THE QURANIC STYLES OF COMMUNICATION WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE STYLES OF CRITIQUE IN THE QUR'ĀN

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ABSTRACT

This research discusses the nature, characteristic, and types of Quranic styles of communication in addition to elaboration on the concept of naqd (critique) as used in the Qur'ān. The Qur'ān makes use of various styles of communication to convey its themes and objectives. Moreover, it is believed that the Quranic critique is present in these styles, among others. Therefore, this research sets a definition of critique, discusses its objectives, its nature and scope, and identifies Qur'ān's various styles of critique. The research will make use of the inductive method, effectively gathering all Quranic verses related to the theme of critique. This task is undertaken through examination of earlier and contemporary sources of Quranic exegesis. Second, this study will also use the analytical method to analyze the verses of the Qur'ān in an attempt to deduce the various styles used for critique.

KEYWORDS: Quranic exegesis, Quranic critique, Quranic styles, Quranic communication.

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1. INTRODUCTION

This research identifies the Quranic styles of communication, and it also identifies and explains the basic concepts related to the definition of Quranic critique, its nature, structure, and styles. Prior to further discussion, the following road map will be taken into account. First, discussion of the content of the Qur'ān in view of the fact that the Qur'ān conveys its maḥāwir (fundamental thematic objectives) such as the divinity of God, ethics, and legislative rules. Here we examine a number of interesting perspectives of mufassirūn (Qur'ān exegetes) from various Islamic disciplines in regard to the content of the Qur'ān. Second, highlighting the Quranic styles of communication used to convey its thematic objectives. Finally, this research investigates the nature, characteristics, and structure of Quranic critique.

2. THE CONTENT OF QUR'ĀN

This section provides taxonomy of the content of the Qur'ān according to its various themes by analyzing the different classifications of the content of the Qur'ān provided by Muslim scholars. This helps identifying the position of the Quranic styles within the frame of the themes of the Qur'ān. Next, this section provides a general overview of the various styles used by the Qur'ān to convey its guidance, meanings, and objectives. Then it proceeds in scrutinizing and analyzing the various Qur'ān's styles of critique.

2.1 Ibn Jarīr Al-Ṭabarī (d.310/923)

Together Al-Zarkashī (d.794H) and Al-Suyūṭī (d.911H) report that Al-Ṭabarī holds the view that the Qur'ān contains three major categories, namely: *tawḥīd* (monotheism) *al-Akhbār (*History) and *al-diyānāt* (rulings). For this reason, the chapter *al-Ikhlāṣ* is believed to represent a third of the Qur'ān because it focuses solely on the discussion of Allāh ﷻ. The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said: "By Him in Whose Hand my soul is, it is equivalent to one-third of the Qur'ān" (al-Bukhārī, 1987). In another version, the Messenger ﷺ said to his Companions: "Is anyone incapable of reciting one-third of the Qur'ān in one night?" they considered it burdensome and said: "O Messenger of Allāh, which of us can afford to do that?" He said: "*Sūrat Al-Ikhlāṣ* (Say: He is Allāh – the One) is equivalent to one-third of the Qur'ān." (al-Bukhārī, 1987). This discussion is considered a discourse on *tawḥīd,* and therefore falls under the category of creed (al-Zarkashī, 1931H; al-Suyūṭī, 1974). According to Al-Qāḍī Abū Bakr ibn al-'Arabī (d.543H), the term monotheism used by al-Ṭabarī is similar to creed, and the term history *(al-Akhbār)* is synonymous to reminders and reflection, (Ibn al-'Arabī, 1992)[1]. The view held by al-Ṭabarī is supported by a great number of prominent scholars including

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[1] He says: "The reminder includes encouragement, warning, Paradise and Hellfire and the outwardly and inwardly purification". 1/45.

Al-Qāḍī Abū Bakr ibn al-'Arabī (1992) Al-Zamakhsharī (d.538H) (N.D), Fakhr al-Dīn Al-Rāzī (d.606/1209) (1420H)[2] Ibn Taymiyyah (d.728H) (2005) and Ibn Ḥajar (d.852H) (N.D). Al-Ṭabarī's taxonomy of the Quranic content into three categories appears to be original, comprehensive, and consistent with the ḥadīth division of al-Ikhlāṣ. If al-Ikhlāṣ, which consists of tawḥīd represents one third of the Qur'an, there remain two other divisions, which are aḥkām (the legal rulings) and wa'ḍh wa tadhkīr reminders and reflection.

2.2 Abū Ḥāmid Al-Ghazālī (d.505/1111)

According to Al-Ghazālī, the Qur'ān thematic contents are structured on the following issues: namely that concerning *Dhikr al-dhāt* (the divine essence), *dhikr al-ṣifāt* (divine attributes), *dhikr al-af'āl* (divine works), *dhikr al-ma'ād* (life to come), *dhikr al-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm* (the straight path; i.e. the purification and beautification of the soul), *dhikr aḥwāl al-ṣāliḥīn* (the conditions of the righteous), *dhikr aḥwāl al-'a'dā'* (the conditions of God's enemies), *dhikr muḥājat al-kuffār* (His arguments towards the infidels), *dhikr ḥudūd al-'aḥkām* and the bounds of legal judgments (al-Ghazālī, 1985). Although Al-Ghazālī's view is sound, his taxonomy could be revised in view of the fact that many divisions can be combined in a single category. If this were to happen, only three divisions would remain under the division of '*Aqīdah* (creed), namely, the divine essence, divine attributes, divine works, and the life to come. The straight path i.e. the purification and beautification of the soul, the conditions of the righteous, the conditions of God's enemies, and His arguments with the disbelievers can be categorised under the remaining category of *tadhkīr* (reminding), whereas legal judgments are under the class of *Sharāi'* (rulings).

2.3 Al-'Izz bin Abd Al-Salām (d.660/1227)

While proving that repetition and diversity is part of the nature of the Quranic discourse, Ibn 'Abd al-Salām provides a division of Quranic themes. He concludes that the Qur'ān can be divided into three divisions. The first two categories include praising Allāh ﷻ (*al-thanā' 'alā Allāh)* and the legal rulings *(aḥkām)* whereas the third category is related to the division of legal rulings. The third category consists of many types such as complementing good and condemning wrong deeds, complementing good and condemning evil doers, promise of different types of rewards in the Hereafter, disheartening punishment in the Hereafter, promise of immediate rewards, promise of immediate punishment, Quranic parables either for encouraging and prompting goodness and warning from evil, stories of prophets including how believers were saved and disbelievers

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[2] In his interpretation of the Chapter of the Opening *(al-Fatiḥah)* Al-Rāzī maintains that the Qur'ān consists of three categories that are related to human knowledge namely, the science of principles (*'Ilm al-'Uṣūl*) referring to the knowledge about Allah ﷻ, His attributes and His works, the science of (*Ilm al-furū'*) referring to ruling legislation, and the science of purification and beautification of the soul (al-Rāzi, 1420H), 1/157.

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destroyed, blame, censure, reprimand of certain acts, and mentioning as favors upon us what he created for mankind to thank Him for His kindness and blessings (Ibn 'Abd al-Salām, 1491). Like al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Abd al-Salām's taxonomy of the content of Qur'ān informs us with more details on the reminders and reflection category. However, the third category of reminders and reflection is not only subservient to the second category of rulings, but also emphasizes the category of creed.

2.4 Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawziyyah (d.751/1350)

Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawziyyah divides the meanings of the Quranic vocabulary into the following ten categories: the Almighty's introduction of Himself to His slaves through His names and attributes of perfection, the various evidences of His divinity, the origins of creation, the return to Allāh ﷻ and re-creation, the stories of past nations, the parables advocating the true realities of life and existence, obligations and prohibitions and recommended and disliked acts, the enemies of mankind and their deceitful ways, and the Prophet's ﷺ rights (Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, 1998). These divisions can also be classified into three main categories, namely, creed, legal rulings, and reminders and reflection.

2.5 Al-Ṭaybī (d.743/1342)[3]

Al-Ṭaybī, an eighth century scholar of *ḥadīth,* maintains that the Qur'ān contains four categories of sciences, which represent the fundamentals of religion; these are *'ilm al-'uṣūl* (the creed), *'ilm al-furū'* (the legal rulings), *'ilm al-'akhlāq* (ethics), and *'ilm al-qaṣaṣ wa al-akhbār* (stories of previous nations) (al-Suyūṭī, 1974). The taxonomy of al-Ṭaybī is also sound. however, the third and fourth categories can be classified under *al-wa'dh wa tadhkīr* (reminders and reflection).

2.6 Al-Dahlawī (1176H)

The Qur'ān in the view of Al-Dahlawī encompasses the five following themes: *'ilm al-aḥkām* (legal rulings), *'ilm al-jadal* (argumentation), *'ilm al-tadhkīr bi 'ālā' Allāh* (the blessings of Allāh Almighty), '*ilm al-tadhkīr bi 'ayyām Allāh* (past nations), and *'ilm al-tadhkīr bi al-mawt wa mā ba'da al-mawt* (death and the afterlife) (al-Dahlawī, 1986). Al-Dahlawī's taxonomy of the Qur'ān can also be classified based on the three categories of *'aqīdah* (creed), *aḥkām* (legal rulings), and *al-wa'dh wa tadhkīr* (reminders and reflections) given that the second, the fourth, and the fifth sections may easily fit under the category of reminders and reflection.

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[3] Ḥussayn bin Abd Allah bin Muḥammad al-Ṭaybī. A scholar who contributed in many fields of sciences. Some his works are: *Al-Tibyān fī al-Ma'ānī wa al-Bayān*, *Muqaddimah fī 'Ūlūm Al-Ḥisāb*, *Asmā' al-Rijāl*, and *Futūḥ al-Ghayb fī al-Kashf 'An Qinā' al-Rayb fī al-Tafsīr*. See: 'Umar bin Riḍā Kaḥḥālat, *Mu'jam al-Mu'allifīn* (Bayrūt: Maktabat al-Muthannā, Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 1376H/1957), 4/52-53

From the previous discussion it can be said: despite the apparent differences among scholars regarding the taxonomy of the content of the Qur'ān, there seems to be a general agreement on the content of the Qur'ān. Moreover, the various themes of the Qur'ān as categorized and classified by the aforementioned scholars appears to be capable of being summarized under the three basic categories of *'aqīdah* (creed), *aḥkām* (legal rulings), and *al-wa'dh wa tadhkīr* (reminders and reflection). The last category can also be considered as a method to illustrate both *'aqīdah* (the creed) and *aḥkām* (the legal rulings) as commented by Al-'Izz bin 'Abd Al-Salām. *Targhīb* (the encouragement) which falls under the category of *al-wa'dh wa tadhkīr* for example is used to emphasize creed such as the reward of believing in God as seen in the verse:

"And whosoever believes in Allāh and performs righteous good deeds, He will remit from him his sins, and will admit him to Gardens under which rivers flow (Paradise) to dwell therein forever, that will be the great success" (Qur'ān 64:9) (al-Hilālī; Khān, 2011).

In addition, it emphasises to the legal rulings such as the reward of *Ṣadaqah* (charity) as seen in the verse: "My Mercy embraces all things. That (Mercy) I shall ordain for those who are the Muttaqoon (pious - see V.2:2), and give Zakat" (Qur'ān 7:156). The previous examples showed that *al-wa'dh wa tadhkīr* is not an objective of the Quranic discourse per se, but more a style of conveying Quranic objectives. To illustrate, when the Qur'ān uses *al-wa'dh wa tadhkīr* (reminding) through narrating to people the stories of the previous nations, the story itself is not the ultimate aim of the Quranic discourse but rather the lessons that are deducted from the story. For instance, the story of Shu'ayb is a reminder that mainly conveys two objectives: the unity of God (*'aqīdah*) and giving others their right and not decreasing it (legal ruling)[4].

The last category of reminders and reflection, however, involves all kinds of Quranic stories like those of the Prophets, encouragement (*targhīb*) and warning (*tarhīb*). In conclusion, the above discussion presents an analytical description of the content of the Qur'ān based on the perspective of a number of Qur'ān exegetes and scholars of different fields of knowledge. It shows how scholars agree that the Qur'ān consists of many categories and contains various fundamental themes irrespective of their differences in regard to their method of division and categorization. The main content of the Qur'ān represents the following *maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* (fundamental Qur'anic objectives) creeds, legal ruling, and reminders and reflection. In addition, those fundamental Qur'anic objectives are conveyed to people through various styles of communication, which fall mostly under the category of reminders and reflection such as the encouragement (*targhīb*), warning

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[4] As they were giving less in measure and weight (decreasing the rights of others).

(*tarhīb*), parables (*ḍharb al-amthāl*), stories (qaṣaṣ), and critique (*naqd*). Hence, critique (*naqd*) is a Quranic style of communication used to convey its objectives.

3. THE COMMUNICATION STYLES OF THE QUR'ĀN

The above discussion shows that the Qur'ān consists of many categories and encompasses many themes and objectives for human life. For this, the Qur'ān uses a variety of communication styles including *targhīb* (giving promises), *tarhīb* (warning), *qaṣaṣ* (stories), *amthāl* (parables), and *jadal* (argumentation) to convey those very objectives. This section discusses the nature, characteristic, and types of Quranic styles of communication in addition to elaboration on the concept of *naqd* (critique) as used in the Qur'ān.

3.1 Characteristics of Quranic communication styles

The Qur'ān's communication styles are believed to be effective and unique as they are divine. A discussion of their main characteristics is made in the following discussion based on an examination of its verses.

3.1.1 *Tanwī'* (diversification of Qur'anic communication styles)

The Qur'ān employs a variety of communication styles to convey its objectives to humanity. This diversity in communication is crucial because it guarantees effective speech that positively influences people. On many occasions, the Qur'ān identifies diversification as one of the characteristics of its styles, such as in the following verse: "And surely, we have explained (variously) (Our Promises, Warnings and (set forth many) examples) in this Qur'ān that they (the disbelievers) may take heed, but it increases them in naught save aversion" (Qur'ān 17:41).

Al-Rāghib al-Alṣfahanī (d.405 H) maintains that the word *ṣarafa* implies change of something from one point to another or to substitute (replace) it with another one such as the case of change in speech (al-Alṣfahanī, 1412H). Al-Rāzi (606H) on the other hand sees *taṣrīf* as a change from one point to another one, like the wind from one direction to another in view of the fact that when one wants to clarify a point he would change or turn from a style to another (Al-Rāzī, 1420H). The word *taṣrīf* carries different meanings like *tazyīn* (decoration) and *ziyādah* (increase). In his *Mu'jam*, Ibn Fāris mentions that *ṣarf al-kalām* implies its decoration and increase in order to attract its listeners (Ibn Fāris, 1979). *Taṣrīf* also means repetition and clarification. In his commentary of the Qur'ān (Chapter 9:58), al-Zamakhsharī (N.D) explains *taṣrīf as* repetition.

The Qur'ān uses its styles repeatedly to clarify issues and remind people. Another meaning of *taṣrīf* is *tanwī'*(diversification). Al-Tha'labī (427H) explains that Allāh Almighty uses various styles such as *wa'd* (encouragement, positive motivation) and *wa'īd* (warning), *muḥkam* (verses with clear

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meaning) and *mutashābih* (verses with ambiguous meaning), *nawāhī* (prohibitions) and *awāmir* (commands), and *akhbār* (stories) and *amthāl* (parables) to communicate its themes to ensure its influence over the reader/listener, ultimately leading to acceptance of the divine truth (al-Tha'labī, 2002).

The verses indicating the diversity of communication styles in the Qur'ān as an essential characteristic include: "See how variously We explain the Ayat (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) (Qur'ān 6:46), And: "We have (repeatedly) shown (them) the Ayāt (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) in various ways that they might return" (Qur'ān 46:27).

The diversity of communication styles in the Qur'ān is an essential characteristic of the Qur'ān affecting the listener in many effective ways. The use of a variety of styles is also set to attract listeners in view of the fact that consistent use of one single style may become monotonous. The use of different styles offers a broad scope of communication to meet the diversity of mankind. A single person may require diverse communication styles for the divine message to get through to him/her. Moreover, smooth and clear use of diverse communication styles stands as a solid proof of the authenticity of the Qur'ān

3.1.2 *Al-'Umūm* (far-reaching coverage)

The styles of the Qur'ān are generally broad and far-reaching. They speak to all kinds of creation, human, Jinn, or others, Muslims and non-Muslims, and people with and without knowledge, Allāh ﷻ says: "Verily, this (the Qur'ān) is no less than a Reminder to (all) the Alameen (mankind and jinn) (Qur'ān 81:27).

Moreover, the styles of Qur'ān address audiences belonging to different periods beginning with its revelation in 610 A.D through to the end of time. What is unique about this is that it continues to remain an effective form of communication and relevant despite this ongoing change in time and audience. This can only be attributed to its divine source, namely the All Wise, All-Knower, and All-Seer who chooses to address His servants in convincing ways.

To explain this point further, one may refer to al-Zarqānī who maintains that the Qur'ān satisfies all categories of people, and that ordinary or knowledgeable alike are satisfied with its discourse and understand it according to their respective levels of comprehension. In contrast, human speech is unable to properly address two single categories of people at the same time, either because it is advanced or too complex for normal people who may fail to understand it or because of its simplicity, which fails to satisfy knowledgeable people (Al-Zarqānī, 1996). In addition, even though Quranic themes and styles vary, nonetheless, the Qur'ān is still able to present its messages in a coherent

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manner. Unlike man who cannot maintain excellence in all themes, tending to excel in a specific field only at the expense of others, the Qur'ān perfects every theme and style.

3.1.3 *Al-Tawāzun* (balance)

The balance of communication is considered among the salient features of the styles of the Qur'ān which balances between human emotion and reason, by taking into account the rational and emotional needs of people. Darrāz elucidates this point, "Think deeply (ponder) about the verses of the Qur'ān and you will find that while the Qur'ān is talking about arguments and legal rulings, it does not, as seen throughout its verses, neglect emotions (hearts)" (al-Darrāz, 2005). Al-Zarqānī (1996). further believes that the entire Qur'ān facilitates easy acceptance of rational evidences while entertaining the intellect and guiding both mind and emotion for the benefit of men. Some of the examples of the Qur'ān's use of this characteristic, seen in the following verses: the first verse represents a discourse that addresses human reason: "And among His Signs is that He shows you the lightning, by way of fear and hope, and He sends down water (rain) from the sky, and therewith revives the earth after its death. Verily, in that are indeed signs for a people who understand" (Qur'ān 30:24). The second verse represents a discourse that addresses the emotional side of human: "Declare (O Muhammad ﷺ) unto My slaves, that truly, I am the Oft-Forgiving, the Most- Merciful And that My Torment is indeed the most painful torment" (Qur'ān 15:49-50).

3.1.4 *Al-Diqqah* (accuracy)

The Quranic styles are accurate, just, true, and based on reality as manifested in numerous Quranic verses related to, a statement, action, or particular incident, the Qur'ān never fails to report accurately, in the exact manner of speech, performance, or occurrence. even though some people like 'Adi bin Ḥātim may not understand this point, and as result thought that the Quranic narrative is not genuine.

'Adi bin Ḥātim η reported that he came to Prophet Muhammad ﷺ while he had a cross of gold around his neck. Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said: 'O 'Adi! Remove this idol from yourself! 'And he heard him reciting from Chapter Repentance (*Barā'ah*): "They took their rabbis and monks as lords besides Allāh" (Qur'ān 9:31). In a different narration, 'Adi η commented: "We do not worship them". The Prophet ﷺ then explained its real meaning, "He said: 'As for them, they did not worship them, but when they made something lawful for them, they considered it lawful, and when they made something unlawful for them, they considered it unlawful (al-Bayhaqī, 1994; al-Tirmithī, N.D). This event highlights the accuracy of the Qur'ān, the Qur'ān gave the fact that the Christians took their rabbis and monks as lords besides Allāh, but 'Adi η thought it is not true, then the Prophet ﷺ explained to him how this is possible, so 'Adi η got convinced.

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3.2 The Quranic styles of communication

The Qur'ān makes use of the styles explained below to convey its themes and objectives. Moreover, it is believed that the Quranic critique is present in these styles among others. Therefore, this section attempts to identify the Quranic style of communication and discusses their nature including its undertones of critique.

3.2.1 *Al-uslub al-istidlālī al-fiṭrī* (the intuitive style of reasoning)

The Qur'ān extensively uses the intuitive style of reasoning which is a kind of narrative that invites people to ponder on the creation of Allāh ﷻ so as to recognize His power, and to worship Him alone. It also presents a variety of rational evidence concerning different topics like death and resurrection as seen in the verse, "O mankind! Worship your Lord (Allāh), Who created you and those who were before you so that you may become Al-Muttaqīn (the pious - see V.2:2), and "Who has made the earth a resting place for you, and the sky as a canopy, and sent down water (rain) from the sky and brought forth therewith fruits as a provision for you. Then do not set up rivals unto Allāh (in worship) while you know (that He Alone has the right to be worshipped)" (Qur'ān 2:21-22).

This verse commands worshipping Allāh ﷻ alone and forbids worshipping anything besides Allāh ﷻ the Qur'ān argues with Allāh's power, creation, planning, and managing the universe to install the intuitive style to invite humans to reflect (al-Sa'dī, 2000). In addition, the Qur'ān uses the concept of His oneness in regard to his lordship- which is instinctive in human nature- in order to establish His oneness in regard to His exclusive right to be worshiped. This logic is found in a number of verses throughout the Qur'ān.

In another verse, Allāh ﷻ declares that He is the only God worthy of being worshipped, "And your Ilāh (God) is One Ilāh (God - Allāh), Lā ilāha illā Huwa (there is none who has the right to be worshipped but He), the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful". Allāh ﷻ continues by providing the proofs of the previous fact saying, "Verily! In the creation of the heavens and the earth, and in the alternation of night and day, and the ships which sail through the sea with that which is of use to mankind, and the water (rain) which Allāh sends down from the sky and makes the earth alive therewith after its death, and the moving (living) creatures of all kinds that He has scattered therein, and in the veering of winds and clouds which are held between the sky and the earth, are indeed Ayat (proofs, evidences, signs, etc.) for people of understanding" (Qur'ān 2:163-164).

These two verses describe the power of Allāh ﷻ that is manifested in His creation and use of the intuitive style of reasoning. All the signs mentioned in the verses stand as proof for people of understanding and invite the human intellect and instinct to return to Allāh ﷻ (al-Sa'dī, 2000).

3.2.2 *Al-uslūb al-qaṣaṣī* (Story telling style, narrative style)

Among the Quranic styles that have been used extensively throughout the Qur'ān is the story. This style has a significant impact according to Afnan Fatani a contemporary scholar, who asserts that "it is not the instructive stories but rather the cognitive role they play to illustrate abstract religion and to make the unfamiliar appear familiar that makes them important." (Fatani, 2006). Moreover, the Quranic stories are described in the Qur'ān as (al-'Uthaimīn, 1423H):

1- The most authentic as it reflects the reality:

"And whose words can be truer than those of Allāh? (Of course, none)" (Qur'ān 4:122).

2- The best as it contains the highest level of language and content:

"We relate unto you (Muhammad ﷺ) the best of stories through Our Revelations unto you" (Qur'ān 12:3).

3- Most beneficial as it has positive effects on the listener/reader:

"Indeed, in their stories, there is a lesson for men of understanding" (Qur'ān 12:111).

Unlike ordinary stories, the Quranic stories are based on reality; they are not fiction invented for entertainment purposes. The Quranic stories pay little attention to names, personalities and figures, and focus instead on the moral lesson they provide. The Quranic stories differ in length according to the message they convey. The Qur'ān frequently repeats certain stories, like the story of Adam ﷺ to highlight and remind its audience of the importance of a particular subject. Finally, the Quranic stories are not gathered in one chapter or place like ordinary stories, rather they are spread throughout the Qur'ān, because each story has a role to play in a particular context.

3.2.4 *Ḍarb al-amthāl* (the use of parables)

Humans in general adhere to what is beneficial and avoid what is harmful. This is perhaps why the Qur'ān effectively exploits this nature to address man through the emotional style known as *targhīb* (encouragement) and *tarhīb* (warning).

Qur'ān's *targhīb* (encouragement) is its approach to encouraging and/or persuading people to accept the truth or act righteously. *Tarhīb* (warning) on the other hand is Qur'ān's discouragement and warning of those who reject the truth and/or choose to do evil. Shaltūt (1963) maintains that the Qur'ān follows the following types of encouragement and warning: Encouragement and warning related to the worldly life, victory and a good life, warning against evil and evil doers, and punishment. He further maintains that encouragement and warning related to the Hereafter are twofold: encouragement of permanent bliss and warning of permanent torment (Shaltūt, 1983).

A careful reading of the Quranic verses reveals that encouragement and warning go alongside each other, which reflects the Qur'ān's pattern of mixing encouragement with warning. To better explain this point, al-Zamakhsharī (N.D) notes, "His habit (Allāh ﷻ) is to mention encouragement with threatening and following glad tidings with warning". In the same context Ibn ʿAshūr (1973) further maintains that it is the Qur'ān's habit to heal the souls through mixed encouragement and warning (Ibn ʿAshūr, 2000).

One of the clear examples of this style is seen in Surah al-Zumar (Qur'ān 40:73-74), in which Allāh ﷻ draws attention to two categories of people on the Day of the Judgment. The scene begins with the losers regretting their committed evil, when regret is useless; reading these verses causes fear in the Qur'ān's reciter. The same scene continues to describe the winners who are extremely satisfied with the divine reward; reading these verses causes happiness in the Qur'ān's reciter.

Another related example is found in the following verses: "Declare (O Muhammad ﷺ) unto My slaves, that truly, I am the Oft-Forgiving, the Most- Merciful And that My Torment is indeed the most painful torment" (Qur'ān 15:49-50). "Verily, (O Muhammad (ﷺ)) the Grip (Punishment) of your Lord is severe". (Qur'ān 85:12). Then He says: "And He is Oft-Forgiving, full of love (towards the pious who are real true believers of Islamic Monotheism)" (Qur'ān 85:14). These verses clearly show the mixing of encouragement with warning in the Qur'ān.

3.2.5 *Jadal* (*A*rgumentative style)

Prior to further discussion, it would be instructive to first define the following terms and concepts *jadal (*argumentation*), ḥiwār (dialog) and munāẓarah (debate),* and highlight the possible differences between them. Badmas stresses that *jadal* according to *al-Rāghib* al-Aṣfahanī, connotes exchange of points with a view to convince the audience about the correctness of a particular subject (Yusuf, 2009). It also refers to "logical arguments used to support a theory, an action, or an idea" (Oxford Learner's Dictionary). This generic definition shows that *jadal* is a means for proving something. The Qur'ān uses *jadal* to convince people about different subjects.

The Qur'ān reports that *jadal* is part of human nature, "But, man is ever more quarrelsome than anything" (Qur'ān 18:45). Unlike philosophy, the Qur'ān uses *jadal* appropriately to effectively explain its messages without ambiguity. The Qur'ān uses the term *jadal* and its derivatives ninety-nine times to indicate a negative meaning except in the following three occasions[5] (al-Ḥanbalī, 1992). Based on this, it is clear that the term *jadal* in the Qur'ān usually carries a negative meaning.

The term *ḥiwār* (dialog) however, refers linguistically to interactive speech (al-Alṣfahanī, 1412H). However, it also refers to exchange of ideas or opinions between two or more people on a particular

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[5] al-Anfāl 16:125. al-Ankabūt 29:46 and al-Mujādilah 58:1.

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issue, especially political or religious, with a view to reaching an amicable agreement or settlement (Dictionary.com). Meanwhile, *munāẓarah* (debate) refers to "a formal discussion of an issue at a public meeting or in a parliament. In a debate two or more speakers express opposing views" (Oxford Learner's Dictionary).

Both dialog and argumentation involve interaction and discussion between two parties, however, a dialog has a broader meaning, as it refers to two people talking, and disagreement is not necessarily a part of it. Whereas argumentation is when two parties disagree and attempt to prove the other party incorrect. Dialog usually refers to a friendlier discussion, while argument refers to an angry and heated debate. Hence, every argument is a dialog and not vice versa.

The Qur'ān provides plenty of examples illustrating dialog such as case of the dialog between Allāh ﷻ and the Angels (Qur'ān 2:30-33). A careful examination of this dialog points to no emotions of anger, frustration, or heated disagreement, rather it consists of friendly exchange. *Jadal* (argumentation, dispute) is also indicated in many chapters of the Qur'ān and in most is not recommended, such as: "They said: "O Nooh (Noah)! You have disputed with us and much have you prolonged the dispute with us, now bring upon us what you threaten us with, if you are of the truthful" (Qur'ān 11:32).

"None disputes in the Ayat (proofs, evidence, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) of Allāh but those who disbelieve" (Qur'ān 40:4). There appears to be no major differences between debate and argumentation, for the latter is also used for debate and vice versa. The term *munāẓarah* is not mentioned in the Qur'ān. However, if debate is a formal contest in which the affirmative and negative sides of a proposition are advocated by opposing speakers (Dictionary.com), a slight difference can be noticed concerning the highly formal nature of debate compared to arguments.

4. THE QURANIC STYLES OF CRITIQUE

The question of critique can be addressed from different perspectives. Before proceeding however, it would be instructive to set a definition of critique, discuss its objectives, its nature and scope, and identify the Qur'ān's various styles of critique.

4.1 Definition of Quranic critique (*al-naqd al-Qur'ānī*)

The Qur'ān uses critique as a means to convey its objectives by evaluating human actions with the aim to correct the wrong. Critique known as *naqd,* refers to the blame, censure, and reprimand of certain actions (Ibn 'Abd al-Salām, 1491). It can be explicit or implicit. The principal objective of using critique in the Qur'ān is to guide humanity to the right path (Qur'ān 17:9).

One of the examples is seen in the following verse regarding the critique of the Prophet ﷺ: "May Allāh forgive you (O Muhammad ﷺ). Why did you grant them leave (for remaining behind, you should have persisted as regards your order to them to proceed on Jihad), until those who told the truth were seen by you in a clear light, and you had known the liars?" (Qur'ān 9:43).

Prior to further discussion however, one needs highlight the possible difference that exists between critique (*naqd*) and argumentation (*jadal*). *Naqd* may be defined as a process of evaluation that effectively employs and makes use of different styles. *Jadal*, on the other hand, is understood to be a style of critique. Within such a paradigm, the term *naqd* refers to the process itself, whereas the term *jadal* refers to the form and specific style. The Qur'ān has often made use of *jadal* as a way and means for evaluation. As such, *naqd* holds a far broader meaning than that of *jadal*, while *jadal* nonetheless remains part and parcel of *naqd*.

4.2 Nature of Quranic critique

The Quranic critique is directed to many categories of people; it differs in terms of severity and has a broad scope. This section discusses the nature of the Quranic critique.

4.2.1 Target of critique

A careful reading of its verses, the Quranic critique is directed to many categories of people including disbelievers among Arabs in general, especially the Quraysh, People of the Book, believers, hypocrites, and mankind.

4.2.2 The critique of the Qur'ān towards individuals

The Quranic critique towards individuals comes in different forms. Sometimes, it criticizes a specific person, and this in turn has different types: mentioning the name of the person as is the case of Abū Lahab (Qur'ān 111:1), or ignoring the name and making the point through reference to the actions of the person as in the case of al-'Āṣ bin Wā'il (Qur'ān 19:77-80). These verses were revealed to refute the claim of al-'Āṣ who publicly declared he will have plenty of wealth and children in the hereafter (Ibn 'Ashūr, 2000).

Another example is found in the following verses of the Qur'ān: "Did you (O Muhammad ﷺ) observe him who turned away (from Islam). And gave a little, then stopped (giving)? Is with him the knowledge of the unseen so that he sees? Or is he not informed with what is in the Pages (Scripture) of Mūsā (Moses), And of Ibrahim (Abraham) who fulfilled (or conveyed) all that (what Allāh ordered him to do or convey), That no burdened person (with sins) shall bear the burden (sins) of another," (Qur'ān 53:33-38). Ibn 'Āshūr stresses that these verses refer to a specific person and not a group, reporting consensus of Qur'ān exegetes on the matter (Ibn 'Ashūr, 2000).

4.2.3 The critique of the Qur'ān towards collective groups

On many occasions the Qur'ān criticizes groups of people when they collectively commit wrong whether Muslims, disbelievers, hypocrites, and/or People of the Book. The following example highlights this point. The Qur'ān states, "Have you not seen those who were told to hold back their hands (from fighting) and perform Al-*Salat* (*Iqāmat as-Salat*), and give *Zakat*, but when the fighting was ordained for them, behold! A section of them fears men as they fear Allāh or even more. They say: "Our Lord! Why have you ordained for us fighting? Would that you had granted us respite for a short period?" Say: "Short is the enjoyment of this world. The Hereafter is (far) better for him who fears Allāh, and you shall not be dealt with unjustly even equal to the Fatila (a scalish thread in the long slit of a datestone)" (Qur'ān 4:77).

Other times, the Qur'ān criticizes actions committed by a specific (single) person in a plural form as shown in the Qur'ān: Allāh ﷻ says: "O you who believe! Betray not Allāh and His Messenger, nor betray knowingly your Amanat (things entrusted to you, and all the duties which Allāh has ordained for you) (Qur'ān 8:27).

Muslim scholars agree that this verse was revealed concerning an action of a specific person, even though they disagreed on his identity (Ibn 'Ashūr, 2000). According to Ibn Kathīr (774H), this verse was revealed concerning the action of Abū Lubābah (Ibn Kathīr, 1999). Although the action was committed by a single person Abū Lubābah, nevertheless, the Qur'ān addresses a group of people saying; "O you who believe", without addressing him in person, but addresses the group of believers.

Another example is in reference to the hypocrites, "They are the ones who say: "Spend not on those who are with Allāh's Messenger, until they desert him." And to Allāh belong the treasures of the heavens and the earth, but the hypocrites comprehend not" (Qur'ān 63:7). The person uttering this statement was 'Abd–Allāh bin 'Ubay bin Salūl. Nevertheless, when the hypocrites accepted and spread his statement, they were considered accomplices (Ibn 'Ashūr, 2000), as a result the speech addressed all of them.

Thirdly, critique directed towards a character in an anonymous person; it is not related to a person in specific, but rather to whoever does the action. The clearest example perhaps on this is illustrated in the following verse: "Until, when death comes to one of them (those who join partners with Allāh), he says: "My Lord! Send me back" (Qur'ān 23:99).

This verse does not refer to a specific person known to the audience, rather describes a moment in the life of negligent (*ghāfil*) when his death comes which did and will happen to many people in the history of humanity. The verse: "And among mankind is he who worships Allāh as it were, upon the very edge (i.e., in doubt); if good befalls him, he is content therewith; but if a trial befalls him, he

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turns back on his face (i.e., reverts back to disbelief after embracing Islam). He loses both this world and the Hereafter. That is the evident loss" (Qur'ān 22:11).

This verse represents another example of critique directed towards an anonymous person not to a specific one or group, rather for the underlying character. This has caused scholarly difference on whether this verse addresses a particular person or group.

4.2.4 Softness and severity of Quranic critique

The Quranic critique differs in terms of severity and softness, the following section highlights the differences between the soft and severe critique, it also discusses the criteria of the soft and severe of the Quranic critique:

1- The severity or softness of the Quranic critique is predominantly identified in the manner the speech is delivered:

a- Soft critique: If there is a slight reprimand followed by a call for repentance or granting of forgiveness, this indicates low levels of severity, and often concerns innocent mistakes by believers. As far as soft tone critique is concerned, critique is conveyed in a way that is kind such as that expressed in the case of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, "May Allāh forgive you (O Muhammad ﷺ). Why did you grant them leave (for remaining behind, you should have persisted as regards your order to them to proceed on Jihad), until those who told the truth were seen by you in a clear light, and you had known the liars?" (Qur'ān 9:43).

Ibn 'Āshūr suggests that starting the critique (reproach) with a notification of pardon is a great generosity and honest kindness. God started with pardon before reproach (*'itāb*) so as to ease the Prophet ﷺ (Ibn 'Ashūr, 2000).

b- Severe critique: if there is severe reprimand that might not be followed by an invitation to repent but by threats and punishment often indicates severe criticism. This is illustrated in,

"… and as for him among them who had the greater share therein, his will be a great torment" (Qur'ān 24:11).

This verse clearly states Allāh's ﷻ decision to punish the subject of this verse, namely 'Abdu-Allāh 'Ibn 'Ubay 'Ibn Salūl.

2- The criteria of the soft and severe of the Quranic critique:

a- The action and its scope, if it regards transgression in *tawḥīd*, there is no leniency unlike other issues. '*Aqīdah* is the essence of Islam, hence, it cannot be compromised in any form (Hocini, 2020, 2019, 2018).

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b- The emotional state of the subject and the awareness of the action: in regard to the emotional state of the subject of criticism, Ḥāṭib[6] η, the Companion of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, for example, felt guilty upon committing a sin for he was weak at the very moment of sinning, and so he repented. The Qur'ān addressed him as follows, "O you who believe! Take not My enemies and your enemies (i.e. disbelievers and polytheists, etc.) as friends" (Qur'ān 60:1).

In contrast, the hypocrites were subject to severe critique because of arrogance and their moral sickness, which resulted in their persistence in sins, and they declined to repent. Severe critique takes on a harsh tone such as that expressed in the case of the People of the Book, which often pertain to the issue of creed and calculated acts of intended transgression,

"And the Jews say: Uzair (Ezra) is the son of Allāh, and the Christians say: Messiah is the son of Allāh. That is a saying from their mouths. They imitate the saying of the disbelievers of old. Allāh's Curse be on them, how they are deluded away from the truth!" (Qur'ān 9:30).

"It is the equal to them whether you (Muḥammad ﷺ) ask forgiveness or ask not forgiveness for them. Verily, Allāh guides not the people who are the Fasiqeen (rebellious, disobedient to Allāh" (Qur'ān 63:6).

The Qur'ān is found to have severely criticized specific actions such as the Jews' betrayal of the covenant, as they were well aware of their transgression. Allāh ﷻ is severe in punishment to those who are aware of the truth yet constantly transgress, as opposed to those who are ignorant of divine truths. Allāh ﷻ says: "And if anyone of the *Mushrikoon* (polytheists, idolaters, pagans, disbelievers in the Oneness of Allāh) seeks your protection then grant him protection, so that he may hear the Word of Allāh (the Qur'an), and then escort him to where he can be secure, that is because they are men who know not" (Qur'ān 9:6).

4.3 Scope of Quranic critique

The Qur'ān is comprehensive and covers all aspects of people's life, and accordingly its critique encompasses broader scopes of activity including beliefs (Qur'ān 6:100-101); legislations such as the case of the Qur'ān's critique of Prophet Muḥammad's ﷺ release of hostages with ransom (Qur'ān 8:67), or ethics such as the Quranic critique of the People of the Book concerning their betrayal of covenant. The Qur'ān reports this as follows: "Is it not (the case) that every time they make a covenant, some party among them throw it aside? Nay! the truth, is most of them believe not" (Qur'ān 2:100).

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[6] Ibn 'Āshūr (2000) reported the unanimous agreement of Mufassirūn on that Ḥāṭib η is the subject of the critique, 15/100.

4.4 Styles of Critique in the Qur'ān

The Qur'ān uses a variety of communication styles to convey its objectives, one of which is the style of critique. Quranic style of critique consists of many different forms including – as illustrated earlier – the intuitive style of reasoning, the style of stories, the style of using parables, the style of encouragement and warning, and the style of argumentation (Figure:1). One such example is, "Verily, the likeness of 'Īsā (Jesus) before Allāh is the likeness of Adam. He created him from dust, then (He) said to him: "Be!" - and he was." (Qur'ān 3:59).
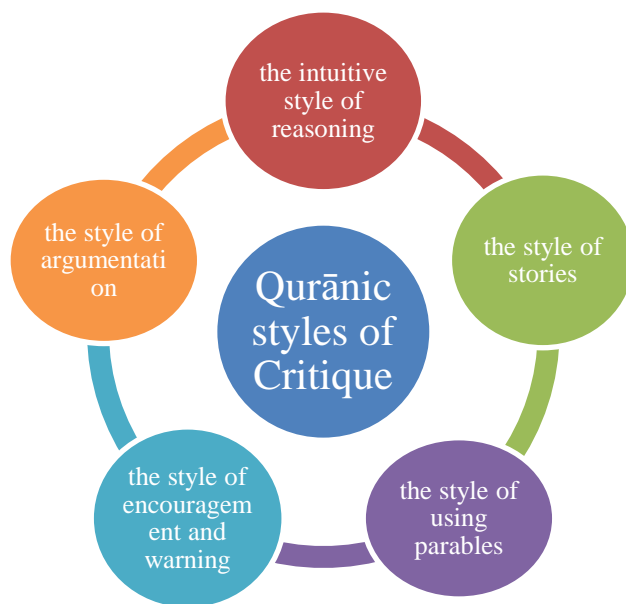

This verse criticizes the false beliefs of Christians regarding the divinity of Jesus v. However, criticizing their false belief by way of an example is not the ultimate objective of the Qur'ān; rather, the Qur'ān seeks to prove the servitude of Jesus v to Allāh ﷻ. Hence, false belief can also be criticized through other styles like encouragement and warning

Figure 1: Qurānic styles of Critique

5. CONCLUSION

To sum up, this research discussion identifies the different viewpoints of Muslim scholars regarding the content of the Qur'ān. The Qur'ān's six styles of communication were identified and discussed with examples. Those Quranic styles are diverse, general, balanced, and accurate. The critique of the Qur'ān has also been identified including blame, censure, and reprimand either explicitly or implicitly. In addition, many dimensions of the Quranic critique such as the nature of critique, scope, and styles were highlighted. The research argues that the Quranic critique aims to convey the Qur'ān's themes and objectives, through various styles including the Qur'ān's styles of communication. Moreover, the critique of the Qur'ān is not an end in itself, but rather for conveying higher objectives, namely, to convey the themes and objectives of the Qur'ān.

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