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THE RICHNESS OF MEANING OF THE LETTER "BÂ" IN THE QUR'ĀN

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Name of Author:
Emin Uz

Affiliation: Assoc. Prof. Afyon Kocatepe University, Faculty of Theology, Department of Arabic Language and Rhetoric, Türkiye .ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3255-7543>

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Abstract: As it is known, there are three minimum components to abstract any language at a certain level. These are vocabulary, morphology and sentence knowledge (Syntax). The vocabulary of a language develops over time in parallel with the effort spent on that language. Information about the shape of words is obtained by learning the rules set forth by the branch of science called morphology. Sentence knowledge is achieved by assimilating syntax knowledge, which consists of transforming the structural elements obtained through grammatical knowledge into sentence form. Structurally, considering the connection function of the vowel between the elements, the letters that fall within the scope of analysis of the nahvin correspond to a very small area within the broad Arabic linguistics we have mentioned, but when the subject is examined locally, a wide research area is encountered. One of the structures that deserve this specific research is the letter bā (ب). Because even in cases where it does not contribute to the meaning (surplus), the letter in question has become an auxiliary element that establishes a semantic link between the verb or words derived from the verb and other sentence elements. In this context, it is an important actor that gives clues about the verb's situations such as time, place, reason, tool, force, type of expression, transitive or intransitive nature. Based on its broad functional features, in this study, the letter bā, which is in the second row of the Arabic alphabet and is one of the most important letters in terms of its usage area and semantic value, was examined in the context of Ḥurūf al-maʿānī. In the research, examples on the subject were tried to be given mainly from the al-Qurʾān al-Karīm; Situations in which the letter bā means something and when it does not mean anything on its own along with its cer function have been tried to be revealed by using the basic sources of the subject.

Keywords: Arabic Language and Rhetoric, Hurūf al-Jarr, Hurūf al-Ma'ānī, Letter Bā.

INTRODUCTION

For communication, which consists of the triad of speaker, listener, and message, tools that can be used by the parties are required. If the intended message is to be understood by the addressee—which is the very foundation of communication—then a medium of communication must be employed that the speaker is skilled in and the addressee can comprehend. Language, above all, is composed of sound symbols. Each of these sounds carries a value agreed upon by the people who speak that language. In this respect, considering Ibn Jinnī's (392/1002) precise definition of language as "the sounds by which each people expresses its purpose" (Jinnī, n.d., vol. 1, p. 34), it would not be wrong to say that the history of language is at the same time the history of humanity,

or in other words, the history of prophets. Indeed, the mystics likened the sounds that constitute language to a community, explaining: “Letters are a community like other nations, they are responsible, and they have messengers from among their own kind” (Ibn al-‘Arabī, 1985, p. 260). The Qur’ān, which found this situation noteworthy, also expressed the harmony of the triad of speaker, addressee, and language as: *لَهُمْ لِيَتَّبِعُنَّ قَوْلَهُ يُبَيِّنَ لَكُمُ الْآيَاتِ* “We sent every messenger with the language of his people so that he might make things clear to them” (Ibrāhīm, 14/4). In accordance with this promise, when God engaged in verbal communication with humankind, He addressed them in the language they knew, conveying His message to people through the most widely spoken languages in

the world. Thus, human language was reflected back to humanity as the Word of God. This became one of the measures to eliminate both social and doctrinal confusion.

From a formal perspective, language is the transformation of letters into words and words into sentence form within certain rules. From this angle, it must not be forgotten that the triad of letter, word, and sentence as a whole indicates meaning. No argument used by language as a means of communication is devoid of meaning or function. Indeed, language has always been a medium of communication imbued with the phenomenon of meaning in every time and place. Considering the Arabic language, the morphological structure that constitutes it is based on words formed of nouns, verbs, and letters. In this division, nouns and verbs possess independent semantic value, whereas letters gain meaning only when they form a composition. For example, when we examine the noun **الكتاب** (kitāb, "book", from the perspective of morphology this word denotes "a collection of pages upon which writings are inscribed." Likewise, when we look at the verb **كَتَبَ** (kataba, "he wrote", we encounter the act of writing performed in the past. As can be seen, within the structure of the Arabic language, the primary function of nouns and verbs is to form the building blocks of language and to signify an object or phenomenon in themselves.

In this respect, while nouns and verbs are signs, the same feature does not apply to letters. When taken alone, a letter has neither an inherent meaning nor a functional value. For instance, the definite article **lām**, used as a particle of determination, has no meaning or function by itself. However, when it attaches to a noun, that is, when it forms a composition, it establishes a semantic relationship with the following word and imparts definiteness to it. This lack of meaning in letters pertains to the science of morphology (**ṣarf**). From the perspective of syntax (**naḥw**), however, the letter is always a functional element. The prepositions (**ḥurūf al-jarr**), which mostly assume roles within the sentence, are the clearest evidence of this. Among the main topics of **ḥurūf al-ma'ānī**, prepositions are auxiliary elements that establish semantic connections between verbs or words derived from verbs and other sentence components. Due to these functions, they provide clues about the verb's circumstances such as time, place, cause, instrument, force, manner of expression, and whether it is transitive or intransitive. On the other hand, they also indicate the syntactic position of the noun they precede, i.e., which element of the sentence it constitutes. Of course, not all letters in the Arabic alphabet fulfill these functions. Therefore, linguists divided letters into two categories: **ḥurūf al-mabānī** (phonetic letters) and **ḥurūf al-ma'ānī** (letters that establish

semantic relations in the sentence) (Suyūṭī, 1987, vol. II, p. 25). Within this categorization, the value of letters emerges in the field of **ḥurūf al-ma'ānī**. For a letter to acquire semantic value, it must be evaluated within the integrity of the sentence. Once letters become members of the sentence, they form a semantic bridge between the verb and other elements. In this context, while nouns and verbs, counted among the types of words, contain independent meaning, the meanings of letters emerge through the words with which they establish connections in the sentence. In other words, they are elements that do not possess meaning independently, unlike nouns and verbs (Jawjarī, 1423/2004, vol. 1, p. 237; Ḥasan, 1973, p. 6). Their dependence on the meaning of the sentence is so absolute that even if there is no verb to which they can be attached, they must be mentally associated with an implied verb meaning. The functions of letters in Arabic sentence structure can be summarized as follows:

- Imparting meaning to the word (noun or verb) with which they are used
- Establishing connections between words
- Expressing emphasis (**ta'kid**) when used redundantly (**zā'id**)

Considering these functions of letters within the structure of the Arabic language, it is concluded that almost every letter must be examined from various aspects. When it is remembered that Arabic, which forms the foundation of Islamic sciences, is also the language of revelation, the value of letters, which are its smallest components, becomes evident once again. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "For the one who recites the Qur'ān, a good deed is written for each of its letters. Each good deed is rewarded tenfold. Look, I do not say that **alif-lām-mīm** is one letter. Rather, **alif** is a letter, **lām** is a letter, and **mīm** is a letter" (Tirmidhī, "Faḍā'il al-Qur'ān" 16). This hadith is important in that it emphasizes the semantic value of letters. For indeed, Arabic in particular and all languages in general are mysterious signs of divine origin and manifestations of God's mercy (Ünver, 2017, p. 216).

On this basis, in this study the letter **bā** (ب), which occupies the second position in the Arabic alphabet and is among the most important letters in terms of usage and semantic value, has been examined within the context of **ḥurūf al-ma'ānī**. In this framework, examples related to the subject have been primarily drawn from the Qur'ān; situations in which the letter **bā** conveys meaning and those in which it does not convey meaning on its own, along with its function as a particle of genitive (**ḥarf al-jarr**), have been revealed by utilizing the fundamental sources of the subject.

1. Structural and Semantic Characteristics of the Preposition **Bā'**
- 1.1. Structural Characteristics

As is known, with a few exceptions, the letter bā' (ب) occupies the second position in the alphabet of almost all languages, and it is likewise the second letter of the Arabic alphabet. This situation is associated with the letter system of the North Semites, which constitutes the origin of many world languages (Erdem, 1991). In the Greek alphabet—one of the oldest languages still in use today—this sign appears as beta in the sequence alpha, beta, gamma...; it is pronounced bā (ب) in Persian and be in Turkish (Millas, 1992).

By virtue of its position in the alphabet, it also corresponds to the number two in the abjad calculation (Sıddık Hasen Hân, 1423/2002, p. 12; Tüzün, 2021, p. 23). Moreover, considering that it is a single-dotted letter, although it is chronologically counted among the second group of dotted letters (h. 58) (Hamed & Gedik, 2014, p. 174), it is the first dotted letter in alphabetical order. Because it bears a dot below, it is included among the letter groups referred to as “tahtāniyya / dotted below,” and because it has a single dot, among those known as “muvahhada / single-dotted” letters (Mutarrızî, 1431, p. 99).

In addition, with respect to its point of articulation, this letter is classified as “şefevî-şefehî / labial”; in terms of its phonetic quality, as “inficārî / plosive”; and with regard to vocal intensity, among the “cehrî / voiced” letters (Ömer, 2008, vol. 1, p. 151). What is meant by cehr here is holding the breath and maintaining contact with the point of articulation until the pronunciation of the letter is completed, without introducing any sound that would disrupt its structure. In essence, all letters are vocal and voiced; however, a few letters—such as bā’—are higher in tone than others.

Due to the proximity of its point of articulation, it is observed that in some words the letter bā’ transforms into the letters mīm, wāw, or fā’. The words “Bekke-Mekke” (Âl ‘Imrân 3:96), “başak-vaşak” (Reynhârt Düzî, 1979, vol. 11, p. 69), and “bur’ul-fur’ul” (Ḥalîl b. Aḥmad, 1988, vol. 2, p. 343; Ibn Manzûr, 1414, vol. 11, p. 51) may be cited as examples of this phenomenon.

The letter bā’, which is regarded as one of the most important and most frequently used letters in the Arabic language, is particularly among the letters sought in augmented (mazîd) forms. For there are six letters expected to appear in the vast majority of Arabic words, such that scholars of morphology have concluded: “A word lacking these letters is thought to have been borrowed from other languages.” These letters are fā’, lām, nūn, mīm, dāl, and bā’ (Ibn Manzûr, 2012, p. 188).

1.2. Semantic Characteristics

Regardless of the language, written texts must exhibit logical coherence; otherwise, semantic difficulties arise. The factors that render a written text logical are intra-sentential relationships that may initially appear structural but are in fact entirely semantic, such as context (siyâq-sibâq), transitivity and intransitivity, cause-effect, and part-whole relations. The relationships among elements that constitute the logical and semantic framework are ensured by auxiliary components such as suffixes, conjunctions, and particles. When these elements—which function as a kind of mortar—are removed, the individual elements may retain isolated meanings, yet the overall meaning intended by the sentence fails to emerge. For this reason, these letters and words, which may appear to be secondary factors, in fact form the foundation for understanding a text.

In the Arabic language, the task of establishing such semantic relationships is undertaken by conjunctions, particles, adverbs, and prepositions (ḥurûf al-jarr). Among these, one of the elements possessing the broadest semantic range is the letter bā’.

The letter bā’ has been regarded as one of the letters to which the greatest number of meanings have been attributed, particularly throughout Islamic history. Numerous literal and metaphorical meanings have been ascribed to it in both linguistic and Islamic sciences—so much so that, according to some mystics, it has been considered the key to reality. For example, Muḥyiddîn Ibn al-‘Arabî (d. 638/1240) authored a work entitled Kitâb al-Bā’ devoted to the letter bā’. In a dialogue mentioned in this work, it is stated that he was inspired from the sacred realm with the words: “Things manifested through the letter bā’, and within the letter bā’ there is a profound matter” (Ibn al-‘Arabî, n.d., fol. 3b).

As noted above, the field concerned with investigating the semantic value of letters in the Arabic language is designated by the term Ḥurûf al-Ma‘ānî. Within this discipline, the letter most frequently discussed is bā’, for—unlike other letters, which possess only a few semantic connections—it is a letter that encompasses a wide array of meanings, depending on its association with a verb or a derived noun. An examination of the works of classical-period Arab linguists reveals that this particular preposition, in comparison with its counterparts, imparts a far greater number of meanings to the word it governs.

In translation into Turkish, it is rendered with various suffixes and expressions corresponding to the word it precedes, such as “-i, -e, -a, -ye, -ya, -de, -da, -den, ile, için, sebebiyle, vasıtasıyla, sayesinde, tarafından, üzerine, üzerinde.” Beyond these, when the meanings recorded in accessible sources are considered collectively within the framework of the

relationship between the verb and the object governed by bā', the following headings emerge:

1.2.1. Adhesion / Contiguity (Ilsāq)

The primary meaning of the letter bā' is ilsāq. Lexically, ilsāq denotes meanings such as "to attach, to fasten, to join, to connect, to cause to reach, to glue, and to unite" (Ezherī, 2001, vol. 8, p. 287; al-Zabidī, n.d., pp. 26–357; Ibn Fāris, 1979, vol. 5, p. 221; Ibn Manẓūr, 1414, vol. 10, pp. 329–330). In this sense, the letter bā' semantically connects the noun it governs (majrūr) with the verb, and even links the agent performing the action with the governed noun. It indicates that the action denoted by the verb is carried out in a manner that is contiguous with the noun following bā' (Ibn Hishām, 1985, vol. 1, p. 97; Nāẓir al-Jaysh, 1428, vol. 6, p. 2945).

For this reason, both in the first revealed verse of the Qur'an (Alaḳ, 96:1) and in the basmala that appears at the beginning of almost every sūrah, the meaning "by holding fast to the name of God" is implicit. Accordingly, mystics have regarded the letter bā' as superior to other letters in terms of honor. By virtue of this nobility, God (Exalted is He) opened His Book with the bā' at the beginning of the basmala and commenced all sūrahs with this letter. Even though the basmala does not appear at the beginning of Sūrat al-Tawbah, God (Exalted is He) nevertheless opened this sūrah with the letter bā', saying: بِرَأۡءِیْهِ اللّٰهُ "A declaration of disavowal from God" (Tawbah, 9:1) (Ibn al-ʿArabī, 1985, vol. 1, p. 356).

In addition, its dimension expressing concrete contiguity may be substantiated by the verse: وَامْسَحُوا بِرُءُوسِكُمْ "Wipe your heads" (Mā'idah 5:6), for it is inconceivable to speak of the act of wiping without the contact between the hand and the head. Even when the letter bā' is used in the meanings to be discussed under subsequent headings, it does not depart from this fundamental sense. For regardless of the meaning in which it is employed, a form of contiguity is sought between the noun following bā' and the verb that governs it within the sentence (Ibn Hishām, 1985, vol. 1, p. 97; Nāẓir al-Jaysh, 1428, vol. 6, p. 2945). Taking this into consideration, Sībawayhi contented himself with stating that bā' signifies nothing other than ilsāq (Sībawayhi, 1979, vol. 2, p. 304). However, although it is possible to subsume many of the meanings of bā' under the notion of ilsāq, the more accurate approach is to enumerate these meanings separately (Mālikī, n.d., vol. 1, p. 223).

As may be understood from its lexical meanings, the contiguity conveyed by the letter bā' can be divided into literal and metaphorical forms. For example, in the sentence اُمْسَكْتُ بِزَيْدٍ "I held Zayd", the letter bā' indicates a literal contiguity between the act of

holding and the governed noun. Indeed, the act of holding in the sentence implies contact with a limb such as Zayd's hand or with something that envelops his body, such as a garment. As for metaphorical ilsāq, the sentence بِزَيْدٍ مَرَرْتُ "I passed by Zayd" may be cited as an example. As is evident, it is difficult to speak of literal contiguity in this case, for according to the verb meaning "to pass by" or "to go past," the speaker does not establish actual physical contact with Zayd. Nevertheless, classical sources state that in such examples one may speak of a metaphorical contiguity, in the sense that "they were almost touching one another," to express passing nearby (Ibn Hishām, 1985, vol. 1, p. 93; Nāẓir al-Jaysh, 1428, vol. 6, p. 2945).

Moreover, the source of the meaning of ilsāq is sometimes traced to the word bāh (باه). According to this view, the origin of the letter bā' lies in this term, which signifies "sexual intercourse, union, marriage, and wedlock." When two elements come together in their original state, bā' establishes a relationship of contiguity between them, and a result emerges. In other words, the essence of this letter is unification (Ibn al-ʿArabī, n.d., fol. 7b).

1.2.2. Causation / Transitivity (Ta'diya)

This meaning of the letter bā' has been designated both as the Bā' of ta'diya (causation/transitivization) and as the Bā' of transfer (naql) (Ibn Hishām, 1985, vol. 1, p. 96). A verb that is used as intransitive (lāzim) may be rendered transitive (muta'addī) with the aid of the letter bā'. In the verse ثُمَّ ذَهَبَ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِ يَتَمَطَّى "Then he went to his family swaggering" (Qiyāmah, 75:33), the verb dhahaba is an intransitive verb, for the act of going expressed by the verb occurs within the subject itself. There is no relation of the verb to an object other than its subject. In Turkish terms, when the questions "what?" or "whom?" are posed to the verb "went," they remain unanswered.

When the same verb is used together with the letter bā', however, it becomes transitive. As understood from the verse اَذْهَبْ بِكِتَابِي هٰذَا "Take this letter of mine" (Naml, 27:28), the verb which fundamentally means "to go" acquires the sense of "to take/bring" and thus gains transitivity when used with bā' (Ibn Ya'ish, 1422/2001, vol. 4, p. 490).

In some usages of this letter, the meanings of ta'diya (transitivization) and muṣāḥaba (accompaniment) become intertwined, leading scholars to advance differing views. This disagreement is most prominently centered on the verse ذَهَبَ اللّٰهُ يُوْرِهِمْ "God took away their light" (Baqarah, 2:18). However, when the verse is evaluated within the framework of linguistic rules, it becomes evident that the meaning of ta'diya is more plausible. For to claim that the letter bā' in this verse conveys the sense of accompaniment would—God forbid—result in understanding the verse as "God went together with

their light," which is clearly incorrect. Consequently, the letter bā' here is used for ta'diya, and the meaning of the noble verse should be understood as "God removed (took away) their light" (Murādī, 1992, p. 38).

A similar case applies to the verse وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَذَهَبَ بِسَمْعِهِمْ وَأَبْصَارِهِمْ "If God willed, He would take away their hearing and their sight" (Baqarah, 2:20). Likewise, interpreting the letter bā' here in the sense of accompaniment would lead to a misunderstanding of the verse. In both verses, the bā' employed for the purpose of ta'diya imparts the meaning of removal or elimination (izāla) to the expressions (Sīrāfī, 2008, vol. 1, p. 243).

When the preposition bā' is used with a verb that is already transitive, it increases the degree of that verb's transitivity. That is, a verb that normally takes one object comes to take two objects, and one that takes two objects comes to take even more. An example of this is the following noble verse: وَلَوْلَا دَفْعُ اللَّهِ النَّاسَ بَعْضَهُمْ بِبَعْضٍ لَفَسَدَتِ الْأَرْضُ "Had God not repelled some people by means of others, the earth would surely have fallen into corruption" (Baqarah, 2:251). As is evident, the letter bā' preceding the word يَبْغِضُ renders the verbal noun daf' transitive for a second time, thereby placing ba'd in the position of a second object (Sībawayhi, 1408, pp. 103–104; Ibn Hishām, 1985, vol. 1, p. 97).

In another verse, it is stated: سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي أَسْرَى بِعَبْدِهِ لَيْلًا "Glory be to Him who made His servant journey by night" (Isrā', 17:1). The verb asrā here is a transitive verb from the if'āl pattern. Although this verb is already capable of taking an object, its transitivity is further reinforced by the use of the preposition bā'. According to some linguists, however, it is not the verbal pattern that renders the verb transitive in this verse, but rather the letter bā' itself; the additional hamzah does not contribute to transitivity in this case (Ibn Fāris, 1997, vol. 1, p. 68).

1.2.3. Instrumentality / Seeking Assistance (Isti'āna)

Isti'āna means "to seek help, to ask for support, to request aid, to employ a means or instrument" (Ezherī, 2001, vol. 3, p. 128; Khalīl b. Aḥmad, 1988, vol. 2, p. 253). In this sense, the letter bā', which assists the verb, indicates that the occurrence of the preceding verb takes place by means of the governed noun (majrūr) that follows it (Murādī, 1992, p. 38; Ṣabbān, 1417, vol. 2, p. 793). In other words, in such sentence structures, the action denoted by the verb is realized through seeking assistance from the governed noun.

Thus, when one says كَتَبْتُ بِالْقَلَمِ "I wrote with the pen", it conveys the meaning "I wrote with the help of the pen" or "I employed the pen in performing the act of

writing" (Ibn Hishām, 1985, vol. 1, p. 97; Ibn Ya'īsh, 1422/2001, vol. 4, p. 473). Nābigha al-Ja'dī (d. 65/685) employed the letter bā' in the sense of isti'āna in one of his verses as follows:

نَضْرِبُ بِالسَّيْفِ وَنَرْجُو بِالْفَرْجِ نَحْنُ بَنُو جَعْدَةَ أَصْحَابِ الْفَلَجِ

"We are the sons of Ja'da, men of distinction; we strike with the sword and hope for relief." (al-Sīrāfī, 1394, vol. 1, p. 324)

In this poem, the bā' prefixed to the word السَّيْفِ indicates that the sword is used as an instrument to carry out the act of striking (Mālikī, n.d., vol. 1, p. 221). According to some scholars, the preposition bā' used at the beginning of the basmala also serves the function of isti'āna (Abū Ḥayyān, 1420, vol. 1, p. 42; Rāzī, 1420, vol. 32, p. 216). Based on these usages, it should be noted that the preposition bā' both conveys the meaning of "assisting the verb" in terms of semantics and contributes to sentence analysis by linking the noun it governs to the verb.

1.2.4. Accompaniment / Association (Muṣāḥaba)
Muṣāḥaba denotes meanings such as "to befriend, to be together with, to accompany, to keep company, to be alongside, to associate with" (I'dād Ibrāhīm Muṣṭafā et al., 1960, vol. 1, p. 507). Within Arabic sentence structure, when a word is governed by the preposition bā', it indicates that the agent performs the action together with the governed noun. In this context, it is possible to state that bā' conveying the meaning of muṣāḥaba functions equivalently to ma'a (مع), which fundamentally expresses accompaniment. For example, when the verse فَاتَّبَعَهُمْ فِرْعَوْنُ بِجُنُودِهِ "Then Pharaoh pursued them with his soldiers" (Tā Hā 20:78) is considered, it becomes clear that Pharaoh carried out the act of pursuit together with his troops. That is, the expression بِجُنُودِهِ may be explained as مَعَ جُنُودِهِ (Mālikī, n.d., vol. 1, p. 223). The accompaniment indicated by bā' here is not instrumental but actional; that is, it does not signify performing an action by means of an instrument, but rather that the action occurs simultaneously with another agent or action.

The verse قِيلَ يَا نُوحُ اهْبِطْ بِسَلَامٍ مِنَّا وَبَرَكَاتٍ عَلَيْكَ وَعَلَى أُمَمٍ مِمَّنْ مَعَكَ "It was said: O Noah, disembark with peace from Us and blessings upon you and upon the communities with you" (Hūd 11:48) is a clear illustration of this usage. Indeed, the expression بِسَلَامٍ in the verse conveys the promise that Noah's disembarkation would occur in a state of peace. In this case, there exists an accompaniment between the action and the noun governed by bā' (al-Rummānī, 2008, p. 6; Ṣabbān, 1417, vol. 2, p. 794).

In certain usages, however, the precise meaning of bā' may not be definitively determined. In such cases, the meaning assigned by taking the context of the sentence into consideration becomes crucial. The

verse فَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ “So glorify your Lord with praise” (Naṣr 110:3) constitutes a clear example of this situation. According to scholars who hold that the bā’ in this verse denotes muṣāḥaba, the word ḥamd is annexed to the object, yielding the meaning: “Glorify Him while praising Him,” that is, “Declare God free from all imperfections while praising Him.” Likewise, “Praise Him for what befits Him.” Consequently, according to these scholars, there is an accompaniment between tasbīḥ and ḥamd in this verse (Ibn ‘Aqīl, 1400, vol. 3, p. 22).

According to other scholars, however, the bā’ in this verse conveys the meaning of isti‘āna. In this interpretation, there exists an instrumental relationship between the verb and the noun that follows it, whereby the act of glorification is commanded to be carried out by means of praise. In this case, the meaning would be: “Glorify God by means of praise,” that is, “Employ praise while declaring God free from imperfection,” as expressed in the verse الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ “All praise belongs to God, the Lord of the worlds” (Fātiḥa 1:2; al-Dasūqī, 2009, vol. 1, p. 278).

1.2.5. Transgression / Exceeding (Mujāwaza)

Mujāwaza denotes meanings such as “to pass beyond, to move away, to depart” (Ibn Manẓūr, 1414, vol. 5, p. 328). Especially the Kūfan linguists stated that the meaning of mujāwaza inherent in the letter bā’ appears in the verb sa‘ala (to ask) and in words derived from it (al-Rummānī, 2008, p. 6; Ibn Nūr al-Dīn, 1993, vol. 1, p. 198; Ibn Ya‘īsh, 1422/2001, p. 339). This usage became so widespread that some scholars even referred to bā’ as “bā’ al-su‘āl” (Mālikī, n.d., vol. 1, p. 223).

The verse سَأَلَ سَائِلٌ بِعَذَابٍ وَاقِعٍ “A supplicant asked about a punishment bound to occur” indicates that the question is directed not at the punishment itself, but rather—by passing beyond it—at its nature and reality (al-Dasūqī, 2009, p. 280). It is the bā’ prefixed to the word ‘adhāb that conveys this meaning. In principle, the preposition ‘an (عن) is the particle that expresses mujāwaza. However, as in the example above, in certain contexts—especially when used with verbs of asking—the letter bā’ also conveys this meaning.

Indeed, the Kūfan school cited the following verse as evidence that both particles may express mujāwaza when used with the verb of asking: قَالَ إِنْ سَأَلْتَهُ عَنْ شَيْءٍ بَعْدَهَا فَلَا تُصَاحِبْنِي “He said: If I ask you about anything after this, then do not accompany me” (Kahf, 18:76). As can be observed, the verb sa‘ala in this verse is used with the preposition ‘an. For this reason, it may be said that the bā’ appearing in the previous verse also expresses mujāwaza in the sense of ‘an (Murādī, 1992, p. 39; al-Zamakhsharī, 1990, p. 339).

Outside the Qur’ān, one of the most well-known poetic examples is the following verse:

بَصِيرٌ بِأَدْوَاءِ النِّسَاءِ طَبِيبٌ فَإِنْ تَسْأَلُونِي بِالنِّسَاءِ فَإِنِّي
“If you ask me about women, then indeed I am a physician well-versed in the ailments of women.” (al-Mufaḍḍal al-Ḍabbī, 1361, p. 392)

In this poem as well, the question is directed away from the woman herself and toward her nature, and thus the letter bā’ is used in the sense of mujāwaza. According to the Basran linguists, however, the bā’ in such examples does not denote mujāwaza but rather indicates causation. For instance, the verse فَاسْأَلْ بِهِ خَبِيرًا “So ask about it one who is well-informed” (Furqān, 25:59) may be understood as فَاسْأَلْ بِسَبَبِهِ خَبِيرًا “Ask a knowledgeable one about its reason” (Murādī, 1992, p. 39).

1.2.6. Causality / Justification (Sababiyya – Ta‘līl)

In its root meaning, sabab—used in the sense of “rope”—denotes that by which one seeks to bring about an action (Jawharī, 1987, p. 299; Khalīl b. Aḥmad, 1988, vol. 1, p. 459; Ibn Durayd, 1408/1987, vol. 2, p. 1000). For this reason, in Arabic, the connection between sequences of events has been likened to a rope. The Turkish expression “İpiyle kuyuya inilmez” similarly conveys the idea that an unreliable cause cannot lead to a sound result. In terminological usage, sabab corresponds to notions such as “path leading to a result, justification, factor, means.” In this sense, within Arabic sentence structure it is understood as “the factor necessary for the occurrence of an action.”

Ta‘līl, derived from the same root as ‘illa, signifies “providing justification, attributing to a cause, presenting an excuse” (Ibn Durayd, 1408/1987, vol. 1, pp. 156–157). Accordingly, in Turkish translation it is appropriately rendered with expressions such as “because of, thanks to, due to, on account of, by doing so.” According to the majority of Arab linguists, there is no semantic difference between sababiyya and ta‘līl.

When the preposition bā’ is used in the sense of cause or justification, it establishes a cause–effect relationship between the noun that follows it and its governing element. The noun following bā’ functions as the cause of its syntactic correlate (Ibn Hishām, 1985, vol. 1, p. 94; Ibn al-Ḥabbāz, 1428, p. 232). The verse فَاصْبِرْ لِحُكْمِ رَبِّكَ بِأَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَى الْإِنْسَانِ “Thus, by His favor you became brothers” should be understood in this manner, for here the result of brotherhood is explicitly linked to the cause of divine grace. Owing to this causal relationship, this particle is referred to both as bā’ al-sababiyya and bā’ al-ta‘līl.

For communication between speaker and addressee through a text to be effective, expression must rest upon a sound logical foundation. The most fundamental of these connections is the cause–effect

relationship, which determines the impact of the event on the reader. Through this connection, the reader forms an understanding of the narrated event, ultimately arriving at a judgment. Hence, the soundness of the judgment depends upon the robustness of the cause–effect relationship. For example, in the verse *وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِ يَا قَوْمِ إِنَّكُمْ ظَلَمْتُمْ أَنفُسَكُمْ بِاتِّخَاذِكُمُ الْعِجْلَ* “And when Moses said to his people: O my people! You have wronged yourselves by taking the calf [as a god]” (Baqarah, 2:54), a shift in state—abandoning the Creator and taking the calf as a deity—is emphasized (Murādī, 1428, vol. 1, p. 190). By linking this change to its cause, the text draws the reader into deeper reflection, resulting in a more effective comprehension.

The letter *bāʾ*, in addition to conveying causality, also includes the meaning of recompense or correspondence. For instance, in the verse *فَكُلًّا أَخَذْنَا بِذَنْبِهِ* “Each We seized for his sin” (ʿAnkabūt, 29:40), it is emphasized that the disbelievers were punished in recompense for their sins, and the letter *bāʾ* is attached to the word sin (Mālikī, n.d., vol. 1, p. 224). Thus, alongside the cause–effect relationship, it is also indicated that the punishment corresponds to the offense committed.

When establishing a causal relationship, attention must also be paid to chronology. The occurrence of the cause must precede the occurrence of the result, for it is inconceivable that a result should precede the factors that produce it. In cases where cause and result are confused, this temporal criterion serves as a corrective principle. If there is uncertainty as to which of two mentioned elements constitutes the cause and which the result, priority is given to the one that occurred earlier in time. The earlier event is deemed the cause, and the later the result.

When the verse *يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تُبْطِلُوا صَدَقَاتِكُم بِالْمَنِّ وَالْأَذَىٰ* “O believers! Do not invalidate your charities by reproach and harm” (Baqarah, 2:264) is examined, it becomes clear that the acts of reproach and injury—introduced by *bāʾ*—precede the invalidation of charity. Their temporal precedence indicates their function as the cause, and reasoning by implication further confirms their chronological priority (Abū Ḥayyān, 1420, vol. 6, p. 378).

Another function of *bāʾ* when indicating causality is to specify the type or manner of an action. At times, an action occurs in a manner different from its usual form, and the meaning is thus directed away from its most immediate sense toward a more specific interpretation. The verse *لَا يُؤَاخِذُكُمُ اللَّهُ بِاللَّغْوِ فِي أَيْمَانِكُمْ وَلَكِنْ يُؤَاخِذُكُمْ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ قُلُوبُكُمْ* “God does not hold you accountable for unintentional oaths, but He holds you accountable for what your hearts have deliberately earned” (Baqarah, 2:225) should be understood accordingly. Here, the preposition *bāʾ*

points to a specific category of oath, namely those undertaken consciously and intentionally.

1.2.7. Zarfiyya / Adverbial Use

For a word to be regarded as an adverb (*ẓarf*), it must convey a meaning of time or place. In some cases, however, a word denoting time or place acquires an adverbial meaning through the addition of an element that conveys the sense of “within.” In Arabic, this function is primarily fulfilled by the preposition *fi* (في). If a preposition does not inherently denote adverbiality but adds meanings such as “in,” “within,” or “at” to the verb as a secondary sense, it is said to be used in the meaning of *fi*. It is observed that the preposition *bāʾ* is occasionally used in the sense of *fi* (Ṣabbān, 1417, p. 1/467). The use of *bāʾ* in the following verse is an example of this: *وَلَقَدْ نَصَرَكُمُ اللَّهُ بِبَنِي بَدْرٍ* “Allah helped you at Badr.” (Āl ʿImrān, 3/123) In this verse, interpreting *بَنِي* as *بِنِ* would be appropriate (Mālikī, n.d., p. 1/224). In the following verses as well, the preposition *bāʾ* indicates that the action took place in a particular location or at a particular time:

أَنْ تَبْنُوا بُيُوتًا لِقَوْمِكُمَا بِمِصْرَ بَيْتًا
“Prepare houses for your people in Egypt.” (Yūnus, 10/87)

وَبِالْأَسْحَارِ هُمْ يَسْتَغْفِرُونَ
“They used to seek forgiveness in the pre-dawn hours.” (al-Dhāriyāt, 51/18)

إِنَّ أَوَّلَ بَيْتٍ وُضِعَ لِلنَّاسِ لَلَّذِي بِبَكَّةَ
“Indeed, the first House established for mankind is the one at Bakkah.” (Āl ʿImrān, 3/96)

Sufi scholars have attached particular importance to the adverbial function of *bāʾ*. Its indication of place rather than time is especially meaningful in terms of relating the servant to the divine knowledge of God. According to Ibn al-ʿArabī, created beings were contained within God’s eternal knowledge before they came into existence. Their emergence into existence occurred through *bāʾ*, for all beings were folded and compressed within this letter. As can be inferred from its form, *bāʾ* served as the vessel, container, and locus of created beings. Indeed, the word *ẓarf* itself signifies a “container.” In this respect, *bāʾ*, as the first locus of existence, functions as a veil between the Creator and the universe. The gnosis of the gnostics, the witnessing of the witnesses, and the attainment of truth by the people of reality are possible only through *bāʾ* (Ibn al-ʿArabī, n.d., fols. 5b, 9b).

1.2.8. Mukābala / Reciprocity

This usage of *bāʾ*, which conveys the meaning of exchange or compensation, is referred to as *bāʾ al-ʿiwaḍ* (the preposition of compensation) (Mālikī, n.d., vol. I, p. 124). The *bāʾ* of reciprocity is used before nouns denoting compensation, price, value, or unit. That is, whenever an exchange occurs, the

compensation given to the other party is preceded by *bâ'*. In this sense, the Qur'ānic verses that indicate exchange generally employ this preposition. In the following verse: *أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ اشْتَرَوُا الضَّلَالَةَ بِالْهُدَى وَالْعَذَابِ* *بِالْمَغْفِرَةِ* "These are the ones who have purchased misguidance in exchange for guidance, and punishment in exchange for forgiveness." (al-Baqara, 2/175) it is observed that the disbelievers gave guidance and forgiveness as compensation and received misguidance and punishment in return. Just as the word indicating price is preceded by *bâ'* in the sentence: *إِشْتَرَيْتُ قَلَمًا بِأَلْفٍ* "I bought a pen for a thousand [liras]," the words denoting what the disbelievers gave as payment—guidance and forgiveness—are also preceded by *bâ'* in the verse, in accordance with the intended meaning. According to Ahl al-Sunna scholars, the *bâ'* mentioned in the following verse also conveys the meaning of reciprocity: *يَقُولُونَ سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ ادْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ* "The angels will say: Peace be upon you; enter Paradise in return for what you used to do." (al-Nahl, 16/32) (Ibn Hishām, 1414, vol. 3, p. 31; 1985, vol. I, p. 97) This is because many Qur'ānic verses state that the righteous deeds performed by believers are recompensed.

According to the Mu'tazila, however, the *bâ'* used before reward and punishment denotes obligation, and thus carries a causal meaning. In that case, the meaning would be: "Enter Paradise because of the deeds you performed." Yet, this interpretation conflicts with the Prophetic ḥadīth: *لَنْ يَنْجُو أَحَدٌ مِنْكُمْ بِعَمَلِهِ* "None of you will be saved by his deeds." (Muslim, 1374–75/1955–56, *Ṣifat al-Qiyāma wa-l-Janna wa-l-Nār*, 76) Therefore, interpreting the *bâ'* in the verse as causal would contradict this and similar ḥadīths. Moreover, according to the majority of scholars, the *bâ'* used in the ḥadīth is causal (Ibn Hishām, 1985, vol. 1, p. 97). Furthermore, attributing obligation to God (glorified and exalted be He) is inconceivable. Consequently, interpreting *bâ'* in such verses as expressing reciprocity is more accurate (Demāmīnī, 1428, vol. I, p. 230). This is because something given as compensation may at times be bestowed gratuitously. In that case, entry into Paradise cannot be attributed solely to deeds; other factors may also be involved. Indeed, God may admit His servant into Paradise without any compensation. The same applies to punishment: those who deserve punishment due to their sins are warned in the Qur'ān that the evil consequences they will face correspond to what they have committed: *إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْسِبُونَ الْإِثْمَ سَيُجْزَوْنَ بِمَا كَانُوا يَقْتَرِفُونَ* "Indeed, those who earn sin will be recompensed for what they used to commit." (al-An'am, 6/120) Conceptualizing punishment on the basis of reciprocity serves to affirm that no injustice or wrongdoing will be inflicted upon the servant on the Day of Judgment. Therefore, assigning the meaning of reciprocity to *bâ'* in such verses is the more accurate approach.

1.2.9. Qasam / Oath

In its lexical sense, *qasam* corresponds to meanings such as "to divide," "to cut," and "to decide." Terminologically, it refers to strengthening the determination of whether an action will or will not be performed by invoking something sacred. In other words, it is the act of presenting God as a witness to the truthfulness of a statement before the addressee. From a linguistic perspective, it is a sentence whose propositional content is reinforced by an oath (Suyūṭī, 1394, vol. 3, pp. 27–28; Zarkashī, 1376, vol. 3, p. 40).

In this phenomenon, which introduces an additional attribution beyond the triad of source, speaker, and addressee in the transmission of information, certain connective elements are required within the interaction. In Arabic, one of these connectors is the preposition *bâ'*. As one of the Arabic particles of oath, *bâ'* is also the most widely used among them. In this function, *bâ'* as a preposition attaches to the object sworn by and renders it in the genitive case. Due to its fundamental status among oath particles, it has also been referred to by grammarians as the "particle of *qasam*." Although *wāw al-qasam* is more frequently employed for oaths, the fact that *bâ'*, by virtue of its inherent sense of *ilsāq* (attachment), connects the object sworn by directly to the verb makes it more convenient for oath usage. For this reason, it can be argued that *bâ'* is the primary particle of oath (Suyūṭī, 1331, vol. 4, p. 232).

The superiority of *bâ'* used for oaths over other oath particles can be summarized under three points:

I. In oath sentences formed with *bâ'*, it is permissible to explicitly mention the verb, whereas with other oath particles the verb is not stated: *أُقْسِمُ بِاللَّهِ* "I swear by Allah."

II. The oath particle *bâ'* may attach to a pronoun, whereas the other oath particles do not attach to pronouns: *بِكَ لَا أَفْعَلَنَّ* "I swear by you that I will do it."

III. The particle *bâ'* may also be used with imperative or request sentences while retaining the meaning of an oath, whereas other oath particles cannot be used in such constructions (Mālikī, n.d., vol. 1, p. 224; Ibn Hishām, 1985, vol. 1, p. 98): *بِاللَّهِ رَبِّكَ إِنْ دَخَلْتَ فَقُلْ لَهُ هَذَا إِنَّ هَرَمَةَ وَاقِفًا بِالْبَابِ* "By Allah, your Lord, when you enter, tell him: 'This is Ibn Harma standing at the door.'" (Baghdādī, 1418/1997, vol. 10, p. 47)

1.2.10. Badal / Substitution

Badal denotes "a substitute that can take the place of something, preferring another equivalent in exchange for a thing, or replacing it" (Khalīl b. Aḥmad, 1988, p. 8/45). The preposition *bâ'* is one of the important particles used to express the meaning of substitution. However, grammarians have generally considered it more appropriate to use the noun *badal* itself rather

than employing *bā'* to convey this meaning (Murādī, 1992, p. 39; Şabbān, 1417, p. 2/795; Suyūṭī, 1331, p. 4/235). Nevertheless, in the Qur'ān, ḥadīths, and Arabic poetry, the use of *bā'* in place of the word *badal* is well attested. For example, in the verse: *يَوَدُّ الْمُجْرِمُ لَوْ يَفْتَدِي مِنْ عَذَابِ يَوْمِئِذٍ بَنِيهِ* "The guilty person will wish that he could ransom himself from the punishment of that Day by [offering] his sons." (al-Ma'ārīj, 70/11) The phrase *بَنِيهِ* may be understood as *بَدَلِ بَنِيهِ*, i.e., "in exchange for his sons." In Turkish, this meaning corresponds to the word *yerine* "instead of". This sense of *bā'* frequently appears in ḥadīths, particularly with the expression *مَا يَسُرُّنِي* "nothing would please me [so much]" (Murādī, 1992, p. 41). As in the ḥadīth: *مَا يَسُرُّنِي بِهَا خُمْرُ النَّعَمِ* "I would not prefer red camels in exchange for it." (Bayhaqī, 1432, p. 2/394; Tabarānī, n.d., p. 6/251) the particle *bā'*, used here in the sense of substitution, also imparts the meaning of "invaluable" to the word it governs. A well-known poetic example in which *bā'* is used with the meaning of substitution is the following verse:

شَنُّوا الإِغَارَةَ فُرْسَانًا وَرُكْبَانًا
فَلَيْتَ لِي بِهِمْ قَوْمًا إِذَا رَكِبُوا
"If only I had, instead of them, a people who, when they mounted, would launch an assault, both cavalry and infantry." (Baghdādī, 1418/1997, p. 6/253; Ibn 'Abd Rabbih, 1983, p. 2/336)

1.2.11. Isti'lā / Elevation

In certain contexts, the preposition *bā'* is used with the meaning of elevation or being "upon," similar to the preposition *alā*. The elevation intended here may be literal or metaphorical. By metaphorical elevation is meant the dominance and authority of the verb over the noun governed by *bā'* (Mālikī, n.d., p. 1/224). In the verse: *وَمِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ مَنْ إِنْ تَأْمَنَّهُ بِقِطَارٍ يُؤَدِّهِ إِلَيْكَ* "Among the People of the Book are those who, if you entrust them with a heap of wealth, will return it to you." (Āl 'Imrān, 3/75) the *bā'* prefixed to *قِطَارٍ* serves this function. The authority and power of disposal over the entrusted wealth indicate being "over" it and possessing the right to exercise judgment concerning it (Ibn Hishām, 1414, p. 3/33). The elevation here is metaphorical, and *bā'* conveys the meaning of the preposition *alā*. In poetry, *bā'* is also frequently used for *isti'lā* in its literal sense, meaning "upon," as in the following verse:

لَقَدْ دَلَّ مَنْ بَالَتْ عَلَيْهِ النَّعَالِبُ
أَرْبَ بَيُولِ النَّعْلَانِ بِرَأْسِهِ
"There are many a man upon whose head foxes urinate; indeed, those upon whom foxes urinate have been utterly humiliated." ('Askarī, 1988, pp. 1/465, 824; Nuwayrī, 2004, p. 3/43; Nāẓir al-Jaysh, 1428, p. 6/2945; Suyūṭī, 1331, p. 4/236)

1.2.12. Tab'īd / Partiality

When *bā'* is used to express *tab'īd* (partiality), it indicates that the action affects only a part, not the entirety, of the noun it governs. In this usage, *bā'*

functions in place of the preposition *min* (مِنْ), which inherently carries the meanings of "a part" or "some" (Zamakhsharī, 1990, p. 339; Ibn Hishām, 1985, p. 1/120; Şabbān, 1417, p. 2/796). In order to establish this meaning, contextual consideration is essential. For example, in the verse: *عَيْنًا يَشْرَبُ بِهَا عِبَادُ اللَّهِ يُفَجِّرُونَهَا تَفْجِيرًا* "A spring from which the servants of Allah drink, causing it to gush forth abundantly." (al-Insān, 76/6) when considered in its context, the phrase *عَيْنًا يَشْرَبُ بِهَا* "they drink from the spring" clearly carries the meaning of partiality. In the preceding verse, the servants are described as standing by the spring with cups in their hands. It is evident that one cannot drink the entire spring with a cup. Therefore, *bā'* here is interpreted as conveying *tab'īd*, meaning "they drink some of the water."

Beyond the meanings listed above, *bā'* is also used in other senses. However, these are not primary meanings of the particle; rather, they occur when *bā'* is employed in place of another preposition. The most commonly encountered cases include the following:

- In the sense of goal (*ghāya*), in place of *ilā* (إِلَى): (وَقَدْ أَحْسَنَ بِي إِذْ أَخْرَجَنِي مِنَ السِّجْنِ) "My Lord has indeed been gracious to me when He brought me out of prison." (Yūsuf, 12/100)
- In the sense of causation (*ta'līl*), in place of *li* (لِ): (إِنَّكُمْ ظَلَمْتُمْ أَنْفُسَكُمْ بِاتِّخَاذِكُمُ الْعِجْلَ) "You have wronged yourselves by taking the calf [as an object of worship]." (al-Baqara, 2/54)
- In the sense of state or circumstance (*hāl*): (قِيلَ يَا نُوحُ اهْبِطْ بِسَلَامٍ مِنَّا) "It was said: 'O Noah! Disembark with peace from Us.'" (Hūd, 11/48)
- In the sense of emphasis (*ta'kid*): (وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ) "Put your trust in Allah; Allah is sufficient as a Trustee." (al-Aḥzāb, 33/3)
- In the sense of simile, in place of the particle *kāf* (كَ): (لَقِيتُ بِهِ الْأَسَدَ) "When I met him, it was as though I had met a lion."

2. Cases Where the Preposition Bā Does Not Convey Meaning (Zā'id)

The preposition *bā* is used redundantly (*zā'id*) in six positions within a sentence. In these contexts, it does not contribute semantically to the sentence but merely performs the function of rendering the following word in the genitive (*majrūr*). The places where *bā* is used redundantly will be briefly evaluated under headings:

2.1. At the Beginning of the Subject (Fā'il)

The preposition *bā* may occur redundantly at the beginning of the subject (Mubarrad, n.d., vol. 4, p. 183; Ibn Hishām, 1985, vol. 1, p. 99; Suyūṭī, 1331, vol. 2, p. 338; 1394, vol. 1, p. 498). This usage may be obligatory (*wujūbī*), common (*ghālibī*), or necessary (*ḍarūrī*).

2.1.1. Obligatory (Wujūbī)

The bā occurs obligatorily as redundant at the beginning of the subject following the verb of the second form of exclamation (ta'ajjub-i thānī, اَعْجَبْ بِهِ). (اَنْصِرْ بِهِ, اَعْلَمُ بِمَا لَبِثُوا لَهُ غَيْبُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ اُنْصِرْ بِهِ وَاسْمِغْ "Say: Allah knows best how long they remained. To Him belongs the unseen of the heavens and the earth. How well He sees, how well He hears!" (al-Kahf, 18/26). In this verse, the bā in اَنْصِرْ بِهِ belongs to the exclamatory form and is therefore used at the beginning of the subject. As can be seen, the obligatory redundancy of this usage arises from the morphological (ṣarfī) nature of the verb. Indeed, in imperative sentences the subject is obligatorily implicit (mustatir). In this case, since the exclamatory verb is formally an imperative sentence, the redundant bā is used at the beginning of the subject to correct the wording and to eliminate the impression that the subject appears explicitly. Thus, the subject assumes the form of fuḍla (redundancy) in speech, and verbal confusion is removed. According to some linguists who state that the second form of exclamation expresses request not only verbally but also semantically, in the sentence اَحْسَنُ بِزَيْدٍ "Zayd is so beautiful", the subject is the implicit pronoun of the addressee. The preposition bā, however, is used in the sense of transitivity (ta'diya), rendering the verb transitive. In this case, the meaning of the sentence will be: "Describe Zayd beautifully, for Zayd is worthy of it." (al-Desūqī, 2009, vol. 1, p. 280).

2.1.2. Common (Ghālībī)

The preposition bā is generally (ghālībī) used redundantly at the beginning of the subject of the verb وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا كَفَى. "Allah suffices as a witness" (al-Nisā', 4/166). In this verse, the subject of the verb كَفَى is the word اللّٰه, and the preposition bā is used redundantly at its beginning (Ibn Hishām, 1985, vol. 1, p. 99; Sirāfī, 2008, vol. 3, p. 5). According to al-Zajjāj, however, the preposition bā is used at the beginning of the subject in order to impart to the verb كَفَى the meaning of اِكْتَفَى "be content" (Zajjāj, 1988, vol. 2, p. 134). In that case, the meaning of the verse would be: "Be content with Allah as a witness." If the verse is understood in this way, then the preposition bā is not redundant, and the subject is not, in meaning, the word Allah, but rather the implicit pronoun of the addressee. Ibn Hishām states that he found al-Zajjāj's interpretation commendable (Ibn Hishām, 1985, vol. 1, p. 100).

2.1.3. Necessary (Ḍarūrī)

In poetry, poets have necessarily (ḍarūran) used the preposition bā redundantly in order to complete the meter. When the meter does not conform to the preceding or following verse, it is completed with the preposition bā, which demonstrates how functional the bā is within the structure of the Arabic language.

بِمَا لَاقَتْ لَبُونُ بَنِي زِيَادٍ أَلَمْ يَأْتِيَنَّكَ وَالْأَنْبَاءُ تَنَمِي
"Have not the reports of the camels of the sons of Ziyād, wandering everywhere, reached you?"
In this couplet, the word مَا is the subject, and the preposition bā in the construction بِمَا, which renders it genitive, is redundant. It does not contribute to the meaning but is used solely to complete the poetic meter.

2.2. At the Beginning of the Object (Maḥ'ul)

The preposition bā may in some cases be used redundantly (zā'id) at the beginning of the object. Normally, when this preposition comes before the object, it renders that word "an indirect object" (maḥ'ul bih ghayr ṣarīh). In Turkish grammar, the element functioning as the object is called maḥ'ul bih, and this designation derives from its connection to the verb through the preposition bā. However, sometimes, apart from its function of making the verb transitive and connecting the following noun to the verb, it also occurs redundantly. وَلَا تُلْقُوا بِأَيْدِيكُمْ إِلَى التَّهْلُكَةِ "Do not cast yourselves into destruction with your own hands" (al-Baqara, 2/195; Ibn al-Athīr, 1420, vol. 1, p. 102). In this verse, the word أَيْدِيكُمْ is the object (maḥ'ul bih), and the preposition bā at its beginning is redundant (Ibn Jinnī, 2010, vol. 2, p. 284; Ibn Hishām, 1985, vol. 1, p. 100). Regarding this, Abū Ḥayyān (d. 745/1344) makes the following explanation:

The verb أَلْقَى مُوسَى عَصَاهُ "Moses cast down his staff", belongs to the if'āl form and thus becomes transitive without requiring a preposition. Therefore, the bā at the beginning of the word أَيْدِيكُمْ is redundant. In the verse, the word يَدٌ "hand" refers to the nafs (self). In this case, the meaning is interpreted as: — وَلَا تُلْقُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ إِلَى التَّهْلُكَةِ "Do not cast your souls into destruction" (Zajjāj, 1988, vol. 2, p. 135). According to this interpretation, the object أَنْفُسَكُمْ has been omitted. The construction بِأَيْدِيكُمْ, with the preposition bā, is understood in the sense of isti'āna (seeking help) or sababiyya (causality) (Mālikī, n.d., vol. 1, p. 224).

Just as the bā may occur redundantly at the beginning of the subject of the verb كَفَى, sometimes when the verb is transitive with an object, the bā at the beginning of the object may also be redundant.

كَفَى بِالْمُرءِ كَذِبًا أَنْ يَخْدُثَ بِكُلِّ مَا سَمِعَ
"It suffices for a person, as a lie, to narrate everything he hears." (Muslim, Muqaddima, 5).
In this ḥadīth, the expression أَنْ يَخْدُثَ بِكُلِّ مَا سَمِعَ is the subject, the word الْمُرءِ is the object (maḥ'ul bih), and the preposition bā at its beginning is redundant (Murādī, 1428, vol. 1, p. 167).

2.3. At the Beginning of the Predicate (Mubtadā')

Especially when the word حَسْبُ is used in the position of the predicate (mubtadā'), the preposition bā at its

beginning is redundant. According to some scholars, it occurs redundantly only at the beginning of the word حَسْبُ when used as a predicate (Mālikī, n.d., vol. 1, p. 224).

بِأَنَّكَ فِيهِمْ غَنِيٌّ مُضِرٌّ بِحَسْبِكَ فِي الْقَوْمِ أَنْ يَعْلَمُوا
 “It suffices for your people to know that you are wealthy and harmful among them.” (Maydānī, n.d., vol. 1, p. 66; vol. 2, p. 324).

As can be seen, the construction بِحَسْبِكَ in the above verse is the predicate, and the preposition bā at its beginning is redundant. Although some scholars have mentioned only the word حَسْبُ as predicate, according to the majority of scholars the preposition bā has also been used redundantly at the beginning of other words functioning as predicate (Fārisī, 2002, p. 73).

The preposition bā also occurs redundantly at the beginning of the subject of لَيْسَ, which is originally a predicate. Because the defective verbs (كَانَ and its sisters) come at the beginning of nominal sentences, the words that are originally predicates become the subject of these verbs. Since the preposition bā is used redundantly at the beginning of the predicate, it also occurs redundantly in the subject of defective verbs (Mālikī, n.d., vol. 1, p. 224). Here, the condition is that the subject and predicate exchange positions. لَيْسَ الْبِرُّ أَنْ تُولُوا وَجُوهَكُمْ قِبَلَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ “Righteousness is not that you turn your faces towards the east or the west” (al-Baqara, 2/177). This verse is the clearest evidence of this situation. For according to some readings, the expression أَنْ تُولُوا وَجُوهَكُمْ is recited with the preposition bā at its beginning. In this case, the subject and predicate of لَيْسَ have exchanged positions, and the construction بِأَنْ تُولُوا وَجُوهَكُمْ has become its delayed subject. Therefore, the bā at its beginning is a redundant preposition (Ibn Hishām, 1985, vol. 1, p. 100).

2.4. At the Beginning of the Predicate (Khabar)

The preposition bā may also occur redundantly at the beginning of the predicate (khabar). This issue should be considered differently in affirmative and negative sentences.

2.4.1. Usage in Negative Sentences

When the term khabar (predicate) is mentioned, a nominal sentence comes to mind; therefore, the negativity here refers to the negative state obtained by the negation particles that come at the beginning of the nominal sentence. In this case, the first example considered is لَيْسَ. Because this word, together with its sisters and similar particles, comes at the beginning of a nominal sentence and renders the sentence negative. Thus, the bā used at the beginning of لَيْسَ and its substitutes is considered redundant (zā'id) since it does not contribute meaning. وَاللَّهُ لَيْسَ بِظَلَّامٍ لِلْعَبِيدِ “Allah is not unjust to His servants” (al-Kahf, 18/26). In this verse, the

construction بِظَلَّامٍ لِلْعَبِيدِ is the predicate (khabar) of لَيْسَ, and the bā at its beginning must be considered redundant. Although there is disagreement among the Hijāzī and Tamīmī scholars as to whether the negation particle مَا functions like لَيْسَ, when this particle comes at the beginning of a nominal sentence, the redundant bā must also occur at the beginning of the predicate.

وَمَا هُمْ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ “They are not believers” (al-Baqara, 2/8).

This verse is an example of such usage. In this case, the redundant bā emphasizes (yu'akkid) the negativity in the sentence (Mālikī, n.d., vol. 1, p. 225).

2.4.2. Usage in Positive Sentences

The use of the preposition bā in affirmative sentences is entirely dependent on transmission (samā', hearing). That is, it cannot be evaluated analogically or grounded in any rule. One of the examples cited in this section is: جَزَاءُ سَيِّئَةٍ بِمِثْلِهَا “The recompense of an evil deed is its like” (Yūnus, 10/27) (Desūqī, 2009, vol. 1, p. 285).

2.5. At the Beginning of the Circumstantial Qualifier (Hāl)

The preposition bā may also occur redundantly at the beginning of a circumstantial qualifier (hāl).

وَأَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً بِقَدَرٍ “We sent down water from the sky in due measure” (al-Mu'minūn, 23/18).

In this verse, the element بِقَدَرٍ, which denotes quality, functions as the circumstantial qualifier. Thus, the interpretation of the sentence is: أَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ الْمَاءَ قَدَرًا.

Furthermore, Arabic linguists generally state that the bā may occur redundantly at the beginning of a circumstantial qualifier whose governing verb is negative, and they cite the following couplet as evidence:

حَكِيمُ بْنُ الْمُسَيَّبِ مُنْتَهَاها فَمَا رَجَعْتُ بِخَائِبَةٍ رَكَابُ

“The caravan of Ḥakīm b. al-Musayyab did not return unsuccessful (but returned victorious).” (Baghdādī, 1418/1997, vol. 10, p. 278).

In this couplet, the construction بِخَائِبَةٍ is the circumstantial qualifier, and its governing verb is negative. In this case, the preposition bā at the beginning of the circumstantial qualifier is used redundantly (Ibn Mālik, 1410/1990, vol. 1, p. 385; Suyūṭī, 1331, vol. 4, p. 232).

2.6. At the Beginning of Emphasis (Ta'kid)

Especially in emphatic constructions made with the words النَّفْسُ “self” and الْعَيْنُ “personally”, the preposition bā is brought redundantly. يَتَرَبَّصْنَ بِأَنْفُسِهِنَّ “The women shall wait concerning themselves” (al-Baqara, 2/228). In this verse, the expression بِأَنْفُسِهِنَّ emphasizes the subject of the verb يَتَرَبَّصْنَ (the women), eliminating the possibility that the emphasis might refer to something other than the subject.

However, according to some linguists, when the attached nominative pronoun (muttasil marfû' damîr) is emphasized with النَّفْسُ or الْعَيْنُ, it must first be emphasized with a detached pronoun (munfaşil damîr). For example: فَمَنْمُ أَنْتُمْ أَنْفُسَكُمْ "You yourselves stood up." If it is not first emphasized with a detached pronoun, then the bā is not considered redundant. Moreover, some scholars argue that such emphasis is invalid, citing the verse mentioned above as evidence. In that verse, those commanded to wait are the women themselves, and there is no situation that would suggest the command was directed to someone else (Ibn Hishām, 1985, vol. 1, p. 103). If, however, the word النَّفْسُ in the relevant sentence is not considered emphasis, then it will function as an object (maf'ûl), which changes the meaning of the sentence. Furthermore, whether a manifest noun or a pronoun is emphasized, the condition of prior emphasis with a detached pronoun should not be required. Because once emphasis has been made with a detached pronoun, there is no need for further emphasis with the word زَارَنِي الْخَلِيفَ نَفْسَهُ "The caliph himself visited me." In this sentence, the word نَفْسَهُ eliminates the suspicion that perhaps it was the caliph's envoy who came, thereby clarifying that it was the caliph himself (Damāmīn, 1428, vol. 1, p. 235).

Conclusion

Considering the branches of morphology (şarf) and syntax (naḥw) that constitute the word and sentence structures of the Arabic language, for an utterance to function as a communicative element, a meaning must be formed in the mind of the addressee. This meaning is the totality of concepts in which letters transform into words and words, within certain rules, into sentence form. From this perspective, it must not be forgotten that the triad of letter, word, and sentence as a whole indicates meaning. In this division, nouns and verbs possess independent semantic value, whereas letters acquire meaning only when they form a composition. While in languages such as Turkish the term "letter" refers to a script character or the narrowest sound unit, in Arabic a letter is a building block of the sentence, composed of several characters and at times endowed with semantic value. Among these structures that gain meaning within the integrity of the sentence, one of the letters with the strongest semantic value is undoubtedly the letter bā.

Based on the sequence alpha, beta, gamma..., the letter bā occupies the second position in the majority of world languages, and it is likewise the second letter of the Arabic alphabet. In terms of the location of its dot, the number of dots, its point of articulation, tone, and phonetic relation, it has been referred to with names such as taḥṭāniyya (dotted below), muwāhhada (single-dotted), shafawī (labial), infīḡārī (explosive), and jahrī (sonorous). From a

semantic perspective, bā can be considered the letter with the widest range of meanings. The attribution of fifteen or twenty meanings to a single letter demonstrates that it possesses more semantic value than an average verb or noun. However, these meanings are not understood independently, as in other types of words, but can only be determined from the context of speech or from certain evidences. For the meanings mentioned for the letter bā are sometimes limited to contextual meanings alone, while at other times they also include syntactic features along with these meanings. Moreover, since the meanings cited are quite intricate in themselves, difficulties may arise in determining them.

Our primary source, the Qur'ān, which for centuries has fascinated both believers and non-believers with its meanings, metaphors, and content, is the most beautiful reflection of the Arabic language and serves as a clear evidence revealing the structural and semantic features of the letter bā, as it does for every word. In this context, it is extremely important to examine the many meanings of the letter bā—such as transitivity (ta'diya), adhesion (ilsāq), assistance (isti'āna), companionship (muşāhaba), causality (sababiyya)—through examples from the Qur'ān. Among these meanings, ta'diya and ilsāq are those that place the letter bā in a distinguished position among other letters. For ta'diya enables certain intransitive verbs (lāzim) that cannot directly convey their meaning to the following noun to reflect their effect upon the nouns following this preposition, especially with the aid of the letter bā. The meaning of ilsāq, with its content of adhesion, clinging, and constant unity not found in other prepositions, creates an unbreakable bond between the verb and the noun governed by this letter.

In both linguistic sciences and other Islamic disciplines, the letter bā has been assigned many literal and figurative meanings. Even in cases where it does not contribute to meaning, it has functioned within the sentence as mortar, helping to maintain sentence integrity by connecting elements such as subject (fā'il), object (maf'ûl), predicate (mubtadā'), complement (khabar), circumstantial qualifier (ḥāl), and emphasis (ta'kid) to their governing words. The redundancy (zā'id) of this letter means that its removal from the sentence does not alter the meaning and that it does not establish an element-based connection with the preceding verb or derived word. Even in situations where no apparent semantic relation can be established, the letter bā has preserved its structural and semantic weight, assuming an auxiliary position in the sentence from different perspectives.

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