

An Analysis of the Concept of the Qur'anic Terms " *Ind*, *Ladun*, and *Laday*" from the Perspective of Qur'anic Commentators

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Abstract

The terms " *Ind*, *Ladun*, and *Laday*" are among the frequently recurring concepts in the Qur'an. Despite their high frequency, no systematic and coherent explanation of the underlying meanings of these terms has been provided in existing research. This study, adopting an analytical-critical approach, examines the interpretations of these terms as presented by exegetes from both Sunni and Shi'i traditions, seeking to extract, classify, and evaluate the most significant views. The findings reveal that while commentators unanimously deny attributing spatiality to God, they identify concepts such as "Special proximity and honor," "Exclusivity," and "Divine absolute knowledge and power" as the primary meanings associated with these terms when used in reference to God. Furthermore, the evaluation of exegetical perspectives demonstrates that some views are entirely untenable, whereas others may be valid in specific contexts; however, their generalization to all verses without due regard for textual indicators and context leads to interpretive inaccuracies. The comprehensive view argued in this study is that the concept of "With God" (*Inda Allah*) should be understood as multifaceted and context-dependent, rather than as a fixed and uniform expression. This analysis shows that although earlier interpretations may be defensible in certain cases and in light of specific contexts, their indiscriminate generalization results in semantic weaknesses and interpretive shortcomings.

Keywords: Qur'anic Exegesis, Sunni and Shi'i Commentators, 'Ind, Ladun, Ladayy.

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Introduction

In the domain of divine negative attributes, the attribution of certain descriptive attributes found in religious texts has consistently been a point of debate and reflection. Among these are attributes that, at face value, seem to imply spatiality with respect to God. The challenge of addressing divine spatiality in the Qur'an emerges through various expressions such as "*Qurb*" (2: 186; 11:61; 34:50; 50:16; 56:85), "*Janb*" (39:56), "*Fawq*" (6:18; 16:50), "*Ma'a*" (e.g., cf. 2:153; 5:12; 8:12; 9:36; 16:128; 20:46; 29:69; 47:35; 57:4), "*Inda*," and others. The present study focuses specifically on the lexical items belonging to the semantic field of "Being with/near God," since these expressions, despite their frequent usage, may appear to imply spatial proximity. Interpreting such expressions as literal spatial nearness would necessitate accepting corporeality and limitation for God, a conclusion that contradicts the foundational principles of *Tawhid* and the doctrine of divine transcendence (*Tanzih*). In the Qur'an, the vocabulary associated with the semantic field of "Being near God" appears in three principal forms: "*Inda*" (136 occurrences), "*Ladun*" (16 occurrences), and "*Ladayy*" (9 occurrences)."

This study examines the vocabulary belonging to the semantic field of "Being near God" in Qur'anic verses. To accomplish this objective, a selection of major and influential Qur'anic commentaries from different periods of exegetical history will be analyzed. These include: *Ṭabarī's Jāmi' al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'an*, *Ṭūsī's al-Tibyān*, *Zamakhsharī's al-Kashshāf*, *Ṭabrisī's Majma' al-Bayān*, *Fakhr al-Rāzī's Maḥāṣin al-Ghayb*, the Tafsir attributed to *Ibn 'Arabī*, *Qurṭubī's al-Jāmi' li Ahkām al-Qur'an*, *Bayḍāwī's Anwār al-Tanzīl wa Asrār al-Ta'wīl*, *Mullā Ṣadrā's Tafsīr al-Qur'an al-Karīm*, *Ibn 'Ashūr's al-Tahrīr wa al-Tanwīr*, *Qāsimī's Maḥāsin al-Ta'wīl*, *al-Marāghī's Commentary* (selected in place of *al-Manār* because *al-Manār* does not cover the entire Qur'an, while the vocabulary of "Nearness to God" appears throughout the text; moreover, *al-Marāghī* incorporates the views of 'Abduh and *Rashīd Riḍā* and provides full coverage), *Sayyid Quṭb's Fī Zilāl al-Qur'an*, *Ṭabāṭabā'ī's al-Mīzān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'an*, *Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn Faḍlullāh's Min Waḥy al-Qur'an*, and *Javadi Amoli's Tasnim*.

The selection of these commentaries is justified, first, by their comprehensiveness in reflecting the diverse theological perspectives of various Islamic schools on the descriptive attributes of God. Second, these works are widely recognized as some of the most profound and analytically rigorous exegetical contributions produced within both Sunni and Shi'i traditions. Although numerous exegetes have, in different contexts, referred to concepts related to "Being near God," an examination of their discussions reveals that such treatments are generally fragmented, occasional, and lacking systematic coherence. The main gap in previous scholarship on the semantics of the "Nearness to God" lexicon is that no independent, problem-oriented, and comprehensive study has yet undertaken a full-scale, multi-dimensional analysis of this semantic field. The present study seeks to fill this gap for the first time by offering a systematic, analytical, and critical investigation of exegetical views, thereby providing an integrated picture of how commentators have understood this domain of meaning. Moreover, this research aims to propose an innovative, holistic, and methodologically structured framework that benefits from the strengths of earlier exegetical

approaches while avoiding their weaknesses and the criticisms directed toward them. Such an analytical and critical approach enables a more precise examination of exegetical disagreements and a more rigorous evaluation of the interpretations advanced by different commentators.

1. Research Questions

This study seeks to address the following questions:

- According to the major exegetes of both Sunni and Shi'i traditions, what is the meaning of the vocabulary belonging to the semantic field of "Being near God?"
- What criticisms have been raised regarding these exegetical views?
- What innovative or comprehensive view can be proposed one that incorporates the strengths of earlier exegetical perspectives while avoiding their weaknesses and the criticisms directed at them?

2. Research Methodology

The methodology of this study is library-based for data collection, documentary in the use of sources, and analytical–critical in data interpretation. Accordingly, the research first provides a comprehensive analysis of the Qur'anic usages of the relevant vocabulary, followed by an examination of the interpretive dimensions noted by exegetes. The ultimate aim is to critically evaluate these exegetical perspectives, analyze their underlying arguments, and, where possible, formulate a more precise and well-substantiated understanding. This approach seeks to offer a more accurate conception of how these lexical items relate to God within the broader system of Islamic thought.

3. Literature Review

The body of research conducted in this field may be examined under two general categories. The first includes studies that address the descriptive attributes of God. Given the long-standing scholarly engagement with this topic and the fact that discussions are scattered across numerous classical and modern works, presenting all relevant sources here would be excessively lengthy. However, among the most significant contemporary studies in this area are the following articles: "Predicative Adjective in the Thought of Ayatollah Javadi Amoli," (2011 AD/1390 SH) "A Comparative Analysis of Shi'i and Sunni Views on the Descriptive Attributes with Emphasis on the Issue of Divine Vision," (2015 AD/1394 SH) "An Examination of the Descriptive Attributes of Divine Limbs and Organs in Sunni and Shi'i Exegeses," (2016 AD/1395 SH) "The Interpretation of God's Descriptive Attributes in al-Mizān," (2019 AD/1398 SH) "A Study of the Descriptive Attributes of *Majī'* and *Ityān* From the Perspective of Wahhabism and Its Critique," (2020 AD/1399 SH) "An Analysis and Critique of the Wahhabi Interpretation of Descriptive Attributes," (2021 AD/1400 SH), and "A Critique of Literalist Interpretation of Descriptive Attributes With a Focus on the Vision of God in the Thought of Shaykh Ṣadūq." (2022 AD/1401 SH) These works typically investigate the descriptive attributes of God, or certain subsets of them, within specific exegetical traditions or across selected commentaries.

The second category consists of studies that are directly related to the semantic field of "Being near God." A review of existing literature shows that only two academic articles have

specifically addressed this topic. Qorbani Laktarashani and Bakhshandeh Bali, in an article titled "Semantic Dimensions of *Indīyyah* in the Qur'an in Explaining the Relationship between the Human Being and the Lord," (Qur'anic Exegesis and Language, no. 20, 2022 AD/1401 SH) examine the concept of *Ind Allah* within the context of the human-Divine relationship. Through an analysis of relevant verses, they investigate whether *Ind* in the Qur'an denotes physical proximity or conveys a meaning beyond spatial nearness. Their findings indicate that misinterpretations often arise from a failure to grasp the Divine intent and from neglecting the semantic role of collocation vocabulary, leading to incorrect understandings of *Ind*. In another study, Cheraghchi, Tohidi, and Ma'aref, in their article "A Comparative Study of the Expressions "*Ind Allah*" and "*Ind Rabb*" and Their Grammatical Complements in the Qur'an" (Humanities Development, no. 9, Spring–Summer 2024 AD/1403 SH), conduct a comparative analysis of these two constructions. They examine the Qur'anic verses containing these expressions, analyze their respective complements, and elucidate the meaningful relationships embedded within their usage.

Previous studies have either focused on other lexical domains related to the descriptive attributes of God or have dealt primarily with the semantic and exegetical analysis of the term *Ind* in the Qur'an. Some of these works, drawing on cognitive linguistics, have examined the conceptual schemas associated with the term *Ind*, while others have approached the topic from exegetical perspectives, analyzing its inter-textual relationships. Building on the achievements of earlier research, the present study moves a step further by aiming to provide a comprehensive analysis of the vocabulary within the semantic field of "Being near God" in relation to divine descriptive attributes in the Qur'anic text. This investigation not only examines the lexical and semantic dimensions of *Ind*, but also extends the analysis to include the other key terms of this semantic field, namely "*Ladun*" and "*Laday*." Moreover, it critically evaluates the perspectives of leading Sunni and Shi'i exegetes and, where possible, proposes a more precise and well-founded interpretation of these expressions.

4. The Concept of Vocabulary in the Semantic Field of "Being Near God"

4.1. Semantic Analysis of the Term *Ind*

The term *Ind* functions as both a temporal and spatial adverb and is linguistically employed to denote presence, proximity, or nearness (Rāghib Iṣfahānī, 1991 AD/1412 AH: 590; Muṣṭafawī, 2007 AD/1386 SH: 8, 237). It conveys the utmost degree and intensity of closeness (Sāmarā'ī, 1999 AD/1420 AH: 2, 214; Jabal, 2010: 3, 1539) and semantically implies connection and association, such that the entity preceding it is conceptually linked or attached to what follows (Muṣṭafawī, 2007 AD/1386 SH: 8, 237). *Ibn Fāris*, in his etymological analysis of the term, interprets it as signifying "Passing by someone or something without stopping at them and inclining toward another." He further clarifies the conceptual connection of *Ind* by stating that when one says "*Zayd inda 'Amr*," it conveys that *Zayd* has moved from all people toward 'Amr, drawing near and attaching himself to him (Ibn Fāris, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 4, 153).

The term *Ind*, when used as a locative adverb, applies both to situations in which something is sensibly present and near and to cases where something is under a person's

possession, even if it is physically distant (Raḍī Istarābādī, 1996: 3, 221). In other words, the term denotes that an entity is present or close to someone, although it can also be employed in contexts where the entity is not physically present. For example, the phrase "*Indi Māl*" (I have property) indicates that the property belongs to the speaker, regardless of whether it is physically near or far. *Ind* is most frequently used as a locative adverb, whereas its use as a temporal adverb is very rare and occurs only when it is associated with a specific time, as in the expression "*Inda al-Ṣubḥ*" (at dawn) (Ibn Hishām, 1985: 206; Ḥasan, n.d.: 2, 291; Muṣṭafawī, 2007 AD/1386 SH: 8, 235).

4.2. Semantic Analysis of the Term *Ladun*

The term *Ladun* functions as both a temporal and spatial adverb and conveys a meaning equivalent to "Near." Although *Ladun* differs conceptually from *Ind*, Persian literature lacks an exact equivalent that reflects this subtle semantic distinction, and therefore in both cases, the terms "Near" or "By" are used. In contrast, in Arabic usage, if a book, for example, is physically in someone's possession or in their presence, *Ladun* is employed, whereas *Ind* has a broader meaning; for instance, if the book is at home or in a library, it is expressed as *Induhu*. *Ibn Fāris* interprets the root of this term as denoting softness; hence the term *Ladun* is associated with soft branches or extensions (Ibn Fāris, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 5, 243). According to *Muṣṭafawī*, *Ladun* is primarily used in spiritual contexts and denotes something that is continually present and intimately connected to a person, as if it is in a position adhering to the individual (Muṣṭafawī, 2007 AD/1386 SH: 8, 183). In Arabic, when an object is accompanying someone, present, and near, the term *Ladun* is used; otherwise, *Ind* is employed (cf. Mughnī al-Labīb: 1, 209).

Ladun also carries the notion of "The beginning of an end" and is used at the end of a verb (Rāghib Iṣfahānī, 1991 AD/1412 AH: 739). Therefore, the term inherently conveys the concept of a beginning, indicating the onset of a temporal or spatial endpoint, as in "*Ladun Ṣabāḥ*" (from the beginning of the morning) and "*Min Ladun Ḥakīm*" (from the presence of a wise one) (Rāghib Iṣfahānī, 1991 AD/1412 AH: 739).

4.3. Semantic Analysis of the Term *Ladayy*

The term *Ladayy* functions as both a temporal and spatial adverb and its primary meaning is "Near" (Muṣṭafawī, 2007 AD/1386 SH: 10, 183). According to "*Fiṣl al-Mu'jamī*," the root *lad* denotes "Enclosure" or "Intense encompassing," a meaning that becomes manifest in *Ladayy* as a spatial locus in which something is placed (Jabal, 2010: 4, 1968). Accordingly, its core meaning refers to a place where something is confined and held (Jabal, 2010: 4, 1966). *Ladayy* shares semantic similarity with *Ladun* (Rāghib Iṣfahānī, 1991 AD/1412 AH: 739) and is also synonymous with *Ind*, with the distinction that it does not convey the notion of beginning or initiation (Raḍī Istarābādī, 1996: 3, 221-222). Therefore, *Ladayy* is associated with separate (discrete) proximity and its meaning is close to that of "Presence." This concept encompasses both material and spiritual dimensions (Muṣṭafawī, 2007 AD/1386 SH: 10, 183). Logically, the relationship between *Ladayy* and *Ind* can be described as a general-specific absolute relation: "Every instance of "*Ladayy Allah*" is also "*Ind Allah*," but not every "*Ind Allah*" is necessarily "*Ladayy Allah*."

5. The Usage of Vocabulary in the Semantic Field of "Being Near God" in the Qur'an

The terms belonging to the semantic field of "Being near God" are employed in connection with the descriptive attributes of God in numerous Qur'anic verses. Depending on the context and content of the verses, these usages can be classified into various categories (cf. 'Abdul Bāqī, 1944 AD/1364 AH: 1, 489, 646). Given the diversity and breadth of these applications, achieving a rapid analytical understanding may be challenging, making organization and classification indispensable. Accordingly, the different types of usage of vocabulary in the semantic field of "Being near God" in relation to the descriptive attributes of God have been compiled in Table 1. This categorization not only facilitates the research process but also provides a foundation for systematic comparison and a more precise elucidation of Qur'anic concepts.

Table 1: Types of Usage of Vocabulary in the Semantic Field Being Near God

No.	Term	Construction	Subgroups of Construction	Frequency
1	'Ind	'Ind + Allah (total: 58 occurrences)	'Ind Allah	58
			'Ind + Rabb (total: 38 occurrences)	'Ind Rabbihim
		'Ind Rabbikum		3
		'Ind Rabbuka		9
		'Ind Rabbihi		4
		'Ind Rabbi		2
		'Ind Rabbina		1
		'Ind + Pronouns (total: 35 occurrences)	'Indahu	21
			'Indana	12
			'Indaka	2
		'Ind + Other Divine Names and Attributes (total: 5 occurrences)	'Ind Bari'	1
			'Ind al-Rahman	2
			'Ind Malik Muqtader	1
'Ind Dhi al-'Arsh	1			
2	Ladun	Ladun + Pronouns (total: 16 occurrences)	Ladun	2
			Ladunka	6
			Laduna	6
			Ladunhu	2
3	Laday	Laday + Pronouns (total: 9 occurrences)	Laday	3
			Ladayna	6

6. Exegetical Perspectives on the Vocabulary of the Semantic Field "Being Near God" and Their Evaluation

An examination of Qur'anic commentaries reveals the diversity and depth of Muslim exegetes' interpretations regarding the vocabulary of the semantic field "Being near God." At first glance, these expressions may appear to imply spatial location or direction. However, in a precise and rational exegesis, commentators reject such literal interpretations and instead adopt spiritual, honorific, and theological approaches, which are discussed in detail below. Based on the theological principles accepted across various Islamic schools, including the widely held concept of divine transcendence, even among literalist-oriented exegetes, a spatial localization of God is never posited for the terms within this semantic field. In fact, the vast majority of commentators explicitly negate any such interpretation. Furthermore, among the approximately 160 verses in which these semantic field terms appear, only a limited number have been accompanied by exegetical commentary specifically addressing them. In the remaining verses, either the meaning is sufficiently clear and requires no further explanation, or the exegetes focus on other aspects of the verse, leaving the discussion of these terms unelaborated.

An analysis of the exegetical perspectives of leading commentators regarding the meaning of these terms indicates that the overall views can be categorized into eight conceptual axes (see Table 2). Some of these interpretations are more prevalent among exegetes and can be considered recurring thematic cores, whereas others appear only in a few works and thus have more limited application. This table not only presents these eight interpretive perspectives but also reflects the extent of attention given to each axis by the commentators. It is structured to facilitate comparison of viewpoints and to show the frequency of citation or reference across various exegetical sources.

Table 2: Exegetical Perspectives of Commentators on the Vocabulary of the Semantic Field "Being Near God" in Qur'anic Verses

No.	Concept	Ṭabarī	Tūsī	Zamakhsharī	Ṭabarṣī	Fakhr Rāzī	Ibn 'Arabi	Qurṭūbi	Bayḍāwī	Mulla Ṣadra	Ibn 'Ashūr	Qāsīmī	Marāghī	Sayyid Quṭb	Ṭabāṭabā'ī	Fadhllullah	Jawadi Amoli
1	Honor and special Proximity		*	*	*	*		*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
2	Exclusivity / Special attribution		*	*	*	*	*		*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*
3	Absolute knowledge and power of God		*	*	*				*		*		*	*	*	*	*
4	Divine legislative Ordinance	*		*	*	*		*	*		*	*	*	*	*		*
5	Abandonment of natural causes and reliance on			*				*					*		*		

No.	Concept	Ṭabari	Ṭūsī	Zamakhsharī	Ṭabarṣī	Fakhr Rāzī	Ibn 'Arabi	Qurṭubī	Bayḍāwī	Mulla Ṣadra	Ibn 'Ashūr	Qāsimī	Marāghī	Sayyid Quṭb	Ṭabāṭabā'ī	Fadhllullah	Jawadi Amoli
	the true cause																
6	Presence of Divine Essence or Attributes						*									*	
7	Realization of Divine promises			*							*				*		
8	Meaning of *fi* (in/within)							*									

6.1. Emphasis on Honor and Special Proximity

One of the most frequently cited interpretations among Qur'anic exegetes is the rejection of any notion of spatiality regarding God and the understanding of "Being with God" (*ʿInd Allah*) as denoting honor, dignity, and spiritual proximity. Commentators such as Ṭūsī, Ṭabrisī, Fakhr Rāzī, Zamakhsharī, and others have articulated this meaning in numerous verses, including "*ʿInda Rabbihim Yurzaqūn*," (Āli ʿImrān: 169) "*Inna Alladhīna ʿInda Rabbika la Yastakbirūn*," (al-Aʿrāf : 206) "*ʿInda Malīkin Muqtadir*," (al-Qamar: 55) and "*ʿInda Dhī al-ʿArshi Makīn*" (al-Takwīr: 20) (Ṭūsī, n.d.: 3, 46; 5, 69; Zamakhsharī, 1986 AD/1407 AH: 1, 439; 2, 193; Ṭabrisī, 1993 AD/1372 SH: 4, 793; 7, 68; Fakhr Rāzī, 1999 AD/1420 AH: 3, 537; Qurṭubī, 1985 AD/1364 SH: 4, 274; 7, 105; Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī, 1987 AD/1366 SH: 3, 39; Ibn ʿAshūr, 1999 AD/1420 AH: 1, 522 and 596; Marāghī, n.d.: 9, 166; 17, 17; Sayyid Quṭb, 1991 AD/1412 AH: 4, 2247 and 2373; Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1996 AD/1417 AH: 8, 383; Faḍlullāh, 1998 AD/1419 AH: 15, 205; 19, 248; Jawadi Amoli, Tafsir of Surah Āli ʿImrān, session 279, under 169). These exegetes explicitly assert that attributing spatial location to God is rationally and theologically impossible (cf. Ṭabrisī, 1993 AD/1372 SH: 2, 883). Therefore, *ʿIndīyya* in such contexts signifies the nobility and elevated ontological status of the created entity, not physical nearness to God.

In addressing the position of the *Mushabbiha*, who interpreted *ʿIndīyya* as implying directionality or spatial proximity, many exegetes refuted this reading by appealing to rational and scriptural arguments. For instance, Fakhr Rāzī emphasizes that just as the presence of soldiers "With the king" does not indicate physical closeness, the phrase "Those who are with their Lord" likewise signifies honor and spiritual rank rather than spatial proximity: "The anthropomorphist (*al-Mushabbiha*) have argued from His saying "Those who are with your Lord" to affirm place and direction for God. The response is that one may say "Such-and-such of the soldiers are with the king," without intending spatial nearness. The same applies here." (Fakhr Rāzī, 1999 AD/1420 AH: 27, 566; see also 3, 608; 9, 17)

Evaluation: The interpretation that the lexical items within the semantic field of "Being with God" (*ʿInd Allah*) denote spiritual rank, dignity, and an honorable ontological status is, in some cases, clearly inferable -especially when these expressions appear alongside terms

that inherently convey meanings of honor, status, and divine favor. This understanding can be compared to Qur'anic expressions that involve an ennobling annexation, such as "My Spirit" in the verse "So when I have fashioned him and breathed into him of My Spirit, fall down before him in prostration." (Şad: 72) In these cases, attribution to God signifies the inherent nobility of the entity being described; thus, the term "*Ruḥī*" in the creation of the human indicates human intrinsic dignity. In an ennobling annexation, the nobility belongs originally to the one to whom something is annexed (God), while the attached entity acquires this honor—such as in "*Bayt Allah*" (the House of God) or "*Naqat Allah*" (the She-Camel of God). Nevertheless, extending this meaning to all occurrences of these expressions is not without difficulty, and in many contexts, such a reading is not defensible. Certain verses, such as "Humiliation will strike those who committed crimes in the presence of God," (al-An'ām: 124) convey threat and disgrace; here, "Being with God" signifies humiliation before Him rather than honor. Thus, the semantic value of '*Ind*' in these verses is entirely different.

Furthermore, degrees of ennoblement vary, and not all usages reflect the same level of dignity or spiritual rank. Close examination of the Qur'anic context and accompanying lexical items is necessary to determine the degree of honor implied. For example, the association of '*Ind*' with expressions such as "A Mighty Sovereign" indicates an intensified level of dignity, whereas other contexts, such as "Indeed, those who are with your Lord do not show arrogance," (al-A'rāf: 206) reflect a lower semantic intensity. In addition, the grammatical and semantic role of that which follows '*Ind*', such as "God," "Your Lord," or "A Mighty Sovereign" significantly influences the degree of implied honor. The difference among phrases such as '*Inda Allah*', '*Inda Rabbihim*', and '*Inda Malīkin Muqtadir*' signals varied conceptual layers of the notion of "Being in the presence of God."

In sum, interpreting '*Ind*' and '*Ladun*' as indicating honorific attribution is defensible only in specific contexts supported by linguistic and semantic evidence; it cannot be treated as a universal interpretive rule for all related Qur'anic verses. Accurate comprehension of these expressions in the context of "Being with God" requires attentiveness to contextual clues and careful semantic analysis of the *Mudāḥḥun Ilayh*.

6.2. Exclusivity

A significant portion of the meanings associated with these expressions concerns the exclusive attribution of certain matters to God Almighty. Phrases such as "Its knowledge rests with my Lord," (al-A'rāf: 187) "And victory is only from God," (Āli 'Imrān: 126) "We taught him knowledge from Our Presence," (al-Kahf: 65) and "Indeed, with God alone is the knowledge of the Hour" (Luqmān: 34) clearly exemplify this sense of exclusivity. Exegetes such as *Ṭūsī*, *Ṭabrisī*, *Fakhr Rāzī*, *Marāghī* and others repeatedly discuss and analyze this concept (*Ṭūsī*, n.d.: 2, 583, 3, 248; *Zamakhsharī*, 1986 AD/1407 AH: 2, 183, 202; *Ṭabrisī*, 1993 AD/1372 SH: 2, 829; *Fakhr Rāzī*, 1999 AD/1420 AH: 7, 150; *Qurtubī*, 1985 AD/1364 SH: 7, 64, 333, 371; *Bayḍāwī*, 1997 AD/1418 AH: 2, 153; *Ibn 'Āshūr*, 1999 AD/1420 AH: 6, 135; *Qāsimī*, 1997 AD/1418 AH: 2, 408; *Marāghī*, n.d.: 7, 73; *Sayyid Quṭb*, 1991 AD/1412 AH: 3, 1409; *Ṭabāṭabā'ī*, 1996 AD/1417 AH: 13, 247; *Faḍlullāh*, 1998 AD/1419 AH: 10, 301, 342; *Javadi Amoli*, *Tafsir Surah Luqmān*, Session 10, commentary on 31:34). *Zamakhsharī*

explains this meaning in his commentary on *Āli 'Imran*: 126 as follows: "And victory is only from God', that is, do not assume that victory comes from the angels, for the true Giver of victory is God, both for you and for the angels. Or, victory, whether through the angels or through any other means, is only from God; and the one who is granted victory is the one whom God aids." (Zamakhsharī, 1986 AD/1407 AH: 2, 202)

Evaluation: Although this meaning may initially appear similar to the notion of "Honorific attribution and special nearness," it differs from it in function and semantic implication. In fact, it may be regarded as a reformulation of that view, but with emphasis on a distinct dimension. In the case of honorific attribution, the focus is on an entity or person attributed to God, which reflects its elevated spiritual status. By contrast, in exclusivity, the emphasis lies in God's attributing a matter to Himself in order to highlight its unique restriction to Him -not in the sense that other matters do not pertain to Him, but in the sense that this particular matter occupies a special position whose association with God is deliberately foregrounded. Thus, in such cases, the attribution is not intended to negate other possible associations but rather to emphasize distinction and exclusivity. Nevertheless, this interpretation cannot be generalized to all occurrences of expressions related to "Being with God." Depending on the context, thematic content, and the nature of the grammatical complement, the notion of exclusivity may or may not be semantically appropriate. For instance, in the verses previously mentioned, attributing the matter to God, while referring to divine knowledge or specific divine governance, also conveys a sense of exclusivity. However, in other verses, this meaning may not align with the contextual indicators. Accordingly, the concept of exclusivity represents one of the significant interpretive dimensions within the semantic domain of "Being with God," functioning alongside honorific proximity as complementary aspects of a broader conceptual framework. Even so, a precise understanding requires careful attention to linguistic context and Qur'anic flow, so that unwarranted generalizations are avoided and the intended meaning is accurately discerned.

6.3. Divine Omniscience and Omnipotence: Comprehensive Knowledge and Absolute Power

Another interpretive dimension of the expression "With God" relates to the notion of divine omniscience and omnipotence, such that in these instances, the meaning of being with God signifies God's comprehensive knowledge of and absolute power over the matter in question. This meaning appears primarily in verses pertaining to the unseen, the Day of Resurrection, cosmic decrees, and divine treasuries, such as "A fixed term with Him" (al-An'ām: 2), "There is not a thing but that with Us are its treasures," (al-Ĥijr: 21) and "With Us is a preserving Book." (Qāf: 4) This interpretation has been discussed by exegetes such as Baydāwī, Zamakhsharī, Ṭabāṭabā'ī, and others (Ṭūsī, n.d.: 8, 102; Zamakhsharī, 1986 AD/1407 AH: 2, 574, 773, 3, 107; Ṭabrisī, 1993 AD/1372 Sh: 5, 282, 6, 513; Fakhr Rāzī, 1999 AD/1420 AH: 8, 210, 22, 125; Marāghī, n.d.: 4, 121, 14, 17; Sayyid Quṭb, 1991 AD/1412 AH: 4, 2279, 5, 2798; Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1996 AD/1417 AH: 12, 84, 14, 169; Faḍlullāh, 1998 AD/1419 AH: 6, 59, 13, 128, 15, 200, 21, 175; Javadi Amoli, Tafsir Surah al-Ra'd, Session 20, commentary on 8; Tafsir Surah al-Ĥijr, Session 25, commentary on 21). Among the most significant and widely

debated verses in this regard is the statement "Had We intended to take a pastime, We would surely have taken it from Ourselves, if We were to do so." (al-Anbīyā': 17) Exegetes such as *Fakhr Rāzī* interpret the phrase "From Ourselves" as an indication of God's absolute power, which is, in essence, His all-encompassing knowledge and comprehensive dominion. That is, had God wished to choose a pastime, He would have taken it from "With Us," meaning from His own power and sovereign capacity (*Fakhr Rāzī*, 1999 AD/1420AH: 22, 125).

Evaluation: Attributing certain matters to God in terms of His comprehensive knowledge and absolute power is particularly acceptable in those verses where the primary purpose is to emphasize the majestic aspects of the Divine and His absolute dominion over the cosmos, not to highlight mercy, grace, or honorary nearness. From a mystical perspective, interpreting absolute divine power belongs to the domain of God's majestic attributes, whose function differs from verses that express beauty and grace attributes. Thus, in passages where the central theme is divine grandeur and dominance, this interpretive approach may offer a reasonable explanation. Nevertheless, this meaning applies only within a specific contextual range and cannot be generalized to all occurrences of the expressions denoting "Being with God." In verses concerning nearness, mercy, and divine benevolence, these expressions reflect dimensions of beauty and grace, and therefore cannot be interpreted solely through the lens of divine power.

The interpretation of al-Anbīyā':17 has also been challenged by several exegetes, most notably by *Allamah Ṭabāṭabā'ī* in *al-Mīzān*. He argues that attributing *Lahw* (vain pastime) to God is inherently impossible, for such diversion, implying engagement in frivolity, is incompatible with divine wisdom and majesty. Accordingly, the notion that God's power could pertain to such an act is invalid, since power does not relate to what is inherently impossible (*Ṭabāṭabā'ī*, 1996 AD/1417 AH: 14, 262).

Thus, although *Fakhr Rāzī's* interpretation is deemed untenable in light of this critique, it may still be considered, to some extent, defensible when evaluated within the conditional structure of the verse. Since the verse begins with *law*, a particle indicating a counterfactual conditional expressing an impossible condition, the attribution in the verse serves to articulate a hypothetical impossibility conceivable only within the framework of God's absolute, unrestricted power.

6.4. Divine Legislative Ordinance

This concept has been articulated by numerous exegetes through verses such as "Indeed, the religion with God is Islam," (Āl i 'Imrān: 19) "My word cannot be changed before Me," (Qāf: 29) "Their omen is with God," (al-A'rāf: 131) "It is they who, in God's judgment, are the liars," (al-Nūr: 13) and "Indeed, the number of months with God is twelve months." (al-Tawbah, 36) In these contexts, the expression "With God" has been understood to mean "In God's ruling, decree, or determination." This interpretation is observed widely among exegetes (*Ṭabarī*, 1991 AD/1412 AH: 13, 75; *Zamakhsharī*, 1986 AD/1407 AH: 2, 145; 3, 219, 371; *Ṭabrisī*, 1993 AD/1372 SH: 1, 287; 5, 42; 7, 207; *Fakhr Rāzī*, 1999 AD/1420 AH: 3, 563; 9, 417, 429; 19, 15, 134; *Qurṭubī*, 1985 AD/1364 SH: 5, 284; *Bayḍāwī*, 1997 AD/1418 AH: 1, 89; 3, 30; 4, 101; *Ibn 'Ashūr*, 1999 AD/1420 AH: 10, 82; 11, 308; *Qāsimī*, 1997

AD/1418 AH: 2, 326; 5, 407; 8, 361; Marāghī, n.d.: 1, 150; 5, 24; 9, 42; 18, 84; 19, 147; 26, 164; Sayyid Quṭb, 1991 AD/1412 AH: 3, 1651; Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1996 AD/1417 AH: 3, 121; Javadi Amoli, Tafsir Surah Āli 'Imrān, session 60, under 3:19; Tafsir Surah al-Naml, session 15, under 27, 47).

For example, *Zamakhsharī* interprets the phrase "*Ṭā'iruhum 'inda Allah*" (al-A'rāf: 131) as indicating that "*Indiyyah*" denotes God's judgment and will (*Zamakhsharī*, 1986 AD/1407 AH: 2, 145). Likewise, *Ibn 'Ashūr*, in commenting on al-Tawbah, 36, explains the expression "The number of months with God is twelve months" as follows: "With God' means in His ruling and decree; thus, the *Indiyyah* here is figurative, indicating evaluation and legal consideration." (*Ibn 'Ashūr*, 1999 AD/1420 AH: 10, 82) Similarly, *Qāsimī*, in his interpretation of the verse "If they do not produce witnesses, then in God's judgment they are the liars," (al-Nūr: 13) states: "That is, in God's ruling and decree, and this is a sound interpretation." (*Qāsimī*, 1997 AD/1418 AH: 1, 337)

Evaluation: This interpretation is particularly meaningful in verses that emphasize legal obligations and religious norms. Nevertheless, it is essential to distinguish between two categories of exegetical readings:

1. Interpretations that situate the expressions "With God" ('Inda Allah) within the context of divine law and religious legislation;
2. Interpretations that understand these expressions in relation to God's ontological decree, predestination, and divine will.

Regarding the first category, it may be stated that terms such as *'Ind* or *Ladun* denote God's legislative authority. In such instances, the meaning of "Being with God" should be understood as a ruling or law originating from God. This interpretation pertains to the normative dimension of religious life, namely, moral and legal obligations, and not to external, ontological realities or, in other words, matters of "What is" or "What is not."

In contrast, some other commentators, primarily Salafis and Ash'aris, have interpreted this concept even in contexts related to the cosmic order and creation as referring to definite divine decree and irresistible divine will (for example, *Qāsimī*, 1997 AD/1418 AH: 2, 326 and 8, 361; *Qurṭubī*, 1985 AD/1364 SH: 5, 284). In many cases, this perspective conflicts with the Qur'anic principle of "An affair between two affairs." According to the Shi'i Qur'anic and theological framework, humans, while dependent on divine will, also possess free will and responsibility. Therefore, interpreting the expressions "With God" in ontological or cosmic matters in a way that negates human choice would be inconsistent with Qur'anic teaching and theological principles. Thus, when the phrase "With God" occurs in the context of divine laws and regulations, as in the verse "Indeed, the number of months with Allah is twelve months" (al-Tawbah, 36), the expression can rightly indicate a legislative ruling. However, in verses such as "Their lot is only with Allah," (al-A'rāf: 131) if such an interpretation leads to determinism, it must be critically assessed from a Qur'anic and theological perspective, and a more accurate exegesis should reconcile divine will and human agency. Therefore, distinguishing between legislative and cosmic verses and carefully analyzing the context of the semantic domain of "With God" is essential for a proper understanding of its meaning.

6.5. Renouncing Natural Causes and Relying on the True Cause

Another concept articulated by several exegetes, including *Zamakhsharī*, *Qurṭubī*, *Marāghī*, and others, is the idea of renouncing reliance on natural causes and turning instead to the Real Cause. They derive this meaning from expressions such as "Our Lord, grant us mercy from Yourself" (al-kahf: 10) and "Grant me, from Yourself, a successor" (Maryam: 5) (*Zamakhsharī*, 1986 AD/1407 AH: 3, 5; *Qurṭubī*, 1985 AD/1364 SH: 4, 21; *Marāghī*, n.d.: 16, 35; *Ṭabāṭabā'ī*, 1996 AD/1417 AH: 3, 30; 13, 342, 347; 14, 20; *Faḍlullāh*, 1998 AD/1419 AH: 15, 13, 25). For example, *Ṭabāṭabā'ī* interprets the phrase "From Yourself" in "So they said, "Our Lord, grant us mercy from Yourself" (al-kahf: 10) as a reflection of the Companions of the Cave's distress and inability to confront their circumstances, a sign of their utmost helplessness. Having found all avenues blocked, they despaired of natural means and thus sought a direct and exceptional mercy from God (*Ṭabāṭabā'ī*, 1996 AD/1417 AH: 13, 247). Similarly, *Faḍlullāh* explains this meaning in his commentary on Maryam: 13, stating: "From Us' is used in contexts where normal natural causes have no effective role or consideration." (*Faḍlullāh*, 1998 AD/1419 AH: 15, 25) These cases indicate that a request or event occurs independently of apparent, external causes, relying solely on God's particular will. In such instances, the notion of "Being from/with God" denotes a direct appeal to the Divine, a renunciation of ordinary natural causes, and a request for something that transcends the customary order.

Evaluation: This interpretation advanced particularly in cases where ordinary conditions and natural causes fail, or where excessive reliance on material causes has taken shape, has been proposed by a number of exegetes and is generally acceptable. In such contexts, expressions belonging to the semantic field of "Being with God" denote an appeal to a source that transcends perceptible causes, functioning within the flow of the verses as a form of pure reliance on divine power. For instance, the supplication of Prophet Zachariah (Maryam) shows that although he was fully aware of the causal laws governing nature, once he perceived that the natural path to having a child was blocked, he presented his request directly to God. This kind of supplication and word choice demonstrates that, although the prophet affirms God as the ultimate cause, he now abandons natural means and turns to the special divine grace granted from the Lordly domain. Here, the expression "From Yourself" carries a particular semantic force, indicating something beyond the natural order and marking a severance from ordinary causes and an exclusive orientation toward the Creator of those causes. This meaning is also applicable in the analysis of other verses in which exegetes have identified the same notion, provided that the context of the verse contains some indication of a rupture from normal means or their ineffectiveness. Like the other interpretive concepts, however, this meaning cannot be generalized across all verses; it is acceptable only in specific cases that contain clear textual and contextual indicators. Applying this interpretation in contexts where the verse points to special mercy, divine intervention, or a break from natural causes can offer a more precise elucidation of the divine intent. Otherwise, one must avoid improper absolutization or unwarranted generalization of this meaning.

6.6. Presence before the Divine Essence or Attributes

In a distinct interpretive approach, *Ibn 'Arabī* understands "being with God," in verses such as "For them is the abode of peace with their Lord" (al-An'ām: 127) and "Indeed, you are receiving the Qur'an from One who is All-Wise, All-Knowing," (al-Naml: 6) as signifying presence within the domain of the Divine Essence or the Divine Attributes. He interprets this expression as an indication of an ontological connection between the created being and the Divine Reality, arising from existential unity and direct experiential union. Commenting on al-An'ām: 127, he writes: "With their Lord" means in the presence of His attributes or the presence of His Essence." (Ibn 'Arabī, 2001 AD/1422 AH: 1, 217; see also 2, 103)

Evaluation: This interpretation is acceptable in certain verses but remains defensible only when accompanied by a precise determination of what is meant by "The Divine Essence" or "The Divine Attributes." In other words, it must be clarified which specific attribute, such as knowledge, power, and so forth, is intended in each context, for every Divine attribute manifests in multiple degrees, and such a notion cannot be attributed to Qur'anic verses in a general or ambiguous manner. Moreover, attributing this level of meaning to individuals is only justifiable with respect to those who possess the highest degrees of monotheistic realization. Thus, it cannot be applied universally to all believers; rather, this degree of proximity to the Divine Attributes is particular to the saints, prophets, and those especially favored by God. Furthermore, interpreting expressions belonging to the semantic field of "Being with God" as indicating presence within the realm of the Divine Essence or Attributes, when not supported by explicit contextual evidence in the verse, may be problematic. A precise analysis requires examining such claims in light of the conceptual framework of Divine Attributes, the spiritual rank of the addressees, and the thematic context of the verse, in order to determine whether such an interpretation is justified or should be rejected. Consequently, this exegetical view is acceptable only in specific cases and only when the gradations of Divine Attributes and the status of the addressed individuals are duly considered. It cannot be applied universally or uncritically to all occurrences of *'Ind* or *Ladun* in the Qur'anic text.

6.7. The Fulfillment of Divine Promises

This concept also appears in the writings of several exegetes. For example, *Ibn 'Āshūr*, in explaining expressions such as "*Lahum ajruhum 'inda rabbihim*" (theirs is their reward with their Lord), considers the phrase "With God" an indication of the firmness, realization, and unchangeability of God's promises and decrees (Ibn 'Āshūr, 1999 AD/1420 AH: 1, 522). Likewise, *Ṭabāṭabā'ī*, in his exegesis of verses such as "*Wa ajalun musamman 'indahū*" (al-An'ām: 2) and "*Wa mā 'inda Allāhi baqīn*," (al-Naḥl: 96) explains that whatever is "With God" is not subject to decay or alteration, and no transformation or modification occurs in it (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1996 AD/1417 AH: 7, 9; see also 9, 268). Similarly, *Zamakhsharī*, in interpreting the expression "*Lahum daru al-salam 'inda rabbihim*," (al-An'ām: 127) understands it as denoting divine guarantee and protection. He further illustrates this with a common linguistic example emphasizing this meaning: "*'Inda rabbihim fī ḍamanihī, kamā taqūlū: Li fulānin 'indi ḥaqqun lā yunsā, aw dakhiratun lahum lā ya lamūna kunhaha*" (With their Lord', that

is, under His guarantee, just as one says: "So-and-so has a right with me that will not be forgotten," or "A treasure kept for them whose reality they do not yet know") (Zamakhsharī, 1986 AD/1407 AH: 2, 64).

Evaluation: This interpretation is particularly acceptable in verses where there is a contextual basis for doubting the fulfillment of a divine promise or imagining the possibility of its failure, such as cases in which external circumstances or human behavior may, at the surface level, cast doubt on the realization of that promise. In such contexts, the appearance of expressions belonging to the semantic field of "Being with God" signifies emphasis, affirmation, and reassurance for the addressee. It indicates that what is "With God" is not only preserved and immune from alteration and decay but will also certainly come to pass, admitting no possibility of breach or failure. Accordingly, as reflected in exegetical literature, in such instances the phrase denotes both preservation within God's knowledge and will, and the inevitability of the promised matter within divine decree. Therefore, although this meaning does not apply to all verses, it is accurate and valid in those specific passages where doubt regarding the realization of divine promises or the supposed influence of external factors is present.

6.8. *ʿInda* in the Sense of *Fī*

Qurṭubī interprets *ʿInda* as equivalent in meaning to *fī* in expressions such as "*Thumma innakum yawma al-qīyāmati ʿinda rabbikum takhtaṣimūn*" (al-Zumar: 31) and "*Liyuḥajjūkum bihī ʿinda rabbikum*" (al-Baqarah: 76). He argues that when the Qur'an states "*Liyuḥajjūkum bihī ʿinda rabbikum*," the expression should be understood as "*Liyuḥajjūkum bihī fī rabbikum*." (*Qurṭubī*, 1985 AD/1364 SH: 2, 4)

Evaluation: From a lexical standpoint, it is clear that *ʿInda* is originally distinct from *fī*, which indicates spatial containment or being "Inside" something. Although in certain figurative usages *ʿInda* may acquire a sense somewhat similar to *fī*, such connotations depend entirely on the contextual and textual indicators of the verse. In particular, in the expression "*Thumma innakum yawma al-qīyāmati ʿinda rabbikum takhtaṣimūn*," (al-Zumar: 31) the phrase "*ʿInda Rabbikum*" cannot legitimately be reduced to the meaning of "*Fī Rabbikum*," since the context refers to disputation in the presence of God, not disputation about Him. For this reason, interpreting *ʿInda* to mean *fī* in this verse is not well-grounded. Moreover, classical grammarians have identified approximately ten meanings for the preposition *fī*, none of which are equivalent to, or synonymous with, the expressions belonging to the semantic field of "Being with God." (Ḥasan, n.d.: 2, 508; Diqqar, 1996 AD/1417 AH: 267; Ibn Hishām, 1985: 223)

Research Findings

The findings of this study, in response to the research questions, can be summarized as follows:

1. Prominent exegetes from both Islamic schools have attributed multiple meanings to the lexical domain of "Near to God" (*ʿInda Allah*). A comprehensive analysis and systematic categorization of their interpretations yield eight conceptual dimensions, the most prominent

of which are: honor and special closeness, exclusivity, divine omniscience and omnipotence, and legislative authority. These concepts are cited more frequently across the exegeses.

2. Certain interpretations, such as those emphasizing predestination and divine determinism (which imply a belief in absolute fatalism) or understanding *'Inda* as equivalent to *Fī* (in), are linguistically or theologically questionable. Nevertheless, each exegetical meaning is valid only within the specific verses in which it appears and can be defended contextually. In other words, the concept of "Near to God" is multifaceted and contingent upon the semantic context of the verse, rather than being a fixed or universal expression. The analyses conducted in this study indicate that, while the interpretations offered are largely acceptable within their respective contexts, indiscriminate generalization across verses and topics leads to semantic distortion and prevents the attainment of an accurate and precise understanding of the intended meanings.

3. Based on the foregoing discussion, a comprehensive and systematic perspective can be derived, which determines the appropriate meaning according to the type of verse. Accordingly:

- If the term appears in a verse referring to a noble and distinguished subject, such as the martyrs, angels, or others carrying connotations of honor, rank, or virtue, "Near to God" denotes honor, elevated status, and special closeness to God.
- In verses emphasizing exclusivity or specific attribution, "Near to God" signifies exclusiveness, that is, a matter designated and reserved by God alone. Attributing a matter to God in this context does not negate other attributions but highlights distinction and exclusivity.
- In verses where the primary objective is to convey the majestic aspects of God, His absolute sovereignty over the universe, or to emphasize divine greatness, wrath, ontological management, or knowledge of the unseen, rather than mercy or benevolence, "Near to God" indicates divine omniscience and omnipotence.
- When a verse concerns legislative matters, commandments, or moral and legal obligations (e.g., those relating to religion or divine limits), the expression "Near to God" can be interpreted as referring to divine legislative authority.
- The concept of relying on God directly and abandoning natural causes is acceptable when the human context in the verse reflects circumstances in which ordinary causes and natural means fail, or when there is excessive dependence on beings other than God, necessitating complete reliance on the ultimate Cause.
- In specific verses where doubt arises regarding the fulfillment of divine promises, the possibility of their breach, or the influence of external conditions, "Near to God" denotes the realization, confirmation, and divine guarantee of actions and promises.

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