

## APPARENT CONTRADICTIONS IN THE QUR'AN: PRECONDITIONS, CAUSES, AND SCHOLARLY METHODOLOGIES OF RESOLUTION

Radwan J. Y. Elatrash \*

Noor Muhammad Osmani \*\*

Mohammad Mohiuddin \*\*\*

### ABSTRACT

This study investigates the phenomenon of apparent contradictions in the Qur'an by examining the conditions under which such perceptions arise, the causes that contribute to them, and the scholarly methods employed for resolution. The central issue addressed is the misinterpretation of verses that appear conflicting, despite the Qur'an's divine origin and inherent coherence. Using inductive and analytical approaches, the research engages with classical *uṣūlī* principles to clarify the preconditions for a genuine contradiction and demonstrates that these conditions are never realized in the Qur'an. It further analyzes common sources of perceived conflict, including generality versus specificity, absoluteness versus qualification, abrogation, and contextual variation. The study highlights the interpretive strategies of scholars, emphasizing the importance of linguistic precision, contextual analysis, and the *uṣūlī* framework in safeguarding textual integrity. The findings affirm that true contradiction in the Qur'an is impossible, and that apparent conflicts can be resolved through sound interpretive tools. The research also recommends incorporating these methodologies into Qur'anic and legal studies curricula to enhance critical skills and deepen engagement with the sacred text. Ultimately, it reaffirms the Qur'an's internal harmony and strengthens intellectual confidence in the Islamic tradition.

**Keywords:** Qur'an, Apparent Contradictions, Conditions of Conflict, Causes of Contradiction, Scholarly Methods of Resolution.

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\* Professor, Department of Qur'an and Sunnah Studies, AbdulHamid AbuSulayman Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences, International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). Email: [radwan@iium.edu.my](mailto:radwan@iium.edu.my)

\*\* Associate Professor, Department of Qur'an and Sunnah Studies, AbdulHamid AbuSulayman Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences, International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). Email: [abusajid@iium.edu.my](mailto:abusajid@iium.edu.my)

\*\*\* Assistant Professor Department of Qur'an and Sunnah Studies, AbdulHamid AbuSulayman Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences, International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). Email: [mmohiuddin@iium.edu.my](mailto:mmohiuddin@iium.edu.my)

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## Introduction

The study of apparent contradictions within the Qur'an has occupied a significant position in the intellectual heritage of Islamic scholarship, revealing not only the depth of Qur'anic discourse but also the sophistication of the methodologies developed to address interpretive challenges. At first glance, certain verses may seem to convey conflicting meanings, thereby inviting misinterpretation or doubt among those unfamiliar with the principles of Qur'anic interpretation. However, such perceptions are rooted either in a lack of linguistic, contextual, or theological awareness or in a superficial engagement with the text.

Classical Muslim scholars, employing the tools of *uṣūl al-fiqh*, *tafsīr*, and *ʿulūm al-Qur'ān*, have meticulously developed systematic approaches to reconcile these perceived tensions. Their methods encompass a rigorous framework of analyzing temporal unity, subject specificity, linguistic precision, and the interplay of abrogation and specification. Through these methodologies, the enduring coherence, harmony, and inimitability of the Qur'an are demonstrated, safeguarding it from charges of inconsistency and reinforcing its divine origin. This research situates itself within this rich scholarly tradition, seeking to both elucidate the causes behind the illusion of contradiction and highlight the powerful hermeneutical tools that ensure the Qur'an's internal consistency.

Among the examples that appear to show contradiction in the Qur'anic verses is what is mentioned in Surah Āl 'Imrān.

﴿إِذْ تَقُولُ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَلَنْ يَكْفِيَكُمْ أَنْ يُمَدِّدَ رَبُّكُمْ بِثَلَاثَةِ آلَافٍ مِنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ مُنَزَّلِينَ . بَلَى إِنْ تَصْبِرُوا وَتَتَّقُوا وَيَأْتُوكُمْ مِنْ فُورِهِمْ هَذَا يُمَدِّدْكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ بِخَمْسَةِ آلَافٍ مِنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ مُسَوِّمِينَ﴾ [آل عمران: 125].

"When you said to the believers, 'Is it not enough for you that your Lord should reinforce you with three thousand angels sent down?' (Āl 'Imrān 3:124) 'Yes, if you remain patient and conscious of Allah and they come upon you suddenly, your Lord will reinforce you with five thousand angels having marks of distinction.' (Āl 'Imrān 3:125)"

This objection is resolved by clarifying that "Allah supplemented the initial thousand with an additional three thousand, leaving no contradiction whatsoever between the two verses." Al-ʿAllāmah al-Bayḍāwī, in his exegesis of the verses related to Badr—particularly the verse on divine support—observes: "Allah initially aided them on the Day of Badr with one thousand angels, which

subsequently increased to three thousand, and ultimately to five thousand.” Hence, any notion of inconsistency is unfounded.<sup>1</sup>” Thus, no inconsistency arises.

### **Scientific Significance:**

This research advances the field of Qur’anic studies by offering a comprehensive analytical response to claims of contradiction within the Qur’an. It contributes to the academic discourse on the coherence and consistency of the Qur’anic text, demonstrates the methodological precision of classical exegetical scholarship, and provides a critical framework for engaging with contemporary criticisms. By bridging classical and modern approaches, it enriches the study of tafsīr and strengthens the intellectual foundations of Islamic theology.

### **Practical/Applied Significance:**

Practically, this study equips scholars, educators, and students with well-substantiated arguments to address and refute misconceptions about the Qur’an. It can be incorporated into educational programs, interfaith dialogues, and scholarly debates, offering a balanced and evidence-based perspective on the Qur’anic message. Moreover, it supports efforts in da‘wah and public engagement by fostering a deeper understanding of the Qur’an’s integrity, thereby enhancing intellectual confidence and reinforcing faith in contemporary contexts.

This research addresses two main sections:

#### **Section1:**

The theoretical aspect consists of:

The conditions for contradiction between Qur’anic and Shar‘i texts.

This section addresses the conditions under which contradiction may be deemed to exist between Qur’ānic and Sharī‘ah texts, the underlying causes that give rise to the illusion of contradiction, and the divine wisdom behind the occurrence of seemingly contradictory expressions in the Qur’ān. The discussion concludes with a succinct summary of the subject.

Islamic scholars have articulated several essential conditions that must be met before a claim of contradiction between Sharī‘ah texts can be validly established. These conditions include:

**Temporal Unity (Ittiḥād al-Zamān):** Al-Dabūsī al-Ḥanafī stated: *"Unity of time is a necessary condition for the coexistence of two opposites in a single subject. The*

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<sup>1</sup>Al-Baydawi, Nasir al-Din Abu al-Khayr Abdullah bin Omar bin Muhammad, Anwar Al-Tanzil wa Asrar Al-Ta'wil (Beirut: Dar Al-Fikr), p. 88.

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*occurrence of opposites at different times in succession—such as life and death in the same person at two different times—is permissible.”<sup>2</sup>*

This condition stipulates that both texts in question must have been revealed within the same timeframe. If one of the texts was revealed at a different time than the other, the matter then falls under the domain of *naskh* (abrogation) rather than contradiction, especially in the case of legal rulings. According to established rational principles, contradiction requires simultaneity in time<sup>3</sup>. For instance, the verse: (وَإِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ لَمَوْعِدُهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ) “Indeed, Hell is their promised place, all together” [al-Ḥijr: 43], has led Abū Ḥayyān al-Andalusī to observe: “This reflects the view of those who claim that the term *ajma’in* indicates temporal unity; however, the more accurate interpretation is that it signifies *all of them collectively*.”<sup>4</sup>

**Unity of Context or Subject (Ittiḥād al-Maḥall):** Ibn al-Tilimsānī stated: “A necessary condition for contradiction is the unity of subject (*maḥall*)”<sup>5</sup>.

*Meaning to say: if the subject differs, then no contradiction exists.”*

Al-Dabūsī al-Ḥanafī similarly affirmed: “The unity of subject is a prerequisite for opposition to take effect, for contradiction operates only when the subject is one and the same.”<sup>6</sup>

If the two texts address different subjects or contexts, no contradiction exists. For example, marriage renders lawful intercourse with one’s wife while simultaneously prohibiting such relations with her mother. Thus, there is no contradiction between the verse: (نِسَاؤُكُمْ حَرْثٌ لَّكُمْ فَأَتُوا حَرْثَكُمْ أَنَّى شِئْتُمْ) “Your wives are a place of sowing for you, so come to your place of cultivation however you wish” [al-Baqarah: 223] and the verse: (حُرِّمَتْ عَلَيْكُمْ أُمَّهَاتُكُمْ) up to (وَأُمَّهَاتُ نِسَائِكُمْ) “Prohibited to you (for marriage) are your mothers ... and the mothers of your wives” [al-Nisā’: 23], due to the distinct rulings concerning the subjects involved<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> Abū Zayd ‘Ubayd Allāh ibn ‘Umar ibn ‘Īsā al-Dabūsī al-Ḥanafī (d. 430 AH), Taqwīm al-Adillah fī Uṣūl al-Fiqh, ed. Khalīl Muḥyī al-Dīn al-Mays (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1st ed., 1421 AH / 2001 CE) p214.

<sup>3</sup> Abu al-Hasan Taqī al-Dīn Ali bin Abdul Kafī Al-Subkī, Fatawa Al-Subkī (Beirut: Dar Al-Ma’rifah, n.d.), vol. 2, p. 116.

<sup>4</sup> Abu Hayyan Al-Andalusi, Tafsir Al-Bahr Al-Muhit (n.p.: Dar Al-Fikr, n.d.), vol. 5, p. 370.

<sup>5</sup> Ibn al-Tilimsānī, ‘Abd Allāh ibn Muḥammad ‘Alī Sharaf al-Dīn Abū Muḥammad al-Fihri al-Miṣrī (d. 644 AH), Sharḥ al-Ma’ālim fī Uṣūl al-Fiqh, ed. ‘Ādil Aḥmad ‘Abd al-Mawjūd and ‘Alī Muḥammad Mu‘awwad (Beirut: ‘Ālam al-Kutub, 1st ed., 1419 AH / 1999 CE) Vol2, P407.

<sup>6</sup> Abū Zayd al-Dabūsī al-Ḥanafī (d. 430 AH), Taqwīm al-Adillah fī Uṣūl al-Fiqh, p214.

<sup>7</sup> ‘Abd al-Karīm ibn ‘Alī ibn Muḥammad al-Namlah (d. 1435 AH), Al-Muhadhdhab fī ‘Ilm Uṣūl al-Fiqh al-Muqāran: Tahrīr li-Masā’ilihī wa-Dirāsah Dirāsah Nazariyyah Taḥqīqiyah (Riyadh: Maktabat al-Rushd, 1st ed., 1420 AH / 1999 CE), vol. 5, p. 2413.

**Presence of Real Inconsistency or Opposition:** Contradiction requires that one text affirms something while the other negates it, or that one permits an action while the other prohibits it. However, this form of contradiction is impossible within the Qur'ān, a Book revealed by God—the Most Wise and All-Knowing—not a product of human intellect or composition<sup>8</sup>.

**Equal Definitiveness in Transmission and Meaning (Tawāzī fī al-Thubūt wa al-Dalālah):**

Both texts must be equally definitive in terms of authenticity and clarity of meaning. Definitiveness in transmission (*thubūt*) means that the texts are either transmitted via *tawātur* (mass transmission), such as the Qur'ān and widely transmitted Prophetic ḥadīths, or through reliably connected *ṣaḥīḥ* chains of narration. Definitiveness in meaning (*dalālah*) requires that the intended meaning of each text is explicit and unambiguous. Therefore, a contradiction cannot be claimed between the clear meaning (*maṭṭūq*) of one text and the inferred meaning (*mafḥūm*) of another, as the former is definitive and the latter is speculative<sup>9</sup>.

If these conditions are met between two texts, then the avenues of interpretation, reconciliation, or preference (*tarjīḥ*) are closed. At that point, it becomes impossible to harmonize the two texts or to assert that one abrogates the other. When two evidences are equal in terms of transmission and meaning, address the same subject matter, and share the same temporal and contextual frame, no reconciliation or judgment of abrogation can be made between them.

**Analytical Summary of the Conditions for Contradiction Between Sharī'ah Texts**

1. True contradiction between Sharī'ah texts is exceedingly rare and governed by strict methodological conditions. Usūl scholars have established that a valid claim of contradiction is subject to four fundamental criteria, which serve as rational and textual safeguards against apparent conflicts in revelation.
2. **Temporal unity is an essential prerequisite for contradiction to be established.** When two texts were revealed at different times, the case pertains to *abrogation* (*naskh*), not *contradiction* (*ta'ārūḍ*). This principle, as emphasized by al-Dabūsī, is rooted in the logical axiom that contradiction requires simultaneity in time.
3. **Unity of subject or referent is likewise indispensable.** Contradiction cannot be claimed if the texts address different legal subjects or contexts. This is a

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<sup>8</sup> Aḥmad ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz ibn Muqrin al-Quṣayyir, *Al-Aḥādīth al-Mushkilah al-Wāridah fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Karīm: 'Arḍ wa-Dirāsah* (Saudi Arabia: Dār Ibn al-Jawzī li-l-Nashr wa-l-Tawzī', 1st ed., 1430 AH), p. 40.

<sup>9</sup> al-Quṣayyir, *Al-Aḥādīth al-Mushkilah*, p. 40.

- foundational rule affirmed by Ibn al-Tilimsānī and al-Dabūsī, ensuring that conflict is not wrongly inferred from distinct rulings applied to different cases.
4. **Real opposition in meaning must be present.** A genuine contradiction arises only when one text explicitly affirms what another denies, or permits what another prohibits, regarding the same subject matter. Apparent contradictions, however, are typically resolved through contextual or semantic analysis.
  5. **Equivalence in definitiveness of transmission and meaning is a decisive condition.** If one text is definitive (qaṭ'ī) in authenticity or meaning while the other is speculative (ẓannī), no contradiction is admitted. The stronger text prevails. This methodological rule preserves the authority of clearly established texts.
  6. **When all four conditions are simultaneously met, the standard tools of reconciliation, preference (tarjīḥ), or abrogation no longer apply.** However, in practical scholarly discourse—across tafsīr, fiqh, and ḥadīth literature—such cases are extremely rare. Scholars usually succeed in harmonizing texts through contextual interpretation or legal reasoning.

### Causes of the Illusion of Contradiction and Discrepancy in the Qur'an

Dr. Salmān al-ʿAwda observes: *“God, Exalted is He, has made difference and diversity an inherent part of worldly life and human nature—even between a father and his own son, despite the latter being a part of the former. They may still differ in thought, temperament, appearance, and color.”* He further asserts: *“Disagreement will persist until God inherits the earth and all who are upon it. One should never imagine that people will arrive at a complete and universal consensus in any absolute form.”* He then cites the Qur'anic verse: ﴿وَلَا يَزَالُونَ﴾ *“They will not cease to differ—except those upon whom your Lord has mercy”* [Hūd: 118]<sup>10</sup>.

Yet the question remains: Does the Qur'an contain contradiction, and if so, what are its perceived causes?

Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal narrated a telling incident: *Anas ibn 'Iyād reported from Abū Ḥāzim, from 'Amr ibn Shu'ayb, from his father, from his grandfather, who said: My brother and I once sat among a group of the Prophet's Companions at*

<sup>10</sup> Dr. Salman bin Fahd Al-Awdah, *And They Continue to Differ* (Riyadh: Series of Publications of Islam Today, 1st ed., 1429 AH), p. 5.

*one of his doors. We avoided breaking their circle, so we sat aside. They began discussing a Qur'anic verse and disputed over it until their voices rose. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ came out in anger, his face reddened, and he threw dust at them, saying: 'Stop this, O people! Nations before you were destroyed for disputing with their prophets and striking the Book against itself. The Qur'an was not revealed to contradict itself, but rather for its parts to confirm one another. Whatever you understand of it, act upon it. And what you do not understand, refer it back to one who has knowledge.'"*<sup>11</sup>

Dr. Aḥmad al-Quṣayyir elaborates: *"It is important to note that actual contradiction between Sharī'ah texts is virtually non-existent, for the Sharī'ah is divinely revealed and therefore intrinsically free from contradiction. For this reason, no two evidences have ever been unanimously agreed upon by the Muslim community to be contradictory such that scholars were forced to suspend judgment. However, individual jurists, being fallible, may perceive contradiction between texts due to differences in interpretation or misunderstanding. This contradiction is only apparent—not real—and is relative, varying according to the understanding and perspective of each jurist."*<sup>12</sup>

The Scholars have outlined several key causes for the illusion of contradiction between Qur'anic or Prophetic texts. A summary of the major causes follows:

### **1. Variation in Generality and Specificity**

Texts of the Sharī'ah may appear in general form (*'āmm*) in one instance and specific form (*khāṣṣ*) in another. Sometimes, a general text is intended to carry a specific meaning, or a specific text may imply general applicability. Misunderstanding this interplay may give rise to a false sense of contradiction. However, when the general is properly specified, the contradiction is resolved. This clarification may stem from context within the same text or from an external corroborating text<sup>13</sup>.

### **2. Difference Between Absolute and Qualified Texts**

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<sup>11</sup> Abu Abdullah Ahmad bin Muhammad bin Hanbal Al-Shaybani (d. 241 AH), Musnad Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal, vol. 2, n.p., Qurtubah Foundation, Cairo, Egypt, n.d., p. 181. The hadiths are appended with the judgments of Shu'aib Al-Arna'ut.

<sup>12</sup> Al-Qasir, The Problematic Hadiths in the Interpretation of the Quran, p 36.

<sup>13</sup> Al-Qasir, The Problematic Hadiths in the Interpretation of the Quran, p 36.

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One text may use absolute language (*muṭlaq*) while another restricts or qualifies it (*muqayyad*). At first glance, this may seem contradictory, but when the absolute is interpreted in light of the qualified text, the apparent conflict dissolves.

### 3. Transmission Errors by Narrators

At times, a narrator may err in reporting a Prophetic tradition, leading to the transmission of a problematic or confusing ḥadīth attributed to the Prophet ﷺ. Such errors may be the source of apparent inconsistencies.

### 4. Limited Understanding on the Part of the Jurist

Apparent contradiction may also arise from a jurist's incomplete grasp of a text's linguistic, contextual, or theological dimensions. Even some Companions experienced moments of confusion. For example, Umm Mubashshir reported hearing the Prophet ﷺ say: *"None of those who pledged allegiance under the tree will enter the Fire, God willing."* Hafṣah objected, citing the verse: *﴿وَإِنْ مِنْكُمْ إِلَّا وَارِدُهَا﴾* *"There is none among you but will pass over it [Hell]"* [Maryam: 71]. The Prophet ﷺ replied: *"But God also said: ﴿ثُمَّ نُنَجِّي الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا﴾ 'Then We will save those who feared [Allah]' "* [Maryam: 72]<sup>14</sup>.

When the Prophet ﷺ stated, *"If two Muslims confront each other with their swords, both the killer and the one killed are in the Fire,"* some of the Companions found it difficult to comprehend why the slain individual would be condemned to the Fire. The Prophet ﷺ clarified the reason, saying: *"He was intent on killing his companion."*<sup>15</sup>

### 5. Contextual Differences Leading to Varied Rulings

Two texts may convey seemingly opposing rulings, yet each pertains to a different context, circumstance, or underlying cause. Such differentiation in ruling is

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<sup>14</sup> Narrated by Imam Muslim in his Sahih; see: Book of the Virtues of the Companions, Chapter on the Virtues of the People of the Tree of Pledge of Ridwan (may Allah be pleased with them), vol. 7, p. 169, Hadith no. 6560.

<sup>15</sup> Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, ed. Muṣṭafā Dīb al-Bughā (Damascus: Dār Ibn Kathīr and Dār al-Yamāmah, 5th ed., 1414 AH/1993 CE), vol. 6, p. 2520, ḥadīth no. 6481, "Chapter: The Statement of Allah: {And whoever saves a life...}" [al-Mā'idah: 32], Book of Blood Money (*Kitāb al-Diyāt*).



justified by variation in the time, situation, or legal rationale (*'illah*), and does not constitute real contradiction.

Among the examples of this type is the report that the Prophet ﷺ prohibited the storing of sacrificial meat (*udḥiyah*) beyond three days,[4] while other narrations indicate that he later permitted it.[5] At first glance, these two ḥadīths may appear contradictory. However, when the underlying reason (*'illah*) is understood, the apparent contradiction is resolved. The prohibition issued by the Prophet ﷺ was tied to a specific circumstance at the time—namely, a period of acute famine that afflicted the people. The injunction was therefore aimed at fostering mutual compassion and encouraging the wealthy to share with the poor. Once the cause of hardship was removed, the ruling reverted, and the Prophet ﷺ permitted the storing of meat.

This rationale is explicitly stated in other ḥadīths. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn ‘Ābis reported from his father, who said: *“I asked ‘Ā’ishah, ‘Did the Prophet ﷺ forbid eating the meat of sacrificial animals beyond three days?’ She replied, ‘He only did so in a year when people were afflicted by famine, and he wanted the wealthy to feed the poor.’”*<sup>16</sup>

## 6. Abrogation (*Naskh*)

In some cases, one text abrogates another. If a jurist is unaware of the chronological order or the occurrence of abrogation, they may mistakenly perceive contradiction. In reality, this is a case of legal succession, not contradiction<sup>17</sup>.

1. The scholarly approaches and methodological steps adopted by scholars in resolving apparent contradictions in Qur’anic verses.
2. The wisdom behind the occurrence of seemingly contradictory or differing expressions in the Qur’an.

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<sup>16</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, vol. 5, p. 2068, ḥadīth no. 5107, Book of Foods (*Kitāb al-Aṭ’imah*), Chapter: “What the Salaf used to store in their homes and travels of food, meat, and other provisions.”

<sup>17</sup> Al-Qasir, *The Problematic Hadiths in the Interpretation of the Quran*, pp. 37-38.

## Section 2: The Practical Aspect – Methodology Adopted by Scholars in Addressing the Apparent Contradictions in the Verses of the Qur'an

**Prologue:** This section explores the practical approaches employed by Muslim scholars to address and resolve what may appear as contradictions within the Qur'anic text. Building upon the theological and linguistic foundations established in earlier discussions, it examines the systematic methods developed throughout Islamic intellectual history to reconcile verses that seem, at first glance, to conflict. These methodologies reflect the scholars' profound understanding of the Qur'an's holistic nature, the principles of interpretation (*usul al-tafsir*), and the context of revelation (*asbab al-nuzul*). The section highlights key techniques such as contextual analysis, specification of general statements, reconciliation of absolute and conditional expressions, and prioritization of interpretative principles. By presenting these scholarly strategies, this section demonstrates how the Islamic scholarly tradition has consistently safeguarded the coherence and divine integrity of the Qur'an against claims of contradiction. Finally, I will present selected examples of these alleged contradictions, accompanied by scholarly responses and solutions that refute the baseless accusations of those who seek to cast doubt upon the Qur'an.

We will present several practical examples demonstrating the invalidity of the claim that the Qur'an contains contradictions between its verses.

**Model One:** The Allegation Concerning the Prohibition of Wine in This World and Its Permissibility in the Hereafter

Critics of the Qur'an have argued: *How can God prohibit wine in this world while granting it to the believers in the Hereafter?* They cite as evidence the verse that unequivocally forbids wine in this life:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّمَا الْخَمْرُ وَالْمَيْسِرُ وَالْأَنْصَابُ وَالْأَزْلَامُ رِجْسٌ مِّنْ عَمَلِ الشَّيْطَانِ فَاجْتَنِبُوهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ﴾ [المائدة: 90].

O Believers, wine, gambling, (ungodly) shrines and divining devices are all abominable works of Satan:108 therefore refrain from these so that you may attain to true success.

In contrast, they point to verses describing the blessings of Paradise, where wine is among the delights of the righteous where Allah says:

﴿مَثَلُ الْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي وَعَدَ الْمُتَّقُونَ فِيهَا أَنْهَارٌ مِّنْ مَّاءٍ غَيْرِ آسِنٍ وَأَنْهَارٌ مِّنْ لَّبَنٍ لَّمْ يَتَغَيَّرْ طَعْمُهُ وَأَنْهَارٌ مِّنْ خَمْرٍ لَّذَّةٍ لِلشَّارِبِينَ وَأَنْهَارٌ مِّنْ عَسَلٍ مُّصَفًّى.....﴾ [محمد: 15].

The Paradise that has been promised to the righteous is such that canals will be flowing in it of pure water, and canals will be flowing in it of milk of unchanged

flavor, and canals will be flowing in it of wine which will be delightful to the drinkers, and canals will be flowing in it of honey, clear and pure.

And His saying:

﴿يَسْقَوْنَ مِنْ رَحِيقٍ مَخْتُومٍ (25) خَتَامُهُ مِسْكٌ وَفِي ذَلِكَ فَلْيَتَنَافَسِ الْمُتَنَافِسُونَ﴾ [المطففين: 25-26].

They will be given to drink a pure wine, sealed, whose seal is musk—let those who aspire, strive for this.

Such juxtaposition, they claim, reveals an inconsistency within the Qur'anic text. Yet, as will be demonstrated, this allegation stems from a superficial reading devoid of any understanding of the qualitative distinction between the realities of this world and the eternal perfection of the Hereafter.

**Response to this Allegation:** There is no contradiction between the prohibition of wine in this world and its permissibility in the Hereafter, for the wine of this world is not like the wine of Paradise. The wine of this world is among Satan's tools to tempt and corrupt people, sowing enmity and hatred among them. Allah says:

﴿إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَنْ يُوقِعَ بَيْنَكُمُ الْعَدَاوَةَ وَالْبَغْضَاءَ فِي الْخَمْرِ وَالْمَيْسِرِ وَيَصُدَّكُمْ عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَعَنِ الصَّلَاةِ فَهَلْ أَنْتُمْ مُنْتَهُونَ﴾ [المائدة: 91].

The wine of this world clouds the minds of those who drink it, whereas the wine of Paradise is free from every defect and harm. It is untouched by Satan's influence and does not impair the minds of the believing drinkers. Allah says:

﴿يُطَافُ عَلَيْهِمْ بِكَأْسٍ مِنْ مَعِينٍ بَيَّضَاءَ لَذَّةٍ لِلشَّارِبِينَ لَا فِيهَا غَوْلٌ وَلَا هُمْ عَنْهَا يُتْرَفُونَ﴾ [الصفافات: 45-47].

Thus, the vile, corrupting wine prohibited by Allah in this world—the “mother of evils”—is utterly distinct from the pure and wholesome wine He has permitted for His faithful servants in Paradise. There is, therefore, no contradiction between the prohibition of the former and the permissibility of the latter<sup>18</sup>.

Ultimately, the fundamental distinction between the wine of this world and that of the Hereafter lies in their very nature and purpose. Worldly wine is an intoxicant—corrupting the mind, harming the body, and serving as a tool of vice and evil, rightly deemed "the

<sup>18</sup> Salah Abdul Fattah Al-Khalidi, *The Quran and the Refutation of the Criticisms of Monks* (Damascus: Dar Al-Qalam, 1st ed., 1428 AH/2007 CE), pp. 554-555.

mother of all abominations." In contrast, the wine of Paradise is pure and wholesome—free from intoxication, harm, or ill effects. It is not a source of corruption but a divine reward, a perpetual delight granted by God to the righteous, entirely transcendent of the flawed pleasures of this world.

**Model Two:** The Description of the Miracle of Moses (peace be upon him) as a Serpent and Elsewhere as a Snake

Allah, Exalted is He, relates that the staff of Moses transformed at times into a ḥayyah (a slithering serpent) and at other times into a thu'bān (a great snake). These designations appear in the context of three distinct events in which Moses cast down his staff.

In his profound words, Dr. Fadel Al-Samarrai explains that the Qur'an uses three distinct terms to describe the transformation of Moses' staff: ḥayyah (حية), thu'bān (ثعبان), and jān (جان), each carefully chosen for its context and connotation.

- Jān (جان) refers to a small, swiftly moving serpent, evoking fear and panic. It is used in contexts where Moses himself was afraid, such as in Al-Qasas 28:31 and Al-Naml 27:10, to reflect his personal terror—(فَلَمَّا رَأَاهَا تَهْتَزُّ كَأَنَّهَا جَانٌّ)—and to intensify the emotional impact of fear.
- Thu'bān (ثعبان) denotes a large, powerful serpent and is employed exclusively in front of Pharaoh (Al-A'rāf 7:107; Al-Shu'arā' 26:32) to instill awe and dread in him and his court, emphasizing the miracle's grandeur.
- Ḥayyah (حية) is a general term for any snake, used in Tāhā 20:20 simply to demonstrate God's power without reference to fear or intimidation<sup>19</sup>.

Thus, each term is contextually precise: "jān" for Moses' fear, "thu'bān" for Pharaoh's intimidation, and "ḥayyah" for showcasing divine might. This lexical precision illustrates the Qur'an's unmatched eloquence and purposeful word choice.

**Model Three:** The Alleged Contradiction Regarding Concealing and Confessing on the Day of Judgment. The objection arises from the following verses:

﴿ثُمَّ لَمْ تَكُنْ تَكُنْ فَتَنْتَهُمُ إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوا وَاللَّهِ رَبَّنَا مَا كُنَّا مُشْرِكِينَ﴾ [الأنعام: 23]

*"Then their only trial will be to say: 'By Allah, our Lord, we were never polytheists.'"*

The objection appears in relation to His saying:

﴿وَلَا يَكْتُمُونَ اللَّهَ حَدِيثًا﴾ [النساء: 42]

*"And they will not conceal from Allah any statement."*

<sup>19</sup> <https://2u.pw/jyB55>. Seen on 23-Aug-2025.

**Response to this objection:** The reconciliation can be understood from two perspectives:

1. **Different stages of the Day of Judgment:** In some moments, they may lie and attempt to conceal their past disbelief, while in other moments, they cannot hide anything, as has been explained in prior discussions.
2. **Distinction between speech and limbs:** While their words may attempt falsehood, their limbs and organs will testify truthfully. Allah commands them to speak, and they will bear witness to the truth that they previously sought to hide.

Thus, the verses are not contradictory but rather describe different aspects of accountability: the futile attempt at denial first, followed by the inevitable, undeniable confession before the Almighty<sup>20</sup>.

**Model Four: The Difference in the “Aspects” of Action:** This model addresses the Qur'anic verses that describe actions in two dimensions—divine causation and human acquisition. Consider the verse:

﴿فَلَمْ تَقْتُلُوهُمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ قَتَلَهُمْ﴾ [الأنفال: 17]

"And you did not kill them, but Allah killed them."

Here, the act of killing is attributed to Allah in terms of causation, while it is negated from the believers in terms of direct effect. The majority of scholars explain that human actions are **created by Allah** yet **acquired by humans**. Therefore, negating the action in one aspect does not contradict affirming it in another.<sup>21</sup> Similarly, in the verse:

﴿وَمَا رَمَيْتَ إِذْ رَمَيْتَ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ رَمَى﴾ [الأنفال: 17]

"And you did not throw when you threw, but Allah threw."

The act of throwing is understood as: what you performed was the acquired component—grasping and releasing—while what is attributed to Allah is the divine causation—ensuring effect and hitting the target. As Ibn Jarir al-Tabari explains: "Allah, Glorified and Exalted, attributed the killing to Himself and negated it from the believers who fought the disbelievers. He is the ultimate cause of their death, while the believers' fighting is subordinate to His command."<sup>22</sup>

This demonstrates that Allah is the Creator of human actions. When Allah attributes the action to Himself and negates it from the human doer, it constitutes a single act: the creation

<sup>20</sup> Refer to: Musa Shahin Lashin, *Beautiful Pearls in the Sciences of the Quran* (Cairo: Dar Al-Shorouk, 1st ed., 1423 AH/2002 CE), p. 160.

<sup>21</sup> Musa Shahin Lashin, *Beautiful Pearls in the Sciences of the Quran*, p. 162.

<sup>22</sup> Muhammad bin Jarir bin Yazid bin Kathir bin Ghalib Al-Amili, Abu Ja'far Al-Tabari, Al-Jami' Al-Bayan in the Interpretation of the Quran, edited by Ahmad Muhammad Shakir (Beirut: Al-Maktabah Al-Risalah, 1st ed., 1420 AH/2000 CE), vol. 13, p. 441.

and causation are from Allah, while acquisition and execution occur through the human. By extension, this principle applies to all acquired human actions: divine origination is from Allah, while human acquisition is through their faculties.<sup>23</sup>

**Model Five:** Variations in the Measurement of Time and Days: Consider, for instance, the description of the Day of Resurrection:

﴿خَمْسِينَ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ﴾ [المعارج:4]

“fifty thousand years” (Al-Ma‘ārij 70:4)

whereas elsewhere it states

﴿أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ﴾ [السجدة:5]

“a thousand years” (Al-Sajdah: 5).

The reconciliation lies in the differing experiences of believers and disbelievers, as indicated by:

﴿وَكَانَ يَوْمًا عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ عَسِيرًا﴾ [الفرقان:26].

“and it will be a hard day for the disbelievers” (Al-Furqān 25:26).

Al-Shinqīṭī elucidates the harmonization of these verses in two dimensions: First, as reported by Ibn Abī Ḥātim through Simāk, from ‘Ikrimah, from Ibn ‘Abbās: the “day of a thousand years” in Sūrat al-Ḥajj refers to one of the six days in which Allah created the heavens and the earth; the “day of a thousand years” in Sūrat al-Sajdah denotes the span of divine command and its ascension to Him; while the “day of fifty thousand years” pertains to the Day of Judgment itself.<sup>24</sup>

**Model Sixth:** Declaring God’s Transcendence from Commanding Immorality: At first glance, an apparent contradiction arises between the following verses:

1. The Verse Denying God’s Command of Immorality

﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَأْمُرُ بِالْفَحْشَاءِ﴾ [الأعراف:28]

“Indeed, Allah does not command immorality.” (Al-A‘rāf 7:28)

<sup>23</sup> Al-Zarkashi, The Burhan in the Sciences of the Quran, previous reference, vol. 2, p. 60.

<sup>24</sup> Muḥammad al-Amin ibn Muḥammad al-Mukhtar al-Jakni al-Shanqīṭī, Daf’ Ḥām al-Idṭirāb ‘an Āyāt al-Kitāb [Āthār al-Shaykh al-‘Allāmah Muḥammad al-Amin al-Shanqīṭī, vol. 3], (Riyadh: Dār ‘Aṭā’ at al-‘Ilm – Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 5th ed., 1441 AH/2019 CE), p. 222.

This verse establishes a fundamental theological principle: God, Exalted be He, never commands what is inherently evil or immoral. His commands are always rooted in wisdom, justice, and righteousness.

## 2. The Verse Mentioning God's Command to the Affluent:

﴿أَمَرْنَا مُتْرَفِيهَا فَفَسَقُوا فِيهَا﴾ [الإسراء: 16].

*“We commanded its affluent ones, but they defiantly disobeyed therein.”* (Al-Isrā’ 17:16).

This verse, when read superficially, might appear to suggest that God commanded wrongdoing. However, the exegetical tradition clarifies that God's command here was for obedience and faith in Him, and for belief in His messengers and their message. The affluent elites, however, arrogantly rejected this divine call, choosing rebellion over submission. Consequently, the destruction of their communities became inevitable.

Why then is the command directed specifically at the affluent (المترفين)?

The Qur'an singles out the affluent because they are often the leaders and influencers of society. The masses tend to follow their example. As the Qur'an states:

﴿إِذْ تَبَرَّأَ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوا مِنَ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوا وَرَأَوْا الْعَذَابَ وَتَقَطَّعَتْ بِهِمُ الْأَسْبَابُ﴾ [البقرة: 166].

*“[Consider] when those who were followed will disown those who followed them, and they [all] will see the punishment, and cut off from them are all ties [of relationship].”*

And regarding the plea of the masses on the Day of Judgment:

﴿وَقَالُوا رَبَّنَا إِنَّا أَطَعْنَا سَادَتَنَا وَكُبَرَاءَنَا فَأَضَلُّونَا السَّبِيلَا (67) رَبَّنَا آتِهِمْ ضِعْفَيْنِ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ وَالْعَنَهُمْ لَعْنًا كَبِيرًا﴾ [الأحزاب: 67-68].

*“And they will say, ‘Our Lord, indeed we obeyed our masters and our dignitaries, and they misled us from the [right] way. Our Lord, give them double the punishment and curse them with a great curse.’”*

Thus, by addressing the command to the affluent, the Qur'an underscores their role as moral leaders whose rebellion drags entire societies into corruption.

## Reconciling the Two Verses:

The resolution to this seeming contradiction lies in the distinction between two types of divine command:

- **Legislative (الأمر الشرعي):** The command that conveys God's law, directing His servants to righteousness. This is the sense in: *“Indeed, Allah does not command immorality”* (7:28).

- **Cosmic/Decreed (الأمر الكوني):** The command in the sense of divine will and decree, by which events in creation unfold, even when they involve human disobedience. This is the meaning in: “*We commanded its affluent ones, but they defiantly disobeyed therein*” (17:16).

As Al-Zarkashī eloquently observed: “*We willed from them righteousness, yet they chose corruption. The first is the command of law (شرعي), while the second is the command of destiny (كوني).*”<sup>25</sup>

## The Wisdom Behind the Occurrence of Apparent Contradictions and Variations in the Verses of the Qur'an

### 1. Demonstrating the Inimitability of the Qur'an:

The examination of seemingly problematic or contradictory verses unveils the Qur'an's unparalleled eloquence, structural precision, and profound semantic coherence. As al-Khattābī reports: “I heard Ibn Abī Hurayrah narrate from Abū al-‘Abbās ibn Surayj that a man once asked a scholar regarding the verse: ‘*I do not swear by this city*’ (Q 90:1), in which God appears to negate swearing by Mecca, whereas in another verse He affirms it. Al-Shinqīṭī comments that, at first glance, this might suggest a contradiction:

The Almighty seemingly denies swearing by Mecca in one instance yet swears by it in another.

﴿وَهَذَا الْبَلَدِ الْأَمِينِ﴾ [التين: 3].

‘and [by] this secure city’

The exegetical response, however, rests on four foundations:

**The foremost** of which—endorsed by the majority—is that the negation particle *lā* in Q 90:1 functions as an expletive (*ṣilah*), a rhetorical device frequently employed in classical Arabic to strengthen the discourse rather than convey literal negation.

Examples include:

﴿مَا مَنَعَكَ إِذْ رَأَيْتَهُمْ ضَلُّوا . أَلَّا تَتَّبِعَن﴾ [طه: 92 - 93]

“*What prevented you, when you saw them go astray, from following me?*” (Q 20:92–93), where the negation intensifies the imperative of following, and

﴿مَا مَنَعَكَ أَلَّا تَسْجُدَ﴾ [الأعراف: 12]

<sup>25</sup> See: Al-Zarkashi, The Burhan in the Sciences of the Quran, previous reference, vol. 2, p. 59.



“What prevented you from not prostrating?” (Q 7:12),

Understood to mean, “from prostrating.” This is further corroborated by the verse in Ṣād:

﴿مَا مَنَعَكَ أَنْ تَسْجُدَ لِمَا خَلَقْتُ﴾ [ص: 75].

“What prevented you from prostrating to what I created with My own hands?” (Q 38:75)<sup>26</sup>.

**The second interpretation** posits that the particle 'lā' serves as a negation of the disbelievers' assertions against the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), while the statement {uqsimu} ('I swear') constitutes an independent affirmation. Although this view has been adopted by many scholars, I do not consider it compelling. This is due to the verse in Sūrat al-Qiyāmah:

﴿وَلَا أَقْسِمُ بِالنَّفْسِ اللَّوَّامَةِ﴾ [القيامة: 2].

{And I swear by the self-reproaching soul (75:2)}, which indicates that the divine expression {wa-lā uqsimu} does not intend to present an independent affirmation following a negation introduced by 'lā'. And God knows best.<sup>27</sup>

**The third interpretation** considers it also as a particle of negation. Its rationale lies in the fact that the very act of initiating an oath entails an implicit assertion regarding the exaltation of the object sworn by. Hence, the negation here refutes that implicit assertion figuratively, conveying that the object does not derive its greatness from the oath itself; rather, it possesses inherent greatness, warranting the oath in the first place<sup>28</sup>.

**The fourth interpretation** posits that the prefixed *lām* is the *lām* of inceptive emphasis (*lām al-ibtidā'*), whose vowel has been phonetically elongated. It is characteristic of classical Arabic usage that the fathah may be lengthened with an *alif*, the kasrah with a *yā'*, and the dammah with a *wāw*<sup>29</sup>.

2. The manifestation of hierarchical distinction among creation and the differentiation of the learned from the unlearned, as underscored by the Qur'anic declaration:

﴿قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ﴾ [الزمر: 9].

“Say, are those who know equal to those who do not know?” (Q 39:9).

3. Engagement with problematic or ostensibly contradictory texts necessitates the active exercise of reason, intellectual reflection, and critical examination of evidence. This

<sup>26</sup> Muhammad al-Amin al-Shanqiti, Daf' Ihām al-Iḍṭirāb 'an Āyāt al-Kitāb, p. 355.

<sup>27</sup> Muhammad al-Amin al-Shanqiti, Daf' Ihām al-Iḍṭirāb 'an Āyāt al-Kitāb p. 358.

<sup>28</sup> Muhammad al-Amin al-Shanqiti, Daf' Ihām al-Iḍṭirāb 'an Āyāt al-Kitāb p. 358.

<sup>29</sup> Muhammad al-Amin al-Shanqiti, Daf' Ihām al-Iḍṭirāb 'an Āyāt al-Kitāb p. 358.

process liberates the scholar from the obscurity of blind imitation<sup>30</sup>, paving the way for rigorous inquiry and independent reasoning (*ijtihād*), thereby contributing to the resolution of apparent contradictions.

4. The cultivation of humility and gentleness in the Muslim character, for when one observes others possessing knowledge beyond his own, it compels him toward learning and acknowledging his limitations<sup>31</sup>. Furthermore, the existence of ostensible contradictions prompts the presentation of additional proofs and arguments, thereby demonstrating the vastness of God's knowledge and the inherent limitations of human cognition—instilling humility and dispelling arrogance.

5. The divine trial of humankind, whereby God distinguishes the pure from the impure, and the sincere believer from the hypocrite<sup>32</sup>.

### **Methodological Steps Adopted by Scholars to Resolve Apparent Contradictions in the Qur'ānic Verses**

#### **1. Clarification of the Point of Ambiguity (Tahrīr Wajh al-Ishkāl):**

1.1 Identifying the exact cause of the perceived problem in the verse and articulating it precisely.

1.2 Steps followed by exegetes include:

- Indicating explicitly, or implicitly through equivalent expressions, that the verse presents a difficulty.
- Classifying the type of ambiguity.
- Examining whether the perceived difficulty relates to other similar verses.
- Addressing the issue using one of the recognized scholarly methods.

#### **2. Understanding the Circumstances of Revelation (Asbāb al-Nuzūl):**

- Determining the context of revelation is essential for understanding the verse accurately and removing apparent difficulties.

#### **3. Referring Ambiguous Verses to Clear Ones and to Established Knowledge, with Faith and Affirmation:**

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<sup>30</sup> Abdullah bin Muhammad Al-Mansour, *The Problematic Aspects of the Holy Quran*, p. 109.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 108.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 108.

- A believer is required to have faith in what is unclear, refer ambiguous passages to clear ones, and acknowledge that all are from Allah and therefore free of contradiction.

#### 4. Contextual Analysis (Al-Siyāq):

- Context provides guidance in explaining ambiguous parts and in eliminating alternative, unintended meanings.
- Example: In Allah's statement, ﴿ذُقْ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْكَرِيمُ﴾ [الدخان: 49] "*Taste! Indeed, you are the mighty, the noble!*" [al-Dukhān: 49], the context clearly indicates sarcasm, meaning: *You are, in reality, the abased and contemptible.*

#### 5. Specification of the General (Takhṣīṣ al-ʿĀmm):

- Example: The verse:

﴿وَالسَّارِقُ وَالسَّارِقَةُ فَاقْطَعُوا أَيْدِيَهُمَا جِزَاءَ بِمَا كَسَبَا نَكَالًا مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ﴾ [المائدة: 38]

*As for the male thief and the female thief, cut off their hands as recompense for what they have earned*" [al-Mā'idah: 38] indicates cutting the hand for any amount stolen. However, the ḥadīth, "*Do not cut off the hand of a thief except for a quarter of a dinar or more,*"<sup>33</sup> specifies the minimum threshold, thereby limiting the verse's generality in line with the majority opinion.

#### 6. Seeking Supportive Prophetic Traditions and Authentic Reports:

- The Sunnah explains the Qur'ān and often resolves difficulties by providing context or clarification.

#### 7. Reconciliation of Evidences (Al-Jam' Bayn al-Adillah):

When apparent contradictions arise between two proofs, and each is general in some aspects but specific in others, scholars reconcile them by qualifying each with the specific elements of the other, provided there is textual evidence supporting this.

Example: The verse

﴿وَالَّذِينَ يُتَوَفَّوْنَ مِنْكُمْ وَيَذَرُونَ أَزْوَاجًا يَتَرَبَّصْنَ بِأَنْفُسِهِنَّ أَرْبَعَةَ أَشْهُرٍ وَعَشْرًا﴾ [البقرة: 234]

<sup>33</sup> Narrated by Muslim in his Sahih; see: Book of Hudud, Chapter on the Punishment for Theft and Its Minimum Requirement, Hadith no. 4494.

“And those among you who die and leave behind wives—they shall wait by themselves for four months and ten days” [al-Baqarah: 234] is general, including pregnant and non-pregnant widows. The verse

﴿وَأُولَاتُ الْأَحْمَالِ أَجَلُهُنَّ أَنْ يَضَعْنَ حَمْلَهُنَّ﴾ [الطلاق: 4]

“And those who are pregnant—their term is until they deliver” [al-Talāq: 4] is specific to pregnant women but general regarding widows and others. The latter qualifies the former: a pregnant widow’s waiting period ends upon delivery, regardless of the time elapsed.

### Scholars’ four-tiered approach to dealing with apparent conflicts between texts:

1. **Comprehensive Reconciliation:** First, all relevant texts on a topic are gathered and reconciled wherever possible. It is impermissible to apply one text and discard another unless reconciliation proves impossible.

- Example: The Companions struggled with the verse

﴿الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَلَمْ يَلْبِسُوا إِيمَانَهُمْ بِظُلْمٍ أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمُ الْأَمْنُ وَهُمْ مُهْتَدُونَ﴾ [الأنعام: 82]

- “Those who believe and do not mix their belief with wrongdoing—they will have security and be guided” [al-An‘ām: 82]. They asked, “Which of us does not wrong himself?” The Prophet ﷺ clarified: “It is not as you think; it refers to associating others with Allah, as Luqmān said to his son:

﴿يُنْيَا لَا تُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّ الشِّرْكَ لَظُلْمٌ عَظِيمٌ﴾ [لقمان: 13].<sup>34</sup>

- ‘Do not associate anything with Allah; indeed, shirk is a great wrongdoing” [Luqmān: 13].

2. **Abrogation (Naskh):** If reconciliation is impossible and it is established that one text chronologically supersedes the other, the latter abrogates the former<sup>35</sup>.

- Example: The verse

﴿فَمَنْ تَطَوَّعَ خَيْرًا فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَهُ وَأَنْ تَصُومُوا خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ﴾ [البقرة: 184]

- “And for those who can fast, there is a ransom: feeding a poor person. But to fast is better for you” [al-Baqarah: 184] permitted choosing between fasting and paying compensation. It was later abrogated by

<sup>34</sup> Narrated by Al-Bukhari in his Sahih in the Book of Friday, Chapter: Perfume for Friday, vol. 8, p. 427, Hadith no. 3360, and narrated by Muslim in his Sahih in the Book of Faith, Chapter: The Truthfulness of Faith and Its Sincerity, vol. 1, p. 80, Hadith no. 342.

<sup>35</sup> Same reference, p. 42.

﴿فَمَنْ شَهِدَ مِنْكُمُ الشَّهْرَ فَلْيَصُمْهُ﴾ [البقرة: 185]

- “So whoever witnesses the month must fast it” [al-Baqarah: 185], as confirmed by Salamah ibn al-Akwa’: “When the verse allowing feeding was revealed,

﴿وَعَلَى الَّذِينَ يُطِيقُونَهُ فِدْيَةٌ طَعَامُ مِسْكِينٍ﴾ [البقرة: 184]

- some would fast, and some would feed instead—until the subsequent verse was revealed, which abrogated it.”<sup>36</sup>

**3. Preference (Tarjīh):** If neither reconciliation nor abrogation is possible, scholars resort to weighing the evidences and acting upon the stronger one based on established principles.<sup>37</sup>

#### **4. Suspension of Judgment (Tawaqquf):**

- This entails withholding judgment temporarily regarding a verse’s meaning when conclusive evidence is lacking, avoiding speculative interpretation without clear proof<sup>38</sup>.
- Tawaqquf does not imply that the verse lacks meaning; rather, it reflects scholarly caution to avoid speaking about Allah’s words without knowledge.
- Allah says:

﴿وَلَا تَقْفُ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ إِنَّ السَّمْعَ وَالْبَصَرَ وَالْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ أُولَٰئِكَ كَانَ عَنْهُ مَسْئُولًا﴾ [الإسراء:

[36]

- “Do not pursue that of which you have no knowledge. Indeed, the hearing, the sight, and the heart—each of these will be questioned” [al-Isrā’: 36], and

﴿قُلْ إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ رَبِّي الْفَوَاحِشَ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَنَ وَالْإِثْمَ وَالْبَغْيَ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَأَنْ تُشْرِكُوا بِاللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يُنَزَّلْ بِهِ سُلْطَانًا وَأَنْ تَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ﴾ [الأعراف: 33]

- “Say: My Lord has only forbidden immoralities—open and hidden—sin, oppression without right, associating with Him what He has not authorized, and saying about Allah that which you do not know” [al-A‘rāf: 33].

<sup>36</sup> Abdullah bin Saleh Al-Fawzan, Explanation of the Papers in Usul al-Fiqh, p. 188.

<sup>37</sup> Al-Qasiri, The Problematic Hadiths in the Interpretation of the Quran, pp. 41-42.

<sup>38</sup> Al-Fawzan, Explanation of the Papers in Usul al-Fiqh, pp. 188-189.



### Key Findings

1. Apparent contradictions in the Qur'an stem from misinterpretation rather than genuine textual inconsistency.
2. A true contradiction between Qur'anic passages is impossible, given the divine origin and perfect nature of revelation.
3. Classical scholars identified four necessary preconditions for a valid claim of contradiction: temporal unity, subject unity, real opposition, and equivalence in definitiveness.
4. Most perceived conflicts arise from variations in generality and specificity, absoluteness and qualification, or contextual differences.
5. Abrogation (*naskh*) is essential for explaining certain shifts in rulings, clarifying temporal succession rather than contradiction.
6. Contextual analysis—particularly attention to *asbāb al-nuzūl* (occasions of revelation)—is indispensable in resolving apparent conflicts.
7. The Qur'an's linguistic precision ensures that terms and expressions are selected purposefully for their contexts, not used interchangeably at random.
8. The methodological framework of *uṣūl al-fiqh* offers a comprehensive and rational basis for addressing alleged contradictions.
9. Interpretive challenges encourage intellectual engagement, critical thinking, and deeper reflection on divine revelation.
10. Refuting claims of contradiction reinforces confidence in the Qur'anic text and safeguards Islamic belief from external criticism.

### Practical Recommendations

1. Integrate the study of apparent contradictions and their resolution into Qur'anic exegesis and legal theory curricula in academic and religious institutions.
2. Develop contemporary scholarly resources and digital platforms to address modern claims of Qur'anic contradiction.
3. Encourage interdisciplinary research that integrates linguistics, hermeneutics, and Islamic legal theory to strengthen Qur'anic interpretation.
4. Promote public awareness initiatives to counter superficial readings and misrepresentations of the Qur'an.
5. Foster critical engagement with classical works of *tafsīr* and *uṣūl al-fiqh* to ensure continuity between traditional scholarship and contemporary discourse.

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