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The Concept of *Miḥnah* and Strategies for Its Role in the Resilience and Civilization-Building of Communities from the Perspective of the Noble Qur'an

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Abstract

This study seeks to elucidate the concept of *Miḥnah* (trial and tribulation) and the strategies by which it contributes to communities' resilience and civilization-building from the perspective of the Noble Qur'an. Utilizing a descriptive-analytical method and library-based data collection, the research examines relevant data through lexical, conceptual, and exegetical analyses of Qur'anic verses concerning *Miḥnah* and its associated concepts, including *Balāʾ* (trial), *Ibtilāʾ* (testing), *Fitnah* (tribulation), *Ṣabr* (patience), *Tamḥīṣ* (purification through trial), *Tamkīn* (establishment and empowerment), and *Istikhlāf* (succession or divinely ordained stewardship). The findings show that, in Qur'anic thought, *Miḥnah* is not merely a test or an experience of suffering; rather, it is an active process that shapes identity and contributes to civilization-building, thereby ensuring a community's historical continuity and dynamism. Through cognitive and behavioral strategies, *Miḥnah* plays a fundamental role in fostering communal resilience and civilization-building. Cognitive strategies encompass knowledge of God, awareness of divine laws governing history, and an understanding of the philosophy underlying hardships and calamities. Behavioral strategies include supplication and seeking God's assistance, strengthening faith, cultivating patience and perseverance, maintaining religious identity, adhering to divine values, and adopting appropriate courses of action. These strategies are fundamental in strengthening community resilience and advancing civilizational development.

Keywords: *Miḥnah*, Resilience, Community, the Noble Qur'an, Civilization.

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Introduction

The Noble Qur'an recounts the history of communities within the framework of divine laws governing human history. Within this framework, testing, purification through trial, tribulation, patience, reliance on God, and divinely ordained succession constitute interconnected elements of a civilizational process (see Ṭabāṭabāʾī, 1996 AD/1417 AH: 4, 312; Makarem Shirazi, et al., 1995 AD/1374 SH: 2, 145). In this context, *Miḥnah*, understood as a crisis-laden, testing situation, plays a central role in shaping and reproducing communities' historical resilience and civilizational capacity. Through such trials, communities undergo purification, achieve greater synergy, reconstruct their collective identity, and attain historical maturity (Ibn Khaldūn, 1946 AD/1366 AH: 1, 287).

The history of divinely guided communities as recounted in the Noble Qur'an is replete with trials and crises that have played a fundamental role in shaping their resilience and civilizations. One of the clearest Qur'anic models of resilience and civilization-building is the life of Prophet Abraham. From the outset, his life was marked by a series of severe trials, ranging from confronting a system of polytheism and migrating from his homeland to facing the test of sacrificing his son. Nevertheless, rather than halting his prophetic mission, each trial deepened his faith, consolidated his divinely ordained leadership, and laid the foundations for a monotheistic community. Following its account of Abraham's trials, the Qur'an states:

"And [remember] when Abraham was tested by his Lord with certain commands, which he fulfilled. He said, 'Indeed, I will make you a leader for the people." (al-Baqarah:124)

Exegetes have interpreted this verse as indicating that divinely ordained leadership results from successfully overcoming trials and fully realizing servitude to God, rather than being merely an initial gift. Accordingly, in this context, testing elevates Abraham's historical and civilizational standing and fosters the formation of a monotheistic community (Ṭabāṭabāʾī, 1996 AD/1417 AH: 1, 274; Makarem Shirazi, 1995 AD/1374 SH: 1, 437).

A different form of resilience-promoting and civilization-building *Miḥnah* can also be observed in the accounts of Prophets David and Solomon. These two prophets faced not only personal hardships but also social and governance-related challenges. After successfully passing difficult trials, David attained power and established divine governance. Solomon likewise faced tests of power, wealth, and social administration as he fulfilled his prophetic mission. In these cases, *Miḥnah* provided a foundation for consolidating justice, establishing social order, and realizing divinely guided governance. These examples show that, in the Qur'anic framework, resilience is not confined to the individual sphere but also extends to social and civilizational dimensions (Qarashī, 1998 AD/1377 SH: 2, 174).

By contrast, the histories of peoples such as *ʿĀd* and *Thamūd* illustrate an opposing pattern of resilience. Despite considerable civilizational capabilities, material resources, and social power, these peoples responded to divine trials with arrogance and denial rather than reconsideration and reform. Consequently, their crises did not become opportunities for reconstruction but instead led to their historical collapse (Moradi Shahriyari, 2012 AD/1391 SH: 96). These examples show that economic and military power does not necessarily

guarantee a civilization's survival; rather, how societies confront crises plays a decisive role in shaping their historical fate.

Accordingly, explaining the relationship between Qur'anic *Miḥnah* and the historical resilience of communities requires a renewed examination of the divine laws governing the history of believing societies, together with an analysis of the functions of concepts such as *Balāʾ* (trial), *Fitnah* (tribulation), *Ibtilāʾ* (testing), *Tamḥīṣ* (purification through trial), *Ṣabr* (patience), and *Istikhlāf* (succession or divinely ordained stewardship) in the formation, continuity, and advancement of communities.

Against this background, this study seeks to clarify the concept of *Miḥnah* in the Noble Qur'an and examine its role in fostering communal resilience and civilization-building. Accordingly, the following research questions are addressed:

1. What does *Miḥnah* mean in the Noble Qur'an?
2. What *Miḥnah-related strategies* contribute to communities' resilience and civilization-building, and how do they operate?

1. Research Methodology

The present study is classified as fundamental research and adopts a descriptive-analytical methodology. Data were collected through library research, utilizing Qur'anic sources, exegetical works, lexical references, and relevant scholarly studies. Initially, the research examines and analyzes the concept of *Miḥnah* and related terms in the Noble Qur'an, as well as in lexical and exegetical sources. Subsequently, relevant Qur'anic verses are analyzed to elucidate the role of *Miḥnah* in fostering community resilience. The study aims to develop a coherent analytical framework, from the perspective of the Noble Qur'an, to explain the role of *Miḥnah* in communal resilience and civilization-building and to reconstruct the discourse on civilization-building.

2. Literature Review

Among previous studies, "How to Become Resilient: A Practical Guide to Resilience Skills" by Karimi and Javidi (2024 AD/1403 SH) takes an applied approach, explaining resilience skills and offering strategies to strengthen individuals' adaptive capacities when facing crises. However, it focuses on psychological and skill-based dimensions and does not address Qur'anic and historical analyses of the concept of *Miḥnah*. Similarly, Moeinoddini (2012 AD/1391 SH), in the thesis "An Examination of the Trials of Prophet Abraham from the Perspective of the Qur'an and Hadith," examines the educational and epistemological functions of trials in Abraham's life but does not extend the findings to communities or broader social processes. Shirzadi (2016 AD/1395 SH), in the thesis "Perseverance in the Path of God from the Perspective of the Qur'an," likewise elucidates the faith-based and educational dimensions of perseverance but does not examine its relationship with historical *Miḥnah* or communal resilience.

Furthermore, Habibollahi (2021 AD/1400 SH), in the article "Factors and Components of Resilience from the Perspective of the Qur'an and Narrations," identifies patience, reliance on God, faith, and hope as fundamental components of resilience. Shahbazpour et al. (2023 AD/1402 SH), in their article "The Culture of Resistance and the Process of Engineering It in

Society Based on the Teachings of the Noble Qur'an," also conceptualize resistance as a cultural process that shapes identity. Nevertheless, taken together, these studies indicate that, despite the attention given to concepts such as testing, perseverance, resistance, and resilience, the relationship between Qur'anic *Miḥnah* and the process through which communities' historical resilience develops has not yet been systematically explained.

Accordingly, this study's originality lies in its semantic and exegetical approach, which conceptualizes *Miḥnah* not merely as a difficult event but as a mechanism that shapes identity, contributes to civilization-building, and creates conditions for social reconstruction. The study proposes an indigenous, Qur'an-based model of active, meaning-oriented, history-shaping resilience to explain communities' historical endurance.

3. Conceptual Analysis

3.1. The Concept of *Miḥnah* and Related Terms

In classical Arabic, the term *Miḥnah* belongs to the semantic field of testing, trial, suffering, and hardship. Lexical sources indicate that, from the outset, the term did not refer solely to enduring hardship; it also denoted a process of assessment, disclosure, and distinguishing truth from falsehood or purity from impurity. Under the root (*m-ḥ-n*), *Ibn Manẓūr* defines the term as testing, revealing inner truth, and distinguishing the pure from the impure (Ibn Manẓūr, 1993 AD/1414 AH: 13, 52). The author of "*al-Muḥīṭ fī al-Lughah*" likewise defines *Miḥnah* as examination and testing (Ṣāḥib ibn ʿAbbād, 1993 AD/1414 AH: 3, 129). Similarly, "*Aqrab al-Mawārid*" applies the term to circumstances through which a person is subjected to difficult trials (Shartūnī, 1995 AD/1374 SH: 5, 169).

Other lexical sources emphasize the hardship and suffering inherent in the concept. In "*al-Muʿjam al-Mufaṣṣal fī al-Jumūʿ*," *Miḥnah* is classified among concepts referring to difficulty and hardship (Yaʿqūb, 2005 AD/1425 AH: 403). *Bustānī* also explains *Miḥnah* within the semantic framework of suffering, hardship, and testing, showing that the term does not carry an exclusively negative connotation in Arabic and can also be understood in an educational and epistemological context (Bustānī, n.d.: 311). Contemporary lexicographical sources similarly define the root *m-ḥ-n* as testing, examining, assigning someone to difficult work, and placing a person or object in a situation where it is subjected to a test (Adharnoosh, 2006 AD/1385 SH: 638).

In "*Tāj al-ʿArūs*," *Zabīdī* discusses the term's root and defines *Miḥnah* as a situation in which a person is tested by calamity or hardship (Zabīdī, 2006 AD/1385 SH: 18, 526). This definition indicates that, in the Arabic lexical tradition, *Miḥnah* does not merely denote a difficult situation; rather, it refers to a process through which individuals' true character and the strength of their personal and social attributes become apparent. Accordingly, most lexical definitions place a person in circumstances that reveal their capacities, weaknesses, and otherwise hidden characteristics.

Although the term *Miḥnah* does not occur in this precise form in the Noble Qur'an, related and semantically associated concepts, including *Balāʾ* (trial), *Ibtilāʾ* (testing), *Fitnah* (tribulation), and *Tamḥīṣ* (purification through trial), appear in numerous verses. Together, these concepts form a relatively coherent semantic network centered on testing human beings

and revealing the truth of their faith under difficult circumstances. *Rāghib Iṣfahānī*, in his examination of concepts associated with testing in the Qur'an, argues that *Ibtilāʾ* reveals a person's true nature and actualizes their latent capacities (Rāghib Iṣfahānī, 1991 AD/1412 AH: 144).

Exegetical sources have also addressed this meaning. In his commentary on the verse "Indeed, this was truly the manifest trial," (al-Ṣāffāt:106) *Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī* describes *Balāʾ* as a manifest test through which sincere individuals are distinguished from others. He also regards *Miḥnah* as the most difficult form of testing, one that reveals the truth of faith (Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī, 1999 AD/1420 AH: 26, 350). In his commentary on the verse "Your wealth and your children are only a trial for you," (al-Taghābun:15) *Shaykh Ṭūsī* considers *Fitnah* synonymous with *Miḥnah* and *Ibtilāʾ*, describing it as a test accompanied by hardship that places human beings in confrontation with their carnal desires (Ṭūsī, 1993 AD/1414 AH: 10, 24). Other exegetes, in their commentaries on verses concerning testing, have likewise presented difficult events as part of the divine practice through which God educates His servants and reveals the truth of their faith (cf. Ṭabrisī, 1952 AD/1372 AH: 1, 233).

From an epistemological perspective, *Miḥnah* constitutes a domain in which "Genuine Sincerity" is distinguished from "Mere Claims." Under ordinary circumstances, many individual and social capacities and weaknesses remain concealed. Crises, however, reveal the foundations of identity and faith and create opportunities for self-awareness, awakening, and a redefinition of the relationship between human beings, God, society, and history (Izutsu, 1999 AD/1999 AD/1378 SH: 214). Therefore, *Miḥnah* cannot be understood merely as suffering or external pressure; rather, it should be regarded as a context in which the truth of faith, the character of collective identity, and the degree of social cohesion become manifest.

One fundamental dimension of *Miḥnah* is its relationship to the divine laws governing the history of communities. The Noble Qur'an interprets history through fixed laws that determine the growth, decline, and survival of civilizations, and it regards *Miḥnah* as one of the mechanisms through which these laws are realized. In times of crisis, communities reveal the extent of their faith, justice, cohesion, and capacity for resistance (Ṣadr, 2000 AD/1421 AH: 119). Accordingly, *Miḥnah* can be understood as a process of purification, refinement, and reconstruction at both the individual and societal levels, through which the conditions for historical and civilizational transformation are established.

On this basis, the present study defines *Miḥnah* as a crisis that subjects an individual or community to an intense trial, in which the authenticity of faith, existential capacities, social cohesion, and the ability to reconstruct identity become manifest.

The terms *Miḥnah*, *Balāʾ*, *Fitnah*, and *Ibtilāʾ* all belong to the semantic field of testing, hardship, and assessment. However, lexical and exegetical sources show that, despite their semantic overlap, these concepts differ considerably in their lexical connotations and Qur'anic applications.

In lexical sources, *Balāʾ* refers to a test intended to reveal the truth and disclose an individual's actual condition; such a test may take the form of either a blessing or a hardship (Rāghib Iṣfahānī, 1991 AD/1412 AH: 144). By contrast, *Ibtilāʾ* primarily denotes testing and assessing a person's inner capacities (Ibn Manẓūr, 1993 AD/1414 AH: 15, 85). In his work

"*al-Furūq al-Lughawīyyah*," *ʿAskarī* distinguishes between *Ibtilāʾ* and *Ikhtibār*, explaining that *Ibtilāʾ* is intended to reveal the extent of individuals' obedience and disobedience. *In contrast, Ikhtibār* means gaining knowledge of an individual's condition and true nature and, in fact, constitutes one of the mechanisms through which *Ibtilāʾ* is realized (ʿAskarī, 1979 AD/1400 AH: 210).

In lexical and exegetical sources, the term *Fitnah* encompasses not only testing but also concepts such as smelting, turmoil, and intermingling. Its original meaning is associated with smelting metals and separating the pure from the impure. Consequently, in Qur'anic usage, it can also refer to disorder, deviation, and the conflation of truth and falsehood (Ṭabāṭabāʾī, 1996 AD/1417 AH: 10, 8); among these terms, therefore, *Miḥnah* places greater emphasis on the severity and difficulty of a trial than the other concepts. Under the root (*m-ḥ-n*), *Ṭurayḥī* interprets the term as a test involving pressure and hardship that reveals a person's inner reality (Ṭurayḥī, 1955 AD/1375 AH: 6, 332). Thus, *Miḥnah* is not merely an ordinary test but rather a crisis that subjects an individual or society to a severe trial.

At the terminological and exegetical levels, the distinctions among these concepts become more apparent. In Qur'anic discourse, *Balāʾ* primarily denotes the manifestation of the truth of faith and the distinction between believers and others, and it may occur through either blessings or suffering (Rāghib Iṣfahānī, 1991 AD/1412 AH: 144). *Ibtilāʾ* is a broader process that reveals human beings' inner capacities and assesses the extent to which they adhere to divine values (Ibn Manẓūr, 1993 AD/1414 AH: 15, 85).

By contrast, in its Qur'anic applications, *Fitnah* signifies not only testing but also disruption of the natural order, cognitive confusion, and the intermingling of truth and falsehood. In some instances, it is also used to denote deviation and seduction (Ṭabāṭabāʾī, 1996 AD/1417 AH: 10, 8). *Miḥnah*, however, emphasizes the severity, intensity, and revelatory dimension of a trial more than the other concepts, evoking a profound crisis that brings an individual's or society's inner reality to light (Ṭurayḥī, 1955 AD/1375 AH: 6, 332).

Accordingly, *Miḥnah* is a situation in which an individual's or community's moral, religious, and historical existence is subjected to intense pressure, revealing latent capacities and redefining the boundaries of identity (Izutsu, 1999 AD/1378 SH: 214). Whereas *Ibtilāʾ* may encompass a range of gradual trials, *Miḥnah* places greater emphasis on the severity and crisis-like nature of the experience (Muṣṭafawī, 1989 AD/1368 SH: 11, 54). Similarly, *Fitnah*, beyond denoting testing, signifies disruption of the normal order and cognitive confusion (Abū Ḥayyān Andalusī, 1999 AD/1420 AH: 4, 245).

Therefore, in the historical analysis of communities, *Miḥnah* may be a more precise concept for explaining how societies distinguish truth from falsehood, undergo purification, and reconstruct their historical identities. This is because, beyond denoting a trial, the concept also encompasses crisis, the disclosure of truth, the redefinition of identity, and changes in historical trajectories. In this respect, it offers greater analytical potential for examining communities' historical experiences as depicted in the Noble Qur'an.

3.2. The Concept of Resilience and Its Relationship with *Miḥnah*

In recent decades, resilience has become an important concept in psychology, sociology, and the humanities. Despite the significance of psychological and sociological approaches, many studies have reduced resilience to its material or psychological dimensions, overlooking the role of meaning and divine purpose. The Qur'an, however, regards crisis as part of the divine practice through which individuals and societies are educated and developed (Najjarzadegan, 2010 AD/1389 SH: 218).

Accordingly, although many studies have primarily analyzed resilience in terms of psychological adaptation or the ability to endure pressure, such an interpretation, while useful for explaining certain individual dimensions of crisis, is insufficient for understanding the Qur'anic framework for confronting crises. As previously explained, the Noble Qur'an does not regard crisis merely as a threatening event; rather, it presents crisis as part of the divine order of guidance and the moral and spiritual development of individuals and communities (Ṭabāṭabāʾī, 1996 AD/1417 AH: 2, 29).

To conceptualize resilience in the Qur'an, no single word equivalent to the modern concept of resilience suffices. Instead, we must examine the network of Qur'anic concepts that explain how individuals and societies confront hardship, trials, pressure, and crises, and consider the relationships among these concepts. In this regard, concepts such as *Miḥnah*, *Ibtilāʾ* (trial), *Fitnah* (tribulation), *Ṣabr* (patience), *Tamḥīṣ* (purification through trial), *Istiqāmah* (steadfastness), *Tamkīn* (establishment or empowerment), and *Istikhlāf* (succession or divinely ordained stewardship) each encompass one dimension of this conceptual framework. Still, they do not serve identical conceptual functions. In this study, *Miḥnah* is understood as the context and condition in which resilience takes shape; *Ibtilāʾ* and *Fitnah* concern the process of testing and the disclosure of truth; *Ṣabr* and *Istiqāmah* represent the capacity to endure and persevere in confronting these trials; and *Tamḥīṣ*, *Tamkīn*, and *Istikhlāf* concern transformative outcomes and ends that extend beyond merely enduring a crisis. Accordingly, within the Qur'anic framework, resilience is not equivalent to any one of these concepts. Rather, it emerges from the interconnection and interaction of this conceptual network, which this study organizes around the central concept of *Miḥnah*.

Therefore, a distinction must be drawn between passive and active resilience. The former emphasizes enduring a crisis, whereas the latter emphasizes using a crisis as an opportunity to reconstruct and enhance individual and social capacities (Peyghami & Mansouri, 2016 AD/1395 SH: 88; Khosropanah, 2005 AD/2005 AD/1384 SH: 110). This theoretical development provides a basis for bringing the modern concept of resilience into dialogue with the Qur'anic logic of *Miḥnah*.

Accordingly, within the Qur'anic framework, resilience can be defined as "Meaning-oriented Perseverance" and "Transformative Action" in the context of *Miḥnah***.** In essence, the Qur'anic logic of *Miḥnah* generates resilience through several fundamental mechanisms:

1) Activating latent capacities: A crisis reveals the strengths and weaknesses of individuals and societies, thereby creating opportunities for internal reform and improvement (Hijazi, 1992 AD/1413 AH: 2, 344).

2) Constructing meaning in suffering**:** When hardship is interpreted within the horizon of divine wisdom, suffering is transformed from a source of depletion into a source of strength and hope (Frankl, 2006: 104).
3) Strengthening collective cohesion: External pressure encourages a society to reconsider its shared objectives and bonds, thereby reinforcing social solidarity.
4) Providing strategic direction for social action: Communities that see crises as opportunities to reform their structures and rebuild their cultural foundations are more resilient (Ungar, 2011: 18).

4. Strategies for Harnessing *Miḥnah* to Foster Resilience and Civilization-Building among Communities

Within the Qur'anic framework, resilience is not solely the product of individual psychological capacity. Rather, it is grounded in a network of cognitive, faith-based, and social components that *Miḥnah* actualizes. From this perspective, *Miḥnah* serves as the conceptual core of resilience in the Qur'anic context. This understanding shows that the Qur'anic conception of resilience differs fundamentally from conventional psychological interpretations. Explaining this difference requires re-conceptualizing resilience within the Qur'an's broader conceptual framework. Thus, resilience must be examined alongside concepts such as *Ibtilāʾ*, *Fitnah*, *Ṣabr*, *Tamḥīṣ*, *Istiqāmah*, *Tamkīn*, and *Istikhlāf*. The Noble Qur'an identifies strategies through which *Miḥnah* influences communities' resilience, which can be broadly categorized as cognitive and practical strategies.

4.1. Cognitive Strategies of *Miḥnah* for Resilience and Civilization-Building among Communities

An examination of the verses of the Noble Qur'an indicates that nations' resilience and civilization-building throughout history are not merely psychological states. Rather, they result from a profound transformation in the cognitive framework through which human beings understand life and perceive the world. Accordingly, the most important cognitive strategies through which *Miḥnah* contributes to communities' resilience and civilization-building are as follows.

4.1.1. Knowledge and Recognition of God

Genuine knowledge, understood as recognizing the realities of existence as they truly are, is one of the most fundamental factors contributing to resilience and civilization-building in nations.

From the outset, the life of Prophet Abraham was marked by a series of difficult trials. His confrontation with the system of polytheism, migration from his homeland, separation from his family in a barren and waterless land, and, ultimately, the trial of sacrificing his son each constituted a stage in the process of divine testing. Nevertheless, none of these *Miḥnahs* halted Abraham's mission. Instead, they deepened his faith, consolidated his divinely ordained leadership, and established a monotheistic community.

After recounting these trials, the Noble Qur'an states:

"And [mention] when Abraham was tested by his Lord with certain commands, and he fulfilled them. He said, "Indeed, I will make you a leader for the people." (al-Baqarah:124)

Exegetes understand this verse to mean that divinely ordained leadership and guidance result from successfully passing through *Miḥnahs* and fully realizing servitude to God, rather than being merely an initial gift. Thus, in this context, *Ibtilāʾ* elevates Abraham's historical and civilizational standing and establishes a monotheistic community (Ṭabāṭabāʾī, 1996 AD/1417 AH: 1, 274; Makarem Shirazi et al., 1995 AD/1374 SH: 1, 437).

4.1.2. Awareness of Divine Laws

Awareness of the divine laws governing existence, including the coexistence of hardship and ease, contributes to resilience and to the development of a civilization centered on *Miḥnah*. The Noble Qur'an states:

"For indeed, with hardship comes ease. Indeed, with hardship comes ease." (al-Sharḥ:5-6)

This awareness assures individuals that challenges are not permanent, a principle consistent with hope's role in resilience (Snyder, 2002: 250). In his exegesis of these verses, *Zamakhsharī* observes that God reminds the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) of this divine law to keep him from despair and to strengthen his spiritual expansiveness (Zamakhsharī, 1986 AD/1407 AH: 4, 780).

Therefore, this statement is not merely meant to console; rather, it expresses a law governing the structure of reality. The repetition of these verses further emphasizes that ease is not confined to some indefinite point in the future but is present alongside hardship itself. This understanding transforms an individual's cognitive framework from a catastrophic outlook to a process-oriented perspective.

This transformation is a key mechanism of emotional regulation under psychological pressure. An individual who understands this divine law sees suffering as temporary and meaningful. This attribution of meaning, in turn, creates the conditions for "Expansion of the Breast," or an expanded and receptive state of mind. This function corresponds to "Maintaining realistic hope," a form of hope based not on denying hardship but on understanding its underlying structure and dynamics.

When the model of resilience and *Miḥnah*-centered civilization is examined within the framework of divine laws, its civilizational implications become more apparent. In the Qur'anic worldview, divine laws govern the emergence, growth, decline, and reconstruction of societies, and *Miḥnah* is part of the process through which communities are guided, purified, and reformed. From this perspective, *Ibtilāʾ* can create the conditions for revealing a society's latent capacities and enabling it to advance toward a higher stage of historical existence (Ṭabāṭabāʾī, 1996 AD/1417 AH: 4, 195; Javadi Amoli, 2006 AD/1385 SH: 9, 214). The divine law of *Ibtilāʾ* is associated with historical awakening, distinguishing the believing community, exposing structural weaknesses, and reconstructing the community's identity. The way a society responds to a crisis plays a decisive role in strengthening or weakening that identity (Khosropanah, 2005 AD/1384 SH: 144).

This process is also connected with the divine law of the alternation of power and fortune. In the Qur'anic worldview, power and historical continuity are neither fixed nor unconditionally inherited; rather, a community's faith, justice, and actions shape its historical destiny. *Ibn Khaldūn* likewise regards the endurance of civilizations as dependent on social

cohesion, justice, and the quality of their responses to crises, linking their collapse to the erosion of group solidarity, justice, and social capital (Ibn Khaldūn, 1946 AD/1366 AH: 1, 329, 355). The divine law of divine assistance further opens a horizon of hope within *Miḥnah* by preserving faith, patience, and steadfastness, preventing a crisis from turning into historical despair. A society's ability to rebuild its cultural and social capacities after a crisis, in turn, depends on collective hope and confidence in the future (Peyghami & Mansouri, 2016 AD/1395 SH: 88).

Within this continuum of divine laws, *Tamkīn* (establishment or empowerment) and *Istikhlāf* (succession or divinely ordained stewardship) can be understood as stages in which the believing community's historical and civilizational capacities are realized. In this framework, *Tamkīn* does not simply mean attaining political power; rather, it refers to establishing divine values, consolidating religious identity, and forming a social order founded on justice. *Istikhlāf*, meanwhile, signifies a community's assumption of responsibility for organizing social life after passing through the stages of testing and steadfastness (Ṭabāṭabāʾī, 1996 AD/1417 AH: 4, 195; Javadi Amoli, 2006 AD/1385 SH: 9, 214).

Accordingly, *Miḥnah*-centered resilience emerges from the interaction of divine laws that guide a community from testing and purification (*Tamḥīṣ*) toward divine assistance, establishment, and stewardship. In this sense, a crisis does not mark the end of the process; rather, it constitutes one stage in the advancement of the community's identity, cohesion, and historical capacity. This is precisely where the fundamental difference between this model and a recovery-oriented understanding of resilience becomes apparent. In the Qur'anic model, successfully overcoming *Miḥnah* means reaching a state that transcends the community's previous condition (Nazarpoor, 1999 AD/1378 SH: 141).

4.1.3. Understanding the Philosophy of Hardship and Calamities

One cognitive strategy through which *Miḥnah* contributes to communities' resilience and civilization-building is understood the reality and underlying purpose of hardship and calamities. Regarding the reality of human life in this world, the Noble Qur'an states:

"We have certainly created man in hardship." (al-Balad:4)

The Arabic term *Kabad* means hardship, suffering, and difficulty (Rāghib Iṣfahānī, 1991 AD/1412 AH: 695). This meaning is supported by interpretations transmitted from *Ibn ʿAbbās* and others. *Ibn ʿAbbās*, *Saʿīd ibn Jubayr*, and *Ḥasan* are reported to have explained the verse as meaning that human beings experience toil, difficulty, and suffering, enduring the calamities of this world and the hardships of the Hereafter. The children of Adam continue to encounter hardship and distress until they depart from this world (Ṭabrisī, 1952 AD/1372 AH: 10, 747).

Exegetes, however, differ regarding the specific nature of the hardship described in this verse. Some maintain that human beings undergo numerous difficulties, pains, and hardships from the very beginning of life, even from the moment the sperm settles in the womb, through the stages of gestation and birth. After birth, people face various hardships in childhood and youth, with old age as the most difficult stage of all (Ṭabāṭabāʾī, 1996 AD/1417 AH: 10, 91).

Others argue that the verse refers to the difficulties of religious obligations: practicing religion involves hardship, and people must fulfill these obligations to attain salvation. Another group holds that the verse refers to the difficulties of the Hereafter, including death, which inspires fear in most people, followed by resurrection, apprehension about the final reckoning, and other experiences that are collectively arduous and overwhelming.

A fourth interpretation maintains that all three meanings are intended: human beings experience hardship in their worldly lives, in fulfilling religious obligations, and in matters associated with the Hereafter. Some exegetes have adopted this comprehensive interpretation (cf. Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī, 1999 AD/1420 AH: 31, 166).

At this stage, individuals and communities do not regard *Miḥnah* merely as a destructive event; instead, they reinterpret it within the horizon of divine wisdom. The Qur'an states:

"And We will surely test you with something of fear and hunger … But give good tidings to the patient." (al-Baqarah:155)

According to some exegetes, *Ibtilāʾ* serves as a precursor to awakening and revealing human beings' inner capacities (Makarem Shirazi et al., 1995 AD/1374 SH: 1, 533).

4.2. Behavioral Strategies of *Miḥnah* for Resilience and Civilization-Building among Communities

The most important behavioral strategies through which *Miḥnah* contributes to communities' resilience and civilization-building are as follows.

4.2.1. Supplication and Seeking Assistance from God

Supplication and seeking assistance from God are key Qur'anic strategies for strengthening resilience and promoting nations' civilization-building. An example of the connection between supplication, *Miḥnah*-centered resilience, and the ability to confront demanding responsibilities appears in the supplication of Prophet Moses in Surah *Ṭāhā*:

"My Lord, expand for me my breast." (Ṭāhā:25)

This supplication occurs at the beginning of Moses' momentous mission to confront Pharaoh, demonstrating that "Expansion of the breast," the expansion of the breast, understood as inner openness and spiritual capacity, is a prerequisite for undertaking weighty responsibilities. After asking God to expand his breast, Moses also requests that his task be made easier and that his speech be freed from impediment:

"And ease for me my task, and untie the knot from my tongue." (Ṭāhā:26-27)

This conceptual continuity indicates that "Expansion of the Breast" is an inner capacity that creates the conditions for effective action. The fact that a prophet of firm resolve asks God for this capacity shows that even at the highest levels of faith, human beings need expanded inner capacities to fulfill demanding responsibilities. This inner capacity entails the ability to withstand psychological pressure, exercise patience in the face of opposition, and maintain concentration under difficult circumstances, thereby preventing individuals from becoming confined to purely emotional reactions.

Another example is provided by Prophet Job, whom the Qur'an describes as saying:

"And [mention] Job, when he called to his Lord, "Indeed, adversity has touched me, and You are the Most Merciful of the merciful." (al-Anbiyāʾ:83)

Despite severe physical and material trials, Job maintained his connection with God and responded to the crisis with patience and steadfastness. The restoration of his blessings after this period demonstrates that, in the Qur'anic worldview, resilience is not merely enduring suffering. Rather, it means preserving one's faith-based identity and maintaining one's relationship with God under crisis conditions (Javadi Amoli, n.d.: 9, 214).

4.2.2. Strengthening Faith

The second behavioral strategy the Noble Qur'an identifies for fostering *Miḥnah*-centered resilience and civilization-building is faith. To encourage and exhort believers to engage in jihad and fight in the way of God, the Qur'an states:

"O Prophet, urge the believers to fight. If there are twenty steadfast among you, they will overcome two hundred; and if there are one hundred among you, they will overcome one thousand of those who disbelieve, because they are a people who do not understand." (al-Anfāl:65)

Some exegetes maintain that the reason the disbelievers are described as people who lack proper understanding is that the believers possess faith in God. This faith is an inner force with no equivalent, and the disbelievers lack the capacity to withstand its resistance (Ṭabāṭabāʾī, 1996 AD/1417 AH: 9, 138).

A crisis leads to resilience and civilization-building when faith enables pressure and insecurity to be transformed into tranquility and hope. The Qur'an states:

"Those to whom the people said, "Indeed, the people have gathered against you, so fear them." But it increased them in faith, and they said, "Allah is sufficient for us, and He is the best Disposer of affairs." So they returned with favor from Allah and bounty, no harm having touched them. They pursued the pleasure of Allah, and Allah is the Possessor of great bounty." (Āli ʿImrān:172-174)

In such circumstances, all an individual's spiritual and material resources are mobilized to confront the danger. This remarkable transformation over such a short period makes one aware of the speed and depth of the educational impact of the Qur'anic verses and the compelling, effective teachings of the Prophet of Islam (PBUH), an impact that approaches the level of a miracle (Makarem Shirazi et al., 1995 AD/1374 SH: 3, 178).

4.2.3. Patience and Steadfastness

Patience and steadfastness play a fundamental role as behavioral and ethical manifestations of *Miḥnah*-centered resilience**.** Patience enables one to keep moving forward under difficult circumstances. The Noble Qur'an presents patience as a means of seeking assistance in confronting challenges:

"O! You who believe, seek help through patience and prayer. Indeed, Allah is with the patient." (al-Baqarah:153)

The verse identifies patience and prayer as means of seeking assistance in the face of challenges (Ṭabāṭabāʾī, 1996 AD/1417 AH: 1, 412). It does not merely provide information about the future; rather, it establishes a horizon of meaning that transcends present circumstances. This horizon fosters inner tranquility, increases one's capacity to tolerate psychological pressure, and ultimately strengthens resilience.

Moreover, attention to the Hereafter's promised rewards for patience reinforces the motivation to remain resilient. The Qur'an mentions patience in about seventy verses, more than ten of which address the Prophet directly (Makarem Shirazi et al., 1995 AD/1374 SH: 12, 45). The Noble Qur'an states:

"Indeed, whoever fears Allah and is patient, and then surely Allah does not allow the reward of those who do good to be lost." (Yūsuf:90)

This verse links patience and God-consciousness with divine reward (Ṭabrisī, 1952 AD/1372 AH: 6, 123). It also shows that patience and God-consciousness are not unrewarded, even under prolonged suffering. Such assurance helps sustain an individual's motivation during difficult circumstances.

4.2.4. Maintaining Religious Identity and Adhering to Divine Values

At this stage, after overcoming difficult trials, a community redefines its historical identity and restores its civilizational cohesion. The Qur'an articulates this process through concepts such as *Tamkīn* (establishment or empowerment) and *Istikhlāf* (succession or divinely ordained stewardship):

"Allah has promised those of you who believe … that He will surely grant them succession upon the earth." (al-Nūr:55)

Some exegetes regard *Istikhlāf* as the outcome of the believing community's historical steadfastness (Ṭabāṭabāʾī, 1996 AD/1417 AH: 15, 149).

Overall, *Miḥnah*-centered resilience offers a conceptual framework for explaining the relationship among *Miḥnah*, faith, action, and identity reconstruction within the Qur'anic worldview. The histories of the divinely guided communities recounted in the Noble Qur'an are replete with trials and crises that have played a fundamental role in shaping their religious and social identities. One of the most important dimensions of this reconstruction is reviving the connection between faith and social action. The Qur'an states:

"So do not lose heart and do not grieve, and you will be superior if you are [true] believers." (Āli ʿImrān 3:139)

Makarem Shirazi regards faith as a factor that sustains morale and prevents psychological and social disintegration (Makarem Shirazi et al., 1995 AD/1374 SH: 3, 91). Accordingly, reconstructing the discourse of Qur'anic resilience requires strengthening society's spiritual foundations and restoring historical hope to collective life.

Reconstructing this discourse also requires reviving the concept of the *Ummah* as a spiritual and historical body. The Qur'an presents believers as a community entrusted with a historical mission, thereby elevating resilience from the individual level to the collective and civilizational levels. Other scholars regard the culture of resistance as a social process grounded in reproducing meaning and identity within Islamic society (Shahbazpour et al., 2023 AD/1402 SH: 194). Within this framework, *Miḥnah* can strengthen social solidarity and restore the community's historical. Having explained the model of *Miḥnah*-centered resilience, its potential to reinterpret Qur'anic discourse on resilience in relation to contemporary societies can now be examined. This reinterpretation seeks to reconsider the relationship among crisis, identity, and social endurance in light of Qur'anic teachings.

Contemporary Muslim societies face not only political and economic crises but also crises of meaning, erosion of identity, and cultural fragmentation. In such circumstances, resilience is not limited to enduring external pressures; it also entails a society's ability to preserve coherence in its system of meaning, reproduce historical hope, and reconstruct its cultural identifying.

At the same time, the contemporary world is experiencing a form of semantic and media warfare aimed at weakening religious identities and generating cultural instability. In this environment, Qur'anic resilience cannot be achieved solely by strengthening material resources; it also requires rebuilding society's cultural and epistemic capital. Some scholars identify the erosion of cultural identity as one of the media age's most significant threats and emphasize the need to develop resilient cultural strategies (Mokhber Dezfouli et al., 2015 AD/1394 SH: 61).

4.2.5. Action-Oriented Engagement

At this stage, individuals and communities move beyond passivity and transform a crisis into an opportunity for active reform and reconstruction. The Qur'an states:

"Indeed, Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves." (al-Raʿd:11)

Nazarpoor likewise maintains that social transformation depends on reconstructing a society's system of meaning and its cultural practices (Nazarpoor, 1999 AD/1378 SH: 88). Accordingly, Qur'anic resilience is not merely enduring a crisis; it is an active process of overcoming it and bringing about a new state of affairs.

The experience of the Children of Israel also offers an important example for analyzing *Miḥnah* and community resilience from a Qur'anic perspective. The Qur'an does not regard the deliverance of the Children of Israel from Pharaoh's domination as the end of their crisis; rather, it presents this deliverance as the beginning of a new stage of historical responsibility. After being freed from tyranny, they were repeatedly subjected to divine trials and faced a choice between remaining faithful to the divine covenant and succumbing to worldly pursuits and disobedience. Nasri regards these trials as part of the Qur'anic process of humanity's historical education, whose purpose is to actualize the community's latent capacities for faith and moral conduct (Nasri, 2000 AD/1379 SH: 203). This experience demonstrates that overcoming a crisis does not, in itself, guarantee a society's lasting stability. Rather, the continuity of religious identity and adherence to divine values are essential conditions for sustainable resilience.

After examining the experiences of earlier communities, the Qur'an presents a more comprehensive model of resilience during the Prophet's mission. During the Meccan period, the first Muslims faced social pressure, economic boycotts, physical persecution, and cultural exclusion. Yet, rather than collapsing the nascent Islamic community, these *Miḥnahs* strengthened its monotheistic identity and cohesion of faith. The Meccan verses demonstrate how the Qur'an reinforced the Muslims' doctrinal and social foundations amid crisis by emphasizing patience, trust in God, and steadfastness (Qara'ati, 2004 AD/1383 SH: 1, 245; Delshad Tehrani, 2016 AD/1395 SH: 118). At this stage, resilience did not mean enduring

pressure passively; rather, it became a process through which the Muslim community developed an independent identity.

With the migration to Medina, the Islamic community entered a new phase characterized by political, military, and economic trials. During this period, crises became more complex, compelling the Muslim community to establish new institutional and social mechanisms to sustain its collective existence. Qur'anic verses on jihad, unity, consultation, and social governance suggest that the Qur'an sought to cultivate active, community-building resilience. This resilience enabled the Islamic community to sustain its social life under crisis conditions. It transformed it from a small community of believers into an *Ummah* possessing social organization and civilizational capacity (Abū Ḥayyān Andalusī, 1999 AD/1420 AH: 3, 74).

Discussion and Conclusion

The present study sought to explain the concept of *Miḥnah* and examine its role in communities' resilience and civilization-building from the perspective of the Noble Qur'an. The findings demonstrate that, within the Qur'anic framework, *Miḥnah* means more than suffering, hardship, or trial. Rather, it is one of the divine laws that operate in the process of guidance, purification, education, and the historical development of individuals and societies. Accordingly, *Miḥnah* extends beyond individual testing. As a divinely ordained mechanism, it creates the conditions for revealing the truth of faith, achieving inner purification, strengthening social cohesion, and directing the historical trajectory of communities.

An analysis of the concepts associated with *Miḥnah*, including *Balāʾ* (trial or affliction), *Ibtilāʾ* (testing), *Fitnah* (tribulation), *Ṣabr* (patience), *Tamḥīṣ* (purification through trial), *Tamkīn* (establishment or empowerment), and *Istikhlāf* (succession or divinely ordained stewardship), demonstrates that these concepts form a semantic network through which a crisis can be transformed from a merely threatening event into an opportunity for reform, reconstruction, and the advancement of individuals and societies. Within this framework, *Miḥnah* is not the endpoint of social life but a threshold for the transformation and historical renewal of communities.

An examination of divinely guided communities in the Noble Qur'an also shows that communal resilience depends less on material resources than on how a crisis is interpreted and on the quality of a community's faith-based response and conscious action in confronting *Miḥnah*. The experiences of the Muslim community during the Prophet's mission, the Children of Israel, and other Qur'anic communities indicate that societies that have interpreted *Miḥnah* within the framework of divine laws have been able to transform crises into opportunities to strengthen religious identity, enhance social cohesion, and sustain their historical trajectory. By contrast, communities that responded to *Miḥnah* with arrogance, excessive worldliness, or an identity rupture followed a path of decline and disintegration.

The findings further show that, beyond developing collective resilience, *Miḥnah* plays a fundamental role in communities' civilization-building. Within the Qur'anic framework, consciously overcoming *Miḥnah* creates the conditions for developing a civilizational identity, strengthening spiritual capital and social cohesion, and attaining divine *Tamkīn* and *Istikhlāf*. Examination of contemporary examples, including the Islamic Revolution and the

resistance movement, also suggests that when a crisis is interpreted in light of faith and divine laws, it becomes a factor in reconstructing cultural, social, and civilizational capacities.

On this basis, the conceptual model of "*Miḥnah*-centered resilience" shows that, in the Qur'anic worldview, resilience is not merely enduring pressure or returning to a previous state. Rather, it is a dynamic, transformative process through which a community sustains its historical and civilizational continuity by reshaping the meaning it attributes to a crisis, consolidating faith, developing responsible action, and reconstructing individual and collective identity.

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