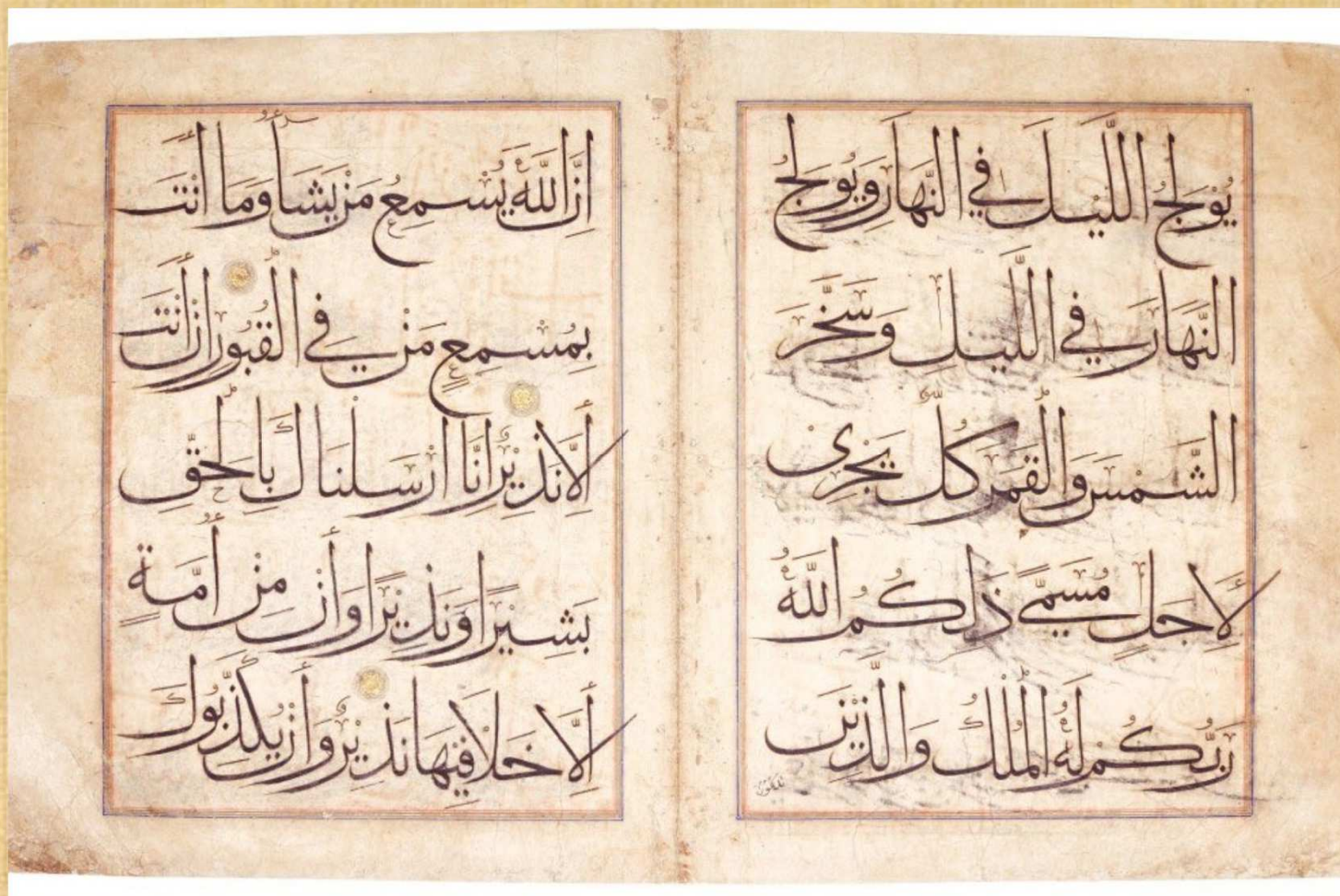


ساختار و انسجام سوره های قرآن
جلسه دوم: نگاهی به تاریخچه بحث انسجام سوره های قرآن



فرهاد قدوسی

Feb. 11, 2022 Fri.

Zekr – MIT Shia Muslim Association

• وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِمَّا نَزَّلْنَا عَلَىٰ عَبْدِنَا فَأْتُوا بِسُورَةٍ مِثْلِهِ وَادْعُوا شُهَدَاءَكُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٢٣﴾

• و اگر در آنچه بر بنده خود نازل کرده ایم شک دارید پس اگر راست می گوئید سوره ای مانند آن بیاورید و گواهان خود را غیر خدا فرا خوانید (سوره ۲: البقرة ایه ۲۳)

• أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَاهُ قُلْ فَأْتُوا بِسُورَةٍ مِثْلِهِ وَادْعُوا مَنْ اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٣٨﴾

• یا می گویند آن را به دروغ ساخته است بگو اگر راست می گوئید سوره ای مانند آن بیاورید و هر که را جز خدا می توانید فرا خوانید (سوره ۱۰: یونس ایه ۳۸)

چکیده:

- در دو مجموعه صحبت‌های قبلی به دو موضوع "جمع آوری و تدوین قرآن" و "ترتیب زمانی نزول سوره های قرآن" پرداخته شد. در این مجموعه سوم صحبتها به بررسی ساختار سوره های قرآن با محوریت بحث وحدت موضوعی و یا انسجام و نظم ادبی سوره های قرآن می پردازیم.
- متن قرآن تنوع زیادی در شکل و سبک را نشان می دهد، تا حد زیادی به این دلیل که واحدهای پایه ساختاری این متن مقدس - ۱۱۴ سوره - به طیف گسترده ای از گونه های ادبی متمایز تعلق دارند و با یک یا دو و یا حتی سه الگوی متمایز مشترک مطابقت ندارند.
- بعضی از خوانندگان قرآن ابراز می کنند که از نظر آنان بعضی سوره های قرآن شامل بخش های جدا از همی هستند که بدون پیوستگی و ارتباط خاصی در کنار هم قرار گرفته اند.
- مطالعات آکادمیک غربی قرآن بر خلاف این برداشت اخیرا به مفهوم سوره به عنوان یک واحد موضوعی و ادبی و به همراه آن، تقسیم سوره های کامل به بخش ها و یا قسمتهای متوالی و جستجوی ارتباط بین این بخشها، علاقه فزاینده ای نشان داده است.

چکیده:

- در این رشته جلسات بررسی خواهیم کرد که آیا همانطور که برخی مطرح کرده اند در پس عدم پیوستگی ظاهری برخی از سوره ها، عناصر پیوند دهنده ای وجود دارند که اجزای مختلف یک سوره را به هم متصل می کند و درون مایه ای وحدت بخش وجود دارد که مانند یک نخ، بخش های مختلف سوره را به هم پیوند می دهد و آن را به یک واحد موضوعی و ادبی تبدیل می کند؟
- بخش بندی صحیح سوره های قرآنی به دسته های متوالی آیات، دغدغه ای نسبتاً متاخر برای مفسران قرآن ولی گامی ضروری برای تبیین ساختار و احراز انسجام و وحدت موضوعی هر سوره است.
- علاوه بر ملاحظات موضوعی و معنایی، شاخص های ساختاری (نشانگرها، تقسیم کننده ها) در تشخیص مرزهای زیر بخش های یک سوره و در نتیجه تقسیم بندی کلی آن تأثیر می گذارد.
- این شاخص های ساختاری شامل جابه جایی در الگوی قافیه (فواصل) غالب، طول و یا ساختار آیه، وجود توازی های نحوی، عبارات آغازین و پایانی فرمولگونه، و تغییرات در گوینده، مخاطب، تکرارها، سوگندها، کلمات عطف، دوتایی ها و چند تایی های، و غیره هستند.

چکیده:

- در این مجموعه جلسات پس از جلسه مقدماتی که به کلیاتی در مورد موضوع مورد بحث و مطالب و سوالات مورد بررسی در این مجموعه جلسات می پردازد، در ابتدا به بررسی برخی از نشانگرهای ساختاری قرآن مانند قافیه (فاصله)، سوگندها، الگوهای خطاب، کلمات عطف و فصل، دوتایی ها و مسئله سرشت شفاهی و نوشتاری قرآن می پردازیم.
- در ادامه مجموعه جلسات انشاءالله به موضوع انسجام و وحدت موضوعی سوره های قرآنی و بررسی ساختار پیشنهادی موسوم به ساختار "سه جزئی" برای برخی از سوره های کوتاهتر قرآن و نیز ساختار پیشنهادی حلقوی برخی از سوره های بزرگتر مورد بحث و بررسی قرار خواهد گرفت.
- در این فرآیند، ساختار برخی از سوره های مکی و مدینه ای کوتاه تر را به عنوان مثال، با تفصیل بیشتر مورد بررسی قرار خواهیم داد.

Salwa El-Awa-Linguistic Structure of Qur'an

- Many non-Arabic-speaking readers of the Qur'ān find that they cannot understand the **interrelations** between the different parts of its long surās, and, sometimes, of its shorter surās as well.
- This does not come as a surprise to the Arabic-speaking reader of the same text.
- Although the latter is more familiar with the style of the Qur'ān, she does not seem able to explain its textual relations much more readily.
- W. M. Watt speaks of "a characteristic of the Qur'an which has often been remarked on, namely, its **disjointedness**." or Qur'anic arrangement is "unsystematic.:" that the Qur'an lacks "sustained composition at any great length.'

Textual Relations

- Text is composed of linguistic units of various lengths, the smallest unit being a **word** and the largest being a **text**.
- A number of **words** linked together make a **sentence**; a number of **sentences** normally make a **paragraph**; a number of **paragraphs** make the **text**.
- **Sentences** within **paragraphs**, and **paragraphs** within **texts**, are usually expected to have some kind of **connection with each other**.
- This connection may be **semantic**, **structural/ grammatical**, or both.
- When the relation between two units (sentences or paragraphs) is expressed physically, in actual words or marks (such as punctuation marks that act as connectives), we will refer to it as “**structural**.”

Structural and Semantic Relations

- **Connectives** indicate to the reader what the author of the text thinks the relation between the two units is.
- On the other hand, when no such indicator is apparent in the text and the relation can be understood only from the meaning, we will refer to it as “**semantic.**”
- Sometimes the two types of relations are combined, and sometimes they are not.
- Our understanding of textual relations in a given text is based on observation and understanding of these two types of relations

Structural and Semantic Connectivity Four Possibilities

- There are four logical possibilities for these two types of relations working together within text.
- A relation between two units may be evident in the **explicit words** and meanings of the two units; or it may be evident in either of them; or it may be unclear in either of them.
- The majority of textual-relation problems arise when the relation is not clear between two sentences that come at the point of **thematic transition**.
- Since our aim is to examine the causes of the problem and how it occurs from a linguistic point of view, for now we will put aside the added complexity of the question of where sections actually begin and end.

Table 4.1 General categories of textual relations

	Structural relation	Semantic relation	Textual relations
1 Semantically related and structurally connected	Yes	Yes	Clear except when the connective is ambiguous
2 Semantically unrelated and structurally disconnected	No	No	Problematic
3 Semantically related and structurally disconnected	Yes	No	Possibly ambiguous
4 Semantically unrelated and structurally connected	No	Yes	Problematic

- Table 4.1 shows the four types of possible relations between sentences and their effects on recipients' understanding of textual relations.

Qur'anic textual Relations are mostly of 2nd & 3rd Categories

- It is by working out which assumptions to use to fill the gaps between the meanings of the different sentences that one can make some sense of relatedness between them and hence justify their arrangement.
- However, if one fails to work out such helpful assumptions, relations between the sentences in similar structures remain highly problematic.
- The reason for the ambiguity of Qur'ānic textual relations is therefore assumed to be that most of them belong to the **second** and **third** categories: they encompass complete and independent units of meaning lined up one after the other with few grammatical connectives, and with relations between those complete units of meaning that are not always straightforward and easy to work out.

Sentence meaning and the intended meaning

- A central problem for the study of meaning is that sentence meaning vastly undermines a speaker's meaning.
- What this means is that the intended meanings of text are not understood simply by working out what the meanings of its units are.
- In fact, in most (Some) cases, the meanings of the words are only a very small aspect of the message communicated.
- Take for example the following sentence:
 - **Sentence 7 : It is raining.**
- There are many cases in which sentence 7 would not be taken as merely informative of the fact that it is raining.
- For example, if the speaker and the addressee were planning a **picnic**, the intended meaning would not be just to inform the hearer of the state of affairs that it is raining.
- Instead, it could be: **Sentence 7a The picnic will have to be cancelled.**
- In another scenario, if the speaker is responding by sentence 7 to sentence 8 below:
 - **Sentence 8 I do not need to take my umbrella with me.**
- The intended meaning of sentence 7 would in this case be:
 - **Sentence 7b Yes, you do need to take your umbrella with you.**

Sentence meaning and the intended meaning

- Which is not what the words of the sentence say. Sentence 7, with its two scenarios, represents many other sentences that we use, hear, and read where **understanding the meanings of their words is not alone sufficient to communicate the intended meanings.**
- In both scenarios, if the hearer of sentence 7 took the sentence as merely informative of a state of affairs not related to her present situation, and continued preparing for the picnic or went out without her umbrella, communication of the intended meaning would have failed.
- In cases of successful communication of the intended meaning, the message communicated by **the sentence is more than what its words simply said.**

Intended Meaning of Sentences

- What is it, then, that one needs in order to work out the intended meaning of sentences?
- If we continue using the example above, we shall be able to see that it is the context of the conversation that is used, in both scenarios, to reach the correct understanding of the intended meaning.
- Sometimes this context comes from **outside the text** (**first scenario**), and at other times from **the rest of the text** (**second scenario**).
- In the **first scenario**, it is the information, known to both the speaker and the hearer, that they were planning to go on a picnic, and the general knowledge that people do not normally go on picnics while it is raining.
- In the **second scenario**, it is the speaker's knowledge of the hearer's intention to go out without an umbrella, as understood from sentence 8 being the preceding part of the conversation, and the common-sense knowledge that if people go out while it is raining they take umbrellas with them in order to avoid getting wet.

Comprehension Intended Meaning of a Text

- This brief analysis highlights three aspects of knowledge used in the comprehension of a text's intended meaning:
- (a) general knowledge/common-sense knowledge;
(b) knowledge common to the speaker and addressee or writer and reader;
- and (c) knowledge from other parts of the text.
- Aspects (a) and (b) are **non-linguistic context** since information drawn from them does not form part of the text, whereas (c) is **linguistic context** because it draws on information gained by recovering the meanings of other parts of the text.
- These are three broad divisions of information from outside the text in question that recipients use to understand the intended meaning.

The Role of contextual information

- As we saw , recipients need **contextual information** to understand the intended meaning.
- If such information is not accessible to them, they are likely to fail to understand the speaker's intended meaning.
- Similarly, if recipients of the Qur'ānic text lack access to the knowledge they need to process the meanings of its language, they are unlikely to succeed in uncovering the intended meanings, including those meanings indicated by the relations between the themes/sections of surās.

Q111- Sural Al-Masad

- A verse such as “**May the hands of Abū Lahab be ruined, and may he be ruined too**” (Q 111:1) is not understandable in the absence of the knowledge of who Abū Lahab is, whereas the following verse (Q 111:2), “**Neither his wealth nor his gains will help him,**” can be understood as a general reference to man, especially in the light of the fact that this reinforces a meaning central to the message of the Qur’ān; that is, if man does not believe in God and the day of judgment, wealth and worldly deeds will not be of any use to him on that day.
- Similarly, the third verse of the same surā , “**and so will his wife, the fire-wood carrier,**” would be understood metaphorically rather than literally, as is the case in its standard Sunni interpretation, if one is not aware of the history of the situation commented on by the surā .
- In fact, if information about the historical situation is not available to interpreters, the meaning of the whole surā may be turned into an image of man and his female partner being punished in hellfire for their disbelief.

سورة المسد

• بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

• تَبَّتْ يَدَا أَبِي لَهَبٍ وَتَبَّ ﴿١﴾ مَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنْهُ
مَالُهُ وَمَا كَسَبَ ﴿٢﴾ سَيَصْلَىٰ نَارًا ذَاتَ
لَهَبٍ ﴿٣﴾ وَامْرَأَتُهُ حَمَّالَةَ الْحَطَبِ ﴿٤﴾ فِي
جِيدِهَا حَبْلٌ مِّن مَّسَدٍ ﴿٥﴾

سورة المسد

• بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

- زیانکار باد دستان ابولهب، و خود او هم زیانکار شد (۱) مالش و دستاوردش به کارش نیامد (۲) زودا که به آتشی شعله‌ور در آید (۳) و زنش هیزمکش [و آتش افروز معرکه] است (۴) و ریسمانی از لیف خرمای تافته بر گردن دارد (۵)

Contextual Information

- The only difference between the Qur'ān and any other text, literary or non-literary, in this respect is that the contextual information required for interpreting each text varies according to the nature of the text and its content.
- Advertising language, for example, is understood in the light of knowledge about modern daily life and commodities, whereas understanding contemporary media language requires knowledge of current affairs and modern lifestyles and a certain linguistic knowledge.
- A pre-Islamic poem would be understood by using contextual information from history and Arab culture of the time in addition to common-sense and general linguistic knowledge of Arabic.
- As for the Qur'ān, in addition to general linguistic knowledge of Arabic and Arabic language at the time of the revelations, knowledge of pre- and early Islamic Arab culture and history and basic Islamic knowledge (e.g., ḥadīth and sirā) are essential.
- However, it is only reasonable to assume that not all recipients, given their varied backgrounds, will have access to all the information they need from outside the text.

Contextual Information

- Thus, generally speaking, contextual information may be divided into two broad types: **linguistic or immediate context**, and **non-linguistic context**.
- Surā 111 above is an example of the latter.
- It remains to clarify what the linguistic context of the Qur'ān is.
- As with any text, the linguistic context of any given part of the Qur'ān is the preceding and the following verses.
- Due to their physical proximity to the text in question they can be referred to as the immediate context.
- The information provided by the immediate context is naturally the most immediately accessible information that can be relied on for working out the meaning of the text in question, which gives it a prime role in the comprehension process.
- However, accessibility of contextual information does not guarantee successful communication.
- Indeed, most of those who have considered the text of the Qur'ān to be confused and incoherent were specialists in this particular field of knowledge, Arabic and Islamic studies.
- Chronological Order.

Context and Relevance

- A major hurdle in the way of successful communication of the intended meaning is that there is often too much contextual information to choose from.
- To solve this problem, relevance theoreticians hold that human cognition has evolved in the direction of increasing efficiency and, therefore, out of the huge amount of information available to recipients of a text (via memory, perception, and inference), the most relevant will be selected and used in processing the language of the text in order to maximize relevance.
- Relevance theoreticians define relevance as a property of text that makes it worth processing.
- For a text to be relevant it has to make a difference to the recipient's cognitive environment, that is, it must enhance their knowledge of the world.
- The outcome of the interaction between the propositions expressed by the text and information derived from context is known as "cognitive effect," of which there are three possible types:
 - 1 Addition of new information to already existing knowledge.
 - 2 Contradiction of already existing knowledge.
 - 3 Confirmation of already existing knowledge.

Context and Relevance

- Relevance is measured against two factors: the **number of cognitive effects** and the **effort put into achieving them**.
- The more the effects, the more relevant the text is, while the less effort one puts into processing an item of information, the more its relevance.
- Consequently, the answer to the question of which items of contextual information to use in processing a unit of discourse lies in maximizing relevance.
- In other words, as an automatic cognitive process, recipients tend to choose the aspect of context that is most easily accessible and that will interact with the text to yield the maximum possible effects; it will enhance recipients' cognitive environment in the most possible ways.

Context and Relevance

- Thus, in the case of sentence 7 above, to understand “it is raining” as merely informative of a state of affairs outside the recipient’s situational context is to minimize the relevance of the utterance because it only adds one item of information to the recipient’s general knowledge, an item that is not likely to enhance the recipient’s knowledge of her present situation.
- To understand it in the ways suggested above adds more to the recipient’s existing knowledge both of the world and of her present situation, making it the optimal explanation of the sentence.
- Similarly, the Qur’ān as a whole should be seen as a highly accessible source of information needed to work out the intended meaning of a given verse.
- Just as the preceding and following utterances in a conversation contribute towards understanding any part of it, previous verses provide background information for understanding a verse in question, and following verses soon act as context for those after them, the end result being that each part of the text is equally important for comprehension of all the other parts, because they reduce the effort required in the process of comprehension, thus maximizing relevance.

Context and Relevance

- The picture of the discourse, then, is as Diane Blakemore (1987: 112) describes it: “one in which the interpretation of utterance (that is the propositional content and its contextual effect) contribute towards the contexts for interpreting subsequent utterances. That is, as discourse proceeds, the hearer is provided with a gradually changing background against which new information is processed.”
- It is from this idea that the importance of the immediate context arises: information made accessible by the verses nearest to those being processed is easily accessible to the reader and so they help to minimize the costs of processing text for comprehension. So meanings achieved by using the immediate context are more likely to be the intended meanings.

Continuity, Context, and Coherence

- By **continuity** we mean linkage between some or all the verses of a sūrah;
- By **context** we mean a framework of meaning which is typically created by a set of verses seen to form a cluster and which helps to determine the meaning of one or more verses occurring inside or in the vicinity of that cluster;

and

- By **coherence** we mean overall, or organic, unity or coherence in a sūrah.

Holistic Approaches to the Qur'an: A Historical Background

Nevin Reda- University of Toronto

Religion Compass 4/8 (2010): 495–506,

- Abstract
- **Holistic** and other **coherence**-related approaches have a long history in tafsir – the tradition of Qur'an exegesis; however, it is only in the twentieth century that they have experienced widespread dissemination.
- This article explores their history from the early eighth century to the modern age, addressing developments both in western and in traditional Muslim scholarship.
- It begins with the early discourses on the Qur'an's style and organization (**nazm**) and the immediate connections between its suras and verses (**munasaba**).
- It then covers the modern revival of the nazm genre and the appearance of the literary and thematic approaches.

Holistic Approach to Qur'an

- While the term 'holistic' is well established in medicine, Biblical studies, and linguistics, it is relatively new in Qur'anic studies and therefore needs some clarification. It has occurred primarily in the work of two scholars, **Mustansir Mir** (1986, p. 99; 1993, p. 217) and **Asma Barlas** (2002, p. 18), both of whom have provided brief explanations.
- Mir is well known for bringing several modern works, which treat suras as whole units, to the attention of a wider scholarly audience, using the expression 'sura as a unity' to describe these approaches.
- He uses 'holistic' to describe a certain quality that characterizes some of these approaches, explaining the term as 'predicated on the assumption that the Qur'an is a well-integrated book and ought to be studied as such' (Mir 1986, p. 99).

Holistic

- In general, 'holistic' is related to holism and is often used synonymously with 'as a whole.'
- It conveys the idea that the properties of a given system cannot be fully determined or explained by the sum of its component parts alone, and is predicated on the assumption that there is an added value gained when looking at how all the component parts work together, as a totality.
- In the case of the Qur'an, it typically implies looking at its suras as whole compositional units, as opposed to the individual verses alone.
- It can also refer to the Qur'an as a whole, the added value usually taking the form of central themes or qualities.
- In the Context of Qur'an is associated with coherence and textual integrity.

Holistic versus Coherence

- Moreover, the term may seem redundant as it is covered by the word coherence.
- However, two factors explain its emergence and the increasing need for it today.
- The first is evident in the work of Mir: the growing number of studies that address the topic of coherence and the need to distinguish between different types of approaches.
- Two main kinds seem to have emerged: studies that tend to be holistic and others that Mir has aptly described as ‘linear-atomistic.’
- Both look for connections within the text; however, while linear-atomistic approaches look for the immediate connections between adjacent verses, passages or suras, holistic approaches are more concerned with the overall picture and look for the central idea that holds a sura together or indeed, the entire Qur’an as a whole.
- Thus, the distinguishing feature of holistic approaches is the identification of central themes or qualities that distinguish one sura from another, or set the Qur’an apart from other texts.
- This aspect is not present in all of the treatments, which Mir has described with ‘as a unity;’ he has needed to use ‘holistic’ to refer to this additional dimension.

Atomistic Approach

- Muslim Qur'an exegesis is of several types-traditionist, theological, literary-philological, juristical.!
- But if there is one feature that almost all types have in common, it is probably **atomism**.
- By **atomism** is here meant a verse-by-verse approach to the Qur'an.
- With most Muslim exegetes, the basic unit of Qur'an study is one or a few verses taken in isolation from the preceding and following verses.
- This approach led to the widely-held belief (or the belief may have caused the approach) that the received arrangement of Qur'anic verses and surahs is not very significant for exegetical purposes.
- "Most scholars, including Imam Malik and al-Baqillani, hold the view that the arrangement of the Qur'an has nothing to do with divine guidance.'

Holistic versus linear-atomistic Approaches

- Holistic and linear-atomistic approaches have one thing in common: both are concerned with coherence and are contrasted with the more traditional atomistic methods, which treat the Qur'an on a verse-by-verse basis, interpreting each verse virtually independently of the general literary context.
- Tabari's (d. 310 / 923) (1954–68) monumental *Jami' al-Bayan 'an ta'wil al-Qur'an* is a prime example of such a commentary.
- He organizes the verses in a seriatim manner, listing the interpretations of a number of early authorities under each verse, and does not address each sura as a whole.
- His work is one of the sequential chain-like commentaries known as *tafsir musalsal* or 'chained commentary,' a type that is widespread and foundational for the *tafsir* genre.
- They are by far the most common of the medieval commentaries and are considerably popular today.

Synchronic & Diachronic Approaches

- The second factor that has led to the emergence of the term 'holistic' is evident in the work of Barlas, and stems from the growing interest in cross-disciplinary pursuits. Barlas has connected her approach to Biblical hermeneutics. She has stepped towards building some methodological consistency with Biblical studies, in which 'holistic' is used to refer to similar, text-based methods.
- Biblical holistic approaches are generally **synchronic** in nature and treat the text 'as-is' without delving into its origins and compositional subunits.
- They are contrasted with **diachronic** approaches, which are concerned with the text's development over time, and tend to fragment it into several source documents.
- Some tension exists between both types: the diachronic, 'fragmenting' approaches and the synchronic, holistic ones.
- However, while the Biblical diachronic approaches are primarily those of modern source critics, Qur'anic 'fragmenting,' atomistic ones are predominantly those of traditional Muslim orthodoxy.

Medieval Approaches

- Early investigations into the Qur'an's textual coherence can be found under two terms: **nazm** (literally, 'order, arrangement, organization') and **munasaba** (literally, 'suitability, correlation, connection').
- The history of these pursuits has interested a few contemporary scholars, among whom Mir's work is probably the most significant in the West.
- Of value is also the modern Egyptian secondary scholarship, particularly some monographs on nazm in the work of major writers, such as
 - 'Amr ibn Bahr al-Jahiz (d. 255 / 868 or 9),
 - Abu Bakr al-Baqillani (d. 403 / 1013)
 - 'Abd al-Qahir al-Jurjani (d. 471 / 1078)

Medieval Approaches

- Jarullah al-Zamakhshari (d. 538 / 1144).
- In addition, one should mention two medieval secondary sources:
- Badr al-Din **al-Zarkashi's** (d. 794 / 1391) al-Burhan fi 'ulum al-Qur'an
- and Jalal al-Din **al-Suyuti's** (d. 911 / 1505) al-Itqan fi 'ulum al-Qur'an.
- Both are still popular as reference manuals on the Qur'anic sciences – categories of knowledge deemed essential for the study of the Qur'an in the past centuries.
- While alZarkashi's book is the earlier and more comprehensive of the two, al-Suyuti's is more widely disseminated and definitive today.
- Both authors provide a chapter on munasaba and discuss nazm in their chapters on l'jaz, the theory of the Qur'an's inimitability or impeccability.
- The placement of nazm within these sources suggests that early nazm discourse was intimately linked to l'jaz theory.

Nazm

- The earliest known monographs on nazm date to the ninth century; however, none of these is extant today.
- The most significant is the well-attested Nazm al-Qur'an of al-Jahiz, which has been reconstructed to some extent from the author's existing works.
- Here too, the link between nazm discourse and ijaz theory is evident; nazm is used to explain and demonstrate the superior diction, stylistic features, and other compositional qualities of the Qur'an.
- There is some confusion over what the term nazm initially referred to, whether it went beyond word-meaning relationships to encompass holistic concerns, such as central themes and other common features.
- Based on the work of Abu Sulayman al-Khattabi(d. 388 / 998) , al-Baqillani, al-Jurjani, and al-Zamakhshari, Mir (1986, pp. 11–6) has argued that it referred principally to the former and he has not found evidence of holistic concerns.
- However, al-Jindi (1969) has shown otherwise: medieval scholars had a more broad-ranging, nuanced understanding of the word.
- The earliest extant example of holistic sura treatments comes in the form of al-Baqillani's analysis of Ghafir and Fussilat, where he points out the internal connections between passages and suggests a central theme).

Nazm

- In both cases, he identifies it as ‘the necessity of the Qur’an being a proof, and the indication of its miracle, stating that these suras are based on it, from the beginning to the end.
- Therefore, al-Baqillani’s understanding of the word nazm went beyond word-meaning relationships: **he has produced the first known treatments of suras as whole units**, tied together by a common theme.
- Thus, medieval scholars understood nazm to refer broadly to various aspects of the Qur’an’s diction, composition, and style. Their understanding ranged from word-meaning relationships to linear connections between verses, and included approaching suras and the entire Qur’an as a whole

MUNASABA

- Unlike nazm, there is scant evidence that munasaba was an established genre early in Islamic history and what is available post-dates nazm by several centuries.
- Two monographs are known from the medieval literature: [Ibn al-Zubayr al-Ghirnati's](#) (d.708 / 1308) (1990) *al-Burhan fi munasabat tartib suwar al-Qur'an* and [al-Suyuti's](#) (1987) *Tanasuq al-durar fi tanasub al-suwar*.
- Both only address the connections between each sura and the next, and are not generally concerned with intra-sura coherence or features that hold the Qur'an together as a whole. Both have been recently published as small one-volume books.

Munasaba

- Third, much larger work is also relevant, Burhan al-Din al-Biqai's (d. 885 / 1480) *Nazm al-durar fi tanasub al-Ayat wa'l-suwar* (literally, 'The Arrangement of Pearls in the Correlation of the Verses and Suras').
- The latter is the most comprehensive of the medieval works: al-Biqai not only addresses the connections between suras, passages and verses, but also central themes or objectives.
- His theory on these themes is quite innovative: he suggests that each sura's objective is encapsulated in its title and proceeds to tie the two together.
- His work thereby reaches well beyond the established scope of munasaba, even though he takes care to ground it within this genre (vol. 1, pp. 5–6). His title also locates it within the purview of the nazm genre, placing nazm in parallel to 'tanasub,' a word that recalls munasaba and derives from it.
- By linking these two words together in this manner, al-Biqai suggests that his work cuts across both genres.
- Thus, the two known monographs on munasaba alone seem to utilize 'munasaba' primarily in the sense of sura connections, while the term also overlaps with nazm, which is a broader concern.