



An Analysis and Evaluation of Sayyid *Murtaḍā*'s Literary Approach to Fiqh *al-Ḥadīth*, with Particular Reference to the Traditions in *al-Amālī*

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Abstract

Al-Amālī by Sayyid *Murtaḍā* stands as a foundational exegetical and hadith text from the fifth century AH. In this work, the author consistently employs rational and literary methodologies to explain

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and interpret both Qur'anic verses and prophetic traditions. Sayyid *Murtaḍā* is recognized for his significant contributions to *Fiqh al-Ḥadīth*, utilizing diverse analytical tools to interpret and clarify hadith traditions. Within *al-Amālī*, alongside Qur'anic verses, Sayyid *Murtaḍā* references numerous hadiths that have been the focus of scholarly debate and lack a universally accepted interpretation. He systematically identifies contradictions and ambiguities in these reports, aiming to clarify obscure expressions and restore their intended meanings. His broad scholarly expertise allows for the application of multiple interpretive methods, rather than adherence to a single framework. These methodological approaches are evident throughout *al-Amālī* and are amenable to systematic scholarly analysis. Employing a descriptive-analytical methodology and drawing on examples from *al-Amālī*, the present study examines Sayyid *Murtaḍā*'s literary approach and assesses its significance in relation to his other interpretive methods. The findings indicate that, when addressing problematic traditions, Sayyid *Murtaḍā* extensively utilizes literary tools such as Arabic grammar and rhetoric, customary Arab usage, poetic citations, lexicographical opinions, explanations of unfamiliar hadith vocabulary, and proverbs and figurative expressions. This literary methodology not only resolves ambiguities within many traditions but also yields interpretations that align with the rational principles of Twelver Shi'i theology.

Keywords: *al-Amālī*, Sayyid *Murtaḍā*, *Fiqh al-Ḥadīth*, Literary

Introduction

The importance of correctly understanding and critically evaluating hadith is so great that one of the Imams (AS) advised his companions: "Consider carefully from whom you acquire your knowledge..." (Kulaynī, 1996 AD/1375 SH: 1, 32; Majlisī, 1982 AD/1403 AH: 2, 92)

Accordingly, it may be said that if a hadith is not properly understood and its intended meaning is not discovered, it is as though it had never been read or benefited from at all (Masoudi, 2006 AD/1385 SH: 10).

Elsewhere, an impeccable Imam state: "One hadith that you truly understand is better than a thousand hadiths that you merely transmit. None of you will attain genuine jurisprudential understanding until he recognizes the indirect expressions in our speech. A single statement may bear as many as seventy meanings, and each of those meanings has a valid explanation from us." (cf. Ma'aref, n.d.: 64) Proper understanding of hadith and discovering the intended meaning of the impeccable Imam constitute one of the most fundamental issues in hadith studies, for an incorrect understanding of the verbal and semantic implications of traditions may lead to doctrinal and theological error. This necessity becomes even more evident when dealing with difficult traditions, reports containing rare vocabulary, or apparently contradictory narrations, since such texts cannot be correctly understood or applied without careful analysis.

Among the most important works devoted to this type of tradition is *al-Amālī* by Sayyid *Murtaḍā*, compiled during the fifth century AH.

Alongside his interpretation of problematic Qur'anic verses, the work provides detailed analyses and interpretations of numerous complex and disputed hadiths. Owing to the diversity of its sessions, the breadth of its subject matter, and the precision of its interpretive methodology, *al-Amālī* occupies a distinguished position in both hadith studies and *Fiqh al-Ḥadīth*.

As one of the foremost scholars of his age, Sayyid *Murtaḍā* presented original and influential ideas across numerous disciplines, including jurisprudence, legal theory, theology, Qur'anic exegesis, and hadith.

Despite the scholarly importance and lasting influence of his works, however, his literary approach to *Fiqh al-Ḥadīth* has rarely been examined independently and systematically. Most existing studies have concentrated on the theological or legal-theoretical dimensions of his thought (cf. Kalantari, et al., 2024 AD/1403 SH; ibid., 2025 AD/1404 SH), while the literary tools that he employs, such as rhetorical devices, syntactic and semantic analysis, the use of poetry and proverbial expressions, and attention to Arab custom and colloquial usage in the process of understanding and interpreting hadith, have not received focused scholarly investigation (cf. Hasoumi, 2011 AD/1391 SH).

A careful reading of *al-Amālī*, however, reveals that Sayyid *Murtaḍā* makes extensive use of the literary capacities of the Arabic language when interpreting difficult traditions. Approximately one-third of the disputed hadiths discussed in *al-Amālī* are analyzed primarily through literary methods, which he employs to resolve

The absence of focused research on this topic underscores the necessity of the present study. By identifying and analyzing the defining features of Sayyid *Murtaḍā*'s literary approach to *Fiqh al-Ḥadīth* in *al-Amālī*, this research addresses a significant gap in the literature and clarifies his position within the broader Islamic tradition of hadith interpretation.

The importance of this issue is further highlighted by the fact that many traditions in *al-Amālī* exhibit both linguistic and conceptual ambiguity. Neglecting the literary dimension in their interpretation increases the risk of superficial or inaccurate understandings is the complete and faithful English translation of the provided text.

1. Criteria for Selecting the Narrations from *al-Amālī*

In this study, among the narrations contained in *al-Amālī* of Sayyid *Murtaḍā*, those examples were selected in which Sayyid *Murtaḍā* clearly employed literary and linguistic elements, such as grammatical rules, rhetorical devices, figurative language, metaphor, conventional Arab usage, and Arabic poetry, in explaining and interpreting the narrations.

Conversely, narrations in which Sayyid *Murtaḍā* relied exclusively upon purely rational or theological arguments, without recourse to literary elements, have not been included among the samples examined in this article, despite their theological significance.

2. Research Method and Data Analysis

With This study adopts a descriptive-analytical approach and relies on

library-based research for data collection. The research procedure was carried out as follows:

- First, narrations possessing literary potential were identified and extracted according to the aforementioned criteria;
- Next, Sayyid *Murtaḍā*'s interpretive discussions concerning each narration were analyzed by focusing on their linguistic and literary components, including grammatical and rhetorical principles, figurative language, metaphor, simile, conventional Arab usage, poetic citations, and references to lexical sources.
- Subsequently, the various forms of Sayyid *Murtaḍā*'s literary approach, including grammatical, rhetorical, lexical, poetic, and customary-linguistic approaches, were classified and described.
- Thereafter, each relevant narration from *al-Amālī* was presented and examined, followed by Sayyid *Murtaḍā*'s explanation and interpretation.
- The author's own description and analysis of Sayyid *Murtaḍā*'s literary approach to the interpretation of each narration was then provided in order to clarify both the surface and deeper dimensions of his literary methodology.
- Finally, at the end of each section, a table illustrating the application of that particular literary approach was presented to provide readers with a comprehensive and coherent overview of the research findings.

Accordingly, the central research question is to identify the components of Sayyid *Murtaḍā*'s literary approach to *Fiqh al-Ḥadīth* in *al-Amālī* and to examine how these elements are utilized in the analysis and interpretation of complex narrations. Addressing this question clarifies

an underexplored aspect of Sayyid *Murtaḍā*'s methodology and establishes a methodological basis for the systematic application of literary analysis in *Fiqh al-Ḥadīth* studies and critical hadith scholarship.

3. Literature Review

Numerous books, articles, and academic theses have been devoted to Sayyid *Murtaḍā*, examining his biography, contributions to *Fiqh al-Ḥadīth*, Qur'anic exegesis, the history of hadith, his scholarly works, and his academic standing. However, only a limited number of studies have specifically addressed his book *al-Amālī* and its contribution to *Fiqh al-Ḥadīth*. The most significant of these include:

- Abbasi, Mehrdad, "The Personality of Sayyid *Murtaḍā*, the Book *al-Amālī*, and Its Narrations," *Hadith Sciences*, 2002 AD/1380 SH, no. 22. In this article, the author introduces Sayyid *Murtaḍā*, presents an overview of *al-Amālī*, and discusses the interpretive narrations contained therein.
- Hasoumi, Valy Allah, "A Typology of the Interpretation and Explanation of Narrations in Sayyid *Murtaḍā*'s *al-Amālī*," *Critique and Idea*, vol. 17, 2013 AD/1391 SH, no. 4. This study classifies Sayyid *Murtaḍā*'s interpretive methods, including interpreting narrations according to their literal, figurative, and symbolic meanings, as well as considering the context of speech and the circumstances surrounding the narration's issuance.
- Khodayari, Ali Naqi, "Sources and Tools of *Fiqh al-Ḥadīth* in Sayyid *Murtaḍā*'s *al-Amālī*," *Hadith Sciences*, 2005 AD/1383 SH, pp. 54-68. As stated in the abstract, the author briefly examines

several of Sayyid *Murtaḍā*'s methodological tools in *Fiqh al-Ḥadīth*, including the citation of Qur'anic verses, the citation of other narrations, and the consideration of the circumstances under which hadiths were transmitted. Nevertheless, Sayyid *Murtaḍā*'s distinctly literary approach in *al-Amālī* remains evident yet insufficiently examined. This study aims, through focused analysis, to more precisely and comprehensively demonstrate his contribution to the development of hadith interpretive methodology.

The novelty of this research is its comprehensive and systematic examination of Sayyid *Murtaḍā*'s literary approach to *Fiqh al-Ḥadīth*, with particular focus on the narrations found in *al-Amālī*. The present study extracts, classifies, describes, and analyzes in detail his literary and linguistic tools, including: "Arabic grammatical principles, rhetoric, conventional Arab linguistic usage, poetic evidence, the opinions of lexicographers, unfamiliar hadith vocabulary, proverbs, and figurative expressions and metaphors."

Consequently, this study offers a clear and comprehensive account of Sayyid *Murtaḍā*'s literary methodology in interpreting and explaining narrations, providing a unified and systematic perspective not previously available in the literature.

4. Definition of Key Concepts

4-1. Amālī

The term "*Amālī*" is the plural of "*Imlā*" (dictation) (Ṭīhrānī, 1987 AD/1408 AH: 161). It also appears in the form "*Amilīyyah*," and

denotes a particular category of scholarly works and literary compositions (Safarzadeh, 2014 AD/1393 SH: 508).

With the flourishing of scholarly literary gatherings from the late third century AH onward, a new academic practice emerged among Muslim scholars, known as the *Amālī* genre. The term *Amālī*, originally the plural of "*Imlā'*," corresponds in modern usage to the concept of dictation (Ibn Bābawayh, 1956 AD/1376 AH: 9). Within the Islamic scholarly tradition, it refers to works whose contents were dictated orally by a teacher and transcribed by students.

4-2. Fiqh al-Ḥadīth

The word "*Fiqh*" is derived from a single linguistic root and originally means "To understand something and gain knowledge of it." Thus, in the expression "*Afqahtuka al-Shay'*," the intended meaning is: "I explained and clarified that matter for you." (Ibn Fāris, 1989 AD/1410 AH: 4, 442)

Likewise, *Rāghib* defines *Fiqh* as "Attaining hidden knowledge through manifest knowledge," and therefore regards it as a concept that is more specific and restricted than mere knowledge (Rāghib Iṣfahānī, 1991 AD/1412 AH: 1, 384). *Fiqh al-Ḥadīth* is one of the branches of the sciences of hadith. On the one hand, it examines the text, content, wording, and linguistic structure of hadiths; on the other, it analyzes their meanings, objectives, and implications. From this perspective, it may, in its original sense, be regarded as a branch of *Dirāyat al-Ḥadīth* (the science of hadith criticism and interpretation) (Soleimani, 2006 AD/1385 SH: 49).

In its broader sense, *Fiqh al-Ḥadīth* simply means "Understanding Hadith," and some scholars have considered it synonymous with hadith commentary (Ṭīhrānī, 1987 AD/1408 AH: 8, 54).

5. The Principal Literary Approaches of Sayyid Murtaḍā in *Fiqh al-Ḥadīth*: Interpretation of the Narrations in *al-Amālī*

5-1. Employing Arabic Language and Literary Principles (Hyperbole, Simile, Metaphor, etc.)

Sayyid Murtaḍā possessed such extraordinary literary expertise that some contemporary litterateurs regarded him as the most knowledgeable person of his age regarding the principles of the Arabic language and literature, and, in certain matters, even considered him superior to *Ṣībawayh* (cf. Mousavi Khansari, 2011 AD/1391 SH: 4, 303).

In interpreting and explaining Qur'anic verses according to the Imami school, he occupied the position of both an accomplished literary scholar and an eminent exegete, to the extent that he engaged in scholarly debates with the foremost grammarian of his time, *Abul Ḥasan ʿAlī ibn ʿĪsā Rabaʿī* (Sayyid Murtaḍā, 1970 AD/1391 AH: 268-278; Sayyid Murtaḍā, 1984 AD/1405 AH: 4, 300-306; Ṭabāṭabāʾī, 1999 AD/1378 SH: 210)

Accordingly, one of the principal approaches that Sayyid Murtaḍā repeatedly employed in interpreting and explaining hadiths was the application of Arabic linguistic and literary principles. Because he was an outstanding literary scholar with exceptional mastery of Arabic, he

12 was able to utilize these tools effectively in his interpretive work.

Indeed, he himself occasionally remarks in *al-Amālī* that anyone possessing even a modest familiarity with the style and usage of the Arabic language will readily grasp the intended meanings (Alam al-Huda, 1998: 1, 6-7).

For example, in one passage he writes: "Arabic speech contains allusion, indication, metaphor, and figurative expression, and it is precisely because of these literary features that it enjoys such distinction and lofty status." (ibid: 4)

Regarding the rhetorical function of hyperbole in interpretation, Sayyid *Murtaḍā* explains: "Arabic employs particular constructions for exaggeration. Thus, concerning someone who sleeps excessively, it is said: "It is as though he was created only for sleeping." Likewise, regarding an extremely wicked person, one says: "So-and-so was created only for evil," meaning that evil constantly proceeds from him. Similarly, they say: "You are nothing but eating and drinking." (ibid: 465) For this reason, Sayyid *Murtaḍā* frequently relied on such literary devices to uncover the intended meanings of hadiths, repeatedly appealing to Arabic grammar and literary conventions throughout *al-Amālī*. The following narration illustrates this approach.

Example 1

In interpreting the hadith, "Whoever learns the Qur'an and then forgets it will meet God while being *Ajdham*." (Maimed) Sayyid *Murtaḍā* cites and critiques the opinions of *Qāsim ibn Sallām* and *Ibn Qutaybah*, both of whom understood the word *"Ajdham"* literally as "One whose hand has been amputated."

Sayyid *Murtaḍā* rejects this interpretation. According to him, forgetting the Qur'an bears no intrinsic relation to the hand that would justify punishment being directed specifically at that limb.

He likewise rejects *Ibn Qutaybah*'s suggestion that divine punishment is inflicted only upon the bodily member through which the sin was committed. According to Sayyid *Murtaḍā*, "*Ajdham*" in this hadith does not signify either physical amputation or leprosy. Rather, it represents a rhetorical form of hyperbole and analogy. In his view, the Prophet (PBUH) intended to liken such a person to someone who has suffered a deficiency in perfection and deprivation of the beauty and excellence that the Qur'an could have bestowed upon him.

Just as the hand is among the most valuable parts of the human body, and losing it deprives a person of numerous benefits and perfections, so too does the one who forgets the Qur'an become deprived of many virtues and divine rewards. Accordingly, Sayyid *Murtaḍā* concludes that the hadith should not be interpreted literally but rather understood through literary devices such as hyperbole, simile, and allegorical representation (Alam al-Huda, 1998: 1, 7).

This example demonstrates Sayyid *Murtaḍā*'s careful linguistic and literary methodology. He critiques the literal interpretation of the word "*Ajdham*," arguing that a superficial reading cannot uncover the Prophet's intended meaning.

Instead, by employing rhetorical devices such as hyperbole, simile, and allegory, he explains that "*Ajdham*" symbolizes the individual's loss of perfection, excellence, and spiritual beauty that could have

14 been attained through adherence to the Qur'an, rather than referring to

literal amputation or the disease of leprosy. Three key methodological features are evident in this approach:

- 1) Critical evaluation of earlier scholars: Sayyid *Murtaḍā* carefully examines the interpretations of *Qāsim ibn Sallām* and *Ibn Qutaybah*, demonstrating through literary analysis the shortcomings of their understanding of the word.
- 2) Application of literary and linguistic analysis: By considering the functions of hyperbole and simile in Arabic rhetoric, he derives the precise meaning of the expression and shows that its use in the hadith constitutes a vivid and instructive metaphorical illustration, rather than a literal description.
- 3) Enhancing the conceptual understanding of the hadith: In light of this analysis, it becomes clear that a proper understanding of hadith requires familiarity with Arabic, its rhetorical devices, and careful attention to figurative expressions. A merely literal reading is insufficient to convey the true meaning of a prophetic tradition.

Overall, Sayyid *Murtaḍā*'s analysis demonstrates that the Arabic language and its literary conventions constitute an effective tool for the interpretation and exegesis of hadiths, enabling a more accurate and profound understanding of the Prophet's (PBUH) intended meanings.

Example 2

In interpreting the hadith: "Indeed, the most beloved deeds to Allah, the Exalted and Glorious, are those that are performed consistently, **15**

even if they are few. Therefore, perform only those deeds that you are capable of, for Allah does not grow weary until you grow weary."

Sayyid *Murtaḍā* argues that the intended meaning is that God becomes displeased with people and leaves them to themselves when their actions are no longer performed sincerely for His sake, and when they themselves become tired of seeking His assistance and supplicating Him.

According to this interpretation, God's abandonment of people and His displeasure with them is metaphorically described as "Weariness," although this does not signify actual fatigue. Thus, "Weariness," with respect to God is not to be understood literally. Rather, it represents an instance of the rhetorical devices of paired expression and lexical correspondence. Sayyid *Murtaḍā* notes that these rhetorical devices are well established in Arabic literature and are also employed in the Qur'an (ibid: 55-57).

In this narration, Sayyid *Murtaḍā* undertakes a detailed examination of the word "Weariness," and the notion of "God becoming weary." The principal aspects of his interpretation are as follows:

1) Attention to the literary and linguistic dimension: Sayyid *Murtaḍā* demonstrates that the term "Weariness," cannot denote literal fatigue, since fatigue is a physical and psychological condition that cannot be attributed to God.

2) Application of Arabic rhetorical devices: He explicitly identifies

16 the rhetorical devices of paired expression and lexical

correspondence. Here, the word "Weariness" is used not to describe actual fatigue but to express God's response to human sincerity or negligence. This demonstrates that Sayyid *Murtaḍā* consistently considers Arabic's linguistic and literary capacities when interpreting hadiths, thereby arriving at more accurate explanations.

- 3) Reliance on Qur'anic interpretive tradition: Sayyid *Murtaḍā* further observes that the same rhetorical technique appears in the Qur'an, reflecting his concern to maintain harmony between Qur'anic and prophetic language. Accordingly, whenever the literal meaning of a word might lead to misunderstanding, literary conventions and Qur'anic usage should be employed to determine its intended meaning.

Thus, through his use of Arabic rhetoric and literary analysis, Sayyid *Murtaḍā* uncovers the semantic and psychological dimensions of the narration while preventing superficial or literalistic interpretations. His careful interpretation of figurative language demonstrates that a proper understanding of hadith is impossible without attention to its literary and rhetorical features.

Example 3

In interpreting the hadith: "The earth will vomit forth its liver-like pieces in the form of columns of gold and silver. Then the murderer will come and say: "For this I killed." The one who severed family ties will say: "For this I severed my kinship." The thief will say: "For this my hand was cut off." Then they will leave it and take nothing from it." Sayyid *Murtaḍā* argues that the Arabs possess a well-known and

distinctive style in employing metaphors and similes.

The expression "The earth vomits" is used because the earth expels its hidden contents, namely gold and silver, which constitutes one of the signs of the approaching Day of Resurrection. This is itself a metaphorical expression.

Likewise, calling what lies within the earth "Its Liver" (Kabid) is a simile comparing the precious metals hidden within it to a camel's liver (ibid: 97).

In analyzing this narration, Sayyid *Murtaḍā* focuses on the distinctive metaphors and similes characteristic of Arabic expression. His principal observations include the following:

- 1) Attention to Arabic literary style: He demonstrates that expressions such as "The earth vomits" and "Its liver-like pieces" belong to a distinctive Arabic literary style, and that they cannot be properly understood without familiarity with these rhetorical conventions.
- 2) The use of metaphor and simile to convey reality: "The earth vomits" serves as a metaphor for the earth bringing forth its hidden treasures, signifying one of the portents of the Day of Judgment. "Its liver-like pieces" compares gold and silver to the liver of a camel, emphasizing their preciousness and value. Thus, by relying upon classical Arabic rhetorical devices, Sayyid *Murtaḍā* not only explains the apparent wording of the narration but also reveals its deeper metaphorical and figurative dimensions, thereby facilitating a more accurate understanding of the hadith.

Table 1. Application of Arabic Literary and Rhetorical Devices in the Interpretation of the Narrations of *al-Amālī*

No.	Hadith	Key Expression	Literary Device Employed	Focus of Sayyid's Analysis	Interpretive Conclusion
1	"Whoever learns the Qur'an and then forgets it will meet Allah while being <i>ajdham</i> ."	Ajdham	Hyperbole, simile, allegory	Critiques the interpretations of <i>Qāsim ibn Sallām</i> and <i>Ibn Qutaybah</i> and rejects the literal meaning (amputated hand/leprosy).	The expression denotes spiritual deficiency and deprivation from Qur'anic perfection, not literal bodily mutilation.
2	"Indeed, Allah does not grow weary until you grow weary."	Yamallu ("grows weary")	lexical correspondence, paired expression	Examines the meaning of <i>Malal</i> and rejects attributing literal fatigue to God.	"Weariness" is a figurative expression referring to God's displeasure with or abandonment of His servants, not actual fatigue.
3	"The earth will vomit forth its liver-like pieces."	Taqī'u, Aflādh Kabidihā	Metaphor, simile	Analyzes the metaphorical style of Arabic in describing the signs of the Day of Resurrection.	The emergence of gold and silver is expressed metaphorically, emphasizing their value and significance rather than describing a literal physiological act.

5-2. Reliance on Colloquial Arabic and Arab Linguistic Usage

One of the general characteristics of the language of hadith is its reliance on common linguistic usage and everyday speech, just as this characteristic also applies to the language of the Qur'an. In Arabic lexicons, custom is defined as the opposite of that which is unfamiliar and is synonymous with that which is well known. It has been stated that "*al-Urf wa al-Ārifah wa al-Ma'rūf Wāhid: Didd al-Nakr*," that is, *Urf*, *Ārifah*, and *Ma'rūf* share the same meaning and stand in opposition to what is unfamiliar. It refers to that which is commonly recognized among people, such that when they encounter it, they do not regard it as strange or objectionable (Ibn Manẓūr, 1987 AD/1408 AH: 9, 237).

Khu'ī maintains that the Prophet (PBUH) undoubtedly did not devise a special method of concealing his intended meanings. Rather, he addressed people in the manner with which they were already familiar (*Khu'ī*, 2014 AD/1394 SH: 263-270). In "*al-Amālī*," Sayyid *Murtaḍā* frequently appeals to the colloquial language and customary expressions of the Arabs in order to interpret hadiths more accurately. As he himself states: "The Arabs possess, within their speech, subtle methods, allusions to intended meanings, and indirect indications. Whoever attempts to interpret and explain their speech without paying careful attention to these features has wronged both him and the text, and has departed from the proper framework of their discourse." (Alam al-Huda, 1998: 1, 7)

The Imams likewise spoke in the ordinary language of the people. They employed the vocabulary and linguistic structures customary among their audience. Thus, when Imam *Ṣādiq* (AS) was informed that some people claimed the Qur'anic references to wine, gambling, idols, and divining arrows actually referred to certain individuals, he replied: "God Almighty would never address His creation in a manner they could not understand." (ʿAyyāshī, n.d.: 1, 341, no. 188; Kashshī, 1988 AD/1409 AH: 2, 578, no. 513)

Through this statement, the Imam emphasizes that God revealed the Qur'an as guidance for humanity, intended for reflection, understanding, and practice. Since hadith likewise serves to guide and instruct people, it too must be expressed in language that people are capable of comprehending. Accordingly, Imam *Ṣādiq* also stated: "Express our traditions clearly, for we are an eloquent people."

20 (*Kulaynī*, 1955 AD/1375 AH: 1, 52, no. 13)

Another interpretive tool employed by Sayyid *Murtaḍā* in "*al-Amālī*" is his reliance on ordinary Arab speech and customary usage. In interpreting several traditions, he explicitly refers to this approach, describing it as the "Method of the people of the language." (Alam al-Huda, 1998: 1, 406)

Example

Abū Hurayrah narrates that the Prophet (PBUH) said: "The best charity is that which leaves one self-sufficient. The upper hand is better than the lower hand. Begin with those whom you support."

Regarding the phrase "The upper hand is better than the lower hand," Sayyid *Murtaḍā* argues that the expression "Upper Hand" refers to abundant blessing or generous giving, because in common Arabic usage the word "Hand" is frequently used metaphorically to mean favor, bounty, or benefaction. Thus, according to him, the Prophet intended to convey that greater generosity is superior to lesser generosity, thereby encouraging charitable conduct.

He regards this interpretation as preferable to the common explanation that the giver's hand is simply superior to the receiver's hand. He argues that such an interpretation does not hold true in every case, since among those who receive charity are individuals whose spiritual rank before God exceeds that of many who give charity. He offers a similar criticism of the opposite interpretation, namely that the recipient's hand is superior to the giver's (*ibid.*).

This tradition illustrates Sayyid *Murtaḍā*'s conviction that interpreting ḥadīth requires close attention to Arab customary usage and everyday

linguistic practice. In his view, the literal meaning of words alone cannot always convey the true intention of the impeccable Imam. Proper understanding demands sensitivity to idiomatic expressions, customary speech, and the linguistic conventions of Arabic. His interpretation of "The upper hand" exemplifies this approach: "Rather than understanding it merely as the giver's hand, he takes it as a metaphor for abundant generosity, since the word hand commonly signifies favor and benefaction in Arabic usage."

Table 2. Application of Colloquial Arabic and Arab Customary Usage in Sayyid *Murtaḍā*'s Interpretation of *al-Amālī*

No.	Discussion Topic	Key Concept	Sayyid's Interpretive Approach	Result and Function
1	Case Study: "The upper hand is better than the lower hand."	The meaning of "Hand" in Arab custom	Interprets "Upper Hand" as abundant blessing or generosity rather than merely the giver's hand	Aligns the meaning with Arab customary usage and critiques purely literal interpretations

5-3. Use of Classical Arabic Poetry

Another distinguishing characteristic of this eminent Shi'i scholar was his refined literary sensibility. Thoroughly acquainted with both classical poetry and prose, Sayyid *Murtaḍā* occupied an eminent place among the great Arab litterateurs. His collected poems, published in the series "*Rawā'i al-Adab al-'Arabī al-Islāmī*," testify to his outstanding literary stature (Sulaymani, 2006 AD/1385 SH: 46).

Tha'ālibī writes in "*Tatimmat al-Yatīmah*": "His poetry is of the highest excellence." (ibid.)

Likewise, *Ibn Khallikān* remarks: "He possessed a large collection of poetry, and whenever he described dreams or apparitions, he
22 excelled in doing so, employing this theme in many places." (Ibn

Khallikān, 1987 AD/1408 AH: 742)

Throughout *al-Amālī*, Sayyid *Murtaḍā* repeatedly relies upon the poetry of celebrated Arab poets to interpret traditions and clarify difficult expressions. In some cases, he cites several poetic verses to establish the meaning of a single word (Alam al-Huda, 1998: 1, 45). Indeed, he considers poetry to possess such linguistic authority that, when lexicographical evidence is unavailable, he turns instead to poetic usage (ibid: 21). Across his interpretations, he cites the works of more than thirty renowned Arab poets.

The following example illustrates this approach.

Example 1

While interpreting the Prophetic tradition: "Whoever learns the Qur'an and then forgets it will meet God while being *ajdham*," Sayyid *Murtaḍā* cites the following verse by *Farazdaq*: "The mountain-like strength of the tribe of *Wā'il* weakened after *Mālik*'s death, and its former glory became mutilated." That is: "The tribe of *Wā'il* became weak and powerless after *Mālik*'s death, and its former strength and splendor disappeared."

He argues that the poet's use of *Ajdham* conveys the notion of being maimed or deprived, and employs this poetic evidence to explain the hadith. Accordingly, he interprets *Ajdham* as "One whose hand has been severed," not literally but as a striking and eloquent metaphor for severe deprivation (ibid: 7).

This example demonstrates Sayyid *Murtaḍā*'s consistent reliance on classical Arabic poetry to elucidate the meanings of difficult words

and expressions found in hadith. By appealing to authoritative poetic usage, he uncovers the intended semantic force of the term *Ajdham*, illustrating how poetry functions as an essential interpretive aid in understanding the linguistic and rhetorical dimensions of Prophetic traditions.

- 1) Alignment of the Hadith's vocabulary with its meaning in poetry: Sayyid *Murtaḍā* demonstrates that the word *Ajdham* in Arabic poetry is used in the sense of "One whose hand has been severed," and he employs this poetic usage as the basis for a striking metaphor in his interpretation of the hadith, rather than understanding the word literally.
- 2) Appeal to the literary style of the Arabs: His use of poetry is not merely aesthetic; rather, it corresponds to the established Arabic rhetorical style, particularly in the use of simile and hyperbole. By citing poetry, Sayyid *Murtaḍā* explains the meanings of words and traditions within the framework of classical Arabic literary conventions, demonstrating that an accurate understanding of hadith requires familiarity with the rhetorical and poetic capacities of the Arabic language.

Example 2

In his commentary on the Prophetic tradition: "He is not one of us who does not *Yataghanna*" with the Qur'an," after citing relevant Qur'anic verses, Sayyid *Murtaḍā* adduces several verses of Arabic poetry, including those of *al-Aswad ibn Ya'far al-Iyādī*: "Indeed, they lived there in the finest prosperity, beneath the shade of a firmly established kingdom" and *al-A'shā*: "For a time I ruled in Iraq,

possessing noble character and lofty dignity."

He also cites verses by *Ḥassān ibn Thābit al-Anṣārī*, arguing that the poet's expression "Around the grave of their father" refers to rulers who remained permanently settled and did not abandon their place of residence. Sayyid *Murtaḍā* concludes that the meaning of the hadith is: "Whoever truly remains within the boundaries of the Qur'an, does not transgress beyond it, and makes it his permanent abode and point of reference, only such a person belongs to us. Whoever does otherwise is not of us." (Alam al-Huda, 1998: 1, 35)

In this tradition, Sayyid *Murtaḍā* employs the poetry of several Arab poets to clarify the concept of remaining steadfast within the limits established by the Qur'an. The principal observations are:

- 1) Conceptual clarification through poetry: The poetic citations enable the reader to grasp the intended semantic boundaries of the expression.
- 2) Harmony with Arabic rhetorical style: Poetry reinforces and deepens the meaning of the hadith in a manner consistent with classical Arabic literary taste and rhetorical conventions.

Example 3

While interpreting the Prophetic tradition: "The most beloved deeds to God, Mighty and Exalted, are those performed consistently, even if they are few. Therefore, perform only those deeds that you are able to sustain, for God does not become weary until you become weary." Sayyid *Murtaḍā* first cites a Qur'anic verse and then supports his interpretation by quoting the celebrated Arab poet *al-Nābighah al-*

Dhubyānī: "You will become wise, or reach your goal, when you grow old, or when the crow grows old."

He explains that the poet's real intention is to tell his audience: "You will never attain wisdom."

In other words, the condition mentioned (when the crow grows old) is impossible, making the entire statement a rhetorical device rather than a literal proposition. Sayyid *Murtaḍā* then presents a second interpretation of the hadith. According to this explanation, the Prophet intended to convey that God becomes displeased with people and abandons them only when their deeds are not performed sincerely for His sake and when they cease turning to Him in supplication and dependence. Thus, God's displeasure and abandonment are metaphorically described as "Weariness," although neither action constitutes actual fatigue.

He notes that this type of figurative expression is common in Arabic, where one thing is designated by the name of another because of a shared characteristic. To illustrate this convention, he cites the following poetic verses: "Then the play of Time began with them, and thus Time destroys men" and another by *Asadī*: "Ask us about *Hajar ibn Umm Qiṭām*, when the sharp and slender spears played with him." In both verses, the poets metaphorically attribute the act of "Playing" to Time and to spears, employing figurative language based upon metaphor and simile (ibid: 56). The principal observations are:

1) Clarification of the figurative meaning: Through poetry, Sayyid

26 *Murtaḍā* demonstrates that "Weariness" cannot be literally attributed

to God; rather, it functions metaphorically.

2) Reliance on Arabic literary style: The poetic examples employ metaphor to explain the human condition and humanity's relationship with God, thereby illustrating broader rhetorical conventions in Arabic.

3) Strengthening the interpretive argument: The appeal to poetry lends authority and credibility to Sayyid *Murtaḍā*'s interpretation while correcting overly literal readings of the tradition. Through his use of poetry, Sayyid *Murtaḍā* elucidates the meanings of hadith within the framework of Arabic rhetoric and metaphor, demonstrating that hadith cannot be properly understood without due consideration of its literary dimensions.

Table 3. Application of Arabic Poetry in Sayyid *Murtaḍā*'s Interpretation of the Traditions in *al-Amālī*

No.	Hadith	Poet Cited	Function of the Poetic Evidence	Interpretive Conclusion
1	"Whoever learns the Qur'an and then forgets it will meet God while being <i>Ajdham</i> ."	Farazdaq	Clarifies the meaning of <i>Ajdham</i> through its poetic usage.	Emphasizes the metaphorical and rhetorical meaning of the term, avoiding a superficial literal interpretation.
2	"He is not one of us who does not <i>Yataghanna</i> with the Qur'an."	al-Aswad ibn Ya'far al-Iyādī, al-A'shā, Ḥassān ibn Thābit	Explains the meaning of <i>Taghannī</i> and abiding within the boundaries of the Qur'an through poetic evidence.	Interprets <i>Taghannī</i> as steadfast adherence to and residence within the framework of the Qur'an, rather than merely melodious recitation.
3	"God does not become weary until you become weary."	al-Nābighah al-Dhubayānī, al-Asadī	Demonstrates the figurative nature of "weariness" through metaphorical expressions found in poetry.	Negates any literal attribution of weariness to God and explains the hadith in accordance with classical Arabic rhetorical style.

5-4. Citing the Opinions of Lexicographers and Hadith Scholars

One of the most significant interpretive tools employed by Sayyid *Murtaḍā* in explaining traditions is his extensive reliance on the opinions of earlier lexicographers and hadith scholars. As one of the earliest influential scholars of *Uṣūl al-Fiqh* (Motahhari, *ibid*: 26), he frequently cites authorities such as *Qāsim ibn Sallām* (d. 224 AH), *Ibn Qutaybah* (d. 276 AH), *Ibn al-Anbārī* (d. 304 AH), *Ibn al-Sikkīt*, and others. He maintains that: Interpreting a statement according to one of its possible meanings should not be considered far-fetched so long as that meaning is supported by the Arabic language and Arab usage (Alam al-Huda, 1998: 1, 19).

According to *Murtaḍā*, anyone who undertakes the explanation of unfamiliar expressions must present all possible meanings that the language permits, since any of those meanings may have been intended by the original speaker. The commentator is not required to determine with certainty the speaker's precise intention, because the true intent ultimately remains known only to the speaker. Elsewhere in *al-Amālī*, he explicitly states that the opinions of lexicographers are trustworthy, as each is founded upon established linguistic evidence (*ibid*: 475). He repeatedly employs this methodology in *al-Amālī*. Two examples illustrate this approach.

Example 1

In commenting on the tradition: "Whoever loves us, the People of the House, should prepare himself for poverty as one prepares a cloak (or armor)."

Murtaḍā first presents the interpretations of *Qāsim ibn Sallām*, who argues that the hadith refers to poverty in the Hereafter, and *Ibn Qutaybah*, who rejects this interpretation and contends that the Prophet intended poverty in this world. *Murtaḍā* accepts both interpretations as linguistically possible but proposes a third interpretation based upon lexical evidence. He explains that one meaning of the Arabic root "*Faqar*" is to pierce a camel's nose until it reaches, or nearly reaches, the bone, then pass a rope through it to tame and control the animal. The verb "*Faqara*" is used for this practice, and the camel is consequently described as "*Mafqūr*." Likewise, anything that is pierced or deeply wounded may be described by derivatives of this root. Thus, severe calamities are called "*Fāqirah*," and a notched sword is termed "*Sayf Mufaqqar*."

On this linguistic basis, *Murtaḍā* interprets the saying of the Prophet to mean: Whoever loves the Ahl al-Bayt (AS) should discipline and restrain his soul, direct it toward obedience, prevent it from following its passions, remain patient in adversity, and train it just as a stubborn camel is brought under control (ibid: 18). Analysis

This example demonstrates how *Murtaḍā* employs lexicographical authorities to clarify the hadith.

- 1) Reliance on lexical authorities: He presents the opinions of *Qāsim ibn Sallām* and *Ibn Qutaybah* to illustrate the range of accepted interpretations.
- 2) Linguistic analysis: He examines the original lexical meaning of "*Faqar*" and proposes an additional interpretation grounded in authentic Arabic usage.

3) Moral application: From this linguistic analysis, he derives the ethical lesson of the hadith, namely, self-discipline, patience, and mastery over one's desires, analogous to taming a wild camel. Through lexical evidence, *Murtaḍā* not only presents multiple interpretive possibilities but also uncovers the hadith's ethical and spiritual significance.

Example 2

In explaining the Prophetic tradition: "The earth will disgorge pieces of its liver like pillars of gold and silver..." *Murtaḍā* again appeals to the opinions of leading lexicographers regarding the word "*Aflādh*."

He reports that *Ya'qūb ibn al-Sikkīt* maintains that "*Faladh*" refers specifically to a piece of a camel's liver, and that this expression is not used for the liver of sheep or cattle. Thus, one says, "Give me a piece of liver," but not "*Faladhan min al-Shāh* or *Faladhan min al-Baqarah*."

Ibn al-Sikkīt further notes that one does not say: "Give me a "*Ḥazzah*" from the hump," or "Give me a "*Ḥazzah*" from meat," because "*Ḥazzah*" is specifically associated with the liver. If one intends a piece of hump or ordinary meat, different terms such as "*Ḥadhīyyah*" (a small piece) are used.

Ṭūsī, citing *Abū 'Ubaydah*, who in turn cites *Aṣma'ī*, reports additional distinctions in Arabic usage. If meat has been cut lengthwise, one says: "Give me a "*Ḥazzah*" of meat," whereas for an uncut piece one says: "Give me a "*Buḍ'ah*" or "*Dhurrah* of meat." After surveying these opinions, *Murtaḍā* concludes that the hadith

30 specifically mentions the liver because, in Arab culture, the liver was

regarded as one of the finest and most valuable parts of a sacrificial camel, alongside the hump and the back. Thus, the hadith likens the treasures concealed within the earth to its "Liver," emphasizing their value and preciousness, much like the Qur'anic description of the earth bringing forth all of its hidden treasures (ibid: 75).

In his treatment of the phrase "The earth will disgorge pieces of its liver," *Murtaḍā* conducts a careful lexical investigation of the word *aflādh*, drawing extensively on earlier linguistic authorities. The key features of his analysis include:

- 1) Precise lexical investigation: He demonstrates that "*Faladh*" properly denotes a piece of liver and is not generally applied to other bodily organs.
- 2) Synthesis of scholarly opinions: Rather than selecting a single authority, he compares and harmonizes the views of several lexicographers before arriving at his conclusion.
- 3) Integration of language and culture: By linking lexical usage to Arab cultural perceptions of the liver as a prized part of the camel, he offers a culturally grounded interpretation of the hadith. Through this methodology, *Murtaḍā* uses classical lexicography to establish both the precise meaning of individual words and a coherent cultural and rhetorical interpretation of the tradition.

Example 3

Murtaḍā also discusses the following Prophetic tradition: "The Prophet (PBUH) was on his way with his Companions and relatives to a banquet to which they had been invited. Along the way, he saw

Husayn (AS), who was still a small child, playing with other children. The Prophet hastened ahead of his companions while the children scattered and ran about playfully. Smiling, he caught *Husayn*, embraced him, placed one hand on the back of his head, lifted him up, kissed him, and said: "*Husayn* is from me, and I am from *Husayn*. O! God, love whoever loves *Husayn*. *Husayn* is one of my grandsons."

Murtaḍā makes every effort to interpret this tradition on the basis of the opinions of lexicographers and authoritative linguistic sources.

He cites *Ibn al-Anbārī*, who explains that the verb "*Istantala*" means "To Advance" or "To move forward." Thus, when a man steps forward quickly, the Arabs say "*Istantala al-Rajul Istintālan*." Elsewhere, early linguists state that when someone prepares himself to undertake a task, the expression "*Istantala al-Amr*" is used. Likewise, when a person separates himself from another, one may also say "*Istantala al-Rajul*." In addition, the verb can mean "To rise above" or "To become prominent." According to *Murtaḍā*, all of these meanings are closely related and compatible with the usage found in the hadith. He further explains that:

- "*al-Sikkah*" refers to rows of adjoining houses or rows of date palms.
- "*Ṭafiqa*" means "Continued" or "Kept on," as illustrated by the poetic verse: "She continued weeping, and I wept with her, while both of us were overcome with grief."
- "*Ass al-Ra's*" denotes the back of the head.
- *Ibn al-Anbārī* explains that "*Aqna 'ahu*" means "He raised him up."

32 – The word "*Asbāt*" was originally used for the descendants of the

Prophet Isaac, just as "*Qabā'il*" was used for the descendants of the Prophet Ishmael. *Ibn al-Anbārī* further states that "*Asbāṭ*" simply means offspring or children (ibid: 219).

In explaining the Prophet's interaction with *Ḥusayn* and expressions such as "*Istantala*" and "*al-Sikkah*," *Murtaḍā* relies extensively on the explanations of *Ibn al-Anbārī* and other philologists.

The principal features of his analysis are:

- 1) Lexical analysis within Arab culture: He demonstrates that "*Istantala*" may mean advancing, rising, or preparing for an action, while "*al-Sikkah*" refers to rows of houses or date palms.
- 2) Relating vocabulary to the narrative: These linguistic explanations clarify the Prophet's movements and the physical setting described in the tradition.
- 3) The importance of authoritative linguistic sources: By relying on established lexicographers, *Murtaḍā* determines the intended meanings of the expressions and avoids superficial interpretations.

Thus, the opinions of classical philologists constitute an essential tool in producing a precise and reliable interpretation of the tradition.

Table 4. Application of Quotations from Lexicographers and Hadith Scholars in the Interpretation of *al-Amālī*

No.	Hadith	Lexicographers / Hadith Scholars Cited	Al-Murtaḍā's Analysis Based on Their Opinions	Key Findings
1	"Whoever loves us, the People of the House,	<i>Qāsim ibn Sallām</i> ; <i>Ibn Qutaybah</i>	Examines multiple meanings of " <i>Faqar</i> " and proposes a third	(1) Reliance on lexical authorities. (2) Clarification of lexical meanings. (3)

No.	Hadith	Lexicographers / Hadith Scholars Cited	Al-Murtaḍā's Analysis Based on Their Opinions	Key Findings
	<i>should prepare himself for poverty..."</i>		interpretation related to taming a camel.	Connection between language and ethical instruction.
2	<i>"The earth will disgorge pieces of its liver..."</i>	<i>Ya'qūb b. al-Sikkīt; Abū 'Ubaydah; al-Aṣma'ī</i>	Lexical analysis of "Aflādh," comparison of scholarly opinions, and selection of the most appropriate meaning.	(1) Precise lexical analysis. (2) Synthesis of scholarly opinions. (3) Harmony between the hadith and authentic Arabic usage.
3	The Prophet's encounter with Ḥusayn during the banquet	<i>Ibn al-Anbārī</i>	Explains <i>Istantala</i> , <i>al-Sikkah</i> , <i>Ṭafīqa</i> , <i>Ass al-Ra's</i> , and <i>Asbāt</i> through lexical authorities and relates them to the narrative.	(1) Analysis of vocabulary in Arab usage. (2) Relationship between lexical meaning and the narrative context. (3) Importance of authoritative sources for accurate interpretation.

5-5. Attention to Rare and Unfamiliar Hadith Vocabulary

According to *Murtaḍā*, many interpretive difficulties arise from rare and unfamiliar expressions occurring in hadith literature. Such vocabulary often leads to misunderstanding and incorrect interpretation. To provide an accurate interpretation of the traditions contained in "*al-Amālī*," *Murtaḍā* consistently explains these obscure expressions, treating *Gharīb al-Ḥadīth* as one of his principal interpretive methods. A substantial portion of his exegetical discussions focuses on rare vocabulary, and in doing so he generally draws upon two

34 primary sources: the works of lexicographers and citations from classical

Arabic poetry (cf. Alam al-Huda, 1998: 1, 285, 630).

Typically, he begins by examining the opinions of authorities such as *Qāsim ibn Sallām*, *Ibn Qutaybah*, and other scholars who authored works on *Gharīb al-Ḥadīth*. After evaluating their interpretations, sometimes accepting them and sometimes criticizing them, he presents his own preferred explanation and interprets the tradition accordingly.

Whenever additional interpretations remain possible, he explicitly notes them, often introducing the discussion with expressions such as: "As for the rare expression in this hadith..." (ibid: 79)

In other instances, he adopts the voice of a hypothetical questioner, asking: "What is its interpretation? How should its obscure expression be explained?" (ibid: 354).

He then answers this hypothetical question by referring to the *Gharīb al-Ḥadīth* literature. Throughout "*al-Amālī*," Murtaḍā repeatedly employs this method in order to interpret obscure vocabulary. The following example illustrates this approach.

Example 1

In his commentary on the hadith: "He is not one of us who does not *"Yataghanna"* with the Qur'an." After reviewing three earlier interpretations, Murtaḍā argues that the obscure expression "*Lam Yataghanna*" derives from the expression "*Ghanīya al-Rajulu bil Makān*," meaning "A place made a person self-sufficient."

Accordingly, he interprets the verb "*Yataghanna*" as referring to remaining permanently or dwelling continually in a place (ibid: 34).

In interpreting this tradition, *Murtaḍā* first reviews the three explanations proposed by earlier scholars, then traces the expression "*Yataghanna*" to the root "*Ghaniya al-Rajulu bil Makān*."

This example demonstrates several important methodological features:

- 1) Precise lexical analysis: *Murtaḍā* interprets "*Yataghanna*" as denoting prolonged residence or abiding in a place, rather than simply vocal recitation.
- 2) Evaluation of previous opinions: He surveys earlier interpretations before determining which best reflects the intended meaning.
- 3) Consistency with the context of the tradition: By relating the lexical root to the broader message of the hadith, he provides a coherent and well-supported interpretation.

Thus, through careful philological analysis and critical evaluation of previous scholarship, *Murtaḍā* establishes a persuasive interpretation of the expression "*Yataghanna*."

Example 2

In interpreting the tradition: "Take this sword and go. If you find him with her, kill him..." the companion asks: "Should I carry out your command as an iron branding rod, proceeding exactly as instructed, or does the witness perceive what the absent person cannot?"

The Prophet replies: "Indeed, the witness sees what the absent does not."

The report then states: "He spread his legs..." *Murtaḍā* explains the obscure expression "*Shaghara bi Rijlayhi*" as meaning to raise and spread one's legs, likening it to the posture a dog assumes when urinating. He further explains that "*Nikāḥ al-Shighār*" refers to the

well-known pre-Islamic marriage arrangement in which two guardians exchange female relatives in marriage without a dowry. The term derives from the same root because of its association with sexual intercourse (ibid., p. 80).

Murtaḍā explicitly states that "*Shighār*" functions here as a euphemistic allusion to illicit sexual intercourse. He also rejects an earlier interpretation that took another word in the report to refer to a person with thin thighs. In his view, such an explanation is irrelevant to the context. Instead, the expression serves as an emphatic form related to "*Ajabb*," conveying the idea that the sexual organ had been completely removed a stronger expression than merely describing circumcision (ibid: 80).

This analysis demonstrates:

- 1) Careful lexical investigation reveals that "*Shaghara*" is interpreted as a figurative expression denoting sexual exposure.
- 2) Critical engagement with previous scholarship: *Murtaḍā* rejects interpretations that conflict with the context.
- 3) Contextual interpretation: The lexical meaning is harmonized with both the narrative setting and Arab linguistic conventions. Through philological analysis and critical assessment of earlier opinions, *Murtaḍā* arrives at a rigorous and convincing interpretation of the tradition.

Example 3

Regarding the Prophet's saying: "Indeed, this Qur'an is God's banquet, so learn from His banquet as much as you can. The emptiest of houses is the one whose interior is empty of the Book of God." *Murtaḍā* again introduces the discussion through a hypothetical

question: "If someone were to ask about the interpretation of this tradition and the explanation of its obscure vocabulary..."

He explains that "*Ma'dubah*" may also be called "*Mad'āh*" (an invitation), and that the word may be pronounced with either a *Faṭḥah* or a *Ḍammah* on the letter *Dāl*. He further explains the expressions *al-jaflā*, which refers to a general invitation extended to everyone, and "*al-Nuqrā*," which denotes an invitation restricted to a select group. He cites verses from *Hudhalī* poetry in which these expressions occur, including: "As though the hearts of the birds within their nests were like dried dates cast down at some banquets."

Here, "*al-Ma'ādib*" is the plural of "*Ma'dubah*." (ibid: 354)

Some scholars maintain that "*Ma'dabah*," pronounced with *Faṭḥah*, derives from the root "*Adab*" (discipline or good manners). On this interpretation, the tradition's meaning is that God revealed the Qur'an to educate and guide humanity. Because Qur'an is grammatically masculine, the feminine ending is added here as an intensive stylistic device, similar to the poetic expression: "This is a drink that delights the soul." (ibid: 354)

Murtaḍā then proposes another interpretation. He argues that the Qur'an is compared to a "*Ma'dubah*" because, just as people gather around a banquet, the Qur'an gathers people together and calls them toward divine guidance. Likewise, he explains the expression: "The emptiest of houses..." as referring to houses most devoid of the Qur'an, noting that in Arabic the word "Empty" is used for anything devoid of content, whether a container or otherwise: "Among the Arabs, *ṣaḥr* denotes whatever is empty, whether a vessel or something else." (ibid: 358). This example highlights several

- 1) Detailed lexical analysis: *Ma'dubah* is understood both as a means of moral cultivation and as a gathering of people.
- 2) Comprehensive review of earlier scholarship: *Murtaḍā* compares the opinions of lexicographers and poets before selecting the interpretation most appropriate to the context.
- 3) Contextual coherence: The chosen interpretation accords with the hadith's emphasis on the Qur'an as a source of guidance and communal unity. By integrating lexical analysis with literary and linguistic evidence, *Murtaḍā* presents a nuanced and well-supported interpretation of the tradition.

Table 5. Application of Rare hadith Vocabulary in *Murtaḍā's* Interpretation of *al-Amālī*

No.	Tradition	Rare Expression	Al-Murtaḍā's Analysis	Key Features
1	"He is not one of us who does not <i>Yataghanna</i> by the Qur'an."	Yataghanna	Derived from <i>Ghaniya al-Rajul bil Makān</i> ; interpreted as abiding permanently in a place.	(1) Precise lexical analysis; (2) Evaluation of earlier opinions; (3) Consistency with the meaning of the tradition.
2	"Take this sword and go..."	Shaghara	Means raising and spreading one's legs; figuratively associated with <i>Nikāḥ al-Shighār</i> and sexual exposure.	(1) Lexical and figurative analysis; (2) Critique of incorrect interpretations; (3) Contextual consistency with Arab linguistic usage.
3	"Indeed, this Qur'an is God's banquet..."	Ma'dubah	Understood as something that gathers people together and cultivates moral discipline; pronunciation does not alter the meaning.	(1) Detailed lexical analysis; (2) Synthesis of lexical and poetic evidence; (3) Consistency with the Qur'an's guiding function.

No.	Tradition	Rare Expression	Al-Murtaḍā's Analysis	Key Features
4	Other expressions: al-Jaflā, al-Nuqrā, Yantaqīru, Ṣafr	Rare vocabulary and poetic usage	Examined through classical Arabic literature and poetry to clarify their meanings.	(1) Philological and literary analysis; (2) Comparison of multiple interpretations; (3) Correlation with the meaning of the traditions.

5-6. Use of Proverbs and Idiomatic Expressions

Every language and culture possesses proverbs and idiomatic expressions that convey rich meaning in concise form. Such expressions embody the principle of rhetorical brevity, enabling speakers to convey extensive ideas without lengthy explanations (Qadami, 2013 AD/1392 SH: 39).

Some proverbs originated as poetry, while certain poetic verses became proverbial through frequent usage. In the discipline of *Fiqh al-Ḥadīth*, failure to identify the intended meaning of these expressions can easily obscure the true intent of the Prophet or the Imams, particularly for non-Arab audiences. For example, the famous saying of Imam Ali: "I followed him as a young camel follows its mother" cannot be fully understood without recognizing its proverbial significance (ibid.). *Murtaḍā* repeatedly emphasizes in "*al-Amālī*" that many expressions found in the Qur'an and hadith reflect established Arab idioms. He remarks: "This is among the customary expressions of the Arabs, and elsewhere: "This is one of the ways in which the Arabs speak." (Alam al-Huda, 1998: 1, 88)

Consequently, he frequently employs well-known Arab proverbs
40 and idiomatic expressions to interpret both Qur'anic verses and

prophetic traditions, using them as an important literary tool to explain difficult texts.

The following traditions illustrate this aspect of his methodology.

Example 1

In his interpretation of the Prophetic tradition: "Whoever learns the Qur'an and then forgets it will meet God while being *Ajdham* (mutilated)." After presenting a detailed explanation of the tradition, Sayyid *Murtaḍā* further supports his interpretation by appealing to a well-known Arabic proverb. He states that this expression belongs to the familiar rhetorical conventions of the Arabic language and reflects common Arab idiomatic usage. The Arabs would say of a person who had lost his supporter or protector: "So-and-so, after the loss of so-and-so, is *Ajda*," or "He remained *Ajdham* after him," meaning that he had become as though deprived of his hand, that is, left helpless after losing the one upon whom he relied (ibid: 7).

Example 2

Likewise, in interpreting the tradition narrated by *Anas ibn Mālik*, in which the Prophet (PBUH) said: "There is no believer except that he has a gate through which his deeds ascend and another through which his provision descends; when he dies, these two gates weep for him."

Murtaḍā explains that the expression "Weeping" refers metaphorically to the change and disruption that occurs after the death of righteous individuals. To support this interpretation, he cites a familiar Arabic proverb: "The house of so-and-so wept after him." That is, after his death, his house became desolate and empty of the

life and blessing he had brought to it (ibid: 53).

Table 6. The Use of Arabic Proverbs and Idiomatic Expressions in *Murtaḍā's* Interpretation of *al-Amālī*

No.	Tradition	Proverb / Idiom	al-Murtaḍā's Analysis	Key Points
1	"Whoever learns the Qur'an and then forgets it will meet God while <i>Ajdham</i> ."	"So-and-so became <i>Ajda'</i> after so-and-so"; "He remained <i>Ajdham</i> after him."	<i>Ajdham</i> signifies one who has become helpless after losing his supporter; it is an idiomatic expression rather than a literal description.	(1) Analysis of the proverb; (2) Reliance on Arabic linguistic convention; (3) Consistency with the meaning of the tradition.
2	"There is no believer except that he has a gate through which his deeds ascend..."	"The house of so-and-so wept after him."	"Weeping" signifies the disruption and desolation that follow a person's death.	(1) Analysis of the proverb; (2) Appeal to Arabic idiomatic usage; (3) Correlation with the reaction to the death of a believer described in the tradition.

Table: Components of Sayyid *Murtaḍā's* Literary Approach to *Fiḥ al-Ḥadīth* in *al-Amālī* Component Description Representative Examples

Component	Description	Representative Examples
1. Employing Arabic literary devices and grammatical principles	Using rhetorical devices such as hyperbole, simile, metaphor, metonymy, and allegory to interpret traditions. Mastery of Arabic language and literature is regarded as indispensable for understanding the intended meaning.	• "Whoever learns the Qur'an and then forgets it..." (<i>Ajdham</i> as a simile for deprivation). • "The most beloved deeds to God..." (use of <i>Mushākalah</i> and figurative naming). • "The earth will vomit forth its liver..." (Metaphorical imagery of the Day of Resurrection).

Component	Description	Representative Examples
2. Reliance on colloquial Arabic and customary usage	Interpreting traditions in light of common Arabic idioms and everyday linguistic practice.	• "The upper hand is better than the lower hand" (<i>al-Yad al-ʿUlyā</i>) interpreted as abundant generosity rather than merely the giving hand.
3. Citation of classical Arabic poetry	Employing poetry to clarify vocabulary and substantiate interpretations; <i>al-Murtaḍā</i> cites more than thirty renowned poets.	• The poem of <i>Farazdaq</i> on <i>Ajdham</i>. • Poems by <i>Aswad ibn Yaʿfur</i>, <i>Aʿshā</i>, and <i>Ḥassān ibn Thābit</i> on <i>Yataghannā bil Qurʾān</i>. • Poems of <i>Nābighah al-Dhubyanī</i> and <i>Asadī</i> regarding "God does not become weary."
4. Reliance on earlier lexicographers and ḥadīth scholars	Drawing upon authorities such as <i>Qāsim ibn Sallām</i> , <i>Ibn Qutaybah</i> , <i>Ibn al-Anbārī</i> , and <i>Ibn al-Sikkīt</i> to explain vocabulary and meanings.	• Interpretation of <i>Faqar</i> in "Whoever loves us, the People of the House..." • Lexical analysis of "The earth will vomit forth its liver..." using <i>Ibn al-Sikkīt</i>, <i>Ṭūsī</i>, and <i>Abū ʿUbaydah</i>.
5. Attention to rare (<i>Gharīb</i>) ḥadīth vocabulary	Explaining obscure expressions to avoid misunderstanding and to establish the intended meaning.	• <i>Yataghannā</i> interpreted as abiding in the Qurʾān. • Lexical analysis of <i>shaghara</i> and other obscure expressions.
6. Use of proverbs and idiomatic expressions	Employing Arabic proverbs and idioms to communicate intended meanings within their cultural context.	• "Even if the Qurʾān were placed in a hide, the Fire would not touch it" (hyperbolic illustration). • "The earth will vomit forth its liver..." (Metaphorical and idiomatic usage).

Table: Analytical Summary of *Murtaḍā*'s Literary Method in *Fiqh al-Ḥadīth*

Central Tradition / Expression	Key Features	Analytical Conclusion
<i>Ajdham, Malal</i> , "The earth will vomit forth..."	• Critique of literal interpretations by earlier scholars (<i>Qāsim ibn Sallām, Ibn Qutaybah</i>). • Attention to rhetorical devices (hyperbole, simile, allegory, <i>Mushākalah</i>). • Extensive use of metaphor.	Deepens conceptual understanding of the traditions and avoids purely literal readings by uncovering their figurative dimensions.
<i>al-Yad al-'Ulyā</i>	• Reliance on Arab custom and idiomatic usage. • Critique of superficial interpretation. • Understanding <i>Yad</i> as "Blessing" or "Generosity."	Aligns the interpretation with Arab linguistic convention and prevents misunderstanding by situating the tradition within its cultural context.
<i>Ajdham</i> , "He is not one of us who does not <i>Yataghannā</i> by the Qur'an," "The most beloved deeds..."	• Citation of poems by <i>Farazdaq, Nābighah, Asadī</i>, and others. • Clarification of vocabulary through poetic evidence.	Strengthens exegetical reasoning, explains figurative meanings, and reflects the rhetorical taste of classical Arabic.
<i>Faqar, Aflādh Kabidiḥā, Istanṭala</i>	• Reliance on lexical authorities (<i>Qāsim ibn Sallām, Ibn Qutaybah, Ibn al-Sikkū, Ibn Anbārī</i>). • Comparative analysis of lexical possibilities. • Synthesis of differing scholarly opinions.	Produces precise lexical meanings while avoiding superficial interpretation and revealing the ethical and educational dimensions of the traditions.
<i>Yataghannā, Shaghara, Ma'dubah</i>	• Detailed lexical analysis of obscure expressions. • Critical evaluation of earlier scholarship. • Rejection of weak interpretations.	Produces academically grounded interpretations based upon authoritative Arabic lexicography and linguistic tradition.

Conclusion

The present study demonstrates that Sayyid *Murtaḍā*'s literary approach to *Fiqh al-Ḥadīth* in *al-Amālī* extends well beyond literal exegesis. His interpretive methodology represents an integrated framework that combines linguistic, lexical, literary, poetic, cultural, and customary analyses. The findings indicate that when confronted with difficult, obscure, or seemingly contradictory traditions, he consistently employs a broad range of literary tools to develop accurate, well-substantiated interpretations.

Murtaḍā frequently draws upon the opinions of earlier lexicographers and *ḥadīth* scholars, carefully examining the various semantic possibilities of words and expressions. By presenting competing interpretations before offering his preferred reading, he not only documents scholarly disagreement but also develops reasoned interpretations consistent with rational principles. His sustained attention to *Gharīb al-Ḥadīth* further enables him to correct earlier misunderstandings and to provide precise and academically rigorous interpretations.

In addition, his extensive use of classical Arabic poetry, proverbs, and idiomatic expressions clarifies not only the literal meanings of words but also the ethical, educational, and cultural dimensions of the traditions. By situating prophetic reports within the broader linguistic and cultural environment of classical Arabic, he makes their intended meanings more accessible and intelligible. This multifaceted approach demonstrates that *Murtaḍā* never confines himself to dictionary definitions alone; rather, he draws on the full rhetorical, literary, and

cultural resources of the Arabic language to produce richer, more comprehensive interpretations. The study further shows that *Murtaḍā*'s literary methodology is simultaneously scholarly, rational, cultural, and literary. His interpretations not only resolve textual ambiguities but also remain fully compatible with the rational principles of Imami Shi'i theology.

Overall, *Murtaḍā*'s interpretive method in *al-Amālī* exemplifies the close relationship among *ḥadīth* studies, Arabic lexicography, and Arabic literature. His simultaneous use of poetic, lexical, and cultural sources produces interpretations that are not only philologically sound and academically reliable but also capable of revealing the ethical, educational, and social dimensions of prophetic traditions. Consequently, his methodology offers a valuable model for contemporary scholars of *ḥadīth* and Islamic studies seeking a comprehensive, linguistically informed, and culturally sensitive understanding of religious texts.

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