

Role of Context and Objectives of the Surah in Shaping the Episodes of the Qur'ānic Narrative: The Narrative of Lot as an Example

Abdul-Samad Abdullah

Abstract

The Qur'anic way of presenting the story of Lot and his people is distinguished by repetition, summation, elaboration, elision, brevity, similarity, and variation.

This article suggests that every episode of the narrative of Lot differs from the others in the series through its own identity, which is acquired from the surah in which it appears. Thus, each episode is woven into its own specific and general framework. Although there are general and clear topics of the narrative as a whole, the topics and objectives of each surah have a very significant role in giving the narrative a specific shape within the surah. Accordingly, when a narrative/story is repeated in the Qur'ān, such repetition comes in response to a certain context or is in harmony with one of the objectives of the surah, either directly or by implication. Thus, repetition or implication becomes a necessity or at least a requirement for a religious or stylistic purpose. Hence, we find that all the episodes in the narrative of Lot and his people in the Qur'ān They are also in accord with the context and are

Dr. Abdul-Samad Abdullah, Convenor, Arabic Studies, Arabic and Islamic Studies Programme, Asia Institute, The University of Melbourne, Australia, and Associate Professor of Arabic Rhetoric and Criticism, College of Arabic Language and Literature, Department of Rhetoric and Criticism, Umm Al-Qura University Makkah Al Mukarramah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

suitable for the occasion. All the episodes in the narrative of Lot correspond with the context and the objectives of the surah. The episode of the people of Lot is closely associated and coherent with these contexts and objectives, and it is impossible to move any episode in the narrative from one surah to another, such is the fit of each episode to its context. In fact, such a shift in position would eventually lead to stylistic flaws related to the context and objectives of that surah. Each episode in the surah has its own characteristics that distinguish it from the rest of the Qur'ānic surahs.

Introduction

The Qur'ānic way of presenting the narrative of Lot and his people is distinguished by repetition, summation, elaboration, elision, brevity, similarity, and variation. The study of the latent aims and purposes behind these techniques in the narrative of Lot in various surahs of the Qur'ān reveals three main features. The first feature is linguistic and stylistic variety; the second is the presence of religious objectives and moral purposes requiring a certain linguistic style, while the third is the coordination of the occasion of the narrative to make it harmonious with the objectives that are included in it and with the general atmosphere of the surah in both style and purpose. This challenges D. H. Müller's frustrations with those narratives in the Qur'an where stories tend to fall into separate incidents instead of being recounted in a linear sequence. For this reason, he and other Western scholars characterized the Qur'ānic style as disjointed.¹

I suggest that every episode of the narrative of Lot differs from the others in the series through its own identity, which is acquired from the surah in which it appears. Thus, each episode is woven into its own specific and general framework. Although there are general and clear topics of the narrative as a whole, the topics and objectives of each surah have a very significant role in giving the narrative a specific shape within the surah. Accordingly, when a narrative is repeated in the Qur'ān, such repetition comes in response to a certain context or is in harmony with one of the objectives of the surah, either directly or by implication. Thus, repetition or implication becomes a necessity or at least a requirement for a religious or stylistic purpose. These narratives convey a large collection of rhetorical points – including mercy, justice, and the obligation of following command. God narrates the narrative of Lot and his people to His Messenger Muḥammad (ṢAAS), and Muḥammad narrates it to his believing followers, as well as

to his opponents and those who deny him from among the disbelievers in order to have an argument against Muhammad and his followers. The argument implies that God repeatedly sent His messages to humankind through His noble messengers throughout the history of humanity, and that there is always a wide gap between those who believe His messengers and those who do not in terms of achieving salvation. The repetition in Qur'ānic narratives/stories also serves to remind people of the gap between those who hear and believe the message and those who do not – a people's failure to listen to the prophet whom God has sent to them has inevitably led to their annihilation. This is manifested in the disastrous end of those who have rejected and denied their prophets. Those who have heeded the divine messengers' call and obeyed them are always rescued from torment.

In my view, this is the general purpose of “punishment narratives” in the Qur'ān, and every narration reminds us of the initial message: do not worship idols, do not mock messengers, worship God alone, submit to His warning and be cautious. Moreover, bear in mind that if you obey the commands of God revealed through His prophets, you will prosper and escape the punishment of God – just as Lot and his believing followers survived when they followed the right path in spite of the warnings, threats, and mockery of the disbelievers. Those who oppose and reject their lord's messages will perish, as did the disbelievers among the people of Lot. From the creedal perspective, this describes God as always pouring out His mercy and justice directly through His messengers to their peoples – asking them to prepare themselves for the Day of Judgment and to follow the message of the Qur'ān as the basis for this preparation, since this is the message of all the messengers.

The narrative is repeated because Lot repeated warnings and called his people using different methods. Every episode of the narrative sheds new light on the narrative as a whole. Thus, I believe that repetition in itself is very important since it seems that prophethood and messages reaffirm the call to God. This coincides with the fact that Islam, or religion in general, is a kind of struggle and fierce resistance between the individual and his or her soul on the way to surrender to the true, divine principles. In the meantime, people tend to deviate from righteousness and swerve from the straight path through Satan's encompassing delusions. Overcoming these delusions requires much remembrance of God and contemplation of His signs in order to renew and instill faith and to escape the punishment of hellfire. Perhaps one of the most important objectives of the narrative that should be referred to on this occasion (as we are now liv-

ing in an age that assumes dialogue as a means to settle disputes) is that prophethood means relation or dialogue between a prophet and his people.

There are two groups of people in the history of humanity since the divine messengers were sent to humankind: those who believe in God and others who disbelieve in Him. Divine destiny is inevitable, and the enactment of Almighty God cannot be evaded. Hence, the punishment narratives are typological; they are not simply a description of past events but are being used to make a point about the present – that is, the time of the Prophet and the current situation of his community. They are based on an analogy or comparison between earlier prophets and the Prophet Muḥammad.

This paper derives its intellectual importance from its endeavor to attend to the inner dynamics, nuances, and complexities of Qur'ānic text – and from its refreshing development compared to certain earlier approaches that analyzed the Qur'ān only in comparison to the Bible. I also deal with some readers' initial confusion regarding the repetition of the Lot episodes in different surahs of the Qur'ān and criticisms on the Qur'ānic style as having too many repetitions and, possibly, slightly or very different contents. I explore all of these aspects through the analysis of the contents, contexts, syntax constructions, comparisons, contrasts between the surahs, the verbal echoes across the verses, and structural analysis. With this kind of exploration, I hope to bring forth a rethinking of approaches to the Qur'ānic text in general and its repeated narratives in particular.²

Narratives of Lot in the Qur'ān

The narrative of Lot and his people is mentioned in ten Qur'ānic surahs – which, according to the order of the Qur'ān, are al-A'rāf (the Heights), Hūd, al-Ĥijr (the Rocky Tract), al-Anbyā' (the Prophets), Ash-Shu'arā' (the Poets), An-Naml (the Ants), al-'Ankabūt (the Spider), Aṣ-Ṣāfat (Those Ringed in Ranks), Adh-Dhāriyāt (the Winds That Scatter), and al-Qamar (the Moon). The following is the general overview of all of the passages in which Lot appears in the Qur'ān.

The Qur'ān presents Lot alongside other prophets in three surahs: al-'An'ām (the Cattle), al-Anbyā', and Aṣ-Ṣāfat. In Aṣ-Ṣāfat, the Qur'ān refers to Lot in the context of affirming how God grants victory to His believing slaves, above whom are His chosen messengers – and the Qur'ān also affirms how God destroys the denying disbelievers after sending them His messengers with clear signs of His existence and sending them all necessary warnings. It also comes in the context of the response of God to the invocation of His messengers to protect them along with the true believers who believe His messengers (Qur'ān 37:72–136).

This is a warning to the disbelievers among the Quraysh – who rejected Prophet Muḥammad, stubbornly opposed his call, and hurt him – that if they persist in their disbelief, denial, and stubbornness, they will face a destiny that is similar to that of those who denied the messengers in previous nations. It also includes a kind of solace for Prophet Muḥammad in this distressing situation; he was not the only prophet to be disbelieved by his people. It also implies glad tidings for his followers that the good end is for the believers and that victory is inevitably granted to the Prophet and his followers regardless of how long it takes or how grave are the afflictions they have to bear. Even though there is not much difference between the contexts of Surat al-Anbyā' and Surat Aṣ-Ṣāfat, accentuating the support of God for His prophets against the plots of those who disbelieve Him assumes a different form in Surat al-Anbyā'. This difference is embodied in two points concerning Lot: Almighty God saved his life twice. The first was when he was saved along with Prophet Abraham after the incident when Abraham was cast into the burning fire (which, in response to God's command, became cool and a means of safety and inner peace for Abraham in fulfillment of the promise of God to save him); the second was when Lot was saved from the people of the towns who practiced abominations. This rescue is congruous with the mercy of God, which is the dominant attribute of the Almighty in this surah. His mercy is manifested in different aspects that flow into the melting pot of the just mercy of God.³ In Surat al-'An'ām, Lot is mentioned among a large group of prophets – Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, Solomon, Job, Joseph, Aaron, Zachariah, John, Jesus, Elias, Ishmael, Elisha, and Jonas – in the context of guidance and preference (Qur'ān 6:84–87). As regards the specific aspects of the narrative of Lot and his people, I shall discuss it according to the chronological order of the surahs: al-Qamar, al-A'rāf, Ash-Shu'arā', An-Naml, Hūd, Ḥijr, Aṣ-Ṣāfat, Adh-Dhāriyāt, al-Anbyā', and al-'Ankabūt.⁴

Like most Meccan surahs, Surat al-Qamar deals with issues about the Day of Judgment and resurrection as a point of departure for other issues that are presented in the surah. However, the matter of the Unseen constitutes the backbone of this surah, since it starts and ends with it. Between the beginning and the end, there is a warning that gravely addresses the disbelievers who deny the messengers. This warning reinforces the dire consequences that followed the intransigence and disbelief of the preceding nations. Indeed, these consequences are not far from the people who deny Prophet Muḥammad if they persist in their disbelief and stubbornness. Within this context redolent of warnings and threats, the narrative of Lot is preceded by the stories of the people of

Noah, ‘Ad, and Thamud, who denied their prophets and persisted in disbelief and stubbornness until they were uprooted in punishment. Moreover, God used them as an example for other people (Qur’ān 54:33–40).

The Qur’ānic narrative is distinguished by concentration, condensed linguistic style, decisiveness and brevity in keeping with the atmosphere of warning, and anger and threat that enfolds the surah from beginning to end. Anger or threats are indicated by the end rhyme of the verses of the surah. The end rhyme in this case is *-ar/-ur/-ir*, the Arabic alphabetical letter *ra*, whose repetitive quality when pronounced must be avoided. Pausing at the rhyme makes the medial consonant *ra* vowel less, which results in a clattering sound that resembles the beating of war drums or the sound of fencing swords. In turn, this sound helps to disseminate the atmosphere of intimidation that concords with the idea of warning, upon which the surah is built. The narrative is condensed in this surah in the final episode after the reminder that the people of Lot mocked his call. This was the episode of the destruction of those who disbelieved and the implied rescue of those who believed. Such an end is suited to the atmosphere of warning and threat and closest to the solace of Lot. It also epitomizes both a warning to those who reject the message or warning conveyed by Prophet Muḥammad and a threat to the audacious leaders of Quraysh and those who follow them. At the same time, it expresses solace for Prophet Muḥammad and his followers, who were helpless. It affirms as well the unchanging way (*Sunnat Allah*) of God in dealing with those who rejected His prophets and messengers in the preceding nations, and how He grants victory to His prophets and worshippers who support His messengers over their enemies, and delivers them from the torment that afflicts the enemies of His prophets and worshippers.⁵

In this context, we see that the episode of warning precedes that of the anticipated punishment. Although the surah does not mention this explicitly, it can be detected through God’s word: “*And they indeed sought to shame his guest (by asking to commit sodomy with them). So, We blinded their eyes*” (Qur’ān 54:37).⁶ Here the narrative includes a reference to one of the episodes of punishment – blinding people for attempting to make improper advances to Lot’s guests – which under the normal sequence of narrative telling should be mentioned earlier. This episode is preceded by the final episode, which is indicated in the following Qur’ānic verse: “*Verily, We sent against them a violent storm of stones (which destroyed them all), except the family of Lot, whom We saved in the last hour of the night*” (Qur’ān 54:34). The narrative ends with the same episode with which the surah started, along with an identification of the time and description of the punishment: “*And verily, an abiding torment seized them early in the*

morning” (Qur’ān 54:38). The rescue of Lot and his people and its appointed time – that is, “*in the last hour of the night*” – is mentioned in a way that indicates that the rescue of Lot and his people preceded the punishment, since “*the last hour of the morning*” comes before “*early (in the morning.*” Perhaps the reversal of the (natural) chronological order of the episodes in this surah symbolizes the people’s violation of natural instinct through committing the act of sodomy. This fact is indicated through the surahs that are revealed after this surah. It seems that this surah represents the ambiguity and condensation that are to be explained and elaborated later.

The context of the narrative of Lot in Surat al-A‘rāf is not much different from that of Surat al-Qamar, though the tone of warning and harshness is more poignant in Surat al-A‘rāf. Surat al-Qamar is based on warning (for disbelievers) and solace for Prophet Muḥammad, along with the prohibition of open or secret shameful deeds (Qur’ān 7:80–84). In Surat al-A‘rāf, which is the second in chronological order of revelation concerning the narrative of Lot, the dimensions and features of the narrative begin to appear more broadly than in Surat al-Qamar, which is a comprehensive introduction to the events of the narrative. The implicit punishment and its dire consequences in Surat al-Qamar are explicitly depicted here in a way that dispels any doubt or probability regarding the anomaly committed by the people of Lot. Upon reading God’s word – “*And they indeed sought to shame his guest (by asking to commit sodomy with them). So We blinded their eyes*” (Qur’ān 54:37) – one might think that the punishment was due to their denigration of their messenger and to their unrealized design to sodomize the angels or the guests. When the verses of Surat al-A‘rāf were revealed, they ruled out every probability by stipulating the kind of punishment and its consequence, declaring that it was the unprecedented shameful practice of sodomy.

In addition, the verses rule out another probability that might come to mind in the verse of Surat al-Qamar, since the rescue episode of the family of Lot could be understood to refer to the survival of his entire family: “*except the family of Lot, whom We saved in the last hour of the night*” (Qur’ān 54:34). Thus, the verses of Surat al-A‘rāf explain what was summed up in al-Qamar by the words, “*Then We saved him and his family, except his wife; she was of those who remained behind (in the torment)*” (Qur’ān 7:83). Therefore, Lot’s wife was excluded from the rescue. Moreover, Surat al-A‘rāf indicates the meaning in Surat al-Qamar of “*We sent against them a violent storm of stones (which destroyed them all)*” by the phrase, “*And We rained down on them a rain (of stones)*” (Qur’ān 54:34).

The third surah in order of revelation, concerning the narrative of Lot with his people, is Ash-Shu‘arā’. Among the objectives of this surah, be-

sides confirming that the Qur'ān is a miraculous scripture, are solaces for the Prophet, and the relief of his sorrow at the degradation of his Ummah as a result of nonbelief and the intensification of the harm committed by the disbelievers of Quraysh against his followers. The surah bears glad tidings that God will grant victory to the believers in spite of their weakness and will inflict defeat on the disbelievers in spite of their might. The general atmosphere of this surah shows might and punishment, and its tone is charged with the rejection of the various atrocities of the disbelievers of all nations. Perhaps this reveals the secret behind describing the people of Lot as transgressors: *"Nay, you are a trespassing people!"* (Qur'ān 26:166) The narrative of Lot stands among the calls of messengers to their people and as a kind of solace for the Prophet Muḥammad, for almost all the stories of this surah – from Noah to Shu'ayb – end with the phrase, *"And verily! Your Lord, He is indeed the All-Mighty, the Most Merciful."* This verse refers to the greatness of Almighty God and to the fact that none of those who reject His messengers can escape His punishment. It also affirms that He does not punish the disbelievers until He has sent messengers to them in order that they might have a case against them (Qur'ān 26:160–75).

The fourth surah, Surat An-Naml, also concerns the narrative of Lot and his people. Its main objectives are to show knowledge and wisdom and to bear glad tidings to the believers and warnings to the disbelievers of the Day of Judgment.⁷ The narrative of Lot is placed in the context of the disbelievers' attempt to murder the messengers due to their failure to refute the messengers' proof and their dissatisfaction with the overpowering irrefutable and unchallengeable message. According to the disbelievers, the only way to be rid of the messengers and their messages was through plots, conspiracies, and assassination attempts against them and their followers. However, God, the Omnipotent and Disposer of Affairs Who sends the messengers, interferes to save His messengers and their followers and supports them by destroying the disbelievers, just as He supported Saleh and his followers by destroying his people who conspired against him (Qur'ān 27:54–58).

The fifth surah in order of revelation concerning the narrative of Lot and his people is Surat Hūd. Among the main objectives of this surah are to give heart to the Prophet, support him, let him put his trust in the Almighty regarding all his affairs, and give him glad tidings that there will be a good end for the believers. In this surah, the narrative of Lot is in the context of the narrative of Abraham, highlighting the episode of the good tidings given by the angels to Abraham that he would father a son. The angels came in the guise of guests, but Abraham conceived a fear of them when he watched them do amazing things. This shows the intransigence of those who asked

for an angel saying, “(Why has not a treasure been sent down unto him), or an angel has come with him?” (Qur’ān 11:12). Although this was not difficult for the Almighty, as He would frequently send angels, it was a difficult thing for human beings to bear. Angels would be frightening and seeing them face-to-face is a terrible thing. Besides, their descent in disguise would not necessarily put an end to the intransigent demand of those disbelievers to see angels.⁸ For this reason, the narrative of Lot was revealed with an emphasis on the episode of the angel of torment (Qur’ān 11:76–83).

The sixth revealed surah concerning the narrative of Lot is Surat Ḥijr. Its objectives include consoling the Prophet for the disbelievers’ turning way from the religion and for their indecent language. This surah also reassures the Prophet that the reward is for the believers, regardless of the extent to which the disbelievers inflict harm on the Prophet and his followers. In this surah, the narrative of Lot occurs in the context of the people’s resistance to their prophets. This context greatly resembles that of the narrative in Surat Hūd, which was revealed before the one under discussion, in the sense that both surahs rebuke those who dare to ask for heavenly angels. Despite the great similarity between the two surahs, the analysis of their style and composition below reveal differences between them (Qur’ān 15:57–77).

The seventh surah in order of revelation concerning the narrative of Lot and his people is Surat Aṣ-Ṣāfat. Among its main objectives are proving the sovereignty of God and His absolute omnipotence, which necessitate the absolute oneness of God, Who is free of any imperfection and full of justice – which, in turn, is a prerequisite for oneness. Such justice dictates that people turn to the Almighty to judge among them according to the norms of justice and fairness, which prescribes having every soul held in pledge for its deeds. In Surat Aṣ-Ṣāfat, the narrative of Lot is mentioned in the context of confirming the constant support of the Almighty and the way in which He rescues his messengers and their followers, as well as the descent of punishment on the disbelievers (Qur’ān 26:133–38).

Surat Adh-Dhāriyāt, the eighth in order of revelation concerning the narrative of Lot, is based on the refutation of the allegations of those who deny the Day of Judgment and the resurrection and reject Prophet Muḥammad. The surah shows that a grave punishment awaits these people, while the warning refers to the destiny of those who disbelieved earlier prophets in the way that they disbelieve Prophet Muḥammad. This affirms that the punishment is substantial. Such is the context in which the narrative is presented (Qur’ān 51:32–37).

The ninth surah in chronological order of revelation regarding the narrative of Lot is Surat al-Anbyā’. It aims at confirming the substantiality

and nearness, even if through the death of people, of the Day of Judgment and its inclusion in calling all people – the noble and the lowly – to account. This demonstrates that the knowledge of the Almighty encompasses all things – that even the tiniest atom in the heavens or on the earth is not hidden from Him, and that He does not have a partner or an equal who can stop Him from requiting the deeds of human beings. Indeed, the stories of all the prophets mentioned in the surah are made to indicate this truth.⁹ In summary, the narrative of Lot is related in the context of saving the believers and destroying the disbelievers, who had no way of avoiding the grave punishment of the Almighty and His severe torment. The fact that nobody can prevent the revenge of the Almighty proves His perfect omnipotence and ability to perform reckoning and retribution. Therefore, nothing can escape or be hidden from Him. The worldly punishment inflicted on the disbelievers of preceding nations, including the people of Lot, is a manifest proof and indication of the punishment in the Hereafter (Qur’ān :74–76).

The tenth surah in order of revelation concerning the narrative of Lot and his people is Surat al-‘Ankabūt. Its objectives include rebuking those who make claims against the prophets or the Almighty, bringing good news to the pious, urging people to enjoin good and forbid evil, calling ceaselessly to the Almighty alone, confirming the strength of the believers and the frailty of the disbelievers, and consoling Prophet Muḥammad by recounting the inflictions that had befallen the preceding prophets. The narrative of Lot is related in the context of imitating the prophets in their patience with their opponents and of punishing sins. We could see the evil deeds of the people of Lot and their abominable lewdness implied in this surah (Qur’ān 29:27–35).

Stylistic Similarities in the Condemnation of Sodomy

The sodomy that was practiced by the people of Lot is denounced in the following four surahs.

Surat al-A‘rāf: 80–81

In this surah, Lot’s call to his people starts with him disapproving of their misbehavior and corrupt manners. This *da‘wah* (preaching) approach is unconventional compared with the approaches of previous messengers, who all started by calling their peoples to embrace monotheism and then dealing with other moral issues or the shameful deeds of their peoples. Lot starts by rejecting his people’s anomalous deeds before inviting them to accept the oneness of God and worship Him alone, which necessitates fol-

lowing His orders and avoiding His prohibitions. Perhaps the secret behind this approach is that it refers to the heinous nature of their misbehavior that was a form of moral corruption, which was unprecedented throughout the history of humanity. With them, homosexuality prevailed. Accordingly, the message of Lot embodied a kind of inexorable war against this abnormal behavior and an attempt to amend it. The divine laws explained such issues to the people in a way that could only be dismissed by those who had gone astray. Consequently, Lot denounced the abominations of his people.

It is clear that Lot's denunciation is expressed in two rhetorical questions charged with renunciation, rebuke, and reproach: one is an indirect invitation to resort to reasoning, and the other is an address to the conscience. Both involve an element of suspense stimulating the addressee to listen attentively; this technique is manifested in elaboration after condensation or explicit interpretation after implication: "*Do you commit the worst sin?*"... "*Verily, you practice your lusts on men instead of women?*" (Qur'ān 7:81). The human soul is usually inclined toward curiosity when an issue becomes complex. Thus, when the perplexing point is explained, it becomes ingrained in the mind since it is acquired after considerable anticipation and insistence. This style is suitable for the psychological condition of the people of Lot that enabled them to justify this abhorrent act and regard it as sound. Renunciation in this surah involves an important element that magnifies their shameful and lewd behavior, which is indicated in the phrase "*Such as none preceding you has committed in the al-'Alamin (past/bygone generations)*" (Qur'ān 7:80). These kinds of shameful deeds are among the innovations for which they will be punished. Moreover, they will bear the sin of everybody who follows their innovation. Such immorality is so heinous that it threatens the human species with punishment and extinction. The phrase "*lusts on men instead of women*" turns their attention to the right way through which one's lust should be satisfied and where it should be properly utilized. Lust is not an end in itself, but it was created in human beings to achieve a lofty purpose that transcends merely fulfilling it. This purpose cannot be achieved except when lust is fulfilled in the normal way as decreed by the Almighty – that is, between a male and a female. Hence, sexual desire is a means to the end of seeking the pleasure of God by having children in order to guarantee the preservation of the human species. Accordingly, any attempt to fulfill this sexual desire, which does not take into consideration this noble aim or follow the planned and right way for it, is rejected and discarded by people of pure instinct and sound mind. In addition, employing the word *shahwatan* (lust) in the accusative indicates that the people rejected the desirable aim of marriage

and sought the satisfaction of lust alone. They failed to satisfy their lust in the correct way, which may be understood from the verse “*instead of women.*” The verse then moves from rejection to report and affirmation: “*Nay, but you are an extravagant people*” (Qur’ān 7:81). This verse judges that the people exceeded the limits and committed a dangerous deed, so it describes them as transgressors, which denotes corruption.¹⁰ This judgment shows how they indulged in this grave lewdness, while the term *transgression* – which means going beyond limits or boundaries – accords with their fulfilling their lust on men instead of women. This behavior, from a Qur’ānic perspective, endangers society. It represents a recession into the abyss of bisexuality and severs the instinctive relation between husband and wife, which is stimulated by sexual desire for the sake of procreation.

In the previous sections, I have mentioned that among the objectives of Surat al-A‘rāf are warning the disbelievers, supporting Prophet Muḥammad, and prohibiting open abominations. The narrative of Lot stands in this context of warning, strong admonition, and prohibition of shameful deeds. Accordingly, we notice that the verses of the narrative of Lot, on one hand, accord with the general atmosphere of the surah and, on the other hand, respond to the requirements of the context in which the narrative is told. Therefore, if the narrative is moved to another surah, disharmony and dissonance will be created that will contradict the smooth style of the verses, given that there are certain ties that are hidden among the elements of the surah. These ties produce a sense of symmetry and harmony in the surah so that the different issues seem congruous as if they were one entity with a unique image. This will rule out the possibility of moving the narrative from one surah to another even if the general objectives of the two surahs are common. It seems as if arteries, veins, and blood run throughout the entire surah in a calculated and accurate system.¹¹ This feature can only be detected through deep contemplation and careful analysis. We know that the narrative of Lot in this surah is preceded by some verses in the beginning of the surah that talk about committing lewdness and how the Almighty abhors it, and about extravagance and how God dislikes it (Qur’ān 7:28).

It can be observed here that the word *fahishah* (lewdness) is in the form of an indefinite noun. Moreover, God’s word, “Say (O Muḥammad), ‘My Lord has commanded justice and (said) that you should face Him only (i.e. worship none but God and face the Qiblah, i.e. the Ka‘bah at Mecca during prayers) in each and every place of worship, in prayers (and not to face other false deities and idols), and invoke Him only making your religion sincere to Him by not joining in worship any partner to Him and with the intention that you are doing your deeds for God’s sake only. As

He brought you (into being) in the beginning, so shall you be brought into being (on the Day of Resurrection)” (Qur’ān 7:29), is followed by His saying, “Children of Adam! Take your adornment (by wearing your clean clothes), while praying and going round (the *tawāf* of) the Ka’bah, and eat and drink but waste not by extravagance, certainly He (God) likes not *al-Musrifūn* (the extravagant)” (Qur’ān 7:31). Thus, the allegation of the non-believers that the Almighty ordered them to commit such shameful deeds is refuted: “*Say, Nay, God never commands any lewdness.*” The verses go on to explain the essential constituents of the true religion that are encompassed within the term *qist* (justice), in order to instruct the people and lift them from their ignorance and to show the sublimity of God. Since they ought to know that God never commands such anomalies, the sentence “*Say, Nay, God never commands of Fahishah*” is separated from the sentence that preceded it in order to accentuate the purpose of these words. The purpose is to refute their claim that God orders them to commit shameful deeds, and to record what God actually orders. God does not conjoin the acts of saying or the said statements because the repetition of the saying itself without conjoining it with its counterpart attracts attention to what the Almighty orders.¹² Moreover, describing the sodomy which was practiced by the people of Lot as *al-fahishah* (lewdness), preceded by the definite article *al* (the), indicates that their lewdness is the ultimate abomination, being unprecedented. It seems that God’s word through Lot, “*Such as none preceding you has committed in the ‘Alamin*” (past/bygone generations), is intended to imply solace for Prophet Muḥammad by telling him that what the people of Lot had done was more outrageous than anything the disbelievers of Quraysh were doing. That is to say, the shameful deeds of the latter were woven according to the tradition of their ancestors: “*And when they commit a Fahishah (evil deed, every kind of unlawful sexual intercourse, etc.), they say, ‘We found our fathers doing it.’*” The people of Lot, unlike their predecessors, invented their lewdness, which is synonymous with polytheism, as it was not practiced by any nation before theirs.

Concerning the attribution of extravagance to the people of Lot, this comes in response to the claim of the disbelievers that God ordered them to commit shameful deeds. God refutes this allegation and proves that justice is what He calls for in all times and places. This is because justice is the virtue in everything and takes a moderate position between extremism and negligence. It is the epitome of all virtues, which sound minds and balanced souls consider as pure goodness and inclusive beneficence. Thus, the narrative of Lot came to confirm these lofty notions by highlighting their opposite, just as things are accentuated through comparison with their

opposite. Hence, describing the people of Lot as extravagant – that is, exceeding all that is reasonable or appropriate – indicates their ultimate ignorance and represents the opposite of justice, since they deny the lewdness that God never condones. This emphasizes that God detests their behavior, and is material proof that He does not approve of lewdness, nor does he order people to commit it. In addition, God’s word, “*Certainly He (God) likes not al-Musrifūn (the extravagant) (Qur’ān 7:81),*” could be seen as referring to the people of Lot, who are highly extravagant. That is why they deserve the severe punishment of the Almighty, which befalls only those whom He abhors. All this is in line with the atmosphere of warning and strong rebuke. The context of the surah confutes the idolatrous thinking that depends on blind imitation and false allegations against the Almighty. This disparages the disbelievers of Quraysh and others, for the people of Lot committed unprecedented lewdness and followed a way of their own without claiming that the Almighty ordered them to do so. However, the Almighty denied their misbehavior and destroyed them. What then would be the case with the disbelievers of Quraysh, who imitated their ancestors in unequivocal corruption and lewdness and then alleged that the Almighty ordered them to do so?

Moreover, describing Lot’s people as extravagant indicates that this practice was so common among them that it became an indispensable part of their national character. Hence, they became extravagant in fulfilling their desires, and went even further. This is the reason why the active participle *musrifūn* is employed, first to prove that the case occurred and then to help in maintaining the rhythmic harmony that is observed at the end rhymes (*fawasil*) of the verses, given that the end rhymes of the previous verses were full of nouns. Again, describing them as extravagant shows that they combined all imperfections, a point that is elaborated in other parts of the narrative.

Surat Ash-Shu‘arā’: 165–166

It is clear that the verses in this surah rejecting lewdness – or Lot’s call to his people to cease their misbehavior – are not much different from the verses that denounce such misbehavior in Surat al-A‘rāf. However, in order to accord with the general atmosphere of Surat Ash-Shu‘arā’, the idea of rejection takes a different stylistic pattern from that of Surat al-A‘rāf. This is because Surat Ash-Shu‘arā’ conveys severe rejection of the forms of aggression assumed by the disbelievers of all nations and confirms that God visits on them a penalty from the One

Exalted in Power, Who is able to carry out His will; this follows the warning of the people by the sending to them prophets and messengers.

The narrative also appears in the context of relieving the Prophet's fears that his nation might suffer humiliation because of abandoning faith and the atrocities of the disbelievers against his companions might increase. Here, the idea of rejection is focused on the fulfilling of lust on men and how the people "*leave those whom God has created for [them] to be [their] wives?*" The verse concludes with the phrase, "*Nay, you are a trespassing people!*" In spite of the stylistic similarity in using the interrogative form (implying reproach) between Surat al-A'rāf and Surat Ash-Shu'arā', the verses have distinguishing stylistic features. The Qur'ān uses the word *dhukran* (males), but in Surat al-A'rāf, it uses *al-rijāl* (men) with the preposition *min* (of) being used in its partitive sense to highlight this difference. This refers to the gravity of the sin that was invented by the people of Lot, through which they contradicted the normal male–female relationship. Among all other species, no creature fulfills its lust on males, including animals. It is through this shameful anomaly that the people of Lot contradicted instinct and stooped lower than the animals. They preferred men among all other creatures, and this explains the statement in Surat al-A'rāf. From this statement, it could be understood that the '*alamīn* (worlds) refers to human beings only and not to animals, while the word *men* refers to human beings only. In addition, the saying of the Almighty, "*And leave those whom God has created for you to be your wives?*", restricts the meaning that might come to mind of permitting sexual relations with women in general: "*Verily, you practice your lusts on men instead of women.*" This would lead to the prevalence of fornication and the confusion of lineages. Thus, the Qur'ān narrows relations to what the law permits, that is, legal wives only. The phrase "*And leave those whom your Lord has created for you to be your wives?*" indicates that this shameful deed involves a change in the creation of God and a contradiction of the universal nature of humanity. Hence, attributing the creation to "*your Lord*" without mentioning the word *God* refers to divine mercy, which implies the Lord's bestowal of blessings abundantly in a way that benefits creatures and provides them with the requirements to keep true to themselves and their religion, with procreation being one of the most important.

The transitional digression attributing aggression or transgression generally applies to the disbelieving nations mentioned in this surah. Thus, we find the Qur'ān saying, "*Nay, you are a trespassing people!*" as it digresses from instruction to rational rectification and addresses the instinct to disparagement by heightening the denunciation and reproach. It

ascribes excessive transgression to the people of Lot by using the noun phrase, which, grammatically and rhetorically, indicates stability and continuity of attributed character. Besides, the predicative “*a trespassing people*” implies that aggression is a quality that is ingrained, so much so that it seems to be a main constituent of their identity.¹³ Here, one cannot miss the extensive elucidation of the exceeding of limits and boundaries, indicated through the use of the word *‘adun* (*trespassers*). Such elucidation is more explicit than would be achieved by the word *musrifun* (*extravagant*) in Surat al-A‘rāf: “*Nay, but you are an extravagant people.*” In Surat Ash-Shu‘arā’, the Qur’ān adds that the people went beyond the limits in their transgression and violated the rights of others. Fulfilling their lust on males instead of females implies usurping and violating females’ natural rights and disrupting their human function and role in the preservation of human life. The conclusion of Surat al-A‘rāf includes the idea of extravagance (*transgressing beyond bounds*), but limits its damage to the extravagant person himself – that is, it does not affect others.

On the other hand, the term transgression (*‘itida’*), which was used in Surat Ash-Shu‘arā’, denotes exceeding the limits in doing evil, and is employed in the present context to mean the transgressor who trespasses the limits of what is right and indulges in falsehood. Thus, transgression implies going beyond the natural limits to the opposite of natural instinct, which is fraught with perversion.¹⁴

The presence of the word *trespassing* in Surat Ash-Shu‘arā’ is in line with the general atmosphere and objectives of the surah. This would make the alternation of the rejection verses in the two surahs, that is, al-A‘rāf and Ash-Shu‘arā’, impossible. Such alternation would certainly disturb the stylistic dissonance and disharmony in both surahs, in spite of the similarity in both surahs in referring to denunciation and to the denounced deed and its nature. As was previously stated, the atmosphere of Surat Ash-Shu‘arā’ is charged with an aggressive tone, that is, of the disbelievers toward the believers. In this surah, the Almighty asks His messenger, Moses, to go to the unjust people, and Moses declares his fear of the tyranny and aggression of Pharaoh. Pharaoh’s aggression is shown when he threatens Moses with imprisonment if he takes another god than him. The climax is reached with Pharaoh’s aggression against the magicians, who believe in the Almighty. He cuts off their hands and legs and crucifies them.¹⁵ In addition, another form of aggression is noticeable on the part of the people of Noah when they ask him to expel the believers because of their poverty and humility. Following that, the aggression of the Noah’s people escalates to the point that they threaten to stone to death the Messenger of

God (Qur'ān 26:111–16). In the same context, the aggression of the people of Hud emerges when Hud rejects their misbehavior, especially their brutality against others.¹⁶ As for the people of Saleh, their aggression drives them to kill the she camel despite having been warned by their prophet not to hurt it.¹⁷ Then follows the aggression of the people of Shu'ayb, who cheat in financial transactions, for example, measures and weights (Qur'ān 26: 181–87). Finally, we may presume that the verses rejecting the shameful deeds of the people of Lot cannot be moved from Surat Ash-Shu'arā' to the parallel contexts of surahs al-A'rāf and Hūd, for example, without disturbing the style and violating the harmony of the texts.

Surat An-Naml: 54–55

This surah is distinguished from those discussed above by the concluding of the first verse of rejection with the phrase “*wa antum tubsurūn (while you see)*” and the second (in the transitional digression) with “*bal 'antum qawmun tajhalun (Nay, but you are a people who behave senselessly)*.” It has been noted already that among the objectives of this surah is to show wisdom and knowledge. It is known by Arabic rhetoricians that one of the best ways to clarify an issue is by the apposition of two opposite things. It seems that the digression and the manner of concluding the verses in the narrative of Lot coincide with the general atmosphere of the surah, in which knowledge and wisdom are shown in different ways. The employment of the phrase “*you see*” is in harmony with such an atmosphere, while the phrase “*behave senselessly*” is not.

The objective of the surah is to show knowledge and wisdom and to demonstrate that the people of Lot contradict these objectives through their shameful deeds and their imitation of ignorant people in their transgressing. The phrase “*behave senselessly*” means behaving in such a way as to make sodomy seem acceptable, in a similar manner to people who lack any trace of knowledge. Driven by bitter hostility and bestial inclinations, such people reveal their lewdness. Although the Almighty has endowed them with reason, they neglect it to the extent that lust controls their minds.¹⁸ The ambience of the surah is tinged with the confusion and allurements that befalls the people – especially those distanced from the religion of the Almighty – through Satan's temptation or his seduction of those whom he seeks to mislead by making evil deeds seem pleasing to them. Such delusions serve to clarify and explain the truth for anyone who wants to know it.

In this surah, there are numerous verses pertaining to delusions that coincide with the transitional digression in the narrative of Lot and his

people:¹⁹ “*Nay, but you are a people who behave senselessly.*” As for the verses relating to the manifestation of knowledge and wisdom that coincide with the ending of the verse of rejection “*you see*”, there are numerous verses pertaining to that too.²⁰ Thus, we find that Lot’s rejection of his people’s lewdness in Surat An-Naml, although similar to his rejection in other surahs, is distinguished from the others by its distinctive identity. In Surat An-Naml the rejection is firmly established, so much so that another surah – in spite of the close similarity that characterizes the verses of rejection in all other surahs – would seem inharmonious.

The previous section dealt with style; the following one will discuss the meanings. The ending of the first verse “*you see*” focuses on the people’s perpetration of a shameful deed despite their awareness of its gravity and their inner rejection of it. This agrees with the word, “*And they belied them (those Ayāt) wrongfully and arrogantly*” (Qur’ān 27:14). This indicates that those people were stubborn and deliberate in approaching males to fulfill their lust and abandoning the females, who Almighty God had made lawful to them through marriage.²¹ The ending of the second verse, “*Nay, but you are a people who behave senselessly,*” describes the people as ignorant. This is an attribute that epitomizes perversion of reason and harshness of heart.²² That description is proportionate to their misbehavior, which is intentional and intransigent: Almighty God says, “*while you see.*” Premeditation and intransigence are among the results of neglecting reason. By neglecting the capacity by which human beings are distinguished from animals, humans stoop to a level that is lower than that of animals.

Surat al-‘Ankabūt: 28–29

The rejection of shameful deeds is expressed thus by Almighty God: “*And (remember) Lot, when he said to his people, ‘You commit al-Fahishah (sodomy, the worst sin) which none has preceded you in (committing) in the ‘Alamīn (past generations). Verily, you do sodomy with men, and rob the wayfarer (travelers, etc.)! And practice al-Munkar (disbelief and polytheism and every kind of evil wicked deed) in your meetings.’”*²³

What is new about the rejection in this surah of the lewdness of the people of Lot is that their misdeeds are explained in detail. Such deeds go beyond lewdness to include other shameful deeds. The rejection in the verses focuses on two other shameful deeds – namely, bullying other people to commit this grave lewdness and stealing their money. The people are shown to have shamelessly practiced such depravity in public in order to seduce people to imitate them. The elaboration of the details of their lewdness is a new addition to the episodes of the narra-

tive. What necessitated such an addition in this surah in particular?

We recall that among the objectives of the surah is to rebuke those who call for lewdness and to praise those who fear Almighty God. There is no doubt that rebuke requires explaining the reasons for the transgression or regularly mentioning or repeating it if there was only one reason. This style is suitable for chiding and defamation. In addition, rejection, here, besides being in harmony with the atmosphere of chiding, is in the context of God instructing people to imitate prophets in their toleration of the atrocities that are committed against them by their people, and the context of punishment for sins. Undoubtedly, both contexts require elaboration and clarification.

Concerning following in the steps of the prophets in their patience toward all that they suffer from their people, elaboration and clarification would ease the harm inflicted upon Prophet Muḥammad by his people. Punishment because of committing sins necessitates explanation and elaboration in order to make an argument against sinners and to give reasons for this punishment. This leaves no doubt that the punishment of those who disbelieve the prophets is deserved and that they can never escape from the Almighty, even if He grants them a respite. In addition, the idea of rejection in Surat al-‘Ankabūt carries characteristics that distinguish it from any other Qur’ānic surah and differentiates the issues that are discussed in it from other similar issues that are discussed in other surahs. Thus, the enumeration of the evil deeds of the people of Lot agrees with the beginning of the surah, which reads, “*Or those who do evil deeds think that they can outstrip Us? Evil is that which they judge!*” (Qur’ān 29:4). Thus, the phrase, “*those who do evil deeds*” instead of “*those who do evil*” requires the listing all the shameful deeds of the people of Lot in addition to the grave lewdness they had practiced. The phrase, “*You commit al-Fahishah (sodomy, the worst sin)*” and “*And practice al-Munkar (disbelief and polytheism and every kind of evil wicked deed) in your meetings*” accord with His saying in the same surah, “*Recite what has been revealed to you of the Book, and perform As-Salat (the prayer). Verily, As-Salāt prevents al-Fahsha’ and al-Munkar*” (Qur’ān 29:45).

Finally, counting the shameful deeds in the context of punishment is consistent with the mentioning of various types of torments afflicted on those who deny their prophets.²⁴

Stylistic Similarity in the Stance of the People of Lot

Surat al-A‘rāf: 82

In Surat al-A‘rāf, the attitude of the people of Lot toward his condemnation of their indecency is tinged with impatience, denunciation, and repudiation, which is translated into threats and aggression embodied in their attempt to banish Lot from their town. The Qur’ān says, “*And the answer of his people was only that they said, ‘Drive them out of your town, these are indeed men who want to be pure!’*” (Qur’ān 7:82). The pronoun in the phrase *‘akhrijūhum* (drive them out) refers to Lot and his followers. It is also used to refer to them in Surat al-Qamar, which was revealed prior to Surat al-A‘rāf. According to the opinion of Abu Hayyan, they are referred to by the pronoun in that surah, even though they are mentioned through the substantive in Surat An-Naml, as this surah was revealed before Surat al-A‘rāf. This means that what is referred to with a pronoun in Surat al-A‘rāf is clearly referred to with a noun in Surat An-Naml. The Almighty says, “*Then, the answer of his people was only that they said, ‘Drive out the family of Lot from your town, these are indeed men who want to be pure!’*” (Qur’ān 27:56).

Here, it is noticeable that the answer of Lots’s people is full of arrogance and aggression; they are far removed from any logical discussion through which they might realize their bad behavior. However, because they have failed to find any reasonable excuse for their indecency, they use an aggressive tone; they have lost the ability to think logically and are reacting defensively. They threaten Lot with banishment, claiming that he and his followers were transgressing the boundaries by purifying themselves. The act of cleansing mentioned in the verse has more than one level of meaning. First, such an act is only conducted in a filthy place, so whoever leaves this place is pure. Second, avoiding sin is called cleansing. Hence, the phrase, “*want to be pure*” means to stay away from sin. Third, the people say, “*These are men who want to be pure*”; this is meant to satirize the believers for distancing themselves from indecency. This is how devilish people reply to a pious person when the person admonishes them; they say “*Rid us of this ascetic; relieve us of this austere person.*”²⁵ All these levels of meaning comply with the dominant atmosphere of the surah, which talks about those who reject the verses and signs of Almighty God, dismiss honorable messengers, and commit unlawful transgressions. That is because the people’s response and their demand to expel the messenger from their village is clear proof of their arrogance and haughtiness. Such a response, which is repeated more than seven times in the surah, is first

mentioned in the narrative of *Iblis* (Satan), the leader of the arrogant.²⁶ In addition, their demand to expel the prophet and his followers is consistent with the use in the surah of the verb *kharaja* (to go out) and its derivatives more than thirteen times.²⁷ It also coincides with some of the objectives of the surah, which include warning of a fate similar to that of the arrogant disbelievers of the nations that preceded that of Prophet Muḥammad. No form of rejection or arrogance is worse than expelling a messenger.

It is clear that the attitude of such people toward Lot is compatible with that of other people toward their prophets. This applies especially to the people of the prophet Shu‘ayb, who threatened him with banishment and forced him and his followers to choose between reverting to their distorted and misleading laws or being thrown out of their village (Qur’ān 7:88).

Surat An-Naml: 56

The stance of the people of Lot in Surat An-Naml is not much different from their stance in Surat al-A‘rāf as regards their pride in their lewdness and their viewing those who denounce lewd acts as criminals who deserve to be banished from the village.²⁸ The structure in An-Naml does not differ from that of Surat al-A‘rāf, except that the coordinating conjunction *wa* (and) in Surat al-A‘rāf is replaced with *fa* (then) in Surat An-Naml, and the object pronoun of the verb “*drive them out*” in Surat al-A‘rāf is replaced with a substantive in Surat An-Naml “*drive out the family of Lot*”. In Surat al-A‘rāf, the conjunctive (*wa*) is employed due to the position of *musrifūn* (extravagant), meaning preceding the apodosis, and because it is in the noun form even though it functions as a verb. The coordinating conjunction (*wa*) suits the noun more than the verb. On the other hand, the conjunctive (*fa*) is employed in Surat An-Naml due to the position of *tajhalūn* (behave senselessly), which is a clear verb regarded as the origin of the apodosis (subordinate clause of the conditional sentence that begins with the conjunctive *fa*).²⁹ The use of the substantive in Surat An-Naml in “*drive out the family of Lot*” is consistent with its objective of showing knowledge and wisdom clearly. On the other hand, the use of the pronoun in Surat al-A‘rāf, in “*drive them out,*” is consistent with the atmosphere of arrogance and haughtiness. The wrongdoers are arrogant even when they are dealing with Lot and his followers. The same thing I said about the unjust attitude of the people of Lot when they insisted on expelling their prophet applies here. This is because Surat An-Naml is full of examples of arrogance, injustice, and disobedience to God.³⁰ In this surah, we find that the verb *kharaja* (to go out) and its derivatives are repeated six times,³¹

so the use of the verb “*drive out!*” is consistent with the general atmosphere of the surah. Furthermore, the stubborn attitude of the people of Lot is the result of the ignorance and impudence that is attributed to them in both surahs, al-A‘rāf and An-Naml. In Surat al-A‘rāf, which focuses on warning and reproach, the people are described by their prophet in the words, “*Nay, but you are an extravagant people (musrifun).*” That is, Lot describes them as unjust people who have violated all the accepted limits. *Israf* in Arabic means “corruptive excessiveness,” and the excessive person is one who violates conventions and commits illegal deeds. Their saying “*drive them out of your town*” is a clear sign of their transgression. Thus, we are told that transgression is a characteristic of that nation. Needless to say, the same condemnatory attitude is necessitated in Surat An-Naml because of their ignorance and foolishness: “*Nay, but you are a people who behave senselessly (ignorantly).*” Since ignorant people are excessive in their behavior, they are described in Surat al-A‘rāf as transgressing excessively. However, here in Surat An-Naml, God attributes ignorance to them because this surah focuses on the manifestation of wisdom and knowledge. Therefore, it is appropriate to describe them as ignorant because of their excessive insistence on committing sin. Their attitude of working to banish the prophet is consistent with their characteristic ignorance and is similar to the attitude of the people of the prophet Salih, who sought to assassinate him, as is reported in the same surah (Qur’ān 27:49).

Stylistic Similarity in the Advent of the Angels of Torment

Surat Hūd

The first surah to record the episode of the angels of torment is Surat Hūd. The most important aim of this surah is to console and assure Prophet Muḥammad and to command him to put his trust in God in all situations. This surah also aims at assuring the Prophet that only the soldiers of God will win and that the soldiers of Satan are certainly the losers and will always be without hope, even if they are given respite.

I mentioned previously the position of the narrative in this surah. We are now aware of both the context of the narrative and that of the narrative of Abraham. The context of the narrative of Abraham is compatible to that of Lot in this surah. Both contexts collaborate in response to the harsh attitude of the disbelievers of the Quraysh, who asked the Prophet to make the angels descend as messengers of God to all humankind, or as disciples to the human messengers, to support their messages. The two stories explain

that the descent of the angels is not difficult for God the Creator of the angels. However, their descent is always associated with momentous events, and it is well known that their form is very frightening, even when they appear to the messengers in the form of human beings. Consequently, the two stories are intended to dissuade those obstinate people from their request for the angels to descend. Added to this is the objective of consoling and alleviating the sorrow of Prophet Muḥammad, the Prophet of mercy and guidance, when he is told about the stories of the messengers before him and how God the Almighty supported them (Qur'ān 11:12). Thus, it becomes clear that the episode of the descent of the angels of torment in this surah is more enlightening than in any other episode, as it carries prominently the very characteristics of the surah and embodies its aspects and objectives that distinguish it from all other Qur'ānic surahs (Qur'ān 11:77–80).

Concerning the attitude of the people of Lot, we notice that they were unrivalled in their oppression and injustice toward their prophet. First, they tried to harass his guests, which they were accustomed to doing with every one of his guests. That is why he would seem angry when any guest came to him lest they should hurt the guest. This is exactly what happened when the angels visited Lot in the form of human beings. Here, it is noticeable that the narrative is tinged with a style denoting the painful psychological state that overwhelmed Lot at that moment. He even tried to avoid this state of fury by offering his daughters in marriage to his people. He talked to them in a way that proves their impurity and impudence, especially when he said, *“Here are my daughters (i.e. the daughters of my nation), they are purer for you (if you marry them lawfully)”* (Qur'ān 11:78). Nevertheless, his people were deviant and perverted. They continued their aberration when they said to Lot, *“They said, ‘Surely you know that we have neither any desire nor in need of your daughters, and indeed you know well what we want!’”* (Qur'ān 11:79). They even asserted their desire by seeking to commit sodomy with the guests. Eventually, seemingly overcome by a sense of helplessness, Lot resorted to prayer. The psychological state that befell Lot is similar to that which befell Prophet Muḥammad over the attitude of the disbelievers of the Quraysh. Prophet Muḥammad himself suffered a state of deep depression, which could be imagined from Qur'ān (11:12). Of course, this would be the best reply from God to the disbelievers of Quraysh. They asked Prophet Muḥammad to make the angels descend, so God reminded them of the punishment that befell the people of Lot. God supported Lot against his oppressive people when he was on the verge of despair, and this essentially is the great solace to Prophet Muḥammad.³² The verse explains better what Lot

felt: *“Would that I had strength (men) to overpower you, or that I could betake myself to some powerful support (to resist you)”* (Qur’ān 11:80).

The punishment that the Almighty determined against the people of Lot was eradication; this displays the absolute power and dominant authority of the Almighty, who says to His prophet, Muḥammad, *“To God is your return, and He is Able to do all things”* (Qur’ān 11: 4). This is consistent with the verse, *“And God is a Wakil (disposer) over all things”* (Qur’ān 11:12). It means that God the Almighty supports and strengthens His messengers. Moreover, the sayings of God – *“He was grieved on their account”* (Qur’ān 11: 77) and *“They used to commit crimes (ills)”* (Qur’ān 11:78) – are consistent with His saying, *“Ills have departed from me”* (Qur’ān 11:10), *“Verily, the good deeds remove the evil deeds (i.e. small sins)”* (Qur’ān 11:114), *“And felt himself straitened for them”* (Qur’ān 11:77), and *“and that your breast feels straitened for it”* (Qur’ān 11:12). Moreover, the verse, *“Is there not among you a single right-minded man?”* (Qur’ān, 11:78), is in harmony with *“Verily, you are the forbearer, right-minded!”* (Qur’ān 11: 87). Again, the verse in which we read *“And the command of Pharaoh was no right guide”* (Qur’ān 11:99) and – about the narrative of Lot, *“Is not the morning near?”* (Qur’ān 11:81) – are consistent with what the Almighty says about the people of Salih: *“Lest a near torment will seize you”* (Qur’ān 11:64) and about the people of Lot: *“And they are not ever far from the (polytheists, evil-doers, etc.)”* (Qur’ān 11:83). Both verses go well with the Prophet Shu‘ayb’s warning to his people: *“And the people of Lot are not far off from you!”* (Qur’ān 11:89). Thus, we come to see that, here, the episode of the narrative of Lot is consistent with the general atmosphere and objectives of the surah, let alone the common stylistic aspects in the surah in terms of a verbal lexicon and a phonetic consonance.

Surat al-Ĥijr: 67–71

In Surat al-Ĥijr, the episode of the angels of torment in the narrative of Lot and his people occurs in a context similar to that in Surat Hūd, which precedes it in revelation and in order. The context is one of rebuking the disbelievers when they daringly ask their prophets to bring down the angels and relating the torment that befell the preceding nations, with the aim being to provide a lesson through their fate. In this surah, the narrative of Lot is preceded by reference to the arrogance of the disbelievers and their demand – in the beginning of the surah – to see the angels walking in the streets like humans (Qur’ān, 15:6–8).

Here, in Surat al-Ĥijr, we notice that the talk about the descent of the angels is more detailed than in Surat Hūd. We read about the frightening aspect of seeing angels, even if they are formed in a way that is better than human beings. Within the context of the narrative of Abraham, the Almighty says, *“Indeed! We are afraid of you.”*³³ In the narrative of Prophet Lot, God says, *“Verily! You are people unknown to me.”*³⁴ It implies that if the angels were like human beings in their shape and garments, those arrogant disbelievers who asked to see them would not be able to. Moreover, if the angels were to show a miracle, the disbelievers would be unable to bear it. Therefore, regardless of the method of seeing them, there is no benefit at all in seeing the angels. Hence, the mere demand to see them is sheer ignorance. It is logical that we – human beings – receive messengers from our kind, not from another species, for this will allow us to communicate with them and understand their instructions. This is exactly the context of the narrative of Lot in Surat al-Ĥijr, which involves the stories of the prophets who were hurt by their families and people (Qur’ān 15: 61–72).

The new element here is the concentration on Lot’s fear of the angels of torment, as is understood from the verse, *“Verily! You are people unknown to me,”* which is preceded by the concentration on the fear of Abraham, who said, *“Indeed! We are afraid of you.”* Both prophets, however, were assured through glad tidings. Abraham was endowed with a son, who in turn was endowed with deep knowledge, while Lot was endowed with victory over his guilty people, as is reported in Surat Ash-Shu’arā’, which precedes this surah in order of revelation.³⁵ The similar versification of this episode is embodied in Surat Hūd (Qur’ān 11:82) and Surat al-Ĥijr (Qur’ān 15:65). Yet there are differences between Surat Hūd and Surat al-Ĥijr. First, in Surat Hūd, the angels explain their identity directly and say that they are messengers of torment sent by the Almighty to support Lot and punish his guilty people: *“We are the Messengers from your Lord!”* Second, they reveal to Lot the fate of his wife, and that she will be among those who are tortured. Third, they respond to Lot’s desire to hasten the torture and determine the date of the torment.

Surat al-Ĥijr differs in the following aspects. First is the nonexception of Lot’s wife from torment, as this is already reported in the dialogue between Abraham and the angels, when he asks about their mission after they have given him glad tidings (Qur’ān 15: 57–60). Second, the following verse is added: *“And you go behind them in the rear, and let no one amongst you look back, but go on to where you are ordered.”* This is an addition to the meaning that we do not see in Surat Hūd, because Lot’s following behind them ensures that he motivates them to hasten and also makes sure who will sur-

vive and who will not. The Almighty says, “*And We made known this decree to him, that the root of those (sinners) was to be cut off in the early morning*” (Qur’ān 15:66). This decree implies a reference to the time of the end of the torment of the people of Lot, which is not mentioned in Surat Hūd.

Similarities among the Surahs

Among the similarities between the surahs are the way the people of Lot seek to seduce the angels, who are guests of Lot, and the way Lot offers his daughters in marriage to his people.³⁶ First, in Surat Hūd we notice the episode that discusses the attempted seduction by Lot’s people of Lot’s guests, who are angels. While expounding this episode, the *ayāt* elaborates on their customs; God says, “*And since aforesome they used to commit crimes (sodomy, etc.)*.” This was the motive behind their rushing toward Lot. Another aspect of this description is that when Lot offers his faithful daughters in marriage to them, he justifies it as an act of purity against the obscenity they were indulging in.³⁷ This is why the parenthetical clause “*Here are my daughters they are purer for you (if you marry them lawfully)*” (Qur’ān 11:78) is employed, because it justifies the reason for his proposal; the daughters, being purer, would prevent the people from committing obscenity. Besides, the comparative degree of the adjective is not meant for comparison, but rather for further emphasis of his daughters’ purity. It also includes a reproachful question; Hud says, “*Is there not among you a single right-minded man?*” The people tried to hurt the guests, an act that was actually a huge error and a violation of essential tradition. The people of Lot are corrupt and have vicious traits, so they would hate to marry his daughters. The Almighty says, “*And his people came rushing towards him, and since aforesome they used to commit crimes (sodomy, etc.)*” (Qur’ān 11:78). When Lot realizes that there would be a huge scandal, he hopes to have a strong shield to rely upon to protect his guests from these perverted people. The angels then assure him that he will win over them. The description of the attempted seduction of the angels by Lot’s people may be necessitated by the antagonism between messengers and their people, as we saw previously through the argument of Abraham concerning Lot. This episode epitomizes the stylistic characteristics of Surat Hūd, which are so firmly established in this surah that it cannot be moved to another surah. For example, the verse “*And his people came rushing towards him, and since aforesome they used to commit crimes (sodomy, etc.)*” has several characteristics:

- The annexation of the people to Lot is, first, consistent with most of the prophets’ stories reported in this surah, from Noah to Shu‘yab,

with the exception of Abraham and Moses. We find here the annexation in the conversation between Abraham and the angels; the Almighty says, “*They said, ‘Fear not. We have been sent to the people of Lot’*”(Qur’ān 11:70), and “*He began to argue [i.e, plead] with Us concerning the people of Lot*”(Qur’ān 11:74).

- The use of endearment can be seen when Lot says, “*O my people!*” This applies to all the prophets reported in this surah, with the exception of Abraham and Moses: “*O my people! Here are my daughters, they are purer for you.*”
- Verbal lexicon and phonetic consonance are represented through the repetition of “*evil deeds,*”³⁸ the word *rashīd* (sound-minded man),³⁹ and the verb *nurīd* (we want), repeated four times in the surah.⁴⁰ Thus, this episode represents all the characteristics of the surah and serves its objectives and rhetorical requirements.

The characteristics of the seduction episode in Surat al-Ĥijr differ from those in Surat Hūd in the following points:

- The people are not attached to the name of Lot; this is consistent with the angels’ description of them – in their answer to Abraham – as guilty.⁴¹
- The annexation of the people to the city – “*And the inhabitants of the city came rejoicing (at the news of the young men’s arrival)*”(Qur’ān 15: 67) – corresponds with mentioning the township while meaning its people: “*And never did We destroy a township but there was a known decree for it.*” (Qur’ān 15: 4).
- The brevity in expounding the details, is represented in the brief dialogue between Lot and his people, and the advancement and deferment of words. All these things serve the aims of the surah and suit the context of the narrative. Here, the verses include an addition to the common objectives of the two surahs, which is not mentioned in Surat Hūd, namely consoling Prophet Muhammad over the rudeness and impudence of the disbelievers and showing him examples of previous messengers who were denied and hurt by their people.

The narrative of Lot is preceded by the assurance of the angels to Lot that he and his family, with the exception of his wife, will survive. Therefore, we find that the talk about rescue and assurance precedes the first indications of torment, which are represented in the attempt of the people

of Lot to seduce and hurt his guests and Lot offering his daughters – as purer – in marriage to them. This is similar to Surat al-Ĥijr, in which we read about the dialogue between Abraham and the angels about the people of Lot. Abraham is also assured that Lot and his family, with the exception of his wife, will survive. However, the attitude of the people toward Lot is full of frivolity and misbehavior. This is represented in their blatant question, when he implores them not to hurt his guests: “*They (people of the city) said, ‘Did we not forbid you to entertain (or protect) any of the ‘Alamīn (people, foreigners, strangers, etc. from us)?’*” (Qur’ān 15: 70). This is parallel to what is mentioned in Surat Ash-Shu‘arā’, which precedes it in order of revelation, as the Almighty says, “*They said ‘If you cease not, O Lot! Verily, you will be one of those who are driven out’*” (Qur’ān 26:168). This is consistent with the objective of the surah, which is to alleviate the sorrow of the Prophet due to the harm inflicted upon him by the disbelievers of Quraysh: “[Lot] said, ‘*These (the girls of the nation) are my daughters (to marry lawfully), if you must act (so)*’” (Qur’ān 15: 71).

The brief narrative is also harmonious with all the other brief stories mentioned in the surah. All these stories discuss the injustice of the prophets’ peoples and focus on the punishment that the Almighty determined against them. The subordinate clause in the conditional sentence “*if you must act (so)*,” which is not found in Surat Hūd, indicates that Lot offering his daughters in marriage is his last option, after he has implored and entreated the people in vain to leave his guests alone and not to hurt them. This removes any doubt that his first response is to offer his daughters in marriage to them. This episode is consistent with the stylistic characteristics of Surat al-Ĥijr. For example, in “*And the inhabitants of the city came rejoicing (at the news of the young men’s arrival)*,” the word *yastabshirun* (rejoice) is repeated four times throughout this surah during the dialogue between Abraham and the angels.⁴²

Moreover, the saying of the angels, “*And we have brought to you the truth (the news of the destruction of your nation) and certainly, we tell the truth*” (Qur’ān 15:64) is consistent with that of the disbelievers of Mecca, “*Why do you not bring angels to us if you are of the truthful ones?*” (Qur’ān 15:7). Again, their saying, “*And we have brought to you the truth (the news of the destruction of your nation)*” is consistent with God’s saying, “*We send not the angels down except with the truth (i.e. for torment, etc.), and in that case, they (the disbelievers) would have no respite!*” (Qur’ān 15:8). And the angels’ saying, “*But go on to where you are ordered*” (Qur’ān 15:65) is consistent with the saying of the Almighty to Prophet Muḥammad, “*Therefore proclaim openly (God’s message of Islamic monotheism) that which you are commanded*” (Qur’ān 15:94).

The second surah to report the narrative of the angels of torment is Surat Adh-Dhāriyāt, which is associated with the narrative of the angels' visit to Abraham and the talk about their mission after they have given him glad tidings in reply to his question. However, there is a very brief discussion in this surah of the narrative of the people of Lot, but without declaring their identity. The Almighty says, "*He [Abraham] said, 'Then for what purpose you have come, O Messengers?' They said, 'We have been sent to a people who are Mujrimun (polytheists, sinners, criminals, disbelievers in God)'"*" (Qur'ān 51:31–32).

The last surah of the Qur'an, as far as the messengers of torment are concerned, is Surat al-ʿAnkabūt, which aims at supporting Prophet Muḥammad and telling him about the stories of the preceding prophets and the ordeals they underwent so that he will follow their example of patience toward oppression and denigration. The narrative of Lot is related in the context of reproach, rebuke, and a call for hastening the imminent torment of Almighty God on them. The narrative is also linked to the narrative of Abraham – his suffering at the hands of his people, their attempt to burn him, the way Almighty God rescues him, his migration with Lot, and then Almighty God sending Lot to his people, who commit an unprecedented sin against morality. Hence, Lot denounces their shameful deed and warns them. However, they challenge him and ask for the hastening of the torment of Almighty God. Lot, then, asks Almighty God to grant him victory over his people. As a result, Almighty God destroys the people of Lot and saves him and his followers. Here, the episode of torment is connected with the narrative of Abraham, who asked the angels about their next task after telling him the glad tidings. They told him that they had been charged with the task of destroying the people of Lot. At this, Abraham objected owing to the presence of Lot in that township. The angels assured him that they would save Lot and his followers but destroy the rest of his people (Qur'ān 29:31–32).

This part of the narrative, which is one of the repeated episodes in the Qur'an, is narrated in Surat al-ʿAnkabūt in regard to the visit of the angels to Lot.⁴³ What is new in this surah, as far as the messengers of torment to the people of Lot are concerned, is that Abraham's fear and awe of the angels is concealed. This can be attributed to the fact that the narrative of Lot is not preceded in this surah by the request of the disbelievers of Quraysh for the hastening of the angels as a kind of challenge and form of disobedience. This is made in support of Prophet Muḥammad and as a sign of the truthfulness of God's message to him. Thus, we can argue that the main reason behind the citation of this episode in this surah is that it is a reply to the challenge on the part of the people of Lot, who asked him to bring God's

torment (Qur'ān 29:29). It is, thus, an answer to Lot's asking the Almighty for victory over his people (Qur'ān 29:30). Hence, the messengers or angels of torment come as a result of Lot's supplication and request for the victory of the Almighty. It also comes as a reply to the disbelievers' challenge to their destruction by the torment of Almighty God. Hence, the verses bypass Abraham's state of awe and fear of the angels in their angelic appearance, even if in human form, because there is no need for it. In turn, the angels do not mention the ones to whom Almighty sent them in answer to Abraham's question about their next task. This answer is stated explicitly in both Surat al-Ĥijr and Surat Adh-Dhāriyāt, and implicitly in Surat Hūd. The case is different here as we find that the angels are the ones who first mention their assigned task of destroying the township of the people of Lot due to their injustice (Qur'ān 29:31). The injustice referred to here as a reason behind their destruction, "*truly, its people have been wrong doers (zālimūn),*" is in line with the context of the narrative of Lot and his people in this surah. We find that there is no single episode of this narrative in the Qur'ān as a whole in which Lot recounts their shameful sins in the way he does in al-'Ankabūt. The detailed enumeration of their sins is a kind of severe rebuke and reproach. The act of describing the people of Lot as unjust is the most appropriate justification for their destruction. There is no more accurate and comprehensive justification for the torment and destruction of the people of Lot due to their sins in this surah. It is enough that this description denotes the gravity of the abominable sins they committed, including the unforgivable sin of polytheism and the association of others with Almighty God in worship: God says, "*Verily! Joining others in worship with God is a great zūlm (wrong) indeed*" (Qur'ān 31:13). God also says, "*Verily, God forgives not that partners should be set up with Him in worship, but He forgives except that (anything else) to whom He pleases*" (Qur'ān 4:116).

Indeed, this is a comprehensive description that comprises all the sins committed by the people of Lot, including their association of others with God in worship. Moreover, describing the people of Lot as unjust also meets the stylistic aim of harmonizing the narrative with the other narratives stated in the surah on the theme of the destruction of the unjust and those who spread corruption. It may be stated that injustice is the core and gist of the present surah. In this surah, the word *zūlm* (injustice) and its derivatives are mentioned several times.⁴⁴

Finally, the angels' saying to Abraham, "*Verily, we are going to destroy the people of this [Lot's] town (i.e. the town of Sodom in Palestine) truly, its people have been [wrong-doers, polytheists and disobedient to God, and have also belied their Messenger, Lot]*" (Qur'ān 29:31), and their saying to Lot, "*Verily, we are about to bring down on the people of this town a great torment*

from the sky, because they have been rebellious (against God's Command)" (Qur'ān 29:34) confirm the saying of the Almighty at the beginning of Surat al-ʿAnkabūt: *"Or those who do evil deeds think that they can outstrip Us (i.e. escape Our Punishment)? Evil is that which they judge!"* (Qur'ān 29:4).

It is noteworthy here that even though we find mention of Abraham's fear of the angels, we also find an inquiry, both explicit and implicit, on his part about the task of those angels. Moreover, wherever the inquiry is explicit, we find an answer naming the people associated with a description that makes them worthy of the wrath and torment of the Almighty. This is clear in Surat al-Ĥijr, in which Abraham's fear is mentioned when he sees the angels (Qur'ān 15:52). Being freed from fear, Abraham then asks the angels about their next task. (Qur'ān 15:57–58). Thus, the act of describing the intended people as criminals is a sign or indication of the reason behind sending the angels to destroy them. The same applies to Surat Adh-Dhāriyāt, where there is no mention of Abraham's fear (Qur'ān 51:24–34). Here, we find that God names the intended people by describing them in terms that make them deserving of destruction.

It is also worth mentioning here that all the Qur'ānic surahs that are related to the episode of the messengers of torment are preceded by the mention of their coming to Abraham and conveying good tidings to him. The surahs fall under two denominators. The first denominator is the way the disbelievers ask for the coming of angels in order to give credence to the messenger, while the second is their asking for the torment to be hastened as a sort of stubbornness and disobedience.⁴⁵

The first verses in Surat al-Ĥijr implicitly point out the disbelief of the people of Quraysh regarding torment and resurrection and their sense that the torment and destruction of the Almighty will be slow to occur. The Almighty answers them by affirming that everything will be accounted for in due time. The Almighty then refers to their stubbornness by asking for the coming down of His wrath and torment after they have labeled the Prophet as a madman. This kind of accusation is adopted by all disbelievers of all nations and is stated in Surat Adh-Dhāriyāt.⁴⁶

The request of the disbelievers of Mecca for God's hastened torment or resurrection makes it necessary for the narrative to mention the episode of torment, apart from everything else. Moreover, the angels' conveying of the good tidings of a son for Abraham is also in harmony with the mention of the angels: *"And those (angels) who distribute (provisions, rain, and other things) by (God's) Command"* (Qur'ān 51:4). It also authenticates the angels' mission, as they are coming down with God's divine and cosmic commandments, which include destroying the people of Lot, Pharaoh and

his hosts, ‘Ad, Thamud, and the people of Noah . It may also be stated that the saying of God, “*And those (angels) who distribute (provisions, rain, and other things) by (God’s) Command*” (Qur’ān 51:4), is an indication of or a hint at the stubbornness of the disbelievers in asking for the angels to be sent down, and that sending down the angels is associated with grave matters, such as the destruction of the people of Lot. God implies or conceals this stubborn request in Surat Adh-Dhāriyāt as a result of its being mentioned in *āyāt* seven of Surat al-Ĥijr. In Surat al-‘Ankabūt, God states that the people of Lot asked for the torment to be hastened. (Qur’ān 29:29). The same also applies to the people of Quraysh (Qur’ān 29:53). The following verse reads, “*They ask you to hasten on the torment. And verily! Hell, of a surety, will encompass the disbelievers*” (Qur’ān 29:54).

Hence, we find that all the episodes in the narrative of Lot and his people in the Qur’ān are integrated and in harmony with the Qur’ān’s implicit and explicit objectives. They are also in accord with the context and are suitable for the occasion. All the episodes in the narrative of Lot correspond with the causes of the context and the objectives with which the surah abounds. The episode of the people of Lot is closely associated and coherent with these contexts and objectives, and it is impossible to move any episode in the narrative from one surah to another, such is the fit of each episode to its context. In fact, such a shift in position would eventually lead to stylistic flaws related to the context and objectives of that surah. Each episode in the surah has its own characteristics that distinguish it from the rest of the Qur’ānic surahs.

Endnotes

1. See W. Montgomery Watt, *Bell’s Introduction to the Quran* (Edinburgh, UK: Edinburgh University Press), 73.
2. For Western analysis displaying these suspicious sentiments and conclusions about Qur’ānic narratives, see, John Wansbrough, *Quranic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2004); John Wansbrough, *The Sectarian Milieu: Content and Composition of Islamic Salvation History*, foreword, translations, and expanded notes by Gerald Hawting. (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2006).
3. The word mercy and its derivatives occur eight times in this surah: 26, 36, 42, 75, 83, 84, 87, 107, and 112.
4. See Badru ad-Din Mohammad Ibn Abdul-Lahi al-Zarkashi, *Al-Burhan fi ‘Ulumi al-Qur’an*, vol. 1, edited by Ibrahim Mohammad Abu al-Fadl (Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: Doral-Hadhorah, 2006), 194.
5. For meaning of Sunnat Allah see: Ar-Razi, Fakhar al-Din, *Mafatih al-Ghayb*, vol. 25 (Tehran, Iran: Dar al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah), 231.

6. English translation of the Qur'ān used in this article is Dr. Mohammad Taqi-ud-Din Al- Hilali and Dr. Mohammad Muhsin Khan, *The Noble Qur'an* (Houston, TX: Dar-us-Salam Publishers).
7. Ibrahim b. Umar al-Biqā'i, *Nazmu Ad-Durar Fi Tanasub al-Ayat Wa As-Suwar*, 2nd ed. vol. 14, (Cairo, Egypt: Dar al-Kitab al-Islami, 1413–1992), 122.
8. Ibid., 228; Ibid., vol. 12, 378.
9. Ibrahim b. Umar al-Biqā'i, *Nazmu Ad-Durar*; vol. 12, 378.
10. 'Abd al-Haqq ibn ibn 'Atiyya al-Andalusi, *Al-Muharrar al-Wajiz Fi Tafsir al-Kitab al-'Aziz*, vol. 7. (Fez, Morocco: al-Majlis al-'Ilmi bi Fas), 106.
11. See the application of this idea in the study presented by Professor Muhammad Abu Musah on the images of Surat An-Nur in his book *Dirasa Fi al-Bala gha wa Ash-Shi'r* (Cairo, Egypt, 1991).
12. See Muhammad Bin, *'Ashur Tafsir At-Tahrir Wa At-Tanwir*, vol. 8. (Tunis, Tunisia: Ad-Dar At-Tunisiyyah Li al-Nashr, 1984), 86.
13. Ibid., vol. 19, 18.
14. Ibid.
15. See Qur'ān (16:10), Qur'ān (16:14), Qur'ān (16:29), Qur'ān (16:49).
16. See Qur'ān (16:128–30).
17. See Qur'ān (16:151–57).
18. See Muhammad Bin, *'Ashur Tafsir At-Tahrir Wa At-Tanwir*, vol. 14, 182.
19. See Qur'ān (27:4), Qur'ān (27:13–24), Qur'ān (27:81), Qur'ān (27:41), Qur'ān (27:42), Qur'ān (27:43), Qur'ān (27:88).
20. See Qur'ān (27:13), Qur'ān (27:42), Qur'ān (27:86), Qur'ān (27:63), Qur'ān (27:66), Qur'ān (27: 92), Qur'ān (27:93).
21. See al-Qadi Abu Muhammad 'Abd al-Haqq ibn 'Atiyya al-Andalusi, *Al-Muharrar al-Wajiz Fi Tafsir al-Kitab al-'Aziz*, vol. 6, 121. See also At-Tabari, *Tafsir*, vol. 9 (Fez, Morocco: al-Majlis al-'Ilmi bi Fas), 175.
22. See Muhammad Bin, *'Ashur Tafsir At-Tahrir Wa At-Tanwir*, vol. 19, 288.
23. Qur'ān (29:28–29).
24. See Qur'ān (29: 40).
25. Fakhar al-Din Ar-Razi, *Mafatih al-Ghayb*, vol. 14 (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, n.d.), 171.
26. Qur'ān (7:13); Qur'ān (7:36); Qur'ān (7:40); Qur'ān (7:48); Qur'ān (7:76); Qur'ān (7:88); Qur'ān (7:133); Qur'ān (7:146).
27. See Qur'ān (7:13); Qur'ān (7:18); Qur'ān (7:25); Qur'ān (7:27), Qur'ān (7:32), Qur'ān (7:57); Qur'ān (7:58); Qur'ān (7:88); Qur'ān (7:110);

- Qur'ān (7:123).
28. See Qur'ān (27:56).
 29. Al-Khatib al-Iskafi , *Durratu At-Tanzil Wa Ghurratu At-Ta'wil*, 2nd ed. (Beirut, Lebanon Dar al-Afaq al-Jadidah, 1979), 162.
 30. Qur'ān (27:13); Qur'ān (27:14); Qur'ān (27:31); Qur'ān (27:47); Qur'ān (27:48); Qur'ān (27:49).
 31. Qur'ān (27:12); Qur'ān (27:25); Qur'ān (27:37); Qur'ān (27:56); Qur'ān (27:67); Qur'ān (27:82).
 32. Ibid.
 33. Qur'ān (15:52); Ibrahim b. Umar al-Biqā'i. *Nazm al-Durar*, vol. 11 (Cairo, Egypt: Dar al-Kitab al-Islami, 1413–1992), 66.
 34. Qur'ān (15:62).
 35. Qur'ān (26:169): “My Lord! Save me and my family from what they do.”
 36. See Qur'ān (11:78–80) and Qur'ān (15:67–71).
 37. Bin, *Ashur Tafsir At-Tahrir Wa At-Tanwir*, vol. 12, 129.
 38. Qur'ān (11:10); Qur'ān (11:14); Qur'ān (11:54); Qur'ān (11:64).
 39. Qur'ān (11:78); Qur'ān (11:87); Qur'ān (11:97).
 40. Qur'ān (11:88); Qur'ān (11:34), Qur'ān (11:15).
 41. See Qur'ān (15:57–58) and Qur'ān (15:12).
 42. Qur'ān (15:53); Qur'ān (15:54); Qur'ān (15:55); Qur'ān (15:67).
 43. See Qur'ān (29:33–35).
 44. See Qur'ān (29:14), Qur'ān (29:40), Qur'ān (29:46), Qur'ān (29:49), and Qur'ān (29:68).
 45. See Qur'ān (11:8), Qur'ān (11:12), and Qur'ān (15: 2–7).
 46. Qur'ān (51:52–53) and Qur'ān (51:10–14).