

Prof. S. M. Ghari Seyed Fatemi

The Imāmī Reception of *āyāt al-aḥkām*

The first Imāmī *āyāt al-aḥkām* work seems to be the now missing *Kitāb aḥkām al-Qurʾān* of Muḥammad b. al-Sāʿib b. Bishr al-Kalbī (fl. 2nd/8th century). Many more Imāmī scholars later compiled their own works, indicating the Imāmīs' warm reception of the subject. Well-received books such as *Fiqh al-Qurʾān* by Quṭb al-Dīn al-Rāwandī (d. 573/1178), *Kanz al-ʿirfān fī fiqh al-Qurʾān* by al-Miqdād b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Suyūrī (d. 826/1423), *Zubdat al-bayān fī aḥkām al-Qurʾān* by al-Muqaddas al-Ardabīlī (d. 993/1585), and *Masālik al-afḥām ilā āyāt al-aḥkām* by Fāḍil Jawād al-Kāzīmī (d. 1065/1654) are just a few examples. This paper deals with two distinct features of Imāmī works of *āyāt al-aḥkām*.

Firstly, the presentation of Imāmī books on *āyāt al-aḥkām* is markedly different from that of the Sunnī books (the book of Muḥammad Kāzīm al-Ṭabāṭabāʾī al-Yazdī (d.1337/1919) being a very rare exception to the rule). Sunnī books are outlined in accordance with the order of the Qurʾānic chapters, influenced by the structure of much of the *tafsīr* literature. Imāmī books, however, are outlined in accordance with the order of works of *fiqh*, beginning with the chapter of purification. Nonetheless, such an analysis of the structure of *āyāt al-aḥkām* based on historical order of the Qurʾānic verses yet to be produced.

Secondly, the typical narrative of the Sunnī legal schools posits that the Islamic legal tradition views the Quran as the primary source of Islamic law. However, when one considers the Imāmī reception and perception of *āyāt al-aḥkām*, a rather distinctive hermeneutical stance appears to have been taken. Imāmī jurists did not allow the normative authority of the apparent meaning (*ẓuhūr*) of the Quran to go unchallenged. This paper shall highlight the three major challenges to the normative authority of the apparent meaning of the Qurʾān: (1) the Akhbārīs' hermeneutical stance, (2) the distortion impediment, (3) and the verbal message to the present audiences' argument.



Prof. S. M. Ghari Seyed Fatemi

Al-Mahdi Institute & Shahid Beheshti University

Seyed Mohammad Ghari Seyed Fatemi is a Professor of Comparative Law and Islamic Hermeneutics in the Faculty of Law at Shahid Beheshti University. He has been working with AMI since 1995. Seyed Fatemi is also a member of the Academy of Sciences of Iran and a member of the Department of Biomedical Ethics at the Iranian Academy of Medical Sciences. He has numerous publications to his name in Persian and English and has organised and presented at dozens of conferences in the fields of law, Islamic studies, and bioethics.