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بررسی و تحلیل دلایل عدم پذیرش قول مشهور در تعیین جایگاه و ترتیب نزول سوره قلم

محبوبه موسائی‌پور*۱ iD، قاسم صادق‌پور۲

۱. استادیار گروه علوم قرآن و حدیث، دانشگاه پیام نور، تهران، ایران.

۲. دانشجوی دکتری علوم قرآن و حدیث، دانشکده الهیات، دانشگاه میبد، میبد، ایران.

نویسنده مسئول:
محبوبه موسائی‌پور
رایانامه: m.mousaeipour@pnu.ac.ir

چکیده

تاریخ‌گذاری یا توجه به چینش سوره‌ها به ترتیب نزول، از دیرزمان، در حدّ مکی و مدنی بودن مورد توجه بوده است اما در تفسیر، چندان مورد اعتنا قرار نمی‌گرفت؛ امروزه تفسیر تنزیلی با استناد به روش‌هایی به جز شیوه مرسوم تکیه بر روایات ترتیب نزول، توجه قرآن‌پژوهان را جهت آسان‌تر کردن فهم قرآن جلب نموده است. بر همین اساس، پژوهش حاضرکوشیده تا با اتخاذ روش توصیفی تحلیلی، تاریخ نزول سوره قلم را طبق روایات ترتیب نزول و به عنوان دومین سوره نازل شده؛ براساس محتوا و سبک بیانی سوره و تطبیق آن با مراحل نزول قرآن به لحاظ چیدمان دعوت پیامبر و مستندات تاریخی و سیره عصر نبوی مورد کنکاش قرار دهد. یافته‌ها نشان می‌دهد؛ این سوره، فضایی از دوران نزول را ترسیم می‌کند که نمی‌تواند با دوره آغاز بعثت پیامبر و دعوت محتاطانه ایشان و دومین سوره نازله سازگار باشد. بنابراین، با لحاظ تحلیل محتوایی و سبک بیانی سوره و نیز تأیید مستندات تاریخی مبنی بر کاربست روش‌های متعدد اعلام مخالفت و دشمنی مخالفین با حضرت و تطبیق آنها بر آیات نازل شده در سور ص و اعراف به بعد و نیز براساس تطبیقی که حکایت از وجود مشابهات تاریخی سوره قلم با سور یس، فرقان و اسراء دارد، به نظر می‌رسد تاریخ نزول تقریبی این سوره، در دور دوم بعثت یعنی بعد از دعوت محتاطانه پیامبر و بعد از سور انعام و صافات اما بسیار نزدیک به آنها باشد.

Quran and Religious Enlightenment

O R I G I N A L   A R T I C L E

Examination and Analysis of the Reasons for Rejecting the Popular Claim Regarding the Position and Order of Revelation of Surah al-Qalam

Mahbubeh Musaeipour[1*] , Ghasem Sadeghpour[2]

1. Department of Quran and Hadith Sciences, Payame Noor University, Tehran, Iran, Iran.
2. PhD student of Quranic and Hadith Sciences, Faculty of Theology, Meybod University, Meybod, Iran.

Correspondence
Mahbubeh Musaeipour
Email: m.mousaeipour@pnu.ac.ir

A B S T R A C T

Dating or arranging the surahs according to their order of revelation has long been considered, at least to the extent of identifying them as Meccan or Medinan. However, it has not received much attention in traditional Tafsir (exegesis). Today, descending (Tanzīlī) exegesis, relying on methods other than the customary reliance on narrations of the order of revelation, has attracted the attention of Quranic researchers to facilitate a better understanding of the Quran. Accordingly, the present study, using a descriptive-analytical method, aims to investigate the date of revelation of Surah al-Qalam, considered the second revealed surah according to narrations of the order of revelation. This will be done by examining the surah's content and style, comparing it to the stages of Quranic revelation in terms of the arrangement of the Prophet's call, and referencing historical documents and the Prophet's biography (Sīrah). The findings indicated that this surah depicts an atmosphere of a period of revelation that is incompatible with the early period of the Prophet's mission and his cautious call, and its position as the second revealed surah. Therefore, considering the content analysis and stylistic features of the surah, as well as supporting historical evidence regarding the use of various methods by opponents to express their opposition and hostility towards the Prophet, and comparing these with the verses revealed in surahs al-Shuʿarāʾ and al-Aʿrāf onwards, and based on a comparison that shows historical similarities between surah al-Qalam and Surahs Yāsīn, al-Furqān, and al-Isrāʾ, it seems that the approximate date of revelation of this surah is during the second phase of the Prophet's mission, after the cautious call and after surahs al-Anʿām and al-Ṣāffāt, but very close to them.

K E Y W O R D S

Surah al-Qalam, Order of Revelation, Content and Style of the Quran, History.

Introduction

The arrangement of the surahs in the existing *Muṣḥaf* is not based on the order of revelation. However, dating the surahs and correlating their revelation with the life of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) through connecting events and matching the stages of revelation with the stages of the call facilitates understanding the Quran and resolving ambiguities in the interpretation of some verses. It also clarifies certain aspects of his biography.

To achieve this, commentators, scholars of Quranic sciences, and some Orientalists have offered various approaches. One method for determining the order of revelation of the surahs is through narrations that have become well-known and form the basis for most scholars of Quranic sciences, although they are not definitive. This strengthens the possibility that some surahs have been misplaced in the commonly accepted order of revelation, especially since in some cases, the themes and styles of the surahs do not align with the order mentioned in these narrations.

One of these surahs is Surah *al-Qalam*. According to the commonly accepted narrations of the order of revelation, Surah *al-Qalam* is the second surah revealed. However, considering the surah's themes and stylistic approach, and comparing it to the surahs of the initial stages of the Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) call to Islam, it seems unlikely that this is the case. This surah appears to have been revealed later, after the initial, cautious phase of the Prophet's call.

Therefore, the present study, using a descriptive-analytical method, aims to answer the following questions: 'What are the detailed reasons for the impossibility of Surah *al-Qalam* being the second surah revealed, as claimed by the narrations on the order of revelation?' And 'In which phase of the Prophet's (PBUH) call does the revelation of this surah show greater compatibility with existing historical accounts?' Thus, this paper aims to demonstrate the inconsistencies of Surah *al-Qalam* being the second revealed surah by examining narrations on the order and reasons for revelation, the Prophet's conduct (Sunnah), and by explaining the content and stylistic approach of Surah *al-Qalam*.

1. Background of the Discussion

Regarding the chronological ordering of the surahs of the Quran, in the early days of Islam, attention was only given to whether surahs were Meccan or Medinan. It is also narrated that the Muṣḥaf of Imam Ali (AS) included the reasons for revelation (Asbāb al-nuzūl) and interpretations (Tafsīr), but it was not accepted. Many years passed until some Orientalists became interested in the chronological ordering of the Quran. Ultimately, writings on the dating of some surahs have emerged, but no independent study on the dating of Surah *al-Qalam* was found, except for some brief mentions in certain modern commentaries. Furthermore, Muhammad Khamegar, in his book "The Geometric Structure of the Surahs of the Holy Quran," points out that although some commentators, relying on narrations of the order of the *Muṣḥaf*, have claimed it to be the second surah after Surah *al-ʿAlaq*, this claim is not consistent with the context of the verses. He also, in an article titled "Structural Interpretation of Surah al-Qalam," published in the Growth of Quranic Education journal, issue 3, 1382, studied and interpreted the surah from the perspective of the relationship between the verses and the main purpose of the surah. However, none of these studies have comprehensively examined and explained the

reasons for the incompatibility of this surah with being the second surah revealed to the Prophet.

2. Conceptualization

Before entering the discussion, the identification of several concepts is necessary:

2.1. Dating the Surah

Narrations regarding the order of revelation are generally and exclusively found in Hadith, Tafsir, and Quranic studies books. However, following the serious efforts of Orientalists in dating the Quran (cf. Eskandarlou, 2008 AD/1387 SH), a *Muṣḥaf* was printed in Egypt in 1337 AH, with the order of revelation, Meccan, and Medinan origins recorded at the beginning of each surah (Ashkar Tizabi, 2016 AD/1395 SH: 49).

Attention to the order of revelation offered Muslim scholars a new understanding in the interpretation of the Quran; therefore, it has received increasing attention from many of them. *Ḥasan Ḥabunka* in "*Maʿārij al-Afkār*," Muhammad ʿIzzah Darwaza in "*al-Tafsir al-Ḥadīth*," *Mullā Ḥūwaysh* in "*Maʿānī al-Qurʾān*," and *Jābirī* in "Understanding the Qurʾān" have all paid attention to the approach of descending interpretation (*Tafsir Tanzīlī*).

In this approach, while paying attention to the narrations of the order of revelation, the most important source for dating the Quran is the theme, content, and style of the verses and Surahs. The history of early Islam is the next stage. There is a close relationship between the Prophet's life environment and revelation, and between the Prophet's biography (Sira) and the verses, which is very beneficial in understanding the verses. Therefore, the context of the revelation of the Holy Quran, its history, and the Prophetic biography has a serious impact on the interpretation of the verses. It is possible to understand the time of revelation of a verse based on the coherence and content of the verses (cf. Nekounam, 2001 AD/1380 SH).

Surah al-Qalam, in the order of the *Muṣḥaf al-Sharif*, is the sixty-eighth Surah, revealed in response to the unjust accusations against the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) by the disbelievers. In some well-known narrations of the order of revelation, it is mentioned as the second Surah revealed (Ma'rifat, 2007 AD/1428 AH: 1, 136), but for several reasons, this seems unlikely. Therefore, considering the approach of descending interpretation (Tafsir Tanzīlī), we will examine these reasons.

2.2. The Order of Revelation of the Holy Quran

The revelation of the Holy Quran took place gradually over the twenty-three years of the Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) prophethood, in the form of complete Surah or parts of Surah. As God stated in the Quran, the reason for the gradual revelation was the gradual reassurance of the Prophet's heart (Ṭabāṭabāʾī, 1970 AD/1390 AH: 15, 210).

To answer the question of how the gradual revelation of the surahs of the Quran occurred, there is no authentic document except by using the narrations of the order of revelation, the narrations of the occasion of revelation (*Sha'n Nuzūl*), the history of the Prophet's life, or the text of the Quran itself. The narrations of the order of revelation are narrations that have been reported concerning the order of revelation of the surahs of the Holy Quran. However, these narrations are either cited without any *Sanad* (Chain of Transmission) (Shahristānī, 1986 AD/1407 AH: 128; Zarkashī, 1975: 1, 193) or, even if documented, are single hadith (*Akhbar al-Wāḥid*), except for one narration mentioned in the introduction of *Kitāb al-Mabānī* (Ibn

'Aṭīyyah, 2013 AD/1392 SH: 13-15), none of them connect to the Prophet (PBUH) (the aforementioned narration is also unreliable due to the unknown author of *Kitāb al-Mabānī*). Others are attributed to *Ibn 'Abbās*, his direct students, or even indirect students like *Zuhrī* and *'Aṭā*. From a Shi'a perspective, although these narrations are considered *Marfū'* (elevated to the Prophet), they are also considered Maqṭū' (interrupted), and since they do not reach the impeccable Imam, they lack definitive and certain validity.

In conclusion, while narrations regarding the order of revelation, being attributed to *Ibn 'Abbās* and considering their abundance and numerous commonalities, as well as the reliance upon them by Quranic scholars, may warrant consideration, in cases where certain surahs contradict these narrations based on other evidence, the latter will be accepted.

2.3. Stages of the Quran's Revelation and its Correlation with the Invitation Process and Islam Development

As many scholars of Quranic sciences and Islamic history affirm, the Prophet's call to Islam and the expansion of this clear religion, although global in scope, was gradual and based on stages that best suited the temporal and spatial context to influence individuals. While these stages are presented in different books, based on supporting evidence and relational characteristics, from 2 to 5 stages, they generally encompass three:

- The stage of individual and secret invitation for character building and the formation of the initial core of Islam;

- The stage of inviting relatives, aiming for better understanding of the Prophet and increased influence;

- The stage of public and open invitation in Mecca, which began approximately in the fourth year of the Prophet's mission (Balādhurī, 1996 AD/1417 AH: 1, 115-118; Ibn Sa'd, n.d.: 1, 163 and 200; 'Ayyāshī, 1960 AD/1380 SH: 2, 253; Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1970 AD/1390 AH: 17, 360).

Since the surahs of the Quran were also revealed gradually to the Prophet, considering these stages and their objectives, alongside a content-based comparison of the surahs in their order of revelation, can greatly assist in correctly analyzing their position in terms of revelation, a matter considered in this research.

3. An Overview of Surah al-Qalam and Scholars' Opinions on its Chronological Order

Surah al-Qalam is the 68th surah in the *Muṣḥaf* arrangement, comprising 52 verses. All tables of chronological order of revelation place it as the second Surah revealed to the Prophet, after surah al-'Alaq (Zarkashī, 1957: 1, 193; Ma'rifat, 2007 AD/1428 AH: 1, 136; Suyūṭī, 1974: 1, 96; Khāzin, 1994 AD/1415 AH: 1, 9).

Most commentators consider it Meccan (Zamakhsharī, 1986 AD/1407 AH: 4, 584; Ibn Kathīr, 1998 AD/1419 AH: 8, 203; Sayyid Quṭb, 1985 AD/1406 AH: 6, 3650; Tha'labī, 2001 AD/1422 AH: 10, 5; Zuḥaylī, 1990 AD/1411 AH: 29:41; Ibn 'Āshūr, 1999 AD/1420 AH: 29, 64; Ṣādiqī, 1985 AD/1406 AH: 9, 56; Amīn, n.d.: 14, 33). However, some suggest the possibility that verses 17-33 are Medinan (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1970 AD/1390 AH: 19, 367; Shah Abdul-Azim, 1984 AD/1363 SH: 13, 259), and others add verses 48-50 to this possibility (Qurṭubī, 1944 AD/1364 SH: 18, 222; Marāqī, n.d.: 29, 26). Both groups base their arguments on similarities to Medinan verses and supporting narrations. Others, while acknowledging the consideration of verses 17-33 and 48-50 as Medinan in some *Maṣaḥif*, propose another possibility: That the first four verses were revealed at the beginning of the

prophethood, after surah al-ʿAlaq, which could explain its position as the second surah in the chronological order. However, considering the style and themes of the surah's verses, they ultimately reject these views and believe in the immediate revelation of the entire surah. They consider narrations indicating the Medinan origin of some verses as weak (Mursal or Maqtūʿ) and attribute them to coincidence, application, or misunderstanding by the narrator (Darwaza, 2004 AD/1383 SH: 1, 353). Some scholars, such as *Zarkashī*, while mentioning narrations regarding the chronological order and considering surah al-Qalam the second revealed surah, conclude in the discussion of "The first revealed," after mentioning differing opinions, including *ʿĀyisha*'s narration that the first revealed verses were *al-ʿAlaq* then *al-MuddAthīr*, that the first revealed verses were "*Iqra*'" (Read), the first revelation for continued propagation was "*Yā Ayuhal MuddAthīr*" (O! You who have wrapped yourself!), and the first surah was *al-Fātiḥa*, without mentioning surah al-Qalam (Zarkashī, 1957: 1, 207). *Suyūṭī* also narrates the chronological order from *Jābir ibn Zayd*, according to which surah *al-Qalam* is the second revealed surah, but he considers this sequence unusual, noting that *Jābir ibn Zayd* was a *Tābiʿī* (Suyūṭī, 1974: 1, 96).

Allamah *Ṭabāṭabāʾī*'s view, explicitly stated at the beginning of the surah, is that the context of all the verses in this surah is Meccan: "The context of its verses is generally Meccan." (Ṭabāṭabāʾī, 1970 AD/1390 AH: 19, 367)

He does not, however, consider the possibility of the revelation of some verses being based on certain narrations unfounded, and mentions it only as a possibility. Furthermore, as previously mentioned, a review of commentaries shows that most commentators from both Shia and Sunni schools consider this surah to be Meccan, and they do not include or pay attention to unreliable narrations and possibilities such as the separate revelation of the first four or five verses of the surah or the Medinan origin of some of its verses. Only a small number have mentioned the possibility, but not with confirmation or reliable evidence, that some verses are Medinan.

4. Narrations of the Occasion of Revelation (*Asbāb al-Nuzūl*) of Surah al-Qalam

The occasion of revelation narrations mentioned in some Shia and Sunni hadith books and commentaries regarding the first verses of surah al-Qalam are generally based on a narration from *Ḍaḥḥāk ibn Muzāḥim*, which, according to *Ḥaskānī*, was also narrated by *Ṭāwūs* from Imam Bāqir (AS) (Ḥaskānī, 1990 AD/1411 AH: 2, 359). This narration states: "When Quraysh saw that the Messenger of God (PBUH) gave precedence to Ali (AS) over others and honored him, they began to speak ill of Ali (AS) and said: Muhammad is infatuated with Ali. God Almighty revealed this verse in response: (*Nūn wal Qalam wa mā Yasṭurūn*), and in it God Almighty swore that (*Anta bi Niʿmati Rabbika bi Majnūn*: You are not mad because of God's blessings), (*Wa Inna Laka la Ajran Ghayra Mamnūn wa Innaka laʿalā Khuluqin ʿAẓīm*: And you indeed have an unending reward, and you are indeed of a great character), referring to the Quran - until He said - (*Biman Ḍalla ʿan Sabīlih*), referring to those who said that, (*Wa Huwa Aʿlamu bil Muhtadīn*: And He knows best those who are guided)," referring to Ali ibn Abi Talib (AS)." (Ṭabāṭabāʾī, 1970 AD/1390 AH: 19, 377; Ṭabrisī, 1993 AD/1372 SH: 10, 501; Furāt Kūfī, 1989 AD/1410 AH: 1, 495; Baḥrānī, 1994 AD/1415 AH: 5, 454; Ḥaskānī, 1990 AD/1411 AH: 2, 359; Qummi Mashhadi, 1989 AD/1368 SH: 13, 379; Majlisī, 1981 AD/1402 AH: 24, 25)

This narrative depicts the Quraysh polytheists' opposition, ranging from accusing the Prophet to their sensitivity and jealousy towards Ali (AS). This is inconsistent with the timeframe of the Prophet's early mission and the initial period of the Quran's revelation, when the Prophet's companions were largely unknown and cautious in the eyes of the infidels. Therefore, this can be considered one of the indicators suggesting that this Surah cannot be the second revealed surah, especially since this narrative is consistent with the surah's content, which will be examined in detail later.

It is worth noting that some other occasions of revelation mentioned regarding the descent of some verses of Surah Qalam, which indicate that those verses are Medinan, are either unsourced, transmitted in a broken or interrupted chain, or seem to be based on analogy and application (Jaberi, 2008: 1, 175; Darwaza, 2004 AD/1383 SH: 1, 379). Shia commentators generally do not pay attention to them and do not mention them in their interpretations, or they only address them as possibilities rather than certainties, mentioning them as opinions. Furthermore, these occasions of revelation conflict with the Surah's content and the coherence of its verses, which will be discussed further.

5. Attention to Stylistic Features

Stylistic features unique characteristics of any verbal expression and considered a kind of verbal art, are now receiving attention from many analysts of literary and religious texts.

Style, in a sense, is the writer's or speaker's particular perspective on the inner and outer world, which necessarily manifests in a specific style of expression and is the product of a specific selection of words, expressions, and phrases (Shamisa, 2016 AD/1395 SH: 18 and 26). Therefore, examining the linguistic aspects of the Quran in different surahs is also one of the indicators considered in any textual research.

In stylistic analysis of a work or text, experts, while emphasizing the subject matter, consider stylistics at three levels: linguistic, literary, and intellectual (Shamisa, 2016 AD/1395 SH: 21).

5.1. Linguistic Level

This level is divided into three smaller levels: phonetic, lexical, and grammatical. The phonetic or musical level of the text involves examining the text in terms of external music (i.e., meter, rhyme, and refrain) and internal music through figures of speech such as various types of rhyme and repetition.

Lexical or stylistic analysis of words involves observing and examining Persian and Arabic words, foreign words, simple or compound nouns, nouns of meaning and essence, and paying attention to the frequency of certain words in the text. Syntactic or stylistic analysis of sentences involves examining sentences in terms of their axis, collocation, and attention to unusual structures, whether sentences are short or long, and the use of archaic grammatical structures. In other words, sometimes the context of phrases and sentence structure, or in other words, the way a subject is expressed in terms of sentence structure, attracts attention, and this gives the writing a stylistic aspect to some extent (ibid: 219).

5.2. Intellectual Level

Whether a work is introverted, subjective, and mental, or extroverted, objective, and realistic; whether it engages with the external world and the surface of phenomena or delves into the inner depths; whether it is optimistic or pessimistic; and whether it is individualistic or loving. What specific idea does it promote? Does the author have specific feelings?

Generally, the examination of a work in terms of the discourses it engages with is called the intellectual level (Shamisa, 2016 AD/1395 SH: 222 and 224).

5.3. Literary Level

Attention to the frequency of words used in secondary or figurative meanings, issues of rhetoric such as simile, metaphor, symbol, and metonymy, and generally issues related to unique eloquence and rhetoric in each style, pertain to this level (Shamisa, 2016 AD/1395 SH: 224 and 225).

6. Stylistic Analysis of Surah al-Qalam

Surah al-Qalam exhibits numerous stylistic markers across various dimensions. Considering these markers significantly aids in analyzing and examining the historical context of its revelation. Therefore, we will focus on aspects of stylistic markers relevant to the research objective.

Surah al-Qalam, at the linguistic level, is noteworthy for its balanced rhyming, subtle musicality, and repetition (the letter *Nūn*, words of equal weight in verb *If'āl*, repetition of the word *Majnūn*, etc.). In this regard, repetition serves as a tool for emphasis, appearing as the repetition of letters, emphatic particles, and words (Eghbali, 2019 AD/1399 SH: 34) to enhance the importance of the subject and main content for the audience. The syntactic structure of the surah, like other Meccan surahs, is based on short sentences and definitive statements without the need for detail or argumentation. Since the overall approach of the Surah is one of warning, and a strong syntactic style is needed, the types of sentences are arranged to suit this approach. Nominal sentences indicating permanence and continuity (Hashemi, 2009 AD/1388 SH: 85) are employed in these

instances. On the other hand, in some verses, particularly the initial verses of the surah, connecting particles, especially the conjunction "Wāw," function as cohesive elements, creating a calm and contemplative style for the audience to absorb the key points (Ghaybi and Asghari, 2020 AD/1400 SH: 17).

On an intellectual level, the surah stands out for its defense of the Prophet against the accusations of his adversaries, refuting the allegations and clarifying God's perspective on the Prophet's character, explaining the divine tradition of affliction and trial. One of the most beautiful intellectual emphases, seamlessly integrated throughout the Surah, is this explanation of the divine tradition of affliction, which may involve ease or hardship in life. This is illustrated by the apparent ease in the worldly affairs of the disbelievers at the beginning of the Surah (verses 8-14), the hardship depicted in the story of *Yūnus* (verses 47-50) at the end, and the affliction of the companions of the garden with both ease and hardship (verses 17-32) in the middle.

On a literary level, one of the most beautiful aspects of surah al-Qalam is the use of literary devices such as the correspondence of expressions within a verse, the causal relationship between verses, metaphor, simile, and metonymy. The oath at the beginning of the Surah, the high frequency of the emphatic particle "*Inna*," and the combination of negation and exception are indicators of the speaker's (God Almighty) insistence on creating belief in the minds of the audience and the certainty of the repetition of the divine tradition regarding the punishment of the Prophet's adversaries and their defeat in their opposition to him (Eghbali, 2019 AD/1399 SH: 34). The use of interrogative sentences aims to make the audience aware of the speaker's emotions,

creating an emotional response to prepare and encourage the listener to respond to what is clear to the speaker.

Furthermore, of the 52 verses in this surah, 42 end with the letter "*Nūn*." Some linguists believe that the pain and sorrow of the Prophet are conveyed to the audience through the sound of the letter "*Nūn.*" (Abbas, 1988: 108)

In other words, the balanced rhyme coupled with the abundance of the letter "*Nūn*" in the verses of this Surah conveys the peak of the Prophet's pain and sorrow to the audience, as he was subjected to persecution and accusations by the polytheists (Eghbali, 2019 AD/1399 SH: 28).

Therefore, the attention paid to and consideration of the use of this style in the surah indicates the expansion of the Prophet's call, his confrontation with the polytheists, and the Prophet's sorrow over their persecution, which is inconsistent with it being the second Surah. Further examination of the Surah's historical and thematic content will further demonstrate and confirm these stylistic points.

7. Content Analysis of Surah al-Qalam with Historical and Stylistic Analysis and Comparison

Reflection on the Surah's content and the main topics raised in its verses also shows that the Surah's theme is based on the Prophet's affirmation and increasing confidence in the face of the polytheists and his call to them. Accordingly, comparing the Surah's contents and objectives with the stages of the polytheists' confrontation with the Prophet based on history, biographical literature, and textual comparison with the content of other surahs in the order of revelation can greatly assist in research and assessing the reliability of the narrations regarding the order of revelation and ultimately the approximate dating of the Surah. Therefore, we will first examine these stages

based on historical evidence and reflection on the context of the verses' revelation, both in terms of content and relying on interpretations.

It should be explained that the Prophet's mission was accompanied by fundamental changes in Jahiliyyah society, affecting and altering all the norms and customs upon which that society was built. This was especially true in terms of the impact on the interests of a group of people (the Quraysh elite and notables) whose interests were served by these norms. The mere adherence to the traditions of their forefathers was enough to generate hostility and opposition to the new situation; this is addressed in surah al-Zukhruf/22: "Nay, they say: We found our fathers following a certain way, and we are guided by their footsteps."

However, since the strategy of the call to change from polytheism and shirk to the belief in Tawhid was meticulously planned, and reflection on historical accounts and biographical literature confirms this, the polytheist leaders of Arabia did not initially attack the Prophet. This is because the first stage of the call was based on individual development and the cultivation of secret followers (in the Qur'anic expression, "Cultivating the seed"). Only after the official call and the revelation of the followers and the increase in their number, especially when the idols were denied, The Meccan leaders reacted by appealing to the Prophet's family, particularly the respected Abū Ṭālib, his uncle. They repeatedly requested Abū Ṭālib to restrain the Prophet. When these appeals proved ineffective, they resorted to various methods to express their opposition and hostility towards the Prophet (Ibn Hishām, n.d.: 1, 264-267).

Initially, they accused the Prophet of being a liar and a sorcerer, as mentioned in surah al-Qamar/37 and surah Ṣād/14. This accusation

was fallacious, as even at the time, it was clear to any rational person that the accusation of falsehood was incompatible with the Prophet's established reputation for trustworthiness. This accusation yielded no results for the opponents; even until the Prophet's migration to Medina, people continued to entrust their possessions to him, confident in his honesty and integrity (Ibn Hishām, n.d.:1, 485; Ibn Athīr, 2006 AD/1385 SH: 2, 104). This is evidenced by numerous historical accounts, including admissions from prominent Meccan leaders such as *Naḍr ibn Ḥārith*, a staunch opponent of the Prophet, who acknowledged the Prophet's unparalleled honesty and trustworthiness (Ibn Hishām, n.d.: 1, 299-300). This is further supported by the famous dialogue between Heraclius, the Byzantine emperor, and *Abū Sufyān*. Although *Abū Sufyān* admitted that he would have disparaged the Prophet if he hadn't feared accusations of lying from his companions, he was unable to point out any negative aspect of the Prophet's character in response to Heraclius' questions. Heraclius ultimately declared, "If what you say is true… if I could reach him, I would personally wash his blessed feet" (Bukhārī, 2001 AD/1422 AH: 6, 35, Hadith No. 4553; Ibn Kathīr, 1971: 2, 183; Ibn Athīr, 1965 AD/1385 SH: 2, 212).

Subsequently, they resorted to mocking the Prophet and ridiculing his message. *Ubay ibn Khalaf* played a significant role in this, famously holding up a decaying bone and mockingly asking the Prophet, "O! Muhammad, do you think God will revive this after it has rotted and turned to dust?" (Ibn Hishām, n.d.: 1, 361-362) and verses 78-80 of surah Yāsīn represent the earliest mention of this approach, based on the order of revelation ('Ayyāshī, 2001 AD/1380 SH: 2, 296).

The Quran, in response to mockery and ridicule, supports the Prophet and explains that previous communities employed similar tactics against their prophets. This reaction is seen in surah al-Anʿām, verse 10: "And indeed, Messengers were mocked before you, but those who mocked them were encompassed by that which they used to mock at." (Ibn Hishām, ibid: 1, 396; Ṭabarī, 1991 AD/1412 AH: 7, 98) This mockery sometimes went beyond words; some like *'Uqbah ibn Abī Muʿayt,* even spat in the Prophet's face, inciting others. Verses 27-29 of surah *al-Furqān* were revealed following this incident (Shawkānī, 1993 AD/1414 AH: 4, 87). After the futility of this approach became apparent, they resorted to argumentation, sophistry, and demands for miracles (Ibn Hishām, n.d.: 1, 308-309). This is first addressed (based on the order of revelation) in surah *al-Isrā'*, verses 90-95. In the same Surah, God consoles His Messenger, stating that their demands stemmed from argumentativeness and stubbornness, not a genuine desire for enlightenment, and instructs him to cease debating: "Say: Sufficient is Allah as a witness between me and you; indeed, He is ever, of His servants, aware, seeing" (al-Isrā'/96) (Bayḍāwī, 1997 AD/1418 AH: 3, 267). Then, they renewed their attacks on the Prophet's character, accusing him of sorcery and madness to dissuade the public or at least sow doubt. The accusation of madness is first mentioned in surahs al-Ḥijr/6 and al-Ṣāffāt/36, and the accusation of sorcery in surah al-Tūr/29. Another method involved appeasement and negotiation with the Prophet, setting conditions for belief, such as demanding revelation (al-Anʿām/124), a miracle (al-Anʿām/107-109), or tempting offers of wealth, prestige, and leadership among the Arab chiefs in exchange for abandoning his call that verses 1-5 of surah

al-Fuṣṣilat were recited by the Prophet in response to a proposal by *'Utba ibn Rabī'a* (Ibn Kathīr, 1998 AD/1419 AH: 7, 148; Ibn Hishām, 1, 293-295); discouraged by these methods, the Meccans severed ties with the Prophet and his companions, boycotting them in trade, marriage, and social interaction. This boycott lasted three years, causing significant harm to the Muslims (al-Amīn, n.d.: 1, 230; Ḥalabī, n.d.: 1, 475). They also subjected Muslims to torture and persecution; *Bilāl ibn Rabāḥ, 'Ammār Yāsir, Sumayya*, and others are prominent examples from this period (Ibn Hishām, n.d.: 1, 317). Further attempts included imprisoning the Prophet, exiling him, and ultimately plotting his assassination (al-Anfāl/30, al-Tawbah/13), but God informed the Prophet and saved him (al-Amīn, n.d.: 1, 231-232). Their final attempt was to wage war against him.

Considering the style, content, and central themes of surah al-Qalam, we find that it begins by praising the Prophet, affirming his noble character, and expressing confidence in him. The opening verses (specifically the second verse), grammatically answering the oath in the preceding verse, respond to the Meccans' accusations of the Prophet's madness (verses 1-7) (Ṭabrisī, 1993 AD/1372 SH: 25, 210). It then describes the reprehensible qualities of his enemies, who often concealed malicious intent behind a deceptive exterior, aiming to halt his call. The Surah warns against their cunning negotiations and deceitful compromises, highlighting the role of these traits in their hostility towards the Prophet (verses 8-16). It then uses the example of the companions of the garden to warn the Meccans about their fate, emphasizing that worldly possessions and wealth are merely tests and not grounds for pride or boasting (17-33). Following this, it rebukes them for their intellectual and ideological bankruptcy

and their sowing of doubt (34-47). Finally, the Surah reaffirms the Prophet's mission, reiterates confidence in him, and advises patience (48-52) (cf. Shaṭnāwī, 2003).

The short sentences, abrupt questions without conjunctions, and numerous interrogative sentences are not intended to seek information about the unknown but… Rather, it serves secondary purposes, aiming to improve communication and exert a greater influence on the opposing audience. This is achieved through reproach: Their leader said, did I not tell you to glorify God? (Verse 28); threat and intimidation: So leave Me and those who deny this message (Verse 44); and denial: Or do you have a book in which you study? (Verse 37) Furthermore, the divine tradition of testing and trial of humanity is emphasized throughout a significant portion of the Surah's content, providing strong reactive statements in response to their oppositional methods.

The concluding verses of the Surah depict the disbelievers' angry gazes towards the Prophet upon hearing the Quran, illustrating the intensity of their anger and reiterating themes of the preceding verses, maintaining the contextual flow (Darwaza, 2004 AD/1383 SH: 1, 398). This depiction of the disbelievers, along with the story of the companions of the garden and their fate—a fate fitting for the arrogance and rebellion of Quraysh—reveals their weakness and constitutes a form of counter-defense against the psychological attacks on the Prophet by the disbelievers. In other words, imagery and representation—valuable tools of the Quranic style, described as an "Emotional-imaginary form of mental meaning"—are effectively employed in this Surah. It depicts a psychological state, transforming it into a tangible event and illustrating it with human examples (Koohi et al., 2013 AD/1392 SH: 24). This imagery,

along with movement, construction, descriptive laws, effort in speech, the sound of the caravan's words, the burning melodies of phrases, and the music of the verses…engages the eyes, ears, and imagination (Sayyid Quṭb, 1994 AD/1415 AH: 36). The accusation of madness leveled against the Prophet and the implicit call and command to patience, both at the beginning and ends of the surah emphasize the unwavering stance on God's Lordship, the unyielding commitment to the message, and the refusal to compromise in the face of opposition (Bahjatpour, 2008 AD/1387 SH: 181). All these elements serve to awaken the audience, adding excitement and authority to the content, aligning with the socio-cultural context of its revelation. This reflects the consideration of external factors, such as the expansion of the Prophet's call among the people of Mecca, moving beyond cautious and clandestine individual invitations. Therefore, it cannot be reconciled with the Surah's position as the second Surah revealed.

This textual analysis and content division demonstrates the coherence of the Surah's verses and its immediate revelation, and also provides insights into its dating.

Because the concurrence of historical instances of the Meccans' approaches towards the Prophet, and the mention of some of these instances in surah al-Qalam, such as their conciliation and agreement with the Prophet or their sowing of doubt, as well as the reminder of the fate of those who denied the truth and the declaration of the reward of the pious by addressing the Muslims, shows that this Surah cannot have been revealed as the second Surah, shortly after the Prophet's mission and call, when it initially only included his relatives and close ones, and the Quraysh did not yet feel threatened and had not yet begun to confront

the Prophet. Furthermore, considering the order of revelation of the surahs in which the Meccans' diverse approaches towards the Prophet were first addressed, as mentioned in the preceding lines, shows that they generally begin with surah al-Qamar (the 37th surah in the order of revelation) and include surahs such as *Ṣād* (surah 38), *Yāsīn* (surah 41), *al-Furqān* (42), *al-Isrā'* (50), *al-Ḥijr* (54), *al-Anʿām* (55), and *al-Ṣāffāt* (56). This too, as a very noteworthy piece of evidence, can strengthen the hypothesis that surah al-Qalam was revealed around the same time as these surahs.

8. Content and Stylistic Analysis of Some Verses of the Surah Specifically

To complete the content analysis of the surah, we will further delve into the style and context of some verses of surah al-Qalam that are not found in the early revealed surahs (using the extensive research and scrutiny of the content and context of the surahs based on the order of revelation, especially the Meccan surahs, conducted by the authors of this article):

8.1. Verses 3-6 and 51

These verses speak of accusations such as being mad and infatuated, which as previously mentioned and confirmed by historical sources, were leveled against the Prophet by the Meccans during their open opposition and confrontation with the Prophet's clear call, especially when their gods were denied. In the Quran, the unjust accusations leveled against the Prophet are all found in the Meccan surahs: Mad, sorcerer, liar, soothsayer, and poet. These accusations generally arose after the cautious call, in the phase of the official call and the emergence of his companions; especially since, according to history, the Meccans coordinated these accusations during the Hajj season, when

Arab groups were heading to Mecca, deciding to sit on the roads of the caravans and mention accusations and speak ill of the Messenger of God (PBUH), making them fearful of associating and contacting him (Dhahabī, 2003: 1, 558; Ibn Hishām, n.d.: 1, 270).

In these verses, God simultaneously mentions the Prophet's great moral virtues, especially his commendable social ethics (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1970 AD/1390 AH: 19, 369), promises his Messenger, and threatens those who leveled such accusations against the Prophet, stating that they will soon see who is truly afflicted with madness. Therefore, the accusation of madness against the Prophet and the vehement, threatening defense of him in this Surah are inconsistent with the early period of the Prophet's call.

8.2. Verses 10-14

The use of emphatic, intensified adjectives like *Ḥallāf, Hammāz, Mashshā', Mannā', and Mukadhdhib* to describe the attributes of the enemies of the religion who invited the Prophet to compromise and leniency (verse 9) indicates, in a sense, the intensification of the Prophet's call, signifying the overt phase following the initial, individual call in the first period and attesting to the peak of the Meccans' and Quraysh leaders' reaction against the Prophet (Jaberi, 2008: 1, 23). Some interpretations mention that regarding the verse "And do not obey every *Ḥallāf*…": some say that *Ḥallāf* refers to *Walīd ibn Mughayrah*, who offered the Messenger of God (PBUH) a large sum of money to abandon his religion; others say it refers to *Akhnas ibn Sharīq* (according to *'Aṭā'*); some, *Aswad ibn 'Abd Yaghūth* (according to *Mujāhid*); and others, *Abū Jahl* (according to *Ibn 'Abbās*) (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1970 AD/1390 AH: 19, 631; Qurṭubī, 1985 AD/1364 SH: 18, 231; Fakhr Rāzī, 1999 AD/1420 AH:

30, 604; Sayyid Quṭb, 2004 AD/1425 AH: 6, 3662), all of whom were chiefs and nobles of Quraysh. Some, like *Ibn 'Ashūr*, after mentioning various opinions, consider *Walīd ibn Mughayrah*, the originator of this matter, whom other Quraysh leaders joined, to be the intended referent of the verse (Ibn 'Ashūr, 1999 AD/1420 AH: 29, 67).

8.3. Verse 15

Verse 15 discusses verses recited from the Quran to the polytheists, after whom one of their representatives says, "These are the legends of the ancients": "When Our verses are recited to him, he says: These are the legends of the ancients."

If we consider Surah al-Qalam the second surah revealed, given that the verses preceding this one also address the Prophet's sanity, there is no room for this interpretation, as only surah al-'Alaq had been revealed up to that point. However, this verse suggests that before this surah, verses and stories must have been narrated, heard by the disbelievers, and then commented upon.

Further explanation: Myths are generally considered stories lacking verifiable authenticity and potentially containing exaggeration and superstition. However, in the Quranic verses, this application is not limited to these instances; it also refers to the books of earlier peoples, such as Jews and Christians. For example, verse 5 of surah *al-Furqān* conveys this meaning (Darwaza, 2004 AD/1383 SH: 1, 375). Therefore, the mention of this objection by the polytheists, assuming any of the aforementioned meanings of myths, in surah al-Qalam inherently indicates that verses must have been revealed before surah al-Qalam for them to be applicable.

8.4. Verse 34

In verse 34: "Indeed, for the righteous are gardens of delight with their Lord," the righteous and paradise are mentioned. However, considering the early-revealed surahs, the tone and context of the verses generally focus on warning and frightening people with Hell (Jaberi, 2008: 1, 23). Only in surah al-Takwīr (Meccan 7): "And when the Garden is brought near" (al-Takwīr/13) is there a brief mention of paradise, and then in surah al-Burūj (Meccan 27), the description of paradise and its inhabitants is first elaborated: "Indeed, for those who have believed and done righteous deeds are gardens beneath which rivers flow. That is the great attainment." (al-Burūj/11) It seems that to prepare and pique the audience's interest, paradise is mentioned very briefly in Surah al-Takwīr, and then, with two broader characteristics, namely faith and righteous deeds, the inhabitants of paradise are described (Darwaza, 2004 AD/1383 SH: 1, 382). Therefore, mentioning paradise along with the attribute of piety in the second revealed surah does not seem to align with the gradual increase of knowledge in the Quran.

8.5. Verse 35

Examination of the content of the early-revealed surahs shows that the word Muslim does not appear in any of them. This non-usage seems logical because the call to Islam was in its initial stages, and only a small number of people had converted to Islam, not enough to be called Muslims. It is only in surah al-Aʿrāf (the 39th surah) that we encounter this word. By then, the number of Muslims had grown significantly enough to be referred to as Muslims, the Prophet's call had taken a more formal shape, and, in a sense, the society of that time fully recognized this group and title. "Our Lord, pour out upon us patience and cause us to die as Muslims." (al-Aʿrāf/126) This phrase is frequently repeated from this surah onwards (Jaberi, 2008: 1, 180). Also, in Surah al-Aʿrāf (Meccan, 39), God, for the first time, describes the Prophet as a bringer of good tidings. Warning is for the wrongdoers, and good tidings for the righteous. Since, in the early days of Islam and for some time thereafter, Muslims were very few, the addresses were directed towards the disbelievers, and warnings were used. However, in the second phase of the invitation, with the increase in the number of Muslims, good tidings are also mentioned in this verse: "Say: I have no power over any benefit or harm to myself except as Allah wills. And if I knew the unseen, I would have acquired much good, and no evil would have touched me. I am only a warner and a bringer of good tidings to a people who believe." (al-Aʿrāf/188)

Therefore, the mention of the word "Muslims" in verse 35 of surah al-Qalam: "Shall We then make the Muslims like the criminals?"—in contrast with the word "Criminals"—cannot seem logical except with widespread invitation and explanation by the Prophet and the understanding of these two words by the people of the time of revelation; especially in the second Surah, when not much time had passed since the beginning of the invitation.

8.6. Verse 41

In verse 41 of surah al-Qalam: "Or do they have partners? Then let them produce their partners, if they should be truthful," the subject of shirk (polytheism) is mentioned; whereas, until Surah al-Aʿrāf, the opponents of the Prophet were only mentioned as disbelievers, "those who disbelieved." (Jaberi, 2008: 1, 176)

This word, like the word "Muslims," is mentioned from verse 33 of surah al-Aʿrāf onwards: "Say: My Lord has only forbidden immoralities—what is apparent of them and what is concealed—and sin and transgression and associating with Allah that for which He has not sent down authority, and that you say of Allah that which you do not know." (al-Aʿrāf/33)

8.7. Verses 44 and 45

"So leave Me with those who deny this [message]. We will gradually draw them from where they do not know (44) and I will give them respite. Indeed, My plan is firm (45)." The use of the imperative verb in these verses, and their threatening tone, which speaks of God's support and aid to the Prophet and the believers, and which declares, in a way, God's war against the disbelievers and deniers, indicates that the context of revelation pertains to the Meccan period, when the number of Muslims around the Prophet was small, and the call had become public, creating a confrontation between believers and disbelievers. This is especially true since the subsequent verses complete and confirm this matter with a recommendation for patience (Sayyid Quṭb, 2004 AD/1425 AH: 6, 3669-3670). However, this threatening imperative tone is inappropriate at the beginning of the call and prophethood, as the second Surah.

8.8. Verse 45

Verse 45 states: "And I grant them respite. Indeed, My plan is firm." The end of the verse is a nominal sentence beginning with "*Inna*" as a reason, a stylistic feature not commonly found in the early Meccan surahs up to surah al-Qamar (Meccan 37).

Only in the last verse (20) of surah al-Muzzammil: "Indeed, your Lord knows that you stand up almost..." and "And seek forgiveness from Allah. Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful," and in two verses of surah al-Burūj (Meccan 27): "Indeed, the punishment of your Lord is severe (12) Indeed, it is He who originates and restores (13)," do we find nominal sentences with "Indeed" used for justification, although at the beginning of the verse.

However, in surah Ṣād (Meccan 38), which can be said to be from the time of the Prophet's call's progress and nearing its public declaration to his relatives, nominal sentences beginning with "Indeed" gradually appear. In surah Ṣād, at the end of verses 17, 30, and 44, the phrase "Indeed, He is the One who accepts repentance" appears, and at the end of verse 59, the phrase "Indeed, they are the fuel of the Fire" appears. For the first time in this Surah, the ends of four verses are concluded with this justificatory nominal sentence beginning with "Indeed." This style is also repeated in the next revealed surah, surah Aʿrāf (Meccan 39), in verses: "Indeed, He does not like the transgressors" (Aʿrāf/31), 55, 56, and 183.

At the syntactic level, nominal sentences describe enduring phenomena and indicate the steadfastness of the Prophet (PBUH). In cases where the text discusses the continuation of phenomena and behaviors such as opposition to the Prophet, the present tense verb is used, and the frequency of the present tense verb is significantly higher than that of the past tense verb.

At the lexical level, the most frequently used verb in this Surah is the present tense, indicating the ongoing conflict between the polytheists and the Prophet (Iqbali, 2019 AD/1399 SH: 34).

8.9. Verse 48

In this verse, God alludes to the story of Prophet Jonah and cautions the Prophet against impatience and quick anger in his call to Islam: "So be patient for the judgment of your Lord, and be not like the companion of the fish, when he cried out while he was oppressed."

This implicit reference, using the concise phrase "Companion of the fish" instead of mentioning Jonah by name, suggests familiarity with the story for the audience. Since the story of Jonah is detailed in surah al-Ṣāffāt, with his name explicitly mentioned, this serves as further evidence against surah al-Qalam being the second revealed Surah. Furthermore, it contributes to a more precise dating of the surah, suggesting that surah al-Qalam was revealed after surah al-Ṣāffāt.

Considering the surah's stylistic features and corroborating historical evidence of the opponents' diverse methods of opposing and antagonizing the Prophet—from mockery and debate to accusations of falsehood, sorcery, madness, and even attempts on his life (Ibn Hishām, ibid: 1, 264-267)—and comparing these with verses revealed in surahs Ṣād and al-Aʿrāf onwards, and based on a comparative analysis revealing numerous historical similarities between surah al-Qalam and surahs Yāsīn, al-Furqān, al-Isrāʾ, al-Anʿām, and al-Ṣāffāt, the most probable time of its revelation seems to be during the period of the open call to Islam, after the cautious initial phase and after surahs al-Anʿām, and al-Ṣāffāt, but very close to them.

Conclusion

Reflecting on surah al-Qalam, the following conclusions are drawn:

- Since traditions regarding the order of revelation consider surah al-Qalam the second

surah revealed to the Prophet, comparing the surah's time of revelation with the stages of the Prophet's call, the themes and style of its verses, and the traditions concerning its reason for revelation provides a scientific and logical method for confirming or refuting its position in the order of revelation.

- Based on verse 29 of surah al-Fatḥ, the development and progress of the Prophet's call to Islam can be considered in five stages. Considering these periods and their objectives is crucial in analyzing the chronological order of the revelation of the Quranic surahs.

- Analysis of the content of surah al-Qalam and corroboration with historical documents both indicate the expansion of the Prophet's call and the recognition of his religion and message, as well as his companions, among the people of the time of revelation. The narration of *Dhaḥḥāk* regarding the reasons for revelation confirms this claim.

- The context of the verses and careful consideration of the words in this surah, and its comparison with the content of early-revealed surahs, shows that the atmosphere of the surah does not align with the atmosphere of the Prophet's secretive and cautious call. This includes the Prophet being called mad, or the description of attributes such as "*Ḥallāf*," "*Mashshāʿ*," and "*Hammāz*" for the enemies of the religion, which indicates the peak of the reaction of the polytheists and Quraysh leaders to the Prophet's widespread call.

- The use of imperative verbs in *surah al-Qalam* and its threatening tone, as well as the use of nominal sentences and beginning with "*Inna*" for explanation, are not typically found in the style of the surahs revealed from the beginning until surah al-Qamar. These points also confirm that this Surah depicts an era of revelation that cannot be reconciled with the

second Surah revealed at the beginning of the Prophet's mission and his cautious call.

- In *surah al-Qalam*, there are numerous stylistic markers at various linguistic, intellectual, and literary levels, resulting from a specific selection of words, expressions, and prominent aspects of phonetic, lexical, and grammatical features. Through the use of appropriate literary devices, it aims to strengthen and reassure the Prophet in the face of his opponents and their accusations.

- Considering the content analysis and stylistic expression of the surah, and corroborating historical documents regarding the application of various methods of expressing opposition and enmity by the opponents of the Prophet, and comparing them to the verses revealed in *surahs Ṣād* and *al-A'rāf* onwards, and based on a comparison of the historical similarities between *surah al-Qalam* and *surahs Yāsīn*, *al-Furqān*, and *al-Isrā'*, it can be said that the approximate date of revelation of this surah is during the period of the open call, after the cautious call of the Prophet and after *surahs al-An'ām* and *al-Ṣāffāt*, but very close to them.

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