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Layered Semiotics of Surah Takāthur

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نشانهشناسي لايهاي سوره تكاثر

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Abstract:

At-Takāthur is one of the Meccan Surahs, which criticizes a part of the culture of the pre-Islamic society in terms of style and content. Like other Meccan Surahs it absorbs the audience to pay attention to Resurrection. A semiotic exploration of the signs of this surah, particularly its layered semiotics, reveals the messages behind its words and signs. In order to explain the first and apparent meaning of the verses, we analyzed the signs of this surah based on interpretive and literary sources. Findings show that in this surah on the horizontal axis, the choice of the words "Alhākum at-Takāthur" is reminiscent of a vain traditional behavior in the pre-Islamic era. This surah also considers visiting the graves with the intention of pride (extravagance) a fanatical approach to tribalism and a kind of irrational sanctification in pre-Islamic culture. On an intentional axis, the beginning words such as "Kalla" (the negative sign of the nexus-oriented) and "Thumma" (the connection of the nexusoriented). "s" and "sawfa" refer to the condemnation and rejection of such useless behavior. These words also refer to the necessity of attention to a knowledge which will be occurred very soon.

Keywords: Qur'an, Beginner, Sanctification, Takāthur, Visiting.

سوره تکاثر، از سورههای مکی است که به شیوه و سبک محتوایی بسیاری از سور دیگر مکی به نقد یک پاره فرهنگ جامعه عصر جاهلی می پردازد و مخاطبان را به مسئله معاد توجه میدهد. واکاوی نشانههای این سوره، بهویژه نشانه شناسی لایه ای آن، گذشته از تبیین معنای نخست و ظاهری آیات، پیامهای نهفته در ورای کلمات و نشانههایش را معلوم می دارد. ازاین رو، از رهگذر توصیف و تحلیل و به استناد منابع تفسیری و مراجع ادبی به واکاوی نشانههای این سوره برآمدهایم. این پژوهش نشان میدهد که در این سوره در محور افقی، گزینش واژههای «ألهیکم، زرتم» یک رفتار سنتی بیهوده در دوره جاهلی را یادآور میشود. همچنین زیارت قبور به قصد تفاخر و تکاثر (افزون طلبی) را رویکردی متعصبانه در قبیله گرایی و نوعی تقدیس نابخردانه در فرهنگ جاهلی میداند. در محور عمودی، آغازگرهایی مانند «کلّا» (نشانه نفی پیوند محور) و «ثم» (ربط پیوند محور) سین و سوف تسویف، بر نکوهش و طرد آن رفتار بیهوده و لزوم توجه به دانشی است که در آیندهای نه چندان دور رخ خواهد

كلمات كليدى: قرآن، آغازگر، تقديس، تكاثر، زيارت.

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Introduction

One of the characteristics of sacred texts is in removing textual layers and aspects of their meanings. These layers interact with each other and have a causal relationship with each other; hence, the concepts in such texts are often multifaceted and interpretable. Today, with the knowledge of semiotics, they analyze and interpret the text. One of the signs that indicates a kind of behavioral abnormality with its layered meaning is the words in the Holy Qur'an that talk about Takāthur (abundance) in the pre-Islamic era; a phenomenon that was prevalent as a part of culture in the pre-Islamic society and was one of the manifestations of the nervousness of the pre-Islamic Arabs.

The prejudices that were present in tribalism, racism and language zeal. The Holy Qur'an, which emphasizes the guidance of people towards a wise life and the liberation of human beings from blind prejudices and imitations and irrational behaviors, by repeating the words that it has mentioned in the field of semantic network of guidance or reason with expressions such as "don't you think? ", "don't you contemplate?" And asking questions in the form of "don't you see ... shall I direct you?" draws its audience to think and reason. and criticizes some social traditions such as ignorant prejudices and the prevalence of reproduction sanctification of some phenomena by challenging some behaviors that have no rational basis, imitates the behavior of predecessors with obvious aspects and signs that are implied in the mind of the audience.

Accordingly, the present article, with a case study of Surah Takāthur,

criticizes the Takāthur (abundance) of the ignorant Arabs, and with the morphological, syntactic and phonetic semiotics of Surah Takāthur, in addition to processing the background of the category of Takāthur in the Holy Qur'an, analyzes the meaning of the words and the style of expression of the verses of this surah and deals with the following questions:

- What is the background of the critique of Takāthur in the Holy Qur'an?
- What is the meaning of the signs of Surah Takāthur?

1. Background and Necessity of Research

For the semiotics of the holy verses of the Qur'an, we can refer to lexical issues in literary commentaries such as the commentary of al-Kashshāf Zamakhsharī, Majma' al-Bayān Ṭabrasī and contemporary commentaries such as the Tafsir Al-Mīzān by Mohammad Hussein Tabataba'i and Tasnīm Abdullah Jawādī Āmulī. Independent studies have also been done including:

- Article "Layered semiotics of verses of the Holy Qur'an according to the intertextual and intra-textual relations" by Zahra Mohagheghian. The findings of this study indicate that different semantic dimensions of the text of the Holy Our'an are obtained in intra-textual and intertextual relations due to the multiplicity of different layers and different levels of its signification in both vertical and horizontal axes. Layered semiotics opens a new chapter for understanding and discovering the different semantic layers of the Holy Our'an.
- The semiotics of the word "fire" in the Holy Qur'an from Bayan Qamari

and Ali Baqir Taherinia. In this research, first the word "fire" has been interpreted and its place in different religions and then its place in the Qur'an has been studied and through similes, metaphors and other signs it has been tried to reveal the hidden semantic layers of the word "fire".

- The lexical semiotics of the word "hypocrisy" in the Holy Qur'an (a case study of Surah Al-Munāfiqūn) by Ensieh Khazali and Mitra Akbari (Lesan Mobin, 8th year, No. 25) The result of this study is that the signs of hypocrisy, despite the high frequency of the words on external signs, the multiple meanings of these words on internal signs have strengthened the depiction of hidden layers of hypocritical behavior.

This considers the centrality of the internal signs to be the lack of honesty and the main manifestations and their external signs to be a demonstrative and opportunistic accompaniment.

- Article "Semiotics of Surah Ghāshiyah" by Abbas Eghbali and Zahra Vakili (Research Journal of Language and Interpretation of the Qur'an 2016, No. 9).

In this study, by examining the aspects of "lexical construction", "grammatical composition" and based on "Paradigmatic or substitution" axis in the application or use of interpretation, it has been found that the application of repetition, punctuation, observance and contrast techniques, in addition to making the surah rhythmic, emphasizes on the intended concept; and the syntactic level of the sentences, the extroverted and introverted images of the verses of this surah, the reality and of the Day circumstances Resurrection, the heavenly and the infernal, are instilled in the audience.

These researches show that the identification of the verses of the Holy Qur'an which, in the words of Amir al-Mu'minin Ali (AS), "Its appearance is beautiful and its interior is deep" (Nahj al-Balāghah, Sermon 18) and according to Ghazālī: There are seas of secrets and treasures of mysteries under any word of the Holy Qur'an. (Mohagheghian, 2014, quoted by Ghazālī, Abi Hamed, 1421, p.22).

Identifying the hidden layers of these verses is a role model and it is possible to identify the layers and messages of these verses by the semiotics of Surah Takāthur with the focus on its first two verses.

2. Theoretical Foundations of Research

Language is a system of signs, and the word is an obvious sign with a hidden meaning; therefore, in identifying the hidden meaning of a text, presentation of its linguistic signs, based on the principles of semiotics (semiology) leads to a more complete identification of these signs. According to Saussure, "meaning arises from the distinctions between signs." These distinctions are of two types: syntagmatic (how elements are placed paradigmatic together) and elements are substituted). These two dimensions are known as the axes of meaning construction; horizontal axis, syntagmatic vertical and axis, paradigmatic.

In the horizontal axis, the fit of the vocabulary with the structure and selection of words that are placed in a linear path and create a new written composition is investigated. Also those words that imply certainty, continuity, stability, and rebuke, or words that have

a particular emotional meaning are considered.

In the study of the vertical axis of a text, the initiators of the text and the of speech are explained grammatically (syntactically). Because Initiation is related to how the structure of the paragraph is formed, it is the starting point of the message, the starting point of the message and what each paragraph is based on (Eghbali and Vakili, 2016, p.171, quoted by Arab Zouzani and Pahlavannejad, 2014, p.18). This sign is one of the worthy features of a text; since Halliday (1985) defines initiatives as the starting point of the message (ibid., p.2014, quoted by Thomson, 1996, p.136).

Grammatically selecting words is a process that is formed in the selection of words such as the particles (and, so, then¹), the letters of emphasis (surely, certainly²), the letter of rejection (no, never³) and the letter of encouragement (beware⁴), each of which indicates some layers of the text.

Because speech is a combination of consonants and vowels, the sounds of a text are also unique implicit. Balances play a special role in this regard. This feature was first introduced by Jacobsen, who believed: Balance is achieved through verbal repetition. (Safavi, 2004, p.150)

At the phonetic level, "repetition gives a sense of originality and depth to the meaning and concept of poetry or prose, and increases its effectiveness by focusing the word on an axis and intensifying emotions." Also, by creating all similar letters and repeating special sounds, it leads the rhythm of the

word towards a specific rhythm (Ghafouri et al., 2015, p.140, quoting Razqah, 2002, p.374-375). If the syntactic features of a section or sentence are repeated in subsequent sections or sentences and cause syntactic symmetry, it is called syntactic balance or syntactic repetition (Al-Ghazali, 2003, p.82).

The aesthetic effect of this symmetry is the result of associations that are obtained by repeating the syntactic features of one section in subsequent sections and cause a kind of unity between the symmetrical structures. As a result, the components that are not homogeneous in the symmetries (incomplete balance) are considered homogeneous due to the syntactic unity (Eghbali and Sayadinejad, 2019).

The semiotics of Surah Takāthur shows examples of lexical and syntactic balances crystallized in phonological and syllabic phonemes and repetitions of syntactic structure that are worthy of attention and analysis.

3. Research Data

The word Takāthur has been used twice in the Qur'an. One case is in Surah Ḥadīd and the other in Surah Takāthur. It has been stated in Surah Ḥadīd:

"Know that the life of the world is only play, and idle talk, and pageantry, and boasting among you, and rivalry in respect of wealth and children; as the likeness of vegetation after rain, whereof the growth is pleasing to the husbandman, but afterward it dried up and thou see it turning yellow, then it becometh straw. And in the Hereafter there is grievous punishment, and (also)

forgiveness from Allah and His good pleasure, whereas the life of the world is but matter of illusion." ¹

This verse shows that abundance and rivalry is a characteristic of worldliness. It is narrated from Sheikh Baha'i ,may God have mercy on him, that: The five characteristics mentioned it the above verse are ordered regarding the age of man and the stages of his life, since when he is a child, he is interested in games and entertainment. And when he is an adolescence, he is interested in other entertainments and after being matured completely, he is busy with decorating himself and his life. He is always thinking to dress rich, ride interesting car, build a beautiful home and always he pays attention to his beauty and make-up and after this age he reaches the old age. Then he tries to increase wealth and children (Tabataba'i, 1417 AH, v.27, p.282).

4. Semiotics of Surah

Ibn Arabī also called the Qur'an a landless ocean and Allameh Tabataba'i considered the various meanings that can be cited in the Qur'an as one of the wonders of the Qur'an that amazes the intellects (Ibid: v.1, p.243). Accordingly, Surah Takāthur, like other systematic texts, the words of Surah are obvious signs that contain the shadow of hidden meanings; layers that are identified by analyzing signs in both vertical and horizontal axes.

4-1. Criticizing the One-Sided Pre-Islamic Culture

Tribal prejudices are a cultural feature of the pre-Islamic era. Tribal affiliation was the basis of tribal life; hence, tribal prejudice was considered the axis of ignorant thought (Mustafa 'Ashshā, 2005, p.4) and it was considered the strategic identity of individuals and played an active role in the political, social, economic and customary and moral unity of the tribe (Hatta, et all, 1965, p.33).

Hence, they always emphasized this prejudice and were proud of each other in tribal appearances and even in sufferings (Zidane, 1972, v.1, p.86). One of the most common behaviors of Surah Takāthur is mentioning the onesided common culture in the pre-Islamic namely boasting about abundance of members of the tribe, this surah has criticized this behavior with signs that have multiple meanings. Signs that in the two axes of horizontal (type of words) and vertical (syntactic structure of the text) were the means of deterring the audience from the ignorant traditions and calling for wisdom and the path of truth. In the horizontal axis of Surah Takāthur, these words are worthy of semiotics: "Al-Hākum", "Al-"Zurtum", Takāthur", "Al-Magābir", "Kallā", "Sawfa", "Tarawunna", "Latus'alunna", "Al-Na'īm", "'Ilm" and "Yaqīn"².

Alhī³: The past tense verb from the infinitive of Ilhā⁴ means to turn to the lahw (vain work) and to turn to the carnal desires. It is clear that for turning to one thing, we must turn away from the other (Fakhr Rāzī, 1990, p.32/72).

 ^{﴿ (}اعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا لَعِبُ وَلَهْوُ وَزِينَةُ وَتَفَاحُرُ بَيْنَكُمْ وَتَكَاثُرُ فِي الْأَمُوالِ وَالْأُولَادِ كَمَّلَ غَيْثُ اعْجُبَ الْكُفَّارَ نَبَاتُهُ ثُمَّ يَهِيجُ فَتَرَاهُ مُصْفَراً ثُمَّ يَكُونُ حُطَاماً وَفِي الْآخِرةِ عُذَابُ شَـدِيدُ وَ مَغْفِرَةُ مَّنَ اللَّهِ وَ رِضْـوَانُ و مَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا مَتَاعُ الْغُرُورِ» [حدید: ۲۰].

 [&]quot;. «ألهاكم»، «التكاثر»، «زرتم»، «المقابر»، «كالاً»، « سوف»، «ترونّ»، «التسألنّ»، «النعيم»، «علم» و «يقين»

۳. ألهى ۴. إلهاء

Using this for Takāthur sign (abundance) is a sign of the futility of this action and turning to a behavior that originates from the carnal desires. "It is very clear that nafs al-'ammārah is always directing to the evil"; hence, the hidden meaning of "Alhī" is the reprimand of negative rivalry (boasting about the abundance of tribal people and the dead in the grave) and its opposite meaning is the invitation to think and behave wisely.

In this Surah, which is different from the verse 11 of Surah al-Fatah: "Those of the wandering Arabs who were left behind will tell thee: Our possessions and our households occupied us."

Instead of the word "job", the term "vain" has been used to rebuke the futility of Takāthur and behavior without rationality and greed, including the number of the dead.

Al-Takāthur: This word is unconditional subject and the Takāthur is not clear; because such an expression (absolute interpretation) brings more condemnation; that is, Takāthur prevents you from remembering God and the necessities of knowing, thinking and contemplating. Turning away from contemplation is such that, according to the previous surah (Al-Qāri'ah), it means that Takāthur prevents you from contemplating the matter of Resurrection and preparing for death, and towards the following verses, that is, from paying attention to the end of this life, i.e. the grave. (Ibid, p.32/74).

Zurtum: "Zurtum" (pilgrimage) is a theological sign that, in addition to the apparent meaning of the visit, has a layer of meanings of love and sanctity; this means that the partial usage of

"pilgrimage" is in cases where the visit is based on a relationship of friendship or sanctification. Hence, the use of this word, which is mentioned only once in the whole Qur'an during the pilgrimage to the graves (you met the graves), indicates that the ignorant Arabs were interested in and proud of tribal prejudices and the abundance of tribal people; Amir al-Mu'minin (AS) reprimanded the interpretation after reciting the first verse of surah Takāthur and said: "Do they boast about the graves where their fathers are asleep or the place where many are dead?"² (Nahi al-Balāghah, sermon 221). So this tradition is confirmed.

Moreover, according to the principle of paradigmatic, the use of the word "you visited" instead of "you saw" is a sign of remembrance of the sanctuary of the ancestors' graves in pre-Islamic culture.

Another horizontal axis has put all the words "you know", "knowledge", "you see" and even the word "you are questioned" in a linear path. It is clear that the compatibility of the semantic signs of "you see" and "you are questioned" with the substance of science is due to the fact that seeing and questioning is a source of knowledge.

In this regard, the repetition of the words of warning (Nay, you shall soon know) indicates the emphasis on the rejection of that ignorant tradition as well as the emphasis on the subject of warning. The hidden meaning of the words "you know", "knowledge", "you see" reminds us that boasting about Takāthur and visiting graves for rivalry and boasting about the abundance of the number of members of the tribe had no origin other than ignorance.

The L in "Latus alunna" (i.e. surely you are questioned) and L in "Latarawunna" (i.e. certainly you see) are all indicative signs that indicate the certainty of the Day of Judgment and the necessity of abandoning the one-sided culture and tradition of Takāthur and rivalry by counting the dead.

Language choices can indicate the power of the messengers over receiver of the message or correlation between the two." (Bayyurt & Bayraktaroğlu, 2001, p.210) Van Dijk believes that the discourse producer uses certain linguistic techniques to indicate the distance between some poles and others that shows the distance between us and the other." (Van Dijk, 2006, p.119) In Arabic, the use of pronouns instead of nouns, as well as the use of descriptive words to express signs, are among the cognitive-social tools in introducing our pole and another (Yousefabadi, 2020, p.113). Accordingly, the rhetorical pronouns, that is, the continuous pronouns and the appearance of "kum, tum1" and the hidden pronouns in the verbs "you know", "you are questioned" and "you see" are signs of distance and indicate the power of the speaker towards the audience.

The use of mere rhetorical pronouns in this surah in relation to Surah Kāfirūn, which criticizes the absurd worship of the infidels, but uses the hidden pronouns of I (worship) and apparently (I am a worshiper) and rhetorical pronouns (you, worship, your religion) are another sign indicating the relationship between the Prophet and the behavior of the audience and the

complete innocence of those ignorant behaviors.

Another sign of this surah is the conditional "law" which is another emphasis on the initial rebuke (the rivalry and abundance made you neglect ...) and insisting on establishing meaning in the mind of the audience according to its deleted answer² (Safi, 1406 AH, v.30, p.335).

In the vertical axis of this surah, like many surahs that were revealed at the beginning of the revelation and in Mecca, they are warning and call the audience to contemplation. initiators of this surah also have a similar message and a and predetermined pattern and it is a means of contemplation and understanding of the hidden layers of the text. Some believe that Hamza Istifhām has been removed before the word "Alhī", such as:

In this verse the letter Hamza Istifhām has been deleted at the beginning of "will you forgive them" (Zamakhsharī, 1404 AH, v.4, p.543).

According to this view, the beginning of this surah is Hamza Istifhām. This kind of beginning resemble the beginnings of Surah al-Inshirāḥ (did we not expand) and Surah an-Naba' (what do they ask one another) and the verses of the question that are like warnings, such as:

This kind of Istifhām is a warning about the vain and useless behavior of counting graves or turning away from

paying attention to the Day of Judgment. Also, the conjunction initiator of "Kallā" in "Nay, you shall soon know", which is a rejection letter and is a sign of "link-axis negation" with the previous phrase, and the initial word "then" is a sign of "link-axis connection". In "Verily, they shall soon know" there are signs that indicate the unity of speech.

Zamakhsharī says: "Repeating the rejection letter of "Kallā" is a sign of intensification in warning and promise and the sign of "then" indicates that the second promise is louder and more intense than the first warning" (Zamakhsharī, 1404 AH, v.4, p.183)

The initiator of the letter "L", "Latarawunna" and "Latus alunna" is a sign that indicates the layers appropriate to these initiators, i.e., the continuation of situations and the emphasis on the certainty of the Day of Judgment. In addition to this, the word "S" in Sawfa has a whistle and a warning sound that is consistent with the content of the verse (Rajayi and Khaghani, 2014, p.119).

Another aspect of the vertical axis of this surah is the syntactic structure of the surah, in which the sentence begins with a verb. In the science of linguistics, "rivalry and abundance made you neglect" the structure of a sentence is analyzed as a choice; that is, the structure of a particular sentence of a given text, is compared to other hypothetical structures that could convey the same meaning, so that the analyst asks himself why this particular text has preferred this particular structure over other possible structures (Rajayi and Khaghani, 2014, p.119. Quoted by Shokrani, Moti' and Fani).

Hence, it can be said that the use of the sentence beginning with a verb is a sign of the continuation of a behavior

and event that has been either occurred intermittently or will occur in the distant or near future. The past tense verb of "Alhī" and "Zurtum", which indicate the certainty of occurrence in the plural form, indicate the behavior that occurred before the sunrise of Islam and by the pre-Islamic Arabs on the basis of a one-sided culture. The present tense verbs in the sentences beginning with a verb in the following verses with the suffix Sawfa, or L or N for emphasis (Sata'lamun, Tus'alunna, Tarawunna) are as layered signs of events that will definitely occur, and completing the speech with the expression "knowledge of certainty" closes the way for any doubt to the audience.

The initiator of the surah has delegitimized reproduction with the sign of "Al-Ḥākum al-Takāthur" (turning to the proliferation of tribal people, which is a material and worldly approach that has no value) has made Takāthur a cause of inattention and lack of understanding and recognition of a reality called resurrection. A warning that is not specific to the audience of the age of revelation and is used everywhere and at all times; because the Qur'an is a "warning to the worlds".

4-2. Denotative Phonetic Signs

Sounds are signs of meanings, so it can be considered part of the knowledge of semiotics, which is called phonosemantics phonetic semantics. or (Ferasatkhah, 1998, p.166). In Surah Takāthur, the sounds of the rhythmic words "Takāthur" with "Maqābir" are of the type of Saj' Mutarraf (the last words of the verses are in the same syllable and in different weights, such as the two words "Waqārā" and "Atwārā" in the verses: "What ailed you that ye hope not toward Allah for dignity" and "When

He created you by (divers) stages?"¹ (Nūh: 13-14) (Al-Qazwīnī, 1984, p.398) and the rhythmic words "Na'īm" with "Jahīm" which are of the type of Saj'Murassa'(words of two or more syllables in weight and in different letters). (Hashemi, nd, p.357).

Like the words "Mustabīn" and "Mustaqīm" in the verses: "And We gave them the clear Scripture" and "And showed them the right path"², it gives a special prominence to the part of speech (speech), it attracts the attention of the speaker (reader). Also, the sound resulting from the syntactic balance resulting the repetition from sentences beginning with throughout this surah is a sign of emphasis on establishing meaning in the mind of the audience, and the verbal balance with verbal repetition in the verse "Verily you shall soon know" is a sign of insisting on a certain aspect of speech i.e. challenging the boast that was due to ignorance and according to Hashemi, it can remind us that ignorance and unawareness are the cause of turning away from spiritual truths and resurrection and going to worthless material things, that is, boasting about the number of tribal people and the number of the dead in graves.

CONCLUSION

The semiotics of Surah Takāthur show that in the horizontal axis, the words "Alhī" and "Takāthur" indicate that turning the pre-Islamic Arabs away from the subject of resurrection and dealing with the excess of material and worldly affairs has become a warning

and rebuke to them. Also, the sign of "Zurtum al-Maqābir" is due to the semantic concept, i.e. the concept of sanctity hidden in the word pilgrimage, poems to sanctify tribal honors and their interest in counting the dead in the graves of their ancestors.

In the vertical axis, the initiators of Surah Takāthur, shows the same and predetermined pattern and is a means of contemplation and understanding of the hidden layers of the text; conjunction initiator of "Kallā" in "Nay, you shall soon know" helps the negative conjunction with the previous phrase, and the sign of the initiator of "then" (positive link) in "then you shall soon know" indicates the unity of speech and emphasis and the intensity of the rebuke of sanctification and rivalry by the dead. Bringing the sign of rejection of "Kallā" and the letters of S and Sawfa, as well as the emphasis sign of L in "Latarawunna and Latus 'alunna" from the appropriate layers of these initiators, draws the audience to the fact that these absurd boasts will not last long and you will soon realize the certainty resurrection.

Also, the vertical axis in the syntactic structure is a sign of the continuation of behavior that occurred before the sunrise of Islam and by the ignorant Arabs based on a one-sided culture, and the end of the verses of the final signs of Surah (Ilm al-Yaqīn) and choosing this interpretation closes the way to any doubt.

In the phonetic denotation of signs, homogeneous words, or the characteristic of balance of lexical and syntactic type, attracts the attention of

the audience and insists on proving the matter in his mind

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