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Thematic and Structural Unity of Q 79 (al-Nāzi‘āt): An Intratextual and Intertextual Analysis

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Abstract

This article will examine a variety of topics within QS. al-Nāzi‘āt (79), such as the sura’s word choices and linguistic characteristics, its structure and literary forms, its place in the Qur’an chronologically, its similarities to other suras from the same period of revelation in terms of phraseology, theme, and formality, its intertextual connections to some earlier traditions, and an analysis of any possible later redactional intervention. This article argues the sura’s intratextual connections among its verses make it evident that all of its sections and subsections are interwoven with one another, proven by the tripartite structure that it has, the main theme of the sura, rhyme changes, and the occurrences of some unique phrases that mark the transition between sub-sections. Furthermore, QS. al-Nāzi‘āt’s intertextual links to previous traditions may have helped the first audience in the context of the sura’s revelation better understand its core lessons, given their familiarity with ancient Arabic and Judeo-Christian literature. Finally, it is unlikely that verse 33 should be a later redactional intervention (as Angelika Neuwirth has contended) because some intratextual analysis of the sura reveals the opposite.

Keywords: QS.79 (Al-Nāzi‘āt); Thematic Unity; tripartite structure; Intratextual; Intertextual.

Introduction

Eschatology is one of the central topics in many of the early Qur’anic suras, particularly those said to have been revealed in the Meccan period [1]. There are no fewer than 65 suras that deal with eschatological topics in the Qur’an, including the end of the world, the resurrection day, the final resurrection, and the world to come [2]. Q 79 (*al-nāzi‘āt*) is supposed to have been revealed during the first Meccan period and is one of the Meccan suras that address the topic of eschatology [3]. This is in line with some *riwāyas* transmitted by Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī in which QS. al-Nāzi‘āt is classified as Meccan sura by

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some companions [4]. In providing a thorough commentary on Q 79, this essay will consider many different aspects, including word choices and linguistic features of the sura, its structure and literary forms, its chronological position within the Qur'an, its phraseological, thematic, and formal parallels to other suras from the same period of revelation, its intertextual links to some earlier traditions, and the analysis of its potential later redactional intervention.

Through analyzing linguistic features, word choices made inside the sura, and intertextual links between verses both inside and outside the sura, this essay will argue that Q 79 is a unity that is supported by its tripartite structure. Furthermore, intertextual connections between some of its verses and some older traditions indicate that Q 79 addressed audiences that were well-versed in Judeo-Christian lore and ancient Arabic literature [5].

Method

This qualitative research uses library data because the main object of this study is an interpretation of the text of the Quran. A qualitative method is a method of assessment or research method of a problem that is not designed using statistical work steps. Therefore, in this study, the process is to gather and analyze the existing literature or secondary sources to answer the research questions.

By means of a diachronic approach that analyses the intratextual aspects of the verses under investigation, along with careful considerations on possible intertextual links between these Qur'anic verses and other sources outside the Qur'an, this study seeks to provide a comprehensive interpretation of Q 79 (al-nāzi'āt) from within and outside the text. Furthermore, as this research deals with one complete sura of the Qur'an, the explanation of each part of the sura will be provided so that the reader can follow the ideas more appropriately.

Result and Discussion

Tripartite Structure of Q 79

QS al-Nāzi'at consists of a total of 46 verses which can be broken down into different thematic groups. This sura, according to Angelika Neuwirth, is a unity consisting of three sections: verses 1-14, 15-32 (she views verse 33 as a later addition), and 34-46 [6]. Neal Robinson also claims that Q 79 is a unity and that it is divided into three parts, much like Neuwirth's division; however, he asserts that verse 33 ought to be included in the sura, rejecting Neuwirth's claim that it represents a later redactional intervention [7]. Meanwhile, in his article, Nasir Raddad Alharthi is inclined towards dividing this sura into six proportions of theme which is centred on the Resurrection and life after death [8].

Abdel Haleem states that 'the possibility and inevitability of the resurrection day, its results, and its timing' is the central theme of the sura. Additionally, the sura's punishment legend, which features Moses and Pharaoh, serves as a warning to the unbelievers and a source of encouragement for the prophet [9]. This is in line with Ḥusayn al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī's statement that this sura centers on the certainty of the coming of the Resurrection day, along with the rewards given to the believers and the punishment given to the unbeliever ones [10]. Robinson also asserts that the story of Moses-Pharaoh in this sura serves as a reminder for the unbelieving Meccan people that God chastised Pharaoh both in this world and the hereafter for disobeying God's instructions [11]. Therefore, the Moses-Pharaoh story serves to warn the unbelieving audiences of how terrifying the judgment day will be for them.

To have a complete picture of the sura, we will see its overall structure as follows:

Part I:

Oath series (1-5: -Cā) + Eschatology (6-14: -CāCiCāh)

Part II:

Narrative (15-26: -Cā) + God's creation (27-32: -Cāhā; 33: -CāCiCum)

Part III:

Eschatology (34-41: -Cā) + Messenger encouragement (42-46: -Cāhā)

It is evident from the aforementioned structure that every part of the sura has two sub-sections. Every sub-section of the sura contains a single rhyme and a single theme, except sub-division two in part II, which has two rhymes (-Cāhā and CāCiCum). Here are the proportions if we split the total number of verses by the sura's sub-divisions: I 14 (5+9) / II 19 (12+7) / III 13 (8+5).

Thematic and Linguistic Analysis of Q 79:

After examining the sura's overall structure, we will now examine its linguistic features, word choices, intratextual links that its verses have with other verses inside and outside the sura, and some possible intertextual links between its verses and some earlier traditions. The sura's parts will serve as the basis for organizing the analysis.

Part I: Oath Series and Eschatological Accounts

An oath series is given in verses 1-5, and it opens the first sub-section of Q 79. There is only one rhyme (-Cā) in this sub-section. Remarkably, all verses in the introductory sub-section of this sura (verses 1-5) are depicted by the female

agents, following the format of *al-fā'ilāt*, namely *al-nāzi'āt* (verse 1); *al-nāshi'āt* (verse 2); *al-sābiḥāt* (verse 3); *al-sābiqāt* (verse 4); and *al-mudabbirāt* (verse 5).

According to Robinson, the oaths found in verses 1-5 are some of the obscure passages in the Qur'an that have given rise to a bewildering variety of interpretations [12]. There are three common interpretations of the word *al-nāzi'āt* alludes to: they are either angels arriving to take away people's souls after death [13], or they are horses embarking on a military expedition that will make the enemy cower in fear [14], or they are the stars which pull from the earth's lowest crust to the outer part of the earth [15]. Haleem is more inclined to interpret *al-nāzi'āt* as horses because of this word's coherence with the word *al-'ādiyāt* in Q 100 which has been widely interpreted as the horses whose attacks generate an effect of suddenness and a sensation of panic [16]. Q 100 and Q 79 appear to have been revealed during the first Meccan period based on Noldeke's chronology. This indicates that since these suras have been revealed at a time close to each other, it is likely to say that the five female agents shown in Q 79:1-5 resonate with those in Q 100:1-5, thus they might have similar meanings [17].

Bint al-Shatī' asserts that it makes more sense to understand the objects of the oaths (*al-muqṣam bih*) as horses because horses are visible and well-known to the audiences of the Qur'an, rather than angels, who are invisible and unknown to them [18]. Robinson also contends that the interpretation of the oath series in Q 79:1-5 as groups of horses not only heightens the gravity of the eschatological declarations that follow but also draws attention to them due to their mysterious nature [19]. Taking into account all of these viewpoints, it appears more plausible to understand the female agents of the oath sequence in Q 79:1-5 as horses rather than angels due to their potent ability to draw the audience's attention to the sura's eschatological message.

According to Angelika Neuwirth, the oath series in verses 1-5 is derived from the *saj'* [20], an old Arabic model of the oath series that introduces an enigmatic effect that occurs already in Q 100 to produce its emotional intensity orally [21]. The early Qur'anic oath series and the pre-Islamic *saj'* share some characteristics, including the use of brief sentences, the invocation of natural phenomena, and the repetition of end rhymes [22]. One example of pre-Islamic *saj'* which the repetition of end consonant can be found in al-Baghdadi's *Kitāb al-munammaq*: *amā wa rabbi l-'ādiyāti l-dubbāh, mā ya'dilu l-ḥurru bi-'ābdin naḥnah, bi-man aḥalla qawmahu bi l-abtāh* [23].

The Qur'an's novel interaction between style, structure, tone, and meaning of the Qur'anic '*Arabiyya* astounded the early Arabs and created a mental 'explosion' in them [24]. This makes sense because the oath series in Q 79:1-5 is probably going to convey the mysterious effect of the abruptness and

panic as a metaphor for the impending shock and suddenness brought on by the horses' menacing approach. Consequently, it can be said that Q 79 employs the *saj* ' pattern in its opening section to evoke mystery in the minds of those who hear it, a hint at the eschatological meaning that will be clarified in later verses of the sura.

Q 79 begins with the oath series and then moves on to the oath statements that range between verses 6 and 14. The rhyme in verses 1 through 5 is -*Cā*, but in verses 6 through 14, the rhyme changes into -*CāCiCah*, indicating the transition from the oath series to the oath announcements. The verb *tarjufu* (to quake) in verse 6 also appears in a Meccan sura, Q 73:14, which reads, 'on the day when the earth and the mountains will quake' (*yawma tarjufu l-arḍu wa-l-jibālu*). The verb *tarjufu* in Q 79:6 is followed by the word *rājifa* which appears as its subject (*fā'il*) whose letters is identical with the verb's ones (*r-j-f*). The reason the word *tarjufu* in Q 79:6 is not followed with the words earth (*al-arḍ*) and mountains (*al-jibāl*) may be because the verb's subject should fit the sub-section's overall rhyme scheme (-*CāCiCah*: *rājifa*). Furthermore, according to Neuwirth, the word *rādifa* in verse 7—which means 'after-rider'—can be translated as 'someone who sits behind the rider on the horse [25].' This suggests that the terms 'the quaking' (*rājifa*) in verse 6 and 'after-rider' (*rādifa*) in verse 7 refer to the horses' attack as the interpretation of the oath sequence in verses 1–5.

The circumstance described in verses 8–9 is one in which people's eyes will be downcast (*khāshi'a*) and their hearts will quake (*wājifa*) because of how terrifying the day of resurrection is. The term 'on that day' (*yawma'idhin*) in verse 8 also appears in the Qur'an in no fewer than 69 places, and it is identical with eschatological connotation in many verses in the Qur'an [26]. Interestingly, Matthew 7:22 contains the New Testament equivalent of this phrase, which reads, 'many will say to me on that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name'. It is also important to note that the words 'eyes (*abṣār*) and 'being downcast' (*khāshi'a*) that exist in verse 9 are found in other suras (Q 68: 43; Q 70: 44; and Q 54: 7). All of these suras limit the depiction of the eyes being downcast to the negative side, where men felt ashamed of themselves, which is comparable to the scenario described in Q 79:9. except for Q 54:7, which is attributed to the second Meccan period, all of these suras are said to have been revealed during the first Meccan period, according to Noldeke's chronology. This indicates that the occurrence of *abṣār* and *khāshi'a* altogether is a common Qur'anic term found in many Meccan suras.

The final subsection of Part I, verses 10–14, describes a scenario in which the resurrected ones engage in polemical discourse regarding the likelihood of their reappearance in the resurrection day. They express reservations regarding the possibility that their bones will be reunited (verse 11) (*a-idhā kunnā 'izāman*

nakhira) and that they will return to life (verse 12) (*qālū tilka idhan karratun khāsira*). Then, in response to their scepticism, God says that all it takes to bring them back to life is a single cry (13-14) (*fa-innamā hiya zajratun wāḥida, fa-idhā hum bi l-sāhira*). Robinson notes that the word *al-ḥāfira* (initial state) in verse 10 originally meant 'the ground dug by a horse's feet'. It is derived from the verb *ḥ-f-r*, which means 'to dig [27]'. This subsection, then, is probably a metaphor meant to remind viewers that the way they felt when they were suddenly brought back to the initial state following the lone cry on the day of resurrection is comparable to how they felt when they were awakened by the approaching horse riders in the early morning, as shown in verses 1 through 5.

Thus far, it is persuasive to argue that Part I's first sub-section (1-5) and second sub-section (6-14) are integrated because the suddenness and shock of the horse-rider attack, as shown in the oath series (verses 1-5), evoked the same feelings in the minds of those who experienced the suddenness of the earthquake and the single cry on the day of resurrection (verses 6-14).

Part II: Punishment legend of Moses-Pharaoh and God's creation

The punishment legend of Moses-Pharaoh, which is the first sub-section of the second part of Q 79, is indicated by a shift in rhyme. In verses 6-14, the rhyme was *-CāCiCāh*; however, in verses 15-26, it changes into *-Cā*. The opening phrase of verse 15, 'have you heard' (*hal atāka*), indicates the presence of a new sub-section. *Hal atāka* phrase appears in other Meccan suras as well, such as Q 85:17, Q 88:1, Q 51:24, Q 38:21, and Q 20:9, and it also indicates the beginning of new subdivisions. Abdel Haleem points out that the *hal atāka* question is rhetorical rather than a straightforward question with a yes-or-no response, provided that the Prophet would have heard about the occurrence numerous times [28]. This subsection describes how God gave Moses the instructions to summon Pharaoh to cleanse himself, and to pay attention to God's message so that Pharaoh would fear his God (verses 17-19). But instead of listening to Moses after receiving a 'great sign' (*al-āyata l-kubrā*), Pharaoh disobeys God and he claims himself as 'a supreme Lord' (*ana rabbukumū l-a 'lā*) (verses 20-24). Because of his disobedience, Pharaoh suffered consequences both on the earth and in the afterlife (verse 25). Pharaoh's punishment narrative serves as a cautionary story for anybody who is in awe of God (verse 26).

In this subsection, it is evident that the primary lesson of the Moses-Pharaoh tale is 'fear' (*al-khashya*). The fact that the word 'fear' appears twice in this subsection, in verses 19 (*fa-takhshā*) and 26 (*li-man yakhshā*), suggests this. Exodus 8:1 in the Old Testament is likely to be the source of God's instruction to Moses in verse 17 to see Pharaoh and tell something to him (*idhhab ilā Fir'awna innahū ṭaghā*). The verse (Exodus 8:1) says: 'Go to Pharaoh and tell him, "This is

what the Lord says: Let my people go, so that they may worship me". Here, it is evident that Q 79:17–19 modifies the original emphasis in Exodus 8:1: Moses was urged to convince Pharaoh to 'purify himself', rather than to free the Israelites [29].

Verses 27-32

After providing a long story of Moses-Pharaoh which appears to be the first detailed narrative of Moses in the Qur'an [30]. Part II of the sura continues with a sub-division consisting of God's question to humans about whether His creation of men is greater than His creation of the sky, the earth, and mountains. The rhyme in verses 27–32 changes to *-Cāhā*, indicating a change in the sub-section. The only rhyme in this subsection to finish with the rhyme *-CāCiCum* is verse 33. Robinson thinks that the word 'pastures' (*mar'ā*) in verse 31 indicates a connection between this sub-section and the previous one concerning the tale of Moses [31]. This is because the word *mar'ā* in Q 79: 31 has derivatives that appear in many Meccan suras that mention Moses. Examples of these are found in Q 87: 4 (*wa-l-ladhī akhrajā l-mar'ā*) and 19 (*ṣuḥufi Ibrāhīma wa-Mūsā*); Q 20: 49 (*qāla fa-man rabbukumā yā Mūsā*) and 54 (*kulū wa-r'aw an 'āmakum*); and Q 28: 20 (*qāla yā Mūsā inna-l-mala'*) and 23 (*qālatā lā nasqī ḥattā yuṣdira l-ri'ā*) [32]. Taking this into account, it becomes evident that the pastoral connotation (*mar'ā*) mentioned in Q 79:31 as God's provision has a strong connection to the Moses-Pharaoh story in the previous sub-section (verses 15–26) due to the pattern that is similar to many Meccan suras in which the name of Moses (*Mūsā*) is mentioned along with the derivatives of pastoral connotation (*mar'ā*).

Part III: Eschatology and prophet encouragement

This subsection describes what happens to people in the afterlife –both the one who transgressed (*ṭaghā*) and the one who feared *khāfa*). The rhyme in verses 34–41 changes to *-Cā*, signalling the start of this sub-section. This sub-section likewise begins with the *idhā* phrase (*fa-idhā jā'ati l-tāmmatu l-kubrā*) in verse 34. The inclusion of the phrase *idhā* is crucial since it seemingly aims to shock the listener by placing him in certain dangerous situations on the day of resurrection [33]: the man will remember what he has done (verse 35) (*yawma yatadhakkaru l-insānu mā sa'ā*) and the Hell is there for all to see (verse 36) (*wa-burizati l-jahīmu liman yarā*).

It is noteworthy that several terms from the Pharaoh-Musa punishment story sub-section (verses 15–26) are repeated in the eschatology sub-section (verses 34–41). These words are *al-kubrā* (verses 20 and 34), *ṭaghā* (verse 17 and 37), *yas'ā/sa'ā* (verses 22 and 35), and *arā/yarā* (verses 20 and 36). Additionally, the rhyme scheme in these two subsections is identical: *-Ca*. Certain words appear

more than once, and the rhyme scheme is consistent, suggesting that the eschatological subsection in Part III of the sura is a continuation of the subsection that dealt with Moses's punishment in Part II.

Overall, it is evident that the eschatological sub-section found in Q 79:34–41, which begins with the *idhā* phrase in verse 34, has developed into an ensemble made up of three components: eschatological scenario, eschatological process, and double image/diptych [34]. Firstly, verses 34–35 portray the eschatological scene, which is the great event of the resurrection day. This situation is similar to the illustration in verses 6–7 regarding the earthquake that would occur on the day of the resurrection. Secondly, verses 35–36 illustrate the eschatological process by having the guy reflect on his past deeds, and the hell is shown to all. These procedures bring to mind the description in verses 8–12 of the men's anxiety and fear about what they see (verses 8–9) and the discussion of their quandary concerning the day of the resurrection (10–12). Finally, verses 37–41 illustrate the double image (diptych) [35], which describes the destinies of two types of people: those who disobeyed God and chose to live in the here and now will go to hell (verses 37–39) (*fa ammā man taghā, wa āthara l-ḥayāta al-dunyā, fa-inna l-jahīma hiya l-ma'wā*), and those who refrained from acting on their baser impulses out of fear of meeting with God will go to paradise (verses 40–41) (*wa ammā man khāfa maqāma rabbihī wa nahā l-naḥsa 'ani l-hawā, fa-inna l-jannata hiya l-ma'wā*). These diptych declarations are reminiscent of what God says in verse 14 about what will happen when everyone is raised from the dead in the afterlife (to be ready for the last judgment).

Verses 42–46:

The rhyme change in verse 42 into *-Cāhā* denotes the sura's final sub-section. Furthermore, the term *yas'alūnaka*, which translates to 'they ask you (O prophet)', seems to be another indicator of the upcoming sub-section. The reason for this is that the term *yas'alūnaka*, which can be found in Meccan and Medinan suras as well as later suras like Q 20: 105, Q 17: 85, Q 18: 83, Q 8: 1, etc., also denotes the start of a new sub-section within the sura. As noted by Abdul Muiz Amir, the question phrase *yas'alūnaka 'ani l-sā'ati ayyāna mursāha* (as it is also found in QS. al-A'rāf: 187) is an expression indicating that the verse was given as a response to questions about the Last Day's signs [36]. It is also interesting to note that the phrase 'the Hour' (*al-sā'a*), which refers to the end of the world in verse 42 [37], alludes to two passages from the New Testament, namely Matthew 24:36: 'No one knows about that day or hour' and Matthew 25:13: 'therefore keep watch because you do not know the day or the hour'.

People who entice the prophet to inquire about the exact time of the resurrection day are described in verses 42–46. Since the prophet is merely a

warner (*mundhir*) (verse 45), he is unable to respond to query, since only God is aware of the exact time of the resurrection day (verse 44) (*ilā rabbika muntahāhā*). The reference to the Prophet as a *mundhir* (warner) is the typical of Meccan suras as he is referred to in many of Medinan suras as *nabī* (prophet, as in 65:1 and 66:1) [38]. The emphasis of the final subsection is on how unexpected the resurrection is, saying that when people see it, it will seem as though they have lingered in the world until the evening or dawn of that particular day (verse 46) (*ka-annahum yawma yarawnahā lam yalbathū illā 'shiywatan aw duḥāhā*).

The Qur'an's reluctance to pinpoint the precise time of the resurrection day is noteworthy since it is paralleled in several biblical scriptures, specifically Matthew 24:3, Mark 13:4, and Luke 21:17. All of these passages from the Bible discuss the query posed by Jesus' followers. They ask Jesus what the signs will be for his arrival at the end of the age and when the end of the world will occur. In Matthew 24:36, Jesus replies, 'But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of Heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only'. This response resembles the declaration made in Qur'an 79:44-45 that the prophet is sent merely to warn people who are afraid and that only God knows the moment. This indicates that, much like Jesus, the prophet is unaware of the exact time of the Hour.

Verses 42-46 recalls some verses in previous sub-divisions. First, the question that the people ask the prophet (*yas' alūnaka*) in verses 42-43 regarding the exact time of the resurrection day is similar to the scenario that is described in verses 10-11 when the people inquire how their bodies can be restored to their previous state (*a-innā lamardūdūna fī l-ḥāfira*) after becoming decomposing bones (*a-idhā kunnā 'izāman nakhira*) [39]. Second, God emphasizes His powerful authority over everything when he tells the prophet in verse 44 that only his Lord knows the hour (*ilā rabbika muntahāhā*). This power of God brings to mind the claim made in verses 13-14 that the return of man is nothing more than a single blast (*zajratun wāḥida*), suggesting that God can accomplish all of His goals with ease. The emphasis on God's power in verse 44 also brings to mind verse 25, where God declares that because of Pharaoh's rebellion in verses 21-24, He has powerful authority to sentence him to punishment in both this life and the hereafter (*fa-akhdhahullāhu nakāla l-ākhirati wa l-ūlā*).

Thirdly, verse 45 describes the prophet's role as a warner (*mundhir*) for those who feared (*man yakhshāhā*), which is similar to verses 17-19, when God gives Moses instructions to go to Pharaoh and warn him to fear his God (*fa-takhshā*). The word 'fear' is mentioned four times in the sura, with the words *takhshā/yakhshā/yakhshāhā* in verses 19, 26, and 45 respectively, and the word *khāfa* [40] in verse 40. Interestingly, if we examine Part I of the sura, people are likely to experience dread and trembling due to the abruptness of the horse attack

(verses 1-5), as well as the suddenness and trembling feeling resulted from the quake on the day of the resurrection (verses 8-12). This indicates that even though Part I of the sura does not explicitly contain the word *yakhshā/khāfa*, its key message is also fearfulness. According to Sinai, attempts to repeat the term 'fear' in numerous verses of Q 79 suggest that believing on the day of judgement should involve both cognitive (the act of belief) and emotional (the sense of dread): He says, "Hence, denial of the Judgement is opposed not simply to an attitude of cognitively deeming the Judgement to be true (which would lack sufficient psychological potency to prevail over man's natural selfishness) but to an existential state of anxious wariness that encompasses both cognitive and emotional aspects [41]."

Finally, the sensation of abruptness that men felt on the day of the resurrection because it seemed to them that they had only been in the world for an evening (*'ashiyatan*) or morning (*ḍuḥāhā*) (verse 46) is reminiscence of the same terrifyingly abrupt feeling that arises from the appearance of horses leaving on a military expedition, which is portrayed in the oaths series in the first section of the sura (verses 1-5). This indicates that the idea of the suddenness of the end of the world, which is thematized at the sura's beginning and conclusion, establishes the argumentative bracketing around the entire sura [42].

The analysis of Verse 33: a later addition or part of the sura?

Neuwirth asserts that verse 33, *matā'an lakum wa-li-an'āmikum* (for use by you and your cattle), clearly represents a redactional intervention because the rhyme -CāCiCum in verse 33 differs from the rhymes in verses preceding and following it, as well as from any rhyme in the entire sura [43]. Furthermore, according to Neuwirth, Q 79:33's redaction is quite similar to Q 80:32's, suggesting that the former may have been taken from the latter. Her claim is that verse 32's message in Q 80 completes the compositional purpose of completing an ayat passage in verse 24 that is devoted to the topic of sustenance (*fā-l yanẓur al-insānu ilā ṭa'āmihi*: let man consider the food he eats!), and as such, the verse belongs in Q 80 [44]. But Q 79:33's content seems to come out of the prior verses' context. This is because the passage this verse closes continues the punishment legend's purpose of demonstrating God's overwhelming power over humans (verses 24-27) rather than making any substantial reference to sustenance (except from verse 31) [45]. Neuwirth does not specify whether this claim of redactional intervention represents a Medinan verse being included in QS. al-Nāzi'āt which is a Meccan one. However, this redactional intervention might be compared to what is called by some traditional Qur'anic exegetes as "Medinan verses that appear in Meccan suras [46].

However, Robinson finds Neuwirth's arguments to be unpersuasive. Neuwirth's hypothesis is contested by Robinson with three counterarguments: First, there is a clear connection between verse 33 and earlier verses. This is since the phrase 'for you and your herds' (*matā'an lakum wa li-an'āmikum*) repeatedly uses the pronominal suffix *-kum* (you, your), which serves to remind the audience of its prior usage in Pharaoh's sacrilegious declaration, 'I am your lord' (*ana rabbukum l-a' lā*), found in verse 24. Second, the wording 'for you and your herds' in verse 33 is perfectly acceptable because it refers to the water and pasturages in verse 31, not the mountains in verse 32. Finally, there is nothing weird with the similarity of the redaction found in Q 79:33 and Q 80:32 because the occurrence of identical verses is also found in other places in the Qur'an, such as the sentence 'they ask you (Prophet) about the Hour, 'When will it happen?' (*yas'alūnaka 'ani l-sā'ati ayyāna mursāhā*) which appears in both Q 79:42 and Q 7:187 [47].

These two opposing views appear plausible at first glance, and any one of the two viewpoints could be true historically. This essay, however, leans more towards Robinson's contention that verse 33 belongs in Q 79 because of two careful reasonings. First of all, this essay has shown that the sura has numerous choices of words that recall verses in other subsections. This reminiscence is one of the primary indicators of the sura's unity. Given that verse 33 exhibits linguistic cohesion with other sura sub-sections, this should likewise be the case. Robinson makes it abundantly evident that the pronominal suffix *-kum* (you, your) in 'for you and your herds' (verse 33) is reminiscent of Pharaoh's heretical declaration, 'I am your lord' (verse 24). Furthermore, the suffix *-kum* in verse 33 distinctly echoes the word 'you' (*antum*) in verse 27, when God asks humans, 'Which is harder to create: you people or the sky that He built?' (*a-antum ashaddu khalqan ami-l samā'u banāhā*). As a result, it is appropriate to view these integrations as signs of the unity of the sura.

Secondly, if Neuwirth argues that the rhyme *-CāCiCum* in Q 79:33 which is not found in any place within the sura has caused the verse to be omitted, why does she not do the same with regards to Q 80:32 (*matā'an lakum wa li-an'āmikum*), given that the rhyme *-CāCiCum* this verse uses is also not found elsewhere within the sura? If, however, she contends that it is Q 80:32's fulfillment of completing the preceding passage about nourishment that maintains the verse, then we could also contend that, even though the rhyme of verse 33 (*-CāCiCum*) in Q 79 differs from other verses, the recall of the suffix *-kum* in Q 79:33 to the suffix *-kum* in Pharaoh's blasphemous claim in verse 24 and to the pronoun *antum* in God's polemical question about creation in verse 27 can keep the verse from being omitted. Therefore, Neuwirth's statement that verse 33 is not part of Q 100 should be challenged.

Conclusion

Q 79 is an early Meccan sura that conveys its eschatological messages using a tripartite structure. The possibility and inevitability of the resurrection day is the main theme of the sura. Rhyme changes and the occurrences of some unique phrases (such as *yas'alūnaka*, *hal atāka*, and *idhā*) throughout the sura assist the audience in recognizing the transition from one sub-section to the next one. The intratextual links between verses within the sura indicate that all sub-sections and parts of the sura are integrated. In addition, Q 79's intertextual connections to earlier traditions may have helped the audiences understand the sura's messages because they might have been familiar with ancient Arabic and Judeo-Christian literature. Finally, considering the verse's correlation with other parts of the sura, it is unlikely that the idea that verse 33 should be omitted because it is thought to be a later redactional intervention will be taken into consideration.

Author Contributions

Hamdi Putra Ahmad: Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing – review & editing, Supervision, Project administration.

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Conflict of Interest

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¹ Toshihiko Izutsu describes eschatology in the Qur'an as "fundamental" since its first audience, pagan Arabs, had a moral worldview which was not antithetical to that of the Qur'an, namely that the eschatological destination for which the "present world" is headed has the greatest influence on the framework of Arabian ethics in the time the Qur'an was presented. See: Toshihiko Izutsu, *Ethico-Religious Concepts in the Qur'ān* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002), 108.

² Sebastian Günther, "Eschatology and the Qur'an", in *The Oxford Handbook of Qur'anic Studies*, ed. Mustafa Shah and Muhammad Abdel Haleem (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 473.

³ Theodor Nöldeke et al., *The History of the Qur'ān*, trans. Wolfgang H. Behn (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 82. See also Angelika Neuwirth, *Der Koran: Band 1: Frühmekkanische Suren* (Berlin: Verlag der Weltreligionen, 2011), 347.

⁴ Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān* (Beirut: Mu'assasa al-Risāla Nāshirūn, 2008), vol. 1, 24.

⁵ As Nicolai Sinai has argued, the Qur'an might have overlaps and differences with earlier texts, such as Biblical, extra-Biblical, and post-Biblical writings. Thus a comparative study of the Qur'an in light of antecedent traditions is undeniably pivotal. See: Nicolai Sinai, *The Qur'an A Historical-Critical Introduction* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University, 2017), 138.

⁶ Angelika Neuwirth and Samuel Wilder, "Subgroup A", *The Qur'an: Text and Commentary, Volume 1: Early Meccan Suras: Poetic Prophecy* (New Haven, CT, 2022; online edn, Yale Scholarship Online, 18 May 2023), <https://doi.org/10.12987/yale/9780300232332.003.0008>, accessed 3 Dec. 2023, 241.

⁷ Neal Robinson, *Discovering The Qur'an A Contemporary Approach to A Veiled Text*, 2nd ed. (London: SCM Press, 2003), 181.

⁸ Nasir Raddad Alharthi, "The Correlation between the Organization of Surat an-Nazi'at and its persuasive Language", *Journal of Arts*, vol. 31, January (1), 2019, p. 7, (1-11).

⁹ M. A. S. Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'an*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 407.

¹⁰ Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *al-Mizān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān* (Beirut: Mu'assasa al-A'lamī li al-Maṭbū'āt, 1997), vol. 20, 195.

¹¹ Robinson, *Discovering the Qur'an*, 184.

¹² Robinson, *Discovering the Qur'an*, 181.

¹³ See: Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān 'an ta'wīl āy al-Qur'ān*, ed. Maḥmūd Muḥammad Shākir and Aḥmad Muḥammad Shākir (Cairo: Markaz al-Buḥūth wa-l-Dirāsāt al-'Arabiyya wa al-Islāmiyya, 2001), vol. 24, 57; Abū Ḥayyān al-Gharnāṭī, *Al-Baḥr al-muḥīṭ*, (Beirut: Dār al-Risāla al-'Ālamiyya, 2015), vol. 21, 206.

¹⁴ See: al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf 'an haqā'iq ghawāmiḍ al-tanzīl wa-'uyūn al-aqāwīl fī wujūh al-Ta'wīl* (Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rifa, 2009), 1175.

¹⁵ This is the opinion of al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī. See: Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr wa Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1981), vol. 31, 30.

¹⁶ Haleem, *The Qur'an*, 407.

¹⁷ Nöldeke et al., *History*, 85.

¹⁸ Bint al-Shāṭi', *al-Tafsīr al-bayānī li al-qur'ān al-karīm* (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, n.d.), vol. 1, 124-125.

¹⁹ Robinson, *Discovering the Qur'an*, 181.

²⁰ The term *saj'* refers to prose that follows a symmetrical sequence with rhyme, assonance, and equal rhythm. See: Ibn Manzūr, *Lisān al-'arab* (Qom: Naṣr Adab al-Ḥawza, 1405 A.H.), vol. 8, 150. Marianna Klar cites from a medieval rhetorician named Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Ibn al-Āthir who states that the majority of the Qur'an is *saj'*, especially the sura's parts that have identical rhymes, such as QS. al-'Ādiyāt whose redaction is almost similar to QS. al-Nāzi'āt. See: Marianna Klar, "A Preliminary Catalogue of Qur'anic Saj' Techniques: Beat Patterning, Parallelism, and Rhyme." In *Structural Dividers in the Qur'an* (n.p.: Taylor & Francis, 2020), 181.

²¹ Neuwirth, , "Subgroup A", *The Qur'an*, 250.

- ²² Soraya M. Hajjaji-Jarrah, "The Enchantment of Reading: Sound, Meaning and Expression in *Sūrat al-ʿĀdiyāt*", *Literary Structures of Religious Meaning in the Qur'an*, ed. Issa J. Boullata (London: Routledge, 2000), 228.
- ²³ Muḥammad al-Baghdādī, *Kitāb al-munammaq fī akhbār quraysh*, ed. Khūrshīd Farūq (Haydarabad: Dā'irāt al-Ma'ārif al-Uthmāniyya, 1964), 116.
- ²⁴ Soraya, "The Enchantment of Reading", *Literary Structures*, 228.
- ²⁵ Neuwirth, "Subgroup A", *The Qur'an*, 244.
- ²⁶ Adam J. Silverstein, "Q 30: 2-5 in Near Eastern Context", *Der Islam: Journal of the History and Culture of the Middle East*, vol. 97 (1), 13.
- ²⁷ Robinson, *Discovering the Qur'an*, 183.
- ²⁸ M. A. S. Abdel Haleem, "Understanding the Qur'an Through Sura Structure: Reading Q. 86 and Q. 88," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 23, no. 3 (2021), 165.
- ²⁹ Nicolai Sinai, *The Qur'an*, 170.
- ³⁰ Neuwirth, "Subgroup A", *The Qur'an*, 245.
- ³¹ Robinson, *Discovering the Qur'an*, 185.
- ³² According to Noldeke's chronology, Q 87 and QS. al-Nāzi'āt has been revealed in the first Meccan period, Q 20 has been revealed in second Meccan and Q 28 has been revealed in the third Meccan. See: Noldeke, 63-126.
- ³³ For a complete explanation of the shock effect provided by the word *idhā* and eschatological signals in many parts of the Qur'an, see: Carl Ernst, *How to Read the Qur'an: A New Guide, with Select Translations* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 82.
- ³⁴ Neuwirth, *The Qur'an and Late Antiquity*, 174.
- ³⁵ Diptych in Qur'anic eschatology is a literary technique used to juxtapose one entity with another, thereby throwing their stark contrasts with each other into greater relief that relates to the gates of Paradise and Hell. See: Mohammed Rustom, "Qur'anic Eschatology", *The Routledge Companion to the Qur'an* (np.: Routledge, 2021), 74.
- ³⁶ Abdul Muiz Amir, Sahiron Syamsuddin, Siswanto Masruri, "Dialectic Relationship between the Qur'an and Hadith: The Interpretation of the Term "As-Sā'ah" Using Critical Hermeneutic Analysis", *Journal of Adabiyah*, vol. 21, 1, 2021, 65.
- ³⁷ As Sinai has noted, "the hour" (*al-sā'a*) with the definite article, is predominantly Meccan designation of the eschatological resurrection and

judgement in the Qur'an. See: Nicolai Sinai, *Key Terms of the Qur'an: A Critical Dictionary* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2023), 421.

³⁸ Raymond K. Farrin, "Surat al-Nisā' and the Centrality of Justice, *al-Bayān – Journal of Qur'ān and Hadīth Studies*, 14, 2016, 14.

³⁹ The question sentence *yas'alūnaka 'ani l-sā'ati ayyāna mursāhā* also appears in another later Meccan sura, Q 7:187, where it is said that "that *al-sā'ah* will not overtake you but suddenly" (*lā ya'tikum illā baghtatan*). Akbar Sajedi notes that since the Resurrection is unknown and sudden, people never think that it is far, so that they always look forward to its coming through their question toward the Prophet. See: Akbar Sajedi and Jawad Nematim "You are asked A Content Analysis of the Qur'ānic Verses about Inquiring of the Prophet Muhammad", *International Journal of Multicultural and Multireligious Understanding*, vol. 9, no 1, December 2002, 62.

⁴⁰ The main qualities that make up the semantic components of the term *khawf* itself are anxiety, flight, expectation of punishment, expectation of evil things, and acceleration of heartbeat. See: Abida Bukhori and Latif Ahmad, "Translating Lexical Synonyms in the Holy Qur'an: A semantic Analysis of Four Lexical Synonyms and their English Translations, *Tanazur (Research Journal)*, vol. 5 (2), 2024, 279.

⁴¹ Neuwirth, "Subgroup A", *The Qur'an*, 241.

⁴² Neuwirth, "Subgroup A", *The Qur'an*, 241.

⁴³ Neuwirth, "Subgroup A", *The Qur'an*, 241.

⁴⁴ Neuwirth, "Subgroup A", *The Qur'an*, 233.

⁴⁵ Neuwirth, "Subgroup A", *The Qur'an*, 241.

⁴⁶ For example, Badr al-Dīn al-Zarkashī identifies that there are six Medinan verses that appear in a Meccan sura, namely Q 6 (*al-An'ām*). See: Badr al-Dīn al-Zarkashī, *al-Burhān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān* (Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rifa, 1990), vol. 1, 287. Also, Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī identifies that the last verse of Q 73 is a Medinan verse even though the sura itself is a Meccan one. See: Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān* (Beirut: Mu'assasa al-Risāla Nāshirūn, 2008), vol. 1, 25.

⁴⁷ Robinson, *Discovering the Qur'an*, 186.

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