon and provide a structured reading of it. Their findings indicate that among the five speech acts, declarative, persuasive, and emotional acts are prominent. In the indirect layer, the persuasive and emotional acts play a central role in warning against worldliness and neglecting death, while encouraging piety and readiness for the afterlife. The effect of these speech acts, in line with the sermon's linguistic structure, is amplified by the use of parallel phrases, metaphors, and descriptions. Moreover, the speech acts are not presented linearly but are interwoven, where declarative acts pave the way for the persuasive and emotional acts in the climactic sections of the sermon.

48 Masboogh and Kahrizi (2022 AD/1401 SH) analyzed the persuasive impact of the *Gharrā'* sermon through Roman Jakobson's

communication model and Goldman's structural critique approach. Their findings reveal that, despite the sermon's persuasive tone, the frequency of explicitly persuasive sentences is low. However, the speaker uses structural variety to imply the overall message of the sermon, making its effect comparable to that of a thought-provoking cinematic work. The six functions of Jakobson's model were also skillfully employed in support of the sermon's persuasive goal. Seddiq Zoodranj et al. (2022 AD/1401 SH) conducted a descriptive-analytical study of Imam Ali's *Shiqshiqīyya* sermon from a critical perspective. This sermon, due to its political and historical content, analyzes the challenges of caliphate and allegiance. The findings of their study emphasize the importance of the Shiqshiqiya sermon in understanding the history and political discourse in Islamic society and interpreting and elucidating its deviations.

Considering the studies conducted on modern linguistic theories applied to the sermons of Nahj al-Balāghah, particularly Fairclough's theory, it can be stated that while numerous articles have been written about Imam Ali's sermons, aligning them with various linguistic theories, no study has independently analyzed the structure of the *Gharrā'* sermon based on Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis theory. Therefore, it can be concluded that the present study is unique in its subject matter and content, offering an unprecedented approach in analyzing the *Gharrā'* sermon across all three levels of description, interpretation, and explanation.

## 2. Theoretical Framework of the Study (Fairclough's Theory)

Norman Fairclough, a British linguist and scholar, is widely regarded

as one of the founders of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). He served as a professor at Lancaster University in England until his retirement. Fairclough's first book, *Language and Power*, published in this field, is considered one of the pioneering works in Critical Discourse Analysis. CDA is an analytical approach that originates from sociology and aims to examine and analyze texts, speech, and discourses present in society. This approach not only describes and interprets the content of texts but also seeks to identify and critique the power relations, hegemonies, and ideologies embedded within them (Dabir Moghaddam, 2007 AD/ 1386 SH: 48). Moreover, Fairclough views CDA as a social practice with profound effects on the socialization process of individuals (Mohseni, 2012 AD/ 1391 SH: 61-62).

In Critical Discourse Analysis, Fairclough concludes that language, as a communicative tool, not only conveys information and meanings but also plays a crucial role in shaping individual and collective identities, determining social relations, and influencing individuals' knowledge systems, beliefs, and convictions. In other words, language and social identities interact with each other, each influencing the other in shaping one another (Fairclough, 2000 AD/ 1379 SH: 70). Using Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis approach, the structure of any text is analyzed in three dimensions: "Description, interpretation, and explanation." At the description level, attention is given to the surface elements of the text, which includes examining its rhetorical and syntactic structure. This level provides the preliminary data required for further analysis and interpretation at the subsequent levels. At the interpretation level, the relationship between discursive

processes and the situational and intertextual context of a text is explored. Here, the elements of the text are analyzed and interpreted as symbols representing underlying thoughts, emotions, and ideas. At the explanation level, the relationship between discursive processes and social contexts is examined with a focus on dominant hegemony and ideology. The aim is to explore the connection between the content of the text and its reactions and effects on society and social processes (Fairclough, 2000 AD/1379 SH: 95-100).

### **3. Analysis of the Sermon in the Three-Dimensional Discourse Framework of Fairclough**

In this section, the effort is made to describe the lofty objectives and underlying subtleties of the sermon by reflecting on the syntactic structures and rhetorical devices used by Imam Ali (AS). Certainly, this brief overview cannot encompass all the segments of the sermon; thus, only selected key and significant excerpts are examined, which uniquely and eloquently convey the transitory nature of the earthly world and the necessity of focusing on the afterlife and the eternal abode, thus transferring these ideas into the reader's mind.

#### **3-1. Description Level**

The first stage in which the analyst examines the formal features of the text is description, which involves the rhetorical and syntactic examination of the words and sentences. In this level, we will analyze these elements in accordance with Fairclough's framework of critical discourse analysis, focusing on their linguistic and rhetorical function.

### 3-1-1. Experimental Value of Words: Consistency

The *Gharrā'* sermon, one of the masterpieces of Imam Ali (AS), demonstrates the Imam's skillful use of *mura'at* (rhetorical balance). Through this device, Imam Ali (AS) seeks to achieve various goals in terms of the moral and social guidance of his audience. In the opening passage of the sermon, the Imam praises and glorifies God with words that demonstrate consistency and harmony "*Wa Ūminu bihī Awwalan Bādīyan wa Astahdīhi Qarīban Hādīyan, wa Asta'īnuhū Qāhīran Qādiran, wa Atawakkalu 'Alayhi Kāfīyan Nāşiran.*" (*Gharrā'*: 83) In this phrasing, Imam Ali (AS) begins by emphasizing God's supreme power and majesty, then calls upon divine assistance for guidance, acknowledging human need. What is particularly noteworthy is the juxtaposition of the words "*Qarīban*" and "*Hādīyan*" with the verb "*Astahdīhi*" suggesting that divine guidance is not only accessible but must be immediate and direct for the faithful. The closeness and immediacy of God's guidance are presented as crucial for human reliance and trust. This juxtaposition of concepts presents a harmonious linguistic arrangement that underscores the urgency and closeness of divine intervention. The subsequent use of "*Qāhīran*" and "*Qādiran*" reinforces the idea of God's absolute power to aid and guide His servants, emphasizing that those who turn to God for assistance should rest assured of His infinite capabilities. Finally, the terms "*Kāfīyan*" and "*Nāşiran*" underscore complete trust in God's providence, indicating that reliance on God's help is adequate for salvation and protection from the challenges of life.

### 3-1-2. Metaphor and Simile

The *Gharrā'* sermon also features vivid metaphorical expressions, which reflect the Imam's rhetorical artistry. One notable metaphor is found in the phrase "*Labūsu al-Istikānati wa Ḍara'u al-Istislām*," (Gharrā': 83) where the Imam compares human submission and humility before God to the act of donning the "Garment of humility and submission." The metaphor conveys the idea that true humility envelops a person completely, as if the individual is physically clothed in humility, reinforcing the notion of total submission to the Divine Majesty. Another rhetorical device frequently employed is metaphor, where only one of the objects involved in a comparison is explicitly mentioned, but the implication creates a more profound understanding in the listener's mind. For instance, in the phrase "*Wa Khullū li Miḍmāri al-Jīyād wa Rawīhi al-Irtīyād*," (Gharrā': 83) (the Imam metaphorically uses "*Miḍmār*" racetrack) to represent the arena for spiritual competition (By adding "*Jīyād*" horses), he emphasizes the noble and strenuous effort required in the race of virtue, suggesting that the greatest race to win in this life is the competition in righteousness and piety (al-Baḥrānī, 1959: 2, 523).

Similarly, Imam Ali (AS) uses another metaphor to vividly describe the deceptive allure of the world and its ultimate treachery. He likens it to a wild, untamed horse that seems manageable at first but eventually leads its rider to destruction: "*Idhā Anisa Nāfiruhā wa Iṭma'anna Nākiruhā Qamaṣat bi Arjuhā wa Aqṣadat bi Ashumihā*." (Gharrā': 83)

### 3-1-3. Contrast and Antithesis

The use of muqabala (contrast or antithesis) in the *Gharrā'* sermon serves as an effective strategy to create a profound and lasting impact on the listeners' minds, drawing their attention to the contrast between worldly life and the afterlife. In rhetoric, muqabala involves juxtaposing two similar or related expressions, followed by two contrasting or opposing ones, to highlight the differences between them (Nazimiyan et al., 2017 AD/ 1396 SH: 66). In the first half of the sermon, Imam Ali (AS) masterfully employs this rhetorical device to highlight the stark contrasts between the description of the world and the afterlife, delineating the characteristics of both realms in a way that powerfully resonates with the soul of the audience (Taftazani, 1989 AD/1388 SH: 267). For example, in the phrase "*Al-ḥamdu Lillāhi Alladhī 'alā bi Ḥawlihī wa Danā Biṭawlihī*," (Gharrā': 83) the contrast between the divine qualities of "*'Alā bi Ḥawlihī wa Danā bi Ṭawlihī*" He is exalted by His power and "*Danā Biṭawlihī*" He is near by His grace vividly illustrates both the transcendence and immanence of God. The term "*'Alā*" connotes the supremacy and elevation of God's power, while "*Danā*" refers to His closeness and grace towards His creation. The juxtaposition of these ideas suggests that, though God is exalted in power and might, He remains accessible to His creatures through His mercy and grace. The imagery evokes the idea of the sun, which, though distant and high in the sky, still provides light and warmth to all beings, symbolizing God's ever-present grace despite His ultimate grandeur. Moreover, the terms "ḥawl" strength

and "Ṭūl" grace are placed in meaningful opposition in this phrase "Ḥawl." reflects God's might and authority, a force that overwhelms and dominates, while "Ṭūl" denotes divine kindness, generosity, and mercy, which counterbalance power with benevolence. This contrast emphasizes the paradoxical nature of God's character: He is simultaneously all-powerful and all-merciful, far from the realms of vengeance or wrath (Khaghani, 1977 AD/ 1376 SH: 231–232). Another powerful use of contrast appears in the seventh section of the sermon, where Imam Ali (AS) rhetorically inquires about the inevitable transformations that life brings "*Fahal Yantaziru ahlu Baḍāḍat al-Shabābi illā Ḥawānī al-Haram, wa Ahlu Ghaḍārat al-Ṣiḥḥati illā Nawāzila al-Saqam, wa Ahlu Muddati al-Baqā'i illā Āwinata al-Fanā'i.*" (Gharrā': 83) In this passage, Imam Ali contrasts youth with old age, health with sickness, and life with death, effectively emphasizing the transient nature of worldly existence. The phrases "*Baḍāḍat al-Shabābi*" the freshness of youth and "*Ḥawānī al-Haram*" the frailty of old age "*Ghaḍārat al-Ṣiḥḥati*" the vigor of health and "*Nawāzila al-Saqam*" the trials of sickness, and "*Muddati al-Baqā'i*" the duration of life and "*Āwinata al-Fanā'i*" the moment of death are juxtaposed to highlight the inevitable transitions that every human being faces in life. These contrasts underscore the ephemerality of worldly joys and the certainty of life's end.

The Imam's use of this antithetical structure is not just a linguistic device but also a profound philosophical reflection on the futility of clinging to the transient pleasures of life. By contrasting the vibrant

vigor of youth with the inevitable decay of old age, and health with sickness, Imam Ali (AS) stresses that these phases of life are not permanent, and clinging to them is futile. The ultimate conclusion drawn from these contrasts is that life is ephemeral, and focusing solely on its fleeting pleasures without considering the afterlife is a misguided approach (Rāghib Isfahānī, 1991 AD/ 1412 AH: 522; al-Baḥrānī, 1959 AD/ 1379 AH: 538).

### 3-1-4. Use of Nominal and Verbal Sentences

In analyzing the structure of a sentence, the first step is to identify its type. In the initial part of his sermon, Imam Ali (AS) begins with a nominal sentence "*Al-ḥamdu lillāhi Alladhī 'alā bi Ḥawlihi; Aḥmaduhu 'alā 'Awāṭifi Karamihī wa Ūminu bihī Awalan wa Asta'īnuhū Qāhīran wa Atawakkalu 'alayhi Kāfiyan wa Ashhadu anna Muḥammadan 'Abduhū wa Rasūluh.*" (Gharrā': 83). The nominal sentence "*al-Ḥamdu lillāhi*" Praise is for God functions to emphasize the permanence and universality of gratitude toward the Creator. The use of a nominal sentence, consisting of a subject and a predicative expression, signifies the eternal and unchanging nature of praise and acknowledgment of God. This implies that divine praise is not a transient or contingent action but a permanent and constant expression of faith, reflecting the stable and perpetual relationship between the believer and the Creator. In contrast, as the sentence progresses with verbs like "*Aḥmaduhū*" I praise Himan "*Ūminu bihī*" I believe in Him, the structure shifts to verbal sentences that reflect actions which are more contingent or transient, especially in the context of worldly

affairs. This shift from nominal to verbal sentences symbolizes the fleeting and impermanent nature of the world in contrast to the eternal and unchanging divine essence. While the praise of God remains unchanging, the acts of belief, seeking aid, and trust (verbs) are inherently dynamic and influenced by the temporal nature of human existence. In the second part of the sermon, Imam Ali (AS) states "*Ūṣīkum 'Ibādallāhi bitaqwā Allāhī Alladhī Daraba al-Amthāl wa Waqqata lakum al-Ājāl wa al-Basakum al-Rīyāsh wa Arfagh lakum al-Ma'āsh wa Aḥāta bikum al-Iḥṣā' wa Arṣada lakum al-Jazā'*," (Gharrā': 83) where he advises the believers to be mindful of God. The fluctuating nature of human faith and awareness is expressed through these verbs, which reflect actions tied to temporal occurrences, such as God's guidance, the setting of human destinies, and the granting of provisions. These verbal constructions convey a sense of movement and change, which resonates with the transient nature of the human condition (al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1973: 259).

### 3-1-5. Use of the Genitive Construction (*Hāl*)

Regarding the syntactic function of the *hāl* (circumstantial modifier) in Imam Ali's sermon, it can be observed in the usage of certain words that describe the state or condition of the subject or object. In Arabic grammar, the *hāl* typically reflects the condition of the subject or object during the action of the verb (Ibn Aqil, 2013 AD/ 1434 AH: 568). In the phrase "*ūminu bihi awalan bādī'ān wa astahdīhi qarīban hādīan, wa asta'īnuhu qāhīran qādiran, wa atawakkalu 'alayhi kāfiyan nāṣīran*" (Gharrā': 83), Imam Ali (a.s.) employs the *hāl* construction to

further emphasize the constant and unchanging nature of God's attributes. The words "*Awalan Bādīyan*" (first, manifest), "*Qarīban Hādīyan*" (near, guiding), "*Qāhīran Qādiran*" (overpowering, capable), and "*Kāfīyan Nāshīran*" (sufficient, supportive) are all hal constructions that describe the continuous and stable attributes of God's power, guidance, and support. These hal expressions reflect the steady, unwavering nature of God's intervention in the world, contrasting with the instability and transience of the material world. Through these artfully chosen circumstantial modifiers, Imam Ali (AS) highlights God's perpetual and unyielding role in the lives of believers, demonstrating His constant readiness to guide, assist, and empower His creation. The use of hal in this context emphasizes that God's attributes are not fleeting but are instead intrinsic and permanent, unaffected by the impermanence of the world around them. Furthermore, in the fourth section of the sermon, Imam Ali (AS) mentions: "*Akhrajahum min Ḍarā'ihī al-Qubūri wa Maṭārihi al-Mahālik Sirā'an ilā Amrihi Muḥṭi'īna ilā Ma'ādihi.*" (Gharā': 83) The words "*Sirā'an*" (quickly) and "*Muḥṭi'īna*" (rushing) serve as circumstantial modifiers, providing additional information about the rapid movement of the dead towards God's command and the ultimate return to Him. These modifiers illustrate the urgency and speed with which God's will is realized, emphasizing the inevitability and certainty of divine judgment. "*Amrihi*" (His command) and "*Ma'ādihi*" (His return) are symbols of the eternal and unalterable divine will, showing that despite the transient nature of worldly existence, God's decree is final and unchanging (Al-Baḥrānī, 1959: 517).

### 3-1-6. Use of Active and Passive Sentences

Another notable syntactic feature in the sermon is the use of both active and passive constructions. In the phrases "*Wa 'Ummirū Mahal al-Musta'tib wa Kushifat 'anhum Sudaf al-Rayb*" and "*Wa 'Ubbira fa'tabara wa Hudhdhira fahadhira wa Zujira fazdajara*" (Gharrā': 83) found in the fifth and sixth sections of the sermon, Imam Ali (a.s.) utilizes the passive voice to shift focus from the subject (the doer) to the action or event itself.

This use of the passive voice serves several rhetorical purposes. By emphasizing the action over the actor, Imam Ali (AS) invites his audience to reflect on the consequences of death and the afterlife without being distracted by the identity of the one performing the actions. The passive constructions help focus attention on the broader spiritual implications, urging the listener to internalize the truth of the message. The veiling of the subject implies a certain universality and inevitability of these actions, underscoring the divine workings that unfold regardless of human intervention or recognition. Through this linguistic device, the Imam intensifies the impact of the message. The obscured agent draws the listener's focus to the core issues at hand—mortality, repentance, and the inevitability of divine justice rather than to specific individuals or causes. By doing so, he encourages self-reflection among the audience, making them more receptive to the teachings of the afterlife and urging them to recognize the fragility of human existence and the urgency of repentance (Makarim Shirazi, 2007 AD/ 1386 SH: 378). Moreover, the passive voice in these

passages serves to magnify the significance of the actions described. The words "kushifat" and "ubbira", for instance, present the uncovering of doubts and the presentation of lessons as occurrences that are beyond human control, as if to say these are inevitable and divinely ordained events, reinforcing the theme of predestination and the certainty of divine justice. This linguistic strategy effectively strengthens the message about the afterlife, reminding the audience that the ultimate truths of existence are governed by a higher, unchangeable power.

### **3-2. Interpretative Level**

The interpretative level of analysis focuses on the context and conditions under which the text is created and delivered. It aims to understand the purpose behind the speech and the specific temporal and spatial conditions in which it was presented. According to Fredric Jameson, interpretations arise from a combination of what is present in the text and what exists in the mind of the interpreter (Fairclough, 2000 AD/ 1379 SH: 100-110). This framework highlights the interrelationship between the content of the text and the background knowledge of the audience or the interpreter.

#### **3-2-1. Contextual Background or Occasion of the Sermon (*Sha'n Nuzū*)**

The concept of contextual background or occasion of the sermon refers to the environment and circumstances in which a particular phrase or discourse is articulated. In linguistics and literary studies, this is often expressed with terms such as "Context," "Discourse

situation," or "Circumstantial context" (Futohi Rud Majani, 2013 AD/ 1391 SH: 57). Jameson emphasizes the importance of the elements in the situation, such as the nature of the event, the parties involved, their relationships, and the role of language itself. In the case of this sermon, Imam Ali (AS) addresses issues that are directly related to the socio-political and cultural conditions of Kufa and Iraq during his caliphate. He speaks of the existence and diverse potentials of humans, who were living in a time influenced by various cultural, social, and political currents.

The Imam touches on theological matters related to the origin and destiny of humanity, and people's inclination toward God, which held particular significance within the intellectual and religious milieu of Kufa and Iraq during that period (‘Allāmah Ja‘farī, 2021 AD/ 1399 SH: 1776). Imam Ali (AS) earnestly addresses the need to prepare hearts and awaken the people to these realities. The main content of the sermon, given its contextual background, focuses on four primary themes: the nature of human existence and its journey, the condemnation of attachment to the world, advice on piety and the characteristics of the God-fearing, and descriptions of events after death (Amin Najee and Amini Armaki, 2024 AD/ 1402 SH: 81-82). The context of the sermon, or its background, reveals that the speech had such a profound impact on the listeners that it is said: "Their bodies involuntarily trembled, tears streamed from their eyes, and all were transformed and moved. One of the listeners named this sermon 'Ghara'." (Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, 1959 AD: 6, 278) This reaction **61**

underlines the powerful effect of the Imam's words in the specific historical and cultural context of the time, where his message resonated deeply with the spiritual and intellectual atmosphere of Kufa. Apart from the time of delivery, which falls between 36 and 40 AH, and the location, which was in Kufa, the content and the context of this sermon are particularly noteworthy.

This period was marked by foundational events that began with the blessed arrival of Imam Ali in Kufa and led to a series of significant political and military developments. The social, political, and ideological deviations of the people led to the imposition of three famous battles namely, the Battles of Jamal, Siffin, and Nahrawan against the Imam. In these battles, Imam Ali rose in defense of the truth against its adversaries, ultimately leading to his painful martyrdom. These events left a profound and decisive impact on the identity of Islamic history and the political movements of that era. In this sermon, the context whether the cause of revelation, the situational framework, or the temporal and spatial elements plays a crucial role. Imam Ali, in light of the historical and social circumstances following the assassination of the third caliph, emphasized the need to avoid corruption and strive for the realization of justice and piety. Furthermore, the sermon illustrates Imam Ali's influence on society and his capacity for leadership and guidance (Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, 1959: 6, 278). Some scholars also believe that this sermon, owing to its extraordinary eloquence, profound content, and seamless expressions, is referred to as "*al-Gharrā*" (al-Baḥrānī, 1959:

62 2, 366). According to reliable narrations, the cause and context of the

sermon are as follows: Abu Nu'aym al-Isfahani recounts a portion of a sermon delivered by Imam Ali during the funeral of a Muslim man, whose family had begun wailing at his burial. He states that in this situation, Imam Ali stood up and delivered a remarkable sermon to awaken the hearts of the attendees, addressing the fate of mankind and his return to his ultimate destination. The text of Abu Nu'aym reads: "*Falammā Wuḍi'at fī Laḥdihā 'Ajja Ahluhā wa Bakaw, fa Qāla: mā Tabkūn? Amā wa-Allāhi law 'Āyanū mā 'āyana Mayyituhum la Adhalathum mu'āyanatuhum 'an Mayyitihim, wa inna lahu Fīhim la-'audatan thumma 'Audatan, ḥattā lā Yabqī minhum Aḥadun thumma Qāma fa Qāla...*" (Gharrā': 83) In this sermon, Imam Ali aimed to provoke reflection and contemplation among the attendees regarding the situation at the funeral (Abū Nu'aym al-Iṣfahānī, 1996 AD: 1, 77-78).

In the book "*Taysīr al-Maṭālib*" Sayyid Abū Ṭālib also mentions a chain of narration and recounts that the Commander of the Faithful delivered the Gharrā' sermon in the Kufa mosque. However, he subsequently provides excerpts from Sermon 185 of Nahj al-Balāghah. It seems that the sermon referred to by Sayyid is the same as Sermon 185, and it is likely that the location of the speech mentioned later is referring to this very sermon. However, in a subsequent narration, he directly cites the *Gharrā'* sermon. Presenting a new chain of narration, the end of which is "from Ja'far ibn Muhammad, from his father, from his grandfather, peace be upon them," which is similar to Abū Nu'aym's narration, he reports the Gharrā' sermon. In this narration, the cause for the delivery of the sermon is identified as the funeral procession, and the text of the

sermon provided bears a strong resemblance to Abu Nu'aym's version (Sayyid Abū Ṭālib, 2002 AD/ 1422 AH: 273). Considering the above points, Imam Ali's sermon not only highlights the significance of human knowledge and orientation towards God, but it also articulates the fundamental principles and laws governing both individual and social life, as well as the way leadership and management of life should be approached, based on the individual's personal and social circumstances in such a context ('Allāmah Ja'farī, 2021 AD/ 1399 SH: 1776). The delivery of the Gharrā' sermon in such a moment, where the hearts are softened by the funeral procession and the remembrance of death, can be likened to rain falling on dry and thirsty soil, bringing with it rejuvenation and clarity.

### **3-2-2. Intertextuality in the Sermon**

In discourse analysis, the phenomenon of intertextuality is recognized as a fundamental concept in the creation of new texts and meanings that arise from it, drawing on their historical, cultural, and social contexts. Critical discourse analysis cannot reach conclusive results without considering intertextuality and the mutual influences of texts on one another. This is because participants in any discourse act based on the backgrounds that link previous discourses to the current one (Fairclough, 2000 AD/1379 SH: 220). Whether consciously or implicitly, or even intentionally and explicitly, intertextuality utilizes paratextual elements to create new meanings and strengthen the arguments of the new text. In doing so, it enhances its depth,

**64** dynamism, and complexity, especially in multifaceted contexts such

as literary critique, narrative analysis, and cultural or epistemological interpretation. In other words, the structure of discourse and interdiscourse reflects aspects of social order, as the central ideology of this sermon is an exposition of the Qur'an. The phrase "*Al-ḥamdu lillāhi alladhī 'alā bi Ḥawlihī wa Danā bi Ṭawlihi*" Praise be to Allah, who ascended by His power and drew near by His grace from Imam Ali's sermon has a clear intertextual connection with the verse "*Thumma danā fa Tadallā.*" (Qur'an, 53:8) Similarly, in "*Māniḥi kuli Ghanīmah wa Faḍlin wa Kāshifī kuli 'Aẓīmah wa Azlin*" The Bestower of every blessing and bounty, and the Revealer of every great adversity and trial), there is a direct intertextual reference to the verse "*Wa in Yamsaska Allāhu bi Ḍurrin falā Kāshifa lahu illā Huwa wa in Yamsaska bi Khayrin fahuwa 'alā Kulli Shay'in Qadīr.*" (al-An'ām/17) In both cases, Imam Ali's statement about blessings and tribulations emphasizes that both are from God and serve as a test and preparation for the Day of Judgment, a principle confirmed by the Qur'an. This concept encourages individuals to reflect more on the blessings they receive and to bear the trials they face with patience, understanding that everything from God ultimately leads to human growth and development. According to the interpretation of Ayatollah Makarem Shirazi, blessings come in various forms, which may be vast or limited, and can be personal or general in nature. In the second part of his sermon, Imam Ali uses Qur'anic verses to explain these dimensions more clearly.

For instance, he draws upon the verse "*Allāhu Yabsuṭu al-Rizqa liman Yashā'u wa Yaqdir*" (al-Ra'd/26) to explain that God has the

power to expand or limit sustenance according to His will. In this interpretation, Imam Ali refers to this concept in the phrase "*Wa al-Rafadi al-Rwāfīghī wa Andharakum bil Ḥujajil Bawāligh*," (Gharrā', 83) stating that God provides abundant blessings to whoever He wills. Additionally, the second section of the sermon, where Imam Ali says "*Wa Albasakum al-Rīyāsha wa Arfagha lakum al-Ma'āsha*" draws an intertextual connection with the verse "Yā banī Ādam qad Anzalnā 'alaykum Libāsan Yuwārī Saw'ātikum wa Rīshan wa Libāsu al-Taqwā Dhālika Khayrun Dhālika min Āyāti llāhi la'allahum Yadhakkarūn." (al-A'rāf/26)

Here, Imam Ali first alludes to the concept of clothing as one of the blessings that protect humans from various external factors. Then he raises the point that in the Qur'an, piety is also referred to as a form of clothing, emphasizing that it is an essential element of the journey to the Hereafter. Thus, the call to piety resonates with the concept of clothing, revealing a clear intertextual connection. Moreover, Imam Ali, through a deep and hidden intertextual approach, reinterprets the content of some Qur'anic verses. He stresses that both blessings and tribulations stem from the will of the absolute will of God, which aligns with the Qur'anic perspective emphasized throughout the sermon (Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawzī, 1989 AD/ 1410 AH: 1, 204-207). In the phrase "*Antum Mukhtabirūn fihā wa Muḥāsabūn 'alayhā*," (Gharrā': 83) there is a clear intertextual connection with the verse "*Aḥasiba al-Nāsu an Yutrakū an Yaqūlū Āmannā wahum lā Yuftanūn.*"

66 (al-'Ankabūt/2) There exists a direct and profound intertextual link

between Imam Ali's words and this Qur'anic verse. In this part of the sermon, Imam Ali explicitly refers to the concept of testing and accounting for human deeds, repeatedly emphasizing that people are tested in this world and will be held accountable for their actions, first in the grave and ultimately on the Day of Judgment. This concept is also reiterated in the Qur'an, which states that humans are examined based on their deeds, and their good and bad actions in this world will serve as the basis for judgment in the Hereafter (al-Ālūsī al-Baghdādī, 1994 AD/ 1415 AH: 20, 133).

The phrase "Ḥadhdharakum 'Aduwwan Nafadha fī al-Ṣudūri Khafīyyan wa Nafatha fī al-Ādhāni Najīyyan Fa'adalla wa Ardā wa Wa'ada famannā wa Zayyana Sayyi'āti al-Jarā'imi wa Hawwana Mūbiqāti al-'Azā'imi" (Gharrā': 83) reproduces the content of verses related to the hidden whisperings of Satan, such as the verse "Qul A'ūdhu bi Rabbī al-Nāsi min Sharri al-Waswāsi al-Khannāsi Alladhī Yuwaswisu fī Ṣudūri al-Nāsi." (al-Nās/1-4-5) This intertextuality manifests implicitly, drawing inspiration from Qur'anic verses that either echo the concept or align with the words themselves, both in content and form. In the seventh part of the sermon, Imam Ali uses the phrase "Fahal Dafa'at al-Aqāribu aw Nafa'at an-Nawāhibu" (Gharrā': 83) in reference to the Qur'anic verse "Lan Tanfa'ukum Arḥāmukum wa lā Awlādukum Yawma al-Qiyāmati Yafṣilu Baynakum wallāhu bimā Ta'malūn basīr." (al-Mumtaḥinah/3) This represents an intertextual connection that reinforces the importance of spirituality and divine values over material wealth and worldly ties. The Qur'an explicitly states that on the Day of Judgment, none of the material

things such as children, relatives, or wealth can save or redeem a person from the consequences of their actions (al-Tha'labī, 2001 AD/ 1422 AH: 9, 290). In the twelfth part of the sermon, Imam Ali, with the phrase "Wa Qaddara lakum A'māran Satarahā 'ankum wa Ḥallafa lakum 'ibrān min Āthāri al-Māḍīn Qablakum min Mustamti'i Khalāqihim wa Mustafsaḥi Khanāqihim," (Gharrā': 83) links this to the verse "Afalam Yasīrū fil Arḍi Fatakūna lahum Qulūbun Ya'qilūna bihā wa Ādhānun Yasma'ūna bihā fa innahā lā Ta'mā al-Abṣāru walākin Ta'mā al-Qulūbu Allatī fī al-Ṣudūr." (al-Ḥajj/46) In this connection, the Qur'an describes that God has given humans eyes and ears to see and hear, so they may understand the truth of life and its purpose. However, the sermon conveys this concept through a question and implicit phrasing, stating that those who deny or are misled may have physical eyes but are blind in their hearts, unable to perceive the truth with their physical sight. This emphasizes the Qur'anic message that, despite possessing faculties like sight and hearing, people often fail to truly understand or heed the signs of Allah (al-Ṭabrisī, 1988 AD/ 1408 AH: 7, 718).

### **3-3. The Level of Explanation**

At the level of explanation, Fairclough addresses the "Why" behind the creation of the text, the underlying ideology, and the dominant hegemony that shapes it. In the context of Imam Ali's discourse, his position as part of the broader social struggle within power relations becomes apparent.

#### **3-3-1. Ideology**

**68** Ideology is a conceptual framework of beliefs and attitudes either

conscious or unconscious that shapes political and social perceptions, influencing judgments and decision-making (Michael Payne, 2015 AD/ 1394 SH: 362). When delivering the sermon *al-Gharrā'*, Imam Ali, as the caliph of the Muslims, occupies a unique position that distinctly differentiates his discourse and approach to social and ideological issues from that of others. During the tumultuous period between 36 and 40 AH, Imam Ali recognized that competing discourses could negatively impact the trajectory of human social and cultural struggles, hindering the achievement of their ultimate goal. Therefore, he emphasizes the importance of human awareness and accountability in the face of ideological and social challenges. His warnings against straying from religious and ethical principles reflect his effort to prevent ideological deviations. Imam Ali, through his discourse, aimed to guide the people of Kufa whom he encountered during a funeral procession toward progress and moral advancement, guarding them against ideological distractions.

The sermon *al-Gharrā'* is not merely a set of ethical and religious recommendations; it also functions as a vital social discourse. Imam Ali uses it to offer foundational Islamic and ethical principles, aiming to establish a robust social structure. He employs his position as the ruler of the Muslim community to invoke true faith and encourage repentance, calling people to self-awareness and guidance. This speech reflects Imam Ali's concern about the fragility of people's faith during this turbulent time, possibly fearing the loss of power within the righteous, divine system of governance. The historical outcome confirms this concern, as after Imam Ali's martyrdom, people pledged

allegiance to Muawiya, and after Imam Hasan's death, Imam Hussein was martyred at Karbala. Imam Ali, in the phrase "Ibādun Makhlūqūn Iqtidāran wa Marbūbūn Iqtisāran," (Gharrā': 83) directly asserts that humans, as creations, are brought into existence by a higher power who has entrusted them with certain resources and abilities. These are given for specific duties in this world, serving as tools for the ultimate goal of achieving proximity to Allah and the Hereafter (Itrat, Doost, et al., 2021 AD/1400 SH: 46). Moreover, the statement "*Fa annā Tu'fakūna? Am Ayna Tuṣrafūna? Am Bimādhā Taghtarrūna? Wa innamā Ḥazzu Aḥadikum mina al-Arḍi Dhāti al-Ṭawli wa al-'Arḍ, Qīdu Qaddihi [mun'afiran] Muta'affiran 'alā Khaddihī Alāna, 'Ibāda Allāh, wa al-Khināqu Muhmalun wa al-Rūḥu Mursalun fī Faynati al-Irshād*" (Gharrā': 83) emphasizes the ideology of God's dominion over the earth, reminding humans that they have forgotten this divine sovereignty. Imam Ali asserts that the world's transitory nature and the fleeting role of human existence should not divert attention from the ultimate purpose of life. In the phrase "*Wa Ḥadharakum 'Aduwwan Nafadha fī al-Ṣudūri Khaṭīyyan wa Nafatha fī al-Ādhāni Najīyyan*," (Gharrā': 83) Imam Ali warns of the insidious whispers of Satan, the most dangerous threat to human progress. This alludes to the subtle, deceptive forces leading individuals astray, engaging them in futile and unproductive pursuits.

Imam Ali's emphasis on the unseen, internal struggles that thwart spiritual development illustrates the necessity for vigilance and inner strength in the face of external and internal dangers. The ideology

70 underpinning the discourse in the tenth part of the sermon, expressed

in the phrase "*Ūṣīkum bi Taqwā Allāhi Alladhī A'dhara bimā Andhara, wa Ihtajja bimā Nahaja, wa Ḥadhdharakum 'Aduwwan Nafadha fī al-Ṣudūri Khaḥfiyyan, wa Nafatha fī al-Ādhāni Najīyyan,*" (Gharrā': 83) is centered around two core principles: the dangers of satanic temptations and the values of divine and human morality. In the first aspect, Imam Ali aims to make individuals aware of the divine blessings and the opportunities for spiritual growth that life offers. On the other hand, the concept of repentance and the return to Allah is introduced as the path toward freeing oneself from the entanglement of Satanic whispers.

### 3-3-2. Hegemony

Hegemony is an approach in which the speaker, using minimal resources namely the power of speech and writing seeks to persuade, guide, and shape the public's thoughts. This approach aims to influence the beliefs and perceptions of the audience through methods such as propaganda, speeches, or sermons, directing them toward a desired outcome. Thus, hegemony is understood as a strategic approach to societal influence, widely studied in communication theories and social sciences (Shaykh al-Yasū'ī, 1929: 7). In the sermon *al-Gharrā'*, the critical approach of the sermon can be understood as addressing the underlying reasons behind its creation, as well as the ideology driving it. Imam Ali's message elaborates on human negligence toward divine commandments, their submission to base desires, and the seductive whispers of Satan, all of which are explicitly discussed throughout the sermon. Through the lens of

Norman Fairclough's theory of hegemony, sermon *al-Gharrā'* can be seen as the practical manifestation of Imam Ali's cultural and spiritual dominance. Imam Ali employs two distinct steps in guiding humanity from the material world to divine truth. The first step emphasizes self-awareness and reliance on God, which shapes an epistemic identity. After Imam Ali's selection as the caliph, and his arrival in Kufa, his representatives *'Ammār ibn Yāsir* and *Mālik al-Ashtar* out conditions for the people, marking their submission to Imam Ali's leadership. In the second step, Imam Ali introduces the concepts of piety, spiritual values, and unwavering obedience to the rightful Imam of the time, establishing a specific intellectual and cultural system aimed at realizing an ideal society.

This system is a reflection of Imam Ali's spiritual hegemony, which influences both the individual and collective aspects of the people's lives. The sermon *al-Gharrā'*, considered one of the most important sermons in Nahj al-Balāghah, becomes a tool for establishing Imam Ali's spiritual authority and cultural leadership in the Islamic society, particularly following the events surrounding the uprising against the third caliph and his subsequent assassination. In this sermon, Imam Ali does not merely address ethical and religious matters but also seeks to introduce a cohesive intellectual system rooted in piety and the oneness of God. His aim is to direct and solidify the intellectual and cultural structures of the community, countering the prevailing Arab tribalism that had seeped into religious and worldly affairs during the caliphate of Uthman. From Fairclough's

**72** hegemonic perspective, the sermon *al-Gharrā'* can be seen as a form

of ideological and leadership dominance, designed to cement a superior, legitimate discourse among the public and within competing ideological frameworks. In the opening section of the sermon, Imam Ali praises God with lofty, divine expressions, emphasizing the magnificence of creation and the greatness of the Creator "*Al-ḥamdu lillāhi Alladhī 'alā bi-ḥawlihi wa Danā bi Ṭawlihi.*" (Gharrā': 83) This passage represents Imam Ali's epistemic hegemony, aimed at consolidating divine beliefs. By emphasizing deep concepts of Tawhid (oneness of God) and reconstructing the theological and prophetic foundations of thought, Imam Ali seeks to establish *ubudiya* (servitude) as the dominant discourse in the community. Through this, he asserts not just a theological and philosophical framework but a social structure grounded in divine guidance, one that challenges the existing systems of power and ideology. From the perspective of hegemony, this approach represents an effort to establish a form of intellectual and spiritual leadership that strengthens the power of Imam Ali as a legitimate leader and cultural reference.

In the middle passages of the sermon, Imam Ali portrays the transient nature of the world and the deceptive allure of its appearances, urging his audience toward *taqwa* (piety) and self-restraint "*Ibādun Makhlūqūna Iqtidāran, wa Marbūbūna Iqtisāran, wa Maqbūdūna Iḥtidāran Fattaqū Allāha Taqīyyata man Sami'a Fakhasha'a, wa Iqtarafa fa'tarafa, wa Wajila Fa'amila Fattaqū Allāha, 'Ibāda Allāh, Taqīyyata dhī Lubbin Shaghala al-Tafakkuru Qalbahu.*" (Gharrā': 83) This passage serves as an ideological guidance, as Imam Ali, by emphasizing the necessity of preparation for the afterlife and the cultivation of *taqwa* (piety), ingrains a specific

moral and ethical system within the people. Taqwa becomes the cornerstone of this value system, solidifying Imam Ali's spiritual hegemony and guiding his audience toward its acceptance and adherence. In the final part of the sermon, Imam Ali emphasizes the importance of drawing lessons from the past and highlights the subtle temptations of Satan, offering practical ways to confront them through the examples of piety and self-restraint "*Ibāda Allāh, ayna Alladhīna 'Ummirū Fana'imū, wa 'Ullimū Fafahimū, wa Unzirū Falahaw? Ūṣīkum bi Taqwā Allāhi Alladhī A'dhara bimā Andhara, wa Ihtajja bimā Nahaja, wa Hadhdharakum 'Aduwwan Nafadha fī al-Ṣudūri Khafīyyan, wa Nafatha fī al-Ādhāni Najīyyan.*" (Gharrā': 83) In this section, Imam Ali presents practical examples of piety, further reinforcing his spiritual leadership. According to Fairclough's hegemonic analysis, this passage exemplifies cultural control, through which Imam Ali establishes divine and Islamic values as hegemonic criteria within society. By introducing the pious as prominent role models, Imam Ali ensures the transmission and institutionalization of his desired cultural and ethical values within the community. These models serve as the mechanism for embedding these values and securing the moral order under Imam Ali's leadership. Through this process, Imam Ali not only addresses the immediate concerns of his audience but also embeds a deeper, long-lasting spiritual and ethical framework within the fabric of the community. Thus, the sermon, in its totality, becomes a powerful tool of hegemonic cultural leadership, emphasizing adherence to divine principles, reinforcing moral responsibility, and guiding individuals and the collective toward the

74 higher goal of spiritual fulfillment.

## Conclusion

From the preceding discussion, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- In this sermon, Imam Ali (AS) has masterfully and delicately employed words, enriched with novel rhetorical devices and robust syntactic rules, creating a profound interplay of meaning and intellectual engagement. This meticulous integration of figures of speech and grammatical rules, like the warp and weft of an artistic tapestry, conveys deep religious, epistemological, and cultural meanings to the audience. The strength and prominence of the persuasive and communicative aspects of the words, achieved through linguistic precision and remarkable attention to detail, create an atmosphere filled with spirituality, culture, and social persuasion, enhancing both the richness of meaning and the clarity of the message. This process strengthens the impact of the sermon in interpreting and explaining religious and social objectives, as well as its rhetorical influence on the Arab society of that era, guiding the audience toward deep reflection and a transformative spiritual, intellectual, and existential insight.
- From an interpretive perspective, particularly in terms of intertextuality, the sermon relies on the divine verses as an authentic, credible, and familiar text to its audience, creating a cohesive structure within its own interpretive and semantic framework. Thus, a strong and multilayered connection has been established between the divine meanings and the Islamic culture of the time, which was at risk of being forgotten. This bond is capable of elevating the audience's mind to transcendental semantic

horizons. Contextually, the sermon, with its reference to the social and cultural demands of the moment, was delivered in the wake of the funeral procession in Kufa, transforming it into a multifaceted system. This system resonates deeply with the audience's intellectual and spiritual framework, leaving a lasting and profound effect on the listener, reminding them of the lessons from the past and preparing them for death and the afterlife through the cultivation of piety, emulation of the righteous, understanding the nature of human creation, and resisting the temptations of Satan.

- From an ideological standpoint, this sermon is a manifestation of the hegemony of the religious discourse, which emphasizes the redefinition of the ontology of man within a higher, transcendental perspective. The dominant ideology, through the imposition of spiritual hegemony, seeks to challenge the worldly worldview and deviations that occurred during the era of the three Rashidun caliphs, calling for submission to the eternal truth. On the one hand, it exposes the deceptive allure of the illusory worldly beauties and, on the other, stresses the necessity of turning toward the origin and the afterlife, urging wakefulness and preparation for the journey to the hereafter. This ideological framework steers the audience's thoughts toward the dominant monotheistic discourse. In this context, Imam Ali's admonitory tone in urging reflection on the past and avoiding the whispers of Satan serves as a crucial tool for cementing the spiritual and moral hegemony of the religious discourse.

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