The Rhetorical Levels of *al-Fāsilah* in the Qur'an: A Scientific Study of Its Concept, Structure, and Meaning

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Abstract:

This study examines the phenomenon of the Qurʾānic *fāṣilah* (verse-ending) as a distinct rhetorical–stylistic component that combines rhythmic function with semantic import. The *fāṣilah* is approached through three integrated rhetorical levels phonological, morphological, and syntactic alongside an expanded consideration of its figurative and contextual significations.

At the phonological level, Qurʾānic rhythm is analyzed through diverse examples that highlight tonal variation, the balance of *Fawāṣil* verse-endings, and patterns of embellishment and sequential cadence.

At the morphological level, the discussion focuses on formal and rhetorical variation in the selection of morphological patterns that best fit contextual meanings, thereby foregrounding the precision of Qurʾānic expression.

At the syntactic and semantic level, the study surveys grammatical phenomena such as fronting and postponement, as well as ellipsis, and relates them to the intended meanings of the verses, demonstrating a structural cohesion between the *fāṣilah* and the content of the verse.

The study concludes with applied examples that demonstrate the rhetorical effects of stylistic choice in shaping the *fāṣilah*, and the degree to which each *fāṣilah* verse-ending is suited to its contextual and semantic position thus confirming the inimitable character of the Qurʾānic system of *Fawāṣil* verse-endings.

Keywords: Qurʾānic *fāṣilah* ; phonological rhythm ; morphological structure ; rhetorical syntax ; semantic proportionality ; rhetorical inimitability.

Introduction

The Qurʾānic *fāṣilah* constitutes a highly distinctive stylistic component within Qurʾānic composition. It brings together rhythmic beauty and fine-grained rhetorical meaning, which has long made it an object of attention for exegetes and rhetoricians, both classical and modern. This phenomenon has generated several scholarly questions regarding its nature and functions: Is the *fāṣilah* merely an ornamental sound device, or a meaning-bearing element integrated into the architecture of sense? How does it interact with the verse's syntactic, morphological, and stylistic context?

The research problem addressed in this study arises from the need to move beyond partial conceptions that restrict the *fāṣilah* to its phonetic dimension, toward a more comprehensive approach that reveals the multiplicity of rhetorical levels through which it operates in the Qurʾānic text. Such an approach highlights its role in achieving structural and semantic coherence within the noble verse.

Accordingly, this study aims to analyze the Qurʾānic *fāṣilah* through three interrelated levels:

1. the phonological level;
2. the morphological level;
3. the syntactic and semantic level;

with the purpose of demonstrating the deeper rhetorical dimensions that govern the selection and deployment of verse-endings, and their effects on textual structure and meaning.

Methodologically, the study adopts descriptive and analytical procedures: it first traces the phenomenon through its lexical and technical definitions, then undertakes an inductive, applied reading of selected Qurʾānic *Fawāṣil* verse-endings, drawing on the determinations of linguists and rhetoricians, the nuanced interpretations of exegetes, and the illustrative evidence found in works on rhetorical inimitability.

In this way, the study seeks to develop an integrated view of the *fāṣilah* as a functional structure within Qurʾānic composition one by which the verse's meaning is completed and without which its rhetorical cadence cannot be fully realized.

1. The Concept of *Fāṣilah* Lexically and Terminologically

1.1 Lexical meaning

Lexicographical definitions of *fāṣilah* are various yet convergent; here we select representative statements from major reference dictionaries.

Ibn Manẓūr, for example, defines it under the root *faṣl* as "the separation that serves as a barrier between two things ; one says: he separated them, so they became separated; and I separated the thing, so it was cut off."[1] Separation is also used to distinguish between entities whether similar or opposed, homogeneous or different so as to make them discernible. It may likewise be used for clarification. For instance, a necklace consists of similar pearls, which may be separated by beads that enhance their brilliance and beauty. Ibn Manẓūr calls these beads "*fawāṣil*," stating that "the *fāṣilah* is the bead that separates between two beads in a string ; and *faṣl* is judgment between truth and falsehood."[2] The plural of *fāṣilah* is *fawāṣil*.

Al-Rāzī states in *Mukhtār al-Ṣiḥāḥ* that in the noble Prophetic hadith : "Whoever spends a separating expenditure will have such-and-such a reward," interpreting it as an expenditure that separates between one's faith and disbelief; and *tafṣīl* also conveys the sense of clarification. [3]

In prosody, *fāṣilah* is classified into a minor and a major type: the minor consists of three consecutive vowels followed by a consonant (e.g., *ḍarabta*), while the major consists of four consecutive vowels followed by a consonant (e.g., *ḍarabakum*). [4]

It is related to rhymed prose in a manner comparable to how rhyme functions in poetry [5]

1.2 Technical meaning

Scholars have faced difficulty in delimiting and defining the *fāṣilah*, and their views differ, though they largely revolve around one idea: the *fāṣilah* is among the most distinctive features of Qurʾānic style, through which the Qurʾān established a new path in eloquent expression. One reason for this definitional difficulty is the variety of Qurʾānic verse-endings: the *fāṣilah* may be a single word, a segment of a word, or even a full clause. *Fawāṣil* Verse-endings are also called "heads of verses" i.e., the final word of the verse and the endings of its letters.[6]

Al-Rummānī (d. 336 AH) defines the *fawāṣil* as "letters that resemble one another at the ends, producing a good conveyance of meaning; *fawāṣil* are eloquence, whereas rhymed prose is a defect because *fawāṣil* follow meanings, while in rhymed prose meanings follow them."[7] In *al-Burhān*, al-Zarkashī reports that Qāḍī Abū Bakr (d. 403 AH) concurs with al-Rummānī, holding that *fawāṣil* are

"letters resembling one another at the ends by which meanings are conveyed."[8] Abū ʿAmr al-Dānī (d. 444 AH), meanwhile, considers the *fāṣilah* to be "the final word of a sentence." [9]

Ahmed Abu Zaid mentions in his book Graphical Proportionality in the Qur'an that Muhammad al-Hasnawi holds that tafṣīl is the concordance of the endings of a verse in the letters of rhyme or in meter, in a way required by the meaning and to which souls find repose.[10] He also notes that Naʿim al-Yani defines the concept of the fāṣilah with three meanings, any one of which it may occur with

1. the rhyme letter by which the verse ends resembling (or not necessarily resembling) the counterpart of rhymed prose and the rhyme of poetry.
2. the concluding segment of the verse, thus approaching "rhyme" in the technical sense proposed by al-Khalīl;
3. the concluding portion appended to the verse, functioning as the best-fitting, firmly-positioned closure.[11]

In sum, the lexical sense of *fāṣilah* revolves around separation, distinction, and delimitation: it marks off one thing from another for the sake of differentiation, whether at a material level or at an abstract semantic level. This semantic core takes on rhetorical dimensions in eloquent usage particularly in the Qurʾānic context where it becomes a device that frames and organizes discourse.

Technically, the *fāṣilah* is an artistic element of the Qurʾān's style, conferring a distinctive cadence and sonic cohesion upon the text without restricting semantic freedom or forcing meaning to serve sound ornamentation, as is often the case in rhymed prose .Rather, the Qurʾānic *fāṣilah* remains subordinate to meaning and governed by it, aligned with the demands of rhetorical appropriateness and semantic precision thereby granting it a singular expressive force.

The *fāṣilah* may take several forms: a single word, a short clause, or even a phonetic segment; yet in all cases it functions as the verse's closure and produces rhythmic and psychological effects in reception. In this respect it resembles poetic rhyme in its rhythmic role, while exceeding it in the degree to which it serves meaning without empty embellishment.

2. Levels of Rhetorical Analysis of the Qurʾānic *Fāṣilah*

The rhetorical and scholarly study of the phenomenon of Qurʾānic verse-endings (*fawāṣil*) is addressed here through three levels:

2.1 The Phonological Level

By the Qurʾān's phonological system is meant its remarkable cohesiveness and harmony in vowels and vowel-movements, lengthening, nasal resonance, linkages, and pauses an extraordinary consistency and a captivating orchestration that draws the ear and appeals to the soul.[12]

The late Muṣṭafā Ṣādiq al-Rāfiʿī, describing the musicality of Qurʾānic *Fawāṣil* verse-endings, states:

"...It is the method of phonetic enthrallment in language, whose effect is natural in every soul; in the Noble Qurʾān, it is akin to being the sound of its inimitability through which it addresses every human soul.".[13]

In his discussion of the *fāṣilah* at the phonological level, Bakrī al-Shaykh Amīn writes:

"If we were to look into the Qurʾān's verse-endings and study the letters that occur frequently within them especially at their final position we would find the letters *nūn*, *mīm*, *alif*, *wāw*, and *yāʾ*. These letters all carry a rhythmic tone not found in other letters. Three of them are often realized with prolongation, corresponding to what prosodists call 'release' in poetic verse; and two are easy in articulation and possess a pleasing nasal resonance that facilitates a beloved sound from the nasal passage this, indeed, is the charge of melody."[14]

Among the most prominent features of Qurʾānic usage of *Fawāṣil* verse-endings are the following:

1) Departing from rhythmic monotony (rhythmic variation / "breaking" the rhythm)

The Qurʾān employs this feature to enrich expression through varied musical contours in which waves of sound descend and echoes diversify. This is achieved through two principal means:

First: Alternation among clauses (*qarāʾin*) with respect to musical length. One finds medium-length endings followed by shorter ones, then longer ones, then a return to medium or short, and so on. An example is God's saying:

﴿أَلَمْ نَجْعَلِ الْأَرْضَ مِهَادًا * وَالْجِبَالَ أَوْتَادًا * وَخَلَقْنَاكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا * وَجَعَلْنَا نَوْمَكُمْ سُبَاتًا * وَجَعَلْنَا اللَّيْلَ لِبَاسًا * وَجَعَلْنَا النَّهَارَ مَعَاشًا * وَبَنَيْنَا فَوْقَكُمْ سَبْعًا شِدَادًا﴾ (al-Nabaʾ 6–12)

Second: Melodic escalation, namely beginning with short *Fawāṣil* verse-endings and then following them with progressively longer ones. An example is His saying:

(Sūrat al-ʿAṣr) ﴿وَالْعَصْرِ * إِنَّ الْإِنسَانَ لَفِي خُسْرٍ * إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ * وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ * وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ﴾

Rhythm may at times be balanced and closely patterned, yet its tones still differ, and no trace of monotony is felt. This is realized, for instance, in Sūrat al-Inshirāḥ.[15] God says:

(al-Inshirāḥ 1–4) ﴿أَلَمْ نَشْرَحْ لَكَ صَدْرَكَ * وَوَضَعْنَا عَنكَ وِزْرَكَ * الَّذِي أَنقَضَ ظَهْرَكَ * وَرَفَعْنَا لَكَ ذِكْرَكَ﴾

2) Parallelism

This refers to phonetic correspondence achieved by repeating the final sound-pattern and reiterating the rhyme-letter, which enriches expression with a beloved musical resonance.

Among passages in which Qurʾānic verse-endings share the same meter and rhyme-letter is His saying:

(al-Nabaʾ 13–14) ﴿وَجَعَلْنَا سِرَاجًا وَهَّاجًا * وَأَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ الْمُعْصِرَاتِ مَاءً ثَجَّاجًا﴾

Likewise, among examples where endings agree in meter and rhyme-letter, and in addition display an instance of "committing what is not required", producing a refined phonetic paronomasia, is His saying:

(al-Ḍuḥā 9–10) ﴿فَأَمَّا الْيَتِيمَ فَلَا تَقْهَرْ * وَأَمَّا السَّائِلَ فَلَا تَنْهَرْ﴾

Among examples in which Qurʾānic discourse uses internal verse-endings is His saying:

(al-Humazah 1) ﴿وَيْلٌ لِكُلِّ هُمَزَةٍ لُمَزَةٍ﴾

The Qurʾān may also bring a clause in the pattern of a preceding one, in word order, while the clause-endings agree in meter and rhyme-letter.[16] An example is His saying:

(al-ʿĀdiyāt 4–5) ﴿فَأَثَرْنَ بِهِ نَقْعًا * فَوَسَطْنَ بِهِ جَمْعًا﴾

3) Balance

In the terminology of rhetoricians, "balanced" verse-endings refer to agreement in metrical weight at the ends of clauses without agreement in the rhyme-letter. This yields a distinct kind of musical richness. Qurʾānic discourse may move from parallel endings to balanced ones or to "tipped" endings then return again to parallel endings, blending diverse tonalities and harmonized sounds.

By way of illustration, among "balanced" endings, where metrical weight is achieved without matching the rhyme-letter,[17] is His saying:

﴿إِنَّا صَبَبْنَا الْمَاءَ صَبًّا * ثُمَّ شَقَقْنَا الْأَرْضَ شَقًّا﴾ (ʾAbasa 25–26)

4) "Tipping"

In the terminology of rhetoricians, *taṭrīf* refers to the agreement of clause-endings in the rhyme letter without agreement in metrical weight.

When Qurʾānic discourse employs this feature in verse-endings, it does not confine itself to mere similarity in the rhyme letters. Rather, it is accompanied by a correlative device that may be termed **segmental similarity**: verse-endings that do not coincide in metrical weight nonetheless coincide in most of their syllabic segments, and the difference between them often occurs in only one segment, thereby achieving tonal variety.

An example is God's saying:

﴿إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا لَا يَرْجُونَ حِسَابًا * وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا كِذَّابًا﴾ (al-Nabaʾ 27–28)

Here the two verse-endings share the same *rawī* without sharing the same metrical weight; yet a segmental similarity is observable: the first clause consists of a short syllable (ḥ), followed by a long syllable (sā), and another long syllable (bā). The final word of the second clause shares with the first the last two segments (dhā) and (bā), while differing from it in the first segment (k–dh).[18]

5.1) *Tarsal* (Unrestricted cadence)

By *tarsal* we mean the **absence of constraint** by either metrical weight or rhyme-letter in verse-endings.

Among instances of *tarsal* in verse-endings though they may sometimes coincide in syllabic segments is His saying:

﴿وَجَعَلْنَا نَوْمَكُمْ سُبَاتًا * وَجَعَلْنَا اللَّيْلَ لِبَاسًا * وَجَعَلْنَا النَّهَارَ مَعَاشًا * وَبَنَيْنَا فَوْقَكُمْ سَبْعًا شِدَادًا﴾ (al-Nabaʾ 9–12)

The endings (*subātan, libāsan, maʿāshan, shidādan*) differ in metrical weight and in the rhyme-letter; however, they share the same phonological segmentation pattern (short + long + long).[19]

3) The Morphological Level

Morphology (*taṣrīf*) is among the defining properties of Arabic; it is the pathway to its abundant patterns and expansive templates capable of accommodating meaning.[20]

3.1) Multiplicity of functional meanings within a single form

A single morphological form may participate in multiple functional meanings, giving one word several interpretive faces and thereby enriching the aesthetic meanings.[21] that the speaker seeks to express before the intended meaning is fixed by contextual indicators.

In the Qurʾān and in verse-endings in particular this feature is clearly operative. Thus, the form **faʿīl**, which may be used for both singular and plural and which also matches the metrical profile of the preceding *fāṣilah* verse-ending (*al-khabīr*), appears in His saying:

﴿ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ بَعْدَ ذَٰلِكَ ظَهِيرٌ ﴾ (al-Taḥrīm: 4)

This form (faʿīl) carries multiple semantic possibilities: it may indicate either singular or plural.

If singular, it may be either **non-derived** or **derived** : [22]

1. **Non-derived:**

- either a concrete noun or an abstract noun , i.e., a verbal noun

2. **Derived:** it may occur in four major values:

- a **permanent adjective** or an **intensive form** when the verb is triliteral;
- carrying the meaning of an active participle for non-triliteral verbs, i.e., in the sense of *mufʿil* (from *afʿala*);
- or in the sense of *mufāʿil* (from *fāʿala*);
- or, fourth, in the sense of a passive participle for non-triliteral verbs.

If plural, the form **faʿīl** may fall into three types:

1. a **collective noun** distinguished from its singular by the tāʾ marbūṭah, e.g., *maṭiyyah* / *maṭiyy*;
2. a **collective group noun** that has no singular of the same form, e.g., *farīq*, *qabīlah*, *faṣīlah*;
3. a **broken plural**, e.g., *ʿabd* / *ʿubayd*, *ḍaʾn* / *ḍaʾīn*.[23]

2.2) Multiplicity of forms for a single meaning

This rhetorical deployment of morphological form is grounded in **selection**: different patterns may vary while converging upon the same core meaning. This is frequently observed in Qurʾānic verse-endings, which are marked by a refined choice of wording in pursuit of optimal correspondence.[24]

A case in point is the pair **(qadara)** and **(iqtadara)**, where **iqtadara** conveys a stronger sense than **qadara**.

God says:

﴿فَأَخَذْنَاهُمْ أَخْذَ عَزِيزٍ مُقْتَدِرٍ﴾ (al-Qamar: 42)

Here, **muqtadir** is more emphatic than **qādir**. The text shifts to it to signal the magnification of the matter and the severity of the seizure something that issues only from intense force or to indicate the expansive reach of power; for **muqtadir** is more eloquent in expressing amplitude than **qādir**. This is because:

- **muqtadir** is an active participle derived from **iqtadara**;
- whereas **qādir** is an active participle derived from **qadara**;

and there is no doubt that the pattern **iftaʿala** is rhetorically stronger than the simple **faʿala**.

The Qurʾān selects words with extreme precision. Thus, although it frequently employs the form **ghafūr** in verse-endings, it at times substitutes it with **ghaffār** so that the endings correspond.

In His saying:

﴿رَبِّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا الْعَزِيزِ الْغَفَّارُ﴾ (Ṣād: 66)

the preceding *fāṣilah* verse-ending is **qahhār** on the pattern **faʿʿāl**. The two forms **ghaffār** and **ghafūr** differ in degree of intensity in accordance with their morphological patterns:

- the pattern **faʿʿāl** indicates hyperbole more strongly than **faʿūl**;
- and both indicate hyperbole more strongly than **fāʿil**.

Moreover, **faʿʿāl** carries an association with **repetition and recurrence over time**. Thus, if one says "a man is habitually striking" or " habitually killing," one intends the frequent occurrence of the act from him. [25]

2) The Syntactic Level

2.2.1 The linguistic (syntactic) dimension

Jalāl al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Suyūṭī *al-Itqān fī ʿUlūm al-Qurʾān* the following statement:

"Shams al-Dīn Ibn al-Ṣāʾigh authored a book entitled *Iḥkām al-Raʾy fī Aḥkām al-Āy*, in which he said: Know that *appropriateness* is a sought-after principle in the Arabic language, for which certain departures from underlying norms are undertaken. He further said: I have traced the determinations that occur at the ends of verses in consideration of appropriateness, and I found among them more than forty rulings."[26]

From these, we select what appears most significant and most fully elaborated:

(a) Fronting the dependent constituent

Among the benefits of advancing a governed constituent ahead of its governor is **specification/exclusivity**, as in His saying:

﴿إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ﴾ (al-Fātiḥah: 5)

i.e., we single You out for worship and do not worship anyone besides You; and we single You out for seeking help and do not seek help from anyone besides You.

Likewise, in His saying:

﴿لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا﴾ (al-Baqarah: 143)

the complement of "testimony" is postponed in the first clause and advanced in the second, because the aim in the first is to affirm their testimony over the nations, while in the second it is to specify them as the ones over whom the Messenger is a witness.[27]

Thus, advancing what is normally deferred serves either **specification** or **appropriateness**, such as maintaining the *fāṣilah* verse-ending, as in:

﴿فَأَوْجَسَ فِي نَفْسِهِ خِيفَةً مُّوسَىٰ﴾ (Ṭā Hā: 67)

or in pursuit of another suitable meaning, as also in His saying:

﴿بِرَبِّ هَارُونَ وَمُوسَىٰ﴾ (Ṭā Hā: 70)

in order to maintain the *fāṣilah* verse-ending unlike His saying:

﴿رَبِّ مُوسَىٰ وَهَارُونَ﴾ (al-Shuʿarāʾ: 48).

(b) Advancing what is temporally later

As in His saying:

﴿إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا لَلْهُدَىٰ * وَإِنَّ لَنَا لَلْآخِرَةَ وَالْأُولَىٰ﴾ (al-Layl: 12–13)

Qurʾānic discourse departs from the familiar ordering that would place "the Former" before "the Hereafter". The purpose is not the *fāṣilah* verse-ending alone, but primarily meaning: the Hereafter is better and more enduring, and its recompense especially its punishment is more severe and weightier.[28]

(c) Advancing the less excellent over the more excellent

As in:

﴿بِرَبِّ هَارُونَ وَمُوسَىٰ﴾ (Ṭā Hā: 70)

This ordering is required by the context, because the subsequent verse states:

﴿قَالَ آمَنتُم لَهُ قَبْلَ أَنْ آذَنَ لَكُمْ﴾ (Ṭā Hā: 71)

and the pronoun in **lahu** returns to the nearest antecedent namely Hārūn, had he been mentioned later. For that reason it does not read "by the Lord of Mūsā and Hārūn." In addition, the verse-endings in the sūrah predominantly come with the lengthened *ā* (maqṣūrah or mamdūdah), so this ordering also accords with the prevailing cadence of the endings.[29]

(d) Advancing a pronoun-like element ahead of what clarifies it

As in:

﴿فَأَوْجَسَ فِي نَفْسِهِ خِيفَةً مُّوسَىٰ﴾ (Ṭā Hā: 67)

because if "in himself" were postponed (relative to what it modifies), the reader might suppose its attachment to "fear" rather than to "he sensed," whereas the intended relation is to the latter.[30] The prepositional phrase is advanced ahead of the object although the object would normally have greater claim to fronting, because this produces a restriction of fear to his own inner self; and postponing "Mūsā" also serves the maintenance of the *-ā fāṣilah* verse-ending.[31]

(e) Advancing a clausal modifier ahead of a single-word modifier

As in:

﴿وَنُخْرِجُ لَهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ كِتَابًا يَلْقَاهُ مَنْشُورًا﴾ (al-Isrāʾ: 13)

For if the adjective **manshūran** were advanced before **yalqāhu**, the attentiveness to the *fāṣilah* verse-ending would be disrupted; therefore the clause is advanced to preserve the correspondence of verse-endings.[32]

(f) Deleting the *yāʾ* of the definite *manqūṣ* noun.[33]

For example:

﴿الْكَبِيرُ الْمُتَعَالِ﴾ (al-Raʿd: 9) and:

﴿يَوْمَ التَّنَادِ﴾ (Ghāfir: 32)

2.3 The Semantic Dimension (Meaning)

First: The relationship between the *fāṣilah* and its parallel clause

The semantic study of Qurʾānic verse-endings falls within the domain of rhetorical embellishment,[34] and the early scholars referred to it as **the concord of fāṣilah verse-endings**. They limited this concord to four features distinctive to Qurʾānic verse-endings[35] which al-Suyūṭī compiled in *al-Itqān*, quoted from earlier rhetoricians[36] Al-Suyūṭī states: "Qurʾānic verse-endings do not depart from one of four things: **tamkīn**, **taṣdīr**, **tawshīḥ**, and **īghāl**".[37]

(a) **Tamkīn** *(stabilizing / securing the ending)*

This is when the *fāṣilah* verse-ending is preceded by a preparation that makes it firmly situated in its place, such that if it were removed, the meaning would be disrupted.

An example is His saying:

﴿قَالُوا يَا شُعَيْبُ أَصَلَاتُكَ تَأْمُرُكَ أَنْ نَتْرُكَ مَا يَعْبُدُ آبَاؤُنَا أَوْ أَنْ نَفْعَلَ فِي أَمْوَالِنَا مَا نَشَاءُ إِنَّكَ لَأَنْتَ الْحَلِيمُ الرَّشِيدُ﴾ (Hūd: 87)

The mention of *forbearance* and *sound judgment* is fitting in relation to the preceding mention of worship and financial conduct.[38]

(b) **Taṣdīr** *(introducing the material of the ending earlier)*

This is when the lexical material of the *fāṣilah* verse-ending appears at the beginning of the verse or in its middle, as in:

﴿رَبَّنَا لَا تُزِغْ قُلُوبَنَا بَعْدَ إِذْ هَدَيْتَنَا وَهَبْ لَنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ رَحْمَةً ۚ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْوَهَّابُ﴾ (Āl ʿImrān: 8)

The word **al-Wahhāb** is derived from **hab** ("grant"), which has already been mentioned in the verse.[39]

(c) **Tawshīḥ** *(prefiguring the ending)*

This is to mention within the verse something that points to, or signals toward, the *fāṣilah* verse-ending, as in:

﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَىٰ آدَمَ وَنُوحًا وَآلَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَآلَ عِمْرَانَ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ﴾ (Āl ʿImrān: 33)

Their being "chosen" indicates their belonging among "the worlds" in a way that prepares for the ending.[40]

(d) **Īghāl** *(over-closing to add an extra point)*

This is to conclude the verse with a phrase that yields an additional rhetorical nuance beyond what is strictly sufficient, as in:

﴿اتَّبِعُوا مَن لَّا يَسْأَلُكُمْ أَجْرًا وَهُم مُّهْتَدُونَ﴾ (Yā Sīn:)

The clause **"while they are rightly guided"** completes the sense, yet it also adds further encouragement to follow them.[41]

Second: Classification of verse-endings

Rhetoricians classify rhymed prose and similarly Qurʾānic verse-endings into several types: **muṭarraf**, **mutawāzī**, **murassaʿ**, **mutawāzin**, and **mutamāthil**.[42]

(a) *Muṭarraf* (tipped): different in meter, same in rhyme

(Nūḥ: 13–14) ﴿مَا لَكُمْ لَا تَرْجُونَ لِلَّهِ وَقَارًا * وَقَدْ خَلَقَكُمْ أَطْوَارًا﴾

(b) *Mutawāzī* (parallel): same in meter and rhyme without semantic counterbalancing

(al-Ghāshiyah: 13–14) ﴿سُرُرٌ مَّرْفُوعَةٌ * وَأَكْوَابٌ مَّوْضُوعَةٌ﴾

(c) *Mutawāzin* (balanced): same in meter, different in rhyme

(al-Ghāshiyah: 15–16) ﴿وَزَرَابِيُّ مَبْثُوثَةٌ * وَنَمَارِقُ مَصْفُوفَةٌ﴾

(d) *Murassaʿ* (ornamented): identical meter and rhyme with semantic correspondence

(al-Ghāshiyah: 25–26) ﴿إِنَّ إِلَيْنَا إِيَابَهُمْ * ثُمَّ إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا حِسَابَهُمْ﴾

(e) *Mutamāthil* (matched): equal in meter without rhyme, with internal corresponding pairs

(al-Ṣāffāt: 117–118) ﴿وَآتَيْنَاهُمَا الْكِتَابَ الْمُسْتَبِينَ * وَهَدَيْنَاهُمَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ﴾

Here, "the Book" and "the path" correspond, as do *al-mustabīn* and *al-mustaqīm*, while the final letter differs.[43]

The Qurʾānic *fāṣilah* manifests an elevated rhetoric through a meticulous concord between sound, morphology, and syntax. Phonologically, devices such as parallelism, balance, and rhythmic variation generate an attractive and diversified cadence. Morphologically, the phenomenon reveals both the multiplicity of functions carried by a single form and the deliberate preference for the more emphatic pattern illustrated by the contrast between **qādir** and **muqtadir**. Syntactically, artistic fronting, postponement, and ellipsis operate in accordance with communicative intention while also serving the *fāṣilah* verse-ending. The semantic analysis is completed by examining the concord between the *fāṣilah* and its parallel clause through **tamkīn**, **taṣdīr**, **tawshīḥ**, and **īghāl**. Verse-endings are further classified into multiple patterns according to meter and rhyme, highlighting the Qurʾān's inimitable precision in harmonizing form and meaning

4. Selected Applied Models of the Qurʾānic *Fāṣilah*

Among the clearest manifestations of the Qurʾān's rhetorical inimitability is the **precision with which it selects its wording**, particularly at the ends of verses what are conventionally termed the verse-endings. This selection is not governed by purely formal or rhythmical considerations detached from meaning; rather, it arises from the depth of context and the dynamism of sense. Hence early rhetoricians formulated a foundational principle: "The verse-endings of the Qurʾān follow meanings; whereas in rhymed prose, meanings follow the rhymes."[44] This distinction marks the difference between inimitable divine discourse and literary styles in which a poet or writer may be compelled to adopt predetermined molds in order to preserve meter or rhymed prose, even at the expense of semantic integrity or syntactic clarity.

Within this framework, Qurʾānic rhythm is neither affectation nor an isolated phonetic construction; it is the outcome of a synergy between meaning and form. A demonstrable rhetorical "fit" is achieved between the lexical item and its position, and between the *fāṣilah* verse-ending and its context so that the verse emerges in a consummate configuration: wise in meaning, sweet in resonance, and coherent in structure.

In order to elucidate the semantic and rhetorical dimensions underlying the selection of Qurʾānic verse-endings, this applied section traces a set of textual models in which the *fāṣilah* appears as a **deliberate choice among plausible alternatives**. The analysis proceeds by comparing the Qurʾān's selected word with a conceivable substitute, in order to show why the chosen form is more precise, more eloquent, and more appropriate to the communicative situation.

Methodologically, we draw on multiple instruments: lexical dictionaries to examine root meanings; rhetorical commentaries that identify loci of eloquence and the functions of fronting, postponement, and ellipsis; and exegetical works that expand contextual analysis and interpretive direction. We also ensure that the selected models are varied some involving morphological form, others phonological effect, fine-grained meaning, or broader contextual impact so that the phenomenon appears as an integrated artistic system displaying the Qurʾān's rhetoric in its most luminous form.

Model 1

It should be noted within the present model that the logic of selection in Qurʾānic verse-endings was not alien to what eloquent Arabs recognized. This is evidenced by some Companions' initiative in completing a *fāṣilah* verse-ending before hearing its conclusion, and likewise by reports of Bedouins correcting erroneous endings in recitation, because they perceived that the proposed ending did not fit the context.

Among the examples is what Ibn Ḥātim narrates on the authority of Zayd b. Thābit:

"The Messenger of God *(peace be upon him)* dictated to me this verse: ﴿وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الإنسَانَ مِنْ سُلَالَةٍ مِّن طِينٍ * ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَاهُ نُطْفَةً فِي قَرَارٍ مَّكِينٍ * ثُمَّ خَلَقْنَا النُّطْفَةَ عَلَقَةً ... ثُمَّ أَنشَأْنَاهُ خَلْقًا آخَرَ﴾ (al-Muʾminūn: 12–14)

Then Muʿādh b. Jabal said: 'So blessed is God, the best of creators.' The Messenger of God (peace be upon him) smiled. Muʿādh said: 'Why did you smile, Messenger of God?' He replied: 'With it the verse was concluded.'"

It is also reported that a Bedouin heard a reciter read: ﴿فَإِنْ زَلَلْتُم مِّن بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْكُمُ الْبَيِّنَاتُ﴾ (al-Baqarah: 209), then conclude it with: "So know that God is Forgiving, Merciful." The Bedouin objected: "If this is God's speech, He would not say it so; a wise speaker does not mention forgiveness in the context of slipping, for that would encourage it.".[45]

Likewise, another heard a reciter say: ﴿وَالسَّارِقُ وَالسَّارِقَةُ فَاقْطَعُوا أَيْدِيَهُمَا ... ﴾ (al-Māʾidah: 38), then conclude: "and God is Forgiving, Merciful." He said: "This is not eloquent speech!" When told that the recitation is not so, but rather: "and God is Mighty, Wise," he responded: "Ah mighty, so He judges; thus He commands cutting!".[46]

Model 2

God's saying:

﴿إِن تُعَذِّبْهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ عِبَادُكَ ۖ وَإِن تَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ فَإِنَّكَ أَنتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ﴾ (al-Māʾidah: 118)

One might initially suppose that the more fitting ending here would be **"the Forgiving, the Merciful."** Yet careful reflection shows that forgiving those who merit punishment can only proceed from One whose judgment cannot be repelled- [47] namely, the **Mighty** and the **Wise**, who places everything in its proper position: if He punishes them, it is with justice; and if He forgives them, it is with wisdom. Therefore, **al-ʿAzīz al-Ḥakīm** is more eloquent and more contextually apt than *al-Ghafūr al-Raḥīm*.[48]

Model 3

God's saying:

﴿فَأَمَّا الْيَتِيمَ فَلَا تَقْهَرْ ۝ وَأَمَّا السَّائِلَ فَلَا تَنْهَرْ ۝ وَأَمَّا بِنِعْمَةِ رَبِّكَ فَحَدِّثْ﴾ (al-Duḥā: 9–11)

A natural question arises: why does the verse say **fa-ḥaddith** "then speak" rather than **fa-khabbir** "then inform", even though *khabbar* might appear to align more closely with the rhyme in *taqhar / tanhar*?

The answer is that *akhbār* ("informing") pertains to what can be described as true or false and may concern oneself or others; whereas *ḥadīth* is what a person relates about himself closer to self-narration and inner experience. Moreover, *ḥadīth* may consist of two or more connected propositions (e.g., "I saw Zayd leaving"), thus functioning as an integrated "account," not a bare "report.".[49]

Model 4

God's saying:

﴿لَا تُدْرِكُهُ الْأَبْصَارُ وَهُوَ يُدْرِكُ الْأَبْصَارَ ۖ وَهُوَ اللَّطِيفُ الْخَبِيرُ﴾ (al-Anʿām: 103)

The initial negation of perceptual "grasping" fits the divine name **al-Laṭīf** The clause "while He grasps the sights" is then paired with **al-Khabīr**, because not everyone who "perceives" something is thereby "expert" in it: the *khabīr* is the one who knows the reality of what he apprehends with complete and penetrating knowledge.[50]

Model 5

God's saying:

﴿أَفَكُلَّمَا جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ بِمَا لَا تَهْوَى أَنفُسُكُمُ اسْتَكْبَرْتُمْ فَفَرِيقًا كَذَّبْتُمْ وَفَرِيقًا تَقْتُلُونَ﴾ (al-Baqarah: 87)

The past tense is used in "you denied" because denial had indeed already occurred.[51] The present tense in "you kill" indicates continuity and recurrence: they repeatedly plotted to kill the Prophet (peace be upon him) through sorcery and poison, and were only prevented from doing so by God's protection.[52]

Model 6

In His saying (al-Jāthiyah: 3–5):

- ❖ ﴿آيَاتٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ﴾: for the creation of the heavens and the earth calls for faith, and the believer affirms it.
- ❖ ﴿آيَاتٌ لِّقَوْمٍ يُوقِنُونَ﴾: in the creation of humans and animals signs that strengthen certainty.

❖ ﴿آيَاتٌ لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ﴾: in particular phenomena such as the turning of winds and rain, which require reflective reasoning.

Here the verse-endings align with graded modes of reception: belief, certainty, and rational inference.

Model 7

God's saying:

﴿وَمَكَرُوا مَكْرًا كُبَّارًا﴾ (Nūḥ: 22)

The form **kubbāran** (on an intensive pattern) is chosen to convey the enormity and force of the plotting calculated scheming engineered by the leaders of the people. It is also more fitting for the *fāṣilah* verse-ending, and rhetorically more vivid in depicting the scale of deception.

Model 8

God's saying:

﴿قَالُوا يَا شُعَيْبُ أَصَلَاتُكَ تَأْمُرُكَ ... إِنَّكَ لَأَنتَ الْحَلِيمُ الرَّشِيدُ﴾ (Hūd: 87)

Because the verse refers to worship and financial conduct, its ending comes as **al-ḥalīm al-rashīd**: forbearance relates to the burdens of religious obligation, while sound judgment relates to the management of wealth.

Model 9

God's saying:

﴿كَيْفَ تَكْفُرُونَ بِاللَّهِ ... وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ﴾ (al-Baqarah: 28–29)

One might expect the verse to end with **qadīr** "powerful", yet ʿ**alīm** "all-knowing" is more fitting, because the entire passage concerns creation, giving life, and causing death [9realities that point primarily to comprehensive knowledge encompassing all things.[53]

Model 10

God's saying:

﴿وَمَا هُوَ بِقَوْلِ شَاعِرٍ قَلِيلًا مَا تُؤْمِنُونَ ۞ وَلَا بِقَوْلِ كَاهِنٍ قَلِيلًا مَا تَذَكَّرُونَ﴾ (al-Ḥāqqah: 41–42)

- The negation of poetry concludes with **"little do you believe"**, because describing the Qurʾān as poetry is obstinate denial and disbelief.
- The negation of soothsaying concludes with **"little do you remember"**, because rejecting that claim requires deeper reflection and attentive consideration.

These applied models show that Qurʾānic verse-endings embody an astonishing precision of selection that consistently serves semantic context and tonal cadence without compromising the intended meaning or violating the norms of Arabic rhetoric. Model 1 demonstrates how native linguistic intuition (among Companions and Bedouins) perceived the "rightness" of the *fāṣilah* verse-ending as context-governed. Model 2 explains why **al-ʿAzīz al-Ḥakīm** is preferred over **al-Ghafūr al-Raḥīm**: forgiveness here is rhetorically bound to inviolable judgment and wise placement. Model 3 clarifies the preference for **fa-ḥaddith** over a more rhyme-driven alternative because "speech/ḥadīth" more accurately fits self-narration and contextual purpose. Model 4 highlights the semantic precision of **al-Laṭīf al-Khabīr** in relation to perceptual negation and exhaustive awareness. Model 5 shows how tense selection itself functions rhetorically (completed denial vs ongoing killing). Model 6 aligns varied endings ("for believers / those certain / those who reason") with graded epistemic engagement. Model 7 uses intensive morphology to magnify the depiction of plotting, while Models 8–9 anchor the ending in the verse's thematic center (forbearance/judgment; knowledge in a passage about creation). Finally, Model 10 differentiates between disbelief and deficient reflection through the paired closures "little do you believe" and "little do you remember.

Conclusion

This study has sought to examine one of the most prominent stylistic phenomena in Qurʾānic composition, namely the Qurʾānic *fāṣilah* verse-ending, by tracing its rhetorical dimensions across three integrated levels: the phonological, the morphological, and the syntactic–semantic. Theoretical and applied analysis has shown that the *fāṣilah* is not a mere rhythmic ornament or a purely formal closure of the verse; rather, it is an essential component of the rhetorical and semantic architecture, performing interlocking functions that relate to both meaning and form.

At the phonological level, the *fāṣilah* exhibits a musical presence that enhances rhythmic beauty and imparts a distinctive effect upon the listener. At the morphological level, it reveals a refined selection of pattern and form in a manner that serves the intended meaning. At the syntactic–semantic level,

the *fāṣilah* emerges as a functional element governed by context and aligned with sentence structure and deep semantic intent.

The applied models further demonstrate the inimitability of Qurʾānic selection: each *fāṣilah* verse-ending is positioned with meticulous precision such that expression does not attain full coherence, nor meaning reach completion, without it. This reinforces the Qurʾān's inimitable character and confirms its unique stylistic distinctiveness.

In concluding its findings and recommendations, the study calls for further research into this phenomenon whether by linking it to contemporary linguistic approaches or by renewed inductive exploration of rhetorical exegetical literature since the *fāṣilah* remains one of the keys to the secrets of Qurʾānic inimitability that has not yet been exhausted.

Findings

1. The Qurʾānic *fāṣilah* integrates with the verse's overall rhetorical system, confirming that it is not merely a phonetic rhyme, but an active semantic element that directs meaning and supports context.

2. The functions of the *fāṣilah* are diverse ranging from musical rhythm and structural balance to contextual meaning granting the Qurʾānic text an aesthetic and semantic dimension that is difficult to separate.

3. The morphological forms selected in verse-endings are marked by precision; differences in patterns (e.g., *faʿīl*, *faʿāl*, *faʿʿāl*, etc.) yield subtle differences in meaning, indicating deliberate rhetorical selection rather than arbitrariness.

4. The connection between the *fāṣilah* and the verse's global meaning appears in multiple examples: substituting the *fāṣilah* verse-ending typically produces disruption in meaning or rhythm, which evidences its inimitability in its precise position.

5. The distinction between Qurʾānic verse-endings and rhymed prose is clear: verse-endings follow contextual meaning, whereas rhymed prose is governed by the sound of rhyme further underscoring the specificity of Qurʾānic composition.

6. The sensitivity of early recipients (Companions and Bedouins) toward verse-endings indicates their natural rhetorical force and their deep integration into the eloquent fabric of Qurʾānic discourse.

Recommendations

1. The study of the Qurʾānic *fāṣilah* should be deepened in light of modern linguistic approaches (e.g., pragmatic and structural analysis) to highlight its interactions with situational context.

2. The topic of Qurʾānic verse-endings should be incorporated into Qurʾānic rhetoric curricula, with emphasis on training students to analyze it on both phonological and semantic levels.

3. Work should be undertaken toward an applied rhetorical encyclopedia of Qurʾānic *Fawāṣil* verse-endings that documents representative models and analyzes them in their contexts and in terms of their aspects of inimitability.

Proposed Research Directions

1. A comparative study between the Qurʾānic *fāṣilah* and poetic rhyme with respect to function, structure, and rhetorical reference frames.

2. A detailed study of the *fāṣilah* in light of *ʿilm al-maʿānī* (the science of meanings), especially regarding fronting and postponement, ellipsis, and inter-clausal linkage.

3. An expanded applied project entitled: "Functional Repetition in the Qurʾānic *fāṣilah* Verse-Ending: A Phono-Semantic Study."

4. A proposed thesis topic: "The Qurʾānic *Fāṣilah* in Rhetorical Exegetes: From al-Rummānī to al-Ṭāhir ibn ʿĀshūr."

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⁴ -al-Jurjānī, ʿAlī b. Muḥammad b. ʿAlī, *Kitāb al-Taʿrīfāt*, ed. Ibrāhīm al-Abyārī, Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, Beirut, Lebanon, 3rd ed., 1996, p. 212.

⁵ -*al-Munjid fī al-Lughah wa-al-Aʿlām*, Dār al-Mashriq / Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, Beirut, Lebanon, 1st ed., 1908, p. 20

⁶ -al-Marsalī, Kamāl al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Ghanī, *al-Wāṣil al-Āyāt al-Turābiyyah*, al-Kitāb al-Jāmiʿī lil-Nashr wa-al-Tawzīʿ, Alexandria, Egypt, 1st ed., 1999, pp. 8–9.

⁷ -Ibid., p. 10.

⁸ -al-Zarkashī, Badr al-Dīn Muḥammad b. ʿAbd Allāh, *al-Burhān fī ʿUlūm al-Qurʾān*, ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm, Dār al-Maʿrifah, Beirut, Lebanon, 1st ed., 1972, p. 53.

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¹⁰ - Ibid., p. 54

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¹² -Lāshīn, ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ, *Fawāṣil al-Āyāt al-Qurʾāniyyah*, Dār al-Marīkh, Saudi Arabia, 1st ed., 1402 AH / 1982, p. 149.

¹³ -Muṣṭafā Ṣādiq al-Rāfiʿī, *Iʿjāz al-Qurʾān wa-al-Balāghah al-Nabawiyyah*, Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, Beirut, Lebanon, 1st ed., 1421 AH / 2000, vol. 1, p. 154.

¹⁴ -Amīn, Bakrī al-Shaykh, *al-Taʿbīr al-Fannī fī al-Qurʾān al-Karīm*, Dār al-ʿIlm lil-Malāyīn, Beirut, Lebanon, 6th ed., 2001, p. 209.

¹⁵Nakhlah, Maḥmūd, *Lughat al-Qurʾān al-Karīm fī Juzʾ ʿAmma*, Dār al-Jīl, Beirut, 1st ed., 1985, pp. 367–373. -

¹⁶ -See: Lāshīn, ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ, *Fawāṣil al-Āyāt al-Qurʾāniyyah*, op. cit., pp. 184–185.

¹⁷ -Nakhlah, Maḥmūd, *Lughat al-Qurʾān al-Karīm fī Juzʾ ʿAmma*, op. cit., p. 368.

¹⁸ -See: Lāshīn, ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ, *Fawāṣil al-Āyāt al-Qurʾāniyyah*, op. cit., pp. 188–189.

¹⁹ -Ibid., p. 190.

²⁰ -al-Hindāwī, ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd Aḥmad Yūsuf, *al-Iʿjāz al-Ṣarfī fī al-Qurʾān al-Karīm*, al-Maktabah al-ʿAṣriyyah, Beirut, Lebanon, p. 7

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[28] -al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān fī ʿUlūm al-Qurʾān*, op. cit., vol. 3, p. 340.

[29] -Lāshīn, *Fawāṣil al-Āyāt al-Qurʾāniyyah*, op. cit., pp. 96–97.

[30] -Ibid., p. 97.

[31] -Ibid., p. 97.

[32] -al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān fī ʿUlūm al-Qurʾān*, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 127.

[33] -Ibid., p. 127.

[34] -Lāshīn, *Fawāṣil al-Āyāt al-Qurʾāniyyah*, op. cit., p. 129.

[35] -See: al-Ḥasnāwī, Muḥammad, *al-Fāṣilah al-Qurʾāniyyah*, al-Maktabah al-Islāmiyyah, Beirut, Lebanon, 2nd ed., 1986, p. 285.

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[38] -al-Ḥasnāwī, *al-Fāṣilah al-Qurʾāniyyah*, op. cit., p. 40.

[39] -Ibid., p. 40.

[40] -al-Ḥasnāwī, *al-Fāṣilah al-Qurʾāniyyah*, op. cit., p. 41.

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[5252] -al-Hindāwī, *al-Iʿjāz al-Ṣarfī fī al-Qurʾān al-Karīm*, op. cit., p. 119.

[53] -Ibid., p. 122.