



Abu al-Hasan ‘Ali Bin Ibrahim al-Qummi and the Accusation of *Tahrif al-Qur’an* in Books of Shia Muslims: A Study on the Book *Tafsir al-Qummi*

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Abstract

One of the most principal sources of Sunni-Shia conflict is the claim about the presence of '*tahrif al-Qur'an*', or the distortion in the Qur'an, in many Shia literatures of Qur'an exegesis books. The claim ends in causing many Shia Muslims to suffer discrimination. For example, they are believed to have a different version of the Qur'an and the doctrine of *taqiyyah* with which they the true nature of their belief. This study focuses on the works of Abu al-Hasan 'Ali bin Ibrahim al-Qummi which are considered to be the main reference for accusing Shia Muslims of distorting some Qur'anic verses (*tahrif*). This study aims to review the thought of al-Qummi about *tahrif al-Qur'an* as he claimed. This is library research using content analysis. The research found that al-Qummi when developing the concept of '*tahrif al-Qur'an*' focused on exegetical exercises, not on actual distortion of the Qur'anic texts. This finding was based on the fact that the term 'tahrif' which that some classical ulama (figures) of Shia Muslims made did not deal with distortion of the Qur'anic verses (the corruption of texts), but with Qur'an interpretations which contradict the 'intended meaning' of the Qur'anic verses (the corruption of meaning).

Keywords: Syiah, *tahrif al-Qur'an*, Abu al-Hasan 'Ali bin Ibrahim al-Qummi, *Tafsir al-Qummi*

Abstrak

Salah satu penyebab konflik Sunni-Syiah adalah munculnya istilah *tahrif* (pengubahan) al-Qur'an di dalam banyak literatur Syiah. Tuduhan-tuduhan ini pada akhirnya melahirkan perlakuan diskriminasi terhadap kelompok Syiah, misalnya tuduhan memiliki al-Qur'an versi berbeda dan doktrin *taqiyyah* sebagai kedok untuk menutupi hakikat akidah mereka. Kajian ini fokus pada karya Abu al-Hasan 'Ali bin Ibrahim al-Qummi yang menjadi salah satu rujukan yang sering dikutip untuk menuduh Syiah karena pernyataan al-Qummi bahwa di dalam al-Qur'an ada ayat-ayat yang mengalami *tahrif*. Penelitian ini ditujukan untuk melihat pemikiran al-Qummi tentang *tahrif* al-Qur'an sebagaimana dituduhkan. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kepustakaan dengan menggunakan analisis konten. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa al-Qummi fokus pada ranah makna, bukan pada teks sebagaimana banyak dituduhkan. Argumentasi ini berdasarkan fakta bahwa kata *tahrif* yang dimunculkan oleh ulama Syiah klasik tidak bermakna perubahan atau distorsi teks al-Qur'an dalam mushaf, melainkan perubahan dan penyimpangan 'maksud sebenarnya' yang dikandung oleh sebuah ayat.

Kata Kunci : Syiah, *tahrif* al-Qur'an, Abu al-Hasan 'Ali bin Ibrahim al-Qummi, Tafsir al-Qummi

Introduction

The vast majority of Muslim people believe that the authenticity of the Qur'an is guaranteed by the God Himself. In this regard, believing that the Uthmanic codex has contained all the God's revelation to the Prophet Muhammad without any addition, reduction, or even a small change is considered to be a part of Islamic doctrine. However, an Islamic sect cast a doubt on the authenticity of the Uthmanic codex (Amal, 2013: 262). The sect was Shia Islam¹ (Hasjmy, 1983: 39) (Tijani, 2007: 29). The sect

1 Etymologically, the term Shia is a group or a faction. From the historical perspective, the term Shia referred to a group of Muslims who loyally supported the fourth caliph Ali ibn Abi Thalib in the political context. The group later joined theological debate and ended up being a sect with a particular ideological standpoint, namely the idolization of Ali and all his descendants by considering them to be the true successors to the Prophet Muhammad as the Prophet himself appointed. They believed that the caliphs before Ali had deprived him of his political rights for leadership. With the passage of time, the sect split up, with each faction having its own concept of *imamah* (the leadership of faith). As a matter of fact, of all the branches of Shia Muslims who manage to survive and constitute the largest group is who is called Shia Ithna 'Asyariyah (Twelver Shi'ism). The group is also known as Imami or Ja'fari. They are defined as the Muslim

believes that the process of the Qur'an codification initiated by Uthman ibn 'Affan made a change from the authentic Qur'an and excluded a large portion of it, be it a word, a sentence, a verse, or even an entire chapter (surah). Such change is usually referred as to *tabdil* or *tabrif* (Amal, 2013: 262). Many leading figures of Shia Muslims claimed that there is distortion in the Qur'an (*tabrif*). One of them was Abu al-Hasan Ali bin Ibrahim al-Qummi, who made such claim in his work, entitled *Tafsir al-Qummi*.

Ali ibn Ibrahim al-Qummi, in the introduction of his book, explicitly mentioned that there is distortion (*tabrif*) in some parts of the Qur'an, which he called *ma huwa muharraf minhu* (something excluded from the Qur'an) (Qummi, n.d.: 10). Some of the Qur'anic verses which he claimed to be distorted include the Qur'an 4: 166 and 167, the Qur'an 5: 70, the Qur'an 26: 227, and the Qur'an 6: 93 (Qummi, n.d.: 10-11). Besides, in order to mention another form of the distortion in the Qur'an, al-Qummi also used a phrase *ma huwa kana 'ala khiblafi ma anzalallahu* (something that contradicts what the God revealed). Included in this category are the Qur'an 3: 110, the Qur'an 25: 74, and the Qur'an 13: 10 (Qummi, n.d.:10). At first glance, the two phrases he used indicate the existence of textual evidences within the Uthmanic codex which do not resemble what was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad.

Such claims should surely not be considered to be baseless accusations taking into the fact that some reports (*rimāyat*) stating that a number of God's revelations were not officially recorded in the Uthmanic text type. Many Muslim scholars expatiated upon those extra-scriptural materials in their description about *nasikh-mansukh* (nasikh: a ruling which abrogates; mansukh: a ruling which was abrogated by another ruling). Some of those materials were categorized into a collection of Hadith Qudsi which since the early period of Islam has not been seen as parts of the Qur'an despite its divine attribute (Amal, 2013: 251).

group who are adherent of 12 Imams (the spiritual and political leader) from Ahl al-Bayt (descendants of the Prophet Muhammad or Muhammad's household).

In general, there are three main types of naskh (abrogation): (1) the God's revelation whose ruling and verse are abrogated (*naskh al-bukm wa al-tilawah*); (2) the God's revelation whose ruling is abrogated, but whose verse is still included in the Uthmanic codex (*naskh al-bukm duna al-tilawah*); and (3) the God's revelation whose verse is abrogated, but whose ruling is still functional (*naskh al-tilawah duna al-bukm*) (Suyuti, 2012: 340-345)

Of the three types, the second is what draws the attention of Ulema (Muslim scholars) the most as it is directly related to the process of interpreting Qur'anic verses, especially in interpreting apparently contradictory verses. Al-Suyuti even regarded knowledge about *nasikh-mansukh* as an essential requirement for Qur'an interpretation (Suyuti, 2012: 339). However, in the meantime, the first and third types raise an issue concerning the authenticity and integrity of the Uthmanic codex because both types indicate the existence of some God's revelations which were not included in the codex, and instead the "obligated" revelations managed to be recorded in some Hadiths and some other reports (Amal, 2013: 252).

In this concern, Sunni Muslim scholars see the concept of *naskh al-tilawah* helps alleviate the problem of the exclusion of some verses in the codex. They believe that existing codex of the Qur'an is the final version of the Qur'an and has contained the entire revelations to the Prophet Muhammad without any addition, reduction or change. From the perspective of Sunni Muslim scholars, the occurrence of Shia Muslim's claim mentioned in some their classical literatures about the presence of distortion (*tabrif*) in the Qur'an is indicative of their refusal to recognize the status of the Uthmanic codex as the representative of God's speech by accusing the codex of causing distortion of the Qur'an.

Furthermore, Shia Muslims are believed to have their own official codex of the Qur'an, which they hide and only after the occurrence of Imam Mahdi will their codex be made publicly available. Actually, some of

Shia Muslims confirm the authenticity of the Uthmanic codex and deny the existence of distortion in it. Nevertheless, Sunni Muslim scholars see the statement as no less than an action of *taqīyyah*² (Shihab, n.d.: 199) (Saduq, n.d.: 107-108) as stated by Muhammad bin Abdurrahman al-Sayf (Sayf, n.d.: 74-78), which is in line with the statement of Ignaz Goldziher in his *Maḥāhib al-Tafsīr al-Islāmī*. He said that although some of the Shia Muslim have dismissed a notion held by their fellow Shia Muslims that the existing Qur'an cannot be seen as an authoritative source of Islam in the light of doubts on its authenticity and originality, the adherents of Shi'ism in general question the validity of the Uthmanic codex of the Qur'an. They believe that the Uthmanic codex in its association with the true revelation to the Prophet Muhammad contains as many additions and significant changes as reductions (Goldziher, 2010: 324). In their belief, the Qur'an is much more and longer than the version widely shared and distributed today. Garcin de Tassy and Mirza Kazhim Ahmad showed for the first time in *Journal Asiatique* (1842), one of the Quranic chapters widely spread in Shia Muslim community which was not included in the Uthmanic codex. Soon afterwards, in the Bankipore library in India was found a manuscript of the Qur'an containing two chapters called "al-Nurain" and "al-Wilayah", consisting of 41 and 7 verses respectively (Goldziher, 2010: 324).

However, some Shia Muslims denied that they accused the Uthmanic codex of making distortion of the Qur'an. They argued that the term *tabrif* mentioned in classical literatures of Shia Muslim scholars refers not to the distortion of the Qur'anic texts in the Uthmanic codex, but to the distortion of meaning, i.e, deviation from the original, intended

² *Taqīyyah* is etymologically protection or prudence, and it is terminologically an action of ignoring an obligation for life safety or avoiding any threat endangering ones' life. Al-Syaykh al-S{aduq said that *taqīyyah* is obligatory: abandoning *taqīyyah* is as bad as abandoning the five prayers. He further stressed that *taqīyyah* is an action obligatory for Shia Muslims to take until the occurrence of who is called *al-Qaim*. In this sense, abandoning *taqīyyah* means abandoning Allah, the Prophet, and Imams.

meaning of a Qur'anic verse. Abu al-Qasim al-Musawi al-Khu'i, in his *al-Bayan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an*, said that the word *tabrif* is meant by al-Qummi to point toward the action of distorting the true meaning of the Qur'an – what is known as *ta'wil batil*. According to al-Khu'i, this is a common phenomenon happening in many Islamic sects (Khu'i, 1981: 197). He stated further that Sunni Muslims admitted the existence *tabrif* in the sense of the distortion of Qur'anic texts within the Uthmanic codex by their developing the two aforementioned categories of *nasikh-mansukh* (Khu'i, 1981: 201).

Considering both sides of the arguments, it can be said that a more comprehensive study on the issue of *tabrif* in the Qur'an is still relevant to be carried out amid the social discord always involving the two sects of Islam, Sunni and Shia. This research is focused on the thought of Abu al-Hasan Ali ibn Ibrahim al-Qummi about *tabrif* in the Qur'an. Besides the reason that al-Qummi clearly stated that there is a distortion in the Qur'an, the research gave the focus on al-Qummi's thought for some other reasons. *First*, Abu al-Hasan Ali bin Ibrahim al-Qummi was among Shia Muslims' leading figures and his Qur'an exegesis book, *Tafsir al-Qummi*, is an excellent reference for the adherents of Shi'ism. In the community of Shia Muslims, Al-Qummi was an intellectual famous for his wealth of knowledge. His father made a close friendship with Imam al-Ridha, and al-Qummi himself was a grand master to whom al-Kulaini frequently referred in writing his masterpiece, Shia's number-one hadth collection book: *al-Kafi*.

Al-Qummi's Qur'an exegesis book belongs to the category of *tafsir bi al-ma'tsur* with a chain of transmission close to Imams, considered to be well-respected authorities on the valid interpretation of the Qur'an. Besides, this book is the primary information source of the next generation of the Shia Qur'anic exegesis such as *al-Shafi*, *Majma' al-Bayan*, and *al-Burban*. *Second*, Al-Qummi's Qur'an exegesis book is the focal point of the

disagreement between Sunni and Shia concerning the issue of *tabrif*. On the one hand, Sunni Muslims accused Shia of questioning the authenticity of the Uthmanic codex of the Qur'an on the basis of the content of this book. On the other hand, besides refuting Sunni's accusation against this book, Shia Muslims regard the book of al-Qummi as a great legacy from the earliest generation of Shia Muslim community.

The Terms Tahrif and the Qur'an

Etymologically, the term *tabrif* is derived from an Arabic word consisting of three base letters: *ba'*, *ra'*, and *fa'*. According to *Lisan al-'Arab*, the word *al-Harf* literally means *al-tarf* dan *al-Janib*, namely a point or a verge. The following is the example of the Qur'anic use of the word *al-Harf*, namely in the Qur'an 22: 11.

There are among men some who serve God, as it were, on the verge (*'ala harfin*): if good befalls them, they are, therewith, well content; but if trial comes to them, they turn on their face: they lose both this world and the Hereafter: that is loss for all to see! (RI, n.d.: 333).

Al-Zamakhshari interpreted the word *harf* in the Qur'anic verse mentioned above as the verge of religion, not its central or focal point. He said that the verse utters a parable of those people who embrace a religion with hesitation, not firmness. They are like soldiers at the edge of the line, as it were: if they feel they will win the war and obtain *ghanimah* (wealth taken by force from an enemy in times of war), they will feel happy; if they feel otherwise, they will turn on their face and leave the battlefield (Zamakhshari, 1998: 179). The word bears different new meanings, some of which are fissures or cracks, thin camels, a tendency to turn away, and different styles of reading al-Qur'an just as mentioned in a hadith report that the Qur'an was revealed in seven *abruf*, namely seven ways of reciting the Qur'an (Ansari, 2009: 50-51).

Meanwhile, the verb *harafa* means ‘*adala*, that is, to deviate. The word *tabrif* is a verbal noun (*masdar*) derived from the verb *harrafa* meaning moving something from its original place to a verge. In this sense, *tabrif al-kalam* is to move a meaning from a word to which it is attached. To put it simply, *tabrif al-kalam* can be defined as interpreting a sentence with other meanings than its literal (*ẓahir*) meanings without any reliable indicator (Ma’rifah, n.d.: 8). Therefore, the use of the term *tabrif* in the context of a word or sentence points towards the change of the word’s or sentence’s intended meaning.

In Qur’anic studies, *tabrif* can terminologically receive five definitions. In his book, entitled *Tabrif al-Qur’an Usturah am Waqi’*, Hasan Tahiri al-Kharram Abadi mentioned all the five definitions (Abadi 2006, 25-28) which will be described in the following paragraphs.

a. *Tabrif fi al-alfaz*

Tabrif fi al-alfaz is a change in Qur’an narrations. It can take the form of changing a word into another word, whether or not they are synonymous. For example, the report from Ibn Mas’ud said that he allowed to change a word of the Qur’an into another word synonymous to it, like the use of “*al-‘alim*” in place of “*al-hakim*”. However, both Sunni and Shia Muslims deny the existence of this type of *tahrif* in the Qur’an because the miraculous quality (*i’jaz*) of the Qur’an lies in both its narrations and the meanings attached to them (Ma’rifah, n.d.: 12).

In addition to deliberately changing a word into another word, this type of *tabrif* may take another two forms. The first is the *tabrif* in the form of variant readings of the Qur’an (*qira’at*). According to Abu al-Qasim al-Musawi al-Khu’i, no *qira’at* has the status of *mutawatir*, which means that only one variant of *qira’at* represents God’s revelation to the Prophet Muhammad, while other variants contain changes and reductions to the al-Qur’an (Khu’i, 1981: 198).

Muhammad Hadi Ma'rifah stressed that other variants of *qira'at* al-Khu'i meant include the ones that occurred and spread widely after the death of the Prophet, namely the variants of *qira'at* which do not resemble the widely-known variant most Muslims recite mentioned in *al-Kafi* (Kulaini, 2005: 583). He called this type of *tabrif tabrif qira'i* (Ma'rifah, n.d.: 11)

The second is the change (*tabrif*) resulting from different ways of uttering a word or sentence due to dialectical variations (variant accent or pronunciation). It is popularly known that each tribe of the Arab nation – probably it happens not only in the Arab nation but also in all nations in the world that each tribe speaks in its local accent - has different ways of uttering a word. This type of *Tabrif* is acceptable, even in the case of non-Arabic accents, as long as it keeps the form of the Qur'anic word and its meaning perfectly intact and does not break any of the existing linguistic rules (Ma'rifah, n.d.: 11)

b. *Tabrif fi al-ma'na*

Tabrif fi al-ma'na is to alter the meaning of a particular text or narration. Such alteration is caused when a word is understood in a meaning different from the original meaning literally or metaphorically, whether or not the alteration is made by considering the word formation (*wad'*) or other indicators allowing the alteration. This type of *Tabrif* is the most frequently occurring one. *Tabrif* in this sense refers to a product of interpretation. In this regard, one will automatically consider an interpretation to be a *tabrif* if it challenges his/her ideology and belief. According to Muhammad Hadi Ma'rifah, there is no *tabrif* in the Qur'an except in this sense (Ma'rifah, n.d.: 10)

c. *Tabrif fi al-tartib* (Ma'rifah, n.d., 11)

Tabrif fi al-tartib is the change in the chronological order of the verses and chapters in the Qur'an. The best example of this type of *tabrif* is to arrange the Qur'an not in the chronological order of revelation, by placing the chapters revealed in Mecca (Meccan

chapters) after those revealed in Medina (Medinan chapters). This type of *Tabrif* is found in the Uthmanic codex in which, the arrangement of the Qur'anic verses and chapters is not based on the chronological order of their revelation.

As quoted by Muhammad Hadi Ma'rifah quoted, al-T{abataba'i stated that the effort and thought (ijtihad) of the Prophet's companions went into the chronological order of the chapters in the Qur'an - in the Uthmanic codex of the Qur'an, to be precise, meaning that the arrangement is not considered to be determined by the Prophet under divine guidance, or what is known as *tawqifi* (Ma'rifah 2011, 285). Meanwhile, the first man of all the Prophet's companions to complete the codification of the Qur'an by order of the Prophet was Ali ibn Abi Talib. The codex of Ali was arranged on the basis of the chronological order of revelation (Ma'rifah, 2011: 286).

d. *Tabrif bi al-ziyadah*

The term *tabrif bi al-ziyadah* presumes that within the existing codex of the Qur'an are some foreign materials, i.e., some narrations, believed not to be parts of the Qur'an. Some reports said to be taken from Ibn Mas'ud and some early Muslim figures state that they added a particular word or sentence to the Qur'anic narrations for the purpose of explaining the meaning of a verse or removing ambiguity from it without believing that the added word or sentence is a part of the Qur'an (Ma'rifah, n.d.: 13).

However, in fact, there is no claim about the existence of the added narrations in the Qur'an except from the followers of Abdul Karim bin 'Ajrud (an adherant of Kharijith). They denied the fact that the chapter Yusuf is a part of the Qur'an, while both Shia and Sunni Muslims agreed to refute the existence of this type of *tabrif* in the Uthmanic codex of the Qur'an. Indeed, Ibn Mas'ud was reported to claim that the codex of the Qur'an includes two chapters that were

not found in the days of the Prophet, but were instead written in his period: al-Falaq dan al-Nas. Nevertheless, the authenticity of the report is questionable (Abadi, 2006: 27)

e. *Tabrif bi al-nuqsan*

The term *tabrif bi al-nuqsan* presumes that the existing codex of the Qur'an does not completely represent all the revelations to the Prophet, which means that some chapters are not included in it. Sometimes, the term *nuqsan* is meant to point towards the Qur'an recitation with a small reduction of its parts, just like a report from Ibn Mas'ud that he recited the first three verses of the chapter al-Layl without mentioning *ma khuliqa*: he recited *wa al-layli iz\`a yagsya wa al-nahari iz\`a tajalla wa al-z\`akaru wa al-uns\`a*. Likewise, Al-A'masy recited *حم سق*, excluding the letter *ع* (Ma'rifah, n.d.: 13). Besides, the *nuqsan* (reduction) is said to be based on a belief that the existing codex of the Qur'an does not completely cover the revelation to the Prophet: there is a word, a verse or even a whole chapter excluded from the codex, whether the reduction was made deliberately or forgetfully. Such report can be detected in the major hadith collection books. It is the type of *Tahrif* of which Sunni Muslims accused Shia Muslim; conversely, Shia Muslims did the same to Sunni Muslims concerning this type of *tahrif*.

Tahrif (Distortion) in the Qur'an

In the Qur'an, the word *tahrif* used in the form of *fi'l mudari'* (a verb indicating an action at the present and future time) is mentioned four times, namely in the Qur'an 2: 75, the Qur'an 4: 46, and the Qur'an 5: 13 and 41. The Qur'anic verses mentioning the word are as follows:

أَفَقَطَّمَعُونَ أَنْ يُؤْمِنُوا لَكُمْ وَقَدْ كَانَ فَرِيقٌ مِنْهُمْ يَسْمَعُونَ كَلَامَ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ يُحَرِّفُونَهُ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا عَقَلُوهُ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ³
 مِنَ الَّذِينَ هَادُوا يُحَرِّفُونَ الْكَلِمَ عَنْ مَوَاضِعِهِ وَيَقُولُونَ سَمِعْنَا وَعَصَيْنَا وَاسْمِعْ غَيْرَ مُسْمِعٍ وَرَاعِنَا لَيْحًا بِاللَّسْتِئِمِّهِمْ وَطَعْنَا
 فِي الدِّينِ وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ قَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا وَاسْمِعْ وَانظُرْنَا لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُمْ وَأَقْوَمَ وَلَكِنْ لَعَنَهُمُ اللَّهُ بِكُفْرِهِمْ فَلَا يُؤْمِنُونَ إِلَّا
 قَلِيلًا⁴

فَبِمَا نَفْسِهِمْ مِيثَاقُهُمْ لَعَنَاهُمْ وَجَعَلْنَا قُلُوبَهُمْ قَاسِيَةً يُحَرِّفُونَ الْكَلِمَ عَنْ مَوَاضِعِهِ وَنَسُوا حَظًّا مِمَّا ذُكِّرُوا بِهِ وَلَا تَزَالُ
 تَطَّلِعُ عَلَى خَائِنَةٍ مِنْهُمْ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِنْهُمْ فَاعْفُ عَنْهُمْ وَاصْفَحْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ⁵
 يَا أَيُّهَا الرَّسُولُ لَا يَحْزَنْكَ الَّذِينَ يُسَارِعُونَ فِي الْكُفْرِ مِنَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا آمَنَّا بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَلَمْ تُؤْمِنُ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَمِنَ الَّذِينَ
 هَادُوا سَمَاعُونَ لِلْكَذِبِ سَمَاعُونَ لِقَوْمٍ آخِرِينَ لَمْ يَأْتُوكَ يُحَرِّفُونَ الْكَلِمَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَوَاضِعِهِ يَقُولُونَ إِنْ أُوتِيتُمْ هَذَا
 فَخُذُوهُ وَإِنْ لَمْ تُؤْتُوهُ فَاحْذَرُوا وَمَنْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ فِتْنَتَهُ فَلَنْ تَمْلِكَ لَهُ مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَهْتَدُوا
 قُلُوبَهُمْ لَهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا خِزْيٌ وَلَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ⁶

The four verses point towards the tahrif made by the Jews to their sacred text, Taurat. In both 4: 46 and 5: 13, the Qur'an use the same narrations: . يحرفون الكلم عن مواضعه. In relation to the phrase *عن مواضعه* in these two verses, Shia Muslims believe that tahrif is made after a word or a sentence is understood in its original meaning, but is then understood in a meaning different from the original one for the sake of benefit. Meanwhile, the Qur'an 5: 41 help stress this interpretation by stating *من بعد مواضعه* (Ma'rifah, n.d.: 14). The word *بعد* is *zaraf zamani* (an adverb of place); thus making it impossible to say that the term tahrif point towards the distortion of the text (*lafzi*), or, to be precise, the Qur'anic narrations.

In addition, the Qur'an 2: 75 mentions *ثم يحرفونه من بعد ما عقلوه*. This means that the tahrif by Jewish leaders was made after they comprehend and master the Torah completely. In this regard, the tahrif in relation to its existence in sacred scriptures refers to a distortion of the scriptures' meaning, not to a corruption in their texts.

On another occasion, tahrif is made by pronouncing a word using a particular accent (lahjah) in order to change its meaning from the intended one (Ma'rifah, n.d.: 15). In other words, the Jews altered the meaning of some words or sentences of their sacred scripture for the purpose of hiding the truth in it. This analysis is in line with the Qur'an 3: 78. ³ Therefore, according to Muhammad Hadi Ma'rifah, it is by no means that the term tahrif mentioned in those four verses are believed to have anything to do with the change of a word or sentence into another word or sentence (tahrif lafzi); rather, it concedes two possibilities: erroneous interpretation and intentional misspelling of a particular word or sentence (Ma'rifah, n.d.: 16).

However, Sunni Muslim scholars have different interpretation of the aforementioned verses. Fakhruddin al-Razi said herein that the term tahrif just as mentioned in the previously mentioned Qur'anic verses includes both tahrif lafzi and tahrif ma'nawi (Razi, 1981: 121). The example of tahrif lafzi which Jews made is that they replaced the word ربيعة with آدم طويل and they used الحد in place of الرجم (Razi, 1981: 121). Al-Razi explained that the tahrif lafzi is possible to be found in Torah although it had been spread from the East to the West in the way called mutawatir. This was because of the limited number of Jewish people, and at this rate, the number of Jewish scholars is much more limited, who were unfortunately the only group of Jewish communities to have knowledge of their sacred scriptures (Razi, 1981: 121).

Furthermore, according to al-Razi, the tahrif occurring in the Qur'an is related more to the distortion of its meanings (ma'nawi). The phenomenon of tahrif in Torah can be seen as a distortion of its meanings by giving it false interpretation; similarly, some Muslims often impose their

⁷The verse states: وَإِنَّ مِنْهُمْ لَفَرِيقًا يَلُؤْنَ أَلْسِنَتَهُم بِالْكِتَابِ لِتَحْسَبُوهُ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَمَا هُوَ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَيَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكُذِبَ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ وَمَا هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ وَيَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكُذِبَ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ

views, namely their interpretation of the Qur'an, to other Muslims in order to justify the belief of their sects (Razi, 1981: 121)

Besides the two forms of tahrif mentioned above, al-Razi suggested another form of tahrif. Jewish scholars may not have changed the narrations of the Torah, nor may they have made interpretations which contradict their knowledge of divine teachings and rulings in it for the sake of worldly success; but they may rather have made false statements which they said to be taken from the Prophet after visiting him and asking him some questions (Razi, 1981: 121).

An Overview on al-Qummi and His Qur'anic Exegesis Book

The Profile of Abu Al-Hasan 'Ali ibn Ibrahim Al-Qummi

He was Abu Al-Hasan 'Ali ibn Ibrahim ibn Hasyim Al-Qummi. There is no data about the date of his birth or his death, only that he was said to live in 307 H, the same era as imam Abu Muhammad al-Hasan al-'Askari (Teherani, 2009: 302). This data was gained from the book of al-Saduq entitled 'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida stating that he took a report (riwayat) on a hadith from Hamzah bin Muhammad al-'Alawi who took the report from 'Ali bin Ibrahim al-Qummi in 307 H (Ma'rifah, n.d.: 423). Al-Qummi was an expert in interpretation of the Qur'an (mufasssir), the Prophet's hadith, and Islamic laws (Ma'rifah, n.d.: 423). Al-Qummi was the greatest master of al-Kulaini. The majority of hadith reports in al-Kafi by al-Kulaini were taken from 'Ali ibn Ibrahim al-Qummi.

Abu al-Hasan 'Ali ibn Ibrahim al-Qummi had three sons (Teherani, 2009: 168), all of whom are expert in hadith. His oldest son, named Ibrahim ibn 'Ali ibn Ibrahim, was the master of al-Husain bin Muhammad bin al-Hasan. His second son, named Ahmad ibn 'Ali ibn Ibrahim, learned hadith from his own father, 'Ali ibn Ibrahim al-Qummi. Meanwhile, his youngest son, Muhammad bin 'Ali bin Ibrahim, was known as an expert in hadith from whom al-Saduq learned.

'Ali ibn Ibrahim al-Qummi was popularly known as the greatest master al-Kulaini ever had, but in fact, he was a source of information and leading figure from whom many Shia Muslim scholars learned. Among those scholars were al-Syarif Hamzah ibn Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn al-Sikkin, Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Safwani (w. 358 H.), Abu Muhammad al-Hasan ibn Hamzah al-Thabari, Abu al-Hasan ibn 'Ali ibn Babawaih (who was the father of al-Shaduq), Muhammad ibn 'Ali ibn Majilawaih, Muhammad ibn Musa al-Mutawakkil, 'Ali ibn Abdullah al-Warraaq, Ahmad ibn Ziyad ibn Ja'far al-Hamdani, al-Husain ibn Ibrahim ibn Nataneh. These ten students of al-Qummi were also the masters of al-Saduq (Teherani, 2009: 167-168).

'Ali bin Ibrahim al-Qummi learned from many Shia Muslim scholars like his own father Ibrahim ibn Hasyim, Muhammad ibn 'Isa bin 'Ubaid, Abu Hasyim al-Ja'fari, Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn 'Isa, Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Khalid al-Barqi, Harun ibn Muslim, al-'Abbas ibn Ma'ruf, al-Mukhtar ibn Muhammad ibn al-Mukhtar al-Hamdani, Musa ibn Ibrahim al-Maharibi Muhammad ibn Ishaq al-Khaffaf, Muhammad ibn Khalid al-Tayalisi, al-Hasan ibn Muhammad, Salih ibn al-Sanadi, Hasan ibn Musa al-Khasysyab, Muhammad ibn al-Husain, 'Ali ibn Hisan, Ya'qub ibn Yazid, 'Ali ibn Muhammad al-Qasani, Muhammad ibn 'Ali Abu Saminah, Yasir al-Khadim, Abdullah ibn al-Salt, Abdullah ibn Muhammad ibn 'Isa, al-Rayyan ibn al-Salt, al-Husain ibn al-Hasan, Ayyub ibn Nuh, Muhammad ibn al-Rayyan ibn al-Salt, 'Ali ibn Syir, Yahya ibn Abdirrahman ibn Khaqan, Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Abi al-Fadl al-Madyini, Ishaq ibn Ibrahim, Salmah ibn al-Khattab, Salih bin Abdullah, al-Qasim ibn Muhammad al-Barmaki, al-Qasim ibn al-Rabi', Ja'far ibn Salmah al-Asfihani, 'Ali ibn al-Rayyan ibn al-Salt, Abdullah ibn Ahmad al-Musili, 'Ali ibn Ishaq, dan Muhammad ibn Abi Ishaq al-Khaffaf (Teherani, 2009: 168).

Abu al-Hasan Ali ibn Ibrahim al-Qummi was among well-respected figures of Shia Muslim scholars who produced many works. Besides his

Qur'anic exegesis book, his works include *Kitab al-Nasikh wa al-Mansukh*, *Kitab Qurb al-Isnad*, *Kitab al-Syara'i*, *Kitab al-Haid*, *Kitab al-Taubid wa al-Syirk*, *Kitab Fadail Amir al-Mu'minin*, *Kitab al-Magazi*, *Kitab al-Anbiya'*, *Kitab al-Masy'ar*, *Kitab al-Manaqib*, and *Kitab ikhtiyar al-Qur'an* (Al-Jazairi, n.d.: 8). However, unfortunately, the existence of these works cannot be discovered.

Ali ibn Ibrahim al-Qummi was a community member of Qum, Iran. Shia Muslim community considers this region to be one of Shia Muslims' sacred sites. Al-Musawi al-Jazairi, in his introduction to *Tafsir al-Qummi*, quoted a report from al-Gaibah written by al-Syaikh al-Thusi that imam al-Shadiq said: "Qum is our country and the sacred country of Shia Muslims." (Al-Jazairi, n.d.: 9). The residents of Qum are showered with extravagant praise in Shia Muslim community because in Qum were born many great figures of Shia Muslims like Abu Jarir, Zakariyya bin Idris, Zakariyya bin Adam, among others, and those figures' contribution to the religion was so great. One of the grand masters of Muslim community in Qum was Ibrahim ibn Hasyim, who was the father of Abu al-Hasan 'Ali ibn Ibrahim al-Qummi. Migrating from Kufah to Qum, he was considered the first person to report hadiths widely spread in Kufah to Muslim community in Qum.

The Profile of *Tafsir al-Qummi*

The Qur'anic exegesis book whose editorial process (tahqiq) was guided by Thayyib al-Musawi al-Jazairi consists of two volumes. The book was named *Tafsir al-Qummi*. Actually, Abu al-Hasan 'Ali ibn Ibrahim al-Qummi never wrote the book by himself, but he dictated his thoughts about the interpretations of Qur'anic verses to his disciple Abu al-Fadl al-'Abbas ibn Muhammad ibn Qasim ibn Hamzah ibn Musa ibn Ja'far. It was his disciple who reported all Quran interpretations of his master for the first time and wrote them down in this book; therefore, he deserved great credit for compiling this book.

The reports from Abu al-Hasan 'Ali bin Ibrahim al-Qummi are in fact not the only reports quoted in this book, because Al-'Abbas also provided other reports from other lines of transmission, namely the lines of Abu al-Jarud and his other masters. The addition of those reports amid the interpretation of al-Qummi was to complete and enrich the contents of his interpretation. Those reports were added to Tafsir al-Qummi from the beginning of the chapter Ali Imran to the last chapter of the Qur'an (Teherani, n.d.: 303). This book was named after al-Qummi and was known as Tafsir al-Qummi because most of the reports (riwayat) were taken from Abu al-Hasan 'Ali ibn Ibrahim al-Qummi.

This Qur'anic exegesis book falls into the category of *tafsir bi al-ma's'ur*, which can be simply defined as the interpretation based on reports (riwayat). In the tradition held by Shia Muslims, reports on which an interpretation can be based should be the ones taken from the Prophet Muhammad and one of the twelve imams (Hakim, 2006: 482-483). In this Qur'anic exegesis book, the reports given were taken from the fifth and sixth imams, namely Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn 'Ali al-Baqir and Abu 'Abdillah Ja'far ibn Muhammad al-Shadiq.

As mentioned before, the majority of the reports quoted in this book were taken from al-Qummi. Most of the interpretations of al-Qummi were based on those of imam al-Sadiq he took from his father, Ibrahim bin Hasyim. Nevertheless, al-Qummi also took reports from other masters, who numbered about 60 masters. Most of his father's reports were taken from Muhammad ibn Abi 'Amir. In addition to imam al-Shadiq, al-Qummi also took the reports from imam al-Baqir, although the reports from the latter were limited. Meanwhile, the reports from the line of Abu al-Jarud contain interpretations of imam al-Baqir.

In general, Qur'an interpretation in tafsir al-Qummi is divided into two parts. The first part is the introduction by 'Ali ibn Ibrahim al-Qummi. In this part, 'Ali ibn Ibrahim al-Qummi gave an overview on the purpose,

function, role of the Qur'an in human life. One important thing in his introduction of the book is that the imams occupy an important position in relation to the Qur'an. It is popularly known in Shia Muslim community that the Prophet was reported to leave a legacy in the forms of the Qur'an and his households (ahlul bait), who were then interpreted as the twelve imams. Both the Qur'an and the Prophet's household will never contradict each other and on the Judgment Day, they will come to the Prophet as the two closed index fingers, as it were. The Prophet stressed that both are not like the index and middle fingers, but both are equal: none of them is superior to the other (Al-Jazairi, n.d.: 4). Subsequently, he classified Qur'anic verses into many categories, which are shown in the following table.

No.	Categories
1.	<i>Al-Nasikh wa al-Mansukh</i>
2.	<i>Al-Mubkam</i>
3.	<i>Al-Mutasyabih</i>
4.	<i>Ma lafzuhu 'amm wa ma'nahu khash</i>
5.	<i>Ma lafzuhu Khashsh wa ma'nahu 'amm</i>
6.	<i>Al-Taqdim wa al-ta'khir</i>
7.	<i>Ayat munqathi' ma'thuf</i>
8.	<i>Ma huwa harfin makana harfin</i>
9.	<i>Ma huwa 'ala khalafi ma anzala allah</i>
10.	<i>Ma huwa mubarraf minhu</i>
11.	<i>Ma lafzuhu jam'un wa ma'nahu wabidun</i>
12.	<i>Ma lafzuhu wabidun wa ma'nahu jam'un</i>
13.	<i>Ma lafzuhu madin wa huwa mustaqbal</i>
14.	<i>Al-Ayat allati hiya fi suratin wa tamamuha fi suratin ukbra</i>
15.	<i>Al-Ayat allati nisfuba mansukhab wa nisfuba matrukab 'ala haliba</i>
16.	<i>Ma ta'wiluhu fi tanzilibi</i>
17.	<i>Ma ta'wiluhu ma'a tanzilibi</i>
18.	<i>Ma ta'wiluhu qabla tanzilibi</i>
19.	<i>Ma ta'wiluhu ba'da tanzilibi</i>
20.	<i>Ma huwa muttafaq al-lafz wa mukhtalaf al-ma'na</i>
21.	<i>Al-Rukhsab allati hiya ba'da al-'azimah</i>

22.	<i>Al-Rukhsab allati Sabibuha fiha bi al-khiyar</i>
23.	<i>Al-Rukhsab allati zahiruha khalafu batinha, yu'malu bizaahiriba wa la yudanu bibatiniba</i>
24.	<i>Ma lafzuhu khabarun wa ma'nahu hikayah</i>
25.	<i>Ma huwa mukhathabah li al-Nabi wa al-ma'na li ummatibi</i>
26.	<i>Ma huwa mukhathabah li qaumin wa ma'nahu li qumin akbar</i>
27.	<i>Al-Radd 'ala al-Zanadiqah</i>
28.	<i>Al-Radd 'ala al-Tsanawiyah</i>
29.	<i>Al-Radd 'ala 'abadah al-Awtsan</i>
30.	<i>Ma huwa radd 'ala al-Dabriyyah</i>
31.	<i>Al-Radd 'ala man ankara al-Tsawab wa al-'Iqab</i>
32.	<i>Al-Radd 'ala man ankara al-mi'raj wa al-isra'</i>
33.	<i>Al-Radd 'ala man ankara al-ru'yah</i>
34.	<i>Al-radd 'ala man ankara khalq al-jannah wa al-nar</i>
35.	<i>Al-Radd 'ala al-mujbirah</i>
36.	<i>Al-Radd 'ala al-Mu'tazilah</i>
37.	<i>Al-radd 'ala man ankara al-raj'ah</i>
38.	<i>Al-Radd 'ala man washafa Allah</i>
39.	<i>Al-Targib</i>
40.	<i>Al-Tarhib</i>
41.	<i>Al-Qisas</i>

However, there is no conceptual framework set in detail for every single category mentioned above: Each category is given only a brief explanation, and even some categories receive no explanation at all. The only clues about what Al-Qummi actually wanted to say are some examples in the form of Qur'anic verses along with their brief interpretation related to the defined categories. Such categorization convincingly shows that al-Qummi was not free from the political bias of his sect, namely Shia Islam. He used the Qur'an to legitimate the opinions of his sect and criticize other sects with contrary opinions, just like the category of *Al-Radd 'ala al-Mu'tazilah* (Qur'anic verses to defy the beliefs of Mu'tazilah). This is understandable taking into consideration the fact that al-Qummi lived in the era when Qur'an interpretation was influenced by a conflict of

many interests, usually know as the interpretation of affirmative era with ideological reason.

The second chapter of *tafsir al-Qummi* is its focal point, namely the interpretation of al-Qummi. The interpretation in this book was arranged in the chronological order of the Uthmanic codec of the Qur'an, only that the interpretation was given to only particular words he considered to need interpreting, not to the Qur'an as a whole. The interpretation method used in this book is *ijmali* (the global method), in which Qur'anic verses are given global interpretations instead of detailed ones, and some verses are not mentioned as they are considered to need no interpretation.

As for its writing system, the book is begun with mentioning complete lists of the chain of report (*riwayat*) transmission from the first to the last transmitters in the beginning of each chapter, followed by its interpretation. The phrase *qawluhu* (God's word) is used rightly before mentioning verses to be interpreted to mark the beginning of an interpretation of a group of verses and the end of the previous group.

Al-Qummi and The Accusation of *Tahrif Al-Qur'an* Against Him

The discussion about the accusation of *tahrif al-Qur'an* against al-Qummi based on his statement in the introduction of his book will be preceded by the exploration and analysis of his interpretation of some Qur'anic verses containing the word *tahrif*. As mentioned earlier, used in the Qur'an always in the form of *fi'l mudari'* (a verb form indicating present and future actions), the word *tahrif* can be found only in four verses, namely the Qur'an 2: 75, the Qur'an 4: 46, and the Qur'an 5: 13 and 41. The interpretation of the word in those verses has provoked intense debate between Sunni and Shia Muslims. The majority of Shia Muslims interpreted the word merely as the distortion of meaning; meanwhile, Sunni Muslims opened up the possibility of the distortion of both meaning and text.

Actually, al-Qummi made no difference to the interpretation of the word *tabrif* except in his interpretation of the Qur'an 5: 13. In which he interpreted the sentence *يحرّفون الكلم عن مواضعه* as *من نحى امير المؤمنين عن موضعه* (those who toppled Amirul Mukminin (the leader of Muslim community) from his throne). Meanwhile, this verse is by no means about Ali or everything related to Shia; instead, it was addressed to the Jews living in the era of the Prophet Muhammad. Al-Qummi made such interpretation just because he saw a similarity between the Jews' distorting the Torah from what the Torah should have been and the action of violating Ali's legal rights over the leadership of Muslim community after the death of the Prophet. Such interpretation is an example of Shia Muslims' concept of hidden meanings (*ta'wil*) of Qur'anic verses. That is the meaning and interpretation of the word *tabrif* according to al-Qummi.

As for the concept of *tabrif al-Qur'an*, in his introduction of his book, al-Qummi simply confirmed the existence of the distortion (*tabrif*) of some verses in the Qur'an. As mentioned before, al-Qummi divided Qur'anic verses into some categories, one of which will be discussed more comprehensively, namely the category of *ma huwa muharraf minhu* (distorted verses of the Qur'an). However, this discussion will not be limited in exploring the category alone; it will also involve some other categories, especially those of which some Sunni Muslim scholars accused al-Qummi, as did Muhammad bin Abdurrahman al-Sayf in his work (Sayf, n.d.: 12). Other categories involved in this discussion include *ma huwa harfun makana harfin* (Qur'anic verses in which a letter was changed into other letters) and *ma huwa 'ala khalafi ma anzala allah* (Qur'anic verses which contradict what God actually revealed to the Prophet Muhammad).

Ma Huwa Harfun Makana Harfin

Simply put, this category presumes that in the Qur'an some letters or words are put in place of other letters or words, whose meanings

are considered to be more suitable. Some examples of Qur'anic verses mentioned in al-Qummi's introduction to contain a distortion of this category include the Qur'an 2: 150, the Qur'an 4: 91, the Qur'an 9: 111, and The Qur'an 27: 10.

The first example is the Qur'an 2: 150, which is as follows.

وَمِنْ حَيْثُ خَرَجْتَ قَوْلٌ وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَحَيْثُ مَا كُنْتُمْ فَوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ شَطْرَهُ لِئَلَّا يَكُونَ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَيْكُمْ حُجَّةٌ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْهُمْ فَلَا تَخْشَوْهُمْ وَاخْشَوْنِي وَلَا تَمَّ نِعْمَتِي عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ

In this verse, the word *illa* (English: except), which is actually used to express exception or exclusion, is considered to replace *wa la* (nor). Therefore, in this case, the word *illa* does not mean "except" as it is usually used as a word indicating exception (*istis\`na*), but instead is used as a conjunction (*af*) which relates the meaning of the structure following it and that of the structure preceding it (Qummi, n.d.: 63).

The second example is The Qur'an 4: 91 which is as follows.

وَمَا كَانَ لِمُؤْمِنٍ أَنْ يَقْتُلَ مُؤْمِنًا إِلَّا خَطَأً وَمَنْ قَتَلَ مُؤْمِنًا خَطَأً فَتَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ مُؤْمِنَةٍ وَدِيَةٌ مُسَلَّمَةٌ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِ إِلَّا أَنْ يَصَدَّقُوا فَإِنْ كَانَ مِنْ قَوْمٍ عَدُوٍّ لَكُمْ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَتَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ مُؤْمِنَةٍ وَإِنْ كَانَ مِنْ قَوْمٍ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهُمْ مِيثَاقٌ فَدْيَةٌ مُسَلَّمَةٌ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِ وَتَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ مُؤْمِنَةٍ فَمَنْ لَمْ يَجِدْ فَصِيَامُ شَهْرَيْنِ مُتَتَابِعَيْنِ تَوْبَةً مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا

When interpreting this verse, al-Qummi did the same way as he did in the Qur'an 2: 150: he considered the word *illa* mentioned in the initial part of this verse not to express the meaning of exception (*istis\`na*). According to Al-Qummi, the phrase *illa kbata'a* should be interpreted as *la 'amdan wa la kbata'an* (not intentionally nor accidentally). In this regard, the verse states that believers (*mu'min*) are not allowed to murder their fellow believers, whether or not the murder is intentional (Qummi, n.d.: 147)

Subsequently, another example is the Qur'an 9: 110, stating:

لَا يَزَالُ بُنْيَانُهُمُ الَّذِي بَنَوْا رِيبَةً فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ إِلَّا أَنْ تَقَطَّعَ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ

Al-Qummi considered the word *illa* in this verse to mean *batta* (until). Just like its use in the two previously mentioned verses, the word *illa* is not used to indicate an exception (*istis'na*), but an adverb of time instead (Qummi, n.d.: 305)

The last example is the Qur'an 27: 10-11, as what follows.

وَأَلْقَ عَصَاكَ فَلَمَّا رَأَاهَا تَهْتَزُّ كَأَنَّهَا جَانٌّ وَلَّى مُدْبِرًا وَلَمْ يُعَقِّبْ يَا مُوسَى لَا تَخَفْ إِنِّي لَا يَخَافُ لَدَيَّ الْمُرْسَلُونَ (10) إِلَّا مَنْ ظَلَمَ ثُمَّ بَدَّلَ حُسْنًا بَعْدَ سُوءٍ فَإِنِّي غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

Just as in the Qur'an 2: 110, al-Qummi considered the word *illa* to mean *wa la*, a combination of a conjunction (*‘atf*) “*wa*” – meaning ‘and’ – and a negative word (*nafti*) “*la*” – meaning ‘not’: *wa la* means ‘and not’ or ‘nor’ (Qummi, n.d.: 126).

From those examples, it can be concluded that what al-Qummi meant by *harfin makana harfin* (a word used in place of other words) is the Qur'anic use of the word “*illa*”, an Arabic word to show the meaning of exception. According to al-Qummi, the word *illa* in the contexts of the aforementioned Qur'anic verses will lose logical coherence within the whole verse if it is understood in its original meaning, which make it necessary to understand the word in a totally different meaning. However, in those contexts of Qur'anic verses, al-Qummi did not recognize the use of the word *illa* as a mistake in the Qur'an.

Ma Huwa 'Ala Khilafi Ma Anzala Allah

This category presumes that some verses in the Qur'an are not exactly the same as what God revealed to the Prophet Muhammad. To illustrate this point, al-Qummi showed some examples of some verses, including the Qur'an 3: 110, the Qur'an 25: 74, and the Qur'an 13: 11.

The Qur'an 3: 110 is the following.

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَلَوْ آمَنَ أَهْلُ الْكِتَابِ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُمْ مِنْهُمُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَأَكْثَرُهُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ

Al-Qummi took a report from his father who received it from Ibnu Abi 'Amir taking it from Ibnu Sinan, who said, "a Qur'anic verse stating "*kuntum khabira ummatin ukhrijat li al-nas*" was recited before Abu Abdillah, who then replied: it was "*khair ummah*" that made the leader of believers (amir al-mu'minin), namely Ali, along with al-Hasan and al-Husain murdered?". Then the reciter (*qari'*) asked: "I am ready to sacrifice myself for you, how was the verse revealed?". Abu Abdillah replied: "*kuntum khabira aimmatin ukhrijat li al-nas*. Did you see that Allah praised them by His words *ta'muruna bi al-maruf wa tanhawna 'an al-munkar wa tu'minuna billah*" (Qummi, n.d.: 110).

In this verse, al-Qummi changed the word *ummah* (community) into *aimmah* (imams/leaders). The way of recitation was based on the report from imam Abu 'abdillah (imam Ja'far). The report of this recitation (using the word *aimmah*) is considered to be one of the official *qiraah* of the Qur'an, namely from the chain of transmission from Imam Ja'far Sadiq, as mentioned by al-Tabrisi in *Majma' al-Bayan* (Tabrisi, 2006: 288) and by Hayim al-Bahrani in *al-Burhan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an* (Bahrani, 2006: 89). These two Qur'anic exegesis books also mention the Qur'an 3: 104, in addition to the Qur'an 2: 110, as the Qur'anic verse in which the word *aimmah* is used in place of the word *ummah*.

The following is the Qur'an 25: 74.

وَالَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا هَبْ لَنَا مِنْ أَزْوَاجِنَا وَذُرِّيَّاتِنَا قُرَّةَ أَعْيُنٍ وَاجْعَلْنَا لِلْمُتَّقِينَ إِمَامًا

Al-Qummi said, "A Qur'anic verse, namely "*wallaḥ\ina yaquluna rabbana hab lana min azwajina wa ḥ\urriyyatina qurrata a'yun waj'alna lil*

muttaqina imama”, was recited before Abu Abdullah, who then said, “They (anti-Shia Muslims) did ask Allah to give them a great thing, that is, to make them the leaders of those who fear God (righteous/*muttaqin*)”. He was asked: “Then, what should we do, oo the descendant of the Prophet?”. He replied, “What Allah actually revealed to the Prophet is like this: *allaḥ\ina yaquluna rabbana hab lana min aḥwajina wa ḥ\urriyyatina qurrata a'yun waj'al lana min al-muttaqina imama*. Another interpretation quoted by al-'Abbas from his master Muhammad ibn Ahmad, who took the report from al-Hasan ibn Muhammad receiving it from H{ammad taking it from Aban ibn Tagallub, who asked Abu Abdillah about a verse of the Qur'an: “*allaḥ\ina yaquluna rabbana hab lana min aḥwajina wa ḥ\urriyyatina qurrata a'yun waj'alna lil muttaqina imama*”. Abu Abdillah replied, “It is we who are called the household of the Prophet (ahlul bait)”. Another report interprets the verse by making specific, explicit references to some words in the verse: what is meant by “*aḥwajina*” is Khadijah, *ḥ\urriyyatina* is Fatimah, *qurrata a'yun* are al-Hasan and al-Husain, and *waj'alna li al-muttaqina imama* is Ali ibn Abi Talib (Qummi, n.d.: 117)

In general, there are two reports (*riwayat*) al-Qummi quoted for this category. The first report is the report of imam Ja'far which offers a variant of or a correction to Qur'an narration: *waj'al lana min al-muttaqina imama* (grant unto us (the righteous people) a leader/*imam*) instead of *waj'alna lil muttaqina imama* (give us (the grace) to lead the righteous). This report actually contains an interpretation of the verse. Al-T{abatabai explained thereof that this variant of *qiraab* is not popular among Muslims (Al-Tabatabai, 1997: 247). The second report, meanwhile, offers no other variant of or a correction to Qur'an narration, but it interprets some constructing words of the verse by mentioning particular names of the household of the Prophet..

Subsequently, the Qur'an 13: 11 is as follows:

لَهُ مَعَقَّبَاتٌ مِّنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِ يَحْفَظُونَهُ مِّنْ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ حَتَّىٰ يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ وَإِذَا أَرَادَ اللَّهُ بِقَوْمٍ سُوءًا فَلَا مَرَدَّ لَهُ وَمَا لَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِهِ مِنْ وَالٍ

It was reported that the verse was recited before Abu Abdillah, who then asked to the reciter: “Are you an Arab, aren’t you? How can a follower be before who he/she follows? A follower must be behind who is followed!”. The reciter then asked him: “I am ready to sacrifice myself for you, so how is this?”. Abu Abdillah replied, “The verse was actually revealed in this way: *lahu mu’aqqibatun min khalqibi wa raqib min baini yadaibi yahfazunahu bi amrillah*. Who can guard something by command of Allah? They are angels assigned to guard humans and record their deeds.

In the report by Abu al-Jarud who received it from Abu Ja’far al-Baqir about this verse, “Those angels protect humans, for example, from falling into wells, being hit by collapsing walls, or other dangers until fate takes a hand. Each person is guarded by two angels by day, and by two other angels at night. They guard humans in shifts (Qummi, n.d.: 360)

Those examples of Qur’anic verses given by al-Qummi help raise some points which can clarify the meaning of what is called *Ma Humma ‘Ala Khilafi Ma Anzala Allah* (Qur’anic verses which are different from what Allah revealed to the Prophet. *First*, the verses considered to belong to this category begin with a version of Qur’an narration from a school of *qira’ah*, a variant readings of the Qur’an, recited before an imam (a notable reciter of the Qur’an) and was corrected by the imam. All of those *qiraah* mentioned bby al-Qummy were based on the report by imam Ja’far Sadiq. *Second*, the word used by the imam when correcting the readings is *nuzzilāt* (brought down), which can etimologically be understood as an action of moving something from higher place to the lower one. In the context of Qur’anic verses, the word *nuzzilāt* is meant to point toward the process of revelation of the Qur’an from Allah to the Prophet Muhammad through the archangel Gabriel (Jibril). *Third*, some reports quoted by al-Qummi contain interpretations of the corrected verses.

Ma Huwa Muharraf Minhu

The phrase used to name this category literally contains a word *muharraf* derived from the word *tabrif*. Qur'anic verses al-Qummi deemed to fall into this category are the Qur'an 4: 166 and 168, the Qur'an 5: 67, and the Qur'an 6: 93.

The Qur'an 4: 166 and 168 are as follows.

لَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَشْهَدُ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ إِلَيْكَ أَنْزَلَهُ بِعِلْمِهِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ يَشْهَدُونَ وَكَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا
 إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَظَلَمُوا لَمْ يَكُنِ اللَّهُ لِيُغْفِرَ لَهُمْ وَلَا لِيَهْدِيَهُمْ طَرِيقًا

Al-Qummi took a report from his father who took it from Ibnu Abi 'Amir taking it from Abi Basir who received it from Abu 'Abdillah, who said, "The verse, the Qur'an 4: 166, was actually revealed in this way: *"lakinillahu yasyhadu bima unzila ilaika fi 'Ali anzalahu bi 'ilmibi wa al-mala'ikatu yasyhaduna wa kafa billahi syahida"*. And Abu 'Abdillah recited the Qur'an 4: 168 in this way *"inna allah\ina kafaru wa zalamu ala Muhammad haqqahum lam yakunillahu liyagfira wa la liyahdiyabum tariqa"* (Qummi, n.d.: 159)

Subsequently the Qur'an 5: 67 is what follows.

يَا أَيُّهَا الرَّسُولُ بَلِّغْ مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ وَإِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلْ فَمَا بَلَّغْتَ رِسَالَتَهُ وَاللَّهُ يَعْصِمُكَ مِنَ النَّاسِ إِنَّ
 اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ

Abu 'Abdillah stated that the verse begins with a part concerning something about 'Ali ibn Abi T{alib which is followed by a mention about the Prophet's journey to perform the Farewell Pilgrimage (*haji wad'*). In the Farewell Pilgrimage, the Prophet gave his last, long sermon on the event of *Gadir Khum*, which is considered to be the moment in which Ali was appointed as the successor of the Prophet (Qummi, n.d.: 171-175)

The last example is the Qur'an 6: 93, which is as follows.

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ افْتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا أَوْ قَالَ أُوحِيَ إِلَيَّ وَلَمْ يُوحَ إِلَيْهِ شَيْءٌ وَمَنْ قَالَ سَأُنزِلُ مِثْلَ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ وَلَوْ تَرَى إِذِ الظَّالِمُونَ فِي غَمْرَاتِ الْمَوْتِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ بَاسِطُو أَيْدِيهِمْ أَخْرَجُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ الْيَوْمَ تُحْزَرُونَ عَذَابَ الْهُونِ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ غَيْرَ الْحَقِّ وَكُنْتُمْ عَنْ آيَاتِهِ تَسْتَكْبِرُونَ

The revelation of this verse concerns Abdullah bin Sa'd bin Abi Sarh, a milk brother of Usman. A report by al-Qummi receiving it from his father taking it from Safwan taking it from Ibnu Miskan who received it from Abi Basir who took it from Abi Abdillah tells that the milk brother of Usman left for Mecca and then embraced Islam. He has such good handwriting that the Prophet asked him to write down God's revelation. However, his writing differed from what the Prophet dictated to him, but the Prophet did not deny the validity of his writing. He then had a conclusion that the Prophet did not know what he himself dictated. As a consequence, he returned to his apostasy and left Mecca. After the Conquest of Mecca, the Prophet ordered him to be killed, but Uthman persuade the Prophet to cancel his order. To make a long story short, Uthman's milk brother was freed. Subsequently, the verse concerns the condition of those hostile to the household of the Prophet Muhammad by saying, "*wa law tara iz\ al-zalimuna ala Muhammad haqqahum fi gamarat...*", with an additional phrase *ala Muhammad haqqahum* (Qummi, n.d.: 210-211)

Those aforementioned verses are examples of Qur'anic verses considered to contain *tabrif*. Those examples of Qur'anic verses given by al-Qummi help raise some points which relate all those examples. *First*, there are some words used to indicate distortion (*tabrif*) in Qur'anic verses, including *nuz\ilat* (the verse was revealed), *qara'a* (an imam recited the verse), an *qala* (Allah says). *Second*, Qur'anic verses considered to contain *tabrif* concern Ali, the Prophet's household (Ahlul bait), and those hostile to them. *Third*, *tabrif* takes the form of adding words or phrases in a Qur'anic verse.

The three categories under discussion create an immediate impression that al-Qummi doubted the authenticity of the Qur'an narration in the Uthmanic codex of the Qur'an. Nevertheless, taking the overall categories into careful consideration will help correct the mistaken impression. Al-Qummi developed forty-one categories of Qur'anic verses. If carefully considered, each of the categories will share a particular similarity, which in turn builds up a comprehensive picture of the construction of al-Qummi's thought on the categorization of Qur'anic verses by meaning. In this respect, considering those three categories explored above to deal with distortion of texts, not of meanings, will lead to internal inconsistency and imbalance. In contrast, understanding the three categories in the same context as the rest of the categories will help clear al-Qummi's thought. Therefore, what al-Qummi meant to say in the introduction of his Qur'an exegesis is to say that the Qur'an contains rich contents; some are abrogated (*mansukh*)⁴, some are decisive (*muhkam*), and some are allegorical (*mutasyabih*). Moreover, some Qur'anic verses consist of a word used out of its original function, some verses communicating particular meanings different from literal meanings of their constructing words, and some verses are given distorted meanings.

It is clearly understood that the first category does not concern linguistic errors of Qur'an narration; rather, it concerns functions of words, in this case the function of the word *illa*, which in some particular contexts cannot be understood in its intended meaning as shown by its functions. In this case, a word can be considered to form the meaning of other words. Such case often occurs, even among Sunni Muslims. For instance, in *Tafsir al-Jalalain*, the word يطبقونه is interpreted as لا يطبقونه with an addition of *la al-naftyah*. Another example is the use of the word

4 As mentioned before, Shia Muslims deny the concept of *naskh al-tilawah*. For them, *naskh al-ayat*, or abrogation of text, occurs only in a verse containing legal rulings, so that what is obligated and replaced by a new one is the legal status of its implication.

man, originally functioned as a question word (*istifham*). In some Qur'anic verses, *man istifham* is frequently used to express the meaning of negation, which can be found in the Qur'an.

Besides, based on *Lisan al-'Arab*, the word *illa* basically functions as a word of *istis'na'*, meaning exception or exclusion, and as a word of *jaz'a'* which literally a combination of *in* (if) and *la* (not) – *illa* can mean if not, or unless. However, the word *illa* can be used in place of a conjunction ('*atf*) *wawu* (Ansari, 2009: 50-51)

Likewise, the second category, although seeming to criticize a reading or a way of recitation, is meant to criticize a meaning carried by the narration of a verse. This is confirmed by the mention of another report along with its chain of transmission which does not make an issue of the Qur'an narration under discussion; as a matter of fact, the report offers an interpretation as is.

As for variants of *qira'ah*, there are two points to be taken into consideration. *First*, the difference in the way Qur'anic verses are recited indeed comes from different schools of *qira'ah* of the Qur'an based on a report by an imam, which is in this case the report by Imam Ja'far. This has received confirmation from some literatures of Shia Muslims as mentioned before, but this variant of *qira'ah* is not popular among Sunni Muslims. Imam Ja'far was one of the masters of Imam Hamzah al-Kufi, who was one of the notable imams of *qira'ah sab'ah* acceptable among sunni Muslims (Sindi, n.d.: 237). Through in-depth exploration, this research found that in the case of the three Qur'anic verses discussed above (the Qur'an 3: 110; the Qur'an 25: 74; and the Qur'an 13: 11), Imam Hamzah took another report of *qira'ah* different from that of Imam Ja'far. This data can be found in *Rif'ah al-Darajat fi Qira'ah Hamzah al-Zayyat* written by Taufiq Ibrahim Damrah (Damrah, 2008). *Second*, such *qira'ah* is called *qira'ah mudrajah*, the one containing non-Qur'anic words used to give an interpretation of a verse. In *qira'ah* terminology, such *qira'ah* belong to the category of *qira'ah syadzah* (Bayly, 1988: 112)

As is known thus far, Shia Muslims believe that the Qur'an has two shades of meaning, namely literal (*ẓāhir*) meanings, also known as *tanẓīl* and hidden (*batīn*) meanings, or *ta'wīl*. They also believe that all Imams are able to grasp both meanings, and therefore mentioning words or phrases to be used in place of Qur'anic words and phrases left an impression that those imams fully understand both literal and hidden meanings of the Qur'an, as if God Himself gave them such understanding.

Meanwhile, it is clear that the meaning of *tabrif* in the third category is the distortion of meaning of Qur'anic verses. This is indicated by the fact that the Qur'anic verses considered to be in this category concern Shia and anti-Shia groups. In the belief of Shia Muslims, al-Qur'an contain many verses concerning Shia and those hostile to them (Kulaini, 2005: 583). At this rate, it is understandable that al-Qummi stated that distortion can be found in many verses of the Qur'an.

This category differs from the previous categories, in which Qur'anic verses deemed to contradict God's true revelation may carry both *tanẓīl* or *ta'wīl*, namely literal and hidden meanings⁵ (Ma'rifah, 2011: 270). On the contrary, this category involves decisive (*mubkam*) verses which contain only *tanẓīl* meanings, and therefore everyone can understand their meanings. As mentioned before, the verses considered to belong to this category are the ones with specific social context behind their revelation. With such clear meanings and social contexts, it is surprising that only Shia Muslims interpret the Qur'an, especially the Qur'anic verses mentioned in discussion above, in the way they did; therein the distortion (*tabrif*) lies.

5 Literal meanings are called *tanẓīl*, while hidden meanings are called *ta'wīl*. The *tanẓīl* meaning deals with social contexts or cases to which the revelation of the Qur'an responded, while *ta'wīl* meaning refers to the universal meaning of the Qur'an with spaceless and timeless qualities. Unlike *tanẓīl* or literal meanings which can be understood by humans in general, *ta'wīl* or hidden meanings can be understood only by *al-rasikhuna fi al-'ilmi*; just as God's statement in the Qur'an 3: 7. Shia Muslims believe that the word *al-rasikhuna* refers to the Prophet Muhammad and the imams. Based on a report, imam Abu Ja'far said, "We understand it (*ta'wīl*) – other reports says, "The imams understand it (*ta'wīl*)".

CONCLUSION

The result of the research shows that the accusation against Shia Muslims of distorting or changing the Qur'an narration written in the Uthmanic codex of the Qur'an to the extent it differs from the one God revealed to the Prophet proves true. The term *tabrif* al-Qummi used does not point towards the distortion of texts, but the distortion of meanings.

However, the concept of *tabrif* advanced by Shia Muslims should receive critical evaluation. The concept was presumably popularized to legitimate any belief and doctrine to which they are committed because this concept was introduced in an era with high political and ideological fanaticism of Islamic schools of thought. Moreover, Shia Muslims possess a poor record in their relationship with other Muslim groups and with the rulers of Islamdom. Therefore, they need to establish a firm foothold, and the introduction of the term *tabrif al-Qur'an* is one of their ways to struggle for their existence.

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