Exegetical Method of *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ's al-Tafsīr al-bayānī – li'l- Qur'ān al-Karīm* - An Analytical Assessment

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Abstract

A progressive Muslim thinker, Egyptian scholar, and a woman representing a minority until her time in *Qur'ānic* studies, *ʿĀʾisha ʿAbd al-Raḥmān*, widely known by her penname *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ* (1912-1998), had contributed to introduce a modern outlook in the realm of the interpretation of the *Qurʿān. Bint al-Shāṭiʾ* had devoted herself to the interpretation of the *Qurʿān* through the use of a literary approach. In fact, the beginnings of modern literary *tafsīr* have been traced back to *Muḥammad ʿAbduh's* (1849–1905) critical edition of *Asrār al-balāgha* and *Dalāʾil al-iʿjāz*, the two major works of the classical philologist and rhetorician *ʿAbd al-Qāhiral-Jurjānī* (d. 471/1078). The direct influence of *Muḥammad ʿAbduh's* ideas has traces in the work of both *al-Khūlī* and *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ. Bint al-Shāṭiʾ* had advocated and applied an approach developed by her teacher and husband *Amīn al-Khūlī* (1895–1966), who had a fundamental influence on her academic and intellectual journey. Although she had written on only 14 surahs in the last part of the *Qurʿān* but *al-Tafsīr al-bayānī Iil- Qur'ān al-Karīm* (The Rhetorical Interpretation of the *Qurʿān*) is the most important of her works on *Qurʿān* to date. The purpose of this study is to focus on *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ's* stylistic beauty and literary approach in her exegesis of *Qur'ān* and specifically her interpretation about rhetorical inimitability which is further assessed in the light of three particular domains ie; the openings of *Qurʿānic* chapters and the secret of the letters, the case of synonyms and Oaths of *Qurʿān*, which are extracted from her al-*Tafsīr al-bayānī - Iil-Qur'ān al-Karīm*.

Keywords: *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ, al-Tafsīr al-bayānī - Qurʿān al-Karīm,* literary approach, inimitability of *Qurʿān*, synonyms, Oaths, secret letters

Introduction:

The texts of the *Qurʿān* and Sunnah constantly focused on the significance of women and safeguarding their rights against pre-Islamic traditions, the Muslims had no reservations in entrusting them with issues of the best religious significance since as sisters, Muslim women were of equivalent worth in Allah's sight. This clearly shows that there are numerous Muslims feamale researchers who have contributed in building the positive image of Islam with their hard work and sound judgment. *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ* is one of a number of twentieth-century Muslim intellectuals who left their indelible mark on modern literary exegesis of the *Qurʿān*.[1] It is 'the first ever to be written by a woman', and that it also has gained a wide readership, *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ* was unique as a woman of the first generation of an emerging tradition of Arab women academics and intellectuals. Thus, it rendered *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ* uniquely positioned to become the first Arab Muslim woman writer to venture into contemporary *Qurʿānic* and religious studies.

Exegesis of the *Qurʿān* is one of the most important religious sciences for Muslims and throughout Islamic history many Muslim scholars from different schools of thought have attempted to interpret the *Qurʿān*, and have shown a keen interest in studying the *Qurʿān* and writing commentaries on it. Since Muslim commentators have

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[1] *ʿIssā J. Boullata*, "Modern *Qur'ān* Exegesis: A Study of *Bint al-Shāṭiʾs* Method", The Muslim World, 64 (1974), This is an excellent study of *Bint al-Shāṭiʾs* methods in interpreting the *Qurʿān*.

tended to represent the dominant intellectual and socio-cultural trends of their times, the history of the exegesis of the *Qurʾān* has truly become a mirror of the intellectual history of Muslims. In the history of exegesis, the philological approach is one of the methods applied in interpreting the *Qurʾān*. *Ibn Jarīr al-Tabarī* (d. 310/923), are colored to a great extent by the reports from previous generations. The reports-oriented approach, however, was not the only way of interpreting the Qur'an in the classical period. Lexical, rhetorical, philosophical, and mystical approaches to the *Qurʾān*, such as those of *al Zamakhsharī* (d. 538/1144),*al-Razī* (d. 606/1210), and *Ibn al-Arabī*(d. 638/1240)also represented other methods of interpretations in that period. Modern exegetes, such as *Muḥammad ʿAbduh's* (1849-1905), have employed other hermeneutical methods, most of which emphasize the *Qurʾān* as a guidance for human lives (*hudan li al-nās).* Some, such as *Tantawī Jawharī* (d. 1941) have tried to impose modern science on the *Qurʾānic* message in their exegetical works. Looking at the history of the discipline, one can say that the interpretations of the *Qurʾān* that satisfied one generation did not always satisfy the next.

The beginnings of modern literary *tafsīr* have been traced back to *Muḥammad ʿAbduh's* (1849–1905) critical edition of *Asrār al-balāgha* and *Dalāʾil al-iʿjāz*, the two major works of the classical philologist and rhetorician *ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī* (d. 471/1078).10 The direct influence of *Muḥammad ʿAbduh's* ideas can also be traced in the work of both *al-Khūlī* and *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ*. The fact that her tafsīr came out after two decades of writing literature, practicing literary criticism, and teaching the Arabic language, thereby realizing the type of exegete *ʿAbduh* had envisioned, is crucial to *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ* perception of her own credentials as a literary exegete of the *Qurʾān*.[2] But the main intellectual stimulus to her work comes from *al-Khūlī's* elaboration of *ʿAbduh's* rudimentary ideas on the relation between tafsīr and literature into an exegetical approach to the Qurʾān, for which he coined the term *al-tafsīr al-adabī*.[3] *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ's* place on this trajectory has been harder to determine, and her approach has been deemed anything from modern to anti-modernist. Her *tafsīr* work is the most extensive produced by any member of this literary school and has come to represent the realization of al-*Khūlī's tafsīr* methodology. In looking at her life and *tafsīr*, her contribution and place as a twentieth-century literary exegete will be reconsidered.

Bint al-Shāṭiʾs Background:

A thorough examination of *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ's* background in Arabic language and literature will enable us to analyze the method of her *tafsīr* within the context of modern literary exegesis. *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ*was born in Dumyat, Egypt in 1912, the daughter of a conservative *Shaykh* of *al-Azhar* who tried to hinder her efforts to study outside the home.[4] *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ's* father, *ʿAbd al-Rahmān*, who was additionally an individual from the *Sufī* fellowships, was an instructor at a philosophical school in Damietta and had a fairly preservationist attitude toward religious issues. Likewise, for him, a young lady who has achieved the period of youthfulness should remain at home and proceed with her religious investigations there. In 1920, because of her father's inquiry in the matter of why she didn't look glad, *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ* first communicated her honest want to go to

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[2] *ʿĀʾisha ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, al-Tafsīr al-bayānī Iil- Qurʾān al-Karīm, 7th ed. (Cairo: Dār al-Mʿārif, 1990),* V. I, p. 15 where she speaks of how she acquired an appreciation of the *Qurʾān's* eloquence after specializing in the study of literary texts and her contact with the greatest Arabic literature.
[3] Shuruq Naguib, Bint al-Shāṭiʾ's Approach to *tafsīr*: An Egyptian Exegete's Journey from Hermeneutics to Humanity, Journal of *Qurʾānic* Studies, 17(1), pp.45–84
[4] C. Kooij, " *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ*: A Suitable Case for Biography"?, The Challenge of the Middle East, ed. Al-El-Shaikh et al (Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam, 1982), p.67

formal school. In any case, she got a firm dismissal from her father, who stated, "There is no chance to get for the little girls of *Shaykhs* to go to a horrendous and character-ruining [secular] school; rather they should learn at their homes." Her father requested her to read verses 32-34 of *Sura al-Ahzāb.*[5] Because her father was not convinced to educate her daughter in non-Islamic educational institution. Out of sensitivity for her little girl's sentiments after her better half had rejected her demand, *Bint al-Shāṭiʾʾs* mother whined to her grandfather, *Shaykh Ibrāhīm Damhūjī* about the issue. After a substantial discourse with *Bint al-Shāṭiʾʾs* incredible grandfather, her father inevitably endorsed his little girl's choice to go to class, with specific conditions. She got a B.A. degree in Arabic dialect and writing from King *Fuʾād* I University (currently University of Cairo), in 1939, M.A. in 1941. At college, her first experience with *Amīn al-Khūlī* left her with a feeling of the 'genuine' import of the advanced idea of 'technique' which, until at that point, she had comprehended as madhhab ('school of thought'), a term that had progressed toward becoming related with belief system and partiality in reformist Muslim talk. From that point on *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ* turned into the most gave promoter of *al-Khūlī's* utilization of a cutting edge philosophy in artistic investigations. She thought of her Ph.D thesis in 1950 on the artist *Abūʾl-ʿAlāʾ al-Maʿarrī* (d. 449/1058).[6] In 1952, she was awarded a doctorate with distinction, following which she resumed the university career she had given up due to family reasons in 1944, and in 1960 she was a visiting professor at *Umm Durmān* Islamic University in the Sudan, and the Universities of Khartoum and Algiers, eventually holding two prestigious chairs, first as Professor of Arabic at ʿAyn Shams University between 1962 and 1970, and then as Professor of *Tafsīr* and Advanced Studies at *Qarawyyīn* University in Morocco until the early 1990s. Then a prominent Islamic scholar and Muffasirah of Arab world died of a heart attack on December 1, 1998.[7]

Intellectual work and literary efforts of "*Bint al-Shāṭi*":

Bint al-Shāṭiʾʾs professional writing career began in women's magazines in the early1930s, as the editor of *al-Nahḍa al-nisāʾiyya* ('Women's Renaissance'), then as a contributor to the feminist magazine *al-Miṣriyya* ('The Egyptian Woman'), following which she was a columnist for al-Ahrām newspaper for the rest of her life. Her early writings in *al-Ahrām* were marked by an engagement with social issues. *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ* produced a widely acclaimed series of biographies of early Muslim women, especially women of the Prophet's household (*tarājim sayyidāt bayt al-nubuwwa*).[8] She also worked on the biographies and literary trajectories of *Sukayna bint al-Ḥusayn* (n.d.), a poet and literary critic from the Prophet's family, and *al-Khansāʾ*, a poet and companion of the Prophet *Muḥammad*. These three later biographies shed a contemporary light on the history of early Muslim women's contribution to the formation of the Arabic language.

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[5] O wives of the Prophet! You are not like any of the [other] women, provided that you remain [truly] conscious of God. [35] Hence, be not over-soft in your speech, lest any whose heart is diseased should be moved to desire [you]: but, withal, speak in a kindly way-And abide quietly in your homes, and do not flaunt your charms as they used to flaunt them in the old days of pagan ignorance; [36] and be constant in prayer, and render the purifying dues, and pay heed unto God and His Apostle: for God only wants to remove from you all that might be loathsome, O you members of the [Prophet's] household, and to purify you to utmost purity.-And bear in mind all that is recited in your homes of God's messages and [His] wisdom: for God is unfathomable [in His wisdom], all-aware. (33:32-34)

[6] C. Kooij, " *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ*: a Suitable Case for Biography?" Amsterdam: Institute for Modern Near Eastern Studies, University of Amsterdam, pp.67-72

[7] Joseph T. Zaidan, Arab Women Novelists, (Albany: State University of New York Press,1995), p.79

[8] *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ, Baṭalat Karbalāʾ* ('The Heroine of Karbalāʾ', 1952), Nisāʾ al-nabiyy ('Wives of the Prophet', 1954), Banāt al-nabiyy ('Daughters of the Prophet', 1956), Umm al-nabiyy ('Mother of the Prophet', 1958).

This biographical series became remarkably popular[9] and firmly established *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ* as a prominent Islamic scholar and writer in the Arab world, before she proceeded in the 1960s to publish her famous studies of the *Qurʾān: al-Tafsīr al-bayānī li'l-Qurʾān al-karīm* ('The Literary Interpretation of the *Qurʾān*'), in two volumes (published in 1962 and 1968 respectively), and *al-Iʿjāz al-bayānī li'l-Qurʾān wa-masāʾil Nafiʿ b. al-Azraq : Dirāsah Qurʾdniyah Lughawiyah wa Bayaniyah[10]* in which she exposes her theory concerning the aspects of *Qurʾānic* artistic inimitability. The last part of the book is her review of the questions of *ʾIbn al-Azraq* to *ʿIbn ʿAbbās* concerning many words in the *Qurʾān* which seem to be non-Arabic. Additional analysis of her theory can also be obtained from her other work, *Min Asrar al-' Arabiyah fi al-Bayan alQurʾāni.[11]*

In these works that *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ* presented an application of *al-Khūlī's tafsīr* methodology to a wider audience; this earned her an unprecedented place in Islamic studies in general and as the first *mufassirah* in the *tafsīr* genre.[12] *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ* discusses few traditional authors, but these include *Khattābī, Rummanī , Bāqillānī*, and *Jurjānī*. Her criticisms are mainly of *Bāqillānī* and *Jurjānī*. Though *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ* does not agree with some of *Jurjānī's* theories pertaining to the attainment of the secret of the eloquence of the Arabic language through the study of Arabic poetry and prose but she admits that *Jurjānī* provided delicate observations of what he noticed about the mystery of Arabic rhetoric.[13]

Her two-volume *Qurʾānic* commentary, *al-Tafsīr al-bayānī li'l-Qurʾān, [14]*is a good source of her exegetical method which she developed from the method first promulgated by her teacher and husband, *Amīn al-Khulī ʾ [15]* *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ's* writings covered a broad range of literary, social, and linguistic studies across more than 60 publications.

Significant Aspects of *Bint al-Shāṭī's al-Tafsīr al-bayānī li'l-Qurʾān:*

The profession of *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ* drove her to be intrigued in Arabic dialect and history, as well as in *Qur'ānic* examines. The evidence of her true enthusiasm for the *Qur'ān* was the production of her *tafsīr,* and that recognized her as the principal Muslim lady ever to compose such a work.[16] Although only two volumes of this *tafsīr* were published, yet it has achieved a special position among *tafsīr* literature. *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ's*

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[9] *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ, Nisāʾ al-nabiyya, (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, 1979).*

[10] *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ, al- ʿijāz al-Bayāni li al-Qurʾān wa Masaʾil Ibn al-Azraq: Dirāsah Qurʾdniyah Lughawiyah wa Bayaniyah (Cairo: Dār al-Mʿārif, 1987).*

[11] *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ, Min Asrar al-ʿArabiyah fi al-Bayan al-Qurʿāni (Beirut: Jam iʿāt Beirut al-ʿArabiyah, 1972).*

[12] Shuruq Naguib, Bint al-Shāṭiʾ's Approach to tafsīr: An Egyptian Exegete's Journey from Hermeneutics to Humanity, Journal of Qur'anic Studies, 17(1), pp.45–84

[13] *Bint al-Shāṭiʾs, al-Iʿjāz al-bayānī li'l-Qurʾān wa-masāʾil Nafiʿ b. al-Azraq*p. (Beirut: Dār al-al kutub al-ʿilmmiyya ,2000), *p.94*

[14] *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ, al-Tafsīr al-bayānī , vol. II, p.127*

[15] Her real name *was ʿAʾisah ʿAbd al-Rahmān*, one of modern Egyptian authors. Her higher education was obtained at Cairo University where she earned her Ph.D. Since 1939, she was Assistant Lecturer at Cairo University, and in 1942 she became literary critic for *al-Azhar* magazine, and at the same year was appointed as the Inspectress of Arabic Language and Literature at the Ministry of Education. Between 1950-1957 she hold position as lecturer in Arabic language at ʿAyn Syams University; in 1957-1962 as assistant professor, and since 1962 was Professor of Arabic Literature, and Chairperson of University College of Women.

[16] The title of this work is *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ, al-Tafsīr al-bayānī* (2 vols., Cairo: Dar al-Ma'arif, 1962-1969). From now on it will be referred to as *al-Tafsxr al-Baydnx.*

exegesis is consist of two volumes in which commentary on fourteen *sūrah*[17]. The volume was published in 1962 and reprinted in 1966 and 1968 and the second volume in 1969, *Dār-ul-Mᶜārfia* of Cario (Egypt) was the publisher of both volumes. Her exegetic contribution can be assessed by examining her methodology in dealing with some important dimensions and different aspects of *tafsīr-ul-Qurʾān.* The importance of this work is her use of a method she acquired from her professor at Fuʾad I University in Cairo, *Shaykh Amīn al-Khulī* (d. 1966). He himself never wrote any *Qurʾānic* commentary, but he discusses many aspects of *tafsīr* in his publications. He calls his method *al-manhaj al-adabi* (literary method). He recommended the use of a topical approach in studying and commenting on the Qurʾān, and advocated a philological interpretation based on the chronological sequence of the text and the semantics of its own usage of Arabic.[18]

Her exegetical endeavor is often deemed to conform to *al-Khūlī's* approach,[19] and offering 'a reliable picture of what a *Qurʾān* commentary by *Amīn al-Khūlī* would have looked like'.[20] for example, *al-Khūlī's* notion of the *Qurʾān* as '*kitāb al-ᶜArabīyya al-akbar'* takes on a new meaning as the locus of the linguistic and cultural unity of the Arabs and the source of 'key solutions to many of the questions of our nationalist existence'.[21] This view may be justifiable in light of her own proclamations in this respect, but it is, nevertheless, an overestimation, that ignores the personal and poetic in her relationship with *al-Khūlī* as teacher and beloved husband. Ruth Roded argued widely about Ayesha *ᶜAbd al-Rehmān* and her *al-Tafsīr al-bayānī lil-Qurʾān*. She said that some scholars regard *ᶜAbd al-Rehmān's exegesis as a reflection of Amīn al-Khulī* 'theory as she writes for her "attempt" to apply Amīn al-Khulī 'method of Qurʾān interpretation to "our new method*"*, it is true because *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ* humbly accepted that the new method which she implemented in her study is based on the philological approach founded by her husband.[22]

Bint al-Shāṭiʾ also preserves the ancient structure of verse-by-verse interpretation in her treatment of each of the fourteen Meccan *sūrah* in the two volumes of *al-Tafsīr al-bayānī*).[23] *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ* tries to summarize her unique method under four points:

1. To acquire an appropriate significance of the words and the styles of articulation, beyond what many would consider possible, through a watchful abstract examination.
2. To pick up a genuine comprehension of the *Qurʾānic* message through the soul of Arabic in light of the styles of *Qurʾān* itself.

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[17] Volume 1: Ad-Duha:93, Ash-Sharah:94, Az-Zalzala:99, An Naziʾaat:79, Al Adiyaat:100, Al Bald:90, At-Takathur:102
Volume 2: Al-Alaq:96, Al-Qalam:68, Al-Asr:103, Al-Layl:92, Al-Fajr:89, Al-Humazah:104 and Al-Mauʾn:107.
[18] *Amīn al-Khulī, Manāhij Tajdīd fi al-Nahw wa al-Baldghah wa al-Tafsir wa al-Adab (Cairo: Dar al-Ma'rifah,* 1961).
[19] *Issā J Boullata*, 'Modern *Qurʾān* Exegesis', p.104
[20] Jansen, The Interpretation of the *Qurʾān*, Publisher: Cambridge University Press; Online publication date: March 2011. p.68
[21] *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ, al-Tafsīr al-bayānī* , vol. I, p.9
[22] Roded, Ruth, 'Bint al-Shāṭi's Wives of the Prophet: Feminist or Feminine?', British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies 33:1 (2006), pp.51–66
[23] In vol. I: Q. 93, Q. 94, Q. 99, Q. 100, Q. 79, Q. 90, and Q. 102, and in vol. II: Q. 96, Q. 68, Q. 103, Q. 92, Q. 89, Q. 104, and Q. 107.

3. To make the topical approach as the base of her *Qurʾānic* study. This may be one reason why she chooses the fourteen *sūrahs* which clearly show topical unity.

4. To abstain from including any immaterial components in the translation of *Qurʾān* and to have the sequential request of the disclosure and recorded setting of the verses taken into consideration.[24]

Bint al-Shāṭī's Standpoint of *Qurʾānic* artistic inimitability in her *Tafsīr:*

Bint al-Shāṭiʾ points out that, regardless of the various opinions that exist on the subject, there is no disagreement on the rhetorical inimitability of the *Qurʾān*. It was in fact widely acknowledged in Muhammad's own day, even by those w ho did not believe in his prophet hood. The unbelievers' claims that the *Qurʾān* was magic, poetry, and *kahāna* (soothsaying) even though they knew that the *Qurʾān* was actually none of these things[25] according to *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ*, a clear affirmation of the extraordinary power of the *Qurʾān* to affect the hearts and minds of those who had not seen the like of it except in the words of magicians, poets and soothsayers.[26] That is why the tyrants of the *Quraysh* warned people against listening to the *Qurʾān*, for its extraordinary power is said to have persuaded many, like ʿ*Umar ibn al-Khattāb*, to embrace Islam.[27] *Amīn al-Khulī* ʾ goes on to argue that the literary quality of the *Qurʾān* is recognized by all Arabs, no matter what their religions and tendencies, as long as they are conscious of their Arabness. This is also recognized by non-Arabs who have a historical relation to the Arabs and have accepted Islam as their religion. And even those who have not accepted Islam as their religion but have mixed and assimilated with Arabs and taken the Arabic language as their own, consider the *Qurʾān* as one of the literary principles of their life, because it occupies an important place in their literary studies.[28] According to *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ*, the purposes of this text can be fathomed only if its style and meaning are soundly comprehended in the same way that it had been by its first Arab hearers. *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ*, however, was not satisfied with the explanations of the rhetorical inimitability offered by previous scholars, some of whom were mentioned earlier. After alluding to their opinions on the subject, she says:

Nevertheless, the rhetorical inimitability [that they have referred to continued to evolve within the boundaries of the unchanged traditional forms and overblown explanations. Someone like al Khattabī does not find the explanations [of *Qurʾānic* rhetorical inimitability*)* satisfying in this regard, or able to cure the "disease of ignorance." The explanations are even considered no longer compatible with the glory of the miraculous book, and do not have any significance to this generation of Arabs who desire to unite with the miracle of the highest example of rhetoric.[29]

Bint al-Shāṭiʾ views the *Qurʾān* as a literary text. Being a literary text, it should be approached through literary methods. She attempts to analyze the *Qurʾān* from an intrinsic viewpoint, utilizing Arabic sciences like rhetorical science and Arabic grammar.

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[24] The summary in English is quoted from I. J. Boullata, "Modern Qurʾān Exegesis: A Study of Bint al-Shatiʾ's M ethod," *Muslim World,* 64 (1979), pp. 104-105. Boullata refers this summary to *al- Tafsīr al-Bayānī,* vol. 1, pp.10-11

[25] Hanafi Ahmad, *Muʾjizāt al- Qurʾān* (Cairo: *Matbaʿāt Lajnāt al-Bayān al- ʿArabi, 1954*); and Muhammad Shahrur, *al-Kitab wa al-Qurʾān (Cairo: Dār al-Mʿārif, 1990),*, pp.187-8

[26] *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ, Kitāb al-Akbar* (*Omdurman: Jamiʾat ʿUmm Durmān*, 1967), p.3

[27] ibid

[28] *Amīn al-Khūlī. Manahij Tajdīd fī al-Nahw wa al-Balāghah wa al-Tafsir wa al-Adab. (*Cairo: *Dār al-Mʿā rifah*, 1961). pp.271-301

[29] *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ, al-Iʿjāz al-bayānī liʾl-Qurʾān wa-masāʾil Nafiʿ b. al-Azraq,* 135

This approach allows the exegete to obtain the objective meaning of the verse and avoid any extraneous influences.[30]The traditional authors, says *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ*, were occupied in discussing all aspects of *balāghah,* detached from the concept of *mʿjizah,* because of their opinion that the sciences of *balāghah* are the arguments which prove the *ʿijāz* and the means to understand it. This opinion is different from that which was prevalent at the time of Bint al-Shāṭiʾ. In her time, *balāghah* was studied through the *Qurʾān.* Therefore, Bint al-Shāṭiʾ is against of the mode by which *Qurʾānic* verses are interpreted in the light of scientific knowledge; for example, she argues that there is not a single verse in the *Qurʾān* which calls attention to the study of biology, anatomy etc., while interpreting the word (علق)[31] she firmly criticizes those innovators who endeavor to decipher this word as indicated by understandings got from the fields of embryology, physiology and science, she contends that the *Qurʾān* was uncovered to an unskilled Prophet and an ignorant group which didn't know and had not considered embryology and couldn't envision that the *Qurʾān* would introduce something that they couldn't comprehend as early Muslims comprehended the word (علق) as just alluding to any material that sticks, for example, blood, they had no compelling reason to contemplate embryology or to counsel any references in a restorative library so as to fathom the importance of the verse which state '*He who creates man from clot'*, she asserts, All the verses concerning the creation of man, are intended to convey the sense of the omnipotence of Allah Who creates man from a blood clot or mingled fluids which become a new creature, that is man, who is to be the subject of reward and punishment.[32]

Another component of her *Qurʾānic* interpretation is strong thought of historical certainties about event of disclosure, for instance, while examining *Ad-Duha*, 93:3, she says that as per a few exegetes, like *Ar-Razi*, the occasion that proceeded the *ibtāʾ-al-wahī* was the moment when a dog of Prophet's grandson Hassan (R.A.) and Hussain (R.A.) entered the house of the Prophet, Gabriel then said to Prophet '*Don't you know that we never enter the house in which is a dog or picture?'.* To *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ*, this report does not make sense, because the historical fact indicate towards that Hassan (R.A.) and Hussain (R.A.) were born three or four years after hijra, whereas Ad-Duha, which is one of the first surahs of the *Qurʾān* revealed several years before the migration. So she regards historical consideration as a crucial tool for assessing the authenticity of *Asbāb al-nuzul*.[33]

Boullata summarizes *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ's* points on this issue as follows: That she ... offers new thoughts and new understanding, revealing certain textures never watched, for example, those in regards to the utilization of the detached voice in *Qurʾānic* scenes of the day of revival which, in her view, stress the resignation of the universe and the immediacy of all creation in complying with the staggering occasions of the day.[34]

Applying this method to her *tafsīr*, *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ* discovered the unique nature of *Qurʾānic* expression which encouraged her to do more study of *Qurʾānic* usage.[35] She

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[30] Jarot WahyudI , Literary Interpretation of The Qur'ān: "Fawāṣil Al-Āyāt," "Qasam" And "Istifhām," Three Examples From Bint Al-Shāṭi"s "Tafsīr", Islamic Studies, Vol. 37, No. 1 (Spring 1998), pp.19-28

[31] *Al- Qurʾān*, Al-Alaq:2

[32] *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ, al-Tafsīr al-bayānī*, vol. II, pp.18-20

[33] *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ, al-Tafsīr al-bayānī*, Vol. p.1,35

[34] Issa J. Boullata, "The Rhetorical Interpretation of the *Qurʾān*: *iʾjāz* and Related Topics." In Andrew Rippin (ed.) Approaches to the History of the Interpretation of the Quran. *(*Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), pp.139-157." p.154

[35]*Bint al-Shāṭiʾ, al-Tafsīr al-bayānī,* vol. 1, pp.9-15

illuminates some of the result of her investigation in her publications, and then discusses it in full in the book that specifically dealt with the issue of *Qurʾānic* rhetorical inimitability. *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ* tries to provide the reader with a new approach. She maintains that the rhetorical inimitability of the *Qurʾān* lies in every particle word, verse and structure.

The theory of *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ* pertaining to rhetorical inimitability revolves around the literary excellence of the *Qurʾān*, and focuses on *Qurʾānic bayān* which involves particular *Qurʾānic* usages. These usages are important to the understanding of the exact meaning of the word or sentences of the *Qurʾān*, which in turn is a vehicle to gain a better understanding of the *Qurʾānic* messages. Many of them only repeated the theory of *balaghah* (eloquence) proposed by their predecessors, but some proposed their own theories, these most especially include *Sayyīd Qutb* and *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ*.[36] *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ's* elaboration of the rhetorical marvel of the *Qurʾān* leads to an understanding of the meaning of key words in the *Qurʾān* which in turn provides a better understanding of the contents of the *Qurʾān* in general. Her attempt to prove the rhetorical inimitability of the *Qurʾān* is conducted by using an exegetical method, which is assessed in the light of three particular domains:

1- The openings of *Qurʾānic* chapters and the *ḥurūf muqaṭṭaʿah* (Mysterious Letters)
2- The case of synonyms
3- Oaths in *Qurʾān*

1- The openings of *Qurʾānic* chapters and the *ḥurūf muqaṭṭaʿah* (Mysterious Letters)

The abbreviated or mysterious letters called *ḥurūf muqaṭṭaʿah* or *fawātiḥ al-suwar* (surah openings) have been the subject of various guesses by *Qurʾānic* reporters old and additionally present day. Muslim researchers and *Qurʾānic* reporters hold that those letters are parts of *Allāh's* name, or that they are names of His angels and prophets, or the name of the section, or the initials of the copyists. Some even say that those letters are a piece of alphabetic letters with numerical esteem, which indicate the length of a religion, of a country, or of the world.[37] Many authors recommended the standpoint of *Abu Bakr* that there is a secret in the Book of Allah and His secret is to be found in the letters that initiate the *sūrahs*, and only Allah knows their meaning, however, are of the opinion that those *fawātih al-sūwar* are a divine secret.[38]

In her exegesis, *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ* also risks to deal with a difficult yet interesting field of *Qurʾānic* knowledge that is **ḥurūf muqaṭṭaʿah**. She has tried to explain some letters in the selected *sūrahs*[39]; for example she explains that the letter (ن) mentioned in just the beginning of *sūrah Al-Qalam*, is used to inform people of the Prophet's time that the *Qurʾān* contains some letters that they were familiar with but could not understand them, the purpose was to make them believe that they were unable to produce such a *Qurʾan*. At that point, she endeavors to relate this *sūrah* to the beforehand uncovered one, *sūrah Al-Alaq* that attracts consideration regarding the indication of Allah, the making of man from a blood coagulation, and after that his learning with the pen when he knows not and *sūrah Al-Qalam* which uncovered after it, starts with the letter (ن) in order to attract thoughtfulness regarding the baffling letters which features the significance of perusing

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[36] *al-Kafrāwi, Salahudin*, 'Methods of Interpreting the Qurʾān: A Comparison of *Sayyid Qutb* and *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ*, Islamic Studies 37:1 (1998), pp.3–17
[37] *al- Alūsī, Shahāb al-Dīn al-SayyidMuḥammad , Ruh al Maʿani, (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr,1997) vol. 28, p.29 see also Mustafa al-Marāghī,Tafsīr al-Maraghi, (Cairo: Dār al-Mʿārif, 2001). vol. 1, p.169*
[38] *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ, al-Tafsīr al-bayānī,* vol. I, pp.128-134
[39] Here, it should be noted that all interpretations (including those of *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ*) of these mysterious letters/symbols are not entirely satisfactory and reliable as they are all based on arbitrary assumptions.

Exegetical Method of *Bint al-Shāṭi'*'s *al-Tafsīr al-bayānī – li'l- Qur'ān al-Karīm* - An Analytical Assessment

and information which are subject to these in sequential order letters.[40] It should be noted, however, that all interpretations (including those of *Bint al-Shāṭi'*) of these mysteri**ous** letter-symbols are not entirely satisfactory as they are all based on arbitrary conjectures. Those letters shall forever remain a mystery.

Her careful examination of *sūrahs* with introductory letters drove her to discover a few things that had been disregarded by others. To demonstrate the discoveries of *Bint al-Shāṭi'*, two cases are proper here. The first is the announcement of *al-Zamakhsharī* with reference to *sūrah (al-Qal am).* He specifies that in this *sūrah* (with the underlying letters) the rhyme of every one of its verses are the same as the underlying letter. *Bint al-Shāṭi',* then again, found an alternate actuality. Utilizing her *manhaj istiqrā'ī*, she calls attention to the way that not every one of the verses in this *sūrah* have a similar rhyme: verses 5[41], 11[42], 12[43], 13[44], 16[45], 20[46], 34[47], 40[48], 48[49], and 49[50] have different ones.[51] This initial points to the *Qur'ānic* miracle and calls attention to the secret of letters which is the object of reading, knowledge, and writing as commanded in the first revealed *sūrah*.[52]

The second instance is the statement of *Rāzī* that each *sūrah* with starting letter(s) by and large starts with the specify of *al-Qur'ān, al-Kitāb,* or *al-Tanzīl,* except for three *sūrahs*: 19, 29, and 30. In these cases, *Bint al-Shāṭi'* observed that in spite of al-*Rāzī*'s statement, those three *sūrah* contain references to the *Holy Book*, though not at their outset. In *sūrah.* 19, there is a mention of *al-Kitāb* in verses 16[53], 41[54], 51[55], 54[56] and 56[57]; then it closes with two verses, 97[58] and 98[59], that clearly refer to the *Qur'ān*. In *sūrah.* 29, verses 45-52[60] contain reference to *al-Kitāb;* and in *sūrah.* 30, verse 58[61] mentions *al-Qur'ān* while the last two verses, 59[62] and 60[63], contain argumentation for

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[40]*Bint al-Shāṭi', al-Tafsīr al-bayānī,* vol. II, p.43

[41] فَسَتُبْصِرُ وَيُبْصِرُونَ

[42] هَمَّازٍ مَشَّاء بِنَمِيم

[43] مَنَّاعٍ لِّلْخَيْرِ مُعْتَدٍ أَثِيم

[44] عُتُلٍّ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ زَنِيم

[45] سَنَسِمُهُ عَلَى الْخُرْطُوم

[46] فَأَصْبَحَتْ كَالصَّرِيم

[47] إِنَّ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ عِندَ رَبِّهِمْ جَنَّاتِ النَّعِيم

[48] سَلْهُم أَيُّهُم بِذَلِكَ زَعِيمٌ

[49] فَاصْبِرْ لِحُكْمِ رَبِّكَ وَلَا تَكُن كَصَاحِبِ الْحُوتِ إِذْ نَادَى وَهُوَ مَكْظُومٌ

[50] لَوْلَا أَن تَدَارَكَهُ نِعْمَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِ لَنُبِذَ بِالْعَرَاء وَهُوَ مَذْمُومٌ

[51] *Bint al-Shāṭi', al-I'jāz al-bayānī lil-Qur'ān wa-masā'il Nafi' b. al-Azraq,* p.134

[52] *Ibid.* pp.146-147

[53] وَاذْكُرْ فِي الْكِتَابِ مَرْيَمَ إِذِ انتَبَذَتْ مِنْ أَهْلِهَا مَكَانًا شَرْقِيًّا

[54] وَاذْكُرْ فِي الْكِتَابِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ إِنَّهُ كَانَ صِدِّيقًا نَّبِيًّا

[55] وَاذْكُرْ فِي الْكِتَابِ مُوسَى إِنَّهُ كَانَ مُخْلَصًا وَكَانَ رَسُولًا نَّبِيًّا

[56] وَاذْكُرْ فِي الْكِتَابِ إِسْمَاعِيلَ إِنَّهُ كَانَ صَادِقَ الْوَعْدِ وَكَانَ رَسُولًا نَّبِيًّا

[57] وَاذْكُرْ فِي الْكِتَابِ إِدْرِيسَ إِنَّهُ كَانَ صِدِّيقًا نَّبِيًّا

[58] فَإِنَّمَا يَسَّرْنَاهُ بِلِسَانِكَ لِتُبَشِّرَ بِهِ الْمُتَّقِينَ وَتُنذِرَ بِهِ قَوْمًا لُّدًّا

[59] وَكَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا قَبْلَهُم مِّن قَرْنٍ هَلْ تُحِسُّ مِنْهُم مِّنْ أَحَدٍ أَوْ تَسْمَعُ لَهُمْ رِكْزًا

[60] اتْلُ مَا أُوحِيَ إِلَيْكَ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ

[61] وَلَقَدْ ضَرَبْنَا لِلنَّاسِ فِي هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ مِن كُلِّ مَثَلٍ وَلَئِن جِئْتَهُم بِآيَةٍ لَيَقُولَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنْ أَنتُمْ إِلَّا مُبْطِلُونَ

[62] كَذَلِكَ يَطْبَعُ اللَّهُ عَلَى قُلُوبِ الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

[63] فَأَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا فِطْرَةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ ذَلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

the *Qurʾān*. One might say that these two instances are easily detected even by ordinary readers of the *Qurʾān*, yet *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ* deserves credit as the first scholar to bring them to light.

The investigation by *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ* of *fawātih al-sūwar* is led by gathering the included *sūrahs* and verses, and masterminding them in the sequential request of disclosure. *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ* presents the verses of each *sūrah* that contains the idea of the greatness of the *Qurʾān* and its supremacy.

1. Those letters are required to draw in thought in regards to how *Qurʾān* is made out of vernacular containing practically identical letters merged and characterized incredibly into a heavenly revelation provoking legitimate uniqueness.

2. Those letters are intended to acquaint the material that alludes with the *Qurʾān*, the Book *(al-Kitāb)*, or the Revelation *(al-Tanzīl)*, and which specify its adversaries, its test to them, and its help by Allah in spite of resistance.[64] However *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ* merits credit as the principal researcher to uncover them.

2-The Case of Synonyms:

The specialists in the Arabic language have for quite some time been contending over the instance of equivalent words. They are separated into two gatherings; the primary hold the view that equivalent words exist, the other say that equivalent words don't exist. The supporters of the main gathering affirm that diverse words can speak to one single significance, while the second gathering contends that each word passes on particular importance not to be connected to different words.[65] *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ* defines *tafsīr* as an attempt to understand the *Qurʾān* that consists in explaining and clarifying the text by using interpretive as opposed to synonymous language.[66] She says that it is a discipline that has been practiced by Muslim scholars from a very early period, and acknowledges that such exegetes as *al-Farrāʿ* (d. 207/822),[67] *al-Tabarī* (d. 310/923),[68] *al-Zamakhsharī* (d.538/1144),[69] *al- Rāzī* (d. 606/1210),[70] *Abū Hayyān* (d. 754/1344)[71] and *Muḥammad ʿAbduh's* (d. 1905),[72] made invaluable contributions to this field. However, their interpretations, according to her, are colored to a great extent by tendentious projections, sometimes based on sectarian and extra- *Qurʾānic* materials, and often ignore the miraculous nature rhetorical inimitability of the *Qurʾān*.[73]

One of the essential discoveries of *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ* is that what the language specialists generally characterize as equivalent words never show up in the *Qurʾān*. As indicated by *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ*, the *Qurʾān* picks its wordings painstakingly so that there is no single word that can be supplanted by some other typically called equivalent words in the lexicons or books of analysis. Each word has its own particular importance, which is not

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[64] *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ, al-Iʾjāz al-bayānī li'l-Qurʾān wa-masāʾil Nafiʿ b. al-Azraq,* p.141

[65] Ibid. pp.194-198

[66] *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ, al-Tafsīr al-bayānī* , vol. II, p.9

[67] See *Abū Zakarīya Yahya ibn Ziyād al-Farrāʿ, Ma'ani al-Qurʾān,* ed. *Muhammad ʿAli al-Najjār (Beirut: Dār -al kutub al-ʿilmmiyya ,1998)*

[68] See *Muhammad ʿibn Jarīr al-Tabarī, Jamiʿ al-Bayan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an (Beirut: Dār-al kutub al-ʿilmmiyya ,1986-7).*

[69] *Abu'lQāsimMaḥmūdibnʿUmar al-Zamakhsharī, Al-KashshāfʿanHaqāʾiq al-TanzīlwaʿUyun al-ʿAqāwīl,(Beirut: Dār al-Maʿarifah, n.d.) vol.2, p.662*

[70] See *Fakhr al-Dīn al- Rāzī Muhammad ibn ʿ Umar, al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr,* n.d.).

[71]See *Muhammad Ibn Yusuf Abu Hayyan, al-Tafsir al-Kabir al-Musamma bi alBahr al-Muhit (Riyād: Maktabaʿ wa Matabiʿ al-Nasr, n.d.).*

[72] See *Muhammad 'Abduh, Tafsir Juz 'Amma (Beirut: Dār-al kutub al-ʿilmmiyya ,2000)*

[73]*Bint al-Shāṭiʾ, Al- Qurʾān wa al-Tafsir al- ʿAsrī* (Cairo: Dar al-Ma'arif, 1970), p.24-32; and , *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ, al- Tafsīr al-bayānī,* vol. II, p.8

quite the same as others. The *Qurʿān* utilizes each word to express a specific importance or thought, which can't be communicated by different words. *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ's* careful investigation of those words yields a noteworthy conclusion, specifically the significance of each word utilized as a part of the *Qurʿān* can not be utilized to denote the importance of another word. One of the essential discoveries of *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ* is that what the language specialists typically characterize as equivalent words never show up in the *Qurʿān*.

As indicated by *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ*, the *Qurʿān* picks its wordings precisely so that there is no single word that can be supplanted by some other ordinarily called equivalent words in the lexicons or books of analysis. Each word has its own significance, which is not quite the same as others. The *Qurʿān* uses each word to express a specific significance or thought, which can't be communicated by different words. *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ's* meticulous investigation of those words yields a huge conclusion, to be specific the importance of each word utilized as a part of the *Qurʿān* can't be utilized to signify the significance of another word.

The words nabi and rasul used as a part of the *Qurʿān* are the easiest case of this case. The two words are generally appointed a similar significance; each word can be translated with the importance of the other. The investigation of Bint al-Shāṭiʾ, however, yields a different result. She argues that if we interpret S. 69:40 (إِنَّهُ لَقَوْلُ رَسُولٍ كَرِيمٍ) "Behold, this [*Qurʿān*] is indeed the [inspired] word of a noble apostle, " with (إِنَّهُ لَقَوْلُ نبى) "That it is indeed the speech of a prophet," the meaning would be impaired, since the *Qurʿān* is not the utterance of a prophet *(nabī),* but it is a mission which he has to deliver, and he could not act in that capacity unless he has the status of a messenger *(rasūl).* Therefore, this 'mission' can only be attributed to the person who is a 'messenger,' and not merely a 'prophet.'[74]

The third example of this case is the words زَوْج and اِمْرَأَة. *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ* observes that these two words are used in the *Qurʿān* in different senses, though lexically the two words might carry the same meaning. The *Qurʿān* uses زَوْج when it speaks about marriage relationship in terms of procreation in which love, compassion, and peacefulness are the binding forces; otherwise it uses اِمْرَأَة. In *sūrah*. 30:21, Allah says:

$$\text{خَلَقَ لَكُم مِّنْ أَنفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِّتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْها}^{75}$$

(He creates for you mates out of your own   kind)
and in S. 25:74 He tells us the prayer of those ʿ *ibād al-rahmān*:

$$\text{رَبَّنَا هَبْ لَنَا مِنْ أَزْوَاجِنَا قُرَّةَ أَعْيُنٍ}^{76}$$

 "O our Sustainer! Grant that our spouses and our offspring be a joy to our eyes,

If love, mercy, and bond between the couple are loss, either by dishonesty, or difference in faith (ʾ*aqīdah*), then Qurʿān uses اِمْرَأَة instead of زَوْج. for example In *sūrah*. 66:10-11 Qurʿān states:

$$\text{ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا لِّلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا اِمْرَأَةَ نُوحٍ وَاِمْرَأَةَ لُوطٍ كَانَتَا تَحْتَ عَبْدَيْنِ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا صَالِحَيْنِ فَخَانَتَاهُمَا}^{77}$$

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[74] *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ's,Min Asrār al- ʿArabiyah, (Cairo: Dār al-Mʿārif, 1990),* p.38
[75] *Al- Qurʿān, Ar-Rum:21*
[76] *Al- Qurʿān, Al-Furqan:74*
[77] *Al- Qurʿān, Al-Tahreem:10*

For those who are bent on denying the truth God has propounded a parable in [the stories of] Noah's wife and Lot's wife: they were wedded to two of Our righteous servants, and each one betrayed her husband;

Both the wives of *Nūh* and *Lūt* were disbelievers, while their husbands were the messengers of Allah, and therefore both wives are referred to as اِمْرَأَة. The spouse of Pharaoh, the ruler of Egypt, was an adherent of Faith of Moses, and thusly she is alluded to in the *Qurʾān* as اِمْرَأَة.

Another unobtrusive point featured by *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ* is the reason for marriage is the continuation of life by multiplication. In the event that this objective can't be expert because of some reason, at that point the spouse is alluded to as اِمْرَأَة. *Zakarīya* implored Allah that he be given offspring although his اِمْرَأَة (wife) was infertile. In *sūrah*. 19:5 we can read his plea to Allah:

$$\text{وَإِنِّي خِفْتُ الْمَوَالِيَ مِن وَرَائِي وَكَانَتِ امْرَأَتِي عَاقِرًا فَهَبْ لِي مِن لَّدُنكَ وَلِيًّا}^{78}$$

"Now, behold, I am afraid of [what] my kinsfolk [will do] after I am gone, for my wife has always been barren. Bestow, then, upon me, out of Thy grace, the gift of a successor.

We read in *sūrah*. 3:40, that when the angel announced the good news to him that Allah granted him a son, he exclaimed his astonishment almost in disbelief because, as he admitted, he is a very old man, and his اِمْرَأَة, referring to his wife, is sterile:

$$\text{قَالَ رَبِّ أَنَّى يَكُونُ لِي غُلَامٌ وَقَدْ بَلَغَنِيَ الْكِبَرُ وَامْرَأَتِي عَاقِرٌ}^{79}$$

[*Zakarīya*] exclaimed: "O my Sustainer! How can I have a son when old age has already overtaken me, and my wife is barren?"

Then, after Allah granted them offspring, the *Qurʾān* uses the word in *sūrah*. 21:90 when it refers to the wife of *Zakarīya*:

$$\text{فَاسْتَجَبْنَا لَهُ وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ يَحْيَى وَأَصْلَحْنَا لَهُ زَوْجَهُ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا يُسَارِعُونَ فِي الْخَيْرَاتِ}^{80}$$

And so we responded unto him, and bestowed upon him the gift of John, having made his wife fit to bear him a child: [and,] verily, these [three] would vie with one another in doing good works,

The utilization of here is suitable as indicated by the hypothesis of *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ*, on the grounds that the spouse of *Zakarīya* is not any more desolate, and thusly, one of the motivations behind marriage is as of now satisfied.[81]

3- Oaths in *Qurʾān:*

The *Qurʾān* uses oaths more than 200 times.[82] Seeming all the more normally in the *Makkī sūrahs* and considering both the settings of the disclosure and the perspective of the early gathering of people, this successive utilization of vows appears to have been an element of the *Qurʾān 's* configuration to be as compelling as conceivable in conveying its message.. The lion's share of Muslim exegetes hold the feeling that the standard capacity of the *Qurʾānic* promise happening at the start of a *sūrah* is to show the honorable position of the objects of the pledge. In any case, *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ* goes past this position, contending that the utilization of the pledge in the *Qurʾān* is a complex device that can draw consideration as powerfully as conceivable to something open to tangible observation. She recommends that this question of recognition has qualities in a similar manner as something otherworldly that isn't communicated in the promise itself.[83] *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ* offers some illustrations. When God swears "By the morning" (والصبح) it represents guidance

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[78] *Al- Qurʾān, Maryam:5*

[79] *Al- Qurʾān, Al-Imran:40*

[80] *Al- Qurʾān, Al-Anbiya:90*

[81] *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ, al-Iʿjāz al-bayānī li'l-Qurʾān wa-masāʾil Nafiʿ b. al-Azraq,* p.47

[82] *Qattān, Mannāʿ al-Khalīl, Mabāhith fi ʿUlūm al-Qurʾān. (Cairo: Maktabah Wahbah, 1981)*

[83] J.J.G. Jansen, The Interpretation of the Koran in Modern Egypt (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1974), 75

and truth, "By the night" (واليل) represents error and falsehood. In *sūrah* al-Najm for example, God

swears: وَالنَّجْمِ إِذَا هَوَى "By the star when it plunges",[84] juxtaposing the image of a star falling from heaven to earth with the idea of divine revelation coming down from God to *Muḥammad* (peace be on him).[85] *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ* may be correct insofar as her claim that she is the first to make the literary connection between the oaths and the rest of the *sūrah*'s message as part of the *Qurʾān's* artistic illustration. Credit may be accorded here to her partly because Muslim scholars have generally not made this literary connection and because what Western scholars describe as an "enigmatic" oath makes no sense to them on its own if they do not turn "to other evidence in order to find the clue to the structural coherence,"[86] let alone serve as any appreciable literary allusion.

    Bint al-Shāṭiʾ's explanations represent a literary role of *Qurʾānic* oaths. To acknowledge the oaths' status and potential by utilizing them appropriately in any communication constitutes an effective style. If the *Qurʾān* had failed to employ oaths in its unyielding pursuit to convey its principal themes effectively, then one would possibly have found its style of communication to be short of its expected level.

$$\text{لَا أُقْسِمُ بِهَذَا الْبَلَدِ– وَأَنتَ حِلٌّ بِهَذَا الْبَلَدِ}$$

"I swear by this city, and you [O Prophet] are an inhabitant of this city".[87] Oaths preceded by a negative clause " لَا " are neither rare in the *Qurʾān* nor uncommon in Arabic. Occurring in about eight places,[88] this verse appears in one of two places in *Qurʾān*, *sūrah.* 90: 1 and 75: 1

$$\text{لَا أُقْسِمُ بِيَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ}^{89}$$

    Where such oaths open a chapter. Apart from the insufficiently substantiated interpretation that portrays God as declaring here that He intends no oath at all, the overwhelming contextual evidence supports this oath's affirmative nature. Yet the popular explanations for this style of oath, once again, are geared toward emphasis (*tākid*) or glorification (*taʿzim*).[90] For *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ*, however, there are more literary implications for both the oath's structure (لَا أُقْسِمُ as opposed to أُقْسِمُ) and phraseology (اقسم as opposed to احلف). The beauty of using لَا أُقْسِمُ(literally, I do not make an oath) rather than أُقْسِمُ (I make an oath) is not so much the intention to emphasize (though so credibly intended here), as it is the significance of applying such a style itself as a literary tool with discrete expression (*sirr al taʿbīr*). In the end, although an ordinary oath may emphasize something to a particular degree, the negative style accomplishes the same. In addition, it also serves as an effective mechanism for drawing more attention, arousing intense. She asserts that every word used in the *Qurʾān* conveys a particularly significant meaning that no other word can provide.[91]

    Bint al-Shāṭiʾ believes that oaths of the Qurʾān are used to attract thoughtfulness regarding the current issue by utilizing discernible things and cases keeping in mind the end goal to present those wonder which are intangible and unique to human personality and creative energies; for instance she says that when Allah swears by the morning which when sparkles inhales away the dimness, and the night which hides it, He really showed

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[84] *Al- Qurʾān,* 53:1. See the translation of Arthur J. Arberry, The *Qurʾān* Interpreted (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), p.550

[85] *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ, al-Tafsīr al-bayānī*, vol. I, p. 250. See also *Muhammad Amīn*, A Study of *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ's* Exegesis, p.49

[86] Angelika Neuwirth, "Images and Metaphors in the Introductory Sections of the Mekkan Suras" in G. R. Hawting and Abdul-Kader A. Shareef, eds. *Approaches to the - Qurʾān* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), p.32

[87] *Al- Qurʾān, Al-Bald:1-2*

[88] *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ, al-Tafsīr al-bayānī*, Vol. 1, p.147

[89] *Al- Qurʾān, Al-Qayamat:1*

[90] *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ, al-Tafsīr al-bayānī*, Vol. 1, p.147

[91] *ibid*

the noticeable marvel to speak to the subtle ones that are direction and truth from one perspective, and blunder and misrepresentation on the other.[92] *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ* shows her ingenuity in analyzing those *sūrahs* containing oaths. Her study suggests that *Qurʾānic* usage must be understood not by interpreting a single, remote verse but, rather, by studying a group of verses within a chapter. The next step is tracing the relationship between these verses, and determining their points according to their context, and not by interpreting those using external, unrelated materials. This is in full accordance with her exegetical method.

Conclusion:

This study reveals outstanding contribution of Bint al Shati in the field of Quranic Exegesis. She took inspiration from Muhammad Abduh's work and made excellent contribution in literary style and interpretation of Quran. Although she belonged to a conservative minded family but her thirst for education and knowledge took her far ahead in breaking all barriers and overcoming all hindrances. *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ* was a firm and effective lady who have devoted her life to upgrading the condition of Muslims fundamentally through her scholarly interests. An examination of her initial career in Arabic language and literature uncovers that she was a great scholar rather than a social and political extremist. Later she ended up gaining perfection in the field of *Qurʾānic* interpretation.

Her editorial on fourteen early *Makkan sūrahs* is an artistic exposition which applies an inherent way to deal with understanding Quran. Her work executes the system created by the Egyptian philologist and scholar *Amīn al-Khulī* ', *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ's* better half. Her significant scholarly exercises incorporate written work books and papers on *Qurʾānic* commentaries, Arabic writing, Islamic history, women liberation, social issues and in addition different imaginative works, for example, books and short stories. She likewise had composed the week by week segments for the Egyptian daily paper, *al-Ahrām*. Among her compositions, *al-Tafsīr al-bayānī li'l-Qurʾān*, is her most fascinating work. The purpose of this study is to analyze *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ's* views with respect to her exegetical study of the *Qurʾān*.

The paper concludes with a discussion on *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ's* stance on the primacy of a linguistic approach for understanding the *Qurʾān* and thus her divergence from *Amīn al-Khūlī* who emphasized history above language in his *Manāhij tajdīdihi*.[93] The emphasis on linguistic advances in *Bint al-Shāṭiʾ's* work into a religious philosophy of humankind in which ladies are similarly depended with comprehension the Qurʾān, uncovering her translation to be propelled by an enthusiasm for the *Qurʾān's* literary inimitability.

Significant aspects of Bint al Shati's major contribution ***al-Tafsīr al-bayānī li'l-Qurʾān*** can be summed up as an attempt to prove the rhetorical inimitability of the *Qurʾān* by using an exegetical method focusing on three major areas; *ḥurūf muqaṭṭaʿah*, Synonyms and Oaths. All these three stylistic characteristics of Quran have been beautifully explained in her remarkable works. Her approach is not only powerful but intriguing too. It convinces the reader of Quran if divine beauty of this revelation and miracles of Arabic language. Her convincing works arouses interests of the reader in learning Quran and its language. Above all it is a motivation and an inspiration for women of contemporary era to indulge in the domain of Qurʾanic Exegesis which is a fathomless sea.

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[92] *Ibid* ,Vol. 1, p.149

[93] *Saʿfān, Kāmil, Amīn al-Khūlī fī manāhij tajdīdihi (Cairo: al-Majlis al-Aʿlā li'l-Funūn wa'l-Ādāb wa'l-ʿUlūm al- Ijtimāʿiyya,* 1970).