

## Poverty Discourse Analysis in the Qur'an within the Framework of Laclau and Mouffe's Theory

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### Abstract

The present paper analyzes the issue of poverty in the Qur'an adopting Laclau and Mouffe's discourse analysis method. Using this approach, it is tried to highlight the importance of the subject in the Qur'an, aiming to initiate serious discussions among Muslims and the followers of other religions on solving the poverty crisis. The Qur'anic discourse has two articulations on poverty alleviation and lack of poverty alleviation: a discouraging-encouraging strategic expression and rational approach. In this way, it divides the social space into the two poles of poverty eliminating identity (i.e., the positive identity or polarity) and poverty disregarding identity (i.e., the negative identity or polarity). The discourse's strategies for poverty alleviation include eliminating the concentration of wealth in society by paying Zakat and Enfagh by individuals and allocating a portion of the community's income to poverty alleviation. This portion is Fay and the spoils of war back then. Also, this discourse is about linking religious life and rituals including Hajj, sacrifice, Fidyah, mosque preservation, and peace concerning poverty alleviation. This discourse achieves hegemony and prevails in 7th-century Saudi Arabia, where no attention is paid to poverty alleviation; however, it died out slowly after the Prophet's death for some reason.

**Keywords:** Qur'an, poverty discourse, mecca and medina, poverty alleviation

Received: July 25, 2020

Revised: October 20, 2020

Accepted: January 26, 2021

Article type: Research Article

DOI: 10.22111/IJALS.2021.6664

Publisher: University of Sistan and Baluchestan

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**How to cite:** Salmani, N., Hamidieh, B., Elmi, G., & Afkhami, A. (2021). Poverty discourse analysis in the Qur'an within the framework of Laclau and Mouffe's theory. *Iranian Journal of Applied Language Studies*, 13(2), 33-52. <https://doi.org/10.22111/IJALS.2021.6664>

## 1. Introduction

The present paper analyzes the issue of poverty in the Qur'an adopting a discourse analysis method (i.e., one of the new branches of linguistics) and a new method in the study of texts, media, and culture. The present paper aims to describe the poverty discourse in the Qur'an within the framework of E. Laclau and C. Mouffe's theory of discourse analysis. The introductory section explains the basis of Laclau and Mouffe's theory to provide a general understanding of the method, followed by analyzing the poverty discourse. The basis of this theory includes developing a new identity in new sets and identifying the well-known essence of the subject that discourse grants to individuals and social phenomena. It is noteworthy that the conflict of this discourse with the social matter is full and every discourse is always at odds with other discourses defining reality differently. The conflict between the discourses is the struggle over the creation of meanings (Philips & Jorgensen, 2010, pp. 89, 85, 56). Equivalence chains are the communication chains in the discourse representing the logic of equality and helping cohere, unify, and understand the identity of the subject, as to what the subject is equal and in opposition (Hosseinizadeh, 2004, pp. 192-191). Signifier includes persons, concepts, expressions, and abstract or real symbols implying specific meanings and its signified is the meaning that is implied on the signifier (Kasraei, 2009, pp. 343-344). The central signifier, around which the other signifiers gather, is the point of gravity and coherence of all signifiers. Moments are the signifiers temporarily and partially fixed around the central signifier within a discourse. The empty signifier indicates a space and an absent matter. Besides, it illustrates the shortcomings and failures of the dominant discourse in providing it. The floating signifiers existing in the social arena have been multiply signified; moreover, the discourses present them as puzzle pieces brought together to depict a well-rounded and compelling image of their preferred sociopolitical system. The discourse domain, referring to the external discourse environment, includes signifiers or elements that can serve as raw materials for new articulations (Muqaddami, 2011, pp. 99,101). The word hegemony indicates who leads the politics and society, meaning that which political force will decide about the dominant forms of behavior in society (Marsh & Stoker, 1999, p. 209).

The above explanations are a general outline of Laclau and Mouffe's discourse analysis theory, but to understand this theory we must speak in detail about it and not confine ourselves to the explanations in the introduction. Therefore, before the poverty discourse analysis in the Qur'an, it is necessary to introduce the axes mentioned above along with several other concepts that constitute collectively Laclau and Mouffe's discourse analysis, and to study in detail, aiming to a full understanding of the present research.

It is noteworthy that to begin the poverty discourse analysis in the Qur'an, the first step is to identify the terms among which there is a contractual relationship; i.e., the words that are correlated with the issue of poverty. In this way, the articulation and identity of the discourse are achieved. The next step is to examine the discourse domain and consequently the discourse hegemony.

### ***1.1. Introducing Laclau and Mouffe Discourse Analysis***

To explain their theory, Laclau and Mouffe have used various and sometimes complex concepts with different aspects that help to understand their theory and consequently its utilization. So to understand and introduce their theory, we must know these concepts. The multiplicity of concepts in the theory of these two thinkers, although it makes it somewhat difficult to understand, at the same time provides the researcher with a tool that can well understand the intra-discourse and extra-discourse relations of the dominant discourses in societies and analyze the various components of social phenomena (Kasraei, 2009, p. 343). These concepts include:

#### ***Articulation***

Articulation is the juxtaposition of phenomena that are not naturally Along with. According to Laclau's discourse theory, articulation is a combination of elements that find a new identity by being in a new collection (Philips & Jorgensen, 2010, p. 56). In the view of Laclau and Mouffe, the discourse identity is formed as a result of the relationship that arises through the articulation act between different elements<sup>1</sup> (Tajik, 2004, p. 46)

#### ***Signifier and Signified***

Signifier includes persons, concepts, expressions, and abstract or real symbols implying specific meanings in specific discourse frameworks, and their signified is the meaning that is implied on the signifier. For example, the plurality of critical presses is a signifier, and freedom of expression is signified (Kasraei, 2009, pp. 343-344).

#### ***The Central Signifier***

The central signifier, the node, or the closure is the signifier around which the other signifiers gather and is the point of gravity and coherence of all signifiers. The importance of the central signifier is because Laclau and Mouffe see the emergence of discourse through the relative consolidation of meaning around particular nodes (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, 112).

#### ***The Floating Signifier***

The floating signifier is a signifier that has multiply signified that is floating and unstable. discourses, based on their semantic system, try to attach their signified to it and marginalize rival other signified. In the articulation process, the discourses present the floating signifiers as puzzle pieces brought together to depict a well-rounded and compelling image of their preferred sociopolitical system (Muqaddami, 2011, pp. 99).

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<sup>1</sup> communication identity

### ***The Empty Signifier***

The empty signifier indicates a space and an absent matter. The empty signifier function is to represent the ideal situation that discourses try to present in the best possible way. On the other hand, it illustrates the shortcomings and failures of the dominant discourse in providing it. Any discourse that can predict the empty signifiers can articulate around them, develop its semantic system and present itself as an ideal and desirable example. Besides, it provides the basis for breaking the dominant discourse foundations by creating a relative hegemonic consensus. (Muqaddami, 2011, p. 99).

### ***Elements and Moments***

Elements are signifiers or signs that every discourse tries to give meaning to them. In other words, elements are floating signifiers that are not placed within a discourse but are excluded from that and are located in a relatively isolated area and cut off from the articulation of the dominant discourse. Indeed, they are located in the discourse domain. In contrast, Moments are the signifiers temporarily and partially fixed around the central signifier within a discourse. (Muqaddami, 2011, p. 101).

### ***The Discourse Domain***

The discourse domain refers to the external discourse environment, which includes signifiers or elements that can serve as raw materials for new articulations. In other words, the discourse domain is called an environment that is created to create uniformity of discourse meanings. In fact, among discourses, there is a constant conflict to consolidate a meaning, a signifier, and a sign, and to transform it from an element to a moment that To create semantic uniformity of discourse, Laclau and Mouffe place the possible meanings of signifiers and signs that have been excluded from discourse in the realm of discourse (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p. 111).

### ***Identity***

Identity is the identification with the position of the subject in a discourse structure. Identity refers to the nature of the subject and is essentially a discourse matter. For Laclau and Mouffe, since everything makes sense within discourse, identity is also a discourse matter that discourse grants to individuals and social phenomena. Of course, due to the constant conflict between discourses, the issue of Identity creation is temporary and relative, and the discourse identity is unstable (Philips & Jorgensen, 2010, pp. 83, 85).

### ***Equivalence and Difference Chains***

Equivalence chains are the communication chains in the discourse representing the logic of equality and helping understand the identity of the subject, as to what the subject is equal and in opposition.

Discourses, through the chain of equivalence, eliminate the differences between the elements and help to cohere and unify. In this sense, the elements lose their different qualities and rival meanings and are dissolved in the sense in which discourse gives. The logic of equality is the logic of simplifying the political space, but in fact, equality can never eliminate these differences (Hosseinizadeh, 2004, pp.192-191)

### ***Hegemony***

The concept of hegemony is important in Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory explanation. Hegemony refers to who is superior in politics and society. In other words, which political force will decide about the dominant forms of behavior in society (Marsh & Stoker, 2005, p. 209)

### ***Conflict and Struggle***

According to Laclau and Mouffe, the social is full of conflict and struggle. Every discourse is always in conflict with other discourses that define reality differently. The conflict between discourses is the struggle over the creation of meanings (Philips & Jorgensen, 2010, 89). This hostility in Laclau and Mouffe's theory refers to the possibility and temporality and phenomena ultimate randomness and discourses (Laclau, 1990, p. 28).

### ***Highlighting and Marginalization***

Highlighting and marginalization are two concepts that are related to the concept of conflict and antagonism. In discourse conflicts, each discourse tries to gain power for itself by highlighting its strengths and weaknesses of the rival and by marginalizing its weaknesses and strengths of the rival. Highlighting and marginalization is a way to maintain the hegemonic power and permanence of discourse. (Philips & Jorgensen, 2010, p. 104)

## **2. Articulation of the Poverty Discourse in Qur'an**

As stated, the discourse articulation consists of the central signifier and moments or peripheral signifiers surrounding the central one. The central signifier, which makes the moments meaningful, is poverty alleviation and lack of poverty alleviation in the poverty discourse in Makki and Madani verses in the Qur'an. These two central signifiers, forming the core of the discourse, gave meaning to their moments and created a semantic coherence in the discourse articulation. Therefore, each moment is defined by its central signifier, poverty alleviation, and lack of poverty alleviation. Furthermore, as a result of the contractual relationship between the signifier and signified in Laclau's theory influenced by Saussure's linguistic theory (Kasraei, 2009, p. 341), the central signifiers, poverty alleviation and lack of poverty alleviation are also defined mutually. The main reason for offering these divinations is the correlation

between the central signifier and the moments that are the signifier and signified. For example, Jesus' religion means poverty alleviation, and poverty alleviation means Jesus' religion.

The important point about poverty alleviation upon which articulation is formed is that poverty alleviation is the empty signifier of the discourse. It signifies the empty space of Arabistan during the pre-Islam era, as well as the failure of Arabistan's dominant discourse (i.e., idolatry), which has no regard for the issue of poverty alleviation. Based on the historical texts, the rich idolatrous usurp and exploit the poor and slaves (Ali, 1976, vol. 5, pp. 404-405). The poverty discourse in the Qur'an draws attention to this social dilemma using the poverty alleviation signifier. Expression such as

يُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ،<sup>٢</sup> يُؤْتِي مَالَهُ يَتَزَكَّى،<sup>٣</sup> فِي أَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ لِّلسَّائِلِ وَالْمَحْرُومِ،<sup>٤</sup> أَنْفَقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ اللَّهُ،<sup>٥</sup> أَطْعَمُوا الْبَائِسَ الْفَقِيرَ،<sup>٦</sup> إِطْعَامٌ يَتِيمًا أَوْ مَسْكِينًا،<sup>٧</sup>  
أَطْعَمُوا الْفَانِعَ وَالْمُعْتَرَّ<sup>٨</sup>

are equivalents of poverty alleviation in the Qur'anic discourse, while are equivalents of lack of poverty alleviation.

مَنْ بَخِلَ،<sup>٩</sup> كَأَيُّ حُضٍّ عَلَى طَعَامِ الْمَسْكِينِ،<sup>١٠</sup> لَمْ نَكُ نُنْعِمِ الْمَسْكِينِ،<sup>١١</sup> يَقْبِضُونَ أَيْدِيَهُمْ،<sup>١٢</sup> كَأَيُّ يَدْخُلْنَهَا الْيَوْمَ عَلَيْكُمْ مَسْكِينًا<sup>١٣</sup>

In general, the poverty discourse in the Qur'an consists of two articulations. One of these discourses is about Makki verses of the Qur'an and the other is about Madani verses of the Qur'an (i.e., verses revealed in Mecca and Medina, respectively). The poverty discourse articulation of Makki verses is articulated around poverty alleviation and lack of poverty alleviation. On the other hand, in the poverty discourse articulation of Madani verses, the discourse is articulated around poverty alleviation and there is limited articulation around the lack of poverty alleviation. Thus, only the one signifier of hypocrite men and women indicates the lack of poverty alleviation. No specific articulation has been made about the lack of poverty alleviation. Therefore, it can be stated that the poverty discourse in the Qur'an has been critical and encouraging in Mecca, while in Medina it has been advisory and strategic. This can be attributed to the social atmosphere of the two cities in which the Qur'anic poverty discourse has emerged. Due to the social and huge class divide that existed between the aristocracy and the other classes in Mecca (Daliri, 2005, p. 81) and the disregard of society's dominant discourse on the issue of poverty alleviation, a critical

<sup>2</sup> They pay Zakat

<sup>3</sup> he gives his wealth away as self-purification

<sup>4</sup> There is rights in their wealth to the beggar and deprived

<sup>5</sup> Give enfagh (the giving of the property) to others out of what God has provided for you

<sup>6</sup> feeding the orphans and destitute

<sup>7</sup> feed the self-contained needy and the mendicant

<sup>8</sup> feed the destitute in hardship

<sup>9</sup> Those who are miserly(al-Layl,8)

<sup>10</sup> He do not encourage feeding the destitute

<sup>11</sup> we did not feed the destitute

<sup>12</sup> They tie their hands against Enfagh

<sup>13</sup> Make sure no destitute person enters the garden

deliberate encouraging discourse was required to pave the way for poverty alleviation. However, in Yathrib (Medinat al-Nabi) due to the agricultural economy, the class gap was not so much as (Shahidi, 1990, p. 56) to require the Qur'anic poverty discourse to be critical. In this regard, even the discourse of the Jewish holy book was a poverty alleviation discourse. More importantly, in such an atmosphere that the Prophet's followers migrated from Mecca to this Medina and the others followed him for the pledge of al-Aqaba, a strategic and advisory discourse was required to provide new strategies and guidelines for eliminating poverty.

## ***2.1. Poverty Discourse Moments in the Qur'an***

### ***2.1.1. The Moments in Makki Verses***

#### ***2.1.1.1. The Moments Signifying Poverty Alleviation***

These moments include the six signifiers of Jesus' religion, the special favored, the most pious, Ashab al-Maimana, the dismissal of fire, and the acquisition of divine rewards that have acquired new meanings of "poverty alleviation" in this discourse. There is a contractual relationship between each of these six words with poverty alleviation in which each of these six moments is a signifier and poverty alleviation is signified.

#### ***Jesus' Religion***

وَجَعَلَنِي مُبَارَكًا أَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُ وَأَوْصَانِي بِالصَّلَاةِ وَالزَّكَاةِ مَا دُمْتُ حَيًّا<sup>14</sup> (Maryam,31)

"Zakat" literally means an increase in both property and the growth and the purification of the human' soul by God. Essentially, it is something that man excludes from the right of God for the poor (Raghib al-Isfahani, 1996, p. 145). The above verse states that Jesus' duty is to say prayers and pay Zakat, by which to maintain his relationship with God and the poor for the rest of his life. Thus, God explains poverty alleviation as the basis of Jesus' religion. As can be noticed, there is a contractual relationship between the two concepts of Jesus' religion and Zakat, in which Jesus' religion is the signifier and paying Zakat is the signified. Similarly, there is a contractual relationship between the following moments with poverty alleviation, i.e. the central signifier.

#### ***The Special Favored***

وَرَحْمَتِي وَسِعَتْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ فَسَأَكْتُبُهَا لِلَّذِينَ يَتَّقُونَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ بِآيَاتِنَا يُؤْمِنُونَ<sup>15</sup> (al-Araf,156)

Based on this verse, God's special favored have the three attributes of piety, paying Zakat, and faith; the most important of which is the zakat paying and attention to the poor. Based on the statistical

<sup>14</sup> He made me blessed wherever I maybe. He commanded me to pray, to pay Zakat (the prescribed alms) as long as I live.

<sup>15</sup> My mercy encompasses all things. 'I shall ordain my mercy for those who are conscious of God and pay Zakat; who believe in Our Revelations.

studies done in the present paper on the identity of the pious and the believers in the Qur'an, paying Zakat and attention to the poor is a constant element in the identity of the believers and the pious people. Therefore, the above verse, when expressing the attributes of the special favored, i.e., faith, piety, and Zakat, repeats in-depth paying zakat and attention to the poor three times. Highlighting the attribute of Zakat paying in the identity of the special favored and their being identified as those who pay Zakat indicates that poverty alleviation (i.e., paying Zakat) gives connotation to the special favored.

The results of the statistical surveys on the identity of Muminun in the Qur'an are as follows. In 673 verses, the Qur'an speaks of faith. Five of these verses describe the personality of the believers. Among these five verses, four verses (2-4 al-Anfal, 71 at-Tawbah, 1-10 al-Muminun, and 2-3 an-Naml) mention Zakat or Enfagh to describe the believers. The results of the statistical surveys on the identity of Muttaqeen in the Qur'an are as follows. In the Qur'an, 222 verses speak of Muttaqeen (i.e., pious), eight of which express the features of the pious. Among these eight verses, six verses (2-3 al-Baqarah, 177 al-Baqarah, 15-17 Ali Imran, 133-134 Ali Imran, 15-19 az-Zariyat, and 17-20 al-Layl) identify Enfagh as a feature. Remarkably, verses 17-20 of al-Layl introduce the most pious people as merely those who have a financial donation.

### *The Most Pious*

وَسَيُجَنَّبُهَا الْأَتْقَى الَّذِي يُؤْتِي مَالَهُ يَتَزَكَّى..وَلَسَوْفَ يَرْضَى<sup>16</sup> (al-Layl,17 to 21)

The description these verses offer about the identity of the most pious person is about the one who donates his properties and is the only characteristic attributed to whom. This means that poverty alleviation (i.e., financial donation) gives the most pious connotation.

### *Ashab Al-Maimana (Companions of Right)*

وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا الْعَقَبَةُ فَكُّ رَقَبَةٍ أَوْ إِطْعَامٌ فِي يَوْمٍ ذِي مَسْغَبَةٍ يَتِيمًا ذَا مَقْرَبَةٍ أَوْ مَسْكِينًا ذَا مَتْرَبَةٍ...أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْمَيْمَنَةِ<sup>17</sup> (al-Balad,12 to 18)

“يمن” is the root word for Maimana (ميمنة). Ashab al-Maimana are the companions and owners of luck and prosperity (Al-Tabatabai, 1995, p. 116). In these verses, the companions of the right are identified as those who feed the orphans and destitute on the day of hunger. This description indicates that poverty alleviation (i.e., feeding the destitute on the day of hunger) has given the companions of right connotation. In these verses, which describe the feeding the destitute at starvation and liberating the slave as the main identity of the companions of right, are referred to as Aqaba (the uphill road). This means that these verses speak of feeding others in need and difficult positions, regarding the others as or superior to one's

<sup>16</sup> The most pious one will be spared this (fire), he who gives his wealth away as self-purification... and he will be well pleased.

<sup>17</sup> What will explain to you what Aqaba (the uphill) is? It is to free a slave, to feed at a time of hunger an orphaned relative or destitute on the day of hunger, ... Those who do these will be Ashab al-Maimana (on the right-hand side).



self. This is an affair of friendship and sacrifice. Certainly, no one can do such an affair except those who exalt their ego and have a compassionate heart.

### *The Dismissal of Fire*

فَأَنْذَرْتُكُمْ نَارًا تَلَظَّى..وَسَيَجْزِيهَا الْآتِقَى الَّذِي يُؤْتِي مَالَهُ يَتَزَكَّى<sup>18</sup> (al-Layl,14 to 18)

These verses state that only one will stay away from the flaming fire who donates his properties to be cleansed. Enfagh is the criterion for the dismissal of fire. Thus, poverty alleviation (i.e., financial donation) has given “the dismissal of fire” connotation.

### *Acquisition of Divine Rewards*

إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي جَنَّاتٍ وَعُيُونٍ..كَانُوا قَلِيلًا مِّنَ اللَّيْلِ مَا يَهْجَعُونَ... وَفِي أَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ لِّلسَّائِلِ وَالْمَحْرُومِ<sup>19</sup> (adh-Dhariyat,15 to 19)

In these verses, the acquisition of divine rewards is linked to allocating rights in wealth to the beggar and deprived, indicating that poverty alleviation, i.e. to allocating rights to the beggar and deprived, has given the acquisition of divine rewards connotation. It is noteworthy that the relationship of man with society is one of the criteria for receiving divine rewards in these verses. The verses speak of paying attention to and allocating the right to the hurt part of society rather than the scholars, clergy, rich, and other elected groups of society. Also, according to the phrase *حقّ للسائل والمحرور*, the poor have some status, value, and identity and thus helping them is not a mere blessing but their right that should be restored.

#### *2.1.1.2. The Moments Signifying Lack of Poverty Alleviation*

Nine signifiers have taken on a new meaning in this discourse, all of which convey the meaning of lack of poverty alleviation. The signifiers include social gap, oppressor, despot, disbeliever, polytheist, denier of religion, the most wretched, Ashabe Shemal, and the entrance to Saqar. There is a contractual relationship between each of these nine expressions with lack of poverty alleviation, a relationship in which each moment is a signifier and lack of poverty alleviation is the signified.

### *Social Gap*

فَأَمَّا الْإِنْسَانُ إِذَا مَا ابْتَلَاهُ رَبُّهُ فَأَكْرَمَهُ وَنَعَّمَهُ فَيَقُولُ رَبِّي أَكْرَمَنِ وَأَمَّا إِذَا مَا ابْتَلَاهُ فَقَدَرَ عَلَيْهِ رِزْقَهُ فَيَقُولُ رَبِّي أَهَانَنِ كَلَّا بَلْ لَّا تُكْرِمُونَ الْيَتِيمَ وَكَأ تَحَاضُّونَ عَلَى طَعَامِ الْمِسْكِينِ وَتَأْكُلُونَ التُّرَاثَ أَكْثَلًا لَّمَّا وَتَحِبُّونَ الْوَالِدَ حُبًّا جَمًّا<sup>20</sup> (al-Fajr, 15 to 20).

<sup>18</sup> So I warn you about the raging Fire...The most pious one will be spared this, he who gives his wealth away as self-purification.

<sup>19</sup> The pious will be in Gardens with [flowing] springs.sleeping only little at night,...giving a rightful share of their wealth to the beggar and the deprived.

<sup>20</sup> [The nature of] man is that, when his Lord tries him through honour and blessings, he says, ‘My Lord has honoured me,’ but when He tries him through the restriction of his provision, he says, ‘My Lord has humiliated me.’ No indeed You [people] do not honour orphans, you do not encourage one another to feed the destitute, you consume inheritance greedily, and you love wealth with a passion.

Based on these verses, there is a social gap in a society where people are honored and disgraced not because of God's will but as a result of human action, which is due to their inner lust and selfishness. They only seek to use the property for themselves, do not honor the orphan, and do not encourage feeding the destitute. That is why there is a social gap in society. The seriousness and certainty of the matter are expressed by the word *كَلَّا*, which means never. Thus, the social gap is the gap created in the society due to neglecting the destitute. This shows that lack of poverty alleviation (i.e., reluctance to feed the destitute) has given the social gap connotation. There is a contractual relationship between the concept of the social gap and lack of poverty alleviation, a relationship in which the social gap is the signifier and the lack of poverty alleviation is the signified. Likewise, there is a contractual relationship between subsequent moments with lack of poverty alleviation, i.e. the central signifier.

### *Oppressor and Despot*

إِنَّا بَلَوْنَاهُمْ كَمَا بَلَوْنَا أَصْحَابَ الْجَنَّةِ إِذْ أَقْسَمُوا لَيَصْرِمُنَّهَا مُصْبِحِينَ وَلَا يَسْتَثْنُونَ فَطَافَ عَلَيْهَا طَائِفٌ مِّن رَّبِّكَ وَهُمْ نَائِمُونَ... فَتَنَادُوا مُصْبِحِينَ أَنْ اغْدُوا عَلَيَّ حَرْثِكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَارِمِينَ فَانطَلَقُوا وَهُمْ يَتَخَفَتُونَ أَنْ لَّا يَدْخُلْنَهَا الْيَوْمَ عَلَيْكُمْ مَسْكِينٌ... فَلَمَّا رَأَوْهَا قَالُوا إِنَّا لَأَصْـٰلُونَ... قَالُوا سُبْحَانَ رَبِّنَا إِنْ أَنَا كُنَّا ظَالِمِينَ... قَالُوا يَا وَيْلَنَا إِنَّا كُنَّا ظَالِمِينَ عَسَى رَبُّنَا أَنْ يُبَدِّلَنَا خَيْرًا مِّنْهَا إِنَّا إِلَى رَبِّنَا رَاغِبُونَ<sup>21</sup> (al-Qalam, 17 to 33).

In these verses in the conversations between the owners of the garden, they decided to ban the destitute and not feed them. Finding the garden all burnt, they described themselves as oppressors and despots. These verses presented those who do not pay attention to the destitute and do not feed them as oppressors and despots. Thus, lack of poverty alleviation, i.e., disregarding the destitute and not feeding them, has given the oppressor and despot connotation, thus both words mean lack of poverty alleviation. The words oppressor and despot were used in these verses, instead of greed and stinginess that are the exact equivalents, to indicate how mean was what the garden owners did.

### *Disbeliever*

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ أَنْفِقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ اللَّهُ قَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا انظِعْمُ مِنْ لَوْ يَشَاءُ اللَّهُ لَطَعَمَهُمْ إِنْ أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ<sup>22</sup> (Yaseen, 47)

Enfagh roots in *نَفَعَ*, meaning to finish and leave. Enfagh refers to the giving of the property since the property is lost by donating poor (Raghib al-Isfahani, 1996, p. 819). This verse introduces the disbelievers as those responding to the believers' request on donating what God has given them by claiming that poverty is God's will and Enfagh is the path of misguidance. Enfagh is the attribute of the disbelievers and

<sup>21</sup> We have tried them as We tried the owners of a certain garden, who swore that they would harvest its fruits in the morning and made no exception : a disaster from your Lord struck the garden as they slept ... Still they called each other at daybreak, 'Go early to your field if you wish to gather all its fruits,' and went off, whispering, 'Make sure no destitute person enters the garden today'... when they saw the garden, they said, 'We must have lost our way... they said, 'Glory be to God, Our Lord! Truly, we were oppressors' ... They said, 'Woe to us! We were despots, but maybe our Lord will give us something better in its place: we truly turn to Him in hope.'...

<sup>22</sup> and when they are told, 'Give to others out of what God has provided for you,' the disbelievers say to the believers, 'Why should we give enfagh (the giving of the property) those that God could feed if He wanted? You must be deeply misguided.'

consequently disbelief, suggesting that lack of poverty alleviation (i.e., no Enfagh) has given disbeliever connotation.

### ***Polytheist***

..وَوَيْلٌ لِّلْمُشْرِكِينَ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَهُمْ بِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ كَافِرُونَ<sup>23</sup> (Fussilat 6 to 8).

These verses define the identity of the polytheists as: “The polytheists are those who do not pay Zakat.” The one who refuses to pay Zakat is a polytheist, meaning the lack of poverty alleviation, i.e., not paying Zakat, has given polytheist connotation.

### ***Denier of Religion***

أَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي يُكَذِّبُ بِالذِّينِ فَذَلِكَ الَّذِي يَدْعُ الْيَتِيمَ وَلَا يَحْضُ عَلَىٰ طَعَامِ الْمِسْكِينِ فَوَيْلٌ لِّلْمُصَلِّينَ الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ صَلَاتِهِمْ سَاهُونَ الَّذِينَ هُمْ يُرَاؤُونَ وَ يَمْنَعُونَ الْمَاعُونَ<sup>24</sup> (Al-Maun,1 to 7)

These verses stating that the denier of religion mistreats the orphan and does not encourage the feeding of the destitute introduces the denier of religion as a person who does not attempt at poverty alleviation. In other words, lack of poverty alleviation (i.e., reluctance to feed the destitute) gives a denier of religion connotation. This discourse introduces poverty alleviation as a highly important issue for religion. The above verses make the worshipers who abstain from Ma'un (ماعون) deserve the cry of woe (ويل), and not those who give the Ma'un while they do not pray. Besides, in the introduction of the identity of the denier of religion, the verses state mistreating the orphan and not feeding the destitute, rather than the acts leading to the regress of the soul such as not praying and not performing the Hajj. Thus, assisting and feeding the destitute, which are attempts to solve the social issue of poverty, is of the utmost importance in religion.

The word Ma'un means any action and anything given to a person in need. It deals with the necessities of his life, such as borrowing money, debt, gift, and the like. Other interpretations of the word refer to the same meaning (Al-Tabatabai, 1995, p. 634).

### ***The Most Wretched***

وَأَمَّا مَنْ بَخِلَ وَاسْتَغْنَىٰ وَكَذَّبَ بِالْحُسْنَىٰ.. فَأَنْذَرْتُمْكُمْ نَارًا تَلْقَىٰ لَا يَصْلَاهَا إِلَّا الْأَشْقَى الَّذِي كَذَّبَ وَتَوَلَّىٰ وَسَيُجَنَّبُهَا الْأَتْقَى الَّذِي يُؤْتِي مَالَهُ يَتَزَكَّىٰ (al-Layl, 8 to 18)

These verses mention stinginess as a negative attribute and contrast the most wretched with the most pious whose attribute is a donation. Thus, the term تَوَلَّىٰ means refusing to be generous. Based on

<sup>23</sup> .. Woe to the polytheists, who do not pay Zakat and refuse to believe in the world to come.

<sup>24</sup> have you considered the person who denies religion? It is he who mistreats the orphan and does not encourage others to feed destitute. So woe to those who pray but are heedless of their prayer; those who show off and abstain from Ma'un.

<sup>25</sup> There is the one who is miserly, who is self-satisfied, who denies goodness...so I warn you about the raging Fire, in which none but the most wretched one will burn, who denied [the truth],and turned away(تَوَلَّى). The most pious one will be spared this who gives his wealth away as self-purification.

these verses, refusal of generosity is the component of the identity of the most wretched. Thus, lack of poverty alleviation (i.e., no financial donation) conveys the most wretched connotation.

### *Ashabe Shemal*

وَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَابَهُ بِشِمَالِهِ فَيَقُولُ يَا لَيْتَنِي لَمْ أُوتَ كِتَابِيهِ..خُذُوهُ فَغُلُّوهُ ثُمَّ الْجَحِيمَ صَلُّوهُ ثُمَّ فِي سِلْسِلَةٍ ذَرْعُهَا سَبْعُونَ ذِرَاعًا فَاسْلُكُوهُ إِنَّهُ كَانَ لَا يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ الْعَظِيمِ وَلَا يَحُضُّ عَلَى طَعَامِ الْمِسْكِينِ<sup>26</sup> (al-Haqqah,25 to 34)

Ashabe Shemal, whose scroll of deed is given to their left hand, is the combination of the two words اصحاب meaning companions, friends, attendants, and شمال meaning left, versus يمين meaning right (Raghib al-Isfahani, 1996, p. 267). These verses introduced Ashabe Shemal as not encouraging feeding the destitute. Thus, disregarding poverty alleviation gives the Ashabe Shemal connotation.

### *The Entrance to Saqar*

..يَتَسَاءَلُونَ عَنِ الْمُجْرِمِينَ مَا سَلَكَكُمْ فِي سَقَرٍ قَالُوا لَمْ نَكُ مِنَ الْمُصَلِّينَ وَلَمْ نَكُ نُطْعِمِ الْمِسْكِينِ<sup>27</sup> (al-Muddathir, 39 to 45)

Saqar is one of the names of Hell, which originally is derived from سقر, meaning transformed and thawed by the sun (Raghib al-Isfahani, 1996, p. 235). These verses mention not feeding the destitute as one of the main reasons for going to Saqar, indicating that disregarding poverty alleviation has given the entrance to Saqar connotation. These verses refer to those who do not feed the destitute as criminals, which is a very important point since through an in-depth look and judgment such persons indirectly are responsible for the thefts, corruption and crimes resulting from poverty, while such a definition of crime and criminal does not exist in any judicial organization. In all of these institutions, the only person that is found guilty of theft, corruption, and crime is the perpetrator.

#### *2.1.2. The Moments in Madani Verses*

##### *2.1.2.1. The Moments Signifying Poverty Alleviation*

These moments include the nine signifiers of believing men and women, the believers' Wali, brethren in faith, ending the war, preservation of mosques, Fay, Hajj, Sacrifice, and Fidyah, all of which are given connotation by poverty alleviation. There is a contractual relationship between each of these nine signifiers with poverty alleviation i.e., the central signifier.

<sup>26</sup> But anyone who is given his scroll of deed in his left hand will say, 'If only I had never been given any scroll of deed...' 'Take him, and fetter him, Then lead him to burn in the blazing Fire, and bind him in a chain seventy metres long. Indeed he would not believe in Almighty God, he never encouraged feeding the destitute.

<sup>27</sup> ...they ask about the guilty. 'What drove you to Saqar (the Scorching Fire)?' they will answer, 'We did not pray; we did not feed the destitute.

### ***Believing Men and Women***

وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَيُطِيعُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ أُولَئِكَ سَيَرْحَمُهُمُ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ (at-Tawbah,71)<sup>28</sup>

According to this verse, paying Zakat is one of the main features of the identity of believing men and women. So, poverty alleviation gives believing men and women connotation. These verses illustrate the discourse's definition of the role and position of women in society who, equal to men, alleviate poverty by paying Zakat. In verse 33 of al-Ahzab, the Prophet's wives are being recommended to pay Zakat as well. The discourse defines a woman's personality and identity in society not as a secluded woman, but as an active, social, compassionate, and caring for the poor woman.

### ***The Believers' Wali***

إِنَّمَا وَلِيُّكُمُ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا الَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَهُمْ رَاكِعُونَ (Al-Maida,55)<sup>29</sup>

In this verse, the believers' ally (or guardian) is introduced as a person who pays Zakat while bowing down in prayers. This means that poverty alleviation (i.e., paying Zakat) gives believers of the guardian connotation. The word *انما* in this verse makes the attribute exclusive for the believers' guardian.

### ***Brethren in Faith***

فَإِن تَابُوا وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ فَإِخْوَانُكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ... (at-Tawbah, 10,11)<sup>30</sup>

According to these verses, the polytheists are considered to be Muslim brethren in faith when they say prayers and pay their Zakat. Paying Zakat has been introduced as a feature of brethren in faith, meaning that poverty alleviation gives brethren of faith connotation.

### ***Ending War***

فَأَقْتُلُوا الْمُشْرِكِينَ حَيْثُ وَجَدْتُمُوهُمْ... فَإِن تَابُوا وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ فَخَلُّوا سَبِيلَهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ (at-Tawbah,1 to 5)<sup>31</sup>

According to this verse, the war with the polytheists who violated their treaty with the Prophet will be terminated when they pay Zakat. Paying Zakat is the criterion for ending the war, meaning that poverty

<sup>28</sup> The believers, both men and women, support each other; they order what is right and forbid what is wrong; they say prayer and pay Zakat; they obey God and His Messenger. God will give His mercy to such people: God is almighty and wise.

<sup>29</sup> Your true allies (or guardians) are God, His Messenger, and the believers— those who say the prayer, pay Zakat, and bow down in worship.

<sup>30</sup> Where believers are concerned, they respect no tie of kinship or treaty. They are the ones who are committing aggression. If they turn to God, say prayer, and pay Zakat, then they are your brothers in faith.

<sup>31</sup> ...As for those who have honoured the treaty you made with them and who have not supported anyone against you: fulfil your agreement with them to the end of their term. God loves those who are pious. When the [four] forbidden months are over, wherever you encounter the idolaters(who violate treaty), kill them, seize them, besiege them, wait for them at every lookout post; but if they turn [to God], say prayer, and pay Zakat, let them go on their way, for God is most forgiving and merciful.

alleviation gives ending the war connotation. Accordingly, the Qur'anic discourse will be at peace with those who help the poor by allocating a portion of their property to them. Otherwise, it will stand against the selfish people who merely think of themselves and pay no attention to the poor or the religions that train such people, and will order war until they give up their selfishness, indifference, and stinginess to allocate some of their wealth to the poor. This is the aim of war in Islam, a war not for bigotry but for the poor who are supported by neither the government nor people. This is where the analyst observes the huge gap between the true Islam of Muhammad and that of Islamic sects such as al-Qaida, the Taliban, and ISIS, who easily kill children, women, and men without aiming at poverty alleviation.

### *Preservation of Mosques*

إِنَّمَا يَعْمُرُ مَسَاجِدَ اللَّهِ مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَأَقَامَ الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَى الزَّكَاةَ<sup>32</sup> (at-Tawbah,18)

This verse mentions that only those preserve mosques who believe in God, say prayers, and pay Zakat. Zakat is the criterion for the preservation of mosques, meaning poverty alleviation has given the preservation of mosques connotation. According to this verse, the mosques with life and prosperity are those in which poverty is dealt with since in such mosques there is a spirit of love, brotherhood, and equality. Besides, its prostrators are those who destroyed their only material existence (i.e., self-interest in the existence of God) and gained survival by God who supports the poor.

### *Fay*

مَا أَقَاءَ اللَّهُ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْقُرَى فَلِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ وَلِذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسَاكِينِ وَأَبْنِ السَّبِيلِ كَيْ لَا يَكُونَ دُولَةً بَيْنَ الْأَغْنِيَاءِ مِنْكُمْ..لِلْفُقَرَاءِ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ الَّذِينَ أُخْرِجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ وَأَمْوَالِهِمْ يُبْتَغُونَ فَضْلًا مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانًا وَيَنْصُرُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الصَّادِقُونَ وَالَّذِينَ تَبَوَّءُوا الدَّارَ وَالْإِيمَانَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ يُحِبُّونَ مَنْ هَاجَرَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَا يَجِدُونَ فِي صُدُورِهِمْ حَاجَةً مِمَّا أُوتُوا وَيُؤْثِرُونَ عَلَىٰ ۙ أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَلَوْ كَانَ بِهِمْ خَصَاصَةٌ ۗ وَمَنْ يُوقِ شُحَّ نَفْسِهِ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ<sup>33</sup> (al-Hashr, 7 to 9)

The word *فِي* means reference and return. Fay is a term that refers to wealth such as Kharaj, and Jizya Muslims take with no war from the disbelievers (Ibn Rushd, 1408 Qamari, p. 355). Verse 7 expresses a share of Fay for the poor and the reason behind dividing Fay for preventing the concentration of wealth among the rich. Further, verses 8 and 9 state the examples of Fay, its belonging to the poor refugees and inhabitants who however in need think the former deserve it, shows that Fay belonging to the poor. Fay is introduced as wealth devoted to the poor and poverty alleviation. This means that Fay has the connotation

<sup>32</sup> The only ones who preserve God's mosques (places of worship) are those who believe in God and the Last Day, who say prayer, who pay Zakat.

<sup>33</sup> Whatever gains God has turned over to His Messenger from the inhabitants of the villages-Fay-belong to God, the Messenger, kinsfolk, orphans, the needy, the traveller in need- this is so that they do not just circulate among those of you who are rich-...The poor emigrants who were driven from their homes and possessions, who seek God's favour and approval, those who help God and His Messenger- these are the ones who are true- [shall have a share], and Those who were already firmly established in their homes [in Medina], and firmly rooted in faith, show love for those who migrated to them for refuge and harbour no desire in their hearts for what has been given to them. They give them preference over themselves, even if they too are poor: those who are saved from their own souls' greed are truly successful.

of poverty alleviation. Meanwhile, in the pre-Islamic period, the poor and needy did not have a specific share in the distribution of property and the spoils of war (Al-Jazari, 1996, p. 375).

The phrase *كَيْ لَا يَكُونَ دُولَةً بَيْنَ الْأَغْنِيَاءِ*, means that the wealth does not remain with the rich, indicates the reason behind dividing Fay and refers to the fact that Fay belongs to the poor (i.e., the poor orphans and relatives).

### *Hajj*

وَأَذِّنْ فِي النَّاسِ بِالْحَجِّ. لِيَشْهَدُوا مَنَافِعَ لَهُمْ وَيَذْكُرُوا اسْمَ اللَّهِ فِي أَيَّامٍ مَّعْلُومَاتٍ عَلَىٰ مَا رَزَقَهُم مِّن بَهِيمَةِ الْأَنْعَامِ فَكُلُوا مِنْهَا وَأَطْعِمُوا الْبَائِسَ الْفَقِيرَ<sup>34</sup> (al-Hajj,27,28)

These verses address Abraham to invite people to Hajj and then declare its cause by ل as “to benefit from it and to mention God while sacrificing. So eat from the meat and feed the destitute in hardship”. Feeding the poor is one of the main practices of Hajj, which is a subset of one of the main purposes of Hajj, namely “to mention the name of God on the sacrifices”. This means that Hajj has the connotation of poverty alleviation. Accordingly, Hajj is a poverty alleviator ritual in which the poor are fed. This essential ritual is of great importance because God invites people to a Hajj such that people solve poverty do not merely revolve around the Kaaba.

### *Sacrifice*

وَأَبْدِنَ جَعَلْنَاهَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ شَعَائِرِ اللَّهِ لَكُمْ فِيهَا خَيْرٌ فَاذْكُرُوا اسْمَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهَا صَوَافٍ فَإِذَا وَجَبَتْ جُنُوبُهَا فَكُلُوا مِنْهَا وَأَطْعِمُوا الْقَانِعَ وَالْمُعْتَرَّ كَذَلِكَ سَخَّرْنَاهَا لَكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ لَنْ يَنَالَ اللَّهُ لُحُومَهَا وَلَا دِمَاؤُهَا وَلَكِنْ يَنَالُهُ التَّقْوَىٰ مِنْكُمْ<sup>35</sup> (al-Hajj, 36 and 37)

These verses order giving a portion of the sacrificed camel meat to *قانع و معتتر* (i.e., the poor) and express the centrality of poverty alleviation in sacrifice deducted from the centrality of piety in the sense of poverty alleviation. These verses state that “flesh and blood of the sacrifices do not come to God, but your piety does”. Sacrifice is described as a ritual on poverty alleviation, meaning poverty alleviation has given sacrifice connotation. Thus, sacrifice is a ritual in which the life of an animal is taken to feed the poor who are in the grip of poverty so that the person conducting the ritual gets closer to God. This is not a sacrifice like with the pre-Islamic Arabs, the blood of which is rubbed on the Kaaba and the flesh remained intact (Najafi Khomeini, 2019, pp. 151,152).

Based on the statistical results of the word *Muttaqin*, mentioned in an earlier section, piety also inherently implies the meaning of poverty alleviation.

<sup>34</sup> Proclaim the Pilgrimage to all people...to attain benefits and celebrate God's name, on specified days, over the livestock He has provided for them– feed yourselves and the destitute in hardship.

<sup>35</sup> We have made camels part of God's sacred rites for you. There is much good in them for you, so invoke God's name over them as they are lined up for sacrifice, then, when they have fallen down dead, feed yourselves and feed the self-contained needy and the mendicant. We have subjected them to you in this way so that you may be thankful. It is neither their meat nor their blood that reaches God but your piety...

### *Fidya*

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ.. عَلَى الَّذِينَ يُطِيقُونَهُ فِدْيَةٌ طَعَامُ مِسْكِينٍ فَمَن تَطَوَّعَ خَيْرًا فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَهُ<sup>36</sup> (al-Baqarah,183,184)

Fidya is a part of a property that is paid in exchange for shortcomings in worshipping and for protection against the former's consequences (Raghib al-Isfahani, 1996p. 25). These verses assume a Fidya for fasting, which is food for the destitute. Fidya is introduced as destitute food, meaning poverty alleviation has given Fidya connotation. In other words, Fidya means the property used to feed the destitute to make up for not fasting. This is because poverty alleviation is one of the reasons behind fasting. Two points prove this claim to be right, the first of which is that the only Fidya for fasting is feeding the destitute, not being kind to relatives, friends, etc. Secondly, the phrase *لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ*, which expresses the purpose of fasting, based on the statistical results of the word *Muttaqin*, indicates feeding the poor. Therefore, one of the goals of fasting is poverty alleviation so that people understand the situation of the poor and taste the bitterness of poverty to help the poor.

#### *2.1.2.2. The Moments Signifying Lack of Poverty Alleviation*

In the Qur'anic poverty discourse in Madani verses, only one signifier of "hypocrite women and men" has been given the connotation of lack of poverty alleviation. This signifier has a contractual relationship with a lack of poverty alleviation, i.e. the central signifier.

#### *Hypocrite Men and Women*

الْمُنَافِقُونَ وَالْمُنَافِقَاتُ بَعْضُهُم مِّن بَعْضٍ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمُنْكَرِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَقْبِضُونَ أَيْدِيَهُمْ نَسُوا اللَّهَ فَنَسِيهِمْ إِنَّا الْمُنَافِقِينَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ- (at-Tawbah,67)<sup>37</sup>

The phrase *يَقْبِضُونَ أَيْدِيَهُمْ* (tight-fisted) means they avoid *Enfagh* and donation (Raghib al-Isfahani, 1996, p. 119). The reason for this is the preceding verses, especially verse 54 of at-Tawbah, which speaks of the hypocrite's *Enfagh* with reluctance. Hence, in this verse, the hypocrite men and women are introduced as those who tie their hands against *Enfagh*. This means that the lack of poverty alleviation has given hypocrite men and women connotation. Accordingly, hypocrite men and women are those who do not give *Enfagh*.

In Laclau and Mouffe's theory, identity is constructed in a discourse form by equivalence chains (Hosseinizadeh, 2004, pp. 191,192). Based on the chains of equivalence in the poverty discourse in Makki verses of the Qur'an, the discourse is based on an approach toward the poor and divides society to the two

<sup>36</sup> You who believe, fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may be pious... For those who can fast only with extreme difficulty, there is a way to compensate (Fidya)– feed the destitute And whoever adds to goodness, it is better for him.

<sup>37</sup>The hypocrites, both men and women, are all the same: they order what is wrong and forbid what is right; they are tight-fisted (against *Enfagh*). They have ignored God, so He has ignored them. The hypocrites are the disobedient ones (*faseq*).



opposite poles or identities of poverty alleviator and neglecting. A poverty alleviator pole or identity is equivalent to the special favored, the most pious, Ashab al-Maimana, the dismissed from fire, and the acquirers of divine rewards; the pole whose poverty alleviation is equivalent to Jesus' religion. Moreover, the pole or identity disregarding the poor is equivalent to oppressors, the despot, disbelievers, polytheists, deniers of religion, the most wretched, Ashabe Shemal, and the entrants to Saqar; the pole that causes the social gap. Also, considering the equivalence chains in the poverty discourse in Madani verses of the Qur'an, the discourse centered on the approach toward the poor, divides the society into the two poles or identities of poverty alleviator and neglecting. The poverty alleviator pole or identity is equal to believing men and women, the believers' Wali, brethren in faith. This pole links ending the war, preservation of mosques, Fay, Hajj, Sacrifice, and Fidyah to poverty alleviation. In contrast, the other pole or identity equals hypocrite men and women.

### **3. The Discourse Domain of the Poverty Discourse in the Qur'an**

Regarding that the context of the emergence of the poverty discourse in the Qur'an is the two cities of Mecca and Medina, the discourse domain is divided into two distinct parts:

#### ***3.1. The Discourse Domain of the Poverty Discourse in Makki Verses***

In this environment, the rich usurp and exploit the poor and slaves (Ali, 1976, pp. 404,405), Quraysh feed many pilgrims (Ibn Hesham, 1994, pp. 63, 64, 65), a group called the Saalic steal and loot commercial caravans out of poverty to feed themselves and the other hungry poor (Al-Hufi, 1972, pp. 226, 230, 234). Commercial caravans fight against the predatory poor selfishly and indifferently (Zilabi, 2007, pp. 56, 57), disregarding their poverty although the Arabs are famous for generosity (Al-Isfahani, Abu al-Faraj, 1985, pp. 4, 3). On the other hand, the poor and slaves either end up enduring poverty with patience and satisfaction or kill their children (31 al-Isra). In this environment where the prevailing discourse in society is idolatry and there is no concern about the issue of poverty alleviation, the poverty discourse in Makki verses of the Qur'an emerges. However, in this context, the Christian and Zoroastrian minorities have a discourse on poverty alleviation in their holy books. Meanwhile, Manichaean minorities claim poverty to be a treasurer identity (Allberry, 1996, Scattered Psalms, pp. 5,19) and require the masses to donate one-tenth of their possessions, and Seddiqins are obliged to pay the charity as much as they can and permanently (Biruni,1973, p. 268). The Mazdaki minorities plunder the wealth of the rich as a way of alleviating poverty and call it piety (Tabari, 1984, pp. 639-640).

The poverty discourse in Makki verses raises a semantic conflict in such an atmosphere as stated by defining and redefining floating signifiers such as Jesus' religion, the special favored, the most pious, Ashab al-Maimana, the dismissal of fire, and the acquisition of divine rewards, which have connotations other than poverty alleviation in the contemporary discourses. Also this discourse defines and redefines floating signifiers such as social gap, oppressor, despot, disbeliever, polytheist, denier of religion, the most

wretched, Ashabe Shemal and the entrance to Saqar, which have meanings other than lack of poverty alleviation in the contemporary discourses. Accordingly, it consolidates and highlights the meaning of poverty alleviation and lack of it in these signifiers and marginalizes other meanings. The result of this struggle is to persuade many people in the community, including the wealthy. This is called the hegemony of the poverty discourse in the Qur'an, which is discussed in the following.

### ***3.2. The Discourse Domain of the Poverty Discourse in Madani Verses***

In an environment that people are living in poverty and the idolatry has no regard for the issue of poverty alleviation, where Jews despite having a discourse on poverty alleviation in their holy book are among the wealthiest in the community for some reasons such as usury (Samih, 2000, p. 618), the poverty discourse in the Madani verses of Qur'an appears. This discourse defines and redefines floating signifiers such as believing men and women, the believers' Wali, brethren in faith, ending the war, preservation of mosques, Fay, Hajj, Sacrifice, and Fidya, which have meanings other than poverty alleviation in the contemporary discourses. Also, it deals with defining and redefining the floating signifier of the hypocrite men and women, which has meanings other than lack of poverty alleviation in the contemporary discourses. Hence, it consolidates and highlights the meanings of poverty alleviation and the lack of it in these signifiers and marginalizes other meanings. The result of this struggle is the persuasion of many in the community, including the rich, which is referred to as the hegemony of the poverty discourse in the Qur'an.

## **4. The Hegemony of the Poverty Discourse in Qur'an**

The best evidence for understanding the hegemony of the poverty discourse in the Qur'an is the historical sources surrounding the era of the emergence of this discourse. Contemporary to the Prophet Muhammad, some chambers were built next to the mosque where the poor and homeless used to live and were supported by alms. They were called Ashab us-Suffah (Ibn Saad, 1410Qamari, vol. 2, p. 652). Each of the companions of the Prophet brought home some of Ashab us-Suffah and fed them (Al-Isfahani, Abu Na'im, 1409 Qamari, vol. 1, p. 338). Also, a fraternal covenant was established between the poor and the wealthy, making the poor migrants' financial problems be partially resolved as Ansar welcomed and fed the refugees who were the poor community in their own homes. Sometimes, there was a conflict over the hosting of a refugee among the Ansar (Mehrin, 1983, p. 114). Furthermore, Ansar believed the spoils of war belong to the poor refugees and shared their possessions and properties with them (9 al-Hashr).

During the Prophet's lifetime, Fay and a portion of the spoils of war were allocated to the poor (Al-Tarihi, 1983, Vol. 2, p. 82) and was divided among the poorest groups of society (Montazer Al-Qaim, 2002, p. 247). For example, the income of Fadak was distributed among the poor and needy, and the income of Khaybar was divided into three parts, two of which for the refugees and one for poor relatives (Al-Waqidi, 2009, p. 82). According to historical texts, Muslim tribes sent the Zakat to the poor to Medina, as those

who were 'Zakat agents' were Zakat collectors, and gave it to the Mostowfi, who were Zakat collectors from the agents (Kattani, 2001, vol. 1, p. 410). It is noteworthy that any money from booty and Zakat was distributed among Muslims quickly and there were no Bayt al-mal and treasuries (Ibn Saad, 1410 Qamari, Vol. 2, pp. 32, 33). This hegemony means the persuasion power of the poverty discourse in the Qur'an that is seen during the Prophet's life. However, after the death of the Prophet, this hegemony died out slowly for some reasons such as the change in the division manner of Bayt al-mal, comparative division of Bayt al-mal based on the closeness to Muhammad and the Islamic background by Umar, the second caliph, and the abuse of Bayt al-mal i.e., the accumulation of property in Bayt al-mal and his arbitrary donations by Uthman, the third Caliph (Montazeri Moghaddam, Hamed, 2010, pp. 143,145). Nevertheless, this hegemony is still present in charity institutes and the Zakat financial system in some Muslim communities.

## 5. Conclusion

The poverty discourse in the Qur'an, articulated around poverty alleviation and lack of poverty alleviation, has a discouraging-encouraging strategic statement that encourages poverty alleviation and discourages neglecting the poor. This statement implies the theology that God is kind and vengeful at the same time. This discourse has a rational approach since it discusses moderate donation with which each individual should allocate some of his property but not all of it to the poor. Although a moderate sacrifice is mentioned in the discourse, it is entirely optional. Economically, the solution provided by this discourse is to eliminate the concentration of wealth in the society by paying Zakat and Enfagh by the individuals in the community, as well as allocating a portion of the community's wealth. This portion includes Fay and spoils of war for poverty alleviation. Also, the solution is to highlight poverty alleviation in the religious lifestyle, which means linking religious life and rituals including Hajj, sacrifice, Fidyah, mosque preservation, and peace concerning poverty alleviation. This discourse transforms the pre-Islamic Arab by creating meanings and reaching consensus among individuals in society. Therefore, in Medina and a few years later in Mecca and even its neighboring cities, the poor, who were the valueless pole of society in such a miserable situation that they robbed caravans and killed their children due to hunger, were financially supported by the Zakat system, Fay, and part of the spoils back then. Also, they were honored, nurtured, and supported by the members of the Islamic community since, in this consensual discourse, poverty alleviation is considered as a value and the poverty alleviator person as a positive identity of the society. Although this discourse has slowly died out after the Prophet's death, its hegemony is still present in charities and the Zakat financial system exists in some Muslim societies. The present study not only proves the unity of religions in poverty alleviation, but also shows that

There is one thing in common between a religious person like Muhammad and an atheist like Marx, and that is paying attention to poverty alleviation.

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