

Assessing the Word *Ummī* with the Character of the Prophet (pbuh) in the Qur'an and Hadiths

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Abstract

To obtain the exact meaning of the Qur'anic words and what is meant by the choice of these particular words by God Almighty, it is best to use the Holy Qur'an itself and the traditions of the Ahl al-Bayt. Since this book has been revealed and united with the same letters and words by the wise Creator, the very arrangement of words and verses together can help human beings in finding their meanings. The Qur'an's interpretive method through the Qur'an, which is the use of the verses itself to convey its meanings and concepts, is a way to be sure that it will be unparalleled if it is alongside with the correct narrations of *Ahl al Bayt*. Now it can be used the same way to get the exact meaning of the Qur'anic words, namely, to find the meaning of the Qur'anic word in addition to using traditional and conventional methods such as searching the root in the originality of the language of the word and searching in the old sources, we should benefit from the verses of the Qur'an and their context that the word has been used in them; and in putting together the authentic traditions endorses meant was obtained.

In this research, we tried to find out the meaning of the word *Ummī* in the Holy Qur'an using the Qur'an itself and the verses in which the word is repeated. By putting these verses together and using

the root of this word, the meaning was obtained, which was also confirmed by the narratives. In fact, *Ummī* in the Qur'an means the son and descendants of Abraham, and especially through Ismael, his eldest son, in front of Isaac, the other son of Abraham. Considering that the root of *Ummī* is derived from the *Ummah*.

Keywords: *Ummī*, *Ummah*, the *Ummī* Messenger, the *Ummī* Prophet.

Introduction

Achieving and access to the meaning of the word *Ummī* in the Holy Qur'an can be different, considering one of the two roots mentioned in the lexical sources for this word, namely (ie, *Umm* or *Ummah*) can be different. In order to get the correct meaning of this meaning, it is better to look at this root by examining the verses mentioned in the holy Quran that the word and its derivatives have been used in them. Until now, the meaning of *Ummī* has been more widely understood by considering the root (*Umm*) for this word, and in many cases, it is related to literacy and the ability to read and write. Of course, other meanings also mentioned that we should avoid them. In order to examine the exact meaning of this word in the Holy Qur'an, it is necessary to first mention the lexical root of this word.

Searching the root of *Ummī* in the dictionaries

Two roots are mentioned for this word in the dictionaries:

1. It means: Origin (Ibn faris, vol. 1, p. 19); Place of reference (Ibid); Strong and firm (Ibid, p. 20); Chief (Ibid, p. 24); Mother (Raghib Isfahani, p. 86).

2- Ummah means: Group, clan and congregation (Ibn manzur, p. 26); Person who has a single religion (Ibn Anbazi, p. 270); Religion and creed (Ibn faris, p. 22); Body and human face (Ibn Faris, p. 22); The righteous (Ibn Ayazi, p. 270); Obedience (Ibn Faris, p. 22); the Scholara and scientist (Ibid).

After extracting the roots of the word from the lexicon, it is necessary to check the verses that this term has used with its derivatives, namely Ummī and Ummīyin, for the Prophet (pbuh), either directly or indirectly. In two verses, 158 and 159 of Surah al-A'raf, this word has been used in the form of (*Ummī*) along with the Messenger and the Prophet, and in the Sura Jumu'ah, this word has been used in the form of (*Ummīyin*), which mentions the Prophet (pbuh) to be linked to this particular group; and in verses 20 and 75 of Al-'Imran, this concept can be partly aligned with the Messenger of Allah (pbuh).

Ummīyin in Sura Jumu'ah

In the first verse of Sura Jumu'ah, Allah speaks of praising all the beings of the world for the Almighty Allah, and then in the next verse, the discussion of the raising (*Be'stat*) of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) has been raised, as well as the goals of this *Be'stat* mentioned in the verse.

«هو الذي بعث في الاميين رسولا منهم يتلوا عليهم آياته و يزكيهم و يعلمهم الكتاب و الحكمة و ان كانوا من قبل لفي ضلال مبين» (Jumu'ah, 2)

[It is He Who raised among Ummīyin (the inhabitants of Mecca) a Messenger from among themselves, who recites to them His verses and purifies them, and teaches them the Book and the Wisdom, although before that they were certainly in manifest error].

Ummī that has been mentioned in this verse in the form of (*Ummīyin*) for those whom the Prophet has been raised among them, and by mentioning the phrase (a Messenger among them), it tells the fact that the Prophet shares with them in the attribute Ummī.

In the rest of the verse, there is talk of recitation of the verses, purifying and teaching the Divine Book and Wisdom, and these duties belong exclusively to the Messenger, and expresses the goals of the *Be'stat*.

This is that why Ummīyin has been exactly called and addressed as Ummīyin, and why the Prophet is referring to this attribute, and why the recitation, education, and teaching has been discussed immediately after that, should be pondered and reflected.

Searching the concept of *Ummīyin* in the Sura Jumu'ah

In verses 124-129 of the Sura Baqarah, it is said that after Prophet Ibrahim succeeded in the divine exams and passing the various trials, and according to the command of Allah Almighty, along with Ismael his son made the building of

Ka'bah, and then they made the following request from their Lord:

«ربنا واجعلنا مسلمين لك و من ذريتنا امه مسلمه لك و
ارنا مناسكنا و تب علينا انك انت التواب الرحيم»
(Baqarah, 128)

[Our Lord! Make us submissive to You and of our descendants a nation submissive to You. And teach us our religious rituals and turn to us. Verily, You are the One Who accepts repentance, the Most merciful].

In the following verses, he refers to some traits of the descendants and Abraham's people who follow Abraham (he has been chosen in the world, and in the Hereafter he is of the righteous) and he is Muslim and pure surrender of the Lord.

«ربنا وابعث فيهم رسولا منهم يتلوا عليهم آياتك و يعلمهم
الكتاب و الحكمة و يزكهم انك انت العزيز الحكيم»
(Baqarah, 129)

[Our Lord! Raise up among them a messenger who recites upon them your verses and teach them the Book and the Wisdom and purify them. Verily! You are the Mighty, the All-Wise].

In fact, the phrase “فى الاميين” in the Sura Jumu'ah replaced the “فيهم” in the verse 129 of Sura Baqarah. And this refers to the phrase (ذريتنا) ربنا (امه مسلمه واجعلنا مسلمين لك و من ذريتنا امه مسلمه لك و ارنا مناسكنا و تب علينا انك انت التواب الرحيم

It is understood from these verses that the Prophet, who was raised among the Ummīyin, is, in fact, the subject of the prayers of Abraham, and are specifically from the descendants of

Abraham and Ismael. As mentioned in the Prophet's (pbuh) narrative. (Man la Yahduru al-Faqih, vol. 4, p. 368).

On this basis, it can be said that the root of *Ummīyin* has been taken from the root of the Ummah in the verse 2 of Sura Jumu'ah. Because the "Ummīyin" of the same nation is from the family of Abraham and his son Isma'il, and the Prophet is considered to be the peak because he is the Messenger and has been raised for education, purification and recitation of the divine book; and he possesses the highest degree as a surrender for the *Vajhullah*.

Ummīyin in Sura Āl-e 'Imran

In the verse 18 of Sura Āl 'Imran, Allah clearly states that Islam is the only way of pure surrender, and, in a better way, he mentions Islam as only religion with Himself, and then in the verse 20 of that Sura says;

«فان حاجوك فقل اسلمت وجهى لله و من اتبعن و قل
للذين اتوا الكتاب و الاميين ءاسلمتم فان اسلموا فقد اهتدوا و ان
تولوا فانما عليكم البلى و الله بصير بالعباد»

[So, if they dispute you, then say: I have surrendered myself to Allah and whoever has followed me (has surrendered himself to Allah too); and say to those who have been given the scripture and Ummīyyin: Have you accepted Islam (as your religion)? So, if they accept Islam, then certainly, they have been guided, and if they turn away, then only conveying of the message is your responsibility; and Allah sees the servants].

This interpretation, that is, confessing to the surrender of Islam, is the same as that from which Abraham was also asked to admit.

«اذ قال له ربه اسلم قال اسلمت لرب العالمين»

(Baqarah, 131)

[And (remember) when his Lord said to him: submit. He said: I have submitted to the Lord of the worlds].

و وصّى بها ابراهيم بنيه و يعقوب يا بنى ان الله اصطفى

لكم الدين فلاتمومتن الا و انتم تسلمون». (Baqarah, 132).

[And Abraham enjoined it on his sons and Jacob: O my sons, certainly Allah has chosen for you this religion, so, definitely do not die except (while) you are Muslims].

«ام كنتم شهداء اذ حضر يعقوب الموت اذ قال لبنيه ما

تعبدون من بعدى قالوا نعبد الهك و اله ابائك ابراهيم و

اسماعيل و اسحاق الها واحدا و نحن له مسلمون» (Baqarah,

133).

[Or were you witnesses when death approached Jacob when he said to his sons: What will you worship after me? They answered: We worship your God and God of your fathers Abraham and Ismail and Isaac, the only divinity and we all surrender to him].

Allah Almighty in the verse 136 of Sura Baqarah commands all to admit to believing in the Lord and the celestial scriptures and divine messengers and calling themselves Muslims:

«قولوا ءامنا بالله و ما انزل الينا و ما انزل الى ابراهيم و

اسماعيل و اسحاق و يعقوب و الاسباط و ما اوتى موسى و

عيسى و ما اوتى النبيون من ربهم لا نفرق بين احد منهم و نحن

له مسلمون»

[Say: We believed in Allah and that which has been sent down to us and that which has

been sent down to Abraham and Ismail and Isaac and Jacob and al-Asbat and that which has been given to Moses and Jesus and that which has given to the Prophets from their lord. We make no difference between any of them and we have surrendered to Him].

In the verse 20 of Sura Āl'Imran, Allah calls on the Prophet to speak to them in the face of the debate: "I and my followers submit to the Lord and Islam, but in the following verse the Prophet's audience is divided into two categories: the People of the book and Ummīyin; that is, in this verse, he separates Ummīyin from the Prophet and his true followers. That is, the Ummīyin and the people of the book are addressees of the Prophet (pbuh), and a conceptual separation takes place against an external truth.

This separation in the concept of Ummī between Ummīyin and the Prophet, and the meaning of the word Ummīyin and the People of the book in the verse 20 of Āl 'Imran, gives us the meaning of this word that the Ummīyin who are in the verse before the Prophet and who are in surrender to the fact that Submissive or not submissive, while religion and the path are one and there is only Islam with Allah; in fact, this group, according to this verse, only communicates with the Prophet by their ancestors; that is, the same concept that was mentioned in the 2nd verse of the Jumu'ah, that Ummīyin was obviously astray before the Messenger was sent, and his purpose was to teach, purify and teach books and wisdom.

Ummī in the concept of the surrendered Ummah

In the verse 129 of Sura Baqarah, as mentioned, the request of Abraham from the Lord was to be formed from his descendants, a Muslim nation, to be familiar with the rituals and be of the people of the repentance, and among them be a messenger to purify and teach them and to educate them.

Also, according to the verse 124 of Baqarah: “And (remember) when Abraham was tried by his lord with certain words, then he fulfilled them. (Allah) said: I certainly appoint you as an Imam for the people. (Ibrahim) said: And of my descendants? (Allah) said: My covenant will never include the wrongdoers”, of the family of Abraham (pbuh) are the cruel people that the authorities and divine successes do not concern them. This group can consist of the descendants of Ismail or Isaac, or of their other sons. The result is that in the real sense of this descendant and this nation, there are Muslims as well as the wrongdoers. But among this Muslim nation, it is pointed out to the followers who follow Islam and submit to the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) along with the Prophet of Allah, although they will join them later. In the following, both verses 2 of Jumu'ah, and 8 of Āl 'Imran are mentioned.

“And others from among them as well who have not yet joined them; and He is the Mighty, the Wise”, some commentators have considered this phrase to be referred to Ummīyin (Al-Mizan, vol. 19, p. 265); and others have referred this sentence to the هم in the word يعلمهم (Rawd

al-Jinan wa Rawh al-Janan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an, vol. 19, p. 193; Rawh al-M'ani fi Tafsir al-Qur'an, vol. 14, p. 289).

In some books of tafsir, following this verse, a hadith from the Prophet quoted that when he was asked: Who are they? The Messenger of Allah laid his hands on Salman's shoulder and said:

If faith is in *Thurayya*, men among them will come to reach it (Nur al-TRhaqalain, vol. 5, p. 323; Kash al-Asrar wa 'Udat al-Abrar, vol. 10, p. 96).

Accordingly, if we consider the phrase (و ... آخرين منهم), according to some commentators, to refer to (هم) in (يعلمهم), and put this narration along with it; this group whom will later be taught and purified by the teachings of the Prophet (pbuh) and yet they have not joined, are Iranians and the followers of Ali.

In the verse 20 of Sura Āl 'Imran: “So, if they dispute you, then say: I have surrendered myself to Allah and whoever has followed me (has surrendered himself to Allah too)”, they are also the same people who followed the Prophet in surrendering to the *vajhullah*. This meaning becomes clearer when the true meaning of the *vajhullah* becomes clear, because in this verse it is not merely a matter of believing in Islam, but the pure surrender of to the *vajhullah* is important.

There is a hadith from the Imam Baqir and Imam Rida, saying: We are the *Mothani* whom God gave to our Prophet, and we are the face of God in the earth.

We are the Mathani, whom Allah has given us to our Prophet. We are, the face of God (Wajhullah) in the earth, we fluctuate between your appearances, and those who know us, know us; and those who do not know us, there is a certainty before them. (Basair al-Darajat, vol. 1, p. 65; Safinat al-Bihar, vol. 8, p. 411).

By looking at this category of narratives, it is understood that *vajhullah*, which the Prophet surrendered purely to it, and those who followed them, that is, the group referred to in the third verse of Sura Jumu'ah (And others from among them as well who have not yet joined them), are true followers of *Ahl al-Bayt*.

***Ummīyin* from the viewpoint of the people of the book in the Qur'an**

In order to find a more exact meaning of the word *Ummīyin* in the Qur'an, it is also helpful to examine the view of the people of the book to *Ummīyin*, which is referred to in the verse 75 of Sura Āl 'Imran:

“And among the People of the Book, there is someone whom if you give him an abundant property as a trusteeship, he will return it to you, and there is someone whom if you give him a Dinar as a trusteeship, he will not return it to you unless you constantly insist on it. That is because they said: There is no loss for us in those who do not have the Book, and they lie against Allah while they know”.

This verse, which its audience is the Prophet of Allah, refers to this issue that a group of people of the book who consider themselves

to be superior to others, violate the return of lending and faith in the covenant.

According to this verse, this group of the people of the book consider themselves, more than any other group and nation, to be superior to the *Ummīyin* (Descendants of Abraham and Isma'il), which later on, the verse considers this a lie that they attributed it to the divine scriptures and divine revelation, while they themselves are aware of this distortion. Sheikh Tusi, in the commentary of the following verses, says: The Jew believes that it is not a way to return the Arab property because they considered them polytheists. (Tibyan, vol. 2, p. 504).

This attribution of Shirk, which Sheikh Tusi referred to it, besides the word *Ummīyin*, which Allah mentions for these people, can be due to the fact that in verse 135 of Sura al-Baqarah:

“And they said: Be Jew or Christian (so) you will be guided. Say: But (we follow) the religion of Abraham who were tending toward the truth and he was not of the polytheists”.

This verse places Abraham's religion in front of the people of the book and defends Abraham and his followers and removes the Shirk from Abraham. However, at the time of the Prophet's mission, a number of people were in the Arabian Peninsula in the error, but it can be understood that this attribution by the people of the book, according to the verse 75 of Sura Āl'Imran, in the light of verse 135 of Sura baqarah, was due to the fact that they called the *Ummīyin* or Abraham's descendant as

polytheist. This was due to the fact that they considered Abraham as polytheist, and they considered the only way of guidance as being Jewish or Christian.

Review of the word *Ummī* along with the words Messenger and Prophet

The attribution of *Ummī* has been mentioned for the Prophet in two verses in Sura al-A'raf in the Holy Qur'an. But this word is associated with other attributes, such as messenger and prophet:

“Those who follow this messenger, the Prophet Muhammad, the *Ummī* whom they found his name mentioned in the Torah and the Bible with them; (the same Prophet) enjoins them the good deeds, and forbids them from evil deeds, and makes good things, lawful for them, and prohibits evil things for them, and removes from them their burden and the shackles that were upon them. So those who believed in him and honor him, and help him, and follow the light that was revealed to him, they are successful” (al-A'raf, 157).

“Say: O people! I am the Messenger of Allah unto all of you; the One to whom belong the sovereign of the heavens and the earth; there is no god except Him, He gives life and gives death; so believe in Allah and His Messenger, the prophet, the *Ummī* who believes in Allah and His words; then follow Him, hoping to be guided” (al-A'raf, 158).

In verse 158, the beginning of the verse refers to the subject of recognizing the attributes

of the Prophet by the people of the book, which is mentioned in other verses of the Qur'an, including verses 146 of Sura al-Baqarah and 20 surah al-An'ām. It is pointed out that the people of the book are well acquainted with the apparent characteristics as well as the features of such things as the approximate place and time of occurrence, events and the approximate location of the Prophet's mission, in the fifth chapter of the Torah, this has been stated (Majma' al-Bayan, vol. 4, p. 749).

The Qur'an states that the people of the book know him (the Prophet) as they know their children). But in these two verses, Prophet Muhammad is introduced with three traits: Prophet and Messenger and the third trait *Ummī*. But why the two attributes of the Prophet and Messenger are placed next to *Ummī* also has to be considered very important. The Prophet's attribute, which is related to the discussion of his mission, is mentioned in the 2nd verse of Sura Jumu'ah, in which the meaning of the *Ummī* Messenger also applies.

Naba literally means huge news that is useful. (Taj al-'Arus, vol. 1, p. 255), and *Nabiy* is the subject name of *Naba*, the one who brings news. And this attribute is mentioned for the Prophet, which, in addition to the mission, is another matter, and that is the announcement of the great news referred to in verse 2 of the Sura Naba, and that great news is the *Wilayat* of *Amir al-Muminin* Ali (as).

Abu Hamzah narrated from Imam Baqir that I said to the Imam: May I sacrificed for you!

The Shiites are asking you about the interpretation of this verse « Concerning what they have asked each other? From that great news» He said: So if you wanted to tell them or not to tell them, then he said: But I tell you the interpretation, I said: What are they asking? He said: This verse has been revealed concerning Ali, the Commander of the believers (as). The Ali said: "There is no sign for Allah greater than me (Tafsir Nur al-Thaqalain, vol. 5, p. 491).

But the issue does not end here, rather in the following verse it says: "So those who believed in him and honor him, and help him, and follow the light that was revealed to him, they are successful" (al-A'raf, 157).

In the following verse, in the meaning of the light mentioned herein, it says:

"Those who follow this messenger, the Prophet Muhammad, the Ummī whom they found his name mentioned in the Torah and the Bible with them; (the same Prophet) enjoins them the good deeds, and forbids them from evil deeds, and makes good things, lawful for them, and prohibits evil things for them, and removes from them their burden and the shackles that were upon them".

That God at the beginning of the verse mentions three attributes for the Prophet: *Al-Rasul*, *Al-Nabi*, and *Al-Ummī*, all three of these attributes are written in the book of the Torah and the Gospel. In other words, the people of the book were recognizing the Prophet of the end of time with all the apparent characteristics of his mission and the mission of communicating the

Great News for his companion light (Ali) and the descendants of the Prophet, who were from Isma'il, who were in their divine books (Tafsir al-Qumi, vol. 1, p. 242).

And this is where God commands the people of the book to obey the companion light of his messenger, so that they do not have any proofs in their disobedience.

In fact, the inclusion of Ummī in this verse along with *Al-Rasul* and *Al-Nabi*, both of which are important attributes to the Prophet, implies that the Prophet has been known to the people of the Book in the meaning of *Ummī's* word along with the Messenger and Prophet. That is, the reference of divine books to the Prophet's descent were well-known, as has been mentioned in his apparent features and moral attributes:

"Say: O people! I am the Messenger of Allah unto all of you; the One to whom belong the sovereign of the heavens and the earth; there is no god except Him, He gives life and gives death; so believe in Allah and His Messenger, the prophet, the Ummī who believes in Allah and His words; then follow Him, hoping to be guided" (al-A'raf, 158).

In this verse, these attributes are repeated, and this time the command of obedience to the Messenger and the Ummī Prophet is given and a fourth feature is mentioned, and that is the faith in God and the words of God, and again He commanded the people to follow it after mentioning this attribute, and this faith is expressed in the words of God, a distinct and

desirable attribute that is in addition to faith in God, and then He commanded the people to obey the prophet.

In order to find the exact meaning of the word, the following narratives are mentioned in verse 37 of the Sura Baghrah, where God says about repentance of Adam: “And then Adam adopted some (secret and holy) words from his Lord, so that (Allah) turned toward him; He absolutely is the Acceptor (of repentance), the Especially Merciful”.

Huwaizi says:

Kulaini narrates a hadith, saying: The Infallible Imam in the interpretation of the verse: “And then Adam adopted some (secret and holy) words from his Lord”, says: Adam said: No god but you, Glory be to You and Praise be to You! I did evil and wronged myself, so forgive me and do mercy on me for you are the best forgivers; No god but you, Glory be to You and Praise be to You! I did evil and wronged myself, so forgive me and do mercy on me for you are the best merciful of the merciful; No god but you Glory be to You and Praise be to You! I have done wrong, and wronged myself, so turn Your face unto me for you are the Acceptor of repentance, Merciful (Tafsir Nur al-Thaqalain, vol. 1, p. 67).

In fact, in both verses, by putting together the attributes of the Prophet (pbuh), which can be examined both for the people of the book and for the people

But in the following Sura Jumu'ah, in the third verse, which is related to the second verse, we read:

“And others from among them as well who have not yet joined them; and He is the Mighty, the Wise”, some commentators have considered this phrase to be referred to Ummīyin (Al-Mizan, vol. 19, p. 265); and others have referred this sentence to the هم in the word يعلمهم (Rawd al-Jinan wa Rawh al-Janān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'an, vol. 19, p. 193; Rawh al-M'ani fī Tafsīr al-Qur'an, vol. 14, p. 289).

In some books of tafsir, following this verse, a hadith from the Prophet quoted that when he was asked: Who are they? The Messenger of Allah laid his hands on Salman's shoulder and said:

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Accordingly, if we consider the phrase (وآخرين منهم ...), according to some commentators, to refer to (هم) in (يعلمهم), and put this narration along with it; this group whom will later be taught and purified by the teachings of the Prophet (pbuh) and yet they have not joined, are Iranians and the followers of Ali.

Conclusion

The Holy Quran, although revealed in Arabic to the Prophet, has a unique combination. Indeed, the light and divine truths are revealed by the Creator and are spelled out in words and

letters to be understood and implemented by the servants. This format, though in Arabic expression, but the most worthy way to discover the truths and meanings of these words, is to search the verses and words and the relationship between them together and other signs, and to confirm its meanings by truths of the valid and authentic hadiths of *Ahl al-Bayt*.

The study of the meaning of the word *Ummī* in relation to the character of the Prophet in the Qur'an and the traditions of the *Ahl al-Bayt* led us to the meaning of the word that *Ummī* in the Qur'an regarding the Prophet means the son and descendant of Prophet Abraham of his child, Isma'il, that the Prophet Himself is the center and destination of all this nation and not just this nation but all of the nations during the history of creation, as we read in the precious prayer of Jami'a Kabirah: "و قَادَتِ الْأُمَّمَ" means the *Ahl al-Bayt*, and at its head are the Prophet of Allah, the leader and the master of all the nations from Adam to Khatam. And this is the meaning of centrality and orientation of the same root (*Umm*) that the *Ummah* is taken from the same root. In fact, the Messenger of Allah is the turning point and the center of the destination of Abraham's people and the same accepted prayer of his father, which is the turning point of the world of creation of humanity.

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