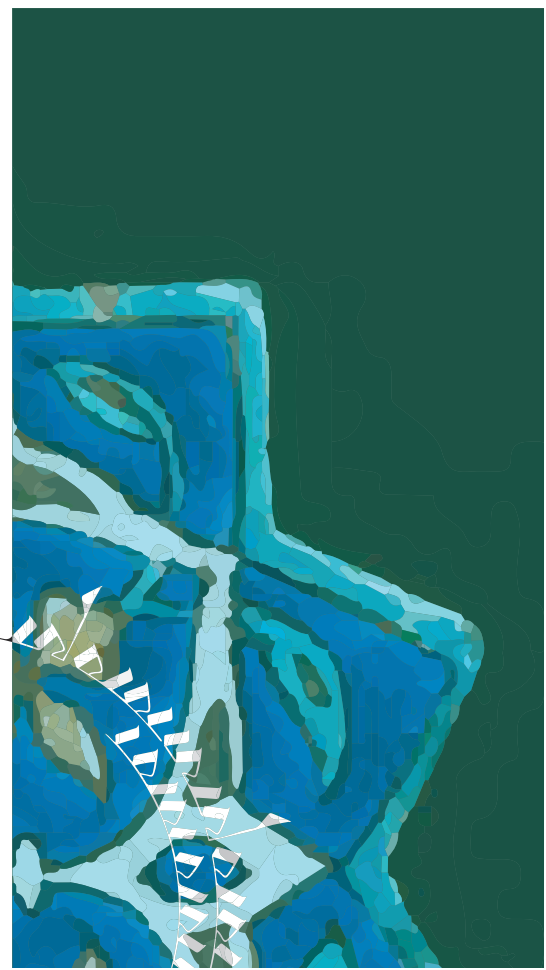


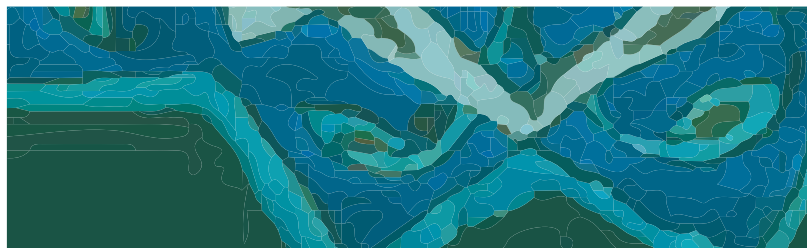
The Beginning of Creation: Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household): A Semiotic Reading in Exegetical Narratives



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Abstract

In the field of interpreting the Quran, there has been ongoing debate about the meanings of certain terms. Scholars who engage in the process of understanding these terms have not been able to agree on a consistent framework. They have not reached a common understanding of the key meanings, leading to frustration among researchers trying to decipher the Quranic text. One such term is the singular noun “al-Asma” (the names), which was divinely taught to Adam. Similarly, “al-Kalimat” (the words) encountered by Adam played a crucial role in his repentance, choices, and decisions. Different terms in the Quran present various signals or possibilities for interpretation. This research aims to shed light on interpretative narratives referenced by hadith narrators and used by commentators to assess their reliability. Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his family, is particularly crucial in this examination. The study carefully examines these perspectives, seeking to understand their implications according to highly regarded interpreters. It takes an objective viewpoint to reconcile the diverse meanings that characterize the reality of Muhammad in both the earthly and unseen realms. Additionally, the research aims to uncover the mysteries surrounding this personality, intended by its Creator to be the focal point of existence—a secret among the profound mysteries of creation.

Introduction:

The divergence of interpretation among exegetes in elucidating the meaning of certain Quranic terms signals the presence of mysteries that warrant exploration to direct their significance toward their intended meanings. The process of extracting potential meanings is intricate and intertwined, requiring a serious commitment to comprehend the meanings articulated by interpreters. These interpreters often rely on their linguistic and semantic heritage, along with their knowledge of the methods and internal and external contexts accompanying the birth of the Quranic text. Such contexts include the reasons for revelation, the context of communication, the system of revelation, events documented in biographical texts, interpretative narratives, and the traditions of hadith. Additionally, individual exegetes bring their personal perspectives, such as revelations and inspirations, into the interpretative process.

Despite scholarly efforts, certain terms in the Quran continue to be a source of disagreement among interpreters, leading to varying interpretations. The scholars haven't managed to agree on a unified interpretative approach or at least find common ground to alleviate the challenges researchers face in understanding the Quranic text. One such term is "al-Asma" (the names), as mentioned in the verse: "And He taught Adam the names, all of them. Then He presented them to the angels and said, 'Inform Me of the names of these, if you are truthful.'" Another term is "al-Kalimat" (the words) in verse: "So Adam received words from his Lord, and He accepted his repentance. Indeed, it is He who is the Accepting of Repentance, the Merciful." These terms, along with others, pose interpretative challenges and possibilities that contribute to cognitive ambiguity.

Upon consulting historical and biographical works, there are no clear indications of the Prophet's relationship with the time period in which our father Adam, peace be upon him, lived. However, upon revisiting the hadith narrations in certain exegesis (Tafsir) books, we find explicit references to the mention of the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, coinciding with the mention of the father of humanity. This aspect is of particular interest and warrants explicit and bold analyses. It necessitates a precise and objective examination, aiming to reach a scientific conviction that tran-

scends biases and doctrinal preconceptions. The goal is to present all viewpoints in a scientific manner, applying constructive criticism, studying the textual structure, and interrogating it to arrive at the closest possible semantic point. This, in turn, can serve as a reliable basis for understanding the Quranic reality attributed to our noble Prophet. The study is divided into two main sections:

First: The Blessed Names in the Canopy of the Throne

Some interpretative narratives suggest that the name of the noble Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, existed thousands of years before his birth, during the time of Adam, peace be upon him. They propose that his name was present even before his existence and before being appointed as the vicegerent of God on Earth. This perspective can be explored in light of the narratives mentioned in the interpretation of the verse: “And He taught Adam the names—all of them. Then He presented them to the angels and said, ‘Inform Me of the names of these if you are truthful.’” (Quran 2:31). Before delving into these indications and understanding the nuances of the narration, it is essential to clarify some of the issues that interpreters have focused on in their attempts to understand this blessed verse. Their emphasis on these issues aims to facilitate the comprehension and interpretation of the meanings. These issues include:

First: Reading of the Verse

The well-known recitation, as documented in the noble Quran, indicates that the verb “taught” (عَلَّمَ) is in the passive form¹, meaning its doer is the Almighty Lord. Thus, the verse is read as “And Adam was taught the names,” with the construction suggesting that Adam is the recipient of the action, raised as a deputy for the doer, whose identity remains unspecified. Alternatively, it is suggested that the teaching to Adam may have occurred through another means, possibly an intermediary in the process of instruction. It is proposed that Adam acquired knowledge of things and names independently during his presence in Paradise. Therefore, it is asserted that this teaching happened either through the essential creation of inherent knowledge within him or through the infusion of knowledge during a state of consciousness. The

¹ Al-Mashhadi, Kanz Al—Daqaiq, vol. 1, p. 345.

term “teaching” implies an action that often results in acquiring knowledge. Hence, it is said, “I taught him, but he did not learn,”² emphasizing the interactive nature of the teaching process involving two entities: the teacher and the learner.

In analyzing the phrase “ثُمَّ عَرَضَهُمْ عَلَى الْمَلَائِكَةِ” (Then He presented them to the angels), there are two different recitations mentioned. Ubai read it as “ثم عرضها” (Then He presented it), while Ibn Mas’ood read it as “ثم عرضهن” (Then He presented them). The pronoun “هُم” (them) in the first recitation refers to the designated names taught to Adam. This can either be interpreted in terms of usage, indicating that a term is mentioned and another meaning is intended with its pronoun, or in the context of omitting the possessive specifier and establishing its position in a defining relation. This would imply the predominance of male rational beings over others, applying to both the second and third categories of names. Moreover, the possibilities can be understood in terms of usage as well or in the context of omitting the possessed attribute. In this sense, the intended meaning is the presentation of the names either belonging to the feminine them or belonging to the masculine them.³ All these possibilities suggest the predominance of rational beings in these designations, signifying that they are names of intelligent entities.

Second: Names and Their Significance

Some available narrations clearly indicate that these names are identifiers for certain entities taught to Adam, either directly or through an intermediary. In a commentary attributed to Imam Al-Askari (d. 260 AH), it is stated, “(And He taught Adam all the names) - the names of the prophets of Allah, and the names of Muhammad, peace be upon him and his family, Ali, Fatimah, Hasan, and Husayn, and the pure ones from their descendants, and the names of the chosen ones among their followers, and the infamous ones among their enemies. (Then He presented them - meaning Muhammad, Ali, and the Imams - to the angels) - meaning their apparitions presented as lights in the shadows of God’s Throne.”⁴ This statement explicitly asserts that these names exist for entities shaped as luminous apparitions

² Al-Qalaji, Language of Jurists Dictionary, p 16.

³ Al-Mashhadi, Kanz Al—Daqaiq, vol. 1, p. 345.

⁴ Al-Askari, Interpretation of Imam Al-Askari, p. 217

in the shadows of the throne, created by Allah before the creation of Adam. These names refer to the prophets, including Muhammad, peace be upon him and his family. It implies that the existence of the Prophet during that period occurred in the form of a luminous apparition. There is no direct evidence from the terminology or the verse and its context to confirm this meaning. Therefore, we need to explore other exegetical narratives in this interpretive stance to guide us towards a closer interpretation of the intended meaning.

In the narration mentioned by Furat Al-Kufi (352 AH) in his commentary, with its chain going back to Imam Al-Sadiq, peace be upon him, it is stated: “Indeed, Allah, blessed and exalted be He, existed, and there was nothing. He created five entities from the light of His glory and [assigned] for each of them a name from His exalted names. He is the Praiseworthy, and He named [the Prophet] Muhammad, peace be upon him and his family. He is the Most High, and He named the Commander of the Faithful Ali. From His beautiful names, Hasan and Husayn were derived. He is the Creator, and He derived the name Fatimah from His names. When He created them, He placed them in the covenant; they are to the right of the Throne...”⁵

This narration, more elucidating than what was mentioned in the exegesis of Imam Al-Askari, explicitly mentions that there are lights created from His glory. These lights represent the true meanings carried by the names, clarifying that the derivation of names from His names is, indeed, related to the essence of the entities. This raises an important question about the relationship between the name and its derivation from the word, and how it can serve as a sign and an indicator of meaning in the mind or external form.⁶ It becomes evident from the details of the narration that Adam, peace be upon him, recognized the reality of these luminous entities. Therefore, he felt the need to understand the significance and asked about their names. The narration, as conveyed by Furat Al-Kufi, continues to complete the scene, stating: “When Allah, the Most Exalted, created Adam, peace and blessings be upon him, He looked at them from the right of the Throne and said, ‘O Lord, who are these?’ He replied, ‘O Adam, these are My elite and special beings. I created them from the light of My glory and

⁵ Al- Kufi ,Interpretation of Furat Al-Kufi, p. 57.

⁶ Al-Qalaji, Language of Jurists Dictionary, p. 16

assigned names to them from My names.’ Adam said, ‘O Lord, by Your right upon them, teach me their names.’ Allah replied, ‘O Adam, they are entrusted to you, a secret from My secrets, not to be disclosed except by My permission.’ Adam said, ‘Yes, O Lord.’ Allah said, ‘O Adam, give Me the pledge for that.’ Adam took the pledge, and then Allah taught him their names, and He presented them to the angels.”⁷

This narrative implies that these names belong to conscious and rational beings, as they were derived from the attributes of the Creator, representing the essence of intelligent existence. We can assert that these names are “existential formations” or entities that manifest the attributes. Every created being is formed as an appearance and manifestation of a specific attribute. Understanding these manifestations, appearances, and characteristics is among the highest divine knowledge, accessible only to those who witness the true essence of majesty and beauty.

The subsequent part of the narration, where Adam takes an oath and Allah teaches him the names, indicates that these names belong to living, rational entities. The mention of a pledge and the secrecy surrounding these names emphasize the elevated nature of this knowledge.⁸ Ayatollah Tabatabai supports this interpretation, stating that these names were living, rational entities concealed behind the veil of the unseen. Knowledge of their names was not akin to our knowledge of the names of things.⁹

The crucial aspect of the narration presented by Furat Al-Kufi is that it alludes to one of the secrets guarded by the Almighty. This secret is kept with Him to serve as evidence for the prophets and messengers. It signifies that the knowledge about these entities is exclusive and requires a level of cosmic understanding accessible only to those of special distinction. This perspective opens the door to understanding the significance of the words that Adam encountered in another verse. The narration implies that the knowledge of these entities, their names, and the secrets associated with them are part of a cosmic comprehension beyond the reach of ordinary under-

⁷ Al-Qalaji, Interpretation of Furat Al-Kufi, p. 57.

⁸ Al-Mustafawi, Studying the Terms of Quran, vol.8, p. 94.

⁹ Al-Tabatabai, The Interpretation of Al-Mizan, vol.1, p. 117.

standing. It further suggests that this knowledge is not a universal possession but is selectively granted, emphasizing the elevated nature of the awareness about these divine creations.

We can discover a new contextual linguistic evidence that confirms these names as intelligent luminous entities. This is derived from the Quran's use of the pronoun for intelligent beings in the phrase "and He presented them." Additionally, the use of the singular feminine pronoun in "all of them" and the demonstrative pronoun indicating a collective of intelligent beings in "tell Me the names of these if you are truthful" all point to these names being rational entities. They are luminous beings in the realm of spirits when manifested in the realm of intelligent beings.

These names transition from potentiality to actuality, embodying the mysteries of existence hidden in God's knowledge. God reveals the concealed knowledge of the unseen to whomever He chooses, as He is the "Knower of the unseen, and He does not disclose His knowledge of the unseen to anyone except to a messenger." The first of the messengers deserving knowledge of the unseen is the first caliph for God.

Regarding these subtle divine qualities, when they are in the stage of potentiality and integration, they are considered a singular feminine entity. However, when they progress to the stage of actualization and collective abundance, they become beings with intellects.¹⁰ Understanding these names is a necessity for the existence of Prophet Adam, as they are intelligent entities with significance in the cosmic destiny ordained by God.

From this linguistic insight, we can affirm the perspective that when God said, "He taught Adam the names," it refers to the essence from the perspective of its manifest attributes. In the phrase "He presented them," it refers to the essence in terms of what it is. In the phrase "with the names of these," it means the aspects of the existence of these luminous entities, which are names and manifestations of true attributes.¹¹

¹⁰ Al- Khomeini, Interpretation of Quran, Mustaga Khomeini, vol.5, p. 337.

¹¹ Al-Mustafawi, Studying the Terms of Quran, p. 94.

This interpretive view, along with linguistic mysteries, serves as a response to those who argue that teaching names refers to teaching the names of things, different languages, or the ability to know things by their names. The evidence against these views is that God, in His dialogue with Adam and the angels regarding the Earth's succession, used language to engage with the angels. He used the names of things known to both Adam and the angels. Knowledge of languages or, at the very least, knowledge of the names of things was achieved through the dialogue presented in the Quran between God and the angels regarding the issue of succession.

The Quranic dialogue, as in the case of appointing a successor, occurred before the incident of teaching names. The apparent implication of this ongoing dialogue between God and the angels is that it took place in a specific language with known meanings for all parties involved. Therefore, the process of conversation cannot be a distinguishing feature for Adam, making him different from the angels. This is under the assumption that the teaching of names refers to the names of things or languages.

In the view of some contemporary interpreters, there is a promotion of the theory that teaching the names of entities to Adam involves more than linguistic education. These scholars draw inspiration from previous commentators and align with proponents of linguistic theories, basing their arguments on the aforementioned verse. They assert, "We witness a portion of the divine secret that Allah has bestowed upon this human being. It is the entrustment of the reins of authority to him—a secret capability to symbolize names for the designated entities, the ability to assign names to individuals and things, transforming them—expressed words—into symbols for those tangible individuals and things. This is an immensely valuable capacity in human life on Earth. We realize its significance by contemplating the great difficulty that would arise if humans were not endowed with the ability to symbolize names for entities. The challenge lies in understanding and interacting when each individual needs to invoke these symbols independently to facilitate mutual understanding."¹²

¹² Sayyed Qutb, *In the Shade of Quran*, p. 67.

Here, one can observe how Sayyid Qutb strenuously argues that teaching names corresponds to instructing Adam in languages. However, this viewpoint encounters numerous and realistic objections, as elucidated by Sayyid al-Tabatabaei in his interpretation, stating, “What evidence is there that Allah educates an individual in the knowledge of language, boasts about it, and then uses it as an argument against honored angels who act obediently under His command? Is it that this individual is My vicegerent and worthy of My honor, unlike you? Allah challenges them to inform Him about the languages that humans will devise among themselves for understanding and comprehension, emphasizing that language perfection lies in comprehending the intentions of hearts, a capacity in which angels do not require speech. Rather, they receive intentions directly. They possess a perfection beyond the perfection of speech. Therefore, these names must conceal secrets beyond the knowledge of angels, designated for the station of Adam, whom Allah intends to qualify for the position of caliphate—the caliphs who will govern the Earth by divine delegation, whether under the banner of prophethood, message, or imamate.”¹³

From the foregoing, it becomes apparent that knowledge of the names of these designated entities must unveil their realities and the essence of their existence, beyond the mere linguistic understanding. These designated entities represent external realities and tangible existences, veiled under the concealment of the unseen realms of the heavens and the Earth. Understanding them as they truly are becomes accessible to an earthly being rather than a celestial entity. This knowledge is not only attainable but also pivotal in the divine caliphate.¹⁴ In light of this perspective, these designated entities harbor metaphysical realities in the realm of the unseen, exclusively revealed by Allah to His chosen ones. The foremost among these realities is the essence of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and His Household), as affirmed by the aforementioned narrations.

In another narration by Sheikh al-Saduq (381 AH) in his book *Kamal al-Din wa Tamam al-Ni'ma*, with a chain of narrators from al-Sadiq, Jafar ibn Muhammad (peace be upon him), it is reported that Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, taught the Prophet Adam (peace be upon him) the names, which are the proofs of God in their entirety.

¹³ Al-Tabatabaei, *The Interpretation of Al-Mizan*, vol.1, p. 117.

¹⁴ Al-Tabatabaei.

Then, these names, which are spiritual entities, were presented to the angels. Allah said, "Inform me of the names of these beings if you are truthful in your claim that you are more worthy of caliphate on Earth due to your glorification and sanctification compared to Prophet Adam (peace be upon him)." The angels replied, "Glory be to You, we have no knowledge except what You have taught us. Indeed, You are the All-Knowing, the Wise." Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, then said to Adam, "O Adam, inform them of their names." When Adam informed them of their names, the angels realized the greatness of their status in the eyes of Allah. They understood that they were more deserving to be the vicegerents of Allah on His Earth and the proofs of His sovereignty. Allah then concealed them from the sight of the angels, subjugating them to His authority through His guardianship and love, and said to them, "Did I not tell you that I know the unseen of the heavens and the earth? I know what you reveal and what you conceal."¹⁵

This narration introduces new elements not found in the previous ones, specifically mentioning that these entities are souls, indicating their tangible existence beyond physical bodies. The additional element emphasizes that Allah intended, through this demonstration of the names, to manifest the stature of the bearers of these names. Most importantly, the narration highlights their recognition of the prophets and successors, especially the Seal of the Prophets and the masters of the early and later generations, along with their infallible descendants—may Allah's blessings be upon them all.

Perhaps the vision that Ibn Arabi (638 AH) had regarding these meanings is embodied in his statement, alluding to this verse: "That Prophet Adam (peace be upon him) is the bearer of the names. Allah, the Almighty, says: 'And He taught Adam the names—all of them.' Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him and his Household) carries the meanings of those names that Prophet Adam (peace be upon him) bore, which are encompassed by the statement of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his Household): 'I have been given comprehensive words.' He who praised himself has reached the pinnacle of praise."¹⁶

¹⁵ Al-Saduq, *Kamal Al-Deen*, p. 14.

¹⁶ Ibn Arabi, *Al-Fotoohat Al-Makia*, vol. 1, p. 109.

Muhammad, or the “Muhammadan reality,” has been endowed with the realities of those names, as indicated by Ibn Arabi with the term “comprehensive words.” If Adam is the visible human with external existence in the forms of individuals, then Muhammad is the hidden human existing in the intelligible world.¹⁷

Thus, we arrive at an important conclusion in the context of exploring the hidden existence of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his Household), conveyed to us by the Quran through indications. This conclusion requires extensive contemplation, reflection, and the need for a sophisticated research approach beyond literal meanings and their implications. The meanings of words extend beyond the realm of expressions, delving into the world of the spirit and the metaphysical—a realm that will be addressed in the upcoming section.

Second: Muhammad (peace be upon him and his Household) as the Word of God

One of the verses that has sparked significant debate and controversy regarding its interpretation and the understanding of its terms is the following divine statement: “So Adam received words from his Lord, and He relented towards him. Indeed, He is the Most-Relenting, Most-Merciful.” (Quran 2:37) There has been a pronounced disagreement among interpreters and researchers regarding the interpretation of the term “received” and the significance of the singular term “words.” This divergence is evident in the numerous narrations that attempt to specify the intended meaning of the reception and the signification of the words received by Prophet Adam (peace be upon him). This discrepancy was a reason for his repentance. Therefore, we need to engage in crucial discussions to reach the desired conclusions:

¹⁷ Ibn Arabi ,Fosoos Al-Hekam, vol. 2, p. 35.

Firstly: Recitation

It is noteworthy that in this blessed verse, there are two recitations:

1. The first, which is the recitation of most readers, where the doer (Adam) is associated with the words (كلمات). This is the well-known recitation found in the commonly known Quranic text.

2. The second, which is a unique recitation attributed to Ibn Kathir, although some claim that this recitation is also attributed to the people of Mecca, Ibn Abbas, and Mujahid. In this recitation, “Adam” is grammatically made the object, and “كلمات” the term “words” is placed in the subject place, indicating that Adam received the words.¹⁸

And Ibn Khallawayh (370 AH) attempted to clarify the evidence for each recitation. He said, “It is recited with the elevation of Adam and the accusative case for ‘كلمات,’ and it is recited with the accusative case for Adam and the elevation of ‘كلمات.’ The evidence for those who raise Adam (peace be upon him) is that when Allah taught Prophet Adam (peace be upon him) the words and commanded him with them, he accepted them. The evidence for those who place Adam in the accusative case is to say: ‘Whatever has come to you, you have received it, and whatever has reached you, you have attained it.’ Linguists call this participation in the action.”¹⁹ This difference in the two recitations has an impact on understanding the other implications of (receiving) and the meanings of the words, as will become clear in the following discussions.

Second: The Meaning of Receiving

The noble verse indicates that Prophet Adam (peace be upon him) was responsive to these words, accepting them willingly and easily. His interaction with them was based on the method of instruction and inculcation. The repetition of the letter “ف” (fa) in both the act of receiving (فتلقى) and the outcome of receiving (فتاب) which is repentance may suggest the immediacy and directness of receiving, the strength of response to repentance, and the depth of interaction. It reveals the positive spontaneity in the process of receiving.

18 Al-Murtada, *Treaties of Sharif Al-Radi*, vol. 2, p. 115.

19 Ibn Khalewaih, *The Proof of the Seven Readings*, p. 51.

The bitterness of the experience Adam went through during the expulsion from paradise, along with the hardship of feeling the sin, may have played a role in preparing Adam for this type of quick reception. He was obedient and responsive with strength. Therefore, commentators made efforts to explain the nature of receiving and clarify its possible degrees by dealing with the linguistic and grammatical structures.

Al-Samarqandi (373 AH), the author of the commentary, believes that the meaning of receiving can be understood in two ways depending on the two readings. If read with “رفع” (Rafa’), its meaning is taking and accepting from his Lord. It can also be said: تلقى (he received) and تلقف (he accepted), which have the same meaning in the language. As for the one who reads with “نصب” (nasb), “فتلقى آدم” means that Adam received the words from his Lord. It is said: (I received him), meaning I accepted him. The overall meaning is that Allah inspired him with words, and he apologized using those words and supplicated to Him, so Allah accepted his repentance.²⁰ However, he did not stop at the meanings of these words but assigned their interpretation to the narrations.

Al-Sharif al-Murtada (436 AH) attempted to distinguish between two types of receiving based on the two readings with which the verse was recited. He considered the first type in the context of the reading with “رفع” (Rafa’) for the word “Adam” and stated: “His saying, ‘So Adam received words from his Lord,’ is more enriching than saying he turned to Allah for them or asked Him about them. This is because the meaning of receiving implies this and indicates what has been omitted from the speech as an abbreviation. That is why Allah says, ‘So He turned towards him,’ and no one turns towards Him except by asking and seeking, and he turns to Him urgently with those words.”²¹

Here, receiving is understood in the sense of responding to a supplication that Prophet Adam (peace be upon him) made to his Lord. He responded to this invocation through the mediation of these names, and the response came with the letter “فاء” (meaning then) associated with repentance.

Then al-Murtada moves on to the second reading, attributed to Ibn Kathir, the peo-

²⁰ Al-Samarqandi, Interpretation of Al-Samarqandi, vol. 2, p. 72.

²¹ Al-Murtada, Treaties of Sharif Al-Radi, p. 115.

ple of Mecca, Ibn Abbas, and Mujahid (according to his opinion), with the structure of placing “Adam” as object and “words” as subject. He states: “According to this reading, the meaning of ‘receiving is not acceptance; rather, the meaning is that the words saved and rescued him.”²² From this, the meaning is that the words took the initiative, addressing him to save him by the command of Allah. This indicates that these words have the ability to comprehend and the ability to think. It provides an important indication of their vitality and effectiveness. This meaning is beneficial in understanding the closest meaning mentioned for words in some different Quranic contexts.

As for Sheikh al-Tusi (460 AH), he presents another perspective on explaining the process of “receiving.” He states: “The action is attributed to the addressees, and the receiver of the action is the received speech. Just as Adam received speech, it is attributed to him, and just as the action is attributed to the addressees, making receiving apply to them, it is necessary to attribute the action to Prophet Adam (peace be upon him), making receiving apply to him, not the words. Abu Ubaydah said the meaning is acceptance before the words. The words are accepted, so nothing other than the nominative case is permissible for Prophet Adam (peace be upon him). Such an addition to the agent is acceptable at times, and at other times, it is acceptable for the recipient.”²³ It becomes evident that al-Tusi does not accept the second reading, which suggests that the term “words” is subject. This is because it implies that the process of acceptance cannot occur by the initiative of Prophet Adam (peace be upon him), and repentance would not happen in that case.

From this perspective, we understand that the nature of receiving is contingent upon identifying the doer. If Prophet Adam (peace be upon him) is the subject, it implies that he was searching for a reason for his repentance and endeavored to find a means to that end. Consequently, he started a quest for these words. However, if the subject is the words themselves, it signifies that they were searching for him through the mediation of the Lord, who made them tools for repentance and a means for it. He commanded them to take the initiative to reach Adam, signifying their intention to acquaint him with their significance and status in the process of

²² Al-Murtada, *Treaties of Sharif Al-Radi*, vol.2 , p. 115.

²³ AL-Toosi, *Interpretation of Al-Tebian*, vol. 1, p. 167.

seeking proximity and repentance, a pursuit sought by Prophet Adam (peace be upon him).²⁴ Thus, “receiving” in the light of obedience and satisfaction, becomes synonymous with supplication, forming a doctrinal construct that transcends the perceptible realm into the unseen, relying on a sacred vision that assigns the unseen the roles of guidance and creation.

Even though these words are simple, they encapsulate a fundamental doctrinal element — the reality of seeking proximity to Allah through words created by Him. Adhering to this conceptualization does not contradict the assertion that these words signify a doctrinal matter or different aspects of the divine realm, as expressed in certain terminologies. Perhaps this interpretation opens the door to legitimate exploration of seeking proximity to Allah through some of these names or words in further research.

This may bring us back to the essence of those names that Adam learned in understanding the construction of the object in the verse, “And He taught Adam the names, all of them.” This verse could be within the context of revealing the meanings of these names through understanding the words.

Third: The Meaning of the Words

The important part in this verse is the diverse interpretations in determining the meanings of the term “words”. The style of the noble verse within the context of education, guidance, and indication towards what rescues Prophet Adam (peace be upon him) from his confusion regarding the consequences of the sin he committed—ultimately leading to his expulsion from paradise. Moreover, it can be seen as preparing for a severe and challenging temporal battle on Earth, embodying the word of God in the creation of time and the succession on Earth to complete the preparation for the caliphate and its foundations.

The crucial role that these words play in the future of Adam and his progeny is highlighted, as they possess a clear authority in changing the impact of the punish-

²⁴ Al-Murtada, *Treaties of Sharif Al-Radi*, p. 115.

ment that led him out of paradise. This punishment placed him in a new environment, contrary to what he was accustomed to in the paradise, accompanied by the presence of a new adversary in this new life. It is as if God is teaching him a new weapon with which he can prevail over himself and his adversary. Thus, the significance of these words and the necessity of knowing them become evident to be present in every era and circumstance.

All of this requires us to raise some questions and comments about the implications that have been directed towards understanding the meanings of these words by the interpreters.

1. Under no circumstances can these words be multiple in the manner described by the exegesis, as they seem to be known to Prophet Adam (peace be upon him). They serve as a reason for repentance and returning to Allah.

2. Why didn't the narrators agree on the Prophet's (peace be upon him) inquiry about these words? He is well-versed in the Quran, as the first recipient who has the sole right to determine the intended meaning.

3. What extraordinary and miraculous power do these words possess that, with mere reception, they can transform the state of the sinner and transgressor into a new state called repentance? They are not ordinary in the immediate perspective and cannot be mere spoken words formed by a set of transient sounds.

The meaning of the "words" is not confined to expressions and words. It is possible that spiritual formative matters are intended. Therefore, the term "word" here does not refer to a verbal sound but rather to a divine person. Although it is appropriate to interpret these external meanings with words, Ibn Arabi (d. 638 AH) clarified the nature of these words, stating that Adam received "lights and ranks" from his Lord. They encompass various levels from the realm of sovereignty, dominion, and disembodied spirits. Every disembodied being is considered a word because it belongs to the world of divine command, similar to how Jesus was called a word. They convey knowledge, sciences, and truths from the realm of divine command."²⁵

Before delving into that, it is essential to understand the singular usage of the term "word" in the Quran. Scholars have presented various meanings for this term in both

²⁵ Ibn Arabi, Interpretation of Ibn Arabi, vol. 1, p. 49.

its singular and plural forms, with most revolving around the concept of a spoken or written word. It is crucial to determine whether the term “word” is used in the Quran to refer to a human being.

A clearer illustration of this meaning can be found in the Quranic verses: “When the angels said, ‘O Mary, indeed Allah gives you good tidings of a word from Him, whose name will be the Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary - distinguished in this world and the Hereafter and among those brought near [to Allah]. He will speak to the people in the cradle and in maturity and will be of the righteous.’” (Quran, Al-Imran 3:45-46) and also: “Indeed, the Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary, was but a messenger of Allah and His word which He directed to Mary and a soul [created at a command] from Him.” (Quran, An-Nisa 4:171). These verses and similar ones, interpreted by various readings, were explained by Ibn Arabi in his work “Fusus al-Hikam”. They are as follows:

1- The intended meaning is that Jesus (peace be upon him) was created without the intervention of a father. While others may have been created through the word of God, it would have been through the agency of a father. In other words, if God created people through the process of reproduction involving male and female, Jesus (peace be upon him) was not created in the same way. Instead, God created him through a different process, through the word “Be” (Kun), and Jesus came into existence as God willed. In the phrase “from Him” in “a word from Him,” “from Him” indicates the beginning and goal, with an omitted description for the word, meaning a word that originates from Him. By this interpretation, many commentators explained the verse.

2- Some scholars believe that the word mentioned in the announcement to Zechariah is the same word mentioned in the announcement to Mary. This word is a name, an intelligent being, and a self-existing entity. The Quran sufficiently supports the evidence for the validity of this opinion by stating, “Through a word from Him. His name will be the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary.” The word is feminine, indicating that it is not a mere word but a person who stands on his own. If the intended meaning were the word as a linguistic unit, the pronoun would have been feminine. However, since the pronoun refers to it as masculine, it suggests that the intended meaning is a person, namely, the Messiah Jesus, son of Mary (peace be upon them).

Even though the word is feminine, the Quran did not say, “God gives you glad tidings of a word from Him, its name is...” Why? Because the intended meaning of “word” here is not a linguistic expression, as when God says, “Be light,” and there was light. Rather, the intended meaning of “word” in this context is a distinct entity or being.²⁶

From here, the research delves into an attempt to scrutinize certain narrations that aim to elucidate the meaning of these words. What truly matters to us here is that these words indicate the presence of the name of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his family. We are interested in exploring how interpreters from various Islamic schools of thought engage with these narrations. Our investigation has uncovered unambiguous references in diverse commentaries, suggesting that these words refer to Muhammad and the family of Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon them.

The first narration encountered in the commentary by Al-Samarqandi, the Hanafi scholar (d. 373 H), and whose chain of narration is not provided for reasons unknown, states: “Some have said that Adam declared: ‘By the right of Muhammad, accept my repentance.’ Allah, the Almighty, said to him, ‘How did you know Muhammad?’ He replied, ‘I saw in every place in Paradise, written: There is no god but Allah, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. I knew that he is the most honored of your creation, so Allah forgave him.’”²⁷

This narration suggests that the name of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his family, is inscribed in every location Adam visited in Paradise. Thus, Adam recognized the intrinsic value, the celestial energy of this name, and the power it holds. Consequently, he made it a means to seek repentance from Allah.

The narration found in Al-Durr Al-Manthoor by Al-Suyuti (d. 911 H) is considered one of the clearest and most detailed. It is reported that Umar ibn Al-Khattab narrated: “The Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) said: When Adam committed the sin, he lifted his head towards the sky and said, ‘I ask You by the right of

²⁶ Ibn Arabi, *Fosoos Al-Hekam*, p. 35.

²⁷ Al-Samarkandi, *Interpretation of Al-Samarqandi*, vol. 1, p. 72.

Muhammad, forgive me.’ Allah inspired him, ‘And who is Muhammad?’ Adam replied, ‘When You created me, I raised my head to Your Throne, and I found written on it: There is no god but Allah, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. I knew that there is no one more honored in Your eyes than the one whose name is mentioned with Yours. Then Allah inspired to him, ‘O Adam, he is the last of the prophets from your descendants, and were it not for him, I would not have created you.’²⁸ In this narration, there are important indications that the name of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) is written on the Throne. This implies that Adam was aware of writing and could read it. He was the one who initiated seeking forgiveness and realized the greatness of the one whose name is linked with the Creator’s name, indicating that Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) is superior to Adam and preceded him in existence. Moreover, he is the reason for Adam’s creation and existence, highlighting the profound significance of the celestial existence of our noble Prophet, peace be upon him and his family.

In another narration with a different chain of narrators, reported by Ibn Al-Mundhir through Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Al-Husayn ibn Ali ibn Abi Talib, it is narrated that when Adam committed the sin, he felt great sorrow and remorse. Gabriel came to him and said, “O Adam, shall I guide you to the door of repentance through which Allah will forgive you?” Adam agreed, and Gabriel instructed him to stand in the place where he used to converse with his Lord, glorify and praise Him, as nothing is dearer to Allah than praise. Then Adam asked, “What should I say, O Gabriel?” Gabriel replied, “Say: ‘There is no god but Allah, alone with no partner. To Him belongs the dominion, and all praise is due to Him. He gives life and causes death, and He is ever-living, never dying. In His hand is all goodness, and He has power over all things.’ Then confess your sin, saying: ‘Glory be to You, O Allah, and with Your praise. There is no god but You. Lord, I have wronged myself and have done wrong. Forgive me, for none forgives sins except You. O Allah, I ask You by the status of Your servant Muhammad and his honor to forgive my sin.’ Adam did as instructed, and Allah said to him, ‘O Adam, who taught you this?’ Adam replied, ‘O Lord, when You breathed the spirit into me and created me as a human, able to hear, see, understand, and contemplate,

28 Al-Suyuti, Al-Dor Al-Manthoor, vol. 1, p. 51.

I saw inscribed on the leg of Your Throne: In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. There is no god but Allah, alone, with no partner. Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. When I did not see any name accompanying Yours, whether of an honored angel or a sent prophet other than the name of Muhammad, I knew that he is the most honored among Your creation.’ Allah said, ‘You have spoken the truth. I have forgiven you.’ Adam praised and thanked his Lord, filled with the greatest joy that no servant had ever experienced when turning to his Lord.”²⁹

This narration differs from the previous one in several aspects. In this version, Gabriel is the one who teaches Adam to seek repentance through Muhammad (peace be upon him and his Household). Additionally, Adam had self-awareness of the existence of Muhammad, and the blessed name of Muhammad is explicitly mentioned as inscribed on the Throne. This narration emphasizes the unique status of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his Household) even before the creation of Adam, reinforcing the notion of his pre-existence and exceptional position in the divine plan.

In a narration reported by Al-Ayashi (d. 932 AH) in his Tafsir with a clear chain of narrators, Imam Ali (peace be upon him) said: “The words that Adam received from his Lord were, ‘O Lord, I ask You by the right of Muhammad, now that I have repented.’ Allah asked, ‘And how do you know about Muhammad?’ Adam replied, ‘I saw him written in Your great sanctuary while I was in Paradise.’”³⁰ This narration further affirms the presence of the blessed name of Muhammad (peace be upon him and his Household), now not only on the Throne but also in the great sanctuary of Paradise. The repetition of the mention of his name in different locations emphasizes its significance and the profound spiritual impact associated with it. It underscores the multifaceted existence and importance of these names in various heavenly realms, each carrying its unique divine significance.

In a narration reported by Furat al-Kufi (d. 936 AH) with a new chain of narrators, Ibn Abbas narrated that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his Household) said, “When the sin occurred with Adam, and he was expelled from Paradise, Gabriel came to him. Gabriel said, ‘O Adam, invoke your Lord.’ Adam asked, ‘My be-

²⁹ Al-Suyuti, *Al-Dor Al-Manthoor*, vol. 1, p. 60.

³⁰ Al-Ayashi, *Interpretation of Al-Ayashi*, vol. 1, p. 41.

loved Gabriel, what should I invoke?’ Gabriel said, ‘Say: O Lord, I ask You by the right of the five who will emerge from my progeny at the end of time. I pray to You, forgive me and have mercy on me.’ Adam then said, ‘O Gabriel, tell me their names.’ Gabriel said, ‘Say: O Lord, I ask You by the right of Muhammad, Your Prophet; by the right of Ali, the successor of Your Prophet; by the right of Fatimah, the daughter of Your Prophet; by the right of Hasan and Husain, the grandsons of Your Prophet; Forgive me and have mercy on me.’ Adam invoked with these names, and Allah accepted his repentance. This is the meaning of Allah’s saying, ‘Then Adam received from his Lord words, and He accepted his repentance.’ (Quran 2:37). There is no troubled servant who sincerely invokes Allah by these names except that Allah responds to him.”³¹

This narration further elaborates on the significance of invoking Allah by the names of Prophet Muhammad, Ali, Fatimah, Hasan, and Husain. It reinforces the idea that these names hold a special status and carry immense weight in seeking forgiveness and mercy from Allah. The unity of meaning between the act of teaching the names and the act of receiving them further emphasizes their importance and divine connection.

Al-Alusi (d. 1270 H) commented on this meaning with an eloquent expression worth examining in depth. “It was suggested that Adam saw inscribed on the Throne the words “Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah,” and he sought intercession through it. If the term “word” is used for Jesus, peace be upon him, then it should be extended to the greatest spirit, the beloved Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household). Jesus, Moses, and others are mere manifestations of his divine lights and flowers from the gardens of his radiance.”³²

In this context, Al-Alusi brings together the expression of Jesus as a “word” and that of the noble Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) as the “greatest spirit,” highlighting the Prophet’s exceptional status. Naturally, the Prophet is greater than those mentioned in the Quran as a “word” from Allah’s words, being the epitome of the powerful and transformative words capable of changing the reality of sins into sincere and purifying repentance. This quality elevated Adam to divine selection

³¹ Al- Kufi, Furat Al-Kufi, p. 58.

³² Al- Alusi ,Rooh Al-Ma’ani, vol. 1, p. 227.

and subsequently to divine preference, as stated in the Quran: “Then his Lord chose him and turned to him in forgiveness” (Taha: 22).

Upon comparing these two verses in a semiotic equation and conducting a substitution operation between the expressions while eliminating the similarities, a profound connection emerges.

Then his Lord chose him + turned to him = so Adam received words from his Lord + turned to him

We find, after deleting the commonalities between both sides of the equation, which is the expression “He repented.”

It follows that: Then his Lord chose him = so Adam received words from his Lord.

Hence, the process of receiving words is equivalent, contextually, to learning names, and the knowledge of these names or words becomes a significant factor in generating repentance. Repentance, in turn, paves the way for divine selection, a level within the degrees of infallibility. This selection is not a random occurrence but a status attained by Adam after receiving specific words. The semantic value of the reception process is thus equal to the rank of selection achieved by Adam due to these words.³³ This perspective may facilitate our understanding of the words with which Allah tested Abraham (peace be upon him) in a later stage of comprehension.

33 Idan, Sabah Hammoud, “The Levels of Qur’anic Significance between Concealment and Selection in Light of Contextual Relationships”, *Journal of Arabic Language and Literature*, University of Kufa, No. 22/1 (2015), p. 471.

Conclusion

After this brief journey through the exegesis books, which constitute a valuable source for understanding the text through narratives, and an indispensable resource in reaching the reality of Quranic comprehension, we can summarize the most significant semantic values obtained from the essence of the research:

1. This perspective, which reveals an important stage in the Quranic understanding, places the Prophet in his heavenly position, for the sake of which Allah created him, and elevated him to this sublime status with His Noble Name. This positions him as a crucial means for the repentance of sinners, even if they are like Adam and his wife.

2. Adam's recognition of the importance of these names and words represents a critical stage in the status shared by the Prophet and those who share the titles of names and words with him. It should serve as an incentive for others to emphasize the significance of legitimate intercession and correct the understanding of intercession within theological doctrines.

3. Undoubtedly, the existence of these names and words predates the existence of Adam. This clear indication suggests that our Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his family, was present before the creation of Adam.

4. Understanding the significance of the names and words and the extent of their existence in the world of the celestial realm is an essential element in structuring the knowledge framework for Adam and his descendants among the prophets. This framework aids in the exploration of the ranks of divine selection in prophethood and the chosen nature of the message.

5. It is crucial to pay attention to these narratives, verifying their semantic relationship with the contexts of the Quranic text at various stages of faith in the unseen. The Quran considers faith in the unseen an essential component of the belief of all believers.

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