

## Research Paper

# The Place of Sunnah (Tradition) and Hadiths in Understanding the Quran from the Perspective of the Deliberation Flow in the Qur'an in Iran after the Islamic Revolution

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## Abstract

The approach of Muslim thinkers in the past centuries regarding the place of hadiths in the understanding of the Qur'an can be considered as a broad spectrum, one end of which is those who believe that there is no need for hadiths in understanding all levels of the Qur'an, and the other end is those who believe that the understanding of the Qur'an is completely dependent on the hadiths of the Prophet and the innocents (PBUH). In the meantime, it seems necessary to pay attention to the perspective of the contemporary socio-cultural flows active in Iran, which are operating in the field of deliberation in the Qur'an and present their special foundations and methods to society in the form of educational institutions. The method of this research is the descriptive-analytical approach. By investigating the written works and interviewing some professors of the three schools of thought, "Mohammad Hossein Elahizadeh", "Ahmadreza Okhovvat", and "Mohammad Ali Lesani Fesharaki", it was clarified that these three flows, by separating the levels of understanding of the Qur'an into two areas of "deliberation" and "interpretation", define a different position for hadiths in each of these levels in such a way that they consider deliberation in the Qur'an to be completely independent of hadiths and only recognize the supporting role of hadiths in this area. However, they believe that the interpretation and explanation of the Qur'an are the responsibility of the innocents (PBUH) and consider it permissible for the scholars and mujtahids on the condition of learning from them.

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## 1. Introduction:

So far, various approaches have been adopted regarding the place of hadiths in understanding the Quran. All of these approaches can be considered as a broad spectrum, one end of which is those who believe that there is no need for hadiths in understanding all levels of the Qur'an, and the other end is those who believe that the understanding of the Qur'an is completely dependent on the hadiths of the Prophet and Ahl al-Bayt (PBUH).

"Deliberation in the Qur'an" is an important subject in clarifying the dimensions of this debate. In the Holy Qur'an, 4 verses explicitly call for deliberation in the Qur'an and consider it a public duty. In addition, there are many hadiths regarding inviting people to deliberate and think. In the past, it was not possible to find a visible difference between the activities of interpretation and deliberation among the works of Islamic scholars. But in the recent century, we have witnessed the emergence of ideas that have addressed the concept of deliberation in the Quran more seriously and introduced it as an activity independent from other Quranic activities.

It can be explained that in today's Iran, three approaches to "deliberation in the Qur'an" have turned to socio-cultural flows. The pioneers and owners of these approaches are "Mohammad Hossein Elahizadeh", "Ahmadreza Okhovvat", and "Mohammad Ali Lesani Fesharaki".

Now the question is, what place do the current socio-cultural flows active in Iran, which are operating in the field of deliberation in the Qur'an, assign to Sunnah (tradition) and hadiths in the understanding of the Qur'an?

## 2. Method:

The method of this research is the descriptive-analytical approach. To investigate this issue, the written works of the professors of the three mentioned flows were used through the library method. Moreover, some professors of these flows were interviewed and the results of these interviews were also utilized as the data of this study.

## 3. Findings:

Lesani Fesharaki believes that interpretation has its own definition and characteristics, and only someone has the right to interpret the Qur'an if he has the necessary conditions and prerequisites for it and is equipped with certain sciences; otherwise, his interpretation will be subjective. However, deliberation in the verses of the Qur'an is an obligation and duty of everyone, for which the Qur'an has given a public call, and everyone not only has the right but also must deliberate on the divine verses and learn and use them.

Accordingly, although Lasani Fesharaki believes that the Sunnah (tradition) of the Innocents (PBUH) has an essential role in the interpretation of the Qur'an, he does not consider the interpretation to be the only level of understanding the Qur'an and explains that deliberation has a different position from interpretation. As a thinker, he considers the position of Sunnah and hadiths as a side and complementary position, not the main one; as for the hadiths of the causes of descent, he believes that these hadiths should be discussed considering their special place. Otherwise, if we want to take them as the prelude to understanding the surahs of the Qur'an, the process of surah studies will be completely disrupted and we will not reach the main goals of the surah.

Ahmadreza Okhovvat also considers hadiths and supplications as another weight of the Qur'an, responsible for explaining, interpreting, implementing, re-revealing revelation, and making it flow in life, and for this reason, using them in understanding the enlightening verses of the Qur'an is clearly effective on the process of deliberation in the Qur'an. Okhovvat believes that the words of Ahl al-Bayt (PBUH) act as a tool for activating deliberation. These hadiths and supplications can open the doors of our awareness and, as an index for understanding, provide the field of knowledge and action appropriate to each verse and surah.

Ahmadreza Okhovvat considers Ahl al-Bayt (PBUH) a divine name and based on this, believes that if they were not there, it would not have been possible to know God's manifestations in the way of understanding the Qur'an, neither in the concept nor in the recognition of examples.

Although Okhovvat has not explicitly mentioned the difference between interpretation and deliberation in his written works, and even mentions these two as mixed and blended in many cases, he considers different levels of deliberation in the Qur'an, the lowest level of which does not require any introduction and means other than the true will to understand the Qur'an; but the closer we get to the higher levels, more tools are needed for deliberation. One of the most important tools is the use of hadiths and supplications of the Ahl al-Bayt (PBUH). The deliberation with the help of Sunnah (traditions) and supplications of Ahl al-Bayt (PBUH) will be one of the highest levels of deliberations. In another part of his written work, Okhovvat states that in order to deliberate in the Qur'an with the help of Sunnah (traditions), it is necessary to first master the themes and concepts of

the Qur'an based on other methods. The greater this mastery is, the more the possibility of using hadiths in deliberation increases.

Mohammad Barzegar, one of Mohammad Hossein Elahizadeh's students, believes that the levels of understanding of the Quran should be detailed and the role of the Sunnah should be examined in each of these separate levels. He introduced the two positions of "deliberation" and "explanation and interpretation" as the most important levels of understanding the Qur'an according to the Qur'an and hadiths, and emphasizes the necessity of paying attention to their differences.

Barzegar introduced deliberation in the Qur'an as the understanding of words, expressions, and verses without the need for any other source, and considers its result to be the understanding of the main and general lines of religion. However, he acknowledges explanation and interpretation as the level of understanding the epistemic layers of the Qur'an, discovering the details and examples of the Qur'an, and deriving the branches of divine decrees.

Barzegar considers deliberation the first step in understanding the Qur'an, completely independent of the Sunnah. On the other hand, he views deliberation as the beginning of interpretation and believes that complete deliberation in the Qur'an is necessary for researchers to enter the interpretation domain. Not only does Barzegar not regard hadiths as a tool and introduction to deliberation, but he basically believes that one of the most important criteria for knowing the correct hadith from an incorrect one is presenting hadiths on the Qur'an through deliberation in it.

Barzegar declares that in terms of explanation and interpretation of the

Qur'an, the main responsibility rests with the Prophet and Ahl al-Bayt (PBUH); because this level of understanding is against deliberation, and according to the Qur'an, is devoted to the Prophet and according to the Qur'an and the Prophet's explanation, is the responsibility of the Ahl al-Bayt (PBUH). According to Barzegar, explanation and interpretation are not necessarily the sole responsibility of the Innocents, but others can also interpret the Qur'an by using the Innocents' (PBUH) teachings and Sunnah (traditions).

#### **4. Conclusion:**

From the sum of the above viewpoints, it can be concluded that the deliberation flow in Iran, by separating the levels of understanding of the Qur'an, defines different positions for hadiths and Sunnah passed down from the Innocent (PBUH) in each of these levels.

In the first level of understanding the Qur'an, which is the duty of the general public and is introduced by the word "deliberation", the hadiths of the Innocents (PBUH) have only a supporting role. However, this supporting role is also evident in the high levels of deliberation, and the initial levels of deliberation are completely independent of the Innocents.

Nonetheless, in the next levels of understanding the Quran, which are referred to as "interpretation" and "explanation", the Innocents (PBUH) play a fundamental role, in a way that the nature of interpretation and explanation is based on them, and although the scholars can learn their method of interpretation as a result of their discipleship, they cannot independently enter the field of interpretation and explanation.

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