



REVIEW ARTICLE

THE QURANIC SYMBOLISM

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ABSTRACT

The quranic symbolism is the use of quran from the symbols and signs that show and instruct us the religious facts because where ever that the words cannot say the facts, symbols are the best. The quranic symbolism is a very specific beauty, Gnostics out of the eminent states of the religion. And it is also a bout the other world and faith to metaphysics or resurrection or Gnosticism. The symbol should be considered as a part of human thought and early attempt of human in the direction of intellectual transition compartment of his spirit .the existing symbols in very cultural domain are the keys to understanding philosophical problems and mystic religious problems related to the domain which help us highly to analyze the content of the existing context of the culture. In symbolism cognition the problem of culture is much more important than literate .human soul is definitely more developed than the symbols based on the amount of its evolution. more dynamic and is capable of taking more benefit .in dealing with the symbols, we must not look for limited and experimental concept. we must consider fundamental feature related to it, that is to say going beyond oneself , which is the characteristic of transcendentalism of the symbol, because the symbol manifests itself clearly ,but also accompanies itself some sort of attempt to provide meanings and spectra to carry along its addressee beyond inward. Consequently the symbol direction is inward from multiply to unity and contains a developed spectrum of concepts.

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INTRODUCTION

Symbol

Every thing that by association of similarity or linguistic convention is the token of abstract and insensible meaning. Symbol, in fact, is a sign that due to its inner characteristics. Both from the geometrical shape, color, kind, odors, composition and complex composition it inspires a specific kind of pictures in the listener or readers mind.

Symbolism

Recognition and the use of symbols in literature and arts but also they are in all religious books of all religions and also in some of philosophical and agnostically texts. the mysteries hints, allusions, ambiguities, indication, inductions, metaphors, pomp's, music's, visionaries, fancies, colors, spaces, wonders are not only in the wants to have in itself the other signs and instruments it would be the creator of a process that is called symbolism(nazerzadeh,3) . The term symbolism is often used in contrast to interpretation and in

agreeable to paraphrasing. Paraphrasing of symbols into abstract meaning is the most important duty of religions.

Quranic symbolism

The quranic symbolism is the use of quran from the symbols and signs that show and instruct us the religious facts because where ever that the words cannot say the facts, symbols are the best. The quranic symbolism is a very specific beauty, Gnostics out of the eminent states of the religion. And it is also a bout the other world and faith to metaphysics or resurrection or Gnosticism.

General aspects of the quran language:

1. Structural
2. Meaning fullness
3. Cognitive ness
4. symbolical

this characteristic is based on the fact that man makes use of symbols to communicate with others , these symbols are partlyconventional and differ from one culture to another these words and signs are called symbols, because these words by themselves are nothing special or no special sound , but because of meaningfulness Convey a special meaning , in fact the symbols reflect the innate concepts of human beings are used in communication and interactions.

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The most important characteristics of the quranic symbols

1. An important part of the quranic symbols had been used in divine religious in holy books (old and new testaments) before Islam, even by prophets before Mohammad (p.b.u.h) concepts such as empyrean heaven (arsh), throne in heaven (korsi), kingdom of heaven (malakout), the holy spirit (rouh- alqodos), and so forth.
2. Some of the symbols are special to the holy quran. A number of symbols have been only used in the quran. they have not been used in any other heavenly books and some of these symbols have only been used once in the quran, such as «preserved tabula» (the mother book) (ommol – kitab) «the indisputable book» (kitab- al mobin) unfortunately due to the illiteracy of muslims with books who have claimed to have awareness of all the symbols, in most cases have created some sort of confusion for Muslims and have set them apart from comprehending the quranic symbols.

The interpretation of some quranic symbols interpreted in related verses

In occasions symbols have been used in the holy quran which can be attained by referring to the quran interpretation, however due to the lack of insight in the field of symbolism, their real concepts have not yet understood, for instance, in the surah 24:35 (noor verse) a number of symbols have been used, such as «light» (noor), «light holder» (mishkah), «lamp» (misbah), «trance parent glass» (al-zojajah), «the shining star» (al- kawkab _al dorri), «the blessed olive tree» (al- shajarat- al- zaytoonat- almobarakat), and other symbols of the light verse (ayah- al- noor) which according to allamah tabatabaee «have been explained and interpreted in previous or later verses (tabatabaee, 121). For instance the light holder is mentioned in surah 24:36-8: (This lamp is found in houses which Allah hath allowed to be exalted and that His name shall be remembered therein. Therein do offer praise to Him at morn and evening (ibid: 24:36). Men whom neither merchandise nor sale beguiled from remembrance of Allah And constancy in prayer and paying to the poor their due; who fear a day when hearts and eyeballs will be overturned. (ibid:37). That Allah may reward them with the best of what they did, and increase reward for them of His bounty. Allah gives blessings without stint to whom He will. (ibid:38). 3. Interpretation of a number of quranic symbols in «narration» and saying handed by followers (sahabah) and household of the Mohammad prophet (p.b.u.h): In hadiths and narrations by the prophets and the household of the prophet (p.b.u.h) hundreds of symbols could be found of which the related narrations have been used and have been interpreted by another preserved personality, and even most of the recorded prayers and religious speeches, a lot of symbols exist which can be extracted and compiled as a unique collection of religious symbols concerning knowledge of divine matters which can of high value to enhance Islam and introduce it to the world to serve the society.

Another part of the quranic symbols, cultural symbols of non- Arab tribes and non- Semitics

The purpose of the quran to mention symbols of this kind is to explain the history of the prophets, their struggles in the direction of truth, and fight against «paganism»,

«polytheism», and publication of the symbols, for instance, worshiping «the calf» Has been mentioned in the surah. «And when We did appoint for Moses forty nights of solitude, and then ye chose the calf, when he had gone from you, and were wrong-doers». Certainly, the practice was due to worship the cow in ancient Egypt. The memmonna which was the goddess of the Hebrews; Fidel's which were under the influence the special cow, called «apiece», worshiped by the Egyptians. Following this people worshiped the cow (baqarah) and the calf (al-ejle). the Hebrews on the plain of Sinai rebuilt and recreated «the calf». Again and decorated it for worshiping. this is why it has been mentioned as an acceptable practice in the quran, and we read in 2:93. And when we made with you a covenant and caused the Mount to tower above you, saying (: Hold fast by that which We have given you, and hear) Our Word they said: We hear and we rebel. And) worship of (the calf was made to sink into their hearts because of their rejection) of the covenant (. Say) unto them (: Evil is that which your belief enjoined on you, if ye are believers. Drinking of the gold calf of Israelites is the symbol of inner fidelity and denying in the invitation of prophets by Hebrews and it can also be a symbol of Semitics solidarity for the Jews in Arabian Peninsula. Consequently to recognize a great number of the quranic symbols, we must get acquainted with the symbols in the holy quran and Semitics tribes as well in same way as they have been mentioned in the quran.

Investigations the opinions of those who are in favor of symbols and those who are against the symbols

Philosophers and Gnostics, due to rational in sight and view points are the first and the most serious supporters of the quranic Symbolism. apparently the first steps in symbolism of the quran scientifically have been taken by the household of the prophet of the Islam. The sufists quoted Abu Abdullah – al Sadegh saying that:

God's book is on four things known as:

- 1-Passages
- 2-Sings
- 3-Gnostic implications
- 4-Truths

The passages for the commoners

Sings for the privileged

Gnostic implications for holy peoples

Truths for the Prophets (Sollami, 21)

In the field of interpretation of the similes in the Quran, Abu Abdullah jafar bin mohammad al- sadegh has recognized them in a symbolic and interprets them in a symbolic method, and through this methodology he interpreted and clarified most of the problems of interpretation by making use of the quranic symbolism and rescued lots of Muslims from falling in to the more as of the superficial qualities- definitely, the Gnostics who followed him dealt with interpretation of his works and tried to explain most of the quranic verses. So the explanations in this field can be attained through careful reading of the book called «hints» an explanation on interpretation. Even most of philosophers have adopted Abu Abdullah al- sadegh's classification as the title for guidance, and this is why we hear Ave Sina in «the al.shifa» saying: There is no doubt that the text of the quran contains a variety of hints and implications which comes talented people to realize and identify complicated discussions of mandatory (Ave Sina, 441).

Mohyeddin al – arabi and quranic symbolism

One of the oldest articles about the quranic symbolism in: «*fotouhat al- makkiah*» is written by mohyeddin al – arabi: He suggests related to meanings of verses and similar narrations:

1- there are groups who are neither men of simile nor illustration .they leave the science and knowledge in divine's word to you and his prophets and take no steps in interpreting and explanation , they are just satisfied with the contents of words and letters in the verses without making any comments or suggests . They just say: « I don't know », they don't believe in similarities interpretations because god say's « there is nothing like itself».they don't look upon it rationally, they accept it obediently. However, the learned people who believe in appearance, those who hold on the quran superficially and don't accept imagination and concentration, and their beliefs are exonerated from any simile and ignoring divines attributions.

2- the second group belongs to those who believe that the conventional sounds and words from the intellectual point of view are below the dignity of God, and make use of specific characteristics endowed with God , and the problem remains that« is it the only purpose of interpretation». However this kind of interpretation related to divinity will not create any problem. It will also attract a few scholars to get involved in interpretation as far as the domain of words and expressions allows them (different phases of philology and lexic in the Arabic language) related to cases of purification, nothing also (simile and exemplification). Lived before us, from different tribes mentioned in history, who were in favour of interpretation, explanation and discussion .this sacred and holly groups who have been successful confess that the greatness of God has been manifested in their hearts and say that we cannot attain to everything which has been descended no matter how we think precisely and deeply, the later group of Gnostics look like narrators with acceptable and accurate beliefs. Because they are nether in favour of intellectuality or interpretation, and they have spent no time in explanation of verses or narrations in detail, they just say we cannot make it out consequently our followers try to confirm with this point of view.

Ibn arabi invokes like the following:

- 1-the All compassionate sat Himself upon the Throne5:20
- 2- He is with you wherever you are 4:57
- 3- There is no secret conference of three but He is their fourth 7:58

It has been proved by rational proof « that almighty God has created times, places, directions, sound, letters, words, expressions, any thing which is articulated by language. All the occurrences which are produced in human speech». consequently the learned Gnostic finds out that these parts of speech which apparently symbolize simile , when attributed to Mohammed prophet (p.b.u.h) have different meanings from what we assume and all the researchers who believe in inspiration all believe that the to Mohammed prophet is not explained through these words, as we interpret objects in the universe. However this is special words and expression proper for the holy existence of almighty God according these researchers. These are the words which have been used to convey meaning to the audience and each human takes benefit

from thus words as much as he grasps the meaning. So belief in duty and commitment is the simplest task, since the universe is built up on it. The easiest job for a person in doubt is to remain on the nature of duty , and be different from the in fields who believe in illustration which is the base of their infidelity no matter how they try to prove the existence physically. But due to the limitation of their awareness. The only way to prove the existence of God is to use imagination to get to the shore of salvation(Ibn arabi72-6).

Tabatabae and quranic symbolism

It can be concluded from the allamah tabatabae,s descriptions that since conventional words and speech fall short to meet human needs , regarding expressing and clarifying the concepts and universal truth ands and divine and knowledge about God , there are two groups who have tried to explain highly advanced knowledge and understanding as below:

1. The first groups are the prophets who are in close contact with higher worlds, yet they are close to materialistic life, however, they follow the Order of the narration(Hadith) : « We, the hous of prophets, have order and missioned to talk to people depending on the level of their insight. No more it(Kolaini, 23). Consequently, we have dispensed with the realities related to light and highly and highly illuminative issue which have not yet been inspired in any human , so they tried to dispose themselves , not proceeding any further, issue like the reality of « houris 22:56» ,(nymph) and the like.: « Not even an eye, an ear, or a heart has ever seen, heard or felt the guilty of paradise portion(Bokhari . 3005). Mohammed prophet has suggested interpretations such as paradise. However they are so confused that they cannot identify the realities of other worlds which are not so easy to be clearly explained.
2. There is another group of people who were fortunate enough to follow the prophets line and were able to realize the truths and gifts depending on their capacities. These people have also spoken metaphorically through exemplification(hosaini tehrani ,1980) . considering this statement by tabatabae it seems that what comes to our mind to mention « the real knowledge of divine» is only one drop from the vast ocean , because the language ability to express religious knowledge and the general understanding of this issue is of symbolic type and only its sounds , words, and expression are used to create and convey some sort of meaning within the imaginative frame of the addressee through the usage of words which posses some sort of similarities in concepts.

The nature of divine revelation and its reality

In order to realize the meaning of the quranic symbols and avoid any uncertainty, the author feels an obligation to state a few points in this connection: The quran language is the language of religion, and Islam language is also a part of religion language with a more developed insight compared with previous religions and tried to establish communication with people.

The quranic language is the language of revelation however, we must be conscious to realize the fact that the language is not capable of communication for all levels of society due to the following reasons:

- A. in certain occasions the quran has talked about «nature, man, human nature» through divine revelations and parts of revelation includes:
- B. Religious direction, social, political, economical, cultural, and historical topics appropriate to the cause of the descendent of the proper verse to fit the right situation, so we call it the nature of revelation (shariat).
- C. the other important of the quranic language is the language of truth and the purpose of divine revelation has been the truths in non-material world related to human soul, kingdom of heaven (malakout), the highest heaven (jabarout), the spiritual world (lahout), and the required knowledge to pass the way to reach the promised worlds.

This type of revelation is called «the reality of revelation». In order to explain non-material world of existence, sometimes the quran depicts a picture by making use of material phrases and pictorial images and invites human intellectuality to comprehend minimum amount of realities. From human point of view these material images contain spiritual meaning and inner concepts in such a way that they push man a head to reach divine destination (reality) at a higher speed. Material images of this kind which demonstrate non-material worlds to man are the same symbols. Understanding them depends on the realizations symbols existing in the verses.

As a matter of fact, the quranic symbols are the nature of truths and existence of religious knowledge which are meant to assist believers to realize the minimum amount of divine truths and knowledge, that is to say reaching «the reality of reality». Originates from the nature of reality through quranic interpretation related to the nature of revelation and quranic interpretation to get to reality, as was observed in previous discussions, the similar verses of the quranic are those which contain material words and images concerning ideology to mohyeddin al-arabi. Verses of the this type can be attributed to the second group known as «reality of revelation», so interpretation similar verses can be considered a method to identify the exactness of revelation in every single verse. so the ambiguous (metaphorical) verses are those which contain nature and the reality of nature, they are similar verses that interpret nature, the reality of revelation which is the minimum amount of recognizing the symbol existing in them. It is at this critical point where the quranic symbolism reaches its highest point, and here religious awareness is the very goal of interpretation in order to distinguish the minimum amount of non-material worlds in existence through available symbols.

The quranic symbolism and traditional religions

Conclusively, the quranic symbols are not free from historical background. The quranic symbols, Arabic symbols, are of Semitic type which have certainly been used in the religions in Semites and even the tribes of Semitic have adapted symbols from neighboring nations and used it in certain concepts and the same used had been made from the quran.

For instance the symbol of «the heart» about which the Egyptian talked in calculating their deeds in the dooms day. This symbol entered Arabic culture by the Hebrews. The same with the symbol of the «bird» which had the same fate as «The heart». It must be pointed out that most of quranic symbols are better understood by studying the holy book and are capable of interpreting. The reason lies in the language of religion, since in spite of the existing differences in religions they possess their own language of interpretation, consequently any confusion regarding the understanding of this language prevents the clergy from understanding each others point of views. This symbolic and exegetical language must possess features and dimensions of its own and each nation and tribe must have use of it to communicate with others according to its likes to convey special purposes. Interactions of this type in quranic symbols are mostly found in Hebrews and Christian in the bible and the second priority regarding symbols is given to Egyptian, and Greece respectively. Certainly the quranic possesses its own proper symbols in unique way, some of which like, «the world of small particles» «the highest part of the horizon» «the evident book» «farthest lotus tree» «the mother book» and «the abbreviated letters of 29 suras» have been discussed previously for example the author interprets symbol of tree in the quran.

The tree symbol in the adventure of creation in the quran

Tree is considered as one of the symbolic ideas which is highly rich. Since the tree changes constantly, it is the symbol of life and through its growth upward toward the sky is known as the vertical symbol. On the other hand the tree is a symbol which reflects space changes, specially the leaves which represent death and reborn. (Schwaltet, J. 2002c) the tree of life grows in the middle of heaven. Pre-eternal waters flow from these trees, pictures of the tree of life originate from the holy book. Some symbols of Semites have the same root. The tree of life is one of the most complicated symbols which is the backbone of religious concepts and is known as an international principle existing in all historical cultures of the world. The tree of life is a symbol resulting from the sky and the earth and is a symbol for spiritual and enlightening feeding (Cooper, 2000). In the Hebrew culture the tree of life has grown from upper part to lower part and looks like a sun which gives light to everything. This symbol by itself represents prosperity. The life tree of Hebrew grows in the middle of Jerusalem in Christian culture fruit tree symbolizes man, since it has got both good fruits and evil fruits (ibid). Probably because the Latin word for "apple" and for "evil" are identical (malum), the apple came to represent the forbidden fruit of the Garden of Eden. It is therefore often used to symbolize the fall into sin, or of sin itself. When Christ is portrayed holding an apple, He is acknowledged as the Second Adam who brings life. 1Cor. 15:21. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. 22 For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. (NIV)

In the holy book also the tree has got a symbolic meaning, where we read: Wicked people were seen as strong as a green tree with an umbrella, however, it vanished and now it is invisible, because I searched for it but it wasn't found (psalm 37: 35-7). Any sapling (young tree) not planted by my heavenly father is outrooted and stops

growing(matthew:15:13). These 2 witnesses the 2 olive trees are 2 illuminative lamps standing in the presence of the earthy God. They will remain in power for three and half years to announce God,s messagege to people they will have full authority they stop the rain if they like(john revelation 11:4-6)in the holy quran the worl of al shajar(tree) implies the quality of tree as a natural object except for 52:54 . however most of usages of al shajarah (special tree) in the quran are symbolic except for 23:20, 31:27, 37: 146, 48:18.

Tree of immorality

We read about of this tree in quran

And when We said unto the angels: Prostrate yourselves before Adam, they fell prostrate, all save Iblis. He demurred through pride, and so became a disbeliever. 34:2. And unto man (: O Adam! Dwell thou and thy wife in the Garden and eat from whence ye will, but come not nigh this tree lest ye become wrong-doers.) 35:2. Then Satan whispered to them that he might manifest unto them that which was hidden from them of their shame, and he said: Your Lord forbade you from this tree only lest ye should become angels or become of the immortals.) (And he swore unto them) saying (: Lo! I am a sincere adviser unto you) Thus did he lead them on with guile. And when they tasted of the tree their shame was manifest to them and they began to hide) by heaping (on themselves some of the leaves of the Garden. And their Lord called them,) saying (: Did I not forbid you from that tree and tell you: Lo! Satan is an open enemy to you?).

They said: Our Lord! We have wronged ourselves. If thou forgive us not and have not mercy on us, surely we are of the lost!)

(He said: Go down) from hence (, one of you a foe unto the other. There will be for you on earth a habitation and provision for a while.):19-22:7

The adventure of fruit from the forbidden tree has already been mentioned and we call this tree external tree of good and evil since this tree caused Adam to lose his eternal life and became mortall but generation of Adam and his chisren continued to resurrection time.that tree wasn't tree of life of Adam but is was tree of life of Adam children generation. many names of natural tree have been mentioned for the tree which won,t he mentioned in this in this article because none of them is symbolic, however we only point out symbolic interpretation of Islamic authors then we will deal with general conclusion in details.

The tree of awareness (tousi,m 1955a). Eating the fruit from tree was only for angles and gave them eternal life. (Dimashqi.I. 1998a). The tree of prophet mohammad knowledge. (Al Askari, 1988). The porpuse of prohibition of the tree was trialing (some sort of testing) the paradise mentioned above was not eternal and the attainment of satan to man is extrinsic and man,s creation on the earth is something like animal birth as we notice it apparently(hosaini hamedani.m. 1983a). Tree of natures of man.(sadra, ma.1977a). Sign of human body style(qoshairi, a,2000a) taking under careful consideration the style of verses related to the forbidden tree it seems that:

The tree is a symbol to express an internal truth related to man,s creation. Since the tree is a symbol for fertility so eating from it and putting it is use in any form causes fecundation and generating human beings. We said: Go down, all of you, from hence; but verily there cometh unto you from Me a guidance; and who so follow My guidance, there shall no fear come upon them neither shall they grieve).But they who disbelieve, and deny Our revelations, such are rightful Peoples of the Fire. They will abide therein.2:38-9

Reflects this reality additionally in 20:7 and 7:22 points out the case of nakedness of Adam and covering the body with loaves. The recent remark implies sexual feeling and attraction power within them and those who live around Them and are not intimate. Thus did he lead them on with guile?. And when they tasted of the tree their shame was manifest to them and they began to hide) by heaping (on themselves some of the leaves of the Garden. And their Lord called them,) saying (Did I not forbid you from that tree and tell you: Lo! Satan is an open enemy to you? 22:7 Consequently bashfulness and timidity dominated them. Fertilization and increasing human population take place through sexual intercourse between male and female. It is concluded that adam and Eve were settled in heaven and were not so aware of their own sexuality, but through the transmigration .of soul in body and eating from the tree they suddenly got aware of their own nakedness and made an attem to cover themselves with tree leaves. The story implies that this unexpected incidence is a sign of new understanding of sexual difference of the two and other living creatures and timidity and shyness in born in Adam and Eve and other creatures. Soon after eating the forbidden fruit falling down on earth occurred so that human generation could become deputy of God on his earth . the author is of the opinion that 5-6 interpretation is more compatible with the quranic verses and best interpretation of the tree symbol is: Sign of human body style.

Conclusion

- A. The best refrences for interpretation of quran symbols are the verses of quran and narrations of Islamic prophet and the household and effort has been made to do research on both types of narrations through Shiites and sunnites.
- B. symbols of quran are semitic symbols in addition that they are Arabic.therefore, for deep understanding of these symbols it has been tried to understand semitic culture before islam and in some casese , it it has been usedfor better interpretation of symbols.
- C. Some of the non semitic symbols such as Egyptian, roman, greek and Iranian symbols can be observed in quran indicating wide use of symbols by quran and recognition of symbols of sch tribes helps interpret yheir symbols in quran.

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