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# A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ISMĀ'ĪLĪ AND TWELVER SHĪĀ' METHODOLOGY IN TA'WĪL BASED ON THE TWO BOOKS 'MIRĀT AL-ANWĀR WA MISHKĀT AL-ASRĀR' AND 'AL-KASHF'

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## **Abstract**

The article attempts to analyse and compare the Ismā'īlī and Twelver Shīā' methodology in 'ta'wīl' based on the two books of 'Mirāt al-Anwār wa Mishkāt al-Asrār' the compilation of great Shīā' scholar Abūl Ḥassan Ṭāhir 'Amilī (1139/1747); and the book 'Al-Kashf' written by Ja'far ibn Manṣūr Al-Yaman (347/955) of the 'da'ts' of Ismā'īlī, who had a high prominent place among the Ismā'īlī Caliphs. The research deals with the two authors biography and their position, the methodology of their two outstanding works 'Al-Kashf' and 'Mirāt al-Anwār', the topics that were discussed by the two authors in their books, such as: the issue of 'Imāmate' and 'Wilāyat' of 'Alī and blaming the enemies, the correspondence of the esoteric aspects of verses and narratives with the Twelver Shīā' and Ismā'īlī beliefs, and the position of esotericism and exotericism, 'mathal' and 'mamthūl' (symbol and symbolized), 'zāhir' and 'bāṭin', 'ta'wīl', experts and those who possess the knowledge of 'ta'wīl' in the Twelver Shīā', and Ismā'īlī as well, and also expressions of some of the two authors' beliefs have been discussed in the two books. The main topics of this research revolve around three axes: semantics, comparison of methodology of Ismā'īlī and Twelver Shīā' in esoteric interpretation of Qur'ān and the two examples of ta'wīl in classical tafsīr works of 'Amilī and Ja'far.

**Keywords:** Ta'wīl, Ismā'īlī, Twelver Shīā', Mirāt al-Anwār wa Mishkāt al-Asrār, Al-Kashf

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## **1. Introduction**

The term *Ta'wīl* has an important place in Islamic tradition, especially in Qur'ānic commentary and mysticism, but also in other religious disciplines, such as Dogmatic theology, Principles of jurisprudence and Philosophy.

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To answer the question of whether Twelver Shi'i and Ismā'īlī [1] authors had a particular method for deriving the esoteric interpretation (*ta'wīl*) of particular Qur'ānic verses, we should study the '*Mirāt al-Anwār*' by great Shīa' scholar Abūl Ḥassān Ṭāhir al-'Amīlī, (1139/1747) and '*Al-Kashf*' of Maṣṣūr al-Yaman (347/955) a high-ranking Isma'īli's *da'ī*, to see how the authors justify their use of *ta'wīl*, and with comparison of these various approaches to each other, the common points and differentiation of them will be realized. Therefore, this research's supreme aim is none other than the cognition of methodology of *ta'wīl* in the both Ismā'īlī and Twelver Shīa', and the methods employed in the two examples texts belonging to the esoteric narratives of Qur'ānic interpretation, with focus on the two books: '*Mirāt al-Anwār*' and '*Al-Kashf*'.

It should be mentioned that despite the Ismā'īlīs interpretation of the Qur'ānic verses radically differs from the Sunni interpretation but there are some similarities in the method of *ta'wīl* interpretation of Qur'ān between Ismā'īlī and Twelver Shīa'.

## 2. Description

Some etymologists believe that the words *tafsīr* and *ta'wīl* are used almost synonymously [2], but in the Shīa' Islam both have distinct meaning. *Tafsīr* in Shīa' Islam refers to the manifest meaning of the Qur'ān and *ta'wīl* refers to its hidden meaning [3].

*Ta'wīl* originally derived from the root (a-w-l=وَلَّى) and it means 'return to the origin' [4-7]. *Ta'wīl* among the Muslim scholars of both sects has different definitions, and they also differ on the meaning of the sixth verse of the *Sūra Āl-e 'Imrān* [8, 9].

Ibn Taymīyyah (728/1336) says that the term '*ta'wīl*' versus '*tafsīr*' is a term used in the words of the contemporary scholars; they have considered it to be esoteric, in contrast to the apparent meanings, which they called it '*tafsīr*'. *Ta'wīl* in the term *salaf* (predecessor) is referred to the interpretation of the word, and the intended truth and the gist of the word [10].

Ṭabātabāī (1401/1981) quotes the words of ibn Taymīyyah in *Tafsīr al-Mīzān* and on the one hand, he accepts it and on the other hand, rejects it. He accepts his word since he believes that *ta'wīl* contains all the verses of Qur'ān [8, 11] and that he considers *ta'wīl* as the truth that is beyond the concepts and phrases [7, p. 99], but because ibn Taymīyyah considers the *ta'wīl* to be just the exterior essence, he does not accept his word [7, p. 49].

Rashīd Ridā (1354/1935) says: We now know *ta'wīl* of the Qur'ān's words and its promises and warnings, but we do not know when it is done? [12]

Some Shiite scholars believe that the significance of *ta'wīl* is to the extent that the wars imposed on Imām 'Alī were due to the *ta'wīl* of the Qur'ān [13].

The doctrine of the *Imāmate* is an important subject. The doctrine of the *imāmate* however, leads to a little deeper differences between the Twelver Shīa' and Ismā'īlī Shiites [14, 15] but both accept the *ḥadīths* of the Prophet, of his

daughter Fatima and the *imāms*, as being of equal importance and validity and they are even as holy as are the Words of God [16].

### **3. Methodology of Ta'wīl in the Twelver Shīa'**

Twelver Shi'i scholars have a specific method for *ta'wīl* of particular Qur'ānic verses. The basis of the *ta'wīl* in Twelver Shīa' is the issue of *Imamate*, so at first, the doctrine of the *imāmate* should be discussed. There are many narratives regarding the relationship between *imamate* and *ta'wīl* in Shi'ite hadith collections [17].

There are two distinct kinds of narratives in *imāmism*: There are first of all the juridical narratives like those found in juridical compilations such as the *Furu* in al-Kulaynī's *Kaḥfī* (328/941), Sheik Ṣadūq's book (381/991) *man la yahḍuruhul faqih*, and there are other narratives that refer to the vast and abundant knowledge of the *imām* saying that the *imām* not only possess the whole and every type of knowledge of the worlds but also possess the true esoteric and exoteric knowledge of Qur'ān [18].

Another important issue that should be discussed here is the position of esotericism and exotericism in the Twelver Shīa'. The doctrine of the *imāms* revolves around two central, polarized axes. The first is 'vertical'; it may be characterized by the two complementary poles defined by pairs such as *ẓāhir/bāṭin* [19] (apparent/hidden; exoteric/esoteric), *nabī/walī* (Prophet/*Imām*), *tanzil/ta'wīl* (literal revelation/spiritual interpretation), Muḥammad/'Alī (the first whom represents lawgiving Prophecy, the exoteric part of religion, while the second represents the *imāmate* mission that consists in unveiling the esoteric part of the religion), *islām/imān* (submission to exoteric religion/initiation to esoteric religion), etc. [20].

According to Twelver Shīa' belief, it must be made specific here that exotericism is presented as being equally as important as esotericism [7, p. 72-74]. It might be said that without exotericism, esotericism has no ground in which to reside. The *ẓāhir* constitutes the foundation and the necessary support of the *bāṭin* [21]. From this point on, we are able to distinguish at least three complementary and increasingly more 'secret' levels in the teaching attributed to the *imāms*: An exoteric level; a level that might be referred to as esoteric for the closest of the disciples; and a strictly esoteric, very secret level for an elite number of the particular devoted disciples [22].

### **4. Methodology of Ta'wīl in Ismā'īlī**

According to Ismā'īlī thought, *ta'wīl* is based on the concept of *al-mathal wa al-mamthūl* [14, 23]. Ismā'īlīs believe that every physical phenomenon have spiritual counterparts [24]. To everything that is apparent, literal, external, exoteric (*ẓāhir*) there corresponds something hidden, spiritual, internal, esoteric (*bāṭin*) [25-27]. The world of the senses is an imperfect example or symbol

(*mathal*) of the world of real and subsistent images, which is the *mamthūl*, the archetype or symbolized [24, p. 62-63].

One of the most important factors in Ismā'īlī approach to the esoteric interpretation of verses is the conflicts of some verses with each other and with the obvious reasons. The incompatible verses, in *ta'wīl* of Ismā'īlī, are interpreted according to each other and by the reason, but a new word never replaces the words of the verse; however, in *ta'wīl* of other sects, the words of the verse are replaced with another word.

It is noteworthy that in view of the enemies of Ismā'īlīs, the *ta'wīl* that Ismā'īlīs believe is the made of their religious special interests and is incompatible with the Qur'ān and the reason [28]. Their notion of *ta'wīl* in Ismā'īlī, completely is inconsistent with what exists as a *ta'wīl* in Ismā'īlī thought, or at least theoretically, is not in line with the ideas of Ismā'īlīs, so it seems that the factors other than scientific discourse have impact in shaping of these trends against Ismā'īlī thought. Especially, considering the fact that the sects like Kaysāniyah, Mokhtāriyah and Hāshemīyah before Ismā'īlīs were the precursors in *ta'wīl* and they were interpreting the verses like the *bāṭinis* [26].

According to the both Ismā'īlī and Twelver Shī'a, ordinary people are not supposed to know the original meaning or the *ta'wīl* [8, p. 246]. It is only the chosen few or the initiated who are entitled to know [29, 30].

The basis of the Ismā'īlī *da'wa* (invitation) has been quite secretly, so this is one of the most important factors that made it difficult to access their interpretive resources. To illustrate and analysis the Ismā'īlī *ta'wīl*, and to eliminate the attacks is intended against them, it is worthy that, first some of the features of *ta'wīl* in Ismā'īlī views should be discussed and reviewed.

## 5. Review of the book 'Mirāt al-Anwār'

The book '*Mirāt al-Anwār wa Mishkāt al-Asrār*', which was first published as '*Muqadamat al-Tafsīr al-Burhān*' is a compilation of great Shī'a scholar Abūl Ḥassan ibn Muḥammad Ṭāhir 'Amilī Nabāṭī Fatūnī of the prominent of the twelfth century AH [31]. *Mirāt al-Anwār* has been arranged in three sections and aims to explain the role of *imāms* in the interpretation and understanding of the inner meanings of Qur'ān [32].

According to Āqā Bozorg Tehrānī (1389/1970), this book has been printed in two volumes and it has been known as '*Mirāt al-Anwār wa Mishkāt al-Asrār*'. He says: "We know the first volume of this book as an introduction to the *Tafsīr al-Burhān*, but the second volume, which is in two versions, is not available to us" [33].

In this book, *ta'wīl* of verses has been based on the narratives texts [34]. This *tafsīr*, in one version, which is in large format, includes from the beginning of *Sūra Fātiḥa* to the middle of *Sūra Baqara*, and in another version, it has continued until the verse 4 of *Sūra Nisā*, and the total is greater than the first volume, which is included in the introduction of *Tafsīr al-Burhān*.

Āqā Bozorq Tehrānī has seen the version which is by the middle of *Sūra Baqara* in the library of 'Mīrzā Muḥammad Tehrānī (1287/1870) in Samarra, and another version, up to verse 4 of *Sūra Nisā*, in the library of 'Sheikh 'Alī Kāshif al-Ghiṭā' in Najaf [34, p. 265].

The review of this book has been made by a number of both Sunni and Shīa' scholars. Among the Sunni scholars who have reviewed the book *Mirāt al-Anwār* is Muḥammad Ḥusain Dhahabī (1397/1977), who has reviewed and introduced this book in about 33 pages and regarded this book as one of the most important Shīa' commentary books [35], which, of course, has been criticized by Shiite scholars.

Zurqānī, (1367/1948) another Sunni scholar, also has a short introduction to this book [36], whose opinion on this book, as Dhahabī's opinion, needs to be criticized.

Ma'rifat, (1427/2006) considering the introduction of *al-Burhān* as an independent book of the *Tafsīr al-Burhān*, states: "This book is a compilation of famous narrator, Abūl Hassan Ṭāhir 'Amilī, which is arranged in three parts to show the role of *imāms* in *ta'wīl* of the verses of Qur'ān. The book is a valuable collection in terms of content, but often has relied on weak and invalid narratives" [37].

Bābāeī, (1373/1954) explains the book and its structure in detail, saying: "The printed volume of the book, written in the preface of the commentary, has a foreword, three introductions and a conclusion" [38].

'Amilī, the author of *Mirāt al-Anwār*, in the foreword, after praising the Lord and the Prophet and his Household, while pointing out that every verse of the Qur'ān has appearance and inner, rather seven and seventy inners, states: "There are many narratives that are too frequent, indicating that *ta'wīl* of Qur'ān, as well as a large part of its interpretation, have been revealed to demonstrate the grace and high status of the Prophet and *imams*" [34, p. 5-6]. In the first introduction, he expresses the esoteric reality of the Qur'an, saying: "The Qur'ān's inner aspects call to the *imāmate* and *wilāyat*, and its appearance calls to the monotheism and prophecy" [34, p. 7]. Author, then explains the praised status of *Ahl al-Bayt* in three articles, and describes the contents of the first and second articles in five chapters.

He has dedicated the second introduction to the expression of some changes occurred in the Qur'ān (in the author's opinion) in four chapters, which has led to an understanding that the guidance of the *imāmate*, *wilāyat* and the virtues of the *Ahl al-Bayt*, and the requirements to obey them should be achieved through virtual, mysterious and occult; also, the narratives related to the change of the Qur'ān by two Sunni and Shiite sects and the scholars' view of acceptance and denial of change have been expressed.

The third introduction, which consists of the most part of the book, is the expression of the traditions of *Ahl al-Bayt* about the esoteric interpretation of some verses, and also some narratives for the verses that there is no specific text for their *ta'wīl*.

This introduction composed of two articles: The first article is in the form of specific *ta'wīl* that the author has mentioned separately for their importance and their high benefits, which are expressed in seven chapters. To avoid exaggerated sense of understanding of the traditions, he described the meaning of extremism and explained the people of exaggeration; then in the second article, he expresses the general *ta'wīl* that are also discussed in the other cases.

In this article, the words of the Qur'ān are presented in alphabetical order, and their *ta'wīl* are provided in accordance with some narratives given in some cases, but their *ta'wīl* has been generalized and extended in some cases without any narrative. These words start from 'Al-Ab' and end to 'Al-Yad'

End part of the book also has two chapters: The first chapter deals with the narratives written in *ta'wīl* of the disconnected letters of Qur'ān, and the descriptions of some viewpoints of scholars about it. The second chapter focuses on the expression of several points that explains the methods used in writing this *tafsīr* such as plurality of different *ta'wīls* for a word and its justification, and documentation of *ta'wīl* of this book into narratives.

## 6. Review of the book 'Al-Kashf'

Ja'far ibn Manṣūr al-Yaman was a high-ranking Ismā'īlī author who flourished during the reigns of the first four Fatimid caliphs. Ja'far had a high prominent place among the Ismā'īlī caliphs, and has seen two periods from Qā'im (344/946) to al-Mu'izz's (367/975) reign [39]. He was also in charge of *Bāb al-Abwāb* in the period of al-Mu'izz's reign [40]. He eventually forced by his brother Abū'l Ḥassan to immigrate to the Maghreb, and there he continued the rest of his life under the reign of the caliph al-Mu'izz [28]. At the same time as he was in charge of the *ta'wīl* of the verses, he also settled down to the task of training *dā'īs* (singular, *dā'ī*) 'Callers to Islām' and organizing their affairs. Ja'far died at an unknown date in the early period of al-Mu'izz's reign [41].

Ja'far's works were often copied and incorporated in later anthologies of Isma'ili literature [42]. They are largely devoted to allegorical interpretation (*ta'wīl*), in which he relates words and expressions from the Qur'ān, Islamic rituals, and letters of the Arabic alphabet, to the grades of the hierarchy of the Fatimid *da'wa* (*ḥudūd al-dīn*); the numbers seven and twelve feature prominently in his scheme [28]. Among Ja'far's early works is *Kitāb al-Kashf* containing esoteric interpretation of some verses and several complete Qur'ānic Sūras that has been compiled in six treatises dealing mainly with the subject of the *imamate* [43]. Ja'far viewed the *imāmate* as a continuation of prophecy [*Encyclopedia Iranica*, Vol. XIV, Fasc. 4, December 2008, 349, <http://www.iranicaonline.org>].

The book *Al-Kashf* includes six treatises, that each of which is a metaphor of the famous sixteenth articulators (*Nuṭāqā'*) for the Ismā'īlis. These six treatises are presented below.

The first treatise includes the praise of God, the interpretation of some of the Qur'ānic verses and emphasis on the covenant, which God has made with His messengers to conceal the secret and the true books from the strangers except for one who is qualified to receive it, and *Al-Kashf* is one of these books, which if it is disclosed to another, the one who reveals it will be punished [43]. And also in this treatise, the author talks about *Hujaj* (plural of *Hujjat* in Arabic – meaning proof) including Adam and his *hujjat* Sheith, Nūḥ and his *hujjat* Sām, Ibrahim and his *hujjat* Ismā'īl, Moses and his *hujjat* Yūsh'a, Jesus and his *hujjat* Sham'un, Muḥammad and his *hujjat* 'Alī, and *hujaj* of Imām 'Alī and Ḥassan and Ḥusain, and their *hujaj* from their offspring 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusain, his *hujjat* Imām Bāqir, his *hujjat* Imām Ṣādiq, and also Imāms after Imām Ṣādiq from his offspring, one after another till the advent of Qāiem. (It should be mentioned that Ja'far ibn Manṣūr al-Yaman, in the first treatise of his book, *Al-Kashf*, in three places, respectively, on pages 32, 33 and 46 writes and emphasizes that Sham'un is the *hujjat* (proof/successor) of Jesus Christ.) The author also talks about the cause of naming the orphans and *hujaj* as night and day, and the companions of whisper and the companions of covenant, prohibiting the followers from assigning partners to the wilāyat of 'Alī whom God appointed as *walī* and *imām*.

The second treatise includes *ta'wīl* of some of the verses, which refer to the exoteric and esoteric, knowledge and practice, ranks, boundaries and status, quality and nature with describing the throne in accordance with the verses. He rejects theories of extremists, the people of metaphor and the sculptors, and then interprets some of the words of Qur'ān, and corresponds the boundaries to which those words point, saying: When these letters were gathered by God, which is about seven boundaries, they were called '*Bāb al-Raqīm*' (*Raqīm*: The sleepers in the cave) which is the same as: "That is the written (recorded=مَرْفُوعٌ) Book, only the elect will see it" (83:20-21), the elects are the ones whom Allāh has chosen among Abraham's family and preferred them to all the worlds, and they are Muḥammad and his progeny [43, p. 54-62].

Third treatise explains the esoteric aspect of the praise (*tasbīḥ*), which is the knowledge of truth and its recognition in any era, as well as the *imām* who is unique and does not have any counterpart. Ibn Manṣūr believes that no one is superior to the *imām*, and God placed him as the source and *bāṭin* of religion as He placed the Prophet as *ẓāhir* of religion; then, using the coded and mysterious letters, the author reminds them of those who oppressed the *imām* whom Allāh preferred him to them, and asserts that the enemies did not obey Allāh's command concerning the *imām*, and did not fulfil the Prophet's command about the successor after him [43, p. 63-90].

In the fourth treatise, Ja'far quotes a *ḥadīth* narrated from Imām Ṣādiq, saying: "God did not create any name unless has made a meaning for it, and He did not create the meaning of the name unless He created a spirit for it, and then made a rank for the spirit, and made for the rank a third dimension (*Quṭr*), and for the *quīr* a separation, and for each separation, He made a connection, the separated one is not known except by the connected one, and when the people talk to the connected one, they will understand it" [43, p. 91-92].

The fifth treatise deals with the theory of *Al-mathal wa al-mamthūl*. In this treatise, author tries to explain some issues about *al-mathal wa al-mamthūl* and then dismisses some doubts about it. Discussion on *ẓāhir* and *bāṭin* in all creation and in the verses of Qur'ān, can be traced in many parts of *Al-Kashf*. Then he explains *ta'wīl* of *Hajj*, stating that the likeness of *Ka'ba* is like *hujjat* that resembles the ship at the time of Noah, or it is like Eve in the age of Adam, or as Shu'ayb in the age of Moses. Then he pointed out that the *hujjat* (the superior) is connected to a large spring called *imām* [the *hujjats* are the ones who are constantly with the *imam* and never separate from him], the *imām-e ṣāmit* (silent *imam*: None-speaker of *sharī'a*) is the *imām-e bāṭin* (esoteric *imām*). Ja'far says the *imām* before the *imām* of *shari'a* (the dispensation) is the silent *imām*, so that he can be distinguished from *nātiq*/speaker of the *sharī'a*. The *imām* is the one who possesses the esoteric levels of religion and ranks the *abwāb* (gates) and *du'āt* (inviters), he is a comprehensive of *hudūd* (boundaries) and everything ends to him, and he, by appealing to God, completes the mission to make it achieve the main goal [43, p. 93-137].

In the sixth treatise, the author speaks of quality of the covenants, and emphasizes the necessity of fulfillment and protecting it, and not declaring it to anyone who is not allowed; and he also stresses on the delivery of important esoteric affairs to the *hudūd* (the spiritual hierarchy) and the officials of *hujaj* (the superiors/authorities) and *abwāb* (the elite); and expresses the need to obey them and to conceal their true beliefs and secrets for fear of violent reprisal (*taqīyya*) [43, p. 138-153]. At the end, Ja'far refers to the conclusion, and completes the meaning of the verses.

## 7. Methodology of *ta'wīl* in the book *Al-Kashf*

In expressing the method of *ta'wīl* in *al-Kashf*, it should be noted that as the name indicates, the author focuses on discovering the secrets, points, and terminology introduced in some Qur'ānic verses. In some cases, the author refers to the interpretation of some letters and tries to match those letters with the religious terms and Ismā'īli invitation ranks [43, p. 13].

According to the *al-Kashf*, there is whole ideal system called *mathal* and here on earth there is a corresponding system called *mamthūl* (representative of the ideal). To understand this, it is necessary to know that Allāh is a totally Transcendent Being who cannot be comprehended by human mind at all. He transcends everything conceivable and is just incomprehensible.

Ibn Manṣūr believes, neither the *imām* nor the *hujjat* are in physical bodies, but the person who appears to the people of the *ẓāhir*, is due to the exoteric and physical existence, as it is known to everybody. Furthermore, since the *imām* and his *hujjat* are eternal, they are immune from all the afflictions of the spiritual and physical worlds. They are incomparable and without any similitudes. Neither change nor transformation has an effect on them. Both truth (*haqq*) and falsehood (*bāṭil*), which are the path and the pit of the religion, are illuminated for them [43, p. 8].



From ibn Manṣūr point of view, the knowledge of *ta'wīl* is possessed by the *al-rāsikhūn fī al-'ilm*, who are the *imāms* from the offspring of Fatima and 'Alī [43, p. 6]. Not only Allāh but the holy Prophet, his legatee (*waṣī*) and *imāms* from his progeny also possess the knowledge of *ta'wīl*. Al-Kashf refers to *'ilm al-ladunnī* as a knowledge, which passes orally from the Prophet to his *waṣī*, and from *waṣī* to *imām* and from one *imām* to another [43, p. 6].

Among the unjust accusations to the Ismā'īlī sect is the neglecting to the appearance of Law, religion and the verses of Qur'ān. Although this accusation is true in some Ismā'īlī groups, but the main body of the Ismā'īlī sect are innocent of such charges. Ibn Manṣūr in different parts of *al-Kashf* acknowledged to the adherence to the trappings of religion and law and invited the Ismā'īlīs to practice the religion. He believes that exotericism is presented as being equally as important as esotericism [43, p. 10].

*Ta'wīl* of some verses in *al-Kashf* refers to those who have usurped the right of Imām 'Alī, and their names are mentioned with code and mystery. This method for such an expression of the names has been used for the first time by the Ismā'īlīs for fear of enemies [43, p. 16]. The author's purpose as the *dā'ī* is to understand and transfer the mystery and the esoteric meanings of the verses to the *mustajīb* (the respondent).

## **8. Similarities and differences in esoteric interpretation in the two books**

Among the common topics that both authors have addressed in their books are:

- *Ta'wīl* is used in connection with the verse 3:7; it is applied to all levels of meaning, from a simple, literal meaning to the hidden meanings. In the exegetical traditions, *ta'wīl* is mostly applied to the hidden meanings and esoteric exemplars of Qur'ānic words.
- *Ẓāhir* of Qur'ānic verses talks about monotheism and prophecy, and its *bāṭin* is related to the issue of *imāmate* and *wilāyat*.
- The necessity of faith in both the esoteric and exoteric aspects of the verses.
- The *imams* are the only ones who possess the knowledge of *ta'wīl* [43, p. 97].
- The need to love the *wilāyat* and *imāmate* and the majesty of their position and dignity, and to hate their enemies.
- Allah has made covenant with all the prophets and messengers to accept the *wilāyat* of *imāms*.
- Referring to the *imāmate* and the *wilāyat* through mystery and coding.
- God's purpose from *ẓāhir* of the verses is to make human pay attention to their *ta'wīl*.
- The reference and use of verses that have revealed about the previous nations, especially the nation of Prophet Moses to the nation of Prophet Muḥammad.
- The use of the word 'Allāh' and 'Lord' as to the prophet and the *Imāms* in terms of their *ta'wīl*.

- Addressing some issues including rejection of *Ghullāt* (extremism) [43, p. 27-28], the advent of *Qa'im* and *Rij'at* (the return) [43, p. 39, 46, 72].
- The apparent interpretation of some words such as the words (عد), (رب) and (جاو) by using the Arabic lexicon.
- Noteworthy that, the definition of *ta'wīl* in Ṭabātabā'ī view is very consistent with Ismā'īlī and it is in harmony with the principles of *ta'wīl* of Ismā'īlīs [7, p. 35-44].

Manṣūr al-Yaman in *ta'wīl* of *Sūra al-Fajr* affirms that '*Fajr*' is the Prophet Muḥammad, '*Layāl al-ashr*' is Imām 'Alī, '*Al-shaf'a wa al-watr*' is Imām Ḥassān and Imām Ḥusain and '*Al-layl idhā yasr*' is Fātima. Ṭāhir 'Amilī, has quoted the same *ta'wīl* in his book '*Mira't al-Anwār* [43, p. 66].

The differences in these two books are as follows:

- The main difference between the two books is that in *Mirāt al-Anwār* all *ta'wīls* are documented to the narrated *ḥadīths*; although in some cases, these narratives are generalized to other verses or the author has used the method of *ijtihād* (the inference) based on the *imāms'* narratives, but it cannot be considered self-opinion interpretation. Ibn Manṣūr has presented *ta'wīl* of the verses in accordance with the reason, and in some cases, he has used the narratives of Imām Ṣādiq and Imām Bāqir as well. However, most of these narratives have been used to introduce the Ismā'īlī invitation ranks and refer to the famous figures in Ismā'īlī, and in the text of some narratives, a kind of instability can be seen, such as the narrative used in *ta'wīl* of the verse 40 of *Sūra al-Mi'rāj* [43, p. 34, 43-44, 82, 98-106].
- The issues mentioned in *Mirāt al-Anwār* are much more than the ones mentioned in *Al-Kashf*, which is clearly seen by looking at the volume of the two books.
- The contents of *Mirāt al-Anwār* are perfectly regular and categorized, and for each part, narratives related to that section are given, but this order and arrangement cannot be seen in *Al-Kashf*, and the material presented in this book is irregular and there is a clear dispersion in the subject matter of this book.
- The difference between the two authors is quite clear in defining, accepting or rejecting some issues including the issue of reincarnation, which was rejected by the author of *Mirāt al-Anwār*, while the issue of *Tanāsukh* (reincarnation) by the author of *Al-Kashf*, of course, is accepted by his specific definition [43, p. 89-94]. In addition, the definition that Ṭāhir 'Amilī has presented on extremism is different from that defined by Ibn Manṣūr.
- Most of the author's attempts in *Al-Kashf* are the matching of verses and narratives to the principles of Ismā'īlī's beliefs and their ranks of invitation, such as the correspondence of *Arāf:142*, *Ṭūr:1-8*, *Nahl:68*, and many other verses with Ismā'īlī invitations ranks [43, p. 27-29].
- *Ta'wīl* of words and their sources have been mentioned and documented in *Mirāt al-Anwār*, but it is not so in *Al-Kashf*, in many cases, Ibn Manṣūr's

view is opposite to the *ta'wīl* of those words interpreted by the *ḥadīths* of the *imams*.

- In *Mirāt al-Anwār* the recitation of *Ahl al-Bayt* has been documentary mentioned in a verse, which is different from the common and usual recitation of the Qur'ān; in many cases, same changes were performed by the author of *Al-Kashf* while no documentary has been mentioned for it, and it may be considered quite personal and unofficial, such as the insertion of the word (له) instead of the word (بحمده) in (17:52).

## 9. Conclusions

Among the interpretive books that have been referred to *ta'wīl* of the verses, is the book of *Al-Kashf* of Ja'far ibn Manṣūr, which is one of the Ismā'īlī *dā'īs* in the 4<sup>th</sup> centuries, as well as the book of *Mirāt al-Anwār*, compiled by Ṭāhīr 'Amīlī, who is among the twelve-century scholars of the Twelver Shīa'. The two scholars from two different sects and different two centuries have only devoted themselves to interpreting *ta'wīl* of the verses in their books, but in addition to the fact that the two commentators are different in addressing the verses, the topics that they have mentioned are also different subjects, but sometimes their views on some of these issues are the same, and differ in others, and also the way to deal with *ta'wīl* of the verses is different in both books. It seems that for a better and a more accurate understanding of *Al-Kashf*, the reader of this book needs to know two different sciences; the science of *Simā* (of occult sciences) which is the science of alphabetology, numerology, astrology, planets, etc. and the other is to know *bāṭin* and *ta'wīl* are based on the concept of *al-mathal wa al-mamthūl*.

With a glance at this book, it can be understood that the author himself has authorized this book with regard to these sciences and *ḥadīths*. But for *Mirāt al-Anwār* the reader needs to know esoteric *ḥadīths* that narrated from the *imāms*, especially Imām Bāqir and Imām Ṣādiq and for him it is easier to understand the material of the book because *ta'wīl* of the verses in this book is based on the narratives of Prophet's *Ahl al-Bayt*.

At the end, it should be noted that with the identifying the theories of Twelver Shīa' and Ismā'īlī scholars and review of their methodology in *ta'wīl*, it is possible to provide a platform for the represent of the Shīa' Qurānic thoughts and its sub-sects, and to find the factors that have played a major role in understanding the esoteric interpretation in both sects.

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