Abstract

Islamic and Western Approaches to the Qur‘ān: A Rhetorical and Thematic Analysis of Sūrah 4 “The Women” (al-Nisā’)

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The Qur’an’s composition is a longstanding concern in Muslim scholarship. Some classical scholars developed the notion of correlations and nazm to understand the order of surahs and verses, but their method is focused mainly on linear arrangement. Modern Muslim scholars attempt to theorize the Qur’an’s organization and coherence. The surahs are examined as units and their arrangement is asserted to compose pairs and groups. Each surah has a central theme running throughout its parts which contain various other subjects. The identification of the main themes and the division into sections differ from one exegete to another due to the interpreters’ choices of thematic breaks rather than textual signs. Long Madinan surahs are viewed as inconsistent by Western scholars, as well, and not all Madinan surahs are examined literarily and structurally. To bring the two parties to a common ground, this study uses two methods (ring-structural analysis by Michel Cuypers and surah-pairs theory by Amin Islahi) to examine the structure and consistency of the Madinan surah 4. The idea of symmetry and rings can be traced in some classical and contemporary Muslim exegesis. This study shows that the selected text is coherent and composed concentrically in mirror-form. The application of ring-theory identifies the main theme based on sectioning the surah’s parts rhetorically into two large sections. The center, located in (v.87), highlights the overarching core of theme of Islam: monotheism and the
certainty of the Resurrection Day. This central pivot establishes society’s foundations and interactions according to faith and righteous deeds. This result is employed in pairing Q 4 and Q 5 and shows that the two surahs compose a large coherent unit in which the first declares the covenant with God whereas the second proclaims the religion’s completion. Both surahs mention many legal laws (e.g. marriages and purity) and theological matters (e.g. Christian theology). Those contents should be read in parallel. The structural and thematic parallelism of the two surahs can create plural views and flexible laws that nourish Muslim identity, fit with modern lives, and consider the need for a reciprocal dialogical relationship between the two academic worlds.
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Dedication

For my parents, my greatest support throughout this journey.

For my siblings, true companions in this endeavor.

And for King Abdulaziz University with gratitude for this extraordinary opportunity.
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Introduction

Western scholars during the last two centuries have doubted the authenticity of the Muslim tradition’s assertions regarding the origin of the Qur’ān. Consequently, critical-historical methods have been applied on the Qur’ānic text in order to examine the Qur’ān’s essence. In comparison, traditional Muslim exegesis has been based on a verse-by-verse reading which takes into consideration Arabic grammar, different recitations, the occasions of revelation, and other principles. Bruce Fudge argues that Muslims have aimed to maintain their doctrines even by compromising some grammatical rules while the Orientalists’ goal has to do with discovering the essence of the text and its relation to the surrounding cultures.1 In context, Islamic and Orientalist studies of the Qur’ān have reduced the significance of the Qur’ānic texts to the outcome of the philological analysis of the Qur’ān’s language without searching for its main theme, expansive implication, and the Qur’ān’s beautiful aspect as a literary and unique text.2

The shift from a historical approach to literary analysis, according to Angelika Neuwirth, should be considered in order to understand the Qur’ān’s place in pre-Islamic time as a text with a “particular literary genre.”3 She argues that due to Western global political dominance and associated Western-centric modes of scholarship, Western study of the Qur’ān has removed it from its significance as scripture. As a result, she states that new methods developed within the Muslim tradition, which approach the Qur’ān as scripture, are not accepted or integrated into

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2 Ibid., 252-53.
Western scholarship. Retrieving the Qur’ān, as she asserts, needs more explorations which maintain the outline of the Muslim accounts on Islam and its Prophet.

Nevertheless, Western scholars’ attention is drawn to the Qur’ān’s hermeneutics and milieu, an approach that challenges Muslim exegesis of the Qur’ān. Accordingly, the Qur’ān has been approached by numerous Western academics without the views of Orientalism. On the other hand, the Qur’ān’s sūrahs, which containing different subjects and historical events seemingly without coherence, often prove overwhelming for Western readers. Many Qur’ān’s sūrahs shift their discourse from narrating a story to establishing a law or addressing specific audiences. Thus, the application of structural approaches to comprehend the texts is needed. Consequently, Western researchers have addressed the question of the Qur’ān’s structure and coherence in order to understand the Qur’ān’s original meaning and its influence on the development of the first Muslim community. The nineteenth-century view of the disunity of a sūrah, as a result, is dispelled by the application of some new analytical methods concerning Qur’ānic composition.

In parallel, there have been a number of attempts in the Muslim world to renew Islamic thinking by purifying the exegetical tradition from superstitions and to return focus back to the Qur’ānic text itself to extract new meanings. The emphasis on the subjective human influence of the exegete embedded within exegetical opinions opens the door for renewing the methods used

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4 Ibid., 128.
5 Ibid., 130.
8 Cuypers, The Banquet, 25.
to interpret the Qurʾān and to highlight the Qurʾān’s universal message and values.\textsuperscript{11}

Accordingly, approaching the Qurʾān from literary perspectives has occupied Muslim scholars in recent decades. The notion of the Qurʾān’s coherence and its sūrahs’ themes and unities has caused a shift to more holistic and thematic interpretations rather than focusing on the meanings of individual verses isolated from their contexts. However, it can be noticed that there is still no adequate space for non-Muslims in most of these readings. Additionally, many of these attempts relate primarily to jurisprudence matters.

The question of the Qurʾān’s unity does not seem related only to academic challenges but also to Muslims’ understanding of their scripture and their applications of its values and teachings in daily life. The need for renewing analytical methods has been recognized. Both Muslim and Western scholars have become concerned about Qurʾānic themes and meanings and their relation to modern intellectual issues. Being able to access non-Muslim efforts on the recent question of the Qurʾān’s coherence and being able to bring a Muslim background into collaboration with these efforts without causing major damages to the Muslim identity would be an opportunity to overcome the fears of applying new methods in reading the Qurʾān present within Muslim scholarship.

Since the Qurʾānic text itself, as it is in its final organization, has become an essential factor to understand the Qurʾān’s meanings in most literary methods, Muslim and Western scholars should be urged to find in this shift towards literary studies a way to learn from the insights of both efforts. Such literary approaches could contribute to reduce the gap between Muslims and Westerns scholarly and intellectual works, and in doing so bring the two different

worlds together for common good, cooperation, and coexistence. The possibility of such collaborations can be seen in the application of two effective ideas regarding Qur’ānic coherence and themes: ring-structural analysis and sūrah-pairs. These two notions have been developed in two different environments, but they have responded positively to different questions and challenges regarding cohesion. Rachel Friedman argues that the ring-theory approach follows structuralism which emerged in European schools during the middle of the twentieth century and it is not on contrary to the Qur’ānic textual nature. Likewise, the notion of sūrah-pairs established within Muslim scholarly literatures is based upon the Qur’ānic text itself. These two methods do not only explain the Qur’ānic coherence and the verses’ order, but they are used to generate or affirm meanings and to unveil the Qur’ānic treasures hidden in its literary aspect and order. The next few pages will shed lights on some studies within the Muslim and Western scholarly traditions conducted to tackle the question of the Qur’ān’s unity and meanings, followed by review of some of these studies’ advantages and points for development.

*Muslim Studies on Qur’ānic Unity*

The emergence of literary approaches within Muslim scholarship has to do primarily with understanding the Qur’ān’s coherence and main themes. However, the subject is not new. To comprehend where Muslim exegetical practices and studies stand today, one must pay attention to the previous attempts that have aimed to understand the layers of meanings embodied in the Qur’ānic text. This concern relates to categories which exegetes apply to these layered meanings: “apparent” ẓāhir, “inner” bāṭin, “literal”, or “figurative.” The earliest interpretive authorities dealt with a number of individual verses’ and words’ meanings. Later, exegetical schools

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12 Friedman, “Interrogating Structural Interpretation of the Qur’ān,” 133-34.
emerged which have set some principles to interpret the Qur’ān and a number of related disciplines have emerged to understand the Qur’ānic nature and styles.

One of those disciplines is the notion of the Science of Correlations (‘ilm al-munāsabāt). The notion of correlations in its basic idea and general classical application is concerned about the logical sequences of the order of the verses (or “concatenation”) and the establishment of the links between two sequential verses or two or more successive sūrah(s) based on reasonable relationships between closer words, verses, or meanings. As linear readings have been the most common characteristic of Islamic scholarship on the Qur’ān, the establishment of the correlations between the verses in a sūrah and subsequent sūrah(s) has followed the same “linear-atomistic” way. Ancient scholars, like Faḵhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d.606/1209), Badr al-Dīn al-Zarkashi (d.794/1391), Ibrahim bin ‘Omar al-Biqā‘ī (d.885/1480), and Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (d.911/1505), are known for their support of the notion of correlations despite some dissenting voices that do not see the significance of this science due to the different periods of revelation. Those aforementioned scholars in general follow the linear method in establishing the internal links between a sūrah’s verses and they focus on the correlations between a sūrah’s opening and end and between its aims and the preceding sūrah(s)’ contents. A number of classical exegetical works provide the correlations between the verses, but the notion itself is not used in interpreting the Qur’ān.

Recently, the notion of correlations has developed to be centered on the concept of “the sūrah” as a unit. The emphasis on the notion of the Qur’ān’s and sūrah’s unities in modern Muslim scholarship started with a tradition established by Muhammad ‘Abduh (d.1322/1905)

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14 Cuypers, The Banquet, 500.
16 Ibid., 211.
later followed by others, such as Maḥmūd Shaltūt (d.1382/1963). In context, several modern exegetical works, like Fī Zilāl al-Qur‘ān by Sayyid Qūṭ (d.1385/1966), have been based on the notion of the thematic unity of the sūrahs. Also, Qur‘ānic Studies scholars have dedicated chapters and works to explain different genres of correlations whereas many academic studies have been conducted to explore the unity of individual sūrahs. Unlike the Early Islamic period studies, the terms “the Qur‘ānic unity,” “thematic unity,” and “munāsabāt (the correlations)” have become very common in tafsīr and the Qur‘ānic field.

In addition, the first usage of the term “al-tafsīr al-mawdū‘ī (thematic exegesis)” was in the late twentieth century when al-Azhar University inserted it as a Qur‘ānic subject for instruction. Thus, Muslim scholarship realized the necessity to compose works defining, framing, and describing thematic exegesis and its principles. There were a small number of works by Egyptian scholars (e.g. al-Tafsīr al-Mawdū‘ī fī al-Qur‘ān al-Kārīm by Aḥmad al-Kummī and al-Bidāyah fī at-Tafsīr al-Mawdū‘ī by ‘Abdulḥayy al-Farmawī) that paved the way toward establishing the rules of such a method. This method has to do in general with revealing the Qur‘ān’s themes and illustrating its objects. It examines a selected Qur‘ānic theme through its occurrences throughout the Qur‘ān in order to form a holistic understanding of it. However, this kind of study is based usually on the traditional exegesis’s principles.

18 Ibid., 40-41.
21 Ibid., 7-8.
22 ‘A. Saeed, al-Madkhal fī al-Tafsīr al-Mawdū‘ī, 10; Muslim, Mabāḥihīth fī al-Tafsīr al-Mawdū‘ī, chap.1, doc.1, 16.
Generally, the thematic exegetical method used to identify “the unity of a sūrah” relies on the sūrah’s main theme by which accompanied themes in the parts are connected. Moreover, a sūrah, either long or short, has one main theme or more while a long sūrah, like Q 2, can be divided into an introduction, main purposes, and a conclusion. In a thematic approach, the notion of correlations is commonly acceptable and applied. Different genres of correlations are seen as indicators of Qur’ānic unity including every Qur’ānic element: a letter’s, a word’s, and a phrase’s locations and correspondence (word-meaning relationship) within the verses’ and the sūrahs’ contexts. Here are the classifications of correlations found in the most modern studies (exegetical or analytical):

i. The correlations between the verses in a sūrah.

ii. The correlations between the contents of a sūrah’s parts.

iii. The correlation between the opening and the end of a sūrah.

iv. The correlation between the opening and the sūrah’s title.

v. The correlations between the sūrahs sharing the same opening.

vi. The correlations between a sūrah and its preceding and following sūrahs.

vii. The correlations between the end of a sūrah and the opening of the following sūrah.

viii. The correlations between the main aims of two following sūrahs.

However, all previously conducted attempts have been in the zone of “theory” because they depend on the interpreters’ judgments in establishing the interrelations. Saeed Ḥawwā (d.1409/1989) indicates that Muslim scholarship has spoken redundantly about the unity between

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27 Fatḥ, Naẓariyyat al-Wihdah al-Qur’āniyyah, 43.
a Qur’ānic sūrah’s verses or between the sūrahs as units. Ḥawwā claims that there have been no sufficient scholarly studies addressing this important subject in this period of scholarly development in which many methods are generated in order to read different religious texts. In the circumstances of the question about the unity and order of the Qur’ān, he states that it becomes an obligation (fard) in this era to take the initiative to tackle such a task. He claims that no Muslim interpreter has come up with a theory that explains the coherence of the Qur’ān whereas many attempts have been conducted to explain the correlations between the verses in a sūrah. Ḥawwā takes pains to explain the sūrahs’ order and unities through establishing Q 2’s themes as a basis for the following sūrahs’ themes.

In parallel to thematic methods, theories of the Qur’ān’s naẓm (composition) have been established in order to explain the arrangements of the verses and the sūrahs. This enables a more accurate and comprehensive reading of the Qur’ān that exceeds the notion of the links between the verses and between the sūrahs and highlights the Qur’ānic wisdom and world-views. Ancient exegetes, like Rāzī, are concerned with different balāḡah’s (eloquence) elements in their commentaries. This is associated with the notion of inimitability because it reveals different levels of the Qur’ānic texts. For Arabs, balāḡah is “when the beginning of your speech leads to its end, and its end is tied to its beginning.” It is also “the ability” of composing well-spoken and well-structured speech. Niẓām is one of balāḡah’s components. On this basis, Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Farāhī (d.1348/1930) and Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāḥī (d.1417/1997) have developed a theory to

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29 Ibid., 1:24.
30 M.A.S. Abdel Haleem, “Context and internal relationships: keys to quranic exegesis: A study of Sūrat al-Raḥmān (Qur’ān chapter 55),” in Approaches to the Qur’ān, ed. by Hawting and Abdul-Kader A. Shareef (New York: Routledge, 1993), 72. Balāḡah is one of the linguistic fields flourishing within the context of the Qur’ān’s interpretation.
explain the Qur’ānic *nazm* (coherence). They emphasize the notion of the coherence of the Qur’ān as an interpretive method instead of interpreting “the basic unit,” namely isolated verse(s). Basically, Farāhī’s and Iṣlāḥī’s theories are based on identifying the pillar of a sūrah (a main theme) by which the sūrah’s different parts are linked.

The significant contribution of Farāhī is the notion of sūrah-groups while Iṣlāḥī presents the idea of sūrah-pairs. Despite the significance of Iṣlāḥī’s contribution to understanding the Qur’ān’s *nazm*, his work is not well-known within Arabic scholarly literature due to the lack of access to Urdu in which his work is originally written. Nevertheless, the works of Farāhī have found their way into Arabic scholarship through the translation of his famous works on *nazm* and *tafsīr*. There are also some contemporary voices that should be considered in discussing the question of Qur’ānic unity. Studying the unity of some individual sūrahs in a similar fashion, Muhammad Subḥānī, Muhammad Darāz (d.1377/1958), and Muhammad al-Qalqūlī provide systematic readings based on the notion of main themes and sections. In sum, the notion of correlations has been coupled with the idea of the sūrahs’ unities and main themes. It can be seen that thematic and literary approaches in modern Muslim scholarship and exegesis have grown within the mainstream.

**Western Scholarship on the Qur’ān’s Coherence**

Research on the composition of the Qur’ānic text has become a dominant trend among Western scholars since 1980s. A Qur’ānic sūrah as a unit is recognized theoretically despite the

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limited application of the verses’ rearrangements.\footnote{Cuypers, \textit{The Banquet}, 27.} For reasons of cohesion, the Qur’ānic text is analyzed structurally, with other scholarly methods and considerations, through dividing the sūrah into different parts in order to figure out the text’s logical sequences.\footnote{Friedman, “Interrogating Structural Interpretation of the Qur’ān,” 133.} The shift towards applying literary methods in reading the Qur’ān can be seen in several influential Western works. Angelika Neuwirth, Neal Robinson, Michel Cuypers, and Raymond Farrin are examples of Western scholars concerning the Qur’ān’s structure and coherence.

Those scholars represent different structural purposes and methods. Neuwirth is concerned about the structural characters of Meccan sūrahs while she views Madinan sūrahs as lacking in composition. Robinson provides a structural and thematic analysis of some Madinan sūrahs, like Q 2 and Q 5. On a rhetorical basis, Cuypers suggests that the Qur’ān’s composition could be examined according to rules of Semitic rhetoric (ring-structure). Cuypers criticizes the historical-criticism method because it reads the Qur’ān with a modern Western mind and it is at liberty to move the text’s parts to other locations. He asserts that those parts could fall in place when they are read according to their “rhetorical” logic.\footnote{Cuypers, \textit{The Banquet}, 27.} He applies this method to a number of Meccan sūrahs and one Madinan text (Q 5).

Raymond Farrin, following scholars, such as Islāḥī, Robinson, Zahniser, and Cuypers, who assert the sūrahs’ unities, employs their contributions to the subject and combines both ring-structure and sūrah-pairs theories to study the Qur’ān’s structure. His work \textit{Structure and Qur’ānic Interpretation} explains the Qur’ān’s composition and some sūrahs’ unities. He argues that the Qur’ān’s pairs and groups are structured symmetrically and stress “universal” themes. He also examines the structure of sūrahs 1-3, 12-13, and 113-114 as units. Moreover, he shows
how the Qur’ānic sūrahs appear in pairs and he provides some thematic correspondences to reveal the notion of sūrah-pairs taking into consideration their composition in ring-form. Showing the Qur’ān’s unity, Farrin argues that the Qur’ān is arranged in a concentric form in which the central group of sūrahs center upon eschatology (“a universal message”). He claims that the two large groups composing this concentrism are also arranged in the same fashion. The first group emphasizes believing in God in a plural context and orienting to Him through “pilgrimage.” Correspondingly, the other group is about doing virtuous deeds and Mecca is mentioned in sūrahs that are located in the extremes. Farrin states that his work can stand against the criticizing views on the Qur’ān’s coherence and lead to consider the Qur’ān’s order in the activity of exegesis.

The unity of Meccan sūrahs and their themes and narratives have been recognized and analyzed literally. Mathias Zahniser states that very few long sūrahs, meaning Madinan texts, have been studied as units. He refers to Iṣlāḥī’s, Robinson’s, and his own examinations of Madinan sūrahs’ structure and coherence. Cuypers’ rhetorical analysis of Q 5 and Farrin’s work should be added to this list. Similar analytical examinations and views seem to be increasing. The recent volume entitled Islamic Studies Today draws attention to different methods employed to read the Qur’ān in both Muslim and Western scholarships. Importantly, this work contributed to by a number of scholars, suggests that literary, thematic, and structural

40 Ibid., 54.
41 Ibid., xvi.
43 Ibid., 27. Robinson states that, according to his knowledge, he himself and Matthias Zahniser provide studies on the Madinan sūrahs’ composition in order to show their structural cohesion and thematic consistency (See Neal Robinson, “Hands Outstretched: Towards a Re-reading of Sūrat al-Mā’ida,” Journal of Qur’ānic Studies 3, no.1 (2001): 18, note.6).
aspects of the Qur’ān should be explored and revisited in order to obtain better understanding of the Qur’ānic text. Some essays appeal for new paradigms separated from the nineteenth century’s dominant theories (e.g. historical-criticism). The volume does not disregard the necessity of the collaboration between the two parties. One can foresee in such attempts a promising way to bridge between modern Muslim and Western Qur’ānic studies.

On the Problem and Importance of this Work

The increasing interests in thematic and literary studies reveal a mutual concern and some challenges. Muslim scholars tend to divide a sūrah into sections based on textual forms and thematic breaks in order to identify its main theme. As a result, the divisions of a sūrah into sections vary and accordingly the unifying theme differs from a study to another. Although the idea of division is present in the Muslim thematic approach, there is no precise approach regarding either identifying the main themes through which to conduct thematic exegesis or to establish the verses’ correlations. ‘Abdussattār Saeed, an Azhari scholar, asserts that establishing the connections “al-munāsabāt” between the verses is a judgmental task and extracted differently from the Qur’ānic texts. He states that thematic unity “al-wiḥdah al-mawḍūʿīyyah” has to do with the identification of a sūrah’s main goal, but this approach is a judgmental matter based on the scholar’s ijtihād rather than the Qur’ān’s texts and fixed meanings. Saeed admits that the thematic unity approach has not been standardized upon a systematic foundation although several classical and twentieth-century tafsīr literatures are founded on the thematic unity

approach.\footnote{Ibid., 33.}\footnote{Zahniser, “Major Transitions and Thematic Borders in Two Long Sūrās: al-Baqara and al-Nisāʾ.” 26; Robinson, “Hands Outstretched: Towards a Re-reading of Sūrat al-Māʾida,” 1; Cuypers, The Banquet, 505.} Thus, Muslim scholarly literature struggles in identifying the main unifying themes of the sūrahs.

On the other hand, long sūrahs, namely Madinan, are lacking coherent composition according to non-Muslim scholarship.\footnote{There are several studies conducted to analyze the structures of some Madinan sūrahs (e.g. Q 2, 3, and 5) by Western scholars: David Smith, “The Structure of al-Baqrah,” The Muslim World 91 (Spring 2001): 121-136; Neal Robinson, Discovering the Qurʾan: A Contemporary Approach to a Veiled Text (Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2003), 201-221; Robinson, “Hands Outstretched: Towards a Re-reading of Sūrat al-Māʾida,” 1-19; Farrin, “Sūrat al-Baqara: A Structural Analysis,” 17-32; Farrin, Structure and Qurʾanic Interpretation, 22-32.} Therefore, this dissertation addresses, on one hand, the application of a systematic method to identify the main theme and found correspondences between the text’s parts and themes. Additionally, it aims to show the structural unity of a Madinan text which Western scholarship has claimed to be lacking coherent structure.\footnote{Mathias Zahniser, “Sūra as Guidance and Exhortation: The Composition of Sūrat al-Nisāʾ,” in Humanism, Culture, and Language in the Near East: Studies in Honor of Georg Krotkoff, ed. Asma Afsaruddin and Mathias Zahniser (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1997), 71-85. There are some Western studies conducted to examine individual verses of Q 4: Gabriel Said Reynolds, “The Muslim Jesus: Dead or Alive?” Bulletin of the} This dissertation examines sūrah 4 which is one of the longest sūrahs and one that contains various themes related to theological doctrines and legislation of the community in Madinah. Sūrah 4 has been interpreted thematically by Muslim scholars and exegetes. The main theme of the sūrah has been determined by dividing the text into parts according to thematic-shifts and some formulas and textual styles. This process does not follow specific systematic methods, but the opening and the end of the sūrah play a significant role in indicating the sūrah’s main theme. The identified theme differs to some extent in these studies and each choice has an effect on understanding the significance of the sūrah’s other themes. On the other hand, the structure of Q 4 has been analyzed by Mathias Zahniser based on formula-changes and thematic breaks, but some thematic and structural concerns remain unexplained.\footnote{He also employs rhyme-shifts and recurring}
phrases to indicate “the borders” of the thematic sections of sūrahs 2 and 4 in comparison to Iślāḥī’s and Robinson’s studies of these sūrahs’ structures and sections.⁵²

Ring-theory is one of the recent methods applied to the Qur’ān by Cuypers and others and the results regarding the sūrahs’ themes and structures are positive and promising. Cuypers has shown that the composition of the thirty short sūrahs in the end of the Qur’ān and the structure of Q 5 in general follow Semitic rhetorical rules. Since not all Madinan texts have been studied structurally and thematically through ring-structure, Cuypers suggests that it is worth examining Q 4’s composition rhetorically in order to explore if its structure is subject to rhetorical rules as well.⁵³ It should be mentioned that George Archer has analyzed the whole sūrah based on ring-theory, but he only has provided the rhetorical macro-structure of the whole sūrah and one of its sub-sequences.⁵⁴ This dissertation will provide detailed structural analysis of the sūrah based on ring-theory in order to show its consistency in relation to its main theme. It will show, for example, that the locations of inheritances’ verses in the beginning and the end are not arbitrary, but they are meant to serve the symmetrical structure of the text.

Other reasons behind choosing the ring-structural method have to do also with examining the text without eliminating its sacred status and displacing some of the passages’ locations.

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⁵³ Michel Cuypers, email to author, November 12, 2015.
⁵⁴ Georg Archer examines a number of Meccan and Madinan sūrahs based on ring-theory. He points out that Cuypers’ application of ring-structure leads him to claim possible modification of the text when it does not meet the rules of rhetoric. Also, Archer claims that Cuypers’ study reinforces a theory over the text. However, Archer shows how such a method caught Muslim attention (See George Archer, A Place Between Two Places: The Qur’ānic Barzakh (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2017), 97-99). Archer argues that people in oral communities as the Qur’ān’s environment were not concerned about following particular rules in performing a text. Thus, he writes “[R]ing structure is a tool to arrive at a goal, and it does not have to be the end in itself... is a way of translating, and therefore like any translation it does not need to make claims over other forms of translation... Ring structural analysis of the Qur’ān if used within its proper limits is only a tool to find more possible meanings; it is not meaningful itself.” (See Archer, A Place Between Two Places, 105-106).
Cuypers claims that rhetorical study of the Qur’ān’s composition does not aim to undermine the Qur’ānic text’s divine state for its adherents, but rather to direct the attention to the inherited exegetical opinions and remove their sacredness.\textsuperscript{55} The use of such a method by Muslim researchers would aid some efforts undertaken to rethink Islam and at the same time would allow them to maintain their faith and to be open to a new way of reading the Qur’ān that can bridge between Muslims and non-Muslims. Interestingly, this study will show that Muslim tradition has references to the basic idea of ring-theory (symmetry) and that this could serve towards bringing the two scholarships into dialogue. Moreover, this method relates to the discipline of correlations developed by Muslims. It can help to establish the internal links not only based on linear form and closer words, parts, and meanings but also by considering often-repeated terms’ and expressions’ far locations which could function to indicate the reasons behind the verses’ arrangements in a certain way.\textsuperscript{56}

The rhetorical analysis, as it is claimed, aids to figure out the message behind the text’s composition.\textsuperscript{57} Such a method studying the structure of the sūrahs shows the order of the verses and a sūrah’s chronology and relation to the Qur’ān as a unit.\textsuperscript{58} Since the long sūrahs are more complex than Meccan sūrahs in terms of structure and themes, and since the rhetorical analysis has been applied more successfully to Meccan sūrahs and to very few Madinan sūrahs, sūrah 4 is chosen as the case study of this dissertation in order to identify its main theme and internal links and to show how this method could provide a systematic development to the notion of correlations and thematic unity exegesis.

\textsuperscript{55} Cuypers, \textit{The Banquet}, 29.
\textsuperscript{56} Cuypers, \textit{The Banquet}, 507.
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid., 29.
\textsuperscript{58} Friedman, “Interrogating Structural Interpretation of the Qur’ān,” 132.
The other aspect of this dissertation considers sūrah 4’s relation to the following sūrah, meaning their order and existence as a pair. This idea is suggested by Iṣlāḥī and depends mostly on establishing the connections between the two sūrahs thematically. Iṣlāḥī’s method shows how repeated ideas in two complete units/sūrahs make them linked and how they form as a pair another complete “unit.”59 This notion is examined by Cuypers on short sūrahs in the end of the Qur’ān and it is confirmed that their existence occurs in pairs.60 Thus, to approach the question of the Qur’ānic coherence, this dissertation aims to use ring-theory to examine the relationship between Q 4 and Q 5 and whether they are a pair or not.

Furthermore, since the final years of the last century, scholarly cooperation has been established between Muslim and Western researchers.61 This collaboration includes coordination between Muslim and Western methods developed in the field of Qur’ānic Studies.62 Dispensing with Muslim interpretation completely does not seem possible. However, new meanings can be generated and some inherited thoughts can be adjusted through applying one or more methods. Some Muslim scholars do not see a complete detachment between the traditional schools and the application of thematic methods.63 In a similar way, Rachel Friedman raises the question of the possibility of finding a common ground between Muslim interpretations and the findings of various methods applied to read the Qur’ān by Western scholarship in terms of philology, theme, and structure.64 In other words, the fact that there are different approaches to the Qur’ān entails the necessity to examine the results of applying new methods in interpreting the Qur’ān under the new scholarly trend regarding its unity. Moreover, she mentions that although a specific

59 Farrin, *Structure and Qur’ānic Interpretation*, 44.
60 Cuypers, *The Banquet*, 26; Farrin, *Structure and Qur’ānic Interpretation*, 44.
62 Ibid., 106.
64 Friedman, “Interrogating Structural Interpretation of the Qur’ān,” 132.
method can shed light on a particular characteristic of the Qur’ān, other elements from other methods cannot be excluded in highlighting the meanings of the texts even in modern studies as Muslim tradition does employ different elements in commenting on the Qur’ān.65

For these reasons, this research aims to examine the possibility of combining two different methods, one is a Muslim approach (sūrah-pairs) and the other is a Western one (ring-theory), in reading Q 4 as a thematic unit and to find out how this combination enriches previous understandings, generates new meanings more suitable with the needs of this era, and corresponds with the Qur’ānic discourses directed to all people (Muslims and non-Muslims). On the other hand, this combination aims to bridge between these two bodies of scholarship and provide some answers for Western challenges regarding the Qur’ān’s unity. It will show that sūrah 4 is a complete and consistent unit arranged in mirror-structure around a central theme located in (v.87) and that the sūrah’s parts lead to one another smoothly and contain references to the main theme. The sūrah’s main theme contains a universal Qur’ānic message that reminds people of their covenant with God and of their return to Him on the Day of Resurrection. Considering this theme in reading the sūrah’s different parts will demonstrate how the sūrah forms and reforms Muslim identity and the community based on the elements of belief and how other religious communities are included, invited, and exhorted to redirect themselves to One God.

Although the sūrah’s identified theme seems more relevant to the themes of the Meccan period, focusing on proclaiming God’s Oneness and eschatology, it conveys that this Madinan sūrah which presents a number of laws and injunctions to organize the community is a continuation of inviting people to worship God with no association and to rid off idols and

65 Ibid., 132.
materials that prevent people from full submission to Him and His religion. The sūrah’s context tends to be more legalistic in most of its parts, but a careful structural reading will reveal that it is entirely oriented upon God’s Oneness and its implications. Additionally, this dissertation will demonstrate that this main theme and the sūrah’s whole structure are in correspondence with Q 5’s main theme and composition and both sūrahs as a pair comprise together a large unit in parallel-form. Thus, legal and theological matters occurring in both sūrahs should be read in parallel. The rhetorical and thematic analysis of Q 4 and its relation to Q 5 will not only enhance the concept of the Qur’ānic unity and the sūrahs’ order, but new meanings and more plural readings can be created.

Methodologies

This dissertation will employ two methodological theories. The first notion is rhetorical and based on ring-structural analysis. This method will be used to analyze Q 4’s structure and to identify its main theme and how the sūrah’s parts are linked and reflect the main theme of the sūrah in one way or another. Also, this method will be used in pairing sūrahs 4 and 5. The idea of pairing is the second theory employed to serve this study’s aim which focuses upon Qur’ānic unity. It should be mentioned again that these two theories have been applied by Farrin in examining some sūrahs’ unities and interrelations in order to study the whole Qur’ān’s composition.
To better understand the idea of ring-analysis, Mary Douglas should be quoted. She explains:

A ring is a framing device. The linking up of starting point and end creates an envelope that contains everything between the opening phrases and the conclusion. The rule for closing the ring endows the work with unity... There has to be a well-marked point at which the ring turns, preparatory to working back to the beginning, and the whole series of stanzas from the beginning to the middle should be in parallel with the other series going from the middle back to the start. Each section on the second side of the ring corresponds to a matching section on the first side... It is basically the chiastic structure... It comes in many sizes, from a few lines to a whole book enclosed in its macro-envelope...66

In other words, it shows how identical and similar words, ideas, and themes come in the beginning of a text rhetorically composed are repeated after a certain point in its other half to compose a match. This compositional structure comes in three symmetrical forms: parallelism AB/A’B’, mirror AB/B’A’, and concentivism AB/X/B’A’ or AB/X/A’B’.67 The correspondence between the two “small” sides is based on the repetition of “key” terms, roots, and phrases and corresponding meanings or “themes.”68 In other words, these terms and themes function as indicators and signs of a ring’s two parts.

Cuypers explains that the method depends on analyzing the text from “micro” to “macro”-levels unlike other attempts that section the text into large thematic units first.69 Ring-structure, as Robinson and Cuypers convey, aims to show the forms of the small and large units and their largest image as a complete surah (one single unit).70 The correspondence between two parallel sections (or larger sides) can be “synonymic,” “antithetic,” “synthetic,” or

69 Cuypers, The Banquet, 508.
70 Ibid., 507.
“complementary.” Mirror-structure can be “antithetic” or “complementary.” In ring-composition, the beginning and the end correspond while the middle contains echoes to both extremes. In a concentric system, the center carries the intended meanings and the aim of ring-structure. The center can be identified through some characteristics. Those characteristics and other details will be provided before analyzing Q 4 rhetorically.

**The Dissertation’s Chapters**

This dissertation contains three chapters and a conclusion. The first section in the first chapter introduces classical Muslim and modern attempts to interpret the Qur’ān. It provides a survey presenting the shift from classical schools to literary methods in Qur’ānic studies and exegesis. It then demonstrates different attempts made to approach the Qur’ān thematically. This section also shows some Western studies conducted to date or understand the coherence of the Qur’ān and some individual sūrahs in order to reach either better understanding of the texts or to comprehend the growth of the first Muslim community. The influential works of Theodor Nöldeke (d.1930), Angelika Neuwirth, and Neal Robinson will be stated as examples of the shift towards textual and structural analysis. The purpose is not to provide a comprehensive survey but only to show the recent scholarly attempts conducted on different literary points of view and to show how they are different from the ring-theory. Although Nöldeke’s work is known for his interest in the Qur’ān’s chronological order, it is included among those studies because of his concern about the inconsistent orders and his usage of different textual indicators and themes to date the verses and explain their places.

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72 Ibid., 78-83.
The second section of the first chapter sheds light on the emergence and development of the Science of Correlations and its relation to the notion of *naẓm* revived again by contemporary attempts to explain Qur’ānic coherence and the sūrah’s unities. It focuses on highlighting four ancient contributors (Rāzī, Zarkashī, Biqā‘ī, and Suyūṭī) to the subject and their recognition of some repeated patterns. The end of the first chapter is dedicated to introducing some significant developments to the subject through the works of Farāhī, Iṣlāḥī, Subḥānī, Darāz, and al-Qalqīlī. Some of these works are not very well-known either in Islamic or Western worlds. Therefore, they are mentioned because they share some similar features with the ring-theory.

The second chapter discusses the structural unity of sūrah 4. This chapter will show that the sūrah is formed in a concentric fashion. It first provides the previous Muslim studies on the sūrah’s unity and the identification of its main theme. It addresses Western attempts, namely Nöldeke’s and Zahniser’s works, to study the sūrah’s chronology, structure, and unity. Then, the rhetorical rules used to analyze the text and other details will be provided, followed by the ring-structure of the whole sūrah and its sections. The main theme identified through ring-theory and the correspondences between the sūrah’s center and sections will be highlighted.

The intention of the third chapter is to explore the following questions: would the examinations of Q 4 and Q 5 based on ring-structure reveal the connection between the two sūrah’s and explain their place as it is in the recent Qur’ānic order? What is the relationship between the main themes of the sūrah’s? Does the form of both sūrah’s have to do with their relationship? Can the repeated phrases and the themes regarding women, prayer, food, death, and the People of the Scripture establish the connection? How does sūrah 5 complete, complement, and elaborate on sūrah 4’s themes? This chapter first explains the notion of paired and grouped sūrah’s as it is viewed by some ancient and modern scholars. It presents Iṣlāḥī’s theory of sūraḥ-
pairs and the Qur’anic coherence, followed by pairing and linking sūrahs 4 and 5 thematically and structurally. Finally, the conclusion contains a summary of the whole study accompanied with its results.

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73 It should be noted that the translation of the Qur’anic verses (other than Q 4 and Q 5) occurs in this dissertation is taken from Muhammad Asad, *The Message of the Qur’ān: The Full Account of the Revealed Arabic Text Accompanied by Parallel Translation* (Bristol, England: The Book Foundation, 2003) and A. J. Droge, *The Qur’ān: A New Annotated Translation* (Bristol, CT: Equinox, 2013).
Chapter One

Approaching the Qur’ān: Methods and Challenges

I. Introduction to Understanding the Qur’ān

Exegesis aims to have access to the Qur’ānic knowledge. Ahmad al-Bayhaqī (d.458/1066) reports that ‘Abdullah bin Mas‘ūd (d.33/653) says “man arāda al-‘ilm fa-yuthawwir al-Qur’ān fa-inna fihi khabaru al-‘awwalīn wa al-‘akhirīn” (whoever wants to gain knowledge should “yuthawwir” (shake up) the Qur’ān which has the knowledge of the first and last people). The phrase tathwīr al-Qur’ān (shaking up the Qur’ān) means, according to Bayhaqī, to study the Qur’ān in order to master “uṣūl al-‘ilm” (the principles of knowledge). Ali bin Abī Ṭālib (d.40/661), Mu‘āṣah bin Jabal (d.18/639), and other Companions were masters in one or two Qur’ānic types of knowledge, such as judgment qadā’ and lawfulness and unlawfulness ḥalāl and ḥarām. ‘Abdullah bin ‘Abbās (d.68/687) is considered the most knowledgeable companion regarding interpretation. Then, the followers of the Companions and a number of Salaf scholars, like Mujāhid (d.104/722) and Saeed bin Jubayr (d.95/714), admire tafsīr, but they were cautious in practicing tafsīr despite their high knowledge of the Qur’ān. Then, next generations came and made their efforts to understand the Qur’ān and its knowledge.

In this chapter, a brief survey of the development of tafsīr followed by the emergence of the Qur’ānic studies will be introduced in the first section. Moreover, different types of Muslim

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1 The report means that the Qur’ān has the knowledge of ancient and later nations and it should be studied very carefully and intensively to gain it (See Badr al-Dīn al-Zarkashī, al-Burhān fī ‘Ulūm al-Qur’ān, ed. Muhammad A. Ibrahim (Beirut: al-Maktabah al-‘Aṣrīyyah, 2006), vol.1:22).
3 Ibid., 1:22.
4 Ibid., 1:22.
5 Ibid., 1:23.
contemporary methods and an overview of modern Muslim exegetical and literary studies, like thematic exegesis and thematic unity, will be addressed. The first section aims to demonstrate the status of modern developments to Islamic exegesis and Qur’anic studies. Additionally, some outstanding structural and literary approaches applied by Western scholarships will be introduced. In the second section, the Science of Correlations as a thematic method used to connect the verses and the sūrahs, its development and influence on tafsīr will be explored with much focus on traditional and contemporary scholars who have contributed a shift in understanding the concept of correlations.

1. Methods

A. Tafsīr and ‘Ulūm al-Qur’ān

Tafsīr (exegesis) is the term used to describe the practice of Muslim explanation of the Qur’ān’s verses and sūrahs. The term “designates opinions, elucidation, background information and commentary on the Koran.” Tafsīr is defined as a discipline/study/science ‘ilm aiming to understand the Qur’ān, explains its meanings, and extracts its laws and wisdom based on considering grammatical rules and rhetoric, the principles of jurisprudence and recitations, and the occasions of revelation and abrogation. Likewise, Ta’wil, the other primary term used to

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6 The term tafsīr occurs once in the Qur’ān (Q 25:33) and it is understood by the authority Ibn ‘Abbās as “elaboration” and by Mujāhid as “revealing” (See Abū Ja'far al-Tabarī, Jāmi’ al-Bayān ‘an Ta’wil Ayī al-Qur’ān, ed. Mahmūd M. Shākir (Egypt: Dār al-Ma‘ārif, 2000), vol.19:267), http://library.islamweb.net/maktaba/index.php?flag=1&page=bookpages&bookid=50&id=1&bookparts=[1:1]&Loa
dTab=LoadBookDetail).


8 al-Zarkashi, al-Burhān fi ‘Ulūm al-Qur’ān, 1:27. Scholars set some rules for those who are willing to interpret the Qur’ān. Ahmad Von Denffer summarizes the rules of the interpreter as follows: being a believer and knowledgeable in Arabic and its lexicon, mastering Islamic traditions and studies, avoiding to follow personal opinions without a sound evidence, interpreting the Qur’ān with the Qur’ān itself, then with the prophetic traditions and the earliest Muslims’ interpretations, and considering other exegetes’ reflections (See Ahmad Von Denffer, Ulum al Qur’an: An Introduction to the Sciences of the Qur’an (Koran) (Markfield, US: The Islamic Foundation, 2015), 96-97. ProQuest elibrary).
refer to commenting on the Qur’ān, means explaining “the inner meaning” that has to do with allegory and the esoteric.⁹

Different genres of *tafsīr* have emerged. The Qur’ānic text has been approached grammatically, historically, theologically, philosophically, legally, metaphorically, cosmologically, and scientifically.¹⁰ Moreover, other disciplines of the Qur’ān’s aspects have been examined in individual works as the Qur’ānic Sciences ‘Ulūm al-Qur’ān. In the following, the three main classical genres of *tafsīr*: al-*tafsīr* bil-]*ma’thūr* (“tradition-based exegesis”), al-*tafsīr* bil-]*ra’y* (“reason-based exegesis”),¹¹ and al-*tafsīr* al-]*’ishārī* (indication-based exegesis) and the Qur’ānic Sciences ‘Ulūm al-Qur’ān will be introduced in order to provide an overall view of Muslims’ efforts in making the Qur’ān’s message and values grasped and present in their lives.

(a) Early Attempts of *tafsīr*

The emergence of documented *tafsīr* begins after the first two centuries of Islam.¹² Early studies of the Qur’ān were not limited to expansive exegetical commentaries as *tafsīr* functions at the present time. According to Andrew Rippin (d.2016), different written materials had been conducted to examine different aspects of the Qur’ān.¹³ For example, anecdotal and juridical

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⁹ Cyril Glasse, *The New Encyclopedia of Islam*, 103, 444. The two terms is understood differently by some scholars while others see no difference between them (See Von Denffer, *Ulum al Qur’an*, 96). According to Andrew Rippin, *tafsīr* indicates the transmitted reports of the Prophet and the Companions while *ta’wil* refers to individual views and judgments of the meanings. Muqātil bin Sulaymān (d.150/767) understands *tafsīr* as what it is understood by human ability whereas *ta’wil* is a reference to knowledge belongs to God only. Another distinction between the two terms makes *tafsīr* referring to one understanding of a verse while *ta’wil* is used to refer to verses with more possible interpretations. Regardless of those different understandings of the two terms, the aim of the discipline of interpretation is to make the Qur’ānic discourses understandable and accessible (See Andrew Rippin, *The Qur’an and Its Interpretive Tradition* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate,2002), 2-3).

¹⁰ Nasr and others, *The Study Quran*, xliii.


¹² Rippin, *The Qur’an and Its Interpretive Tradition*, 2, 6-7. Von Denffer indicates that it is claimed that the interpretation ascribed to Ibn ‘Abbās is the early ancient documented interpretation despite the accuracy of this claim (See Von Denffer, *Ulum al Qur’an*, 107).

interpretations can be found in Muqātil bin Sulaymān’s work *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān*. Lexical interpretation focusing on grammatical and textual aspects of the Qur’ān can be seen in *Maʿāni al-Qur’ān* (The Meanings of the Qur’ān) by al-Farrāʾ (d.208/822). Also, *Majāz al-Qur’ān* by Abū ‘Ubaydah (d.210/824-25) and *Gharīb al-Qur’ān* and *Ta’wil Mushkil al-Qur’ān* by Ibn Qutaybah (d.276/889) examine the rhetoric of the Qur’ān and pave the way for the notion of inimitability “iʿjāz al-Qur’ān.” Sufī interpretation based on allegory and symbols also appeared in the ninth century as a method showing the Qur’ān’s esoteric aspect as it can be seen in Sahl al-Tustrī’s (d.282/896) interpretation. Some of those works are ordered according to the Qur’ān’s order while others are arranged based on themes. In the following centuries what is considered as a full *tafsīr* examines most of those Qur’ānic characteristics.

(b) The Classical Traditional Schools of *Tafsīr*

There are three major types of traditional *tafsīr*: 1) *al-tafsīr bil-maʾthūr* (“interpretation by tradition”), 2) *al-tafsīr bil-raʾy* (“interpretation by opinion”), and 3) *al-tafsīr al-ʾishārī* (“by indication, from signs”). The most distinct feature of traditional interpretation is verse-by-verse approach. The first type has to do with “all explanations of the Qur’ān which can be traced back through a chain of transmission to a sound source.” It relies intensively on the Qur’ān itself, prophetic reports, earlier Muslims’ interpretations, the Prophet’s biographical materials, and the

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15 Ibid., 9.
18 Ibid., 9-11.
19 Ibid., 11.
20 Ibid., 11.
22 Ibid., 97.
23 Von Denffer writes “[t]o seek to explain an āyah from the Qur’ān by referring to another āya from the Qur’ān is the first and foremost duty of the muṭāṣṣir [exegete]. Only if this does not suffice, he will refer to other source of tafsīr.” (See Von Denffer, *Ulum al Qur’ān*, 98).
occasions of revelation. Abū Ja‘far al-Ṭabarī (d.310/923), Jāmi‘ al-Bayān ‘an Ta‘wīl Ayī al-Qur‘ān, is a famous example of the traditionalists. Following Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr (d.774/1372) and Shihāb al-Dīn al-Alūsī (d.1270/1854) conduct encyclopedic commentaries on a similar basis.

The second type al-tafsīr bil-ra’y is based on providing an opinion ijtiḥād or a personal explanation of the text. It does not mean that it follows a different method from the classical method of interpretation or it ignores Muslim intellectual literatures. The prophetic restriction on expressing personal opinions in interpreting the Qur‘ān is understood as speaking on no referential links to scholastic foundations, like early understandings made by earliest Muslims or linguistic rules. Also, this type is associated with new aspects that merged with interpretation, after the third century, like rhetoric, theology, philosophy, and legality. Abū al-Qāsim Maḥmūd bin ʿUmar al-Zamaḵẖshārī (d.539/1144), for instance, in al-Kashshāf emphasizes rhetorical and

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24 Mir, Coherence in the Qur‘ān, 1, note.1; Abdullah Saeed, The Qur‘ān: An Introduction, 178-179; Von Denffer, Ulum al Qur‘an, 98.
25 Ṭabarī mentions many historical reports with the chains of transmission followed by stating his own opinion. (See Von Denffer, Ulum al Qur‘an, 107).
27 Mir, Coherence in the Qur‘ān, 1, note.1; Abdullah Saeed, The Qur‘ān: An Introduction, 178. Von Denffer also mentions that this type of interpretation is called (al-tafsīr bi-dirāyah “by knowledge”) (See Von Denffer, Ulum al Qur‘an, 97).
29 Ibn ‘Atiyyah (d.546/1151) explains: “The meaning of this is that a man asks himself concerning the significance of a passage in God’s Book and conceives an answer on the basis of opinion without due consideration of the expressed statement of the ‘ulamā’ and the requirements of the scientific disciplines such as grammar and the principles of interpretation... This hadith does not relate to linguists who explain its language, or grammarians who explain its grammar, or fuqahā’ who explain its significances as long as each one bases his statement on ijtiḥād founded on the rules of science and deduction... One who speaks thus is not speaking merely on the basis of opinion” (The translation of the quote is by Calder, “Tafsīr from Ṭabarī to Ibn Kathīr: Problems in the description of a genre, illustrated with reference to the story of Abraham,”132). Shams al-Dīn al-Qurtūbī comments on the quotation above that establishing an interpretive opinion should be based on authoritative and considerable rules and foundations (See Shams al-Dīn al-Qurtūbī, al- Jāmi‘ li-Ahkām al-Qur‘ān. ed. Ahmad al-Bardoounī and Ibrahim Aftish (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Maṣriyyah, 1964), vol.1:33, http://shamelaweb.com/browse.php/book-20855).
linguistic interpretations of the text more than transmitted interpretive reports. 31 Rāzī in his voluminous work entitled Mafāṭīḥ al-Ghayb or al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr shows theological and philosophical perspectives in interpreting the Qur’ānic verses.32 Additionally, al- Jāmi’ li Aḥkām al-Qur’ān by Shams al-Dīn al-Qurṭūbī (d.671/1273) focuses dominantly on legal interpretation. It should be noted that those works follow the order of the Qur’ān.

The last type called al-tafsīr al-’ishārī or “bil-’ishārah” goes beyond literal and apparent meanings of the Qur’ānic text to mystical understandings.33 It relates to personal engagements with the text through open hearts guided by God.34 Mystical meanings should correspond with the apparent meanings and be supported by the verse’s phrases and linguistic rules.35 This kind of exegesis can be found in Sūfī interpretive works although it is claimed that Ibn ‘Abbās and ‘Umar bin al-Ḵaṭṭāb (d.23/644) understood the inner indications of some verses.36 Alūsī’s tafsīr provides multiple of examples of the mystical interpretation.37

(c) Sciences of the Qur’ān ‘Ulūm al-Qur’ān

There were early attempts during the first Islamic centuries to examine different Qur’ānic aspects. The emergence of Qur’ānic Studies is not independent from tafsīr, but these studies continue the previous works and are conducted to answer other questions.38 The most famous examples of the Qur’ānic Studies works are al-Burhān fī ‘Ulūm al-Qur’ān39 by Zarkashī and al-

31 Von Denffer, Ulum al Qur’an, 108.
32 Ibid., 108.
33 Ibid., 104.
34 Ibid., 104.
35 al-Dhahabī, Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn, 2:265-266, 279-280; Von Denffer, Ulum al Qur’an, 105.
36 al-Dhahabī, Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn, 2:261-264.
37 Ibid., 2:281.
38 Rippin, The Qur’an and Its Interpretive Tradition, 13.
39 “The Criterion for the Sciences of the Qur’ān” this translation of the title is by Andrew Rippin (See Rippin, The Qur’an and Its Interpretive Tradition, 13).
Itqān fī ‘Ulūm al-Qur’ān⁴⁰ by Suyūṭī. Zarkashī states seventy four genres of Qur’ānic Sciences and mentions that his work aims to introduce, explain, and discuss different Qur’ānic subjects and their characteristics while one can spend his whole life studying and mastering one of these genres independently.⁴¹ Zarkashī states that such a work collects the Qur’ānic studies in one place helps commentators to be aware of the Qur’ānic “truth, secrets, and subtleties” and provides essential keys to understand the Qur’ān.⁴² Likewise, Suyūṭī mentions a hundred and two Qur’ānic fields. Each scholar has different order of these genres and that might indicate the significance of each subject in the process of understanding the Qur’ān. For example, Zarkashī places the occasions of revelation as the first genre in his list while in Suyūṭī’s list the occasions of revelation are eleventh.⁴³

The Sciences of the Qur’ān also concern Meccan and Madinan revelations, the order of the sūrahs, and the collection and canonization of the Qur’ān. In addition, the Qur’ānic Sciences scholars pay attention to the order of the verses in a sūrah and provide different rhetorical explanations of their arrangement. They also explain the meanings of tafsīr, ta’wīl, the Qur’ān, the sūrah, and the verse āyah in addition to providing some manners and rules for teachers, learners, and interpreters.⁴⁴ This research is concerned about the genre has to do with the order of the verses and the sūrahs as it will be discussed in the second section of this chapter.

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⁴⁰ “The Perfection about the Sciences of the Qur’ān” this translation is by Andrew Rippin (See Rippin, The Qur’an and Its Interpretive Tradition, 13).
⁴² Ibid., 1:23.
⁴⁴ Ibid., 1:16-17.
B. Modern Muslim Commentaries and Qur’ānic Studies

Muslim scholarship acknowledges that since the Qur’ān has been intensively approached linguistically, rhetorically, literarily, grammatically, legally, theologically, scientifically, and philosophically by earlier Muslims, most of the later interpretations of the Qur’ān do not go beyond either collecting, explaining, or judging between the earliest interpretive opinions. Therefore, those attempts lacked of innovation and creativity and did not cause any renewal in the exegesis of the Qur’ān until the era of Renaissance. The contemporary renewing attempts work on purifying *tafsīr* from unsound reports, showing the Qur’ānic social and literary aspects, and reconciling between the Qur’ānic text and proven scientific theories and discoveries.

Modern exegesis of the Qur’ān, just as traditional interpretations, aims to bring the Qur’ān’s meanings to the time of the exegetes. Accordingly, approaching the Qur’ān in modern ages emphasizes four genres: scientific, sectarian, atheistic, and socio-textual interpretations. This research is concerned about the last type, as it will be shown, since it affects the development of approaching the Qur’ān thematically and structurally.

(a) Socio-political Exegesis

Socio-textual exegesis aims to reveal the precision of Qur’ānic phrases in delivering the Qur’ānic message, and then the exegete forms the Qur’ān’s meanings in an attractive literary

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46 Ibid., 2:363-364.
48 al-Ḏahābī, *al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn*, 2:364. It should be noted that the scientific exegesis is not accepted by some Muslim scholars because it aims to show that all scientific discoveries are mentioned in the Qur’ān. The sectarian interpretation focuses on supporting theological doctrines and legal laws of specific Muslim sects survive until the modern era. The atheistic exegesis (or what is known as critical studies of the Qur’ān through modern Western theories and methods such as structuralism and deconstruction) is meant to indicate the renewing attempts that depend on rejecting some traditional and legal views and criticizing some classical methods in interpreting the Qur’ān in order to make the Qur’ān relevant to contemporary Muslims (See al-Ḏahābī, *al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn*, 2:365-400).
style and applies the meanings to the principles of social development. The most important features of this type of exegesis are as follows: 1) it approaches the Qur’ān with no intention to support specific sectarian beliefs, 2) it uses reason widely over some prophetic reports and earliest opinions, 3) it purifies *tafsīr* from superstitions and fabricated reports, 4) it forms *tafsīr* with a tone of social development which reveals the Qur’ān’s rhetoric and inimitability, and finally 5) it affects and reforms Muslim thinking concerning the Qur’ān and development.

Shah Walī Allah (d.1175/1762), writing in India, paved the way for contemporary socio-political interpretation when he recognized the gap between Qur’ānic values and Muslim life. He subsequently approaches the Qur’ān with much emphasis on the notion of *ijtihād* (judgmental opinion). The well-known works belong to this modern school are: *Tafsīr al-Manār* by Muhammad ‘Abduh and his student Rashīd Riḍā (d.1353/1935), *Fi Zilāl al-Qur’ān* by Sayyid Qutb, and *Tafhīm al-Qur’ān* Abū al-‘Alā al-Mawdūdī (d.1400/1979). Those works share the ideas of reformation and development in response to Western scholarship of historical criticism and experimental sciences. The most important principle of *tafsīr* for this school is to understand the meanings of the text based on viewing the Qur’ān as guidance to the “happiness” of mankind, rather than focusing only on the Qur’ān as a legal, lexical, and grammatical text. Accordingly, the Qur’ān becomes again the main source of interpretation and theology instead of

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50 Ibid., 2:401-403.
the previous opinions and inherited beliefs used to interpret the Qur’an. The aim is to link between the Qur’an and modern Muslims and to allow non-specialist Muslims to be engaged with the Qur’an.

(b) Literary and Thematic Approach

Literary studies on the Qur’an have paved the way for viewing the Qur’an “as a work of art.” As it is in both traditional and socio-political schools, interpreting the Qur’an through the Qur’an itself is dominant in literary methods. Approaching the Qur’an literarily, Amīn al-Khūlī (d.1385/1966) considers the historical context in reading the Qur’an paying attention to the Qur’ānic passages that share one topic. Literary readings, developed as a systematic method, are practiced by some scholars, like Muḥammad A. Khalafullah (d.1418/1998) and ʿAysha ʿAbdurrahmān (d.1418/1998) known as Bint al-Shāṭi’. Following ‘Abduh’s view and al-Khūlī’s method, Khalafullah examines the Qur’ānic narratives in terms of their consistency, style, content, and intended purpose, not only from a historical view. Systematically, Khalafullah divides the narratives into: “historical,” “symbolic,” and “fableistic.” The last two types cause him to bring up the authority of classical and modern interpreters’ views on

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58 al-Dhabābī, al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn, 2:408; Rippin, The Qur’an and Its Interpretive Tradition, 18.
59 Von Denffer, Ulum al Qur’an, 111-112.
60 Campanini, The Qur’an: Modern Muslim Interpretations, 48.
61 Campanini, The Qur’an: Modern Muslim Interpretations, 82; Abū al-ʿOlā, Maṣāḥib al-Durar, 53.
64 Campanini, The Qur’an: Modern Muslim Interpretations, 43-44.
65 According to Massimo Campanini, in Khalafullah’s analysis of sūrah 11, he claims that a careful reading of the narrative of Lūṭ in the sūrah conveying Lūṭ’s emotional position reveals that the narrative aims to encourage the Prophet Muḥammad to be strong in faith despite his people’s rejection of his message. Khalafullah states that based on this reading the other stories of the Prophets come in the sūrah seem to focus on the psychology of the Prophet Muhammad to stay strong. In his view, the symbolic stories are formed by the Prophets’ “imagination” and “mind” based on their experiences and that does not mean that the stories’ details are true. Also, he indicates that since the Meccans called some Qur’ānic narratives with “asāfir al-awwalīn,” the Qur’an has “fableistic” narratives (See Campanini, The Qur’an: Modern Muslim Interpretations, 44-45).
symbolism in order to show how the Qur’ān includes “artistic” and “literary” aspects have to do with its “eloquence” and “rhetoric.”\textsuperscript{66} He questions the origin of the Qur’ānic narratives because the Qur’ān has its distinct way in retelling the stories and connecting them to the Arabic milieu.\textsuperscript{67}

‘Abdurrahmān, influenced by her husband al-Ḳhūlī, emphasizes a literary reading of the Qur’ān because it is “a linguistic text of exceptional eloquence.”\textsuperscript{68} She invites the traditionalists to shift from the status of lack of methodologies to establish scholarly studies based on rhetorical elements and aspects.\textsuperscript{69} For her, the Qur’ān’s words are arranged in their deliberate places and the sūrahs should be interpreted thematically and holistically instead of dealing with isolated parts independently.\textsuperscript{70} Massimo Campanini comments that such a method that is different from traditional exegesis opens the door for the development of methods, although this literary reading of the Qur’ān is not sufficient in facing contemporary challenges and engaging the Qur’ān in modern life.\textsuperscript{71} In a similar context, Sayyid Quṭb, in his 1945 work \textit{al-Taṣwīr al-Fannī fī al-Qur’ān} (“The Artistic Form of the Qur’ān”), criticizes rhetoric scholars for focusing on words and meanings and for ignoring the literary aspect of the Qur’ānic text.\textsuperscript{72} Because of this view, Qur’ānic studies have entered a new phase reintroducing the Qur’ān’s influence.\textsuperscript{73}

Accordingly, the question of the Qur’ānic themes generates what is called thematic exegesis \textit{al-tafsīr al-mawḍū‘ī}. It concerns about studying the Qur’ān as a whole unit through identifying the Qur’ānic texts on a specific topic, then analyzing and comparing the identified

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\textsuperscript{66} Campanini, \textit{The Qur’an: Modern Muslim Interpretations}, 45.
\textsuperscript{67} Ibid., 45-46.
\textsuperscript{68} Ibid., 46.
\textsuperscript{69} Ibid., 46.
\textsuperscript{70} Ibid., 46.
\textsuperscript{71} Campanini explains ‘Abdurrahmān’s method in dealing with Q 93 as follows: she identifies the period of revelation, considering previous interpretative opinions and the occasions of revelation in which the latter is an indication of history not affecting the comprehension of the sūrah, analyzes the given text literarily and linguistically, and then studies other Qur’ānic texts mentioning the same identical word (e.g. Q 93:1) followed by examining the rest of the sūrah (See Campanini, \textit{The Qur’an: Modern Muslim Interpretations}, 46-47).
\textsuperscript{72} Ibid., 48.
\textsuperscript{73} Campanini, \textit{The Qur’an: Modern Muslim Interpretations}, 48.
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verses. The aim of this approach is to interpret the Qur’ān objectively. Scholars, like Ayatullah M. Muṭahharī (d.1338/1920) and ‘Abbās M. al-‘Aqqād (d.1383/1964), support this approach. Different Qur’ānic themes, such as God, human rights, and fasting, have been studied based on this method. Ḥassan Ḥanafī demonstrates that traditional exegesis does not provide a holistic understanding of a Qur’ānic theme occurring in different places and contexts in the whole Qur’ān. Also, traditional exegesis, according to him, does not use a method that discovers and gathers various texts on a theme and surpasses literal understanding. The Thematic Approach, in his view, accumulates the multiple texts’ meanings of a theme, provides access to “the whole” through the “parts,” and builds a reciprocal intellectual relationship between the Qur’ān and the reader who participates in generating broader comprehension and conception of a given theme based on the reader’s ideological background.

In context, Fazlur Rahman (d.1408/1988) is one of the advocates of thematic approach. Rahman claims that the attempts to understand the Qur’ān lack significant depth, maintain inherited knowledge, and disregard the depth of the Qur’ānic discourse addressing humanity because the Qur’ān has been for eras interpreted and read through verse-by-verse approach. In *The Major Themes of the Qur’ān*, he stresses the need to emphasize the Qur’ānic “context” and

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75 Ibid., 213.
76 Ibid., 213.
“unity.” By “context,” he is referring to the prophetic era’s concepts and explains how these concepts can be applied in modern ages which have different aspects regarding society, politics, and intelligence. Rahman, Mir states, studies the Qurʾān’s themes according to its order of revelation and thus excludes studying the Qurʾān’s composition. Like Rahman, some scholars focus interest upon a contextual reading of the Qurʾān in a manner that aims to connect the Qurʾānic main values to the needs of each era. According to this view, the Qurʾān’s guidance and laws are flexible and evolving based on social and cultural changes. Muḥammad Arkoūn (d.2010) and Naṣr Ḥamīd Abū Zayd (d.2010) are “contextualists” despite their widely different comprehensions of the Qurʾānic text. Their method involves also literary and hermeneutical studies.

From a global-values perspective, Muslim literatures have shown that the idea of Qurʾānic holistic aims “maqāṣid al-Qurʾān al-kulliyyah” have been addressed by a number of classical scholars, such as Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d.505/1111). Saeed Nūrsī (d.1379/1960) asserts that each sūrah is as a whole “Qurʾān itself” and has all or one of the Qurʾān’s four aims: tawḥīd, prophecy, resurrection, and justice. Accordingly, interpretation must highlight “the fundamental center” of the sūrah where the Qurʾānic purpose(s) reveals and aids in interpreting

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82 Mir, Coherence in the Qurʾān, 23; Abdullah Saeed, “Introduction: the Qurʾan, interpretation and the Indonesian context,” 5; Campanini, The Qurʾan: Modern Muslim Interpretations, 77-78.
83 Mir, Coherence in the Qurʾān, 23.
85 Ibid., 214, 221.
86 Ibid., 214.
87 Ibid., 220.
89 al-Daghāmīn, “Maqāṣid al-Qurʾān fī Fikr al-Nūrṣī: an analytical study,” 373-374, 385-386. According to al-Daghāmīn, those aims do not differ from previous scholars’ stated aims of the Qurʾān.
the sūrah. He also shows that each verse has these Qur’ānic aims and each word in its context demonstrates its intended meaning. His work entitled Rasā’īl al-Nūr considers both the aims of the Qur’ān and the aims of the verses and their interrelations and occurrences in every Qur’ānic element: “word, verse, sūrah, and the whole Qur’ān” in interpretive practices. His theory aims to reduce irrelevant explanations and causes the reader to be affected by the Qur’ān’s aims.

The works above are examples of different literary approaches to the Qur’ān. They highlight the shift to thematic studies. In parallel to studying the Qur’ān’s themes, styles, and narratives, the interest in the sūrahs’ unities and themes has emerged as the next pages show.

(c) The Sūrahs as Units

In modern exegesis, the theory of the Qur’ān’s aims has been known as “the Qur’ān’s thematic unity” and each sūrah has its own thematic unity. This theory of the unity of the Qur’ān came to occupy the exegetical field in the middle of the last century. In addition, from rhetorical and structural views, the Qur’ān is believed to follow a specific coherent order although it is not arranged chronologically. The notion of thematic unity of the Qur’ānic sūrahs “al-wiḥdah al-mawdū’yyah” became a trend in this context. Phrases like “themes” and

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90 Ibid., 387.
91 Ibid., 389.
92 Ibid., 391.
93 Ibid. 395-396.
96 Campanini, The Qur’ān: Modern Muslim Interpretations, 84.
“aghrāḍ/purposes” are commonly used to indicate a sūrah’s main ideas. This part will mention some contemporary exegetical works built on the sūrahs’ unities and the notion of correlations and it will show their efforts in advocating thematic unity approach.

Modern scholars, like Qūṭb and al-Ṭāhir ibn ʿĀshūr (d.1879/1973), focus on the themes/aims of the sūrahs. Qūṭb states that “each sūrah of the sūrahs of the Qur’ān has its own distinctive identity, peculiar features, and pivot which links all [the sūrah’s] themes.” He realizes that “parts,” “verses,” and “terms” are important means that help to identify a sūrah’s pivot (miḥwar). Qūṭb’s exegesis entitled In the Shadows of the Qur’ān is literary and reflects his radical view of Islam against modern Jāhiliyyah. He claims that the main theme of the whole Qur’ān is “tawḥīd” and it relates to each sūrah’s main pivot especially within Meccan texts.
Ṭahir ibn ‘Āshūr, in his work *al-Taḥrīr wa al-Tanwīr*, provides the aims of the sūrahs, divide the sūrahs into parts, and link the parts through the aim(s) and through highlighting the correlations between the verses.\footnote{Mir, *Coherence in the Qurʾān*, 65.} Ibn ‘Āshūr believes in the consistency of the sūrahs but not in the sūrahs’ relationships. His main focus is on the unity of a sūrah not only regarding its consistent words and meanings, but also its aims and interconnected parts.\footnote{Ibid., 1:79.} He provides ten introductions in his voluminous work. The eighth and tenth introductions discuss the verses’ arrangement and the Qurʾān’s inimitability, rhetoric, and unique styles. He indicates that the Qurʾānic inimitability and rhetoric appear in the arrangement of the verses.\footnote{Ibid., 1:104.} The Qurʾānic challenge (*taḥaddī*) with composing a sūrah has to do with the concept of the composition (*naẓm*). He agrees with Sharaf al-Dūn al-Ṭībī (d.743/1342) stating that when a discourse is composed and organized according to an aim from the beginning to the end, and the transition from an aim to another through different rhetorical modes and styles is pursued, followed by returning to the first aim as it is found in the sūrahs, that what is meant by the challenge.\footnote{Ibid., 1:110.} In Ibn ‘Āshūr’s understanding of *naẓm*, the inimitable aspect is the consistency of the composition of the Qurʾān’s parts as small units and their composition as a large unit.\footnote{Ibid., 1:112.}

For Ibn ‘Āshūr, the Qurʾān’s *naẓm* has multiple structural and rhetorical semantics, meaning the position/arrangement of the Qurʾān’s sentences in which the relationships to the preceding and following sentences can be either an explanation, a response to a question, a reason, and so on.\footnote{Ibid., 1:111.} He provides the connections between the verses through a verse-by-verse approach, one which is concerned with word-meaning conception and verbal structures.
composed in different stylistic patterns to serve rhetorical purposes. According to him, “the Qurʾān’s habits” can be recognized through the Qurʾānic “naẓm” and “words.” One of those habits is the mention of “threat” waʾīd followed by a “promise” waʾad in a digressive context and the correlation in this case is labeled with “contrariness.” He asserts that studying the Qurʾān’s various styles and rhetorical modes shows the text’s correlations, consistency, and continuity.

‘Abdurrahmān H. Ḥabannakah al-Maydānī (d.2004) approaches the Qurʾān differently from traditional commentaries. His Maʾārij al-Tafakkur wa Daqāʾiq al-Tadabbur: Tafsīr Tadaburī lil-Qurʾān al-Karīm is arranged according to the chronological revelation of the sūrahs. He believes that this method can provide more structural meanings and pedagogical disciplines intended by the Qurʾān for the growth of the Muslim community in terms of religious and social aspects and for those who reject the Qurʾānic message. Maydānī describes the main theme of a sūrah with “the tree of the sūrah’s theme.” He finished commenting on Meccan sūrahs, but he died after starting the interpretation of Q 2. In his scheme, the sūrah’s theme can be identified

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108 Ibid., 1:117.
109 Ibid., 1:124.
110 Ibid., 1:125.
111 Ibid., 1:116.
113 Abū al-ʿOlā, Maṣābiḥ al-Durar, 58.
114 Similarly, Muhammad Darwazah (d.1404/1984) writes a commentaries entitled at-Tafsīr al-Hadīth following the chronological order of the revelation. He states the he pays attention to the links between the verses and the sūrahs besides the contexts and the themes of the Qurʾānic sentences (See Muhammad Darwazah, al-Tafsīr al-Hadīth (Egypt: al-Ḥalabī, first edition, 1962), 1:7 cited in Abū al-ʿOlā, Maṣābiḥ al-Durar, 56). According to Mir, Darwazah’s interpretation of Q 81 shows how he divides the sūrah into two parts and connects them based on each part’s content in order to demonstrate how they are interwoven and complementing one another (See Muhammad Darwazah, al-Tafsīr al-Hadīth, (12 vols., Egypt, 1381-83/1962-64), 12:1381-83/1962-64 cited in Mir, “The sūra as a unity: A twentieth century Development Qurʾān exegesis,” 214).
through dividing the sūrah into parts keeping in mind the preceding revealed sūrah’s themes while reading the sūrah at question.115

As shown, the Qur’ān’s and the sūrah’s themes and unity have become fundamental foci in the exegesis and Qur’ānic studies. There are other scholars, not mentioned above, who are well-known for their contributions to thematic methods, such as ‘Abdulḥamīd Ṭahmāz (d.2010) and Muhammad Abdel Haleem.116 Developing from identifying the Qur’ān’s universal principles to determining each sūrah’s theme and from linguistic analysis to thematic analysis, new readings of the Qur’ān have emerged, surpassing linear and parts-isolation interpretations to more holistic and systematic view and exegesis. Thematic approach has been developed from merely exploring the world-views of the Qur’ān to the identification of each sūrah’s theme and unity. The end of this chapter will show how this shift generates theories in modern scholarship to explain the whole Qur’ān’s structure and coherence. Five contemporary works by Farāhī, Iṣlāḥī, Subḥānī, Darāz, and Qalqīlī will be introduced as significant systematic attempts to the subject of nāzīm and the Qur’ānic and sūrah’s ‘unities. They are attached to the section explaining the correlations’ concept due to their direct relationship and the similarities some of those works share with ring-theory. The next part will move on to Western efforts made to explain the Qur’ānic coherence.

115 For example, in Maydānī’s analysis of Q 10 (51 chronologically), Maydānī demonstrates that sūrah 10 is about explaining and discussing with more details the previous matters revealed in Q 17 (50 chronologically). Those matters have to do with dealing with the pagans’ continuing attitudes towards Islam and answering the Prophet’s and the believers’ inquiries (See ‘Abdurrahmān H. al-Maydānī, Ma′ārij al-Tafakkur wa Daqā′iq al-Tadabbur: Tafsīr Tadabburī līl-Qurʿān al-Karīm (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 2004), 10:24).

116 Campanini, The Qur’ān: Modern Muslim Interpretations, 28-32, 82-84.
2. Western Readings of the Qur’ān and Challenges

The Qur’ānic sūrahs containing different subjects and historical events without an apparent coherence seem overwhelming for Western readers. Orientalism has tended to examine the Qur’ānic texts from a historical-critical perspective aiming to identify its chronology and origin. This method depends mostly on examining the Qur’ān’s “small units” (verses) in order to date them and then explain their locations in the final codex or move them to a logically suitable place. In this view, the Qur’ān is considered as a fragmental text revealed based on the context of separate and various occasions of the Prophet’s career and then it is edited and canonized after the death of Muhammad. The application of historical-criticism by Western scholars to the Qur’ānic text disregards the origin of the Qur’ānic language and reads it through the lens of modern Western readers instead of its rhetorical order. It is claimed that this view dominated Western scholarship on the Qur’ān until the end of the twentieth century when Western studies on the Qur’ān began using literary and thematic methods to examine the Qur’ān’s distinct style. Accordingly, new approaches used by Western scholars have dealt with the Qur’ān as a complete unit.

Theodor Nöldeke, Angelika Neuwirth, and Neal Robinson will be presented in detail in the following pages because of their significant contributions to the field.

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117 Cuypers, The Banquet, 25.
118 Ibid., 26.
119 Ibid., 26-27.
120 Ibid., 27.
121 Friedman, “Interrogating Structural Interpretation of the Qur’ān,” 139.
122 Ibid., 132.
(a) Theodor Nöldeke

Nöldeke rearranges the sūrahs chronologically. His work *The History of the Qurʾān* remains academically influential today and is considered as the first scholarly study on the Qurʾān.123 His method relies on philological and historical analysis of the text in order to reorder the sūrahs and the verses and to understand its historical context.124 To do so, Nöldeke assumes that the order of the verses can be examined by noticing the change of the Prophet’s imagination and its effects on the differences between the Qurʾānic discourses in Mecca and Madinah in terms of the style and content. The Prophet was enthusiastic in Mecca and able to preach and reform his acquired knowledge despite danger.125 On the other hand, the gradual evolvement of the style from poetical to prosaic can be seen after Hijrah when the Prophet’s excitement clamored and the sūrahs contain teachings and instructions.126

Nöldeke believes that the idea of the challenge of the Qurʾān has to do with its message, not style.127 In general, Nöldeke accepts the main outline of Muslim tradition regarding dating the sūrahs into two periodic revelations. However, he focuses more on the stylistic and thematic aspects of the Qurʾān to determine the Qurʾānic chronology.128 He divides the Qurʾān chronologically into four periods: three in Mecca and one in Madinah. He shows that the first Meccan period’s sūrahs tend to be short with different rhymes and topics, such as Divine oaths

125 Ibid., 4-6, 24.
126 Ibid., 4-6, 25.
127 Ibid., 50.
128 Ibid., 60.
of cosmos, theological beliefs, and refutation of the Quraysh’s accusations against the Prophet.\textsuperscript{129} The sūrahs in this period are similar to poetical forms and contain assonance (\textit{saja’}).\textsuperscript{130}

The second Meccan period contains longer sūrahs that have longer verses.\textsuperscript{131} There is less variety in the rhymes (mostly “-ūn/-īn”) and the oaths have to do mostly with the Qur’ān.\textsuperscript{132} The style shifts from poetry to discourses of criticism.\textsuperscript{133} The universal signs, repetitive expressions, God’s name “the Most Merciful” and biblical narratives are frequently common.\textsuperscript{134} He observes that the beginnings of the sūrahs in this period are characterized either by mysterious letters or “a liturgical bidding.”\textsuperscript{135} The structure of the sūrahs mostly has three parts: first, an opening exhorting the disbelievers to repent, second, a story of a previous nation who disobeyed and the retribution for its negative response to God’s Messengers, and third, a conclusion perorating and exhorting Quraysh to accept the Prophet.\textsuperscript{136} The third period’s sūrahs are similar to the previous group in terms of the structure and topics, but now “Allah” is used to refer to God, the term “Message” is used to refer to the Qur’ān, and “O People” is used to address the listeners.\textsuperscript{137} Repetition of phrases and thoughts is very common while the style is more prosaic.\textsuperscript{138}

The last group of the sūrahs is about the sūrahs revealed in Madinah after the emigration. In this period, the Prophet became a religious and political leader of a large community whereas previously he was followed by few prestigious people and slaves.\textsuperscript{139} Because of this shift, the verses’ number differs in the sūrahs and the verses become longer. The rhyme “-ūn/-īn” prevails

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\textsuperscript{129} Ibid., 68-70.
\textsuperscript{130} Ibid., 69.
\textsuperscript{131} Robinson, \textit{Discovering the Qur’ān}, 78.
\textsuperscript{132} Nöldeke and others, \textit{The History of the Qur’ān}, ed. and trans. George Thāmir and others, 106, 128-129.
\textsuperscript{133} Robinson, \textit{Discovering the Qur’ān}, 78.
\textsuperscript{134} Nöldeke and others, \textit{The History of the Qur’ān}, ed. and trans. George Thāmir and others, 106-107.
\textsuperscript{135} Robinson, \textit{Discovering the Qur’ān}, 78.
\textsuperscript{136} Ibid., 78-79.
\textsuperscript{137} Nöldeke and others, \textit{The History of the Qur’ān}, ed. and trans. George Thāmir and others, 129; Robinson, \textit{Discovering the Qur’ān}, 79.
\textsuperscript{138} Nöldeke and others, \textit{The History of the Qur’ān}, ed. and trans. George Thāmir and others, 128.
\textsuperscript{139} Ibid., 148.
and the audience is the “Jews” and the “hypocrites.”

The themes of the sūrahs aim to guide the Muslim society through establishing laws while theological doctrines and moral teachings are not very common.

Nöldeke refers the length of the sūrahs to the frequency of the passages which have the same contents gathered in one sūrah. Nöldeke depends mostly on identifying the chronology of this period’s sūrahs on contents rather than style.

Nöldeke admits that an objective reading of the Qur’ān demonstrates that many verses are connected and revealed or composed at one time. Moreover, some sūrahs are well-structured and have conclusions fit well with their openings. Nöldeke observes that the Qur’ān addresses a topic and moves to another and that may lead to disconnect the sequence of the meanings of the verses at the first glance, however; he claims that paying careful attention to the connection of the meanings could reveal the original context of the sūrahs’ composition.

Nöldeke states that Muslims misunderstood the reasons behind the correlation of some verses to others and this misconception leads them to think that those verses were revealed separately. It is most likely that the Prophet collected some passages with different circumstances of composition and placed them in specific positions. However, Nöldeke does not believe that the placement happened immediately after descending as Muslim accounts assert. Thus, Nöldeke asserts that identification of rhymes does not indicate the unity of a sūrah since some passages were added later.

140 Ibid., 153.
141 Ibid., 153.
142 Ibid., 154.
143 Ibid., 154.
144 Ibid., 28.
145 Ibid., 28.
146 Ibid., 42.
147 Ibid., 38.
(b) Angelika Neuworth

Neuwirth in several studies pays attention to the Qurʾān’s structure. She considers the Muslim tradition of the Qurʾān’s origin as a reliable foundation. She notices that historical-criticism lacks systematic examinations of the Qurʾānic texts’ structure. Many conducted studies, according to Neuworth, neglect that the Qurʾān is meant to be an oral text to be “recited” in liturgy not “a written literary work” and thus required to satisfy some certain rules. She points out that Western studies on the Qurʾān have dealt with its fixed written form “not with the Qurʾān as a collection of prophetic communications that document the emergence of a community.” She claims that the ignorance of “micro-structural literary” approach has led to a complete replacement of the Muslim account without providing solid explanatory theories.

Neuwirth indicates that Western examinations of the Qurʾānic text not only have focused on chosen texts but have not noticed the unity of the Qurʾān’s sūrahs and their indications of the community’s growth and religious development. She states that previous studies have not examined the sūrahs as groups in order to discover their interrelations. Thus, using themes instead of structural signs in dividing the sūrahs limits the verses’ meanings to a few themes. Additionally, the traditional tools, such as a sūrah’s events, the occasions of revelation, and

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149 Ibid., 100-101.
150 Ibid., 101.
151 Ibid., 140.
154 Ibid., 36.
155 Friedman, “Interrogating Structural Interpretation of the Qurʾān,” 143.
abrogated passages, are different from the “historical approach” in terms of their reference to the growth of the community theologically and juridically mirrored in the Qur’ān.¹⁵⁶

For Neuwirth, many sūrahs maintain part of their compositional structure in their final form despite the editions made during the “oral” phase.¹⁵⁷ “Introductory sections” play an important role in understanding the internal compositional parts of “literary” texts composed in Arabic, like poetical texts, since those introductory sections reflect the author’s and listeners’ “psychical” status.¹⁵⁸ On this basis, Neuwirth argues that the Qur’ān follows a particular structure starts with “a prayer… for blessings” (referring to Q 1) and ends with “a divine command” ordering people to ask for God’s protection (referring to Q 113-114).¹⁵⁹ She continues that noticing the opening and the end as “framing parts” leads to the verse (Q 2:2) addressing the adherents to pay attention to “the book,” its guidance, and their “religious duties” while Q 112 asserts God’s “Oneness.” This order of the sūrahs, she states, conveys indications signified by the editors to those believers who read the codified Qur’ān. After the Prophet’s death, “the book” refers to the fixed text (muṣḥaf).¹⁶⁰ However, the order of the sūrahs in the codex does not reflect that they were arranged according to particular connections while “the oral Qur’ān” has to do with the previous revelation and the addressees’ participation and dialogue with the text and its contents.¹⁶¹

In the essay entitled “Structural, Linguistic and Literary Features,” Neuwirth shows that the notion of “oral composition” in performing pre-Islamic poetical texts without the aid of

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¹⁵⁹ Neuwirth, “Structure and the Emergence of Community,” 143-144.
¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 144.
¹⁶¹ Ibid., 145.
writing can be applied to understand the composition of some short Meccan sūrahs. On the other hand, longer sūrahs seem to be subject to instant editions “in writing.” On this basis, she argues that the current Qurʾān went through different stages of stylistic progress along with the growth of the community in Mecca and Madinah. A close study of the text’s styles and structures leads to see that short sūrahs consist of a specific rhyme scheme called saja’ (assonance) associated in pre-Islamic Arabia with the style of “soothsayers.” Saja’ in short sūrahs functions to serve the idea of memorization and liturgical recitation. Moreover, the written Qurʾānic texts in early Islam were used as “a mnemonic-technical support.” Thus, the Qurʾān’s self-description as “quran” and “kitāb” in Meccan and Madinan times refers to two stages of its structural composition: 1) the description of the revelation as “qurʾān” indicates its “purely oral phase” while 2) the usage of “kitāb” reflects the writing phase.

Before the integration of the meanings of the two terms, the occurrence of “kitāb” in Meccan sūrahs is conceived by early Muslims as a reference to previous revelations, particularly “the qurʾānic narratives.” The codification of the revelation leads to merging the two terms and “kitāb” becomes a reference to the written text. Attempting to discover the oral Qurʾān from the fixed text, Neuwirth examines the change of the text’s rhymes. She notices that early sūrahs’ structural shape of passages is “mono-partite,” and then developed to “bi-partite” passages with less poetical rhymes causing a new development in Arabic literature. In this period, “oaths,” Afterlife, and universal “signs” are manifested in the sūrahs’ polemical arguments and

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163 Ibid., 101.
164 Ibid., 98-99.
165 Ibid., 98.
166 Ibid., 99.
167 Ibid., 101-102.
168 Neuwirth, “Structure and the Emergence of Community,” 147.
The powerful control of God is revealed through the “short” stories (e.g. Q 105). This period’s texts also indicate their “oral” nature in which they rebuke the rejecters (e.g. Q 53). She states that this criticism coming in the context of mentioning merits as “God-fearing” functions as an indicator of immediate “performance” (e.g. Q 70:36-37). Moreover, Arabic culture focused on the surroundings, like “space, time, and place” in its literary compositions while the Qur’an revisits those themes differently through mentioning nature and previous nations.

Middle Meccan texts are mostly in “tripartite” form: an introductory passage (apologetic, polemical, or hymnal), a narrative, and a conclusion confirming the Qur’an, functioning to fulfill the purpose of ritual liturgies. Those texts are longer and with a prosaic character. In the late Meccan period, narration is central. The frequency of the narratives has to do with the growth of the community, its distinct character, and with the Qur’an becoming a codified text. Biblical narratives and their rhymed endings serve ethics and homily. Polemical and apologetic discourses framing the surahs of this period do not only affirm the Qur’an, but also they exhort the messenger. Madinan surahs appear with no particular structural form and they seem to be consisted of “isolated texts.” The discussed themes in this period have to do with social matters and other incidents facing the society, such as wars. The surahs begin with hymns and the divine voice addressing the Prophet who acts with the divine during the subsequent

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169 Ibid., 147-148.
170 Ibid., 148.
171 Ibid., 148.
172 Ibid., 147-149.
173 Ibid., 152-153.
174 Ibid., 152.
175 Ibid., 152.
176 Ibid., 153.
177 Ibid., 156.
discourse.\textsuperscript{178} The audiences are broadened to include scriptural people.\textsuperscript{179} The sūrahs composed in Madinah needed “writing” to be conserved.\textsuperscript{180}

In her recent work \textit{Scripture, Poetry and the Making of a Community: Reading the Qur’ān as a Literary Text}, Neuwirth claims that illustrating the “intertextuality” in the Qur’ān is possible through the theory of the oral revelation in dialogue with its audiences.\textsuperscript{181} She asserts that intertextuality in the Qur’ān is about the Qur’ānic text itself and not external texts.\textsuperscript{182} To illustrate, intertextuality in Meccan sūrahs occurs with Arabic poetical and biblical texts whereas in Madinan sūrahs it is coupled with theology.\textsuperscript{183} Arabic poetry’s styles and “images” can be seen in the sūrahs of early Meccan period, however; the sūrahs’ aim is to emphasize ethics and rituality. The sūrahs usually have an opening stressing the truth of the Last Day through “oaths” and “eschatological scenes.”\textsuperscript{184} In the middle Meccan period, a turning point occurred with Q 15. It provides a recitation from “scriptural \textit{kitāb}.”\textsuperscript{185} The narratives are included to indicate the continuity of monotheism’s practices.\textsuperscript{186} Middle and late Meccan sūrahs have narratives in the center by which the Qur’ānic message is delivered.\textsuperscript{187} Accordingly, Muslims’ religious ceremonies were constructed similarly to scriptural people’s traditions. Worship sites and Mecca which come in earlier sūrahs are substituted for “scripture” and “Holy Land.” The previous prophets become ancient religious leaders and role models in faith.\textsuperscript{188} Late Meccan sūrahs mention the “scripture” within the stories. They indicate that the stories are sent down from the

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{178} Ibid., 155.
\bibitem{179} Ibid., 156.
\bibitem{180} Ibid., 157.
\bibitem{181} Neuwirth, \textit{Scripture, Poetry and the Making of a Community}, 18.
\bibitem{182} Ibid., 37.
\bibitem{183} Ibid., 42.
\bibitem{184} Ibid., 28.
\bibitem{185} Ibid., 29.
\bibitem{186} Ibid., 30.
\bibitem{187} Ibid., 31.
\bibitem{188} Ibid., 31-32.
\end{thebibliography}
“heavenly book.”¹⁸⁹ Those sūrahs start with mentioning the scripture or the disconnected letters as an indication to one of the heavenly book’s components.¹⁹⁰ As a result, Neuwirth argues that Muslim society turned from “ritual coherence” into “textual coherence” group.¹⁹¹

The Madinan period focuses upon “kitāb” and regulating the society. Thus, the sūrahs’ themes become more diverse.¹⁹² Unlike Meccan sūrahs’ structure, some Madinan sūrahs (Q 22, 24, 33, 47-49, 57-64, 66) are called “oratory sūrahs.” Some of them starts with “O men” (Q 22:1) while others begin with hymns (Q 59).¹⁹³ Long sūrahs (Q 2-5, Q 8-9) appear to be less structurally composed in comparison to the earlier sūrahs in Mecca. These sūrahs seem to be compiled without any reconstruction. Importantly, because of their length, they do not function similarly to Meccan sūrahs as recited texts in one religious session. Rather “individual” parts of the sūrahs can be recited independently in social congregations (e.g. Friday Prayers) and daily prayers “without seeming to compromise the text.”¹⁹⁴ Therefore, Neuwirth states that “in the compromised form of the long sura, the Qur’ān contains within itself the formula for the dissolution of its own sura compositions.”¹⁹⁵ Neuwirth examines first the unity of a sūrah through studying its structure and “form” followed by observing the sūrah’s structure in relation to other sūrahs’ “genres” and literary styles in order to identify the similarities. The last step in her approach is to study the text from redactional view to point out the redactors’ marks.¹⁹⁶ In her view, the Qur’ān’s chronology can be retrieved through studying its listeners’ interactions since “the Qur’ān is …essentially the “property” of a community. If this is so, the Qur’ān is not a text

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 30.
¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 31.
¹⁹¹ Ibid., 30.
¹⁹² Ibid., 30-31, 33.
¹⁹³ Ibid., 32.
¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 32-33, 154-155.
¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 33.
¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 35.
created by one author but the transcript of a process of interaction whose final literary shape probably goes back to the inspired mind of the Prophet.”  

(c) Neal Robinson

Robinson examines some of the long sūrahs’ structure. He asserts that studying different structural features of the Qur’ānic text leads to unveiling the Qur’ān’s coherence and its sūrahs’ unities. In *Discovering the Qur’an*, he discusses Western studies regarding the origin of the Qur’ān and maintains the main outline of Muslim account of the Qur’ānic origin that can be supported by the Qur’ānic text itself. Studying the early sūrahs in Mecca, Robinson highlights six classifications of thematic passages: “polemic,” “eschatology,” the Divine addressing the Prophet, “hymnic signs lists or signs controversies,” “narratives,” and proving the Qur’ān’s legitimacy. He explains that each short sūrah touches on at least one or more of those themes. In context, Robinson studies the arrangements and collections of the parts in their sūrahs. Rhyme-changes play an essential role in Robinson’s division of the sūrahs into labeled sections. According to Robinson, short sūrahs’ parts can be identified through the change of themes or “rhymes.” Those parts can be divided into one or two coupled verses or into a number of grouped verses. He also draws attention to other forming characteristic of this period’s sūrahs which are 1) the categorical styles, 2) the recurrence of the oaths located in the sūrahs’

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198 Robinson, *Discovering the Qur’an*, 162.
199 Ibid., 123-125. Using the word “register” found in Musicology to indicate diverse contextual levels of styles, Robinson argues that the sūrahs are initially composed of one register (one of the six themes originally stated by Nöldeke in his examination of the middle and late Meccan sūrahs), then they become more complex sūrahs with more than one theme (See Robinson, *Discovering the Qur’an*, 125-126).
200 Ibid., 125.
201 Ibid., 99.
introductions or in the openings of main passages, and 3) the instructive inquires shaped in a debatable tone.\textsuperscript{202}

In the longer Meccan sūrahs, eschatology and signs come in polemical contexts while the stories are extended in length and may be absent in some sūrahs. Texts containing narratives can be sectioned as sūrahs while others come in the sūrahs structured in a “tripartite” form.\textsuperscript{203} Robinson explains that the tripartite sūrahs containing narrative discourse(s) in the center either affirm in the introductory and concluding sections their state of revelation in the context of mentioning other topics (e.g. Q 12) or open and end with polemics coupled with other subjects (e.g. 54).\textsuperscript{204}

Moreover, Robinson examines the middle and late Meccan texts include narratives. Robinson analyzes the sūrahs combining between narrative and other thematic parts like polemic and the Prophet. Q 19 is divided into sections as follows: “narrative (v.1-33), polemical interlude (v.34-63), messenger (v.64-65), polemic (v.66-96), and messenger (v.97-98).” He emphasizes the idea of recited text in order to connect between the first story of Zachariah and ordering John to embrace the scripture strongly. Also, he assumes a sort of audience familiarity with the texts in which the retold narratives may provide additions to the listeners’ previous knowledge. Robinson states that other thematic sections in the sūrah complement the narratives. Emphasizing Jesus’ and John’s day of “resurrection” is a contradictory parallel to criticizing the denial of the Last Day. Moreover, the story of Abraham represents the opposite of the action of people depending on their material goods and idols. Stylistically, Robinson explains that the first part, referring to the messenger, is not about the divine speaking but the “angelic” voice while

\textsuperscript{202} Ibid., 124.
\textsuperscript{203} Ibid., 126.
\textsuperscript{204} Ibid., 148-149.
the second one seems similar to earlier texts in Mecca. The last link connecting the whole sūrah, as explained by Robinson, has to do with three similar words: (“dhikr” in v.2, “Zachariah” in v.2, “rikz” in v.98) which consist of the same letters but indicate different meanings.205

The example above aims to show how Robinson studies the sūrahs thematically and structurally. He also argues that thematic progression is evident in the Meccan texts due to the addressees’ responses. The six themes are generally interrelated in this period and function as an aid to support a sūrah’s main theme (e.g. Q 93).206 Additionally, Robinson writes “[i]f Nöldeke’s chronology is correct in broad outline, eschatology seems to have been the keynote of the first Meccan period, whereas narrative played a more important role in the second, and signs controversies were more frequent in the third.”207 Furthermore, Robinson points out that some “verbal echoes” seem dominant in the whole Meccan texts. They can be seen in the narratives, such as the parallel between Noah’s and the Prophet’s careers in terms of inviting their people with “the same vocabulary”: “to believe” and “obey” since their people’s reactions were identical.208 Robinson examines the development of Noah’s story in the Meccan texts in order to

205 Ibid., 146-147.
206 Ibid., 154-155.
207 Ibid., 155.
208 Ibid., 155-156. Robinson also stresses Meccan texts’ interrelated compositions, “sound,” and “meaning.” For example, Robinson states that the linguistic meaning of “asr” in (Q 103:1) seems to be uncertain besides that the sūrah is claimed to be extended with (v.2). Based on the composition of Q 103 and the sound of the first word “asr”, Robinson argues that its meaning has to do with “late afternoon” not “age or destiny” because it is a prayer time for the adherents as it is the time for Meccan traders to count their earnings before the end of the day, thus; the sūrah emphasizes that “human beings are in danger of eternal loss unless they are believers.” Moreover, Robinson stresses the influence of reading the text in its original language, therefore; he shows how the phonological components of the word “asr” are found repeatedly in the last verse explaining the meaning of being a believer. As a result, Robinson declares that the sūrah is a consistent unit and the claim of late addition can be declined (See Robinson, Discovering the Qur’an, 162-164).
indicate more similarities reflecting the development of the Prophet’s career, the growth of Muslim community, the historical events, and Arabic culture.\footnote{Ibid., 156. Robinson also studies Šāliḥ’s, Joseph’s, and Moses’ narratives in the same way he does with Noah’s story. He notes that “punishment” is a common element in the stated stories except Joseph’s (See Robinson, Discovering the Qur’an, 155-161).}

Moving on to Madinan texts, Robinson focuses on examining the extension of the six Meccan themes in this period. According to Robinson, there are some thematic shifts and absences. For instance, polemical texts are now directed to the scriptural people much more than to the Meccans. In addition, a large amount of the Madinan texts include laws to organize society. The Prophet now is addressed with “O Prophet” (Q 8:64) and “O Messenger” (Q 5:41). Eschatology tends to focus on “rewards” and “punishment.” Similar to the Meccan corpus, Madinan sūrahs emphasize the descriptions of the gardens and hell. Unlike Meccan sūrahs’ narratives, Madinan texts do not narrate “punishment” stories, but rather they show the divine grace upon Moses’ people, “the Children of Israel,” and promote the Prophet’s depiction as Moses’. The stories start with, for example, “Have you not considered” (Q 2:246) and other phrases (e.g. Q 5:27, Q 60:4, and Q 9:70). Signs texts do not seem dominant in this period. Also, Robinson draws attention to God’s names located in the verses’ conclusions and he states that those names can be characterized into seven main groups.\footnote{Ibid., 197-198, 200.} Moreover, he stresses six functional significances of the names in relation to a sūrah’s structure, meanings, and coherence.\footnote{Ibid., 200-201.} Those are some the thematic differences between Meccan and Madinan sūrahs noticed by Robinson.

Q 2 is examined broadly by Robinson who emphasizes the sūrah’s structural unity. He notices that the sūrah’s title “al-Baqarah” (The Cow) is not a representative of the sūrah’s “content,” but an indication of the cow’s event stated in the sūrah which is thus named after it because it only comes in this sūrah. Additionally, Robinson states that the sūrah’s theme appears
in (v.143), which is its “numerical center,” describing Muslim society with “the middle nation”
distinguishing them from other scriptural communities through changing qiblah to Mecca, being
in relation to Abraham, and establishing Islamic laws.\footnote{Ibid., 201-202. He agrees with Iṣlāḥī’s conclusion about the pillar of the sūrah.} The sūrah includes passages from
different Madinan time and consists of five main “sections.”\footnote{The five sections are: 1. An introduction (v.1-39) refers to the Qur’ān, “the dynamics of belief and unbelief,” and Adam’s narrative, 2. The Children of Israel (v.40-121) carry on Adam’s wrongdoing and follow Satan, 3. An invitation to the Children of Israel (v.122-152) to accept Muslim claim says that Abraham’s religion is the foundation of all covenants, 4. Laws (v.153-242) are stated to organize the new Muslim society, and 5. Jihād for the sake of God (v.243-283) to return to Mecca is mentioned with other laws while the last three verses (v.284-286) are a thematic summary of the preceding sections’ themes (See Robinson, Discovering the Qur’a n, 202-223).} Robinson also divides the
sections into parts and indicates the thematic interrelations and repeated phrases and rhymes
between the sub-sections by which the whole section is correlated. Robinson states that his
division of Q 2 needs to be revisited.\footnote{Robinson, “Hands Outstretched: Towards a Re-reading of Sūrat al-Mā’ida,” 1.}

In his article “Hands Outstretched: Towards a Re-reading of Sūrat al-Mā’ida,” Robinson
studies Q 5, a long Madinan sūrah, from a “macro”-structural perspective. He divides the sūrah
into eleven sections.\footnote{The eleven sections are: (v.1-9), (v.10), (v.11-19), (v.20-26), (v.27-32), (v.33-40), (v.41-50), (v.51-58), (v.59-68),
(69-85), (v.86), (v.87-108), (109-120). According to Robinson, the last section (11/B”) echoes section (2/B) and
section (9/B”). The two isolated verses in his division (v.10) and (v.86) are similar thematically and corresponding
symmetrically.} He asserts that this division is not based on themes-shift, but rather on
considering a number of textual and other elements.\footnote{Robinson, “Hands Outstretched: Towards a Re-reading of Sūrat al-Mā’ida,” 2.} For Robinson, they indicate the symmetry
in the whole sūrah’s sections.\footnote{Ibid., 4.} The interrelations between the sections take a “chiastic” form
“(ABCDEE’D’C’B’A’).”\footnote{Ibid., 11.} Robinson explores the symmetry in each section framed with vocal
repetitions and he indicates each section’s symmetrical pair though highlighting thematic and
vocal correlations taking into consideration G. H. Guthrie’s remarks regarding the examination
of biblical texts, such as “hook-words,” similar introductory parts, “inverse order,” “repetition of
rare words,” and contrariness.\textsuperscript{219} For example, the term “covenant” occurs once in the first section and repeatedly in the next section; this is called “hooked key words.”\textsuperscript{220} Moreover, Robinson shows how sections 1 and 10 are in correspondence through their theme (the holy place and its laws) and through some phrases not found elsewhere in the sūrah.\textsuperscript{221}

As shown above, Nöldeke’s approach does not hesitate to displace some verses from their locations in the sūrahs. Neuwirth’s and Robinson’s studies reflect the shift in Western studies regarding examining the Qur’ānic texts literarily.\textsuperscript{222} Neuwirth’s analysis and framework only focus on Meccan texts and the relation to surrounding cultures. The Qur’ān’s different developed styles and its oral nature play a significant role in her theory and distinguish her method from previous attempts that have dealt with the Qur’ān as a fixed text. She examines the text’s features, like repetition, thematic development, and rhyme-change, in order to identify the structural development of the text and accordingly the growth of the first Muslim community on theological and social levels. She does not see any consistency in Madinan sūrahs. Cuypers states that Neuwirth’s scheme does not fit with the structure of Madinan texts.\textsuperscript{223} The sūrahs’ “tripartite” composition in Neuwirth’s scheme, according to Friedman, is labeled with

\textsuperscript{219} Ibid., 4-9.
\textsuperscript{220} Ibid., 7.
\textsuperscript{221} Ibid., 14-15.
\textsuperscript{222} There are a number of literary studies concern about the sūrahs’ literary features and unities. For example, Marianna Klar in her essay entitled “Re-examining Textual Boundaries Towards a Form-Critical Sūrat al-Kahf” attempts to identify “the narratives and non-narratives” in Q 18. To do so, Klar provides an analysis of the sūrah’s unity, themes, lexicons, and phrases located in the borders of a group of sequential verses. She notices that repetitive themes function within the frame of introductory and concluding parts and the idea of “circularity.” This repetition or “boundaries” indicates the beginning and the end of a part and its relation to other sūrah’s parts. In her examination, the sūrah revolves around tawḥīd from the beginning to the end. She divides the sūrah into five main sections: (1-8), (9-26), (27-59), (60-102), and (103-110). She locates where the main theme is emphasized in each narrative and in the opening’s and the final conclusion’s exhortation. Identifying the similar borders, she is able to show the parallel narratives, the sūrah’s unity, and each section’s consistency (See Marianna Klar, “Re-examining Textual Boundaries Towards a Form-Critical Sūrat al-Kahf,” in Islamic Studies Today, ed. Majid Daneshgar and Walid Saleh (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2017), 215-238.
\textsuperscript{223} Cuypers, The Banquet, 506.
classifications, like “the introductory hymn, the pericope, and the prayer.”\textsuperscript{224} In order to divide a
text into these parts, Friedman indicates that one must first identify those classifications.\textsuperscript{225} Such
a division based on the themes instead of textual indicators is subject to non-objective process of
sectioning as Rippin states.\textsuperscript{226}

Dissimilarly, Robinson examines Meccan and Madinan sūrahs as units thematically,
textually, and structurally. His method depends more on thematic shifts in dividing the long text
into sections. In terms of Meccan sūrahs, he examines their structure through the shifts of themes
and rhymes. He also notices the symmetrical structure in Q 5. Cuypers demonstrates that
Robinson’s method starts from identifying the large units to the small ones. This way, Cuypers
continues, leads to start sectioning the text into parts from an arbitrary point rather than a precise
one.\textsuperscript{227} Despite these points, Neuwirth’s and Robinson’s structural studies are examples of ways
of reading the Qur’ān literarily and noticing its development of themes and styles.

\textsuperscript{224} Friedman, “Interrogating Structural Interpretation of the Qur’ān,” 137.
\textsuperscript{225} Ibid., 142.
\textsuperscript{226} Andrew Rippin, Rev. of Studien zur komposition der mekkanischen Suren, by Angelika Neuwirth. Bulletin of the
of the Qur’ān,” 142.
\textsuperscript{227} Ibid., 508.
II. The Science of Correlations (‘ilm al-munāsabāt)

The question of the Qur’ānic coherence is not new for Muslim scholarship. It has been discussed by Muslim linguistics, exegetes, and jurists in different stages of Islamic history to serve different purposes. A considerable number of traditional and modern commentators tend to use different terms, such as latā’īf, daqā’iq, ittiṣāl, and munāsabah, to refer to the connections between the Qur’ānic verses and sūrahs. Early Qur’ānic Studies scholars dedicate several chapters and works to explain the correlations (al-munāsabāt) and how this notion explains the naẓm of the verses by which the inimitability of the Qur’ān reveals. In context, new categories of the science of the correlations, such as the correlations between the opening and end of a sūrah, have been produced and classified.

‘Izzu al-Dīn ibn ‘Abdussalām (d.660/1262) does not support the notion of correlations, as in his view, because the Qur’ān was revealed in different occasions and long periods, the endeavor of searching for the coherence between the verses and their order is difficult. This discipline was not an exegetical principle for Ibn Taymiyah (d.728/1327) in his Introduction of Tafsīr’s Principles. On contrary, Wāfī al-Dīn al-Mallawī (d.774/1372) argues in support of

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228 Abū Ishāq al-Shāṭibī (d.790/1388), a jurist, in al-Muwāfaqāt considers the aims of the sūrahs (See al-Daghāmīn, “Maqāṣid al-Qur’ān fī Fikr an-Nūrī: analytical study,” 385). Shāṭibī emphasizes naẓm in order to understand the Qur’ān and individual passages. For him, a sūrah as one unit has different styles function as introducing a matter, followed by complementing or confirming parts, and then concluding and emphasizing what comes earlier (See al-Muwāfaqāt fī ‘Uṣūl al-Sharī‘ah, ed. Dr.Darāz, second edition, 3:279-280, 284 cited in Subhānī, ‘Im‘ān al-Naẓar, 31).

229 al-Zarkashī, al-Burhān fī ‘Ulūm al-Qur’ān, 1:42. Muḥammad al-Shawkānī (d.1250/1834) argues against the notion of correlations. He claims that it has to do with practicing the unlawful rational judgment on the Qur’ān. Also, he compares between a seek of correlations and a preacher who seeks to connect his previous speeches on irrelevant topics with the most recent one. Thus, Shawkānī considers it as a non-logical unworthy activity. Abū al-‘Olā responds to each point from theological and rhetorical perspectives (See Abū al-‘Olā, Maṣābīḥ al-Durar, 30-46). However, Subhānī shows that there a considerable number of places in Shawkānī’s exegesis seems to show links and correlations between the verses. He is not against the correlations, but he rejects the exaggeration in establishing connections where they do not appear (See Subhānī, ‘Im‘ān al-Naẓar, 37-40, 43).

230 Mir, “The sūra as a unity: A twentieth century Development Qur’ān exegesis,” 212; Cuypers, The Banquet, 498. In Ibn Taymiyah’s tafsīr of Q 2, there is an indication of his concern about “the consistency of the Qur’ān and the correlations between its parts.” Al-Sayyid al-Jufīnī, Daqā’iq al-Tafsīr al-Jāmi’ li-Tafsīr Ibn Taymiyah (Beirut:
searching for the connections between the verses because “historical circumstances determined the order in which the quranic revelations were sent down, [while] considerations of wisdom determined the order in which those revelations were arranged.”\textsuperscript{231} Rāzī notices that the majority of exegetes do not pay attention to the “subtleties” concealed in the sūrahs’ \textit{naẓm}.\textsuperscript{232} Abū Bakr ibn al-ʿArabī (d.543/1148) asserts that searching for the links between the verses, in order to show how the verses are connected as “a single word” which is well-structured and well-spoken, is “a great knowledge.”\textsuperscript{233} He uses the term “\textit{irtībāṭ}” (connection) to refer to the connection between the verses.\textsuperscript{234} Zarkashī indicates that those who ignore this task are reluctant to undertake it because of “its precision.”\textsuperscript{235} Nevertheless, some commentators embrace the notion and apply it in their exegesis. This section will shed light on the beginning of the notion of correlations, its development, and its relation to \textit{naẓm}. Influential classical and modern scholars’ contributions will be introduced. Those studies will show that Muslim scholars have noticed some Qur’ānic habits, like repetition and symmetry, have to do with its \textit{naẓm} and unity.

1. \textbf{Emergence of Correlations and Early Relationship to \textit{Naẓm}}

The correlations generally are understood as the links between the verses or the sūrahs. The correlations between the verses are claimed to be known among the Companions and \textit{Salaf} through their Arabic innate and knowledge of Arabic styles.\textsuperscript{236} It is reported that Ibn Masʿūd says

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\textsuperscript{231} Mir, “The sūra as a unity: A twentieth century Development Qurʿān exegesis,” 211.
\textsuperscript{232} Faḵhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, \textit{Mafāṭīḥ al-Ghayb or al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr} (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿelmiyyah, 2004), vol.7:112.
\textsuperscript{233} al-Zarkashī, \textit{al-Burḥān fī ‘Ulūm al-Qurʿān}, 1:42.
\textsuperscript{234} Ibid., 1:42.
\textsuperscript{235} Ibid., 1:42.
\textsuperscript{236} Biqāʿī states many reports show that the connections were recognized by \textit{Salaf} and linguists because of their awareness of Arabic and its styles, human methodologies of thinking, and impulse rational methods. He claims that this ‘\textit{ilm or fann} (knowledge, art, or science) becomes strange in which people do not recognize it (See Ibrahim al-}
that those who ask how to read a particular verse should ask about the preceding verse. Also, it is reported that al-ʿAṣmaʾī (d.216/831) was reciting “(As for) the male thief or the female thief: cut off their hands...God is mighty, wise” (Q 5:38), in the company of Aʿrābī (a Bedouin) who recognized through his Arabic innate the mistake made by Aṣmaʾī reciting the phrase “Know that God is forgiving, compassionate” instead of the actual end of the verse “God is mighty, wise” (Q 5:38). The Bedouin could figure out that the verse’s first half on penalty does not fit logically and thematically with concluding the verse with “God’s mercy.” Those two reports indicate that the context sīyāq, order nazm, and meaning are intuitively recognized and known in Arabic.

The first emergence of the correlations among Baghdadis is when Abū Bakr al-Nīsābūrī (d.324/936) criticizes those who are ignorant of the correlations. Part of his habitual reading of the Qurʾān relates to his wondering why a particular verse is placed next to the following verse and why a particular sūrah is placed next to the following sūrah. Furthermore, scholars of rhetoric produce works explaining the Qurʾān’s consistency based on nazm. The term nazm is embraced by some to refer to the inimitability of the Qurʾān. Rhetorically, Ḥamd b. Muhammad al-Kaṭṭābī (d.388/998), Abū Bakr al-Baqillānī (d.403/1013), and Abū Bakr al-Jurjānī (d.471/1078) share a similar concept of nazm in which the Qurʾān’s thoughts are expressed

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238 Ḥamdī A. al-Salafī, 1:142.
239 Ibid., 1:142.
240 “Nazm al-Qurʾān” means “The Qurʾān stylistic organization” developed to show the Qurʾān’s coherence during 3rd and 4th Islamic centuries due to the opposition of the notion of coherence because of repetition, omission, irrelevant topics, disunity, and so on (See Cuypers, The Banquet, 493).
241 Mir, Coherence in the Qurʾān, 10.
through suitable words and that is understood as the Qur’ān’s i′jāz. In this context, naẓm, a rhetorical approach, indicates two different methods: 1) examining the correlation between the Qur’ānic “word” and its “meaning,” and 2) exploring the connections between the Qur’ān’s sūrahs and verses based on a linear-atomistic reading. Despite different meanings of inimitability, the Qur’ān’s eloquences, stylistic manners, and contents are seen by many Muslims as a fundamental aspect of the meaning of Qur’ānic inimitability.

Ibn ‘Atiyyah al-Andalusī states that the inimitability i′jāz has to do with composition, meanings, and the arrangement of the words. Rāzī also asserts that the composition of the sūrahs and the order of the verses may be the meaning of the inimitability indicated by those who say that “the Qur’ān is inimitable due to its style.” Also, Qurṭubī states that one of the Qur’ān’s aspects of inimitability is tanāsub consistency of the Qur’ānic contents without any contradictions. In a similar naẓm fashion, al-Zamaḵḥsharī, in his famous exegesis al-Kashshāf, describes the Qur’ān as a “well-arranged” discourse and structure. He mentions the term “tanāsub” many times in his commentary and provides the relationships between some verses.

Abū Ja‘far ibn al-Zubayr al-Gharnāṭī al-Andalusī (d.708/1308) produces the first individual work on the connections only between the sūrahs al-Burhān fī Tartīb Suwar al-Qur’ān. He also writes Milāk al-Ta‘wīl on the correlations between the verses and the

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243 Ibid., 15-16.
247 al-Rāzī, Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb, 7:112.
sūrahs. Then, al-Fayroûz Abâdî (d.817/1415) pays attention to the correlations between the terms and between the parts and he views recurring parts in a sūrah as connected.

In sum, there were early individual attempts aim to show the importance of the relationships between the verses and between phrases and meanings. Some of those attempts consider this practice as common and natural in Arabic linguistic system whereas some shape an early concept of the correlations that has to do with the idea of the Qur’ānic inimitability sited in naẓm. Thus, the identification of the verses’ relationships is seen as a rhetorical tool to understand the coherence of the verses and the relationships between the sūrahs in their order. The terms used to indicate these relationships vary, but they refer to one main idea which is the connections between the successive verses. However, those attempts did not establish a theorized understanding of the notion of connections. Also, the concept of correlations was not a means of exegetical activities. On the other hand, there were some exemplary literatures that illustrate and contribute towards conceiving and forming these correlations. In the next pages, influential classical scholars, concerned about the use of correlations as an exegetical tool and method, will be introduced in order to shed light on the development of the conception of correlations.

2. Development of the Notion of Correlations

The major progression in the concept of correlations, it can be claimed, is made through four Muslim scholars: Rāzī, Zarkashī, Biqā‘ī, and Suyūṭī. The following parts will introduce their understandings, methods, and literatures regarding correlations.

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252 Ibid., 27.
(a) Faḵr al-Dīn al-Rāzī

Rāzī is well known for his rational and philosophical exegesis. Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb or al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr provides a lot of correlations between the verses. He encourages scholars to look for the Qurʾān’s “subtleties” (latāʾif) hidden in its “arrangements” (tartībāt) and “links” (rawābiṭ).²⁵³ He employs different expressions to refer to the correlations between the verses.²⁵⁴ The term munāsabah is used for the first time in his exegesis when Rāzī indicates the connection between Q 5’s opening and end.²⁵⁵ His approach in pointing out the connections is “linear-atomistic.”²⁵⁶

Rāzī is the first scholar to apply the notion of naẓm to the entire Qurʾān.²⁵⁷ Also, he paves the way for more methodological analysis of the Qurʾān’s inimitability and structure.²⁵⁸ He expresses that the whole Qurʾān is like one word “kal-kalimah al-wahidah.”²⁵⁹ Rāzī states that examining “latāʾif of the naẓm of the sūrah” and its order “tartīb” reveals the inimitability of the Qurʾān in terms of: 1) the eloquence of phrases and meanings and 2) the order and the verses’ naẓm.²⁶⁰ Therefore, the correlations in his understanding are featured as delicate links between the verses found in their arrangement naẓm. Rāzī is also concerned with the arrangement of the

²⁵⁴ Mir, Coherence in the Qurʾān, 18.
²⁵⁶ Salwa El-Awa, “Linguistic Structure,” in The Blackwell Companion to the Qurʾān, ed. Andrew Rippin (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2006), 57. Mir explains Rāzī’s method of identifying the correlations: “Rāzī’s method of establishing naẓm in a Qurʾānic sūrah consists in showing how verse 1 of the sūrah leads to verse 2, how verse 2 is related to verse 3, and so on until an unbroken linear connection between all the verses of the sūrah is established. Sometimes Rāzī seeks to connect sūrahs in similar fashion. Not infrequently, he suggests two or more types of connections (not always mutually reconcilable) between verses. Thus he may give his own explanation of the naẓm connection and, at the same time, adduce a sabab al-nuzūl that links up the verses in question. It should be noted, however, that Rāzī does not hesitate to reject a sabab al-nuzūl if it appears to him to be in clear contradiction of naẓm interpretation he himself has arrived at, though this does not often happen.” (See Mir, Coherence in the Qurʾān, 17-18).
²⁵⁷ Mir, Coherence in the Qurʾān, 17.
²⁵⁹ Rāzī’s interpretation of Q 2:30 (See al- Rāzī, Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb, 2:147).
²⁶⁰ al- Rāzī, Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb, 7:112.
words in a verse and a verse’s place in a context. Moreover, he mentions the connection between a sūrah’s opening and end. Also, thematic shift in a discourse is not seen by Rāzī as discontinuity, but rather it is viewed as good arrangement “tartīb” when it is read in relation to the preceding text (e.g. Q 75). Additionally, he links between a multitude of non-successive and successive sūrahs thematically.

In context, he explains in his interpretation of Q 4 that the Qur’ān’s way “sunnah” of the order of the verses is as follows: mentioning some laws followed by different verses addressing theological matters, like promise and threat, coupled with verses praising God and showing His almighty and power, then, the context returns back to mention laws. He states that this arrangement is the nearest to cause a great influence on the audience to respond positively to

\[\text{Abū al-'Olā, Maṣābīh al-Durar, 70. See examples: al-Rāzī, Mafātīh al-Ghayb, 1:179-186, 3:64-65.}\]
\[\text{In his examination of end of Q 2 (v.285-286), Rāzī lists four links to connect this concluding passage to the preceding verses. One of those links has to do with tying the whole passage to the opening of the sūrah and he calls it “the consistency between the beginning of the sūrah and its end” (See al-Rāzī, Mafātīh al-Ghayb, 7:111-112).}\]
\[\text{Non-successive sūrahs 1,6,18,34, and 35, according to Rāzī, share the same openings in which each opening is suitable with its sūrah’s contents and complements the other sūrahs’ beginnings in terms of meanings (See al-Rāzī, Mafātīh al-Ghayb, 1:150).}\]
\[\text{Rāzī notices the thematic links between two following sūrahs by which they become parallels. According to him, Q 107 has an antithetical relationship to Q 108 in terms of themes. Q 107 mentions the hypocrite’s four characters (niggard, not praying, riyā’, not giving alms zakāt) which are antithetically repeated in Q 108 through addressing and honoring the Prophet (See al-Rāzī, Mafātīh al-Ghayb, 32:110).}\]
\[\text{Rāzī links between some successive sūrahs. For example, Q 108 is “the completion/conclusion” of the preceding sūrahs and “the origin/introduction” of the following sūrahs. He establishes thematic links between each preceding sūrah (Q 93-107) and Q 108’s contents. He indicates that the preceding sūrahs have to do with the Prophet’s honor and virtue (Q 93-95,99, 105-106), prophecy and revelation (Q 96-97), his followers’ destiny, graces, and characteristics (Q 98,100-101,103), his rejecters’ destiny, attitudes, and punishment (Q 102,104, 107). Rāzī states that after honoring the Prophet in those sūrahs with different graces, Q 108 starts with an indication to that profound honor (Q 108:1) followed by ordering the Prophet to worship God (Q 108:2). Likewise, Rāzī connects Q 108 to the following sūrahs (Q 109-114) thematically and symmetrically. Now, Q 108 becomes as an assurance of protection from people whose religions are disbelieved by the Prophet. Then, Q 112 shows the most honorable way through stating God’s attributes followed by Q 113 on God’s creatures’ levels while Q 114 is about the levels of human being’s soul. Rāzī points out that the conclusion of the whole Qur’ān shows the secrets hidden in “the Book” (See al-Rāzī, Mafātīh al-Ghayb, 32:111-114).}\]
\[\text{al-Rāzī, Mafātīh al-Ghayb, 11:49.}\]
God’s commands and laws. Rāzī calls this style the Qur’ānic habit of the verses’ order in which non-juridical themes come in between mentioning laws in one sūrah. 267

Also, Rāzī criticizes those who claim that the Qur’ān was distorted because they are unable to explain the connections between (Q 75:16) and the preceding discourse. He mentions six possibilities as munāsabah. He prefers to maintain the occasion of the revelation saying that when the Prophet was repeating the Qur’ān during its revealing, he was ordered to stop reciting what it is revealed. Rāzī alludes that the shift in the discourse is similar to a mentor speaking about very significant matters to his student when the latter becomes distracted by something else during the conversation and thus, the teacher attracts his attention to what happening by addressing him. Then, Rāzī states that knowing the occasion explains why (Q 75:16) comes in this place in the discourse. 268

In summary, Rāzī’s method of the unity of a sūrah has to do mainly with the notion of naẓm. He devotes his verse-by-verse analysis to reveal the correlations between the verses and the phrases’ positions and choices in indicating particular meanings. He also provides the links between the opening and the end of a given sūrah. Additionally, it seems that he almost theorizes the notion of the sūrah’s structure through suggesting that the Qur’ān’s dynamism regarding the verses’ arrangement which follows a particular structure (e.g. Q 4). In general, Rāzī’s concern

267 The phrase recurs in his interpretation of (Q 5:109). Rāzī states the same structural form and labels it with “the habit of this book.”
268 al-Rāzī, Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb, 30:196-197. Zarkashī deals with the same example, but he notices the symmetrical pattern in Q 75’s parts. His analysis connects not only what appears as an unrelated passage in a discourse, but also the following verses to the preceding discourse as a whole. He illustrates that the verses (Q 75:16-19) order the Prophet to meditate and follow the revelation’s teachings. Those verses come between the preceding verses “Nay, but man shall against himself be an eye-witness, even though he may veil himself in excuses” (Q 75:14-15) and the following verses “Nay, but [most of] you love this fleeting life, and give no thought to the life to come [and to Judgment Day]” (Q 75:20-21). Zarkashī explains that there is no interruption here between the beginning and the end of the sūrah, but it resembles a conversation between two men as Rāzī explains. Both scholars maintain the tradition stating that the verses (Q 75:16-19) are about the Prophet particularly. Importantly, they both assert that the discourse from the beginning of the sūrah to the end is connected thematically (See al-Zarkashī, al-Buhān fī ‘Ulūm al-Qur’ān, 1:49).
about the unity of the Qurʾān can be seen in his attempt to thematically link two subsequent sūrahs and a group of sūrahs.

Nevertheless, the notion of correlations was not common in exegesis despite Rāzī’s broad application. Mir indicates that Rāzī uses the connections as an exegetical tool to determine which meanings correspond with the arrangement of the verses, however; this approach is not pushed further to be a sustainable technique of interpretation. Accordingly, the few fellow scholars applying the same method reach similar findings. Abū Ḥayyān al-Andalusī (d.754/1344) influenced by Ibn al-Zubayr al-Gharnāṭī mentions in Tafsīr al-Bahr al-Muḥīṭ the connections between the two successive verses as Rāzī does. He also recognizes the correspondence between the opening and the end. In the end of his interpretation of Q 2, Abū Ḥayyān states that the long sūrahs’ naẓm does not reveal any disunity, but it is coherent and mentions a point, then it moves from digression to another point, then it returns to what is mentioned first as Arabs’ habit of naẓm does. Mir argues that Abū Ḥayyān and others following Rāzī’s view on the connections and naẓm make some progress in understanding the connections on different levels, but “word-meaning relationships” and atomistic approach are the dominant ways in identifying the connections.

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270 Mir refers to the connection’s relationship with naẓm (See Mir, “The sūra as a unity: A twentieth century Development Qurʾān exegesis,” 221, note.12).
271 Ibid., 212.
274 Ibid., 2:378.
275 Mir, Coherence in the Qurʾān, 18-19. The fellow commentaries on the Qurʾān take it to a further level and link a group of verses thematically after rhetorical analysis. Mir shows that some commentators, influenced by Rāzī in terms of his presentation and determination of the connections, do not focus only on individual verses’ relationships. For instance, Niẓām al-Dīn al-Nisābūrī (d.728/1327) quotes a lot of the connections from Rāzī, but also he is concerned about tying a series of verses in terms of their main contents as Mir states.
(b) Badr al-Dīn al-Zarkashī

Zarkashī is in support of the correlations as a “science.” He devotes the second chapter entitled “Knowing the Correlations Between the Verses” in his work *al-Burḥān fī ʿUlūm al-Qurʾān* towards introducing the correlations. He explains that the correlations correct “the naẓm of the discourse” because they are not the cause of the discourse but dependent on the occasions of revelation if they exist.276 Thus, Zarkashī’s understanding of the correlations has to do with *naẓm* with the occasions of revelation given primary consideration.

*Munāsabāh*, Zarkashī states, is “a unifying/linking meaning” that can be based on different types of relationships: generality or specialty, rationality or tangibility, causality or reason, and contradiction or parallelism.277 According to Zarkashī’s mentor,278 the researcher of the connections should first determine whether a particular verse is “complementing” the preceding verse or “independent.” If the latter is the case, the researcher should seek the verse’s relationship to the preceding verse and one can do the same for seeking the connections between the sūrahs.279 Zarkashī provides similar genres of the correlations to Rāzī’s. In terms of the correlations between the sūrahs, Zarkashī links the sūrahs through their contents, openings, and ends. He provides five links connecting the sūrahs: 1) the Disconnected Letters (e.g. *al-ḥawāmīm*), 2) the accordance between the opening of a sūrah and the end of the preceding sūrah (e.g. Q 1 and Q 2), 3) the similar assonance of the end of a sūrah and the opening of the

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276 al-Zarkashī, *al-Burḥān fī ʿUlūm al-Qurʾān*, 1:40. By looking at his order of the chapters, the chapter on the occasions of revelation is placed first then the correlations.

277 Interestingly, Zarkashī says “God Knows” after mentioning what the unifying meaning between the verses can be. This might indicate that searching for *munāsabāh* as he states later is a difficult task (See al-Zarkashī, *al-Burḥān fī ʿUlūm al-Qurʾān*, 1:41).


following sūrah (e.g. Q 111 and Q 112), 4) the similar sentences in two following sūrahs (e.g. Q 93 and Q 94), and 5) the similarity of contents (e.g. Q 2 and Q 3).²⁸⁰

Furthermore, Zarkashī provides a section entitled with “the types of the correlations of the verses.”²⁸¹ He explains that, for example, two verses can be related to one another with obvious connections if the meaning of v.1 is only complemented by v.2, or v.2 confirms, illustrates, or opposes v.1.²⁸² Unlike this type, there are verses in the Qurʾān seem with no obvious indication of connections. To solve this issue, Zarkashī provides several types of links:

1. If there is a conjunction (maʿṭūf), the links can be based on one of the following categories: 1) parallelism (e.g. Q 3:27), 2) antithesis;²⁸³ 3) explanation “digression (istiṭrād) or example (tamthīl)” (e.g. Q 2:189), 4) “takhallūṣ” (transition of speech from a topic to another until the discourse finishes);²⁸⁴ 5) familiarity of audience with the conjunctive objects (e.g. Q 88:17-20), and 6) resemblance (mushābahah) between two narratives in a sūrah (e.g. Q 2:258 and Q 2:259).²⁸⁵

One of Zarkashī’s examples in this section which should be noticed is Q 17’s interrelations. He states most of the correlations mentioned by Rāzī, but his correlations seem to follow a specific pattern where the focal point of the discourse appears in between two complete parallel texts connected thematically. He considers the opening of the sūrah to (v.10) as a united discourse and indicates the similar, symmetrical, and parallel links between the event of the

²⁸⁰ Ibid., 1:184-185.
²⁸¹ Ibid., 1:44.
²⁸² Ibid., 1:44.
²⁸³ Zarkashī explains that the Qurʾān’s habit is to mention mercy with punishment, then; to state laws followed by promises of rewards and threats to encourage people to obey, followed by mentioning God’s attributes in order to show the Almighty of the Commander as it can be seen in the structures of sūrahs 2-4. It can be noticed that he follows Rāzī’s proposal regarding the structure of a sūrah (See al-Zarkashī, al-Burhān fī ʿUlūm al-Qurʾān, 1:44).
²⁸⁴ The transition in his scheme occurs: within an individual verse (e.g. Q 24:35), between the verses of a sūrah’s part (e.g. Q 70:1-4), and between a sūrah’s parts (e.g. Q 26:69-70, 102).
²⁸⁵ Ibid., 1:44-48.
ascension, Moses, Noah’s people, the Children of Israel, and the Qur’ān within this whole part.\footnote{Ibid., 1:45–46.} He considers the transition (intiqāl) from a theme to another without a break in niẓām until the discourse completely discontinues as takhallus. To illustrate, he explains the relationship between (v.1) and the successive verses on Moses, Noah, and the Qur’ān (Q 17:2-10). He shows how (v.1) on the event of al-‘isrā’ (ascension) as an ayāh (sign) of Muhammad’s prophecy is a synthetic parallel to the following verse mentioning Moses’ revelation (Q 17:2). Zarkashī shows the symmetrical and antithetical relation between mentioning Noah and his salvation from the flood (v.3) and the Children of Israel’s rebellion and corruption (v.2 and v.4-6) in which both Noah and the Children of Israel have different responses to God’s graces. Then, Zarkashī states that the three verses (v.7-9) explain the purpose of mentioning the story of the Children of Israel. According to him, those verses provide “in few words” the central message of the whole narrative. Zarkashī illustrates that (v.7-9) exhort the Children of Israel to obey and then the verses move on to mention the Qur’ān’s wisdom, which is the greatest sign, without any interruption in “the discourse’s niẓām” although the narrative is completed by (v.7).

2. If there is no conjunction, the links can be found in several incorporeal conjunctions by which v.2 is the second part of v.1 according to one of the following: \footnote{Ibid., 1:48.} tanẓīr symmetry (e.g. Q 5:3), \footnote{Ibid., 1:48-50. It should be noted that Cuypers mentions Zarkashi’s analysis of (Q 5:3) in order to show how Zarkashi understands the correlations similarly to ring-structure although Zarkashi does not provide an advanced level of it in his work as Cuypers claims (See Cuypers, The Banquet, 497).} contrariness (taḍādd), \footnote{al-Zarkashi, al-Burhān fī ‘Ulūm al-Qur‘ān, 1:50.} digression.

In context, for Zarkashi, the correlations can be established based on any aspect of relations of a main theme of a context. For instance, Q 2 starts with mentioning the Qur’ān’s and its followers’ characters (v.1-5), then the sūrah mentions the other group that does not believe
which is the opposite of the previous group (v.6), thus; the verses are connected through an antithetical link although the context is from the beginning on the Qur’ān as a main aim of the whole discourse and the groups are mentioned for explanatory and complementary purposes.

Zarkashī continues that the aim is to invite people to follow the Qur’ān, accordingly; the discourse returns to mention the Qur’ān (v.23) after mentioning the groups of people responding to the Qur’ān. It can be noticed that his treatment of the repetitive theme shows his awareness of the central aim, context, and the discourse’s continuity even though there are some verses addressing related themes to the text’s main theme.290

In summary, Zarkashī is concerned about the correlations between the verses, within a verse, or the sūrah’s parts. He considers *niẓām* context and themes in establishing the connections. His method differs from the previous attempts in terms of expanding the correlations’ base from “word-meaning” and “linear-atomistic” basis to thematic, contextual, and structural foundations that consider larger units of the text (the opening, the end, and the parts in between). However, Zarkashī’s understanding of the correlations between the verses and between the openings and ends does not differ from Rāzī’s conception. Zarkashī applies the same theory of the relationship between the openings and the ends to connect a verse’s parts and a sūrah’s parts. Some analyzed examples in Zarkashī’s work, like (Q 2 and Q 17) provide more developed understanding of the continuity of two discourses based on thematic links and the discourses’ aims and contents rather than linear connections.

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290 Ibid., 1:50.
(c) Ibrahim bin Omar al-Biqā‘ī

Biqā‘ī dedicates his tafsīr to show the correlations in the whole Qur‘ān. He declares in the introduction of Naẓm al-Durar fī al-Ayāt wa al-Suwar that the Qur‘ān is coherent “mutanāsib-an” in terms of its sūrahs and verses and it is “resembling/mutashābih-an” in terms of its rhyme-patterns “fawāṣil” and “aims.” The title Naẓm implies how Biqā‘ī connects between naẓm and munāsabāt. Biqā‘ī adds that this science aims to unveil “the reasons” behind “the arrangement/tartīb” of every Qur‘ānic component and this science is “the secret of balāoghah.” He points out that “such a study is thus extremely valuable - it is to exegesis what ‘ilm al-bayān is to syntax.” He indicates that the “fruit” of this science is to show the significance, links, and relationships of each component/part with what comes before and after. This reflects his linear method to establish the correlations between small units.

On the other hand, Biqā‘ī states several times that knowing the correlations relies on knowing the aim of a given sūrah. He follows a rule used to know the correlations by Abū al-Faḍl Muhammad bin Muhammad al-Bujā‘ī (d.865/1461) who explains that identifying the aim of a sūrah leads to understand how the sūrah is composed and how the aim exists from the beginning in every part directly or indirectly. According to Bujā‘ī, knowing the aim of a sūrah

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292 Biqā‘ī’s tafsīr composed on al-munāsabāt was unique and new in his time. He encountered controversies and envy from his contemporaries, not because of their opposition to the notion of the correlations, but due to his quotation from the Torah and the Bible (See Biqā‘ī, Maṣā‘id al-Nazr, 1:109-141). This opinion, according to Sa‘ad, misleads Muslims and makes them disregard the significance of Biqā‘ī’s work which is pioneering, renewing, and unprecedented (See Muhammad T. Sa‘ad, al-Imam al-Biqā‘ī: Jihāduhu wa Minhāju Ta’wilihi Balāoghah al-Qur‘ān al-Karīm (n.p., 1424AH), 55).
293 al-Biqā‘ī, Naẓm al-Durar, 1:3.
294 Sa‘ad, al-Imam al-Biqā‘ī, 137.
298 al-Biqā‘ī, Naẓm al-Durar, 1:5, 11.
299 Ibid., 1:11.
helps to connect its parts and understand the naẓm of the verses and the sūrahs.\textsuperscript{300} The
application of this rule by Biqāʿī leads him to realize after reaching Q 34 in his interpretation that
a sūrah’s name indicates its aim.\textsuperscript{301} Thus, he states that his method in general depends on
mentioning the aim, the relationship between the aim and the name,\textsuperscript{302} and the meaning of
basmalah in relation to its aim. Then, he interprets the verses within this frame.\textsuperscript{303}

The characteristics of Biqāʿī’s theory and method of the identification of the correlations
are as the following:

\textit{i. Naẓm, Order, and Structure}. Biqāʿī’s work is based on the notion that each word, sentence,
verse, aim, and sūrah is linked rhetorically, compositionally, and thematically and leads to one
another in a meaningful way. The links and relations can be unveiled through \textit{tadabbur}.\textsuperscript{304} For
Biqāʿī, the inimitability of the Qur’ān appears in 1) \textit{naẓm} and 2) the order of the text.\textsuperscript{305} \textit{Naẓm}
has two concepts. It is based, on one hand, on “the structure” \textit{tarkīb} and, on the other hand, on
“the arrangement” \textit{tartīb}.\textsuperscript{306} On a small-unit level, it means the \textit{naẓm} of each verse’s components
(letters, words, and sentences) is to be understood as the structure of each sentence not the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{300} Ibid., 1:11.
\item \textsuperscript{301} Ibid., 1:11-12.
\item \textsuperscript{302} Biqāʿī states that each sūrah’s name is an explanation of its main aim. He also takes into consideration the other sūrah’s name(s) in relation to main aims. For instance, Q 2 aims to prove the revelation’s guidance which leads to believe in the “unseen” \textit{tawḥīd} and in the Last Day. The title “The Cow” refers to the story of the cow comes in the sūrah to emphasize the Last Day through “the belief in the Resurrection.” The sūrah is called also \textit{al-Zahrā’}. It means that the sūrah brightens the path to guidance and salvation in this life and Afterlife (See al-Biqāʿī, \textit{Naẓm al-Durar}, 1:24).
\item \textsuperscript{303} According to Saʿād, Biqāʿī explains his method in a compendious script of \textit{Naẓm al-Durar} called “\textit{Dalālat al-Burḥān al-Qawīm}.” It has an introduction and an exegesis of sūrahs 1-5. He uses a similar method to the original work without quoting from the biblical scriptures and without mentioning many linguistic details. He states that he interprets \textit{al-basmalah} according to the identified aim of a sūrah and its words’ semantics. He also views each sūrah as a unit has a main aim connects its parts and the aim relates generally to the sūrah’s name and interprets it. Then, he connects between the opening of a given sūrah and the end of the previous sūrah. His method depends on interpreting the words in the sūrah in accordance to the context and the rules of Arabic. He also indicates that there is no redundancy in the Qur’ān, but \textit{balāḡah} requires repetition. He explains that the repetition is meant either to serve a new meaning or to cast an emphasis on an existing meaning based on the context in order to connect the word to the context. In addition, he extracts meanings from the letters of the word, their characters, and the word’s meaning and context in order to connect the word to the context in general (See Saʿād, \textit{al-Imam al-Biqāʿī}, 72-77).
\item \textsuperscript{304} al-Biqāʿī, \textit{Naẓm al-Durar}, 1:3.
\item \textsuperscript{305} Ibid., 1:7.
\item \textsuperscript{306} Ibid., 1:7.
\end{itemize}
arrangement. In this context, every word indicates a particular meaning and is placed in a particular structural order.

The other naẓm has to do with the order of the sentences in a verse and with the aims and the sūrahs. This naẓm is based on the notion of discontinuity and continuity “al-faṣl wa al-waṣl” and the escalation of the structure and meaning. Thus, the components of the Qurʾān’s order whether a small unit (a whole sentence) or a larger unit (a whole sūrah) are connected to one another through different labels of relationship. When Biqāʿī interprets each unit, he focuses on indicating its place in relation to its preceding and following one in terms of similar forms and through providing how this unit explains, confirms, or limits those similar relations through different rhetorical styles “asālīb al-niẓam.” Thus, the aim of the order is to explain and connect well-structured sentences, verses, and meanings which seem irrelevant or hidden. For Biqāʿī, what can be applied to small units can be extended to the verses, sūrahs, and aims.

The benefit of knowing the order is not only to understand the meanings of the text, but also to comprehend the reasons behind repeating some narratives in different sūrahs. He states that each repeated narrative indicates different aspects of the aim of a sūrah. The repetition of a narrative in several contextual places with different words, details, and naẓm does not cause changes in its original meaning.

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307 Saʿad explains that Q 2:255 “āyat al-kursī” has a series of ten grammatical following sentences, but the verse is considered as one structural unit. The relationships between the sentences have nothing to do with the notion of order but the structure, and each sentence relates to the previous one structurally and grammatically. All balāghah’s elements (ʿilm al-maʿāni, ʿilm al-bayān, and ʿilm al-badī) fall into this rhetorical structure’s category (See Saʿad, al-Imam al-Biqāʾī, 142-143).
308 Saʿad, al-Imam al-Biqāʾī, 144.
309 Ibid., 144-145.
310 Ibid., 144.
311 al-Biqāʾī, Maṣāʾid al-Naẓr, 102-103.
312 al-Biqāʾī, Naẓm al-Durar, 1:8.
313 Saʿad, al-Imam al-Biqāʾī, 145.
315 al-Biqāʾī, Naẓm al-Durar, 1:8, 14.
ii. The main aim of a surah “al-maṣūd al-aʿẓam.” According to Biqāʾī, the aim of a surah leads to its consistency “tanāsub.” Identifying the main aim plays an important role in connecting a given surah’s parts from the beginning to the end. In other words, the science of the correlations depends mainly on determining the main aim in his view. This can be seen applied in Nazm al-Durar, but his other work, Maṣāʾid al-Nazar, reveals a more advanced understanding of the unity of the surahs through their names and main aims. However, although there are few differences between the aims mentioned in both works as he mostly repeats his work Nazm al-Durar. One may argue that Biqāʾī is the first interpreter to apply thematic unity approach as it is common nowadays to the whole Qur’ān. This will be demonstrated more below.

iii. The unity of a surah. Biqāʾī stresses the connections between each surah’s beginning and end. Also, he interprets al-basmalah each time according to a given surah’s aim. Then, he connects the meaning of the opening of a surah (maṭla’) to the following section’s meaning (maqṭa’) and he indicates the relationship between the two meanings which are composed differently but share and elaborate on the main aim. Moreover, after interpreting some parts of a surah, he connects these parts to the opening. In Q 7, Biqāʾī states that the end of the surah is about an invitation to follow the Qur’ān and be like those who are not arrogant in accepting the command of God unlike the story of Satan in the beginning of the surah.

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316 Ibid., 1:12.
317 al-Biqāʾī, Maṣāʾid al-Nazar, 1:149; al-Biqāʾī, Nazm al-Durar, 1:5,12.
318 Biqāʾī states that surah 4’s basmalah has to do with its aim which gathering people on tawḥīd. He explains that “In the Name of God” indicates that God pairs differences for good, “The Merciful” who makes the wombs as mercy, “The Compassionate” who is merciful for those do good to their relatives and follow His religion (See al-Biqāʾī, Nazm al-Durar, 2:204-205). This method is used before Biqāʾī by Imam al-Qushayrī (d.465/1073) (See Saʿad, al-Imam al-Biqāʾī, 207-208).
319 Saʿad, al-Imam al-Biqāʾī, 218.
320 Ibid., 219.
In context, Biqā’ī’s method does not indicate that he divides Q 7 into sections. Sa’ad states that Biqā’ī divides the sūrah into sections based on the recitation (maqta’ tilāwah). In other words, the sūrah is sectioned into parts based on the completion of the meaning of a group of successive verses during reciting. Moreover, Biqā’ī indicates several verses, from what it seems to be the second section of Q 7, which match verses in its first section. In interpreting Q 7, Biqā’ī mentions that after the narratives, a verse comes to link them to the previous section. To illustrate, he pairs the verses in terms of their corresponding meanings as follows: (Q 7:179) is similar to (Q 7:58), (Q 7:180) is corresponding with (Q 7:55), (Q 7:181) with (Q 7:42), (Q 7:182) with (Q 7:34), (Q 7:187) with (Q 7:29), (Q 7:189) with (Q 7:11), and (Q 7:203-206) with (Q 7:2-3). This order of paired verses shows a parallel relationship not only in terms of meanings but also similar or identical words found in these parallel paired verses.

Sa’ad illustrates that Biqā’ī does the same with interpreting short sūrahs, like Q 108. The sūrah has only three verses, but Biqā’ī connects the opening v.1 to the end v.3, which he asserts is the result. The verse 2 (the middle boader) relates to the surrounding verses in terms of being a consequence of v.1 and an aim of v.3. Sa’ad states that the linguists (al-balāghiyyūn) use this method in which a part of a text has a link to the opening. The link can be a word in a part that corresponds with a word in the opening, even though both words do not share the same meaning. This method is called “badī‘.” According to Sa’ad, Biqā’ī takes this method further from the

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322 Sa’ad, *al-Imam al-Biqā’ī*, 221.
324 Ibid., 3:180. It should be noted that the last pair represents the opening and the end of sūrah 7. Thus, the paired verses mentioned by Biqā’ī function as links between the first section (includes the opening Q 7:1-58), the second section on the narratives (Q 7:59-179), the last section of the sūrah (the conclusion Q 7:180-206).
325 For instance, (Q 7:36) “But those who call Our signs a lie, and become arrogant about it- those are the companions of the Fire. There they will remain” is very similar to (Q 7:182) “But those who call Our signs a lie – We shall lead them on step by step without their realizing it.”
corresponding words to the corresponding verses. Therefore, the links between the parts of a sūrah (a groups of verses in Biqā’ī’s view) have to do with rhetoric and meanings.

iv. The correlations between the sūrahs. Biqā’ī’s work demonstrates the connections between the opening of a sūrah and the end of the preceding sūrah. Moreover, he sometimes briefly reviews through a previous sūrah’s opening, aim, themes, and end, and then he connects them to the following sūrah’s aim and opening. Biqā’ī connects the aims of the sūrahs through the end and opening passages not through the last verse of a previous sūrah to the first verse of a given sūrah. In other words, his idea of establishing the connections does not follow a linear reading of the verses, but rather a broader view of the texts in general.

Biqā’ī also connects between the aims of surrounding sūrahs. He shows how the aim of a previous sūrah relates to the aim of a following sūrah. For example, Q 3 is about tawḥīd and Q 4 is gathering people around tawḥīd. Furthermore, he connects a group of sūrahs through their aims. He keeps connecting the aims of the following sūrahs to the previous sūrahs’ aims according to the Qur’ān’s order even between the non-sequential sūrahs.

v. The unity of the Qur’ān. Biqā’ī connects the first sūrah to the last sūrah and claims that there is no complete end (waqf) in the Qur’ān; thus, for him, the Qur’ān is a united discourse composed...
in a circle/ring form (dā‘īrī).\textsuperscript{335} He states that the aim of the whole Qur’ān is to educate people about God and this main intent can be found in the aim of Q 1.\textsuperscript{336} He explains that since Q 1 is about worshipping God, the Creator, the Owner, and the Watcher, it requires one to purify and direct self to God. Therefore, the last two sūrahs relate to Q 1 through taking refuge in God from envious people and enemies.\textsuperscript{337} In this context, Biqā‘ī links the last nine sūrahs (Q 106-114) to the first nine sūrahs (Q 1-9) where Q 106 is parallel to Q 9.\textsuperscript{338} He states in analyzing Q 106 that since the notion of a sūrah’s beginning and end shows how they are symmetrical, the end of the Qur’ān is symmetrical to its beginning. He illustrates that Q 106 is about God’s blessings upon the Quraysh, who are ordered to worship God whereas Q 9 aims to announce the disavowal from shirk which asserted to be the cause of disharmony, and to mention the Holy Mosque’s privileges and graces bestowed upon those who visit it to worship God (Q 9:17,28). Then, he continues to show how Q 105 al-Fīl is symmetrical with Q 8 al-Anfāl in which the first sūrah shows how God saved Quraysh from the enemy while the latter sūrah shows how God saved Muslims from their opponents and assured the believers’ safety.\textsuperscript{339}

He also places Q 4 al-Nisā’ in parallel with Q 111 al-Masad.\textsuperscript{340} He states that Q 111 shows that Abū Lahab\textsuperscript{341} (the Prophet’s uncle) was arrogant and acted against accepting the Prophet’s religion and was not good to his relatives. In the sūrah, Abū Lahab is depicted making efforts to have people go astray and relying on his wealth and power which cast God’s curse on him and his family. Likewise, Q 4 is a symmetrical parallel to Q 111 because Q 4 is about

\textsuperscript{335} al-Biqā‘ī, \textit{Naẓm al-Durar}, 1:9.
\textsuperscript{337} al-Biqā‘ī, \textit{Naẓm al-Durar}, 1:12, 8:611.
\textsuperscript{338} Ibid., 8:537; Sa‘ad, \textit{al-Imam al-Biqā‘ī}, 178-179.
\textsuperscript{339} He also mentions other links to support his hypothesis, like the number of the angels and the prayers, the year of the revelation of Q 9, and the number of the words in Q 105 and Q 106. However, those links do not seem convincing and tend to be more exaggerating (See al-Biqā‘ī, \textit{Naẓm al-Durar}, 8:537-538).
\textsuperscript{341} Literally means “the father of flame.” His name is ‘Abdu al-‘Uzzā (See Glasse, \textit{The New Encyclopedia of Islam}, 24.
inviting people to be good and just and to do good and charitable deeds to relatives and other people. Q 4 warns people against acting like Abū Lahab.\textsuperscript{342} Those examples demonstrates that Biqā’ī has in mind the theory of the unity of the Qur’ān through symmetrical parallel relationships between the sūrahs founded on their similar or identical themes. He also applies the theory of the relationship between the beginning and the end to the whole Qur’ān and how the end is connected to the opening thematically and symmetrically.

Illustrating the Qur’ān’s unity, Biqā’ī explains that Q 1 “the Mother of the Book” is explained in details through the following sūrahs 2-10, then, sūrahs 11-30 represent another phase of the explanation of the Qur’ān since the first two sūrahs in this group, called \textit{al-mi’ayn} (sūrahs with 100 verses or more), aim to show that the Qur’ān has wisdom, “\textit{bishārah}” (tiding), and “\textit{nidhārah}” (warning). The last sūrah in the group Q 30 mentions the victory of Roman and ends with stating that the Qur’ān contains parable, sign, and God’s promise (Q 30:58-60).\textsuperscript{343} The following phase also begins with the Qur’ān and it starts from Q 31 to Q 48 in which the latter is the last sūrah in \textit{al-mi’ayn}.\textsuperscript{344} At this point, each phase starts with mentioning the Qur’ān and ends with mentioning \textit{jihād} and the victory of the truth (Q 10, 30, 48).\textsuperscript{345} Then, short sūrahs (Q 49-114) come as the conclusion of the previous phases of the Qur’ān’s wholistic meaning.\textsuperscript{346} Each phase starts with the Disconnected Letters except the first sūrah and short sūrahs.\textsuperscript{347}

\textit{vi. Defending and developing the Correlations.} Biqā’ī’s wide application of the science of the correlations as the basis of his exegesis needs more explanation for the sake of proving its necessity in \textit{tafsīr}. In \textit{Maṣāʾid al-Naẓar lil-Ishrāfī ‘alā Maqāṣid al-Suwār}, Biqā’ī dedicates

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{342} al-Biqā’ī, \textit{Naẓ al-Durar}, 8:574.
\item \textsuperscript{343} Sa’ad, \textit{al-Imam al-Biqā’ī}, 162-163.
\item \textsuperscript{344} al-Biqā’ī, \textit{Naẓ al-Durar}, 6:3.
\item \textsuperscript{345} Sa’ad, \textit{al-Imam al-Biqā’ī}, 163.
\item \textsuperscript{346} al-Biqā’ī, \textit{Naẓ al-Durar}, 7:220.
\item \textsuperscript{347} Ibid., 7:220.
\end{itemize}
many pages to defending his extraordinary exegesis *Naẓm al-Durar*. For *Biqā’ī*, the task of *tafsīr* cannot be reduced to grammatical or sectarian dimensions, but rather it is about correlations and meanings.\textsuperscript{348} He also asserts that Qur’ānic inimitability has to do with the text’s arrangement.\textsuperscript{349}

*Maṣḥā‘īd al-Nāzār* is not an exegetical work, but it relates to Qur’ānic Studies literatures. It is mainly about the aims of the sūrahs as the title indicates, but it discusses also other aspects intensively. *Biqā’ī* claims that it is an invented study of his own.\textsuperscript{350} He states in the introduction that the aims of the sūrahs lead to the correlation “*tanāsuab*” of the parts.\textsuperscript{351} He asserts that “who knew the intended aim “*al-murād*” from the titles of the sūrahs, [one was able to know] their aims, and who confirmed [those] aims, [one was able to know] the consistency of their verses, narratives, and their whole parts.”\textsuperscript{352} What should be observed in *Maṣḥā‘īd al-Nāzār* is what *Biqā’ī* mentions in the introduction. He explains the science of the connections and its relation to *balāḡhah* exactly as he does in his previous work.\textsuperscript{353} However, he presents his new understanding of *naẓm* and the arrangement of the verses in a sūrah as a whole unit. The following paragraph is the advanced understanding of the correlations developed by *Biqā’ī*.

\begin{itemize}
\item[vii.] \textit{The circle form}. *Biqā’ī* indicates that each sūrah’s parts, either short or long sūrahs, revolve around an aim from the beginning to the end.\textsuperscript{354} The aim is expressed differently stylistically. However, in each part the discourse reaches the aim then returns to the beginning of the portion in a circular manner. Then, the discourse moves on to another matter following the same structure but with different textual and rhetorical styles. He symbolizes this theory by using the expression “the branches of a tree.” Each branch (a sūrah’s part) in the tree (the sūrah) overlaps
\end{itemize}

\textsuperscript{348} The editor’s introduction in al-*Biqā’ī*, *Maṣḥā‘īd al-Nāzār*, 1:63.
\textsuperscript{349} Ibid., 1:147.
\textsuperscript{350} Ibid., 1:98.
\textsuperscript{351} Ibid., 1:97.
\textsuperscript{352} Ibid., 1:149.
\textsuperscript{353} Ibid., 1:142.
\textsuperscript{354} Ibid., 1:149.
in “circles” (dawā’ir) with other branches. The opening leads to the end, each in other words, part relates to one another, and each sūrah and its parts are composed in a circle-form. Moreover, Biqā‘ī states that each sentence is introduced within the previous sentence’s context and the general context in which both explain the sentence’s position and order. Sa‘ad illustrates that the circle structure “al-binā’ al-dā’irī” does not contradict the notion of the reproduction of meaning “tanāsul al-ma’nā” within a given sūrah.

Another observation should be made has to do with Biqā‘ī’s connection between the sūrahs’ names and aims. He asserts that the names of the sūrahs indicate their aims. However, his identification of the aims does not always rely on the sūrahs’ famous names, but also on the previous sūrah’s aim and the given sūrah’s composition. For example, the aim of sūrah 75 al-Qiyāmah, preceded by Q 74 al-Muddaththir, is to show “the greatness” of the Prophet and the Qur’ān. This greatness is taken from God who sent down this well-composed and high-value revelation to the Prophet. Biqā‘ī does not state that the aim of Q 75 is about the Resurrection itself as he claims that the name leads to the aim of a sūrah. Rather, he highlights the content of (Q 75:16) and states it as the aim of the sūrah. In other words, Biqā‘ī determines the aim and interprets the sūrah based on the passage comes in the middle addressing the Prophet about his behavior towards the revealing of the Qur’ān (Q 75:16-19). The thematic shifts in Q 75 from the Resurrection to the Prophet and the Qur’ān then going back to the Last Day are explained by Rāzī and Zarkashī as a way of informing the addressee to pay attention. Biqā‘ī seems to provide

355 Ibid., 1:149.
356 Ibid., 1:102.
357 Sa‘ad, al-Imam al-Biqā‘ī, 217.
a more compositional explanation which relates to each part’s content and the sūrah as a connected unit with a unifying main aim, which, although it is expressed differently, corresponds.358

To sum up, Biqāʿī’s theory of the unity of the Qurʾān and the connections depends on two notions: the circle/ring structure and the notion of the escalation of meaning “tanāsul al-maʿnā.” He views the unity of the Qurʾān and the sūrahs through naẓm as previous scholars do, but he links it to munāsabāt in a wide range includes the connections between the sūrahs from the beginning of the Qurʾān to the end. Biqāʿī argues disparately for the sake of the correlations and makes this notion fundamental for exegesis and extracting meanings. The most important contribution made by Biqāʿī has to do with his understanding of the unity of a sūrah and the unity of the whole Qurʾān according to a ring-formation. The essential key in his view is the identification of the main theme of a given sūrah which functions to connect its parts from the opening to the end. He notices that ring-form composes the parts, the sūrahs, and the Qurʾān as a whole. This form starts with an idea then after reaching the aim of the discourse, it returns back to what it is opened with. For him, the sūrahs’ names play a significant role in the identification of their aims. However, his analysis of sūrah 75 provides a different view in which he chooses an interrupting theme coming in the middle as the sūrah’s aim instead of the sūrah’s obvious title and recurring theme. It can be claimed that Biqāʿī’s view reflects an advanced understanding of the coherence of the Qurʾān and the sūrahs similar to modern views.

(d) Jalāl al-Din al-Suyūṭī

Suyūṭī asserts that the Qurʾān is well-arranged and well-divided into verses and sūrahs.359 He contributes a profound literary contribution to the science of correlations. In al-Itqān fī ‘Ulūm

358 al-Biqāʿī, Maṣāʾid al-Naẓr, 3:139-140; al-Biqāʿī, Naẓm al-Durar, 8:241-258.
al-Qur‘ān, he mentions most of what Zarkashī states about correlations, but he elaborates on Zarkashī’s examples. Furthermore, he emphasizes the correlations between the names and aims of the sūrahs. The significance of Suyūṭī’s contributions can be seen in the following works:

1. Marāṣid al-Maṭāli‘ fī Tanāsub al-Maqāti‘ wa al-Maṭāli‘ is dedicated to show the correlations between the openings and the ends of the sūrahs as the title indicates. This genre of the correlations has been discussed by other scholars, such as Abū Ḥāyyān and Biqā‘ī. Although Suyūṭī quotes from other scholars (e.g. Rāzī) or provides his own thoughts, he links between the opening and the end of a sūrah through identical and similar words, meanings, or themes. An example of linking the extremes of a sūrah through identical words and meanings is Q 8 which starts with “it is they, they who are truly believers! Theirs’ shall be great dignity in their Sustainer’s sight, and forgiveness of sins awaits them, and a most excellent sustenance” (Q 8:4) and ends with “And they who have attained to faith, and who have forsaken the domain of evil and striving hard in God’s cause, as well as those who shelter and succour [them] – it is they, they who are truly believers! Forgiveness of sins awaits them, and a most excellent sustenance”

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361 Ibid., 3:337.
363 Muhammad Bāzmūl, ed., Marāṣid al-Maṭāli‘, 92-93. Rāzī and Zarkashī as shown in this chapter mention the correlations between the openings and the ends. But Suyūṭī seems the first who dedicates a whole work on this type. It should be mentioned that Bāzmūl compares between Biqā‘ī and Suyūṭī’s works and methods. Bāzmūl states that unlike Biqā‘ī, Suyūṭī does not show this type of correlations in the whole sūrahs, namely the shorts sūrahs, like 105, 106, 113. Both scholars demonstrate the correlations based on verbal or thematic links, however; Suyūṭī provides more verbal correlations than thematic. Another difference mentioned by Bāzmūl is that Suyūṭī tends to be briefer in indicating the correlations. Also, sometimes they mention different correlations whereas Suyūṭī states one link or a verbal correlation unlike Biqā‘ī who may mention more than one (See Bāzmūl, ed., Marāṣid al-Maṭāli‘, 92-94).
364 al-Suyūṭī, Marāṣid al-Maṭāli‘, 124.
(Q 8:74). Also, a thematic link can be found in sūrahs 18, 19, 20 which all start and end with mentioning the Qurʾān and dhikr. Another thematic example is the opening and end of Q 75 which both focus on the resurrection (Q 75:1-4, 36-40).

2. Tanāsuq al-Durā fī Tanāsub al-Suwar (The Consistency of the Pearls in the Correlations of the Sūrahs) is about the correlations between the sūrahs according to their order in the Qurʾān. It is based on the tradition that says that the Qurʾān is divided into four sections: ʿtiwāl (long sūrahs), miʿayn (sūrahs with 100 verses or more), mathānī (sūrahs with less than a hundred verse), and mufassal (Q 50-114).

Suyūṭī argues that there is no agreement among the scholars about the order of the sūrahs in each section whether the order is ijtihād or not, however; he claims that the disagreement should not expand to include the idea of the four sections itself because those four sections are based on divine guidance.

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365 Ibid., 134-135. Bāzmūl shows that Suyūṭī mentions in Qaṭf al-Azhār that the sūrah’s opening and end are corresponding and parallel since it starts with faith and dependence on God (heart’s deeds) and God’s reward of increasing ranks “darajāt” whereas the sūrah ends with mentioning bodily and financial deeds, thus; the promised reward is forgiveness and providence. Another mentioned link is that the sūrah mentions from the beginning the conflicts about the war’s spoils anfāl and inviting Muslims to overcome dissension. Accordingly, the end of the sūrah invites Muslims to unify and become allies to one another (Q 8:72-75) (See Bāzmūl, ed., Marāṣid al-Maṭāliʿ, 134-135, note.3).

366 al-Suyūṭī, Marāṣid al-Maṭāliʿ, 140.

367 Ibid., 172.

368 This book is also edited and published with another title “Asrār Tartīb Suwar al-Qurʾān”, by the editor ‘Abdulqādir ‘Atā, and with differences and changes in terms of the contents (See Ibrahim ad-Darwīsh, 19). I have “Asrār Tartīb Suwar al-Qurʾān” edited by Riḍā al-Hammāmī and it has slight differences from “Tanāsuq al-Durā” entitled by Suyūṭī himself and edited by Darwīsh.

369 It is reported that the Prophet says that he was given the long seven sūrahs in replacement of the Torah and mathānī instead of the Injīl, and he was privileged with the short sūrahs (See al-Zarkashi,1:259 cited in Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, Asrār Tartīb Suwar al-Qurʾān, ed. Riḍā Faraj al-Hammāmī (Beirut: al-Maktabah al-ʿAṣriyyah, 2007), 13, note.2; Imam Ahmad, Musnad al-Shamiyyin, Bāb ḥadīth Waṭihilah bin al-ʿAsqa’, no.16368, cited in al-Suyūṭī, Asrār Tartīb Suwar al-Qurʾān, 13, note.3). Also, it is said that the Prophet’s Companions divide the Qurʾān into “three sūrahs, five sūrahs, seven sūrahs, nine sūrahs, eleven sūrahs, thirteen sūrahs, and then from Q 50 to Q 114” (See Abū Dāwūd, Book of prayer, taḥzīb al-Qurʾān, no.1185, cited in al-Suyūṭī, Asrār Tartīb Suwar al-Qurʾān, 13, note.5).

3. Suyūṭī states some rules to indicate the correlations between successive sūrahs in his other work entitled *Asrār al-Tanzīl* (The Secrets of the Revelation).\(^{371}\) One of the rules is that each sūrah elaborates on what is mentioned in the previous sūrah.\(^{372}\) He in many places of his analysis shows how a sūrah’s contents are explained, opposed, or complemented by the following sūrah as if the sūrahs in their order construct unbreakable chain of thematic interrelations. To illustrate, Suyūṭī provides other scholars’ statements of the aims of the first ten sūrahs, followed by stating each sūrah’s relation to the preceding sūrah(s). He uses the sūrahs’ other themes to tie them to the following sūrahs’ similar or identical themes elaborated with different details and located mostly in the openings and ends.\(^{373}\)

In connecting sūrahs 25 and 26, Suyūṭī states that if a Meccan sūrah opens with praising God and comes after a Madinan sūrah,\(^{374}\) this pattern indicates “independency”\(^{375}\) and “transition” between different modes and genres.\(^{376}\) Furthermore, he declares that in each quarter of the Qur’ān, there are seven successive sūrahs started with the Disconnected Letters.\(^{377}\) Additionally, he establishes a connection between two or three following sūrahs through their titles, such as (Q 53 “*The Star*” and 54 “*The Moon*”) and (Q 91 “*The Sun,*” 92 “*The Night,*” and

\(^{371}\) He mentions fourteen genres of the correlations and Qur’ānic inimitability: 1. the correlations of the sūrahs’ order, 2. the elaboration relationship between a sūrah and the previous one, 3. the correlation between a sūrah’s end and the preceding sūrah’s opening, 4. the correlation between a sūrah’s opening and aim, 5. the correlation between a sūrah’s opening and end, 6. the correlations between a sūrah’s verses, 7. Qur’ānic rhetorical genres, styles, and contexts, 8. rhetorical modes, digression, and metaphors, 9. the correlation between a verse and its rhyme pattern, 10. the correlations of the sūrahs’ names, 11. the differences between synonym words, 12. the choice of specific words over other, 13. the recitations and their meanings, and 14. the distinction between the recurring narratives in each place (See al-Suyūṭī, *Tanāsuq al-Durar*, 24-26).


\(^{373}\) More details will be explored in Chapter Three.

\(^{374}\) Other stated examples are (Q 5-6, 16-17, 33-34, 56-57, and 66-67). The editor states that Q 16-17 are both Meccan and they do not follow this rule (See al-Suyūṭī, *Tanāsuq al-Durar*, 101, note.18).

\(^{375}\) Could he possibly mean by “independency” the unity of each sūrah?


\(^{377}\) Ibid., 119.
93 “The Bright Morning Hours,” and Q 89 “The Dawn” which is counted in this chain although the chain is interrupted by Q 90 “The Town”).

Noticeably, Suyūṭī does not go further to establish a composition-theory which would help to understand the order of the sūrahs. However, he establishes many correlations between successive sūrahs and sets some rules to explain the arrangement of the sūrahs. He notes similar parallel patterns found in different places in the Qur’ān and he seems to have in mind the idea of parallel or united sūrahs complementing, elaborating, or contradicting with one another themes. He also views the sūrahs organized as groups through dividing the Qur’ān into four large sections.

(e) Concluding Remarks

The notion of connections was not accepted widely within Muslim scholarship of the Medieval period despite its application by Rāzī. The discussed works on the correlations show that searching for the correlations is a concept developed within nazm and tafsīr literatures.

Zarkashi’s few pages introducing and explaining the correlations to Muslim scholars and its effectiveness and advantages established a new phase of this method. Moreover, compositions on such correlations as a discipline of Qur’ānic Studies emerged to define, classify, and frame the correlations. However, some attempts, with few exceptions, provide no more than generating more correlations and links between the verses in a sūrah and between two following sūrahs.

378 Ibid., 127.
379 Suyūṭī quotes some scholars explaining the order of the sūrahs through four categories: the disconnected letters, the correspondence between the end of a sūrah and the opening of the next sūrah (e.g. Q 1 and Q 2), corresponding rhymes (e.g. Q 111 and 112), and similar phrases in two following sūrahs (e.g. Q 93 and Q 94) (See al-Suyūṭī, Asrār Tarīkh Suwar al-Qur’ān, 14).
380 There is a number of ancient exegetical works are known with their concern about the correlations, but those works are not presented above in details because their main focus is to demonstrate the links between the verses in the sūrahs in linear way, such as al-Jāmi’ li-Ahkām al-Qur’ān by Qurtuqshī, and Tafsīr Abū al-Su‘ūd: Irshād al-‘Aqil al-Salīm ‘ilā Mazāyā al-Kitāb al-Karīm by Abū al-Su‘ūd Muhammad al-‘Amādī (d.951/1544), (Beirut: Dār ‘Iḥyā’ al-Turāth al-‘Arabī, 1994).
Michel Cuypers claims that despite the earlier attempts to establish the correlations as an exegetical tool for the coherence of Qur’ānic texts, the methods, “linear-atomistic” in particular, seem to be more related to “the concatenation” of the texts instead of the structure itself. He considers Zarkashī as the first scholar to classify and present the correlations to the scholarly field of Qur’ānic Sciences. Cuypers argues that Zarkashī does not mention naẓm scholars, such as Ibn Qutaybah (d.276/889) and Baqillānī (d.403/1013), in his introduction of the correlations because they are concerned about the “small” Qur’ānic units, such as “words” and “verses.” According to Cuypers, Zarkashī does not address the developed naẓm studies focusing on the Qur’ānic styles of the sūrahs in relation to the sentence’s structure and rhetoric. Rather, Zarkashī’s concern is the correlations between the verses and the sūrahs by which the text seems coherent and linked.

Cuypers argues that even though Zarkashī mentions that (Q 5:3) is composed in a particular manner, Zarkashī does not realize that the verse is formed according to the symmetrical structure with a center. Furthermore, Cuypers shows how the following scholars, like Biqā‘ī, contribute to the notion of correlations. According to Cuypers, Biqā‘ī has an advanced understanding of the order of the texts’ components and units in contexts by the virtue the texts have their meanings. Cuypers writes, that for Biqā‘ī, the “study of correlations itself is the rhetoric of the structures of the various parts of the discourse, even the Book as a whole.” Cuypers claims that Biqā‘ī’s view reflects Rāzī’s statement in his interpretation of Q 2, in which contended that “naẓm” and “organization” relate to the Qur’ān’s inimitability. In terms of

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381 Cuypers, The Banquet, 500.
382 Ibid., 497.
383 Ibid., 498.
384 Ibid., 497.
385 Ibid., 499.
386 Ibid., 499.
Suyūṭī’s view of the correlations, Cuypers states how Suyūṭī brings no obvious development to the notion.\footnote{Ibid., 500.} After his presentation of scholarly ancient views, Cuypers asserts:

Despite these isolated attempts, the importance Rāzī, Zarkashī, and Biqāʾī attached to the correlations between verses and suras and to their coherence did not succeed in being imposed as a principle of exegesis. This is probably due to the fact that their attention was particularly focused on the relationship between successive verses; they never really stopped treating the text in an “atomistic” way, but were only trying to link these “atoms” to one another.\footnote{Ibid., 500.}

Cuypers is right to claim that those stated scholars deal with the Qur’ān through verse-by-verse approach. However, Cuypers’ discussion does not include either Rāzī’s claim of the Qur’ān’s “habit” in illuminating the structure of Q 4 which starts with laws and returns to mentioning laws in the end after stating theological discussions in the middle or Rāzī’s attempt to explain the position of (Q 75:16-19). Also, Cuypers’ presentation does not mention Zarkashī’s analysis of Q 17 and Q 75 which shows the connections between two discourses within a sūrah. Moreover, Cuypers’ discussion does not observe Biqāʾī’s development of the correlations and his understanding of the notion of the circle-form, aim, and symmetrical parallelism of the sūrahs’ themes. There is no mention in Cuypers’ survey of Suyūṭī’s concept of the relationship between two following sūrahs or a group of them.

The basic idea of ring-structural analysis is the existence of symmetries in the texts. It is based on identifying the rings composing a text (the beginning and the end of the small and large units) through rhetorical and thematic indications arranged in a symmetrical way whether parallelism or chiasmus. This above presentation has found that some Muslim scholars have noticed the presence of symmetry in the Qur’ān by paying attention to thematic repetitions in a text. Rāzī has recognized that the sūrahs with a legislative tone follow a particular pattern where
the laws are arranged to occur in the beginning and the end while in between theological matters come to serve the theme of laws. Zarkashī also indicates a kind of symmetry between two discourses whether within a single verse or the sūrah’s parts. In addition, it can be said that in Biqā‘ī’s work the idea of symmetry/ring becomes essential to the sūrah’s structure. As shown, Biqā‘ī notices that each part in a sūrah is based on a particular structural form called “circle-structure.” He mentions that a sūrah is composed of a number of parts which start with a matter, followed by the aim, and conclude with the same matter comes in the beginning. Accordingly, the whole sūrah’s structure is a huge circle that has a multiple of circles with different rhetorical styles. The sūrah has a main aim which is found in each partial circle. In other words, he notices the circle-figures of the sūrah’s parts and their overlap from the beginning to the end. None of the literatures this research came across has mentioned or observed Biqā‘ī’s introduction of Maṣā‘id al-Nazr explaining his method in his famous exegesis Naẓm al-Durar which has been studied and criticized widely by ancient and modern scholars. He also applies the same theory in explaining the Qur’ānic order. He views the whole Qur’ān as a large ring in which the first nine sūrahs are arranged to compose thematic parallels to the nine sūrahs in the end of the Qur’ān. Similarly, Suyūṭī attempts to explain the Qur’ān’s order. He goes beyond the idea of the interrelation between the openings and the ends to claim that each sūrah’s contents relate to the preceding one through different types of relationships by which these sūrahs not only linked but composing together a larger thematic unit.

One must admit that those “isolated attempts” regarding the concept of correlations were ignored and not widely accepted as exegetical means. However, the actual practice of identifying the correlations was found within tafsīr and exegetical activities in order to reach better understanding of the Qur’ānic text, naẓm, and meaning. As a result, these correlations became
one of the fields of Qur’ānic Studies. The correlations are considered “the fruit” of Qur’ānic Sciences as those Sciences are introductory to understand the Qur’ān. Some of those individual attempts have demonstrated an advanced understanding regarding the Qur’ān’s unity, structure, and coherence. The following attempts made by the Qur’ānic Sciences scholars dedicate separate works from tafsīr books to various genres of the correlations as an individual Qur’ānic science. Exegetical works, following the traditional tools and rules of exegesis, continue to show more internal relations between the verses and correlations between the sūrahs until the emergence of thematic exegesis and thematic unity in the middle of the last century.

There is one last observation regarding the flourishing of correlations in Islamic literatures that should be made. The previous attempts did not separate between naẓm and the claim of the Qur’ānic inimitability. Mir states that the start has to do with

[T]he issue of the Qur’ānic i’jāz, the notion of naẓm in the Qur’ān evolves to become a subject of interest in itself. The shift of emphasis is very evident in Jurjānī, who… cites plenty of verses from Arabic poetry but relatively few Qur’ānic verses. With him, one might say, a theological issue is transformed into a literary issue. With modern writers, the connection between i’jāz and naẓm is further loosened.

The next part will show that the notion of naẓm is brought to the subject again in order to understand the Qur’ān’s wisdom.

3. Contemporary Understanding of Correlations and Naẓm

The theory of the sūrahs’ unity and pivots and the notion of correlations are dominant in modern studies as shown earlier in this chapter. The most important contemporary work on the

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389 Abū al-‘Olā, Maṣābīḥ al-Durar, 27.
391 Mir, Coherence in the Qur’ān, 23.
correlations is Farāḥī’s. His work has influenced a number of scholars, like Iślāḥī and Muḥammad ‘Enāyat Allah Subḥānī, who have produced works based on Farāḥī’s scheme. According to Mir, Farāḥī and then Iślāḥī do not completely follow “the traditional principles of exegesis.” Unlike the traditional exegetical paradigm, the notion of naẓm is a main “exegetical principle” in reading the Qur’ān. First, this part will shed light on Farāḥī’s scheme followed by Iślāḥī’s and Subḥānī’s applications and contributions to the subject. Those scholars have examined sūrahs not studied by Farāḥī himself. Finally, the part will introduce Muhammad A. Darāz’s and Muhammad A. al-Qalqīlī’s attempts in studying some individual sūrahs’ structure and unity. Those two works will show a basic understanding of ring-structure in the Qur’ān.

(a) Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Farāḥī

Farāḥī theorizes his method through two principles: niẓām (coherence) and munāsabāt (correlations). He proclaims that niẓām helps to understand Qur’ānic meanings, structures, parts’ relationships to one another, and the sūrah’s ‘amoūd (pillar). In Dalā’il al-Niẓām, Farāḥī argues to prove the Qur’ānic naẓm. He states that those who claim the scholarly and honorable aspect of tanāsib do not attach it to “the concept of the Qur’ān,” and therefore “hesitation” and many interpretations without a solid base of interpretation remain unresolved. He asserts that

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392 Abū al-‘Olā, Maṣābīḥ al-Durar, 17; Subḥānī, ‘Im’ān al-Nazar, 5-6.
393 Iślāḥī, Pondering over the Qur’ān, 44-47; Mir, Coherence in the Qur’ān, 29-30. Mir refers to Ibn Taymiyyah’s and Zarkashi’s “exegetical principles” in his comparison between them and Farāḥī’s and Iślāḥī’s exegetical means. Mir indicates that naẓm is used in the history of exegesis with different understanding. Mir explains that they do not view “the sayings of the Successors” as a foundation of interpretation while most of the occasions of revelation ought to be taken from the Qur’ānic text due to their historical aspect unless particular incidents indicated by the Qur’ān require external sources, like those reports.
395 al-Farāḥī, Dalā’il al-Niẓām, 16.
396 Ibid., 75, note 1.
the varieties of interpretive opinions, including the contradictory views, prevent recognizing nizām and its assistance to reach the best interpretation based on the composition of the text.397

For Farāhī, the Qurʾān’s verses and sūrahs are organized in which any changes in their organization lead to lose the Qurʾān’s “wisdom.”398 Farāhī claims that the Qurʾān itself leads to its nāẓm.399 The Qurʾān interprets itself and the verses explain each other and nizām of each sūrah can be extracted from its context.400 He explains that the previous attempts made in developing ‘ilm al-munāsabāt do not pay attention to the pillar by which a sūrah is linked from the opening to the end as a complete unit.401 Comparing between nāẓm and tanāsub, he stresses that “tanāsub is part of nāẓm,” although the correlations between the verses do not reveal “the unity” of the text since some verses seem to be not connected to the next verses.402 On the other hand, nāẓm shows how the text’s parts are united as “one independent sūrah” through a pillar ‘amoūd and how the sūrah is connected to the preceding and following sūrahs, therefore; the Qurʾān becomes “a single discourse.”403

397 Ibid., 24-25, 80.
398 Ibid., 12-38, 78.
399 Ibid., 27.
401 al-Farāhī, Dalāʿīl al-Nizām, 74-76. Mir explains that understanding of munāsabah for Farāhī is different from the previous attempts searching for the correlation through verse-by-verse method. Farāhī prefers to use the term nāẓm which indicates broader and wider understanding from the concept of correlation (See Mir, Coherence in the Qurʾān, 32).
402 al-Farāhī, Dalāʿīl al-Nizām, 74-75. Mir explains that understanding of munāsabah for Farāhī is different from the previous attempts searching for the correlation through verse-by-verse method. Farāhī prefers to use the term nāẓm which indicates broader and wider understanding from the concept of correlation (See Mir, Coherence in the Qurʾān, 32).
403 al-Farāhī, Dalāʿīl al-Nizām, 75-76. Nāẓm’s components, for Farāhī, are: “the order tartīb, the correlation tanāsub, and the unity wahdāniyyah.” Mir explains that wahdāniyyah “imparts unity to a discourse, making it a whole that is more than the sum total of its parts… the element of wahdāniyyah is missing from other scholars’ concept of nāẓm. That is why he describes their concept as the concept of munāsabah and his own as that of nāẓm… a discourse will possess nāẓm when it has tartīb, tanāsub, and wahdāniyyah, that is, when it is well-ordered, well-proportioned, and well-unified” (See al-Farāhī, Dalāʿīl al-Nizām, 76-77; Mir, Coherence in the Qurʾān, 33).
For Farāhī, the sūrah is the essential “naẓm unit.”\textsuperscript{404} The overall structure of the sūrahs includes four elements: “‘amoūd, introduction, context, and conclusion.” Also, he lists eight categories labeling the internal links between those four parts, such as explanation, reason, and contrariness.\textsuperscript{405} He explains that ‘amoūd is the unifying factor which does not belong to “the ordered parts,” but it organizes and correlates them.\textsuperscript{406} Some verses in a sūrah seem unique and others are less important. However, the pillar is not hidden and has to do with the Qur’ānic global values.\textsuperscript{407} Identifying the pillar is “a difficult task,” but noticing “the sūrah’s features” may help.\textsuperscript{408} Mir summarizes Farāhī’s method by stating that Farāhī studies the sūrah’s parts based on “thematic breaks,” and then tries to identify each part’s unifying theme in order to reach the central theme by which all parts’ themes are united and “developed logically in the sūrah.” Those parts have their own naẓm and they should be read within the whole sūrah’s naẓm.\textsuperscript{409}

Farāhī’s other significant contribution is his theory of the order of the Qur’ān. He states that the sūrahs’ organization is similar to the verses’ arrangement. Thus, some sūrahs are grouped for various correlations, like explanation and resemblance.\textsuperscript{410} He explains that some sūrahs are “independent” while others are attached. Also, two independent sūrahs, like Q 2 and Q 3, are connected, but the order requires that Q 2 comes first because it is about “faith Imān” and addressing Jews while Q 3 is about “Islam” and mentioning Christians.\textsuperscript{411} The placement of short sūrahs grouped together is meant to highlight their wisdom individually while the long sūrahs are

\textsuperscript{404} Mir, \textit{Coherence in the Qur’ān}, 34.
\textsuperscript{406} al-Farāhī, \textit{Dalā’īl al-Niẓām}, 73, 82.
\textsuperscript{407} Ibid., 62, 77-78.
\textsuperscript{408} Ibid., 77, 80-81.
\textsuperscript{409} Mir, \textit{Coherence in the Qur’ān}, 39-42.
\textsuperscript{410} al-Farāhī, \textit{Dalā’īl al-Niẓām}, 83.
\textsuperscript{411} Ibid., 84, 99.
grouped together and placed first because they are more remembered by the community since they are the last revelation and “nāẓm goes from the present revelation to the past.”

Furthermore, he claims that “the Qurʾān’s origin” is Meccan sūrahs and accordingly each group of sūrahs starts with a Meccan and ends with a Madinan. Some grouped Meccan sūrahs are coupled with “one or two Madinan sūrahs.” He divides the sūrahs into nine groups: (Q 1-5), (Q 6-9), (Q 10-22), (Q 23-24), (Q 25-33), (Q 34-49), (Q 50-66), (Q 67-112), and (Q 113-114). For example, the group (Q 10-22) is about “the middle of the Prophet’s ministry and the middle of emigration” in the context of “bīshārah (tiding) and nīḍhārah (warning).” This group’s sūrahs are Meccan except the last sūrah (Q 22).

On this basis, Farāḥī wrote his work Tafsīr Niẓām al-Qurʾān. This tafsīr includes exegesis of Q 1, 51, 66, 75, 77, 80, 91, 95, 103, 105, 108, and 109. According to Mir, Farāḥī examines only some Meccan sūrahs’ nāẓm. His interpretation of those sūrahs in Majmūʿah extends to mentioning previous commentaries, differences with the scriptures, and pre-Islamic poetical texts. Mir argues that Iṣlāḥī’s application of Farāḥī’s understanding of nāẓm on the same Meccan sūrahs already examined by Farāḥī shows very similar outcomes although there are some minor differences between the two scholars’ studies. Those differences are related to the identified pillars and the sūrahs’ divisions. Mir states that Iṣlāḥī’s application supports the efficiency of Farāḥī’s view on those sūrahs. In the next part, Iṣlāḥī’s and Subḥānī’s studies will be elaborated in terms of applying Farāḥī’s theory of nāẓm on Madinan sūrahs.

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412 Ibid., 84-86.
413 Ibid., 91.
414 Ibid., 92-98.
415 Ibid., 94-95.
416 Mir, Coherence in the Qurʾān, 45.
417 Ibid., 43-45.
(b) Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāḥī

Iṣlāḥī notices the limitation of verse-by-verse approach common in Muslim exegetical methods. Compare to other thematic methods, unlike Rahman’s approach, Iṣlāḥī’s theory goes beyond the notion of the Qur’ānic themes to the structural composition of the Qur’ān.\textsuperscript{418} He develops, according to Mir, a more accurate method to indicate a given sūrah’s main theme (‘amoūd) through the sūrah’s parts.\textsuperscript{419} Additionally, Iṣlāḥī, unlike Quṭb, differentiates each individual sūrah’s goal from the Qur’ān’s general purpose.\textsuperscript{420} Iṣlāḥī explains that knowing the verses contain daily life practices is much easier than life-devotion in seeking Qur’ānic wisdom embodied in its coherence.\textsuperscript{421} In the introduction of \textit{Tadabbur-e-Qur’ān “Pondering over the Qur’ān,”} Iṣlāḥī explains his method through stating the “internal and external exegetical means” used in his exegesis.\textsuperscript{422} He states that the internal means are: language,\textsuperscript{423} coherence, and the Qur’ānic text.\textsuperscript{424} This research will focus on the second means.

To explain the concept of coherence as a means, Iṣlāḥī argues that since the Qur’ān is not ordered either chronologically or based on length, and not organized to be easily memorized, the Qur’ān must be arranged according to the Prophet’s supervision and the final order must be

\textsuperscript{418} Ibid., 4.
\textsuperscript{419} Ibid., 73.
\textsuperscript{420} Ibid., 69.
\textsuperscript{421} Iṣlāḥī, \textit{Pondering over the Qur’ān}, 36.
\textsuperscript{422} The external means are: 1) “\textit{Sunnah mutwātirah},” 2) \textit{hadīth} and the Companions’ sayings read through and according to the Qur’ān, 3) the occasions of revelation extracted from the Qur’ān itself, 4) earlier exegetical opinions used unless they seem indefensible, 5) previous revelations, and 6) “Arab history.” He explains in details how he uses each means in his exegesis (See Iṣlāḥī, \textit{Pondering over the Qur’ān}, 42–48).
\textsuperscript{423} Iṣlāḥī places a lot of emphasis on the significance of pre-Islamic language in understanding the Qur’ān, not only linguistic and literarily aspects, but also what the language carries of the different characteristics of the Arabic environment where the Qur’ān was revealed. He notes that the historical literatures do not show the pre-Islamic people as civilized beings. He claims that the pre-Islamic period’s positive and negative aspects can be found in the Qur’ān and lexical studies of the Qur’ān cannot reveal the Qur’ānic “beauty” (See Iṣlāḥī, \textit{Pondering over the Qur’ān}, 27–29).
\textsuperscript{424} Iṣlāḥī uses the Qur’ānic texts itself to discern a meaning of a word and a stylistic question. The Qur’ān is authoritative regarding “its message and meaning.” Thus, the repetitions and recurrences in the Qur’ān are meant to indicate specific meanings each time they occur in various contexts (See Iṣlāḥī, \textit{Pondering over the Qur’ān}, 42).
coherent and intentional. Moreover, he states that the previous attempts to explain the Qurʾān’s coherence only reveal links between irrelevant verses and those attempts do not seem convincing.\(^{425}\) On the other hand, for Iṣlāḥī, Farāhī provides a different meaning of coherence. Exploring the coherence is not “some sort of a super intellectual pursuit of subtleties.”\(^{426}\) He asserts that “it is a great injustice to the Quran to assert it has no coherence; and ... the real treasure of the Qurʾānic knowledge and wisdom lies in its coherence.”\(^{427}\) Ignoring the coherence leads to incomplete understanding of the verses isolated from their context and arrangement in the sūrahs and then the Qurʾānic wisdom cannot be grasped.\(^{428}\) The conflict in interpreting some verses is caused by ignoring the verses’ context. He stresses that the coherence leads to “only one position and interpretation.”\(^{429}\) All Qurʾānic sūrahs are complete units in which each unit has a focal subject which unifies all of the sūrah’s sections.\(^{430}\)

Iṣlāḥī uses, edits, and develops Farāhī’s notion. Iṣlāḥī’s theory of the coherence lies on the unity of each sūrah, the idea of paired sūrahs, and the division of the Qurʾānic sūrahs into groups.\(^{431}\) In this part, his view of the sūrahs’ unities will be explored while the other two aspects will be discussed in Chapter Three. To illustrate, Iṣlāḥī stresses a sūrah’s unity as Farāhī does. To identify the pillar of a sūrah, Iṣlāḥī, divides the text into parts thematically.\(^{432}\) According to Mir, Iṣlāḥī considers parallelism, contrariness, each part’s naẓm, and relevant themes to indicate the pillar.\(^{433}\) Like Farāhī, Iṣlāḥī argues that naẓm exists also in each part in the sūrah in which each part has its central theme and refers to the previous and next parts through a thematic link while

\(^{425}\) Ibid., 32.
\(^{426}\) Ibid., 33.
\(^{427}\) Ibid., 33.
\(^{428}\) Ibid., 34.
\(^{429}\) Ibid., 35.
\(^{430}\) Ibid., 38.
\(^{431}\) Mir, *Coherence in the Qurʾān*, 5.
\(^{432}\) Robinson, *Discovering the Qurʾan*, 272.
\(^{433}\) Mir, *Coherence in the Qurʾān*, 49-50.
all parts are organized in a coherent way highlighting the main pillar of the whole sūrah. Iṣlāḥī does not only divide a sūrah into sections to determine the pillar, but also applies a specific method called “the germ idea” to connect the parts in Madinan sūrahs. Basically, it means that a part has a germ idea that is incorporated with the main theme of the section, and then this germ idea becomes the central theme of the following section. One can see in this idea the similarity between Biqā‘ī’s and Iṣlāḥī’s concepts of the relationship between the sūrah’s parts.

Iṣlāḥī’s identification of the pillar of some Meccan sūrahs in comparison to Farāḥī’s determinations is examined by Mir. For example, according to Farāḥī, Q 80 is about preventing the Prophet from devastating himself to have the rejecters believe in his message while for Iṣlāḥī the pillar of Q 80 is to continue the preceding sūrah’s theme which is the truth of “the Last Day.” Furthermore, the division of the sūrahs is not the same. Farāḥī’s division of Q 80 consists of four parts as follows: (1-10, 11-22, 23-32, and 33-42) whereas Iṣlāḥī divides the sūrah into five sections: (1-10, 11-16, 17-23, 24-32, and 33-42). Mir states that the difference between the two divisions is not significant since Iṣlāḥī concerns more about naẓm and follows Farāḥī’s intensive exegesis of many Meccan sūrahs. In terms of interpreting Madinan sūrahs, Iṣlāḥī, according to Mir, applies his mentor’s theory without having the latter’s application available as

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434 Ibid., 48-49.
435 Ibid., 50.
436 Ibid., 53-54.
438 al-Farāḥī, Majmū‘ah, 249, 262, 268, 274 cited in Mir, Coherence in the Qur’ān, 44; Iṣlāḥī, Tadabbur, 8:191-192 cited in Mir, Coherence in the Qur’ān, 45. Mir states that the only Madinan sūrah studied by Farāḥī is Q 66 and it is not long enough to provide a “model” for examining the Madinan sūrahs (See Mir, Coherence in the Qur’ān, 45-46).
a “model” to be followed. Ḥ Mir, Coherence in the Qur’ān, 45-46. ICAST states that no long sūrah is examined by Farāhī (See Iṣlāḥī, Pondering over the Qur’ān, 33).

439 Ḥ Subḥānī, 'Im’ān al-Nazar, 36.

440 Ibid., 319.

441 Ibid., 316.

442 Ibid., 316.

443 Ibid., 10-18, 254-257. He also provides a reading of (Q 38:21-26) based on naẓm in order to purify the exegesis from 'isrāʾīliyyāt reports associated with the meaning of the passages. He extracts from the sūrah itself five “truths” that do not correspond with the reports (See Subḥānī, 'Im’ān al-Nazar, 242-254).
showing that the correlations are only established on the interpreter’s rational ability and personal judgment instead of rules and exegetical principles.\textsuperscript{444}

Studying naẓm leads him to notice some Qur’ānic habits and features of its composition. He discusses nine matters: 1) “the narratives’ recurrence,” 2) “the verses’ similarity,” 3) “the return to the beginning,” 4) “the unity of the openings and names,”\textsuperscript{445} 5) the distinct “unity” of a sūrah’s “style,” 6) “the recurrence of particular words,” 7) “the links’ semantics,” 8) “the verses’ recurrence” in two or more sūrahs to serve the context, and 9) the similarity between a verse’s and a sūrah’s naẓm.\textsuperscript{446} It seems that the meaning of naẓm in his view has to do with 1) the order of the Qur’ānic units, like phrases, verses, and sūrahs,\textsuperscript{447} and with 2) thematic links between the verses as a complete discourse. Importantly, naẓm is not only about grammar, but also about the rational and beautiful meaning with maintaining rhetoric.\textsuperscript{448}

For example, “the return to the beginning” is one of Farāhī’s aspects of naẓm adopted by Subḥānī. It is called “ḥalaqah” (a ring) and it refers to the discourse’s smooth transition between a number of matters until the discourse addresses again “the beginning” or “the middle.”\textsuperscript{449} He notices also how Q 17 starts and ends with almost identical phrases and a similar theme that of Moses and the Children of Israel (Q 17:2-4, 101-104). Similarly, the sūrah mentions laws and commandments that are surrounded with the same theme “tawḥīd” and similar phrases (Q 17:22, 39).\textsuperscript{450} He mentions a couple of examples to assert that the sūrahs follow a particular structure

\textsuperscript{444} Ibid., 323-324.
\textsuperscript{445} He shows how Q 2 and 3 start with the same phrase and they are called “al-Zahrāwān” (“The Two Luminous Chapters” this translation is taken from Farrin, \textit{Structure and Qur’anic Interpretation}, 22) (See Subḥānī, \textit{Im’ān al-Nazar}, 298-299).
\textsuperscript{446} Ibid., 269.
\textsuperscript{447} Examples see Subḥānī, \textit{Im’ān al-Nazar}, 207-211, 214, 220-223, 237-238, 259.
\textsuperscript{448} Subḥānī, \textit{Im’ān al-Nazar}, 305-306.
\textsuperscript{449} Ibid., 293.
\textsuperscript{450} Ibid., 294.
that starts and ends with the same theme and phrases although the opening theme is the main
topic of the text continues to occur while there are other themes addressed in between. He invites
the scholars to further examine this Qur’anic characteristic and its relation to the links between
the verses. Following Farāhī, Subḥānī explains that a verse’s 

azm can be similar to a sūrah’s 

azm and knowing the verses’ 

azm leads to realizing the 

azm of the whole sūrah, a group of
sūrahs, and the Qur’ān as a coherent unit composed of “consistent connected rings halaqāt.”

Subḥānī’s other work al-Burḥān fī Niẓām al-Qur’ān examines broadly the 

azm of sūrahs 1, 2, and 3. He asserts that the coherence and unity do not appear through making any
unsystematic, arbitrary, or fragile links between the verses and the sūrahs. In this context, he
dedicates the first part of this work to criticize Biqā’ī’s method in identifying the correlations
between the verses based on a sūrah’s aim, which is made known through its title. Subḥānī
argues that Biqā’ī does not show how the aims can be identified. For Subḥānī, the
identification of the aim depends on examining over and over the consistency of the parts first
then determining the aim taking into consideration the surrounding sūrahs’ aims and contents.
He summarizes his method to three steps: 1) knowing the meanings of the verses, 2) searching
for the correlations, and 3) determining the aim. Subḥānī follows these steps in studying the

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451 Ibid., 293-295.
452 The order of the first long sūrahs 2-5 follows the 

azm of Q 103 al-‘Āsr. Subḥānī claims that Q 103 has four
characters arranged in the same order of the aims of the four sūrahs: Q 2 “Imān,” Q 3 “Islam/good deeds,” Q 4
“justice and rights,” and Q 5 “God’s covenants/patience.” Furthermore, he agrees with Farāhī that the 

azm of Q 2 follows the 

azm of (Q 2:129) in which the verse’s and the sūrah’s 

azm follow this thematic order: “reciting ayāt”
and proofs of the religion (v.1-176), the Book’s teachings and laws (v.177-242), wisdom leading to good deeds
(v.267-269), and “purification” (the whole sūrah’s verses) (See Subḥānī, ‘Imān al-Nazar, 315-317).
453 Subḥānī’s Master dissertation, al-‘Imām Muhammad bin Su’ūd al-Islamiyyah University in Riyadh in 1986,
was written five years later after the previous one.
455 Ibid., 36-39.
456 Ibid., 56.
457 Ibid., 57.
Each established link made by Subḥānī is usually supported by the Qur’ānic verses in other sūrahs and by prophetic traditions if existing. He applies Farāhī’s scheme to some sūrahs, including Madinan sūrahs (Q 2-3) not examined by Farāhī. Subḥānī reaches similar results to some of Farāhī’s conclusions regarding the pillars of the sūrahs.

(d) Muhammad Abdullah Darāz

*al-Naba’ al-‘Azīm* by Darāz discusses the unity of Q 2. He affirms the coherence of the sūrahs and considers it as an aspect of the Qur’ānic inimitability. Each sūrah has its main theme by which the parts are arranged and connected. Also, he calls the sūrahs and their parts as *njm/nujūm* (stars). Those parts were united before revealing separately in different occasions and then they took their places together, whether they come in the opening, the end, or the middle of a sūrah, and whether they are complementing or initiating a new meaning. Additionally, they are

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458 Following his first two steps, Subḥānī states that “the prayer… is a practical interpretation of Q 1” as the sūrah is described in the Divine *ḥadīth*. He claims that this is supported by the sūrah’s *naẓm* and its place in relation to the following sūrah mentioning the prayer as the pious people’s first character. In this context, Subḥānī continues to show how the sūrah’s parts represent the prayer’s rituals. In doing so, he divides the sūrah into three parts: praising God (v.1-3), glorifying God and asking His aid (v.4), and supplication to be guided (v.5-7) and points out the parallelism with the prayer’s practices (recitation, bowing, prostration, and *tashahhud*). Moving on to identifying the aim of the sūrah, he declares that the sūrah’s aim is “the covenant” in (v.4). He explains that a believer affirms his covenant with God through worshiping and seeking God’s aid. This covenant is meant for “the future” to remain in the Right Path and that explains the following verses. He mentions some Qur’ānic verses and *ḥadīth* on the covenant to support his conclusion. Then, Subḥānī reads the sūrah with paying attention to its consistency and the verses’ connections. For instance, he explains how (v.1) is complemented by (v.2) as it is complemented by (v.3). He then establishes six correlations between Q 1 and Q 2 by stating that sūrah 2’s main aim complements sūrah 1’s aim. He notices the recurrence of the word “covenant” in the sūrah (Q 2:26-27, 40, 47, 63, 83-84, 93, 100, 122, 153). Accordingly, Q 2 aims to remind people with the covenant and to rebuke those who break God’s covenant. Also, Q 1 ends with requesting God’s guidance to the Right Path and the opening of Q 2 is “the response.” Furthermore, he lists ten points to explain the reason of placing Q 1 in its place as the opening of the Book. He also connects between Q 1 and the last six short sūrahs through a number of themes such as asking for God’s aid (Q 1:4) and seeking refuge with God (Q 113-114) (See Subḥānī, *al-Burhān fi Nizām al-Qur’ān*, 62-87).

connected and blended through different grammatical and rhetorical styles suitable with the arrangement of the parts as if they are organized around a circle’s center equally.\textsuperscript{460}

The composition of “small units” containing different aims and united as one “large unit” requires very high skills of rhetoric. Despite the long period and different occasions of revelation, \textit{nażm} of a Qur’ānic sūrah and its diverse verses/parts are extraordinary in terms of the transition between themes.\textsuperscript{461} Darāz explains that a sūrah is one unit like a chain that has rings where each is in its place according to the sūrah’s aim.\textsuperscript{462} The best way to study the sūrah’s unity is not to start with establishing the correlations between the verses, but rather to identify its unifying aim through examining the sūrah as a whole. He shows that it is a mistake to establish the connections based on close links between two near parts without considering the sūrah’s \textit{nażm}.\textsuperscript{463}

Darāz examines the unity of Q 2 through dividing the sūrah into: “introduction, four aims, and conclusion.”\textsuperscript{464} He uses the occasions of revelation and \textit{sīrah} reports to explain the place of interrupting verses.\textsuperscript{465} Interestingly, Darāz notices the ring form in a number of places in the sūrah and its resemblance with the structure of (Q 5:3). He explains that one of the Qur’ān’s \textit{bayān} styles is that the “result” of a group of verses comes in “the center of the circle” not in “the extreme parts/the beginning and end of the part” which are about relevant matters

\textsuperscript{461} Ibid., 143-145.
\textsuperscript{462} Ibid., 158.
\textsuperscript{463} Ibid., 159.
\textsuperscript{464} Ibid., 163.
\textsuperscript{465} The disruptive passage (Q 2:190-195) on \textit{jihād} comes between two passages on \textit{Hajj} (Q 2:189) and (Q 2:196-203). He argues that this disruption is similar to what happened with Muslims going to visit Mecca in 6AH, but they were prevented from reaching the Holy Place and ordered not to fight their enemies. He states that the whole part’s structure is a reflection of that event and to train the addressees to be patient and willing to know the rest of the discourse on \textit{Hajj}. Darāz declares that the whole part (v.189-203) is “the first complete ring” of “laws” regarding patience in different situations (See Darāz, \textit{al-Naba’ al-‘Azīm}, 198-199).
explaining and complementing the center. For example, he places (Q 2:244) on jihād as the center/result of the whole part (v.240-245) which contains within the outer parts the reasons to fight. Similarly, he illustrates that (Q 5:3) “Toady I complete your religion” means the completion of Islam on different levels socially, religiously, and politically and this broad meaning does not come before this verse except in a few indications. Then, an explanation comes between (Q 5:3) through (Q 5:10). Another mentioned example is “Do not take to worshiping two deities. He is the One and Only God” (Q 16:51). He shows that this verse comes in “the middle” between the verses mentioning different evidence of God’s Oneness. He states that the Qur’ān has many examples of this structure.

(e) Muhammad al-Qalqīlī

Qalqīlī examines the unity of a sūrah and the connections between a group of sūrahs. In *al-Handasah al-Ilahiyyah fī Surat al-Kahf* (The Structural Construction of Sūrah the Cave), he argues that Q 1 has its own “handasah” structure/construction in which it is divided into two parts with a center (v.4) as hadīth shows. He states that the first part of (v.4) relates to the first part of the sūrah (v.1-3) while the second part of (v.4) echoes the second half of the sūrah (v.6-7). Sūrah 18 “the Cave,” he shows, is structured according to a similar form. Q 18 has a “heart”, meaning a central focus which is Adam’s story. This story is preceded by two major stories (story 1.ʿAṣḥāb al-Kahf and story 2. the Owner of the two gardens) and followed by two major stories (story 3. Moses with Ḥiḍr and story 4. Dhū al-Qarnayn). He claims that Adam’

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466 Ibid., 206-208.
467 Ibid., 207, note.1.
468 Muhammad al-Qalqīlī, *al-Handasah al-‘Ilahiyyah fī Sūrat al-Kahf* (Amman, Jordan: Dār al-Fayḥā’, 1986), 5-6. It should be noted that Qalqīlī does not mention ring-structure, but his analysis is the same division and explanation provided by Cuypers who applies ring structure on the sūrah (See Cuypers, *The Composition of the Qur’ān*, 109-110).
469 Placing Adam’s story in the center of Q 18, highlighting the central theme as God’s Oneness and Power, and mentioning the idea of “barrier” (different barriers including water/rivers, ear’s barrier prevents listening to the
story reflects the main aim of the sūrah, appears in the meanings of the surrounding narratives. He explains that Adam’s story is about God testing Adam’s patience “ṣabr” and the gratitude “shukr” of His blessings, but Adam failed the whole test. Then, Qalqīlī shows how each story presents this central idea in a parallel order: (story 1 patience/success, story 2 gratitude/failure), (story 3 patience/failure, and story 4 gratitude/success). He states that the story of Adam is reflected in the whole sūrah and works as a unifying theme of all its various parts which appear to be structured in “a symmetrical form.” Thus, he also asserts that the sūrah is about testing human beings ibtilā’ on this earth by providing them with worldly goods to see who will believe, accept the revelation, do good deeds and who will disbelieve and reject the message.

Accordingly, Qalqīlī is able to read the sūrah’s parts through the identified main theme. He claims that the sūrah indicates through the story of Adam the human vulnerability and ability to sin and it states that the way to salvation and protection is the Oneness of God and His revelation and messengers which function as a preventing “barrier” from “evil,” “lust,” “ignorance,” and wrongdoing. Thus, the whole sūrah, Qalqīlī stresses, presents the “idea of refuge and shelter” in parallel to the theme of barrier occurs in different terms (e.g. ḥujub, sadd, and ghitā’) in the sūrah’s parts. He states that relying on God for protection leads to “mercy, knowledge and patience” and then to the Garden which is the believers’ destiny in the Last Day while association and taking refuge in His creatures or this life lead to rely on powerless entities

\[^{470}\text{Ibid., 7, 40.}\]
\[^{471}\text{Ibid., 7, 37.}\]
\[^{472}\text{Ibid., 36-56.}\]
\[^{473}\text{Ibid., 82-87.}\] Examples of barriers mentioned in the sūrah are earth, water (river, sea), ship, and mountains, wealth, and children. al-Qalqīlī argues that those worldly things can be negative barriers if people depend on them and their dying reality and forget God.\[^{474}\]
and then to dwell in Hell. The theme of “ma’wā” barrier (protecting place, intangible, or being) is parallel to going to the cave by the Companions and Qalqīlī indicates that this theme is reflected in the whole text through showing good barriers (e.g. “God” and “pious people”) and negative barriers (e.g. “desire” and “this worldly life”). The sūrah warns from worshiping the messengers (e.g. Jesus) or God’s creatures (people, Satan, jinn, human ability, or this world) instead of God the Creator, Powerful, Protector, and Provider. On this basis, he establishes the internal correlations between the opening, the middle, and the end and between the stories in a symmetrical way and stresses the consistency and unity of the whole sūrah.

Examining the relationship between a group of sūrahs starting with the same Disconnected Letters “alif lām mīm,” Qalqīlī claims that those six sūrahs (Q 2-3, Q 29-32) share the same main theme, addressed differently in each sūrah. First, he shows the significance of the concept of “balance, correspondence” in the universe and creatures and that includes the Qur’ān and religious teachings. The Qur’ān is composed of letters used and understood by the first addressees. The idea of Disconnected Letters leads him to claim that they indicate the meaning of “construction and analysis.” Construction means an organized structure aiming to provide a well-composed and consistent discourse in its every component and that is the meaning of taḥaddi. The meaning of “sūrah” has to do with “sūr” (a fence) or “jidār” (a wall). Thus, the sūrah’s “internal parts” must be contained, corresponding with one another, and structured on a main theme. In this context, he argues that the unifying theme of the six sūrahs is to know God through the idea of “construction and analysis” and meditating God’s scripture and universe in order to see the consistency and balance between the Qur’ān and the universe where both share

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475 Ibid., 8-9, 57-81.
476 Ibid., 63-64, 69, 82, 120.
477 Ibid., 25-26, 46-47.
479 Ibid., 13.
the same source which is God. He explains that God is the cause of the consistency between this world and His scripture.

Qalqīlı’s conclusion is based on rearranging the order of the Disconnected Letters “ʻalf lām mīm” to words in Arabic, like “lā’ama” (a verb meaning “to correspond” which is composed of the Disconnected Letters in a different order).\textsuperscript{480} He claims that the derivatives contain “contrary or corresponding pairs” in terms of meanings (e.g. “alam/amal” pain/hope, “māla/lāma” deviation/rebuke, “mala’/lama’” filling/empty, “māl/mala’” wealth/social class). Those meanings are treated in the six sūrahs in order to reach a consistent state and cause “reformation” and “justice” on different levels. Qalqīlı finds that the unifying word of the derivatives is “talā’um” (consistency) which indicates different kinds of consistency have to do with the universe, the right path/religious teachings, and man.\textsuperscript{481} On this basis, Qalqīlı examines the thematic similarities between the sūrahs’ verses. The author elaborates each pair through a number of Islamic doctrines and teachings in order to show their consistency with humanity and how each sūrah in the group presents them.

To conclude, in modern Muslim scholarship, as shown, the concept of the “sūrah” has become the essential factor in showing the Qur’ān’s coherence and meanings instead of establishing the correlations based on a linear reading. Farāhī’s theory of \textit{naẓm} has led to more systematic attempts to explain the sūrahs’ unities as individuals and groups. The concept of symmetry is recognized in the structures of the sūrahs as whole units. Işlâhī’s examination of the unity of the Qur’ān considers the idea of symmetry and parallelism of the parts’ length. Subḥānī demonstrates how the theory of \textit{naẓm} affects the Qur’ān’s interpretation. He points out that the

\textsuperscript{480} Ibid., 16-17.
\textsuperscript{481} Ibid., 19-23.
sūrahs’ composition is as rings. Similarly, Darāz uses the term “circles/rings” to refer to the parts composing a sūrah. Subḥānī and Qalqīlī, which are less known, have pointed out the symmetry in Q 1. Moreover, Qalqīlī shows the symmetrical structure of Q 18 and how this observation affects his identification of the sūrah’s main theme. Those scholars have also noticed that the rings contain in their middle the stressed meanings. Despite these references, the notion of symmetry is not examined in the whole Qur’ān’s sūrahs and not confirmed as a fundamental factor of their structural unities. However, it can be said that this recognition of symmetries and ring-forms should encourage Muslims to consider ring-theory method as a way to understand the Qur’ān’s themes and unity.
Second Chapter

Thematic and Literary Unity of Sūrah al-Nisā’

I. Thematic and Structural Studies on Sūrah 4


Sūrah 4 is the second long sūrah after sūrah 2. The sūrah’s contents vary to include social regulations, laws of battle, and the attitudes of the People of Scripture and hypocrites. Muslim traditional and contemporary accounts have attempted to identify the main theme of the sūrah. It is important to note that sūrah 4 is considered as a Madinan text revealed gradually over a long period. Its context as a Madinan revelation explains the large quantity of juridical rules and laws that in the text. Although the sūrah was not revealed at one time, its parts and different themes are interrelated and interwoven and construct a correlated unit. This chapter will mainly examine the sūrah’s structure based on ring-theory. First, an overview of the sūrah’s contents will be provided. Then, Muslim scholars’ identification of the main theme will be explored, followed by Western analysis of the sūrah. Finally, the sūrah will be analyzed rhetorically and structurally according to the Semitics rhetorical method suggested by Michel Cuypers.

Contents of sūrah 4:

The sūrah starts by calling and exhorting people to fear God followed by mentioning the origin of humanity, the creation of men and women, and the wombs, then; exhorting to fear God again because He is Watching. Rules of lawful and unlawful things are stated regarding orphans’ and women’s rights and properties. Then, the division of inheritances is illustrated in detail.

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2 More details about the period of revelation of Q 4 and its historical context will be provided in the third chapter.
followed by a statement about God’s limits and the reward and punishment of obedience and disobedience. The rules of lawfulness and unlawfulness are taken up again in the context of committing adultery, repentance, properties, and marriages. Another clear statement of the reasons behind all these injunctions comes (to guide, purify the community, and lighten the burden) in the context of confirming human beings’ vulnerability and exhorting them to avoid violation of the rules regarding possessions and lives in order to enter an honorable place and receive forgiveness. More laws regarding men’s and women’s properties and marital problems come up again. Then, the addressees are ordered to worship God with no association and be good to their parents, relatives, neighbors, and other people, and not to be like those who are niggard or give alms to show off. This order comes in the context of exhorting the addressees to believe in God and the Last Day. A statement of God’s ultimate justice and multiplied reward occurs followed by appointing the Prophet as a witness against the disbelievers. Calling the believers, the sūrah clarifies prayer’s laws in terms of mental and physical purification and it establishes the law of tayammum as a part of the sequence of the previous mentioned laws.

Turning to a new theme, the sūrah, at this point, starts to have a polemical tone and addresses the People of the Scripture (Jews). It exhorts Jews to believe in the new revelation sent down to Muhammad, followed by the verse of shirk in the context of mentioning Jews’ hostile attitudes (alteration the words, disobedience, and envy), claiming purity for themselves, believing in al-jibt and al-ṭāghūt, mentioning the kingdom of Abraham, and the destiny of disbelievers and believers in the Last Day. Then, the sūrah exhorts the addressees to return trusts to their owners and judge with justice, followed by calling the believers to obey God, the Prophet, and the leaders of the community. Addressing the hypocrites and showing their attitudes
towards God’s commands, the text asserts that obeying the Prophet is a sign of faith and leads to a great reward, a right path, the company of the prophets and other righteous people.

The next part of the sūrah is dominated by the idea of fighting in God’s way and defending the oppressed. Continuing the hypocrisy’s theme, the sūrah shows the hypocrites’ disobedience of the order of fighting. Death is stated as a natural phenomenon and fortune and misfortune fates are decided only by God in order to refute the hypocrites’ excuses. In this context, the Qurʾān’s meditation is mentioned in order to refer its consistency to God and the Prophet is ordered to fight and follow rules of fighting, followed by a statement confirming God’s Divinity and the Resurrection. Laws are given to deal with different groups of the hypocrites, followed by the instructions about murdering a believer by mistake or purposely, other matters related to fight, and an exhortation to fight and emigrate in God’s earth. Then, laws regarding prayer during travel and war are elaborated. Next, the sūrah instructs the Prophet to judge between people based on the scripture revealed to him and not to advocate the sinners (the hypocrites) who attempt to make the Prophet go astray. The text comes back to exhort obedience towards the Prophet in the context of stating the clarification of the guidance and the believer’s way. The sūrah mentions the second verse of shirk and gives exhortations to not follow Satan as Pagans do, followed by three statements: 1) a statement about those who believe and do good deeds (no distinction between male or female believers) and their entrance to the Gardens, 2) a statement about the religion of Abraham as a religion should be embraced because Abraham is God’s beloved, and finally 3) a statement on God’s ownership of everything in the heavens and on the earth.

Then, the sūrah returns to orphans’ matter and a marital issue in the context of exhortation to taqwā (fear God), īslāh (reform), and justice. Immediately the sūrah exhorts the
People of the Scripture and the believers to fear God in the context of affirming God’s ownership of the heavens and the earth and His omnipotence to take people away and bring another people. Then, the text calls the believers to be just with all people and believe in God, His Messengers, His Angels, His Scriptures, and the Last Day. Hypocrites’ punishment and attitudes are mentioned again in the context of warning the believers from taking them as allies. The sūrah again mentions Jews in the context of stating their transgressions of laws including their claims of murdering Jesus and insulting his mother. The sūrah moves on to confirm the revelation sent to the Prophet in relation to the previous revelations and messengers. Again, God’s ownership of heaven and earth is mentioned several times in the context of addressing people to believe in the truth comes with the Prophet and addressing Christians to not exaggerate in their religion. Then, people are addressed again that a manifest proof and light has come to them followed by stating that the believers will enter in God’s mercy and be graced and guided to the right path. The sūrah wraps up as it begins with another inheritance case regarding a man dies with no children. In this context, the sūrah closes with a statement that God makes matters clear to guide people and He is All-Knowing.

After this presentation of the sūrah’s sequential contents, it is obvious that many repetitions stand out and these repeated themes may fall into place with a careful reading. Classical exegetes, Qur’ānic sciences scholars, contemporary commentators, and Western researchers have applied different theories and methods to analyze the sūrah thematically and literarily. The next part provides some of those studies found during this research followed by some observations.
2. **Sūrah 4’s Themes in classical and modern Islamic Exegesis**

(a) Classical Islamic Exegesis and Qur’ānic Studies

In general, traditional works introduce a list of thematic contents discussed in the sūrah. The aim is not always to provide a thematic-unity study of the sūrah even with the efforts made to show the connections between the verses, but rather it focuses on presenting a broad overview of the given text’s themes followed by linear-atomistic explanations. Some ancient scholars attempt to show the sūrah’s thematic coherence. The following exegetes Rāzī and Biqā’ī and the Qur’ānic Studies scholars Zarkashi and Suyūṭī have shed some lights on the sūrah’s thematic unity.

Rāzī starts his interpretation of Q 4 by explaining the link between its opening and its contents in general. He states that this sūrah contains many laws; thus, it opens with ordering people to be merciful and just in terms of maintaining their relatives’, orphans’, and women’s rights. Because of the difficulties of those laws, the sūrah states from the beginning that God is the Creator and people should fear Him. For Rāzī, this sūrah’s coherence starts with establishing many laws and rules, followed by stating disbelievers’ and hypocrites’ attitudes, then the sūrah mentions God’s power and almighty and it goes back to mentioning and explaining laws (he refers to Q 4:127). The end of the sūrah on property, according to Rāzī, (Q 4:176) is parallel to the sūrah’s opening. The middle of the sūrah contains arguments with the opponents of this religion. Then, as he does in interpreting the opening based on the sūrah’s contents, Rāzī links

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5 Ibid., 11:49.

6 Ibid., 11:95.
the concluding verse (Q 4:176) to the opening (Q 4:1) through stating that the sūrah shows God’s power in the beginning (God is the Creator Q 4:1), then it states in the end God’s knowledge (Q 4:176) in order to prove those two attributes of God which represent His Divinity and Lordship by which people ought to obey God’s commands and laws. As a result, the unity of the sūrah in Rāzī’s analysis can be seen in the theological theme established between the opening and the end and in the order of the contents in which what comes earlier in the sūrah is repeated in the middle and the end. This repetition is used for rhetorical purposes relating to the addressees’ reactions. Rāzī does not divide the sūrah as modern scholars do, but the middle of the sūrah for him seems to begin with (Q 4:127) since it returns to state women’s laws again.

In Biqā‘ī’s exegesis, one can notice that the idea of the aim of the whole sūrah becomes clearer and sought in order to establish internal and external links. Biqā‘ī states that the main purpose of the sūrah is “to unify the community on tawḥīd.” On this basis, he continues to show how the sūrah emphasizes the virtues of “chastity and justice” through many injunctions and laws in order to reach the unity of the society. He explains that the sūrah starts with the formula “O People” and “Fear your Lord” to tie all souls to their origin and to prepare them to receive the sūrah’s teachings. Although Biqā‘ī specifies a main theme, his approach in showing the correlations between the sūrah’s verses is based on a linear-atomistic method. In terms of the structure of the sūrah, Biqā‘ī follows Rāzī’s explanation (starting with laws, followed by mentioning theological concepts, then returning to laws), but Biqā‘ī adds that the correlations

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7 Ibid., 11:96.
8 Biqā‘ī links sūrahs 1, 2, 3, and 4 by stating that sūrah 3 is about tawḥīd, sūrah 2 is about kitāb and religion, and sūrah 1 is about the features of the religion. He states that after establishing the basis (tawḥīd) and the way (kitāb) in the previous sūrahs, the Qur’ān invites in sūrah 4 the community to gather around these components of the religion in the context of emphasizing the significance of unity, rights, and sympathy (See al-Biqā‘ī, Naẓm al-Durar, 2:204).
between the parts “or styles” can be seen in the end of each “style” uslūb and in the beginning of the next style in terms of words and meanings. 

Biqā‘ī illustrates that the sūrah starts with laws of justice (e.g. marriages, inheritances) and in the middle (Q 4:126-127) the sūrah returns back to mentioning laws coupled with the idea of submission and obedience of God’s order since it comes after mentioning the hypocrites and pagans. He also explains the reasons behind placing (Q 4:176) in the end. He states that it has to do with three explanations: 1) the gradualism in mentioning laws, 2) the significance of the laws of inheritances by which they come in the beginning and the end and within the sūrah’s parts, and 3) the warning from following desires and being like the hypocrites and the People of the Scripture in believing in parts of the religion and disbelieving in the others. He continues that the correlations between the opening and the end can be seen in the opening mentioning people and the origin of humanity which requires applying God’s laws with everyone equally while the end states the equality between men and women in inheritance. In Biqā‘ī’s analysis, there is no stated division of the text as known in modern scholarship, but there are references to its extremes and middle where the first subject reappears again. Yet the sūrah’s themes are linked through the main theme identified in the opening and traced in the rest of the sūrah’s subjects.

Zarkashī and Suyūṭī highlight Q 4’s general themes. They mostly focus on the relationship between the beginning and the end of the sūrah, or the sūrah’s relationship to the surrounding sūrahs’ contents. On this basis, they establish connections between the sūrah’s subjects in a very general sense. Zarkashī states that Q 4 contains laws concerning people’s relationships, and properties, and inheritances. He mentions that there are two causes of how

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10 Ibid., 2:325.
11 Ibid., 2:382.
people relate to one another in the sūrah: the origin of humanity and marriage. Thus the sūrah, according to him, is about the covenants between God and people through the Messengers and the Messengers’ covenants with God.  

Following Zarkashī, Suyūṭī indicates in several works that Q 4 includes the causes of relationships between people. He pays attention to the opening which summarizes the contents of most parts of the sūrah about lawful and unlawful marriages and inheritances. He states that Q 4 starts with “creation and birth” (Q 4:1), and then ends with “death” (Q 4:176). Also, it begins and ends with inheritances and kalālah (Q 4:7-12, 176). Generally, Suyūṭī identifies the purpose of a sūrah taking into consideration the preceding, following, and near sūrahs’ contents. He explains that taqwā in Q 2 is discussed as “an aim” while in Q 4 it is presented as “a principle.” Therefore, Q 4 is an explanation of what is mentioned briefly in Q 2. He also links (Q 2:21) to (Q 4:1) and other verses in both sūrahs in order to highlight the connection between the two sūrahs since Q 2 discusses briefly orphans’ and inheritances’ matters. Furthermore, he ties sūrahs 1, 3, 4, and 5 thematically in order to explain the final order of the sūrahs.

(b) Modern Islamic Exegetical Studies

This part will show a number of contemporary exegeses of the sūrah conducted with the thematic unity method. The notion of correlations is common in these interpretations as a means to connect the sūrah’s different themes and parts. The part aims manly to show how the identified themes differ in those different works. Here are those themes:

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13 al-Suyūṭī, Marāṣid al-Maṭāli, 128; al-Suyūṭī, Asrār Tartīb, 21-22.
14 al-Suyūṭī, Marāṣid al-Maṭāli, 128; al-Suyūṭī, Asrār Tartīb, 22.
15 al-Suyūṭī, Marāṣid al-Maṭāli, 128.
16 al-Suyūṭī, Asrār Tartīb, 35.
17 It should be noted that those views on the themes of the sūrah come in Suyūṭī’s different works, examining the order and the connections between the sūrahs and the links between each sūrah’s opening and end, not meant to focus on the sūrah’s thematic unity.
i. Reforming and organizing the society:

Ṭāhir ibn ʿĀshūr states that the sūrah is about different aims and laws in order to organize political relations, possessions and rights, protection of the community, and justice and trusts. He lists most laws and injunctions come in the sūrah, then he states that in between those aims and laws the sūrah provides exhortations to repent, do good deeds, purify the soul from envy, and spread empathy between Muslims.

Muḥammad al-Ghazālī divides the sūrah thematically into three sections in order to show how each section has its own theme relating to the main theme of the sūrah. He states that the sūrah’s pivot is on social relationships and regulations. The first section is about familial matters whereas the other two sections are about social affairs. Commenting on the sūrah’s name “the Women,” Ghazālī mentions that women’s matters in the sūrah are parts of the whole sūrah discussing major issues have to do with the society, its structure, relationships with others. Ghazālī links the three sections through establishing thematic correlations. He does not exactly indicate the beginning and the end of each section. However, a careful reading of his analysis shows that he is able to notice the repeated themes and thematic shifts and connect them in their section-contexts and to the whole sūrah’s main theme and other sections.

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19 Mentioning the same main theme, ‘Adel Abū al-‘Olā states six points represent the main subjects of the sūrah which deals with social reform: 1) an invitation to taqwā, belief, and unity of the society, 2) women’s rights and equality between men and women, 3) properties and inheritances, 4) Muslim community’s adversaries, 5) Jihād, and 6) justice and trusts amānah as the basis of judgment. His commentary is mainly based on the traditional method (See ‘Adel Abū al-‘Olā, Manhāj al-Qawām fī Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-Karīm; Ṣafwat al-‘Ārar fī Tafsīr Sūrat al-Nisā’ (Beirut: Moa’ssasat al-Risālah, 2007), 48-54. Another academic study conducted by Fattohah ʿAbdulḥafīẓ to explore the sūrah thematically indicates that the sūrah’s pivot is to organize the Muslim community. She studies the context of the sūrah and stresses the shifts in the discourses in relation to the main theme of the sūrah. In her introduction of the sūrah’s subjects, she connects the first section on the society’s social matters with the second one, addressing the People of the Scripture and hypocrites, by stating that the sūrah shifts its tone to international affairs after discussing domestic social reform (See Fattohah ʿAbdulḥafīẓ, Tanẓīm al-Mujtama’ al-Islāmini khilāl Sūrat al-Nisā’” (MA diss., Mecca, Saudi Arabia: Ümm al-Qurā University, 1989), 5.


21 Muhammad al-Ghazālī, Nahwa Tafsīr-in Mawḍūʿī li-suwar al-Qurʾān, 41.
ii. Islam

Farāhī states that the sūrah’s pillar is about “Islam” which has to do with the previous sūrah’s pillar about “Imān.” Q 4 shows how laws are for all humanity’s common good as the Prophet is sent for people’s good. He lists all the sūrah’s themes in their order with no further analysis since he died before interpreting the Madinan sūrahs. Although Subḥānī uses Farāhī’s method, Subḥānī’s identified main theme is different. He claims that the main theme of Q 4 is “justice and fulfillment of rights.” The first verse, according to him, exhorts people to do so while the rest of the sūrah is composed on serving this theme.

iii. The origin of human beings and their relationships

Abū Zahrah (d.1394/1974) states that Q 4 is “the sūrah of humanity” in which it shows how human relationships should be based on “fitrah” instinct. It aims to fix the deviation of individuals and societies to reach elevated levels of purity and morality. He goes through the sūrah’s topics and shows how they lead to one another through many details and explanatory links before he comments on the sūrah verse by verse. Similarly, Wahbah al-Zuḥaylī (d.2015) demonstrates that the sūrah is about familial laws and society’s relationship with the larger human community. In this context, the sūrah illustrates the moral basis of international relationships and laws of war and peace in order to organize the community and purify it from

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22 al-Farāhī, Dalā’īl al-Niẓām, 93. Farāhī’s analysis of the sūrah is not available as stated in Chapter One.
23 Ibid., 100-101.
24 Subḥānī, ’Imān al-Nazar, 316.
26 Wahbah al-Zuḥaylī, al-Tafsīr al-Munīr fī al-’Aqidah wa al-Sharī‘ah wa al-Manhāj (Damascus: Dār al-Fikir al-Mu‘āṣir, 2003), vol.4:553. Similarly, Ṭabāṭabā’ī stresses the unity of the sūrah despite its various topics and separate occasions and periods of revelation. He mentions that Q 4 is about stating laws of marriage (e.g. polygamy), inheritance, prayer, and battle besides addressing the People of the Scripture (See Muhammad Ḥusayn al-Ṭabāṭabā’ī, al-Mīzān fī Tafsīr al-Qur’ān (PDF, www.ahl-ul-bait.org), 73).
deviation. In another work, he states that the sūrah is about the unity of humanity, families, and believers’ brotherhood based on believing in God, His Messengers, His Scriptures, and the Last Day.

The ancient and modern attempts presented above have shown how the scholars provide a main theme (or themes) and then establishing the correlations between the sūrah’s various subjects. The ancient scholars tend to provide a broader major theme based on observing the whole text and the contents of the surrounding sūrahs. Another element considered in identifying the major themes is the first verse’s statement regarding the origin of humanity and its relation to the last verse by which the sūrah is seen as a consistent unit. Likewise, contemporary commentators indicate one broad theme explains and unifies the sūrah’s contents and parts. However, the identified main theme differs in the mentioned works. It can be observed that all attempts depend on the opening as the key to indicate the main subject.

The principal themes according to those attempts have to do generally with protecting rights and organizing the new community in different aspects socially, financially, religiously, and politically. The theme of the origin of humanity is mentioned by all stated works and is made the basis of laws and injunctions of social reform in the sūrah. Furthermore, this theme is extended in some works to mean the unity of God’s message and the unity of humanity as a society when it comes to the theme of justice and opponent groups. The themes of belief, taqwā, and justice are dominated as well in reforming and unifying the society and in its external relations.

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The scholars of the Qur’ānic Sciences and some commentators mentioned above tend to be brief in listing every theme in the sūrah and focus on a comprehensive theme. Three ancient authors have added distinctive themes to the idea of human origin that comes in the beginning: Zarkashī (human covenants, covenant with God through the Messengers), Suyūṭī (creation/birth and death, people’s covenants, and an explanation of sūrah 2’s contents), Biqā‘ī (gathering ummah/community on tawḥīd through the themes of taqwā and wombs). Those writers have approached sūrah 4’s themes, on one hand, in relation to the previous sūrah’s themes, beginnings, and ends and, on the other hand, through sūrah 4’s opening statement on creation and the conclusion on laws of inheritances.

It can be noticed that exegetes tend to list many subjects that are not a unifying dominating theme found in one way or another in each part of the sūrah. Also, in the later works, there is recognition of the sūrah’s thematic shifts and attempts to establish the connections between the themes. Recurring themes are observed, especially those in the opening and the end of the sūrah and repeated women’ laws. Moreover, there is no specific structural method used to identify the themes, such as a division of the sūrah into parts, except the opening and end of the sūrah. Structural signs, like the recurring formula of address, are not part of their methodological system.

(e) Muslim Studies on Sūrah 4 as a Structural Unit

In this part, modern works dedicated to analyze the sūrah’s structure as a thematic unit will be explored. The part will show also different theories and methods used in determining the main theme(s). Some of those works consider Q 4’s themes in relation to the previous sūrah’s themes in order to build a theory that explains the discussed subjects in Q 4 and the sūrah’s
placement within the Qur’ān. Dividing the sūrah into parts (not small units “verses”) to identify its themes seems a common factor of the employed methods. However, the sūrah is divided differently by the following selected scholars (M. Muhammad Ali, Quṭḥ, Iṣlāḥī, Saeed Ḥawwa, and Ḥanān Laḥḥām) and that has an effect on determining the sūrah’s main theme.29

Maulana Muhammad Ali (d.1349/1931) states that Q 4 primarily deals with women’s rights and that explains its name “the Women.” He links Q 3 and Q 4 through the Battle of Ḫud where many Muslims died and instructions to deal with the aftermath were provided. The three main themes of the sūrah are: orphans’ and women’s rights, the hypocrites, and the Jews. These themes divide the sūrah into three large sections with returning points in between that make the sections interconnected. He divides the sūrah into 24 sections and considers it 177 verses not 176. Each section’s main ideas relate to the three major themes. According to M. M. Ali, the first six sections address different issues regarding women and the end of them introduces the theme of the next following sections on hypocrites. Then, from the seventh section to the eighteenth section, the sūrah deals with the second major theme, that of the hypocrites and their attitudes toward the Muslim community with stating other laws regarding battles and prayers. He points out that after these middle sections the sūrah mentions women’s and orphans’ matters again and then mentions the hypocrites’ alliance with Jews (sections 19-20). The last chief theme can be

29 Here are two more exegetical works not stated above concern about the sūrah’s themes and unity. First, Muhammad S. Ṭanṭāwī (d.2010), in al-Tafsīr al-Wasīf, the sūrah is about organizing the Muslim community in order to reach its stability locally and internationally. He divides the sūrah into 12 quarters and provides a brief thematic overview of each quarter. In his presentation of the quarters’ themes, he notices the recurring themes and uses the phrase “the sūrah returns back to …” He also connects two quarters through their themes (See Ṭanṭāwī, al-Tafsīr al-Wasīf, 3:9-16). Second, ‘Abdulḥamīd Ṭāḥmāz, in al-Tafsīr al-Mawḍū’ī, states that sūrah 4’s main theme is human’s rights and to connect mankind’s rights to the Creator’s rights in the context of discipline and guidance. Ṭāḥmāz divides the sūrah into seven chapters based on his determination of the main theme of the sūrah. He also provides a title to each chapter in order to represent its contents. The chapters are divided as follows: 1. Women’s and orphans’ rights (Q 4:1-31), 2. Psychological issues (Q 4:32-57), 3. Judgment with sharī‘ah (Q 4:58-70), 4. Jihād (Q 4:71-104), 5. Accusation of an innocent Jew (Q 4:105-126), 6. Maintaining faith, taqwā, and justice (Q 4:127-149), 7. People of the Scripture’s doctrines (Q 4:150-176) (See ‘Abdulḥamīd Ṭāḥmāz, al-Tafsīr al-Mawḍū’ī li-Suwar al-Qur’ān al-‘Azīm (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 2014), 2:5-6).
found in sections 21-24 warning Jews from not believing in the Prophet and recalling their sins. The end of the surah recalls its opening by mentioning inheritance.\(^\text{30}\)

Sayyid Qutb explains that the pivot of Q 4 is to show Islam’s efforts in protecting and shaping Muslim society in Madinah in accordance to the Qur’ān’s world-views. The formation, according to Qutb, in this surah has to do with how Q 4 presents the Qur’ān’s participation in purifying the new community from oppression and pre-Islamic practices (Jāhiliyyah) and replacing them with Islamic legislations. Qutb divides Q 4 into fifteen sections and shows the principal themes in each section.\(^\text{31}\) He illustrates that the surah deals with eleven purposes relate to disciplining individuals and unifying the community.\(^\text{32}\)


\(^{31}\) Qutb’s division is the following: 1.(Q 4:1-14) stating the origin of humanity, Lordship rubūbiyyah and Divinity ulūhiyyah, and the unity of society through organizing families, orphans’ rights, and inheritances, 2.(Q 4:15-23) purifying the community from pre-Islamic practices, isolating people corrupt the community by committing adultery, and stating lawful and unlawful marriages and women’s rights, 3.(Q 4:24-35) continuing establishing laws to organize family and protect property, 4.(Q 4:36-43) organizing the community based on tawhīd and emphasizing the importance of human relationships in the context of worshiping God and performing the prayers with tidiness tāhārah, 5. (Q 4:44-57) starting the Qur’ān’s war against Jāhiliyyah’s groups to protect the growth of the community domestically and internationally, 6.(Q 4:58-70) stating the condition of faith, the community’s source of teachings, judgments, and values, and showing the community’s role in maintaining justice and following the right path, 7.(Q 4:71-86) describing different groups, in Madinah not shaped by the Qur’ān’s principles yet, and showing the Qur’ān’s efforts in: disciplining human souls, dealing with human being’s weaknesses, and protecting the society from its enemies, 8. (Q 4:87-94) stating the basis of Islamic system regarding other communities, and establishing laws for different issues, 9. (Q 4:95-104) showing the virtue of Hijrah in God’s way to join the Muslim community and demonstrating God’s guarantee of recourses/places or reward for those who overcome human fears and emigrate, 10.(Q 4:105-113) confirming Islamic justice even with enemies (rescuing a Jew from an accusation of theft), 11. (Q 4:114-126) commenting on the previous passage by mentioning the role of Satan, the unforgivable sin (shirk), the secret councils of hypocrites, and Islamic justice based on God’s rules not people’s desires, 12. (Q 4:127-
From *naẓm* perspective, Iṣlāḥī, according to Mir, divides Q 4 into “three parts” where each part has a main theme, “sections,” and “sub-sections.” The three parts are as follows: (Q 4:1-43), (Q 4:44-126), and (Q 4:127-176). For Iṣlāḥī, the *amoūd* of the sūrah is the elements and bases established for the unity of the Islamic community. The components of organizing the society, as Mir illustrates, are presented in the context of *taqwā* in the first part. Then, in the following part, the idea of organization of the community comes in the context of highlighting the efforts and attitudes of hostile groups aim to hinder the community’s unity. The last part repeats this with more details and emphasizes the same matters discussed earlier in the sūrah.

Iṣlāḥī’s division of the sūrah is as follows:

1- The first part (Q 4:1-43) is about reforming the society by tying people to their origin and Creator (Q 4:1), emphasizing the significance of the concept of *taqwā* in relationships and in maintaining rights and laws (Q 4:2-10, 11-14, 15-18, 19-22, 23-25, 26-28, 29-33, 34-35), and wrapping up the part with an order to worship God and do good to people (Q 4:36-43).
2- The second part (Q 4:44-126) has to do with the Muslim society and the adversaries. The part’s sections deal with Jews’ rejection of Islamic laws and the Prophet’s religion (Q 4:44-57), invite Muslims to treat all people with justice, to seek the cohesion of the community, and to be alert of hypocrites’ attitudes (Q 4:58-70), invite the believers to fight in Allah’s way (Q 4:71-76), raise up the awareness of Muslims regarding the hypocrites’ conspiracies (Q 4:77-85), show Muslims how to deal with hypocrites (Q 4:86-100), explain the prayer of Fear (Q 4:101-104), illustrate the unnecessary tolerance with hypocrites’ misdeeds (Q 4:105-115), and show Allah’s punishment for hypocrites (Q 4:116-126).  

3- The third part (Q 4:127-176) is the “conclusion.” The sections in this part contain an answer regarding women’s and orphans’ matters (Q 4:127-134), remind Muslims of hypocrites’ attitudes (Q 4:135-152), exhort the People of the Scripture (Q 4:153-162), console the Messenger and warn the adversaries (Q 4:163-175), and provide a “supplement” to (Q 4:12) regarding inheritance (Q 4:176).  

Mir explains that this division into three main large sections seems related to subject-change.  

Explanations of the methodological strategy used by Iṣlāḥī, Mir remarks that besides dividing the sūrah into smaller units, Iṣlāḥī indicates a dominating thought in each section where this thought plays a role in distinguishing each section from one another. In addition, each section has a thematic connection that makes the section interconnected with the others.
lists three features of Iṣlāḥī’s method: 1) parallelism (e.g. the two passages (Q 4:2-4) and (Q 4:15-18) discuss two different wrong deeds), 2) contrast (e.g. Jews’ attitudes towards the revelation in contrast with Muslims’ adherence to it), 3) recognition of the structure of each section individually (e.g. the mentioned prophets in (Q 4:163) come in order in the beginning of the verse, then; a prophet is paired with another prophet due to their parallel stories or similar circumstances). Mir emphasizes that Iṣlāḥī’s scheme of *naẓm* depends on identifying the themes to link the sections rather than the textual connections.

To understand the long discussion in the sūrah on the theme of the People of the Scripture and the hypocrites in relation to the theme of women without assuming the disunity of the sūrah, Mir explains that the notion of connection has to do with “symmetry” in terms of the length of the parts. He affirms that Iṣlāḥī is able to demonstrate that the main theme links the most of the sūrah’s parts, however; there are parts that discuss digressively and in a smooth way secondary matters before the sūrah returns to the major theme again. The digression in the second section regarding the adversary groups is explained by the idea of the dynamism of the Qur’ānic text. Iṣlāḥī explains that the hypocrites are mentioned for the first time in the sūrah in (Q 4:61) after a digressive discourse on many laws regarding women in the first section because the readers should be alert that there are people who reject the Qur’ān and the Qur’ān aims to invite them to its message as well. For Iṣlāḥī, the unity of the sūrah has to do, on one hand, with the balance between its sections’ length and, on the other hand, with the idea that the Qur’ān deals with different reactions to its themes. Furthermore, Mir shows how Iṣlāḥī notices that the central

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46 Ibid., 49-50.
47 Ibid., 50, note.49.
48 Ibid., 49.
49 Ibid., 54-55.
50 Ibid., 55.
theme of (Q 4:2-10) is the orphan’s rights while that of (Q 4:7) is about “inheritance.” Accordingly, the theme of (Q 4:7) is the focal subject of the following part (Q 4:11-14).  

Also, Mir points out that Işlāhī’s illustration of the places of (Q 4:127-130) and of (Q 4:176) is problematic from the perspective of naẓm.  

According to Mir, for Işlāhī, the passages (Q 4:127-130) are not placed right after the passages (Q 4:2-4) although the first provides an answer related to (Q 4:2-4) because the verses (Q 4:127-130) are a later revelation. He provides the same explicable reason for the placement of the verse (Q 4:176) despite its relevance to the passages of (Q 4:11-12). Mir wonders why those passages do not follow their counterparts in other sūrahs, like (Q 2:215-219) and (Q 5:3-4), where the later revealed verses are placed close to earlier relevant verses. One last point made by Mir regarding Işlāhī’s sections is that the second section could start from (Q 4:135) instead of (Q 4:127) since a discontinuity is made in the discussed theme.

Saeed Ḥawwa claims that Q 4 elaborates on Q 2’s pivots (mahāwir). He explains that (Q 2:21-25) contains the main themes of Q 4, and he stresses how Q 2 explains this passage in its unique context while Q 4 expresses them in its own manner. He states that sūrah 4’s pivot is: a command of worship (amr bi al-‘ibādah) that leads to reach righteousness (taqwā) which is against blasphemy (kufur) and hypocrisy (nifāq). Ḥawwā points out that Q 4 explains in details

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52 Mir, Coherence in the Qur’ān, 53.  
53 Ibid., 58-59.  
54 Ibid., 58.  
55 Ibid., 58-59.  
56 Ibid., 59. The verse (135) is a beginning of a new thematic part starts from (v.135-147) in Quṭb’s division.  
57 As shown earlier in this chapter, Suyūṭī states the same theory that Q 4 is an explanation of what is mentioned briefly in Q 2, but Ḥawwā takes it to a further level methodologically (See al-Suyūṭī, Tanāṣṣuq al-Durar, 54-59).  
58 More details about his theory will be explained in Chapter Three. Ḥawwā also connects the second four sections of Q 4 to Q 2. While Q 2 explains how to reach taqwā through believing in the Unseen, and doing good deeds (prayer, alms), Q 4 explains how to be righteous through obeying God and His Prophet, fighting in God’s way, judging based on al-kitāb, and not defending the unfaithful (See Ḥawwā, al-Asās fī al-Taṣfīr, 2:1199).  
59 Ḥawwā, al-Asās fī al-Taṣfīr, 2:1111.
the means and requirements of taqwā. He shows how Q 4’s themes are linked. Q 4 starts with the rights of women and orphans who are the most vulnerable members in the society, and then the sūrah moves on to address major social matters. Ḥawwa divides the sūrah into 13 sections. Each section has groups of passages, concluding passages, and a miḥwar.

Ḥawwa notices that Q 4 is composed of sections, and each section has its unity, and the whole sūrah as a unit has a main theme linking all sections. He recognizes the notion of a ring, but he uses the term “circle” to describe how the sūrah returns to discuss social matters related to the opening after mentioning other themes. Ḥawwa’s division relies also on indicating the recurring formulas and main themes of the sections. He observes that the eighth section ends with the formula of address “O you who believe” while most of the sections in this sūrah, he states, start with the formula “O people” or “O you who believe.” His explanation of this Qur’ānic style is that concluding a passage with the same formula coming in the beginning is

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60 Ḥawwa states that taqwā is discussed from various angles in the three sūrahs (Q 2, 3, and 4) whose contexts in dealing with this theme are different from one another (See Ḥawwa, al-Asās fī al-Tafsīr, 2:1267).

61 Ḥawwa’s division is as follows: 1. (Q 4:1-18) is about taqwā and its requirements of justice in relation to orphans, women’s rights, and inheritance, 2. (Q 4:19-28) is about taqwā in terms of lawful and unlawful marriages and women’s rights in the continuation of the previous passage’s context stating the origin of humanity, 3. (Q 4:29-42) is an elaboration of taqwā in terms of finance, nafs (soul), women’s matters, charity to different people, and other matters like the Last Day and the Prophet’s testimony, 4. (Q 4:43-58) adds to the concept of taqwā two matters: giving trusts to those who are worthy and judging with justice. Those two matters come in the context of mentioning the prayer (an example of worship) and People of the Scripture (an example of rejection the commands), 5. (Q 4:59-70) is about taqwā in the context of obeys God and the Prophet. 6. (Q 4:71-93) links taqwā to jihād, its manners (unlawfulness), and movement by which true believers can be distinguished from hypocrites besides mentioning the murder of a believer, 7. (Q 4:94-104) mentions the manners of jihād and emphasizes emigration in God’s way and explaining some laws of prayer, 8. (Q 4:105-135) demonstrates the purpose of sending down a kitāb to the Prophet in the context of exhorting to judge with justice and follow God’s kitāb in order to elaborate more on the concept of taqwā. The manifestations of justice vary in this passage in terms of defending non-Muslims, treating women, being just with all people in testimony, and exhorting not to follow Satan instead of the true revealed kitāb, 9-10. (Q 4:136-162) is about renewing faith in God, His Messengers, the Angels, the Books, and the Last Day in the context of threatening the hypocrites with punishment unless they repent, and mentioning the believers and disbelievers of Jews, 11. (Q 4:163-170) continues to show that faith requires believing in kitāb and following its teaching because it is a demonstration of taqwā. This passage is about confirming the truth of the revelation (the Qur’ān), 12. (Q 4:171-173) addresses Christians to know God (One Lord, tawḥīd), believe in Him, and do good deeds, 13. (Q 4:174-176) is a return to address all people as the sūrah starts to believe in God and follow the Qur’ān besides mentioning an inheritance’s matter as the first section does (See Hawwā, al-Asās fī al-Tafsīr, 2:984-1260).


63 Ibid., 2:1199.

64 Ibid., 2:1199-1200.
frequent in many places in the Qurʾān and in this case it aims to show how section 8 is composed around a main theme of justice. In a similar manner, he recognizes that the ninth and tenth sections are completing one another. When Ḥawwā deals with these two sections, he discusses and presents them together and observes that each section starts with the formula of address “O you who believe” (Q 4:136, 144) which corresponds with the last verse in the tenth section about the believers and knowledgeable people of Jews (Q 4:162). Linking the last three sections, Ḥawwā refers several times to the beginning of a section corresponding with the end thematically. He states that the eleventh section’s beginning and end are about the revelation and the Qurʾān while the following sections deal with the People of the Scripture and all people and contain an invitation to believe in God and His revelation after inviting the audience in the preceding sections to purify their faith from blasphemy and hypocrisy.

Ḥanān Laḥḥām (b.1943) in her book about “the guidance” of Q 4 states that the sūrah revolves around two pivots: purification of the community from Jāhiliyyah and warning Muslims from their enemies’ threats. For Laḥḥām, Q 4 aims to define the meaning of religion dīn, the form of faith Imān, and the conditions of Islam. It links all social laws and individual’s and society’s affairs to the concept of Imān in the sūrah in order to support the basis of Islamic doctrines and the social and intellectual growth of the community. Achieving these goals, the sūrah, as Laḥḥām stresses, provides a glimpse of the pre-Islamic society that can be extracted from the stated laws. After stating the main themes, Laḥḥām provides a thematic division of Q 4.

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65 Ibid., 2:1166-1167.
66 Ibid., 2:1200-1201.
67 Ibid., 2:1263.
69 Ibid., 20.
Under the title “The Concepts of the Sūrah”, she divides the sūrah into 18 sections and a conclusion. Her study aims to serve the legal purposes of the sūrah’s laws.

**Observations:**

The above works reflect the development in determining the sūrah’s themes in contemporary Muslim literatures. Here are three points regarding the employed methods:

1- The works in this part deal with the sūrah based on the notion of sūrah’s thematic unity. Accordingly, the sūrah has its own distinctive theme, style, and purposes. The identified main theme differs in those works although there is a consensus that Q 4 focuses mainly on the theme of social reform based on theological bases. The scholars employ different terms to describe the main subject: theme (mawdoū’), pivot (mihwar), aim (hadaf), pillar (‘amoūd), or purpose (gharaḍ). Some scholars provide one broad theme while others provide two pivots. Also, the opening of the sūrah is a significant factor in determining the main theme(s). Moreover, some of those analyses provide structural theories, like Iṣlāḥī’s and Ḥawwā’s works.

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70 Ibid., 22-26. Here is her division: 1. (Q 4:1-3) is about taqwā and wombs, then orphans and polygamy, 2. (Q 4:4-14) is about finance: dowry, orphans’ property, and inheritance, 3. (Q 4:15-21) mentions adultery, acceptable and unacceptable repentance, and an order to do good to women, 4. (Q 4:22-28) states unlawful marriages, confirmation of dowry, lawful marriages, slave woman’s adultery, and the eight verses (Q 4:26, 27, 28, 31, 40, 48, 110, 152), 5. (Q 4:29-35) is about property and men’s role gawāmah, 6. (Q 4:36-43) is about an exhortation to worship God and be good, avoid riyâ’, worship God with no association, 7. (Q 4:44-57) is about Jews, their deviation and hostility to Muslims, 8. (Q 4:58-70) is about the verse of trusts, leaders, and people, 9. (Q 4:71-87) is about jihād, 10. (Q 4:88-91) is about hypocrites and some international affairs, 11. (Q 4:92-93) is about murder of a believer, 12. (Q 4:94-104) returns to talk about jihād and emigration, 13. (Q 4:105-126) states a reminder of God’s bless, prohibition of secret talks unless for good purposes, the verse of shirk, and warning from Satan, 14. (Q 4:127-136) is about women, taqwā, and justice, 15. (Q 4:137-149) is a return to the hypocrites’ subject and mentioning their punishment, 16. (Q 4:150-162) is about the Children of Israel, 17. (Q 4:163-170) is a discourse to the Prophet and confirmation of his revelation, 18. (Q 4:171-175) addresses Christians, 19. (Q 4:176) is a conclusion: fatwā of kalālah.

71 Mir compares between Iṣlāḥī’s, Quṭb’s, and Ṭabāṭabā’ī’s determination of the main theme of Q 4. He observes that Quṭb’s view tends to be broad and linked to the Qur’ān’s overall purposes while Ṭabāṭabā’ī’s opinion seems imprecise and fragmentary. For Mir, Iṣlāḥī’s view represents the best identification of the main theme of the sūrah because his view is more complete, accurate, and distinct and able to connect the sūrah’s themes to one specific theme (See Mir, *Coherence in the Qurʾān*, 67).
2- New methods are applied, like dividing the sūrah into sections and parts and giving each section a thematic pivot. There is no agreement on the number of the sections and parts by which the sūrah is composed. However, there are large sections and smaller ones as in Iṣlāḥī’s division whereas other divisions only contain a number of parts sectioned according to thematic breaks.

3- All the exegetes mentioned above (except Ḥawwā) agree that (v.127) is a beginning of a section. This will be confirmed by ring-structural analysis. M.M. Ali considers (v.58-70) and (v.116-126) as parts which will be seen as sub-rings after applying ring-theory. Also, Quṭb agrees with Ali on the first part, but he divides the second one slight differently to start from (v.114-126). Dissimilarly, For Iṣlāḥī, (v.126) is an end of a large section. There are many examples similar to these two parts which show the difference in sectioning the sūrah. Also, what will be identified as the sūrah’s center (v.87) is in Ali’s and Laḥḥām’s divisions an end of a section (v. 77-87). Likewise, in Quṭb’s division, it is a beginning of a section (v.87-94) while in Iṣlāḥī’s it is included within the middle large section (v.44-126) and in Ḥawwā’s within (v.71-93).

4- The establishment of the correlations between the verses is mainly based on the main theme(s) and it follows a linear approach in most of these works. Also, thematic relationships between the larger units (parts and sections) are highlighted. Furthermore, there is recognition of repeated formulas and their function in framing the sections or indicating a new thematic break. In connecting the sections, Iṣlāḥī indicates that each section carries references to the next section’s main theme. Ḥawwā suggests that the sections in the sūrah seem overlapping as if they are in a round-shape, but he does not push this idea further.
3. Western Analysis of Structure of Sūrah 4

This part mainly demonstrates Mathias Zahniser’s examination of Q 4’s construction. As mentioned earlier, this research only came across in two studies (Nöldeke’s and Zahniser’s) focusing on the entire sūrah as a structural unit, not only examining some individual passages. Zahniser’s study tends to relate more to the sūrah’s structure than Nöldeke’s analysis which is more about dating the verses. Nöldeke’s study shows how some verses are seen as either later additions or disconnected. However, he indicates some thematic links between the verses and divides the sūrah into parts to examine their chronology. For example, the passages on sinning men and women (Q 4:19-22) and on marriages (Q 4:23-32) belong to the same time because of the similarity of the ideas. The verses (Q 4:63-68) are linguistically and thematically alike to the preceding ones (v.61-62) on a disagreement when a Muslim rejects the Prophet’s involvement and both belong to the same period.

Furthermore, Nöldeke indicates that the parts (Q 4:116-125) and (Q 4:130-133) are connected thematically through the idea of idolatry vs. Abraham’s religion. Nöldeke dates those verses to the time after the end of the battle of Badr. He states that the passages (Q 4:126-129) are a completion of the earlier legislations in the sūrah while (Q 4:134) can be relevant to (Q 4:61). The passages (Q 4:135-142) and (Q 4:143-152) seem to be composed after the Battle of Uḥud and indicates that Muslims were at war and suffering some misfortunes. Additionally, Nöldeke points out that the passages (Q 4:152-168) represent the Prophet’s hostility towards

72 Farrin claims that in the first section of the Qur’ān the first group (Q 2-5) provides legislations for the society in Madinah and speaks to the People of the Scripture. He pairs Q 2 with Q 3 and Q 4 with Q 5. This group with Q 1 revolves around the theme of the Qur’ānic guidance by which faithful community is prospered. His mainly purpose is to study the whole Qur’ān as a unit (See Farrin, Structure and Qur'anic Interpretation, xiv-xv, 48-49, 75).
74 Ibid., 162-163.
75 Ibid., 164-165.
Jews publically.\textsuperscript{76} Therefore, the part on Christian theology (Q 4:169-174) is related to the preceding passages. Finally, Nöldeke doubts the traditions ascribed to (Q 4:175)\textsuperscript{77} on inheritance. He states that this passage seems to be composed shortly after (Q 4:12-15) as it contains modifications of the previous laws.\textsuperscript{78} Those are some examples of Nöldeke’s analysis aims mainly to date the verses, but it shows some textual and thematic levels.

Within the work of Mathias Zahniser, the case is different. He studies the sūrah’s structure from a thematic and literary perspective. His approach in analyzing Q 4, as he states, depends on specifying “the basic units” of the Qur’ān, namely “verses,” and “the thematic units” of the verses in order to recognize the themes of the large group of verses and recurring rhymes.\textsuperscript{79} For him, the repetition of some formulas and sentences is an indication of the sūrah’s structural divisions. He pays attention to the five “formulas of address” used in the sūrah and their recurrences within the context.\textsuperscript{80} He claims that the recurring formula “\textit{O you who believe}” is not helpful in understanding structural divisions while the formulas addressing the People of the Scripture and the Prophet play a compositional role.\textsuperscript{81} Furthermore, he analyzes the repetition of “\textit{God owns everything in heaven and on earth}”\textsuperscript{82} for six times in the last two sections and he examines its repetition in relation to the other repeated sentence “\textit{Never will God forgive}...
associating any being with him.”

He concludes that those recurrences and occurrences should not be interpreted separately for exegetical and thematic purposes.

Considering what mentioned above in reading the sūrah, Zahniser’s investigation shows that the sūrah is divided into five sections with two main themes as follows:

1- (Q 4:1-43) Women
2- (Q 4:44-70)
3- (Q 4:71-104) Battle
4- (Q 4:105-175) (sub-section Q 4:127-135 on women)
5- (Q 4:176) Women

What he calls “Women Material” includes the verses (1-43), (127-135), and (176) and is identified in order as: “a block, a cluster, [and] a verse dealing with women through attention to theme borders, repeated phrases, and rhyme-pattern change.”

He claims that the rhyme-change in the last long verse connects the verse with “the block” which has similar rhymes while the block is linked to “the cluster” though the cluster’s content summing up the block’s matters and providing an answer.

He continues to find the textual and thematic correlations between the three parts. He notices the similar formula at the beginning of both (Q 4:127) and (Q 4:176) by which the last verse is connected to the cluster.

Zahniser illustrates that the sūrah has its composition from the beginning by which (Q 4:176) comes in the end not attached to the relevant verses come earlier in the sūrah despite the obvious thematic similarity between the last verse and the women’s verses in the sūrah.

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83 The translation of (Q 4:48, 116) is Zahniser’s (See Zahniser, “Sūra as Guidance and Exhortation: The Composition of Sūrat al-Nisā’,” 78-79).
85 Ibid., 77.
86 Ibid., 74.
87 Ibid., 75.
88 He states that “repeated phrases” are considered one of the signs of the structural division (See Zahniser, “Sūra as Guidance and Exhortation: The Composition of Sūrat al-Nisā’,” 76).
89 Ibid., 76.
explaining the thematic parallel between the three parts regarding women and inheritances. Also, he mentions that the theme of fighting in God’s way comes in the middle of the sūrah in (Q 4:71-104). The term qitāl is mentioned repeatedly in this section. He observes that the topic of fighting does not appear in the other sections.

Zahniser illustrates that the first, third, and fifth sections contain laws and injunctions to organize the society regarding relationships and inheritances in the context of a symmetrical structure while the central section labeled with battle contains the central idea which is to fight in God’s way and defend the oppressed people. He also claims that addressing all people in the beginning of the sūrah and addressing the People of the Scripture, in the second and fifth sections, indicate that the sūrah is meant to exhort and guide the addressees including the People of the Scripture who might were wondering about some matters and approaching the Prophet for some answers. The beginning and the end of the last section of the sūrah (Q 4:127, 176), showing people asking the Prophet, support this conclusion.

Zahniser observes that the opening of the sūrah “O People” and its repetition in the section addressing the People of the Scripture indicate that the sūrah addresses many different listeners. The places of the formulas in the sūrah’s introduction and conclusion play a role in interpreting the sūrah as a unit. He claims that the discourse about Jesus placed between the formula “O People” (Q 4:170-174) indicates that Christians are addressed from the beginning of the sūrah although there are many addressees. The second and fourth sections are linked through

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90 Ibid., 76.
91 Ibid., 76, note.25.
92 Ibid., 77.
93 Ibid., 84.
94 Ibid., 85.
95 Ibid., 85.
96 Ibid., 80-81.
97 Ibid., 83.
the repeated phrases “God owns everything in heaven and on earth” and “Never will God forgive associating any being with him.” These two phrases are connected through (Q 4:171) “He is exalted well beyond having a child, He owns everything in heaven and on earth, God needs no deputy.” Thus, he explains that the repeated verses regarding association come in the second section (Q 4:48) where the main idea in this section is to exhort the People of the Scripture to obey the Prophet while in the fourth section the main idea is to provide an exhortation to Arabs who associate with God (Q 4:116). This links the second and fourth sections’ themes with the last section exhorting the People of the Scripture, namely Christians.

Zahniser also examines “the borders between thematic units” in sūrah 2 and 4. He aims to identify their borders of major thematic parts in the sūrah and point out the similar “transitions.” Zahniser pays attention to the places and repetitions of some phrases and to the concluding passages preceding a thematic shift because those passages highlight the main message of the text and function as borders. He shows that his own division of Q 4 is identical to Iṣlāḥī’s division whose contains three major themes (v.1-43, 44-126, 127-176). Zahniser shows how the division at (v.126/127) can be supported through: 1) the compositional coherence of the part (v.116-126) analyzed based on ring-structure and 2) the theme of the verses (127-130).

Zahniser explains that Mustansir Mir views that (v.134/135) might be a place of division instead of (v.126/127) in Iṣlāḥī’s sections. Zahniser justifies Mir’s view by stating that

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98 Ibid., 83.
99 Ibid., 83. The translation is by Zahniser.
100 Ibid., 83-84.
102 Ibid., 48.
103 Ibid., 42.
104 Ibid., 42-45.
on God’s ownership of the heavens and earth relates to (v.116-126) in terms of emphasizing God’s Oneness vs. Satan and association. However, Zahniser argues that İslâhi’s division seems more accurate because the end of the sūrah (v.176), on inheritance of sisters, “a topic related to the women themes of the sūra’s first main division [v.1-43],” contains very similar phrase to the beginning of the major section (v.127-175) which mentions the theme of women as well. Thus, the verses (127-130/134), according to Zahniser, can be considered as “an inclusio” of the end of the last section. He concludes that he does not aim to favor a specific division, but he attempts to show some factors can be used to divide a long sūrah thematically.

**Observations:**

Zahniser’s analysis has a theoretical and methodical basis. He claims that the sūrah is structured symmetrically through the locations of women’s verses. However, he makes the formulas of address as indications of the beginning of a section/block besides the thematic shifts. He notices the disappearance of the theme of fighting in the sūrah’s extremes, but he states that the main theme has to do with fighting since it occurs in the third section. He observes the symmetrical places of inheritance verses and their influence in framing the sūrah’s structure. The ring analysis of the sūrah will provide explanations for Zahniser’s struggles regarding the division and the main theme.

By looking carefully at the mentioned attempts in identifying the main theme of the sūrah in Muslim and Western studies, it can be noticed that the main theme according to those analytical studies has to do with internal and international social organization, fighting in Allah’s

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105 Ibid., 45-46.  
106 Ibid., 47.
way, *tawḥīd* and *taqwā*, and the origin of humanity. The unifying theme of the sūrah’s various subjects is determined by breaking the text down into several units based on thematic shifts.

The idea of social reform is meant to indicate that the Qur’ān provides new injunctions and laws to organize the society and rid of pre-Islamic practices regarding women and orphans. Also, it shows how the new community should deal with other groups inside and outside of Madinah. Iṣlāḥī emphasizes this theme as the sūrah’s main theme and he justifies his choice by stating that addressing Jews and hypocrites is a response to their rejection of the reformation.\(^{107}\) Iṣlāḥī’s explanation might be in correspondence with the general context of the sūrah, but the section about the hypocrites and the order to fight, emigrate, and obeying God and His Prophet seems more relevant to another kind of holistic and internal reformation that is relating to the human soul and heart. This inner reformation, it can be argued, has to do with pure creed and submission with no compulsion. Also, the theme of social organization stated by Iṣlāḥī does not explain a large portion of the sūrah addressing the People of the Scripture and discussing their transgressions and doctrines.

Those who choose the topic of fighting in God’s way as a main theme explain that the new established community in Madinah needs a protection from its enemies. In this context, they connect the idea of social reform to defending the community and its members. However, this theme reduces the community’s interactions with other religious groups to hostility rather than considering them as groups living with Muslims and sharing the same origin of humanity and similar religious beliefs and practices. Zahniser is right in indicating that the sūrah exhorts Jews and Christians and addresses them with the community through the opening verse. This view explains the occurrence of the theme of justice with all people including non-Muslims and men

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\(^{107}\) Mir, *Coherence in the Qur’ān*, 48-49.
and women and leads to more plural view in reading the sūrah’s regulating laws and exhortations.

The claim that the sūrah is about tawḥīd or taqwā and their implications in line with the theme of the human origin seems more comprehensive and emphasized in the sūrah’s parts and discussed themes. Although these themes are found in other sūrahs, like Q 2 and Q 3, the ring structural analysis will show that the theme of tawḥīd and its implication (the truth of the Day of Resurrection) are central in Q 4 and demonstrate more universal view in relation to many reforming laws and their application domestically and internationally.
II. **Rhetorical Analysis of Sūrah al-Nisā’**

1. **Ring-Structure: Michel Cuypers**

   Michel Cuypers applies Semitics rhetorical rules to understand the Qur’ān’s *naẓm*. The main concept of this method is to indicate the small and large symmetrical structures composing a text. It depends basically on dividing the text into “small units” and examines its arrangement into the three forms of symmetry: “parallelism (A B C/ A’ B’ C’),” “concentrism (A B C D /X/ D’ C’ B’ A’ or A B C /X/ A’ B’ C’),” and “mirror (A B C D/ D C B A).” Some of Nils W. Lund’s laws of symmetry are used by Cuypers in studying the Qur’ānic composition. The same laws are applied in this research to analyze the structure of Q 4. Here are the five laws in Cuypers’ words:

   *First law*: The center is always the turning point. The center may consist of one, two, three, or even four lines.
   *Second law*: At the center there is often a change in the trend of thought, and an antithetical idea is introduced. After this the original trend is resumed and continued until the system is concluded. [He calls it “the law of the shift at the center”].
   *Third law*: Identical ideas are often distributed in such a fashion that they occur in the extremes and at the center of their respective system, and nowhere else in the system.
   *Fourth law*: There are also many instances of ideas, occurring at the center of one system and recurring in the extremes of a corresponding system, the second system evidently having been constructed to match the first. [He calls it “the law of shift from center to the extremes”].
   *Fifth law*: There is a definite tendency of certain terms to gravitate towards certain positions within a given system, such as the divine names in the Psalms or the quotations in a central position in the New Testament.

The fifth law is explained more by Cuypers in *The Composition of the Qur’an*. According to Cuypers, the center emphasizes a significance meaning should be noticed, thus; it is either “the

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109 Ibid., 35, 508.
110 Ibid., 36.
divine names,” “a quotation,” “a question,” “wisdom maxims,” “theological maxims,” or “ethical maxims.”111 Most of these features of the center are found in Q 4.

Moreover, the layers of a text are divided into “inferior” and “superior” levels. The inferior levels include: “the term, member, segment, piece, and part” while the superior levels contain: “the passage, sequence, section, and book.” There are also “intermediary levels: sub-part, sub-sequence, and sub-section.”112 The provided analysis of Q 4 focuses more on highlighting the higher levels due to the research’s limited space. Terminologies, such as section, sub-section, sequence, sub-sequence, passage, part, piece, and term, are used here to refer to either small or large structural levels of the text.

The explanations of each ring’s structure mostly underline the extremes (or outer parts) and the centers. Some verses are analyzed based on some of the inferior levels in order to illustrate their positions in their systems. The presentation of the rhetorical analysis of Q 4 states first the text in question in its ring-structural form as a whole sub-sequence with marking the parts or the passages composing the given sub-sequence and the identical and similar terms/phrases (in bold and upper letters) in order to show the symmetrical indications. Then, those parts’ or passages’ compositions are highlighted along with the themes of the sub-sequence and the parts’ or passages’ rhetorical relationships. Also, in many places the correlations between an end of a system and a beginning of a following system are mentioned. More details about each part/ passage are provided depending on the structure of the sub-sequence. In many places, rhetorical links (e.g. median terms, recurring similar/identical phrases in the beginnings and ends)113 are listed in order to show the coherence and correspondence between two sub-systems

111 Cuypers, *The Composition of the Qur’an*, 121-130.
113 “Median terms” are “identical or similar terms or syntagmas which mark the end of a textual unit and the beginning of the unit which is symmetrical to it; “link word” in traditional exegesis.” The other type of terms
or sub-rings. Sub-headings are provided to help in referring to the relationship between two corresponding rings. Additionally, some interpretations (e.g. Ṭabarî’s, Ibn ‘Āshûr’s, and The Study Qur’an’s exegesis) are provided when needed to aid dividing the text or know some verbal meanings. The following part presents the ring-form of Q 4 based on the above laws. Some reflections on some meanings or determination of some interpretations based on ring-theory reading will occur within the analysis. Finally, the correspondences and correlations occur within the analysis are produced by the author, but it should be noted that similar correlations might be found in Muslim exegetical works which are based on the sūrah’s unities and correlations.

2. Structure of Sūrah 4 based on Ring-Theory

This part shows first the whole sūrah’s structure (macro-level) followed by examining the central pivot and its relation to the opening and concluding sub-sections (the extremes). Then, the center’s surrounding sub-sections (the inner sub-sections) will be analyzed moving towards the middle sections in order to illustrate how the sūrah is composed in concentricism. Some of the sūrah’s inferior/micro-structural levels will be provided when needed within the discussion of the sub-sections and sequences in order to show their coherence and the sūrah’s unity.

Although ring-structural analysis is based on a micro-structural examination, macro-structural level is chosen to be the way of presentation. It is used by George Archer in his analysis of Q 18. It should be remembered that Archer provides a ring-structural analysis of the whole structure of Q 4 and one of its sections for the sake of his study on death and sleep in the Qur’ān in relation to the theme of barzakh.114 His analysis is very helpful for this research whose

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114 The division of the last sub-sequence in sub-section B2 is borrowed from Archer, A Place Between Two Places, 279.
The rhetorical division and some themes mentioned below are identical to Archer’s examination of Q 4’s structure. His division of the middle sections contains five sub-sequences in each section. The macro-structure provided here combines between the sub-sequences and only indicates the two sequences and the center of each sub-section. Here is the sūrah’s complete composition:

(a) Sūrah 4 “The Women” (al-Nisā‘): Macro-Structural Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Verses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Section A (4:1-86)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-section A1</td>
<td>Moral obligations of sharing the same Lord: A Community of Men-Women, Inheritance</td>
<td>4:1-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-section A2</td>
<td>Divine limits, Obedience/Disobedience, Women’s Laws</td>
<td>4:13-25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Divine clarification of laws and lightning burden, Man’s vulnerability</td>
<td>4:26-28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Women’s Laws, Worshipping God/ no association, Divine Judgment</td>
<td>4:29-42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-section A3</td>
<td>Purification: People of Scripture, Fight in God’s way</td>
<td>4:43-86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center</td>
<td>No god but God, the Day of Resurrection, God’s Speech</td>
<td>4:87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-section B3</td>
<td>Orientation: Hypocrites, Emigration in God’s way</td>
<td>4:88-115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-section B2</td>
<td>No association, Divine Religion, Justice with Women</td>
<td>4:116-130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Divine Ownership of heavens and earth</td>
<td>4:131-132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Justice/belief, not Allying hypocrites, People of Scripture’s violations</td>
<td>4:133-175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-section B1</td>
<td>Inheritance (men-women), Divine clarification to people to not go astray</td>
<td>4:176</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As it appears in the figure above, the sūrah is structured in mirror-shape around the center (v.87). It contains two large sections (Section A v.1-86 and Section B v.88-176). Each section consists of three sub-sections.

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115 Archer, A Place Between Two Places, 277-283.
The first large section (Section A):

Sub-section A1 (v.1-12): A community of men and women
Sub-section A2 (v.13-42): Divine limits and judgment
Sub-section A3 (v.43-86): Purification and fight in God’s way: (the People of the Scripture and the hypocrites)

1) **Sub-section A1** shows the community’s relationship with God and human relationships to one another. It has one sequence, organized concentrically in mirror-fashion, deals mainly with orphans’ and women’s rights and inheritances.

2) **Sub-section A2** declares Divine limits and the attitude of obedience and disobedience will be judged. It has five sub-sequences (v.13-14), (v.15-25), (v.26-28), (v.29-35), (v.36-42) arranged in mirror-structure around the central passage (v.26-28).

3) **Sub-section A3** is about people not purifying their hearts to be able to listen to God’s commands and obey the Prophet’s judgment and the order of fight in God’s way. This sub-ring consists of two sequences composed in parallel-figure: (v.43-70) and (v.71-86).

The whole section is about organizing and purifying the new community and the hearts to be truthful in belief in their Creator. It presents God guiding and watching the community. The Prophet is placed as a witness and an authority with God. The community is warned from internal people pretending to be believers, but they are not. Those are the enemies and Satan’s companions and allies since Satan disobey the order as Jews heard the Prophet and disobeyed, and the hypocrites say they obeyed, but they changed what the Prophet’s says.

Justice is the element of maintaining community’s unity and a sign of obedience. *Taqwā*, justice, and obedience are the foundations of fulfilling financial obligations to people (including orphans, wives, and children). Worshipping God only, being charitable with parents and people, obeying God and the Prophet, praying in the state of purity, and fighting in God’s way are signs of pure belief in God and the Last Day (the covenant). God knows each one’s belief and will
bring witnesses (the Prophet/prophets) against them on the Day of Judgment. God is Watching (v.1), accepting repentance (v.26), and does not wrong anyone and reward is multiplied out of Himself (v.40).

Concluding the section with the theme of fight in God’s way, emphasizing the reward of the Last Day “sell this life for Hereafter” (v.74), and defending the oppressed men, women, and children in the oppressing community corresponds with the opening about the new community (men and women), inheritance, and people leaving behind when they die property and weak children. The theme of death is dominant in the extremes of the section as a whole, although the opening verse symbolizes the idea of life and birth of people/community. Death is not the last episode of souls. The center of the whole sūrah (v.87) comes to confirm the Resurrection (another life) and its events (God’s Judgment, reward and punishment).

The three sub-sections present different authoritative roles in the community which have to be under God’s authority including the Prophet’s juridical authority. Guardians/parents in A1, husbands in A2, and religious/political figures in A3 are discussed. All these authorities should be just and act with taqwā to avoid violation of God’s limits or abusing authorities given by God to them, meaning not altering God’s Words and the Prophet’s teachings. God’s limits are part of the covenant with God. Those who disobey God and His Prophet break/betray the covenant and are in the state of impure, untruthful, or incomplete belief. Those are the main meanings emphasized in the first section. More details and correspondences will reveal in the analysis.

**The second large section (Section B):**

*Sub-section B3 (v.88-115):* Orientation: emigration in God’s way and the hypocrites  
*Sub-section B2 (v.116-175):* Divine Ownership of the heavens and the earth  
*Sub-section B1 (v.176):* Divine clarification
1) **Sub-section B3** contains two sequences, (v.88-104) and (v.105-115), arranged in parallel-image. The first sequence consists of two sub-sequences: (v.88-94) and (v.95-100). The second sequence also has two sub-sequences: (v.101-104) and (v.105-115).

2) **Sub-section B2** is about God’s monotheism, ultimate authority, and ownership of everything. It has five sub-sequences: (v.116-126), (v.127-130), (v.131-132), (v.133-152), (v.153-175). The sub-section is composed in mirror-form around (v.131-132).

3) **Sub-section B1** mentions an inheritance case and emphasizes God responding to people and clarifying things. It contains only one passage (v.176) composed in mirror-form.

   Section B is about God’s Oneness, Ownership, and guidance. From the beginning the system shows that true believers (not the hypocrites) will emigrate to God and His messenger and those who are not guided by God have gone astray. Different laws regarding the hypocrites outside and inside the community are stated. Those who break from the clear guidance and the way of the believers will be facing a bad destination in Hell. Then, the system warns people from *shirk* and following Satan. It shows the reward of believers and the good doers who followed the way of Abraham. Then, it stresses the concept of justice with women followed by emphasizing the theme of justice with people and the theme of belief and disbelief in terms of not allying the disbelievers and the hypocrites. The system moves on to highlight the theme of revelation and God’s messengers in the context of mentioning the People of the Scripture’s transgressions of their covenant. As it begins, the system concludes with emphasizing God’s clarification to guide people.

   Now the center of the surah will be examined in detail, followed by analyzing sub-sections A1 and B1. It should be noted that the inferior levels are indicated in the English Qur’anic text as the following (abcd). The English translation is mainly taken from Droge while
some words’/phases’ translations are taken from Asad and The Study Qur’an. Also, some of the verses’ translations are taken from the combination of the two or the three works while others are only taken from one source. The reason behind this is to choose the nearest translation to the original Arabic text (sometimes literal).

i. Structure of the Center

The Center (Q 4:87) No god but God, the Day of Resurrection, God’s Speech

87. a GOD– (there) is NO god but Him.
   b He will indeed gather you to the Day of Resurrection-
   c (there is) NO doubt about it.
   d Who is more truthful than GOD in report.

The composition of (v.87) is a mirror-structure with a center (87b-c). The outer lines (87a) and (87d) consist of a unimember segment. Each member has five terms, mentions “God,” and corresponds and complements one another. The central segment (87b-c) contains two members also complementing one another. The second segment (87c) affirms the first member (87b) and it matches the statement of (87a) through “lā/No” meaning negation: there is no god but God and there is no doubt about the truth of the Resurrection Day. The first segment (87a) is about the Oneness of God. The center (87b-c) proclaims the Resurrection truth entailed by confessing God’s Oneness. The last segment (87d) refers to God’s true Words (probably the Qur’ān). It corresponds with stating God’s Oneness and it implies that there is no doubt about God being Truthful to what He says/reveals including the certainty of the Resurrection.116

The central pivot of the sūrah announces tawḥīd and its implications and elements. This pure monotheism implies the belief in the Day of Resurrection when all created people will be gathered after death for just judgment of their belief and disbelief and good and evil deeds. The

116 Similar to “That is the Book- (there is) no doubt about it” (Q 2:2).
whole sûrah revolves around this truth. The opening of the sûrah on fearing God, the Creator (v.1) and the end affirming God’s Oneness with a similar phrase: “God is only one God. Glory to Him! (Far be it) that He should have a son” (v.171) are indications of the correspondence between the center and the far extremes. The following is the structure of the extreme sub-sections A1 (Q 4:1-12) and B1 (Q 4:176). It will show the center’s presence in A1 and B1.
**ii. Structure of the Opening**

**Sub-section A1 (Q 4:1-12) Moral obligations of sharing the same Lord: A Community of Men-Women, Inheritance**

This sub-section contains one sub-sequence arranged concentrically in mirror-formation.

**(A)**

1. *People* *Be conscious of your Lord* *Who created you from one soul* *And from it created its mate* *And scattered from the two of them many MEN and WOMEN* *And remain conscious of God through Whom you demand (your rights) from one another* *And the wombs (those ties of kinship) Verily, GOD is ever watchful over you.*

**(B)**

2. *Give the orphans their property, and do not exchange the bad for the good, and do not consume their property along with your own.* *Surely it is a great sin.*

3. *If you fear that you will not act fairly towards the orphan girls, marry what seems good to you of the women: two, or three, or four. But if you fear that you will not be fair, marry only one, or what your right (hands) own. That will make it more likely that you will not be biased.*

4. *Give the women their dowries as a gift. If they remit to you any part of it on their own, consume it with satisfaction (and) pleasure.*

**(C)**

5. *Do not give the foolish your property which God has assigned to you to maintain, but provide for them by means of it and clothe them, and speak to them rightful words.*

6. *Test the orphan girls until they reach (the age of marriage).* *If you perceive right judgment in them, hand over their property to them.* *Do not consume it wantonly or hastily before they are grown up.* *Whoever is wealthy should refrain from using it,* and whoever is poor should use it rightfully. *And when you do hand over their property to them, take witnesses over them.*

7. *Surely those who consume the property of orphans in an evil manner, they only consume fire in their bellies, and they will burn in a blazing (Fire).*

**(C’)**

8. *When the family, orphans, and the poor are present at the distribution (of the estate), provide for them from it, and speak to them rightful words.*

9. *Let those fear who, if they left behind them weak offspring, would fear for them. Let them be conscious of God, and speak a direct word.*

10. *Surely those who consume the property of orphans in an evil manner, they only consume fire in their bellies, and they will burn in a blazing (Fire).*

**(B’)**

11. *God charges you concerning your children: to the male, a share equal to two females. But if they be (only) women, more than two, then to them two-thirds of what he leaves. But if there be (only) one, then to her a half.*

*And to his parents, to each of them, a sixth of what he leaves, if he has children.*

*But if he has no children and his heirs are his parents, then to his mother a third.*

*And if he has brothers, then to his mother a sixth, after any bequest he may have made or any debt (has been paid).*

*Whatever your fathers or your sons are of most benefit to you, you do not know. (This is) an obligation from God. Surely God is knowing, wise.*

**(A’)**

12. *And to you a half of what your wives leave, if they have no children. But if they have children, then to you the fourth of what they leave, after any bequest they may have made or any debt (has been paid).*

*And to them the fourth of what you leave, if they have no children. But if they have children, then to them the eighth of what you leave, after any bequest they may have made or any debt (has been paid).*

*If a Man or a WOMAN has no direct heir, but has a brother or a sister, then to each of them the sixth.*

*But if they are more (numerous) than that, then they share in the third, after any bequest they may have made or any debt (has been paid) without prejudice to (anyone).* *(This is) a directive from God. GOD is knowing, forbearing.*
The whole sequence’s main theme asserts that men and women have rights in their parents’ and relatives’ left properties. The center X (v.7) consists of three parallel pieces. The first two pieces (7a-b) and (7c-d) are synonymic while the last piece (7e-f) is complementing. The whole part (v.7) is linked through the recurring word “naissance/portion” (7a,c,f).

Part A (v.1) is about the emergence of a community of men and women from one soul and its mate and their spread in the context of exhorting them to fear their Creator while part A’ (v.12) mentions laws of husbands’ and wives’ possessions and an inheritance’ case that relates to a man or woman with no offspring. Part B (v.2-4) mentions orphans’ and women’s financial rights whereas part B’ (v.11) states the right of inheritance for daughters/sons and parents. Part C (v.5-6) contains an exhortation to the guardians of orphans to maintain their property and spend or consume fairly while part C’ (v.8-10) exhorts to treat relatives, orphans, and poor rightfully during distributing property and shows the punishment of consuming orphans’ properties unfairly. More thematic and rhetorical links between the parts will be provided in the following pages.

**Part A (Q 4:1):**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a People</th>
<th>b Be conscious of your LORD</th>
<th>c Who created you from one soul “nafs-in wāhidah”</th>
<th>d And from it created its mate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>e And scattered from the two of them many MEN and WOMEN</td>
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<td></td>
<td>f And remain CONSCIOUS of GOD</td>
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<td></td>
<td>g Through Whom you demand (your rights) from one another</td>
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<td></td>
<td>h And the wombs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>i Verily, God is ever watchful over you.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

This part is composed of two pieces arranged in parallel-image with a center (1e). The first piece starts with calling all people (1a) while the second piece ends with stating God’s ability to watch over them (1i). The segments (1b-d) and (1f-h) are synonymic parallels. The key phrases “Be CONSCIOUS of your LORD” (1b), “And remain CONSCIOUS of GOD” (1f), and “al-dhī/who/whom” (1c,g) indicate parallelism and link the two pieces.
The central segment (1e) relates to (1a-d) through the synonymic parallelism of the phrases “baththa minhumā/scattered from” and “khalaqa minhā/created from,” and through the contrary meanings of “wāḥidah/one” and “kathīr-an/many.” The phrase “nafs-in wāḥidah/one soul” is parallel to “rijāl-an/men.” Thus, “nafs-in wāḥidah” here is a reference to one man (probably Adam). Also, “nafs-in/soul” and “zawjahā/its mate” are parallels in the first piece. Accordingly, the phrase “zawjahā” is a reference to a woman (probably Eve). The plural of zawj is used in the same sub-section to refer to wives (Q 4:12) and in the following sub-section is used in the singular form to refer to a wife (Q 4:20). Consequently, women are anfus (pl. of nafs) and azwāj (pl. of zawj) and this indicates equality between men and women.\footnote{117 Both male and female human beings can be nafs and zawj although grammatically the first word refers to feminine and the latter refers to masculine.\footnote{118 The term azwāj (spouses) occurs in sub-section A3 (v.57) referring to pure women in the Gardens. Therefore, the piece (1c-d) refers to the Creation of Adam and Eve from the same essence (nafs).\footnote{119 Women are indicated in the center and the two pieces. The word “al-arḥām/the wombs” in the second piece is obviously a reference to women and it also signifies the meaning of kinship. “The wombs” is parallel to “zawjahā/its mate” in the first piece and to “women” in the} Both male and female human beings can be nafs and zawj although grammatically the first word refers to feminine and the latter refers to masculine.\footnote{117 The word “zawj”, according to M. Asad, is “a pair/mate” and refers to both genders. Asad explains that ‘Abduh also refers the meaning to “brotherhood of human race” not Adam and Eve. Asad states that Rāzī quotes Abū Muslim holds a similar view. Asad writes “[t]he literal translation of minhā as “out of it” clearly alludes, in conformity with the text, to the biological fact that both sexes have originated from “one living entity.” (See Asad, The Message of the Qur’ān, 117, note.1). In (Q 4:1), nafs seems referring to a woman (particularly the womb) where mankind (whether male or female) is created by God from another mankind (namely a woman). The sūrah later will show the significance of the concept of equality before God (Q 4:123-124). Nafs in the sūrah refers to insān (mankind) in general regardless of genders. The inequality between male and female in pre-Islamic period makes men superior to women. Multiple of examples are discussed in the sūrah, like women’s inheritance and property. Both men and women are created by God and both are equal in terms of religion, social status, and rights.\footnote{118 Nasr and others, The Study Qur’an, 189.\footnote{119 M. M. Ali explains that nafs means either “soul” or “the whole of a thing and its essence.” He is in favor of the second meaning in relation to (Q 4:1), thus; for him, both man and woman are created from the same “essence” which indicates equality between the two genders (See M. M. Ali, The Holy Qur’ān, 186, note.531).}
central segment (1e). The terms “min/minhā” are translated as “out of/from;” therefore God created from nafs its equal mate/pair/zawj in humanity, whether a male or a female.\(^{120}\)

The word “baththa minhumā” is parallel to “ḳhalaqa minhā.” The latter refers to the Creation of Eve out of Adam\(^{121}\) while the first (1e) refers to the creation of anfus/people inside the lions and wombs (an indication to “nikāḥ” marriage). This also can be inferred through reading (v.1) in parallel to the next verses mentioning “nikāḥ” and “dhurriyyah/offspring” (v.9). The creation in the wombs leads to have men and women (anfus) come to this life and families (relationships) and communities can be established. The meaning of “baththa” is nashara (spread).\(^{122}\) Those anfus/people are spread on this earth and generate communities through marriages. This meaning of “baththa” completes the meaning of creating “ḳhalaqa.”

**Reflections:**

The opening alludes to the foundation of people’s relationships in a community constituted of many men and women and shows the need to organize different relationships (obligations and rights) and to explain the community’s duty and relationship with the Creator. The formula “O People” signifies an emergence of a community that contains diversity on all levels including beliefs and practices, but not inequality. All people share the same essence and the same Lord. This explains why the sūrah does not start with the common Medinan formula “O you who believe” and instead begins with Meccan sūrahs’ common formula. This opening indicates a closer Medinan stage to Meccan period since some pre-Islamic practices are discussed in the first sub-section. It also explains the references to Pagans’ theological belief

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\(^{120}\) The sūrah somewhere else mentions that there is no difference between a righteous male and female. Both will enter the Garden and will not be wronged (Q 4:124).

\(^{121}\) According to *The Study Qur’an*, the phrase “And from it” is a reference to the creation of Eve from the same essence of Adam (one soul) and not necessarily refers to her creation from Adam’s rib as it is mentioned in the Bible (See Nasr and others, *The Study Qur’an*, 189).

\(^{122}\) al-Ṭabarī, *Jami‘ al-Bayān*, 7:515. The word baththa comes in the Qur’ān several times (Q 2:164, Q 31:10, Q 42:29, Q 45:4). In each place it is coupled with the verb ḏhalaqa or creation.
(shirk), “the town/village of evildoers,” the order of fighting and emigration in sub-sections A3 and B3, and the discourses with Jews and Christians (included in the formula of address “O People”).

The whole part (v.1) carries a reference to all mankind’s covenant with God “When your LORD drew dhurriyyatahum/descendants from the loins of the sons of Adam, he made them bear witness against themselves: ‘Am I not your LORD?’ they said, ‘Yes, we testify!’” (Q 7:172). Similarly to this covenant, sub-section A1 contains references to God/Lord (v.1) and descendents (v.9). Also, the same root SH-H-D in “bear witness against themselves ... we testify” (Q 7:172) occurs in (Q 4:6) in the context of giving orphans’ their possessions: “And when you hand over their property to them, take witness over them.” God established the covenant with people when they were in the loins and made them witnesses against themselves. Now people are witnesses in this life upon one another. This conclusion will be supported by the end of A2 making the Prophet a witness against the community (v.41). Accordingly, Q 4 reminds people with their covenant with God and its implications. The term “loins” will appear in A2 in the context of unlawful marriages. The word “covenant” does not occur in A1, but it comes in A2 (marriage’s covenant) and in B2 (Jews violating the covenant with God).

The repetition of the phrase “Be conscious of your Lord/Remain conscious of God” is explained by the statement in the center of A2: “Man is created weak” (v.28). The term “ḳhalaqa/created” in (v.1) occurs in a passive form in (v.28) in the context of reminding people why God provides guidance and lightens burdens while people following their desires wish the believers to go astray. This reading corresponds with the story of Adam and Satan’s enmity to humanity. Adam forgot the covenant, responded to Satan’s plot, submitted to his weakness, and

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123 The translation is taken from Cuypers, The Banquet, 107.
disobeyed God’s command. “Man is created weak” conveys an allusion to mankind’s need to God’s guidance in order to gain the strength to resist Satan and his allies as Q 4 shows.

Thus, indications to the “covenant” in A 1 can be found in (v. 1). God is introduced in (v. 1) to the addressed community as “your Lord/rabbakum” (1b) and “Allah” (1f). Also, the phrase “Whom you demand (your rights)” in the second piece is parallel to “Who created you” in the first piece. The latter is a statement about God (the Creator) and the first is the result of believing in Him; people know their Lord/Creator/God and request “tasā’lūna” with God their rights from one another. It implies that the community was demanding the application of justice and at the same time requesting God’s guidance to obtain their rights. The word “tasā’lūna” in the tradition means either the covenants between people or through God’s name people request their rights from one another. Thus, the covenant with God relates people to one another and requires being just with others. “God is ever watchful over you” because He provides regulating laws (justice) since all share the same Lord and all are equal before Him.

This idea of a community’s establishment corresponds with the Muslim community’s settlement in Madinah and the organization of its internal and international relationships. This community has to be based on the covenant “there is no god but God” (v. 87). This theological statement is explained by (v. 1) which introduces God as the Creator, Allah, and the source of just laws and guidance and it emphasizes that social justice is watched by Him. God’s Presence in the community in this life alludes to the Day of Resurrection when God will be judging among people. The opening depicts God interacting with the community based on the covenant established when they are in the loins and wombs. Obviously, this interaction was through the Prophet and the Qur’ān (both will be mentioned later in the sūrah). It is all about God-man

124 The story of Adam occurs seven times in the Qur’ān. In Q 20, Adam forgot the covenant (Q 20:115).
125 al-Ṭabarī, Jāmi` al-Bayān, 7:518.
relationship and God watches their taqwā. This community of “many men and women” and all communities in history received guidance through their prophets and messengers (Q 4:131, 163-165) will be gathered by Him to the Day of Resurrection as they were created and then they spread. The covenant with God which ties people to God and to one another requires justice and pure belief (taqwā). This analysis leads to claim that people encountered social injustice, particularly about women. The following passages contain the community’s concern in details.

Part B (Q 4:2-4):

2.  a GIVE the ORPHANS their PROPERTY, b and do not exchange the bad for the good, c and do not consume their PROPERTY along with your own PROPERTY. d Surely it is a great sin.

3.  a If you fear that you will not act fairly towards the ORPHAN girls, b marry what seems good to you of the WOMEN; c two, or three, or four.
   d But if you fear that you will not be fair,
   e (marry only) one, or what your right (hands) own.
   f That (will make it) more likely that you will not be biased.

4.  a GIVE the WOMEN their DOWRIES as a gift. b If they remit to you c any part of it on their own, d consume it with satisfaction (and) pleasure.

This part about orphans’ possessions and marriage’s financial obligation is composed in parallel-form with a central piece (v.3). The central piece mentions marrying to orphans. In the extremes, consuming orphans’ property is a great sin “hūb-an kabīr-an” (2d) while consuming women’s dowries with their agreement is allowed (4d). Also, the word “orphans” is parallel to “women” in “and if you fear that you will not act fairly toward the ORPHAN girls, marry what seem good to you of the WOMEN” (v.3a-b) and to the phrase “one or what your right (hands) own” (3e). In the outer pieces, similar words occur: “orphans” (2a, 3a), “the women” (3b, 4a).

Two key roots linking the whole part are ʿ-T-Ā-B and A-K-L. The first root’s derivatives occur in the extremes and at the center: “tayyib/good” (2b), “tāba/seem good” (3b), and “tībna/remit” (4b). The second root occurs in the outer pieces to stress the idea of consuming and not consuming: “wa lā ta’kulū/do not consume” (2c), “fa-kulūhu/consume it” (4d). Likewise,
antithetical words to “tāyyīb/good” can be found in the parallels “khabīth/bad” and “hūb-an/crime or sin” (v.2).

The central piece (v.3) contains three sub-pieces. The first two sub-pieces are arranged in a complementary parallel starting with the same and synonymic words “if you fear you will not act fairly” (3a,d) and end with antithetical meanings “marry what seems good to you of the women; two, three, or four” (3b-c) and “(marry only) one, or (from among) those whom you rightfully possess” (3e). The center demonstrates the standard in marriage which is to marry one woman to avoid injustice (3f). The verse is used by Muslim tradition to limit, not to institute, polygamy which is a Jāhiliyyah habit. The meaning of “taʾūlū” (3f) is either to be unjust or with a lot of dependants (meaning to be unable to provide for them). The parallels of “taʾūlū” (3f) in the central piece: “allā tuqsiṭū/not act fairly” (3a), “allā taʾdilū/not be fair” (3d) support the meaning of injustice.

The part (v.2-4) is related to the preceding part (v.1) through several links:

- The same root in the extremes: “nafs-in” (1c) and “nafs-an” (4c).
- Mentioning women: “women” (1e), (3b, 4a), references to women: “al-arḥām/the wombs” (1h), “aw mā malakat aymānukum/or what your right (hands) own” (3e).
- The correspondence between the order of fearing God: “Be conscious of your Lord” (1b) and “And remain conscious of God” (1f), and the order to give orphans and women their rights.

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126 al-Farāḥī, Dalāʾīl al-Niẓām, 100.
127 Nasr and others, The Study Qur’an, 190.
128 al-Ṭabarī, Jāmiʿ al-Bayān, 7:549.
Reflections:

The whole part serves to against injustice towards orphans and women. Injustice is presented through the idea of “consuming” orphans’ rights and being unjust with them in marriage. In the case of being afraid of injustice with the orphans, men (or guardians) should marry other women. The context does not seem in support of polygamy or marrying only one, but it has to do with maintaining the rights of everybody involved,\(^{129}\) including guardians.\(^{130}\) In terms of financial rights, guardians should not consume “the bad” (orphans’ property) instead of the “the good” (guardians’ property) because this exchange is a great sin (v.2). Correspondingly, all women mentioned in (v.3), namely orphans, other women, and slaves, should be given dowries (v.4).

Part C (Q 4:5-6):

5. a**Do not** give the FOOLISH your PROPERTY b which GOD has assigned to you to maintain, c **but provide** for them by means of it d and clothe them, e **and speak to them RIGHTFUL WORDS.**

6. a **Test the orphan girls** b until they reach (the age of) MARRIAGE. c **If you perceive right judgment in them,** d **hand over** their PROPERTY to them. e **Do not** consume it wantonly f or hastily before they are GROWN UP.

\(^{129}\) Nasr and others, *The Study Qur’an*, 190.
\(^{130}\) Marrying up to four wives seems not only conditioned with justice, but also with being a guardian of an orphan(s).
“walā-ta’kulūhā/do not consume it” (v.6), “fal-ya’kul/consume” (v.6), “fa-inkiḥū/marry” (v.3), “al-nikāḥ/marriage” (v.5), “property/amwālahum/amwālakum” (v.2,5-6), and “ṣaduqātihinna/dowries” (v.4). The synonymic words “ṭayyib/good” (v.2) and “ma’rūf/rightful” (v.5-6) in the two parts emphasize justice in treating orphans and providing for them. The same root K-B-R occurs in the outer pieces. Not giving orphans their property is a great sin “hūb-an kabīr-an” (2d) while (v.6) shows that guardians should be wise/just in consuming orphans’ property and in providing for them and not consuming the whole property or wasting it before becoming adults “yakbarū” (6f). Similar phrases occur linking the two parts with antithetical meanings: “Give the orphans their property” (2a), “Give the women their dowries” (4a), and “Do not give the foolish your property” (5a).

The correspondence of the parts A/B/C as a whole passage (v.1-6):

The theme of (v.1-6) has to do with orphans’ marriage and obligations of finance and justice entailed by fearing God, the Creator and the Watcher. The mention of orphans indicates an example of social injustice occurred in Madinah community during the aftermath of the battle of Uhud. Unjust practices seem to be a continuity of the pre-Islamic period in the new community which should be purified. The phrase “and do not exchange the bad for the good” (2b) symbolizes the idea of purification and the human tendency to maintain personal benefits and ability to be unjust regarding others’ rights and possessions. The outer parts end with similar phrases: “God watches over you” (1i) and “God is sufficient as a reckoner” (6k). References to marriage are found in all parts: (1c-e,h), (3b), (4a), (5b).
Part C’ (Q 4:8-10):

8. a When the family, ORPHANS, and the poor b are present at the DISTRIBUTION (of the estate), c provide for them from it, d and speak to them RIGHTFUL WORDS.

9. a Let those fear who, b if they left behind them c weak offspring, d would fear for them. e Let them be conscious of God, f and speak a DIRECT WORD.

10. a Surely those who consume the PROPERTY of ORPHANS in an evil manner, b they only consume fire in their bellies, c and they will burn in a blazing (Fire).

This part is arranged concentrically in parallel-figure. It exhorts guardians to fear God and treat well orphans, relatives, and poor attending the distribution of property. It reminds them of their own children and states the torment of consuming orphans’ inheritance. The piece (v.8) relates to the preceding one through similar words “naṣīb/portion” (7a,c,f) and “al-qismah/the distribution” (8a). Moreover, similar words occur in both parts: “parents and kinfolk” (7b,d) and “near of kin (family)” (8b).

The mention of orphans in (v.8,10) and the echo “weak offspring” (v.9) tie the whole part to the first passage discussing orphans’ matters. The middle piece (v.9) relates to the preceding piece (v.8) through the similar parallels: “and speak to them rightful words” (8d), “and speak a direct word” (9e). Also, the piece (v.9) is relevant to the center of the whole sequence (v.7) through the occurrence of the same word: “taraka/leave” (7b,d), “tarakū/left” (9a). The last piece (v.10) is about the punishment of consuming orphans’ inheritances unjustly. The term “ẓulm-an” (unjustly/sinfully) has an antithetical meaning to providing for orphans or giving orphans their property and consuming fairly by guardians (part C). Similar phrases to the meaning of “ẓulm-an” occur in part B “hūb-an kabīr-an/a great sin” (v.2), and antithetical meanings can be found:

131 In the tradition, qismah is either “will” or “distribution” (See al-Ṭabarī, Jāmi’ al-Bayān, 8:10). The ring-structural reading shows that the term “the distribution” is parallel to the term “the property of the orphans” (v.10). Thus, the meaning of the term qismah has to do with the actual act of distributing wealth more than the will. This meaning corresponds also with the meaning of providing for orphans and the meaning of being present.
“not act fairly”, “not be fair”, “that you will not commit injustice” (v.3), “do not consume it wantonly or hastily” (v.6).

Identical and similar terms and phrases link the two parts C and C’ rhetorically:

- “And whoever is POOR should use (it) rightfully” (6h), “and the POOR” (8b).
- “The orphans” (6a), (8b).
- “Provide for them by means of it and clothe them, and speak to them rightful words” (5c-e), “and whoever is poor should use (it) rightfully” (6h), and “provide for them from it, and speak to them rightful words” (8c-d).
- “qawl-an ma’rūf-an/rightful word” (5e) and “qawl-an sadīd-an/a direct word” (9e).

Reflections:

The idea of consuming orphans’ possessions unjustly in part B is symbolized as consuming (or the literal translation “eating”) “the bad” instead of “the good” (v.2). These two terms symbolize the concepts of lawfulness and unlawfulness (ḥalāl and ḥarām). The idea of good/bad and the verb “exchange” (v.2) emphasize a sense of (limits) and a distinction between what is just or sinful. An exception is made if women allow men to consume part of the dowry (v.4). The phrase “fa-kulūhu hanī’-an marī’-an/consume/enjoy it with pleasure and good cheer” (v.4) refers to consumption with full satisfaction, meaning no fear of committing a sin. This phrase indicates a symbolic meaning referring to consuming (good or bad) food. In (v.4), there are references to human body or parts: “nafs-an” (literally soul) and “marī’-an” (literally esophagus). Also, the term “the wombs” occurring in (v.1) implies a reference to women’s bellies. In parallel, in (v.10), bellies of guardians are mentioned “bellies/buṭūnihim.” Thus,
consuming orphans’ wealth unjustly is like consuming fire in the bellies and will lead to
punishment in “a blazing (Fire)” (v.10).

In part C, the idea of consumption is associated with the concept of “use (it) bil-ma’rūf /
rightfully” (6h). This concept is corresponding with the meaning of fearing God that occurs in
(v.1 part A) and (v.9 part C’). Thus, part C’ is linked to the opening. In (v.1), the order of taqwā
requires remembering that God watches people’s acts with one another. It implies that people
should maintain justice and avoid committing sins.132 The same order of taqwā occurs in (v.9). It
signifies the importance of purifying one’s actions from injustice through not consuming harām
(not taqwā) which leads to the punishment of the Last Day when man’s actions will be judged
after the resurrection of man (soul and body). As a result, the sūrah’s center (v.87) mentioning
the Day of Resurrection is implied in the meaning of (v.10) which is the only reference in the
sub-section A1 to the Last Day.

Part B’ (Q 4:11):

11. a GOD charges you concerning your CHILDREN:
b to the male, a share equal to two females.
c But if they be (only) women, more than two, d then to them two-thirds of what he leaves.
e But if there be (only) one, f then to her a half.

And to his PARENTS, to each of them, h a sixth of what he leaves, i if he has CHILDREN.
j But if he has no CHILDREN, k and his heirs are his PARENTS, l then to his mother a third.
m And if he has brothers, n then to his mother a sixth,
o after any bequest he may have made or any debt (has been paid).

Whatever your FATHERS or your SONS are of most benefit to you, s you do not know.
t (This is) an obligation from GOD. u Surely GOD is knowing, wise.

132 Cuypers quotes that taqwā is “to protect oneself from evil”…[t]he primary meaning of taqwā in the Qur’ān, in
the context of the announcement of the Judgment, is the eschatological fear of divine punishment, against which one
needs to forearm oneself.” “From this original meaning”, writes Toshihiko Izutsu, “comes the meaning of “pious
fear (of God)” and then finally, “piety” pure and simple.” (See Toshihiko Izutsu, God and Man in the Koran:
Semantics of the koranic Weltanschauung (Tokyo: Keio Institute of cultural and linguistic studies, Studies in the
Humanities social relations 5, 1964), 234 cited in Cuypers, The Banquet, 64. Cuypers states that “[t]he same writer
[Izutsu] sees in it “the very heart and pivot” of the Qur’ānic teaching, practically an equivalent to īmān, “faith” (See
Toshihiko Izutsu, Ethico-religious concepts in the Qur’ān (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1966), 195-
200 cited in Cuypers, The Banquet, 64).
The dominant theme of this part is inheritance. The part, in parallel-composition, is about the portions of inheritances for children, parents, and relatives while the echoed part B is about women and children (cannot participate in wars) in the pre-Islamic period were unable to inherit their fathers’ properties.\(^\text{133}\) Both parts B and B’ are about financial rights, especially rights were not given to women and orphans in pre-Islamic period. Part B is about a social matter (orphans’ dowry and property left by their fathers). Correspondingly, part B’ provides details regarding distribution of inheritances left by parents. The coherence of part B’ is as follows. The term “God” occurs in the extremes. Corresponding meanings occur in the outer pieces: “GOD charges you concerning your children” (11a) and “(This is) an obligation from GOD” (11r). Similar words occur: “your CHILDREN” (11a) and “your SONS” (11p).

**Part A’ (Q 4:12):**

12. \(^a\) And to you a half of what your wives leave, \(^b\) if they have no CHILDREN.

\(^c\) But if they have CHILDREN, \(^d\) then to you the fourth of what they leave,

\(^e\) after any bequest they may have made or any debt (has been paid).

\(^f\) And to them the fourth of what you leave, \(^g\) if they have no CHILDREN.

\(^h\) But if they have CHILDREN, \(^i\) then to them the eighth of what you leave,

\(^j\) after any bequest they may have made or any debt (has been paid).

\(^k\) If a Man or a WOMAN has no direct heir, \(^l\) but has a brother or a sister, \(^m\) then to each of them the sixth.

\(^n\) But if they are more (numerous) than that, \(^o\) then they share in the third,

\(^p\) after any bequest they may have made or any debt (has been paid) \(^q\) without prejudice (to anyone).

\(^r\) (This is) a directive from God. \(^s\) God is knowing, forbearing.

This part, in parallel-image, is about husbands’ and wives’ properties and the case of *kalālah*. It is related to part B’ through the recurring phrase (11o, 12e, 12j, 12p-q). In addition, the phrases “yūṣīkumu Allah/God charges you concerning your children” (11a), “farīdat-an mina Allah/(This is) an obligation from God” (11r), and “waṣiyyat-an mina Allah/(This is) a directive from God” (12r) are synonymic and link the two parts to the center (v.7) and part C’ (v.8-10).

There are a number of links between the two parts B’ and A’:

- The phrase “After any bequest he may have made or any debt (has been paid)” (11o) is repeated three times with different pronouns each time and with an addition in the last one “without prejudice (to anyone)” (12q).

- Recurring phrases with different pronouns: “in kāna lahu walad/if he has children” (11i), (12c), (12h) and “fa-in lam yakun lahu walad/but if he has no children” (11j), (12b), (12g).

- The term “naf’t-an/most benefit” (11p) antithetically parallel to “ghayra mudār/without prejudice (or without harm)” (12p).

- Similar terms: “wa warithahu/his parents are his (only) heirs” (11k), “yūrathu/a man or a woman has no heirs” (12g) and “’iikhwah/brothers” (11m), “’akh-un aw ’ukht-un/brother or sister” (12h).

- Identical and similar words: “li-ḏhakar/the male” (11b), “al-unthayyan/two females” (11b), “women” (11c), “rajul-un/a man” (12g), “’imra’ah/a woman” (12g).

- Synonymic ends: “Surely, God is all-knowing, wise” (11s), “God is all-knowing, forbearing” (12n).

The echoed part A is about the establishment of the relationships in the community and their base while the part at hand is about the inheritances of spouses (marital relationship) and the case of kalālah. Kalālah is symbol of a person with no children, unlike part A (v.1) where men and women are created from one soul and its mate and they become many men and women. The opening of sub-section A1 starts with the theme of creation, life, and human kinship while its end (part A’) implies the theme of death embodied in the laws of inheritances between different human relationships. Parts A and A’ are linked rhetorically through similar and identical phrases:
- Similar words: “many MEN and WOMEN” (1e) and “a MAN and a WOMAN” (12k).
- Identical word in different forms: “zawjahā/its mate” (v.1) and “azwājukum/wives” (v.12).
- The occurrence of “God” in the outer pieces (v.1, 12) and “wāhidah/one” (v.1) and “wāhid/one” (v.12).
- Similar phrases: “kathīr-an/many” (1e) and “akthara/more” (12n).

iii. Structure of the Conclusion

Sub-section B1 (Q 4:176) Inheritance (men-women), Divine clarification to people to not go astray

176. a They ask you for a pronouncement. b Say: ‘GOD makes a pronouncement to you about the person who leaves no direct heirs.
   c If a MAN perishes d without children, e but has a SISTER, f then to her a half of what he leaves.
   g and he is her heir h if he has no children.

1 If there are TWO SISTERS, i then to the two-thirds of what he leaves.
2 If there are ‘ikhwāt-an (brothers/sisters) [of] MEN and WOMEN, j then to the MALE a share equal to TWO FEMALES.

m GOD makes (this) clear to you, n so that you do not go astray. o GOD has knowledge of everything.

This sub-section is composed of one passage arranged in mirror-structure. “God” occurs in the outer pieces answering people’s question (176a-b) and clarifying things to them because He knows everything (176m-o). Sub-section B1 focuses on further elaboration on the case of kalālah in particular. It completes the theme of inheritances (v.11-12) in sub-section A1. Both are about the divisions of inheritances of different cases. The concluding passage (v.176) explains the case of kalālah occurs in (v.12). Revisiting the case of kalālah (a man dies with no parents or children), according to the tradition, is because the complain made by Jābir bin Abdullah about being with no heirs as the case in (v.12), but he had nine sisters who would
inherit only one-third of his property according to the law of (v.12).\textsuperscript{134} Other reports show that the Companions differed about the meaning of kalālah and they asked the Prophet about it.

Sub-section A1 shows the division of inheritances left by parents (v.11) followed by the division of property left by spouses (v.12); then, kalālah’s case (v.12) comes. In (v.12), kalālah has relatives (brothers/sisters) but no parents, in (v.176), kalālah is described as a person who dies and has no descendants.\textsuperscript{135} According to Abū Bakr (d.13/634), the verses (v.11-12) are about parents’/children’s and husbands’/wives’ cases while the verse (v.176) is about brothers’/sisters’ cases (not siblings).\textsuperscript{136}

**The correspondence between the sub-sections A1 and B1:**

Both sub-sections are about the right of inheritance ordained by God. The verse (v.176) is not attached to its similar thematic verses in the beginning. The rhetorical reading explains the place of this verse in the end. Both sub-sections A1 and B1 are composed in mirror-form, but they are not equal in length. Identical and similar terms/themes can be found in sub-sections A1 and B1:

- The center of A1 (v.7) is corresponding with the middle part of B1 and mentions men and women as B1 does.

- The outer parts of each sub-section mention “God” repeatedly and stress God’s authority, guidance, and knowledge of everything. Also, there is a corresponding meaning between the openings: “through Whom you demand (your rights) from one another” (1g) and “They ask you for a pronouncement. Say: GOD makes a

\textsuperscript{134} al-Ṭabarī, Jāmiʿ al-Bayān, 9:431.
\textsuperscript{135} kalālah has no parents or children (See al-Ṭabarī, Jāmiʿ al-Bayān, 8:53).
\textsuperscript{136} Ibid., 8:53.
pronouncement to you” (176a-b). Likewise, the concluding pieces are similar: “(This is) an injunction from GOD, GOD is all-Knowing, Forbearing” (12q-r), “GOD makes (this) clear to you, so that you do not go astray. GOD has knowledge of everything” (176m-o).

- The opening of the sūrah contains the meaning of life embodied in the theme of creation and the beginning of one person’s life in the womb (v.1) whereas the last verse refers to the end of a person’s life “if a man perishes/dies childless” (176c-d). Also, both the opening and the last verse refer to parents and descendents.

- Linking and recurring phrases occur in both rings: “many MEN and WOMEN” (v.1), “if there are ’IKHWAT-an (brothers and sisters [of] MEN and WOMEN” (v.176). Also, many references to women/females and men/male occur in both A1 and B1.

- Identical phrase occurs in the second passage of A1 and second half of B1: “Unto the male a share equal to that of two females” (11b, 176l).

- The repetition of the term “walad/children” (v.11-12,176).

- Identical terms: “A sister/a brother/brothers” (11m, 12l, 176e,k)

- Similar phrase: “Warithahu/yūrathu/yarithuhā inherit(s)” (11k, 12k, 176g).


**Reflections:**

The theme of inheritance in both A1 and B1 refers to justice, portions, and death. God is Watching and Knowing what people do after they receive clarification from Him. Everything is designed and arranged from the beginning according to the Divine plan for humanity based on
justice. Everything is known and will be judged when people die and return to Him. The piece (v.10) of A1 affirms the doctrine of reckoning on the Last Day. The Last Day is not mentioned in B1. However, death of a man (the case) implies the first stage of the Last Day. Although sub-sections B2 and B3 are not analyzed yet, the interrelations between last ring B1 and those sub-sections will be stated in the next pages in order to show the compositional coherence of Section B’s extremes and center since the last sub-section B1 is analyzed here.

**The correspondence between sub-sections B3 (v.88-115) and B1 (v.176):**

These two sub-sections are the outer sides of Section B. Sub-section B3 focuses on the theme of emigration to God and the hypocrites’ attitudes. The outer parts/pieces contain similar phrases affirm God’s guidance:

“What is (the matter) with you? (Are there) two cohorts (of you) concerning the hypocrites, when GOD has OVERTHROWN them for what they have earned? Do you wish to GUIDE the one whom GOD has LED ASTRAY? Whomever GOD has LED ASTRAY – you will not find a way for him” (v.88).

“GOD makes (this) clear to you, so that YOU DO NOT GO ASTRAY. GOD has knowledge of everything” (176m-o).

Also, the end of B3 about judging with the revelation (v.105-115) corresponds with the beginning of B1 mentioning God’s reply to people’s question (176a-b). There are linking terms occur in both systems:

- “except for the (truly) weak among the al-rijāl/men, al-nisā’/women, and children” (98a-b).
- “If a man perishes without children, but has a sister, then to her a half of what he leaves, and he is her heir if he has no children. If there are rijāl-an/brothers and nisā’-an/sisters, then to the male a share equal to two females”(176c-d).

- “after the GUIDANCE has become CLEAR to him, and follows a WAY other (than that) of the believers- We shall turn him (over) to what he has turned to” (115b-d).
- “God makes (this) CLEAR to you, so that you do no go ASTRAY” (176m-n).

**The correspondence between sub-sections B1 (v.176) and B2 (v.116-175):**

Sub-section B1 starts with “yastaftūnaka qul Allah yuftīkum fī/they ask you for a pronouncement. Say: ‘God makes a pronouncement to you about …’” (176a-b) which is almost
identical to the phrase found in (127a-b) in sub-section B2. Also, both (v.127) and (v.176) end with very similar expressions: “Whatever good you do, surely God knows about it” (v.127), “God has knowledge of everything” (176o). The similar beginnings and ends link the end of the sūrah to the previous sub-section rhetorically and show the continuity of the theme of justice occurs in B2 (v.127-130) and (v.133-152). As it will be shown later in analyzing sub-section B2, the part (v.127) is about being just with women and orphans regarding dowries and treatment while God’s authority and abundance occur in the extremes.

Also, sub-section B1 relates to the first sub-sequence (v.116-126) of sub-section B2. Also, they are connected through the theme of God’s Oneness and following His clarification (v.176) and Abraham’s religion (v.125) while rhetorically they are linked through:

- Similar ends: “God encompasses everything” (v.126), “God has knowledge of everything” (176o).

- Corresponding meanings in the extremes: opening of sub-section B2 “whoever associate (anything) with God has GONE VERY FAR ASTRAY” (v.116) and end of sub-section B1 “God makes (this) clear to you, so that you do not GO ASTRAY” (176m-n).

- Antithetical meanings occur: Satan confuses people and says “and I shall indeed lead them astray and fill them with longings” (v.119) and “He (Satan) makes promises to them (people) and fills them with longings, Yet Satan does not promise them (anything) but deception” (v.120) whereas God replies to people’s question (176b) and clarifies things (176m).

- Linking words: “They only call on FEMALES/’ināth-an (deities)” (v.117), “WOMEN” (176l), “Then to the male a share equal to TWO FEMALES/unthayyayn” (176k).
Moreover, sub-section B1 (v.176) relates to the end of B2 (v.153-175) as follows. The main theme of B2 is revelation. This theme is stressed in the extremes of B1 mentioning God answering and guiding. The phrase “and HE will guide them to Himself (on) a straight path” (v.175) corresponds with the meaning of the phrase “GOD makes (this) clear to you, so that you do not go astray” (176m-n). The statement that God knows everything (176o) complements the recurrence of the statement mentioning God’s ownership of everything in the heavens and on the earth occurs in the extremes of B2 (v.126 and v.170-171) and at the center (v.131-132).

Generally, the passages and sub-sequences (v.26-28) in sub-section A2, sub-section A3, (v.88-100) in sub-section B3, and (v.136-152), (v.163-169), (v.170-175) in sub-section B2 contain many references to “a way/the way/ the right path”, deviation (going astray from it), and examples of people went astray and followed Satan and his way instead of God’s guidance and revelation. Although the passage at hand (v.176) is about an inheritance case mentioned earlier in sub-section A1 (v.12), this case is just one of the things that God clarifies (v.26-28 central passage of A2) in the sūrah in order to explain the right path (the path of the believers v.115 in the end of B3) vs. the path of “those who follow (their) lusts” (v.27). The idea of clarification is emphasized in a number of contexts:

- God clarifies matters “yubayyina/makes CLEAR” (v.27,176).
- Guidance is made clear “tabayyana/has become CLEAR” (v.115), Moses is given a clear revelation “We gave Moses CLEAR authority” (v.153).
- The Qur’an has no contradiction because it is from God (v.82), the Qur’an is described as “the TRUTH from your Lord” (v.170), “a PROOF has come you to from your Lord: We have sent down to you a CLEAR light” (v.174)
- Sending Messengers and Prophets is to preach the clarification and warn people “so that the people might have no argument against God after (the coming of) the messengers” (v.165).

The last points regarding the correlations between this sub-section B1 and the preceding sub-sequence (v.153-175) are as follows:

- The opening of the sub-sequence “The People of the Book ASK YOU to bring down a Book from the sky” (153a-b) corresponds with the beginning of sub-section B1: “They ASK YOU for a pronouncement. Say: God makes a pronouncement to you” (176a-b).
- Similar meanings and phrases occur in the ends of both systems: “and HE will GUIDE them to Himself (on) a STRAIGHT PATH” (175d) and “God MAKES (this) CLEAR to you, so that you do not GO ASTRAY” (176m-n).
- Addressing the People of the Scripture (Christians) to not go beyond the limits (v.171) corresponds with providing clarification to not go astray (176m-n).
- The phrases “laysa lahu walad/childless” (176d) and “in lam yakun lahā walad/if she has no children” (176h) are parallel to the statement “Subḥānahu an yakīna lahu walad/Glory to Him! (Far be it) that He should have a son” (171l).
- Jesus is God’s Messenger, His Word casted into Mary (171e-f), and “a spirit from Him” (171g). This statement refers to the doctrine of Trinity, however; the Qur’ān has its view of Jesus and it exhorts Christians to refrain from saying “three”: “And do not say (‘God is’) thalāthah/three. Stop!(It will be) better for you. God is only ONE God” (v.171). Sub-section B1 contains similar phrase in terms of quantity: “if there are TWO (sisters), both shall have al-thuluthānī/TWO-THIRDS of what he has left”
Accordingly, the term “thalāthah/three” probably means a third because two sisters share two thirds in the case of kalālah.

Finally, the conclusion of the sūrah recalls different themes discussed in the earlier subsections. Although there is no direct reference to the Last Day in B1, the center of the sūrah (v.87) affirming God’s Oneness and God’s Words is emphasized in the outer pieces of B1. In B1, God replies to people and clarifies laws. This shows God’s ultimate knowledge and authority. This links the end to the opening mentions that people ask God about their rights or demand them with God’s name (v.1). The theme of creation (life) and the generation of men and women (v.1) are antithetical to the death of a man has no child (v.176). The order to fear God twice (v.1) complements the law of inheritance in (v.176).

(b) Structure of Center’s Surrounding Rings

This part will explore the structure of the inner rings surround the center of the sūrah.

Here is the overall composition of the two sub-sections A3 and B3:

| Sub-section A3 | Purification: People of Scripture, Judge with Justice | 4:43-70 |
| Fight in God’s way | 4:71-86 |
| Center | No god but God, the Day of Resurrection, God’s Speech | 4:87 |
| Sub-section B3 | Orientation: Hypocrites, Emigration in God’s way | 4:88-100 |
| Prayer’s laws, Judge with the Scripture | 4:101-115 |
Sub-Section A3 (Q 4:43-86) Purification: People of Scripture, Fight in God’s way

This sub-section is consists of two sequences: (v.43-70) and (v.71-86).

Sequence 1 (Q 4:43-70)

This sequence has two sub-sequences: (v.43-57), (v.58-70).

Sub-sequence 1 (Q 4:43-57)

(A)
43. *You who BELIEVE, *do not go near the PRAYER *while you are in the state of drunkenness *[but wait] until you know what you are saying; *or (when you are) defiled, *unless (you are) travelers (on the) way, *until you have bathed. *But if you are ill, or on a journey, *or if one of you has come from the toilet, *or have touched WOMEN, *and you do not find any WATER, *take PURE EARTH, *and wipe your faces and your hands, *SURELY, God is pardoning, forgiving.

(B)
44. *Do you not see *those who have been given a portion of the Book? *They purchase error *and wish you that would go astray from the WAY
45. *God knows about your enemies, *God is sufficient *as an ally, *and God is sufficient *as a helper.
46. *Some of those who are Jews *alter words from their positions, *and they say, ‘We hear and disobey,’ *and ‘Hear, and do not hear,’ *and ‘Observe us,’ *twisting with their tongues *and vilifying the religion. *If they had said, ‘We hear and obey,’ *and ‘Hear,’ *and ‘Regard us,’ *it would indeed have been better for them, *and more just. *But God has cursed *them for their disbelief, *and so they do not believe, except for a few.
47. *You who have been given the Book! *Believe in what We have sent down, *confirming what is with you, *before We obliterate faces, *and turn them in their backs, *or curse them as We cursed the men of the Sabbath, *and God’s command is done.

(X)
48. *SURELY God does not forgive *anything), BEING ASSOCIATED with Him, *but He forgives *what is other than that *for whomever He pleases.
49. *Whoever ASSOCIATE *anything) with God *has FORGED a great SIN.
50. *Do you not see *those who claim PURITY for themselves?
51. *No! (It is) God (who) PURIFIES whoever He pleases- *and they will not be done evil in the slightest.
52. *See how they FORGE LIES against God. *That suffices as a clear SIN.

(B')
51. *Do you not see *those who have been given a portion of the Book? *They believe in al-jibt and al-tāghūt, *and they say to those who disbelieve, *‘These are better guided (as to the) WAY than those who believe.’
52. *Those are the ones whom God has cursed, *and whomever God has cursed— *for him you will not find any helper.
53. *Or do they have a portion of the kingdom? *If that were so, they do not do the people the slightest thing.
54. *Or are they jealous of the people *for what God has given them of His favor? *Yet We gave the House of Abraham *the Book and the wisdom, *and We gave them a great kingdom.
55. *There are) some o them who believe in it, *and some of them who keep (people) from it. *Gehenna is sufficient *as a blazing (Fire).

(A')
56. *SURELY those who disbelieve in Our signs, *We shall burn them in a FIRE. *Whenever their skins are completely burned, *we shall exchange their skins for others, *so that they may (continue to) feel the punishment. *Surely God is mighty, wise.
57. *But those who BELIEVE *and do RIGHTEOUS DEEDS— *We shall cause them to enter GARDENS *though which RIVERS flow, *there to remain forever. *There they will have PURE SPOUSES, *and We shall cause them to enter sheltering shade.
This sub-sequence contains two passages (v.43-47) and (v.51-57) arranged concentrically around (v.48-50). The central part, containing three parallel pieces, emphasizes the theme of Oneness, purification, and Justice. God does not forgives shirk (association) and He is the One who purifies people. Shirk is a great sin/forge/lie and it is antithetical to pure Oneness. This corresponds with part A mentioning the purity required from the believers before praying (v.43) and with part A’ stating the punishment of the disbelievers (v.56) and the reward of the believers (v.57). The phrase “Surely” occurring at the center (48a) and the extremes: (43n, 56a) links parts A and A’ to the center. The phrase “Do you not see”, occurring in parts B and B’ (44a, 51a) and at the center (49a), and the echo “See” (50a) link the whole sub-sequence. Also, the phrase “yuzakkûna anfusahum/claim purity for themselves” (49b) occurs in the context of claiming purity of souls while in (v.43) physical purity of body is required for prayer.

For the first time in the surah the People of the Scripture are mentioned and particularly Jews (v.46). Also, the sub-sequence addresses the Prophet and uses the phrase “Do you not see” (v.44) which occurs in the next sub-sequences. The Prophet is mentioned in the beginning of sub-section A2 (Q 4:13-14) to be obeyed and in the end of A2 as a witness (Q 4:41-42). Here the Prophet is told to notice the attitudes of his enemies. The center is surrounded by synonymic parallel parts. Part B mentions the disobeying People of the Scripture purchasing error, addresses them to believe in the Qur’ân confirming what they have been given, and warns them of God’s punishment of the people of the Sabbath (v.44-47). Part B’ mentions the People of the Scripture believing in al-jibt and al-ṭāghūt (shirk) and envying people (the Prophet and the believers) for God’s favor (the Qur’ân), and it recalls God’s favor upon the House of Abraham and mentions

137 There is a reference to the previous nations’ “sunan/traditions” in (v.26).
their responses and the punishment of the disobedient (v.51-55). The relationship between the center and the mention of the People given a portion of the Book is that their claim of obedience (or in other words belief) is not pure.

The sub-ring is a continuation of the theme of purification/reformation in a different context (not relationships and financial laws). The center’s composition shows that shirk (48b,e) and “They forge al-kaḍhib/LIES against God” (50b) are parallels. The theme of shirk completes the order: “Believe” (47b). Correspondingly, shirk/association is a state of impure belief and “a great sin” (48f). In parallel, the center emphasizes that the state of purity is decided by God (49c) and inventing lies against God is “a clear sin” (50c). The term “God” is mentioned in each central piece. Similar phrases occur in the center: “HE FORGIVES what is other than that for WHOMEVER HE PLEASES” (48c-d) and “(it is) GOD (who) PURIFIES WHOMEVER HE PLEASES” (49c).

The phrases in the parallel parts (B/B’): “They purchase al-ḍalālah/ERROR” (44c) and “They believe in al-jibt and al-ṭāghūt” (51c) are reflected in the theme of shirk and the central phrase “They forge al-kaḍhib/LIES against God” (50b). God is the Only truth and everything other than God is an error, lie, and forge. The way to God is through pure belief, His Book, and His messenger while those addressed people wish the believers to go astray (v.44). Therefore, shirk here does not only mean worshiping idols with God or doing good deeds for the sake of showing off as in the preceding sub-sequence (v.36-42), but it carries the meaning of disbelieving in the Qur’ān and disobeying the Prophet. And the meaning of “claiming purity” (v.49) here has to do with this meaning of shirk. In other words, purification from the beginning of the sūrah is more about issuing new laws to replace some unjust/sinful practices in the
believing community and this replacement happens through the new revelation. The theme of *shirk* will occur in B2 in relation to idolatry (a pagan belief).

*Passage 1 (Q 4:43-47):*

This passage mentions two groups: the believers (v.43) and the People of the Scripture “the Jews” (v.44-47). Because of apparent thematic discontinuity between the theme of (v.43) and the following parts, part A (v.43) will be analyzed independently, then linked to the following.

*Part A (Q 4:43):*

a You who believe

b Do not go near the PRAYER

  c while you are in the state of drunkenness but wait until you know what you are saying; or (when you are)

  d defiled, unless (you are) TRAVELERS (on the) way, until you have BATHED.

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b But if you are ill, or on a JOURNEY, or if one of you has come from the toilet, or have touched women, and you do not find any WATER.

  c take clean earth, and wipe your FACES and your hands,

a Surely, God is pardoning, forgiving.

This part is composed in mirror-image. The pieces (43b-g) and (43h-k) are complementary showing the impure states prevent the believers from performing the prayer as it is required. In both pieces, similar terms can be found: “travelers (on the) way” (43f), “or on a journey” (43g), and “junub-an/’or (when you are) defiled” (43e), “lāmastum al-nisā’/or have touched women” (43j). The phrases “until you have bathed” (43g) and “and you do not find any water” (43k) contain antithetical meanings. The first mentions bathing while the second states the lack of water. Thus, (43l-m) provides the law of *tayammum* as a purifying practice when there is no water. The whole part is connected. The extreme members (43a,n) are corresponding through addressing the believers and concluding with mentioning God.
The beginning of this sub-sequence part A (v.43) corresponds with its end part A’ (v.56-57) as follows:

- The phrase “You who believe! Do not go near the prayer” (43a-b) is complemented by the phrase “But those who believe and do righteous deeds” (57a-b). The antithetical group is mentioned: “Surely those who disbelieve in Our signs” (56a). The reference to the signs is an indication to the Qur’ân recited in the prayer.

- The mention of water and bathing in (v.43) is a symbol of purification/grace/blessing in this life as it will be a reward for the believers in Afterlife “Gardens through which RIVERS FLOW” (57c-d).

- The mention of “al-nisā’/women” and the state of impurity caused by intercourse (lawful marriage) between women and men “or have touched WOMEN” (43j) links part A to part A’ “There they will have PURE SPOUSES” (v.57).

- The reference to a good/pure earth (43l) corresponds with “Gardens” (57c).

- The phrase “We shall cause them to enter sheltering shade” (57g) indicates stability and this meaning is antithetical to the theme of travel in (v.43).

Part A bans the believers from performing the prayers in two states (“sukārā” drunks and “junuban” defiled). Then, it provides four states when a believer has no water or is unable to use it. The whole part is about being purified mentally (43b-c) and physically (43d) before the time of prayer. Since God’s forgiveness and pardon are closing the part, it is also about lightening burdens (during the states of sickness, travelling, going to toilet, and interacting with women) through establishing a new law that facilitates the daily ritual practice. The mention of

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139 M. Asad explains that the term “junuban” is taken from “januba,” a verb, has to do with “remoteness” and this situation makes someone remote from praying due to physical impurity by intercourse. He illustrates why he translates it into “in a state requiring total ablation” (See Asad, The Message of the Qur’ân, 129, note 55).
travel associated with prayer will reappear in the echoed sub-section B3 in the context of fighting and emigrating in God’s way. Furthermore, the end of this sequence in question will mention leaving homes (v.66) which corresponds with the idea of travelling.

**Part A’s relation to its sub-sequence and other places in the sūrah:**

How does this part (v.43) relate to the previous verses, the first sub-sections of the sūrah, and the mirrored sub-section B3? According to Muhammad Asad (d.1992), during prayer, a believer directs his face to meet his “Creator” in order to fulfill his duty of worship and to enhance his spiritual relationship with God before the Last Day which is mentioned in the preceding verse (Q 4:42). The verse (Q 4:42) shows how those who disbelieve and disobey wish to be inside the earth on the Judgment Day because they will face their deeds and the Prophet will witness against them. The phrase “your faces” (43m) is parallel to “the prayer” (43b), and the phrases “lā taqraḥū/do not go near” (43b) and “fa-tayyammū/take clean earth” (43l) are antithetical in terms of meanings. Tayammum means to aim to or to do something intentionally. In the prayer, one aims to become closer to God or near Him spiritually. Thus, the prayer is a symbol of facing God on this earth and it obliges bodily purity. The process of tayammum has to do with using hands to touch the earth/dust “ṣa’īd-ṭayyib” which seems a reference to (Q 4:42) “la watsawwā bihimu al-ardu/the earth would swallow them” meaning to be dust like the earth. Also, “ṣaʿīd,” according to Ṭabarī, means a “flat” earth with no plants and buildings while “ṭayyeb” means pure tāhir or good. This corresponds with the theme of

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140 Asad, *The Message of the Qurʾān*, 129, note 54.
142 Similar to the meaning of the passage (Q 78:39-40): “That is the true Day. Whoever pleases takes a (way of) return to his Lord. Surely, We have warned you of a punishment near (at hand), on the Day when a person will see what his hands have sent forward, and when the disbeliever will say, “Would that I were mere dust!”
this part which is to perform the prayer in full purity and using pure dust. Describing the earth can be used for purity with the term “ṭayyeb”\(^{144}\) in the context of mentioning “travelers” and being on “a journey” referring to the meaning and process of tayammum and symbolizes the idea of emigration on God’s earth to God and His Prophet occurs in B3 (v.97-101). Both prayer and emigration indicate the idea of directing selves to a good and straight path which is referred to in the end of sequence 1 (v.68). Travelers and travelling are mentioned in (v.43) while the term “traveler” occurs also near the end of sub-section A2 (Q 4:36). Travelling is associated with the prayer now and will be elaborated more in sub-section B3 mirroring sub-section A3.

The phrases “Do not go near the prayer” (43b) and “until you know what you are saying” (43d) emphasize the need of a direction and full clear mental state.\(^{145}\) The prayer’s direction is already changed in Q 2 (revealed before Q 4) from the People of the Scripture’s direction to Mecca (Q 2:142). Since the historical context of changing the qiblah has to do with the People of the Scripture, since (Q 4:43) is the beginning of sub-section A3 which is about the People of the Scripture, hypocrites, and fighting in God’s way, and since the echoed sub-section B3 mentions the prayer laws during travelling and fight, the part (v.43) is an introduction of the theme of purification and submission to God only who is the believer’s direction (or way) as it is stated above regarding facing God in prayer. This conclusion corresponds with the sub-sequence’s theme on God’s Oneness.

In this context, “the way” occurring in the following part B (v.44) is a reference to the qiblah. The People of the Scripture wish the believers to go astray from “the way” (v.44) and this explains the People of the Scripture’s jealousy and enmity to the believers (v.45, 54). Thus, part

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\(^{144}\) The word “ṭayyib-an” links this part to sub-section A1 (Q 4:2) where the word occurs for the first time in the sūra in the context of orphans’ laws.

\(^{145}\) Direction qiblah is one of the prayer’s conditions as full bodily purity is required.
A (v.43) is connected historically and rhetorically to the following (v.44-57) about the People of the Scripture. The implication of direction/qiblah, which is also “sabīl/way” on earth, is signified by the term “the prayer” (43b) and using the earth’s pure dust to do *tayammum*. The term “earth” does not occur in (v.43), but a synonymic term comes “ṣaʿīd-an/dust/earth’s surface.” Also, as the meaning of *tayammum* has to do with searching purposefully, therefore, as the believers are required to search for pure dust, they also are required to direct themselves on this earth to clear/pure direction which is God (Only) and His way. The term “earth” is used later in B3 to refer to a place (Madinah/the community of the believers) as a direction/place of emigration in God’s way.

Moreover, the form of (v.43) stresses the significance of the prayer as a sign of faith (43a) and as a practice must be performed whatever the believers’ situation is. The law of *tayammum* is given to facilitate the believers in the case of no water and this case signifies a hardship time or lack of one of the prayer’s conditions. However, excuses seem not acceptable and God’s mercy, aid, and guidance are provided for those who believe and struggle to stay believing through doing what they are ordered to do (here in this verse it is the prayer, the sign of belief). This paves the way to the establishment of the prayer’s laws in travel and war comes in sub-section B3. Finally, the second reference to the prayer in sub-section A3 occurs in (v.77) in the context of hypocrisy. This place supports that the prayer is a sign of practical faith as other orders and laws. This corresponds with what occurs in sub-section B2 stating that the hypocrites (not true believers) standing up to the prayer lazy to show off while few of them remember God truly (v.142).
The last point regarding this part, closing with the order of wiping faces and hands (body’s parts), is that the phrase “your faces and hands” (43m) is complemented by “aḥad/ one of you” (43i) (a whole person/one person of the believers). The same term “aḥad” occurs in the preceding sub-section A2 (v.18 pl. masculine, v.20 pl. feminine) in the context mentioning God’s limits. These bodily parts have to be purified for the prayer as the whole body must be bathed after certain activities when there is water. The reference to tongue can be found in “until you know what you are saying” (43d) which is also an indication to reciting the Qurʾān (God’s Words containing God’s limits) in the prayer.\footnote{al-Ṭabarī, Jāmiʿ al-Bayān, 8:376.} The requirement of full awareness of utterances or what is recited entails first the hearts’ and minds’ purity and clarity to receive and believe in the revelation. This corresponds with part B addressing the People of the Scripture to believe in the new revelation affirming their scriptures. This conclusion is supported by the verb “taʿlamū” (know) which has to do with understanding the Qurʾān’s knowledge/teachings since the end of the sequence contains an exhortation to ponder over the Qurʾān (v.82). Also, the Qurʾān, in many places, and in this sūrah particularly (Q 4:26, 176), asserts the concept of being a divine knowledge and clarification/guidance for people. Qurʾānic knowledge not only requires purity, but it has a purification function when it is obeyed and applied. It purifies one’s soul, heart, and mind and leads to the state of obedience and tazkiyah (purity) and then entering the Gardens with rivers running below (Q 4:57).

As shown in analyzing sub-section A1, from the beginning of the sūrah bodily parts (the wombs v.1, right hands v.3, esophagus v.4, and bellies v.10) are mentioned in the context of justice and taqwā. Also, bodily parts (“ḥujūrikum/your care (literally your laps)” v.23, “your loins” v.23, right hands v.24-25 and v.36, “yourselves” v.29) occur in sub-section A2 in the
context of lawful and unlawful marriages. Now, bodily parts occur in the context of prayer and warning from *shirk* (impure belief). The idea of knowledge and purification and bodily parts (faces, hands, tongues, and hearts) will reappear in the whole sub-section A3 addressing the People of the Scripture and the hypocrites.

*Part A’ (Q 4:56-57):*

56.  a SURELY those who **DISBELIEVE** in **OUR SIGNS**– b We shall burn them in a FIRE. c Whenever their skins are completely burned, d We shall exchange their skins for others, e so that they may (continue to) feel the punishment. f Surely God is mighty, wise.

57.  a But those who **BELIEVE** b and do **RIGHTEOUS DEEDS**– c We shall cause them to enter **GARDENS** d though which rivers flow, e there to remain forever. f There they will have pure spouses, g and We shall cause them to enter sheltering shade.

Part A’ states the punishment of disbelief and the reward of belief. It is arranged in parallel-form. This part relates to the preceding parts B and B’ through the recurrence of references to the Book: “a portion of the Book” (51b), “a portion of the kingdom” (53a), “the Book and the wisdom” (54d). Those references are described as “Our signs” (56a). This part echoes part A’ through:

- “Our signs” (56a) imply the meaning of the Qur’ān (or revelation) recited in the prayer (v.43).

- Identical and similar phrases occur in both parts: “You who believe do not go near the prayer” (v.43) and “But those who believe and do righteous deeds” (v.57).

- Part A’ contains a reference to “Gardens through which RIVERS FLOW” (57c-d). River/water is a bounty in Gardens for “those who believe and do righteous deeds” (57a-b). Correspondingly, the part (v.43) opening A3 mentions an antithetical meaning which is a state of lack of water on earth and using pure dust to purify self to perform the prayer which is a good deed and one of God’s commands. The law of *tayammum* requires minimum bodily purity through “wiping FACES and HANDS”.
(v.43) to show a sign of pure belief and complete obedience. The theme of purity has to do with inner and physical purity. Thus, those who disbelieve in God’s signs will encounter external punishment “We shall burn them in Fire. Whenever their SKINS are completely burned, We shall exchange their SKINS for others” (v.57).

- Water (v.43) and Fire (v.56) are antithetical terms. The terms “muṭahharah/pure” (v.57) and “tayyib-an/pure” (v.43) are synonymic.

- The occurrence of similar phrases: “lāmastum al-nisā’/or have touched WOMEN” (43j), “lahum fīhā azwāj-muṭahharah/There they will have PURE SPOUSES” (v.57).

Part B (Q 4:44-47):

44. “Do you not see b those who have been given a portion of the BOOK? a They purchase error c and wish you that would go astray from the way.
45. a GOD knows about your enemies. b GOD is sufficient as an ally, c and GOD is sufficient as a helper.

46. “Some of those who are Jews b alter WORDS from their positions, a and they say, ‘We hear and disobey,’ d and ‘Hear, and do not hear,’ e and ‘Observe us’, f twisting with their tongues g and vilifying the religion. b If they had said, ‘We hear and obey,’ i and ‘Hear,’ and ‘Regard us,’ j it would indeed have been better for them, and more just. k But God HAS CURSED them for their DISBELIEF, l and so they do not BELIEVE, except for a few.

47. a You who have been given the BOOK! b BELIEVE in what We have sent down, c confirming what is with you, d before We obliterate faces, e and turn them in their backs, f or CURSE them as We CURSED the men of the Sabbath, g and GOD’s command is done.

The whole part, composed in parallel-form, mentions the People of the Scripture’s disobedience. The first sub-part (v.44-45) conveys Jews’ hostility to the community while the sub-part (v.46) states their disobedience of the Prophet and disbelief and exhorts them to obey, but few of them believed and the disbelievers were cursed. The piece (47a-b) orders the People given the Book to believe in the new revelation affirming what they have, followed by warning them from the punishment of the previous people (47f). The theme of the revelation/the Book is dominant. The part starts with: “those who have been given a portion of the Book” (44b) which corresponds to “Some of those who are Jews alter words from their positions” (46a-b) and is
very similar to “You who have been given the Book” (47a). The whole part has references to the revelation: “a portion of the BOOK” (44b), “alter WORDS from their positions” (46b), “the Book” (47a), and “Believe in what We have SENT DOWN, confirming what is with you” (47b-c).

As in the previous passages mentioning bodily parts, the first sub-part mentions tongues “Twisting with their TONGUES” (46f) and has a reference to hearing “and they say ‘We HEAR and disobey’” (46c) while the last sub-part mentions “faces” (47d). Recalling the first part (v.43) mentioning the state of soberness (knowing what to say) and wiping faces and hands (purity), it can be said that the part (v.44-48) corresponds with (v.43) thematically and contains identical and similar words and meanings. The phrase “until you know what you are saying” (43b) referring to soberness is antithetical to mentioning Jews altering the revelation and twisting their tongues (v.46). Also, the phrase “min qabli an naṭmisa wujūh-an/before We obliterate FACES” (47d) occurs in the context of warning from disbelieving and punishment while in part A the identical term occurs in the context of obeying and belief (preparing for prayer): “fa-msaḥū bi-wujūhikum/and wipe your FACES” (43m). The two verbs “naṭmisa/obliterate” and “fa-msaḥū /and wipe” are similar and complementing.

Part B’ (Q 4:51-55):

51. a Do you not see b those who have been given a portion of the BOOK? c They BELIEVE in al-jibt and al-ṭāghūt, d and they say to those who DISBELIEVE, e ‘These are better guided (as to the) way than ‘those who BELIEVE.’
52. a Those are the ones whom God HAS CURSED, b and whomever God HAS CURSED – c for him you will not find any helper.
53. a Or do they have a portion of the kingdom? d If that were so, they do not give the people the slightest thing.
54. a Or are they jealous of the people b for what God has given them of His favor? c Yet We gave the House of Abraham d the BOOK and the wisdom, e and We gave them a great kingdom.
55. a (There are) some o them who BELIEVE in it, b and some of them who keep (people) from it. c GEHENNA is sufficient as a BLAZING (Fire).

This part in parallel-structure mentions the People of the Scripture’s attitudes with the believers. The first sub-part (v.51-52) shows how the People of the Scripture believing in al-jibt and al-ṭāghūt view the disbelievers more guided than the believers. The parallel sub-part (v.53-
55) describes this attitude as jealousy from the believers whom God has given His Favor (54a-b) as He gave the House of Abraham the Book, the wisdom, and a great kingdom (54c-e). God’s punishment for them is stated in both sides. Those People of the Scripture are cursed by God (v.52) whereas the Blazing is the punishment of those who do not believe and prevent people from believing (v.55). The idea of jealous people in the context of belief and disbelief seems a continuation of the theme of purification occurring in the beginning (v.43). Here the purity of the soul is emphasized in parallel to the theme of obedience in part B. This emphasis implies that belief and guidance require pure souls to take a place inside persons (or enter the hearts). Similar words occur in the center (v.48-50) and part B’: “THEY will not be done evil in the SLIGHTEST” (49d), “THEY do not give the people the SLIGHTEST thing” (53b).

The mirrored parts B/B’ start with the same phrase “Do not you see those who” (44a-b, 51a-b). Complementing meanings occur in the outer pieces of both parts: “THEY purchase al-ḍalālah/ERROR and wish you that would go astray from the WAY” (44c-d), “THEY believe in al-jibt and al-ṭāghūt and they say to those who disbelieve, ‘These are better guided (as to the) WAY than those who believe’” (51c-f). In addition, almost identical phrases occur in both parts: “GOD knows about your enemies. GOD is sufficient as an ally, and GOD is sufficient as a helper” (45a-c), “or CURSE them as WE CURSED the men of the Sabbath” (47f), and “Those are the ones whom GOD HAS CURSED, and whomever GOD HAS CURSED – for him you will not find any helper” (52a-c). They say to the Prophet that they obey (v.46) while in part B’ they say to the disbelievers that they are more guided than the believers (v.51). The pieces (v.54-55) emphasize God’s favor (the Book and the wisdom) bestowed upon the House of Abraham who some of them believed while some kept people from the way. As in (46n-o), there are few people who believed whereas a lot of them had been cursed by God for their disbelief.
The end of part B’ “Gehenna is sufficient as a BLAZING (Fire)” (55c) is completed by mentioning Fire and burning the disbelievers’ skins (part A’ v.56b-f). The pieces about a Blazing Fire (v.55), the Fire (v.56) and entering the Gardens (v.57) link sub-section A3 to sub-sections A1 (v.10) and A2 (v.13-14). Part A’ (v.56-57) which is preceded by mentioning the disobedience of the People of the Scripture (v.46) and shirk (v.48) corresponds with (v.13-14) setting God’s limits and showing the reward of obedience and punishment of disobedience. Part A’ relates to sub-sections A1 and A2 through the occurrence of the root B-D-L: “tatabaddalū/exchange” (2b), “istibdāla/exchange” (20a), and “baddalnāhum/shall exchange their skins” (56d). Also, the term šāliḥāt/righteous” occurs in describing women in A2 (v.34).

Reflections:

The first part (v.43) seems disconnected and a jump to a completely new theme. However, this sub-ring presents the opposite response of the believers purifying themselves for their duty comes in (v.43). As the sub-sequence begins and ends with mentioning bodily purity (part A mentions prayer’s purity while part A’ mentions pure spouses on the Last Day) and with referring to spiritual purity embodied in the theme of belief and good deeds, the middle parts (B and B’) refer to spiritual purity and pure belief in the context of exhorting the Jews to obey the revelation. Some of those who received “naṣīb-an mina al-kitāb” (v.44) and “‘ūtū al-kitāb” (v.47) disobey and alter the words from their positions (v.46), claim purification (v.49), and generate lies (v.50). Furthermore, they say that they “hear and disobey” (unlike the believers)

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147 Those lies are their claims that they are purified from sins and they are God’s children (See al-Ṫabarī, Jāmi’ al-Bayān, 8:455). The latter claim is addressed in Q 5.
and “hear without heartening”\textsuperscript{148} which is an attitude resembling drunks who do not comprehend what they say or what is recited in the prayer.

The People of the Scripture given the Book are ordered to believe in the new revelation. The word “\textit{naṣīb}” (portion) occurs in the first two sub-sections A1 and A2 in the context of inheritance and property. Now, the term “\textit{naṣīb}” acquires a new meaning has to do with revelation. This leads to the sūrah’s center about God’s Words. Also, an obvious link to the center regarding God’s Oneness is found in the central part on \textit{shirk} (v.48-50) with other references to God’s power as an ally and helper, God’s command, God’s curse, and God purifying people. God’s “\textit{done command}” in (47g) is explained in (v.48) that He does not forgive association (a great sin). Sub-section A1 has the term “\textit{ẓulm-an/unjustly/in an evil manner}” (v.10). Near the end of sub-section A2 contains the same term: “\textit{Whoever does that in enmity and ẓulm-an/evil}” (v.30) and “Surely, God lā yaẓlimu\textit{/does not do (even) a speck’s weight of evil}” (v.40). The root \textit{Ẓ-L-M} appears also in this sub-sequence’s center: “\textit{They will not be DONE EVIL in the slightest}” (49d). This phrase implies a reference to God’s judgment and justice on the Last Day (v.87).

The whole sub-sequence has many and obvious correlations to the center (v.87). The belief in One God, His revelation, and the Last Day is explained in the sub-sequence at hand through the theme of purification. The physical purity for prayer in this life is reflected in the idea of pure spouses in the Gardens. The inner purity cannot be claimed without God being the One who purifies people. Thus, God provides revelation and signs to purify people’s soul. This favor bestowed upon people is received differently. The purity of souls can be reflected through “righteous deeds” and obedience. Righteousness is a sign of pure belief. This corresponds with

\textsuperscript{148} Asad’s translation. Asad indicates that those Jews reject both their revelation and the Qur‘ān (See Asad, \textit{The Message of the Qur‘ān}, 130, note.59).
the meaning of the term “signs” indicates clarity. As the revelation is parallel to “Our signs” (56a), belief entails clear signs of obedience and pure submission. Those who believe and obey the command will enjoy lasting bounties “there to remain forever” (v.57), unlike being on this earth for limited time like the travelers “(you are) travelers (on the) way” (43f). The theme of travelling in the beginning of the sub-sequence implies that this life is only a way to the life of Afterlife as the end indicates (v.56-57).

Sub-sequence (Q 4:58-70) Judgment with Justice and Obeying the Prophet: the Hypocrites:

(A)

58. *Surely GOD COMMANDS you b to pay back deposits to their (rightful) owners, c and when you JUDGE between the people, d to judge with justice. * Surely God gives you ADMONITION which is excellent. f Yet they have been COMMANDED to disbelieve in him. f Satan wishes to lead them very far astray.

59. *you who believe! B Obey God and obey the messenger d and (those who) have the command among you. g If you argue about anything, h refer it to God and the MESSENGER, i if you believe in God and the Last Day. b That is BETTER and fairer in interpretation.

(B)

60. *Do you not see b those who claim that they believe in what has been sent down to you, d and what was sent down before you? f They wish to go (with their disputes) to al-tāghāt for JUDGMENT. f Yet they have been COMMANDED to disbelieve in him. f Satan wishes to lead them very far astray.

61. *When it is said to them, b ‘Come to what God has sent down, c and to the MESSENGER,’ d you see the hypocrites f keeping (people) from you.

62. *How (will it be) when a smiting smites them b for what their (own) hands have sent forward? c Then they will come to you swearing: ‘By God! f We wanted nothing but good and reconciliation.

63. *Those are the ones who – b God knows what is in their hearts. c So turn away from them, d and admonish them, e and speak to the effective words about themselves.

64. *We have not sent any MESSENGER, b except that he should be obeyed, c by the permission of God.

65. *But no! By your Lord! b They will not believe c until they make you JUDGE concerning their disputes. d Then they would have e no difficulty f with what you decided, g and would submit (in full) submission.

(A’)

66. *If We had PRESCRIBED for them: b ‘Kill one another’ f or ‘Go forth from your homes,’ d they would not have done it, e except for a few of them. f Yet if they had done f what they were ADMONISHED (to do), b it would indeed have been BETTER for them, c and a firmer foundation (for them).

67. *And then We would indeed have given them b a great reward from Us, c and indeed guided them b to a straight path.

69. *Whoever obeys God and the messenger b are with those whom God has blessed: d the prophets, and the truthful, and the martyrs, and the righteous. e Those are GOOD companions!

70. *That is the favor of GOD. b GOD is sufficient as a knower.

This sub-sequence is composed concentrically in mirror-structure. It stresses the theme of obeying the Messenger and his judgment between people as God commands. The outer parts are complementing. Part A is composed of two complementing parallel pieces. The first piece mentions God’s command which has to do with returning “amānāt” (deposits) to their owners
(probably a reference to fitful financial laws occurred earlier in the surah) and judging between people with justice (v.58). The second piece addresses the believer and emphasizes the theme of obedience of God and the Prophet and makes it relevant to belief in God and the Last Day.

Justice in the phrase “and when you judge between the people, to judge with justice” (58c-d) is completed by “If you argue about anything, refer it to God and the messenger” (59e-f).

In parallel, part A’ refers to other commands (fighting and emigration) and reemphasizes the theme of obedience of the Prophet followed by mentioning the reward of the obedient in this world and on the Last Day. It is composed of two parallel sub-parts (v.66-68) and (v.69-70). The term “God” occurs twice in the extremes. The term “the Messenger” (69a) is echoed in the phrase “those whom God has blessed; the prophets, and the truthful, and the martyrs, and the righteous” (69b-d). This part introduces the themes of fighting and emigration (66a-c) coming in the following sub-sequence. The hypocrites’ attitudes towards fight and emigration explained in the next sub-sequence are anticipated here. They will not obey except a few of them (66d-e). Part A’ contains promises in this life: being firm in belief (66h-i), rewarded by God, and guided to a straight path (v.67-68). The theme of a path, besides the theme of obedience, links the parts A’ and B. Antithetical phrases and meanings occur: “Satan wishes to lead them very far astray” (60g), “and indeed guided them to a straight path” (68a-b). Also, there are antithetical groups: “the hypocrites” (61e), “those whom God has blessed; the prophets, and the truthful, and the martyrs, and the righteous” (69b-d). The term “the truthful” (69d) is antithetical to the phrase “claim to believe” (60b).
There are a number of links between parts A and A’:

- **Similar meanings:** “Surely GOD COMMANDS you” (58a) and “If We had PRESCRIBED for them” (66a).

- **Identical terms:** “Surely God gives you ADMONITION which is excellent” (58e) and “what they were ADMONISHED (to do)” (66g).

- **Complementing phrases:** “That is BETTER and fairer ta’wil-an/in interpretation” (59h) and “it would indeed have been BETTER for them, and a firmer foundation (for them)” (66h-i). The term “ta’wil-an” literally means “interpretation” should be translated into “the end” as Asad does because it refers to the status and destiny of the believers explained in part A’.

- **Linking term:** “THAT is better and fairer in the end” (59h), “it would indeed have been better for them, and a firmer foundation (for them)” (66h), and “THAT is the favor of God” (70a).

- **Similar root N-‘A-M occurs:** “which is excellent” (58e) and “with those whom God has blessed” (69c).

**Part B (Q 4:60-65):**

60. *Do you not see those who claim that they BELIEVE in what has been sent down to you, and what was sent down before you? They wish to go (with their disputes) to al-jāghīt for JUDGMENT. Yet they have been COMMANDED to disbelieve in him. Satan whishes to lead them very far astray.*

61. *When it is said to them, COME to what God has sent down, and to the MESSENGER, you see the hypocrites keeping (people) from you.*

62. *How (will it be) when a smiting smites them for what their (own) hands have sent forward? Then they will COME to you swearing. By God! We wanted nothing but good and reconciliation.*

63. *Those are the ones who God knows what is in their hearts.*

64. *We have not sent any MESSENGER, except that he should be obeyed, by the permission of God.*

65. *But no! By your Lord! They will not BELIEVE until they make you JUDGE concerning their disputes. Then they would have no difficulty with what you decided, and would submit (in full) submission.*
Part B mentions the hypocrites and their attitudes towards the Qur’ān and the Prophet’s judgment. Part B mentions a group of people (the hypocrites) claiming belief but wanting the judgment of al-ṭāghūt. This part is arranged in mirror-fashion around “Those are the ones who – God knows what is in their hearts” (63a-b). The center indicates God’s knowledge of belief and claiming belief. It is a continuation of the theme of claiming purity and pure belief (with no association) that occurs in the center of the previous sub-sequence (v.48-50). This is also affirmed by the meaning of the phrase “and would submit (in full) submission” (65g) which indicates the meaning of complete belief.

The outer pieces (v.60) and (v.65) are corresponding and address the Prophet to notice the hypocrites’ attitude during disputes and to inform him how to respond to them. In these extremes, the claim of belief needs to be proved by obeying the Prophet. The piece (v.61) is about the hypocrites’ response when they are called to obey God’s commands and the Prophet while the echoed pieces (63c-e, v.64) exhort them to repent and instruct the Prophet how to deal with them. The piece (v.61) is linked to (v.60) through the repeated term “unzila/anzala/SENT down”, and the pieces (v.60-61) are tied to (v.64) through the similar word “arsalnā/SENT.” Also, there is a key word linking these pieces: “COME to what God has sent down” (61b-c), “They will COME to you swearing” (62c), “They had COME to you” (64e). The word “come” signifies the meaning of a direction/way which is God and the Prophet. This conclusion is supported by the phrase “they would indeed have FOUND GOD turning (in forgiveness), compassionate” (64h). This meaning of finding a way has been discussed in the beginning of A3 and it will be more detailed in the whole system and in B3.

The piece (v.62) describes the hypocrites’ attitude (swearing by God) when their true nature appears to the Prophet and the believers. This attitude is like the disobeying Jews’
behavior in the previous sub-ring: “**twisting with their tongues and vilifying the religion**” (v.46). The mirrored piece to (v.62) is (63c-e) which orders the Prophet to turn away from and admonish them. Thus, in the end, the piece (v.65) shows God taking an oath that they will not believe until they purify themselves through complete obedience.

Part B contains similar and identical terms/phrases and meanings link it to parts A/A’:

- The same meanings and phrases occur in every part: “**OBEY GOD and OBEY the MESSENGER**” (59b-c), “**We have not sent any MESSENGER, except that he should be OBEYED, by the permission of GOD**” (64a-c), and “**Whoever OBEYS GOD and the MESSENGER**” (69a).
- The root W-‘A-Ẓ: “**Surely God gives you ADMONITION which is excellent**” (58e), “**and ADMONISH them**” (63d), and “**Yet if they had done what they were admonished (to do)**” (66f-g).

**Reflections:**

Part B underlines the theme of belief (including doing “ṣāliḥāt/righteous” deeds) occurring in the preceding sub-sequence (v.57). God knows what in the heart (v.63). Thus, claiming belief without actions is hypocrisy. Actions must be in accordance with what God commands to reflect a pure/true/complete belief. Satan wants people to go astray from this way (60g-h). As a result, the true believers in God and the Last Day will obey God, the Prophet, and authoritative people and their destiny will be good “**That is BETTER and fairer in ta’wil-an/end**” (59h).

The term “al-ṭāghūt” (60e) is complemented by the term “**SATAN**” (60g). This parallelism is also completed by the phrases occur in the extremes and the center:

- “**How (will it be) when a smiting smites them for what their (own) HANDS have sent forward?**” (62a-b).
- “Those are the ones who- God knows what is in their HEARTS” (63a-b).
- “and speak to them effective words about THEMSELVES” (63e).
- “if when they did THEMSELVES evil” (64d).

The references to bodily parts, a smiting, and doing evil to selves in these verses are an indication of people’s own responsibility of responding positively to Satan. The mention of Satan recalls his arrogance and disobedience of God’s command to prostrate to Adam. Arrogance is a spiritual impurity (similar to “jealousy” in previous sub-sequence v.54) which leads to disobedience. The implication is that people with fake belief (or the hypocrites) go to “al-ṭāghūt” (the arrogance of themselves) for judgment and their act is disobedience of God’s commands. Thus, the end of part B asserts that they do not only need to go to the Prophet for judgment, but they also need to “find in their HEARTS no bar to an acceptance of the decision and would submit (in full) submission” (65e-g). Full acceptance and submission are the opposite of arrogance. The conclusion that “al-ṭāghūt” refers to self (or arrogance) is corresponding with the central sub-sequence (v.26-28) in A2 showing that people following their desires want the believers to go astray, like Satan’s wish (v.60).

The idea of the community’s enemies that occurs in the beginning of A3 (v.45) in the context of addressing the People of the Scripture is now completed by mentioning Satan and the hypocrites. The Qur’ān warns against Satan’s enmity in this place and many other verses in other sūrahs. Also, the enmity of the hypocrites will be explained more in the next sequence and in sub-sections B3 and B2. Moreover, the part depicts the hypocrites doing themselves evil by disobedience (v.64). Antithetically, sub-sections A2 and A3 assert that God does not do wrong to

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149 Similar meanings will appear in the end of sub-section B2 mentioning Jews’ disobedience of entering the gate humbly and Jesus’ and the angels’ humbleness.
anyone (v.40, v.49). In other words, people are the ones who do evil and bring evil to themselves and one another through their choice to disobey. This theme of doing good and evil to self will appear in the following sub-sequence (v.70-79).

The statement about God knowing what is in the hearts is an allusion to His ultimate knowledge of everything, as demonstrated in many places within the sūrah. The sub-sequence invites the hypocrites to repent because God will accept repentance (before death) as shown in sub-section A2 (v.16-17, v.26-28). Satan and “al-ṭāghūt” are contrary to God and the order of making no association (full submission with hearts and acts). Thus, the centers of both sub-sequences (v.43-57) and (v.58-70) are corresponding. Accordingly, God purifies people (v.49) and He knows what in their hearts (v.63). Satan also is a symbol of disobedience of God’s commands/limits and he wants people to go astray (60g-h), unlike God who wants to guide people and lighten burdens as it comes in A2 (v.26-28) and B3 (v.176).

The themes of God’s Oneness, references to the Qur’ān, and the mention of the Prophet are clear within this part and occur in the context of belief and the theme of obedience. They connect the sub-sequence to the center’s themes (v.87). God is taking an oath in (v.65) and He is truthful to what He says (v.87).

The correspondence of sequence 1 as a whole:

The sub-sequences (v.43-57) and (v.58-70) composing sequence 1 are corresponding. Both sub-sequences demonstrate the similar attitudes of people who disobey: the People of the Scripture and the hypocrites. Their central parts emphasize God’s Oneness and Knowledge of people’s purity/belief. The extreme parts are about the believers’ (v.43) and the obedience of a group of people (v.66). The people who obey will be joining the company of other blessed
people and true believers who are guided by God towards a straight path (v.68-69). The two sub-
sequences are arranged in parallel-composition and rhetorically linked as follows:

- Both sub-sequences’ first parts contain the phrase: “You who believe” (43a, 59a).
- The recurrence of the phrase: “Do you not see” (44a, 50a, 51a, 60a) in the extremes and the center of the first sub-sequence and the center of the second sub-sequence.
- The repetition of the term “the people” (53b, 54a, 58c).
- The concluding parts of both sub-systems are complementing. Both mention the reward of the believers on the Last Day. Also, corresponding meanings occur:150 1) the believers who perform good deeds (v.57) are echoed in mentioning the prophets and righteous people (v.69), and 2) both “pure spouses” and “companions” indicate the meaning of company and gathering.
- Similar phrases: “BELIEVE in what We have SENT DOWN, confirming what is with you” (47b-c) and “Do you not see those who claim that they BELIEVE in what has been SENT DOWN to you, and what was SENT DOWN before you?” (60a-d).
- Similar meanings: “They BELIEVE in al-jibt and al-ṭāghūt” (51c) and “They wish to go (with their disputes) to al-ṭāghūt for judgment” (60e).
- The mention of the People who were given a portion of the Scripture and want the believers to go astray from the way (44d) in the first sub-sequence is parallel to Satan wishing people to go astray in the second sub-sequence (60g-h).
- Linking phrase and similar meaning in the outer parts of each sub-sequence: “except for a few” (46l) and “except for a few of them” (66e). Also, antithetical meanings

150 “But those who BELIEVE and do RIGHTEOUS deeds – We shall cause them to enter Gardens through which rivers flow, there to remain forever. There they will have pure spouses, and We shall cause them to enter sheltering shade” (57a-g) and “those whom God has blessed: the prophets, and the truthful, and the martyrs, and the RIGHTEOUS. Those are good companions” (69c-e).
occur: Jews do not obey what the Prophet tells them (v.46) while the believers in God and the Last Day obey and refer to God and His messenger (v.59).

- An identical word recurs in both sub-sequences: “God is SUFFICIENT as an ally, God is SUFFICIENT as a helper” (45b-c), “That SUFFICES as a clear sin” (50c), “Gehenna is SUFFICIENT as a blazing (Fire)” (55c), “God is SUFFICIENT as a knower” (70b).
- Linking words: “and you do not FIND any water” (43k), “they would indeed have FOUND God” (64h), “FIND in their HEARTS” (65e).
- The root Ṣ-D-D occurs in the first passage of sub-sequence 1 and in the central part of sub-sequence 2: “and some of them who ṣadda/KEEP (people) from it” (55c), “you see the hypocrites yaṣuddūna ‘anka ṣudūd-an/KEEPING (people) from you” (61f).

Reflections:

In the first sub-sequence, the phrase “THEY purchase error and THEY wish that you would GO ASTRAY from the WAY” (44c-d) is complemented by “THEY believe in al-jibt and al-ṭāghūt, and THEY say to those who disbelieve, ‘These are better GUIDED (as to the) WAY than those who believe” (51c-e). The term “error” (44c) is parallel to “al-jibt and al-ṭāghūt” (51c). In the second sub-sequence al-ṭāghūt occurs: “They wish to go (with their disputes) to al-ṭāghūt for judgment” (60e) and it is antithetical to “You who believe! OBEY GOD and OBEY the MESSENGER and THOSE (who have) the COMMAND among you” (59a-d). In the tradition, al-jibt and al-ṭāghūt are the Pagans’ idols worshiped instead of God. Other traditional opinions claim that they refer either to deviating persons or Satan in man’s image.151 Ğabarī states that al-

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151 According to Ibn ‘Abbās’ authority, al-jibt refers to “idols,” al-ṭāghūt refers to people making others going astray. According to Mujāhid, al-jibt refers to “magic,” al-ṭāghūt refers to Satan in man’s image sought to judge between people. According to Ibn Jubair’s authority, al-jibt refers to “magician” in Ethiopian culture while al-ṭāghūt...
jibt and al-ṭāghūt are a reference to all things/persons/deities worshiped instead of God. This opinion is supported by the focal themes of the two sub-sequences and conclusion that al-ṭāghūt refers to self’s impurity (including arrogance) leading to disobedience.

The first sub-sequence emphasizes the belief in God alone in the context of affirming purification and the new revelation while the second sub-sequence highlights the same theme (pure belief), adds the authority of the Prophet and belief in the Last Day, and stresses the theme of obedience (acts). As argued earlier, “al-ṭāghūt” in parallel to Satan in (v.60) refers to one doing wrong towards themselves by disobeying just as Satan disobeyed. Since rabbis are authoritative people who have knowledge of the Book, and since the first sub-sequence mentions the People of the Scripture wishing the believers to go astray, the meaning of al-jibt and al-ṭāghūt has to do with obeying other authorities than God and the Prophet. The authority of “THOSE (who have) the COMMAND among you” (59d) antithetically corresponds with mentioning the authority of rabbis altering the words (46b) and disobeying the Prophet (46c). Since religious authority is limited (59d) and the believers are ordered to refer to God and the Prophet during conflicts (59e-f), it can be implied that those rabbis do not act in accord with the given Book. Obeying them or one’s self instead of God and the Prophet is not a sign of belief in God and the Last Day (59g).

refers to “rabbi.” Another reports ascribed to Ibn Jubair shows the reverse. Also, another opinion ascribed to Ibn ‘Abbās’ sates that al-jibt refers to Ka‘b bin al-Ashraf and al-ṭāghūt refers to Ḥuyay bin Akhtāb. Likewise, Mujāhid states that al-jibt refers to Ka‘b bin al-Ashraf while al-ṭāghūt refers to Satan in man’s image (See al-Ṭabarî, Jāmi‘ al-Bayān, 8:461-465).
Sequence 2 (Q 4:71-86)

This sequence has two sub-sequences: (v.71-79) and (v.80-86).

Sub-sequence 1 (Q 4:71-79) Fight in the Way of God:

(A)
71. "You WHO BELIEVE! " Take your precautions. They who are GOING FORTH in detachments or going forth all together.
72. "Surely among you there is the one who lags behind. And if a SMITING SMITES you, he says, ‘God has blessed me because I was not a MARTYR with them.’
73. "But indeed if favor from God SMITES you, he will indeed say – as if there had been not any friendship between you and him. "Would that I had been with them when they are ordered to fight while the disbelievers fight or not (v.78).

(B)
74. "So let those who SELL THIS PRESENT LIFE for the price of the HEREAFTER. Fight in the way of God. Whoever fights in the way of God – whether he is KILLED or conquers – We shall give him a great reward.
75. "What is with you (that) you do not fight in the way of God, and (on behalf of) the weak among the men, women, and children, who say, ‘OUR LORD, lead us forth/bring us out of this town of the evil-doers,’ and make for us an ally from Yourself, and make for us a helper from Yourself?

(X)
76. "THOSE WHO BELIEVE FIGHT in the way of God. And THOSE WHO DISBELIEVE FIGHT in the way of al-tāghūt. So FIGHT the allies of SATAN. Surely the plot of SATAN is weak.

(B’)
77. "Do you not see those to whom it was said, ‘Restrain your hands, and observe the prayer and give the alms.’ Then, when FIGHTING is PRESCRIBED for THEM, it is for you, and amongst them is the one who fear the people as (much as) they fear God, or even more. And they say, ‘OUR LORD, why have you prescribed FIGHTING for us? Why not spare for us a time near (at hand)?"
78. "Say ‘the ENJOYMENT of THIS LIFE is a SMALL THING, but the HEREAFTER is better for the one who guards (himself)’. You will not be done evil in the slightest.

(A’)
78. "Wherever you are, DEATH will overtake you, even though you are in well-built towers. And if some good SMITES them, they say, ‘This is from God’, but if some evil SMITES them, they say, ‘This is from you.’ Say: ‘Everything is from God.’ What is (the matter) with these people? They hardly understand any REPORT.
79. "Whatever good SMITES you is from God, and whatever evil SMITES you is from yourself. We have sent you as a messenger to the people. God is sufficient as a WITNESS.

This sub-ring is arranged in mirror-image and centered around (v.76). The main theme is to fight in God’s way and to show that the believers fight in God’s way while the disbelievers fight in the way of al-tāghūt and ally with Satan. Part A shows that there are some people among the believers who “lag behind” when they are ordered to fight because of their fear from “muṣībah/smiting” and becoming a “martyr” (v.71-72). On the other hand, if the believers win and obtain the war’s spoils, they wish that they had attended with them (v.73). Part A’ explains that death/smiting (78a) will overtake everybody whether they fight or not (v.78). This part refers the occurrence of good and evil (in war) to God “Say ‘Everything is from God’” (78g). On the
other hand, the occurrence of good to someone is from God and the occurrence of evil is from someone’s self (v.79). The part implies that evil deeds have consequences on their doers and it refers to responding negatively to the order of fighting in part A. Part A’ affirms that God’s limits, commands, and qadar (decree) are good, but people are the ones who choose to disobey and bring evil to themselves as part A shows. This theme is a continuation of what comes in sequence 1 regarding disobedience (choosing to do evil to themselves and to follow al-ṭāghūt).

The extremes parts contain the same root SH-H-D with different meanings: “I was not shahīd-an/a MARTYR with them” (72d), “God is sufficient as shahīd-an/a WITNESS” (79f).

Part B orders the believers who purchase the Hereafter with this life to fight in God’s way and states they are promised a great reward (v.74). It also shows that the order to fight is to rescue weak people asking God to aid them in leaving the town of evildoers (v.75). The mirrored part B’ shows the reaction of those who wish that they were not ordered to fight (77a-l). The end of this part orders the Prophet to tell them the difference between this life’s enjoyment and the Hereafter’s reward (77m-o). A linking term is found in both parts B and B’: “rabbanā/Our Lord” (75e) and (77j). Also, part B relates rhetorically to part B’ through the recurrence of the words of the root Q-T-L. The root of the term: “this town of EVILDOERS” (75f) in part B occurs in the end of part B’ “You will not be done EVIL in the slightest” (77o).

The center (v.76) is linked to the extremes through similar phrases “Go forth” (71c-d), “fight” (76b,d,e), and “fighting” (77f,k). It also relates to the first part through the theme of allegiance: “he will indeed say – as if there had been not any friendship between you and him” (73b-c) and “So fight the allies of Satan” (76e). The first phrase refers to the hypocrites’ allegiance with the believers while the second phrase refers to their allegiance with Satan. Satan and al-ṭāghūt are parallels (76d-e) and Satan’s plot is weak (76f). This parallelism and the
previous findings regarding the meaning of al-ṭāghūt are echoed in part A’ through the theme of the source of good and evil.

Although death is described as “muṣῑbah”, fighting is not presented as in terms of loss as the disobeying group thinks in part A. The great triumph “fawz-an ‘azīm-an” for them is the spoils (an indication of property corresponds with earlier financial laws) and death is a loss. Therefore, they do not immediately respond to God’s command (v.72). Antithetically, in the center, fighting must be conducted in God’s path in order to be a great triumph no matter if a believer is killed (lost his life) or wins by “Favor of God” (73a). This is because he will be rewarded with “ajr-an ‘azīm-an/a great reward” (74e) for exchanging this life with Afterlife. The idea of exchanging this life with the Afterlife corresponds antithetically with earlier references to exchanging the bad for the good (v.2 in A1) and with purchasing error (v.44 in A3).

The second part B presents the meaning of fighting in God’s path for the purpose of helping weak people in a society/“town” against oppressors. The reference to “the evildoers” and “town” seems to be an indication to a specific place which is most likely Mecca. These oppressive people are Satan’s allies. Thus, it is God’s path vs. al-ṭāghūt’s way and Satan’s “kayd/plot.” The term “weak” links the verse (75c) to (76e). Also, the similar and identical terms in the phrase “and make us an ALLY from Yourself, and make us a HELPER from Yourself” (75g-f) are found in the antithetical phrase “So fight the ALLIES of Satan” (76e). Finally, part B mentions “the men, women, and children” which corresponds with the sūrah’s general contents and the familial and social laws established to maintain justice. The references to “hands,” “prayer,” and “alms” (v.77) link this passage to earlier passages regarding financial laws, spending wealth in charity, prayer, and bodily parts in sub-sections A1 and A2.

\[152\] al-Ṭabarî, Jāmi‘ al-Bayān, 8:543-544. The mirrored sub-section B3 mentions groups of people (including the hypocrites and weak people) not residing in Madinah and mentions emigration to God and His messenger.
The whole sub-sequence’s relation to the sūrah’s center is obvious. The mention of death and the Hereafter has a direct link to the Day of Resurrection. Also, the sub-sequence has many references to God. The phrase “They hardly understand any REPORT” (78i) corresponds with the phrase in the center: “Who is more truthful than God in REPORT” (v.87). These two phrases are a reference to the Qur’ān which is God’s Word to mankind.

Finally, this sub-sequence has thematic and rhetorical relations to sub-sequence (v.58-70). The sub-sequence at hand is about the hypocrites’ attitudes towards God’s commands to fight while the previous sub-sequence orders the believers to go to the Prophet for judgment if they truthfully believe. The end of the preceding sub-sequence (v.58-70) mentions killing one another as an order not issued yet, but that the hypocrites would disobey it except a few of them. Now the community is ordered to fight in God’s path and the hypocrites disobey the order. Here are some rhetorical interrelations:

- Both sub-rings have the same phrase in their beginnings: “You who believe” (59a, 71a).

- Antithetical meanings with the same phrases occur: “are with those whom God has blessed” (69b-c), “he says ‘God has blessed me...’” (72c).

- Linking phrases: “How (will it be) when a SMITING SMITES them” (62a), “and if a SMITING SMITES you” (72b), “But if indeed some favor from God SMITES you” (73a), and “And if some good SMITES them, they say, ‘This is from God’, but if some evil SMITES them, they say, ‘This is from you’” (79a-c).

- Similar phrases with different meanings: “for what their (own) HANDS have sent forward?” (62b) and “‘Restrain your HANDS” (77c).

- Median term: “the martyrs” (69d), “I was not a martyr with them” (72d).
- Linking phrases: “That is the Favor of God” (70a), “But if indeed some Favor from God smites you” (73a).
- The last part of sub-sequence (v.58-70) has the phrase “Go forth from your Homes” (66b) which is corresponding with “Lead us forth out of this town of evildoers” (75e-f).
- The occurrence of similar meanings with almost identical phrases: in the end of (v.58-70) “If We had prescribed for them, ‘iqtulū/Kill one another” (66a-b) and in the end of (v.71-79) “Then, when al-qitāl/fighting is prescribed for them” (77f).
- Linking phrases: in the last part of (v.58-70) “And then WE would indeed have GIVEN them a GREAT REWARD from Us” (67a-b) and in part B of (v.71-79) “WE shall GIVE him a GREAT REWARD” (74e).
- The root Z-L-M: “if, when they żalamū anfusahum/did THEMSELVES evil” (64d), “al-żālim/oppressors” (75f).

Sub-sequence 2 (Q 4:80-86) Obeying the Prophet and Pondering the Qur’ān:

(A) 80. W H O E V E R obeys the MESSENGER has obeyed GOD, but W H O E V E R turns away – WE have not sent you a watcher over them.

(B) 81. They say, ‘(We pledge) obedience (to you),’ But when they go forth from your presence, a contingent of them plans by night (to do) other than what you say. GOD is writing down what they plan. So turn away from them and put your trust in GOD. GOD is sufficient as a guardian.

(X) 82. Do they not contemplate the Qur’ān? If it were from any other than GOD, they would indeed have found in it much contradiction.

(B’) 83. WHEN any matter COMES to them concerning security and fear, they divulge it. But if they were to REFER it to the MESSENGER and to THOSE (who have) the COMMAND among them, those who investigate (such things) would indeed have known (about) it. If (it were) not (for the) favor of GOD on you, and His mercy, you would have followed Satan, except for a few (of you).

84. Fight in the way of GOD! You are only responsible for yourself, but urge on the BELIEVERS. It may be that GOD will restrain the violence of those who DISBELIEVE. GOD is harsher in violence, and harsher in punishing.

(A’) 85. W H O E V E R intercedes with a good intercession will have a portion of it for himself, but W H O E V E R intercedes with an evil intercession will have a portion of it for himself. GOD is powerful over everything.

86. W H E N you RECEIVE a greeting, reply with a better greeting, or RETURN it. Surely GOD is a reckoner of everything.
This sub-sequence is arranged concentrically in mirror-formation. It is about the authority of the Prophet and the Qur’ān. Median terms/phrases linking this sub-sequence to the preceding one are: “We have sent you as a MESSENGER to the people” (79e) and “Whoever obeys the MESSENGER has obeyed God, but whoever turns away- We have not sent you as a watcher over them” (v.80).

Part A declares that what the Prophet says to them is God’s command (or the Qur’ān) and he is not a keeper, but only a messenger delivering the message. Part B shows that some people claim obedience in front of the Prophet, then they change what they say and plan conspiracies (v.81). The Prophet is ordered to leave them and trust in God (v.81). The echoed part B’ shows how they react during major matters in a similar way and it orders the Prophet to fight and encourage the believers to fight. God will prevent the disbelievers from hurting the believers (v.84). Part A’ mentions some instructions of intercessions and greetings (v.85-86).

The extremes (A/A’) contain antithetical meanings in the outer pieces: “We have not sent you ḥafīz-an/a watcher over them” (80d), “God is powerful over everything” (85e), and “Surely God is hasīb-an/reckoner of everything” (86d). They emphasize God’s agency and authority over everything and reflect the sūrah’s center. Also, the outer parts have the same linking word: “Whoever obeys” (80a), “but Whoever turns away” (80c), “Whoever intercedes” (85a, c).

Similarly, the middle parts (B/B’) contain complementing meanings: “God is sufficient as wākil-an/a guardian” (81h) and “God is harsher in violence, and harsher in punishing” (84f-g).

The attitude of the group in part B (81c-d) is similar to the Jews’ (v.46) and the hypocrites’ (v.62). The term “bayyata/plans by night” used to describe the hypocrites’ attitude in (v.81) means according to the tradition: 1) “to do something (usually secretly) at night,” 2) break

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153 Tabarî states that this conspiring group spread the news of fear and security of the Prophet’s battles before his return to Madinah (See al- Tabarî, Jāmi’ al-Bayān, 8:569).
a promise with the Prophet when they leave at night, or 3) “to give much thought and contemplation to something.” All meanings are possible and correspond with earlier passages (v.71-79) describing the hypocrites’ hesitation to respond to the order of fighting. It shows “that the hypocrites pondered the benefit and harm to themselves in following the Prophet’s commands before deciding if they should obey them as they had promise to do.” In other words, the hypocrites’ attitude is different from what they say/claim. Their actions are contradictory. Thus, the central part exhorts them to contemplate the Qur’ān in order to “understand the Divine provenance of the Prophet’s commands.” The Qur’ān (v.82) is parallel to God’s favor and mercy protecting people from following Satan (part B’ v.83). The Qur’ān is mentioned here in the center by the name “the Qur’ān” instead of referring to it as what is “sent down” by God (v.47), (v.60) and (v.61).

**The coherence of sequence 2 (Q 4:71-86) as a whole:**

This ring contains two corresponding sub-sequences, (v.71-79) and (v.80-86), arranged in parallel-structure. The theme of fighting in God’s way is dominant. The sequence starts with ordering the believers to fight (v.71), but a group lags behind and thinks about the worldly rewards (v.72-73). Those who sell this present life for the Afterlife’s reward fight in God’s way (v.74-75). In this context, a question occurs explaining the reason of fighting which is to help the weak people in the oppressors’ town (v.75). The believers fight in God’s way and the disbelievers fight in *al-țāghūt’s* way (v.76). The disbelievers are Satan’s allies and Satan’s plot is weak (v.76). The Prophet is addressed to see those who are ordered first to observe the prayer and give alms, then; when fighting is prescribed, they fear people more than fearing God (v.77).

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154 Nasr and others, *The Study Qur’an*, 228.
155 Ibid., 228.
156 Ibid., 228.
He is ordered to “Say ‘the enjoyment of this life is a SMALL THING” (v.77). Death is a natural law and the Prophet is ordered to “Say: ‘Everything is from God.’ What is (the matter) with these people? They hardly understand any report” (v.78). Good things occur from God while bad things occur from one’s own actions and the Prophet is sent to all people (v.79).

The second sub-ring starts with stating that obeying the Prophet leads to obeying God (v.80). Some people claim obedience, but they act differently from what the Prophet says to them and plan another thing (v.81). Those people (the hypocrites) do not understand what they are told (v.78). The ring-structural reading shows that what the Prophet saying is from God which is the Qur’ān mentioned in the center (v.82). The Qur’ān is understandable because it is from God (v.82) as everything good is from God (v.78-79) and it is God’s favor and mercy guiding people during situations and matters and protecting them from following Satan (v.83) and being his allies (v.76). People are exhorted to refer matters to the Prophet and people of authority who would know the matters after investigation (v.83). The sub-ring again mentions fighting in God’s way and reflects the idea of one being accountable for his/her own actions (v.84). The end of the whole ring mentions examples of good and bad deeds: intercession and greeting (v.85-86).

Here are some of the rhetorical links between the two sub-sequences:

- Similar phrases in the extremes: “You who believe” (v.71) and “the believers” (v.84).
- Similar words and phrases in the first parts: “people” (77h), (79e), “a GROUP of them”, “al-qawm/people” (78h), “a CONTINGENT of them” (81c).

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157 This idea of referring matters to the Prophet and people in authority corresponds with the idea of God making things clear to people (v.1, v.26-28, v.176).
- Linking phrases with identical words: in the end of sub-sequence 1 “God is sufficient as a witness” (79f), in the beginning of sub-sequence 2 “God is sufficient as a guardian” (81h).

- The central piece (v.76) of sub-sequence 1: “Those who BELIEVE FIGHT in the way of God” contains God’s command which corresponds with the central piece (v.82) mentioning the Qur’ān.

- The same word in the concluding parts: “And whatever evil smites you is from YOURSELF ” (79c-d), “You are only responsible for YOURSELF” (84b).

- Recurring terms “ḥasanah/good ... sayy’ah/evil”: (v.78), (v.79), (v.85).

- Corresponding meanings: “What is (the matter) with these people? They hardly UNDERSTAND any report” (78h-i) and “those who INVESTIGATE (such things) would indeed have known (about) it” (83f).

The coherence of sub-section A3 as a whole:

The two sequences compose this sub-section are arranged in parallel-structure. The theme running in the first sequence (v.43-70) is the purification of belief through obedience to God (with no association), His messenger, and His revelation. This theme is presented in the context of mentioning the People of the Scripture given a portion of the Book. They hear what the Prophet says and then they disobey. Similarly, the hypocrites, mentioned in sub-sequence (v.58-70), claim belief, but they seek the judgment of al-ṭāghūt. Their attitude and what is in their hearts are known by God. Likewise, sequence 2 (v.71-86) is about proving faith though fighting in God’s way and obeying the Prophet and the Qur’ān. The hypocrites respond to God’s commands with a similar response to the People of the Scripture. They are attached to this life’s
enjoyment and do not understand the Qur‘ān. The rhetorical links between the two sequences are as follows:

- Both sequences start with the same phrases “You who believe” (43a), (71a) and contain orders to the believers. The theme of purification is reflected in the laws of prayer and the command to fight. Both require true belief to be obeyed.

- Also, they end with similar meanings: “God is sufficient as a knower” (70b), “Surely God is a reckoner of everything” (86d).

- Both sequences’ outer parts contain the same phrases: “Whoever obeys God and the messenger are with those whom God has blessed” (69a-b) and “Whoever obeys the messenger has obeyed God” (80a-b).

- References to the Qur‘ān in the extremes: “what sent down” (47b-c, 56a, 60c), “the Qur‘ān” (82a).

- Linking word: “or have touched WOMEN” (43j), “the weak among the men, WOMEN, children” (75c).

- Identical/similar phrases in the extremes: “a PORTION of the Book” (44b), “Whoever intercedes with a good intercession will have a PORTION of it for himself, but whoever intercedes with an evil intercession will have a SHARE of it for himself” (85a-d).

- Recurring phrases: “and those (who have) the command among you” (59d), “to those (who have) the command among them” (83e).

- Recurring phrase: “Do not you see those who” (44a-b), (49a-b), (77a).

- In both outer passages, antithetical phrases occur: “They PURCHASE error” (44c), “So let those who SELL this present life for (the price of) the Hereafter” (74b). Also,
very similar phrases occur: “and they will not be done evil in the slightest” (49d), “You will not be done evil in the slightest” (77o).

- Both sequences have references to the Last Day. The mention of the Last Day in sequence 1 occurs in (59g) and in mentioning the Gardens and Fire (v.55-57) and the blessed people and reward (v.67-69). Likewise, sequence 2 mentions the Hereafter (74b), (77n) and God’s punishment (84f-g).

- The recurrence of the term “favor”: in sequence 1 “Or they are jealous of the people for what GOD has given them of HIS FAVOR?” (54a-b), “That is the FAVOR of GOD” (70a), in sequence 2 “But if indeed some FAVOR from GOD smites you” (73a), “If (it were) not (for the) FAVOR of GOD on you, and His MERCY, you would have followed SATAN, except for a few (of you)” (83g-h). In sequence 1, God’s favor refers to revelation while in the second sequence it refers to victory (73a) and guidance (83g-h). This idea also links sub-section A3 to A2 mentioning God’s favor in the context of stating laws and rights (v.32).

Finally, the theme of intercessions and greetings is an introduction to the beginning of the mirrored sub-section B3. The phrases in the extremes of the last sequence: “he will indeed say-as if there had not been any friendship between you and him” (73b-c) and “when you receive a greeting, reply with a better greeting, or return it” (86a-c) imply that the believers receive a greeting from the hypocrites residing in Madinah in order to show their friendship with the believers. The echoed sub-section B3 refers to the hypocrites outside of Madinah offering peace to the believers fighting them in order to prevent the believers from killing them.
The correspondence between sub-sections A1 and A3 (the extremes of Section A):

The whole section provides different laws of regulation and protection regarding various matters. The main idea is to guide the community according to Divine authority, favor, and justice or as Biqā‘ī puts it “to gather the community on tawḥīd” emphasized in establishing laws by God watching people’s responses. The extremes (the beginning of sub-section A1 and the end of sub-section A3) have similar meanings and phrases: “Surely God is watching over you” (v.1), “God is sufficient as a reckoner” (v.6), “God is muqīt-an/powerful over everything” (85e), “Surely God is a reckoner of everything” (v.86). Those phrases correspond with the sūrah’s center on monotheism (v.87) and emphasize the gathering of people for judgment on the Day of Resurrection.

Sub-section A1 (v.1-12) is about familial/internal justice while sub-section A3 establishes social justice between the community’s members. Maintaining justice requires taqwā as in A1 while it entails inner and physical purification to accept divine revelation and obey the Prophet as in A3. Disobeying God’s laws regarding orphans is “a great sin” (v.2) in A1. Similarly, association with God and claiming purity are also sins: “has forged a great sin” (v.48), and “That suffices as a clear sin” (v.50). This theme of sin in the beginnings of A1 and A3 shows their correspondence and links the theme of true/pure belief to righteous actions.

Also, the terms “naṣīb/a portion” (v.44, 53, 85) and “kifl-un/a share” (v.85) connect the beginning and the end of sub-section A3 to sub-section A1 which contains identical and similar terms “naṣīb/a portion” (v.7) and “ḥażz/a share” (v.11) in the context of inheritance. The themes of inheritances’ portions in A1 and revelation’s portions in A3 are corresponding and implying that a portion of the House of Abraham’s heritage (book, wisdom, and great kingdom v.53-54) is now given to the Prophet. Moreover, there are references to “men,” “women,” and “children” in
both sub-sections. Sub-section A1 is about maintaining members’ (men, weak women and children) financial rights while in sub-section A3 weak men, women, and children are discussed in terms of lacking their rights of belief under oppression by the Meccans who are described as having commit evil upon themselves by not believing.

Sub-section B3 (Q 4:88-115) Orientation: Emigration in God’s way, Hypocrites

This sub-section is composed of two sequences: (v.88-101) and (v.102-115).

Sequence 1 (Q 4:88-101)

Sequence 1 has two sub-sequences: (v.88-94) and (v.95-100).

Sub-sequence 1 (Q 4:88-94) Laws of dealing with the Hypocrites and Murder:

(A)
88. What is (the matter) with you? (Are there) two cohorts (of you) concerning the HYPOCRITES, when GOD has overthrown them for what they have earned? Do you wish to guide the one whom God has led astray? Whomever GOD has led astray – you will not find a WAY for him.

(B)
89. They want you to DISBELIEVE as they have DISBELIEVED, and then you would be alike. Do not take any ALLIES from them, until they emigrate in the WAY of GOD. If they turn back, SEIZE them and KILL them wherever you find them. Do not take any ALLLY or helper from them.
90. EXCEPT those who join a people with whom YOU HAVE A TREATY, or who come to you with their hearts restrained from FIGHTING you or FIGHTING their own people. If God had (so) pleased, He would indeed have given them power over you, and they would indeed have FOUGHT you. If they withdrew from you, and do not FIGHT you but offer you peace, GOD has not made a WAY for you against them.
91. You will find others wishing that they were safe from you, and safe from their (own) people. Whenever they are returned to temptation, they are overwhelmed by it. If they do not withdraw from you alone, and offer you peace, and restrain their hands, SEIZE them and KILL them wherever you come upon them. Those (people) – WE give you clear authority against them.

(B’)
92. It is not for a BELIEVER to KILL a BELIEVER, EXCEPT by mistake. Whoever KILLS a BELIEVER, by mistake, (the penalty is) the setting free of a believing slave, and a compensation (is to be) paid to his family, unless they remit (it as) a freewill offering. If he is from a people (who are) an ENEMY to you, and he is a believer, (the penalty is) the setting free of a believing slave. If he is from a people with whom YOU HAVE A TREATY, compensation (is to be) paid to his family and the setting free of a believing slave. Whoever does not find (the means to do that), (the penalty is) a fast for two months convectively – a repentance (prescribed) by GOD. GOD is knowing, wise.
93. Whoever KILLS a BELIEVER intentionally, his payment is Gehenna – there to remain. GOD will be angry with him, and curse him, and prepare a great punishment for him.

(A’)
94. YOU WHO BELIEVE! When you STRIKE forth in the WAY of GOD, be discerning, and do not say to the one who offers you peace, ‘YOU ARE NOT A BELIEVER,’ seeking (the fleeting) goods of this present life. For (there are) many spoils with GOD. You (too) were like that before, but GOD bestowed favor on you. So be discerning. Surely GOD is aware of what you do.
The sub-sequence is composed of two passages arranged in mirror-structure: (v.88-91) and (v.92-94). The first passage (parts A and B) is about how to deal with the hypocrites claiming belief but living outside the Muslim community. Part B relates to part A through a linking phrase: “God arkasahum/has overthrown them for what they have earned” (88b) and “they ’urkisū/are overwhelmed by it” (91e). These phrases reaffirm the theme of doing evil to oneself and that evil comes from the self. The mention of the hypocrites in (88a) is explained in part B through stating different cases of not emigrating to Madinah. Also, the outer pieces of the whole passage have the same word: “Do you WISH to guide” (88c), “You will find others WISHING” (91b). The term sabīl occurring in “you will not find a WAY for him” (88f), “until they emigrate in the WAY of God” (89d), and “God has not made a WAY for you against them” (90k) links the whole passage rhetorically.

The second passage (parts A’ and B’) explains some of the laws. Part B’ is about the laws addressing murdering a believer intentionally or by mistake during war. Part A’ is linked to part B’ thematically through ordering the believers fighting in God’s way to discern before killing a person who might be a believer. Accordingly, killing one who offers peace for the sake of spoils is considered as a murder on purpose. The whole passage is linked through the recurring phrases: “a believer” (92a-d, j, 94e), (93a), “a believing” (92e, k, o), and “You who believe” (94a). An identical term occurs in both parts: “Whoever kills a believer” (92d, 93a), “‘You are not a believer” (94e).

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Both parts A/A’ (the extremes of the sub-sequence) address the believers. Part A shows that the believers were in conflict regarding killing the hypocrites\(^\text{159}\) while the echoed part A’ instructs them to discern before killing while striking. Some rhetorical indications are found:

- Antithetical meanings: “the hypocrites” (88a), “You who believe” (94a).
- Linking phrase: “a way” (88f), “the way of God” (94b).
- The hypocrites are led astray because of their own deeds in part A (88c-d) while the believers are guided by God in part A’ (94h-i).
- Complementary phrases: “Whomever GOD has LED ASTRAY— you will not find a way for him” (88e-f) and “You (too) were like that before, but GOD BESTOWED FAVOR on you” (94h-i).\(^\text{160}\)

Parts B/B’ complete one another on the theme of laws of war and contain antithetical terms: “allies/ally” (89c, 89h), “an enemy” (92i) and identical linking phrases: “except those who join a people with whom YOU HAVE A TREATY” (90a-b) and “If he is from a people with whom YOU HAVE A TREATY” (92l-m).

\(^{159}\) It is reported that those hypocrites either: 1) who did not participate with the believers in the battle of Ḫud, 2) who emigrated from Mecca to Madinah claiming belief then they returned to the Pagans, 3) who claimed belief in Mecca, but they helped the disbelievers against Muslims, or 4) who were in Madinah and wanted to leave it. Ṭabarī states they were people not residing in Madinah since emigration is mentioned in (v.89) (See al-Ṭabarī, Jāmi’ al-Bayān, 9:7-15).

\(^{160}\) It is reported that the meaning of the last phrase “You (too) were like that before, but GOD bestowed favor on you” (94h-i) has to do with: 1) hiding being a believer during living among the disbelievers or 2) being a disbeliever before being guided by God to believe. Ṭabarī prefers the first opinion because the context mentions emigration. (See al-Ṭabarī, Jāmi’ al-Bayān, 9:83). The ring-analysis indicates that the first meaning is more relevant to the whole context on emigration in God’s way and the order to discern before killing. Thus the favor of God here relates to the establishment of the community of the believers in Madinah and leaving the town of the evildoers.
Part B (Q 4:89-91):

89.  They want you to DISBELIEVE as they have DISBELIEVED, and then you would be alike.

Do not take any allies from them,
until they emigrate in the WAY of GOD,
If they turn back, 1 SEIZE them 2 and KILL them wherever you find them.
Do not take any ally or helper from them,
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90.  except those who join a people 3 with whom you have a treaty,
or who come to you with their hearts RESTRAINED 4 from FIGHTING you or FIGHTING their own people.
If GOD had (so) pleased, 5 He would indeed have given them power over you,
and they would indeed have FOUGHT you.
If they WITHDREW from you, 6 and do not FIGHT you 7 but offer you peace,
GOD has not made a WAY for you against them.
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91.  You will find others 8 wishing that they were safe from you, and safe from their (own) people.
Whenever they are returned to temptation, 9 they are overwhelmed by it.
If they do not WITHDREW from you alone, 10 and offer you peace, 11 and RESTRAIN their hands,
Seize them 12 and KILL them wherever you come upon them.
Those (people) – We give you clear authority against them.

The whole part focuses upon laws regarding groups of the hypocrites outside of the community in Madinah. It contains three pieces arranged in parallel-form. Those groups are: the hypocrites residing with the disbelievers (v.89), the hypocrites joining a group which holds a treaty with Muslims or who does not want to fight their people (v.90), and the hypocrites wanting security from Muslims and the disbelievers (v.91). The occurrence of the similar phrases “seize them and kill them wherever you find them” (89f-g) and “seize them and kill them wherever you come upon them” (91i-j) links the outer pieces. Emigration in God’s way is established as the way to show true allegiance with Muslims (89c, h). Being in the middle, like the last group (v.91), is a clear sign of hypocrisy. This theme of allegiance is corresponding with the phrase “except those who join a people with whom you have a treaty” (90a-b). The two pieces (v.90-91) are linked through the similar phrases: “If they withdraw from you, and do not fight you but offer you peace” (90h-j) and “If they withdraw from you alone, and offer you peace” (91g-f).
Part B’ (Q 4:92-93):

92. a It is not for a BELIEVER b to KILL a BELIEVER, c except by mistake.
d WHOEVER kills a BELIEVER by mistake, d (the penalty is) the setting free of a BELIEVING slave, e and a compensation (is to be) paid to his family, f unless they remit (it as) a freewill offering.

b If he is from a people i (who are) an ENEMY to you, j and he is a BELIEVER, k (the penalty is) the setting free of a BELIEVING slave.
i If he is from a people m with whom you have a TREATY, n compensation (is to be) paid to his family o and the setting free of a BELIEVING slave.

p WHOEVER does not find (the means to do that), q (the penalty is) a fast for two months convectively –
r a repentance (prescribed) by GOD. s GOD is knowing, wise.

93. a WHOEVER kills a BELIEVER intentionally, b his payment is Gehenna – c there to remain.
d GOD will be angry with him, e and curse him, f and prepare a great punishment for him.

This part, composed in parallel-form, focuses upon the laws regarding murdering a believer. These laws complete those mentioned in the previous passage regarding the believers’ conflict about the hypocrites’ states. The first piece (v.92) is about murdering a believer by mistake and contains three parallel segments. Antithetically, the parallel sub-part/piece is about murdering a believer intentionally (v.93) and contains two complementing segments. Both concluding segments of part B’ contain the same term: “Whoever” (92d, p, 93a). Also, these segments contain the term “God” (92r-s), (93d). They also have antithetical meanings: “a repentance (prescribed) by God. God is knowing, wise” (92r-s), “God will be angry with him, and curse him, and prepare a great punishment for him” (93d-e). The term raqabah (literally a neck) is a symbol of a slave (92e, k, o) as the phrase “or what your right (hands) own” (v.3) in A1 and in A2 (v.24-25) referring to slave girls.

Reflections:

This sub-sequence under review relates to the surah’s center through the theme of God’s way, which symbolizes God’s Oneness and the covenant with Him. Different attributes of God occur and reveal His authority, guidance, forgiveness, wrath, and knowledge. The sub-sequence also refers to the Day of Resurrection through mentioning Gehenna (v.94). The laws mentioned
have to do with the theme of true belief and hypocrisy. Hypocrites are those who break their covenant with God and hide their true position from Muslims. The Muslim community is warned against their enemies who claim belief but act according to themselves and what is personal beneficial. The sub-sequence indicates, on one hand, that the Muslim community during the revelation of the sūrah was in confrontation with external groups (middle Madinan period) and, on the other hand, its identity was in the process of shaping and purification religiously and politically.
The correspondence between sub-sequences (v.80-86) in A3 and (v.88-94) in B3:

87:* WHOEVER obeys the MESSENGER *has obeyed GOD, *but WHOEVER turns away – *We have not sent you a watcher over them. *4 They say, *(We pledge) OBEDIENCE *(to you), *5 But when they go forth from your presence, *a contingent of them plans by night (to do) *4 other than what you say. *4 GOD is writing down what they plan. *4 So turn away from them *4 and put your trust in GOD. *4 GOD is sufficient as a guardian. *2 Do they not contemplate the Qur’ān? *3 If it were from any other than GOD, *4 they would indeed have found in it much contradiction. *52 When any matter COMES to them *concerning security and fear, *5 they divulge it. *5 But if they were to refer it to the MESSENGER *and to Those (who have) the command among them, *4 those who investigate (such things) would indeed have known (about it). *5 If (it were) not (for the) favor of GOD on you, and His mercy, *5 you would have followed Satan, except a few (of you). *54 Fight in the WAY of GOD! *5 You are only responsible for yourself, *5 but urge on the BELIEVERS. *4 It may be that GOD will restrain *the violence of those who DISBELIEVE. *4 GOD is harsher in violence, *4 and harsher in punishing. *55 WHOEVER intercedes with a good intercession *will have a portion of it for himself, *4 but WHOEVER intercedes with an evil intercession *will have a portion of it for himself. *5 GOD is powerful over everything. *56 When you receive a greeting, *reply with a better greeting, *or return it. *55 Surely GOD is a reckoner of everything.

87:* GOD – (there) is no god but Him. *3 He will indeed gather you to the Day of Resurrection. *4 (there is) no doubt about it. *4 Who is more truthful than GOD in report.

88:* What is (the matter) with you? *(Are there) two cohorts (of you) concerning the HYPOCRITES, *4 when GOD has overthrown them for what they have earned? *4 Do you wish to guide the one *4 whom GOD has led astray? *4 WHOMEVER GOD has led astray – *4 you will not find a way for him. *89 They want you to DISBELIEVE *as they have DISBELIEVED, *4 and then you would be alike. *4 Do not take any allies from them, *4 until they emigrate in the WAY of GOD. *4 If they turn back, *4 seize them *4 and kill them wherever you find them. *4 Do not take any ally or helper from them, *4 except those who join a people *4 with whom you have a treaty, *4 or who COME to you with their hearts restrained *4 from fighting you or fighting their own people. *4 If God had (so) pleased, *4 He would indeed have given them power over you, *4 and they would indeed have fought you. *4 If they withdrew from you, *4 and do not fight you *4 but offer you peace, *4 God has not made a way for you against them. *90 You will find others *4 wishing that they were safe from you, *4 and safe from their (own) people. *4 Whenever they are returned to temptation, *4 they are overwhelmed by it. *4 If they do not withdraw from you alone, *4 and offer you peace, *4 and restrain their hands, *4 seize them *4 and kill them wherever you come upon them. *4 Those (people) – WE give you clear authority against them. *92 It is not for a believer *4 to kill a believer, *4 except by mistake. *4 WHOEVER kills a believer, by mistake, *4 (the penalty is) the setting free of a believing slave, *4 and a compensation (is to be) paid to his family, *4 unless they remit (it as) a freewill offering. *4 If he is from a people *4 (who are) an enemy to you, *4 and he is a believer, *4 (the penalty is) the setting free of a believing slave. *4 If he is from a people *4 with whom you have a treaty, *4 compensation (is to be) paid to his family *4 and the setting free of a believing slave. *4 Whoever does not find (the means to do that), *4 (the penalty is) a fast for two months convectively – *4 a repentance (prescribed) by GOD. *4 GOD is knowing, wise. *95WHOEVER kills a believer intentionally, *5 his payment is Gehenna – there to remain. *4 GOD will be angry with him, *4 and curse him, *4 and prepare a great punishment for him. *94 YOU WHO BELIEVE! *4 When you strike forth in the WAY of GOD, *4 be discerning, *4 and do not say to the one who offers you peace, *4 ‘You are not a believer, *4 seeking (the fleeting) goods of this present life. *4 For (there are) many spoils with GOD. *4 You (too) were like that before, *4 but GOD bestowed favor on you. *4 So be discerning. *4 Surely GOD is aware of what you do.

The sub-sequence in question (v.88-94) is about the hypocrites’ disobeying attitudes and it echoes (v.80-86). These two sub-sequences surround the sūrah’s center (v.87). Both sub-sequences deal with the disobedient hypocrites and their conspiracies and both provide some laws. The first sub-sequence affirms the theme of obeying the Prophet and understanding the Qur’ān’s teachings as a sign of belief and it informs the Prophet about the hypocrites’ attitudes (disobedience and planning conspiracies at night) in Madinah. It begins with mentioning those who disobey and turn away and it concludes with ordering the Prophet to fight the disbelievers and to encourage the believers to fight. The Prophet is accountable of his own self (84b).

Likewise, the second sub-sequence shows that emigration in God’s way is an indication of true belief and it shows that the hypocrites are led astray because of their own deeds (88b), disbelief
and turning away (v.89). Thus the first sub-ring is about the hypocrites in Madinah while the echoed sub-ring mentions laws about those who live outside the Muslim community.

In the first sub-ring, there is an exhortation to ponder the Qur’ān and refer the matters to the Prophet and the community’s authority. Correspondingly, in the second sub-sequence, the believers are exhorted to not differ about the hypocrites’ status (v.88). Moreover, the mention of conducting salutation (v.86) in the context of ordering the Prophet to fight (v.84) and providing some rules of war (v.85) links the first sub-sequence to the mirrored sub-sequence on fighting and not allying with the hypocrites. Similar terms occur: “When you receive tahiyyah/a greeting” (86a), “offer you al-salam/peace” (90k, 91g), and “offer you al-salām/peace” (94d). These terms indicate the meaning of peace in general. The believers in (v.86) are ordered to reply the greeting while in the second sub-sequence, they are ordered to discern before fighting when they are greeted or offered peace. Greeting or offering peace represents the signs of allegiance and the absence of adversarial conspiracies. Also, linking words occur in both sub-sequences:

- Linking phrases: “until they emigrate in the WAY of GOD” (89d) and “Fight in the WAY of GOD” (84a).
- Corresponding meanings: “But whoever turns away” (80c), “If they turn back” (89e).
- Linking phrases: “those who DISBELIEVE” (84e), “the HYPOCRITES” (88a), and “They want you to DISBELIEVE as they have DISBELIEVED, and then you would be alike” (89a-b).
- The middles of both sub-sequences contain the same word: “When any matter comes to them concerning al-amni/SECURITY and fear” (83a) and “that ya’manūkum/they were SAFE from you, and ya’manū/SAFE from their (own) people” (91b-c).
- The same root R-D-D: “if they were to REFER it to the messenger” (83d), “or RETURN it” (86c), “Whenever they ARE RETURNED to temptation” (91d).
- The recurrence of the term “whoever” in the extremes: (80a, 85a, 85c) and (92d, 93a).
- The repetition of the root Q-T-L: (84a), (89g), (90d, h, j), (91j), (92b-d), (93a).
- Identical term: “It may be that GOD will RESTRAIN” (84d) and “RESTRAIN their hands” (91h).
- Similar meanings: “GOD is powerful over everything” (85e), “Surely GOD is a reckoner of everything” (86d), and “Surely GOD is aware of what you do” (94k).

Sub-sequence 2 (Q 4:95-100) Emigration on God’s Earth:

(A)
95. a Those of the believers who sit (at home) – b other than the INJURED – c are not equal with the ones who struggle in the WAY of GOD d with their wealth and their lives. e God favors in rank the ones who struggle f with their wealth and their lives g over the ones who sit (at home). h To each God has promised the good reward, i but God favors (with) a great REWARD the ones who struggle j over the ones who sit (at home);
96. a (higher) ranks from Him, and forgiveness and mercy. b Surely God is forgiving, compassionate.

(X)
97. a Surely those who – (when) the angels take them b (while they are doing) themselves evil – c they will say, ‘What (condition) were you in?’ d They will say, ‘We were WEAK on the EARTH.’ e They will say, ‘Was God’s EARTH not wide enough, f so that you might have emigrated in it?’ # And those – their refuge is Gehenna – b and it is an evil destination!

(A’)
98. a except for the (truly) WEAK b among the men, women, and children, c (who) were not able (to devise) a plan d and were not guided to a WAY (of escape).
99. a Those – b God may pardon them, c (for) God is pardoning, forgiving.
100. a Whoever emigrates in the WAY of GOD b will find on the EARTH c many places of refuge and abundance (of provisions). d And whoever goes forth from his house, e emigrating to GOD and HIS MESSENGER, f (and) then death overtakes him – # his REWARD falls on God (to pay). g Surely God is forgiving, compassionate.

This sub-sequence is arranged concentrically in parallel-composition. The main theme is emigration in God’s way/earth to God and His Messenger. Part A mentioning fighting in God’s way with selves and properties corresponds with the previous sub-sequence mentioning striking in God’s way and not killing who offers peace for war’s wealth (v.94). The outer parts of the sub-sequence at hand are corresponding thematically. Part A is about those who fight in God’s way and those who are unable to fight, accompanied with emphasis on the reward of both
groups. Likewise, part A’ is about the weak who are unable to emigrate in God’s way, followed by an exhortation to emigrate in God’s way and mentioning the reward of those who emigrate. The phrase “other than the injured” (95b) is corresponding with mentioning the weak among the men, women, and children (v.98) Identical and linking phrases occur in both parts: “the way of God” (95c, 100a), “reward” (95i, 100g), and “(for) God is pardoning, forgiving” (99c) and “Surely God is forgiving, compassionate” (96b, 100h).

The central part mentions those who did not emigrate: “ẓālimi anfusihim/(there are doing) themselves evil” (97b). The center is linked to part A through recurring phrase: “anfusihim/their lives” (95d-f) and “anfusihim/themselves” (97b). The occurrence of the word “wide” in (97e) is similar to the term “abundance” that occurs in part A’ (100c). The piece (v.97) contains an eschatological scene. The references to the angels and Gehenna are indications of the Last Day’s events. The phrase “Was God’s earth not wide (enough), so that you might have emigrated in it?” (97e-f) states God’s ownership of the earth which is the theme of the next sub-section B2. God’s earth (94e) and God’s way (95c, 100a) are parallels. This is supported by the piece “Whoever emigrates in the WAY of GOD will find on the EARTH many places of refuge and abundance (of provisions)” (100a-c).

The coherence of sequence 1 (v.88-100) as a whole:

The two sub-sequences (v.88-94) and (v.95-100) composing the whole sequence are parallel. The hypocrites who did not emigrate in the first sub-sequence are 1) parallel to those who claim weakness after death in the second sub-sequence and 2) antithetical to those who fight and emigrate in God’s way or those who are truly unable to do so. Both sub-sequences show that the hypocrites did evil themselves: “when God has overthrown them for what they have earned?”
(88b) and “(while they are doing) themselves evil” (97b). The second sub-sequence shows their final destination in Gehenna (97g-h).

The theme of emigration is stressed in both sub-sequences in the context of laws of fighting and death. The theme of death is dominant in the whole sequence. Death in sub-sequence 1 either occurs by the believers fighting the hypocrites or by murdering a believer by mistake or intentionally. The mention of the angels\textsuperscript{161} taking in death those who do evil deeds (v.97) (an eschatological scene) and the mention of death overtaking who emigrates in God’s way (v.100) (a scene from the present life) imply the truth about this life and afterlife. This truth is an implication of belief in God and the Resurrection Day (v.87). Here are some rhetorical links:

- The believers are addressed in the extremes (v.88, 94, 95, 98-100).

- The occurrence of words of the same root: “and then you would be sawā’-an/alike” (89b), “lā yastawī/are not equal” (95a).

- Similar meanings in the ends: “For (there are) many spoils with God” (94g) and “many places of refuge and abundance (of provisions)” (100c).

- Antithetical groups are mentioned in the extremes: “the hypocrites” (88a), “the believers” (95a). The hypocrites who did not emigrate (v.88-89) and those who are in between are echoed in mentioning those who do themselves evil (97b).

- The occurrence of the term “Gehenna” in the end of sub-sequence 1 (93b), and the center of sub-sequence 2 (97g).

\textsuperscript{161} The angels are mentioned for the first time in the sūrah and they will be mentioned in the following sub-sections.
The outer parts of the sequence contain similar phrases: “until they emigrate in the way of God” (89d), “Whoever emigrates in the way of God” (100a). Also, the same term “sabil/way” occurs (88d).

- The recurrence of repentance and God’s forgiveness: (92r), (v.96), (v.99), (100h).

- Corresponding phrases: “When you STRIKE forth in the WAY of GOD” (94b) and “Whoever EMIGRATES in the WAY of GOD” (100a).

The correspondence between sub-sequences (v.71-79) and (v.95-100):

Sub-sequence (v.71-79):

71. You WHO BELIEVE! Take your precautions. 72. Go FORTH in detachments or Go FORTH all together. 73. Surely among you (there is) the one indeed who lags behind. 74. And if a smiting smites you, 75. he says, ‘God has blessed me because I was not a martyr with them.’ 76. But indeed if favor from God smites you, 77. he will indeed say— as if there had been not any friendship between you and him— 78. Would that I had been with them and attained a great triumph. 79. So let those who sell this present life for the price of the hereafter, 80. fight in the way of God. 81. Whoever fights in the way of God— 82. whether he is killed or conquers— 83. We shall give him a great reward. 84. What is with you (that) you do not fight in the way of God, 85. and (on behalf of) the weak among the men, women, and children, 86. who say, ‘Our Lord, lead us forth out of this town of the evildoers,’ 87. and make for us an ally from Yourself, 88. and make for us a helper from Yourself? 89. Those who believe fight in the way of God, 90. and those who disbelieve fight in the way of al-fâghût. 91. So fight the allies of Satan. 92. Surely the plot of Satan is weak. 93. Do you not see those to whom it was said, 94. ‘Restrain your hands and observe the prayer and give the alms?’ 95. Then, when fighting is prescribed for them, 96. (suddenly) there is a group of them who fear the people as (much as) they fear God, 97. or even more. 98. And they say, ‘Our Lord, why have you prescribed fighting for us? 99. Why not spare for us a time near (at hand)?’ 100. Say ‘The enjoyment of this life is a small thing, 101. but the hereafter is better for the one who guards (himself).’ 102. You will not be done evil in the slightest. 103. Wherever you are, death will overtake you, 104. even though you are in well-built towers. 105. And if some good smites them, 106. they say, ‘This is from God,’ 107. but if some evil smites them, 108. they say, ‘This is from you,’ 109. Say: ‘Everything is from God,’ 110. What is (the matter) with these people? 111. They hardly understand any report. 112. Whatever good smites you is from God, 113. and whatever evil smites you is from yourself. 114. We have sent you as a messenger to the people. 115. God is sufficient as a witness.

Sub-sequence (v.95-100):

95. Those of the believers who sit (at home) 96. other than the injured 97. are not equal with the ones who struggle in the way of God 98. with their wealth and their lives. 99. God favors in rank the ones who struggle 100. with their wealth and their lives over the ones who sit (at home). 101. To each God has promised the good (reward), 102. but God favors (with) a great reward the ones who struggle over the ones who sit (at home); 103. (higher) ranks from Him, and forgiveness and mercy. 104. Surely God is forgiving, compassionate. 105. Surely those who— (when) the angles take them— (while they are doing) themselves evil— 106. they will say, ‘What (condition) were you in?’ 107. They will say, ‘We were weak on the earth.’ 108. They will say, ‘Was God’s earth not wide enough, 109. so that you might have emigrated in it?’ 110. And those— their refuge is Gehenna— 111. and it is an evil destination! 112. Except for the (truly) weak among the men, women, and children, 113. who were not able (to devise) a plan 114. and were not guided to a way (of escape). 115. Those— 116. God may pardon them, 117. (for) God is pardoning, forgiving. 118. Whoever emigrates in the way of God 119. will find on the earth many places of refuge and abundance (of provisions). 120. And whoever goes forth from his house, 121. emigrating to God and his messenger, 122. then death overtakes him— 123. his reward falls on God (to pay). 124. Surely God is forgiving, compassionate.

The first sub-sequence is about fighting in God’s way and the other is about emigrating in God’s earth/way. The central parts are corresponding rhetorically and thematically. The first center shows that the believers fight in God’s way and disbelievers/hypocrites fight for the way
of al-tāghūt (themselves). Likewise, the second center mentions the disbelievers as those who do themselves evil by not emigrating in God’s earth and claiming weakness. Identical terms occur in both centers: “weak” (76f) and (97d) and antithetical words: the angels (97a) and Satan (76e,f). Fighting Satan’s allies (76e) corresponds with the theme of emigration to God and His messenger (100d).

The Prophet is mentioned in the end of each sub-sequence: “We have sent you as a messenger to the people” (79e), “emigrating to God and His messenger” (100d-e) while the believers are mentioned in the beginnings (71a, 95a). The repetition of the phrase “the way of God” links the two sub-rings. The first sub-ring mentions in the beginning those who lag behind when they are ordered to fight in God’s way (v.72-73) while the second mentions an antithetical group who is the injured and sitting at homes (unable to fight) (v.95-96). Furthermore, similar phrases and complementing meanings are found: “So let those who SELL THIS PRESENT LIFE for (the price of) the HEREAFTER, FIGHT in the WAY of GOD” (74a-b) and “the ones WHO STRUGGLE in the WAY of GOD with their WEALTH and their LIVES” (95b-d). Both sub-sequences mention the reward of obeying God’s command: “WE shall give him a great REWARD” (74e), “GOD has promised the ultimate good, but GOD favors (with) a GREAT REWARD the ones who struggle over the ones who sit (at home), (higher) ranks from Him, and forgiveness and mercy” (95h-j, 96a), and “his REWARD falls on God (to pay)” (100g).

The piece (v.75) mentions those who want to emigrate from the town of the evildoers, but who are weak and asking for God’s aid. Those truly weak people (“the men, women, and children” in 75c) unable to emigrate are mentioned in the context of mentioning God’s pardon “except for the (truly) WEAK among the men, women, and children” (98a-b). The idea of coming out from the town of the disbelievers (v.75) or homes (v.100) reflects the idea of changing
identity in terms of places and allegiance. The true and purified belief requires joining the community of the believers when it is possible.

Moreover, the ends of both sub-sequences are corresponding. The first end emphasizes the reward of the Last Day for those who fear God (taqwā) and obey His order: “Say ‘the enjoyment of this life is a small thing, but the HEREAFTER is better for the one who GUARDS (himself). You will not be done evil in the slightest’” (77m-o). Similarly, the second end stresses the reward of those who emigrate from their homes in God’s way (100e-g). Thus, fearing God by obeying the order to fight and emigrate are parallel. In addition, both ends contain identical phrases: “Wherever you are, DEATH will overtake you, even though you are in WELL-BUILT TOWERS” (78a-b) and “And whoever goes forth from HIS HOUSE, emigrating to God and His messenger, (and) then DEATH overtakes him – his reward falls on God (to pay)” (100d-g).

References to towers/homes/places (78b, 100b-d) on the earth in both ends are indications of the idea of protection and allegiance; however, no one can escape death and be protected from it. The theme of death indicates God’s ultimate power and people’s weakness. They should fear God, not death or from people killing them: “who fear the people as (much as) they fear God, or even more” (77h-i). The phrase “will find o the EARTH many places of refuges and ABUNDANCE (of provisions)” (100b-c) indicates that many directions lead to God on this earth when one truly comes out from disbelief to belief. The phrase “His reward falls on God (to pay)” (v.100) refers to God’s knowledge of the true believers (unlike the hypocrites) who come to Him and it stresses His justice indicated in the phrase “You will not be done evil in the slightest” (v.77). Accordingly, the two sub-sequences complement one another and emphasize the sūrah’s center on God’s Oneness and the Last Day.
The correspondence between sequence 1 (v.88-100) of B3, the sūrah’s center, and sub-sections A1/A2:

The sequence’s relation to the sūrah’s center is obvious. The mention of God’s knowledge (v.93-94) and forgiveness (v.92, 96, 99-100) corresponds with the Oneness of God and His ultimate Power (v.87). The themes of death, God’s reward (v.95, 96, 99, 100) and punishment (v.88, 97) have to do with the Day of Resurrection (v.87). This sequence emphasizes the theme of emigration or moving in God’s earth toward God. It also implies that this direction includes joining and allying the new community addressed and reformed in A1 and A2. The occurrences of the bodily parts (v.90-91) and the weak men, women, and children (v.98) link the system to A1/A2 on different social organizations regarding orphans, women, children, and men. The theme of fighting in God’s way with wealth and life occurring in sequence (v.88-100) corresponds with the earlier mention of financial laws set by God in A1 and A2. Positive responses to the laws and the order of fighting in God’s way are signs of true belief.

Sequence 2 (Q 4:101-115)

Sequence 2 has two sub-sequences: (v.101-104) and (v.105-115).

Sub-sequence 1 (Q 4:101-104) Laws of the Prayer during Travelling and War:

(A)
101. a WHEN you STRIKE FORTH on the earth, b (there is) no blame on you c to shorten the PRAYER, d if you FEAR that e those who DISBELIEVE may ATTACK you. f Surely the DISBELIEVERS are your clear ENEMIES.

(B)
102. a WHEN you are among them, b and establish the PRAYER for them, c let a contingent of them stand with you, d and let them take their weapons. e When they have prostrated themselves, f let them be behind you, g and let another contingent (which has) h not prayed come (forward) i and pray with you. j Let them take precautions and their weapons. k Those who DISBELIEVE want you l to be oblivious of your weapons and your baggage. m Then they would launch an ATTACK on you (all at) once. n (There is) no blame on you o if you lay down your weapons p because of the harmful effect of rain on you q or (because) you are sick. r But take your precautions. s Surely God has prepared for the DISBELIEVERS a humiliating punishment.

103. a WHEN you have finished the PRAYER, b remember God, c whether standing or sitting or (lying) on your sides.

(A’)

Then, WHEN you are SECURE, d observe the PRAYER. e Surely the PRAYER is f a written decree for the BELIEVERS at appointed times.

104. a But do not grow weak in SEEKING OUT the ENEMY. b If you are suffering, c surely they (too) are suffering as you are suffering, d while what you hope for from God they do not hope for. e God is knowing, wise.
This sub-sequence is composed of one passage arranged concentrically in parallel-image. The outer parts are complementing. Part A is about the law which shortens the length of prayer during travel (101a) or fighting (101d), while part A’ exhorts its audience to observe prayer at its specified times and with its regular accompanying rituals after the war finishes (103d) and not to stop seeking out the enemies/disbelievers (v.104). The recurrence of the term “the prayer” (101c, 103e,f) and its echo “prayed/pray” (102h-i), and the references to the disbelievers (101e, 101f, 104a) link the two parts. Also, antithetical group to the disbelievers occurs in part A’ “the believers” (103g). The extremes contain similar terms: “a contingent” (102c), “al-qawm/the people” (104a). Part B addresses the Prophet and explains how to pray during war. The disbelievers are also mentioned (102k, 102s) and this repetition connects all parts.

Additionally, each part starts with “when” (101a, 102a, 103a) and contains the term “the prayer.” The phrase “When they have prostrated themselves” (102e) corresponds with the phrase “sitting or (lying) on your side” (103c). Moreover, the same root occurs in the extremes of part B and part A’: “fa-’aqamta/lead” (102b), “fal-taqum/stand with” (102c), “qiyām-an/standing” (103c), “fa- ‘aqīmū/observe” (103e). This sub-sequence relates to the previous one (v.95-100) through the median term “the earth” (100b, 101a) and the recurrence of the same root: “al-qā’idūna/al-qā’idīna/who sit (at homes)” (95a, g, j), “qu’ūd-an/or sitting” (103c).

162 al-Ṭabarî, Jāmi’ al-Bayān, 9:123.
Sub-sequence 2 (Q 4:105-115) Judgment between People with the Book:

(A)
105. a Surely We have sent down on you the BOOK with the truth. b So that you may judge between THE PEOPLE c by what God has shown you. d Do not be an advocate on behalf of the TREACHEROUS.
106. a Ask forgiveness from God. b Surely God is forgiving, compassionate.
107. a Do not dispute b on behalf of those who betray themselves. c Surely God does not love d anyone WHO is a traitor (or) sinner.
108. a They hide themselves from THE PEOPLE, b but they do not hide themselves from God. c HE is with them when they plan by night d (with) the WORDS He finds displeasing. e God encompasses what they do.
109. a There you are! b Those who have disputed on their behalf in this present life, c but WHO will dispute with God on their behalf on the Day of Resurrection? d Or WHO will be a guardian over them.

(X)
110. a WHOEVER does evil b or does himself evil, c (and) then asks forgiveness from God, d he will find God is forgiving, compassionate.
111. a WHOEVER earns sin, b only earns it against himself. c God is knowing, wise.
112. a WHOEVER earns a mistake or sin, b (and) then hurls it against an innocent person, c will bear (the burden of) slander and clear sin.

(A')
113. a If (it were) not for the favor of God on you, b and His mercy, c a CONTINGENT of them was indeed determined d to lead you astray. e But they only lead themselves astray; f they will not harm you at all. g God has sent down on you the BOOK and the wisdom, h and He has taught you what you did not know. i The favor of God on you is great.
114. a (There is) no good in much of their SECRET TALK, b except for the one WHO commands voluntary giving, c or what is right, d or setting (things) right among THE PEOPLE. e WHOEVER does that, f seeking the approval of God- g We shall give him a great reward.
115. a But WHOEVER breaks with the MESSENGER h after the GUIDANCE has become clear to him, i and follows a way other (than that) of the BELIEVERS. d We shall turn him (over) to what he has turned to, e and burn him in Gehenna- f and it is an evil destination.

The sub-sequence contains two passages structured concentrically in parallel-image. The center stresses the theme of justice and the effects of actions on their doers. Passage A is about how the Prophet is ordered to judge between people (a hypocrite and a Jew in Madinah) in accordance with the revelation while the parallel passage A' affirms God’s favor/mercy given to the Prophet in the form of the Book and the wisdom to judge between people.163 In the previous sub-sequence, the Prophet is addressed as the leader of the prayer during war (v.102). The reference to security and observing prayer at times without war in the preceding sub-sequence introduces the theme of this sub-sequence. Now the theme of fighting is not mentioned anymore.

163 al-Ṭabarī, Jāmi` al-Bayān, 9:176-190. It is reported that “Ṭu'mah ibn Ubayriq, a Muslim who was likely a hypocrite…, has stolen a piece of armor and hid it among the belongings of one of the Jews of Madinah in order to avoid discovery and later accused him with the theft. The Prophet initially attempted to defend Ṭu'mah at the behest of the latter’s relatives, but in v.105 he was warned not to defend those who betray their trust, and in v.106 he was instructed to seek forgiveness for his initial willingness to do so... V.107 again warns against advocating for those who betray their own selves. The parallelism between those who betray their trust in v.105 and those who betray their own selves in v.107 which both refer to the same people, reflects the Qur’ānic idea that one’s moral and immoral actions ultimately affect only oneself.” (See Nasr and others, The Study Qur’an, 241-242).
Corresponding phrases occur in the end of the preceding sub-sequence (v.102-104) and the beginning of (v.105-115): “remember God” (103b), “Ask forgiveness from God” (106a). Some of the median words linking this sub-sequence to the preceding one are: “kitāb-an/appointed” (103g) and “al-kitāb/the Book” (105a), “God” (104d-e), (105c), and “takūnū/are” (104b) and “takun/be” (105d). Antithetically to evil deeds mentioned in the first passage and the center, a list of good deeds occurs in (v.114). These good deeds facilitate the unity of the community and they link the end of sub-section B3 to earlier sub-sections mentioning social and financial laws.

The sub-sequence is rhetorically linked as follows:

- The Prophet is addressed in the beginnings of both passages and similar terms/phrases occur:

  “Surely WE HAVE SENT DOWN ON YOU the BOOK with the truth. So that you may judge between the people by WHAT GOD HAS SHOWN YOU, Do not be an advocate on behalf of the treacherous” (v.105).

  “If (it were) not (for the) favor of GOD on you, and His mercy, a contingent of them was indeed determined to lead you astray. But they only lead themselves astray; they will not harm you at all. GOD HAS SENT DOWN ON YOU the BOOK and the WISDOM, and HE HAS TAUGHT YOU WHAT YOU DID NOT KNOW” (113a-g).

- The occurrence of the terms “anfusahu/themselves” (107b), (113d), “nafsahu/himself” (110b), and “nafsihi/himself” (111b) links the whole sub-system.

- Linking term: “al-nās/the people” (105b, 108a, 114c) and the echo “a contingent of them” (113c).

- Similar terms and phrases occur in the parallel pieces (v.108) and (v.114):

  “He is with them when they plan by night (with) mā lā yarḍā mina al-qawl/the WORDS HE finds displeasing” (108c-d).

  “(There is) no good in much of najwāhum/THEIR SECRET TALK, except for the one who commands voluntary giving, or what is right, or sitting (things) right among the people. Whoever does that, seeking mardātī Allah/the approval of GOD- We shall give him a great reward” (v.114).

- The repetition of the term: “Whoever/who” in the central part and the extremes:

  (107d), (109c,d), (114b,e), (115a).
- The parallel pieces (v.109) and (v.115) are complementing and contain references to the Last Day: “But who will dispute with God on their behalf on the Day of Resurrection?” (109c), “and burn him in Gehenna – and it is an evil destination” (115e-f).

- “The TREACHEROUS” (105d) are those who break with the Prophet (115a) and they are antithetical to “the BELIEVERS” (115c).

**Passage A (Q 4:105-109):**

105. а Surely We have sent down on you the BOOK with the truth. 
b So that you may judge between THE PEOPLE c by what GOD has shown you.

d Do not be an ADVOCATE on behalf of the TREACHEROUS.

106. а Ask forgiveness from GOD. b Surely GOD is forgiving, compassionate.

d Do not be an ADVOCATE on behalf of the TREACHEROUS.

107. а Do not DISPUTE b on behalf of those who BETRAY themselves. 
c Surely GOD does not love d anyone WHO is a TRAITOR (or) SINNER.

108. а THEY HIDE themselves from THE PEOPLE, 
b but they do not hide themselves from GOD.

c HE is with them when THEY PLAN by night d (with) the words He finds displeasing. 
e GOD encompasses what THEY DO.

109. а There you are! b Those who have DISPUTED on their behalf in this present life, 
c but WHO will DISPUTE with GOD on their behalf on the Day of Resurrection? d Or WHO will be a guardian over them.

Passage A contains two complementing parallel parts in which the second part explains the first one. Each part is arranged in parallel-form. The first part (v.105-107) addresses the Prophet to judge using the Book and to not advocate those who have betrayed while the second (v.108-19) shows their disloyalty/conspiracy and stresses God’s knowledge and their lack of advocates on the Resurrection Day. Also, it implies that The Prophet is the judge between the people in this present life, however; the people will be judged on the Day of Resurrection by God who, unlike the Prophet, “encompasses what they do” (108e) and no one will advocate them.
The whole passage is linked through several rhetorical links. The term “God” occurs in every piece. Corresponding meanings occur in the first pieces: “by what GOD has shown you” (105c) and “but they do not hide themselves from GOD” (108b). The terms “TREACHEROUS” (105d), “BETRAY” (107b), “TRAITOR (or) SINNER” (107d), “THEY HIDE” (108a), and “THEY PLAN” (108c) are parallels and link the two parts.

Passage A’ (Q 4:113-115):

113. a If (it were) not (for the) FAVOR of GOD on you, b and His mercy, c a CONTINGENT of them was indeed determined d to lead you ASTRAY.
   e But they only lead themselves ASTRAY; f they will not harm you at all.
   g GOD has sent down on you the BOOK and the wisdom,
   h and He has taught you what you did not know.
   i The FAVOR of GOD on you is GREAT.

114. a (There is) no good in much of their secret talk, b except for the one WHO commands voluntary giving, c or what is right, d or setting (things) right among THE PEOPLE.
   e WHOEVER does that, f seeking the approval of God-
   g We shall give him a GREAT reward.

115. a But WHOEVER breaks with the MESSENGER b after the GUIDANCE has become clear to him, c and follows a WAY other (than that) of the BELIEVERS-
   d We shall turn him (over) to what he has turned to,
   e and burn him in Gehenna- f and it is an evil destination.

This passage is arranged in parallel-image. The first part/piece has two complementing parallel segments. It highlights God’s favor upon the Prophet and His guidance and protection from the betraying people. The second part has two antithetical parallel pieces. Each piece contains two segments. This part mentions the opposite of disloyalty (stating some social good deeds and promising a great reward) and it stresses the punishment of the disloyal people. The prophet is addressed in the beginning (v.113) and mentioned in the end (v.115). Also, the phrase “God has sent down on you the BOOK and the WISDOM” (113g) is complemented by the phrase “after the GUIDANCE has become clear to him” (115b).
Part X (Q 4:110-112):

110. a WHOEVER does EVIL, b or does himself EVIL, c (and) then asks forgiveness from God, d he will find God is forgiving, compassionate.
111. a WHOEVER earns SIN, b only earns it against himself. c God is knowing, wise.
112. a WHOEVER earns a MISTAKE or SIN, b (and) then hurls it against an innocent person, c will bear (the burden of) slander and clear sin.

This part is structured in parallel-form. Its coherence and connection to passage A are obvious. The preceding passage contains identical phrases to (v.110) occurring in “Ask forgiveness from God. Surely God is forgiving, compassionate”(v.106). Also, the phrase “God encompasses what they do” (v.108) is corresponding with “God is knowing, wise” (v.111).
Moreover, the terms “evil,” “sin,” and “mistake” are references to “the treacherous” (v.105) and “a traitor (or) sinner” (v.107). Passage A’ relates to the center through the median term: “himself” (110b, 111b) and “themselves” (113d) and the theme of good deeds (v.114). The center reaffirms God’s ability to know everything people do or hide. Also, it warns the sinners against blaming innocents. All pieces composing this part are synonymic and contain identical and similar words. They are mainly about the idea of one’s evil deeds affecting the self (v.110-111) while the last piece stresses the burden of blaming innocent people for one’s own sins (v.112).

On the other hand, God’s forgiveness, knowledge, and wisdom are emphasized in the center in order to exhort the person (a hypocrite) to repent before the Day of Resurrection (v.109). The mention of the Resurrection Day in the last sub-sequence of B3 corresponds with the center of the sūrah (v.87) mentioning the Resurrection Day. It also confirms the correspondence between A3 and B3 as mirrored sub-rings. The other extreme which is the beginning of A3 does not mention the Day of Resurrection, but it is preceded by mentioning the Last Day and the Prophet being a witness against the disobeying people (v.38-42). The term “Day” occurs in both (v.42) and (v.87). The occurrence of the term “ḥadīth-an/report” in (v.42) and (v.87) corresponds with the terms “al-qawl/the words” (v.108) and “najwāhum/secret talk”
(v.114). God is truthful to what He says (v.87) and He sent down the Book with the truth (v.105) while the hypocrites are the betrayals of the truth and prepare untruthful words (v.107-108) and there will be no guardian over them before God on that Day (v.109).

Moreover, the occurrence of the term “the earth” in (v.42) in the end of A2 is echoed in the beginning of A3 (v.43) in the context of prayer and purification with dust and in B3 (v.94-101) mentioning “God’s earth” (v.97), places of refuge and abundance on the earth (v.100), and moving on the earth for fighting in God’s way (v.101). On the Last Day, the disbelievers and disobeying people will wish: “law tusawwā bihimu al-ardu/the earth were leveled with them” (v.42). This means that they will wish to have a place of refuge or to hide on that Day. However, their only place of refuge on the Day of Resurrection is Gehenna as in “And their refuge in Gehenna – and it is an evil destination” (v.97) and “We shall turn him (over) what he has turned to, and burn him in Gehenna – and it is an evil destination” (v.115). This is the destination of those who did not obey, emigrate, and follow the believers’ way. Those people wanted to make the Prophet go astray (v.113) and they turned away from the guidance made clear to them (v.115). Similarly, the People of the Scripture in the beginning of A3 wish for the believers to go astray from “the way” in (v.44) and lose the direction (the qiblah) embodied in mentioning the prayer (v.43), and are exhorted to believe in the new revelation (v.47).

The last observation should be made is that the central part (v.110-112) contains only singular pronouns while the preceding passage (v.105-109) contains plural pronouns referring to the hypocrites and singular pronouns referring to the Prophet. Considering the main theme of the whole sub-section B3 about orientation and allegiance, the singular pronouns in “but who will dispute with God on their behalf on the Day of Resurrection? Or who will be a guardian over them” (v.109) and in (v.110-112) indicate that they will not have their allies in this life on the
Last Day. Every person will be reckoned for his/her own evil deeds and no one would bear someone else’s actions. This central part (v.110-112) complements what come in sequence 1 regarding murdering a believer intentionally (v.93). This idea of evil deeds and their punishment will reappear in B2 (v.123-125).

The correspondence of sequence 2 (v.101-115) as a whole:

The two sub-sequences (v.101-104) and (v.105-115) are arranged in parallel-figure. Both sub-sequences address the Prophet, the leader of the prayer/the community. They are linked through many rhetorical indications:

- The outer passages in the beginnings address the Prophet (102a-c) and (105a-c) while the ends address people: the believers (v.104) and the people/community (v.115). Also, the disbelievers (v.101) and “the treacherous” (v.105) are parallels.

- Similar phrases occur: “when you are among them, and establish the prayer for them, let a contingent of them stand with you” (102a-c), “HE is with them” (108c).

- The occurrence of the same term in the extremes: “let a contingent of them” (102c), “a contingent of them was indeed determined” (113b).

- The same word occurs in the ends of both systems: “ibtighā’/seek out” (104a), “ibtighā’/seeking” (114e).

- The repetition of: “kunta/you are” (102a), “fal-yakūnū/be” (102f), “kāna/is” (102o, 104e, 106b, 107d, 108e, 111c), “kānat/is” (103f), “takūnū/are” (104b), and “takun/be” (105d, 113g), “yakūn/will be” (109d).
The correspondence of sub-section B3 as a whole:

The first sequence (v.88-100) addresses the believers. It states the laws of fighting the hypocrites outside Madinah. Emigration in God’s way is mentioned as a sign of true belief. On the other hand, the second sequence (v.101-115) addresses the Prophet regarding 1) prayer during wars and 2) judgment with the Book between people. Both sequences are arranged in parallel-structure and orient the community toward God and His authority. The following are some of the rhetorical and thematic links:

- Antithetical groups in the extremes: “the hypocrites” (88a), “the believers” (115c).
- The recurrence of “Gehenna” twice in the first sequence “his payment is Gehenna-there to remain” (93b-c) and “And those- there refuge is Gehenna -and it is an evil destination” (97g-h), and once in the end of the second sequence “and burn him in Gehenna- and it is an evil destination” (115e-f). These references indicate the final place/destination of those who did not follow the way of God to Him.
- God’s mercy occurs in the second sub-sequence of each sequence: (96a), (113a).
- The first sub-sequences (v.88-94) and (v.101-104) contain different laws during wars. The first sub-sequence mentions the laws of fighting the hypocrites and laws of murder while the second states the laws of praying during fighting.
- The central parts of the second sub-sequences (v.97) and (v.110-112) are corresponding. Both mention those who do evil deeds to themselves. The first center is about who did not emigrate and made excuses when the angels take them in death. The second center opens the door for the evildoers to repent before they will be judged on the Last Day for doing bad things to themselves and others.
- The recurrence of the term: “Whoever” (93a, 100a, 100d, 107d, 109c,d, 110a, 111a, 112a, 114b,e, 115a).

- The occurrence of the same phrase in both sequences: “this present life” (94f), (109b).

- The same term occurs in the outer passages: “clear” (91k, 101f, 112c), and the same root B-Ā-N occurs in (94c, 94j, 115b).

- The same root occurs in the outer sub-sequences: “a fast for two months mutatābiʿy/n/consecutively” (92q), “and yattabiʿ/ follows a way other (than that) of the believers” (115c).

- Antithetical meanings occur in the extremes with similar phrases: “Do you wish to guide the one whom God has led astray? Whomever God has led astray- you will not find a way for him” (v.88), “a contingent of them was indeed determined to lead you astray. But they only lead themselves astray” (113c-e).

- The outer sub-sequences contain the same root K-S-B: “God has overthrown them for what they have earned” (88b), “Whoever earns sin, only earns it against himself” (111a-b), “Whoever earns a mistake or sin” (112a). Also, similar root occurs in the extreme sub-sequences: “by mistake” (92c-d), “a mistake” (112a).

Thematically, the extremes are about exhorting the believers about the disbelieving hypocrites. In the beginning of sequence 1, the believers were divided into two groups regarding the hypocrites’ state while in the end of sequence 2 the hypocrites’ betrayal is disclosed. The whole sub-section B3 emphasizes that there is only one way/one direction of belief and it is obedience of God and His messenger and emigration to them. All ways other than the believers’ way lead one astray. There is only One God and one way leads to Him which is through the guidance, the Book, and the wisdom sent down to the Prophet (v.105, v.113, v.115).
The sub-section asserts that the hypocrites should prove their belief and allegiance to the believers through emigrating to God and His Prophet. The hypocrites are only allies to themselves and their benefits. From the beginning of the system, they are depicted as disloyal (v.88-91) while in the end of the system they are shown as betraying people (v.105-109). They want the believers to go astray (be disbelievers) (v.89) as they attempt to mislead the Prophet (v.113). The themes of good and bad deeds and reward and punishment are dominant. These themes link the sub-section to the sûrah’s center (v.87). The mention of the Day of Resurrection in the center and the end of sub-section B3 confirms the structural coherence of the sub-sections surrounding the center as shown earlier and will be explained in the next pages.
The correspondence between sequences (v.43-70) in A3 and (v.101-115) in B3:

Sequence (v.43-70):

43 You who BELIEVE! 8 Do not go near the PRAYER 7 while you are in the state of drunkenness 4 [but wait] until you know what you are saying: 4 or (when you are) defiled, 4 unless (you are) travelers (on the) way, 4 until you have bathed. 5 But if you are ill, or on a journey, 1 or if one of you has come from the toilet, 1 or have touched women, 4 and you do not find any water, 1 take pure earth, 5 and wipe your faces and your hands, 4 Surely, God is pardoning, forgiving. 44 Do you not see 8 those who have been given a portion of the Book? 8 They purchase error 4 and wish you that you would go astray from the WAY. 45 God knows about YOUR ENEMIES. 8 God is sufficient as an ally, 8 and God is sufficient as a helper. 46 Some of those who are Jews 8 alter words from their positions, 7 and they say, 'We hear and disobey,' 4 and 'Hear, and do not hear,' 7 and 'Observe us,' 7 twisting with their tongues 8 and vilifying the religion. 7 If they had said, 'We hear and obey,' 7 and 'Hear,' 7 and 'Regard us,' 7 it would indeed have been better for them, 7 and more just. 7 But God has cursed them for their disbelief, 7 and so they do not believe, except for a few. 47 You who have been given the Book! 1 Believe in what We have sent down, 1 confirming what is with you, 1 before We obliterate faces, 1 and turn them in their backs, 1 curse them as We cursed the men of the Sabbath, 7 and God's command is done. 48 Surely God does not forgive 8 (anything) being associated with Him, 7 but He forgives what is other than that 8 for whomsoever He pleases. 7 Whoever associate (anything) with God 1 has forged a great sin. 49 Do you not see 8 those who claim purity for themselves? 7 No! (It is) God (who) purifies whoever He pleases- 4 and they will not be done evil in the slightest. 50 See 8 how they forge lies against God. 7 That suffices as a clear sin.

51 Do you not see 8 those who have been given a portion of the Book? 8 They believe in al-jibt and al-taghût, 4 and they say to those who disbelieve, 4 'These are better guided (as to the) WAY than 4 those who believe.' 52 Those are the ones whom God has cursed, 8 and whomever God has cursed— 5 for him you will not find any helper. 53 Or do they have a portion of the kingdom? 8 If that were so, they do not give THE PEOPLE the slightest thing. 54 Or are they jealous of THE PEOPLE 8 for what God has given them of His favor? 7 Yet We gave the House of Abraham 4 the Book and the wisdom, 4 and We gave them a great kingdom. 55 (There are) some o them who believe in it, 8 and some of them who keep (people) from it. 7 Gehenna is sufficient 4 as a blazing (Fire). 56 Surely those who disbelieve in Our signs— 7 We shall burn them in a FIRE. 7 Whenever their skins are completely burned, 8 We shall exchange their skins for others, 7 so that they may (continue to) feel the punishment. 7 Surely God is mighty, wise. 57 But those who BELIEVE 8 and do righteous deeds— 7 We shall cause them to enter GARDENS 8 though which RIVERS flow, 7 there to remain forever. 7 There they will have pure spouses, 8 and We shall cause them to enter sheltering shade.

58 Surely God COMMANDS you 8 to pay back deposits to their (rightful) owners, 7 and when you JUDGE between the people, 4 to judge with justice. 7 Surely God gives you admonition which is excellent. 7 Surely God is hearing, seeing. 59 You who believe! 8 Obey God 8 and obey the messenger 8 and (those who) have the command among you. 7 If you argue about anything, 1 refer it to God and the MESSENGER, 8 if you believe in God and the Last Day. 7 That is better and fairer in interpretation. 60 Do you not see 8 those who claim that 7 they believe in what has been sent down to you, 4 and what was sent down before you? 7 They wish to go (with their disputes) to al-taghût for JUDGMENT. 7 Yet they have been commanded to disbelieve in him. 4 Satan whishes to lead them very far astray. 61 When it is said to them, 7 'Come to what God has sent down,' 7 and to the MESSENGER,' 7 you see the hypocrites 8 keeping (people) from you. 62 How (will it be) when a smiting smites them 8 for what (their own) hands have sent forward? 7 Then they will come to you swearing. 'By God! ' 8 We wanted nothing but good and reconciliation. 63 Those are the ones who—— 7 God knows what is in their hearts. 7 So turn away from them, 4 and admonish them, 4 and speak to the effective words about themselves. 64 We have not sent any MESSENGER, 7 except that he should be obeyed, 7 by the permission of God. 7 If, when they did themselves evil, 7 they had come to you 1 and asked forgiveness from God, 7 and the MESSENGER had asked forgiveness for them, 7 they would indeed have found God turning (in forgiveness), compassionate. 65 But no! By your Lord! 7 They will not believe 7 until they make you JUDGE concerning their disputes. 7 Then they would have ‘no difficulty' 7 with what you decided, 7 and would submit (in full) submission. 66 If We had prescribed for them: 7 'Kill one another' 8 or 'Go forth from your homes,' 7 they would not have done it, 7 except for a few of them. 67 Yet if they had done 8 what they were admonished (to do), 8 it would indeed have been BETTER for them, 1 and a firmer foundation (for them). 67 And then We would indeed have given them 8 a great reward from Us, 68 and indeed guided them 8 to a straight path. 69 Whoever obeys God and the messenger 8 are with those whom 7 God has blessed: 4 the prophets, and the truthful, and the martyrs, and the righteous. 8 Those are good companions! 70 That is the favor of GOD. 8 GOD is sufficient as a knower.
Sequence (v.101-115):

103. WHEN you STRIKE FORTH on the earth, b (there is) no blame on you 4 to shorten the PRAYER. 4 if you fear that 4 those who DISBELIEVE may attack you. 1 Surely the DISBELIEVERS are your clear ENEMIES. 102. WHEN you are among them, b and establish the PRAYER for them, 4 let a contingent of them stand with you, 4 and let them take their weapons. 4 When they have prostrated themselves, 1 let them be behind you, 4 and let another contingent (which has) b not prayed come (forward) 1 and pray with you. 1 Let them take precautions and their weapons. 4 Those who disbelieve want you to be oblivious of your weapons and your baggage. 4 Then they would launch an attack on you (all at) once. 4 (There is) no blame on you 4 if you lay down your weapons 4 because of the harmful effect of rain on you 4 or (because) you are sick. 1 But take your precautions. 1 Surely God has prepared for the DISBELIEVERS a humiliating punishment. 101. WHEN you have finished the PRAYER, 4 remember God, 4 whether standing or sitting or (lying) on your sides. 4 Then, WHEN you are secure, 4 observe the PRAYER. 4 Surely the PRAYER is a written decree for the BELIEVERS at appointed times, 104. But do not grow weak in seeking out the enemy. 4 If you are suffering, 4 surely they (too) are suffering as you are suffering, 4 while what you hope for from God they do not hope for. 4 God is knowing, wise.

Both sequences are about the people who disobey (some of the Jews and the hypocrites).

The believers are addressed in the beginnings of both sequences with laws and instructions. The theme of prayer occurs also in the first extremes: purity (v.43) and description of the prayer (v.101-104). As shown earlier, the theme of prayer symbolizes the idea of way/direction.

Correspondingly, the end of (v.43-70) refers to a straight path (v.68) while the end of B3 refers to it as "the way of the believers" (v.115). The theme of obeying the Prophet and the Qur'ān which occurs in the first sequence is emphasized in the second sequence through the theme of the Prophet’s leadership and judgment. The Prophet is the authority of the community during conflicts (v.59) and he is the leader of the prayer during war (v.102). He is addressed to see the disloyal attitude of the People of the Scripture (v.44-47) and the disobedience of the hypocrites claiming belief but wishing to seek al-tāghūt’s judgment (v.60). Both sequences end with similar phrases and antithetical meanings regarding obedience and disobedience:

"Whoever obeys God and the MESSENGER are with those whom 4 God has BLESSED: the prophets, and the truthful, and the martyrs, and the righteous. 4 Those are good companions! That is the favor of GOD. b GOD is sufficient as a knower" (69-70).
“But whoever breaks with the MESSENGER of the guidance has become clear to him, and follows a way other (than that) of the BELIEVERS. We shall turn him (over) to what he has turned to, and burn him in Gehenna- and it is an evil destination” (v.115).

The themes of God’s favor and revelation occur in both sequences. God’s favor (revelation) that is given to the Prophet and people occurs in (v.54) in the context of mentioning the envious People of the Scripture who were given a portion of the Book, but they attempted to lead the believers astray (v.44). Likewise, God’s favor and mercy are bestowed upon the Prophet to protect him from the hypocrites trying to lead him astray (v.113). This favor relates to the Book, wisdom, knowledge, and guidance (v.113, 115). Thus, God’s favor and the revelation are parallels. Also, this favor is the same favor bestowed upon the House of Abraham: “Yet We gave the House of Abraham the BOOK and the WISDOM, and We gave them a GREAT kingdom” (54c-e) and “God has sent down on you the BOOK and the WISDOM, and He has taught you what you did not know. The favor of God on you is GREAT” (113g-i).

In addition, God’s favor has to do with God’s reward and guidance towards His way. God’s reward for obedience in the end of (v.43-70) is referred to as the favor of God (v.70). The mention of God’s reward (v.67), guidance to a straight path (v.68), and the company of the blessed people in (v.69) are echoed in referring to God’s reward of righteous deeds (v.114) and obeying the Prophet, the clear “guidance,” and the believers’ way (v.115). Those blessed people in (v.69) are the believers in (v.115). The ends of both sequences refer to the Last Day’s events: the reward of the believers (v.67-69) and the reward of righteous people (v.114) destiny of disobeying people “Gehenna” (v.115).

Also, the central parts of sub-sequence (v.43-57) and sub-sequence (v.105-115) are corresponding. Both mention sins although the first center is about unforgivable sin (shirk) while the second center mentions evil deeds coupled with God’s forgiveness. Every person is
responsible for his own evil deeds. Forging lies (v.50) corresponds with blaming an innocent person (v.112). Similar and identical terms occur in both centers:

\[\text{(v.48 a) Surely GOD DOES NOT FORGIVE anything being associated with Him, but He FORGIVES what is other than that for whomever He pleases. (v.50) WHOMEVER associate (anything) with God has forged a GREAT SIN. (v.49 a) Do you not see those who claim purity for THEMSELVES? (v.60) No! (It is) God (who) purifies whoever He pleases- and they will not be done EVIL in the slightest. (v.50 a) See how they forge lies against God. (v.49-50).} \]

\[\text{(v.110 a) WHOEVER does EVIL or does HIMSELF EVIL, (and) then ASKS FORGIVENESS from God, he will find GOD is FORGIVING, COMPASSIONATE. (v.111 a) WHOEVER earns SIN, only earns it against HIMSELF. (v.112 a) WHOMEVER earns a MISTAKE or SIN, (and) then hurls it against an innocent person, will bear (the burden of) slander and CLEAR SIN} \]

The following are some of the links between the two sequences:

- The recurrence of the root N-F-S: “about themselves” (v.63), “they did themselves evil” (v.64), “thumma lā yajidū fῑ anfusihim ḥaraj-an/they would have no difficulty with what you decided” (v.65), “Kill anfusakum/one another” (v.66), “those who betray themselves” (v.107), “does himself evil” (v.110), “against himself” (v.111), “they only lead themselves astray” (v.113).

- Similar phrases: “Surely GOD COMMANDS you to pay back deposits to their (rightful) owners, and when judge between the PEOPLE, to judge with justice” (58a-d) and “except for the one who COMMANDS voluntary giving, or what is right, or setting (things) right among the PEOPLE” (114b-d).

- Similar/identical terms: “the prayer” (v.43, 101-103), “water” (v.43), “rivers” (v.57) and “rain” (v.102), “sick/ill” (v.43, 102), “enemies” (v.45, 101).

- Corresponding meanings: “unless (you are) travelers (on the) way... or on a journey” (v.43) and “When you strike forth on the earth” (v.101).

- The punishment of the disbelievers “Gehenna is sufficient as a blazing (Fire)” (v.55) and “WE shall burn them in a FIRE so that they may (continue to) feel the
"PUNISHMENT" (v.56) are echoed in the reference “Surely GOD has prepared for the disbelievers a humiliating PUNISHMENT” (v.102).

- The occurrence of the same term: “and speak to them effective WORDS about themselves” (v.63), “when they plan by night (with) /the WORDS HE finds displeasing” (v.108).

- The verse “If, when, they did themselves EVIL, they had come to you ASK FORGIVENESS from God, and the messenger has asked forgiveness for them, they would indeed have found God turning (in forgiveness) and compassionate” (v.64) is similar to the center “Whoever does EVIL or does himself EVIL, (and) then ASKS FORGIVENESS from God, he will find God is forgiving, compassionate” (v.110).

Finally, the tradition associates the part (v.105-109) about the betraying hypocrites with one of the Jews. The authenticity of the report about the theft incident can be confirmed through ring-structural reading of both parallel sub-sequences, through the beginning of (v.43-70) on the People of the Scripture, and through pairing Q 4 to Q 5 which contains a passage about the punishment of stealing (Q 5:38-39). In the tradition, the hypocrites accused an innocent Jew in order to advocate one of them. The hypocrites are concerned only with their personal benefits and they do not spare an effort to achieve them even through betrayal. The reference to the innocent Jew is found in (v.112) and it will reappear in B2 when mentioning the Jews’ violations of the covenant and their attempt to kill an innocent Jew/Jesus.

The rhetorical analysis of the sub-sections A3 and B3 surrounding the surah’s center has been completed. The following parts will show the coherence of each sub-section in relation to the center in general with mentioning some reflections and correlations.

The correspondence between sub-section A3 and the sūrah’s center:

Sequence (v.43-70) starts with addressing the believers to perform prayer with full purity (v.43) and it ends with stating the reward of the obedient who will be joining in the Last Day the blessed people guided by God (v.69-70). The themes of God’s Oneness (no shirk/association) and God purifying whom He wants are emphasized in the context of mentioning the People of the Scripture (Jews) purchasing error, wanting the believers to go astray and lose al-sabīl/the way (or the direction), disobeying the Prophet, and believing in al-jibt and al-ṭāghūt (v.44-47). Bringing up God’s commands for social justice, another example of disobeying people occurs. The believers are called to obey God, the Prophet, and people in authority and to refer to God and the Prophet when facing conflict “if they believe in God and the Last Day” (v.59). Believing in the Qur’ān and in the previous revelation entails obeying the Prophet’s judgment because the hypocrites (impure/fake believers) want the rule of al-ṭāghūt and Satan wants them to go astray (v.60-62). As God is the One who purifies people, God knows what is in their hearts (v.63). The sign of truthful belief, God swears, is to come repenting to the Prophet and accepting his judgment with complete and true submission (v.64-65).

The central pivot of the sūrah (v.87) runs throughout the whole system. God’s Oneness vs. shirk/al-jibt/al-ṭāghūt is obvious. God knows the true and impure/fake believers. The Divine authority, dominion, aid, and power and a number of God’s names and attributes are dominant everywhere in this sequence. Thus, the first segment (87a) is present. The central emphasis on the Day of Resurrection (87b-c) can be found in mentioning the Last Day, punishment, and reward in (v.47, 55-57, 59, 67-69). The last segment (87d) referring to God’s report can be seen in the mention of a revelation sent down to the Prophet and the affirmation of its authenticity in relation to previous revelation (v.47, 60). What was given to the People of the Scripture is only a
portion and now a revelation carrying the same divine status is given to the Prophet whom the addressees must obey if they believe in God and the Last Day (v.46, 59, 64-65, 69).

The second sequence (v.71-86) in A3 is a continuation of the theme of obedience of the Prophet and his scripture in the context of the order of fighting in God’s way. Now al-sabīl, sabīl-an, and ṣīrāt-an mustaqīm-an occurred in sequence 1 become sabīl-i Allah (God’s way). Pure/true believers, unlike the hypocrites, will obey God’s order. Dissimilarly to Jews purchasing error, the believers sell this life for Hereafter and fight for the sake of God not in al- ṭāghūt’s way and Satan’s allies (v.71-76). The command to fight is justified as serving to remove social and religious oppression happening to weak men, women, and children. The hypocrites would fight only for the spoils of war and view death in God’s way as a loss (v.72-73). Thus, they are told that the enjoyment of this life is little in comparison to Hereafter’s reward (v.77). They fear people (not from God) and they do not understand that death can happen to them wherever they are and fortunes and misfortunes in war come from God (v.78). The Prophet’s authority is emphasized and witnessed by God and whatever good occurs to him (and people) is from God and evil is from “yourself” (one’s self) (v.79). Again the Prophet must be obeyed because whoever obeys him, obeys God (v.80). The impure hypocrites claim obedience, but God knows their bad intentions and plans (v.81). It would be better for them to understand the Qurʾān and realize its divine origin because it is coherent and has no contradiction (v.82) while the hypocrites’ claim of belief and obedience are contradictory with their actions. They are exhorted to refer things to the Prophet and Muslim authority (v.83). Because of God’s favor and mercy the Prophet and pure believers do not follow Satan (v.83). The Prophet is ordered to fight in God’s way (he is “responsible for himself”) and to encourage the believers to fight because God will deter the disbelievers, He is more Powerful (v.84). As the sequence begins with fighting (v.71),
laws of fighting regarding intercession and greeting are provided and God is Watching and Reckoning of everything (v.85-86).

This sequence relates to the sūrah’s center through the idea of God’s way vs. al-ṭāghūt’s way (seeking worldly reward, allying with Satan, fearing death and people). The theme of fighting is employed to facilitate believing in God’s Oneness, Power, Favor, Mercy, Knowledge, Justice, Control, and Agency and fearing from God only. All good is from God while people’s evil deeds and disobedience are from themselves. The other central point regarding the Day of Resurrection can be seen in mentioning the Hereafter vs. this life, the natural law of death, and the reward and punishment of deeds. The idea of death (wherever people are, never escaped by humans) serves the certainty of the Resurrection and gathering people to that Day. The Qur’ān stated in the context of obeying God and the Prophet complements and explains the truth of God’s report (87d). The Qur’ān is from God (as all good is from God) and has no contradiction (v.82) and this corresponds with “Who is more truthful than God in report” (87d).

The correspondence between sub-sections B3 and the sūrah’s center:

The center is reemphasized in a context similar to sub-section A3’s. The end of A3 mentions the Qur’ān’s authenticity in the context of ordering the Prophet and the believers to fight in God’s way while the hypocrites are depicted planning disobedience. The first sequence (v.88-100) in B3 continues mentioning the theme of fighting in God’s way and presents a complementing idea which is emigration in God’s way. Now the theme of “the way” is coupled with the idea of leaving the evil community for the new community. This system starts with instructing the believers about the hypocrites who went astray because of their disbelief and disobeying deeds (v.88-89). The believers are ordered not to take them as friends unless they
show the sign of true belief through emigration in God’s way (v.89). The end of the sequence rebukes those who did not emigrate in God’s wide earth and it emphasizes the reward of emigration to God and His messenger (v.100). In the middle of the system, different laws and manners of fighting in God’s way are provided to complement the theme of emigration to the new community.

The second sequence (v.101-115) in B3 continues providing laws during fighting and emphasizing the Prophet’s and the Book’s authority of the new community. A prayer’s law during wars and travelling is established (v.101) followed by the description of the prayer and placing the Prophet as the leader of prayer during wars (v.102-104). The Prophet is ordered to judge between people with the scripture sent down (v.105) and to not advocate on behalf of those who betray and are hiding themselves from the community, but God is with them and knows their conspiracies secretly planned (v.106-108). Because of their evil deeds, they will neither be advocated nor guarded by anyone on the Day of Resurrection before God (v.109). The judgment rules of the Resurrection Day by God are provided. Whoever does wrong, it is earned against himself unless he repents and God is forgiving and Compassionate (v.110-111) and who blames an innocent for a sin, he himself bears the sin’s burden (v.112). Again because of God’s Favor and Mercy, the Prophet was protected from those who attempt to lead him astray. The Book and Wisdom were sent down on him and he was taught by God what he did not know (v.113). Hell will be the destination of those who disobey and do not follow the believers’ way after the guidance was clarified (v.115).

The whole sub-section B3 reveals many relations to the center (v.87). God’s Oneness is stressed through establishment of laws and manners, Divine promise of great reward and great and lasting punishment, God’s earth (ownership), God’s knowledge of everything (belief and
disbelief in hearts), and Divine guidance (the Book and wisdom). The Resurrection Day is mentioned (v.109) in the context of showing the betraying people being presented before God with no advocate or helper. The whole system has references to that Day’s punishment and reward (v.93-97, 102, 114-115). Antithetically, this present life is mentioned twice (v.94, 109). One of the places (v.94) shows the difference between the gains of this life and what God will provide for the obeying believers. Also, the theme of death is present, either by nature or during war (including murder). People will be gathered to that Day and each person will be reckoned for his own actions whether good or evil and God knows and encompasses everything. In this sequence, the Qur’ān is referred to as “the Book and Wisdom” (v.105, 113) and “al-hudā/the guidance” (v.115). The Book comes with “the truth” (v.105) and this corresponds with God’s truthful report (v.87). This truth includes all the laws pertaining to the system to guide the community. The phrase in the beginning of A3 “the way” (v.44) is now identified as the believers’ way in the end of B3 (v.115) and all in between explains and purifies the way and symbolizes the way of returning to God, the Owner of the earth, in this world and on the Resurrection Day. This way requires full submission of hearts and acts to One God, taking one side, and disbelieving in all deities and lies. Finally, the belief in God’s Oneness requires believing in the Last Day and doing good deeds in this present life according to His revelation.

As shown above, the center of the sūrah identified through ring-compositional analysis conveys God’s Oneness and truthful Words and emphasizes the truth of the Resurrection Day. The surrounding sub-sections A3 and B3 affirm and stress the center through similar and complementing themes and contexts. Purification through the prayer’s laws, obeying the Prophet and the Qur’ān, and fighting in God’s way in A3 are symbols of pure belief and good deeds. In parallel, emigration in God’s way, striving in God’s way with self and possession, observing the
prayer in war and peace, and following the believers’ way indicate truthful faith. All these deeds require struggling with the self, its desires, and its attachment to worldly goods to obey the commands. God in both sub-sections watches and encompasses of everything (good/pure and evil/impure intentions and actions).

God’s way, a straight path, and the believers’ way are identical. The idea of “a way/a path/the way” in both A3 and B3 indicates an implication of heading towards something or a direction. This life is a way towards God again as it is given by God at the first time (v.1). This way includes different tests until death, and guidance is provided. Death cannot be escaped as the truth of the Resurrection Day “there is no doubt” (v.87). Thus, it is better for the disobeying people to understand the Qur’ān and to purify their belief/self before facing their deeds on the Last Day. God knows what in the hearts and He is Forgiving, Compassionate.
(c) Structure of Middle Rings

The middle rings contain sub-sections A2 and B2. The two sub-sections are in mirror-image with central passages. Each sub-section contains two sequences. First, sub-section A2 will be analyzed then sub-section B2 will be examined, followed by showing their relations to the sūrah’s center and other sub-sections.

**Sub-section A2 (Q 4:13-42)**

*Sub-section A2*  Divine Limits, Obedience/Disobedience, Reward and Punishment  
4:13-14

- Immorality, Repentance, Lawful and Unlawful Marriages (women)  
4:15-25

- **Divine clarification of laws and lightning burden, Man’s vulnerability**  
4:26-28

- Women’s property, Marriage’s problem  
4:29-35

Worshiping God/ no association, Charity, Divine Judgment  
4:36-42

**Sub-section B2 (Q 4:126-175)**

*Sub-section B2*  Worshiping God/ no association, Satan, Abraham  
4:116-126

- Be Just to Women as Told in Scripture, Marriage’s Problem  
4:127-130

- **Divine Ownership of Heavens and Earth**  
4:131-132

- Be Just and Believing and not Take Hypocrites Allies  
4:133-152

People of Scripture’s Violations of God’s Covenant and Revelation  
4:153-175
Sub-section A2 (Q 4:13-42) God’s Limits, Clarification, Judgment

This sub-section contains two sequences, (v.13-25) and (v.29-42), arranged concentrically around (v.26-28).

Sequence 1 (Q 4:13-25)

Sequence 1 has a part (v.13-14) and sub-sequence (v.15-25) arranged in mirror-structure. The first part is not equal in length to the sub-sequence (v.15-25), but it is explained by it.

Part 1 (Q 4:13-14) Divine Limits, Obedience/Disobedience, Reward and Punishment:

13. a Those are the LIMITS (set by) God. b WHOEVER obeys God and His messenger –
   c He will cause him to enter GARDENS, d through which rivers flow, e THERE TO REMAIN. f That is the great triumph.

14. a But WHOEVER disobeys God and His messenger, b and transgresses His LIMITS –
   c He will cause him to enter the FIRE, d THERE TO REMAIN. e For him (there is) a humiliating punishment.

This part contains two antithetical parallel pieces. The main theme is God’s limits and people’s responses to them. This part relates to the preceding sub-section A1 through:

- Median phrases: “Those are the limits (set by) God” (13a), “(this is) an injunction from God” (v.12). Also, similar meanings occur in A1: “God enjoins (this) upon you” (v.11) and “(therefore this) ordinance from God” (v.11).

- Similar meanings: “enter to the Fire ... For him (there is) a humiliating punishment” (14c,e), in A1 “and they will burn in a blazing (Fire)” (v.10).

Thematically, this part corresponds with the social and financial laws mentioned in A1. It affirms that God, the Creator (v.1), sets limits because the established community needs new limits to replace the remnants of pre-Islamic practices. The repeated order to be conscious of God in (v.1) corresponds with the meaning of obedience in (v.13). The themes of God’s limits and the reward and punishment link this part to the sūrah’s center. The covenant with God (v.87) requires
obeying God’s and the Prophet’s authority. Obedience and disobedience will be accounted for on the Day of Resurrection.

Sub-sequence 2 (Q 4:15-25) Immorality, Repentance, Lawful and unlawful marriages (women):

(A)
15. (As for) those of your WOMEN who commit immorality, b call witnesses against them, four of you. c If they bear witness (to the truth of the allegation), d confine them in their houses e until DEATH takes them, f or God makes a way for (dealing with) them.
16. (if) you commit it, b harm both of them. c But if they turn (in repentance) and set (things) right, d let them be. e Surely God turns (in forgiveness), compassionate.
17. (But) God only turns (in forgiveness) b to those who do EVIL in ignorance, c (and) then turn (in repentance) soon after. d Then God will turn to them (in forgiveness). e God is knowing, wise.
18. (But) (His) turning (in forgiveness) is not b for those who continue to do EVIL DEEDS, c and only when DEATH approaches say, d Surely I turn (in repentance) now, e Nor (does He turn in forgiveness) to those who die f while they are still disbelievers. g Those- for them We have prepared a painful PUNISHMENT.

(B)
19. (You who believe) b It is NOT PERMITTED TO YOU c to inherit WOMEN against their will. d And do not prevent them, e so that you may take part of what you have given them, f unless they commit clear immorality. g Associate with them rightfully. h If you dislike them, i it may be that you dislike something j in which God has placed much GOOD.
20. (And if you wish) b to exchange a wife for (another) wife, c and you have given one of them a qintār, d take (back) none of it. e Would you take it (back) by slander and clear SIN?
21. (How can you take it (back),) b seeing that one of you has gone into the other, c and they have taken a firm pledge from you?
22. (Do not marry) b WOMEN whom your fathers have married, c unless it is a thing of the past. d Surely it is an immorality, e an abhorrent thing, and an evil way.

(B’)
23. (FORBIDDEN TO YOU are:) b your mothers, your daughters, your sisters, your parental aunts, your maternal aunts, c (your) brothers’ daughters, (your) sisters’ daughters, d the mothers who have nursed you, e (those who are) your sisters by nursing, f your wives’ mothers, g and your stepdaughters who are in your care, h (born) of wives you have gone into, i but if they have not gone into them, j (there is) no blame on you. k wives of your sons, l those of your own lions, m and that you should have two sisters at the same time, n unless it is a thing of the past. o Surely God is forgiving, compassionate.
24. (And (also forbidden to you are) married WOMEN,) b except what your right (hands) own. p (This is) a written decree of God for you. q (All women) beyond that ARE PERMITTED TO YOU r to seek (to obtain) by means of your wealth, s taking (them) in marriage, not in immorality. t So (because of) what you enjoy from them in this way, b give them their marriage gifts an obligation. u (There is) no blame on you v in anything you may give them by mutual agreement k beyond this obligation. v Surely God is knowing, wise.

(A’)
25. (Whoever among you cannot wait) b to MARRY believing, free women, c (let them take) believing young women d from what your right (hands) own. e God knows your belief, f the one of you is as the other. g MARRY them with the permission of their families, h and give them their rightful marriage gifts, i (as) married women, not (as) women who commit immorality j or take secret lovers. k But if they commit immorality l after they are married, m they will be liable to half n the PUNISHMENT (inflicted on free women). o That (provision) is for those of you who fear SIN. p Yet to be patient (would be) BETTER for you. q God is forgiving, compassionate.

This sub-sequence is composed of two passages, (v.15-22) and (v.23-25), arranged in mirror-formation. The whole sub-sequence is linked through the term “fāḥishah/immorality” which echoes the meaning of God’s limits (v.13-14). The whole sub-ring is about lawful and
unlawful social practices. Some of these practices were pre-Islamic. Regulating the community continues in this sub-ring and more limits are provided regarding women and their rights.

**Passage 1 (Q 4:15-22):**

(A)

15. "(As for) those of your WOMEN WHO COMMIT IMMORALITY," call witnesses against them, four of you. If they bear witness (to the truth of the allegation), confine them in their houses until DEATH takes them, or GOD makes a WAY for (dealing with) them.

16. "And (if) you COMMIT it, harm both of them. But if they TURN (in repentance) and set (things) right, let them be. Surely GOD TURNS (in forgiveness), compassionate."

17. "But God only TURNS (in forgiveness) to those who DO EVIL, in ignorance, and then TURN (in repentance) soon after. Then GOD will TURN to them (in forgiveness). GOD is knowing, wise."

(B)

19. "You who believe! It is NOT PERMITTED TO YOU to inherit WOMEN against their will. And DO NOT prevent them, so that you may TAKE part of what you have given them, unless they COMMIT CLEAR IMMORALITY. Associate with them rightfully."

20. "And if you wish to exchange a WIFE for (another) WIFE, and you have given one of them a qintār/great sum, TAKE (back) NONE of it. Would you TAKE it (back by) SLANDER and CLEAR SIN?"

21. "How can you TAKE it (back), seeing that one of you has gone into the other, and they have TAKEN a firm pledge from you?"

22. "DO NOT MARRY WOMEN whom your fathers have married, unless it is a thing of the past. Surely it is an IMMORALITY, an ABHORRENT thing, and an EVIL WAY."

Part A, arranged in mirror-form, is about committing immoral deeds coupled with stressing the theme of repentance before death and providing a way for the sinner/disobeying people to return to God. There are people doing evil “in ignorance” (17b), but they soon repent (17c) and their repentance will be accepted by God (17a) whereas they who continuing their evil deeds/disbelief and only declare their repentance when they face death are sinners and disbelievers (v.18). Their late repentance will not be accepted (18a). The term “death” occurs in the extremes (15e, 18c). The terms “immorality,” “do evil,” “do evil deeds,” and “disbelievers”
are corresponding and linking the whole part. The occurrence of the theme of repentance in this location (the extreme of sub-section A2) corresponds with the central part (v.26-28) of the whole sub-section.

Part B (v.19-22) has three pieces arranged in parallelism: (v.19), (v.20-21), and (v.22). It presents pre-Islamic practices that should be changed to God’s laws. Women were inherited in Jāhiliyyah when their husbands died and their husbands’ families either forced them to marry a family member or to prevent them from marrying men outside the husband’s kinship.\(^{165}\) The reason behind this practice is to not allow the husband’s property or the marriage gift to go to strangers.\(^{166}\) Also, it is reported that during the Prophet’s ministry a widow was inherited by her husband’s son (“step-son”) and the verse (v.22) was revealed to ban this kind of inheritance.\(^{167}\) Marrying fathers’ wives is not allowed and is considered as an immoral conduct. Also, the theme of immorality links this part to part A. The meaning of the word “\(\text{maqt-an/an abhorrent}\)” \(^{(22e)}\) corresponds with the meaning of the repeated words: “\(\text{karh-an/against their will}…\text{If you karihtumūhunna/dislike them, it may be that you takrahū/dislike something}…\)” \(^{(19a, h-i)}\). The three pieces are linked through the phrases: “\(\text{It is NOT PERMITTED TO YOU... And DO NOT prevent them}\)” \(^{(19b,d)}\), “\(\text{take (back) NONE of it}\)” \(^{(20d)}\), and “\(\text{DO NOT marry}\)” \(^{(22a)}\). The terms “\(\text{women}\)” \(^{(19c, 22b)}\) and “\(\text{wife}\)” \(^{(20b)}\) link the whole part.

The extremes contain identical terms: “\(\text{immorality}\)” \(^{(15a, 22d)}\), “\(\text{women}\)” \(^{(15a, 22b)}\), “\(\text{or God makes a WAY for (dealing with) them}\)” \(^{(15f)}\), “\(\text{an evil WAY}\)” \(^{(22e)}\) and similar ideas: committing immorality (v.15-16) and considering marrying father’s wives immoral (v.22). Also,

\(^{165}\) Nasr and others, \textit{The Study Qur’an}, 197.
\(^{166}\) Ibid., 197.
\(^{167}\) Ibid., 197.
the extremes contain antithetical meanings: “immorality” (15a) and “and they have taken a firm pledge from you” (21c). There are also some rhetorical links between the two parts:

- Corresponding phrases: “their houses” (15d) and “exchange a wife makāna zawj-in/for (another) wife” (20b). The term “makāna” means literally a place and it corresponds with “houses.” It symbolizes marrying to a new wife and bringing her to the house.

- Antithetical phrases: “they are still disbelievers” (18f) and “You who believe” (19a).

- Identical terms: “when death confronts one of them” (18c), “even if you have given to one of them a great sum” (20c).

**Passage 2 (Q 4:23-25):**

(B')

23. a FORBIDDEN TO YOU are:

   b your mothers, your daughters, your sisters, your parental aunts, your maternal aunts,
   c (your) brothers’ daughters, (your) sisters’ daughters,
   d the mothers who have nursed you, e (those who are) your sisters by nursing,
   f your wives’ mothers, g and your stepdaughters who are in your care, h (born) of wives your have gone into-
   i but if they have not gone into them, j (there is) no blame on you-
   k a wives of you sons, ℓ those of your own lions,
   m and that you should have two sisters at the same time, n unless it is a thing of the past.
   o Surely God is forgiving, compassionate.

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24. a And (also forbidden to you are) married WOMEN, b except what your right (hands) own.

   c (This is) a written decree of God for you.

   d (All women) beyond that ARE PERMITTED TO YOU e to seek (to obtain) by means of your WEALTH,
   f taking (them) in marriage, not in immorality.

   g So (because of) what you enjoy from them in this way, h give them THEIR MARRIAGE GIFTS an obligation.
   i (There is) no blame on you j in anything you may give them by mutual agreement k beyond this obligation.
   l Surely God is knowing, wise.

(A')

25. a Whoever among you CANNOT WAIT b to MARRY believing, free women,

   c (let them take) believing young women d from what your right (hands) own.
   e God knows your belief, f the one of you is as the other.

   f MARRY them with the permission of their families, g and give them their rightful marriage gifts,
   h (as) married women, not (as) women who commit immorality i or take secret lovers.

   i But if they commit immorality j after they are MARRIED,
   k they will be liable to half ℓ the punishment (inflicted) on free women.

m That (provision) is for those of you who fear SIN.

n Yet to BE PATIENT (would be) better for you.

o God is forgiving, compassionate.
This passage is about unlawful and lawful marriages. It is linked to the previous one through similar meanings and phrases: “DO NOT marry women whom your fathers have married” (22a-b) and “FORBIDDEN to you are: your mothers” (23a). The term “women” (23f, h, 24a) is repeated and links the two parts. Additionally, an identical phrase occurs in the end of the previous passage and the beginning of this passage: “unless it is a thing of the past” (22c, 23n).

Part B’ contains two parallel pieces and states the unlawfulness and lawfulness of marriages. All women except the listed women are lawful to be married if they are given their dowries. Part A’, composed in mirror-image, is about marrying believing slaves if the man is unable to marry a free woman. Slaves should be given their dowries by poor men and be allowed to get married by their families.168 The phrases “give them their marriage gifts as bil-ma’rūf/an obligation” (24h) and “and give them their rightful marriage gifts” (25h) complement the theme of women’s dowries in part B (v.20-21).

The passage at hand is connected through the repetition of some identical and similar phrases:

- In the extremes: “Surely God is forgiving, compassionate” (23o), “God is forgiving, compassionate” (25q).
- The phrase “(There is) no blame on you” (23j), (24i) occurs twice.
- The phrase “what your right (hands) own” (24b), (25c) occurs twice.

168 The term “ṭawl-an” in “Whoever among you cannot tawl-an/wait to marry believing, free women” (25a) does not mean wait literally, but it indicates the meaning of lack of wealth that enables a man to marry a free woman (See al-Ṭabarī, Jāmi‘ al-Bayān, 8:184-185).
- The similarity between the phrases: “Ḥurrimat ‘ālykum/Forbidden to you” (23a) and “kitāb Allah ‘ālykum/(This is) a written decree of God for you” (24c).

The pre-Islamic practice dismissed in part B’ is that of marrying two sisters at the same time (23m). This law occurs in the context of mentioning unlawful women for marriage. This part mentions the bodily part “ḥujūrikum/your care” (literally means your laps). The term is used to refer to step-daughters. This shows the correspondence between the mention of step-sons in the end of part B (v.19-22) and the reference to step-daughters in part B’.

Corresponding ideas occur in the beginning and end of this passage. It starts with forbidden marriages (v.23, 24a) and ends with mentioning immorality (25k-n) while the middle pieces address the lawful marriages (24b-l, 25a-j). This construction is similar to the previous passage’s composition. The passage (v.15-22) mentions unlawful acts in the extremes as well.

The whole sub-sequence is linked through:


- The recurrence of similar phrases: “you have given yourselves to one another” (21b), “the one of you is as the other” (25f).

- Corresponding meanings and identical words: “associate with them bil-ma’rūf/rightfully” (19g), “give them their marriage gifts as bil-ma’rūf/an obligation” (25h).

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169 Rāzī states that the term “ḥijir” symbolizes the meaning of taking care/upbringing and it is taken from having a child sitting in one’s lap. He also shows that Abū ‘Obaydh states that the term “ḥujūrikum” refers to houses (See Rāzī’s interpretation of (Q 4:23) in al-Rāzī, Mafāṭīḥ al-Ghayb, 5:27-28). The reference to houses corresponds with mentioning the terms “houses” and “makāna/place” in the first passage’s first part (v.15-18). Thus, step-daughters raised by their mothers’ husbands in their houses are forbidden.

170 Nasr and others, The Study Qur’an, 200.
- The theme of repentance in part A is reflected in the occurrence of the repeated phrase in passage 2: “Surely God is forgiving, compassionate” (23o), “God is forgiving, compassionate” (25q).
- Antithetical meanings with the same verb: “lā yaḥillu lakum/it is not permitted to you” (19b), “wa ‘uḥilla lakum/(All women) beyond that are permitted you” (24d). The same root is also occurs in “and ḥalā’ilu/wives of your sons” (23k).

The correspondence between sub-sequence 1 (v.15-25) in A2 and sub-section A1:

Sub-section A1’s themes are repeated in the beginning of sub-section A2. The community of men and women was facing issues regarding orphans’ and women’s financial and marital rights and that some of those rights should be witnessed when they are fulfilled (v.2-10). Similarly, the community also was encountering immoral cases in which some of them need to be proved by four witnesses before the application of the punishment (v.15-18). The theme of inheritance which occurs in (v.11-12) affirms men’s, women’s, spouses’, and relatives’ right of inheritance and it confirms women’s right in their parents’ and husbands’ possessions while part (v.19-22) in the sequence in question shows that women should not be inherited as a property and that their possessions are not allowed to be taken by their husbands’ relatives.

The correspondence between sequence 1 (v.13-25) in A2 and the sūrah’s center:

The sequence’s relation to the sūrah’s center can be found in God’s authority occurs in the beginning (v.13-14) and God’s promise of reward for obedience and punishment for disobedience. The sequence starts with the theme of obedience and ends with a corresponding meaning: “God knows your belief” (25e). Accordingly, believing in God’s Oneness requires
obeying God and His messenger. The term “punishment” occurs in the beginning (v.14) and the end (v.25) rhetorically linking the extremes of the sequence. Thematically, the end (v.25) mentions the punishment of those women who commit immortality after marriage which is an example of disobeying God’s commands (v.14). Also, the exhortation to the evildoers and disbelievers to repent before death and the mention of the punishment (v.15-18) are references to the truth of the Day of Resurrection when evil deeds’ doers will be reckoned.

Central Passage (Q 4:26-28) Divine Clarification of Laws and Lightning Burden, Man’s Vulnerability

26. a GOD wishes to make things clear to you,
b and to guide you to the traditions of those who were before you,
c and to TURN toward you (in forgiveness). d GOD is knowing, wise.

27. a GOD wishes to TURN toward you (in forgiveness),
b but those who follow (their) lusts wish you to swerve far away.

28. a GOD wishes to lighten (your burden) for you,
b (for) the HUMAN was created weak.

This central passage is composed of three complementary parallel pieces. This passage/part explains the purpose of establishing limits and laws. The outer pieces clearly state man’s needs of God’s guidance and clarification as He has guided earlier communities. The middle segment (v.27) indicates that there are people who are following their lusts and want to lead the believers astray. The coherence of the center is obvious. The recurrence of the phrase “God wishes” links the whole passage. The previous people mentioned in (26b) are parallel to those who follow the lusts and wish the believers to go astray (27b) from the “sunan/ways/traditions” of previous nations. It is reported in Ţabarî’s exegesis that the phrase “those who follow lusts” (27b) refers to unspecified people, those who commit adultery, Majūs (Zoroastrians), or the People of the Scripture (particularly Jews who allow marrying to multiple
sisters from the same father). Ṭabarī prefers the opinion saying that it refers to people follow lusts in general and this generality includes all people follow their desires instead of God’s religion. The parallelism between the phrases (26b) and (27b) indicates that those people are given a revelation from God, but some of them choose to follow their lusts instead of obeying God’s limits. Their attitudes are similar to the People of the Scripture (v.44), Satan (v.60, 118-119), and the hypocrites (v.89, 113) mentioned in sub-sections A3, B2, and B3. The last piece (v.28) is about lightening the burdens and stating man’s weakness. It can be inferred that his weakness is redeemed by God’s guidance (or revelation), and thus, man’s weakness is not an excuse for disobeying God’s commands. The beginning of the center on God clarifying things and the end on the creation of man are corresponding with the opening (v.1) mentioning the creation and God whom people demand their rights with.

The theme of repentance stressed in the center (26c, 27a) occurs earlier in the beginning of the preceding sequence (v.15-18). Also, God’s limits are reflected in the idea of God’s guidance and clarification. Those who are evil doers (v.18), still disbelievers (v.27), and people following the lusts are corresponding with those who disobey God and His messenger and violate God’s commands (v.14). Also, the references to the aforementioned people in (26b) and the people following lusts (27b) are echoed in the end of sub-section A2 through mentioning the nations and the witnesses against them (v.41-42). On the Last Day, those who disbelieve and disobey the Prophet will wish to be dust (v.42). Thus, the people mentioned in the beginning, the end, and the center of sub-section A2 share disobedience and disbelief. Accordingly, the extremes of the sub-section and the center are rhetorically and thematically corresponding. Additionally, the central passage relates to sequence 1 through the following:

\footnote{al-Ṭabarī, Jāmiʿ al-Bayān, 8:213-216.}
Sequence 2 (Q 4:29-42)

This sequence contains two sub-sequences: (v.29-35) and (v.36-42).

Sub-sequence (Q 4:29-35) Women’s property, Marriage’s problem:

(A)
29. a You who believe! b DO NOT consume your PROPERTY among yourselves by means of falsehood. c but (let there) be a transaction among you d by mutual agreement. e And DO NOT kill one another. f SURELY GOD is compassionate with you.

30. a Whoever does that b in enmity and evil – c We shall burn him in a Fire. d That is easy for GOD.

31. a If you AVOID the gross (sins) b of what you ARE FORBIDDEN (to commit), c WE shall absolve you of your (other) EVIL DEEDS, d and WE shall cause you to enter (through) an entrance of honor.

(A')
32. a DO NOT long for what GOD has bestowed in FAVOR on b some of you over others. c To MEN (belongs) a portion of what they have earned, d and to WOMEN (belongs) a portion of what they have earned. e Ask GOD for some of HIS FAVOR.

f SURELY GOD has knowledge of everything.

33. a To everyone We have appointed heirs b of what parents and family leave; c and those with whom your (hands) have made a pledge, d give them their portion. e SURELY GOD is a witness over everything.

(B)
34. a MEN are sustainers of WOMEN b because GOD has FAVORED c some of them over others, d and because they have contributed their WEALTH. e RIGHTEOUS women are obedient, f watching over (affairs) in the absence (of their husbands) g because GOD has watched over (them). h (As for) those women whom you fear may be REBELLIOUS; i admonish them, j AVOID them in bed, k and iḍribūhunna. l If they obey you, m DO NOT seek (any further) way against them. n SURELY GOD is most high, great.

35. a If you fear a breach between the two, b send an arbiter from his family c and an arbiter from her family. d If they both wish to set (things) right, e GOD will effect a reconciliation between the two. f SURELY GOD is knowing, aware.

The sub-ring is arranged in parallel-form. This sub-ring relates to the center and sequence 1 through sharing the theme of laws and providing more limits. The limits here are about
consuming others’ property and killing one another while the laws have to do with financial and marital matters. The whole sub-sequence is linked through the terms “amwālakum/your property” (29b), “amwālihim/their wealth” (34d), and the references to inheritance in the middle part. Also, each part contains the repeated phrase: “SURELY GOD” (29f, 32f, 33e, 4n, 35f).

Similar words occur in the outer pieces: “baynakum/among yourselves” (29b), “baynihamā/between the two” (35b), “baynahumā/between the two” (35e).

**Part A (Q 4:29-31):**

29. *a You who believe!*
   
   b DO NOT consume your PROPERTY among yourselves BY THE MEANS OF FALSEHOOD,  
   
   c but (let there) be a transaction among you  
   
   d by mutual agreement.  
   
   e And DO NOT kill one another.  
   
   f SURELY GOD is compassionate with you.

30. *a Whoever does that in ENMITY and EVIL –  
   
   b We shall burn him in a Fire.  
   
   d That is easy for GOD.*

31. *If you AVOID the gross (sins) of what you ARE FORBIDDEN (to commit),  
   
   c WE shall absolve you of your (other) EVIL DEEDS,  
   
   d and WE shall cause you to enter (through) an entrance of honor.*

**Part A’ (Q 4:32-33):**

(A’)  

32. *DO NOT long for what GOD has bestowed in FAVOR on some of you over others.*  

   c TO MEN (belongs) a PORTION of what they have earned,  
   
   d and to WOMEN (belongs) a PORTION of what they have earned.  
   
   e Ask GOD for some of HIS FAVOR.  
   
   f SURELY GOD has knowledge of everything.

33. *TO everyone We have appointed heirs of what parents and family leave;  
   
   c and those with whom your (hands) have made a pledge, give them their PORTION.  
   
   e SURELY GOD is a witness over everything.*

Part A prohibits consuming others’ property except trading by mutual agreement while part A’ states the right of possessing wealth for men and women through earning them or inheritance. Wealth in A’ is God’s favor since the whole context states financial matters.  

172 It is reported that God’s favor in (v.32) has to do with favoring men with the virtue of jihād and greater inheritance and women were complaining and wishing the same favor. Ṭabarī states that the favor here refers to ranks of favor and both men and women are given a portion and they should ask for God’s favor (See al- Ṭabarī, Jāmi’ al-Bayān, 8:261-265).
Corresponding phrases and similar roots link the two parts rhetorically: “Do not consume your property among yourselves by means of falsehood” (29b), “Do not long for what God has bestowed in favor on some of you over others” (32a-b). Also, similar meanings of earning wealth occur: “tijārt-an/a transaction” (29c) and “they have earned” (32c-d).

Part B (Q 4:34-35):

34. “MEN are sustainers of WOMEN because GOD has FAVORED some of them over others, and because they have contributed their WEALTH.

RIGHTEOUS women are obedient, watching over (affairs) in the absence (of their husbands) because GOD has WATCHED over (them).

(As for) those women whom you fear may be REBELLIOUS; admonish them, avoid them in bed, and iḍribūhunna.

If they obey, DO NOT seek (any further) way against them. SURELY GOD is most high, great.

35. If you fear a breach BETWEEN THE TWO, send an arbiter from his family and an arbiter from her family.

If they both wish to set (things) RIGHT, GOD will effect a reconciliation BETWEEN THE TWO.

SURELY GOD is knowing, aware.

Part B (v.34-35) is about husbands’ role and a marital problem. The “authority” of men has to do with providing for wives and other responsibilities, such as supervision and disciplining. Considering God’s limits and the theme of committing immorality running in the extremes of sequence 1, the marital problem here relating to non-righteous wives focuses on immoral women and their punishment mentioned in (v.15 and v.24-25). Part B explains how to deal with married women prone to committing immoral deeds. The term “whom you FEAR may be rebellious”, according to Ṭabarī, means “you know their rebelliousness/nushūz.” The part provides three disciplinary steps (34i-k) to deal with those women who are about to violate God’s limits. The term “iḍribūhunna” (34k) is understood in the tradition as beating women

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173 Nasr and others, The Study Qur’an, 206-207.
174 He states that the verb “fear” here relates to the meaning of zann/think/doubt, but it means here knowledge while nushūz refers to the meaning of rising up, meaning being arrogant, disregarding husbands’ rights, and hating them (See al-Ṭabarī, Jāmi‘ al-Bayān, 8:299).
physically with causing no harm. Ṭabarī states that it means holding them in their houses and beating them to have them obey God’s limits regarding husbands’ rights. 175 Some modern commentaries reject the meaning of beating/striking and refer to the root Ḑ-R-B which means also “to journey” as it is in (Q 4:94). 176

According to (v.15), the punishment of immoral women (either married or not) cannot be implemented without calling four eyewitnesses or “or God makes a WAY for (dealing with) them” (15f). 177 Moreover, the context of (v.15) invites the sinners to repent before death (v.16-18). Here the verse (v.34) refers to possible rebellious women (may have not yet committed an immoral deed or they did and only their husbands knew about it) and how to deal with them. Thus the three steps may refer to the way made by God for women (15f) and they should be applied in order to make those women obey God’s limits (or to repent). In this context, the problematic term “iḍribūhunna” (34k) can be understood as the opposite of confining immoral women in their houses until death (v.15). It could refer to making women leave husbands’ houses as a final step since being in husbands’ houses (or married) implies the meaning of chastity in (v.24-25) and the phrase “watching over (affairs) in the absence (of their husbands) because God has watched over (them)” (34f-g). This meaning of leaving is supported by (v.35) referring to the possibility of separation between the two and the involvement of relatives from both sides to avoid it. The role of the arbiters is to help both to set things right in order to avoid separation. This role is similar to the husbands’ role relating to the three steps. Both roles have to do with solving the problem and attempting to maintain marriage.

175 al-Ṭabarī, Jāmi’ al-Bayān, 8:313-316. It is said that this verse (v.34) was revealed when a husband stroke his wife and she complained to the Prophet who wanted to retaliate from the husband. But the verse (v.34) shows that men are allowed to hit women (See al-Ṭabarī, Jāmi’ al-Bayān, 8:291-292).
176 Nasr and others, The Study Qur’an, 208.
177 According to the tradition, they were confined to homes until they die or God establishes another way for them (v.15), meaning ḥadd/punishment of one hundred lashes and “a banishment for a year.” It is stated that this rule is abrogated by Q 24 which provides another punishments for committing adultery by married and unmarried women and men. (See al-Ṭabarī, Jāmi’ al-Bayān, 8:74-79; Nasr and others, The Study Qur’an, 195).
Part B is linked to the preceding parts A/A’ through the terms “men” and “women” (32c-d), (34a) and the similar phrases “what God has bestowed in favor on some of you over others” (32b) and “because God has favored some of them over others” (34b). Moreover, the term “If you tajtanibū/AVOID the gross (sins)” (31a) is similar to the meaning of the verb “fa-ihjrāhunna/AVOID them in bed” (34j).

The correspondence between sub-sequences (v.15-25) and (v.29-35):

Sub-sequence (v.15-25):

15 * (As for) those of your WOMEN who commit immorality, 6 call witnesses against them, four of you. 7 If they bear witness (to the truth of the allegation), 6 confine them in their houses 7 until death takes them, 10 or God makes a WAY for (dealing with) them. 10 * And (if) you commit it, 5 harm both of them. 6 But if they turn (in repentance) and set (things) right, 8 let them be. 7 SURELY God turns (in forgiveness), compassionate. 17 * But God only turns (in forgiveness) 6 to those who do EVIL in ignorance, 14 (and) then turn (in repentance) soon after. 8 Then God will turn to them (in forgiveness). 6 God is knowing, wise. 18 * But (His) turning (in forgiveness) is not for those who continue to do EVIL DEEDS, 3 and only when death approaches say, 19 * SURELY I turn (in repentance) now; 18 * Nor (does He turn in forgiveness) to those who die 1 while they are still disbelievers. 3 Those- for them We have prepared a painful PUNISHMENT.

20 * You who believe! 6 It is NOT PERMITTED TO YOU 1 to inherit WOMEN against their will. 4 And do not prevent them, 4 so that you may take part of what you have given them, 4 unless they commit clear immorality. 6 Associate with them rightfully. 5 If you dislike them, 1 it may be that you dislike something 1 in which God has placed much good. 20 * And if you wish 1 to exchange a wife for (another) wife, 4 and you have given one of them a qintar, 4 take (back) none of it. 6 Would you take it (back) by slander and clear SIN? 21 * How can you take it (back), 5 seeing that one of you has gone into the other, 4 and they have taken a firm pledge from you? 22 * Do not marry 3 WOMEN whom your fathers have married, 4 unless it is a thing of the past. 4 SURELY it is an immorality, 3 an abhorrent thing, and an EVIL way.

23 * FORBIDDEN TO YOU are: 3 your mothers, your daughters, your sisters, your parental aunts, your maternal aunts, 5 (your) brothers’ daughters, (your) sisters’ daughters, 4 the mothers who have nursed you, 4 (those who are) your sisters by nursing, 4 your wives’ mothers, 5 and your stepdaughters who are in your care, 6 (born) of wives you have gone into- 1 but if they have not gone into them, 1 (there is) no blame on you- 7 a wives of your sons, 7 those of your own lions, 8 and that you should have two sisters at the same time, 6 unless it is a thing of the past. 6 SURELY God is forgiving, compassionate. 24 * And (also forbidden to you) are married WOMEN, 3 except what your right (hands) own. 3 (This is) a written decree of God for you. 4 (All women) beyond that are PERMITTED TO YOU 1 to seek (to obtain) by means of your wealth, 1 taking (them) in marriage, not in immorality. 5 So (because of) what you enjoy from them in this way, 2 give them their marriage gifts an obligation. 1 (There is) no blame on you 1 in anything you may give them by mutual agreement 2 beyond this obligation. 2 SURELY God is knowing, wise.

25 * Whoever among you cannot wait 6 to MARRY believing, free women, 6 (let them take) believing young women 4 from what your right (hands) own. 4 God knows your belief, 4 the one of you is as the other. 4 MARRY them with the permission of their families, 6 and give them their rightful marriage gift, 3 (as) married women, not (as) women who commit immorality 1 or take secret lovers. 6 But if they commit immorality 1 after they are married, 6 they will be liable to half 6 the PUNISHMENT (inflicted) on free women. 6 That (provision) is for those of you who fear SIN. 2 Yet to be patient (would be) better for you. 4 God is forgiving, compassionate.
**Sub-sequence (v.29-35):**

29 **You who believe!** ¹⁰ Do NOT consume your PROPERTY among yourselves by means of FALSEHOOD. ¹⁰ But (let there be) a transaction among you ¹⁰ by mutual agreement. ¹⁰ And DO NOT kill one another. ¹⁰ Surely GOD is compassionate with you. ¹⁰ Whoever does that ¹⁰ in ENMITY and EVIL—¹⁰ We shall burn him in a FIRE. ¹⁰ That is easy for GOD. ³¹ If you avoid the gross (sins) ¹⁰ of what you ARE FORBIDDEN (to commit), ¹⁰ We shall absolve you of your (other) EVIL DEEDS, ¹⁰ and WE shall cause you to enter (through) an entrance of honor.

32 **Do NOT long for what GOD has bestowed in favor on some of you over others.** ³² To MEN (belongs) a portion of what they have earned, ³² and to WOMEN (belongs) a portion of what they have earned. ³² Ask GOD for some of His favor. ³² Surely GOD has knowledge of everything.

³⁴ **MEN are sustainers of WOMEN** ³⁴ because GOD has favored some of them over others, ³⁴ and because they have contributed their WEALTH. ³⁴ Righteous women are obedient, ³⁴ watching over (affairs) in the absence (of their husbands) ³⁴ because GOD has watched over (them). ³⁴ (As for) those women whom you fear may be REBELLIOUS, ³⁴ admonish them, ³⁴ avoid them in bed, ³⁴ and idribūhunna. ³⁴ If they obey you, ³⁴ Do NOT seek (any further) WAY against them. ³⁴ Surely GOD is most high, great. ³⁵ If you fear a breach between the two, ³⁵ send an arbiter from his family ³⁵ and an arbiter from her family. ³⁵ If they both wish to set (things) right, ³⁵ GOD will effect a reconciliation between the two. ³⁵ Surely GOD is knowing, aware.

These two sub-rings surround the center of sub-section A2. They are corresponding thematically although the first sub-sequence is longer than the second one. They contain social and financial laws and warn from violating God’s limits. The first passages of the two sub-rings are corresponding. Both mention the theme of evil deeds and their punishment and address the believers with financial laws. The second sides of both sub-rings are mainly about the theme of marriage. Although the first sub-sequence (v.15-25) is in mirror-form while the second (v.29-35) is composed in parallelism, here are some rhetorical links between the two:

- The extremes contain the same phrase: “You who believe” (19a, 29a).

- Identical word occurs in the outer parts: “a way” (15f), “(any further) way” (34m).


- Similar meanings: “Those- for them We have prepared a painful punishment” (18g), “We shall burn him in a Fire. That is easy for God” (30c-d).
- Similar phases: “what your right (hands) own” (24b, 25c), “and those whom your right (hands) have made a pledge” (33c).

- Corresponding meanings: “associate with them rightfully” (19g), “Men are sustainers of women” (34a).

- Similar terms: “their families” (25g), “his/her family” (35b-c).

- Corresponding phrases: “taking (them) in marriage not in immorality” (24f), “(as) married women, not (as) women who commit immorality or takes secret lovers” (25i-j), and “Righteous women are obedient, watching over (affairs) in the absence (of their husbands) because God has watched over (them)” (34e-g).

- The recurrence of similar phrases: “you have given yourselves to one another” (21b), “the one of you is as the other” (25f), “on some of you over others” (32b), “some of them over others” (34c).

Sub-sequence (Q 4:36-42) Worshiping God/ no association, Charity, Divine Judgment:

(A)
36. a Worship GOD, b and do not associate anything with Him, c and (do) GOOD to parents d and to family, and orphans and the poor, e and the neighbor who is related and the neighbor who is a stranger, f and the companion at your side, g and the traveler, h and what your right (hands) own. i Surely GOD does not love anyone who is arrogant (and) boastful.
37. a (nor) those who are stingy, b (and) who command the PEOPLE to be stingy, c and CONCEAL what GOD has given them of His favor. d We have prepared for THE DISBELIEVER a humiliating punishment.
38. a (Nor does God love) those who contribute their wealth b to show off c before the PEOPLE d and who do not believe in God and the LAST DAY. e Whoever has Satan for his comrade- f he is an evil comrade.
39. a What (harm would it do) b if they believed in God and the LAST DAY, c and CONTRIBUTED from what GOD has provided for them? d But GOD KNOWS ABOUT THEM.

(A’)
40. a Surely GOD does not do (even) a speck’s weight of EVIL. b If it is a GOOD (deed), He doubles it, c and gives from Himself a great reward.
41. a How (will it be) when We bring from each COMMUNITY a witness, b and bring you as a witness against them (all)?
42. a On that DAY b those who have DISBELIEVED c and DISOBEYED the Messenger d will wish that the earth were leveled with them. e But they will not (be able to) CONCEAL (any) ACCOUNT from GOD.

This sub-sequence is linked to the preceding one through the median terms: “God” (35f, 36a), “his/her family” (35b-c), “parents and to family” (36c-d). It is mainly about God’s right as the Only Worshipped God and His Justice. The theme of property and the right of inheritances
and possessions occurs in preceding sub-sequence is now about God’s rights in one’s own property since God is the Provider of what one owns. This sub-sequence shows financial responsibilities toward family and the community. But some people are niggardly and do not show what God favors them while others show off through spending their wealth. God will judge their deeds on the Last Day and witnesses will be brought against every nation and the Prophet will be witnessing against those mentioned people who will not be able to hide their disobedience and disbelief. The whole sub-sequence contains two complementing parallel parts: (v.36-39) and (v.40-42).

Part A (Q 4:36-39):

36. a WORSHIP GOD, b and DO NOT ASSOCIATE anything with Him, c and (do) GOOD to parents d and to family, and orphans and the poor, e and the neighbor who is related and the neighbor who is a stranger, f and the companion at your side, g and the traveler, h and what your right (hands) own.

i Surely GOD does not love anyone who is arrogant (and) boastful.

37. a (nor) those who are STINGY, b (and) who command the people to be STINGY, c and conceal what GOD has given them of HIS FAVOR.

d We have prepared for THE DISBELIEVER a humiliating punishment.

38. a (Nor does God love) those who CONTRIBUTE their WEALTH b to SHOW OFF (before) the people, c and who DO NOT BELIEVE in GOD and the LAST DAY.

d Whoever has Satan for his comrade- e he is an evil comrade.

39. a What (harm would it do) b if they BELIEVED in GOD and the LAST DAY, c and CONTRIBUTED from what GOD has PROVIDED for them? d But GOD knows about them.

Part A’ (Q 4:40-42):

40. a Surely GOD DOES NOT do (even) a speck’s weight of EVIL.

b If it is a GOOD (deed), He doubles it, c and gives from Himself a great reward.

41. a How (will it be) when We bring from each community a witness, b and bring you as a WITNESS against them (all)?

42. a On that DAY b those who have DISBELIEVED c and DISOBEYED the MESSENGER d will wish that the earth were leveled with them. e But they will not (be able to) conceal (any) account from GOD.

Part A is mainly about deeds while part A’ is about judgment. The beginnings mention God. God’s rights have to do with worshipping Him alone and doing good actions to the parents, relatives, and other people (v.36). Part A also mentions some people who conceal God’s favor
(v.37) and those who show off with wealth (v.38). The phrases “(do) GOOD to parents” (36c) and “and CONTRIBUTED from what God has provided for them” (39c) are complementary parallels. In part A’, God does not do unjust to people and He doubles the reward of one’s single good deed (v.40) while those who disbelieved and disobeyed the Messenger will not hide their deeds (v.42).

The terms “shay’an/anything” (36b) and “dharrat-in/a speck’s weight” (40a) are complementing parallels and refer together to the tiniest thing in the world. The first term affirms the Oneness of God and He is beyond everything in this world whereas the second shows God’s ultimate justice. God does not wrong anyone even with the weight of the smallest thing in the world. The terms “iḥsān-an/good” (36c) and “ḥasanah/good” (40b) refer to righteous actions entailed by believing in God with no association (v.36) and believing in the Last Day (v.39).

There are a number of identical and similar words and phrases linking the two parts:

- Antithetical meanings to worshiping God alone (36a-b) occurs: “and who do not believe in GOD and the LAST DAY” (38c), “those who have disbelieved and disobeyed the MESSENGER” (42b-c). The phrases “GOD and the LAST DAY” and “the MESSENGER” are parallels.

- Similar and linking terms: kinship and different people mentioned in (v.36), “the people” (37b, 38b), and “each community” (41a).

- Linking phrase: “the Last Day” (38c, 39b) and “On that Day” (42a).

- Linking term: “conceal” (37c), (42e) in different contexts. The first refers to people’s concealing God’s favor while the second refers to their inability to conceal their deeds from God on the Last Day. Also, corresponding phrases occur in the ends of both

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178 The term “dharrat-in/a speck’s” is translated by Asad as “atom.”
parts: “But GOD knows about them” (39d) and “But they will not (be able to) conceal (any) account from GOD” (42e).

Belief according to this sub-sequence requires believing in God alone and the Last Day, and obeying the Messenger and doing good deeds (e.g. spending wealth in charity and for the sake of God only). These requirements reflect the overall Qur’ānic view of belief and the covenant with God stated in the sūrah’s center. This conclusion also demonstrates the correlations between this sub-section and the theme of properties and rights discussed in the previous sub-section and sequences. The sūrah starts with stating the rights regarding properties and here it represents the properties as means of doing good deeds and as revealing belief in God and the Last Day. Moreover, attachment to worldly enjoyment is presented in A3 as a hypocrites’ act (v.72-73) while wealth is presented in B3 as means of the believers to fight in God’s way (v.142).

Reflections:

The piece (v.37) is probably referring to the People of the Scripture given God’s favor while the pieces (v.38-39) refer to the hypocrites. The first group conceals what they are given of God’s favor and this corresponds with A3 mentioning the People of the Scripture given a portion of the Book (v.44). Likewise, the second group who spends wealth in front of people to superficially show off their belief is the hypocrites. This corresponds with the attitudes stated in A3 regarding claiming belief (v.60-63). The following system A3 mentions both groups’ attitudes in detail. The people mentioned in (v.38-39) correspond with the people mentioned in

\[179\] God’s favor here refers to “knowledge” or “the Torah” given to the Jews (See Nasr and others, The Study Qur’an, 210). This is also supported by the mention of God’s favor referring to revelation/portion of the Book in sub-section A3.
(v.71-79). The first group does good deeds (giving wealth/alms) not for the sake of God and the Last Day, but for showing off (v.38-39) while the second group fights for the sake of worldly rewards and *al-šāghūt* (v.72-73, 76). The first group is Satan’s companion (v.38) while the second one is Satan’s allies (v.76). The theme of believing in God and the Last Day is stressed in both in the context of mentioning God’s favor.

Furthermore, the emphasis on the belief in God and the Last Day (v.38-39) and affirming God’s just judgment on the Last Day (v.40-42) link the end of this system to the end of A3 where the Hereafter is mentioned twice (v.74,77) and to the sūrah’s center (v.87). Despite several references to the Last Day’s reward and punishment in sub-sections A1 and A2, now the sūrah mentions the phrase “the Last Day” twice in the end of A2 as a requirement of believing in God alone. The context highlights one’s intentions and deeds as evidences of obedience and disobedience of God’s limits, thus; the next sub-section A3 touches on the attitudes of two groups of disobeying people: the People of the Scripture and the hypocrites. The end of A2 corresponds with the center (v.87) and has similar and identical terms:

“41 How (will it be) when We BRING from each community a witness, and BRING YOU as a witness against them (all)? 42 On that DAY those who have disbelieved and disobeyed the messenger will wish that the earth were leveled with them. But they will not (be able to) CONCEAL (any) ACCOUNT FROM GOD” (v.41-42).

“God – (there is) no god but Him. He will indeed GATHER YOU to the DAY of RESURRECTION – (there is) no doubt about it. Who is MORE TRUTHFUL THAN GOD in REPORT” (v.87).
The correspondence of sequence 2 (v.29-42) as a whole:

Sub-sequence 1 (v.29-35):

24 *You who believe!* 2 Do not consume your PROPERTY among yourselves by means of FALSEHOOD, 3 but (let there) be a transaction among you 4 by mutual agreement. 5 And DO NOT kill one another. 6 SURELY GOD is compassionate with you. 30 *Whoever does that* in ENMITY and EVIL,— 2 We shall burn him in a FIRE. 3 That is easy for GOD. 31 If you avoid the gross (sins) 5 of what you are forbidden (to commit), 7 WE shall absolve you of your (other) EVIL DEEDS, 8 and WE shall cause you to enter (through) an entrance of honor. 32 *Do not long* for what GOD has bestowed in favor on 9 some of you over others. 10 To men (belongs) a portion 3 of what they have earned, 4 and to women (belongs) a portion 3 of what they have earned. 5 Ask GOD for some of HIS FAVOR. 1 SURELY GOD has KNOWLEDGE of everything. 33 To everyone We have appointed heirs 6 of what parents and family leave; 7 and those with whom your (hands) have made a pledge, 8 give them their portion. 9 SURELY GOD is a witness over everything.

Sub-sequence 2 (v.36-42):

34 *Men are sustainers of women* 8 because GOD has FAVORED 9 some of them over others, 4 and because they have contributed their WEALTH. 10 Righteous women are obedient, 11 watching over (affairs) in the absence (of their husbands) 12 because GOD has watched over (them). 13 (As for) those women whom you fear may be rebellious, 14 admonish them, 15 avoid them in bed, 16 and idribahumaa. 17 If they obey you, 18 DO NOT seek (any further) way against them. 9 SURELY GOD is most high, great. 31 If you fear a breach between the two, 19 send an arbiter from his family 20 and an arbiter from her family. 21 If they both wish to set (things) right, 7 GOD will effect a reconciliation between the two. 22 SURELY GOD is KNOWING, aware.

Both sub-rings (v.29-35) and (v.36-42) are arranged in parallel-form. The first sub-sequence mentions some limits and laws including possessing properties and the right of inheritances while the second sub-sequence mentions God’s right in people’s wealth and how some people do good and evil actions regarding knowledge and wealth given by God. The sequence starts with calling the believers not to do evil deeds to one another followed by stating the punishment of wrongdoing and the reward of avoiding evil deeds (v.29-31).

Correspondingly, it concludes with mentioning God’s reward for doing good deeds and the status of the disbelievers disobeying the Messenger (v.40-42). Antithetical meanings occur: people do evil deeds “*Whoever does that in enmity and EVIL*” (30b) while God does not wrong anyone “*Surely God does not do (even) a speck’s weight of EVIL*” (40a). Here are some rhetorical links between the two sub-sequences:
- Complementing and antithetical meanings: “We shall ABSOLVE you of (other) your EVIL DEEDS” (31c), “If it is a GOOD (deed), He DOUBLES it, and GIVES from Himself a great reward” (40b-c).

- The same term occurs in the end of (v.29-35) and the beginning of (v.36-42): “sabīl-an/way” (34m) and “ibn al-sabīl/the traveler” al-sabīl literally is the way (36f).


- Recurring term “favor/His favor”: (32b), (34b), (37c). All places refer to property.

- Linking phrases: “what parents and family leave” (33b) and “and (do) good to parents and to family” (36c), “and those with whom aymānukum/your (hands) have made a pledge” (33c) and “what your right (hands) own” (36g).

- Identical and linking phrases: “because they have CONTRIBUTED their wealth” (34d), “those who CONTRIBUTE their wealth” (38a), “and CONTRIBUTED from what God has provided for them?” (39c).

- Complementing meanings: “Surely God is a WITNESS over everything” (33e), “How (will it be) when We bring from each community a WITNESS, and bring you as a WITNESS against them (all)?” (v.41).

- Linking terms “property/wealth”: (29b), (34d), (38a).

- References to places: “al-madāji’/bed” (34j) and “the earth” (42d).

**The coherence of sub-section A2:**

As mentioned earlier, the two sequences composing A2 are concentrically arranged in mirror-structure. The first sequence is about the theme of God’s limits whereas the second one
highlights God’s judgment in the context of stating laws and belief. The extremes are corresponding as follows:

- Recurring terms “God” and “His messengers/the messenger” (13b, 14a, 42c, 42e).
- Similar meanings: “whoever disobeys God and His messengers, and transgresses His limits” (14a-b), “who have disbelieved and disobeyed the messenger” (42b-c).
- The same phrase: “a humiliating punishment” (14e, 37d).
- Complementing phrases: “the great triumph” (13f) and “a great reward” (40c).
- Corresponding meanings in the extremes: “Those are the LIMITS (set by) GOD” (13a) and “WORSHIP GOD” (36a). This correspondence between the beginning and end of A2 implies that one of God’s limits is not to associate anything with Him.
- Linking phrases: “He will cause him to ENTER the FIRE” (14c) and “We shall BURN him in a FIRE” (30c), “He will cause him to ENTER Gardens” (13c) and “and We shall cause you to enter (through) an ENTRANCE of honor” (31d).
- Similar meanings: “GOD KNOWS YOUR BELIEF” (25e), “SURELY GOD HAS KNOWLEDGE of everything” (32f), and “But GOD knows about them” (39d).

The sub-section starts with an opening about God setting limits and the reward and punishment of obedience and disobedience (v.13-14). Then, the system mentions a number of laws regarding some immoral cases and social matters (v.15-25). In general, most of these laws order the believers not to commit several acts. The center comes with a statement that serves as an explanation of those established limits. Those laws are meant to guide the community to the previous traditions, to invite people to repent, and to lighten the burden. However, there are people attached to their lusts and want the believers to go astray. The system returns to mention
more limits and laws (v.29-35). God’s authority of guidance and clarification aiding weak man is stressed (v.26-28). The theme of God’s limits is echoed in the order to worship God with no association and do good deeds to people (v.36). God does not love those who are “arrogant (and) boastful” (36h-i). This attitude is similar to Satan’s action towards God’s command as the Qur’ān shows somewhere else (e.g. Q 2:34, Q 7:12-13). Satan is mentioned in (v.38) and the people following their lusts are echoed in the attitudes of those who are stingy and conceal God’s favor and of those who show off through spending wealth for charity (v.37-39). Satan’s companions do not believe in God and the Last Day (v.38). They are exhorted to believe and do good deeds with what God provides them (v.39) because God will judge with justice their wrong deeds and with generosity their good deeds, even if it is one good act done out of true belief (v.40). The Prophet who is mentioned in the extremes should be obeyed with God because he will witness against them on the Last Day (v.41-42).\(^{180}\)

The extremes here indicate that belief requires obedience through the concept of limits (not doing or exceeding a limit). This concept of limits includes also the concept of belief itself “and do not associate with Him” (36b). The Qur’ānic view of belief, according to this sub-section A2, is to believe in God and the Last Day and to do good deeds according to God’s guidance. Obeying the Prophet is a reflection of belief in this sub-section while sub-section A3 states that obeying the Prophet is an obedience of God (v.80). Sub-section A2 is echoed by B2 and the theme of belief and no association will reappear again.

\(^{180}\) The theme of obeying the Prophet is stressed in A3 in the context of judgment and fight in God’s way and in B3 in the context of judgment and advocating.
The correlations between sub-sections A1 and A2:

Sub-section A1 is about declaring the Lord of the community of men and women and stating some regulating laws based on the fact that God is the Creator and the One whom people should refer to with their rights. On the other hand, sub-section A2 emphasizes God’s authority as the Only Worshipped Deity and the One who sets the limits organizing the community. There are a number of identical ideas in the two systems. Both sub-sections deal with pre-Islamic practices that should change. The theme of inheritance occurs in A1 (v.7-8, 11-12) and in A2 (v.32-33). Marriages and their obligations are discussed in A1 (v.3-4) and in A2 (v.19-25, 34-35). The central passage of A2 (v.26-28) echoes the opening (v.1) stating God as the Creator and being Watchful over people. The center of A2 corresponds with depicting God enjoining upon people some laws in A1 (v.11-12). The extremes of both A1 and A2 contain identical, similar, antithetical roots, words, phrases, and meanings:

- Similar root occurs in A1 and in sequence 2 in A2 and it functions as a linking term: “dhurriyyat-an/offspring” (v.9) and “dharrat-in/a speck” (40a). It connects the end of A2 to A1. Sub-section A1 starts with stating God as the Creator and Watcher of the people (v.1). In the end of A2, God is the only Worshiped (v.36) and He does not wrong anyone of the people (v.40).

- The terms “people” (v.1) and “community” (v.40) in the extremes are corresponding. Also, the term “people” occurs in A2 (v.37-38).

- The term: “tasā‘lūna” (v.1) is translated as “demand” by Asad and “ask” by Droge. The same root occurs in A2 “wa-is’alū/ASK God from His Favor” (32e) and both
scholars translate it into “ask.” This indicates that the community from the beginning
of the sūrah seeks out God’s guidance in some social concerns.

- Recurring terms and phrases in both systems:
  - “men” (v.1, 7, 32, 34) and “women” (v.1-4, 7, 11, 15, 19, 22-25, 32, 34).
  - “To the men (belongs) a portion of what parent and family leave, to the
    women (belongs) a portion of what parent and family leave” (v.7), “To men
    (belongs) a portion of what they have earned, and to women (belongs) a
    portion of what they have earned” (v.32), “To everyone We have appointed
    heirs of what parents and family leave; and those with whom your (hands)
    have made a pledge” (v.33).
  - “When the family, orphans and the poor” (v.8) and “and to family, and
    orphans and the poor” (v.36).
  - The root N-K-Ḥ: (v.3, 7, 22, 25).
  - “their wealth” (v.2, 6, 34, 38), “your wealth” (v.5, 24, 29).
  - “and do not consume their property along with your own” (v.2) and “Do not
    consume your property among yourselves by means of falsehood” (v.29). The
    verb “consume” occurs repeatedly in A1.
  - The same root SH-R-K in the ends: “If they are more than that, then they
    shurakā’/share in the third” (v.12) and “Worship God, wa lā tushrikū/and do
    not associate anything with Him” (v.36).

The opening (v.1) symbolizes the very beginning of the creation and the establishment of
a community of men and women. Taqwā/fearing God (v.1) sets the base of the relationship
between man. The statement about God watching over people (v.1) in this life is completed by
the end of A2 mentioning God’s judgment of people’s deeds on the Last Day (v.40-42). This end reflects an eschatological scene. This conclusion corresponds with the sūrah’s center indicating God gathering people to the Day of Resurrection. Also, the mention of “many men and women” (v.1) is parallel to mentioning “community” (v.41).

The idea of spreading men and women (or a community) is complemented by the term “the earth” where people live. The earth in the Qur‘ān is also a witness against people on the Last Day (Q 99) and it is one of God’s creatures. Sub-section B2 mirroring A2 will restate this reality about the earth being owned by God (also sub-section B3 does in the context of emigration). Thus, the disbelievers’ wish to be dust will not come true because God is the Owner of the earth and their evil deeds (opposite of taqwā) will not be concealed. The concept of taqwā is now antithetical to disbelief and disobedience. The phrases “Surely GOD is Watching over you” (v.1), “Surely GOD does not do (even) a speck’s weight of evil” (v.40), and “But they will not (be able to) conceal (any) account from GOD” (v.42) affirm God’s knowledge of people’s responses to His limits.

The next part will show the structure of the corresponding sub-section B2.

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181 The same phrase “a speck’s weight” (Q 4:40) comes in Q 99 contains: “And so, he who shall have done a speck’s weight of good, shall behold it; and he who shall have done a speck’s weight of evil, shall behold it” (Q 99:7-8). According to Muhammad Asad, this sūrah is a Madinan revealed earlier after Hijrah although some claim its Meccan origin (See Asad, The Message of the Qur‘ān, 1104). Moreover, there are identical terms occur in this sūrah and parts in question: “the earth” (Q 99:1-2) and “the people” (Q 99:6). The earth will be ordered by God to “recount all her tidings” (Q 99:4), likewise; the disbelievers will not be able to conceal their deeds and will wish to not be resurrected (Q 4:42). This suggests that Q 99 is a Madinan sūrah as Asad states.
Sub-section B2 (Q 4:116-175) God’s Ownership, Religion, and Covenants

Sub-section B2 has two sequences, (v.116-130) and (v.136-175), arranged in mirror-structure around (v.131-135).

Sequence 1 (Q 4:116-130)

Sub-sequence (Q 4:116-126) Worshiping God/no association, Satan, Abraham:

116. *Surely God does not forgive (anything) b being associated with Him, *c but He forgives what is other than that d for whomever He pleases,
   *c WHOEVER associate (anything) with God ~f has gone far astray.
117. *They only call on ~FEMALES (deities) instead of Him. *c They only call on d a rebellious SATAN.
118. *God cursed him, b and he said, ~I shall indeed take e an obligatory portion of Your servants,
119. *and I shall indeed lead them astray b and fill them with longings, c and I shall indeed command them d and they will cut off the ears of the cattle. *f I shall indeed command them f and they will alter will alter the creation of God. *WHOEVER takes SATAN as an ally, *h instead of God, i has lost utterly (and) clearly.
120. *He MAKES PROMISES to them *b and fills them with longings. *c Yet SATAN does not PROMISE them (anything) *d but DECEPTION.
121. *Those- their refuge is Gehenna, b and they will not find any place of escape from it.
122. *But those who have believed b and done righteous deeds, *c We shall cause them to enter Gardens *d through which rivers flow, *e there to remain forever – *f the PROMISE of God in TRUTH! *g WHO is more truthful than God in speaking?
123. *(This is) not (in accord) with your wishful thinking, *b (nor in accord with the) wishful thinking of the People of the Book. *c WHOEVER does evil *d will be repaid with it, *e and he will not find for himself f any ally or helper than God.
124. *But WHOEVER does righteous deeds – *b whether male or FEMALE – *c and he is a believer, *d those will enter the Garden- *e and they will not be done evil in the slightest.
125. *WHO is better in religion than *b one who submits his face to God, *c and is a doer of good, *d and follow the creed of ABRAHAM the Ḥanīf? *c God took Abraham as a friend.
126. *To God (belongs) whatever is in the heaven and whatever is on the earth. *b God encompasses everything.

This sub-sequence is about the Oneness of God, His promises, and Ownership of everything and presenting examples of disobedience (Satan) and obedience (Abraham). Again the sūrah touches on the theme of belief in terms of its spiritual and practical aspects. The concept of belief contains three components: God, the Last Day, and good deeds. This sub-ring is arranged in mirror-formation. The outer pieces (v.116, 126) are corresponding. The first piece stresses the Oneness of God and His forgiveness of sins except shirk (116a-d) whereas the last piece emphasizes God’s Ownership of the heaven and the earth and His knowledge of people’s actions (126a-b). They imply that nothing on this earth or in the heavens should be associated with Him.
The segment (116e-f) and the piece (v.117-118) are echoed in the piece (v.124-125). *Shirk* is explained as calling on idols and following Satan (v.117). God cursed Satan and he promises to take a share of God’s servants (v.118). The piece (v.124-125) explains the religion of the believers/good doers (God’s servants). Abraham is presented as the leader of God’s servants and the model of pure belief/religion. The pieces are linked through antithetical phrases and meanings and identical/similar terms:

- **Linking term:** “*females*” (117b) and “female” (124b).
- **Antithetical meanings:** “*They only CALL ON a rebellious Satan*” (117b-d), “*and he is a BELIEVER*” (124c), and “*and FOLLOW the creed of Abraham the Ḥanīf*” (125d).
- **The same verb:** Satan says “*I shall indeed take an obligatory portion of Your servants*” (118b-c) and “*God took Abraham as a friend*” (125e).
- **Antithetical meanings:** “*WHOEVER yushrik/associate (anything) with God has gone far astray*” (116e-f) and “*But WHOEVER does righteous deeds – whether male or female – and he is a believer*” (124a-c), “*WHO is better in religion than one who ’aslama/submits his face to GOD, and is a doer of good, and follow the creed of Abraham the Ḥanīf*” (125a-d).

The pieces (v.119) and (v.123) are complementary. The first piece mentions Satan’s attempts to make God’s servants go astray, long, and do pre-Islamic practices, like cutting off the ears of the cattle and changing God’s creation (119a-f). The piece shows that taking Satan as an ally instead of God is a clear loss (119g-i). The echoed piece (v.123) asserts that the religion does not follow the desires of (you) and the People of the Book (123a-b). The phrase “[This is] not (in accord) with YOUR wishful thinking” (123a) probably refers to the hypocrites since they are mentioned in the previous sub-section B3 and later in this sub-section B2. The previous sub-
sequence (v.105-115) shows that the hypocrites were treacherous and trying to defend one of their own who had committed an evil deed. Their attitude is similar to Satan who works to deceive people (v.119-120). The piece (v.123) mentions that evil deeds will be reckoned (123c-d). Similar and complementary terms/meanings occur and link both pieces: “and fill them with longings” (119b) and “(This is) not (in accord) with your wishful thinking, (nor in accord with the) wishful thinking of the People of the Book” (123a-b). Also, the pieces contain identical terms: “WHOEVER takes Satan as an ALLY, instead of GOD, has lost utterly (and) clearly” (119g-i) and “WHOEVER does evil will be repaid with it, and he will not find for himself any ALLY or HELPER than GOD” (123c-f).

The pieces (v.120-121) and (v.122) demonstrate the difference between Satan’s and God’s promises. They also show the punishment of Satan’s followers and the reward of the believers. They contain similar words and antithetical phrases:

- “He makes promises to them and fills them with longings. Yet Satan does not promise them (anything) but DECEPTION” (120a-d) and “the promise of God in TRUTH! Who is more truthful than God in speaking?” (122f-g).

- “Those- their refuge is GEHENNA, and they will not find any place of escape from it” (121a-b) and “But those who have believed and done righteous deeds, We shall cause them to enter GARDENS through which rivers flow, there to remain forever” (122a-e).

Also, there are some corresponding and antithetical meanings linking the whole sub-sequence:

- Bodily parts: “the ears of the cattle” (119d) and “his face” (125b).
- Recurring phrases: “instead of Him” (117a), “instead of God” (119h), and “than God” (123e).
- Linking phrases with antithetical meanings: “Whoever TAKES SATAN as an ALLY, instead of God” (119g-h) and “God TOOK Abraham as a FRIEND” (125e).

This sub-sequence shows that God does not forgive shirk (116a-b) while Satan was cursed for his disobedience which is not mentioned, but his enmity to people is embodied in his saying “and he SAID, ‘I shall indeed take an obligatory portion of Your servants’” (118b-c). The same root of “said” occurs in the context of mentioning God’s promise of rewarding the believers doing good deeds at the center: “Who is more truthful than God in qīl-an/SPEAKING?” (122f-g) which is similar to the phrase in the sūrah’s center: “Who is more truthful than God in ḥadīth-an/REPORT” (87d). Thus, the beginning of B2 has a rhetorical link to the sūrah’s center. In addition, Satan’s saying (118b-c) indicates that he attempts to share a portion of God’s servants. The theme of shirk reflects that God’s Oneness/Lordship stated in the sūrah’s center (87a), on one hand, cannot be shared with anything and on the other hand, His servants (or creatures) as everything in the heavens and on the earth are owned by Him (v.126).

In addition, the recurring of the similar terms “religion” (125a) and “the creed of Abraham” (125d) indicates that the beginning mentioning shirk and female idols refers to the Pagans’ religion. The term “females” (117b) is a reference to the angels worshiped by the Pagans (as in Q 37: 149-157). This is also supported by the occurrence of a pre-Islamic practice regarding the cattle (v.119), by the recurrence of the term “the angels” in B3 (97a) and B2 (v.136, 166, 172), and by the beginning of the sūrah deals with pre-Islamic social practices. On the other hand, the term “female” (124b) refers to a believing woman who does good deeds. The sūrah is not only affirming women’s rights that were not given or fulfilled in the time of
Jāhiliyyah, but also it shows men’s and women’s equality in terms of the Last Day’s reward of belief and doing good deeds (124d). This is another Qur’ānic view of women. It also supports the meaning of equality between men and women in terms of essence (social status) and the order of taqwā (religious deeds) indicated in the opening (v.1).

There are a number of rhetorical and thematic links between this sub-sequence and the previous one (v.105-115):

- Median term is “whoever” (115a, 116e). Also, the same term occurs repeatedly in both: (110a, 111a, 112a, 114d, 119g, 123c, 124a, 125a).
- Corresponding terms in the ends: “the Messenger” (115a) and “Abraham” (125d).
- Corresponding terms: “the believers” (115c) and “Your servants” (118b).
- Antithetical meanings in the ends: “and follows a way other (than that) of the believers” (115c) and “and follow the creed of Abrahams the Ḥanīf?” (125d). It can be inferred that the believers’ way is Abraham’s religion.
- Similar phrases and meanings: “and burn him in Gehenna- and it is an evil destination” (115e-f) and “Those- their refuge is Gehenna, and they will not find any place of escape from it” (121a-b).
- Complementary meanings and similar phrases: God is with the hypocrites planning evil matters “HE IS WITH THEM when they plan by night (with) the words He finds displeasing. God encompasses what they do” (108a-e) and God owns everything “To God (belongs) whatever is in the heaven and whatever is on the earth. God encompasses everything” (126a-b).
The occurrence of the root Q-Ā-L: “al-qawl/the words He finds displeasing” (108d), “and he qāla/said, ‘I shall indeed take an obligatory portion of Your servants’” (118b-c), and “Who is more truthful than God in qīl-an/speaking?” (122g).

Complementary and similar phrases and meanings about doing immoral acts and their effects occur in the center of (v.105-115): “WHOEVER DOES EVIL or does himself evil, (and) then asks forgiveness from God, he will find God is forgiving, compassionate. WHOEVER earns SIN, only earns it against himself. God is knowing, wise. WHOEVER earns a MISTAKE or SIN, (and) then hurls it against an innocent person, will bear (the burden of) slander and clear sin” (v.110-112) are echoed in the extreme of (v.116-126): “WHOEVER DOES EVIL will be repaid with it” (123c-d).

The occurrence of the same word in the outer parts: “Surely We have sent down on you the Book with the truth” (105a) and “the promise of God in truth” (122f). The two phrases are complementing. God’s revelation is true and contains the truth, likewise; His promise of the Last Day’s judgment, reward, and punishment is true as well. This term is similar to the phrases in the center: “(there is) no doubt about it. Who is more truthful than God in report” (87c-d) affirming the truth of the Day of Resurrection and God’s speech.

The correspondence between sub-sequences (v.36-42) in A2 and (v.116-126) in B2:

Sub-sequence (v.36-42):

Surely God does not do (even) a speck’s weight of EVIL. If it is a GOOD (deed), He doubles it, (and) gives from Himself a GREAT REWARD. How (will it be) when We bring from each community a witness, (and) bring you as a witness against them (all)? On that Day those who have DISBELIEVED and DISOBEYED the MESSENGER will wish that the EARTH were leveled with them. But they will not (be able to) conceal (any) ACCOUNT from GOD.
\textbf{Sub-sequence (v.116-126)}:

SURELY God does not forgive (anything) being ASSOCIATED with Him, but He forgives what is other than that for whomever He pleases.

Whoever associate (anything) with God has gone far astray. They only call on females (deities) instead of Him. They only call on a rebellious SATAN. God cursed him, and he said, ‘I shall indeed take an obligatory portion of Your servants, and I shall indeed lead them astray and they will cut off the ears of the cattle. I shall indeed command them and they will alter the creation of God.

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{Whoever has done evil will not be done evil in the slightest.} (119g)
  \item \textit{But those who have believed and done righteous deeds will be repaid with it,} and he will not find for himself any ally or helper than God.
  \item \textit{Who is more truthful than God in speaking?} (116a-b)
  \item \textit{Surely GOD does not forgive (anything) being associated with Him.} (116a-b).
  \item \textit{The earth} (42) and \textit{the earth} (126).
\end{itemize}

Moreover, Satan is mentioned in both sub-rings. In (v.36-42), Satan is the comrade of those who do \textit{ri’ā} (or showing off which is opposed to pure belief in God and the Last Day) and do not believe in God and the Last Day: “\textit{WHOEVER has SATAN for his comrade- he is an evil comrade}” (38e-f). Similarly in (v.116-126), Satan is an ally of those who obey his commands and associate things with God: “\textit{WHOEVER takes SATAN as an ally, instead of God, has lost utterly (and) clearly}” (119g-i). Also, antithetical meanings occur: “\textit{who disbelieved and disobeyed the messenger}” (42b-c) and “\textit{But those who have believed and done righteous deeds}” (122a-b). The People of the Scripture are referred to in (v.37) while the hypocrites are referred to in (v.38-39). Accordingly, they are addressed in sub-sequence (v.116-126) “\textit{(This is) not (in accord) with your wishful thinking, (nor in accord with the) wishful thinking of the People of the}”

The first sub-sequence is the end of A2 while the second sub-sequence is the beginning of B2. These two sub-sequences are corresponding. Both emphasize the theme of monotheism, righteous deeds, and God’s Justice. Identical ideas and terms occur in the extremes:

- “\textit{Worship GOD, and do not associate anything with Him}” (36a-b) and “Surely GOD does not forgive (anything) being associated with Him” (116a-b).
- “\textit{the earth}” (42) and “\textit{the earth}” (126).
Thus, the first sub-sequence mentions the People of the Book who were miserly and concealing God’s favor and the hypocrites who were claiming belief in front of people whereas the second sub-sequence mentions the Pagans following Satan’s commands. All those evil deeds were known by God (39d, 126b) and on the Last Day nothing can be concealed (42e). The term “ḥadīth-an/report” (42e) is very similar to the term “qīl-an/speaking” (122g) and both occur in the second parts of both sub-sequences. God is truthful in speaking and they are not, including their friend/ally (Satan). Similar words and antithetical ideas occur: in the first part of (v.36-42), God “does not LOVE anyone who is arrogant (and) boastful” (v.36) and the disbelievers take Satan as their friend: “qarīn-an/a comrade” (38d-e) and in the second part of (v.116-126), God takes a believing friend “God took Abraham as khalīl-an/friend” (125f).

The three components of belief: God, the Last Day, and good deeds are found in both sub-sequences. God’s Oneness is obvious in both (v.36, 116). The Last Day (38d, 39b) and its events (v.40-42, 121-124) are emphasized. The theme of God’s judgment of deeds: “Surely God does not do (even) a speck’s weight of EVIL. If it is a GOOD (deed), He doubles it, and gives from Himself a great reward” (40a-d) is echoed in the pieces: “Surely God does not forgive (anything) being ASSOCIATED with Him, but He forgives what is other than that for whomever He pleases” (116a-d), “Whoever does EVIL will be repaid with it” (123c-d), and “But whoever does RIGHTEOUS DEEDS – whether male or female – and he is a BELIEVER, those will enter the Garden- and they will not be done EVIL in the slightest” (124a-e). A good deed will be doubled while a bad deed will be repaid with it. The mention of “Gehenna” (121a) explains “We have prepared for the disbelievers a humiliating punishment” (37d) while the occurrence of Gardens with rivers (122c-d) and Garden (124d) refers to “He doubles it, and gives from Himself a great reward” (40c) since they occur twice in the same part. The same root and meaning occur:
“If it is a hasanah/GOOD (deed), He doubles it” (v.40) and “Who is aḥsanu/BETTER in religion than one who submits his face to God, and is muḥsin/un/a doer of GOOD, and follow the creed of Abraham the Ḥanīf?” (v.125). Also, the root Ẓ-L-M occurs in mentioning the judgment of deeds: “Surely God does not do (even) a speck’s weight of EVIL” (40a) and “and they will not be done EVIL in the slightest” (124e).

Sub-sequence (Q 4:127-130) Be just to Women as told in Scripture, Marriage’s problem:  
127. a THEY ask you for a pronouncement about WOMEN. b Say, c ‘GOD makes a pronouncement to you about them, d and what is recited to you in the Book (gives instruction) e about female ORPHANS to f whom you do not give what is prescribed for them, g though you wish to MARRY them, h and (about) the weak among the children, i and that you secure JUSTICE for ORPHANS. j Whatever GOOD you DO, k SURELY GOD knows about it.

128. a If a WOMAN b fears mistreatment from her husband, or desertion, c (there is) no blame on the two of them d if they SET (things) RIGHT between themselves.

129. a You will not be able b to ACT FAIRLY among the WOMEN, c even though you are eager to (to do so). d But do not turn completely away (from one of them) e so that you leave her, as it were, in suspense. f If you SET (things) RIGHT and are conscious g of Him- h SURELY GOD is forgiving, compassionate.

130. a But if b the two of them SEPARATE, c GOD will enrich each (of them) from His abundance. d GOD is embracing, wise.

This sub-sequence is arranged in mirror-image. It is about treating women (including orphan girls and weak children) with justice. This recalls the theme of justice present in the beginning of the sūrah (A1) dealing with pre-Islamic practices with orphans’ and women’s rights. Now the believers come to ask about women’s matters and justice, set by God and His Book, as the base of treating them. The outer pieces (127a-h) and (v.129-130) discuss the theme of justice. The beginning contains an order to be just with women and orphans according to God’s authority and the Book (127b-h) while the end shows that justice between women is not in men’s ability in terms of having equal “affection” (129a-c), and if they divorce, they will receive God’s abundance (130b). Antithetical meanings occur: marriage “though you wish to marry them” (127f) and divorce “But if the two of them separate” (130a). The segments (127g-j) and (129a-f) present two kinds of justice: 1) giving the orphan girls their rights (dowries,
inheritance, and marrying to other men not to the guardians)\(^{183}\) and 2) being unable to be just emotionally to wives (129a-e).

The segment (128a-b) is about a marital issue in which a woman fears her husband’s unjust treatment or abandonment whereas the segment (128c-f) encourages both of them to cooperate to avoid separation through arranging an agreement. Cooperation is good, but human nature tends to be greedy. Similar phrases occur complementing the theme of God’s authority and linking the whole sub-sequence: “Whatever you do, surely God knows about it” (127i-j) and “If you do good and are conscious of Him- Surely God is aware of what you do” (128g-h).

The coherence of sequence 1 (v.116-130) as a whole:

Sub-sequence (v.116-126):

116.\(^a\) Surely God does not forgive (anything) \(^b\) being associated with Him, \(^c\) but He forgives what is other than that \(^d\) for whomever He pleases. \(^e\) Whoever associate (anything) with God \(^f\) has gone far astray. \(^g\) They only call on \(^h\) females (deities) instead of Him. \(^i\) They only call on \(^j\) a rebellious Satan.\(^{116b}\) God cursed him, \(^k\) and he said, ‘I shall indeed take \(^l\) an obligatory portion of Your servants, \(^m\) and I shall indeed lead them astray \(^n\) and fill them with longings. \(^o\) and I shall indeed command them \(^p\), and they will cut off the ears of the cattle. \(^q\) I shall indeed command them \(^r\) and they will alter will alter the creation of God. \(^s\) Whoever takes Satan as an ally, \(^t\) instead of God, \(^u\) has lost utterly and (and) clearly.

119.\(^a\) He makes promises to them \(^b\) and fills them with longings. \(^c\) Yet Satan does not promise them (anything) \(^d\) but deception.\(^{119b}\) Those-\(\text{their} \) refuge is Gehenna, \(^k\) and they will not find any place of escape from it.

120.\(^a\) But those who have believed \(^b\) and done righteous deeds, \(^c\) We shall cause them to enter Gardens \(^d\) through which rivers flow, \(^e\) there to remain forever – \(f\) the promise of God in truth. \(^g\) Who is more truthful than God in speaking? \(^h\) This is not (in accord) with your wishful thinking, \(^i\) (nor in accord with) the wishful thinking of the People of the Book.

121.\(^a\) (This is) not (in accord) with your wishful thinking, \(^b\) (nor in accord with the) wishful thinking of the People of the Book. \(^c\) Whoever does evil \(^d\) will be repaid with it, \(^e\) and he will not find for himself \(^f\) any ally or helper than God.

124.\(^b\) But whoever does righteous deeds – \(b\) whether male or female – \(c\) and he is a believer, \(^d\) those will enter the Gardens \(\text{and} \) and \(c\) they will not be evil in the slightest. \(^d\) \(c\) Who is better in religion than \(b\) one who submits his face to God, \(b\) and is a doer of good, \(b\) and follow the creed of Abraham the Hamid? \(b\) God took Abraham as a friend.\(^{126a}\) To God (belongs) whatever is in the heaven and whatever is on the earth. \(b\) God encompasses everything.

Sub-sequence (v.127-130):

127.\(^a\) They ask you for a pronouncement about women, \(^b\) say, ‘God makes a pronouncement to you about them, \(^c\) and what is recited to you in the Book (gives instruction) \(^d\) about female orphans to \(c\) whom you do not give what is prescribed for them, \(c\) though you wish to marry them, \(c\) and (about) the weak among the children, \(^c\) and that you secure justice for orphans.

128.\(^b\) Whatever good you did, \(b\) surely God knows about it. \(^b\) If a woman \(b\) fears mistreatment from her husband, or desertion, \(b\) (there is) no blame on the two of them \(d\) if they set (things) right between themselves. \(^b\) Setting (things) right is better, \(b\) but people are prone to greed. \(b\) If you do good and are conscious of Him, \(b\) surely God is aware of what you do.

129.\(^b\) You will not be able \(b\) to act fairly among the women, \(b\) even though you are eager to (to do so). \(^d\) But do not turn completely away (from one of them) \(b\) so that you leave her, as it were, in suspense. \(^b\) If you set (things) right and are conscious of Him, \(b\) surely God is forgiving, compassionate.\(^{130b}\) But if the two of them separate, \(b\) God will enrich each (of them) from His abundance. \(b\) God is embracing, wise.

The two sub-sequence, arranged in mirror-form, that compose this sequence have similar ideas in their extremes. The first sub-sequence begins with stating that association with God is

\(^{183}\) Ibid., 249.
not forgiven and it concludes with affirming God’s ownership of the heavens and the earth and everything in them. Correspondingly, the second sub-sequence stresses in the beginning God’s authority and responses to people’s questions through the Book while the end mentions God’s abundance. The theme of reward occurs at the middle of the first sub-sequence (v.120-122) is completed by the theme of encouraging people to do good deeds and set thing right occurs at the middle of (v.127-130). The second sub-sequence relates to the previous one through the following:

- Similar and recurring meanings: “God encompasses everything” (126b), “Surely God is aware of what you do” (128h), and “God is embracing, wise” (130c).

- The theme of doing good deeds and the recurring of the root of Ś-L-Ḥ: “done righteous deeds” (122b), “But whoever does righteous deeds” (124a), “Whatever good you do” (127i), “If they set (things) right between themselves. Setting (things) right is better” (128d-e), “If you do good and are conscious of Him” (128g), and “If you set (things) right and are conscious of Him” (129f).

- Similar and linking terms: “females” (117b), “female” (124b), “women” (127a, 127d, 129b), and “a woman” (128a).

- Similar meanings: “a male” (124b) and “ba’lihā/her husband” (128a).^{184}

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^{184} According to Ibn ‘Āshūr in his exegesis of (Q 2:228), the term “ba’lihā/her husband” means originally “the master” in Semitics to emphasize the meaning of ownership and the term is used to refer to husbands until Abraham’s era. Then, Arabs has used the term “zawj/spouse” to refer to both husband and wife. The Qur’ān uses the term ba’al in (Q 11:72) to refer to husband and to “a male” (See Ibn ʿĀshūr, al-Tahrīr wa al-Tanwīr, 2:393); Also, it was used to call an idol/deity in Yemen as the Qur’ān shows in (Q 37:125) (See al-Ṭabarī, Jāmiʿ al-Bayān, 21:96).
The Correspondence between Sub-sequences (v.29-35) and (v.127-130):

Sub-sequence (v.29-35):

29 **You who believe!** Do not consume your PROPERTY among yourselves by means of falsehood, but (let there) be a transaction among you by mutual agreement. And do not kill one another. **SURELY GOD is compassionate with you.** 30 Whoever does that in enmity and evil – We shall burn him in a Fire. **That is easy for GOD.** 31 If you avoid the gross (sins) of what you are forbidden to commit, **WE shall absolve you of your (other) EVIL DEEDS,** and WE shall cause you to enter (through) an entrance of honor.

32 **Do not long for what GOD has bestowed in favor on some of you over others.** To MEN (belongs) a portion of what they have earned, and to WOMEN (belongs) a portion of what they have earned. **Ask GOD for some of His favor.** 33 **SURELY GOD has knowledge of everything.** To everyone We have appointed heirs of what parents and family leave; and those with whom your (hands) have made a pledge, give them their portion. **SURELY GOD is a witness over everything.**

Sub-sequence (v.127-130):

127 **They ask you for a pronouncement about WOMEN.** Say, ‘GOD makes a pronouncement to you about them, and what is recited to you in the Book (gives instruction) about female orphans to whom you do not give WHAT IS PRESCRIBED for them, though you wish to marry them, and (about) the weak among the children, and that you secure justice for orphans.

128 **Whatever GOOD you DO,** **SURELY GOD knows about it.** 129 If a WOMAN fears nushiz-and MISTREATMENT from her HUSBAND, or desertion, (there is) no blame on the two of them if they SET (things) RIGHT between themselves. **SETTING (things) RIGHT is better,** but people are prone to greed. **If you DO GOOD and are conscious of Him,** SURELY GOD is aware of what you do.

130 **You will not be able to act fairly among the WOMEN,** even though you are eager to (to do so). **But do not turn completely away from one of them** so that you leave her, as it were, in suspense. **If you SET (things) RIGHT and are conscious of Him,** SURELY GOD is forgiving, compassionate. 130 But if the two of them separate, GOD will enrich each (of them) from His abundance. GOD is embracing, wise.

The first sub-ring is composed in parallel-form while the second is arranged in mirror-formation. However, they are corresponding thematically. The first pieces in the beginnings are about financial obligations and rules: (v.29-33) and (v.127). There are similar meanings which occur in the beginnings. The phrase “Do not consume your property among yourselves by means of falsehood” (29b) contains an order to not consume other rights. Likewise, an exhortation to give women their rights comes in the beginning of the corresponding sub-sequence “to whom you do not give what is prescribed for them, though you wish to marry them, and (about) the weak among the children, and that you secure justice for orphans” (127e-h). Also, the right of inheritance for men and women reemphasized in the middle (v.32-33) corresponds with references to weak children’s and orphans’ rights (127g-h) in the beginning.

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185 This order is similar to the order to not consume orphans’ properties in A1.
Obviously, the marital problem regarding rebellious women occurring in the end of (v.29-35) is echoed in mentioning man’s nushūz in the sub-ring’s middle (v.128) while the theme of rights and laws occurring in the middle of (v.29-35) is echoed in the outer parts of the sub-sequence (v.127-130). The phrase “If you/the two” found in the extremes of the first sub-sequence (31a, 35a, 35e) occurs in the middle of the second sub-sequence: “If a woman” (128a, 128g) and in the end (129f, 130a). Moreover, the beginning of (v.29-35) contains the term “And do not kill anfusakum/one another” (29e) which also occurs in the middle of (v.127-130): “but al-anfus/people” (128f). The ends of both sub-sequences are corresponding thematically. The first is about maintaining marriage through the involvement of families in mediating right between husband and wife: “If you fear a BREACH between the TWO, send an arbiter from his family and an arbiter from her family. If they both wish to SET (things) RIGHT, God will effect a reconciliation between the TWO. Surely God is knowing, aware” (v.35). Likewise, the second is about also cooperating to solve the issue, divorce is also presented as a solution “But if the TWO of them SEPARATE, God will enrich each (of them) from His abundance. God is embracing, wise” (v.130).

References to unjust deeds are found in the extremes of the first sub-sequence: “Whoever does that in enmity and evil” (30a-b) and “If you avoid the gross (sins) of what you are forbidden (to commit)” (31a-b). The theme of scriptural laws associated with justice and doing good deeds occurs in “and that you secure justice for orphans. Whatever good you do, surely God knows about it” (127h-j) and in the repetition of the exhortation to do good and taqwā (128g, 129f). A number of similarities can be found between the two sub-sequences:

- Similar and linking phrases: “Surely God is knowing, aware” (35g) and “Surely God is aware of what you do” (128h).
- In the middles, the occurrence of identical meanings: “Surely God has knowledge of everything” (32f) and “Whatever good you do, surely God knows about it” (127i-j).

- Linking term is “the women” (32d, 34a), (127a, 127d, 129b), and “a woman” (128a).

- The same root ﺲ-ﻝ-Ḥ in the second parts: “RIGHTEOUS WOMEN are obedient” (34e), “If they both wish to SET (things) RIGHT” (35e), “If they SET (things) RIGHT between themselves. SETTING (things) RIGHT is better” (128d-e), “If you SET (things) RIGHT and are conscious of Him” (129f).

- The phrase “Surely God is compassionate with you” (29f) occurring in the beginning of the first sub-sequence is echoed in the end of the second sub-sequence “Surely God is forgiving, compassionate” (129g).

- Similar meanings occur in the beginning and end of (v.29-35): “by mutual agreement” (29d) and “If they both wish to set (things) right, God will effect a reconciliation between the two” (35e-f), and in the middle of (v.127-130): “setting (things) right is better” (128e).

Central passage (Q 4:131-132) Divine Ownership of Heavens and Earth

131. a To GOD (belongs) whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth.
   b Certainly We have enjoined c those who were given the Book before you, and you (as well).
   d ‘GUARD (yourselves) against GOD!’
   s
   e But if you DISBELIEVE – f surely to GOD (belongs) whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth.
   f GOD is wealthy, praiseworthy.
   s

132. a To GOD (belongs) whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth.
   b GOD is sufficient as guardian.

The center is composed in parallel-image. It is about taqwā (fearing God) in the context of mentioning God’s ultimate authority, wealth, and ownership of everything in the heavens and on the earth. Also, the first segment affirms that God has spoken to the People of the Scripture
and now to the believers with the same order of taqwā. Taqwā (131d) is antithetical parallel to disbelief (131e), however; the two groups have already believed. Thus, the order of taqwā has to do with enhancing their belief through obeying God’s teachings in terms of practices/deeds. The repetition of the phrase “To God (belongs) whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth” in the context of exhortation to fear God emphasizes the same source of those laws revealed in the previous and new revelations. Taqwā (131d) and disbelief (131e) reflect people’s responses to the commands of the Owner of everything. Exhortation to fear God (taqwā) occurs twice in the previous sub-sequence (128g, 129f) in the context of emphasizing justice with women. The phrase “Certainly We have enjoined” (131b) links the center to the preceding sub-sequence’s exhortation to fear God and set things right and it complements the meaning of “God makes a pronouncement to you about them, and what is recited to you in the Book” (127b-c). Moreover, God’s abundance “yughni Allah kull-an min sa’atihi/God will enrich each (of them) from His abundance” (130b) is echoed in the phrases: “God is wealthy, praiseworthy” (131g) and “God is sufficient as guardian” (132b).

Moreover, the first extreme of sub-section B2 (v.116-126) corresponds with its center (v.131-132). The center’s recurring phrase occurs in the first sub-sequence “To God (belongs) whatever is in the heaven and whatever is on the earth” (v.125). Furthermore, the People of the Book are mentioned in both: “(This is) not (in accord) with your wishful thinking, (nor in accord with the) wishful thinking of the People of the Book” (v.123) and “those who were given the Book before you, and you (as well)” (131b-c). The sūrah’s center is very relevant to this central passage. There is an obvious connection between the theme of God’s Oneness (87a) and God’s ownership of the universe. The phrase “Certainly We have enjoined” (131b) corresponds with
God speaking to people through the scriptures. God is Truthful in all what He says as the center shows (87d).

The correspondence between the centers (v.26-28) and (v.131-132):

Sub-section A2’s center: (v.26-28):

26. a GOD wishes to make things clear to you,
   b and to guide you to the traditions of those who were before you.
   c and to turn toward you (in forgiveness).
   d GOD is knowing, wise.

27. a GOD wishes to turn toward you (in forgiveness),
   b but those who follow (their) lusts wish you to swerve far away.

28. a GOD wishes to lighten (your burden) for you,
   b (for) the human was created weak.

Sub-section B2’s center: (v.131-132):

131. a To GOD (belongs) whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth.
   b Certainly We have enjoined those who were given the Book before you, and you (as well).
   c ‘Guard (yourselves) against GOD!’

132. a To GOD (belongs) whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth.
   b GOD is sufficient as guardian.

The first center is complemented by the second one. Both are arranged in parallel-formation. The first shows that God clarifies, guides, invites people to repent, and lightens burdens. Correspondingly, the second center shows God’s ownership of everything in heaven and on the earth. It explains why God provides clarification and guidance. Both centers are linked through the similar meanings: “and to guide YOU to the traditions of those who were BEFORE YOU” (26b) and “those who were given the Book BEFORE YOU, and YOU (as well)” (131b-c). This parallelism confirms that the source of both revelations is God. And it also has an implication that there are a lot of similarities between the previous laws and the new
Accordingly, the term “sunan/traditions” in (26b) refers to the People of the Scripture’s scriptural laws.

Finally, God, the Owner of the heavens and the earth, does not need people or their belief taqwā (131e), but they are the ones who need His guidance and aid. Antithetical meanings occur: “(for) the human was created weak” (28b) and “To GOD (belongs) whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. GOD is sufficient as guardian” (132a-b). If people disbelieve (131e), meaning not fear God, they are similar to those who follow (their) lusts (27b-c). The latter people include the hypocrites as it was inferred in A2’s end and B3 mentioning the hypocrites’ attitudes. This conclusion is supported by the following sub-sequence mentioning the hypocrites’ disbelief through being in-between state and inclining to the side serving their personal benefits. Thus, taqwā in the center (v.131-132) refers to belief translated into obedience (good deeds).

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186 This idea is more obvious in sūrah 5’s laws of crimes.
Sequence 2 (Q 4:133-175)

Sub-sequence (Q 4:133-152) Be just and believing and not take hypocrites as allies:

(A)
133. *If He (so) pleases,* He will do away with you, PEOPLE, and brings others (in your place). *God is powerful over that.
134. *Whoever desires the REWARD of this world,* with God is the REWARD of this world and Hereafter. *God is hearing, seeing.
135. *You who believe!* Be supervisors in justice, witnesses for God, even if it is against yourselves or your parents and family. *What ever he be rich or poor,* God (stands) closer to both of them. *Do not follow (your vain) desire or you will (not) act fairly.* If you turn aside or away — surely God is aware of what you do.
136. *You who believe!* *Believe in God and His MESSENGER,* and the BOOK He has sent down on His MESSENGER, and the BOOK which He sent down before (this). *Whoever disbelieves* in God and His angels, *and His BOOKS and His MESSENGERS,* and the Last Day, *has gone very far astray.
137. *Surely those who have believed,* then disbelieved, *then believed (again),* *disbelieved (again),* *and increased in disbelief.* God will not forgive them or guide them to the way.

(B)
138. *Give the HYPOCRITES the news* that for them (there is) a painful PUNISHMENT.
139. *– those who take the disbelievers as ALLIES instead of the believers.* Do they seek honor with them? *Surely HONOR (belongs) to God altogether.
140. *He has already sent down on you the BOOK.* *When you hear the signs of God being disbelieved and mocked,* do not sit with them until they banter about some other TOPIC. *Otherwise you will surely be like them.* *Surely God is going to gather the HYPOCRITES and the disbelievers into Gehenna — all (of them).

(C)
141. *The hypocrites are* those who wait (to see what happens) with you. *If a victory comes to you from God,* *Away we not with you?* But if a portion (of good fortune) falls to the disbelievers, *they say,* *Did we not prevail over you,* and protect you from the believers? God will judge between you on the Day of Resurrection. *God will not make a WAY for the disbelievers over the believers.*

(C')
142. *The HYPOCRITES (try to) deceive God,* but He deceives them. *When they stand up for the prayer,* they stand up in a lazy fashion, *showing off (before) the PEOPLE,* but they do not remember God, except a little.
143. *Wavering between (this and) that,* *belonging* neither to these nor to those. *Whomever God leads astray — you will not find A WAY for him.

(B’)
144. *You who believe!* *Do not take disbelievers as ALLIES instead of the believers.* Do you wish to give God clear AUTHORITY against you?
145. *Surely the HYPOCRITES will be in lowest level of the Fire,* and you will not find for them any helper, *except those who turn (in repentance),* and set (things) right, *and hold fast to God,* *and make no distinction between any of them.* Those are with the believers, *and God will give the believers a great REWARD.*
146. *Why would God PUNISH you,* if you are thankful and believe? *God is thankful, knowing.

(A')
148. *God does not love the public utterance of evil WORDS,* except (by one) who has suffered evil. *God is hearing, knowing.
149. *If you do good openly or you hide it,* or you pardon an evil — surely God is pardoning, powerful.
150. *Surely those who disbelieve in God and His MESSENGERS* *and wish to make a distinction between God and His MESSENGERS,* *We believe in part,* and disbelieve in part, *and wish to make a WAY between (this and) that,* *those — they in truth are the disbelievers.* *And We have prepared for the disbelievers a humiliating PUNISHMENT.*
152. *But those who believe in God and His MESSENGERS* *and make no distinction between any of them,* *He will give them their REWARDS.* *God is forgiving, compassionate.

The sub-sequence is composed of two passages, (v.133-141) and (142-152), arranged in mirror-form. Each passage is constituted by three parts. The relation to the center’s theme (v.131-132) has to do with mentioning God’s ability to replace people with others and His
ownership of this life’s and Afterlife’s reward (v.133-134). In other words, God owns everything in the heavens and on the earth including people who are His creation as well. Also, the piece (v.136) emphasizes God’s revelation (the earlier scriptures and the new scripture) in the context of ordering the believers to believe in the Prophet and his Book. This corresponds with addressing the People of the Scripture and the believers in the sub-section’s center (v.131). This sub-sequence correspondingly addresses the believers with some obligations of belief including the order to not ally the disbelievers because the honor (v.139) and judgment (v.141) belong to God as everything in the heavens and on the Earth belongs to Him.

The themes of honor and allegiance in this sub-sequence complement the central phrases: “God is wealthy, praiseworthy” (131g) and “God is sufficient as a guardian” (132b). Rhetorical links and similar ideas occur correlating the center and this sub-sequence:

- The same word “ghanī”: God is wealthy, praiseworthy” (131g) and “Whatever he be rich or poor” (135e).
- Complementary meanings with similar phrases: “SURELY to GOD (belongs) whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth” (131f) and “SURELY honor (belongs) to GOD altogether” (139d).
- Similar phrases: “But if you disbelieve” (131e) and “Whoever disbelieves” (136e).
- Similar and complementing meanings and phrases: “We have enjoined those who were given the Book before you, and you (as well)” (131b-c) and “Believe in God and His messenger, and the Book He has sent down on His messenger, and the Book which He sent down before (this)” (136b-d).
- The order of taqwā in (131d) is completed and explained by: “You who believe! BE SUPERVISORS in justice, witnesses for God” (v.135) and “You who believe!
BELIEVE in GOD and His messenger, and the Book He has sent down on His messenger, and the Book which He sent down before (this)” (v.136).

Parts A/A’:

(A)
133. a If He (so) pleases, b He will do away with you, PEOPLE, c and bring OTHERS (in your place).
d GOD is powerful over that.

134. a Whoever desires the REWARD of this world-
b with GOD is the REWARD of this world and Hereafter.
c GOD is hearing, seeing.

135. ‘You who believe! a Be supervisors in JUSTICE, b witnesses for GOD, c even if it is against yourselves or your parents and family.
d Whatever he be rich or poor, e GOD (stands) closer to both of them.

# Do not follow (your vain) desire or you will (not) ACT FAIRLY.
b If you turn aside or away – c surely GOD is aware of what you do.

136. ‘You who believe!
b Believe in GOD and His MESSENGER, c and the BOOK He has sent down on His MESSENGER, d and the BOOK which He sent down before (this).

# Whoever disbelieves in GOD and His angels, e and His BOOKS and His MESSENGERS, and the Last Day, f has GONE VERY FAR ASTRAY.

137. ‘Surely those who have believed, g then disbelieved, h then believed (again), i then disbelieved (again), j (and) then increased in disbelief-
k GOD will not forgive them l or GUIDE THEM (to the) WAY.

(A’)
148. ‘GOD does not love b the public utterance of evil words, c except (by one) who has suffered EVIL.
d GOD is hearing, knowing.

149. ‘If you do good openly or you hide it, b or you pardon an EVIL – c surely God is pardoning, powerful.

150. ‘Surely those who disbelieve in GOD and His MESSENGERS, b and wish to make a distinction between GOD and His MESSENGERS,
c and say, ‘We believe in part, d and disbelieve in part,’
e and wish to make a WAY between (this and) that,

151. ‘those – they in truth are the disbelievers.
b And We have prepared for the disbelievers a humiliating PUNISHMENT.

152. ‘But those who believe in God and His MESSENGERS, b and make no distinction between any of them,

# those- He will give them their REWARDS.
d GOD is forgiving, compassionate.

Part A is about justice and belief while part A’ is about injustice (v.148-149) and disbelief (v.150-152). Part A has three pieces. The first piece mentions God’s power in replacing the people and people’s responses coupled with stating His ownership of the reward of both lives
The second piece addresses the believers to be just with family (even if it was against their own selves), to be witnesses for God, and not to follow the desire (v.135). The third piece again addresses the believers to believe in God, the Prophet, his Book, and the previous Scripture while disbelieving in the belief’s pillars is the way of those who went astray (v.136). Then, it shows that there are people who believed and disbelieved several times. Those who disbelieve in all belief’s components (136e) have gone astray (136g) and God will not tolerate the increase in disbelief after believing and because of their response, God will neither forgive nor guide them to “a way” (v.137). Those people are the hypocrites mentioned in part B.\textsuperscript{188}

Part A is connected through the recurrence of the terms related to belief and disbelief and through similar and identical terms and phrases occur in the extremes: “Hereafter” (134b) and “the Last Day” (136f), and “WHOEVER” (134a, 136e). The terms “the people” (133b), “witnesses for God” (135c), and “His Messenger” (136b) are parallels and indicate that people and messengers are witnesses for God on this earth as it occurs in A2 (v.41) and it will be re-mentioned in the next sub-sequence. The mention of the Messenger and his Book and the previous messengers and revelations (v.136) reflects the idea of bringing other people instead of the current people (v.133) or (the establishment of a new community with a new message).

The mirrored part A’ has two pieces. The first piece mentions the theme of public injustice. In part A, the theme of justice towards parents and family is stressed and the believers are ordered to be witnesses for God (in public) and to not follow hawā/desire (v.135). Likewise, part A’ shows that God does not like bad words spread in public except for who has been

\textsuperscript{187} According to Ṭabarī, the replacement means to annihilate the people (See al-Ṭabarī, Jāmi’ al-Bayān, 9:298).

\textsuperscript{188} Ṭabarī prefers that the verse refers to Jews and Christians because they believed in their scriptures, then disbelieved in them and in the new scripture (See al-Ṭabarī, Jāmi’ al-Bayān, 9:315-317). The Study Qur’an claims that it refers to the hypocrites not the People of the Scripture since the latter is granted “salvation” in (“Q 2:62”) and (“Q 5:69”) while the hypocrites in this passage are told to be punished (See Nasr and others, The Study Qur’an, 255).
wronged, followed by encouraging the addressees to do good publicly or secretly and to forgive evil deeds (v.148-149).

Part A contains an order to believe in God, His Messenger, the Qur’ān, and the Scripture (136b-d). Similarly, the second piece in part A’ complements that order of belief and affirms that believing in some and disbelieving in some is a complete/true disbelief (v.150-151). The piece (v.150-151) refers to the People of the Scripture as it will be discussed in the next sub-sequence while the piece (v.137) refers to the hypocrites. Complementing phrases occur: part A’ mentions the increase of disbelief and God’s un-forgiveness “(and) then increased in disbelief: God will not forgive them or guide them (to the) way” (137e-g) and part A’ confirms their disbelief and mentions God’s punishment “those – they in truth are the disbelievers. And We have prepared for the disbelievers a humiliating punishment” (151a-b). The two parts at hand are a confirmation of the Prophet’s career and the truth of his Book which share the same source of earlier revelations. This theme will be reemphasized in the rest of sub-section B2. These two outer parts contain identical and similar words/phrases:

- “God is powerful over that” (133d) and “surely God is pardoning, powerful” (149c).
- “God is hearing, seeing” (134c) and “God is hearing, knowing” (148d).
- Similar meanings: “thawāb/reward” (134a-b) and “‘ujūrahum/rewards” (152c).
- “His messenger” (136b-c) and “His messengers” (136f, 150a-b, 152a)
- Antithetical meanings: “in justice” (135b), “has suffered evil” (148c).
- The recurrence of the roots K-F-R and Ā-M-N.
Parts B/B’:

(B)
138. *Give the **HYPOCRITES** the news
that for them (there is) a painful **PUNISHMENT**.

139. – *those who take the **disbelievers** as **ALLIES** instead of the **believers**, 
*Do they seek honor with them? *Surely **HONOR** (belongs) to **GOD ALTOGETHER**.

140. *He has already sent down on you in the **BOOK**:
*When you hear the **SIGNS** of **GOD** being **disbelieved** and mocked,
*do not sit with them *until they banter about some other **TOPIC**.
*Otherwise you will surely be like them.
*Surely **GOD** is going to **GATHER** the **HYPOCRITES** and the **disbelievers**
*into Gehenna – all (of them).

(B’)
144. *You who believe! *Do not take **disbelievers** as **ALLIES** instead of the **believers**.
*Do you wish to give **GOD** clear **AUTHORITY** against you?

145. *Surely the **HYPOCRITES** will be in lowest level of the **Fire**, 
*and you will not find for them any **HELPER**.

146. *except those who turn (in repentance), *and set (things) right, *and hold fast to **GOD**, *and devote their religion to **GOD**. 
*Those are with the **believers**, *and **GOD** will give the **believers** *a great **REWARD**.

147. *Why would **GOD** PUNISH you, *if you are thankful and **believe**?
* **GOD** is thankful, knowing.

Parts B/B’ are about the theme of allegiance in relation to the theme of belief and disbelief. Both parts contain two pieces and are about the hypocrites allying the disbelievers. The first part mentions that the hypocrites take the disbelievers as allies: “**those who take the disbelievers** as allies instead of the **BELIEVERS**. Do they seek honor with them? Surely **HONOR (belongs) to God altogether**” (v.139) whereas the second part addresses the believers to not take the disbelievers as friends “**You who believe! Do not take disbelievers** as allies instead of the **BELIEVERS**. Do you wish to give God clear **AUTHORITY** against you?” (v.144). Both pieces contain a question and complementing words. Also, similar phrases and meanings occur in both parts: **Surely God is going to gather the hypocrites and the disbelievers into Gehenna – all (of them)” (140h-i) and “**Surely the hypocrites will be in lowest level of the Fire, and you will not find for them any helper” (v.145). In part B, sitting with the hypocrites while they are mocking with the signs makes the believers like them (140g), whereas in part B’, repenting, setting things
right, and holding fast to God make the hypocrites with the believers “Those are with the believers” (146e).

In the extremes of these parts, two different statements are completing one another:

“Give the hypocrites the news that for them (there is) a painful PUNISHMENT” (138a-b) and

“Why would God PUNISH you, if you are thankful and believe? God is thankful, knowing” (147a-c).

Parts C/C’:

(C)
141. a (The hypocrites are) THOSE WHO wait (to see what happens) with you.
b If a victory comes to you from GOD, ‘they say, ‘Were we not with you?’

d But if a portion (of good fortune) falls to the disbelievers, ‘they say, ‘Did we not prevail over you, ‘and protect you from the believers?’

f GOD will judge BETWEEN you on the Day of Resurrection.
b GOD will not make A WAY for the disbelievers over the believers.

(C’)
142. a The HYPOCRITES (try to) deceive GOD,
b but HE deceives them.

143. a wavering BETWEEN (this and) that, 
b (belonging) neither to these nor to those.

d Whomever GOD leads astray- 

e you will not find A WAY for him.

These two parts are a continuation of the theme of allegiance and the hypocrites. Both parts have one piece. Part C shows the hypocrites’ attitudes of waiting the war’s result while part C’ shows that the hypocrites’ showing off their prayer and wavering between the believers and disbelievers in order to deceive God (v.142-143). The phrase “those who wait” (141a) is parallel to “The hypocrites deceive God” (142a). The same term “a way” occurs in the extremes (141i, 143c). The phrase “(belonging) neither to these nor to those” (143c) in part C’ refers to the believers and disbelievers mentioned in part C.
The first part refers to the hypocrites who joined the disbelievers outside of the community of Madinah and this links the sub-section to the beginning of sub-section B3 that mentions the hypocrites and the believers’ division about their belief’s status prior to emigration. The second part is likely about the hypocrites in the community and this part warns the believers from their in-between place. Thus, the part orders the believers to not ally them unless they repent.

**The coherence of sub-sequence (v.133-152) as a whole:**

The two passages discussed above construct a mirror-compositional sub-system. After mentioning antithetical ideas (complete belief and increased disbelief) in part A, parts B and C touch on the theme of reward in (v.134) by mentioning an opposing idea which is punishment. Those who want only the reward of this present life (v.134) and those who have their disbelief increased (v.137) are now named as “the hypocrites” and they are told about their painful punishment (v.138). The middle parts (B and C) explain why they deserve a painful punishment: 1) allying with the disbelievers instead of the believers (v.139), 2) disbelieving in God’s signs and mocking them (v.140), and 3) waiting during war to choose whichever side best serves their personal benefits/desires (v.141). The phrases “fatḥ-ūn mina Allah/a victory comes to you from God” (141b) and “But if naṣib/a portion (of good fortune) falls to the disbelievers” (141d) refer to the beginning of the passage (part A): “the reward of this world” (134a). However, God has both rewards: “with GOD is the reward of this world and Hereafter” (134b) and He is the Judge of their deeds: “GOD will judge between you on the Day of Resurrection” (141g).

The theme of God’s reward is completed by stating that God will not allow the disbelievers to have any “way” against the believers on the Day of Resurrection (141h-i). It is
said that the term “a way” refers to “ḥujjahlan argument.”\textsuperscript{189} The recurrence of the term “a way” in the ends of (v.137, 141) suggests that they both carry the meaning of a way of argument. The first place refers to an argument against God (v.137) whereas the second to an argument against the believers (v.141). This conclusion will be supported when the term “argument” appears in the next sub-sequence (v.153-175) in the context of the Last Day. Moreover, some rhetorical indications are found linking the whole passage:

- Similar roots Q- Y- M and Q- Ā- M in the extremes in the context of justice and judgment: “qawwāmīna/supervisors” (135b) and “the Day of al-qiyāmah/Resurrection” (141g).

- Repeated verb: “nazzala/has sent down” (136c, 140a), “anzala/sent down” (136d).

- Recurring term “the Book”: (136c-d, plural 136f), (140b). Similar phrase occurs: “the signs of God” (140b).

- Complementing meanings: “Give the hypocrites the news that for them (there is) a PAINFUL PUNISHMENT” (138a-b) and “Surely God is going to gather the hypocrites and the disbelievers into GEHENNA— all (of them)” (140h-i).

The second passage starts with mentioning the hypocrites’ deceiving attitudes regarding them pretending to be with the believers (part C’). Because of their false belief, part B’ exhorts the believers to not take the hypocrites as allies and it exhorts the hypocrites to repent and devote their religion to God (v.146). The theme of reward and punishment is repeated (v.145-147). Then, the passage concludes with mentioning another state of incomplete belief (believing in some and disbelieving in some) accompanied by the theme of reward and punishment. The whole passage is connected through:

\textsuperscript{189} al-Ṭabarī, Jāmi` al-Bayān, 9:327-328.
- Similar phrases and meanings occurring in the outer pieces: “waver between (this and) that, (belonging) neither to these nor to those. Whomever God leads astray-you will not find a way for him” (143a-e) and “‘We believe in part, and disbelieve in part,’ and wish to make a way between (this and) that” (150d-e).

- Similar phrases: “Surely the hypocrites will be in lowest level of the Fire” (145a-b) and “those – they in truth are the disbelievers. And We have prepared for the disbelievers a humiliating punishment” (151a-b).

- Almost identical phrases: “and God will give the believers a great reward” (146f-g) and “He will give them their rewards” (152c).

- Repeated word linking the whole passage: “EXCEPT a little” (142f), “EXCEPT those who turn (in repentance)” (146a), and “EXCEPT (by one) who has suffered evil” (148c).

In addition, there are several rhetorical links found in the whole sub-sequence:

- The first parts of both passages contain the linking term “people” (133b, 142e).

- The recurrence of the same phrase: “You who believe” (135a, 136a, 144a).

- Linking and recurring term “sabil-an/a way”: (137g, 141i) and (143e-150e).

- Linking phrases: “has gone very far astray” (136g) and “Whomever God leads astray” (143d).

- Antithetical meanings: “sit with” (140e) and “stand up” (142c-d).

- The first passage shows that the believers hear the hypocrites’ sarcastic saying about the Qur’ān “When you hear the signs of God” (140b) while the second passage shows God’s is Hearing and Knowing the evil words (v.148).
Similar words and ideas occur in the second parts: the hypocrites speak in public about God’s signs “When you hear the signs of God being disbelieved and mocked, do not sit with them until they banter about some other ḥadīth-in/TOpic” (140a-f) and God does not like bad words to be spread in public “God does not love the public utterance of evil al-qawli/WORDS, except (by one) who has suffered evil” (148a-c).

The term “ḥadīth-in” occurs also in the sūrah’s center “ḥadīth-an” referring to God’s speech. The occurrence of the term in the context of mentioning God’s signs “āyāt Allah” and the hypocrites’ mocking ḥadīth (v.140) and at the center affirming the truth of God’s ḥadīth (v.87) implies that the phrase “Who is more Truthful than God in ḥadīth/Report” (87d) refers to God’s signs/the Qur’ān which is emphasized in this sub-sequence addressing the hypocrites (v.133-152) and the following addressing the People of the Scripture (v.153-175).

The themes of belief/disbelief, justice/injustice, allegiance/deception, and reward/punishment link this sub-sequence to the sūrah’s center. The components of belief (v.136) that include believing in God, the Last Day, and the Scriptures are echoed in the center stating the covenant with God, the Day of Resurrection, and God’s truthful report.
The correspondence between sub-sequences (v.127-130) and (v.133-152):

Sub-sequence (v.127-130):

127 1. They ask you for a pronouncement about women. 2 say, ‘GOD makes a pronouncement to you about them, 3 and what is recited to you in the Book (gives instruction) 4 about female orphans to 5 whom you do not give WHAT IS PRESCRIBED for them, 6 though you wish to marry them, 7 and (about) the weak among the children, 8 and that you secure JUSTICE for orphans.

1. Whatever good you do, 2 SURELY GOD knows about it. 3 If a woman 4 fears mistreatment from her husband, or desertion, 5 (there is) no blame on the two of them 6 if they SET (things) RIGHT between themselves. 7 Setting (things) RIGHT is better, 8 but PEOPLE are prone to greed. 9 If you do good and are conscious of Him, 9 SURELY GOD is aware of what you do.

129 9. You will not be able 10 to ACT FAIRLY among the women, 11 even though you are eager to (to do so). 12 But do not turn completely away (from one of them) 9 so that you leave her, as it were, in suspense. 13 If you SET (things) RIGHT and are conscious of Him, 9 SURELY GOD is forgiving, compassionate. 140 9. But if the two of them separate, 10 GOD will enrich each (of them) from His abundance. 15 GOD is embracing, wise.

Sub-sequence (v.133-152):

131 9. If He (so) pleases, 10 He will do away with you, 11 PEOPLE, 12 and bring others in your place. 13 GOD is powerful over that. 134 9. WHOEVER desires the reward of this world- 14 with GOD is the reward of this world and Hereafter. 15 GOD is hearing, seeing. 155 9. You who believe! 16 Be supervisors in JUSTICE, 17 witnesses for God, 18 even if it is against yourselves or your parents and family. 19 Whatever he be rich or poor, 20 GOD (stands) closer to both of them. 21 Do not follow (your vain) desire or you will (not) ACT FAIRLY. 22 If you turn aside or away 23 SURELY GOD is aware of what you do. 236 9. You who believe! 16 Believe in GOD and His Messenger, 17 and the BOOK He has sent down on His Messenger, 18 and the BOOK which He sent down before (this). 19 WHOEVER disbelieves in GOD and His angels, 20 and His Messengers, and the Last Day, 21 has gone very far astray. 217 9. SURELY those who have believed, 20 then disbelieved, 21 then believed (again), 20 then disbelieved (again), 20 (and) then increased in disbelief. 20 GOD will not forgive them 20 or guide them (to the) way.

138 9. Give the hypocrites the news 19 that for them (there is) a painful punishment. 139 9. those who take the disbelievers as allies 18 instead of the believers. 19 Do they seek honor with them? 20 SURELY honor (belongs) to God altogether. 140 9. He has already sent down on you in the BOOK: 19 When you hear the signs of GOD 20 being disbelieved 20 and mocked, 20 do not sit with them 20 until they banter about some other topic. 20 Otherwise you will surely be like them. 20 SURELY GOD is going to gather the hypocrites and the disbelievers 1 into Gehenna – all (of them).

141 9. (The hypocrites are) those who wait (to see what happens) with you. 19 If a victory comes to you from GOD, 20 they say, ‘Were we not with you?’ 20 But if a portion (of good fortune) falls to the disbelievers, 20 they say, ‘Did we not prevail over you, 19 and protect you from the disbelievers?’ 20 GOD will judge between you on the Day of Resurrection. 20 GOD will not make 1 a way for the disbelievers over the believers; 20 the hypocrites (try to) deceive God, 20 but He deceives them. 20 When they stand up for the prayer, 20 they stand up in a lazy fashion, 20 showing off (before) the PEOPLE, 21 but they do not remember GOD, except a little. 20 wavering between (this and) that, 20 (belonging) neither to these 1 nor to those. 20 Whoever GOD leads astray – you will not find a way for him.

144 9. You who believe! 16 Do not take disbelievers as allies 18 instead of the believers. 19 Do you wish to give GOD clear 19 authority against your 19 SURELY the hypocrites will be in lowest level of the Fire, 19 and you will not find them for any helper, 146 9 except those who turn (in repentance), 19 and SET (things) RIGHT, 19 and hold fast to GOD, 20 and devote their religion to God. 20 Those are the with the believers, 19 and GOD will give the believers 19 a great reward. 19 Why would GOD punish you, 20 if you are thankful and believe? 20 GOD is thankful, knowing.

145 9. GOD does not love 19 the public utterance of evil words, 19 except (by one) who has suffered EVIL. 20 GOD is hearing, knowing. 142 9. If you do good openly or you hide it, 19 or you pardon an evil – SURELY GOD is pardoning, powerful, 150 9 SURELY those who disbelieve in GOD and His Messengers, 19 and wish to make a distinction between GOD and His Messengers, 19 and say, ‘We believe in part, 19 and disbelieve in part, 19 and wish to make a way between (this and that), 151 9 those – they in truth are the disbelievers. 19 And We have prepared for the disbelievers a humiliating punishment. 152 9 But those who believe in GOD and His Messengers, 19 and make no distinction between any of them, 19 those- He will give them their rewards. 9 GOD is forgiving, compassionate.

The two sub-sequences are not equal in length, but they are constructed in mirror-structure. They surround the central passage (v.131-132). The first sub-sequence is about God’s authority and social justice while the second sub-sequence is about belief and justice. These two sub-sequences correspond as follows:

- The theme of justice occurs in the outer parts of both sub-sequences: “and that you secure JUSTICE for orphans” (127h), “You will not be able to ACT FAIRLY among
the women” (129a-b), and “Be supervisors in JUSTICE, witnesses for God” (135b-c) and “God does not love the public utterance of evil words, except (by one) who has suffered EVIL” (148a-b). Also, similar meanings occur linking the extremes: “But do not turn completely away (from one of them) so that you leave her, as it were, in suspense” (129d-e) and “Do not follow (your vain) desire or you will (not) act fairly. If you turn aside or away – surely God is aware of what you do” (135g-i).

- Identical linking phrase: “surely God is aware of what you do” (128h) and (135i).
- God is “forgiving, companionate” occurs in the end of the first sub-sequence (129g) and the end of the second sub-sequence (152d).
- The theme of setting things right (ṣulḥ/’īṣlāḥ) occurs in the middle and the end of the first sub-sequence (128d-f, 129f) in the context of stating a marital problem and impossibility of being just between wives. The same theme of (ṣulḥ/’īṣlāḥ) occurs near the end of the second sub-sequence in the context of inviting the hypocrites to repent (146b).
- Linking phrases and similar meanings are found: in the beginning of the first sub-sequence, an emphasis on the Qur’ānic teachings occurs “and what IS RECITED to you in the BOOK (gives instruction) about female orphans to whom you do not give what is PRESCRIBED for them” (127c-e) and in the beginning of the second sub-sequence, an order to believe in God’s revelation comes (136b-e) and in the middle the same theme is stressed “He has already SENT DOWN on you in the BOOK” (140a) and the echo “When you HEAR the SIGNS of God” (140b).
- Similar words of the same root F-R-Q occur in the ends: “But if the two of them yatafarraqā/separate” (130a) and “and make no yufarriqū/distinction between any of
them” (152b). The first phrase indicates the separation between husband and wife while the second indicates that the belief in the messengers requires believing in all of them equally.

- Similar meanings with the same verb: “or ʾiʿrād-an/desertion” (128b) and “if you turn aside or tuʿridā/away” (135h).

The correspondence between sub-sequences (v.15-29) in A2 and (v.133-152) in B2:

Sub-sequence (v.15-25):

15  "(As for) those of your women who commit immorality, 7 call WITNESSES against them, four of you. 8 If they bear WITNESS (to the truth of the allegation), 9 confine them in their houses until death takes them, 10 or GOD makes a WAY for (dealing with) them.11 And (if) you commit it, 2 harm both of them. 3 But if they TURN (in repentance) and SET (things) RIGHT, 4 let them be. 5 SURELY GOD turns (in forgiveness), compassionate. 12 13 But GOD only TURNS (in forgiveness) 3 to those who do EVIL in ignorance, 4 (and) then turn (in repentance) soon after. 4 Then GOD will TURN to them (in forgiveness). 7 GOD is knowing, wise. 14 "But (His) TURNING (in forgiveness) is not 8 for those who continue to do EVIL DEEDS, 9 and only when death approaches say, 10 Surely I TURN (in repentance) now; 11 Nor (does He turn in forgiveness) to those who die 12 while they are still disbelievers. 13 Those- for them We have prepared a PAINFUL PUNISHMENT.

20 a You who believe! 7 It is not permitted to you 2 to inherit women against their will. 3 And do not prevent them, 4 so that you may take part of what you have given them, 5 unless they commit clear immorality. 6 Associate with them rightfully. 7 If you dislike them, 8 it may be that you dislike something 9 in which God has placed much good. 20 10 And if you wish 11 to exchange a wife for (another) wife, 12 and you have given one of them a qinār, 13 take (back) none of it. 14 Would you take it (back by) slander and clear sin? 21 15 How can you take it (back), 16 seeing that one of you has gone into the other, 17 and they have taken a firm pledge from you? 22 18 Do not marry 19 women whom your fathers have married, 20 unless it is a thing of the past. 21 SURELY it is an immorality, 22 an abhorrent thing, and an EVIL WAY.

23 5 Forbidden to you are: 6 your mothers, your daughters, your sisters, your parental aunts, your maternal aunts, 7 (your) brothers’ daughters, (your) sisters’ daughters, 7 the mothers who have nursed you, 8 (those who are) your sisters by nursing, 9 your wives’ mothers, 9 and your stepdaughters who are in your care, 6 (born) of wives your have gone into- 12 but if they have not gone into them, 13 (there is) no blame on you- 6 a wives of you sons, 13 those of your own lions, 14 and that you should have two sisters at the same time, 15 unless it is a thing of the past. 16 SURELY GOD is forgiving, compassionate. 24 25 And (also forbidden to you are) married women, 9 except what your right (hands) own. 18 (This is) a written decree of God for you. 4 (All women) beyond that are permitted to you 2 to seek (to obtain) by means of your wealth, 4 taking (them) in marriage, not in immorality. 5 So (because of) what you enjoy from them in this way, 6 give them their marriage gifts an obligation. 7 (There is) no blame on you 1 in anything you may give them by mutual agreement 1 beyond this obligation. 1 SURELY GOD is knowing, wise.

25 10 Whoever among you cannot wait 9 to marry believing, free women, 10 (let them take) believing young women 4 from what your right (hands) own. 11 GOD knows your belief, 12 the one of you is as the other. 13 marry them with the permission of their families, 14 and give them their rightful marriage gift, 13 (as) married women, not (as) women who commit immorality 1 or take secret lovers. 14 But if they commit immorality 1 after they are married, 6 they will be liable to half 8 the PUNISHMENT (inflicted) on free women. 15 That (provision) is for those of you who fear sin. 16 Yet to be patient (would be) better for you. 8 GOD is forgiving, compassionate.
Sub-sequence (v.133-152):

134 If He (so) pleases, 6 He will do away with you, people, 7 and bring others (in your place). 6 GOD is powerful over that. 134 Whoever desires the reward of this world- 8 with GOD is the reward of this world and Hereafter, 9 GOD is hearing, seeing. 135 You who believe! 8 Be supervisors in justice, 10 WITNESSES for God, 11 even if it is against yourselves or your parents and family. 12 Whatever he be rich or poor, 13 GOD (stands) closer to both of them. 6 Do not follow (your vain) desire or you will (not) act fairly. 6 If you turn aside or away – 135 SURELY GOD is aware of what you do. 136 You who believe! 8 Believe in GOD and His Messenger, 13 and the Book He has sent down on His Messenger, 14 and the Book which He sent down before (this). 137 Whoever disbelieves in GOD and His angels, 15 and His Books and His Messengers, and the Last Day, 16 has gone very far astray. 138 Disbelief occurs in the extremes of the first sub-attitudes. 139 SURELY those who have believed, 17 then disbelieved, 18 then believed (again), 19 then disbelieved (again), 19 (and) then increased in disbelief. 139 GOD will not forgive them 20 or guide them (to the) WAY.

138 Give the hypocrites the news 21 that for them (there is) a PAINFUL PUNISHMENT. 139 ... those who take the disbelievers as allies instead of the believers. 21 Do they seek honor with them? 135 SURELY honor (belongs) to God altogether, 140 He has already sent down on you in the Book: 141 When you hear the signs of GOD 22 being disbelieved 23 and mocked, 1 do not sit with them 2 until they banter about some other topic. 7 Otherwise you will surely be like them. 2 SURELY GOD is going to gather the hypocrites and the disbelievers 24 into Gehenna – all (of them).

143 (The hypocrites are) those who wait (to see what happens) with you. 14 If a victory comes to you from GOD, 2 they say, 21 Were we not with you? 22 But if a portion (of good fortune) falls to the disbelievers, 23 they say, 'Did we not prevail over you, 21 and protect you from the believers?' 24 GOD will judge between you on the Day of Resurrection. 146 GOD will not make a way for the disbelievers over the believers, 15 The hypocrites (try to) deceive God, 2 but He deceives them. 21 When they stand up for the prayer, 24 they stand up in a lazy fashion, 25 showing off (before the people), 1 until they do not remember GOD, except a little, 141 wavering between (this and that), 8 (belonging) neither to these 21 nor to those. 4 Whomever GOD leads astray – 1 you will not find a WAY for him.

144 You who believe! 8 Do not take disbelievers as allies instead of the believers. 6 Do you wish to give GOD clear 4 authority against you? 134 SURELY the hypocrites will be in lowest level of the Fire, 6 and you will not find for them any helper, 146 except those who TURN (in repentance), 6 and SET (things) RIGHT, 6 and hold fast to GOD, 6 and devote their religion to God. 146 Those are with the believers, 6 and GOD will give the believers 8 a great reward. 147 Why would GOD PUNISH you, 5 if you are thankful and believe? 2 GOD is thankful, knowing.

147 If GOD does not love 4 the public utterance of EVIL words, 8 except (by one) who has suffered EVIL. 2 GOD is hearing, knowing. 149 If you do good openly or you hide it, 6 or you pardon an EVIL – 135 SURELY GOD is pardoning, powerful. 135 SURELY those who disbelieve in GOD and His Messengers, 2 and wish to make a distinction between GOD and His Messengers, 2 and say, ‘We believe in part, 4 and disbelieve in part,’ 4 and wish to make a WAY-between (this and that), 141 those – they in truth are the disbelievers. 4 And We have prepared for the disbelievers a humiliating PUNISHMENT. 152 But those who believe in GOD and His Messengers, 4 and make no distinction between any of them, 4 those– He will give them their rewards. 4 GOD is forgiving, compassionate.

Both sub-rings are arranged in mirror-structure. The first sub-system is about unlawfulness on the familial level while the second sub-system explains the unlawfulness (not to ally with the disbelievers) in terms of groups’/communities’ relationships. 190 The theme of belief and disbelief occurs in the outer parts of the first sub-system. The first part shows that repentance of the evildoers and the disbelievers facing death is not accepted (v.17-18) while the end shows that marrying believing women is lawful and God knows the state of people’s belief (v.24-25).

On the other hand, the whole second sub-system elaborates more on the theme of belief and disbelief, but the phrase “God knows your belief” (25e-f) in the first sub-sequence’s end is emphasized in the second sub-sequence through the theme of allegiance and the hypocrites’ attitudes.

190 Immoral social practices (adultery/fulfilling desires unlawfully, inheriting women and taking their rights) occur in the extremes of the first sub-ring and the middle part shows unlawful marriages in pre-Islam. On the other hand, the ideas of following desires and justice/injustice come in the outer parts of the second sub-ring and its middle parts show how the hypocrites ally the disbelievers for the sake of personal desires (e.g. honor and triumph).
Continuing doing evil deeds and disbelieving (v.15-18) in the first passage of the first sub-sequence is completed by mentioning unlawful and lawful marriages while stating at the center that earlier unlawful marriages (marrying a father’s widows or two sisters at the same time) are in the past “unless it is a thing of the past” (22c, 23n). Similarly, the first middle part of the second sub-sequence mentions evil deeds of the hypocrites and their punishment while the second middle part (v.146-147) provides an exception from punishment for those who repent and do good deeds. An identical term to “unless it is a thing of the past” (22c, 23n) occurs in the phrase “except those who turn (in repentance)” (146a). Here are some of rhetorical and thematic links between the two sub-systems:

- Similar phrases occur: “But if they TURN (in repentance) and SET (things) RIGHT” (16c) and “except those who TURN (in repentance), and SET (things) RIGHT, and hold fast to God, and devote their religion to God” (v.146).

- The root SH-H-D occurs in both sub-sequences’ beginnings: “all WITNESSES against them, four of you, if they bear WITNESS (to the truth of the allegation), confine them in their houses” (15c-d) and “Be supervisors in justice, WITNESSES for God” (135b-c).

- Identical and similar repeated words occur in the outer parts of both sub-rings: “al-ssū’/evil” (17b), “al-ssayyiʿīt/evil deeds” (18b) and “the public utterance of al-ssū’/evil words” (148b), “or you pardon sū’-in/an evil” (149b).

- The occurrence of the word “reward”: it means marriage gifts in the first sub-ring (24h, 25h) unlike in the second sub-ring: “a great reward” (146g) and “He will give them their rewards” (152c).

- Recurring and linking phrase: “You who believe” (19a), (136a, 137a, 144a).
- Similar phrases in the extremes: “fathers” (22b), “mothers” (23a,d,f), “their families” (25g), and “parents and family” (135d).

- The recurrence of the root A-ḲH-ḎH means to take: in the first sub-ring it occurs in the context of taking back dowries from women (20d, 20e, 21a, 21c) and in the context of unlawful act “or take secret lovers” (25i-j) while in the second sub-ring it comes in the context of taking the disbelievers/hypocrites as allies (139a, 144b, 150e).

- Similar phrases: “or GOD makes A WAY for (dealing with) them” (15a) and “GOD will not make A WAY for the disbelievers over the believers” (141h).

- The same verb in the beginnings: “liṭaḏḥhabū/so that you may take part of what you have given them” (19e) “He yuḍḥhibkum/will do away with you” (133a).

- Recurring phrases and meanings in the extremes: “Surely God is forgiving, compassionate” (23o, 25q, 152d), and the echoes “Surely God turns (in forgiveness), compassionate” (16e) and “surely God is pardoning, powerful” (149c).

- Recurring term “punishment”: (17g, 25n) and (138a-b, 151b).

- The same root J-M-A‘ means to gather or all: “that you tajma‘ū/should have two sisters at the same time” (23m), “Surely honor (belongs) to God jamī‘-an/altogether” (139d), and “Surely God is going to jāmi‘u/gather the hypocrites and the disbelievers into Gehenna – jamī‘-an/all of them” (140h-i). This root also occurs in the sūrah’s center mentioning God gathering people to the Day of Resurrection (87b). The same word “jamī‘-an/all” will reoccur in the next sub-sequence in the context of gathering the disbelievers and arrogant people to God (v.172).
Sub-sequence (Q 4:153-175) People of Scripture’s violations of God’s covenant and revelation:

(A)  
153. *(The People of the Book)* ask you *to bring down on them a Book from the sky.* *(They)* had already asked Moses *(for something) greater than that,* *(for)* they said, *(Show us God openly!)* *(So)* the thunderbolt took them for their evildoing. *(Then)* they took the calf, *(after)* the clear signs had come to them. *(But)* We pardoned them for that, *(and)* We gave Moses clear authority.  
154. *(And)* We raised the mountain above them, *(with their covenant,)* *(and)* We said to them, **ENTER the gate in prostration.** *(And)* We made a firm COVENANT with them.

(B)  
155. *(So for their breaking their COVENANT, and their disbelief in the signs of God, and their killing the prophets without any right, and their saying, ‘Our hearts are covered.’)* *(No!)* God set a seal on them for their disbelief, *(so they do not believe, except for a few–)* *(and)* for their disbelief, *(and)* their saying against Mary a great slander, *(for)* and for their saying, *(Surely we killed the Messiah,Jesus, son of Mary, the messenger of God– yet they did not kill him, nor they crucify him, but it (only) seemed like (that) to them.)* *(Surely those who differ about him are indeed in doubt about him.)* *(They have no knowledge about him, only the following of conjecture.)* *(Certainly they did not kill him.)*  
156. *(No!)* God raised him up to Himself. *(God is mighty, wise.)*  

(C)  
159. *(There is) not one of the People of the Book who will not believe in him (Jesus) before his death.** *(and on the Day of Resurrection he will be a witness against them.)*  
160. *(So far for the evildoing of those who are Jews, We have made (certain) good things forbidden to them which were permitted to them (before), and (also) for their keeping many (people) from the way of God.)*  
161. *(And (for) their taking usury, when they were forbidden (to take) it, and (for) their consuming the wealth of the people by means of falsehood, We have prepared for the disbelievers among them a painful punishment.)* *(But the ones who are firm in KNOWLEDGE among them – and the believers – believe in what has sent down to you, and what has sent down before you. And the ones who observe the prayer, and who give the alms, and who believe in God and the Last Day, those- We shall give them a great reward.)*  
164. *(and) messengers We have already recounted to you before, and messengers We have not recounted to you – but God spoke to Moses directly.)* *(and)* messengers bringing good news and warning, *(so that the people might have no argument against God after (the coming of) the messengers.)* *(God is mighty, wise.)*  

(X)  
163. *(Surely We have inspired you as We inspired Noah and prophet after him, and as We inspired Abraham, and Ishmael, and Isaac, and Jacob, and the tribes, and Jesus, and Job, and Jonah, and Aaron, and Solomon,* *(and)* We gave David (the) Psalms, *(and)* the messengers We have already recounted to you before, *(and)* messengers We have not recounted to you – but God spoke to Moses directly.)* *(and)* messengers bringing good news and warning, *(so that the people might have no argument against God after (the coming of) the messengers.)* *(God is mighty, wise.)*  

(C’)  
166. *(But God bears witness to what He has sent down to you – He sent it down with His knowledge – and the angels (also) bear witness.)* *(Yet God is sufficient as a witness.)*  
167. *(Surely those who disbelieve and keep (people) from the way of God – they have gone very far astray.)* *(Surely those who disbelieve and do evil – God will not forgive them, nor will He guide them to (to any) road, except the road to Gehenna, there to remain forever.)* *(That is easy for God.)*  
170. *(People! The messenger has brought you the truth from your lord, so believe! (It will be) better for you.)* *(But if you disbelieve – surely God (belongs) whatever is in the heavens and the earth, God is knowing, wise.)*  

(B’)  
171. *(The People of the Book! Do not go beyond the limits in your RELIGION, and do not say about God (anything) but the truth.)* *(The Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, was only a messenger of God, and His word, which He cast into Mary, and a spirit from Him.)* *(So believe in God and His messengers, but do not say, ‘Three.’ Stop! (It will be) better for you.)* *(God is only one God.)* *(Glory to Him! (Far be it) that He should have a son!)* *(To Him (belongs) whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth.)* *(God is sufficient as a guardian.)*  
172. *(The Messiah does not disdain to be a servant of God, nor will the angels, the ones brought near. Whoever distains His service and becomes arrogant – He will gather them to Himself – all (of them),)* *(As for those who believe and do righteous deeds, He will pay them their rewards in full and increase them from His favor. But as for those who have become disdainful and arrogant, He will punish them with a painful punishment.)* *(They will not find for themselves any ally or helper other than God.)*  
174. *(People! A proof has come to you from your Lord: We have sent down to you a clear light.)*  

(A’)  
175. *(As for those who believe in God and hold fast to Him, He will cause them to enter into mercy from Himself, and favor, and He will guide them to Himself (on) a straight path.)*

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191. The translation of the phrase (159b) is by M.A.S Abdel Haleem, *The Qur’an: A new translation* (New York: Oxford University Press Inc., 2004), 65. Droge’s translation “*(There is) not one of the People of the Book who will indeed believe in him before his death*” does not correspond with Muslim account on the meaning of this verse.
This sub-sequence contains two passages, (v.153-162) and (v.166-175), arranged concentrically around a central part (v.163-165). Part A showing the Jews challenging Moses and not holding to their covenant is mirrored by part A’ mentioning the believers holding to God and guided to Him through a straight path. Part B stating the Jews’ violations of their covenant (disbelieving in God’s signs, saying evil things about Mary, and claiming responsibility for murdering Jesus) is echoed by part B’ mentioning Christians’ theological claim about Jesus’ divinity. The first two parts and the echoed two parts in the end are dominated by the theme of entering the covenant with humbleness.

To illustrate, part A shows that the covenant taken from the Jews orders them to enter the gate in a humble manner of “prostration” (154b) and to not violate the law of the Sabbath (154c). The following part B states their violations of these orders and others sinful deeds regarding Mary and Jesus. Correspondingly, the two parts A’ and B’ address the Christians to not exceed the limits regarding Jesus’ divinity (171a-g), exhort them to believe in God and His messengers (171h), show the reward of the believers and the punishment of those who reject and the arrogant (173a-g), and finally affirm that the believers will enter in God’s mercy and favor (175c). The recurrence of the term “enter” in the extremes (154b, 175c) signifies that it is an invitation to enter the covenant of God and His messengers with humbleness and to not break the covenant by disobedience and exaggeration because God is the Owner of everything and the source of all revelation given to the Prophets: “Then they took the calf, after the CLEAR SIGNS had come to them. But We pardoned them for that, and We gave Moses CLEAR AUTHORITY” (153g-j) and “People! A PROOF has come to you from your Lord: We have sent down to you a CLEAR LIGHT” (v.174). Therefore, the covenant has to do with the clear signs/proof/light containing God’s orders, limits, and promises. Complementing terms to “covenant” (154a, 154d, 155a) are
“knowledge” (162a) and “your religion” (171b). Accordingly, the theme of purification of the religion of the community through God’s clarification/guidance/limits (Section A) is reflected now in exhorting the People of the Book in this sub-sequence and earlier in Section A to believe in their scripture and the new revelation.

The parts surrounding the center are complementary. Part C mentions the evil People of the Scripture, the knowledgeable believers, and doers of good among them and states each group’s destiny on the Last Day. Part C’ emphasizes God bearing witness of the truth of the revelation sent down and the destiny of the disbelievers and the evildoers. This part also addresses people to believe in the truth that has come through the Prophet from God who is the Owner of everything. There are recurring phrases linking these two parts: “(There is) not one of the People of the Book who will not believe in him (Jesus) before his death and on the Day of Resurrection he will be a WITNESS against them” (v.159) and “But God BEARS WITNESS to what He has sent down to you – He sent it down with His knowledge – and the angels (also) BEAR WITNESS. Yet God is sufficient as a WITNESS” (166a-d). Also, the references to those who are evildoing of the Jews keeping people from God’s way (160a-c) echo the mention of the disbelievers gone astray from God’s way (167a-c) and the evildoers (168a).

The central part X (v.163-165) affirms the revelation sent down to the Prophet as all previous messengers received revelations from God. The mentions of God giving David the Psalms and speaking to Moses are examples of earlier revelations. The Prophet is informed with some of the prophets’ stories. People will have no argument after the coming of the prophets with tidings and warnings. Thus, the center is linked to the first outer part mentioning God’s covenant with previous people (the Jews), but they argued with their prophet (v.153-154). The
other outer part affirms God’s mercy, favor, and straight path for those who believe in the sent down revelation and maintain the covenant (v.175).

There are some terms and complementing ideas linking the beginning of this sub-system to the previous one. To illustrate, the reference to those who believe in some prophets and disbelieve in some (v.150) is explained through mentioning the People of the Scripture asking the Prophet to bring a Book from the heaven (v.153). The phrase “His Messengers” (150a, 150b, 152a) are echoed by addressing the Prophet and mentioning Moses (v.153). The People of the Scripture request a Book from the sky to believe as their earlier ancestors asked Moses to see God. This implies that the Prophet Muhammad’s duty is not different from Moses’ ministry and Muhammad is sent to all people in his time including the People of the Scripture. Those disobeying people request physical evidences to believe while proof from God has come to them (v.174). This conclusion explains the recall of earlier People of the Scripture’s violations which echo those people’s disobedience in the Prophet’s time.

Additionally, the end of the preceding sub-sequence contains similar/identical phrases to the beginning of this sub-sequence. Both extremes have to do with the themes of saying/words and injustice:

“God does not love al-jahra/the PUBLIC utterance of evil WORDS, except (by one) who zułima/has suffered EVIL. God is hearing, knowing. If you do good OPENLY or you hide it, or you PARDON an evil – surely God is PARDONING, powerful” (v.148-149)

“The People of the Book ask you to bring down on them a Book from the sky. They had already asked Moses for (something) greater than that, for they SAID, ‘Show us God jahrat-an/OPENLY! ’ So the thunderbolt took them bi-zulmihima/for their EVILDOING. Then they took the calf, after the clear signs had come to them. But We PARDONED them for that” (v.153).

This sub-sequence emphasizes the theme of God speaking to the Prophets with revelation. This theme links this sub-sequence to the sūrah’s center mentioning God’s truthful report. In addition,
the sub-ring refers in many places to God’s Oneness and the reward and punishment. These themes correspond with the center’s statement about God’s Oneness and the Resurrection Day.

The coherence of sequence 2 (v.133-175) as a whole:

Both sub-sequences (v.133-152) and (v.153-175) composing this sequence discuss a similar theme of belief and disbelief in the contexts of mentioning the disbelieving hypocrites and the disobeying People of the Book. The second sub-ring explaining the order to believe in God, His Messengers, and His Books, with no distinction between the prophets (v.136, 152) comes in the extremes of the first sub-ring. Believing in the Book sent down and the earlier Book (v.136) is reemphasized in the extremes and at the center of the second sub-ring. Also, believing in the Prophet and the other messengers occurring in the end of the first sub-sequence is stressed in the second sub-sequence’s central part.

Many similar ideas are found in the extremes linking the two sub-systems. Warning “people” of replacement occurs in the beginning of the first sub-sequence (v.133). This theme is echoed in the beginning of the second sub-ring mentioning the punishment of the People of the Scripture in Moses’ time for their evilness (v.153). The term “people” (v.133) is echoed by the disbelieving People of the Scripture. Also, the same word “people” occurs at the center and the end of the second sub-sequence in the context of informing people with the way to not be replaced. This way has to do with the coming of “the truth” with the Prophet (v.170) and of the proof and light sent down to people (v.174). Antithetical meanings occur in the outer parts with the same term “increase”: in the beginning of the first sub-sequence, the disbelievers’ disbelief increased (v.137) while in the end of the second sub-sequence the reward of the believers will be increased by God “will pay them their rewards in full and increase them from His favor” (v.173).
The correspondence between sub-sequences (v.116-126), (v.131-132), and (v.153-175):

According to Lund’s third law, the center and the extremes of a system contain the same themes. The beginning of B2 (v.116-126) stresses God’s Oneness while the concluding sub-sequence of B2 (v.153-175) highlights the theme of God’s revelation and Messengers. Correspondingly, the center emphasizes God’s ownership of the heavens and the earth. The center’s repeated expression is mentioned in the outer sub-sequences: “To God (belongs) whatever is in the heaven and whatever is on the earth. God encompasses everything” (v.126) and “To Him (belongs) whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth” (v.171).

The correspondence between sub-sequences (v.13-14) in A2 and (v.153-175) in B2:

Obviously, the two sub-systems are not equal in length, but they are complementing one another. The first sub-sequence is about God’s limits and mentioning the reward of obeying and the torment of disobeying God and His messenger. Likewise, the corresponding sub-ring mentions first the transgressions of God’s limits by the People of the Scripture and then the punishment of the disbelievers and the evildoers (v.153-174). It also concludes with stating that those who believe (obey) and hold to God (to not disobey) will enter into God’s mercy and favor and will be led to a correct path (v.175). God’s limits in (v.13-14) are brought to people by the Prophets through the Books and revelation. The theme of revelation is central in (v.153-175).

The theme of entering in (v.13-14) relates to entering Gardens and Fire (reward and punishment): “He will cause him to ENTER Gardens through which rivers flow, there to remain. That is the great triumph” (v.13) and “He will cause him to ENTER the FIRE, for him (there is) a humiliating punishment” (v.14). In (v.153-175), the theme of punishment and reward occurs:

“We have prepared for the disbelievers among them a painful punishment” (161d).
“We shall give them a great reward” (162g)

“except the road to Gehenna, there to remain forever” (169a-b).

“He will punish them with a painful punishment. They will not find for themselves any ally or helper other than God” (173f-g)

“He will cause them to ENTER into mercy from Himself, and favor, and He will guide them to Himself (on) a straight path” (v.175).

The theme of entering in (v.153-175) not only has to do with punishment and reward, but also with people entering in humbleness in God’s covenant through obedience of His commands. The sub-ring starts with the order to enter the gate humbly (v.154) while it ends with the reward of entering, meaning believing in God (v.175). There are a number of rhetorical links between the two sub-sequences:

- The recurrence of similar words: “His messenger” (13b, 14a), “a messenger of God” (157b, 171e), “the messenger” (170a), “messengers/the messengers” (164a, 164b, 165a, 165c). Also, there are echoes: “Moses” (153c,153i), “Jesus” (157b, 171d), “the Messiah” (171d, 172a), and at the center: “the Prophets” (163c) and the names of the prophets (v.163-164).

- There is a correspondence between the meanings of “whoever obeys” (13b) and the mention of the Jews who are firm in knowledge, believing, doing righteous deeds (v.162, 173a) and holding to God (175a). On the other hand, there are many examples in the second sub-ring explain the meaning of the phrase “whoever disobeys God and His messenger, and transgresses His limits” (14a-b): “And (for) their taking usury, when they were forbidden (to take) it, and (for) their consuming the wealth of the people by means of falsehood” (161a-c), “So for their breaking their covenant” (155a), and “Do not go beyond the limits in your religion, and do not say about God
(anything) but the truth” (171a-c). The disobedience in (v.14) is also complemented by the ideas of disbelief and ẓulm/evil (v.167-168) and arrogance (173e).

Concluding remarks:

The rhetorical compositional analysis of Q 4 shows that the two large sections are arranged around (Q 4:87) in mirror fashion. The central pivot’s theme sums up all the sūrah’s contents that arise in different contexts. It meets Lund’s six rules of the center’s characteristics. In this case, the center is two lines indicating a theological statement and occurring near a theme-shift (from fighting to emigration). Also, identical ideas to the center in the extremes, repetition of similar ideas (“shift from centre to the extremes”), and divine names in the center and the extremes can be found. The identified center affirms the truth of the Resurrection Day. The sūrah from the beginning reminds the audience with the creation of humanity from one soul and its mate and it orders people to fear God because He watches over people. The sūrah’s conclusion reflects God’s authority, knowledge, and guidance of people. Many laws and limits are stated in between the beginning and the end and they are arranged in two large sections.

The analysis also has demonstrated the correspondences between the sections and the occurrence of the main theme in each section. These findings, based on a systematic method, can confirm Zarkashī’s, Biqā’ī’s, Farāhī’s, and Ḥawwā’s identification of the main theme, which is expressed in different terms, as the covenant with God/monotheism/Islam/worshiping God. Zarkashī uses the opening of the sūrah to indicate the main theme while Biqā’ī employs the opening and the end. Farāhī’s analysis is not available while Ḥawwā’s method is based on Q 2’s themes. Considering the opening and the end of the text as indications to the central meaning and
the text’s *naẓm* imitates the consideration of the extremes in determining the main theme in ring-theory.

One of Cuypers’ criticisms of Muslim thematic approaches is the different identifications of the main theme of a sūrah. However, the match between the result of ring-structural analysis of Q 4 and some classical and contemporary Muslim scholars’ identifications of the main theme shows that ring-theory is a way to decode the text or in Archer’s word “a modern method of translation *not* a component of the text itself.”¹⁹² The analysis has shown that there are some places where the sūrah’s rings do not follow some rhetorical laws. However, this does not mean that the sūrah is not coherent or cannot be analyzed based on ring-theory either. It actually draws attention to the Qur’ān’s language, style, and coherence as a distinct text. As this method is not completely independent from Muslim exegesis in terms of some terms’ meanings and grammatical explanations as Cuypers indicates, it does not mean that it is the only way to reach the text’s intended meanings. But rather it helps to read the verses as complete thematic and structural parts not isolated from their overall context and the unifying main theme.

¹⁹² Archer, *A Place Between Two Places*, 102. Similarly, Nevin Reda examines the composition, main theme, and narratives of Q 2. She argues that “oral organizational tools,” such as “rhetorical devices,” should be considered in reading the Qur’ān in order to reach a “holistic” understanding of the text and indicate its structural form and literary “genre.” Thus they function, as she states, to form the “framework” of comprehending the sūrahs’ parts according to their main themes (See Nevin Reda, *The al-Baqara Crescendo: Understanding the Qur’an’s Style, Narrative Structure, and Running Themes* (Canada, Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2017), 28-29, 38-39).
Chapter Three

Theory of Sūrah-Pairs

I. Sūrah-Pairs in Muslim Studies

1. The Concept of Paired Sūrahs in Muslim Tradition

Pairing sūrahs in the early Islamic tradition is related to the ritual of recitation and reward. It is reported that the Prophet himself recited “in prayer certain sūrahs in pairs.”\(^1\) Another report shows that the Prophet recited sūrahs 112 and Q 113-114 \(\text{al-mu‘awwaḍhār} \) “The Two Prayers of Refuge”\(^2\) before sleeping.\(^3\) Also, in the tradition, the Prophet exhorts the believers to recite together the first two long sūrahs 2 and 3 \(\text{al-Zahrāwayn} \) “The Two Luminous Chapters.” Such reports do not indicate that these sūrahs’ are linked thematically or structurally although they are placed in succession in the \(\text{muṣḥaf} \) and share similar or identical openings.\(^4\) On the other hand, some traditions group a number of sūrahs that share the same opening. For instance, the group of sūrahs called \(\text{al-ḥawāmīm} \) (Q 40-46) is linked in the tradition in terms of merits and the same beginnings.\(^5\) Moreover, some sūrahs are gathered in a report as they are

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\(^1\) Mir, Coherence in the Qur‘ān, 75.
\(^2\) The translation is taken from Farrin, Structure and Qur’anic Interpretation, 22.
\(^4\) Sūrahs 2 and 3 starts with the Disconnected Letters “\(\text{alf lām mīm} \)” while the last two sūrahs open with the same phrase: “\(\text{Ṣay} \).”
\(^5\) al-Bukhārī, \(\text{Ṣahīh} \), chap. Book of Fadā‘il al-Qur‘ān, hadīth no.5043, 6:195. Following İslāhī’s theory of sūrah-groups, Islam Dayeh argues that \(\text{al-ḥawāmīm} \) sūrahs (starting with the same Disconnected Letters) are coherent and connected through the same opening and affirmation of the Qur’ānic revelation with similar terms in the beginning of each sūrah. He finds also that Q 39 shares the same expressions occur in the openings of \(\text{al-ḥawāmīm} \) and that makes Q 39 relevant to this group. Furthermore, he shows that the recurrence of some identical and similar formulas functions as a means to establish the connection between the sūrahs along with the themes developed in this group based on the growth of the community and the chronological order of the revelation (See Islam Dayeh, “Al-Hawamim: Intertextuality and Coherence in Meccan Sūrahs,” in The Qur‘ān in Context: Historical and Literary Investigations into the Qur’ānic Milieu, ed. Angelika Neuwirth, Nicolia Sinai, and Michael Marx (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 462-464).
ordered in the *mushaf* (e.g. Q 17-21). Such reports are examples of the idea of pairs or groups of sūrahs in the tradition, but they are not employed fundamentally in theorizing the Qurʾān’s organization.

Iṣlāḥī and his mentor Farāḥī are concerned about the unity of the Qurʾān from the perspective of *naẓm*. They present the theory of sūrah-groups in order to explain the order of the Qurʾān. The idea of paired sūrahs distinguishes Iṣlāḥī’s scheme from Farāḥī’s. The notion of paired or grouped sūrahs seems to be not new within Qurʾānic Studies. As shown in the first chapter, early Muslim scholars are concerned about the order of the Qurʾān’s sūrahs. They attempt to explain the arrangement of the sūrahs through providing explanations of each sūrah’s position in relation to the preceding and following sūrahs or further ones either in the first half or in the second half of the Qurʾān. Their method primarily relies on linking the openings and ends of two successive sūrahs. Some scholars show the parallels between the arrangement of the first long sūrahs and the short sūrahs in the end of the Book. Also, they try to find the connections between the long seven sūrahs in the first half of the Qurʾān through placing Q 2 as an introductory base of the following long sūrahs’ contents (Q 3-7). In contemporary studies of the Qurʾānic unity, Iṣlāḥī makes the idea of paired sūrahs essential to his theory of the Qurʾān’s structural consistency. The following pages will present some of earlier attempts made to explain the relationship between Q 4 and the following Q 5. Iṣlāḥī’s view of the Qurʾānic coherence and the view of sūrah-pairs will be stated, followed by applying ring-theory to connect sūrahs 4 and 5 as a pair.

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7 Mir, *Coherence in the Qurʾān*, 35.
2. Sūrah 4’s relation to surrounding sūrahs in Muslim Studies

The idea of paired sūrahs does not seem to be suggested only by Išlāḥī even though he provides a more systematic view of the mutual relationship between the sūrahs and asserts their existence as in pairs and groups. Zarkashī, Suyūṭī, and Saeed Ḥawwā have attempted to explain the sūrahs’ order and thematic relationship. This part will shed light on these selected attempts, including their illustrations of the correlation between Q 4 and Q 5.

Zarkashī shows the connections between sequential sūrahs in general. He links between Q 1 and the first four long sūrahs (Q 2-5) through stating each sūrah’s themes and linking them to the following sūrah’s similar or identical themes. He illustrates that Q 1 is about confirming the Divinity of God and taking refugee to Him in Islam as religion. Q 2 mentions the religion’s principles, the legitimacy of Ḥajj (pilgrimage), and Jews while Q 3 complements Q 2, responds to the opponents, and establishes Ḥajj. Q 4 is about the laws regulating people’s relationships and properties, the covenants taken through the religion, and the Messengers’ covenants with God. Q 5 is about the fulfillment of the covenants and completion of the religion through establishing laws regarding food, crimes, transgression, ablution, and judgment with the Qur’ān.8

The rule that Suyūṭī sets to explain the order of the sūrahs has to do with the elaboration’s notion in which a sūrah’s contents are explained by the following sūrah.9 This relationship of elaboration between two following sūrahs can be complementary, contrary, and explanatory. For example, Q 53 has an antithetical connection to Q 52.10 Also, in Suyūṭī’s mind the sūrahs seem to compose a chain of pairs. After connecting sūrahs 32 and 33 through the similarities of their openings, Suyūṭī states that the opening of Q 33 complements the meaning of the previous

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10 Ibid., 125-126.
sūrah’s end in which both addressing the Prophet as “if both were a single sūrah.”\footnote{Ibid., 111.} He uses the same phrase in describing the relationship between Q 4 and Q 5.\footnote{Ibid., 63.} He also cites a number of sūrahs complementing their preceding sūrahs, such as Q 11-12, Q 19-21, Q 26-27, and Q 37-38.\footnote{Ibid., 116.} In addition, he is concerned about providing why a sūrah is placed in its order. For him, Q 3 comes before Q 4 because the first has a similar opening to Q 2.\footnote{Ibid., 59.} Sūrahs 2 and 3 are parallels as sūrahs 4 and 5 are united because of their themes.\footnote{Ibid., 62.} Moreover, he claims that the long Madinan sūrahs relate somehow to Q 1.\footnote{In al-Itqān, Suyūṭī quotes what other scholars states regarding the sūrahs’ aims and relationships to one another according to the order of the Qur’ān (See Suyūṭī, al-Itqān fī ‘Ulūm al-Qur’ān, 3:332-333). In Tanāsuq al-Durar, he adds more thematic correlations and explanations of the order and connects the sūrahs through the openings, ends, and themes (See examples in al-Suyūṭī, Tanāsuq al-Durar, 63, 67-69, 94-95).} He keeps linking the sūrahs through their openings and ends. He conveys that the “resemblance of the extremes,” meaning the end of a sūrah and the opening of the following sūrah, is a “genre of bādī’” and an evidence of the correspondence of the sūrahs’ order.\footnote{al-Suyūṭī, Asrār Tartūb, 36.}

On this basis, Q 4 is connected to Q 5 thematically in Suyūṭī’s work. Both suraḥs explain what comes in Q 2 as shown in Chapter Two. In connecting sūrahs 4 and 5 and explaining their order, he states that Q 4 includes different covenants between people like marriages, wills, and treaties. Those covenants are included in the divine order to return the deposits/trusts to their people (Q 4:58). This theme, he states, connects Q 4 to the opening of Q 5 about fulfilling those covenants. The end of the latter about God’s power is similar to the opening of Q 4 on creation.\footnote{Ibid., 41.} Also, he states that the order of the sūrahs indicates that Q 4 is placed before Q 5 because the first starts with a Meccan formula “O people” indicating generality and this similarity to Meccan
sūrahs makes Q 4 comes first. Moreover, “ittiḥād/the unity” of these two sūrahs is based on the theme of laws.\textsuperscript{19} Furthermore, Q 4 begins with the theme of creation and Q 5 concludes with mentioning “resurrection and accountability.”\textsuperscript{20} Another link made by Suyūṭī is that the incident of theft that occurs in Q 4 is completed by mentioning the punishment of stealing in Q 5. Finally, the theme of judging between the people with the Book’s teachings comes in (Q 4:105) is reoccurred in (Q 5:44-46) mentioning judgment between the disbelievers.\textsuperscript{21} It can be said that Q 4 is complemented by Q 5 thematically (through the theme of laws occurring “from the beginning to the end”)\textsuperscript{22} according to Suyūṭī’s rule of elaboration.

In contemporary era, Saeed Ḥawwā approaches the Qur’ān’s consistency thematically. He attempts to theorize the Qur’ān’s unity and the sūrahs’ themes and coherence. Like Suyūṭī, Ḥawwā states that the Qur’ān can be divided into main four sections based on the prophetic report.\textsuperscript{23} He indicates that the first three sections of the Qur’ān are composed of several groups of sūrahs. Each group has its unity in its section. He uses the words “\textit{qisim (section)}” and “\textit{majmū’ah (group)}” to refer to the Qur’ān’s unity whereas words like “segment,” “passage,” “part,” and “group” are employed to describe the unity of a sūrah.\textsuperscript{24} Moreover, he calls some sūrahs that belong to different sūrahs’ groups “\textit{zumrah (a troop)}” because they share the same features.\textsuperscript{25}

Ḥawwā’s theory of the unity of the Qur’ān, as he claims, does not follow the traditional way in highlighting the correlations based on a “linear-atomistic” approach or showing the

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., 41.  
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., 42.  
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., 42.  
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., 42.  
\textsuperscript{23} Ḥawwā, \textit{al-Asās fī al-Tafsīr}, 1:30-31.  
\textsuperscript{24} Ibid., 1:31.  
\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., 1:31.
connections between the end of a sūrah and the beginning of the following sūrah. He places Q 2’s themes as the main foundation of all sūrahs’ themes, aims, and purposes in the first section of the Qur’ān which includes the seven long sūrahs after Q 2. In other words, the order of the sūrahs after Q 2 is the same sequence of Q 2’s themes and parts. He claims that his theory is proven to support the notion of the unity of the sūrah as a unit, the unity of sūrahs as a group, and the whole Qur’ān as one coherent unit. However, he asserts that Q 4 has its own way in dealing with the matters mentioned in Q 2. This means that he admits as Quṭb does that each sūrah has its distinctive identity and details although it overlaps with other sūrahs in different ways. He asserts that each section of the sūrah is connected to the following and preceding sections. The sūrah is linked by different correlations and each sūrah is a complete unit and has its place among the preceding and following sūrahs where each group of the sūrahs has its context and meaning in the whole Qur’ānic context and each verse in this context is connected to what he calls “aṣl jāmi‘ (a unifying origin).”

In explaining the order of the long sūrahs, Ḥawwā states that Q 2 has an introductory part, three sections, and a concluding part. Q 3 explains the introduction of Q 2 while sūrahs 4-7 elaborate on the first passage of the first section of Q 2. This passage (Q 2:21-25) addresses all people to worship their Lord and contains a warning and a challenge to those who disbelieve to produce something like a sūrah of the Qur’ān. This passage also has a command to fear God.
because He will reward those who believe and do good deeds with Gardens. Ḥawwā states that this passage contains the two ways “al-ṭariqayn”: the way of taqwā and the way of disbelief and hypocrisy.\(^{33}\) On this basis, he argues that Q 4 paves the way for the details coming in sūrah 5 and 6. In order to prove his theory, Ḥawwā lists verses of sūrah 2 and 4 and indicates the thematic and textual similarities. For example, Ḥawwā points out that (Q 2:21) is about worshipping God and the rest of the sūrah explains the meaning of worshipping in the context of strengthening faith, praying, giving alms, and following the Qur’ānic teachings. Likewise, the section (Q 4:1-43) starts and ends with a command to worship God in order to show how one can be righteous in the context of lawful and unlawful deeds. Ḥawwā keeps connecting Q 2 to Q 4 by breaking down the passage (Q 2:21-25) and searching for thematic similarities in Q 4’s passages.\(^{34}\)

In this scheme, Q 4 explains the way of taqwā while Q 5 explains the verses (Q 2:26-27) mentioning fusūq (disobedience) and kufur (disbelief) which are the violations of the covenant.\(^{35}\) He lists a number of similar verses containing references to covenants and transgressions from both Q 2 and Q 5 in order to show the connection between the two sūrahs. Also, he remarks the recurrence of the terms “ḳhāsirīn” (the losers) and “fāsiqīn” (disobedient) in both sūrahs.\(^{36}\) He writes that Q 5 is an elaboration of breaking the covenant, disobeying God’s commands, and corrupting the earth. Q 5 mentions the opposite way of taqwā, therefore; it is complementary to the theme of taqwā that comes in Q 4.\(^{37}\) For Ḥawwā, Q 4 contains 13 maqta’ (passages)\(^{38}\) while

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\(^{33}\) Ibid., 3:1295.
\(^{34}\) Ibid., 2:979, 1044, 1096-1070, 1263-1264.
\(^{35}\) Ibid., 3:1296-1297.
\(^{36}\) Ibid., 3:1295.
\(^{37}\) Ibid., 3:1297.
\(^{38}\) Ibid., 2:980.
Q 5 has three sections and a concluding part (v.109-120). His establishment of the relationship between the two sūrahs is mainly thematic.

To sum up, the stated ancient attempts provide an explanation of the sūrahs’ order through establishing thematic links. They institute the sūrahs’ connections based on identical or relevant contents found in both sūrahs and according to the thematic similarities between the openings and ends of two following sūrah. In modern views, different links are established also between two or more sūrahs based on the correspondences between the sūrahs’ unifying themes. The idea of sūrah-pairs appears more in Suyūṭī’s view. He seems to have this notion in his mind through mentioning different connections’ classifications, like elaboration and “complementarity.”\(^39\) However, he does not mention that Q 4 and Q 5 construct a pair as Farrin states, but he refers to their unity (being as one sūrah) because of the occurrence of similar legal matters.\(^40\) The mentioned scholars remark some thematic links between the two sūrahs mostly in relation to the surrounding long sūrahs in order to show the Qur’ānic coherence.

3. **Theory of Paired/Grouped Sūrahs: Īṣlāḥī**

The coherence of the Qur’ān is emphasized by Īṣlāḥī in *Taddabur-e-Qur’ān* “Pondering over the Qur’an” through the notions of: 1) a sūrah’s unity, 2) sūrah-pairs, and 3) sūrah-groups. The first notion has been introduced in the first chapter. The other two notions will be highlighted in this part. The idea of paired sūrahs is based on noticing that the sūrahs form pairs, such as the pair of Q 2-3 and the pair of the last two sūrahs, and the Prophet’s habit of reading

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\(^{39}\) The term “complementarity” is borrowed from Mir.

\(^{40}\) Farrin examines the correspondence of the group Q 2-5. He explains that this group has two pairs: Q 2-3 and Q 4-5. The whole group, arranged in concentric form, is about organizing the society legally and mentioning Jews and Christians. The middle sūrahs 3 and 4 are linked through the similarity between their names: the House of ‘Imrān and the Women. The extreme sūrahs 2 and 5 are corresponding through the themes of “pilgrimage” and “pluralism” (See Farrin, *Structure and Qur’anic Interpretation*, 48-49).
two consecutive sūrahs (e.g. Q 75 and Q 76) in his prayers.\textsuperscript{41} Also, Ḥivalsī uses the Qur’ān itself to support his notion through indicating the verses mention the concept of pair (Q 15:87 and 39:23).\textsuperscript{42} According to Mir, in Ḥivalsī’s scheme, a sūrah is a complete “unit” and being a paired sūrah means that it is completed by the other half.\textsuperscript{43} Paired sūrahs have a mutual relationship as follows: a sūrah complements its paired sūrah by one of the followings taken into consideration that both paired sūrahs share the pillar and addressed themes: 1) “brevity and detail,” 2) “principle and illustration,” 3) “different types of evidence,” 4) “difference in emphasis,” 5) “premise and conclusion,” and 6) “unity of opposites.”\textsuperscript{44}

In addition, the idea of sūrah-pairs comes within his notion of Qur’ānic unity. Ḥivalsī divides the Qur’ān into seven groups of sūrahs. Each group has a main subject. Each sūrah reflects “a specific aspect” of this main theme. The groups are as follows: (Q 1-5) “laws and sharī‘ah,” (Q 6-9) Abraham’s descendants, (Q 10-24) “good and evil and the Divine laws governing that conflict,” (Q 25-33) “prophethood,” (Q 34-49) “tawḥīd” and “its implications and demands,” (Q 50-66) “warnings,” and (Q 67-114) “resurrection” and “the Day of Reckoning and Judgment.”\textsuperscript{45} Unlike Farāhī’s division, each group has Meccan and Madinan sūrahs in which in each group all Meccan sūrahs precede all Madinan sūrahs.\textsuperscript{46} In other words, in each group, the Meccan sūrahs come first then the Madinan sūrahs. Also, each group refers to one of the phases of the rise and growth of Islam.\textsuperscript{47} He explains that the Qur’ān starting with “sharī‘ah” and ending with admonitions indicates that these laws are meant to guide to the right path and good

\textsuperscript{41} Ḥivalsī, \textit{Pondering over the Qur’ān}, 39-40.
\textsuperscript{42} Ibid., 41.
\textsuperscript{43} Mir, \textit{Coherence in the Qur’ān}, 75.
\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., 77-79.
\textsuperscript{45} Ḥivalsī, \textit{Pondering over the Qur’ān}, 38-39.
\textsuperscript{46} Ibid., 38.
\textsuperscript{47} Ibid., 40-41.
and that is the Qur’ānic central aim.\textsuperscript{48} According to Iṣlāḥī, \textit{shari‘ah} is the grace bestowed to Muslims. Thus, the first group of sūrahs shows the People of the Scripture’s violations of their revelation in the context of stating the new laws of Islam.\textsuperscript{49} The beginning of the Book with those laws, Iṣlāḥī explains, is the “completion” of the religion while the end is its “foundations.”\textsuperscript{50}

Iṣlāḥī states that the sūrahs in a group are found as pairs. He writes that “[a]ll sūrahs are found in pairs. In other words each sūrah has a twin with which it shares a mutual affinity, one complementing the other. If there is a gap in one, the other fills it, and if an aspect is hidden in one, it is manifest in the other.”\textsuperscript{51} Iṣlāḥī states that Q 1 has no pair complementing it because it is the opening of the Book, contains the Qur’ān’s fundamental knowledge, and introduces the first group and the entire Qur’ān.\textsuperscript{52} Moreover, some sūrahs can be “supplementary” explaining other sūrahs’ parts, such as Q 49 is an explanation of (Q 48:29).\textsuperscript{53}

Recalling Iṣlāḥī’s division of Q 4 occurred in Chapter Two, he divides it into three large sections. Also, the main pillar of the sūrah is the reformation of the society and warning against its enemies. Iṣlāḥī associates the idea of the sūrahs’ order with \textit{naẓm} and Qur’ānic unity. Mir demonstrates that Iṣlāḥī does not state particularly that Q 4 and Q 5 are a pair, but it can be assumed that they are paired in his mind.\textsuperscript{54} Farrin also shows briefly how Q 4 and Q 5 construct a pair. He states several thematic and rhetorical links to pair the two sūrahs which both have legal tone and address the People of the Scripture. For example, he states that the end of Q 4 describes the Qur’ānic revelation with “Light” (v.174) which is repeated in the beginning of Q 5 (v.15) and

\textsuperscript{48} Ibid., 40.
\textsuperscript{49} Ibid., 40.
\textsuperscript{50} Ibid., 41.
\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., 40.
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., 40.
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid., 40. See also the translator’s note.20.
\textsuperscript{54} Mir, \textit{Coherence in the Qur’ān}, 76.
connects the two units “at their intersection.”\textsuperscript{55} Some of his links will be stated in the next pages when pairing the sūrahs based on ring-structure.

\textsuperscript{55} Farrin, \textit{Structure and Qur’anic Interpretation}, 100.
II. **Pairing Sūrah 4 and Sūrah 5: Ring-Theory**

1. **Chronological Order of Sūrahs 4 and 5**

The sūrahs in question are Madinan. Being a Madinan revelation explains the occurrence of many legislative teachings regulating the community. There is almost a consensus that Q 4 is revealed over a long period similarly to other long sūrahs revealed in Madinah.\(^{56}\) However, scholars differ in identifying the exact year of the beginning of the sūrah’s revelation. Some exegetes indicate that the sūrah’s opening was revealed in Mecca due to the formula of address “*O People*” while the rest was revealed in Madinah after *Hijrah* even if some passages were revealed in Mecca.\(^{57}\) Muhammad bin Ismall al-Bukhārī (d.870/1465) reports that ‘Aysha (d.678/1279) states that the sūrah was revealed when she became the Prophet’s wife in Madinah.\(^{58}\) Moreover, it is reported that the last verse on the case of *kalālah* (v.176) was revealed in summer during the farewell pilgrimage while the first verse on *kalālah* (Q 4:12) was revealed in winter.\(^{59}\)

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Zarkashī states that the conclusion of Q 4 with exhortations and inheritances fits with the last revelation of laws in the farewell year.\textsuperscript{60} Quṭb indicates that parts of the sūrah were revealed after Q 60 in the sixth and eighth years of Hijrah while most of the sūrah was revealed in early time in Madinah and after the battle of Uḥud.\textsuperscript{61} Maulana Muhammad Ali states that the sūrah mentions many matters in the aftermath of the battle of Uḥud, however; a major part of the sūrah was revealed in the fourth year of Hijrah while its themes show that some verses were revealed in the third and fifth years.\textsuperscript{62} In a similar context, Ibn ʿĀshūr indicates that Q 4 started revealing in the seventh year of Hijrah since many laws in Q 2 regarding women, orphans, and inheritance were explained in detail in Q 4.\textsuperscript{63} Moreover, he illustrates that there is more evidence found in the text supporting its revelation prior to the battle of Mecca.\textsuperscript{64} For example, the sūrah invites people to emigrate to Madinah, shows that the Muslim community is powerful and that Islam had at that time spread and had some interactions with Christians and arguments with Jews and the hypocrites.\textsuperscript{65} From a Western perspective, Nöldeke’s analysis of Q 4 indicates that most of the sūrah’s passages were revealed between the end of (3/624) and the end of (5/626).\textsuperscript{66}

Since sūrah 4 and 5 are placed successively and both contain legal themes, Q 4’s period of revelation should be considered in parallel to Q 5’s time of revelation. In Muslim account, Q 5 was the last revelation.\textsuperscript{67} M. Muhammad Ali states that the contents of Q 5 indicate that the sūrah “follows in the order of revelation, as it does in arrangement, the last chapter [Q 4], and the main

\textsuperscript{60} Ibid., 1:133.
\textsuperscript{61} Quṭb, ʿFi Zilāl al-Qurʿān, 1:554.
\textsuperscript{62} M. M. Ali, The Holy Qurʿān, 185.
\textsuperscript{63} Ibn ʿĀshūr, al-Taḥrīr wa al-Tanwīr, 4:212.
\textsuperscript{64} Ibid., 4:212.
\textsuperscript{65} Ibid., 4:213.
\textsuperscript{66} Nöldeke and others, The History of the Qurʿān, ed. and trans. Wolfgang H. Behn, 158-159.
\textsuperscript{67} Ḥāwwā, al-Asās fī al-Tafsīr, 3:1298.
portion of it was revealed within 5-7 Hijrah.\textsuperscript{68} He asserts that the verse (Q 5:3) is revealed during the farewell pilgrimage in 10AH and it is considered a later revelation than the rest of the sūrah. Muhammad Asad indicates that this verse is the core of the sūrah and it was sent down before the Prophet died.\textsuperscript{69} Since Q 5 is associated with the farewell pilgrimage and with mentioning final laws, it can be said that Q 4 is completed by the last legal verse (v.176) during that time while most of its parts were revealed earlier after \textit{Uḥud}.

The view of the separate, early, and late revelation of sūrah 4 can be supported by looking at the matters mentioned in the sūrah in relation to other Madinan sūrahs addressing them as well. The issues addressed in Q 4 (e.g. orphans’ and women’s rights, avoid drinking before praying, fight’s law, and trusts) suggest that the sūrah started descending during the period after the battle of \textit{Uḥud} and continued its revelation for years until 10AH. Many of those issues are discussed in Q 5 with new details, additions, and changes not mentioned in the previous sūrahs 2 and 3. For example, marital relationships mentioned in Q 4 have to do with lawfulness of marrying believing orphans and women while Q 5 adds to lawful marriages the marrying of believing women who belong to the People of the Scripture. According to Muslim tradition, drinking is made unlawful in Q 5 while Q 2 shows its disadvantages and Q 4 exhorts its audience to avoid drinking before praying.\textsuperscript{70} Additionally, Q 5 shows Muslims’ celebration of Islam and overcoming the disbelievers in Mecca while Q 4 contains a reference to Mecca being under the control of the Pagans (Q 4:75) and several exhortations to immigrate to Madinah (Q 4:75, 97-100). Accordingly, it can be said that Q 4 was revealed gradually since the end of the battle of \textit{Uḥud} (3-4AH) until the farewell year. Although some verses of Q 4 are reported to be

\textsuperscript{68} M. M. Ali, \textit{The Holy Qurʾān}, 238.
\textsuperscript{69} Asad, \textit{The Message of the Qurʾān}, 162.
revealed in later time than the rest, ring-structural analysis of the sūrah has shown its unity and coherence.

Also, it seems that the sūrah 3, 4, and 5 are placed in order according to their contents. It is more suitable chronologically to place Q 4 after Q 3 since the latter refers to the battles of Badr and Uḥud while Q 4 mentions some social concerns associated with the aftermath of the battle of Uḥud. Q 5 is chronologically associated with the Prophet’s pilgrimage and it states laws have been mentioned in earlier sūrahs, but now those laws are either expanded, finalized, or edited. Pairing the two sūrahs rhetorically and thematically in the next pages will reveal the logic behind their order in the Qurʾān and support their times of revelation.
2. Pairing Sūrahs 4 and 5

This part will mention first the ring-structure of both sūrahs 4 and 5, followed by establishing the connections between the two systems as a pair.

Sūrah 4’s Structure

*Section A (4:1-86)*

**Sub-section A1**  Moral obligations of sharing the same Lord: a Community of Men-Women, Inheritance  
4:1-12

**Sub-section A2**  Divine limits, Obedience/Disobedience, Women’s Laws  
4:13-25

Divine clarification of laws and lightning burden, Man’s vulnerability  
4:26-28

Women’s Laws, Worshipping God/ no association, Divine Judgment  
4:29-42

**Sub-section A3**  Purification: People of Scripture, Fight in God’s way  
4:43-86

**Center**  No god but God, the Day of Resurrection, God’s Speech  
4:87

**Sub-section B3**  Orientation: Hypocrites, Emigration in God’s way  
4:88-115

**Sub-section B2**  No association, Divine Religion, Justice with Women  
4:116-130

Divine ownership of heavens and earth  
4:131-132

Justice/belief, Not allying hypocrites, People of Scripture’s violations  
4:133-175

**Sub-section B1**  Inheritance (men-women), Divine clarification to people to not go astray  
4:176

*Section B (4:88-176)*

As shown in Chapter Two, the sūrah is arranged in mirror-form around (v.87). The extreme sub-sections A1 (v.1-12) and B1 (v.176) are about injunctions and laws in terms of financial rights. Those laws aim to regulate internal relationship between people according to justice (God’s laws) and to highlight the Divine role as the Creator, source of authority and guidance, and the One should be feared.

The middle sub-sections A2 (v.13-42) and B2 (v.116-175) emphasize God’s limits, guidance, Oneness, judgment, and ownership of the universe in a legislative context concerning with social and domestic issues and international/political relations with other groups (e.g. the
People of the Book and the hypocrites). The theme of replacement is dominant. Regulations regarding immorality, inheritance, marriage, and justice replace pre-Islamic practices with the ways/traditions of earlier people guided by God. Also, theological doctrines, like shirk and Christians’ belief in Jesus’ divinity, are replaced with the theme of pure monotheism and doing good deeds. The disobeying people are warned against replacement and the emergence of a new community is embodied in the affirmation of Muhammad’s career and revelation placed in the chain of the previous prophets sent by God, like Moses and Jesus. The marital problems occurring in both sub-sections have to do with conflict and evil deeds and considering divorce/separation. Similarly, the political concerns emphasize the theme of allegiance (opposite of separation) with the Muslim community based on complete and pure belief, unlike the hypocrites’ disbelief and the People of the Scripture’s incomplete belief. The community’s identity has begun to be distinct and those groups are exhorted to believe in God, the Prophet, and the Qur’ān.

The sub-sections surrounding the center A3 (v.43-86) and B3 (v.88-115) are about two disobeying groups of people (the People of the Book and the hypocrites) lost the way and want the believers to go astray from the way. These two sub-sections contain commands from God (fighting/emigrating) and show those groups’ responses to God’s orders. They refuse to obey the new revelation and the Prophet’s judgment. The theme of the Last Day is dominant in the context of their disobedience vs. the obedience of earlier true believers and righteous people. This life and the Hereafter are emphasized in the context of mentioning death as a natural fact cannot be escaped and they link these two sub-sections to the center confirming the Day of Resurrection and God’s power and agency (gathering people to the Last Day).
Sūrah 5, according to Cuypers, is arranged in mirror-structure as follows:⁷¹

### Sūrah 5’s Structure

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**Section B (5:72-120)**

Cuypers illustrates that the outer sub-sections A1 (v.1-26) and B1 (v.109-120) are mainly about entering the covenant of Islam. Muslims respond positively to the covenant while the People of the Scripture decide not to enter (sequences A1 and A2). However, there are some followers of Jesus “Christians” who accept the covenant or they are exhorted to enter into it (sequence B3 according to Cuypers’ division).

The middle sub-sections A2 (v.27-50) and B2 (v.87-108), according to Cuypers, contain laws regulating the society. Those laws are meant to organize the Muslim community and the religious groups (the People of the Scripture) living with Muslims.

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⁷¹ Cuypers, *The Composition of the Qur’an*, 60. Referring to the sub-sections in Section B is reversed from the original division made by Cuypers in order to have his references to the sub-sections match this dissertation’s sub-section divisions of Q 4. However, his original division of the sequences is kept as it is.
The sub-sections A3 (v.51-71) and B3 (v.72-86), called by Cuypers “contiguous sub-sections,” have to do with Jews’ and Christians’ relation to the community and the new religion. They are invited to conversion from their religion to “Islam.”

(a) Correspondence between Two Sūrah’s Main Themes

The main theme of Q 4 has to do with the purification of religion and the declaration of pure monotheism. The idea of purification extends to purify the Muslim community from pre-Islamic practices, internal enemies, and incomplete devotion/submission to God. This purification has to do with fearing God (taqwā) and justice stressed in the whole text. Being a believer entails a full commitment to God according to God’s commands, limits, guidance revealed to the Prophet in the Qur’ān. These meanings can be found in the extremes and at the center of the sūrah. The sūrah opens with the theme of creation and rights and the conclusion refers to death (end of life) through mentioning laws of inheritances (rights). God’s Oneness and its implications are emphasized in the sūrah’s center (v.87). The Day of Resurrection is confirmed in the center to provide the last episode of the creation of people who are scattered on God’s earth and should fear God (v.1). In the center, God’s truthful words are stressed and serve as a reference to God’s revelation (including limits, promise, and warning). All people will be gathered for just judgment on that Day and all sins might be forgiven except association with God (v.48, 116).

Sūrah 5 is about “the completion of religion.” This completion, according to Cuypers, has to do with the theme of fearing God (taqwā) and submitting to God’s “will.”

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72 Ibid., 59.
73 The translation of sūrah 5 occurs in this chapter and then in the Conclusion is borrowed from Cuypers’ work “The Banquet”.
74 Cuypers, The Banquet, 86.
75 Ibid., 82.
emphasized in Q 5 is the day of the completion of religion (v.3) and the declaration of the
purification of the Sacred Place from Paganism during the Prophet’s pilgrimage in 10AH.\textsuperscript{76} The
disbelievers in (Q 5:3) are defeated and no longer have control over the believers who are the
“new people” blessed by God with the religion on the day of the completion.\textsuperscript{77} This day is
celebrated during the farewell pilgrimage when the believers gather for this Islamic ritual
symbolizing full submission to God. Cuypers indicates that “this day” in the beginning of Q 5 is
called “‘ayd/feast” and should be understood as similar to the festivity of the banquet in the last
sequence of the sūrah. He writes

[T]his “today” is not explicitly declared a feast but, …, during the mysterious scene of
the descent of celestial food, as Jesus declares that this “may be a feast (‘ayd) for us, for
the first of us and for the last of us (= for all generations)” (v.114)…the ‘ayd al-kabīr will
be the celebration of Islam’s day of completion for all, not just the Muslims, but also the
Jews and Christians. The everlasting feast announced by Jesus at the end of the sura will
then be supplanted by the celebration of the pilgrimage mentioned at the beginning.\textsuperscript{78}

In addition, Cuypers states that the word “day” in sūrah 5 also refers to the Resurrection Day and
“the day of God’s final intervention.”\textsuperscript{79} Gathering people/messengers on the Last Day by God
Himself (Q 4:87, Q 5:109) echoes the gathering during pilgrimage when the religion is
completed by God. The idea of gathering affirms that God is the source of the previous and new
revelations that lead to believe in Him and do good deeds.

The laws established in Q 5 regarding the relationship between Muslims and the People
of the Scripture regarding the mention of the transgressions of the covenant by Jews and the
exaggeration in religion by Christians serve to establish the interrelations between the new
covenant/community/identity and the People of the Scripture. The three religions should be

\textsuperscript{76} Ibid., 84.
\textsuperscript{77} Ibid., 84.
\textsuperscript{78} Ibid., 87.
\textsuperscript{79} Ibid., 84.
gathered (or oriented) to its original source which is God. Sūrah 4 asserts that Jesus would not be arrogant to be God’s servant (Q 4:172) and Q 5 shows that Jesus will affirm this truth on the Last Day: “I only said to them what your ordered me: Worship God, my Lord and your Lord” (Q 5:117). Exhorting the People of the Scripture in Q 4 is an invitation to enter into the completed covenant in Q 5. Whether they accept or reject to enter into it, the judgment is all to God when the Last Day comes. Jesus says “If you punish them, they are your servants. If you forgive them, you are the Powerful, the Wise One” (Q 5:118).

Moreover, sūrah 4 emphasizes that God does not tolerate association with Him and He is the source of laws organizing the community of the believers. The new covenant and the new community require new behaviors based on justice and taqwā (obedience). Many of those behaviors are completed in Q 5 and presented as final laws and rules for social justice (e.g. Q 5:2, 8). Those behaviors do not seem in complete departure from the earlier injunctions, traditions, and laws given to the previous communities. Therefore, the two sūrahs contain laws shared by the three traditions (e.g. marriages’ laws in Q 4 and the punishment of crimes in Q 5) in line with mentioning new laws distinguishing the new identity (e.g. “call to prayer”\textsuperscript{80} Q 5:58).

Sūrah 5 mentions some legal laws in the beginning and the end. The laws of lawful and unlawful food and marriages and of purity for prayer come in the first sub-section including references to justice (v.1-26). Some pre-Islamic rites and habits coming near the end of the sūrah are adopted as Islamic rituals, such as the Sacred Ka‘bah, while some are excluded, like some kinds of meat (v.87-105).\textsuperscript{81} These laws are followed by the laws of bearing witness and inheritance (v.106-108). The references to Mecca occur in both large sections of Q 5. The laws of the sacred state (pilgrimage) coming in the beginning indicate the believers’ return to Mecca

\textsuperscript{80} Nasr and others, \textit{The Study Qur’an}, 271.
\textsuperscript{81} Cuypers, \textit{The Banquet}, 52.
(the direction) while the exclusion of some pre-Islamic rites represents the idea of purification in the end of the sūrah. Mecca is purified from *shirk’s* practices and becomes monotheistic again when the sūrah declares the religion’s completion. The community’s identity now is completed. The theme of emigration in God’s way occurring in Q 4 represents the theme of coming out from the community of evil and *shirk/disbelief* to the community of the believers.

The community in Madinah encounters some purifying and organizing rules that exclude pre-Islamic practices regarding some social matters. In Q 5, the believers come back to Mecca and their religion is completed. God’s favor and mercy repeatedly occur in Q 4 are parallel to God’s perfected grace in Q 5. Now Mecca and Madinah are monotheistic places in character and identity. Daily life is organized in both sūrahs and final laws with more additions have been issued. In context, both sūrahs show that the People of the Scripture are invited to believe in the new revelation since it is a continuation of what they have received. They are called to God, the source and the Only authority.

The theme of gathering on the Day of Resurrection means to leave judgment to God not only in terms of judging people’s behaviors but also judging between their conflicts concerning theological matters, such as the Jews’ claim of Jesus’ murder (Q 4:157) or the Jews’ and the Christians’ claim of being God’s children and lovers (Q 5:18). Religion orients people to God who created people and has the final judgment between them. On the other hand, although the invitation to the new covenant is extended to the People of the Scripture, and Muhammad is placed in both sūrahs as the judge between people (including Jews and Christians Q 4:105, Q 5:42-43, 49), Q 5 states that the People of the Scripture have their own scriptural revelations and they should refer to them for legislative judgment (Q 5:48). Therefore, the two sūrahs together

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82 Nasr and others, *The Study Qur’an*, 271.
can provide a plural understanding of some controversial matters as Cuypers states in his analysis of Q 5.

The completion of religion and identity has to do with the Sacred Place Ka‘bah. The direction of prayer for the new community is Mecca. The Ka‘bah is embodied in the theme of the prayer’s laws occurring in (Q 4:43). Also, the prayer should be observed during peace and war (Q 4:102-103). The believers are ordered to remember God “whether qiyām-an/standing or sitting or (lying) on your sides” (Q 4:103) when they are in peace. Accordingly, the covenant between God and the believers should be remembered in all situations and times. The Ka‘bah, part of the pilgrimage’s rituals, is made as a symbol of the Islamic covenantal identity (Q 5:97) in the context of mentioning God’s torment, pardon, and His knowledge of everything in the heavens and on the earth including people’s commitment to the covenant. The phrase “God instituted the Ka‘ba as the Holy House, qiyām-an/built for humanity” (Q 5:97) reflects the symbol of religion and the organization of the community based on justice and equality. The mention of the Holy Mosque (Q 5:2) and the Sacred Place (Q 5:97) in the sūrah declaring the completion of religion is an indication of the last features of the new monotheistic covenant. The final destination is Mecca as it is the beginning of this religion. The gathering of people during pilgrimage around the Ka‘bah through submission to God imitates the gathering of people on the Last Day for judgment.

The word “religion” in the Qur‘ān indicates: 1) “judgment,” 2) “the right way,” and 3) “religion, a collective undertaking to follow the right path given by God.” Cuypers states that the meaning of “religion” (Q 5:3) refers to the regulating laws and the society of Islam. “Islam”

83 See Chapter Two of this research.
84 Cuypers, The Banquet, 385-386.
85 al-Ṭabarī, Jāmi‘ al-Bayān, 11:90.
(Q 5:3) is understood as “submission” to God more than the concept of Islam known as one of the religions nowadays. This meaning of Islam as submission corresponds with the meaning of the covenant in Q 4 “God – (there is) no god but Him” and mentioning the Day of Resurrection (v.87).

The phrase “Who is better dīn-an/in religion than one who submits his face to God, and is a doer of good, and follows millata Ibrahim/the creed of Abraham” (Q 4;125) has the two words “dīn/religion” and “millah/creed.” The word “islam” does not occur in Q 4, but only the verb “aslama/submit.” The submission of faces to God is a symbol of direction/orientation and it corresponds with directing faces in the prayer toward Mecca. This submission requires also manifesting submission through good actions (obedience). Thus, the covenant has to do with faith/creed and the way of life “religion.” In other words, the Qur’ānic view of belief has two aspects: theological and practical. The two sūrahs elaborate on these two aspects. The creed of Abraham is the creed of the new community. And “the way of God” or toward God repeatedly mentioned in Q 4 is completed in Q 5 through the final laws leading to the Ka’bah built by Abraham. The Ka’bah symbolizes the creed of Abraham and reflects his complete submission to God which corresponds with the declaration of the completion of religion and the victory of the believers during pilgrimage. Accordingly, the People of the Scripture are invited to enter into Abrahamic creed again and to return to the way, given to them, theologically and practically. As a result, it can be said that sūrah 5 completes sūrah 4. The covenant is purified in Q 4 and the religion is completed in Q 5 and final statements, rules, and laws are given. The completion relationship does not disregard other religious communities, but rather it builds a kind of interactions on daily and religious basis.

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87 Ibid., 77.
At this point, it can be said that many new meanings, thematic links, and rhetorical correlations can be established between the two sūrahs. The following pages will focus mainly on the examination of Lund’s fourth law in order to reveal the two sūrahs’ connection as paired sūrahs and to illustrate their order in the muṣḥaf. Some correspondences and correlations between the two sūrahs’ sections composing together one unit will be highlighted including some reflections on several matters.

(b) Pairing the Two Sūrahs Rhetorically

Here is the fourth law of Lund:

*Fourth law:* There are also many instances of ideas, occurring at the center of one system and recurring in the extremes of a corresponding system, the second system evidently having been constructed to match the first. [He calls it “the law of shift from center to the extremes”].

As shown earlier, sūrah “the Women” revolves around the verse: “God – (there is) no god but Him. He will indeed gather you to the Day of Resurrection – (there is) no doubt about it. Who is more truthful than God in report” (v.87). Obviously, the center of Q 4 states the covenant with God. It requires believing in God’s Oneness and the truth of the Resurrection Day (including judgment between people and reckoning their moral and immoral deeds) coupled with emphasizing God’s truthful speech (referring to revelation). This monotheism is the firm Islamic covenant and it emphasizes the belief in God and the Last Day and doing good deeds as shown in the analysis of the whole sūrah. These themes occur in the extremes of Q 5 “the Banquet/Table.” The first outer sub-section of Q 5 contains two sequences (A1 and A2) stressing the completion of Islam and inviting Jews and Christians to embrace it. The theme of this sub-section

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corresponds with the center’s statement of monotheism (Q 4:87). The other outer sub-section has one sequence (B3) mentioning Jesus and his followers confessing faith in One God and affirming Jesus’ monotheistic belief on the Last Day. This is also a reflection of (Q 4:87) and it shows the correspondence between the center of Q 4 and this extreme of Q 5.

Identical and similar terms and ideas occurring in the center (v.87) are found in the extremes of Q 5:

- The opening of Q 5 and other verses in the first section refer to the theme of the covenant (v.1, 7, 12-14) and to God’s grace (v.3, 6-7, 11, 20).
- The occurrence of the phrase “the Day of Resurrection” in (Q 4:87) is found in (Q 5:14) and references to the Last Day’s promise and punishment (Q 5:9-10).
- The term “today” occurring repeatedly in (Q 5:3) affirms the completion of the religion in this life and connects the phrase “On the DAY when God will bring the messengers together” (Q 5:109) to (Q 4:87) mentioning the Day of Resurrection. Also, similar and identical phrases and complementing meanings occur: “He la-yajma’nnakum/will indeed gather you to the DAY of Resurrection—(there is) no doubt about it” (Q 4:87) and “On the DAY when God yajma’u/will bring the messengers together, and he will say: ‘What was answered to you?’, they will say: ‘We have no knowledge; truly you are the great knower of the secrets things’” (Q 5:109). The gathering to the Day of Resurrection in the center of Q 4 is completed by (Q 5:109) showing God’s power and knowledge and affirming what occurs near the end of Q 4 regarding the coming of the messengers with revelation to people and God and the angels being witnesses upon their responses to the messengers (Q 4:153-175).
- The phrase “Who is more truthful than God in report” (Q 4:87) corresponds with: 1) the recurrence of God speaking with Jesus (Q 5:110, 115-116) and 2) in the end of Q 5, the verse (Q 5:119) indicates God speaking on the Last Day to confirm His promise to the truthful people: “God said, ‘This is the day when the truthful will take advantage of their truthfulness.’”

- The extremes of Q 5 containing a lot of references to God’s Oneness, judgment, punishment, ownership of the heavens and the earth, power, knowledge, and being a witness (e.g. Q 5:1-2, 9, 16-18) are an explanation of the statement in the center (Q 4:87).

**The correspondence between the two sūrah as a single unit:**

Both sūrah have two large sections. Each section has three sub-sections as shown in each sūrah’s structure. This part will indicate the correlation between the two structures and the occurrence of key words/phrases and themes linking the sūrah’s large sections in order to reveal how their unity as a pair constructs one large unit composed in parallel-formation.

*Sections A in both sūrah:*

There are five sequences composing the first large sections of sūrah 4 and 5. The theme of the first sub-section A1 (Q 5:1-26) corresponds with the theme of the first sub-section A1 (Q 4:1-12) of Q 4. The latter refers to the creation of people by God and the emergence of the community ordered to fear God regarding rights while the first is about the covenant with God. The second sub-sections A2 (Q 4:13-42) and (Q 5:27-50) are linked through mentioning different laws to regulate the community and maintain its stability and social justice. The last sub-sections A3 (Q 4:43-86) and (Q 5:51-71) mention the Jews and the hypocrites and their attitudes towards the new religion.
The first large sections are linked rhetorically and thematically as follows:

- Both sūrah start with similar phrases: “O people” (Q 4:1) and “O you who believe” (Q 5:1). Q 4’s opening reminds people of their Creator and Lord and people’s rights while Q 5’s opening exhorts the believers to fulfill the covenants. Also, the two openings show God’s attributes: “Who created you” (Q 4:1) and “Truly, God commands what he wishes” (Q 5:1). Moreover, the center of sub-section A2 (Q 4:26-28) contains identical ideas and phrases to (Q 5:1).89

- The idea of consumption occurs in both first sub-sections. In Q 4, consuming orphans’ properties unjustly and women’s marriage gifts without their agreement is unlawful. In Q 5, consuming some kinds of meat (Q 5:3) is unlawful while it is lawful to consume other kinds of meat and the People of the Scripture’s food (Q 5:4-5).90

- Sūrah 4 mentions marrying up to four wives in the context of mentioning orphans. In Q 5, marrying the People of the Scripture’s women is lawful (v.5). It should be noted that the first section of Q 4 mentions also in details the lawfulness and unlawfulness marriages. This theme is completed by allowing marriage to the believing women of the People of the Scripture located in the first section of Q 5.

- Both first sections contain identical phrase: “Are Forbidden to you” (Q 4:23, Q 5:3).

- Both first sections mention the purity for prayer. Q 4 states the law of ṭayammum (v.43) while Q 5 describes the law of ablution (v.6).

89 “GOD wishes to make things clear to you, and to guide you to the traditions of those who were before you, and to turn toward you (in forgiveness). God is knowing, wise. GOD wishes to turn toward you (in forgiveness), but those who follow (their) lusts wish you to swerve far away. GOD wishes to lighten (your burden) for you, (for) the human was created weak” (Q 4:26-28).

90 “Are forbidden to you dead animal, and blood, and pig-flesh, as is whatever another name but God’s has been called down upon, and the suffocated or knocked-out animal, or an animal killed by a fall or by goring, and whatever the wild animal has devoured, unless you have drained its blood, and whatever has had its throat cut on the steles, and drawing lots by arrows, - that is an abomination…” (Q 5:3).
The theme of fearing God “taqwā” is stressed in the extremes of both systems: (Q 4:1,10) and (Q 5:2, 4, 7, 11). The theme of justice also occurs in the beginning of each sūrah: in the context of orphans and women (Q 4:3) and in the context of being just with non-Muslims/the enemies (Q 5:2, 8).

Similar meanings and almost identical phrases occur: “through Whom tasā’lūna/you DEMAND (your rights) from one another” (Q 4:1) and “They yas’alnaka/QUESTION you about what has been made lawful for them” (Q 5:4).

Addressing the believers to obey the Prophet and his judgment in the context of mentioning the disobeying Jews and the hypocrites (Q 4:43-86) is parallel to the mention of the Prophet judging between the People of the Scripture (Q 5:41-50) and addressing the believers to not ally the Jews and the Christians (Q 5:51-71).91 The sub-ring in Q 4 mentions the Qur’ān (has no contradiction v.82) and the earlier scriptures “a potion of the Book” (Q 4:44-47, 51, 55-56, 60) while the sub-ring in Q 5 mentions the Torah and the Gospel (Q 5:66, 68) and contains a reference to the Qur’ān (Q 5:59). Also, the recurrence of the terms: “the prayer” (Q 4:43, 77, Q 5:55, 58), “the Messenger/His Messenger/a messenger” (Q 4:59, 61, 64, 80, 83, Q 5:55-56,66,70), “the Prophets/Messengers” (Q 4:69, Q 5:70), “His message” (Q 5:67), and “We sent” (Q 4:64, 79-80, Q 5:70) shows the correspondence between these sub-rings.

The theme of fighting in God’s path and the hypocrites’ attitudes in the end of section A of Q 4 is echoed in the end of section A in Q 5 referring to the hypocrites’ behaviors during wars (Q 5:52-56) and the Jews’ role in triggering wars (Q 5:64).

In the beginning of Q 4, people are created by God and many men and women spread from one soul and its mate (v.1). Near the end of the first sub-section of Q 5, there is a...

91 Cuypers, The Banquet, 52.
statement indicating that God creates what He wants because He is the owner of the heavens and the earth. This statement occurs in the context of arguing with Christians about Jesus’ sonship (Q 5:17) and refuting the Jews’ and the Christians’ claim of being God’s children and lovers, but they are only “human beings of his creating” (Q 5:18).

Sections B in both sūrahs:

The second large sections are corresponding although section B in Q 4 contains five sequences while section B in Q 5 has only three sequences. Both sections are arranged in concentric form and have to do with the new identity of the nascent community. Sub-section B3 (Q 4:88-115) contains an invitation to emigrate in God’s way to God and His Messenger, likewise; sub-section B3 (Q 5:72-86) invites Christians to enter into the Islamic covenant. Sub-section B2 (Q 4:116-175) contains laws to maintain social justice and to protect the Muslim community in the context of emphasizing God’s ownership of the heaven and earth and confirming the new revelation. Similarly, sub-section B2 (Q 5:87-108) provides laws for the community’s organization in the context of affirming God’s legislative authority and the revelation of the Qur’ān. The last sub-section B1 (Q 4:176) stresses God’s clarification for those who ask the Prophet about a legal matter in order to have them not go astray. Correspondingly, sub-section B1 (Q 5:109-120) is about Jesus and his apostles confessing God’s Oneness and knowledge in a eschatological context has to do with God’s watching over people and judging their deeds because He owns the heavens and the earth.

The following is some rhetorical and thematic links between the two large sections:
- Both sections start with warning the believers’ from their enemies and show the allies of the disbelievers (Q 4:88-91, Q 5:77-82). Sub-section B3 of Q 4 shows that the
disbelievers and the hypocrites are the enemies of the believers while the parallel sub-
ring in Q 5 shows that Jews ally the disbelievers and a group of Christians is closer to the
believers in friendship and some of them have believed in Muhammad (Q 5:72-86).

Then, laws on different matters are stated: (e.g. murder, prayer, judgment and marital
problem in Q 4 while in Q 5 there are laws about food, oaths, hunting, and wills). An
example of almost identical phrases and similar meanings occurring in both sections is:

“Whoever kills a believer by mistake, (the penalty is) the setting free of a believing slave, and a compensation (is to be)
paid to his family, unless they remit (it as) a freewill offering. If he is from a people (who are) an enemy to you, and he
is a believer, (the penalty is) the setting free of a believing slave. If he is from a people with whom you have a treaty,
compensation (is to be) paid to his family and the setting free of a believing slave. Whoever does not find (the means to
do that), (the penalty is) a fast for two months convectively” (Q 4:92).

“The expiation will be to feed ten poor people, with the average [food] with which you feed your family, or to clothe
them, or to free a slave. And he who cannot [is to] fast for three days. This is the expiation for your
oaths, when you have sworn” (Q 5:89).

- Sub-section B3 of Q 4 states God’s ownership of the earth (v.97) and sub-section B2
affirms God’s ownership of everything in the heaven and on the earth (Q 4:126, 131-132,
170-171). Similarly, God’s knowledge of everything in the heavens and on the earth and
His kingship of the heavens and the earth occur in the middle (v.97) and the end (v.120)
of section B in Q 5.92

- Sub-section B3 of Q 4 has an exhortation to emigrate to God and His messenger “And
whoever goes forth from HIS HOUSE, emigrating to God and His messenger, (and) then
death overtakes him – his reward falls on God (to pay)” (100d-g). This phrase refers to
leaving house (meaning leaving Mecca which is in control of the Pagans). This reference
to “house” is echoed in sub-section B2 (Q 5:87-108) stating that the Sacred Place in
Mecca is made the Holy House of people after the completion of religion “God instituted
the Ka‘ba as the Holy HOUSE, built for humanity” (Q 5:97).

92 The theme of the Divine ownership of the heavens and the earth occurs in Section A of Q 5 (v.17-18).
The sub-sequence (Q 4:153-175) is mainly about Jews and their request of a Book while the last sequence (Q 5:109-120) is about the Christians and the event of the Last Supper. In section B of Q 4, the Jews ask Muhammad for a Book from the heaven to believe in him as their ancient Jews asked Moses to see God (Q 4:153), but the section shows their violations of the covenant and their history of disbelief in earlier prophets and their attempt to kill Jesus. A statement about Jesus’ human nature comes near the end of the sūrah, followed by stating Jesus’ attitude regarding worshipping God and being his servant with the angels (Q 4:171-172). Correspondingly, the concluding sequence (Q 5:109-120) has a historical and eschatological character and mentions Jesus and his followers. It contains God’s grace upon Jesus and his mother, followed by the story of the apostles requesting food from the sky as a miracle in order to become more faithful. God appears in dialogue with Jesus on the Last Day in the end of Q 5. Jesus affirms God’s Lordship and denies his mother’s and his own divinities (Q 5:116). In Q 4, those who believe and hold to God will enter into His mercy and favor and be guided to Him in this life (Q 4:175). The last episode of this scene comes in Q 5 when the truthful believers will enter into God’s Garden with rivers (Q 5:119).

The central passage of (Q 4:153-175) is about the Messengers in history with whom God spoke and sent with revelation to be heralds and warners to people (Q 4:163-165). This sub-sequence states that God and the angels are witnesses upon the revelation sent down to Muhammad (Q 4:166, 170, 174). Those who remain disbelievers and evildoers after the coming of revelation will be in Gehenna (Q 4:167-169) while the believers holding onto God will enter into His mercy and be guided to Him (v.175). Similarly, in the last

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93 “The Messiah does not disdain to be a servant of God” (Q 4:172).
94 Cuypers, The Banquet, 52.
95 Ibid., 52-53.
sequence of Q 5, the Messengers will be gathered on the Last Day and asked about people’s responses to them and the Messengers will decline their knowledge (Q 5:109). Jesus also states that God is the watcher over people and a witness upon everything after his rise to Him (Q 5:117). Sending down the banquet imitates sending down the revelation to Muhammad. God says that those who disbelieve after the descending of the banquet will be punished (Q 5:115).

- Jesus and his mother are mentioned in both ends (Q 4:156,163, 171-172, Q 5:110-120). The mention of “the tribes” (Q 4:163) is parallel to the mention of Jesus’ apostles (Q 5:111).

- Almost identical and linking phrases occur: in the end of Q 4 “People of the Book! Do not go beyond the limits in your religion and do not say about God (anything) but the truth” (Q 4:171) and in the beginning of section B of Q 5 “Say People of the Book! Do not exaggerate your faith far from the truth” (Q 5:77).

- Unlike the polemical tone in Q 5, sūrah 4 addresses Christians with a soft tone exhorting them to not exaggerate in their religion (v.171). Identical and similar phrases occur in both places, like “but do not say, ‘Three.’ Stop! (It will be) better for you. God is only one God. Glory to Him! (Far be it) that He should have a son!” (Q 4:171) and “Surely, they have disbelieved who say: ‘Truly, God is the third of three.’ There is no god but God the one! If they do not desist from what they say...” (Q 5:73).

- Sub-sequence (Q 4:153-175) in B2 mentions the Jews’ violations of the covenant and states that some goods are forbidden to them because of their evil deeds (v.160-161). Similarly, sub-section B2 (Q 5:87-108) states that seafood is lawful for the believers in the context of mentioning lawfulness and unlawfulness during pilgrimage. Almost
identical phrases and antithetical meanings are found: “So far for the evildoing of those who are Jews, We have made (certain) **good things FORBIDDEN** to them which were permitted to them (before), and (also) for their keeping many (people) from the way of God. And (for) their taking usury, when they were **FORBIDDEN** (to take) it, and (for) their consuming the wealth of the people by means of falsehood, We have prepared for the disbelievers among them a painful punishment” (Q 4:160-161) and “Is made **LAWFUL** for you, the game of the sea and its food to be used by the caravans. But is made **UNLAWFUL** for you, the game of the land, when you are in a sacred state. Fear God to whom you will be gathered” (Q 5:96).

- Similar meanings occur in the end of (Q 4:176) and in the beginning and end of the last sequence (Q 5:109-120): “God has knowledge of everything” (Q 4:176), “Truly, you are the great knower of the secret things” (Q 5:109, 116).

Moreover, there are other links between the two sūrahs showing their correspondence:

- Almost identical phrases occur in Section A of Q 4 and Section B of Q 5: “*and do not exchange the bad for the good*” (Q 4:2) and “Say, ‘The good and the bad are not equals’, even if the number of the bad shocks you” (Q 5:100). The two locations occur in the context of mentioning laws and *taqwā.* The first place is preceded by the creation of people (Q 4:1) while the second place is followed by the return to God (Q 5:105).  

- Identical terms and meanings occur in Section B of Q 4 and Section A of Q 5:

  “People! A proof has come to you from your Lord: We sent down to you a clear light. As for those who believe in God and hold fast to Him, He will cause them to enter into mercy from Himself, and favor, and He will guide them to Himself (on) a straight path” (Q 4:174-175).

  “Surely, came to you from God a light and a clear scripture; through this, God guides those who observe his good pleasure on the ways of peace, and he brings them out of the darkness into the light with is permission, and he guides them onto a right path” (Q 5:15-16).

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96 Ibid., 387.
Both locations of these verses come in the context of addressing the Christians. The verses are about God’s revelation sent down and being light and guidance. The verses in Q 4 invite people to enter into the covenant while the verses in Q 5 show that the coming out from darkness of disbelief to the light of faith has to do with believing in the new Messenger and his Book.

- The beginning of Q 4 states that God is “WATCHING over people” and He is their Creator and Lord (v.1). This statement is reaffirmed by Jesus’ words in the end of Q 5: “I only said to them what you ordered me ‘Worship God, My Lord and your Lord.’ And when you recalled me [to you], you WATCHED over them, for you are a witness to all things” (v.117).

- Almost identical verses occur in Section B of Q 4 and Section A of Q 5:

  “You who believe! Be supervisors in justice, witnesses for God, even if it is against yourselves or your parents or family. Whether he be rich or poor, God (stands) closer to both of them. Do not follow (your vain) desire or you will (not) act fairly. If you turn aside or turn away - surely God is aware of what you do” (Q 4:135).

  “O you who believe, be upright before God witnesses of equity. And do not let hatred of any people incite you not to be just. Be just! This is closet to fear [of God]. And fear God, for God is informed of what you do” (Q 5:7).

- In Q 4 (sub-sections A2 and B1), God makes things clear (v.26) and clarifies things to people to not go astray (v.176). In Q 5 (sub-section A1), the Messenger makes clear to the People of the Scripture what they have sealed (v.15) and he is “a herald and a warner” (v.19).

- The opening of Q 4 mentions the creation of people from one soul “nafs” (v.1) referring to one essence. The same term occurs in the end of Q 5 in the context of affirming God’s Oneness and knowledge. According to Cuypers, the verse “He [Jesus] said, ‘Glory to you! It is not to me to say what is not true for me. If I had said that, you have known it. You know what is nafsīn me, but I do not know what is nafsik/in you. Truly you are the
great knower of secret things” (Q 5:116) signifies that people, including the messengers of God, are ignorant of the nature of God. Cuypers states that Jesus’ saying is a refutation of the claim of the Son’s knowledge of the Father. In other words, it asserts Jesus’ limited knowledge and confirms his human nature. The symmetrical reading between the opening of Q 4 “who created you from one soul” (v.1) and the statement in the end “the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, was only a messenger of God, and His word, which has cast into Mary, and spirit from Him” (Q 4:171) shows that the two phrases “from one nafs/soul” and “and rūḥ/spirit from Him” are corresponding. The two terms “nafs” and “rūḥ” simply refers to the essence of human beings including Jesus’ essence. According to The Study Qur’an, Q 4 opens with a reference to the creation of people from one soul then God created its mate which is “a Divine gift” should be thanked by people. The idea of a human pair here “indicates a progression in human creation from singularity (a single soul, reflecting the singularity of God), to duality (its mate), to multiplicity (multitude of men and women).” This implies, on one hand, the Oneness of God and His uniqueness, and on the other hand, it links between the gift of life (rūḥ/spirit) and revelation/guidance in which both come from the same source. The term rūḥ in the Qur’ān refers also to revelation. The coming of the Prophets and the descending of the revelation are also a gift in this life to lead people to God. Jesus is one of God’s messengers and His word (Q 4:171) and he is listed among the Prophets with whom God spoke (Q 4:163).

The same verb occurs in section B of Q 4 “If a man halaka/dies” (Q 4:176) and in section A of Q 5 in the context of mentioning Jesus “Surly, they have misbelieved, who said,

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97 Ibid., 432.
98 Q 3 refers to the creation of Adam and Jesus (Q 3:59).
99 Nasr and others, The Study Qur’an, 189.
'God is the Christ, the son of Mary.' Say, 'Who possesses anything against God, if he wishes to yuhlīka/make perish the Christ, son of Mary, and his mother, and all those who are on earth' (Q 5:17). Both places refer to the meaning of death or end of life.

- Christian theology in both sūrahs is discussed to affirm Jesus’ humanity. The most significant point about Jesus’ humanity in Q 4 is the statement “the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, was only a messenger of God, and His word, which has cast into Mary, and spirit from Him” (Q 4:171). This statement refers to Jesus’ human nature through calling him the son of Mary and referring to his essence as a spirit of God. It corresponds with the theme of creation of human beings from one soul and its mate, with the theme of women and marriages, and with the sūrah’s main theme and parts stressing God’s Oneness and being the Creator and not having a son or a wife. On the other hand, the discussion of Jesus’ humanity relates to the theme of death occurs in the sūrah as a natural phenomenon prescribed to all people. The sūrah denies that Jesus was killed or crucified by the Jews (v.157). It does not affirm whether Jesus is dead or alive, but it highlights God’s agency and knowledge.\(^{100}\) Since the sūrah highlights the natural law of death and it affirms Jesus’ humanity, it can be implied that he is as well subject to death or might be made dead. Although Muslim doctrine based on the tradition holds that Jesus is alive and will be coming again by the Last Day,\(^{101}\) Jesus’ natural death by God as the way to be risen up (v.157-158) is still a possibility to be considered according to the ring-structural reading of the sūrah and its parts as a coherent unit. It also implies that God does not die and this is another reflection of the sūrah’s center affirming God’s Oneness and Divine attributes. This conclusion corresponds with Jesus’ saying: “And when you

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\(^{100}\) Archer, *A Place Between Two Places*, 280-281.

\(^{101}\) Reynolds, “The Muslim Jesus: Dead or alive?,” 237.
recalled me [to you]” (Q 5:117). Also, the criticism of Jesus’ divinity in Q 5 has to do
with emphasizing Jesus’ human nature through the themes of death\footnote{“Say, ‘Who possesses anything against God, if he wishes to make perish the Christ, son of Mary, and his mother, and all those who are on earth” (Q 5:17) and “And when you recalled me [to you]” (Q 5:117). Although Islamic
document does not hold that Jesus is dead, the Qur’ān affirms Jesus’ humanity and asserts that death is prescribed to all human beings as Q 4 states.} and food. Jesus is
like other earlier messengers and his mother is a truthful believer and they are depicted
eating food as other humans (Q 5:75). This statement is corresponding with the food’s
laws and the event of the banquet occurring in the sūrah.

- Q 4 in section B refers to the punishment of murdering a believer (v.93), the Jews’ crimes
(murdering the prophets v.155) while Q 5 in section A mentions the story of Adam’s sons
(Cain and Abel v.27-31) and the retaliation of murder (v.32, 45).

The examples mentioned above are some rhetorical indications between the two sūrahs. It
can be concluded that the two sūrahs construct a pair in which sūrah 4 is completed by sūrah 5
and their main themes are complementing. The two sūrahs together can be a single unit arranged
in parallelism. This chapter takes up the question of coherence to a higher level. It combines the
ring-structural approach and İslahi’s theory of the existence of the sūrahs in pairs. The two
sūrahs are Madinan texts and both are complete units structured in mirror-composition, but Q 4
has a center. The monotheistic religion stressed in Q 4 is declared to be completed and perfected
in Q 5. The two sūrahs have a large amount of regulating laws and mention the People of the
Book. Interestingly, most of the laws occurring in Q 4 are related to the laws mentioned in Q 5.
The application of ring-theory in pairing the two sūrahs also indicates the recurrence of rhetorical
and thematic links between the two sūrahs’ large sections.

The significance of the idea of sūrah-pairs has to do with reading in parallel the repeated
themes that occur in both sūrahs within the broader context, meaning their composition of a large
unit. This chapter has touched very briefly on some controversial themes between Muslims and Christians. For example, the theme of Jesus’ death is mentioned in both surahs and can be reviewed by Muslim theologians. Likewise, the theme of Jesus’ divinity present in both texts relates to the Christian theology of the trinity and incarnation and it can be viewed as an invitation to review these doctrines. Importantly, such themes cannot be revisited on the Qur’anic text alone without considering the heritages of both traditions.
Conclusion

To reach the Qur’ānic “wisdom” or what Cuypers calls the “universal principles” and “timeless” meanings of the text,¹ one needs to notice the emphasis on the Qur’ān’s universal message which is the umbrella for all other meanings that make Muslims live according to God’s religion and in God’s way/earth. The rhetorical and thematic analysis of sūrah 4 emphasizes the covenant with God (monotheism), the certainty of the Resurrection Day (judgment of deeds), and the truth of God’s words (the revelation and promises). This covenant and its implications are highlighted in each sūrah’s parts and they are made the foundations of reformation of individuals and the society. The consideration of this Qur’ānic message in reading the text opens a space for maintaining Muslim identity and reaching out to others as members of the community and of the human society. Taqwā (fear of God), justice, and good deeds are the universal Qur’ānic values highlighted the most in Q 4 to shape the community’s religious, social, and political identity. Those values are also emphasized in the sūrah’s polemical parts as well. The sūrah does not seem to aim mainly to provide criticism or harsh laws (Q 4:148-149) but to build a just community of men and women oriented to God in this life through pure belief and good deeds until they face God, the Absolute, on the Last Day.

The covenant occurring in the center of Q 4 is set to organize the soul’s life and to be the basis of the community’s internal and external interactions. On the first level, this covenant (worshipping God with no association) should lead souls to righteous life and just behaviors. The large amount of women’s laws relates to initiating and regulating life. From the beginning the sūrah treats the struggle of the soul with its vulnerabilities and fulfilling rights to those who are entitled to them, such as financial rights related to orphans, women, and inheritances. The state

¹ Cuypers, The Banquet, 32.
of belief in God and the Last Day requires avoiding immoral deeds and purifying the soul from following lusts. According to this understanding, the theme of fighting in God’s way does not aim purposely to cause death to oneself and others. However, fighting and emigrating in God’s path symbolize the idea of souls struggling to submit to God, show loyalty to the community, and aid the weak. The command of fighting is not easily obeyed by those who are attached to wealth and not to God (Q 4:72-73). Similarly, the attachment to wealth instead of God prevents the human soul from respecting others’ financial rights (Q 4:29), doing charitable deeds to relatives and others (Q 4:36-39), or helping the oppressed men, women, and children (Q 4:75). Thus, the sūrah states that God is the Owner of the reward of this life and the Last Day (Q 4:134) and the Hereafter’s reward and enjoyment are much greater, better, and doubled by God Himself.

The sūrah also confirms that man is created weak and God wishes to guide man (Q 4:26-28). Additionally, only good comes from God (Q 4:79) while evil comes from people or “yourself” (Q 4:79). Thus, all these commands in the sūrah including social justice are meant to stress the concept of good and evil deeds and people’s choices to live righteously or doing evil to themselves through disobedience. Accordingly, the sūrah presents the human soul/nafs in a journey in this life facing different tests to remain believing and obeying (taqwā) and to stay on the straight path until the soul returns to God. Those who believe, stay fixed in obedience, and know the true great reward will be with the righteous people on the Last Day:

...And had they done what they were exhorted to do, it would indeed be for their own good and apt to strengthen them greatly (in faith). And then We would indeed have given them, from Our Presence, a great reward. And indeed guided them to a straight path. Whoever obeys God and the Messenger shall be among those upon whom God has bestowed His blessings: the prophets, the truthful, and the martyrs, and the righteous, and how goodly a company are these. Such is the bounty of God, God is sufficient as Knower (Q 4:66-70).
Those blessed people are exemplars of the believers devoting life, self, and possession to God and they are the good companions on the Last Day unlike Satan and his followers/comrades who disbelieve in the Oneness of God and the Last Day. “And those who spend their wealth to show off (before) the people, and who do not believe in God and the Last Day. Whoever has Satan for his comrade, he is an evil comrade” (Q 4:38). The theme of God’s way and straight path vs. the way of al-ṭāghūt (Q 4:76) symbolizes the idea of the soul’s struggle to stay strong in faith and purified from any attachment to other ways (e.g. gods, lusts, hawâ/desire, and worldly life). Therefore, the sūrah asserts that all things associated with God are errors, lies, and forges (Q 4:48-50) and Satan’s plot is weak (Q 4:76).

Impure or incomplete belief leads to the opposite of God’s way (or “the way of the believers”) where human greed, arrogance, envy, injustice, and deception (spiritual and practical disobedience) exist. The hypocrites’ attitudes are examples of complete disbelief. The Jews’ violations of the covenant reflect incomplete submission to God while the Christians’ religion is an exaggeration. The meaning of complete belief in God, as the sūrah presents, entails purified hearts with full submission as it requires believing in all components of belief: God, the Angels, the Scriptures, the Messengers, and the Last Day (Q 4:136). Those components are the reflection and explanation of the covenant with God which occurs in the sūrah’s center (Q 4:87). An invitation to all people to re-enter into the pure covenant/God’s way through taqwâ/believing (Q 4:1, 131, 136), obedience (Q 4:59), repentance, and setting things right (Q 4:146) occurs in several places of the sūrah. And sins can be forgiven (Q 4:110-112) except for association (shirk/impure belief) (Q 4:48, 116). Therefore, the gathering of all people to the Day of Resurrection is about God’s judgment of all deeds (Q 4:40-42). The recurrence of the theme of the Last Day’s reward and punishment is an exhortation to people to believe, to be grateful and
believing “Why would God punish you, if you are thankful and believe? God is thankful, knowing” (Q 4:147), and to enter into His mercy and favor “As for those who believe in God and hold fast to Him, He will cause them to enter into mercy from Himself, and favor, and He will guide them to Himself (on) a straight path” (Q 4:175). God’s promise and report are the most truthful (Q 4:87, 122).

In terms of Muslims’ relationship to other groups, the sūrah clearly orders the believers not to ally with the disbelievers (Q 4:144). As shown, it warns the believers against the hypocrites’ in-between state and their allegiance to themselves and their own benefits (Q 4:141-143). In this context, the text states that God will judge between the believers and the hypocrites on the Day of Resurrection (Q 4:141). Those hypocrites are exhorted to devote the religion to God to be with the believers on that Day (Q 4:146-147). In addition, the sūrah addresses the People of the Scripture to stop the violations of the covenants through conducting evil deeds. Meanwhile, it does not neglect that some of them are firm in knowledge, believers, and doers of righteous deeds (Q 4:55-57, 162). Accordingly, they are included in addressing “People” (or the whole human society) in the beginning and the end of the sūrah to fear God (v.1) and to believe in Him (v.170) and His revelation (v.174) while addressing the believers particularly “You who believe” with laws, limits, and teachings in the sūrah seems relevant to the formation of the Muslim identity.

In correspondence to its center, the sūrah shows in its extremes the unity of the source of creation (Q 4:1) and revelation (Q 4:174). All people should be guided to God and therefore, all provided religious laws in the previous and new revelations should lead to Him (Q 4:26-28). Both the believers and the People of the Scripture are exhorted to fear God (taqwā) which has to do with obeying God’s commands and doing good deeds (Q 4:131). Abraham is the lover of God
and the leader of the community of the monotheistic religion (Q 4:125-126). Moreover, Jesus is God’s messenger and would not be arrogant regarding being God’s servant (Q 4:171-172). Also, in Q 5, Jesus declares this truth by affirming that he and his people are God’s slaves (Q 5:117-118). Accordingly, no group should claim to be God’s children and beloved as the Jews and the Christians did and thus their sins will be reckoned (Q 5:18). In the contexts of both locations in Q 4 (v.125-126 and v.171-172) and the other two in Q 5 (v.117-118 and v.18), God’s ownership of the heavens and the earth is declared. Furthermore, Jesus’ humanity is stressed and those Jews’ and Christians’ humanity is stated in order to indicate God’s Oneness and their creation. This also refers to God as the One who purifies whom He pleases (Q 4:49) and chooses whom He loves (Q 4:125). Accordingly, sūrah 4’s center on God’s Oneness and the statement in Q 5 “Surely, those who believe, and those who practice-Judaism, and the Sabiens and the Christians, whoever believes in God and the Last Day and does good works – there is no fear for them, and they will not be afflicted” (Q 5:69) are complementing and show that it is entirely about believing and doing good deeds and it leaves all judgment only to God, the Real. This universal message helps to stress that the addressee’s self needs to stay oriented to God, discipline its human vulnerability, and reach common good. This is also supported by the verse “O you who believe, look out for yourselves! He who strays will not hurt you, if you are [going] in the right direction. Towards God is your return all together, and he will warn you about you were doing” (Q 5:105).

Furthermore, mentioning Jesus in the sūrahs called “The Women” and “The Table” is a Qur’ānic statement of Jesus’ and his mother’s humanity and a negation of the Trinity and Incarnation. Both sūrahs contain human activities regarding marriage and food in line with the themes of life and death (caused naturally or by murder in Q 4). Considering these themes and the salvation and redemption associated to the doctrine of the Trinity and Incarnation shows that
the exaggeration in religion criticized in Q 4 has to do with exceeding a limit that leads to arrogance and pride (or evil deeds) from being God’s servants (Q 4:172-173). In parallel, the criticism of exaggeration in religion in Q 5 leads to lose the way to God and follow the desires of those who lost the way (Q 5:77) and were rejected because of their evil deeds (Q 5:78-81). Similarly, Q 4 mentions that some Jews are rejected because of their disobedience and transgressions. Thus, this exaggeration is in conflict with believing and doing good deeds in order to be guided to God’s mercy and straight path (Q 4:173-175) and with the theme of the completed way to God declared in Q 5. However, the two sūrahs show clearly that there are Jewish believers who live righteousyly (Q 4:162), there are humble believing Christians among the exaggerating people (Q 5:82), and there are the apostles wishing to have their hearts assured and be faithful (Q 5:113). This could be a starting point to initiate dialogical conversations with the Christian believers instead of debates. The Qur’ānic arguments are not criticizing only but exhorting and building a bridge based on a common value. Also, the ambiguity regarding Jesus’ death in Q 4 and his ascension to God has been one of the matters that have caused debates and been left to God only. Using different methods (e.g. ring-theory and sūrah-pairs) to read the text and other relevant verses in other sūrahs might provide clarification or an access to that knowledge. This would be another task that should be tackled, but until that people should live according to what make them righteous and closer to God.

Moreover, the idea of the religion completed “today” in Q 5 cannot be read without considering the previous Madinan sūrahs Q 2-4 mentioning the term “religion”, stating the covenant, and forming/reforming the community as well. Those sūrahs as mentioned in this study are arranged in pairs. Those sūrahs’ main themes are corresponding. According to Farrin,

2 See verses 47, 52, 155, 160-161.
sūrah 2 establishes the Muslim society’s distinct identity from other religious communities through changing the direction to Mecca (or the sacred place built by Abraham and Ishmael)\(^3\) whereas sūrah 3 is about fearing God and exhorting the society to do righteous deeds.\(^4\) Similarly, the other pair Q 4-5 mentions the covenant and its completion. In Q 2, there is no compulsion in religion and those who believe in God disbelieve in \(\text{al-}\text{fāghūt}\) and hold tight to the covenant (Q 2:256). This statement is preceded by declaring the covenant with God in the context of affirming God’s ultimate knowledge and ownership of everything in the heaven and on the earth (Q 2:255). In Q 3, “\textit{the religion}” is “\textit{submission}” to God and it occurs in the context of stating the covenant “\textit{no god but God},” mentioning the conflicts between the People of the Scripture after the reception of God’s revelation/knowledge, and showing their violations of the convent leading them to failure in this life and Afterlife (Q 3:18-22). Moreover, Q 3 refers to the House of Abraham (Q 3:33), the Jews’ and the Christians’ debates about Abraham’s being either a Jew or Christian (Q 3:64-68), and Abraham’s creed and “\textit{standing place}” (Q 3:95-97). Then, Q 4 comes and declares that the best religion is to submit oneself (one’s “face”) to God, do good deeds, and follow Abraham’s creed (Q 4:125). Correspondingly, Q 5 proclaims the completion of religion in the context of exhorting the believers to fulfill the covenants and mentioning the Holy Mosque and the sacred state’s laws (Q 5:1-3). This sūrah also states that there is “only one God” in the context of negating God being the “\textit{third of three}” (Q 5:73). Therefore, the concept of religion presented in these two pairs has an obvious relation to Abraham’s religion which its major features are submission and virtuous deeds. The three first sūrahs mention the submission of faces to God (Q 2:112, 3:20, 4:125) and all locations refer to the Last Day. These three sūrahs provide many laws and shed lights on the community of the believers and its interactions with

\(^3\) Farrin, \textit{Structure and Qur’anic Interpretation}, 9, 14.

\(^4\) Ibid., 31.
different communities. The last surah (Q 5) in this group completes these laws and provides the final features of the covenant. This order of these two pairs must mean something and it needs more exploration.

In addition, those surahs have polemical tones towards the People of the Scripture, but their arrangement in thematic pairs and being in the first group of the Qur’ān’s surahs could lead to a broader view of Muslim identity and the concepts of religion and belief vs. disbelief. Those surahs can be read as stressing the universal messages they present, in the meantime; space for other believers under the monotheistic statement distinguishing the community can be found. Many other themes in these surahs, like shirk/association and kufur/disbelief, can be revisited and many social affairs should be read in parallel in order to see if the surahs’ unities and structures may establish new and plural understandings.

One cannot ignore the long inherited heritage of exegesis, but one can read the text with new lenses that consider the diversity of the Qur’ānic environment and the surahs’ theme and order. Reducing the Qur’ānic understanding to one way of reading does not serve the idea of the Qur’ānic universal values. It is not about which method is accurate or more correct, but rather it is about the human differences and the various good deeds lead to one way (“the way of God”). Directing the self to that way requires more than believing in One God. It entails remembering the origin of humanity, different nations/communities/methods (Q 4:41, Q 5:48), and the order to be righteous and just to everyone (with no exception). All these concepts are parts of the Qur’ānic world-views’ system. And all nations will be brought with their witnesses to God on the Last Day for judgment (Q 4:41). Judgment of deeds and conflicts is to God only and this reality should not be declined during reading the text. Understanding God’s “ḥadīth/report” as Q
4 shows requires ongoing purification and disciplining souls. Overcoming self’s lusts and evil through taqwā (Q 5:35) is its duty in life until becoming before God for judgment.

Furthermore, sūrah 4 in the traditional exegesis is associated with many prophetic reports and the occasions of revelation due to its length and association with the Madinan period. This dissertation has not examined the authenticity of all of them but has focused on very few based on the text’s structural analysis. Also, this dissertation has not touched on revisiting all legal verses and matters because the intention was not to provide detailed legal understandings but rather to draw attention to the possibility of generating new meanings of such verses within the sūrah’s overall structural unity and main theme. Those verses should be read under the shadow of the sūrah’s center. A legal reading based on the emphasis on God’s Oneness and righteous life would lead to more plural and broader interpretations fitting with the Qur’ānic message and modern eras. Beating women (Q 4:34), for instance, does not correspond with the statement affirming men and women being equal in terms of belief, and deeds, and reward (Q 4:124). Furthermore, the verse should be read within its context mentioning immorality taking into consideration the sūrah’s emphasis on taqwā (obedience of God’s limits) and social justice. Only a very brief reflection on this theme has been provided within the sūrah’s analysis, but deep legal reading of this verse and others (e.g. polygamy, females’ portions of inheritances, and men’s role qawāmah) is needed. Legal matters in both Q 4 and Q 5 have to do with daily life practices and should be read in accordance to the Islamic covenant mentioned in Q 4 and the exhortation to Muslims to maintain and value the covenant completed and revisited in Q 5.

Looking at the Qurʾān as a single unit that has linked themes corresponds with Q 4 asserting that the Qurʾān has no contradiction and should be pondered to understand its unity (Q 4:82). As seen in a number of thematic and structural studies presented in this dissertation,
holistic readings of the Qurʾān’s themes lead to discover the Qurʾānic universal values. Such readings do not undermine the Muslim identity’s main features, but rather they enhance the Qurʾānic message and self-reference to being guidance and bringing tidings to the believers doing good deeds “Surely this Qurʾān guides to that which is more upright, and gives good news to the believers who do righteous deeds, that for them (there is) a great reward, and that those who do not believe in the Hereafter - We have prepared for them a painful punishment” (Q 17:9-10). These verses and many others refer to the Qurʾān’s main features of characterizing believers: doing good deeds and believing in the Last Day. These features are explained in Q 4 in a different context from other sūrahs’ main themes and contexts.

The variety of approaches to the Qurʾān reflects the efforts made by Muslims and non-Muslims to understand the Muslim Scripture. The first chapter has shown that for centuries the Qurʾān has been interpreted and understood by Muslims through linear, grammatical, and rhetorical readings. Studying the Qurʾān’s unity was not a fundamental part of classical exegetical activity, but the matter of the coherence of the Qurʾān and sūrahs has become essential after the emergence of thematic methods concerning about the sūrahs’ unity and the Qurʾān’s themes in the contemporary era. The shift toward different literary methods aims, on one hand, to renew Islam and rid of some superstitions inherited within tafsīr, and on the other hand, it carries an apologetic tone to Western challenges regarding Muslim understanding of the Qurʾān.

Orientalist views and the application of historical criticism have made many Muslim scholars reject Western studies of the Qurʾān. Those studies do not see any coherence in the Qurʾānic text and they aim to discover the origin of the Qurʾān, its multiple authors, and imitated or borrowed texts from earlier scriptures. However, since the end of the last century, Western scholarship has implemented a number of theories and methods to approach the Qurʾān
according to modern and scholarly views of studying literary and religious texts. A new phase of Western Qur’ānic studies has started and paved the way for more opening and dialogical views that consider the Qur’ānic text’s nature. The shift to literary methods is a sign of the recognition of the Qur’ānic text’s language, composition, and styles. The old view regarding the repetition in the Qur’ān is not anymore seen as a “deficiency,” but rather a way to display the Qur’ānic message and to enrich the religious, social, political development of the community. The Qur’ān’s rhymes are not only an imitation of Arabic poetry, but they are also signs of the text’s progression from shortness to length and indications of the text’s periods and developed themes.

The shifts in both scholarships to literary studies should be considered as an opportunity to establish a bridge between Muslim and Western approaches to the Qur’ān. New meanings are needed in modern eras as new methods are used to reach better understanding of the Qur’ānic text. This does not seem only significant to Muslims but also to non-Muslims reading the Qur’ān for different purposes including dialogues with their Muslim counterparts. As a result of these shifts, the question of the Qur’ānic coherence has been discussed by both parties. This question has been taken up in the second chapter of this dissertation through examining the structure of sūrah 4 “The Women” based on ring-theory. Furthermore, the sūrah’s relationship to the following sūrah 5 “The Table” is examined according to the theory of sūrah-pairs. As shown, this combination between the two literary methods has led to positive and fruitful findings not only in terms of demonstrating the structural unity of Q 4 and its relationship to Q 5, but also regarding the possibility of bringing Muslim and Western studies approaching the same question into cooperation.

Ring-theory is very helpful in reading long sūrahs’ structures which seem arbitrarily constructed and disconnected in terms of the sequence of thoughts. This method of analysis helps
to know how a long text’s parts lead to one another. One of the aspects of the Semitic rhetoric is to divide the text into small/micro units in order to reach its larger/macro units and then establish the correlations between the units. Muslim scholars can find in ring-theory an extension and development of the notion of correlations, *naẓm*, and thematic unity and exegesis. On the other hand, a long sūrah, such as Q 4 which is viewed as lack of consistency by Western scholarship, is coherent as short sūrahs. It is composed based on a main theme and its other themes are interwoven and interrelated.

One of the most important concerns for Muslims in order to initiate mutual dialogues between the two academics is to examine the text as it is in its final order with no tendency to rearrange its parts. The Qur’ān’s language and way are different from earlier scripture, and since traditional Muslim scholarly literature tends to be more polemical and negative regarding applying biblical methods and historical-criticism on reading the Qur’ān, ring-structure is not in conflict with Muslim doctrine of the Qur’ān and it does not concern about the origin of the Qur’ān. It focuses on the discourses’ forms of order used to deliver the message as Cuypers shows. Ring-theory applied by Cuypers and other scholars on a number of the Qur’ānīc sūrahs has shown some promising results regarding the sūrahs’ unities and meanings without going against Muslim faith. The same result can be said about applying ring-theory on sūrah 4’s structure.

The application of ring-theory enriches the concept of pondering the Qur’ān during the regular recitation. Sometimes there is no need to know first the interpretation in order to understand a meaning of a word or verse. The system contains a great deal of explanation embodied in its layers. Ring-structural reading helps to focus on the arrangement of the text and extract its meanings from the text itself. Thus, the Qur’ān becomes the main focus and it is used
again to interpret its meanings. Ordinary Muslims can grasp through ring-theory reading the message of the text even with less aid of external means, like dictionaries, exegetical opinions, or historical reports. Importantly, ordinary Muslims can be each time reminded of the Qur’ānic universal views and act in accordance to them. This corresponds with the order to ponder the Qur’ān occurrence in Q 4 and makes the Qur’ānic knowledge accessible to all Muslims. Also, this ongoing reminder fits with sūrahs 4 and 5 inviting people to reentering into the covenant and expressing their faith through righteous deeds.

Academically, this method is not only a way to read the text and reach its intended meanings, but it is a way to bring Muslim and Western scholars into dialogue and to revisit some inherited views. Cuypers draws attentions to the possibility of reading Q 5’s legal verses more independently from the accumulated heritage in order to reach more flexible views and to produce new meanings that find a room for other religious community.\(^5\) Similarly, the notion of naẓm/coherence as an exegetical tool emphasized by Farāhī, Iślāḥī, and other scholars is deeper than establishing correlations in a linear way. It sheds light on the larger structure of the text and its meanings. This notion of naẓm is employed to judge between conflicting and multiple meanings that may not correspond with the overall contexts. The significance of focusing on the large image (or context) in determining meanings can serve to emphasize the Qur’ānic world-views of belief and the foundations of a society and its relation to other communities instead of focusing only on legal details and jurisprudence verses isolated from their context (reading the parts through the whole and the reverse). All controversial theological matters and laws should be read according to the sūrahs’ centers or main themes. The study case is a good example that shows how sūrah 4, as a complete unit, is an invitation to submit to God and re-enter into His

religion/covenant through doing good deeds and obedience. Moreover, if all sūrahs as units with main themes provide a Qur’ānic view contains a universal value, examining their order as pairs can enrich the significance of the Qur’ānic message to its adherents and the theory of the Qur’ān’s coherence. Scholars, like Iṣlāḥī, Cuypers, and Farrin, have contributed to this notion and more analysis of the sūrahs’ order and correlations in a similar way should be considered and tackled.

Hopefully, this dissertation’s findings can contribute to the field of the Qur’ānic Studies and more importantly to the reformation of Muslim identity based on the Qur’ān itself. Being in the academic field, I have been frequently asked by Muslim students about which best exegetical work that can be used to ponder and understand the Qur’ān’s meanings. They wonder about how to bring the Qur’ān’s values into their modern lives and how they can find in the Qur’ān moderate answers for critical questions regarding beliefs and commands. My response has been always that there is no such work because the Qur’ān addresses each person who approaches the Qur’ān looking for his/her own guidance to live morally. Depending on one work or one way of reading the Qur’ān reduces the Qur’ānic significance into one limited human understanding. To build a relationship with the Qur’ān, one needs to overcome the barriers (e.g. fear from error or deviation) preventing the self from approaching the Qur’ān with open/purified hearts, fixed belief, humbleness, and rationality. Reading the Qur’ān for young Muslims should be based on the main Qur’ānic message that guides them to be righteous people in their societies and seekers of common good for the whole world. Being a female Muslim studying the Qur’ān in the West this journey has been a grace on different levels including spiritual, religious, and academic ones. I have learned a lot about the Qur’ān from the Western scholars’ insights and their different religious backgrounds. My experience, I hope, could be imitated and more Muslim researchers
might work hand in hand with their counterparts in the West to reach broader understanding that does not exclude any believer live righteously.


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