

## Critical Analysis of the Traditions Prohibiting “*ḍarb al-Qur’ān bi’l-Qur’ān*” and points of view about it

**Mohammad Sadegh Yousofi Moqaddam**

Full Professor, Research Institute of Islamic Sciences and Culture, Qom, Iran. (Corresponding Author). Email: y\_moqaddam@yahoo.com

**Farideh Pishvaei**

Level 4, Masoumiyyah Seminary Institute of Higher Education, Qom, Iran. Email: f.pishvaei@dte.ir

Received: 18/03/2023

Accepted: 18/07/2023

### Introduction

The traditions prohibiting *ḍarb al-Qur’ān bi’l-Qur’ān* (striking the Qur’an with the Qur’an) are among the well-known traditions concerning the Qur’an and its exegesis. Due to their connection with the Qur’an-by-Qur’an hermeneutical method (*tafsīr al-Qur’ān bi’l-Qur’ān*), they have long been debated. Given the severity of the prohibition and equating the act with disbelief, scholars have interpreted these traditions variously: as a prohibition against *tafsīr bi’l-ra’y* (interpretation based on personal opinion), as a literal prohibition against "striking," or as evidence invalidating the Qur’an-by-Qur’an exegetical method itself, categorizing it under *tafsīr bi’l-ra’y*. Conversely, proponents of Qur’an-by-Qur’an exegesis have sought to reconcile these traditions. Considering the significance of these traditions, the importance of the Qur’an-by-Qur’an method, and its practical application by the Infallibles (*ma’sūmīn*) in expounding Qur’anic teachings, this article examines the traditions prohibiting *ḍarb al-Qur’ān bi’l-Qur’ān* and related scholarly viewpoints.

### Materials and Methods

Data for this article is derived from library resources and Sunni and Shi’a ḥadīth and exegetical compilations. Traditions prohibiting *ḍarb al-Qur’ān bi’l-Qur’ān* appear in diverse forms in Sunni ḥadīth collections, their commentaries, and Shi’a sources; this study analyzes Sunni and Shi’a traditions independently. Referenced ḥadīth works include *Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal*, *Maḥāsīn al-Barqī*, *Wasā’il al-Shī’a* by al-Ḥurr al-‘Āmilī, *al-Wāfi* by Fayḍ al-Kāshānī, and *Bihār al-Anwār*. Exegetical sources include *Durūs Tamhīdiyya fī al-Qawā’id al-Tafsīriyya*, *al-Mizān fī Tafsīr al-Qur’ān*, and *Tafsīr al-Šāfi*. Authoritative Arabic lexicons (e.g., *al-‘Ayn*, *al-Šihāh*) were consulted for semantic analysis.

The methodology of this article is critical analysis. The chains of transmission (*isnād*) of these traditions were examined using sources such as *al-Kāfi*, *Ma’ānī al-Akhbār*, *Mawsū’at Ṭabaqāt al-Fuqahā*, *Mu’jam Rijāl al-*

*Ḥadīth, Tafṣīl Ṭabaqāt al-Ruwāt wa al-Ḍu‘afā’, Rijāl al-Najāshī, Rijāl al-Ṭūsī, and Mustadrakāt ‘Ilm Rijāl al-Ḥadīth.* Sunni and Shi’a exegetical and ḥadīth works were surveyed to identify and categorize interpretive perspectives regarding this ḥadīth. The analysis proceeded in two stages: First, presenting researchers’ and exegetes’ interpretations of the traditions. Second, critically evaluating these interpretations through rational argumentation and the practical tradition of the infallible imams, highlighting challenges while adhering to critical standards.

### Results and Findings

Findings revealed that traditions prohibiting *ḍarb al-Qur’ān bi’l-Qur’ān* in Sunni sources pertain to: dispute (*khuṣūma*) among Muslims involving "striking"; argumentation (*mujādala*) involving "striking"; mutual falsification (*takdhīb*) using Qur’anic verses. Shi’a traditions fall into three categories: prohibition of unregulated argumentation using verses; linking the act to deprivation of intellectual sustenance (*rizq al-‘aqlāniyya*); absolute prohibition. Examination of transmission chains (*isnād*) and transmitters, alongside their presence in Sunni sources, supports attribution to the prophet (ṣ) and infallibles.

The other finding of the research is that scholars’ interpretations of the traditions include: prohibition of *tafsīr bi’l-ra’y*; prohibition of *tafsīr al-Qur’ān bi’l-Qur’ān*; literal meaning of *ḍarb*. Critical analysis shows challenges for each view; for instance, the prohibition does not solely target *tafsīr bi’l-ra’y* or the literal act; it does not prohibit *tafsīr al-Qur’ān bi’l-Qur’ān* or thematic exegesis; *tafsīr bi’l-ra’y* and *ḍarb al-Qur’ān bi’l-Qur’ān* differ in ruling (*ḥukm*) and outcome. Distinctions in ruling, outcome and the absence of intent to falsify the Qur’an in Qur’an-by-Qur’an exegetical method are thought-provoking.

### Conclusion

Critical examination of the proposed perspectives and their critique led to the acceptance of the selected viewpoint. In this viewpoint, the traditions prohibiting *ḍarb al-Qur’ān bi’l-Qur’ān* (striking the Qur’an with the Qur’an) fundamentally prohibit a composite practice comprising:

- possessing an adversarial motive against one’s opponent by invalidating the verse they cite and nullifying its content;
- imposing a verse to conform to a predetermined belief or opinion which is *tafsīr bi’l-ra’y* (interpretation based on personal opinion);
- engaging in contentious dispute (*jidal*) and hostility (*mukhāṣama*), resulting in disregarding the characteristic of mutual verification (*taṣdīq*) among Qur’anic verses.

Therefore, according to this perspective, the aforementioned traditions - explicitly or implicitly- indicate the validity of *tafsīr al-Qur'ān bi'l-Qur'ān* (Qur'an-by-Qur'an exegesis).

**Keywords:** Striking the Qur'an (*Ḍarb al-Qur'ān*); Traditions Prohibiting Striking the Qur'an with the Qur'an (*Riwāyāt Ḍarb al-Qur'ān bi'l-Qur'ān*); Qur'an-by-Qur'an Interpretation (*Tafsīr al-Qur'ān bi'l-Qur'ān*); Interpretation by Personal Opinion (*Tafsīr bi'l-Ra'y*); Scholarly Perspectives.