

The Role and Position of the Contextual Clue of "Maqām" (Situation) in Allamah Ṭabāṭabā'ī's *al-Mīzān* Commentary

Ali Safari *

Assistant Professor, Department of Quran and Hadith
Sciences, Allameh Tabataba'i University, Tehran,
Iran

Hasan Asgharpour 

Associate Professor, Department of Quran and
Hadith, Shahed University, Tehran, Iran

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Abstract

The importance and role of contextual clues in achieving an accurate and valid interpretation of the Holy Quran is a fundamental topic that has consistently attracted the attention of researchers in the field of Quranic sciences. Interpretive clues, as efficient tools, play a vital role in understanding the profound meaning and real intent of the verses and are divided into two general categories: "Verbal" (*Maqālīyah*) and "Circumstantial" (*Ḥālīyah*). Paying attention to these clues is an important criterion for evaluating the validity and accuracy of Quranic commentaries, because accurate and correct use of them can lead to a better understanding of the context and circumstances of the revelation of the verses. The contextual clue of "Maqām" (Situation) is one of the valuable clues that has received less direct attention in commentaries. This clue can be understood from the exigency of speech and the atmosphere governing the discourse, and it helps the commentator to find the precise meaning of the verses and link it to the temporal and spatial circumstances. Allamah Ṭabāṭabā'ī is among the commentators who, in *al-Mīzān* commentary, have extensively

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* Corresponding Author: safari.a@atu.ac.ir

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used the contextual clue of *Maqām* to deepen the understanding of the verses. This approach has enabled him to look at the verses from a new perspective in various fields, including literary and linguistic discussions, Quranic sciences, traditions, and specialized issues of interpretation, and sometimes to critique prevailing views. The application of the contextual clue of *Maqām* in *al-Mīzān* commentary has not only led to a new understanding of the verses, but has sometimes led to the rejection or correction of some traditional interpretations. The present study, using a descriptive-analytical method, aims to examine the frequency of use of the *Maqām* clue and the extent of its impact on the interpretation of Quranic verses in *al-Mīzān*, in order to reveal the different roles that this clue plays in various interpretive fields and, on the other hand, to reveal its importance in a more accurate and better understanding of the verses of the Quran.

Keywords: *Allamah Ṭabāṭabā'ī*, *al-Mīzān* Commentary, Interpretive Clues, Clue of *Maqām*

Introduction

In Islamic sciences, the exegesis of the Holy Quran holds a unique position. From the early days of Islam until now, Islamic commentators have strived to unveil the various dimensions of the Quran, each traversing this path using a specific methodology. *Ijtihādī* exegesis is one such prevalent method, and many Quranic commentaries have been written in this style. In *Ijtihādī* exegesis, the commentator relies on contextual clues to discover God's intended meaning from the verses. These clues are matters that are linguistically or conceptually linked to the text and effectively contribute to understanding the meaning of the text and grasping the speaker's intent.

Allamah Ṭabāṭabā'ī, in his Tafsir *al-Mīzān*, pays considerable attention to the contextual clues for understanding the Quran. One of the contextual clues used by *Allamah Ṭabāṭabā'ī* in his Tafsir is *Maqām* clue. *Maqām* clue is among the verbal (contiguous) contextual clues, and paying attention to it is highly effective in understanding the speaker's words. A review conducted reveals that, despite its direct role in the correct understanding of Quranic verses and expressions, precise studies in the present research indicate that in *Ijtihādī* Tafsirs of the Quran from the second to the sixth centuries of the Hijri era, which were written with various methods and inclinations, the issue of "*Maqām*" (situation) and its application in understanding Quranic verses have not been considered at all. From the sixth century of the Hijri era to the contemporary period, in some *Ijtihādī* Tafsirs, occasionally and only in isolated cases (less than 5 instances in a single Tafsir), the context of the speech has been used as a clue in understanding the Quran.

In the contemporary era, two Tafsirs have extensively utilized "The context of the speech" as a clue in a more detailed understanding of the Quranic verses, more than other Tafsirs. First, *Allamah Ṭabāṭabā'ī*'s Tafsir "*al-Mīzān*," and then, *Allamah Faḍlullāh*'s Tafsir "*Min Waḥy al-Quran*." *Allamah Ṭabāṭabā'ī*, in Tafsir *al-Mīzān*, has referred to the *Maqām* clues in understanding the verse more than

1300 times. *Allamah Faḍlullāh*, in his Tafsir, has also spoken of the *Maqām* clues and its role in understanding the Quranic verses more than 300 times. In the contemporary era, in addition to the aforementioned Tafsir works, no independent research, whether article or thesis, has been organized in this field, and only one article entitled "The Impact of Situational Contextual Clues in Understanding Hadith from the Perspective of Sheikh Ansari" has been published in the journal "Quranic Sciences and Hadith," issue 106 (2021 AD/1400 SH).

As the title suggests, it has no connection to the subject matter of this research. It is worth mentioning that scattered research has been conducted using the term "*Maqām*" (station) in the Quran, such as: "An Investigation into the Meaning of "Glad Tidings" in the Station of Threat" by Mohammad Reza Ansari, published in 1381 SH (2002 AD) in the Tarjoman-e Wahy Journal, No. 12, or "Surah al-Rahman and the Station of the Truthful" by Sayyid Musa Mazhari, published in 1389 SH (2010 AD) in the Besharat Journal, No. 81. However, in none of the aforementioned research, has the "Contextual Evidence" been used with the specialized meaning and application intended in this research.

The present study is fundamental in terms of its objective and descriptive-analytical in terms of its method. Based on this, first, the instances of the use of contextual evidence in Tafsir *al-Mīzān* are extracted, and after study, they are categorized and analyzed.

The questions guiding this research are:

- 1) What is meant by "Contextual Evidence" in Tafsir *al-Mīzān*?
- 2) What is the thematic scope of the use of "Contextual Evidence" in Tafsir *al-Mīzān*?
- 3) What are the interpretive innovations resulting from the use of this evidence in Tafsir *al-Mīzān*?

1. The Nature of *Maqām* Clue

The word "Clue" (evidence) originates from the root "Q R N,"

meaning to join and place something next to something else. In discussions of words in the principles of jurisprudence, "Clue" refers to a sign or indication that accompanies a word or sentence and causes a shift to another meaning (Maleki Esfahani, 2000 AD/1379 SH, 2: 65). According to another view, the word "Clue" is derived from "*Muqārana*" (association) and means anything that accompanies speech and guides the audience to the meaning intended by the speaker. In other words, anything that points to the speaker's main purpose and expresses their serious intention is called "Clue," in such a way that if it were not present, it would convey another meaning that is not intended by the speaker (A group of researchers, 2019 AD/1398 SH: 1, 630).

Clues to understanding speech are divided in various ways, including "Connected" and "Disconnected," "Attached" and "Detached," and "Verbal" and "Non-verbal." Non-verbal contextual clues refer to all non-verbal matters that indicate the speaker's serious intention.

In non-verbal contexts, the clue is not linguistic. Rather, through non-linguistic elements such as rational inference, situations accompanying the speech, or the speaker's specific position, it guides the audience to the speaker's serious and primary intention (ibid: 1, 632).

Rajabi, in defining "*Maqām*" (context/situation), states: "*Maqām*" in language means the place of standing, location in general, and rank and status. The intended meaning of the *Maqām* of speech is the overall goal that the speaker puts forward the speech to achieve. For example, if a speaker utters words to praise and commend someone, the *Maqām* of that speech is praise. If the speaker speaks to humiliate and condemn someone, the *Maqām* of that speech is humiliation and condemnation. If the speaker speaks to prove a point and provide evidence for it, the *Maqām* of that speech is argumentation. If the speaker argues with the audience to persuade them and prove a point to them by using accepted principles of the audience, the *Maqām* of the speech is dialectic. In common conversations, the *Maqām* of speech influences the meaning of words and determines their

meaning; that is, if a statement is made in the context of praise for someone, the meanings of the words and the composite meaning are determined in a way that is consistent with praise. If it is issued in the context of condemning a person, the words and their composite form appear in a meaning appropriate to the condemnation. Accordingly, in interpreting the Holy Quranic verses, attention must be paid to the *Maqām* of speech, and the apparent meaning of the words and sentences must be obtained with attention to it. Commentators have also used the *Maqām* of speech in some cases to interpret the Holy Quranic verses and have referred to it. For example, *Allamah Ṭabāṭabā'ī*, in the interpretation of the verse "*Kitābun Marqūm*" (Book Inscribed) (al-Muṭaffifin/9 and 20), in explaining the meaning of "*Marqūm*," first quotes from *Rāghib Isfahānī*: "*Raqm*" means bold handwriting, and some have said: "It means the dotting of the writing, and the word of God "*Kitābun Marqūm*" has been interpreted in both ways." He then writes: "The second meaning is more appropriate to the context; therefore, this word is a reference to the clarity and lack of ambiguity of what is ordained for them; that is, that predetermined decree is certain and inevitable." (Rajabi, 2004 AD/1383 SH: 138-139)

Another definition of contextual indication (*Qarīnah al-Maqāmi*) states: "Contextual or non-verbal indication is an indication that is not of a verbal nature but arises from matters such as the implication of reason, circumstances surrounding the discourse, or the speaker's specific situation, etc., guiding the audience to the speaker's intended meaning." (Nosrati et al., 2021 AD/1400 SH)

One might ask, what is the difference between "Clue" and "Context"? In response, it must be said that "*Maqām*" (Situation) refers to a state arising from the condition of the speaker and the listener, necessitating a particular way of speaking; whereas, "Context" refers to the words and phrases within the text itself. For example, in some verses, beyond the context, the "Situation of the speech" is a situation of "Bestowal of favor" and the expression of divine kindness from the Lord, and according to such a situation, the

content of the verses and even their style of expression are different.

2. Applications of "Maqām" in Tafsir *al-Mīzān*

Allamah Ṭabāṭabā'ī, in his Tafsir *al-Mīzān*, relies on contextual indication in many instances. The application of contextual indication in Tafsir *al-Mīzān* is sometimes used in the literary-linguistic arena, sometimes in the arena of Quranic sciences, sometimes in the arena of Hadith, and sometimes in specialized interpretations and judgments among interpretive opinions. In what follows, specific examples of the application of contextual indication in each of the aforementioned areas will be examined in more detail:

2.1. Application of Contextual Clue in the Literary-Linguistic Arena

One of the most frequent applications of the "Maqām" indication in Tafsir

al-Mīzān should be traced in the literary-linguistic arena. The application of this indication in the aforementioned area is characterized by considerable diversity and breadth, which will be referred to below:

2.1.1. Justification of Using an Apparent Noun Instead of a Pronoun

Sometimes in the verses of the Quran, despite the possibility of using a pronoun to refer to a person or phenomenon, an "Apparent Noun" is used. Zarkashī, in the last section of his book *al-Burhān*, in the section "Styles of the Quran and its Eloquent Arts" under the title "Placing the Apparent in Place of the Implicit," refers to this style of expression of the Quran in detail. He expresses surprise at the scholars of rhetoric for not addressing this topic in the discussion of "*Iṭnāb*" (elaboration). (Zarkashī, 1989 AD/1410 AH: 3, 59) In his book, he lists 17 reasons for using an "Apparent Noun" instead of a "Pronoun" and mentions various examples from the verses of the Quran for each (ibid: 3, 59-76).

Allamah Ṭabāṭabā'ī also paid attention to this issue in his

commentary and pointed to the wisdom of using the explicit noun instead of the pronoun in many instances. For example, regarding the reason for repeating the word "*al-Sā'ah*" (the Hour) instead of the pronoun in verse 11 of Surah *al-Furqān*: "But they have denied the Hour, and We have prepared for those who deny the Hour a Blaze," he says: The repetition of "*al-Sā'ah*" twice instead of the pronoun is done with the purpose of God speaking more explicitly and seriously, and this explicitness and seriousness is consistent with the "position of threat." (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1970 AD/1390 AH: 15, 188) A similar analysis by Allamah can also be seen under verse 61 of *al-Ghāfir*: "Indeed, Allah is full of bounty to mankind, but most of the people do not give thanks" (ibid: 17, 345) and verse 5 of *al-Qīyāmat*: "Rather, man desires to continue in his wrongdoing." (ibid: 20, 105)

2.1.2. Justification for the Occurrence of Repeated Shifts in the Verse

"*Ilṭifāt*" (shift in person) is one of the most important literary devices and methods of rhetoric that has a wide application in literary texts. The application of this device in the Holy Quran, which is at the peak of literary texts in the Arabic language, is so extensive and diverse that scholars of Arabic rhetoric often refer to divine verses in defining and presenting examples of it (For example, cf. Bāqillānī, 1954 AD/1374 AH: 100-102). *Ilṭifāt* is defined as "Changing the course of speech and transferring it from one style to another" with the aim of pleasing the listener, creating enthusiasm in him, and preventing his mind from boredom after listening to a single style of speech (Zarkashī, 1989 AD/1410 AH: 3, 380). Before Zarkashī, Ḥāzim Andalusī in *Minhāj al-Bulaghā' wa Sirāj al-Udabā'* had pointed to this change of direction in Arabic expression (Ḥāzim Andalusī, 1986: 348). *Ilṭifāt* has different types, which Zarkashī has enumerated in his book, mentioning many Quranic examples (Zarkashī, ibid: 381-389).

Allamah Ṭabāṭabā'ī also used the context of the situation in his commentary to explain the secret of the numerous *Ilṭifāt* instances in the verses of the Quran. For example, under verses 94 to 99 of Surah

al-Baqarah, he says:

"He says in justifying the repeated *Ilṭifāt* instances used in these verses: "Although the address is directed to the Children of Israel, since the address is one of blame and reproach, and the speech has been prolonged, the situation is one of weariness from speaking to the addressee and belittling him."

Another example can be found in verse 253 of Surah *al-Baqarah*. The verse begins in the first-person plural, and in the phrase "And if Allah had willed, they would not have fought each other," there is a shift (*Ilṭifāt*) to the third-person. *Allamah*, in justifying this shift, refers to the context (*Maqām*) of the verse. He considers the context of this part of the verse to be one of "Demonstrating the overwhelming and dominant nature of God's will and declaring His absolute power and sovereignty," and considers the requirement of this context to be the expression of the transcendent attribute of divinity, which is expressed by the noble word "Allah." Therefore, God has said: "And if Allah had willed, they would not have fought each other" and not "And if We had willed, they would not have fought each other." He applies the same reasoning to other shifts present in the verse (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *ibid*: 2, 322).

Also, in the commentary on the verses: "Indeed, those who conceal what We have sent down of clear proofs and guidance after We have made it clear for the people in the Book - those are cursed by Allah and cursed by those who curse. Except for those who repent and correct themselves and make evident [what they concealed]. For those, I will accept their repentance, and I am the Accepting of repentance, the Merciful. Indeed, those who disbelieve and die while they are disbelievers - upon them is the curse of Allah and the angels and the people all together" (*al-Baqarah*/159-161) from Surah *al-Baqarah*, he says: "In these verses, there are instances of *Ilṭifāt*." The first *Ilṭifāt* in the first verse is from "First-person plural to third-person." The second *Ilṭifāt* in the second verse is from "Third-person to first-person singular," and the third *Ilṭifāt* in the third verse is from "First-person singular to third-person." He justifies the first and third

Illifāt by appealing to the context of the verses. The context of the first verse is one of intensifying wrath, anger, and punishment; therefore, in the context of the verse, God's name is mentioned so that the corrupt scholars and concealers know whose wrath they are incurring. *Allamah* considers the justification for the *Illifāt* in the third verse to be the same (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *ibid*: 1, 391).

2.1.3. Determining the Meaning of the Prepositions "*Lām*" and "*Bā*"

In Arabic, particles (letters) have different categories, and each particle takes on different meanings in different contexts. Throughout Islamic history, many scholars have written books titled "*al-Ḥurūf*" (The Particles) and have discussed the possible meanings of particles in various contexts. *Khalīl ibn Aḥmad Farāhīdī*, *Ibn al-Sikkīt Ahwāzī*, *Abū Naṣr Fārābī*, *Abū al-Ḥasan Rummānī*, and others have each produced works on this topic.

One of the comprehensive and authoritative works in this field is the book *Mughnī al-Labīb* by *Ibn Hishām Anṣārī* (d. 761 AH) (For more information, cf. *Ibn Hishām Anṣārī*, 1964 AD/1384 AH: 1, 5-413). *Suyūṭī* (d. 911 AH) also dedicated a chapter of his book *al-Itqān* to this specific discussion (*Suyūṭī*, 2005 AD/1426 AH: 4, 1153).

Allamah Ṭabāṭabā'ī sometimes paid attention to the context of the discourse (verses) in determining the meaning of prepositions. For example, regarding the verse: "Mankind's reckoning has drawn near to them, and they are heedless, turning away," (al-Anbīyā'/1) he argues that there are two possibilities for the meaning of the letter *Lām* in "*Li al-Nās*": "one is that it means "To" (*Illā*) and the other is that it means "From" (*Min*)." In the verse under discussion, he chooses the meaning "To" for *Lām* and says: "The *Lām* in the word "*Li al-Nās*" means "To" (*Illā*), not "From" (*Min*); because it is more appropriate to the context of the discourse to take a close relationship from the side of reckoning and say: "People have drawn near to reckoning; because it is reckoning that is demanding and wants people to draw near to it, not people; because people are completely heedless of it." (Ṭabāṭabā'ī,

ibid: 14, 245)

Similarly, in the interpretation of the verse "The Trustworthy Spirit has brought it down upon your heart, that you may be of the warners, in a clear Arabic language," (al-Shu'arā'/193-195) regarding the letter *Bā'* in the phrase "*Nazala bihī al-Rūḥ al-Amīn*," he says: "The letter *Bā'* here is for transitivity (*Ta'dīyah*)." He goes on to criticize the words of some commentators who have taken the letter *Bā'* in the aforementioned verse to mean companionship, saying: "Here, the verse is in the position of paying attention to the revelation of the Quran and not in the position of stating the descent of the spirit along with the Quran." (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, ibid: 15, 317)

2.1.4. Determining the Conditional Nature of "*In*"

Allamah Ṭabāṭabā'ī, in the interpretation of verse 17 of Surah *al-Anbīyā'*, "Had We desired to take a diversion, We would have taken it from Ourselves, if We were to do so," has twice used the context of the discourse in interpreting the verse. First, in interpreting the first part of the verse, he argues that, according to the context, the talk of "Diversion" (*Lahw*) in this verse is about diversion in God's action, not His essence; because the implication of talking about diversion is deficiency and need, and the essence of God Almighty is free from any deficiency and need.

Also, Allamah, commenting on the phrase "If we were the doers" from this verse, says: "*In*" in the verse is conditional. In refuting the view of those who consider it negative, he says: the conditional nature of "*In*" is, according to the context, more eloquent than its being negative (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, ibid: 14, 260-262).

2.1.5. Determining the Meaning of the Genitive Construction (*Idāfa*)

Regarding the genitive construction of the word "*Ghayb*" [unseen, unknown] to "*al-Samāwāt wa al-Arḍ*" [the heavens and the earth] in verse 33 of Surah *al-Baqarah*, "He said, "O! Adam, inform them of their names; and when he had informed them of their names, He said, "Did I not tell you that I know the unseen [aspects] of the heavens and

the earth? And I know what you reveal and what you have concealed," there are two possibilities: "First, the genitive construction is in the sense of "*Min*" [of], partitive; and second, the genitive construction is in the sense of "*Lām*" [for, belonging to]. In other words, if in this verse the genitive construction is in the sense of "*Min*," then the "*Ghayb*" is within the confines of the heavens and the earth, and if the genitive construction is in the sense of "*Lām*," then the scope of the "*Ghayb*" is beyond the realm of the heavens and the earth."

This point has been overlooked by most commentators. Some commentators have different views on this matter: "*Fayḍ Kāshānī*, without referring to the type of genitive construction in this verse, says: what is meant by it is the secret of the heavens and the earth." (Fayḍ Kāshānī, 1994 AD/1415 AH: 1, 115)

Brūsawī believes that what is meant by "*Ghayb*" in the verse is within the limits of the heavens and the earth (Brūsawī, 1993 AD/1414 AH: 1, 102). Nahavandi also holds this belief in *Tafsir Naḥāḥāt al-Raḥmān* (Nahavandi, 2007 AD/1386 SH: 1, 244). *Ibn 'Āshūr* considers this sentence to be a detailed explanation of the phrase "Indeed, I know what you do not know" in verse 30 of *al-Baqarah* (Ibn 'Āshūr, 1999 AD/1420 AH: 1, 404).

However, *Allamah Ṭabāṭabā'ī*, taking into account the "Contextual Clue," says: "Although the genitive construction of "*Ghayb*" to "*Samāwāt wa Arḍ*" may be in the sense of "*Min*," partitive, since the verse is intended to show the perfection of God's power and His all-encompassing knowledge on the one hand, and to express the helplessness and deficiency of the angels on the other, this genitive construction should be understood as the genitive of "*Lām*," in which case its meaning is: "I know the unseen aspects of all the heavens and the earth." (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *ibid*: 1, 117)

2.1.6. Justification for Changing the Expression from One Word to Another

In verses 117-119 of Surah *Hūd*, the word "*Rabb*" (Lord) is used, while in the last verse of this surah, the word "*Allah*" is used. *Allamah*

Ṭabāṭabā'ī, in justifying this change of word, says: "Since the word "Allah" expresses God's encompassing of all things, large and small, and on the other hand, the context requires that a person take refuge in a secure refuge – one that is not subject to the coercion of any overpowering force and is never defeated, and that is Allah – the word "Allah" is used in this verse instead of the word "*Rabb*". Therefore, after fulfilling the requirements of the context, the same description repeated in the previous verses (i.e., the word "*Rabb*") is used again, and God Almighty says at the end of the verse: "And your Lord is not unaware of what you do." (*Ṭabāṭabā'ī*, ibid: 11, 72)

2.1.7. Determining One of the Possible Meanings of "Word"

One of the applications of contextual (*Maqām*) clue in *Tafsir al-Mīzān* is its use as defining contextual (*Mu'ayyanah*) clue. The explanation is that sometimes, for a word in a verse, several meanings are possible, and to determine one of those meanings, a contextual clue is needed to select one of those multiple meanings. In the following, examples in this regard will be mentioned:

"In the verse: "Our Lord, and make us Muslims [in submission] to You and from our descendants a Muslim nation [in submission] to You. And show us our rites and accept our repentance. Indeed, You are the Accepting of repentance, the Merciful," (al-Baqarah/128) it is observed that Prophet Abraham (AS) has asked God to make him and his son Ishmael, as well as his descendants, Muslims. However, in this request, the term "Islam" is used twice, a repetition that leads to the assumption that the meaning of the first "Islam" is different from the second "Islam."

Commentators have not paid attention to the possibility of the difference between these two Islams, but *Allamah Ṭabāṭabā'ī* believes that the meaning of "Islam" is: "Complete servitude and submission of everything to the Lord." He then points to a problem that may be raised regarding the interpretation of the verse. He says:

"Someone might say that Abraham's (AS) intention with "Islam" in the sentence, "Our Lord, and make us Muslims [in submission] to

You," is the elevated meaning of Islam, which befits his and his son Ishmael's (peace be upon him) status." And in the sentence, "And from our descendants a Muslim nation [in submission] to You," the intended meaning of Islam is its general meaning, which includes all levels of Islam, even its most basic level, namely the outward appearance of Islam. Just as, in the view of the Prophet of Islam (peace and blessings of God be upon him), Islam has this same meaning, which is to acknowledge the truth of the two testimonies of faith, even if only outwardly. He considered this acknowledgment a means of protecting their lives and based issues of marriage and inheritance upon it. In response to this objection and the comparison between the Islam that Abraham (AS) requested from God for his descendants and the Islam that the Prophet (PBUH) asked of people, he believes that the position of these two discussions is separate, and the "Position of Legislation" is different from the "Position of supplication and request" and has two different rulings. *Allamah Ṭabāṭabā'ī* considers the Prophet's (PBUH) actions to be in the position of legislation, which the expansion of power and the preservation of the outward appearance of a righteous system required to be satisfied with this degree of the levels of Islam. Whereas, the position of Abraham's (AS) request is the position of supplication and request from God Almighty, in which only truths govern, and the purpose of the requester is a position related to the truth of the matter. Abraham (AS) truly wanted to attain nearness to God, not just His name and outward appearance. This is because prophets (AS) have no attention and love for the outward appearances of things for the sake of the outward appearances themselves (*Ṭabāṭabā'ī*, *ibid*: 1, 285).

Elsewhere, *Allamah Ṭabāṭabā'ī*, commenting on the verse: "O! You who have believed, testimony [should be taken] among you when death approaches one of you at the time of will-making - [that is, by] two just men from among you or two others from outside you, if you are traveling through the land and the disaster of death should strike you. Detain them after the prayer and have them swear by Allah if you doubt [their testimony, saying], "We will not exchange it for a price,

even if he should be a relative, and we will not withhold the testimony of Allah. Indeed, we would then be of the sinful" (al-Mā'idah/106), in clarifying the meaning of the word "Justice (ʿAdl)," states: "Justice' is a source (*Maṣḍar*) and what is meant by it is uprightness in action, and here, according to the context, what is meant by it is 'uprightness in religion.'" (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *ibid*: 6, 195)

Furthermore, about the verse: "Their messengers said, "Is there doubt about Allah, Creator of the heavens and earth? He invites you that He may forgive you of your sins and delay you for a specified term," (Ibrāhīm/10) some commentators believe that in this verse, "Creator" (*Fāṭir*) is used to prove the existence of the Creator." *Allamah*, in criticizing this view, says: "If the verse intends to prove the existence of the Creator, it is inconsistent with the context of the verse, which is "Addressing the polytheists"; because the polytheists did not deny the existence of a Creator for the world, who is Allah, but rather they denied the Oneness of Lordship (*Tawḥīd Rubūbiyy*)."
(Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *ibid*: 12, 26)

2.2. Application of Contextual (*Maqām*) Clue in the Field of Quranic Sciences

Undoubtedly, Quranic sciences are effective tools and necessary for the interpretation of the Quran. Therefore, from the very first centuries of the emergence of comprehensive commentaries, the commentators, before beginning the interpretation of the Quran, have presented important discussions of Quranic sciences to their readers in the preface of their commentaries. The extent of the importance and role of Quranic sciences in interpretation is such that significant works compiling discussions of Quranic sciences have been written in the introduction of comprehensive commentaries, as well as within their core content (cf. Haqqi, 2004 AD/1425 AH; Center for Quranic Culture and Knowledge, 2007 AD/1386 SH).

Allamah Ṭabāṭabā'ī is also among the commentators who, in his interpretation, have frequently used discussions of Quranic sciences in explaining the meaning of verses. In the midst of discussing Quranic

sciences, he sometimes uses contextual (Maqām) clue, some examples of the application of contextual evidence in the field of Quranic sciences in *al-Mizān* will be mentioned below:

2.2.1. Confirming the Relationship between Verses

Discovering the relationship between the verses of the Quran in a medium or long surah, which consists of at least several contexts, is an important topic of Quranic sciences and has been the subject of attention and analysis by many commentators. In ancient commentaries, the discovery of these connections was done under the title "*al-Naẓm*" (arrangement). In addition to independent works, *Shaykh Ṭūsī* (460 AH) in *al-Tibyān*, under the title "*al-Naẓm*" and with the expression "*Wajhu Ittiṣāli Hādhihil Āyah bimā Qablahā annahū...*" (the aspect of the connection of this verse to what precedes it is that...) has addressed the discovery of the internal connections of the Surahs of the Quran.

Ṭabrisī (d. 548 AH), in *Majma' al-Bayān*, delved more than *Shaykh Ṭūsī* into uncovering the connection between a *Āyah* and *Āyāt* of a Surah of the Quran with each other. Sunni commentators have also paid attention to the intra-Surah connections of the Quran in their commentaries. For example, *Tha'labī Nīshābūrī* (d. 427 AH) in *al-Kashf wa al-Bayān*, repeatedly alluded to this important matter with phrases such as "*Naẓm al-Āyah*" or "*Naẓmuhā*."

Among contemporary commentators, *Allamah Ṭabāṭabā'ī* also paid considerable attention to the connections between verses within a Surah. One of the functions of the contextual (Maqām) clue in the *Tafsīr al-Mizān* is to uncover the relationships between verses in a single Surah. For instance, *Allamah Ṭabāṭabā'ī*, in his commentary on ayah 281 of Surah *al-Baqarah*, which is located after the verses on *Ribā* (Usury), states: "This ayah is an explanation and completion of the verses on usury, because it states the judgment and recompense and speaks of some characteristics of the Resurrection, which are appropriate to the context. These characteristics prepare souls for adopting God piety and abstaining from prohibitions, including

violating the rights of people, meaning: "O! People, know that a day is ahead of you in which you will return to God, and every human being will see what he has earned present in the Divine Court, and no one will be wronged."

He also, in the commentary of verses 19 to 25 and 28 to 32 of Surah *Āli Imrān*, considered these two groups of verses to be connected, relying on contextual clue, saying: "verses 28 to 32 are related to verses 19 to 25, because the context of the verses speaks of the condition of the People of the Book and the polytheists and alludes to them." (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *ibid*: 3, 151)

2.2.2. Explaining the Difference between Similar verses

One of the topics in Quranic sciences that has occupied the minds of many scholars of Quranic sciences from the era of the compilation of Islamic sciences, that is, the second century AH, until today, is the verbally similar verses.

From *Kisā'ī* and *Ibn Munādī* to *Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī*, *Kirmānī*, *Ibn al-Zubayr al-Ghirnāṭī*, *Ibn Jumā'ah*, and *Suyūṭī*, each has written works on reporting, categorizing, and sometimes analyzing the verbally similar verses of the Quran. From the end of the fourth century AH onwards, following the doubts of opponents and criticisms of the Quran, works on verbally similar verses of the Quran began to be accompanied by analysis of the Quranic similarities.¹

Allamah Ṭabāṭabā'ī, in his exegesis, also analyzes verses with verbal ambiguity in the Quran, and in this regard, sometimes utilizes the context of the situation. For instance, regarding the verse: "O! You who have believed, be persistently standing firm for Allah, witnesses in justice, and do not let the hatred of a people prevent you from being just," (al-Mā'idah/8) he considers it similar to the verse: "O! You who have believed, be constantly upright in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves, parents, or relatives. Whether one is rich or poor, Allah is more worthy of both. So follow not [personal] inclination, lest you not be just. And if you distort [your testimony] or

1. cf. Ibn Qutaybah Dīnawarī, 1973 AD/1393 AH: 232-255.

refuse [to give it], then indeed Allah is ever, with what you do, Acquainted," (al-Nisā'/135) and attributes the slight difference in the wording of the two verses to the difference in their context. According to him, verse 8 of Surah *al-Mā'idah* is in the context of prohibiting believers from injustice in testimony—motivated by the witness's prior animosity towards the accused. Therefore, the testimony is qualified by "Justice." However, verse 135 of Surah *al-Nisā'* is in the context of prohibiting giving testimony in favor of someone, motivated by friendship and desire. Therefore, in this verse, one is commanded to give testimony with justice, and then this "Testimony with Justice" is mentioned as a branch of "Standing for Allah." (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *ibid*: 5, 237)

2.2.3. Justification and Analysis of Verse Endings

The final phrases of Quranic verses, which are referred to as "*Fāṣilah*" (cadence/ending) in Quranic sciences terminology, have always been the subject of discussion and analysis by scholars of Quranic sciences, and several works have been written in this regard. In addition to *Suyūṭī*, who dedicated type 59 of *al-Itqān* to this important matter, valuable works in the form of books, theses, and articles have been written in this field in the contemporary era (cf. Ḥasnāwī, 2000 AD/1421 AH: 23-430; al-Sayyid Khidr, 2009 AD/1430 AH: 9-190; al-Mursī, 1999 AD/1420 AH: 3-230).

Quranic commentators, as appropriate, have also spoken about the Quranic *Fāṣilah* and their role in clarifying the meaning of verses in their interpretations of the Quranic verses. The investigations carried out in the present study indicate that in the early fourth century AH, scholars of Quranic sciences and commentators used the term "*Fāṣilah*" for the final phrases of verses in their works (For example, cf. Zajjāj, 1995 AD/1416 AH: 3, 907; Naḥḥās, 2000 AD/1421 AH: 3, 209 and 224; Farsī, 1992 AD/1413 AH: 1, 77, 78, 381 and 2, 83, 219 and 3, 219-220 and 6, 460; Ṭūsī, 1962 AD/1382 AH: 2, 32, 438 and 6, 91).

Allamah Ṭabāṭabā'ī also, in his commentary, has discussed

"*Fawāṣil*" and their connection with the content of the verses, as appropriate. In some cases, the context of the situation has played a role in this matter. For example, regarding the verse "They will abide therein forever. Indeed, Allah has with Him a great reward" (al-Tawbah/22) he refers to the context of the verse in justifying the phrase "Indeed; Allah has with Him a great reward." He considers the context of the verse to be "A context of astonishment and incredulity," meaning that since this verse promises great blessings that are unfamiliar to us; it is natural to be astonished by the mention of such blessings. Such a context requires that God, in order to remove incredulity on our part, should say, "Indeed, Allah has with Him a great reward." (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *ibid*: 9, 206)

2.3. Application of the Clue of the Situation in the Field of Hadith

Despite the fact that "Hadith" in *Tafsir al-Mīzān* is used in the role of evidence and support for the interpretive view, *Allamah* sometimes relies on the "Context of the situation" when evaluating and judging the text or chain of transmission of narrations. Examples of this role will be discussed below:

2.3.1. Confirming the Meaning of a Narration

One of the functions of the clue of the situation in *Tafsir al-Mīzān* is to judge the correctness or incorrectness of interpretive narrations. For example, *Allamah*, in the "Discussion of narrations," when mentioning verse 125 of Surah *al-Nisā'*, relying on a narration from Imam *Ṣādiq* (AS),¹ in justifying that the prophethood of Abraham (AS) precedes his being a friend (*Khalīl*) of God, says: This meaning is derived from the verse: "And followed the religion of Abraham, inclining toward

1. *Allamah* report from mentioned narration: "Fī al-Kāfī, 'an al-Ṣādiq (ع): Anna Allāha 'Azza wa Jalla Ittakhadha Ibrāhīm 'Abdan Qabla an Yattakhdhahu Nabīyyān wa anna Allāh Ittakhadhahu Nabīyyan Qabla an Yattakhidhahu Rasūlan wa anna Allāh Ittakhadhahu Rasūlan Qabla an Yattakhidhahu Khalīlan wa anna Allāh Ittakhadhahu Khalīlan Qabla an Yattakhidhahu Imāmā, falamā Jam'a lahu al-Ash'yā' Qāla: "Innī Jā'iluka lil Nāsi Imāmā." Qāla: Faman 'Aẓamahā fī 'ayn Ibrāhīm Qāla: Wa min Dhurrīyatī Qāla: lā Yanālu 'Ahdī al-zālimīn. Qāla: Lā Yakūnu al-Safīh Imām al-Taqī."

truth. And Allah took Abraham as an intimate friend." This is because the verse is in the context of expressing the honor of the religion of Abraham (AS) (the upright religion), through which Abraham (AS) attained honor (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *ibid*: 1, 278).

2.3.2. Weakening and Rejecting a Narration

In a discussion of narrations related to the verse: "O! You who have believed, decreed upon you is fasting as it was decreed upon those before you," (al-Baqarah/183), *Allamah* quotes a narration from the book *al-Faqīh*, which states that Imam *Ṣādiq* (AS) said: "Fasting in the month of Ramadan was not obligatory on any nation before the Islamic Ummah." The narrator says: "I asked: "Then what about God Almighty's saying: "O you who have believed, decreed upon you is fasting as it was decreed upon those before you?" He replied: "Yes, fasting in the month of Ramadan was obligatory before the Islamic Ummah, but not on the nations themselves, only on their prophets. God favored the Islamic Ummah over other nations by making obligatory on its Ummah what He had made obligatory on His Messenger."

After reporting this narration, *Allamah* weakens it for two reasons: first, because of the presence of the name Ismail ibn Muhammad in its chain of transmission, and second, because the apparent meaning of the verse, that the phrase "Those before you" refers only to the prophets (PBUH) is not favorable. In arguing for this point, he refers to the context of the verse, saying: "If the intention was only the prophets of previous nations, considering that the context of the verse is one of preparation, encouragement, and motivation, explicitly naming those prophets would have been better and more effective than alluding to them." (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *ibid*: 2, 26)

Regarding *Allamah*'s first reason for criticizing the above narration, it is astonishing that he mentions a person named Ismail ibn Muhammad in the chain of transmission of the mentioned narration, whereas upon referring to the above narration in the book *al-Faqīh* of *Ṣādūq*, no trace of his name is found in the chain of transmission. The

narration in question is reported with the transmission of *Sulayman ibn Dāwūd Minqarī*, and referring to the *Mashīkha al-Faqīh* of Ṣadūq shows that in the routes of his narrations, there is no person with the name *Ismā'īl ibn Muḥammad*!¹ If *Allamah*'s intention was *Sulayman ibn Dāwūd Minqarī*, he has been authenticated in *Rijāl al-Najāshī*!² (Najāshī, 1997 AD/1418 AH: 184) In any case, *Allamah*'s mistake in the *Isnād* criticism of this narration is clear.

2.4. The Application of Contextual Clue in Specialized Interpretations and Judging Among Different Interpretive Views

One of the most important and frequent applications of contextual clue in *al-Mīzān* commentary can be traced in specialized discussions of interpretation; both in the realm of interpreting a verse and explaining God's intention, and in the realm of judging different interpretive viewpoints. Some examples of these applications will be mentioned below.

2.4.1. Determining the Meaning of a Verse

Sometimes, *Allamah Ṭabāṭabā'ī* relies on "Contextual Clue" to determine the general and final meaning of a verse. For example, in the discussion of "Intercession" (*Shafā'ah*) in the narrations, he refers to narrations that introduce the verse "And your Lord is going to give you, and you will be satisfied" (al-Ḍuḥā/5) as the most hopeful verse in the Quran, and interpret it as referring to intercession. In justifying the meaning that the narration attributes to this verse, he explains that the giving of God and the satisfaction of the Prophet (PBUH), considering the context of the verse which is one of bestowing favor,

1. Wa mā Kāna fīh 'an Sulaymān ibn Dāwūd al-Minqarī faqd Rwaytuhu 'an Abī — Raḍīya Allāhu 'anhu — 'an Sa'd ibn 'Abd Allāh, 'an al-Qāsim ibn Muḥammad al-Aṣbihānī, 'an Sulaymān ibn Dāwūd al-Munqarī al-ma'rūf bi-Ibn al-Shādhakūnī.

2. It is worth mentioning that al-Najāshī, in his *Rijāl*, mentioned three individuals named *Ismā'īl ibn Muḥammad*: one is *Ismā'īl ibn Muḥammad ibn Ishāq ibn Ja'far ibn Muḥammad ibn Ali ibn al-Husayn* (AS); another is *Ismā'īl ibn Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl ibn Hilāl al-Makhzūmī*; and finally, *Ismā'īl ibn Abi Khālīd Muḥammad ibn Muhājir ibn 'Ubayd al-Azdī*. All three have been authenticated by him (cf. Najāshī, 1997 AD/1418 AH: 25-26, 29 & 31).

is the same as "Intercession." (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *ibid*: 1, 177)

Also, regarding the interpretation of the phrase "Pure things We have provided for you" in the verse: "O! You who have believed, eat from the pure things We have provided for you and be grateful to Allah if it is [indeed] Him that you worship" (al-Baqarah/172), he mentions two possibilities: "First, that this phrase is a case of adding an adjective to a noun, in which case the meaning would be: "Eat from what We have provided for you, all of which is pure." The second meaning is that it is a case of "The adjective standing in place of the noun," in which case the meaning would be: "Eat from the pure provision, not from its impure parts." He considers the second meaning to be far from the context because he believes that the context of the verse in this place indicates the freedom of people and not the prohibition of freedom." (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *ibid*: 1, 425)

Another example of attention to contextual evidence in determining the meaning of a verse can be seen in the interpretation of the verse: "And those who deny Our signs - We will progressively lead them [to destruction] from where they do not know." (al-A'rāf/182) In this verse, *Allamah* says: "*Istidrāj*" means gradually ascending or descending in degree. Furthermore, *Allamah*, referring to the context, considers the meaning of the verse to be approaching torment and destruction (worldly or otherworldly) (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *ibid*: 8, 346).

2.4.2. Determining the Scope of Those Included in the Verse

Allamah Ṭabāṭabā'ī, regarding the verse "You are the best nation produced [as an example] for mankind," (Āli 'Imrān/110) believes that the verse's content does not encompass all of the Prophet's (PBUH) Ummah (community). In his reasoning for this interpretation, he points to the verse's context, stating: the verse is in the position of bestowing favor, glorifying, and elevating the Ummah's status, and on this basis, how can it be said that it includes the entire Islamic Ummah, while there have arisen within this Ummah pharaoh-like figures and deceivers who have erased the traces of religion and

strived to humiliate the saints of God? (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *ibid*: 1, 297)

Similarly, in interpreting the verse: "O! You who have believed, testimony [should be taken] among you when death approaches one of you at the time of will - two just men from among you or two others from other than you, if you are traveling through the land and the disaster of death should strike you. Detain them after the prayer and let them both swear by Allah if you doubt [their testimony, saying], "We will not exchange our oath for a price, even if he should be a near relative, and we will not conceal the testimony of Allah. Indeed, we would then be of the sinful," (al-Mā'idah/106) in determining the scope of the phrase "Or two others from other than you," he says: "Based on the context, which is the harmony of the ruling with the subject, and also relying on the intuition derived from the specific words of God, it can be said that the above phrase refers to "non-Muslims from the People of the Book"; because nowhere in the words of God have polytheists been mentioned with honor." (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *ibid*: 6, 196)

2.4.3. Justification for Mentioning Certain Rewards and Punishments in the Quranic Verses

Sometimes, the context in *al-Mīzān* is used to explain the wisdom behind mentioning certain rewards and punishments. For example, *Allamah Ṭabāṭabā'ī*, regarding the verse "On the Day [some] faces will turn white and [some] faces will turn black," (Āli 'Imrān/106), considers the reason for mentioning the blackening and whitening of faces on the Resurrection to be the suitability of mentioning these two rewards with the context of the verses preceding the verse, stating: "Because the context of the verses is "The context of ingratitude," and ingratitude entails helplessness and shame, therefore, from among the forms of otherworldly punishment, a punishment is mentioned that is commensurate with the state of shame. Likewise, from among all the otherworldly rewards, "White Faces" are mentioned, which is commensurate with gratitude." (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *ibid*: 3, 375)

2.4.4. Critique of Other Interpretive Understandings

Sometimes, the context becomes a tool for *Allamah Ṭabāṭabā'ī* to critique interpretive understandings. *Allamah Ṭabāṭabā'ī*, commenting on the verse: "So whoever Allah intends to guide - He expands his breast to [contain] Islam; and whoever He intends to misguide - He makes his breast tight and constricted as though he were climbing into the sky. Thus does Allah place defilement upon those who do not believe," (al-An'ām/125), states: "Some have argued, based on this verse, that guidance and misguidance are in the hands of God, and no one else has any involvement. However, this verse is in the position of explaining the reality of divine guidance and divine misguidance. In reality, in this verse, guidance and misguidance are defined and separated into two specific categories. The verse does not intend to restrict guidance and misguidance to God and deny it to others." (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *ibid*: 7, 343)

Similarly, *Allamah*, commenting on the verses "Indeed, our father is in clear error" (Yusuf/8) and "By Allah, indeed you are in your [same] old error," (Yūsuf/95) raises the possibility that some might consider the use of the word "Error" (*Ḍilālat*) by Jacob's sons in addressing their father as indicative of their disbelief. However, he rejects this possibility for two reasons: "Firstly, there is evidence in the course of this Surah indicating their monotheism and acceptance of the religion of their forefathers – Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." Secondly, the context in these two verses has nothing to do with error in religion; rather, "Error" in these contexts expresses an everyday issue in life, which is the father's love for one of his children and his honoring of him over the other children. (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *ibid*: 11, 245)

In another instance, commenting on the verse "Were you arrogant or were you among the exalted?" (Ṣād/75) *Allamah* reports the view of some commentators who believe that the meaning of "Exalted" (*Uluww*) in the verse is the same as "Arrogance," and that God is saying to Satan: Was your refusal to prostrate due to your prior arrogance, or did you become arrogant at the time of being commanded to prostrate? *Allamah* critiques this interpretation of the verse because of its incompatibility with the context, stating: "The

requirement of the verse's context is related to inquiring about the origin of Iblis's arrogance, not determining whether his arrogance was from the past or occurred at the time of being commanded to prostrate." (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *ibid*: 17, 226)

2.4.5. Selecting One Interpretive Possibility and Rejecting Other Possibilities

Another function of the context in the interpretation of *al-Mīzān* is the selection or rejection of an interpretive possibility. Regarding the verse 7 of Surah *Āli 'Imrān*, concerning whether the "Wa" in the phrase "*Wa mā Ya'lamu Ta'wīlahū illallāh wa al-Rāsikhūna fil 'Ilm*" is conjunctive or *Istīnāf*, Allamah Ṭabāṭabā'ī prefers the possibility of it being *Istīnāf* and refers to the context of the verse in defense of his view. According to Allamah Ṭabāṭabā'ī, the verse is in the context of dividing the verses of the Quran into two categories; clear (*Muḥkam*) and ambiguous (*Mutashābih*) and dividing people into two categories: A) Those who believe in the Quran and act upon what they understand from its verses, entrusting the knowledge of what they do not understand to God;

B) Those with diseased hearts and deviants who have nothing to do with the guidance of the Quran and only use it as a tool for inciting discord (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *ibid*: 3, 51).

Allamah Ṭabāṭabā'ī also, regarding the verse: "Beautified for people is the love of that which they desire - of women and sons, heaped-up sums of gold and silver, fine branded horses, and cattle and tilled land" (Al-Imran/14), considers the subject of "*Zuyyina*" to be someone other than God Almighty, specifically "Satan" or "The Self." In his reasoning for this view, he emphasizes several points; the first point is the context of the verse. From Allamah's perspective, the context of the verse is the criticism of disbelievers who rely on material pleasures and, following Satan's adornment, consider themselves independent of God. He further states: Such adornment that causes negligence of God is not worthy of being attributed to the holy presence of God (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *ibid*: 3, 102).

Elsewhere, *Allamah Ṭabāṭabā'ī*, regarding the verse: "Or do they envy people for what Allah has given them of His bounty? But We had already given the family of Abraham the Scripture and wisdom and conferred upon them a great kingdom," (al-Nisā'/54) believes that the "family of Abraham" (AS) in this verse refers to "The Prophet (PBUH) and his descendants (AS)." In reasoning for this view, he refers to the context of the verse and believes that the verse is in the context of denying the Children of Israel and blaming them, and from here it becomes clear that the family of Abraham in the verse does not refer to his descendants from the lineage of Isaac and Jacob, but rather to his descendants from the lineage of Ishmael (*Ṭabāṭabā'ī*, *ibid*: 3, 166).

Conclusion

The findings of the present study indicate that:

- 1) The "Maqām" indicator has been extensively considered by *Allamah Ṭabāṭabā'ī* in *Tafsir al-Mīzān* and plays a significant and prominent role in interpreting the verses of the Quran.
- 2) The "*Maqām*" indicator does not refer to the literal context of the verses (internal structure of the speech) or the socio-cultural conditions governing the discourse (external structure of the speech). Rather, "*Maqām*" of a verse refers to "The atmosphere governing the dialogue and the exigencies of the speech conditions." *Maqām*, in fact, applies to a state that arises from the speaker and the addressee and necessitates speaking in a specific manner.
- 3) The functions of the "*Maqām*" indicator in *Tafsir al-Mīzān* are highly diverse. The most important and extensive application of the "*Maqām*" indicator in the interpretation of the Quran by *Allamah Ṭabāṭabā'ī* can be traced in four areas, literary-linguistic discussions; Quranic sciences discussions; Hadith discussions; specialized interpretations.
- 4) Paying attention to the "*Maqām*" indicator has led to the presentation of novel interpretative ideas by *Allamah Ṭabāṭabā'ī*.
- 5) The "*Maqām*" indicator, in both positive and negative forms, has

been used by *Allamah Ṭabāṭabā'ī* both in the field of selecting the correct interpretative view and in the field of criticizing the common interpretative views of the commentators.

ORCID

Ali Safari



<https://orcid.org/0009-0001-5187-5072>

Hasan Asgharpour



<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7779-0483>

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