

«مقاله پژوهشی»

## واکاوی حوزه‌ی معناشناسی "امن" و "کفر" در قرآن با تکیه بر تئوری رابطه‌ی هم‌نشینی سوسور

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### چکیده

معناشناسی از شاخه‌های علم زبان‌شناسی است که به وسیله‌ی شبکه‌ی ارتباطی بین صورت زبان و معنای آن، می‌توان به مفاهیم دقیق‌تری از واژگان و گزاره‌های قرآنی دست یافت و یکی از روش‌های معمول در آن، ارتباط مفهومی هم‌نشینی بین واژه‌هاست. واژه‌ی امن و کفر از واژگان کانونی قرآن کریم است که در دایره‌ی معنایی آن، کلمات کلیدی دیگری مانند اسلام، تصدیق، شکر، تکذیب یافت می‌شود. جستار پیش رو درصدد کشف معنای دو واژه‌ی "امن" و "کفر" با استفاده از رابطه‌ی هم‌نشینی است و روش انجام پژوهش، توصیفی-تحلیلی و مبتنی بر منابع کتابخانه‌ای است. هدف از این پژوهش دستیابی هرچه بیشتر به عمق مفاهیم حیات بخش قرآن کریم برای رسیدن به هدایت الهی است. برای دستیابی به این هدف ابتدا آیات مربوطه استخراج و از تئوری رابطه‌ی هم‌نشینی در زبان‌شناسی که سوسور آن را مطرح ساخت کمک گرفته شد. و در نهایت با توجه به معانی اولیه‌ی واژگان و کلمات مجاور آن، مفاهیمی ارائه گردیده است. برخی از نتایج به‌دست آمده از این گفتار بدین شرح است: معنای اولیه‌ی امن، آرامش و معانی دیگر آن در رابطه‌ی هم‌نشینی، شامل هم‌نشین حرفی (حروف جر باء و لام)، هم‌نشین اسمی (واژه‌ی مشرکون)، هم‌نشین وصفی (المؤمن، و هو مؤمن، صادق) و هم‌نشین فعلی (شکرتم، کفروا، عملوا الصالحات) می‌باشد. معنای اولیه‌ی کفر، پوشاندن و معنای دیگر آن در رابطه‌ی هم‌نشینی، شامل هم‌نشین اسمی (الفاسقون)، هم‌نشین وصفی (یؤس) و هم‌نشین فعلی (لا يؤمنون، ما عرفوا، اشکروا، أصلح، اشرکتون، کذبوا) است.

### واژه‌های کلیدی

قرآن کریم، معناشناسی، امن و کفر، هم‌نشینی، سوسور.

## ORIGINAL ARTICLE

# Semantic Analysis of "Amn" and "Kufr" in the Quran: Based on Saussure's Theory of Collocation

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## ABSTRACT

Semantics, a branch of linguistics, utilizes the relational network between the linguistic form and its meaning to achieve a more precise understanding of Quranic vocabulary and propositions. One common method is the conceptual collocation between words. "Amn" (security) and "Kufr" (disbelief) are central words in the Quran, whose semantic fields include key words such as Islam, affirmation, gratitude, and denial. The present study aims to uncover the meanings of "Amn" and "Kufr" using the concept of collocation. The research method is descriptive-analytical, based on library resources. The objective is to deepen the understanding of the life-giving concepts of the Quran to achieve divine guidance. To achieve this, relevant verses were extracted, and Saussure's theory of collocation in linguistics was employed. Finally, based on the primary meanings of the words and their neighboring words, concepts are presented. Reflecting on the semantics of Quranic vocabulary and carefully examining the collocation network between them provides a more precise understanding of the verses. Simultaneously examining "Kufr" and "Amn," and the network of meanings associated with them, reveals the various semantic levels of these words, leading to a better understanding of the verses. Some of the research findings are as follows: The primary meaning of "Amn" is tranquility, and its other meanings in collocation include prepositional collocations (prepositions "Bā'" and "Lām"), nominal collocations (the word "Mushrikūn" - polytheists), adjectival collocations ("al-Mu'min" - the believer, "Wa Huwa Mu'min" - and he is a believer, "Šādiq" - truthful), and verbal collocations ("Shakartum" - you gave thanks, "Kafarū" - they disbelieved, "Amilū al-Šāliḥāt" - they did righteous deeds, "Ta'murūna bil Ma'rūf wa Tanhawna 'an al-Munkar" - you command good and forbid bad). The primary meaning of "Kufr" is concealment, and its other meanings in collocation include nominal collocations ("al-Fāsiqūn" - the wicked), adjectival collocations ("Ya'ūs" - despair), and verbal collocations ("Lā Yu'minūn" - they do not believe, "Mā 'Arafū" - they did not know, "Ushkurū" - give thanks, "Ašlih" - correct, "Ashraktumūn" - you associated partners with God, "Kadhdhabū" - they denied)

## KEYWORDS

Holy Quran, Semantics, Amn (Security), Kufr (Disbelief), Collocation, Saussure.

## Introduction

"*Amn*" and "*Kufr*" are pivotal words in the Quran, whose semantic fields include other key words that have positive and negative relationships with them.

The Japanese linguist and Orientalist Izutsu, in his semantic field of faith, mentions words positively related to faith, such as Allah, Islam, affirmation, and gratitude, and words negatively related to it, such as rebellion, denial, disbelief, etc. (Izutsu, 2013 AD/1393 SH: 29). Considering this collocation is highly effective in explaining the meanings of faith and disbelief. Today, there are new and practical methods for accessing the meanings of Quranic vocabulary, including descriptive linguistics, which examines word meanings without temporal constraints. Linguistics has branches of knowledge that assist in determining word meanings, including phonetics, lexicology, syntax, and semantics. Phonetics deals with sounds, their articulation, and related rules. Lexicology discusses the origin and roots of words, derivation and its absence, word meaning, and usage. Semantics addresses the network of relationships between the linguistic form and its meaning (Tayyeb Hosseini, 2014 AD/1393 SH: 35). In this branch, the collocation and substitution of words are of paramount importance in meaning construction. Through this network connecting linguistic forms and their meanings, more precise understandings of various texts, especially the Holy Quran, can be achieved. In sacred texts like the Quran, words are carefully selected and interconnected. In fact, considering collocates and substitutes better clarifies the meanings derived from Quranic verses and propositions. "The collocation axis is the horizontal axis of speech where elements of speech are collocated, establishing collocation relationships. The substitution axis is the vertical

axis of speech where elements substitute each other, establishing substitution relationships. These two types of relationships were first introduced in linguistics by Ferdinand de Saussure." (Scholes, 2004 AD/1383 SH: 38)

Izutsu believes that each semantic field is an independent semantic domain, similar in nature and essence to a word (Izutsu, 2013 AD/1393 SH: 25). He utilized semantics to clarify the true meanings of the Quran. In his opinion, understanding verses correctly requires attention to their context.

In fact, style and context are among the most important interpretive rules. In addition to being considered by semanticists, prominent Quranic interpreters such as Allamah Ṭabāṭabā'ī and Makarem Shirazi have also paid attention to them in their interpretations (Marowwati et al., 2012 AD/1392 SH: 136). The method of this research is descriptive and synchronic semantics, and its aim is to become familiar with a significant portion of the message of revelation regarding the two words *Amn* (security) and *Kufr* (disbelief). This research is a theoretical study conducted using a descriptive-analytical method and library resources.

The main research question is: 'With what words are the two words *Amn* (security) and *Kufr* (disbelief) associated in the Quran, and how does understanding these words help in deeply understanding the meaning of these two words?

## 1. Research Background

In the history of research on the meaning of words in the Quran, valuable works have been written in both early and contemporary periods. The oldest of these is "Gharīb al-Qurān" by *Abān ibn Taghlab*, which has had a noticeable impact on later books. Another one is "Mufradāt al-

Qurān" by *Rāghib Isfahānī*, "Majāz al-Quran" by *Abū 'Ubaida*, "Majma' al-Baḥrayn" by *Turayhī*, "al-Taḥqīq fī Kalimāt al-Quran" by *Muṣṭafawī*, "Qāmūs al-Quran" by *Qarashī*, and literary interpretations such as "Kashshāf" by *Zamakhsharī*. Articles have also been written on this topic, the most important of which are as follows:

The article "The Semantic Structure of Faith in the Quran" by Azarbayjani, published in the second issue of the journal of the Islamic Culture Society of Iran in 1385, in which the author considers faith to be one of the important religious concepts whose semantic structure plays a significant role in theological discussions and the rationale for religion. He considers faith to be an acquired and optional matter based on knowledge and having an emotional component and requiring action. Therefore, it goes beyond Islam and has attributes such as the unseen, God, divine books, prophets, the hereafter, revelation, angels, and divine verses. Given these seven characteristics of faith, this word is interpreted as affirmation accompanied by peace of mind and security.

The article "A Linguistic Study of the Quranic Word *Kufr*" by Azarnoush and colleagues, published in *Adab Arabi* journal, vol. 4, no. 2, 1391, posits that the primary meaning of "*Kufr*" is concealment. Ingratitude, they argue, stems from this meaning, and through semantic evolution, it came to signify the denial of God's Lordship in the verses of the Quran. However, the initial meaning of "*Kufr*," namely ingratitude and the concealment of blessings is evident in many verses. The article equates "*Kufr*" with the two terms ingratitude and denial of God.

The article "Historical Semantics of the Word *Kufr* from Jahili Usage to Grammatical Implication in the Quran," by Qarehkhani et al.,

published in *Adab Arabi* journal, vol. 8, no. 2, 1395, examines the semantic evolution of *Kufr* from a historical semantic perspective. According to their findings, in the Jahiliyyah period, this word was used to mean night, sea, clothing, etc., meanings absent in the Quran. In the Quran, its meaning is primarily associated with denial and disbelief in God. The authors, using the rule of grammatical implication, argue for a semantic extension of the core word *Kufr*, suggesting it influenced words like *Zulm* (oppression), *Jaḥd* (denial), and *Kadhdhaba* (lying), adding or intensifying the meaning of denial to them.

The article "Artistic Imagery of *Kufr* in the Holy Quran," by Ghaemi et al., in the *Quranic Stylistic Studies* journal, no. 1, vol. 1, 1396, concludes that in examining Quranic imagery related to *Kufr*, attention to vocabulary is crucial. Vocabulary, they argue, beyond its semantic meaning or musicality, or both, best portrays the intended meanings of divine speech in the context of *Kufr*. The authors state that the verb *Kafara* has two different infinitives, *Kufr* and *Kufrān*, the former opposing *Imān* (faith) and the latter opposing *Shukr* (gratitude). Therefore, the root *Kufr* encompasses a wide semantic field.

This article, while utilizing the aforementioned articles, examines the two central words, "Security" (*Amn*) and "Disbelief" (*Kufr*), emphasizing their collocation, a relationship not previously studied. Previous work has explored areas such as semantic structure, artistic imagery, and the semantics of the word "Disbelief" or "Faith," but has not addressed the collocation of words. Furthermore, the simultaneous examination of the two words, "Disbelief" and "Faith," and the comparison of their meanings and collocates is a unique contribution of this article. The simultaneous

analysis of both words and careful consideration of the interconnected network of meanings associated with them provides the reader with a more accurate understanding of the verses' meanings and reveals the various semantic levels of the words.

## 2. Semantics

"Semantics" in Arabic is known as "Ilm al-Ma'nā" (Meaning Science) or "Ilm al-Dalālah" (The science of Signification). This term is derived from the Greek noun "Sema," meaning "Sign" and the verb "Semaio", meaning "To signify." (Aitchison, 1992 AD/1371 SH: 113) This discipline is a branch of linguistics that studies the meanings in human languages; in other words, as some linguists have stated: "Linguistics is the science of studying meaning." (Mokhtar Umar, 2007 AD/1386 SH: 19) "This knowledge is divided into philosophical, logical, and linguistic semantics." (Ghaemini, 2010 AD/1389 SH: 78)

One of the new topics related to the science of interpretation is linguistic semantics, which helps to uncover the intended meaning of the Quran. In semantics, there are various types of semantic relationships, which, when encountering the words of the Quran, can be divided into different categories. Furthermore, in understanding the semantic components of Quranic vocabulary, the knowledge of interpretation and exegesis is of particular importance and must be taken into consideration.

Semantic studies in Quranic research have systematic approaches that allow for an acceptable understanding of the concepts under study, explaining the place of that concept among other Quranic concepts, and analyzing them.

The subject of meaning can be discussed and examined from the perspective of conceptual

relationships at the level of vocabulary within the linguistic system under discussion.

There are eight types of conceptual relationships at the lexical level of language: 1. Semantic inclusion, 2. Part-whole relationship, 3. Member-whole relationship, 4. Unit-whole relationship, 5. Synonymy, 6. Polysemy, 7. Semantic opposition, 8. Collocation (Safavi, 2012 AD/1391 SH: 59-76).

Here, the meanings of "Security" (*Amn*) and "Unbelief" (*Kufr*) are explained based on the theory of syntagmatic relationship in linguistics, introduced by Saussure and used in this research.

## 3. Syntagmatic Relationship

Structuralism is among the new critical approaches that has introduced novel perspectives and ideas in the theorizing and application within the field of literary and artistic criticism and analysis.

Structuralism is one of the methods of analyzing literary texts, whose theoretical discussions were shaped by the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure. He considered the internal system of language to have various levels, formed based on binary oppositions, one of which is the syntagmatic and paradigmatic relationship. In the syntagmatic relationship, linguistic signs are combined with each other, and in the paradigmatic relationship, words substitute each other. The entire system of language is based on the two axes of substitution and combination, one being the presence of signs and the other their combination (Khorsha et al., 2016 AD/1395 SH: 116). In other words, words gain semantic breadth in relation to each other and create multiple meanings.

The importance of the syntagmatic and paradigmatic relationship in semantics is

evident in the following statement: "According to Saussure, the entire linguistic system can be encompassed within a theory of these two relationships (syntagmatic and paradigmatic)." (Saussure, 2000 AD/1379 SH: 54). Syntagmatic relationships justify the connection of elements in chains and sentences, while paradigmatic relationships describe the connection of elements with their substitutes (Bierwisch, 1976 AD/1355 SH: 30). In other words, it can be said that: "The syntagmatic link is the link observed between different words in a speech chain. The syntagmatic link is more focused on the combinatorial link between linguistic elements. However, in the paradigmatic link, components are related to each other that do not necessarily have a physical presence in a speech chain, but are understood in a memory chain and are present beyond the statements and sentences. These components can substitute each other in the absence of one another (Javadi and Amir Nikpey, 2010 AD/1389 SH: 177-203).

Selection relates to substitution in the linguistic system, and combination relates to collocation within it (Ghaemina, 2010 AD/1389 SH: 225). Therefore, linguistic elements have two types of relationships: selection and combination. Selection is based on similarity, difference, synonymy, and contrast, while sentence structure, based on collocation, determines combination. The speaker or writer selects elements of speech from among similar options and arranges them in a specific order. This selection of speech elements from among similar options and their combination creates meaning.

#### 4. The Concept of "Amn" (Security/Safety) from a Lexical Perspective

The canonical word *Amn* (and its derivatives) appears 879 times in 77 surahs and 723 verses

of the Quran (Homaie, 2014 AD/1393 SH: 118). *Amn* is used in the Quran with both literal and figurative meanings and has a higher frequency than the word *Kufr* (disbelief). Lexicographers have defined and analyzed this word as follows: *Khalīl ibn Aḥmad* and *Ṭurayḥī* considered the root *Amn* to be the antonym of *Khawf* (fear) (Farāhīdī, 2010 AD/1409 AH: 8, pp. 388-389; Ṭurayḥī, 1956 AD/1375 AH: 6, 204), and defined *Imān* (faith) as confirmation and *Mu'min* (believer) as one who confirms. For example, *Mu'min* means confirmation in this verse: "And you are not a believer to us, even if we were truthful."<sup>1</sup> (Yūsuf/17)

*Ibn Fāris* considers the word *Amn* to be derived from two closely related roots, one meaning tranquility of the heart and the other meaning confirmation (Ibn Fāris, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 1, 133). *Rāghib Iṣfahānī* also defines the root *Amn* as tranquility and peace (Iṣfahānī, 1991 AD/1412 AH: 90-91). Ibn *Manẓūr* and *Zubaydī* define *Amn* as safety and security, and *Imān* as trust and *Amīn* (trustworthy) as strong due to confidence in one's own power (Ibn Manẓūr, 2006 AD/1426 AH: 1, 156-160; Zubaydī, 1993 AD/1414 AH: 18, 27-28). *Muṣṭafawī* derives the root *Amn* from a single origin of security, tranquility, and the removal of fear and anxiety, and defines *Imān* as placing oneself or another in security and tranquility (Muṣṭafawī, 1989 AD/1368 SH: 1, 150).

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1. Even if we were truthful, you would not believe us. The noteworthy point in this verse is the use of the conditional particle "Law" which, according to grammarians, is a particle of impossibility. This means both the condition and the result of the condition are impossible and improbable. In other words, the particle "Law" further emphasizes the brothers of Joseph's lack of truthfulness, demonstrating the harmony and coherence between the wording and the meaning. (This meaning is considered in some Quranic translations such as al-Mizān, Makarem, and Meshkini, etc., and the phrase "*Mā Anta bi Mu'min Lanā*" is translated as "You would not believe" or "you did not believe.")

From the foregoing discussion of the root *Amn*, it is clear that *Amn* has various semantic aspects, some of which are not its primary meaning. According to lexicographers, the primary meaning of the word *Amn* is security and peace, and it gradually came to be used with other meanings, although the original meaning is usually also present.

## 5. *Amn* (Security) in Collocation

Semantics studies the relationship between the linguistic form and its meaning. In this field, the collocation and substitution of words are crucial in meaning construction. This network connecting linguistic form and meaning allows for a more precise understanding of texts, especially the Holy Quran. The word *Amn* (security, safety, faith) is a central word in the Quran, sometimes used in its primary meaning (to put oneself or another at ease) and sometimes in a secondary meaning. Within its semantic field, it forms multiple semantic domains with other key words, acquiring specific meaning and concept through relationships such as collocation and substitution with these words. This section examines the meaning of *Amn* based on its collocations.

### 5.1. prepositional Collocation of *Amn*

Verses where *Amn* is accompanied by a preposition encompass both its primary and secondary meanings. Verses using the prepositions *Bā'* (with) and *Lam* (to, for) appear together in Surah *al-Tawbah*: "And among them are those who annoy the Prophet and say: He is but an ear. Say: An ear of good for you; he believes in Allah and believes in the believers, and is a mercy to those who have

believed." (al-Tawbah/61)<sup>1</sup> It is noteworthy that the verse discusses the Prophet's faith in Allah and the believers. Faith in Allah is expressed with the preposition *Bā'*, signifying literal belief, while faith in the believers is expressed with the preposition *Lam*, signifying a secondary, figurative meaning of belief (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1995 AD/1374 SH: 9, 409). This means the Prophet (PBUH) has faith in God and trust in believers, but not in hypocrites. In other words, as a leader fulfilling his prophetic duty, he is a "good ear" and a good listener to the hypocrites; however, he trusts the believers and confirms their truth.<sup>2</sup>

### 5.2. Nominal Collocation of *Amn*

The nominal companion of "Faith" (*Imān*) is "Polytheists" (*Mushrikūn*). The verse, "And most of them believe not in Allah except while they are polytheists," (Yūsuf/106) presents faith intertwined with polytheism. *Ibn 'Āshūr*, in his commentary, explains that "Most of them" refer to the Arab polytheists. He interprets the verse's core meaning as refuting their claim of faith alongside polytheism, arguing that their faith is equivalent to disbelief because they associate other deities with God (Ibn 'Āshūr, 1999 AD/1420 AH: 12, 124). Allamah Ṭabāṭabā'ī, addressing the coexistence of seemingly contradictory concepts—faith in God and polytheism—uses the analogy of conflicting human traits, explaining that their coexistence

1. Among them are those who trouble the Prophet, saying, "He is credulous and listens to everyone." Say, "He listens to you for your own good. He believes in God and trusts and believes the words of the believers." And he is a mercy to those of you who have believed.

2. This distinction in wording is another manifestation of the harmony and coherence of word and meaning in the Holy Quran, which is also observed in translations of the Quran. For example, "Belief in believers" is translated as "Confirmation" in the Makarem and al-Mizan translations and as "Trusting" and "Confidence in the Ansariyan and Elahi Qomeshei translations—all of which are synonymous meanings.

depends on their relative strengths and degrees (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1995 AD/1374 SH: 11, 276). In this verse, "Faith" signifies polytheistic faith, as it is juxtaposed with polytheism. *Qummī*, *Fayḍ Kāshānī*, and *Muqātil*, in their commentaries, interpret this polytheism as polytheism in worship (Qummī, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 3, 52; Fayḍ, 1994 AD/1415 AH: 3, 52; Muqātil, 2005 AD/1426 AH: 1104).

In summary, the commentators' consensus regarding the conjunction of faith and polytheism is that the mention of "Faith" alongside polytheism in this verse does not imply the existence of true faith in the polytheists. Rather, the negative particle "*Illā*" (except) in the verse excludes them from the realm of true faith. They are polytheistic in their obedience to God, following both divine commands and prohibitions, and harbor conflicting traits—faith and polytheism—of varying degrees. Since they worship other deities alongside God, their faith is tantamount to disbelief.

### 5.3. Adjectival Collocation of *Amn*

The term *Amn* in its adjectival context refers to verses where it is accompanied by a descriptive adjective, such as in (al-Ḥashr/23): "*al-Quddūs al-Salām al-Mu'min al-Muḥaymin*"<sup>1</sup> (The Holy, the Peace, the Secure, the Guardian), or by a phrase with a descriptive meaning, as in (al-Nisā'/124): "And whoever does righteous deeds, whether male or female, while being a believer, those will enter Paradise."<sup>2</sup> Therefore, it signifies a description applicable to both God and His servant. Comparing these two verses, we can say that when "Mu'min" (believer)

describes God, it is preceded by "al" (the definite article) and means "He who secures His creation from their own oppression." (Ṭabrisī, 1952 AD/1372 AH: 9, 400) When it describes a servant, it appears as an indefinite noun. Or, as in verse 17 of Surah *Yūsuf* (previously mentioned): "You do not believe us, even if we were truthful," where, due to its proximity to "*Ṣādiq*" (truthful), "*Amn*" implies belief or acceptance.

### 5.4. Verbal Collocation of *Amn*

Certain words in the semantic field of "*Amn*" play a contextual role, appearing before or after it, significantly impacting the construction of the concept of faith and its specific meaning. Verses where "*Īmān*" (Faith) takes on different semantic aspects due to its association with other verbs indicate that the root "*Amn*," depending on the context, refers to meanings beyond those already mentioned. These meanings include verbal affirmation, heartfelt belief, faith accompanied by gratitude, monotheism, and in some cases, faith accompanied by shirk (polytheism).

#### 5.4.1. *Shakartum*

In verse 147 of Surah *al-Nisā'*, "*Amn*" is associated with the verb "*Shakartum*" (you gave thanks), placing them within the same semantic field: "If you are grateful and have faith, what business does God have in punishing you?"

*Majma' al-Bayān* interprets this verse, and the preceding and following verses, as addressing the hypocrites who are in the lowest level of Hell and have no help except those who repent, believe, and do righteous deeds; God will not punish them, because punishment by kings is for satisfaction, revenge, averting harm, or gaining benefit – things impossible for God (Ṭabrisī, 1952 AD/1372 AH: 3, 200).

1. And God is pure, free from all defects, a grantor of safety, and dominant.

2. And those among men and women who perform some righteous deeds, while having faith during the act, they will enter Paradise.



Therefore, God does not punish hypocrites who repent and perform righteous deeds; rather, as the meaning of the previous verse indicates, "*Sawfa Yu'tillāhu al-Mu'minīna Ajran 'Azīmā*," (al-Nisā'/146) He gives them a great reward along with the believers. Thus, believers are those who believe in God and are grateful for His blessings.

#### 5.4.2. Kafarū

Among the words that fall within the semantic field of faith and are associated with it but are in contrast to it is the word *Kufr* (disbelief). "This is because they believed, then disbelieved. Therefore, a seal was set upon their hearts, so they do not understand." (al-Munāfiqūn/3) This verse explains the faith of the hypocrites. The hypocrites professed faith with their tongues but were disbelievers in their hearts, and God sealed their hearts so that they could not understand the truths of faith (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1995 AD/1374 SH: 19, 469). In this verse, faith means outward faith, because it is associated with the word *Kafarū* (they disbelieved). 'Arūsī, Ṭabāṭabā'ī, Muqātil, and Hārūn ibn Mūsā considered the faith of the hypocrites to be outward and verbal, and their disbelief to be inward and heartfelt ('Arūsī, 1994 AD/1415 AH: 5, 331; Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1995 AD/1374 SH: 19, 469; Muqātil, 2005 AD/1426 AH: 5; Hārūn, 1988 AD/1409 AH: 125-126).

Also, in verse 5 of Surah *al-Mā'idah*, the word *Amn* is associated with the verb *Kufr*: "And whoever denies faith, indeed, their deeds will be nullified." (al-Mā'idah/5) (Muqātil, 2005 AD/1426 AH: 979). Fayḍ Kāshānī interprets the word *Īmān* (faith) as prayer (Kāshānī, 1994 AD/1415 AH: 2, 12), and Baḥrānī, in his commentary, interprets it as the Wilayah (spiritual guardianship) of Imam Ali (AS) (Baḥrānī, 1954 AD/1374 AH: 2, 250).

*Kulaynī*, regarding the *Bā'* in *Bil Īmān*, states that the *Bā'* is either a *Bā' al-'Iwāḍ* (*Bā'* of substitution) or a *Bā' al-Muṣāḥaba* (*Bā'* of companionship). In the first case, it means that one disbelieves in place of the faith he possessed. In the second case, it means that he disbelieved along with his faith; that is, he was a disbeliever in his heart but a believer in appearance (Kulaynī, n.d.: 5, 591).

#### 5.4.3. 'Amilū al-Ṣāliḥāt

The word *Amn*, in verses such as verse 7 of Surah *al-Bayyinah*, takes on the meaning of profound faith due to its association with righteous deeds: "Indeed, those who have believed and done righteous deeds – it is they who are the best of creation." (al-Bayyinah/7) In this verse, *Īmān* signifies heartfelt belief, which is also the most common meaning of *Īmān* in the Quran (Makarem, 1992 AD/1371 SH: 27, 206; Muqātil, 2005 AD/1426 AH: 430). The same applies to verse 124 of Surah *al-Nisā'*, where *Īmān* signifies profound faith, coupled with righteous deeds, as a condition for entering Paradise: "And whoever does righteous deeds, whether male or female, while being a believer – then those will enter Paradise." (An-Nisā': 124) In these verses, *Īmān* means acknowledging the oneness of God and His justice, believing in the Prophet (peace be upon him), and acting upon God's commands (Ṭūsī, n.d.: 3, 338; Ṭabrisī, n.d.: 6, 59).

From the foregoing, we can conclude that profound faith is accompanied by righteous deeds. According to Quranic interpretations, righteous deeds consist of acknowledging God's oneness and justice, believing in the Prophet (PBUH), and acting upon God's commands and prohibitions. The combination leads to becoming "The best of creation." Superficial

faith, however, is not accompanied by righteous deeds and results in "A seal being placed upon their hearts," leading to an inability to understand the truth.

#### 5.4.4. Ta'murūna bil Ma'rūf wa Tanhawna 'an al-Munkar

The word *Amn* in verses such as verse 110 of Surah *Āli 'Imrān*, due to its association with enjoining good and forbidding evil, signifies sincere and devout faith: "You were the best nation brought forth for mankind; you enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and believe in Allah." (Āli 'Imrān/110) In this verse, *Īmān*, because of its association with enjoining and forbidding, means steadfastness in upholding the oneness of God (Ibn 'Arabī, 2001 AD/1422 AH: 1, 118). *Ṣāfi* commentary interprets the verb *Tu'minūn* (you believe) in this verse as encompassing belief in everything commanded. *Fayḍ Kāshānī* states that the reason for the believers' commanding good and forbidding bad is their faith in God, their affirmation of Him, and their public declaration of their religion (Fayḍ Kāshānī, 1994 AD/1415 AH: 1, 370).

Based on the information provided regarding the term *Amn* (security), its primary meaning is security and tranquility. Other meanings, such as verbal faith, heartfelt faith, faith accompanied by righteous deeds, faith accompanied by gratitude, etc., are secondary meanings arising from contextual association. Regarding the word *Amn*, its various meanings represent different levels of faith, the highest being heartfelt faith accompanied by righteous deeds, and the lowest being verbal affirmation. However, in instances where the words *Kufr* (disbelief) and *Amn* are juxtaposed, the discussion pertains to those who deny faith and hypocrites who, after outward

faith, revert to disbelief and leave the realm of faith.

Following the examination of the word *Amn* and its various meanings through contextual association, the word *Kufr* is studied, as it is considered by some lexicographers to be the antonym of *Īmān* (faith). For a better understanding of *Amn*, it can be understood through its opposite.

#### 6. The Concept of *Kufr* from the Lexicographers' Perspective

The word *Kufr* is a central word in the Holy Quran, appearing with its derivatives 524 times in 77 surahs and 464 verses of the Quran (Homaei, 2014 AD/1393 SH: 273). This word is examined from the perspective of early and later lexicographers such as *Farāhīdī*, *Ibn Fāris*, *Ibn Manẓūr*, *Zamakhsharī*, *Muṣṭafawī*, and others.

*Khalīl ibn Aḥmad* sometimes defined *Kufr* as the opposite of faith and sometimes as the opposite of gratitude (Farāhīdī, 1988 AD/1409 AH: 5, 356). He also defined ingratitude (*Kufrān al-Ni'mah*) as a lack of gratitude: "He was ungrateful for the blessing (*Kafara al-Ni'mah*) meaning he did not thank for it." Therefore, it can be concluded that gratitude is commensurate with faith. *Ibn Fāris* derived the root of *Kufr* from the meaning of concealment and covering, and defined a farmer as a *Kāfir* because he covers the seed in the earth. He also defined *Kufr*, due to its concealment of the truth, as the opposite of faith, and ingratitude as denying, concealing, and covering a blessing (Ibn Fāris, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 5, 191). *Rāghib Isfahānī* and *Zamakhsharī* also defined *Kufr* as concealment and covering, and called night a *Kāfir* because it covers people. *Rāghib*, in explaining the meaning of ingratitude, defined it as the failure to express gratitude. He also

believed that the word *Kufrān* (ingratitude) is used more frequently in the Quran in the sense of denying a blessing than the word *Kufr* in denying religion. He considered the plural of both meanings to be *Kafūr* (Iṣfahānī, 2005 AD/1426 AH: 714; Zamakhsharī, 1979: 547).

*Ibn Manẓūr* and *Zabīdī* also define *Kufr* as the opposite of faith, its meaning being denial and rejection of blessings, and they equate *Sātir* with *Kāfir* (disbeliever): "Whoever conceals something has disbelieved in it." (Ibn Manẓūr, 2005 AD/1426 AH: 2, 3453-3457; Zabīdī, 1993 AD/1414 AH: 7, 450) Therefore, the word *Kuffār* in the verse of Sura *al-Ḥadīd* is interpreted as "Farmers": "Like the rain which delights the farmers with its growth." (al-Ḥadīd/20) *Ibn Manẓūr*, *Ibn Athīr*, and *Ṣāhib* identify four types of *Kufr*: denial (*Juḥūd*), opposition (*Mu'ānada*), hypocrisy (*Nifāq*), and rejection (*Inkāṛ*) (Ibn Manẓūr, 2005 AD/1426 AH: 5, 144; Ibn Athīr, 1947 AD/1367 AH: 4, 184; Ṣāhib, 1993 AD/1414 AH: 6, 250). They then explain these types as follows: *Kufr Juḥūd* is a satanic disbelief; there is inner knowledge but no outward confession: "But when that which they knew came to them, they disbelieved in it." (al-Baqarah/89) *Kufr Mu'ānada* is where a person has inner knowledge and outwardly confesses to God's existence, but out of envy and injustice is not a believer. This is like the disbelief of *Abū Jahl* and his ilk. The third type, *Kufr Nifāq*, is defined as having outward confession but no inner belief. The fourth type, *Kufr Inkāṛ*, is disbelief that is both inner and outward, and is disbelief in the oneness of God: "Indeed, those who disbelieved – it is all the same to them whether you warned them or did not warn them – they will not believe." (al-Baqarah/6) A ḥadīth from Imam *Ṣādiq* (AS) in *Majma' al-Baḥrayn* mentions five forms of *Kufr* in the Book of God: Denial and rejection of the

Lord's Lordship (like the disbelief of the *Zanadiqa*), denial by one who knows the truth (*Jahd Jāhid*), rejection of blessings, neglecting God's commands and prohibitions, and the disbelief of disavowal, as in Abraham's words to his people: "We have disbelieved in you" (al-Mumtaḥanah/4) (Ṭurayḥī, 1955 AD/1375 SH: 3, 475-476).

*Mustafwī* considers the root of *Kufr* to be rejection and disregard of things, the effects of which are repudiation, erasure, and concealment. Examples include rejecting and disregarding the kindness and generosity of others, and neglecting the truth (Mustafwī, 1989 AD/1368 SH: 10, 79).

It is clear from what has been said about *Kufr* (disbelief) that it has various semantic aspects, some of which are not its primary meaning. According to linguists, the original meaning of the word *Kufr* is concealment or covering, and it gradually came to be used with other meanings and associated with them, although it often retains its original meaning as well.

## 7. *Kufr* in Relation to Collocation

The network of connections between a word and its meaning has a significant impact on the meaning derived from the verses, and understanding the meanings of Quranic words requires knowing the relationships that words have with each other. In the field of the semantics of *Kufr*, some words play a collocational role, appearing before or after the word *Kufr*, and having a considerable impact on the construction and meaning of *Kufr*. In this section, the meaning of *Kufr* will be examined in light of its collocational words.

### 7.1. Nominal Collocations of *Kufr*

Among the words that are in the same semantic field as *Kufr* and have a collocational relationship with it is the word *al-Fāsiqūn* (the transgressors). "And whoever disbelieves after that - then those are the transgressors." (al-Nūr/55) In this verse, those who do not associate partners with God and worship Him are categorized with the believers, and those who disbelieve in Him are categorized with the transgressors. In *Tafsir al-Şāfi*, *Kufr*, due to its collocational relationship, is interpreted as apostasy from the religion or ingratitude for the blessing of security (Fayḍ Kāshānī, 1994 AD/1415 AH: 3, 443). The same is true in verse 99 of Surah *al-Baqarah*, where it says: "And none will disbelieve in it except the transgressors." In *Kashf al-Asrār*, by Khāja 'Abdullāh Anṣārī, *Kufr*, due to its collocational relationship with *Fisq*, is interpreted as the rejection of God's covenant, and because of this rejection, they were expelled from the Sharia of Moses (Anṣārī, 1951 AD/1371 AH: 1, 291). Ṭabāṭabā'ī, in *al-Mizān*, considers their transgression to be the reason for their disbelief (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 2011 AD/1390 SH: 1, 230). Another nominal collocation that is in the same semantic field as *Kufr* is the word *al-Khāsirūn* (the losers). "And whoever disbelieves in it - then those are the losers." (al-Baqarah/121) This verse points out that those who recite the divine book as it should be (to act upon it) believe in it and those who disbelieve in it are among the losers. *Kufr* in this verse, due to its collocation with what precedes and follows it, is interpreted as disbeliever (Makarem, 1992 AD/1371 SH: 1, 427; Ṭabrisī, n.d.: 1, 375).

## 7.2. Adjectival Collocations of *Kufr*

The word *Kufr* in verse 9 of Surah *Hūd*, due to its association with the adjective *Ya'ūs* (despairing), carries the meaning of "Ingrate"

and "Concealer": "And if We grant a man a taste of mercy (such as health, wealth, children, and security) from Ourselves, then We withdraw it from him (for a wise reason), he becomes utterly despairing of the future and deeply ungrateful for the blessings he once possessed." (Hūd/9) *Ibn 'Āshūr's* commentary defines *Kafūr* as denying a blessing and showing ingratitude towards the benefactor (Ibn 'Āshūr, 1999 AD/1420 AH: 11, 212). In *Majma' al-Bayān*, *Kafūr* is interpreted as "Ingrate." (Ṭabrisī, n.d.: 12, 15) Verses where *Kufr* signifies concealing the truth all refer to disbelievers. Another verse, in Surah *Luqmān*, uses *Kafūr*, due to its association with the adjective *Khattār* (transgressor), to mean denial and rejection: "And when a wave encompasses them (at sea), like overshadowing clouds, they call upon God, purifying their faith and worship for Him (from all forms of shirk). But when He brings them to the land, some of them follow a moderate path (the path of Tawhid), while others break their covenant. And none deny Our signs except every covenant-breaker and disbeliever." (Luqmān/32) Both *al-Mizān* and *Neoonneh* commentaries interpret *Kafūr* as "Ingrate." (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1995 AD/1374 SH: 16, 341; Makarem, 1992 AD/1371 SH: 17, 84)

## 7.3. Verbal Collocations of *Kufr*

In numerous verses of the Quran, the word *Kufr*, due to its association with other verbs, takes on different semantic aspects. That is, based on the context of the verses, it refers to concepts other than those previously mentioned. Among the verbs associated with *Kufr* are:

### 7.3.1. *Lā Yu'minūn*

In verse 6 of Surah *al-Baqarah*, *Kufr*, due to its association with the verb "*Lā Yu'minūn*,"

means the denial of the oneness and uniqueness of God: "*Inna Alladhīna Kafarū Sawā'un 'Alayhim am Lam Tundhirhum lā Yu'minūn.*" (al-Baqarah/6) *Qarashī* calls this type of *Kufr* "Stubborn Disbelief." (*Qarashī*, 1991 AD/1412 AH: 6, 125) As previously mentioned, *Ibn Manzūr*, *Ibn Athīr*, and *al-Ṣāḥib* termed it "Disbelieving Denial." (*Ibn Manzūr*, 2005 AD/1426 AH: 5, 144; *Ibn Athīr*, 1947 AD/1367 SH: 4, 184; *al-Ṣāḥib*, 1993 AD/1414 AH: 6, 250) From what has been stated, it can be said that stubborn disbelief is that disbelief where warning and the lack thereof have no effect on the disbeliever and do not lead to their belief.

### 7.3.2. 'Arafū

Another keyword semantically related to *Kufr* (disbelief) and exhibiting a collocation with it is the root '*Irfān*. "So when that which they recognized came to them, they disbelieved in it" (al-Baqarah/89); the precedence of the root '*Irfān* over *Kufr* indicates knowledge preceding disbelief. *Fayḍ* explains the verse by stating that the Jews sought divine assistance against the disbelievers, and God answered their request by sending the final Prophet (PBUH). They recognized the Prophet through his attributes, but denied his prophethood due to envy and oppression (*Kāshānī*, 1994 AD/1415 AH: 1, 158). In this verse, due to the collocation of '*Irfān* with *Kufr*, the intended meaning of *Kufr* is its technical meaning: Rejection and denial. This verse implies that disbelief does not occur unless preceded by knowledge and recognition; hence, the verse first states "They recognized" ('*Arafū*), followed by "They disbelieved." (*Kafarū*)

### 7.3.3. Ushkurū

Among the words that fall within the same semantic field as *Kufr* and have a contrastive

collocation with it is the word *Shukr* (gratitude/thanksgiving). In verse 152 of *al-Baqarah*, *Kufr* is collocated with *Shukr*, meaning the denial of blessings: "So remember Me; I will remember you. And be grateful to Me and do not disbelieve in Me." (al-Baqarah/152) The remembrance of God precedes gratitude, and gratitude follows the remembrance of God. Whenever *Kufr* in the Quran means the denial of blessings, it is accompanied by *Shukr*. At the end of the verse, the verb *Lā Takfurūn* means "do not disbelieve in Me."

Also, in verse 3 of Surah *al-Insān*, "Indeed, We guided him to the way, either grateful or ungrateful," (*Innā Hadaynāhu al-Sabīl Immā Shākirān Immā Kafūrā*), *Kufr* and *Shukr* are situated in a contrastive semantic field and have a contrastive relationship. *Ṭabāṭabā'ī*, in his interpretation of the verse, defines guidance as showing the way, not as achieving the desired goal, and interprets *Shukr* as utilizing the blessing and acknowledging its source. In explaining the phrase "Either grateful or ungrateful," he states that this phrase provides two arguments. The first is that the intended meaning of "Way" is the tradition and path that humans are obligated to follow. The second is that this path is optional (*Ṭabāṭabā'ī*, 1995 AD/1374 SH: 20, 122-123). Therefore, when *Kufr* is accompanied by *Shukr*, the literal meaning of *Kufr* is intended, which is concealment or covering up, and is translated in Persian as ingratitude.

### 7.3.4. Aṣlahā

In verse 2 of Surah *Muḥammad*, the word *Kufr* (disbelief), due to its inflectional form (*Taf'īl*) and its proximity to the verb *Aṣlahā*, undergoes a semantic shift. Combined with *Sayyi'āt*, it acquires a positive connotation, and *Kaffara 'anhum Sayyi'ātihim* means the transformation

of evil deeds into good deeds: "*Kaffara 'anhum Sayyi'atihim wa Aṣṣalaḥa Bālahum*" (Muḥammad/2) (Askari, 2020 AD/1400 SH: 225; Rāghib, 1954 AD/1374 AH: 4, 51; Zamakhsharī, 1986 AD/1407 AH: 4, 315; Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1995 AD/1374 SH: 18, 336; Ṭūsī, n.d.: 9, 288).

### 7.3.5. Ashraktumūn

In verse 22 of *Ibrāhīm*, the word *Kufr*, due to its proximity to the verb *Shirk* (associated with polytheism), signifies disavowal and rejection, taking on a positive connotation: "*Innī Kafartu bimā Ashraktumūni min Qablu*"<sup>1</sup> (Ibrāhīm/22) (Zamakhsharī, 1986 AD/1407 AH: 2, 551; Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1995 AD/1374 SH: 12, 54). *Homaei* notes that this meaning of rejection is more prevalent in the Quran (Homaei, 2013 AD/1393 SH: 278). Furthermore, the article "A Linguistic Study of the Quranic Word *Kufr*" equates *Kufr* with ingratitude and denial of God (Azarnoosh et al., 2012 AD/1391 SH: 1-16).

### 7.3.6. Kadhdhabū

Another key word semantically related to and in collocation with *Kufr* is the root *Takdhīb* (denial). (al-Baqarah/39) In this verse, *Kadhdhabū* (they denied) follows *Kafarū* (they disbelieved). *Ibn 'Āshūr*, in his commentary on this verse, suggests that *Alladhīna* (those who) may refer to the descendants of Adam, alluding to the polytheists who denied all divine miracles, including the Quran (Ibn 'Āshūr, 1999 AD/1420 AH: 1, 430). *Ṭabrisī* explains that the disbelief inherent in

denial is not merely a matter of speech but indicates a denial of the heart, similar to prostrating to the sun, which is not disbelief in itself but reveals the denial within the heart (Ṭabrisī, n.d.: 1, 144). In this verse, the collocation of *Takdhīb* with *Kufr* emphasizes the intended meaning of the latter as a denial of the heart.

Based on the provided material regarding the root word *Kufr*, it can be said that its primary meaning is "To cover," and its other meanings, in the context of co-occurrence, include *al-Fāsiqūn* (the wicked), *Ya'ūs* (despair), *Lā Yu'minūn* (they do not believe), *Mā 'Arafū* (they did not know), *Ashraktamūn* (you associated partners with God), *Kadhdhabū* (they lied) and so on. Furthermore, rejecting the truth, denying Tawhid (the oneness of God), denying and rejecting evidence, denying blessings, and disavowal and disassociation are secondary meanings of *Kufr* that have emerged due to co-occurrence. It can be said that the various meanings of the word *Kufr* represent different levels of disbelief, and its base meaning is denial, which, depending on the change in the object of the verb, has acquired different meanings.

## Conclusion

The aim of this research was to gain a deeper understanding of the divine word concerning the two central words *Amn* (security, safety) and *Kufr* (disbelief) in their collocations. The findings showed that the two focal words, *Amn* and *Kufr*, within their semantic fields, are related to other keywords in various relationships, such as collocations and substitution. Careful attention to the network of connections between words in a semantic field

1. I certainly disavow the partnership you attributed to me in this world (that you equated my obedience with the obedience of God). Existing translations of the Holy Quran render the word *Kufr* in this verse as disavowal (Ansariyan), disbelief (Elahi), disavowal and disbelief (Makarem), being a disbeliever (Jawāmi' al-Jāmi'), and denial (al-Mizān). From what has been stated, it can be said that, based on the context of the verse, the meaning of disavowal and rejection is more appropriate.

yields more precise understandings of the Quran.

Among the results obtained, the following can be mentioned:

Regarding the root word *Amn*, it can be said that the primary meaning of *Amn* is tranquility. Its other meanings, in the context of collocations, include verbal confession, heartfelt belief, faith accompanied by gratitude, etc. This word, in terms of collocations, includes verbal collocations (prepositions *Bā'* and *Lām*), nominal collocations (the word *Mushrikūn* (polytheists)), adjectival collocations (al-Mu'min (the believer), *Wa Huwa Mu'min* (and he is a believer), *Ṣādiq* (truthful)), and verbal collocations (*Shakartum* (you gave thanks), *Kafarū* (they disbelieved), *'Amalū al-Ṣāliḥāt* (they did righteous deeds), *Ta'murūn bil Ma'rūf wa Tanhawna 'an al-Munkar* (you commanding good and forbidding bad).

Regarding the root word *Kufr*, it can be said that the primary meaning of *Kufr* is "To cover," and its other meanings, in the context of co-occurrence, include nominal collocations (*al-Fāsiqūn*), adjectival collocations (*Ya'ūs*), and verbal collocations (*Lā Yu'minūn*, *'Arafū* (they knew), *Ashkurū* (give thanks), *Aṣlah* (to reform), *Ashraktumūn*, *Kadhdhabū*).

Rejecting the truth, denying Tawhid, denying and rejecting evidence, denying blessings, and disavowal and disassociation are secondary meanings of *Kufr* that have emerged due to collocations. It can be said that the various meanings of the word *Kufr* represent different levels of disbelief, and its base meaning is denial, which, depending on the change in the object of the verb, has acquired different meanings.

Furthermore, the findings indicated that in the Holy Quran, the words and their meanings

are completely coherent and harmonious. Whenever faith in God and the unseen is mentioned, it is expressed using the preposition *Bā'*, and whenever faith and trust in other people are mentioned, it is expressed using the preposition *Lām*. It is suggested that in future research, words within the semantic field of security and disbelief, such as gratitude (*Shukr*), remembrance (*Dhikr*), falsehood (*Kidhb*), and truth (*Ṣidq*), be studied and examined.

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