

## Review and Critique of "Theory of Personal Exegesis" from the Perspective of Shari'at Sanglaji

بررسی و نقد « نظریه تفسیر به رأی » از منظر شریعت سنگلجی

Received: 2021/10/26

Accepted: 2021/11/29

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### Abstract

*Shari'at Sanglaji, as one of the activists of the contemporary Shia Qur'an-Sufficiency attitude, seeks to narrow the scope of personal exegesis with anything other than the interpretation of the Qur'an to the Qur'an. Updating the religion by purifying it from non-Qur'anic teachings is the ideal of the defenders of this movement. This research critiques this religious rethinking approach by a descriptive-analytical method. Shari'at Sanglaji, through understanding the Qur'anic phrases, concludes that the Nubuwwah and Wilayah Sunnah are not original in anything other than Ayāt al-Ahkām, and emphasizes the need to interpret the Qur'an in the light of other verses, as the best and only source for the correct interpretation of verses. He considers a non-independent role for the Ahl al-Bayt (AS) in explaining the divine verses and considers them as the commentator of the Prophet's Sunnah (PBUH), and not the commentator of the Qur'an's verses. Among the contradictions of this approach with Imamiyyah thoughts are incompatibility with the nature of intercession, a shaky position for the intellect in interpreting verses, and the fallacy of referring to the companions in referring to the interpretation of the Qur'an without any explanation regarding accepting the narrations received from them. Most Imamiyyah theologians emphasize the position of the Prophet and the saints in the direct news of God and organizing the spiritual and social life of the people, as well as the authority that God has given to the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and his esteemed saints. And they consider obedience to the Prophet and the saints necessary because of their immunity from sin and error in personal and social actions. From this perspective, intercession is impossible without God's permission, and the authority of intercession is expressed.*

**Keywords:** Holy Qur'an, Personal Exegesis, Shari'at Sanglaji, Qur'an-Sufficiency.

### چکیده

شریعت سنگلجی به عنوان یکی از فعالان نگرش قرآن بسندگی معاصر شیعی، در صدد تضییق محدودده تفسیر به رأی با هر آنچه غیر از تفسیر قرآن به قرآن است. روزآمدسازی دین با پیراستن آن از آموزه های غیر قرآنی، آرمان مدافعان این جریان به شمار می آید. این جستار با روش توصیفی - تحلیلی، این رویکرد نو اندیشی دینی را به بوته نقد می گذارد. شریعت سنگلجی از رهگذر فهم مجملات قرآنی، القای عدم اصالت سنت نبوی و ولوی در هر آنچه غیر از حوزه آیات الاحکام باشد راه نتیجه می گیرد و بر ضرورت تفسیر قرآن در سایه آیات دیگر، به عنوان بهترین و یگانه ترین منبع برای تفسیر صحیح آیات تأکید می کند. وی نقش غیر استقلالی برای اهل بیت (ع) در تبیین آیات الهی قائل است و آنها را شارح سنت پیامبر (ص)، و نه آیات قرآن می داند. از جمله تهافت های این رویکرد با اندیشه های امامیه می توان به ناسازگاری با ماهیت شفاعت، جایگاهی متزلزل برای عقل در تفسیر آیات و مغالطه رجوع به صحابه در ارجاع به تفسیر قرآن بدون هیچ قید توضیحی در ارتباط با قبول روایات رسیده از آنها، اشاره نمود. غالب متکلمان امامیه با تأکید بر جایگاه نبی و اولیا در اخبار بی واسطه از خداوند و ساماندهی حیات معنوی و اجتماعی مردم و همچنین اختیاراتی که خداوند به نبی اکرم (ص) و اولیای گرامی اش داده و مصونیت از گناه و خطا در عرصه اعمال شخصی و اجتماعی، تبعیت از نبی و اولیا را ضروری می دانند. از این منظر شفاعت بدون اذن خداوند محال است و حجیت شفاعت افاده می شود.

**کلمات کلیدی:** قرآن کریم، تفسیر به رأی، شریعت سنگلجی، قرآن بسندگی.

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## Introduction

Theory of personal exegesis is unprecedented in studies with historical approaches (Gerami, 2010: 79-106), Sunni interpretation (Ṭabarī, 1408: 1/27; Ehsani et al., 2015: 79-107) and Shia narrative texts (Ayyashi, 1421: 1/195; Sadūq, 1991: 1/257). Most of these approaches are based on historical arguments against personal exegesis as one of the most dangerous ways to deal with the Qur'an. (See Rāghib Isfahani, nd: 165; Qurṭubī, 2008: 31-34; Ibn Qayyim, 1995: 1/284-285; Al-'Ak, 1414: 67) In fact, the history of personal exegesis has been from the beginning of the revelation (Nisā'ī, 1411: 5/31) and the first commentator of the Holy Qur'an warned it as one of the serious dangers of understanding the divine verses. Avoiding the personal exegesis with the aim of following the prophetic narrations has been considered as the main basis of the commentators of the Holy Qur'an with any kind of interpretive tendencies in the interpretation of the Qur'an (Fayḍ Kashani, 1415: 1/35)<sup>1</sup>. Therefore, the commentators have each turned to the interpretation and analysis of the prophetic narration in connection with the personal exegesis and have offered various different definitions of it. The definition of each commentator on the personal exegesis, introduces the type of interpretive method of the interpreter to the audience. Because any implication of this definition can determine the main basis of the interpretation, the rules derived from it, the method of the interpreter and the sources used by him.

Some commentators, on the one hand, while dividing the commentary into praised and condemned, have mentioned its examples, and on the other hand, have accused the condemned commentators of imposing their beliefs and misinterpreting verses (Zhaḥabī, 1961: 1/256). Each of the commentators of this prophetic narration, especially in the letter "Bi" and the word "Ra'y", have announced their own interpretations along with their interpretive opinions. The main opinions in the letter "Bi" are defined as causality, subjugation and transitive by the second object, which in causality means that the interpreter interprets because of his own opinion, i.e. the purpose of interpretation is to express his point of view and verses are a means he seeks to confirm his point of view and seeks the interpretation of verses with the help of his own opinion. (Rajabi, 2000: 57-58) The word "Ra'y" i.e. opinion" according to its usage in the book and tradition, does not mean rational understanding, but it means personal opinion and taste or thought, conception and estimation. (Makarem Shirazi, nd: 22) The general form of exegesis is applying the exegesis to express his opinion or to use the verses to confirm his own opinion. The exegesis has been unanimously banned by both Shia and Sunni sects. (Rezaei Isfahani, 2007: 4/25) The need for coherent research in accordance with the groundwork for the design of different views and opinions led to the present research with a library method and an analytical-critical approach, the idea of denying the tradition in the field of religiosity in some aspects from the perspective of Mohammad Hassan Shari'at Sanglaji, one of the figures of the contemporary Qur'an-sufficiency

1. «من فسر القرآن برأيه فليتبوأ مقعده من النار»؛ «من فسر القرآن برأيه فأصاب الحق أخطأ»

that has developed and promoted this idea in the form of his various writings.

Sanglaji's presence among contemporary modernist commentators has made scholars pay attention to his works. He is considered to be one of the followers of the Qur'an-Sufficiency intellectual current, which originates from the geographical area of the Sunnis, but declares the authority of the Prophetic tradition to be narrow and states that the part of the Prophetic tradition which is in the realm of the *Āyāt Al-Aḥkām*, which is about one-sixth verse of the Qur'an related to the *Āyāt Al-Aḥkām*, and can be used as a source in understanding the verses, otherwise the verses of the Qur'an are self-explanatory.

Historically, the views of Shari'at Sanglaji on his Qur'anic views have not been independently written. However, several articles have been written about his political views and ideas, including: the article on religious reform of the first Pahlavi period based on the views of Shari'at Sanglaji (Dehghani and Alipour Silab, 2013: 25-50) and the article on Analytical look at intellectual endeavors of Shari'at Sanglaji (Nabawī Raḍawī, 2011: 249-272). However, Shari'at Sanglaji's view on personal exegesis has not yet been explored. This study aims to explain the view of Shari'at Sanglaji on personal exegesis, and to test this view from the perspective of Imamiyyah theology.

### **1. Components of personal exegesis in the discourse of Shari'at Sanglaji**

Sanglaji has raised challenging arguments with the aim of denying the Sunnah in the interpretation of the Qur'an except for Tafsir Ma'thūr, which is the interpretive narrations in the field of *Āyāt al-Aḥkām*. It is

appropriate to first consider the text of the competitor's claim in the category of the nature of personal exegesis and its criteria. His position is explained in the following headings:

#### **1-1. Reductionism in the field of Sunnah**

In the process of reductionism of Sunnah, an area of tradition is marginalized and limited to a certain status. Sanglaji relies on the narration of the Prophet (PBUH) to reach the definition and concept of personal exegesis. He considered personal exegesis to mean the interference of his opinion and beliefs in the Qur'an, which is condemned in the Holy Shari'a and deserves the person, who interprets the Qur'an based on his own opinion, to go to the fire of hell. As it is mentioned in the authentic hadith of the Prophet who said:

“He who interprets the Qur'an according to his own opinions, so his position will be in Fire.”

And it is clearly quoted from the Imams that the interpretation of the Book of God is not permissible except for the correct word or the explicit text. (Sanglaji, nd: 53) It should be noted that he quotes personal exegesis from the book of Kāfī, which according to the investigation that the authors did in the text of the narrations of the book of Kāfī, this narration does not exist in this book. There is a similar narration about falsifying the narration and lying about the Holy Prophet (PBUH) in the text of the narrations of the book of Kāfī with the following subject:

“If a person attributes a lie to me intentionally, so his position will be in Fire.”(Kulaynī, 1407: 1/62) This can be resulted from several things:

1. This is due to the author's carelessness in documenting the

narrations regarding the sanctity of personal exegesis.

2. Or because the author considers a part of the narrations which is in the realm of the *Āyāt Al-Aḥkām* as a correct interpretation, so the interpretation may be a part of the narration from his point of view, and with this view, he has cited the narration in question sufficiently.

Sanglaji has considered the narration of the prohibition of personal exegesis to be divided into two aspects:

The first aspect: Interpretation based on the carnal desires of the interpreter and adopting the interpretation to express his own point of view, which has several aspects, including:

1. An interpretation that the deviated sects offer to misguide the people with the aim of doubting the intention of God Almighty on them. Such as various interpretations with Mu'tazilite, Ash'arites, philosophical, esoteric, Sufi and...

2. An interpretation given by the ignorant to understand the verses of the Qur'an according to his view based on the carnal desires and the teachings that he has learned in a false way from his teachers, and the purpose of this interpretation is to express his opinion. He knows any interpretation other than the interpretation of verses together in this type.

3. The interpretation that the commentator seeks from the verses of the Qur'an to confirm his own opinion, although it may have a correct purpose. (Sanglaji, nd: 54)

Second aspect: The interpretation that the commentator offers without knowledge toward the basics of interpretation of the divine word such as vocabulary knowledge, Arabic literature, history, narrations of the revelation, the Sunnah of the Prophet

(PBUH), Qur'anic sciences such as submission and delay, the strangeness of the Qur'an from understanding divine verses (Sanglaji, nd: 55) As it is clear, this aspect of Sanglaji's point of view is in line with the thoughts of Imamiyyah scholars, because it is necessary for the commentators of the Holy Qur'an as well as the scholars of Qur'anic sciences to understand the divine verses, to go through the preliminaries and acquire the sciences related to understanding them. Various sciences along with divine grace for understanding the Qur'an have been introduced by commentators for the interpretation of verses (Amid Zanjani, 1988: 182). Because the divine verses are of the Arabic language, and of course the knowledge of the sciences related to the Arabic word is in the first place, including grammar, syntax, rhetoric, the knowledge of the word to understand it. And also because many verses have been revealed in special circumstances that we are far from now, so understanding the events related to those events is very important in understanding the verses and the importance of knowledge of the dignity of revelation (Suyūfī, 1421: 2/462) and even in the interpretation of new commentators, the atmosphere of revelation is not hidden from any of the commentators (Jawādī Āmulī, 1997: 1/233). Many verses contain instructions related to individual and social life that require the commentator's knowledge on jurisprudence, law and the rules of the day, and many other sciences that can be understood using the current contexts of the verses. (Mo'ddab, 2001: 213) which makes their dependence on the level of understanding and knowledge of the interpreter more and more obvious. The more knowledge the

interpreter has about the sciences related to understanding the divine verses, the better he will certainly be in understanding the verses and interpreting them.

### **1-2. A shaky position for the intellect in the interpretation of the Qur'an**

However, in many of the articles received from Shari'at Sanglaji, using reason is seen as one of the sources to answer doubts or prove a point of view, and in the religious contents received from him (Sanglaji, 1323; Homo, Bi Ta; Homo, 2007) using the intellect has clearly been occurred along with citing the verses and narrations in response to Qur'anic issues and doubts, such as what he has described in the discussion of the death of Khidr and Elias in the book *Mahw al-Muhūm* after quoting verses and narrations to prove it. One of the rational reasons for his opinion about the death of Haḍrat Khidr and Haḍrat Elias is that they did not board the ark of Noah, that no one informed them of boarding the ark, and that according to the following verse, some of the children of Prophet Noah (AS) remained and no one other than his children remained, and also if they survived, the Qur'an should mention their life as the life of Noah (AS), which can be a proof of its miracle:

"And made his progeny to endure (on this earth)". (77 / Šāffāt)

But in the Qur'an their life is not mentioned as a miraculous proof; therefore, this can be one of the reasons approving their death (Sanglaji, 1323: 15). Although Sanglaji has used reason in interpretation, its use is not seen alone without the help of verses and narrations. And basically his rational reasons are a kind of using the verses and narrations; even in this short

example, these reasons are not strong rational reasons to be useful for science, and they are flawed from the point of view of science itself. In order to avoid the opinion of the commentator in the interpretation of the verses and to avoid using the reason, the Shari'at Sanglaji summarizes the correct interpretation in the sufficiency of the verses in its interpretation and the Sunnah in the interpretation of the *Āyāt al-Aḥkām*. As if his scale in using this narration was the jurists' promise on the jurisprudential use of this narration that whatever is not inferred from the divine verses based on the book and tradition (Rezaei Isfahani, 2003: 377), they consider it as personal exegesis and therefore, in their words, they are called the companions of opinion, the companions of analogy and *Istiḥsān*. (Taheri, 1998: 2/52)

### **1-3. The non-independent role of the Ahl al-Bayt in interpreting the Qur'an**

In the following discussion, Sanglaji considers the need of the general rules of Shari'a to the Sunnah, defines the Sunnah according to the hadith of *Thaqalayn* as *'Itrat*. Therefore, he believes that since the *'Itrat* of the Prophet (PBUH) express the Sunnah of the Prophet, are the same as Sunnah. (Sanglaji, nd, 41).

From this statement it can be implicitly understood that he does not consider an independent role for the family of the Prophet (PBUH) as the commentators of the Qur'an and only considers them as expressing the Sunnah and its narrator.

But it is very surprising that he in this section, about the correct interpretation, considers the interpretation of the Companions as an example of the correct interpretations

that have reached us. It is possible that the meaning of expressing the Sunnah is the description and elaboration of the Prophetic Sunnah, but nevertheless it still does not solve the problem of the independence of the Imams (AS) in interpreting the Qur'an. Sanglaji considers the family of 'Itrat (AS) only to express what has been received from the Sunnah of the Prophet (PBUH), that is, he does not consider them to be the revelators of the Qur'an, but considers them to be the commentators of the Sunnah of the Prophet (PBUH) and not the verses of the Qur'an. In this way, they cannot be considered as an independent source in explaining the divine verses.

#### **1-4. Referring to the Narrations of the Companions without any Explanation**

Assigning Salafism to Sanglaji is mostly due to his numerous quotations from the Companions without commenting and criticizing the authenticity and text of their narrations in the interpretive discussions quoted by him. For example, following the discussion of "Tawaffi" in the book *Mahw al-Muhūm*, as a testimony to the narrations, he referred to Sunni books such as *Ṣahīh Bukhārī*, *Madārij al-Sālikīn* Ibn Qayyim, *Tafsir Abu al-Fadā*, *Yawāqīt* Sheikh Abdul Wahab Sha'rānī, the conquests of Mecca by Sheikh Akbar Muhyī al-Din and Ibn Hajar. (Sanglaji, 1323: 41). Sanglaji has stated the correct way of understanding the divine verses as follows: "Whoever wants to interpret the Book of God must first seek its interpretation in the Qur'an itself. Because the Qur'an interprets some other verses and if it was summarized to seek its expression in another verse, and if it was brief, to seek its details in

another verse, if it sought and found it, it has reached its destination and there is no delay. But if he didn't find the interpretation in the Qur'an, he should refer to the Sunnah of the Prophet (PBUH), and if he does not find it in the Sunnah, he should refer to the family of the Prophet and the sayings of the Companions. The Prophet was aware of the facts and circumstances at the time of the revelation of the Qur'an. To refer to the best commentaries, it is *Tafsir Kabīr Ṭabarī* and *Tafsir Majma' al-Bayān* and *Mufradāt Rāghib*, which is the word of the Qur'an, are very helpful in understanding the Qur'an. (Sanglaji, nd: 56)

True understanding the divine verses, as expressed in his statement, depends on the interpretation of the Qur'an to the Qur'an and in the absence of this kind of interpretation, *Tafsir Ma'thūr* of the Prophet (PBUH), the Ahl al-Bayt (AS) and the Companions are mentioned. In other words, the correct interpretation in his view is the interpretation of the Qur'an to the Qur'an, and if the verses could not answer the reader's question, the narrations of the Prophet, Ahl al-Bayt (AS) and the Companions are without any explanation about the narration received from the Companions.

#### **1-5 Inducing the lack of originality of intercession**

One of the important issues that Shari'at Sanglaji has emphatically raised is the issue of intercession. Sanglaji accepts the issue of intercession after mentioning the Qur'anic, narrative and intellectual reasons and evidences subject to conditions. He considers this to be one of the common mistakes and writes: How can a person who disobeys the

commands and prohibitions communicated to the people by the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and then says that the Holy Prophet (PBUH) can intercede for him? Hence, in his view, this argument is even contrary to the goal of education. Sanglaji expresses his protest in this regard as follows: First: Intercession is impossible without God's permission. Second: God is not satisfied with anyone's intercession unless he is satisfied with him in terms of words and deeds in general. And thirdly, the word and deed of God means only monotheism to God and abstaining from committing any sin and carrying out divine commands (Sanglaji, 2007: 139).

## 2. Inadequacies of Sanglaji's discourse comparing the Imamiyyah beliefs

The prominence of the theological conflicts of Sanglaji's discourse with Imamiyyah beliefs attracts the attention of every researcher. The denial of superhuman affairs and the intercession of the Holy Prophet of Islam (PBUH) and the saints and the narrowing of the limits of using the prophetic tradition have many contradictions with the chain of Shia beliefs. The shortcomings of this idea are reviewed in several sections:

### 2-1. Explaining the Necessity of the Originality of the Nabawī and Allawī Narrations

It is accepted that the commentator pays attention to the divine verses based on carnal desires and without knowledge. Both verses such as "And pursue not that of which thou hast no knowledge." (Isrā'/36) and narrations

such as (Ibn Babawayh, 2016: 1/257)<sup>1</sup> and also in terms of the intellect, the very subtle difference between intellect and opinion has been denied. Opinion means believing in two contradictory things, in which accepting one of the two contradictory sides means the superiority of suspicion (Rāghib Isfahani, 1416: 374); but the intellect is a force that ends in knowledge and is praised in the verses of the Qur'an (Ibid.: 577). This principle has also been considered by Shari'at Sanglaji. However, the fact that he considers anything other than Tafsir Ma'thūr as a kind of personal exegesis, is worth considering for the following reasons:

#### 2-1-1. The command of verses and narrations to ponder and reason in divine verses

The Qur'an invites us to ponder on its verses in order to understand them, which has been ordered in many verses including:

"Do they not then earnestly seek to understand the Quran, or is it that there are Locks upon their hearts." (Muhammad/24), and narrations including: (Huwayzī, nd: 1/315)<sup>2</sup>.

Therefore, the understanding of the verses cannot be considered only in the quoted words left by the Prophet (PBUH), Ahl al-Bayt (AS) and the Companions (Najarzadegan, 2004: 38) as well as the traditions in the field of

١. «وَمَنْ فَسَّرَ الْقُرْآنَ بِرَأْيِهِ فَقَدْ افْتَرَىٰ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكَذِبَ وَمَنْ أَفْتَى النَّاسَ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ فَلَعَنَتْهُ مَلَائِكَةُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَ كُلُّ بَدْعَةٍ ضَلَالَةٌ وَ كُلُّ ضَلَالَةٍ سَبِيلُهَا إِلَى النَّارِ»

٢. قال رسول الله: معاشير الناس تدبروا القرآن و افهموا آياته، و انظروا محكماته، و لا تتبعوا متشابهه.

Āyāt al-Aḥkām according to Sanglaji (Shafiiyan, 2013: 123).

### **2-1-2. Inclusion of divine verses on various topics**

The Holy Qur'an in its verses, according to its guiding aspect and the level of understanding of its audience, has spoken about various topics (Ja'fari, 1996: 56) and sometimes has included different sayings in a single topic. (Zarqānī, 2006: 929) so that the audiences of the Qur'an can benefit from its guidance according to their level of understanding and consciousness.

### **2-1-3. Lack of interpretation based on the doctrinal interpretation of the Qur'an by the Prophet (PBUH) and the Ahl al-Bayt (AS)**

The fact that the Prophet (PBUH) and the Ahl al-Bayt (AS) have interpreted many doctrinal verses of the Qur'an, cannot be a complete induction and even the number of narrations received from the Holy Prophet (PBUH) in the interpretation of the Qur'an does not reach two hundred narrations (Rostami, 2001: 65). Because it is possible that this was not done due to the lack of demand of the audience of their time and even their level of ability, and if it is possible that such interpretations of the verses have been done, but now it is not fully available to us. (Babaei, 2002: 39).

Therefore, in this assumption, especially considering that not all of their audiences are in the same degree of interest (Ibid: 52) and even the sociology of the Ahl al-Bayt (AS) era, the political and social conditions prevailing in their era, indicate that we do not have enough hadiths of those

holy essences in all verses and their dimensions (Muruwati, 2002: 286) and now there is no wide and comprehensive book that contain their knowledge toward the interpretation of Qur'anic verses.

Therefore, in general, any interpretation other than Tafsir Ma'thūr cannot be considered as an example of personal exegesis. Because if these interpretations are in harmony with the general spirit of the verses and narrations as well as the rational and natural intellect that is approved by the Qur'an and narrations, and there is no substantial opposition to them, it is without predetermined prejudices and somehow pay attention to more enlightenment of the verses content, it is a correct interpretation of the divine verses (Alawi Mehr, 2002: 63) and it cannot be an personal exegesis. But if these non-Ma'thūr interpretations are a means to express the opinions of the commentator or to confirm them, it is definitely an example of personal exegesis (Rezaei Isfahani, 2008: 506), even if it has the correct result. Because in personal exegesis, the criterion is not the correct result but achieving the correct result by following the right path (Saeedi Roshan, 2004: 384). But sometimes the same opinion of the commentator, as stated by Shari'at Sanglaji, is from an ignorant person who has taken opinions through his scholars without knowing whether these opinions can be used to interpret and understand the Qur'an or not? (Sanglaji, nd: 54) Therefore, although the Shari'at Sanglaji, in introducing the most correct interpretation, has not explicitly mentioned its sufficiency in the Holy Qur'an and considers the need for the Ahl al-Bayt (AS) only in the field of Qur'anic conciseness in the field of Āyāt al-Aḥkām. As some



claimants of the Qur'an-Sufficiency believe in it; in a way that indicates his view on sufficiency in interpreting the Holy Qur'an. Some claimants of the Qur'an, suffice it to say, quoting verse 89 of Surah An-Nahl, which explains the totality of the Holy Qur'an, this verse contains both the meanings of the Qur'an and its explanation to the Prophet (PBUH) and the Ahl al-Bayt (AS), and therefore again, this verse has a kind of poems on the unity of the Holy Qur'an in explaining its intentions. (Babaei, 2002: 2/146) The orientalists also consider the prophetic tradition to have no originality and a set of jurisprudential fatwas that have no legislative concept and have found a legislative meaning in later periods (Schact, 1959: 34).

## 2-2. Explaining the originality of reason in the independent interpretation of the Qur'an

Shia jurists consider reason to be one of the sources of their jurisprudence, and in the jurisprudential sources of some Sunni sects, tolerance in the sense of reason is analogy and praise. Considering that the connection of verses with the general spirit of the Qur'an and understanding the deep connection even in the form of images in verses is one of the subtle intellectual points that occur in line with the deep intellectual and spiritual effort of the commentator in verses 22 to 24 of Surah Yūsuf: When Joseph attained his full manhood, We gave him power and knowledge: thus do We reward those who do right. But she in whose house he was, sought to seduce him, and she fastened the doors, and said: "Now come!" He said: "Allah forbid! Truly (thy husband) is my lord! He made my sojourn agreeable! Truly to no good come those who do wrong!"

And( with passion )did she desire him, and he would have desired her, but that he saw the evidence of his Lord: thus (did We order)that We might turn away from him( all )evil and indecent deeds: for he was one of Our servants, chosen.(Yūsuf/22-24)

for example in this verse, the theme of chastity of Prophet Yūsuf (AS) is clear that portrayed his puberty with the circumstances namely a woman's request to adultery and the closed doors, and that is when the discussion of seeing the Lord's argument for Prophet Yūsuf (AS) does not create the illusion of his forced infallibility. And so, the miraculous aspect of the Qur'an can be shown in its high eloquence in choosing and selecting its words, phrases and interpretations as an integrated set (Pakatchi, 2013: 134). Only morphological and syntactic knowledge and the cause of the revelation of the verse does not express the rhetoric of the verse, but requires a rational effort from the intellectual and spiritual practice of the interpreter in order to show the sweetness of the word. Now this is in seemingly contradictory verses such as:

"Some faces, that Day, will beam (in brightness and beauty); Looking towards their Lord;" (Qiyāmah/22-23)

"No vision can grasp Him, but His grasp is over all vision: He is Subtle well-aware (of all things)." (An'ām/103)

- Or verses of Naskh, which indicates a kind of seemingly contradictory difference between them. In these cases, what is the ruling of reason in resolving the apparent contradiction? If the verses are seemingly cited, there is easily no result other than accusing the Qur'an of contradiction. Shari'at Sanglaji at the beginning of his discussion in personal

exegesis, has stated the point that we should ponder on the divine verses because with the passage of time, new needs and rules are found for human beings that should be answered by the divine verses. Now the question must be raised that if there are no new needs in the narrations, what will be the task of human beings? Should we just remain silent and somehow stop and rely on our predecessors and consider the Qur'an incapable of responding to new needs? Does relying solely on Tafsir Ma'thūr meet the human need for guidance? This expression of Shari'at Sanglaji has a contradiction with the monopoly of interpretation to Tafsir Ma'thūr, which deserves reflection and discussion.

It is necessary to mention here that in interpreting the Qur'an to the Qur'an, intellect and understanding of its verses play a leading role, because sometimes a commentator or addressee of the Holy Qur'an can use the interpretation of the Qur'an to the Qur'an in understanding the word of revelation. The need for interpretation on the one hand and his nobility to divine verses on the other hand can lead to an understanding of the Qur'an to the Qur'an. Therefore, just how a verse or a series of verses can be the interpreter of other verses cannot represent the interpretation of the Qur'an to the Qur'an. Because certainly if the commentator cannot get the necessary information on a subject and then go to the divine verses to understand and answer it from the Holy Qur'an, surely the correct result that may be obtained by comparing and looking at the verses together, is desirable.

Therefore his interpretation of the Qur'an to the Qur'an will lead to the Darb of the Qur'an (Yadollahpour, 2004: 180). Obviously, the interpretation of the Qur'an to the Qur'an cannot be seen as the emptiness of the mind of the interpreter and

addressee of the Qur'an, the result of which will be Darb of the Qur'an to the Qur'an.

### **2-3. Incompatibility with the independent role of the Ahl al-Bayt (AS) in the interpretation of the Qur'an**

In the view of Imamiyyah, the infallible Imams (AS) themselves are the commentators and interpreters of the Holy Qur'an, as in the noble hadith of Thaqalayn, their independent role has been recommended along with the Holy Qur'an (Mo'addab, 2007: 228). What emerges from the appearance of Sanglaji's words is the belief in the lack of an independent role of the Ahl al-Bayt (AS) in interpreting the Qur'an. But this word contradicts another part of his words that the companions have an independent role to interpret the verses, because they have witnessed the revelation of verses and understood the verses. And therefore the interpretation that we have received from them can be used in the interpretation of verses. That he introduces the companions as witnesses of the revelation and familiar with the evidence of divine verses that can be used to understand them in the interpretation of the divine word and ignore the role of the Prophet (PBUH) in the interpretation and at least for Amir al-Mu'minin (AS) if he apart from being from the family of revelation, and assuming that he was one of the first and closest companions of the Prophet (PBUH), his understanding will play an independent role in the interpretation of divine verses. And considering that in the hadith of Thaqalayn, the family of revelation is equal to the divine word and in line with it has been entrusted as two divine trusts among Muslims after the existence of the Prophet (PBUH),

their role in interpreting divine verses is considered as an independent and explanatory pillar. Shari'at Sanglaji considers the role of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and the Ahl al-Bayt (AS) as Sunnah only in the realm of Āyāt al-Aḥkām of the Qur'an and not for all divine verses. Because he believes that the Qur'an itself has fully explained the verses of belief, even in detail, and only the role of the Prophet (PBUH) and the Ahl al-Bayt (AS) is related to Āyāt al-Aḥkām, which are discussed in the Qur'an in general. Therefore, their role cannot be ignored in legislating and explaining them (Sanglaji, nd: 38). It did not take some conclusions from divine verses, it can be used as a second source for interpreting verses. But the question is whether the Qur'an has interpreted all its verses and has left only the explanation of Āyāt al-Aḥkām to the Sunnah. What is the reason for this claim of the Shari'at Sanglaji?

#### **2-4. The fallacy of the authenticity of all the narrations of the Companions**

This complete statement by the Shari'at, without any restrictions on the understanding of the Companions, raises many questions and ambiguities: What is the role of the Companions in the interpretation of divine verses? Is it possible to accept their understanding in response to all the divine verses, as soon as they are considered as witnesses of revelation and familiar with the evidences of revelation of verses? Has their full understanding reached to the future? What are the criteria for accepting the understanding of the narrations received by them? Are the narrations received by them not free from personal error and interpretations of the verses? Given that they are not in the family of revelation, what is the difference between the understanding

of other human beings and their understanding by mentioning that they also have a normal understanding like other human beings and are not immune from error and slipping? The silence of Shari'at Sanglaji in referring Qur'anic phrases to the Companions due to their familiarity with the evidences and proofs of revelation as a source along with the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and Ahl al-Bayt (AS) without any explanation about accepting the narrations received from them, which causes the thought of accepting the status of Companions in his opinion for the readers. And this slander increases when he considers the best interpretations to be the interpretation of Ṭabarī and the interpretation of Majma' al-Bayān fi Tafsir al-Qur'an. Tafsir Ṭabarī, as one of the most famous influential Sunni commentaries, whose narrations are mostly from the narrators who end up with the Companions, can be seen that in this discussion, by his silence, he somehow invites them to accept their narrations. Assuming an optimistic view about accepting the position of the Companions from their point of view, it can be limited to those narrations which, regarding the dignity of the revelation of the narrations and their knowledge toward the Arab situation and their Arabic knowledge toward the verses interpreted by them. From his point of view, the understanding of companions can be considered as an independent source in the interpretation of the Qur'an. Focusing again on Tafsir Ṭabarī as the best commentary from his point of view, this commentary cannot be considered to include only the issues of revelation, Arabic situation and vocabulary, because this commentary from the point of view of commentators, its narrations even

include narrations attributed to Israeli with reference to the document (Dhahabī, nd: 1/143). Therefore, in a way, it includes the interpretation of the majority of verses with any kind of subject included in the verses. The large volume of narrations in it, the lack of attention to the narrations of the Ahl al-Bayt (AS), the lack of attention to the documentary and textual critique of the narrations, are among the main reasons that, despite his privileged position are among Sunni commentators, cause some Sunni commentators and even the Shia have become reluctant to it (Rezaei Isfahani, 2011: 21/130). Tafsir is the expression of the tradition of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) that has reached us and Ṭabarī has compiled it in his great commentary (Ṭabarī International Seminar, 1990: 91). Therefore, with such a view, an independent role cannot be considered for them. Rather, although the Companions had an understanding of the verses of the Qur'an, which was mostly a basic and simple understanding. But they were like narrators who collected the narrations received from the Holy Prophet (PBUH) in the field of understanding the Holy Qur'an. Certainly, in accepting these interpretive narrations, one cannot accept them unequivocally. Because there are hints from the great Sunni narrators such as Ibn Ḥanbal themselves about the serious avoidance of interpretive narrations (Biazar Shirazi, 1997: 424) (pessimistic view). However, in the view of Shari'at Sanglaji, the interpretation of Majma' al-Bayān as one of the best interpretations, again expresses his narrative view of the interpretation. Although this interpretation is one of the best Shia interpretations by many

Shia and Muslim commentators, and contains important interpretive points including words, readings, rulings, literature as well as Shia views. But it cannot be safe from examining the document and text of the narrations and accepting it voluntarily because the author is Shia, especially that Ṭabarasī, in some cases, has also used Sunni narrations in interpreting the verses (Hashemi, 2002: 8/25). From the above, we can understand the interpretive view of Shari'at, which in a way expresses the position of the Qur'an as its interpreter and revealer, although he considered the tradition received from the Holy Prophet (PBUH) as a source in the interpretation of verses, but not a complete role. Rather, only in the form of summaries of the Qur'an in the section of Āyāt al-Aḥkām, because the Holy Qur'an itself has expressed all its interpretations, even in the verses of beliefs, with details. Therefore there is no need for another source in interpreting the verses. But this statement, as mentioned before, is an incomplete induction because almost one sixth of the verses of the Qur'an deal with the subject of rulings and also on the other hand a complete interpretation including the interpretation of all verses in the Qur'an by the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and his family (AS) that has not reached us. On the other hand, although the narrations received from the Companions are accepted, which include all the interpretations of the verses, either these narrations are mostly attributed to the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (PBUH), or if not all of them are attributed or narrated from the Holy Prophet (PBUH). It contains a part of the reasons for the revelation of the verses or the Arabic knowledge at the

time of the revelation of the Qur'an to the verses, which is definitely not complete. Therefore, he considers the interpretation to be exclusive to his verses and to the summaries of *Āyāt al-Aḥkām* of the Sunnah. On the other hand, it introduces any interpretation that is minus this field as personal exegesis.

### **2-5. Incompatibility with the nature of intercession**

In the Shia teachings, there is a consensus on the first case stated by Sanglaji, namely intercession is impossible without God's permission. Many Shia scholars believe that the Prophet and the saints did not perform *ijtihād* in any ruling through personal opinion and did not establish anything except with the permission of God. (Majlisī, 1403: 34/365) Therefore, the legitimacy of all the possessions of the Prophet and the saints in the individual and social spheres is due to God's permission and guardianship. Therefore, the originality of intercession is obtained from the all-encompassing authority of the Sunnah, and the authority of the Prophet and the saints is the criterion in all matters. Sanglaji's other ambiguity about the nature of intercession relates to two other cases. The idea of the lack of originality of intercession arose from these two views; which says: God is not satisfied with anyone's intercession unless He is satisfied with him in terms of words and deeds in general. And the word and deed of God means only monotheism to God and abstaining from committing any sin and carrying out divine commands (Sanglaji, 2007: 139). However, from the Shia point of view, according to the authority that God gives to the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and his esteemed saints (Saduq, 1371:

79), he cannot show the same result that Shari'at Sanglaji has reached. The book of the monotheism of his worship is also full of many cases that show a kind of opposite result with what exists among the religious leaders in the Shia intellectual-belief system.

### **CONCLUSION**

The ups and downs of the commentators' view to the theory of personal exegesis have been found new characteristics in the periods of the history of interpretation in the contemporary era. By adopting the approach of the Qur'an-Sufficiency, Shari'at Sanglaji tries to prove that a significant part of the teachings derived from the Sunnah is insignificant. Separation of interpretation from the teachings of the Sunnah, which according to Shari'at Sanglaji is limited to *Āyāt al-Aḥkām*, has been pursued in various ways.

In proving the claim of reductionism in the field of Sunnah, he relied on the narration of the Prophet (PBUH) and he insists on the shaky position of reason in the interpretation of the Qur'an, the non-independent role of the Ahl al-Bayt (AS) in the interpretation of the Qur'an, referring to the narrations of the Companions without any explanation as well as inducing the non-authenticity of intercession. Sanglaji considers only a part of the narrations that are in the explanation of *Āyāt Al-Aḥkām* valid in the field of correct interpretation, and this narration leads to the spoil of the content and message of the Sunnah and leads to false meanings. According to Imamiyyah theologians and thinkers, the authority of the Sunnah is proved by the Prophet and the saints of God due to the refusal to issue sins and negligence. On the other hand, verses on the need to adhere to all the

teachings of the Prophet and the Ahl al-Bayt (AS) (A'rāf / 158; Al Imrān / 31; Šāffāt 39; Al-Hijr 42) confirm the authority of the Sunnah as the second source of achieving divine commands and prohibitions. From this point of view, the supervision of the affairs of society is one of the necessities of the Bi'thah of the prophets, and the rulings that are set in the tradition are all discoverers of the divine ruling. Also, since the legitimacy of all the possessions of the Prophet and his saints and their authority in the individual and social spheres is due to divine permission and guardianship, therefore, the comprehensive authority of the Sunnah does not allow separation in the Sunnah and limiting it to the realm of Āyāt Al-Aḥkām is obtained and Sunnah is the criterion in all matters.

The ultimate goal of religion and the mission of the Qur'an is to provide happiness and guidance in this world and in the hereafter. Sanglaji's distorted arguments from the nature of intercession, as well as references to the narrations of the Companions without any restrictions, provide a wide field for the promotion of the Salafi School.

#### Notes

Mohammad Hassan Shari'at Sanglaji is the son of Haj Sheikh Hassan Ibn Mirza Reza Gholi, who died in Tehran at the age of 53 in 1363 AH and is buried in Farhang Street in Tehran. He learned the basics of jurisprudence from his father and Sheikh Abd al-Nabi Nouri, and in the presence of Hajj Sheikh Ali Nouri, he succeeded in learning theology. He learned wisdom from Mr. Mirza Hassan Kermanshahi and mysticism from Mirza Hashem Eshkori and traveled to Najaf Ashraf to

complete his education (Shafi'i, 2015: 189). In Tehran, he established a Sangalaj neighborhood called Dar al-Tablighi (Qur'anic porch). (Mushar, 1961: 5/512) Others also consider him of the Salafi preachers in Iran, who, in the continuation of the banner of the Salafīyyah movement, openly expressed his religious beliefs about the acquisition and appreciation of religion in Iran. Raised the issue of receiving and receiving religion from predecessors and not successors in Iran. Contrary to many Shia religious rites, especially about recourse and intercession, he raised issues that arose from his ideological and religious denial of these Shia teachings. One of his main slogans was to return to Islam (Ja'farian, 1988: 46-47). His greatest writings can be referred to as "The Key to Understanding the Qur'an", "Islam and Return", "Tawhid of Worship".

The book "The Key to Understanding the Qur'an", in 257 pages, has been published three times in Tehran. This book is about non-distortion of the Qur'an and its comprehensibility, ways of knowing it, personal exegesis, Nāsikh and Mansūkh, Muḥkam and Mutashābih, Fawātiḥ-e-Suwar, Asrār al-Tanzīl, proverbs of the Qur'an, the truth Revelation, Bi'thah and Ma'ād are discussed in detail. After the publication of this book, discussions took place in some seminaries, and even a treatise entitled "Rejection and Criticism on the Key to Understanding the Qur'an" by one of the religious scholars of Lar was published in 1949 in Shiraz. Shari'at Sanglaji was influenced by Salafism or Wahhabi intellectual sources and in fact the book is the key to understanding the Qur'an promoting his Salafi views in the Qur'anic style (Khorramshahi, 1998:

2/1300-1301; Shia Encyclopedia, 2002: 9/570) in This book, Sanglaji complains a lot about people's lack of attention to the Qur'an, which Muslims have taken their thought from non-Qur'anic sources instead of taking their thoughts from the Qur'an. According to him, people should take their beliefs from the Qur'an, not from places other than the Qur'an and then come and carry the Qur'an with them.

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