

Essential Parameters for the Reconstruction of Society: A Critical Analysis of Sūrat al-Ḥujurāt, Verse 10

ZAKIR ARAS*

Abstract

In the tenth verse of Sūrat al-Ḥujurāt, the fundamental parameters set by Allah for the structuring of Muslim communities can be delineated as the following: brotherhood, reformation, nation, identity, justice, piety, and community. A close analysis of the verse reveals a hierarchy among these parameters. While the brotherhood forms the first layer of the pyramid, the final layer is the community. The supporting layer that sustains all other levels is the layer of justice. At a fundamental level, the ultimate goal of these layers is to attain Allah's mercy. Consequently, at the pinnacle of these layers lies the pyramid of mercy. The study concludes that there are no clear demarcation lines among these layers; instead, they are interconnected and interdependent. This analysis provides important clues for strengthening the social and moral structure of Muslim societies. The hierarchical structure of these parameters and the relationships between them play a key role in ensuring social solidarity and justice.

Keywords

Sūrat al-Ḥujurāt, exegesis, reconstruction, society, parameters.

Introduction

In the modern era, the quest for global dominance among world actors has escalated, driven by the production of advanced technological weapons and their increased destructive potential. This ambition has intensified among both Muslim and non-Muslim states, heightening the quest for power and control on a global scale. The geopolitical tensions and conflicts resulting from these ambitions pose significant challenges to international peace and security. Given this reality, it is essential to establish peacebuilding initiatives that are based on the principles of open dialogue, mutual understanding, and cooperation. Muslim societies, which share a common culture, history, and religious foundation, need well-defined parameters to foster unity and harmony. These parameters should be rooted in shared values and principles that can guide interstate interactions and promote cohesion within and between Muslim communities. Therefore, this study seeks solutions

* Assistant Professor, Department of Qur'anic Exegesis, Faculty of Theology, Bayburt University, Türkiye.

informed by a Qur'ānic perspective to build bridges of peace among Muslim societies. By exploring the teachings and values articulated in the Qur'ān, the study identifies several key principles and frameworks that can support dialogue, cooperation, and conflict resolution. The goal is to leverage these insights to develop a more peaceful and stable environment within Muslim societies and to contribute to a broader system informed by global peace and stability. By promoting understanding and modes of collaboration based on shared spiritual and ethical foundations, the study aspires to offer practical pathways for reducing tensions and building a more harmonious world.

The modes of inquiry and methods used in this study are both descriptive and analytical in nature. With respect to the descriptive method, the meanings of related concepts were analysed to clarify key terms and ideas from the Qur'ānic mode of analysis and relevant scholarly interpretations. The analytical method examined various parameters that could advance peacebuilding among Muslim societies, including brotherhood, reformation, nation, identity, justice, piety, and community. Opinions of notable Qur'ān scholars (*mufasssīrūn*) were analysed to gain insights into the Qur'ānic perspective on peace and cooperation. A hierarchy of these parameters was carefully established to understand their relative importance and interplay, with the ultimate aim being to identify relationships between these different layers. This structured approach provides a comprehensive understanding of how Qur'ānic principles can promote peacebuilding initiatives among Muslim societies. In sum, while the descriptive analysis clarifies foundational concepts, the analytical method delves into the parameters and their interrelations.

Scholars have studied Sūrat al-Ḥujurāt from various perspectives. Hossain examines verses eleven and twelve of Sūrat al-Ḥujurāt, specifically addressing social issues related to speech, such as backbiting, mocking, and name-calling.¹ Muslich discusses interreligious dialogue as expressed in Sūrat al-Ḥujurāt, verse 13. For him, the term “*ta'āruḥ*” (to know one another) “can be interpreted as a foundation for modern interreligious discourse, promoting peaceful coexistence and harmony within the Islamic worldview.”² Additionally, some studies address

¹ ASM Delowar Hossain, “Roadmap to Social Reconstruction from Surah al-Hujurat: Safeguarding Society from Misinformation and Disinformation,” *IIUM Journal of Religion and Civilisational Studies* 6, no. 1 (2023): 4-24.

² Abdullah Muslich Rizal Maulana, “*Ta'āruḥ* and Its Relevance to Interreligious Dialogue: A Semantic Analysis of Sūrat al-Ḥujurāt, Verse 13,” *Islamic Studies* 63, no. 1 (2024): 93-107, <https://doi.org/10.52541/isiri.v63i1.3003>.

various elements within the entire Sūrat al-Ḥujurāt.³ However, these studies primarily focus on developing a thematic interpretation of the Qur'ānic chapter. In contrast, the present study takes a more detailed hermeneutic approach to a single verse.

Basic Criteria for the Reconstruction of a Virtuous Society

The fundamental parameters outlined in verse ten of Sūrat al-Ḥujurāt revolve around the theme of morality and remind Muslims of their obligations and responsibilities towards one another. Briefly, the parameters of this Qur'ānic verse can be divided into the following classifications:

Brotherhood

Brotherhood refers to those born of the same parents or through one of them, and also extends to relationships formed through milk kinship. It also encompasses the spirit of unity and solidarity among individuals or groups who share commonalities, such as belonging to the same clan, tribe, or nation, or holding similar beliefs, values, and worldviews.⁴ In Islamic encyclopedias and lexicons, a Qur'ān-centric methodology is employed when defining the meanings of words. This approach involves examining all the verses in the Qur'ān related to the subject to establish a comprehensive understanding. For example, Rāghib al-Aṣfahānī's definition of brotherhood encompasses the meanings found in various contexts where the term appears in the Qur'ān.⁵

Another discipline that adopts a holistic approach to the Qur'ān is the science of *al-wujūh wa 'l-nazā'ir* (polysemy/homonymy and synonymy), which studies the different meanings and contexts of words within the Qur'ān. Given that our study is a linguistic analysis focused on specific terms, the sources from this discipline are particularly important. For instance, Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597/1201) identifies five distinct usages of the term “brother” in the Qur'ān, providing corresponding verses for each meaning:

- a) Brotherhood from the same parents or one of them;⁶
- b) Brotherhood within the same tribe (e.g., 11:50);⁷

³ For example, see ASM Delowar Hossain and Muhammad Salama, “Reconstructing Society in the Light of Sūrat al-Ḥujurāt: Protecting Society from Malicious Tongue,” *Islamic Studies* 62, no. 3 (2023): 303–31, <https://doi.org/10.52541/isiri.v62i3.2703>.

⁴ Al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad b. al-Mufaḍḍal al-Rāghib al-Aṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt fī Ḥarīb al-Qur'ān*, ed. Ṣafwān 'Adnān al-Dāwūdī (Beirut: al-Dār al-Shāmiyyah, 1412/1991), 68; Muḥammad b. Muḥammad Murtaḍā al-Zabīdī, *Tāj al-'Arūs min Jawāhir al-Qāmūs* (Damascus: Dār al-Hidāyah, n.d.), 6:46.

⁵ Al-Aṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*, 68.

⁶ For example, Qur'ān 4:11 and 5:30.

- c) Brotherhood in faith and obedience;⁸
- d) Brotherhood in love and affection;⁹ and
- e) Brotherhood as companionship.¹⁰

However, when considering these various meanings, we observe that they all converge in Sūrat al-Ḥujurāt, verse 10. This verse serves as an overarching verse that encapsulates the concept of brotherhood in its most comprehensive form. It can be viewed as a “comprehensive verse” that beautifully defines brotherhood, capturing its essence as the relationship between Muslims who are not only brothers in faith but also companions and friends. Undoubtedly, the word “brotherhood” also carries the meaning of unification. It unites two things as pairs. In this context, the principle of brotherhood is a bond that tightly unites believers.

On the other hand, the Prophet (peace be on him), who preached brotherhood among Muslims, was also an integral part of this community. In this context, brotherhood is a social order that challenges all hierarchical structures and eradicates caste systems, promoting social equality. Therefore, the fact that a prophet emerged from within the community to which he was sent and shared a sense of brotherhood with them has become one of the cornerstones of the philosophy of Islamic propagation. Islam does not support the class discrimination present in many other religions, such as Hinduism. Despite recent anti-discrimination laws in India and the renaming of the lower caste Sudras to “Harijans” (Children of God), they are still regarded as untouchables by other castes to this day.

In this verse, essential elements are mentioned concisely and eloquently. Specifically, *innamā* is used for situations that the audience is already familiar with and understands. This demonstrates how clear and comprehensible the verse is in its expression. According to al-Jurjānī (d. 471/1078), the particle *innamā* is not used for news or situations that the audience is unaware of.

According to the Qur’ān, the establishment of social peace and the reinforcement of the principle of Islamic brotherhood fundamentally rest upon the performance of prayer (*ṣalāh*) and the active

⁷ Ibid., 11:50.

⁸ Ibid., 49:10.

⁹ Ibid., 15:47.

¹⁰ Ibid., 38:23; ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ‘Alī b. al-Jawzī, *Nuzhat al-A‘yun al-Nawāzīr fī ‘Ilm al-Wujūh wa ‘l-Naṣā’ir*, ed. Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Karīm Kāzīm al-Rāḍī (Beirut: Mu’assasat al-Risālah, 1984), 132.

maintenance of the institution of almsgiving (*zakāh*) within Muslim communities. Indeed, *Sūrat al-Mu'minūn* highlights that those who perform their prayers and give *zakāh* are the ones who attain salvation. These two obligatory acts constitute some of the most effective practical means for sustaining Islamic brotherhood. As acts of worship that purify both materially and spiritually, they serve as foundational and functional values that bind Muslims together, strengthen their fraternal ties, and promote social solidarity. In addition, the *Qur'ān* emphasizes other moral virtues essential to the development of a cohesive and ethical society, such as refraining from idle or vain speech and safeguarding one's chastity.¹¹ In *Sūrat al-Ḥujurāt*, the verses introduced by the address "O you who believe!"¹² set forth the ethical and social principles that believers are expected to observe within the framework of religious brotherhood. These include not putting oneself ahead of Allah and His Messenger, maintaining proper etiquette in speech, verifying the accuracy of information received, refraining from mockery, avoiding offensive nicknames, and steering clear of slander. Such principles are of vital importance for preserving Islamic brotherhood and ensuring social harmony.

Reformation (Iṣlāḥ)

The concept of reformation (*iṣlāḥ*) is used in the *Qur'ān* as an antonym to the term mischief (*fasād*). Also, "Mecca is called *Ṣalāḥ*."¹³ "*Ṣulḥ*" (reconciliation) takes on the meaning of doing good when used with the preposition "*ilā*." For example, "*Aṣlaḥtu ilā 'l-dābbah*" means, "I treated the animal well" or "I did good to the animal."¹⁴ Abū Hilāl al-'Askarī (d. 400/1009) explains that the concept of "*iṣlāḥ*" in the *Qur'ān* is used in seven different contexts. These contexts are as follows: *īmān* (faith), *manzilah raḍiyyah* (a respected position), *rifq* (gentleness), *taswiyat al-khalq* (being created properly), *ḍidd al-fasād* (the opposite of corruption), *ṭā'ah* (obedience), and *amānah* (trust). Here, al-'Askarī employs metaphors of the spoilage of fruit and the corruption of human actions to illustrate his point. The author refers to *qubḥ* (ugliness) as moral ugliness, which is not a physical defect but rather a repugnant quality or action that the sound mind rejects and admonishes. The corruption of an apple refers to *physical* and observable corruption, which can be seen

¹¹ Ahmad Zaki Hammad, trans., *The Gracious Qur'an: A Modern-Phrased Interpretation in English* (n.p.: Lucent Interpretations, LLC, 2008), 575.

¹² Ibid., 901–5.

¹³ Aḥmad b. Fāris, *Mu'jam Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, ed. 'Abd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1979), 3:303.

¹⁴ Al-Zabīdī, *Tāj al-'Arūs*, 6:548.

and avoided as “the sound mind admonishes against it,” meaning that reason recognizes the harm of the spoiled apple and therefore avoids it. On the other hand, the corruption of a person, which results from sin, is a form of moral corruption. This type of corruption is not deterred by reason after it occurs; that is, reason cannot prevent the commission of a sin once it has happened. However, reason still plays a role in recognizing the evil of what has occurred, feeling remorse, and striving to avoid repeating it.¹⁵

The concept of reformation (*işlāḥ*) signifies the goal of restoring the earth, as opposed to the meanings ingrained in the phrases of creating corruption on the earth and disrupting order. It is generally associated with the field of action, that is, in the practical realm. It is occasionally used in the Qur’ān as the opposite of evil. Mischief and evil both refer to harmful activities. On the other hand, the concept of reformation, which has a positive meaning, corresponds to reconstructing the earth and eliminating the passions of hatred and enmity among people. The same trilateral root is also found in the name of a prophet, Ṣāliḥ.¹⁶ *Işlāḥ* means showing virtuous behaviour to everyone, being peaceful, living in order, and accepting differences based on the fundamental principles of peace. The Qur’ānic concept of reform and reformation applies to all human beings and is an act of peace among Muslims.

Nation

A nation defines the organization of different tribes in a coherent state. According to Ernest Renan (d. 1892), the concept of a nation, which assembles itself around some common values, is just like a soul and is a transcendent code that constitutes a desire to live together.¹⁷ Although Renan presents this as a positive situation, the notion of the nation is a negative concept that classifies people along ethnic and linguistic lines. Every nation considers its people to be superior vis-à-vis other nations and even goes as far as excluding certain nations altogether from time to time. The concept of patriotism was developed to address the shortcomings of the concept of the nation.¹⁸ The point to be noted here is that the concept of a nation consists of a given people who

¹⁵ Al-Ḥasan b. ‘Abd Allāh al-‘Askarī, *al-Wujūh wa ‘l-Nazā’ir*, ed. Muḥammad ‘Uthmān (Cairo: Maktabat al-Thaqāfah al-Dīniyyah, 1428/2007), 283-85.

¹⁶ Al-Aṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*, 489-90; Mustafa Çağrı, “İhsan,” in *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (Istanbul: TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi, 2019), 24:485-86.

¹⁷ Ernest Renan, “What is a Nation?” trans. Martin Thom, in *Nation and Narration*, ed. Homi K. Bhabha (London: Routledge, 1990), 19.

¹⁸ Steven Grosby, *Nationalism: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 18.

collectively share a given land or territory. In this context, the concept of nation is territorial.

The Qur'ān addresses the concept of a nation and the conditions for its existence. It emphasizes the diversity of societies and recognizes the different tribes, languages, and cultures insofar as they are signs of Allah's wisdom and creativity. Furthermore, the Qur'ān recognizes the different identities and responsibilities of different nations and emphasizes the principle of sending Prophets to guide each society. References to the Israelites, Christians, and Sabians in the Qur'ān further underscore the importance of the concept of nation. By recognizing these communities, the Qur'ān highlights the diversity of belief systems and cultural backgrounds within the broader framework of humanity.

النَّاسُ مِنْ جِهَةِ التَّمَنَّا أَسْكَاءَ ••• أَبُوهُمْ آدَمُ وَالْأُمُّ حَوَاءُ

فَإِنْ يَكُنْ لَهُمْ مِنْ أَصْلِهِمْ شَرَفٌ ••• يُفَاخِرُونَ بِهِ فَالطِّينُ وَالْمَاءُ.¹⁹

People are equal in their creation and form
 Their father is Adam, and their mother is Eve
 So if they have any honour from their origin
 For which they can boast, it is only clay and water.

In this context, the Qur'ān invites people to see and appreciate the diversity of the earth: "Say, 'Travel throughout the earth.'"²⁰

The emergence of strife, war, and conflict between individuals, societies, and states in our global age can be attributed to the concept of the other. We have the habit of including the people we marginalize in the category of "not from us" and thereby initiating a phase of hostility and enmity towards them. All conflicts arise from the dilemma of us and the other. However, although the process of differentiation contains virtues such as an interest in the unique characteristics that define a people, it also causes separation. Individuals with an awareness of difference are not prejudiced against this danger. The basis of diversity is interaction, solidarity, socialization of the individual, love, and collectivity. The Qur'ān captures this reality in the thirteenth verse of Sūrat al-Ḥujurāt, which reads in the following manner: "O mankind! Lo! We have created you male and female and have made you nations and tribes that ye may know one another. Lo! The noblest of you, in the sight

¹⁹ Ibrāhīm b. 'Umar al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar fī Tanāsib al-Āyāt wa 'l-Suwar* (Cairo: Dār al-Kitāb al-Islāmī, n.d.), 6:127.

²⁰ M. A. S. Abdel Haleem, trans., *The Qur'an: A New Translation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 253.

of Allah, is the best in conduct. Lo! Allah is Knower, Aware.”²¹ In a Prophetic tradition, it is reported that the Prophet said, “O mankind! Your Lord is one, and your lineage is one. No Arab has superiority over a non-Arab, and no non-Arab has superiority over an Arab. No white has superiority over a black, and no black has superiority over a white.”²² Both the Qur’ān and the *ḥadīth* corpus present an international worldview in which human beings are equal, created by a single Creator, in which the philosophy of meeting and merging with each other is at the centre of their differences and is not shaped around several regional elements (such as country, nation, and language).

Moreover, the term “believers” in the verse is not confined to any nation, society, or region. As such, the “believers” segment of the verse does not refer to any political, social, or religious group among Muslims. This principle is the affirmation of a higher value that prevents all kinds of disputes and conflicts among people.²³ It can be deduced that the main reason for the polarization of ideas and individuals is the contempt and weakness of those who do not belong to them. The fact that the verse begins with an inclusive address, such as “O mankind,” is because the verse condemns all kinds of mockery between people and does away with any notions of ethnocentrism.²⁴

It is a verse that equalizes human beings in the sense that all human beings were created from a single soul and thereby created in tribes and societies.²⁵ The fact that it mentions the philosophy of diversity after the unity of the species underscores the concept of the other. It is due to this latter fact that it conveys that there is no “other,” and that everything is equal to something fundamental. As al-Kirmānī points out, the verse is the greatest witness and guarantor in this regard, since God has established that all human beings are brothers and sisters by affirming here that all human beings are descendants of one mother and one

²¹ Marmaduke Pickthall, *The Meaning of the Glorious Koran* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1930), 535.

²² Anis Ahmad, “Mevdûdî,” in *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (Ankara: TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi, 2004), 32:432-37.

²³ ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Umar al-Bayḍāwī, *Anwār al-Tanzīl wa Asrār al-Ta’wīl*, ed. Muḥammad ‘Abd Al-Raḥmān al-Mara’shalī (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā’ al-Turāth al-‘Arabi, 1418/1997), 5:137.

²⁴ Aḥmad Muṣṭafā al-Marāghī, *Tafsīr al-Marāghī* (Cairo: Sharikat Maktabat wa Maṭba‘at Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī wa Awlādih, 1946), 26:142.

²⁵ ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq b. Ghālib b. ‘Aṭīyyah al-Andalusī, *al-Muḥarrar al-Wajīz fī Tafsīr al-Kitāb al-‘Azīz* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1422/2001), 5:152.

father.²⁶ Just as Allah established common values for all human beings in His Book and made all human beings equal, he also established the principle of religious and faith-based commonality. This is in addition to the unity of origin to preserve the ideal of brotherhood among believers. Thanks to these dynamics, the Islamic community, by adhering to the principles of the Qur'ān, has been able to deal with the problems of life, defend itself against external factors, and extend a helping hand to its Muslim brothers in religious unity wherever they are, and to protect them with its reconciling aspect when any problem arises between them.

Consequently, Islam has given precedence to the concept of the *ummah* over the nation. Recognizing localized problems in the nation, the Qur'ān has characterized Muslims as a single *ummah* and described them as “the most virtuous *ummah*.”²⁷ For these reasons, we contend that translating the phrase “*khayr ummah*” in the verse as “the best nation” is inaccurate. Given the emphasis on spiritual values and the concept of a unified *ummah* over localized national identities, a more precise translation would be “the best community” or “the best of peoples.” However, this phrase is predominantly rendered as “the best nation” in most English translations of the Qur'ān.²⁸ Furthermore, while the concept of the nation is more of a project of coexistence based on material values, Islam, particularly in the case of this verse, focuses on spiritual values such as promoting goodness and combating evil. One of the key reasons for attaining the status of the “best community” (*khayr ummah*) is the commitment to enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong. This represents one of the most fundamental duties in Islam. Through the practice of such moral virtues, a continuous awareness of coexistence and communal responsibility is cultivated among Muslims.

Identity

In the Qur'ān, Allah has declared believing servants to be brothers and sisters without distinction. In this regard, the Qur'ān aims to unite believers into one body based on the fundamental principle of *tawḥīd* (God's unity and sovereignty). Most commentators have interpreted the brotherhood of Muslims to mean that they follow the same religion.²⁹ Undoubtedly, the religion of Islam has given Muslims a great form of

²⁶ Muḥammad Karīm Khān al-Kirmānī, *Tafsīr Sūrat al-Ḥujurāt* (Kirman: Maṭba'at al-Sa'ādah, 1371/1951), 110.

²⁷ Qur'ān 3:110.

²⁸ George Sale, trans., *The Qur'ān* (London: C. Ackers for J. Wilcox, 1734), 44.

²⁹ Aḥmad b. Abī Ṭālib al-Ṭabarsī, *Majma' al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān* (Beirut: Dār al-'Ulūm, 2005), 9:170.

identity, that is, through the principle of brotherhood. A pivotal verse, where Allah says, “He hath named you Moslems,”³⁰ is a manifestation of this blessing. Al-‘Imādī (d. 982/1574) emphasizes the brotherhood in the verse by saying, “Muslims belong to the same origin, to a faith that leads to eternal life.”³¹ Al-Rāzī (d. 606/1210) emphasizes that the brotherhood of faith is more permanent and that the unity of religion is superior to the unity of lineage, referring to the poetic verse:

أبي الإسلام لا أب [لي] سواه ... إذا افتخروا بقبس أو تميم³²

My father is Islam; I have no father except it, while they boast of Qays or Tamīm.

Some commentators, such as al-‘Imādī, have interpreted the identity of being a Muslim, which the Qur’ān presents as the supreme identity for Muslims rather than a nation, in relation to the hereafter, due to their faithful reading of the Qur’ān. These commentators have adopted the method of emphasizing the afterlife to strengthen the faith of Muslims. However, Muslims have a greater need for brotherhood in this temporal world. This is not to say that brotherhood in the hereafter is unimportant, but it is clear that Muslims need this identity more in the global age in which we currently live. One might have expected, however, that these commentators would have sought reasons for the preservation and further consolidation of this superior identity in the world. An example can be found in the following Prophetic tradition: “A Muslim is a brother of another Muslim, so he should not oppress him, nor should he hand him over to an oppressor. Whoever fulfills the needs of his brother, Allah will fulfill his needs.”³³

On the other hand, some commentators have included several elements necessary for the establishment and consolidation of Islamic identity in Muslim societies. When al-Sam‘ānī (d. 489/1096) delves into the underlying purposes concealed within this verse, he asserts that this brotherhood serves objectives such as *al-tawālī* (mutual loyalty and friendship), *al-ta‘āḍud* (solidarity), and *al-tarāḥum* (mutual compassion).³⁴

³⁰ Qur’ān 22:78.

³¹ Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Muṣṭafā al-‘Imādī, *Irshād al-‘Aql al-Salīm ilā Mazāyā al-Kitāb al-Karīm* (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā’ al-Turāth al-‘Arabī, n.d.), 8:120.

³² Fakh al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb* (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā’ al-Turāth al-‘Arabī, 1420/1999), 28:106.

³³ Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, ed. Muḥammad Zuhayr (Beirut: Dār Ṭawq al-Najāh, 1422/2001), 9:22.

³⁴ Maṣṣūr b. Muḥammad al-Tamīmī al-Sam‘ānī, *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān*, ed. Yāsir b. Ibrāhīm (Riyadh: Dār al-Waṭan, 1997), 5:220.

Another commentator also includes fraternity and fellowship among the purposes of the verse.³⁵ Similarly, al-Zamakhsharī (d. 538/1144) attributes the objectives of brotherhood mentioned in the verse to unity. The assertion that “believers are nothing but brothers” serves as a fundamental identity that prevents attitudes and behaviours leading to disintegration.³⁶

This aspect of the verse urges Muslim societies to acknowledge natural differences and diversities among them, band together towards their singular essence, and unite under the banner of a single entity. This divine call, which essentially fosters a sense of belonging to a religion and identity, also regulates various religious, political, and social interpretations that may emerge from this perspective. The dictum “*Aṣḥab al-wāḥid huwa ’l-īmān*” (One fundamental principle is faith)³⁷ exemplifies this notion. In this regard, the Islamic movement, with its diverse sects, religious interpretations, and ideological currents, is a movement guided by a central directive. This call, rooted in the fundamental philosophy of preserving the ideal of brotherhood, refers to this phenomenon and aspires towards this lofty and noble blessing.

The fact that the Qur’ānic definition of Muslims as brothers is permanent means that otherworldly denominations are transitory. Therefore, instead of relying on a common set of goals that are likely to disappear, the definition of brotherhood calls for acting in light of the unity of religion—permanent and essential—when disputes arise between them. Al-Ṭabāṭabā’ī (d. 1981) posits that while birth is the origin of terrestrial life, faith serves as the source of eternal life in paradise.³⁸ Consequently, he considers religious unity to be superior to lineage and kinship unity. Al-Qurṭubī (d. 671/1273) asserts that “the brotherhood of religion is stronger than the brotherhood of kinship,”³⁹ offering clear evidence to support this claim. This is because robust and cohesive faith and brotherhood are essential for leading a dignified life. Indeed, the Qur’ān has established values among Muslims that are eternal and timeless. According to al-Kūrānī (d. 893/1488), the brotherhood of faith is enduring and strong, while the unity of lineage has a temporal limit.

³⁵ Al-Baghawī, *Ma’ālim al-Tanzīl*, 7:341.

³⁶ Maḥmūd b. ‘Umar al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf ‘an Ḥaqā’iq Ghawāmiḍ al-Tanzīl* (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-‘Arabī, 1407/1986), 4:366.

³⁷ Al-‘Imādī, *Irshād al-‘Aql al-Salīm*, 8:120.

³⁸ Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Ṭabāṭabā’ī, *al-Mīzān fī Tafsīr al-Qur’ān* (Beirut: Mu’assasat al-‘Ilmī li ’l-Maṭbū’āt, 1994), 18:317.

³⁹ Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Qurṭubī, *al-Jāmi’ li Aḥkām al-Qur’ān*, ed. Aḥmad al-Baraddūnī and Ibrāhīm Aṭṭayyish (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyyah, 1964), 16:322.

While the unity of lineage and descent is complex and driven by worldly interests, religion's unity is clear and selfless.⁴⁰

Justice

The second part of the verse that we will focus on is “*Fa aṣliḥū bayna akhawaykum*.” The Qur’ānic scholars read the verse in the dual form (*tathniyah*). Ibn Sīrīn (d. 110/728), however, read it as “*bayna ikhwānikum*” in the plural form. Al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923) informs us that he found this reading (*qirā’ah*) contrary to the common one and did not prefer reciting it in the form of a plural (*jam’*).⁴¹ Al-Zuḥaylī comments, “Let piety to Allah, fear of Him, and adherence to truth and justice guide you in correction and in all your affairs. Do not show prejudice or favouritism to any of your brothers, for they are your brothers. Islam has made them all equal, so there is no distinction or difference between them.”⁴²

The Qur’ān says, “The believers are none other than brothers. Therefore, make peace between your brothers and do your duty to Allah, so that you may obtain mercy.”⁴³ When we examine the exegesis of the verse, we find that some commentators did not go far beyond the literal meaning. In the literal sense, Muslims are brothers, and if there is a dispute between them for any reason, they should mediate.⁴⁴ This is already evident from the literal meaning of the verse. Again, following the principle of “*al-tafsīr bi ’l-lāzim*” (interpreting something through what it necessarily entails), they have interpreted the phrase “*Fa aṣliḥū bayna akhawaykum*” to mean that mediation should be conducted in a just manner.

In the Qur’ān, justice is both a necessity and a result of judgment. In Sūrat al-Ḥujurāt, verse 9, Allah’s imperative of “*Fa aṣliḥū baynahumā bi ’l-’adl*” (then make peace between them with justice)⁴⁵ specifically emphasizes the criterion of justice. Additionally, the commentators have highlighted the various *qirā’āt* of the verse to further support this conclusion.⁴⁶ The bond of brotherhood requires only mediation. Notably,

⁴⁰ Aḥmad b. Ismā’īl al-Kūrānī, *Ghāyat al-Amānī fī Tafsīr al-Kalām al-Rabbānī*, ed. Bahattin Dartma (Istanbul: Ibn Haldun University Press, 2019), 5:53.

⁴¹ Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi’ al-Bayān fī Ta’wīl al-Qur’ān*, ed. Aḥmad Muḥammad Shākir (Beirut: Mu’assasat al-Risālah, 2000), 22:277.

⁴² Wahbat al-Zuḥaylī, *al-Tafsīr al-Munīr* (Damascus: Dār al-Fikr al-Mu’āṣir, 1418/1997), 26:239.

⁴³ Qur’ān 49:10; Pickthall, *Meaning of the Glorious Koran*, 534.

⁴⁴ Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi’ al-Bayān*, 277.

⁴⁵ Abdullah Yusuf Ali, trans., *The Holy Qur’ān* (Tunis: Dar al-Kitāb al-Aziz, 2022), 507.

⁴⁶ Al-Baghawī, *Ma’ālim al-Tanzīl*, 7:341.

in the most challenging times, the Qur'ān consistently reminds Muslims that they are brothers. This implies that the strength and bond derived from this unity are the strongest and will prevail over any kind of separation. Abū Ishāq al-Zajjāj (d. 311/923), on the other hand, argues that the verse calls for alliance and unity after stating that every Muslim is descended from one mother and one father and has unity in both religion and lineage. The principle that a Muslim majority does not inherit from an infidel father is the most significant indicator of this argument.⁴⁷ The grandest intention and purpose of the verse is to foster a Muslim's compassion for his brother and his good treatment of him. The verse acts as an ethical shield that supports the Muslim body during challenging times.⁴⁸ Mediation between Muslims is also one of the most outstanding examples of avoiding evil and is considered one of the religious duties of Muslims.⁴⁹ Consequently, this religious and conscientious mission is a necessity of brotherhood.⁵⁰ The commentator al-Kāshānī defines the concept of reform as constituting a requirement of justice itself.⁵¹ Dialogue is the locus where the concept of reconciliation (*muṣālaḥah*) between brothers and sisters is most relevant. This is because the verse indicates that there may be gaps between Muslims that allow room for dialogue and commands that these disagreements be resolved through discourse. Just as with other nations, solid channels of dialogue should be established among Muslims, and the existing problems should be diagnosed and treated collectively. Surprisingly, commentators have not interpreted the phrase "reconcile" in the verse as dialogue. Making peace between them and acting with peace is an example of an absolute covenant. The commentators did not include sufficient material in their works to reflect this aspect of a peace treaty, the rules of which are set by Allah and the criteria of which are determined. They have preferred a very closed interpretation, such as "reconcile between them if they disagree." To be clear, this interpretation does not have the characteristic of a genuine episode of *tafsīr*, as understood from the literal meaning of the verse. *Tafsīr* means to reveal what is hidden and to open and explain in detail what is closed.

⁴⁷ Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad al-Zajjāj, *Ma'ānī 'l-Qur'ān wa l'rābuh*, ed. 'Abd al-Jalīl 'Abduh Shalabī (Beirut: 'Ālam al-Kutub, 1988), 5:36.

⁴⁸ Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 4:366.

⁴⁹ 'Abd al-Karīm b. Hawāzin al-Qushayrī, *Laṭā'if al-Ishārāt*, ed. Ibrāhīm al-Basyūnī (Cairo: al-Hay'ah al-Miṣriyyah al-'Āmmah li 'l-Kitāb, n.d.), 3:441.

⁵⁰ Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī, *Maḥāsin al-Ta'wīl*, ed. Muḥammad Bāsil 'Uyūn al-Sūd (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1418/1997), 8:529.

⁵¹ Al-Qāsimī, *Maḥāsin al-Ta'wīl*, 8:529.

In terms of its reconciliatory aspect and the way it exemplifies an agreement, the verse remains closed in this respect.

Ibn ‘Āshūr, however, clarified the meaning of the verse and interpreted it based on a covenant. His interpretation of this verse is that when believers have a disagreement, they should make peace among themselves. It is customary among men that if there is a dispute between two brothers, the rest of the brothers must join hands to settle it by seeking reconciliation between them. The same normative rule applies to the Muslim community as well: if there is a dispute between two groups, the rest of them must rise to seek reconciliation between them and send messengers until they mend what has fallen and rebuild what has been injured and destroyed.⁵² Carefully analysed, this commentary contains the essential building blocks of a treaty. One of the requirements of the treaty is to send peace envoys to both sides at the same time to achieve reconciliation between the opposing parties. At the same time, the material and moral damages of the parties are determined and duly compensated. Unfortunately, this restorative aspect of the verse was neglected by the exegetical commentators, who, in many cases, had sectarian ambitions and dealt with controversial theological issues. These topics do not constitute a relevant portion of exegesis. Yet, they filled the works of exegesis with controversial issues, such as the status of the *fāsiq* (grave sinner) and the view of the Mutazilite sect on this issue.⁵³ Al-Zamakhsharī was also aware of this situation and explained this form of covenant with a social tradition that was practised in his time. It is the custom of the people that if such a situation arises between two brothers, the rest strive to remove it, leave no stone unturned to bring about reconciliation, and send messengers to both parties until the reconciliation is secured. He notes that the brothers in religion have a *fortiori* greater right to this bonding than other parties.⁵⁴ With these few exceptions, the commentators, however, have failed to address how the verse could be used to solve disputes between social bodies and political actors. This may have been because the commentators were not well-versed in such areas of law. They could not interpret the Qur’ān’s judgment sufficiently, especially with regard to state administration and legal norms concerning the individual. They did not focus on these legal and social values and instead assigned preponderance to philological analyses of the verses, differences among

⁵² Al-Ṭāhir b. ‘Āshūr, *al-Taḥrīr wa l-Tanwīr* (Tunis: al-Dār al-Tūnisiyyah, 1984), 26:243.

⁵³ Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Juzayy al-Kalbī, *al-Tashīl li ‘Ulūm al-Tanzīl*, ed. ‘Abd Allāh al-Khālīdī (Sharjah: Dār al-Arqam Ibn Abī l-Arqam, 1416/1995), 2:297.

⁵⁴ Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 4:366.

the *qirā'āt*, and unnecessary sectarian debates in the past *tafsīr* literature. This is evidenced by the fact that al-Zamakhsharī cites a situation that he witnessed in his society as a fleeting example. Notwithstanding this, he does not deal sufficiently with the verse itself. Interpreting a highly important legal norm like reconciliation, which prevents chaos caused by problems among Muslims, as a simple provincial custom is not a sufficient reason to criticize the commentators. The main reason for the criticism is that they merely rely on such a weak example and do not explore this issue in depth. Sūrat al-Ḥujurāt primarily outlines the practical responsibilities incumbent upon Muslims. A central principle for preserving lasting peace within the Muslim community is to maintain impartiality when mediating between conflicting parties and to administer justice in all judgments.

Piety

It is important to note here that piety (*taqwā*) is another parameter that is a guarantee of the covenant of brotherhood among Muslims. The term piety is generally understood as the fear of God. The Qur'ānic revelation, particularly in the earlier period of the prophetic career of Muḥammad, proliferates through its most impressive eschatological visions. Interestingly, the concept of *taqwā* is closely connected with this general atmosphere.⁵⁵ The widespread translation of the word “*taqwā*” as fear in English translations of the Qur'ān is considered somewhat problematic. However, there are synonyms for the word in English, such as piety. Izutsu (d. 1993) may have run into this problem because of his teleological glorification of fear.⁵⁶

As it is evident, in the verse, the section expressing “*wa ittaqū Allāha la'allakum turḥamūn*” speaks of the necessity of piety. Here, the word *taqwā* is used in the imperative form. Given that the verse commands fearing Allah, we can conclude that Allah is warning the believers against injustice. In fact, in line with the philosophy of reconciliation, the verse commands the parties to reconcile, thereby preventing any form of partiality that constitutes injustice.

Based on Allah's command to fear Him in this part of the verse, we can conclude that Allah warns believers against enacting injustice in any form. The verse, which is in line with the philosophy of reformation, orders the parties to reconcile and prevent injustice, which is a form of favouritism. In fact, within this context, one considers the verse, which reads, “Verily God commandeth justice, and the doing of good, and the

⁵⁵ Toshihiko Izutsu, *Religious Concepts in the Qur'ān* (McGill: Queen's University Press, 2002), 195.

⁵⁶ D. Wainess, “Muslim Piety and Food of the Gods,” *al-Qanṭara* 21, no. 2 (2000): 414.

giving unto kindred what shall be necessary, and he forbiddeth wickedness, and iniquity, and oppression: he admonisheth you that ye may remember.”⁵⁷ This Qur’ānic segment establishes the importance of justice and many other values. For these reasons, it has become famously known as the most comprehensive verse of the Qur’ān.⁵⁸ The concept of justice is considered to be the greatest value that establishes the Muslim *ummah*’s understanding of the social state and ensures equality among opposing ideas and opinions. Whatever Islamic theologians, philosophers, and jurists may suppose about the status of justice, no one has denied that justice epitomizes the ethical relationships that God calls human beings to practise in every dimension of their respective lives. As Averroes makes clear, even Aristotle taught that justice is the central and highest virtue, the virtue that perfects all the other virtues.⁵⁹ Therefore, through this prism, piety becomes the most fundamental parameter of faith.

In Sūrat al-Ḥujurāt, the concept of *taqwā* appears five times: three times in the imperative form (*ittaqū*) (49:1, 49:10, 49:12), once in the noun form (*al-taqwā*) (49:3), and once in the form of the superlative degree (*atqā*) (49:13). In the three imperative sentences, believers are called upon to adopt a practical and moral stance. These verses emphasize social responsibilities such as showing reverence for divine revelation and authority, mediating justly between fellow Muslims, and restoring bonds of brotherhood. In this context, *taqwā* is presented as a behavioural obligation and a guarantee of social harmony. In contrast, the superlative adjective degree (*atqā*) refers to the highest degree of *taqwā*, indicating a ranking among Muslims in the sight of Allah. It suggests that there is a distinction in virtue, with *taqwā* being the measure of spiritual excellence. In the usage of *taqwā* in the noun mode (*al-taqwā*), it is portrayed as the result of a respectful and sincere attitude towards the Prophet. In this particular instance, *taqwā* is depicted as an inner consciousness and a noble virtue, presented as a spiritual reward for those who uphold proper conduct.

Community/Social Harmony

In Arabic lexicology, the word “*ummah*” (Muslim community) means any group united by something, such as a single religion, time, or place,

⁵⁷ Qur’ān 16:90; Sale, *The Qur’ān*, 202.

⁵⁸ Zakir Aras, “Fath al-Raḥīm al-Raḥmān fī Tafsīr Āyat ‘Inna Allāha Ya’muru bi al-‘Adl wa al-Iḥsān’ by Abū al-Ḥasan b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad al-Khaṭīb al-Shirbīnī al-Shāfi’ī: Study and Critical Edition,” *Cumhuriyet Theology Journal* 27, no. 2 (2023): 628.

⁵⁹ Daniel Philpoot, *Just and Unjust Peace: An Ethic of Political Reconciliation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 155.

whether this unifying thing is a blessing given to man by Allah or a choice.⁶⁰ Indeed, the fact that Muslims are an *ummah* as one body is because they have the same religious beliefs. This unity rejects the other condition of being an *ummah*, which is to be at the same time and place. This is because Islam is the name of the religion that continues from Adam to the Day of Judgment. Therefore, it cannot be limited to one time and place.

The last part of the verse, “so that mercy may be shown to you,”⁶¹ shows that there are two pillars that define the philosophy of the Muslim social community. The first is the material world, and the second is the spiritual world. In the material world, it includes several parameters that will solve problems that will arise among Muslims. In the spiritual world, the model of ethical conduct is that the believers who live in the virtuous society of Islam can be forgiven by Allah. This unitary model affirms the following: “In professing to provide man with a political and legal system as well as a spiritual faith, Islam denies at the outset the conception familiar in Christendom of a separation between temporal and spiritual matters.”⁶²

However, Sayyid Qutb (d. 1966) considers this verse a legislative principle that falls under the remit of a “*qā'idah tashrī'iyyah 'amaliyyah*” (legislative practical principle), which is an essential step in maintaining Muslim societies. He refers to the social dimension of the verse and states that it is a verse that came to protect the believing community from any delusions, divisions, enmities, and fragmentation.⁶³ From this point of view, it is possible to infer that the verse has a protective mission. The verse states that strife, disagreement, and war between people, especially between communities of the same religion, is a natural occurrence and that the conscious Muslim's role is to mediate between the two groups fairly and constructively and to try to reconcile them. Indeed, divisions and disputes do occur from time to time because of different points of view and ways of thinking. In this sense, the Qur'ān accepts the philosophy of difference and assumes a mediating role within the social environment. This is the most unambiguous indication that the Qur'ān is multicultural in its outlook and respectful of different views. It accepts people from both groups as interlocutors and offers suggestions for solving the disputes and problems that arise between them. The verse communicates an exceptionally inclusive message,

⁶⁰ Al-Aṣḥānī, *al-Mufradāt*, 86.

⁶¹ Wahiduddin Khan, trans., *The Qur'ān* (New Delhi: Replika Press, 2009), 395.

⁶² Malcolm H. Kerr, *Islamic Reform: The Political and Legal Theories of Muhammad 'Abduh and Rashid Rida* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), 3.

⁶³ Sayyid Quṭb, *Fī Zīlāl al-Qur'ān* (Cairo: Dār al-Shurūq, 1412/1991), 6:3343.

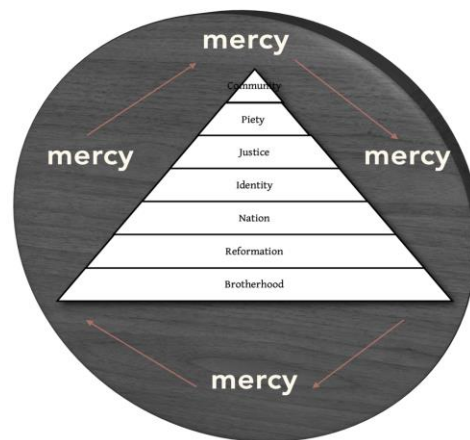
addressing all divisions and conflicts between societies within the framework of faith. It features the distinctive characteristic of being a comprehensive verse directed towards the entirety of the Muslim community without limitation.

The verse also contains essential values about the law of war, especially in inter-Muslim conflict. The fact that it touches on the issue of war, primarily through the values of brotherhood and reform, demonstrates that Islam does not seek any wars between believers and that other Muslims can and should intervene in the wars that will occur between Muslim communities. Therefore, within the framework of this verse, the commentators have analysed the ruling in light of the Islamic rulings found in the chapters on rebels from among the Muslims, that is, those who commit tyranny in war and cause mischief among Muslims. ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib was quoted as saying that the verse implies that causing mischief does not remove the attribute of faith because Allah calls such Muslims brothers.⁶⁴ Because of war, one or both of the contending groups will likely behave in a manner that crosses the legitimate limit. According to Ibn ‘Āshūr, the statement “believers are brothers” implies that reconciliation between two opposing groups is obligatory.⁶⁵

Relationship Between the Parameters in the Verse

The tenth verse of Sūrat al-Ḥujurāt delineates the parameters essential to the reconstruction of Muslim society into seven distinct layers, all of which can be structured in a pyramid.

Figure: Hierarchy of Parameters



⁶⁴ ‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-Khāzin, *Lubāb al-Ta’wīl fī Ma’ānī ’l-Tanzīl*, ed. Muḥammad ‘Alī Shāhīn (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1415/1994), 4:180; Abū ’l-Barakāt al-Nasafī, *Madārik al-Tanzīl wa Ḥaqā’iq al-Ta’wīl*, ed. Yūsuf ‘Alī Budaywī (Beirut: Dār al-Kalim al-Ṭayyib, 1998), 3:353.

⁶⁵ Ibn ‘Āshūr, *al-Taḥrīr wa ’l-Tanwīr*, 26:244.

The seven-level pyramid represents the foundational parameters for peacebuilding in Muslim societies, organized from the base to the ultimate goal. At the base is the brotherhood, emphasizing the importance of strong ties and unity among Muslim societies. Brotherhood serves as a solid foundation upon which all the other parameters are built and fashioned. Building on this foundation, reformation expresses the need for communities to rebuild themselves and restore their values, thereby revitalizing positive historical values in the present. Beyond reformation, the nation component represents a shared identity and sense of belonging, requiring communities to identify themselves as a nation and to strengthen this collective identity. This shared level of intersubjectivity is further developed through identity, which shapes how individuals and communities see and define themselves. The preservation and development of authentic identities are vital for social cohesion. At the centre of this structure is justice, critical for the peaceful and stable existence of societies. Fair treatment of all individuals and communities is essential for maintaining cohesion and preventing conflict. Besides fostering justice at the highest level, piety implies a deep sense of reverence for and consciousness of God, encouraging communities to adhere to their spiritual values and practise them in daily life. At the top of the pyramid is community, with the ultimate goal being the development of a harmonious and cohesive society. The community represents the culmination of all the other layers and embodies a well-integrated and peaceful society. This structured approach outlines the necessary steps for achieving a strong, unified community, thereby promoting peace and cooperation among Muslim societies. There is an intimate relationship between the layers of the pyramid that sustains the dynamism of society. Again, these layers are not separate from each other, but interrelated, whereby one supports and strengthens the other. For this reason, the special mention of piety is related to its emphasis on mercy: "Do not transgress the commandments of your Lord, so that mercy may be upon you."⁶⁶ The Qur'ān informs us that the behaviour that leads to mercy is to be pious in this place. Al-Zamakhsharī affirms that one will receive Allah's mercy if one emulates such standards in their day-to-day conduct.⁶⁷

The seven essential parameters of achieving mercy in Islamic teachings form a cohesive whole that complements each other. Brotherhood, as emphasized in verse ten of Sūrat al-Ḥujurāt, is the foundation of the bond between believers; it removes hatred and

⁶⁶ Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī, *Ta'wīlāt Ahl al-Sunnah*, ed. D. Majdī Bāslūm (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 2005), 9:333.

⁶⁷ Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 4:366.

division, preparing the ground for mercy. Reformation aims to repair broken relationships and re-establish bonds of brotherhood through peaceful steps. The consciousness of the nation fosters social unity, paving the way for the spread of mercy, while identity prepares individuals for mercy through humility and an unbiased stance required by being a believer. Justice preserves social balance by ensuring fairness, removing the barriers of oppression that hinder mercy. Piety opens the way to earn Allah's mercy by adhering to His boundaries. Finally, the spirit of community promotes solidarity, ensuring that mercy becomes a societal, rather than individual, virtue. These seven parameters function as interconnected links, providing a holistic roadmap to reach the ultimate goal, that is, Allah's mercy. Each stage nourishes the other, contributing to the realization of mercy on both individual and societal levels.

Al-Qurṭubī has noted that Sūrat al-Ḥujurāt is unanimously considered a Medinan sūrah.⁶⁸ This sūrah is particularly recognized for addressing ethical conduct, daily life, and resolving interpersonal issues, earning it the designation of the "sūrah of ethics." Mawdūdī (d. 1979) mentions that many of the teachings within this sūrah were revealed during the final stage of the Prophet Muḥammad's life in Medina.⁶⁹ According to the understanding of the Qur'ān's revelation, Muslims transitioned from an individualistic to a community-based approach during the Medinan period. During this time, political, social, and cultural regulations were established to maintain order among people. Consequently, the sūrah highlights the concept of brotherhood, indicating that Muslims who gather around such a noble value will contribute to a culture of coexistence and, ultimately, can only achieve the maturity of civilization and culture through this unity. This sūrah not only regulates social relations but also plays a fundamental role in the construction of Islamic society. Ultimately, it lays down the moral foundations necessary for building a strong social structure and fostering solidarity among Muslims.

Conclusion

In this article, some terms used in the tenth verse of Sūrat al-Ḥujurāt were analysed, aiming to conduct a hermeneutical interpretation of the entire verse. Each term in the verse was examined individually using an analytical method, and the views of various commentators were presented and critiqued wherever necessary.

⁶⁸ Al-Qurṭubī, *al-Jāmi' li Ahkām al-Qur'ān*, 16:300.

⁶⁹ Ebu 'l-A'lā Mevdūdī, *Tefhim'ul-Kur'an* (Istanbul: İnsan Yayınları, n.d.), 5:431.

This verse was a prime example in the Qur'ān that emphasized brotherhood, dialogue, and reform among Muslims. In classical *tafsīr* books, such parameters were typically assigned only their literal meanings, with medieval commentators often providing simple examples from their periods. While commentators like al-Rāzī partially discussed these concepts in the context of constructing a Muslim society, the majority overlooked this aspect. In contrast, modern exegetes delved into these themes in greater depth.

The parameters in this verse are brotherhood, reform, nation, identity, justice, piety, and community. In the study, the first level of the pyramid within the hierarchy of these parameters was determined to be brotherhood, with the final layer being community. The fundamental importance of brotherhood in this hierarchy signifies that all the subsequent layers depend on it. However, beyond the final layer, all these layers' ultimate goal is Allah's mercy. This ultimate and overarching layer serves as the peak point and summit of the verse, acting as the guarantor of all the aforementioned parameters.

There are intricate connections between every one of these layers, suggesting that the verse offers a framework for rebuilding Muslim society in a bottom-up manner. This system of societal modelling presents a significant opportunity for Muslim communities to contribute to the principles of peace and brotherhood and reform their spiritual and ethical conduct.

* * *