

## The Role of Baṣra and the Personality Indexes of Naẓẓām Baṣary in the Formation of the Theory of Ṣarfa

Asst. Prof. Amir Ahmadnezhad  
University of Isfahan, Iran,  
[ahmadnezhad@ltr.ui.ac.ir](mailto:ahmadnezhad@ltr.ui.ac.ir)

Mahdi Pichan  
University of Tarbiat Modares, Iran,  
[pichanmehdi@yahoo.com](mailto:pichanmehdi@yahoo.com)

Received: 13/12/2021

Accepted: 9/1/2022

Published: 15/6/2022

Doi: <https://doi.org/10.36473/ujhss.v61i2.1303>



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

### Abstract

According to Qur'anic scholars Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm ibn Saiyyār Baṣary, commonly known as Naẓẓām, the great Mu'tazila theologian is the first person to formulate and develop the theory of Ṣarfa about the miraculous aspects of Qur'an. Contemplation and focus on the biography of Naẓẓām Baṣary, as well as the historical, social and geographical conditions of Baṣra, his hometown, opens a new chapter in understanding the active factors in the formation of the theory of Ṣarfa. The results of the paper confirm the Communication of Naẓẓām with Hindu Brahma and the widespread presence of Hindus in Baṣra in the ninth century further reinforces the possibility that Ṣarfa is retrieved from Indian Brahma's thought, found in the book al-fida. His encounter with philosophers and the emergence of philosophical thought in his theological perspective, on the one hand, and the dominance of philosophical thought in Baṣra, suggests that the theory of Ṣarfa is influenced by philosophical thought. Moreover, the coincidence of Naẓẓām's life as a proponent of Qur'an's creation with a significant amount of challenges on the idea of the Greatness of Qur'an, reinforced the effectiveness of the theory on Ṣarfa on the idea of the Greatness of Qur'an.

**Keywords:** Baṣra, Mu'tazila, Brahma's Hinduism, Ṣarfa, Naẓẓām, miracle of Qur'an, crestedness of Qur'an, al-fida, Inquisition, paradigm.

## 1. Introduction

One of the interpretations for the miraculous aspects of Qur'an is the theory of *Şarfa*, and belief in the extratextual miracles of the Qur'an. According to the proponents of *Şarfa*, God discourages people from uttering a word like Qur'an and disables their ability and intelligence to bring forth a word like Qur'an. In other words, people have the potential to produce a text like Qur'an. However, God is preventing them from producing it. Indeed, it is God who does not allow the potential of the human to be realized in this field. There are three interpretations to be framed in this regard. First, the point is that God will deprive them of their motivation to bring a word like the Qur'an. Second, God forbids those who are trying to compete with the Holy Qur'an to bring forth a word like the Qur'an, and third, God has taken their ability to oppose the Qur'an, and does not allow them to come up with a word like the Qur'an innately. In other words, they may, in theory, be able to utter words like Qur'an, based on their human faculties; however, God does not allow it to happen (Alawī 1423, 3:218).

This theory, God's prevention of a text, such as Qur'an, being produced by Jinns and Man alike, is one of the approaches to the miracle of the Qur'an. This approach had some subscribers from the beginning of the ninth to the eleventh century (A.D.), however scholars, especially in the tenth century, began opposing it.

Believers in *Şarfa* have put forward arguments in favour of the theory. The first argument, given by *Şarfa*'s scholars, which has been expressed in various forms in Nazzām and Sayyid Mortadā's writings, is the presence of a clear distinction between Qur'anic verses and the speeches of the eloquent and literate Arabs. According to them, when we compare the poems of an eloquent and experienced poet to those of a novice, we notice a clear distinction between them. Even laypeople can detect this distinction. In other words, while the poem is not extraordinary, it is superior to everyday expressions. Based on this argument, when we compare the verses of the long suras, or even some of the short ones, with the most eloquent words of Arab poets and orators, sometimes the difference is not even between a strong and a weak poem, let alone the difference between a majestic text and that of an ordinary one. This argument suggests that the mystery of the miraculous nature of the Qur'an should be sought elsewhere, rather than the text itself.

Moreover, it has been reported in historical accounts of the compilation of Qur'an that many of the companions had disagreements on the two suras of Falaq and Nas, and some, like Ibn Mas'ud, the premium reciter, did not include these two suras in his notebook, for he believed that these suras were not in the Qur'an. Thus, if the miracle of the Qur'an were its eloquence and order, there would be no dispute about these two suras (Javāhirī 1391).

According to the proponents of *Şarfa*, the form of some verses is another implication for the validity of *Şarfa*. The following verse is an example, "I shall divert those from my signs who have strutted around the earth so proudly without having any right to do so." Even if they saw every sign, they still would not believe in them. If they saw the way to normal behaviour they would not accept it as any

way [to behave], while if they saw any way to err, they would accept it as a course [of action]. That is because they have rejected our signs and been heedless of them” (A’raf: 146). They argue the meaning of " Sa’srefu " (I shall divert) as genetic prevention of conflict, and consider the meaning of " Āyāt " (signs) as the verses of Qur'an, thus arriving at the theory of Şarfa (Ma’rifat 1415, 170-171).

The pivotal point in the formation of scientific theories, including Şarfa, is the fact that science and scientific theories do not arise in a vacuum and are the result of the needs and structural issues of society. The social status and historical, cultural and geographical conditions in which an individual, or thinker and expert, lives have a profound effect on how they think and perceive. Scientists and scholars, therefore, derive their knowledge, insights, attitudes, and methods of study from the community in which they live, and following their collective needs and desires, they select and understand their subjects (Razavī 2012, 127-128).

Philosophers of science have addressed the emergence and evolution of science since the late nineteenth century. American physicist Thomas Kuhn, in the 1960s, in his book “The Structure of Scientific Revolutions”, put forward this question in the light of earlier comments of historians of science whether “the progress of science is a gradual thing that results from the accumulation of scientists' ideas?” (Kuhn 1970, 2-3). In his view, the change in science is followed by scientific revolutions or changes in social and cultural conditions or paradigms.

As a result, the question of explaining the miracle of the Qur'an in general, and particularly the formulation of Şarfa Theory, which forms part of the sciences, have been influenced by paradigms, or social and cultural conditions, that govern the context of Islamic society, and are influenced by historical and scientific conditions of their respective society. According to Qur’anic scholars, Nazzām Başary, the famous Mu’tazila theologian, also known as Nazzām, was the first person to devise the theory of Şarfa in trying to explain the miraculous nature of the Qur'an (Sobhani 1412, 3:337-338).

According to Nu’aim Ĥimşy, we have not received a book containing the views of Nazzām’s ideas in this subject. However, his arguments can be found in books and other text in the field. Nazzām grew scientifically, and rationally, in Başra, which at that time had been an important trading center and gathering place for traders from across the Islamic world (Ĥimşy 1400, 54).

The present paper seeks to explore the role of personality characteristics of Nazzām; as the first person to offer a franchise theory, focuses on the historical, social and geographical conditions of Başra as his residence, and explores the role of the personality traits of Nazzām and Başra in the formation of this critical theory for the miraculous nature of Qur'an. To this end, after a brief acquaintance with the scientific life of Nazzām, the historical and scientific contexts of the tendency to Şarfa theory with particular regard to these characteristics, and the influential conditions of Başra, are examined. Through this perspective, factors that are already involved in the formation of Şarfa theory become strengthened; thus, a different dimension of the theory manifests itself.

## **2. Nazzām Başary and the theory of Şarfa**

Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm ibn Saiyyār bin Hāny Baṣary (c. 775 – c. 845), known as Nazzām, is the great Mu'tazila theologian. Nazzām was one of the great leaders of Mu'tazila, and his great disciple student, Jāhiz, has told about him; "If there is one man in every thousand years who does not have a peer, that man is Abū Ishāq". Sunnis strongly disagree with him and consider him as a denier of prophecy and apostate, a drunk, and an illiterate student. Many Sunni sects, and even a group of Mu'tazila, excommunicated him. Moreover, he was an expert in philosophy and was very opinionated. In addition to his expertise in rationality, he is also regarded very positively, as a poet and literary figure. The date of his death is recorded somewhere around 840 to 850 A.D.

Nazzām only considered the word of the Imams as infallible; therefore, he is very close to the beliefs of Shia Muslims. It is claimed that he did not believe in the miracle of the Qur'an in the sense of it being eloquent. The reason for the monicker, Nazzām, is given by his supporters as his ability to regulate the word and his opponents as his job of ordering beads and stones in the Baṣra's bazaar (Zarkilī 1980, 1:43; Khatib Baghdadi 1997, 6:97).

Montgomery Watt, in his book "The Formative Period of Islamic Thought" states that there were great names of Mu'tazila who contributed much in the doctrinal development of Mu'tazila school of thought. The most prominent among them was Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm ibn Saiyyār an-Nazzām (Watt 1998; Massimo Campanini 2012). Nazzām grew scientifically and rationally in Baṣra (Jahiz 1997).

About the origin of his ideas, Baghdādī says, "As a youth, he was in Baṣra commuting with a group of thanawiyya (dualists and ganūsīs) and also with a group of Sumanniyya (from the Indian Nahla). Upon reaching adulthood, he became associated with a group of atheist philosophers, then, he travelled with Hishām ibn Hakam Rāfiḍī, and in the rejection of the prophecy, he appreciated the words of Brahma." Abdul Qahir Baghdādī is one of the enemies of Nazzām, and the above quotation's purpose is to blame and reprimand him, nonetheless, it conveys Nazzām's extensive relations with various sects, religions, and thinkers of his age, especially his contact with philosophers, which influenced him greatly, which is a matter of great importance (Baghdadi Dateless, 79) Shahrastanī writes about Nazzām that he read many philosophers' books, and interwove their ideas with Mu'tazila's words (Shahrastanī 1364, 1:56). He was one of the first thinkers who let philosophy become useful in their theology. Much of his sayings and teachings are derived from subjects that have, according to Greek philosophy, flowed among people of Middle East (Deboer 1963, 49-52). Among those said to have been a source of inspiration and influence to Nazzām was Hishām ibn Hakam, one of the Shia leaders and Imam Ṣādiq's companion (Baghdadi Dateless, 79).

Nazzām went to Baghdad after it became well-known for debate and discussion on theological issues, and found his place among the city's elites. One day Ja'far ibn Yahya Barmakī gave some remarks on Aristotle, and Nazzām said that he had violated Aristotle's book. Ja'far questioned Nazzām's expertise in the subject, and in response, Nazzām said, "Do you want to read the book from the beginning to its completion or from the end to the beginning?" (Abdul Jabbar 1393, 1:264). He

became a fixture in Baghdad, to the extent that even Al-Ma'mun mentioned him. Another popular belief of Nazzām is the miracle of the Qur'an. According to Nu'aiym Ĥimşy, a text that contains the views of Nazzām on this subject is not available to us, but his views can be found in other books and works (Ĥimşy 1400, 54). He first devised Şarfa theory concerning the miracle of the Qur'an; The theory in which the miracle of the Qur'an is referred to an external issue (Sobhani 1412, 3:337-338).

In examining the life of Nazzām, features such as his encounter with other religions, especially the Hindu religion, the inclusion of philosophical thought in his theological perspective, and at the same time, living in the time of the clashes over the belief in the Qur'an, makes him an attracting subject to study for any scholar. On the other hand, given the fact that he grew up in Başra, it is probable that the socio-historical conditions of the region influenced his theory.

In the following, focusing on the spatial and temporal position of Başra as the land of origin of Şarfa, as well as considering the particular features of Nazzām as a Basari character, and the first provider of the theory of Şarfa, we analyze the factors that influenced Nazzām's gravitation towards Şarfa.

### **3. Entry and prevalence of Greek philosophical thought**

The influence of popular philosophical thought in Başra, in the eighth and ninth century, is one of the influential factors in the development of this theory about the miracle of the Qur'an by Nazzām Basari. According to scholars, Mu'tazila scholars are the pioneers of philosophical and rationalist movements in the spread of theology (Atta Muhammad 2012; Watt 1998; Young and R.B. Serjeant 1990). To this point, the formation of his Islamic scholastic theology has been attributed to his findings in Greek philosophy (Amir Ali 2005). Mu'tazila was the first group to defend Islam against Manichaeans or dualists on theological grounds. During the debate with these Manichaeans, Mu'tazila learned about Greek philosophy and rationalism (Gibb 1962).

It should be noted, however, that among the Mu'tazila scholars writing about Nazzām as a person who is likely to be the originator of the theory of Şarfa, he is notably credited with being one of the first thinkers to allow philosophy to influence their Islamic scholastic theology. According to Greek philosophy, much of his sayings and teachings derive from subjects and matters that were prevalent among population of Middle East (Deboer 1963, 49-52).

Concerning the personality and philosophical thinking of Nazzām, reading 'Allama Ṭabāṭabāī conceptualization illustrates how the theory of Şarfa was influenced by philosophy. Stating an objective and philosophical statement on this issue, he has documented the philosophers' viewpoint in the following philosophical forms, "Man puts the word as a sign that signifies meaning so that he can fulfil his urgent social need, which is to understand others, and to be understood by others. This attribute, which implies specific meanings, has arisen out of human penchant and initiative, and this attribute cannot come from the human brain to such an extent as to exceed human capacity. How can words turn

out in a way that the human brain fails to duplicate as such when human beings themselves have invented it for social needs? Is it possible for a human being to produce something that is beyond his or her ability? The subject is always stronger than its verb, philosophically speaking.”(Ṭabāṭabāī 1417, 1:69-72). Furthermore, Abu Zuhra considers the prevalence of philosophical thinking among people as the basis for gravitating towards such a theory. The pseudo-philosopher, in his view, put forward the idea about the miracle of the Qur'an, not because of its originality, or even reality, but because of its alienating feature and unpopularity (Abu Zuhra 1418, 57).

In addition to the philosophical thought of Nazzām, other factors have contributed to the spread of philosophical thought in the city of Baṣra, and among Muslim scholars, especially in the ninth century (A.D.), which further confirms the influence of philosophy on Ṣarfa theory.

One of the most prominent manifestations of philosophy in Baṣra was the formation of the philosophical and mystical society of Akhwān Al-Ṣafā, headed by Abdullah ibn Maymūn, in the ninth century (A.D.). Receiving education in the school of natural philosophers, enabled him to reconcile the differences among the Zandaqa and believers. The basis of Maymūn and his companions' work and ideology was that there was no contradiction between Sharia and Greek philosophy, and one could unite Islamic law and Greek wisdom to guide them through life. The purpose of this group was to promote peace among the people and to resolve intellectual and religious differences by expanding the rule of reason and integrating philosophy and religion, thus creating a kind of utopia (Deboer 1963, 81-83).

The difference in the type of syntactic thinking in Baṣra with Kufa, as two essential centers in Arabic literature and the influenced by philosophy and logic, is another reason for the prevalence of philosophical thought in Baṣra. Baṣra's syntax –Nahvian– emphasized dignity in analogy, while Kufa's syntax often allowed the departure from the analogy. Therefore, the syntaxes of Baṣra were called Logical in order to be different from the syntaxes of Kufa. Baṣra's pre-eminence in applying the logic was not a matter of coincidence, for the influence of philosophical religions in Baṣra appeared before elsewhere. Among the followers of Baṣra's syntax, there were many Shias and Mu'tazila who paved the way for the entrance of non-Islamic philosophy, until it started to affect their theological method (Deboer 1963, 33).

It must, therefore, be said that the spread of philosophical thought in the city of Baṣra as the residence of Nazzām, the pioneer of Ṣarfa, and his interaction with philosophers and the study of Greek philosophical works, further reinforces the idea that Ṣarfa is based on a philosophical thought; As some Qur'anic scholars, such as Ṭabāṭabāī and Abu Zuhra, have concluded. One of the most important signs of the prosperity of philosophy in Baṣra is the formation of Akhwān Al-Ṣafā in the ninth century. The difference between the science of syntax in Baṣra and Kufa, and the philosophical and logical syntax of Baṣra, is another evidence of the prevalence of philosophical thought in Baṣra. Although philosophy influenced Islamic scholars

in later centuries, and other cities such as Baghdad, a careful look at the biographies of other outstanding supporters of Şarfa suggests that among them, Nazzām was more renowned for his philosophical thinking, and Başra in the eighth century was an important bastion for the spread of philosophical thought. Thus, it seems that a philosophical view on Şarfa, concerning the century and the place of residence for its possible pioneer in Nazzām, namely the ninth century and the city of Başra, is justifiable and itself is a reason for gravitation towards such views.

#### **4. The Impact of the Indian Brahma's point of view**

Some Qur'anic scholars have pointed out that among the Islamic scholars, certain pseudo-philosophers found the sayings of the Brahmans in al-Fida's book. This book contains a collection of poems that they thought could not be produced in people's speech, and their great scholars point to the intervention of Brahma as the reason for human beings' incapability to produce or even attempt to do as such. Their claim is documented in Abu Rayhan al-Biruni's "A Critical Study of What India Says, Whether Accepted by Reason or Refused", where he writes, "Their relatives say that the followers of this religion can bring along such poems, but they have called off the matter to honor that book" (Abu Zuhra 1418, 76).

Although, at first glance, the influence of Brahma belief on the theory of may not be correct, the bold presence of Hindus in Başra, as the land of origin for Şarfa, as well as reports indicating the connection of Nazzām, the first provider of the theory about the miraculous nature of Qur'an, with different sects of religions, including Indian Brahma, strengths this idea. According to historical reports, Başra was founded during the Second Caliphate, and was initially used for military purposes because of its communication characteristics (Furūzānī and Shahrīārī 1393). However, over time the population of Başra increased, and various tribes from Iran, Bukhara and India settled in there, and engaged in various activities (Balazari 1337, 511-525; Massoudi 1365, 338). Along with demographic diversity, the diversity of religions led to the creation of a cultural community in Başra. Furthermore, the geographical location of the region provided an excellent opportunity for maritime trade, and traders from distant lands, such as India and Yemen, came to Başra to help with the region's economic prosperity. Consequently, Başra was considered as a vital economic hub in the ninth century AD (Forouzani and Shahriari 1393). The presence of the "Zuṭ" as a Hindu tribe during the numerous uprisings of the eighth century in Başra, and is considered as one of the causes of the stagnation of the Mu'tazila school in this region, indicates the widespread presence of Hindus in Başra. They migrated to Ahwaz and Başra, for famine was ravaging India, and gradually gained the power to the extent that in the year 834 AD, under the rule of the Mu'taşim, headed by Muhammad ibn Uthman, they plundered and looted people on the roads, and merchant ships (Massoudi 1365, 338). According to Tabarī, their population was 6,000, of which about 5,000 were warriors, which indicates their strength (Tabari 1354, 13: 5803).

In addition to the widespread presence of Hindus in Başra, the relation of Nazzām Basari as the originator of Şarfa theory with other tribes and religions,

including the Hindu Brahma, is important in its influence on his thinking. During his life in Baṣra, he had been in contact with the enemies of Islam including the secondary (dualists), atheist philosophers, and Brahmans, and many of their ideas have influenced his thought process. Based on the idea of Brahmas, the theory of prophecy revocation was accepted by Nazzām, but he did not dare to publicize it out of fear for his life. However, he denied the miracle of the Qur'an in its style and order, and denied miracles such as splitting of the moon, the praising sand in the hand of the prophet, and boiling water through his fingers, to consider the denial of the miracles of the prophet as a means to arriving at the denial of his prophecy (Badavi 1374, 228).

Although in the biography of other prominent supporters of the theory of Ṣarfa, such as Sayyid Mortaḏā, Sheikh Mufid, Ibn Ḥazm Andalassi, Ibn Sanān khafāji, and others, there was no mention of contact with the Indian Brahma and correspondence with them, there have been reports of communication between Nazzām and supporters of other religions, including the Hindu Brahma. Considering the whereabouts of Nazzām, Baṣra, and its particular geographical location in terms of commerce and business communities, and the presence of various tribes and religions, including the most prominent of them Braham Hindu, are evidence of Nazzām ability to communicate with them. Hence, the historical reports of Nazzām and his relationship with the Hindu Brahma gain some validity. Although being inspired by Brahma's perspective, and the book of al-Fida affecting their belief system, and its effect on the formation of Ṣarfa theory about the miraculous nature of Qur'an, was not accepted by all the supporters of Ṣarfa, for Nazzām Basari, the first provider of this theory, it is an entirely plausible proposition. Therefore, it seems inspiration from Braham Hindu is a basis for his tendency toward Ṣarfa theory.

## **5. The ordeal regarding the createdness of the Qur'an**

The factor that has partly influenced the development of the theological and literary discourse around the Qur'anic miracle is the intense disagreement over the createdness of Qur'an. Followers of Qur'an being created believed that the Qur'an, like other objects, was created by God in time and place. Lubaiyd ibn A'asam is the first person to ridicule the Qur'an in this way, during the time of the Prophet of Islam. In his opinion, Qur'an is created like Torah and not a miracle. Ja'ad bin Derham, who was attributed to Zandaqa, is another person in Umayyad era whom, by claiming that the Qur'an is created, did not regard its eloquence as miraculous, claiming that ordinary individuals are capable of bringing forth a text like Qur'an (Ḥimṣy 1400, 37).

The Mu'tazila were also one of the most important sects that their formation was somehow tied to the issue of the creation and miracles of Qur'an (Atta Muhammad 2012). ĩsa bin Ṣabīh the president of Muzdarī sect, and known for his asceticism, and a renowned Mu'tazila monk, regarded people as capable of bringing about the eloquence, rhetoric, and order of a text akin to Qur'an, and by expressing the createdness of Qur'an denied the miraculous nature of Qur'an (Watt 1948, 76;



Himṣy 1400, 40-53). Hushām Fuwwtī, a pupil of Abu al-hodhayl and Abbād bin Suliyman from Mu'tazilas of the Baṣra School, both rejected the idea that Qur'an could be a reason for Muhammad's prophecy. Their opposition was rooted in the disagreement of the majority of Mu'tazila on the question of Qur'an being eternal. From their point of view, the Qur'an had been created, and something that is not created is not evidence of an ancient and eternal Creator (Martin 1980).

Nonetheless, it is well-known that Nazzām was the first one who introduced Ṣarfa. He did not regard the Qur'an distinct from human texts, but also sought the miracle in something related to God, and apart from the text; Hence, Ṣarfa. The present author argues that from Nazzām's point of view, he believed that a divine word and a miracle could explain this theory. Thus, it was no longer necessary to deny the miracle of Qur'an in its createdness. The synchrony of the climax of the ordeal of the createdness of the Qur'an, and the life of Nazzām Basary as the first provider of Ṣarfa theory, makes it possible that Qur'an would influence the Ṣarfa theory as a creation.

The history of theology indicates that most of the theological discussions in the ninth century A.D. were about createdness, or immortality, of the word of God. The companions of Hadith knew the word of God to be eternal and increate, but the Mu'tazili said that word is the creation of God. Thus, the act of someone who comes after him cannot be considered increate. The Mu'tazila's scientific and political influence reached its apex during the reigns of Ma'mun to Mutavakil Abbāsī; that is 813 to 857 AD. Ma'mun and Mu'tasem were firm supporters of the Mu'tazila. In the year 833 AD, the Mu'tazila, under the contribution of Ahmad ibn Abī Dāwūd Hakamī, examined all the judges, and government clerks, and kept those who were believers in the createdness of the word of God, and as a result, those who believed in the word of God being eternal were dismissed, and even their testimony was not valid in court (Meshkour Dateless, 68).

Madelong also described the peak of controversy over the createdness of Qur'an as an inquisition, writing, "since the end of the Inquisition era, which was initiated by Ma'mun, the Abbāsī Caliph, to defend his beliefs about the creation of Qur'an, the principle that the Qur'an is the word of God and non-creature has always been one of the most established components of Sunni beliefs, but its interpretation has always caused much controversy among Sunni theological schools. Mu'tazila and some other sects supported the belief that Qur'an was created. However, these discussions have been documented in existing religious writings since the time of the Inquisition, and the main motives and their ramifications of the theological systems of the various schools are fully explored. The scarcity of the resources of our day, or the often obscure of later reports, have made it difficult to trace the origins of these disputes and their progress lasted to the period of the Inquisition. However, the relative lack of interest in these arguments before this time may indicate that these issues had reached to a new height at that time, making most of the previous controversies trivial and pale in comparison (Madelung 1985, 120-126; Cooperson 2015; Melchert 2014).

Thus, one factor influencing the issue of the miracle of Qur'an has been the

controversy over its creation. The culmination of these disputes and challenges as a literal and verbal discussion has been in the third century A.H. This means that the life of Nazzām coincides with these debates; a person from the Mu'tazila's heads and the first scientist who is likely to put forward a Şarfa theory about the miracle of the Qur'an. On the other hand, the era of the Ma'mun Abbasid from 813 to 833 AD and the inquisition phenomenon and Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal's misery and life era, Hadith leader and a notable opponent of Qur'an as a creation, is also significantly coincident with the life of Nazzām. Therefore, it can be said that controversies over the creation of Qur'an are considered as an active factor in the formation of Şarfa theory. In fact, as one of the supporters of Qur'an creation, Nazzām does not distinguish the text of the Qur'an from human texts, but also he sought the miracle in something that relates to the Lord's image and is separate from the text. From his point of view, the theory of Şarfa could help to sum up the creation of the divine word and its miracle. On the other hand, conflicts over the creation of the Qur'an in the following centuries are not much discussed. Instead, Muslims have referred to it as a time of tribulation and sedition, and they were sorry that government and politics entered them in such a fun and seductive game (Berkey 2003; Massimo 2012).

Therefore, the issue of the creation of the Qur'an in the following centuries no longer acts as a driving force for the tendency toward Şarfa. In other words, the controversy over the creation of Qur'an and its belief in Mu'tazili most influenced the formation of Şarfa theory by Nazzām in the third century but in the following centuries, given the fever of these conflicts, we must look for other factors influencing the tendency toward Şarfa theory.

## 6. Conclusion

Reflection on the History of Nazzām; The First Provider of the Theory of Şarfa and consideration of Başra's historical, social and geographical conditions, his whereabouts, opens a new chapter in understanding the factors that influence the formation of theory Şarfa. Communication of Nazzām with Hindu Brahma and the widespread presence of Hindus in Başra in the ninth century further reinforces the possibility that Şarfa is retrieved from Indian Brahma's thought, found in the book al-fida. His encounter with philosophers and the emergence of philosophical thought in his theological perspective, on the one hand, and the dominance of philosophical thought in Başra, including in his syntactic thinking, as well as the formation of a mystical, and philosophical community of Akhwān Al-Şafā in this region, on the other hand, suggests that the theory of Şarfa is influenced by philosophical thought. Focusing on the personality traits of Nazzām, as well as the spatial and temporal conditions of Başra confirms this hypothesis. Moreover, the coincidence of Nazzām's life as a proponent of Qur'an's creation with a significant amount of challenges on the idea of the createdness of Qur'an, reinforced the effectiveness of the theory on Şarfa on the idea of the createdness of Qur'an more than ever, which came to us because of the life of Nazzām.

## References

- Alawī, Yahyā bin Ḥamza. 1423. *al-Tarāz Lassarr al-Balāgha and al-A'ajaz, Sciences: Research by Abdul Hamīd Hindawī*. Beirut, al-Maktaba al-Assariyah.
- Javāhirī, Seyed Mohammad Hassan. 1391. "Readout of Ṣarfa theory", *Journal of Qabasat*, Vol 17, No 66, pp 147-179.
- Ma'rifat, Muhammad Hadi. 1415. *Al-Tamhid fi Al-Qur'anic Sciences*, Qom, Al-Nashr al-Islamī Institute.
- Razavī, Abolfazl. 2012. *Critical Philosophy of History*, Tehran, Institute for Research in Culture and Islamic Thought.
- Kuhn, Thomas S. 1970. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, United States of America, University of Chicago Press, Second Edition.
- Sobhani, Ja'far. 1412. *Al-elahyat ala Hody al-Ketab and al-Sunna and al-aql*, Qom, Al-Alimi Center for the Derasat al-islamy.
- Ḥimṣy, Nu 'aiym. 1400. *Fekrah Ejaz Al-Qur'an Men al-Be'tha ela-Asrena al-Hazer*, Beirut, al-Rasala Institute.
- Zarkilī, Khaiyyruddin. 1980. *al-Qamus al-Tarajem*, Beirut, Dar al-Lmallabin.
- Khatib Baghdadi, Abu Bakr. 1997. *History of Baghdad, Research: Mustafa Abdul Qader Atta*, Beirut, Dar al-Kutb al-Elmiyah.
- Watt, W. Montgomery. 1998. *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought*, Oxford, Oneworld.
- Massimo Campanini. 2012. *The Mu'tazila in Islamic History and Thought, The Author Religion Compass Blackwell Publishing Ltd, University of Trento*, Vol 6, pp 41-50.
- Jahiz, Amr ibn Bahr. 1997. *al-Bakhla, Research: Taha al-Hajri*, Cairo, encyclopedia.
- Baghdadi, Abdul Qahar bin Tahir. Dateless. *Al-Farq beyn Al-Firaq*, Beirut, published by Mohammed Mohiuddin Abdul Hamid.
- Deboer, T.J. 1963. *The History of Philosophy in Islam*, Translator: Edward R. Jones, Delhi, Cosmo Publication.
- Abdul Jabbar, Ghazi Abi al-Hasan. 1393. *Fazl al-E'tezal and the classes of al-Mu'tazilah*, Research: Fuad Sayed, Tunisia, Dar al-Tunisia.
- Atta Muhammad. 2012. *Mutazila-Heresy; Theological and Rationalist Mutazila; Al-mamun, Abbasid Caliph; Al-mutawakkil, Abbasid Caliph; The Traditionalists*, *Middle-East Journal of Scientific Research*, Vol 12 ,pp 1031-1038.
- Young, M.J.L., J.D. Latham and R.B. Serjeant. 1990. *Religion, Learning and Science in the Abbasid Period*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Amir Ali, Syed. 2005. *The Spirit of Islam*. Lahore, Sang-e-Meel.
- Gibb, H.A.R. 1962. *Mohammedanism: An Historical Survey*. New York, Oxford University Press.
- Ṭabāṭabāī, Seyyed Muhammad Hussein. 1417. *al-Mizan al-Tafsir al-Quran*, Qom, Islamic Publications Office of the Qom Theological Seminary.

- 
- Abu Zuhra, Mohammed. 1418. *Al-Mo'jeze al-kobra of the Qur'an*, Cairo, Dar al-Fakr al-Arabi.
  - Madelung, Wilferd. 1985. *Religious Schools and Sects in Medieval Islam*, London, Variorum Reprints.
  - Furūzānī, Abulghasim and Bahādur Shahrīārī. 1393. "Investigating the Role of Basra Relations with its Neighboring Area", *Quarterly Journal of Islamic History*, Vol. 8, No. 16.
  - Balazari, Ahmad ibn Yahya ibn Jabīr. 1337. *Fotooh al-Baladan*, Translated by: Mohammad Tavakol, Tehran, Silver Publishing.
  - Massoudi, Ali ibn Hossain. 1365. *Al-tanbih Va al-ashraf*, Translated by: abolqasem payandeh, Tehran, Scientific and Cultural Publications.
  - Tabari, Mohammed bin Jarir. 1354. *History of Rusul Va al-muluk*, Translated by: Abolqasem Payandeh, Tehran, and Publication of the Iranian Cultural Foundation.
  - Badavi, Abdul Rahman. 1374. *The History of Verbal Thoughts in Islam*, Translated by: Hossein Saberi, , Mashhad, Astan Qods Razavi Publications, First Edition.
  - Montgomery, Watt. 1948. *Free Will and Predestination in Islam*, London.
  - Martin, Richard C. 1980. "The Role of the Basrah Mu'tazilah in Formulating the Doctrine of the Apologetic Miracle", *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, Vol.39, No.3, pp. 175-189.
  - Meshkour, Mohammad Javad. Dateless. *Shiite History and Sects of Islam*, Tehran, Eshraq.
  - Cooperson Michael. 2015."Inquisition in Early Islam: The Competition for Religious and Political Authority in the Abbasid Empire By John P. Turner", *Journal of Islamic Studies*, Oxford Academic, Vol 26, Issue 3, pp 334–338.
  - Melchert Christopher. 2014. "Virtues of the Imām Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal By Ibn Al-Jawzī, edited and translated by Michael Cooperson", *Journal of Islamic Studies*, , Oxford Acad, Vol 25, Issue 3, pp 354–355.
  - Berkey, Jonathan P. 2003. *The Formation of Islam: Religion and Society in the Near East, 600-1800*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

## دور البصرة وسمات الشخصية للنظام البصري في تكوين نظرية الصرفه

أ.م.د. أمير أحمد نجاد

جامعة أصفهان ، جمهورية إيران الإسلامية

[ahmadnezhad@ltr.ui.ac.ir](mailto:ahmadnezhad@ltr.ui.ac.ir)

مهدي بيشان

جامعة تربية مدارس جمهورية إيران الإسلامية

[pichanmehdi@yahoo.com](mailto:pichanmehdi@yahoo.com)

### المخلص

وفقاً لعلماء القرآن، فإن أبا إسحاق إبراهيم بن سيار بصري، المعروف باسم نظام، المتكلم المعتزلة العظيم، هو أول من صاغ وطور نظرية الصرفه عن الجوانب الإعجازية للقرآن. إن التأمل والتركيز على سيرة نظام بصري، فضلاً عن الظروف التاريخية والاجتماعية والجغرافية للبصرة، يفتحان فصلاً جديداً في فهم العوامل الفاعلة في تكوين نظرية الصرفه. تؤكد نتائج البحث على تواصل نظام مع الهندوس براهما، كما أن الوجود الواسع للهندوس في البصرة في القرن التاسع يعزز إمكانية استرجاع الطرفة من فكر نظام، الهندي الموجود في كتاب الفيدياء. إن لقاءه بالفلاسفة وظهور الفكر الفلسفي في منظوره اللاهوتي من جهة وهيمنة الفكر الفلسفي في البصرة، يوحي بأن نظرية الصرفه متأثرة بالفكر الفلسفي. علاوة على ذلك فإن مصادفة حياة نظام كداعية لخلق القرآن مع قدر كبير من التحديات لفكرة خلق القرآن، عززت تأثر النظرية الصرفه عن فكرة خلق القرآن.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** البصرة، المعتزلة، الصرفه، الهندوس براهما، نظام البصري، إعجاز القرآن، خلق القرآن، الفيدياء، محاكم التفتيش، النموذج.