

## Love for The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) in the Qur'an, *al-Tawbah 9:24*: Interpretative Traditions\*

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### Abstract

Love as a feeling is in the core of the life. In other words, attitudes, acts and behaviours are directly or indirectly linked to love. Given that it is a set of rules to shape life, religion is based on divine love, through which human beings obey the commandments of God. As stated in the Qur'an, *al-Tawbah 9:24*, divine love is constituted of love for Allah, His Messenger (pbuh) and jihad in His way. is part of divine love in Islam. This paper will examine the interpretative traditions of *tafsirs* regarding the verse in the question. For the study, only ten renowned classical *tafsirs* between al-Tabari and Abu al-Suud have been chosen. The study endeavours to answer the following: How did the *tafsirs* deal with the theme of love for the Prophet (pbuh) in the verse? In terms of interpretation, what are the similarities, which perhaps indicate inter-exegetic relations, and the differences, which may show a unique contribution to the Qur'anic exegesis, between them?

**Keywords:** Love, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), Qur'an, Tafsir.

### Kur'an'da Hz. Peygamber (sav) sevgisi, *Tevbe 9:24*: Yorumsal Gelenekler

#### Öz

Sevgi, bir duygu olarak hayatın merkezindedir. Başka bir ifadeyle; tutumlar, eylemler ve davranışlar direkt veya dolaylı olarak sevgiyle ilintilidir. Hayatı şekillendiren kaideler bütünü olması hasebiyle, din insanların Tanrı'nın buyruklarına itaat etmesini sağlayan ilahî sevgi üzerine kuruludur. Kur'an'da *Tevbe 9:24*'te ifade edildiği üzere ilahî sevgi, Allah'a, Elçisine (sav) ve yolunda cihada duyulan sevgiden müteşekkildir. Bu makale, söz konusu âyete dair tefsirlerdeki yorumsal gelenekleri inceleyecektir. Araştırma kapsamında, Taberî'den Ebussuud'a meşhur olan sadece on klasik tefsir seçilmiştir. Çalışma şu sorulara yanıt bulmaya çalışacaktır: Tefsirler bu ayetteki Hz. Peygamber (sav) sevgisi temasını nasıl ele almışlardır? Yorumlama açısından onlardaki tefsirlerarası ilişkileri gösterebilecek benzerlikler ve Kur'an tefsirine nadide bir katkı olarak değerlendirilebilecek farklılıklar nelerdir?

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Sevgi, Hz.Peygamber (sav), Kur'an, Tefsir.

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## Introduction

In the Qur'an, while some verses introduce the characteristics and position of the Prophet (pbuh), the others guide the believers to the correct treatment towards him, showing an ideal relationship with the Messenger (pbuh). The present study will examine a verse among the latter, namely *al-Tawbah* 9:24. Containing the root verb *ḥ-b-b* ("to love"), only *al-Tawbah* 9:24 makes mention of love for the Prophet (pbuh). Attesting the high relevance of the said verse with the theme, a chapter in *al-Shifā bi-Ta'rif Huqūq al-Muṣṭafā* by al-Qādī 'Iyād (d.544/1149), a leading source dealing with the attributes of the Prophet and his veneration, is titled 'on the necessity of love for the Prophet (pbuh)'. The chapter starts by stating 'This (verse, 9:24) is sufficient to be a proof for the compulsion (*'ilzām*) of love for him...'<sup>1</sup>

However, it is implied by the verses about following (e.g. 3:31), obeying (e.g. 4:80) and priority or closeness (e.g.33:6) of the Messenger (pbuh). Rather than loving him, the Qur'an repeatedly speaks of "obeying" the Prophet (pbuh) as obedience to Allah is an essential proof of love for him. The Qur'an, which indicates that following the Prophet is the manifestation of love for Allah, declares that the Prophet is closer to the believers than even their own selves, implying how great love of the believers for the Prophet (pbuh) is.

As for the discussion of *al-Tawbah* 9:24, its Arabic text will be given, followed by a translation.

The following classical commentaries (*tafsirs*) will be cited and discussed:

- 1) Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. Jarīr b. Yazīd al-Ṭabarī (d.310/923)<sup>2</sup>, *Jāmi' al-Bayān 'an Ta'wīl 'Āy al-Qur'ān*
- 2) Abū 'Ishāq Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. 'Ibrāhīm al-Tha'labī (d.427/1035)<sup>3</sup>, *al-Kashf wa al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*
- 3) Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī b. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Wāhidī (d.468/1075)<sup>4</sup>, *al-Wasīt fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Majīd*
- 4) Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥusain b. Mas'ūd b. Muḥammad al-Baghawī (d.516/1122)<sup>5</sup>, *Ma'ālim al-Tanzīl fī al-Tafsīr*

<sup>1</sup> al-Qādī 'Iyād, *al-Shifā*, II/13.

<sup>2</sup> al-Dāwūdī. n.d. *Ṭabaqāt al-Mufasssīrīn* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1999), II/110; Ibn al-Imad. *Shadharāt al-Dhahab fī Akhbar Man Dhahab*. (Damascus and Beirut: Dar Ibn Kathir, 1995), IV/53.

<sup>3</sup> al-Dāwūdī, *Ṭabaqāt*, I/66; *Shadharāt*, V/127.

<sup>4</sup> al-Dāwūdī, *Ṭabaqāt*, I/394; *Shadharāt*, V/291.

<sup>5</sup> al-Dāwūdī, *Ṭabaqāt*, I/161; *Shadharāt*, VI/79.

- 5) Abū al-Qāsim Maḥmūd b. ‘Umar b. Muḥammad al-Zamakhsharī (d.538/1143)<sup>6</sup>, *al-Kashshāf ‘an Ḥaqā’iq al-Tanzīl wa ‘Uyūn al-Aqāwīl fī Wujūh al-Ta’wīl*
- 6) Abū ‘Abdullāh Muḥammad b. ‘Umar b. al-Ḥusain al-Rāzī (also known as Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī) (d.606/1209)<sup>7</sup>, *Maḥāṣin al-Ghaib* (or *al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr*)
- 7) Abū ‘Abdullāh Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Abī Bakr<sup>8</sup> al-Qurṭubī (d. 671/1272)<sup>9</sup>, *al-Jāmi‘ Aḥkām al-Qur’ān*<sup>10</sup>
- 8) Abū al-Khair ‘Abdullāh b. ‘Umar b. Muḥammad al-Baiḍāwī (d.685/1286)<sup>11</sup>, *‘Anwār al-Tanzīl wa ‘Asrār al-Ta’wīl*
- 9) Abū al-Fidā’ Ismā‘īl b. ‘Umar b. Kathīr (also known as Ibn Kathīr) (d.774/1372)<sup>12</sup>, *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-‘Aẓīm*
- 10) Abū al-Su‘ūd Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Mustafa al-‘Imādī (d.982/1574)<sup>13</sup>, *‘Irshād al-‘Aql al-Salīm ilā Mazāyā al-Kitāb al-Karīm*

### 1. Al-Tawbah 9:24

It is the most related verse in the Qur’an to the theme of love for the Prophet (pbuh) because it directly refers to it by means of the elative *‘aḥabb* (i.e. more beloved or the most beloved). As al-Qāḍī ‘Iyād (d.544/1149) has said, ‘this [i.e. this verse 9:24] is sufficient as an indicator towards the obligation of love for the Prophet’<sup>14</sup>.

The root *ḥ-b-b* referred to above (cf. *‘aḥabb*) occurs 95 times in the Qur’an<sup>15</sup>. Except one derivative meaning ‘grain or seed’ that is used 12 times, the other derivatives of the root are all about ‘loving and preferring as a result of loving’.

The keyword *‘aḥabb* (أَحَبُّ) is the elative form of *‘ḥabīb*, i.e. ‘beloved’ or ‘dear’. In *al-*

<sup>6</sup> al-Dāwūdī, *Ṭabaqāt*, II/314; *Shadharāt*, VI/194.

<sup>7</sup> al-Dāwūdī, *Ṭabaqāt*, II/215; *Shadharāt*, VII/40.

<sup>8</sup> Contrary to other sources, this name is placed in *Ṭabaqāt* of al-Suyūṭī as Abī Farḥ (not Abī Bakr).

<sup>9</sup> al-Dāwūdī, *Ṭabaqāt*, II/69; *Shadharāt*, VII/584

<sup>10</sup> Its complete title is *Jāmi‘ Aḥkām al-Qur’ān wa al-Mubayyin li ma-taḍammāna min al-Sunnah wa Āy al-Qur’ān*. This is according to *al-Dībāj al-Mudḥhab* (cf. id. 317) and al-Dāwūdī’s *Ṭabaqāt* (II/69). However, Ḥajī Khalīfah gives information about the said book with the title, *Jāmi‘ Aḥkām al-Qur’ān wa al-Mubayyin li ma-taḍammāna min al-Sunnah wa Āy al-Furqān*. Cf. Ḥajī Khalīfah, *Kashf al-Zunūn ‘an ‘Asāmī al-Kutub wa al-Funūn*, II/534.

<sup>11</sup> al-Dāwūdī, *Ṭabaqāt*, I/248; *Shadharāt*, VII/685.

<sup>12</sup> al-Dāwūdī, *Ṭabaqāt*, I/111; *Shadharāt*, VIII/397

<sup>13</sup> Ali b. Bālī, *al-‘Iqd al-Manzūm fī Dhikr ‘Afāḍil al-Rūm* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 1975), 440; Naw‘izādah ‘Atā’ī. *Ḥadā’iq al-Ḥaqā’iq fī Takmilah al-Shaqā’iq* (Istanbul: Çağrı Yayınları, 1989), 183; *Shadharāt*, X/584

<sup>14</sup> *al-Shifā*, II/13.

<sup>15</sup> Elsaid, M. Badawi and Muhammad Abdel Haleem. *Arabic-English Dictionary of Qur’anic Usage* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 186.

*Tawbah* 9:24 it is used as a comparative adjective, accompanied by the preposition *min* (من). The form أَحَبَّ is found only three times in *al-Tawbah* 9:24, *Yūsuf*, 12:8 and 12:33<sup>16</sup>.

### 1.1. The Qur’anic Arabic Text of *al-Tawbah* 9:24

قُلْ إِنْ كَانَ آبَاؤُكُمْ وَأَبْنَاؤُكُمْ وَإِخْوَانُكُمْ وَأَزْوَاجُكُمْ وَعَشِيرَتُكُمْ وَأَمْوَالٌ اقْتَرَفْتُمُوهَا وَتِجَارَةٌ تَخْشَوْنَ كَسَادَهَا وَمَسَاكِينُ تَرْضَوْنَهَا أَحَبَّ إِلَيْكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَجِهَادٍ فِي سَبِيلِهِ فَتَرَبَّصُوا حَتَّى يَأْتِيَ اللَّهُ بِأَمْرِهِ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقِينَ.

### 1.2. English Translation of *al-Tawbah* 9:24

“Say: **If** (it [the case] is [that]) your fathers and your sons, and your brothers, and your wives<sup>17</sup>, and your tribe; and the property that you have earned; and the commerce that you fear for its decline; and the dwellings which you are pleased with are more beloved (or ‘dearer’) to you than Allah, and His Messenger, and jihad (striving) in His way (or ‘his cause’); **then** wait until Allah brings about His decision (or ‘His command’). And Allah guides not the rebellious people.”

### 2. Tafsirs on *al-Tawbah* 9:24

*Mufassirs* (interpreters of the Qur’an) quite often make lexical explanation of words in the verse. In addition to that, they also interpret some words and phrases. Even though it is difficult to make an incontestable distinction, the *mufassirs* interpret the verses by either suggesting their own comments, or by quoting early scholars. The former method is generally used by those *mufassirs* who interpret the verse according to opinion (*ra’y*) based on their knowledge. The latter method, quoting or referring to the previous scholars, is generally chosen by those commentators who interpret the verse according to the narration (*ma’thūr*).

Presented below is observations on the tafsirs with respect to their interpretation about *al-Tawbah* 9:24 are presented, followed by a comparison of their interpretative approach through several selected phrases of the verse.

### 2.1. Observations on the Tafsirs Regarding *al-Tawbah* 9:24

#### 2.1.1. Observations on the Tafsīr of al-Ṭabarī

The following observations may be made regarding the *tafsīr*:

a) The addressee of *qul* (i.e. Say!) is given; it is the Prophet (pbuh).

<sup>16</sup> Hanna, E. Kassis. *A Concordance of the Qur’an* (California: University of California Press, 1983), 509; Muḥammad Fu’ād ‘Abd al-Bāqī. *al-Mu’jam al-Mufahras li ‘Alfāz al-Qur’ān al-Karīm*. 4th edition. (Beirut: Dar al-Marifah, 1994), 245.

<sup>17</sup> The word ‘*zawj*’, which is the singular form of ‘*’azwāj*’ is used in Qur’ān as follows: spouse (husband or wife) (2:102); mate (39:6); one of a pair (6:143); kind, variety (22:5)’. (Cf. Badawi and Haleem, *Dictionary of Qur’anic Usage*, 406). For the above ‘*’azwāj*’ followed by *kum*, which is a plural masculine possessive pronoun, the word ‘*’azwaj*’ has been translated as ‘wives’.

- b) The people concerned are identified. They are those who stay away from *hijra*.
- c) The reason for ‘the fearing for the decline of wealth’ is given, namely ‘leaving town’, i.e. going on *hijra*.
- d) What ‘delight of dwellings’ caused is elucidated. It is ‘staying in them’.
- e) Allah and His Messenger are no longer directly related to the adjective *aḥabb* and the preposition *min* as in the Qur’anic texts but become prepositional objects after the noun *hijra*. In other words, it is no longer love for Allah and His Messenger that are focused upon but *hijra* to Allah and His Messenger.
- f) ‘Jihad in his cause’ is separated from Allah and His Messenger, and treated as a separate issue. So *hijra* and jihad are interpreted as the concern of the verse, instead of love for the divine.
- g) ‘In His way’ (*fī sabīlihi*) that follows ‘jihad’ is explained as “in the way to help Allah’s religion with which he (Allah) is pleased.”
- h) The reference to the ‘decision’ [*bi-’amri-hi*] is elaborated on, specifying it as the conquest of Mecca.
- i) The concluding sentence of the verse is amplified, stating that namely guiding means ‘granting *khair* ‘i.e. goodness’.
- j) Some traditions are rendered either as authorities for the *tafsīr* or different comments for some phrases of the verse.

### 2.1.2. Observations on the *Tafsīr* of al-Tha‘labī

- a) The addressed people are who stay away from *hijra* and jihad. When it is compared to al-Ṭabarī’s, it appears that jihad is here added to *hijra*, but the characterization of the places, namely *Dār al-Islām* and *Dār al-Shirk* are not mentioned.
- b) Different authorities are mentioned with reference to the vocalization and lexical explanation of the word (as ‘*ashīratukum* and ‘*ashīrātukum*)
- c) ‘Guiding’ is interpreted as ‘granting of success’ and ‘leading’.
- d) Previous scholars whose interpretations are mentioned are al-Suddī, ‘Atā’ [not referred to by al-Ṭabarī], Mujāhid and Muqātil.
- e) In addition to explaining some words [e.g. *tarḍawnahā* with *tu jibukum*], even a poem is given when interpreting ‘decline’ to explain the meaning of *kasād*. This Arabic word means ‘staying’ at the origin. A decline occurs when the commercial goods are not sold but continue to stay in the possession of the trader. From that context, the poem is presented to show the link.

f) The ‘command’ (*’amr*) of Allah is equated to judgement (*qaḍā’*), a general threat not mentioned by al-Ṭabarī.

The verse is thus placed within a historical setting without indicating the specific context. It is explained according to historical circumstances and events. It refers to *hijra* and the conquest of Mecca. Various interpretations on the ‘decision’ [*bi-’amri-hi*] are cited without expressing the preference for one of them. Meanwhile themes, love for Allah, His Messenger and jihad are not elaborated on.

### 2.1.3. Observations on the *Tafsīr* of al-Wāḥidī

- a) An account is narrated about people who are reluctant to emigrate.
- b) Al-Wāḥidī gives a variant reading; discusses it and characterizes it as weak.
- c) ‘Acquisition’ is expounded by giving an explanatory verse from the Qur’an.
- d) After the phrase ‘then wait’ a word of Ibn ‘Abbās is narrated.
- e) The ‘decision’ (*’amr*) is elaborated upon. The ‘decision’ (*’amr*) referred to the text is interpreted as ‘the conquest of Mecca’. As authority for his interpretation al-Wāḥidī refers to ‘the majority (of scholars)’, but they are unidentified. He does, however, provide his own explanation.
- f) The last phrase of the verse is not mentioned.

A dialogue with the Prophet (pbuh) is alluded at, focusing on religion as dividing factor in religion. ‘Wait’ (*fa-tarabbaṣū*) is explained quoting Ibn ‘Abbās in a way different to the previous two *tafsīrs*. The *tafsīr* also differs from them by evaluating a distinct citation, namely ‘*ashīrātukum*’ as weak and elucidating how threat the conquest of Mecca is.

### 2.1.4 Observations on the *Tafsīr* of al-Baghawī

- a) Al-Baghawī simultaneously interprets the verse 9:24 and the previous verse [i.e. 9:23], in which Muslims are prevented from friendship with (standing by) their fathers and brothers.
- b) In Qur’anic context, al-Baghawī identifies as addressed people the following: (I) The Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh) (II) People who refrained from emigrating (*hijra*).
- c) A tradition without *isnād* (chain of narrators), is given as the reason for the revelation of the verse.
- d) Recital and interpretation of written revelation is recorded, without stating how the different scholars attained their alternative recital or explanation of the text.
- e) As later sources, al-Baghawī mentions Abū Bakr, ‘Atā’, Mujāhīd, and Muqātil.

Like several others, a specific historical setting is associated with the verse. Meanwhile, no comment is made on the aspects of love for Allah, his Messenger (pbuh) and jihad.

### **2.1.5 Observations on the *Tafsīr* of al-Zamakhsharī**

- a) Like many other *tafsīrs*, historical background is presented. Two traditions about reason why the verse was revealed are mentioned. One of them is mentioned differently, compared to most *tafsīrs*. This tradition speaks about nine persons who revert to polytheism.
- b) At first of them, *hijra* to Medina and cutting the relation with unbeliever relatives are requirements for being a believer.
- c) Different citations are shown.
- d) For ‘the decision’ at the verse two interpretations are mentioned.
- e) By means of strong questions, the readers are invited to consider its meaning deeply.

Al-Zamakhsharī has chosen both the historical setting and thematic method of interpretation. And he refers to two different reasons for the revelation of the verse is rendered.

Although specifically love for the Prophet (pbuh) and jihad are not mentioned, another theme i.e. love for Allah, actually love for the sake of Allah and the authority of the religion are spoken.

### **2.1.6. Observations on the *Tafsīr* of Fakhr al-Din al-Razi**

- a) The *tafsīr* is introduced with an imperative, ‘know’.
- b) The connection between the previous verse with the verse is made by giving a word from those who are reluctant towards *hijra*.
- c) At the beginning, the whole verse is stated. Then no part of the verse is repeated while interpreting except a few words and phrases.
- d) Different citations are given with explaining and supporting sayings from the previous scholars.
- e) Unlike nearly most *tafsīrs*, inductive statements mentioned can be seen.
- f) Four casual things (motives) for social intercourse with unbelievers are derived in the same order, which they are found in the verse. Then this order is lauded and elucidated how beautiful it is.

Fakhr al-dīn al-Rāzī set his interpretation in logical and methodical order, which enables the content of the verse to be easily and well understood. Like al-Zamakhsharī, he mentions historical background but beyond it, makes satisfactory and original comments on the verse.

Yet it resembles to many other *tafsīrs* regarding giving the historical side and often discussed issues at the verse, such as citations; it uniquely differs from them making inductive statements.

### 2.1.7. Observations on the *Tafsīr* of al-Qurtubi

- a) At the beginning, the reason behind the revelation is told depicting the stage at this time very well.
- b) In this order (course) of mentioning the reason, the previous verse is also stated. Then it is said that about ‘those who stay away *hijra* the verse was revealed.
- c) Some words are in detail explained. Even poems are given to support the meaning.
- d) Grammatical explanations are made by rendering poems while interpreting ‘*’ahabb*’ (‘more beloved/dearer). It means either ‘the most beloved’ or ‘more beloved’ when a comparison is made.
- e) Even though interpretation is ‘than *hijra* to Allah...’ the necessity of love for Allah and his Messenger (pbuh) is mentioned acknowledging the verse as a proof for it.
- f) Jihad and its priority and importance are expressed.
- g) Different interpretations about ‘the decision’ in the verse are given.
- h) About love for Allah and his Messenger (pbuh) and jihad, where the relevant explanation in detail is or will be, is announced.
- i) An authentic (*ṣaḥīḥ*) *ḥadīth* about the striving of Satan to prevent person from Islām, jihad and *hijra* is quoted.
- j) The last phrase of the verse is not interpreted.

Al-Qurtubī explained the historical background of the verse by touching the previous verse. Meanwhile, some etymologic explanations and discussions enrich the interpretation.

Love for Allah and his Messenger (pbuh) and priority of jihad are mentioned, and the reader is referred to the relevant verses, which sufficient explanation is available. In this point, it uniquely differs to other *tafsīrs*.

Exemplifying the interpretation of the Qur’an by means of *ḥadīths*, he presents an authentic (*ṣaḥīḥ*) *ḥadīth* that is relevant to the theme.

### 2.1.8. Observations on the *tafsīr* of al-Baidawi

- a) Unlike the other *tafsīrs*, historical background is omitted. However, while interpreting ‘his decision’ (*bi-’amri-hi*), the conquest (*fath*) of Mecca is mentioned. It implies that the verse was revealed before the conquest (*fath*) of Mecca.
- b) Different traditions are cited, but only Abū Bakr is specifically mentioned as authority. It is not always clear where tradition or the author’s own opinion is reflected.



c) 'A decline' is explained as 'the lapsing of the time (*fawāt waqti-hi*) of being in demand (i.e. prosperous trade).'

d) Love is classified as facultative (*'ikhtiyārī*) love and natural/spontaneous (*tābi 'ī*) love.

e) Interpretation ends with a comment pertaining to a whole verse, stating the great harshness from which only a few people are saved.

Al-Baiḍāwī in this relatively concise interpretation, states the previous interpretations, usually without mentioning the *mufassirs*. Contrary to the previous *tafsīrs*, he gives a classification for love. The focus of the love (for Allah, his Messenger (pbuh) and jihad) is however not elaborated upon.

### 2.1.9 Observations on the *Tafsīr* of Ibn Kathīr

a) Ibn Kathīr also interprets the verse and the previous verse.

b) At the beginning of the *tafsīr*, the addressee is identified as he who preferred his family, his relatives and his tribe to 'Allah, his Messenger and jihad in his cause.

c) The outcome is interpreted as an exemplary punishment for them.

d) After the *tafsīr* of the verse, some relevant *hadīths* are given together with the mention of their chain and source.

e) Lexicographical information is supplied. Regarding [*'iqtarāftumū-hā*] two synonyms are supplied; in reference to [*raḍawna-hā*] a synonym and motivation (reason), and with respect to [*fa-tarabbaṣū*] a synonym and explanation by way of an object sentence.

Ibn Kathīr also adopted a historical setting; however, it is partially adopted. He gave some *hadīths* that are independent of the precise historical background but relevant to the subject, as well. Despite the fact that the link between the verse and the *hadīths* are clear, no comments are made and *hadīths* are not explained in connection with the verse.

### 2.1.10. Observations on the *Tafsīr* of Abu al-Suud

a) Interpretation begins with explanations about 'Say!', which is a command to the Prophet (pbuh).

b) The aim of the verse is concisely explained at the beginning.

c) In accordance with historical background, the previous verse is also borne in mind while interpreting and compared to the verse. For instance, why the sons and wives were not mentioned in the previous one is explained.

d) Different citations are given with lexical information regarding certain words.

e) Regarding the meaning of 'to acquire' (*'iqtarāfa*) a comment is made that this word implies the wealth, which was collected by working hard.

- f) ‘Decline’ is explained by alluding at historical and social circumstances.
- g) Love is classified and explained. Accordingly, it is said that love for Allah and his Messenger (pbuh) is facultative (*’ikhtiyārī*).
- h) Love for jihad is expounded by means of connection with love for Allah and his Messenger (pbuh).
- i) About ‘the decision’ in the verse, famous previous interpretations are given.
- j) The last phrase is both generally and particularly interpreted.
- k) The interpretation ends saying that the verse includes a threat, which only people who have acquired a favour (kindness) from Allah is saved.

Abū al-Su‘ūd begins interpreting the verse by setting the link between the previous verse and this verse. Then he expounds some words and elucidates upon substantial concepts such as jihad.

Some narrations about the verse, which can be found in the previous *tafsirs* such as the conquest of Mecca, are mentioned.

Because this interpretation is relatively late, it may be affected by the previous *tafsirs*. For instance, Abū al-Su‘ūd was possibly affected by the interpretation of al-Baiḍāwī when classifying love as facultative (*’ikhtiyārī*) and natural/spontaneous (*ṭabī‘ī* or *jibillī*).

Rendering sufficient information about words and phrases of the verse, and when required, mentioning the previous interpretations make the interpretation satisfactory.

## **2.2. Interpretative Tradition of the *Tafsirs* in Terms of al-Tawbah 9:24**

Interpretations of some phrases in the verse, *al-Tawbah* 9:24 are examined below. The phrases are as follows: ‘beloved to you than Allah and His Messenger’, ‘and [than] jihad in His way’, as well as ‘His decision/command’.

### **2.2.1. “beloved to you than Allah and His Messenger”**

*’Aḥabba ilaikum min Allāhi wa rasūli-hi* is found only in *al-Tawbah* 9:24 in the Qur’an. The theme, love for the Prophet (pbuh), is included in this phrase alongside love for Allah and love for jihad. However, the said *mufassirs* have various approaches towards interpreting this phrase.

Among the above-mentioned *mufassirs*, al-Tha‘labī, al-Wāḥidī, al-Baghawī, al-Zamakhsharī and Ibn Kathīr do not make any interpretative statement about the phrase, *’aḥabba ilaikum min Allāhi wa rasūlihi*.

Al-Ṭabarī interprets the verse, and particularly this phrase, within a historical setting. Accordingly, he says ‘*aḥabba ilaikum min al-hijrah ilā Allāhi wa Rasūlihi min dār al-shirk*’ (more beloved to you than *hijra* [emigrating] from *dār al-shirk* [the abode of polytheism] to Allah and His Messenger). Therefore, he seemingly specified the context of the verse and this phrase within a historical setting corresponding to the time and the circumstances of the revelation.

A later commentator, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, deals with this phrase in an indirect way. He interprets this phrase as ‘*awlā min ṭā’ah Allāhi wa ṭā’ah rasūlihi*’ ([worthier] to you than *ṭā’ah* [obedience] to Allah and *ṭā’ah* [obedience] to His Messenger). In his *tafsir*, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī has seemingly referred to the practical reflection or outcome of love, i.e. obedience instead of love itself, which is more apparent in the verse.

A later *mufasssir*, al-Qurṭubī, expresses the opinion that there is an indication or sign (*dalīl*) for the necessity [or obligation; *wujūb*] of love for Allah and for His Messenger in the verse, 9:24. Al-Qurṭubī’s statements thus generalize the contents of the verse and place them within the *wujūb* category of the shariah commandments.

Unlike the others, two later *mufasssirs*, al-Baiḍāwī and Abū al-Su‘ūd, by implication classify love into two categories: natural love (*al-ḥubb al-ṭabī‘ī* or *jibillī*) and facultative (optional) love (*al-ḥubb al-’ikhtiyārī*), implying that love for Allah, His Messenger (pbuh) and jihad in His [Allah’s] way originate from facultative love, not natural love. Furthermore, the reason why it [the divine love] is a kind of facultative love is explained by both the above *mufasssirs*. It emanates from (belongs to) facultative love because someone is answerable for the results of facultative love because his will applies to it.

### 2.2.2. “and [than] jihad (striving) in His way”

The phrase, *wa jihādīn fī sabīlihī*, which is linked to the previous phrase also occurs only once in the Qur’an<sup>18</sup>. However, an almost similar version, which is ‘*jihādān fī sabīlī*’ [‘in my way’]<sup>19</sup>, can be found.

Among the said ten *mufasssirs*, only al-Ṭabarī, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, al-Qurṭubī and Abū al-Su‘ūd comment on this phrase. Al-Ṭabarī interprets *fī sabīlihī*, as ‘in helping [*nuṣrah*] Allah’s religion [*dīn Allāh*] with which He is pleased [*’irtadāhu*]. Therefore, according to al-Ṭabarī, *jihād fī sabīlihī* [jihad (striving) in His (Allah’s) way] means ‘jihad (striving) in helping Allah’s religion with which He is pleased’. While commenting on the verse, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī substitutes jihad with its synonym, *mujāhadah*, stating that performing it together with

<sup>18</sup> *Al-Mumtaḥinah*, 60:1.

<sup>19</sup> al-Bāqī. *al-Mu’jam al-Mufahras li ’Alfāz al-Qur’ān al-Karīm*, 233.

obedience to Allah and His Messenger (pbuh) is worthier (*'awlā'*) than worldly benefits. The verbal expression *mujāhadah* (the third form of *j-h-d*) also has the connotation 'to fight'.

The other two *mufassirs*, al-Qurṭubī and Abū al-Su'ūd, speak of the significance and superiority of jihad in Islam. According to al-Qurṭubī, in the verse (9:24) 'there is a sign (*dalīl*) for the superiority of jihad and preferring it to the comfort of the self [*nafs*] and its attachment [*'alā'iq*, lit. ties] to the family and the property.'

Lastly, Abū al-Su'ūd elaborates upon the importance of jihad, even discussing its sequence in the verse, that it is preceded by love for Allah and his Messenger. According to Abū al-Su'ūd, the mention of love for jihad after love for Allah and His Messenger indicates that the status of jihad is praiseworthy. Abū al-Su'ūd states that jihad is necessarily to be loved, let alone to be disliked. According to him, 'love for jihad' depends on love for Allah and His Messenger due to fact that jihad consists of fighting against their enemies. It follows then that whoever loves them [Allah and His Messenger] must necessarily love fighting against those who do not love them.

To conclude, Abū al-Su'ūd expounds on 'the significance of jihad' more than any other *mufassir* who is mentioned above. Al-Qurṭubī briefly mentions the superiority of jihad, while al-Ṭabarī just clarifies what 'his [Allah's] way' means.

### 2.2.3. "His decision [or command]"

The phrase, *'hattā ya'tiya Allāhu bi-'amrihi* occurs in the Qur'an twice, namely in *al-Baqarah*, 2:109 and *al-Tawbah*, 9:24<sup>20</sup>.

All *mufassirs* except Ibn Kathīr, discussed the said phrase, *bi-'amri-hi* (His decision [or command]). Ibn Kathīr, after a concise interpretation on the verse, 9:24, chooses to provide some hadiths concerning the themes [such as love for the Prophet (pbuh)] found in that verse.

The *mufassirs* offer five different interpretations of the phrase, *bi-'amri-hi* (His decision [or command]). They are namely *fath Makkah* ('the conquest of Mecca'), *'uqūbah 'ājilah aw 'ājilah* ('an instantaneous or delayed punishment'), *qaḍā'ihī* ('His judgement'), *al-qitāl* ('the fight/war') and *al-fath* ('the conquest').

*Fath Makkah* (the conquest of Mecca), including *al-fath*, is mentioned nine times in total by eight of the *mufassirs*. Those who made no mention of it are Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī and Ibn Kathīr. At an instance only the noun *al-fath* is employed. Al-Ṭabarī, who refers to *fath Makkah*, also uses the term *al-fath* which is most probably an abbreviated form for *fath*

<sup>20</sup> 'Abd al-Bāqī, *al-Mu'jam al-Mufahras*, 100.

*Makkah* ('the conquest of Mecca'). The interpretation, *fath Makkah* originates from Ibn Abbās, who is cited in both al-Zamakhsharī's and Abū Su'ūd's *tafsirs*.

Some of the *mufasssirs* quoting *fath Makkah* referred to later narrators than Ibn 'Abbās (d. 68/687); namely Mujāhid (d.103/721) and Muqātil (d.150/767). Among the *mufasssirs*, al-Ṭabarī and al-Qurṭubī referred to Mujāhid, while al-Tha'labī and al-Baghawī referred to both Mujāhid and Muqātil as source for their interpretation. Al-Ṭabarī differs from any other *mufasssirs* by quoting two narrations from Mujāhid, which are '*fath Makkah*' and '*al-fath*', as the interpretation of the phrase, *bi-'amri-hi*.

Al-Wāhidī only refers to 'the majority [*al-'aktharūn*]' instead of a specific early source, while al-Baiḍāwī simply says 'it was said *fath Makkah*' ('the conquest of Mecca').

Six of the above-mentioned *mufasssirs*, namely al-Wāhidī, al-Baghawī, al-Zamakhsharī, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, al-Qurṭubī and al-Baiḍāwī agree that the order for 'waiting (*fa-tarabbaṣū*) for the decision of Allah' is a threatening order [*'amr tahdīd*] or a menace [*wa'īd*]. However, among them only al-Wāhidī elucidates how the conquest of Mecca would be threatening. According to his explanation, which is based on the historical context of the verse, at the conquest of Mecca the command of *hijra* would become invalid, and those who did not leave their family but stayed away from *hijra* would remain unrewarded 'by/with Allah' [*'inda Allah*].

*Uqūbah 'ājilah aw 'ājilah* ('an instantaneous or delayed punishment'), is mentioned five times. The *mufasssirs*, namely al-Zamakhsharī, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, al-Qurṭubī, al-Baiḍāwī and Abū al-Su'ūd mention this interpretation, but only al-Zamakhsharī and al-Qurṭubī refer to al-Ḥasan [al-Baṣrī] (d.110/728) as the source for this interpretation. The other three *mufasssirs* simply say 'it was said...' Amongst the above-mentioned *mufasssirs*, only Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī refers solely to this narration [*'uqūbah 'ājilah aw 'ājilah*] with no reference to *fath al-Makkah*.

*Qaḍā'ihī* (his judgement) is mentioned two times. Only two earlier *mufasssirs*, al-Tha'labī and al-Baghawī refer to this interpretation, quoting 'Aṭā' (d.114/732) as a source.

*Al-Qitāl* ('the fight/war') was mentioned once. This interpretation was mentioned by a later *mufasssir*, al-Qurṭubī. He interpreted the said phrase, *bi-'amri-hi* (His decision [or command]) as '*al-qitāl* ('the fight/war') and *fath Makkah* ('the conquest of Mecca'), while referring to Mujāhid (d.103/721) for the latter interpretation.

## Conclusion

In this paper, the focus has been on interpretative comments on the phrases ‘more beloved to you than Allah and His Messenger (pbuh)’, ‘jihad in His way’ as well as the phrase ‘His decision/command’. Regarding the first phrase interpretations ranged from paraphrases such as the gloss that family relations and worldly matters should not be preferable to or worthier than obedience to Allah and obedience to His Messenger (pbuh), to pointing at the necessity for love for Allah and His Messenger (pbuh). While the first is a general comment, the second moves towards a shariah-like statement. The same tendency is also visible in distinguishing between natural and facultative love.

Regarding ‘jihad in his way’, *mufassirs* focus on the importance of jihad (bearing in mind its position in the verse) and its praiseworthiness. Non-conforming to the call for jihad is even ascribed (cf. al-Qurtubī) to the interference of Satan. In the interpretation of the phrase, ‘His decision/command’, the conquest of Mecca is mainly referred to. Most of the *mufassirs* interpreted the phrase in this way, and they thus form a line of interpretation. In accordance with the order of ‘wait’ (*fa-tarabbaşū*), which implies a threat, this phrase is also interpreted as ‘an instantaneous or delayed punishment’. Accordingly, an earlier *mufassir*, al-Wāhidī also elucidates upon how ‘the conquest of Mecca’ would be a threat. As another example of tendency to interpret within the context of ‘threat’, the phrase is explained as ‘fight/war’ once. Lastly, a synonym for ‘amr’ (i.e. decision/command) namely *qaḍā*’ (i.e. judgement) is supplied twice.

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