

The Barley (*Hordeum Vulgare*): Special Plant Described in the Quran

Barli (*Hordeum Vulgare*): Tumbuhan Istimewa Menurut al-Quran

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ABSTRACT

*The present work is an analysis of nine Quranic verses and their interpretations which specifically described barley (*Hordeum vulgare*). The main objective of this study is to establish how Allah described different parts of barley and how the verses are interpreted as well as identifying the various benefits of barley as a wholesome food. To achieve this, comprehensive and detailed data was systematically collected from the Quran, books of commentary as well as references which contain scientific findings related to barley. The study found that Allah SWT uses merely inclusive terms like *habb*, *habba*, *habbah* which indirectly denote grains. Therefore, interpreters of the Quran along with translators form diverse yet all-encompassing interpretations and translations of the inclusive terms. Based on the analysis, the nine Quranic verses were found to define barley as a plant that is harvested with its roots. It is also regarded as a nutritious food for humans and cattle. Its stalks contain grains, they grow when watered and it has no nuclei. Its size is small, and the grains are clustered together.*

*Keywords: Tafsir; barley; *Hordeum vulgare*; *habb*; *habba*; and *habbah**

ABSTRAK

*Kajian ini adalah tentang sembilan ayat berkaitan barli (*Hordeum vulgare*) yang terkandung dalam Al-Quran beserta interpretasinya. Objektif utama kajian ini adalah untuk menetapkan bagaimana bahagian-bahagian yang berbeza telah dijelaskan oleh Allah dan difahami oleh para penterjemah serta manfaat barli sebagai suatu makanan yang sihat. Kajian ini penting kerana melaluinya data yang komprehensif dan terperinci dikumpulkan secara sistematik dari al-Quran, kitab-kitab tafsiran yang muktabar juga rujukan-rujukan yang ditulis tentang penemuan saintifik. Kajian ini mendapati bahawa Allah SWT hanya menggunakan istilah inklusif seperti *habb*, *habba*, dan *habbah* yang secara tidak langsung merujuk kepada biji-bijian. Ini menyebabkan para penterjemah dan penafsir Quran mempunyai interpretasi dan terjemahan yang berbeza namun merangkumi semua makna istilah inklusif tersebut. Sembilan ayat tersebut mentakrifkan barli sebagai tumbuhan yang dituai bersama akarnya. Ia dianggap sebagai makanan yang bergizi untuk manusia dan ternakan. Ia boleh dikenali melalui batangnya yang mengandungi biji-bijian sebagai makanan, tumbuh apabila diberi air dan tidak mempunyai nukleus. Saiznya sangat kecil dan biji-bijinya pula rapat antara satu sama lain dalam tangkai.*

*Kata kunci: Tafsir; barli; *Hordeum vulgare*; *habb*; *habba*; and *habbah**

INTRODUCTION

Plants are essential components of the universe. Human beings have used plants as medicine, preventive or curative from the very beginning of time. After various observations and experimentations medicinal plants were identified as a source of important medicine, therefore, treatment through these medicinal plants began in the early stages of human civilization. Approximately, 70% of the homeopathic drugs are prepared from the fresh plants (Marwat et al. 2012).

In fact, there has never been a greater demand for natural remedies as increasingly people search for treatments that are effective yet safe. Fears about the harmful side-effects of some prescription drugs, for instance, are prompting people to seek alternatives whenever possible. Moreover, today's high-tech medicine with its surgical procedures that treat a specific part of the individual has led many people to resent the impersonal nature of their health care and yearn for treatment that takes account of the whole person (Bean et al. 1996).

Therefore, healthy food like barley plays an essential role in an individual's life, as it is required for the survival and sustainability of a human being and the nourishment of the body and mind. Barley (*Hordeum vulgare*) is mentioned in the Quran 9 times as *habb*, *habba*, and *habbah* (Abd al-Baqi' 1994). This article outlines the most essential knowledge and descriptions of barley based on the Quran.

Barley (*habb*) Has Stalks of Food

Allah SWT reveals that the barley stalks contain grains as food. He says:

وَالْحَبُّ ذُو الْعَصْفِ وَالرَّيْحَانُ

“And also corn (grain), with (its) leaves and stalks for fodder and sweet-scented plants.”

(al-Quran, al-Rahman 55: 12)

Ibn Kathir (1999) in his commentary on the verse cites a report from Ibn Abbas that the verse: “And also corn (grain), with (its) leaves and stalks for fodder, and sweet-scented plants” refers to the husks of corn or grain.

Tantawi (2007) observes that the verse indicates the power of Allah SWT who has created fruits as well as palm with vessels that contain fruit which could be enjoyed by His creations. He also created

grain which is surrounded by husks and also spikes which contain wheat, barley, and others.

Al-Baghawi (2002) views that *al-habb* connotes all kinds of grains cultivated in the ground. In a similar vein, al-Tabari as viewed by al-Dahhak, confirms that the word *al-habb* in the verse connotes the grain as wheat and barley covered by leaves while the word *al-'asf* as viewed by Qatadah, al-Dahhak, al-Qamah bin Abadah, and *al-ta'wil* is similar to *al-tibn* which means stalks or stems. In addition, Abu Malik believes that *al-habb* refers to the first thing which grows. Ibn Abbas says that *al-'asf* suggests the plant. Some scholars say that *al-'asf* is the grain of particular wheat and barley. Al-Dahhak views that *al-'asf* refers to wheat and barley.

Ibn Abbas suggests that *al-'asf* is the budding green leaves of plants which has been cut and is called *al-'asf* whenever they are dried. Sa'id says that the verse: “And also corn (grain), with (its) leaves and stalks for fodder” means the seed pod of a leguminous plant used as food (al-Tabari 1968).

BARLEY (*HABB*) HAS NO NUCLEI

Allah SWT stresses that He is the Creator who causes grain (like barley) and seeds (date stones) to germinate. In other words, He is the One who splits the seed-grain into seed plants and crops as well as the fruit-stone into fruit stone trees. He says:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ فَالِقُ الْحَبِّ وَالنَّوَى وَالنَّوَى يُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ وَمُخْرِجُ الْمَيِّتِ مِنَ الْحَيِّ ذَلِكَمُ اللَّهُ فَأَنَّى تُؤْفَكُونَ

“Verily! It is Allah SWT Who causes the seed-grain and the fruit-stone (like date-stone, etc.) to split and sprout. He brings forth the living from the dead, and it is He Who brings forth the dead from the living. Such is Allah SWT, then how are you deluded away from the truth?”

(al-Quran, al-An'am 6: 95)

Al-Dahhak in his commentary on the verse: *فالِقُ الْحَبِّ وَالنَّوَى* thinks that it verifies that Allah SWT is the Creator of all types of grains (Al-Tabari 1968).

In addition, Ibn Kathir views that the saying: *فالِقُ الْحَبِّ وَالنَّوَى وَمُخْرِجُ الْمَيِّتِ مِنَ الْحَيِّ* is the *ma'tuf* of *والنَّوَى*. In fact, the meanings of the two are connected and interrelated as the saying: “The chicken emerges from the egg and the egg from the chicken.” The saying: *يُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ* acts as an explanation and interpretation for *فالِقُ الْحَبِّ وَالنَّوَى* as the splitting of the seed-grain in the ground, and the fruit-stone into diverse types of germinated plants and trees (in terms of shapes, colours, and tastes). This shares the same characteristic with the bringing forth of the

living from the dead; since germination is a part of a living process (al-Razi 1992 ; al-Baghawi 2007). Ibn Kathir (1999) asserts that this verse is similar to Surah Yassin: 33-36.

Al-Razi in his commentary on the verse: *فَالِقُ الْحَبِّ وَالنَّوَى* gives two interpretations. Firstly, Ibn Abbas, al-Dahhak, and Muqatil view that the word *faaliq* is similar to *khaaliq* (the Creator) and al-Wahidi understands it as *fatir*. Al-Razi (1992) and al-Baghawi (2002) confirm that the word *al-fatir* is similar to *al-shaqq* and also *al-falq* (all connote split). Al-Tabari disagrees with this opinion as it is strange in Arabic that *falaqa al-shay'* is similar to *khalafa al-shay'*. *Al-habb* refers to something that has no nucleus or kernel like wheat and barley (Tantawi 2007). Secondly, most of the scholars view that the word *al-falaq* is similar to *al-shaqq*. The actual meaning of the word *al-habb* refers to grains of wheat, barley, and other species while the word *al-nawa* refers to something which is located in the cores inside the fruit like nucleus of plums/peaches, dates, and others (al-Baghawi 2002).

Al-Razi (1992) adds that whenever the seed grain and the fruit stone exist in moist soil, after sometime as decreed by Allah SWT, the splitting of the seed grain and fruit stone could be seen from the top. The top part produces a tree, ascending (rising) into the air and the bottom part produces a tree, descending (remaining) in the ground called the roots of the tree. Therefore, the seed-grain and the fruit-stone are the determining factor of the existence of the tree; either ascending or descending.

Ibn Asyur (2000) asserts that the word *al-falq* connotes the split and break of a little bit of some parts. It also refers to something which produces vegetations, trees, and roots signifying the absolute power and wisdom of Allah SWT the Almighty. The word *al-habb* is the plural of *habbah* which means enabling a tree to bear fruits. The word *al-nawa* is the plural of *nawah* which means the nucleus of dates. In fact, it embraces the nucleus of all kinds of fruit which grow on trees such as grapes and olives.

It is the researcher's opinion that the second opinion is stronger, i.e. *al-falaq* is similar to *al-shaqq* as the similar saying: *فَالِقُ الْحَبِّ*. This is mentioned in *ahadith* concerning the supplication when going to sleep as narrated by Muslim:

حَدَّثَنِي زُهَيْرُ بْنُ حَرْبٍ حَدَّثَنَا جَرِيرٌ عَنْ سُهَيْلٍ قَالَ: «كَانَ أَبُو صَالِحِيًّا مُرْنَا إِذَا أَرَادَ أَحَدُنَا أَنْ يَنَامَ أَنْ يَضْطَجِعَ عَلَى شِقِّهِ الْأَيْمَنِ، ثُمَّ يَقُولُ: اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَرَبَّ الْأَرْضِ وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ رَبَّنَا وَرَبَّ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ فَالِقَ الْحَبِّ وَالنَّوَى وَمُنزِلَ التَّوْرَةِ وَالْإِنْجِيلِ وَالْفُرْقَانِ

أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ شَرِّ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ أَنْتَ آخِذٌ بِنَاصِيَتِهِ اللَّهُمَّ أَنْتَ الْأَوَّلُ فَلَيْسَ قَبْلَكَ شَيْءٌ وَأَنْتَ الْآخِرُ فَلَيْسَ بَعْدَكَ شَيْءٌ وَأَنْتَ الظَّاهِرُ فَلَيْسَ فَوْقَكَ شَيْءٌ وَأَنْتَ الْبَاطِنُ فَلَيْسَ دُونَكَ شَيْءٌ أَقْضِ عَنَّا الدَّيْنَ وَأَغْنِنَا مِنَ الْفَقْرِ. وَكَانَ يَرُوي ذَلِكَ عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ (ص).

Suhail reported that Abu Solih used to command us (in these words): “When any one of you intends to go to sleep, he should lie on the bed on his right side and then say: “O Allah I the Lord of the Heavens and the Lord of the Earth and Lord of the Magnificent Throne, our Lord, and the Lord of everything, the Splitter of the grain of corn and the date stone (or fruit kernel), the Revealer of Tawrah (Torah) and Injil (Bible) and Criterion (the Holy Quran), I seek refuge in Thee from the evil of everything Thou art to seize by the forelock (Thou hast perfect control over it). O Allah SWT, Thou art the First, there is naught before Thee, and Thou art the Last and there is naught after Thee, and Thou art Evident and there is nothing above Thee, and Thou art Innermost and there is nothing beyond Thee. Remove the burden of debt from us and relieve us from want.” Abu Solih used to narrate it from Abu Hurairah who narrated it from Allah's Apostle SWT”. (Hadith. Muslim. Kitab al-Dhikr wa al-Du'a wa al-Tawbah wa al-Istighfar: Ma Yaqul 'Inda al-Nawm wa Akhd al-Madja': Juz' 13: # 4888)

BARLEY (*HABB*) GROWS WHEN WATERED

The previous verse highlights the seed and grain germination process and Allah SWT affirms the essential role of water in the germination process, as He says:

لِنُخْرِجَ بِهِ حَبًّا وَنَبَاتًا

“That We may produce therewith corn (grain) and vegetations.”

(Al-Quran. Al-Naba' 78: 15)

Al-Tabari explains that the verse: “That We may produce therewith corn (grain) and vegetations” shows that Allah SWT brings forth grain by giving it water which comes from the clouds to the earth. The word *al-habb* includes everything which has a muzzle of plants to be harvested and it is the plural of *habbah* as *al-sha'ir* is the plural of *sha'irah*.

Al-Razi clarifies that the verse: “That We may produce therewith corn (grain) and vegetations” refers to everything which is regarded as food from wheat and barley like hay and grass which is normally fed to animals as in the verse of Allah SWT:

كُلُوا وَارْعَوْا أَنْعَامَكُمْ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لآيَاتٍ لِأُولِي النُّهَى

“Eat and pasture your cattle, (therein); verily, in this are proofs and signs for men of understanding.”

(Al-Quran. Taha 20: 54)

And the saying of Allah SWT:

وَالْحَبِّ ذُو الْعَصْفِ وَالرَّيْحَانُ

“And also corn (grain), with (its) leaves and stalks for fodder and sweet-scented plants.”

(Al-Quran. al-Rahman 55: 12)

BARLEY (*HABB*) IS A PLANT HARVESTED WITH ITS ROOTS

وَنَزَّلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً مُبَارَكًا فَأَنْبَتْنَا بِهِ جَنَّاتٍ وَحَبَّ الْحَصِيدِ

“And We send down blessed water (rain) from the sky, then We produce there with gardens and grain (every kind of harvests) that are reaped.”

(Al-Quran. Qaf 50: 9)

Ibn Ashur (2000) in his commentary of the verse says that the word *al-habb* refers to a plant that grows and has ears/spikes containing seed-grains like wheat, barley, corn, rye, legumes, and the like. The plant as well as its root is harvested and flour is derived from the seed-grains. The saying: حب الحصيد is the *maf'ul* of أنبتنا as the growth of *al-habb* (the seed-grain) depends on the growth of its spike. This verifies the germination process as exemplified by the term: الحصيد which indicates that harvesting takes place after the germination process. It also signifies the harvested plant in which the edible, seed-grains are obtained after the roots are cut off. Therefore, the addition of the word *habb* to *al-hasid* signifies the actual place; it does not imply the addition of *al-mawsuff* to *al-sifah*. *Al-hasid* is mentioned here as an indication of the different advantages of the plant species that could be obtained by human beings. The trees in the gardens bear fruit while their roots remain. The edible, seed-grains are obtained after the roots are cut off and the waste material after the harvesting process could be food for cattle as highlighted by Allah SWT:

مَتَاعًا لَكُمْ وَلِأَنْعَامِكُمْ

“(To be) a provision and benefit for you and your cattle.”

(Al-Quran. Al-Nazi'at 79: 33)

BARLEY GRAINS (*HABBA*) ARE CLUSTERED TOGETHER

Allah SWT the Almighty reveals that He causes the barley grains to be gathered together. He says:

وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَخْرَجْنَا بِهِ نَبَاتَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ فَأَخْرَجْنَا مِنْهُ خَضِرًا نُخْرَجُ مِنْهُ حَبًّا مِثْرًا كَثِيرًا وَمِنَ النَّخْلِ مِنْ طَلْعِهَا قِنْوَانٌ دَانِيَةٌ وَجَنَّاتٍ مِنْ أَعْنَابٍ وَالرَّيْثُونَ وَالرُّمَّانَ مُشْتَبِهًا وَغَيْرَ مُتَشَابِهٍ انظُرُوا إِلَى ثَمَرِهِ إِذَا أَثْمَرَ وَيَنْعِهِ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ

“It is He Who sends down water (rain) from the sky, and with it We bring forth vegetation of all kinds, and out of it We bring forth green stalks, from which We bring forth thick clustered grain. And out of the date-palm and its spathe come forth clusters of dates hanging low and near, and gardens of grapes, olives, and pomegranates, each similar (in kind) yet different (in variety and taste). Look at their fruits when they begin to bear, and the ripeness thereof. Verily! In these things there are signs for people who believe.”

(Al-Quran, al-An'am 6: 99)

Al-Tabari (1968) and *ahl al-ta'wil* view that the verse: نخرج منه حبًا مثرًا كَثِيرًا signifies an ear or spike comprising wheat, barley, rice, and others whereby the grains are gathered together.

Al-Zujjaj (2002) and al-Baghawi assert that the word *khadhira* in the verse: فَأَخْرَجْنَا مِنْهُ خَضِرًا connotes *akdhara* (be or become green) as per the word *awiaa* connotes *a'wara* (be or become one-eyed). Al-Layth says that the word *al-khadhr* mentioned in the Quran connotes *al-zar'* (crops/ plants) which connotes all kinds of plants with green leaves. Al-Razi affirms that the word *al-nabt* in the Quran is been restricted by Allah SWT into two classifications: firstly, *al-zar'* refers to a plant that grows from a seed-grain and secondly, *al-shajar* refers to a plant that grows from a fruit-stone. Therefore, the two categories are applicable for the verse: إِنَّ اللَّهَ فَالِقُ الْحَبِّ وَالنَّوَى and also: فَأَخْرَجْنَا مِنْهُ خَضِرًا. Thus, the latter starts with the word *khadhira* which is similar to *al-zar'* as narrated from al-Layth. Ibn Abbas adds that it encompasses wheat, barley, beet-root, corn, and rice. Al-Razi (1992) further explains that the word *al-khadhr* in the verse connotes the green branches of a tree which are first to appear and have spikes/ears on the top. In addition, the saying: نُخْرَجُ مِنْهُ حَبًّا مِثْرًا كَثِيرًا reveals that *al-khadhr* (the green branches of a tree) produce thick clustered grain in the spikes/ears.

Ibn Asyur (2000) says that the word *al-habb* in the verse: نخرج منه حبًّا مثرًا كَثِيرًا refers to the seed-grain that comes out of moist soil. It is the fruit of plants like wheat, barley, and other types of seed-grain.

The word *al-mutarakib* signifies the mutual sticking of the seed-grain in the spike like wheat and other types of grain. In this case, the form of *al-tafa'ul* is used to signify an exaggeration in the mutual sticking of the seed-grain. It could be perceived as the *haal* of all of the preceding verses; similar and different (in terms of the contents).

On the other hand, Ibn Asyur (2000) reveals that al-Zamakhshari believes that it is the *haal* of *al-zaytun* as it is the *ma'tuf* and *al-rumman* regarded as another *haal* evidenced by the earlier which is estimated as *al-rumman* as well. Tantawi (2007) in his commentary on the verse says that it means “We bring forth green plants” and *حَبًّا مُتْرَاكِبًا* means to gradually gather together as in the case of wheat, barley, and other types of the seed-grain. It has been said *rakibahu* as per *sami'ahu*, *rukuban*, and *murakiban* connotes to be high.

BARLEY (*HABBA*) IS FINE FOOD FOR HUMANS AND CATTLE

Allah SWT asserts that He creates grain, including barley as food and animal feed. He says:

فَأَنْبَتْنَا فِيهَا حَبًّا

“And We cause therein the grain to grow.”

(Al-Quran, 'Abasa 80: 27)

Ibn Asyur (2000) asserts that this verse is similar to Surah al-Baqarah: 261. The word *habba* in the verse connotes the food of human beings. Al-Tabari (1968) and Tantawi (2007) views that it refers to cultivated seed, which is brought out from the ground, including grains of wheat, barley, corn, and others. The word *al-haba* embraces all types of grains (al-Tabari 1968). In addition, it refers to a sort of plant which produces foods such as wheat (al-Tabari 1968).

Likewise, Allah SWT says:

وَأَيَّةٌ لَهُمُ الْأَرْضُ الْمَيْتَةُ أَحْيَيْنَاهَا وَأَخْرَجْنَا مِنْهَا حَبًّا فَمِنْهُ يَأْكُلُونَ

“And a sign for them is the dead land. We gave it life, and We brought forth from it grains, so that they eat thereof.”

(al-Quran, Yasin 36: 33)

Al-Tabari (1968) and Ibn Kathir (1999) in his commentary on the verse asserts that it is regarded as clear evidence to the disbelievers on the power of Allah SWT to do in accordance with His Will. This includes resurrecting the dead to its original form before death as well as reviving dead land which had no life by sending rain from the sky, thereby producing crops which bring forth grains as staple food for human beings and cattle.

Barley is scientifically proved to be a nutritious food as it is an excellent source of soluble and insoluble dietary fiber and other bioactive

constituents like vitamin E (including toco-tri-enols), B-complex vitamins, minerals, and phenolic compounds. It is also a rich source of tocols, including tocopherols, and toco-tri-enols (Marwat, et al. 2012). In addition, barley has a high level of phosphorus, calcium, potassium, magnesium, sodium, copper and zinc (Ragee et al. 2006). Barley has high antioxidant potential and polyphenol content (Fogarasi et al. 2015). Ferulic acid was the main phenolic acid in barley flours (Yu & Keller 2005). Phenolics have been identified in nine varieties of barley and their corresponding malts as flavan-3-ols, flavonols, phenolic acids and apolar esters. Besides polyphenols, barley and malt extracts contained other antioxidants; carotenoids (lutein and zeaxanthin) and tocopherols (α , δ and γ) (Goupy et al. 1999).

The whole grain barley contains phytochemicals including phenolic acids, flavonoids, lignans, tocols, phytosterols and folate. These phytochemicals exhibit strong antioxidant, antiproliferative and cholesterol-lowering abilities, which are potentially useful to combat frequent nutrition-related diseases including cardiovascular disease, diabetes and obesity (Idehen et al. 2017). Barley β -glucan is a functional ingredient implicated to lower glycemic response and plasma cholesterol (Thondre et al. 2011).

The wisdom behind barley in the diet of the Prophet as exemplified in various hadith is that barley contain relatively higher beta-glucan contents compared with other cereals (Johansson et al. 2004). Wild barley showed a higher β -glucan content and variation than cultivated barley (Nishantha et al. 2018). Barley has high crude protein, crude fiber and low carbohydrate (FAO, n.d.).

BARLEY (*HABBAH*) IS A PLANT-BASED GRAIN

مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ حَبَّةٍ أَنْبَتَتْ سَبْعَ سَنَابِلٍ فِي كُلِّ سَنَابِلَةٍ مِائَةٌ حَبَّةٌ وَاللَّهُ يُضَاعِفُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ

“The likeness of those who spend their wealth in the Way of Allah I is as the likeness of a grain (of corn); it grows seven ears, and each ear has a hundred grains. Allah I gives manifold increase to whom He pleases. And Allah I is All-Sufficient for His creatures' needs, All-Knower.”

(Al-Quran. Al-Baqarah 2: 261)

The word *habbah* is mentioned twice in this verse. Al-Tabari (1968) in his commentary on the verse: “The likeness of those who spend their wealth in the Way of Allah SWT” says that it means the

likeness of those who spend their wealth in the *jihad* (holy war) against the enemies of Allah SWT with themselves and their money. Their acts are “as the likeness of a grain (of corn),” or grains of wheat and barley and other types of plant-based grains.

Al-Zamakhshari asserts that the *mudhaf* (adverb) which is either *mithl nafaqatihim* (the likeness of their spending is as the likeness of a grain) or *mithlihim kamathal badhir habbah* (the likeness of -their spending- is as the likeness of a grain seed) should be excluded from the verse: “the likeness of those who spend their wealth”. Indeed, the Originator is Allah SWT and yet, as the seed is the mean of germination, the word *al-inbat* (germination) has been assigned to it as per *al-ardh* (earth) and *al-ma'* (water) (Tantawi 2007).

Ibn Asyur (2000) says that the word *al-habbah* is the singular form of a *muannath* which refers to the seeds of a plant from ears/spikes or cotton which determines the type of plant. The word *habbah* in this verse is similar to *al-habb* which has been mentioned in Surah al-An'am : 95. Both words include grains of wheat and barley.

BARLEY GRAIN (*HABBAH*) IS VERY SMALL

Allah SWT the Creator declares the small size of the barley grain as He says:

وَعِنْدَهُ مَفَاتِحُ الْغَيْبِ لَا يَعْلَمُهَا إِلَّا هُوَ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي الْبُرِّ
وَالْبَحْرِ وَمَا تَسْقُطُ مِنَ وَرَقَةٍ إِلَّا يَعْلَمُهَا وَلَا حَبَّةٍ فِي
ظِلْمَاتِ الْأَرْضِ وَلَا رَطْبٍ وَلَا يَابِسٍ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ

“And with Him are the keys of the *ghayb* (all that is hidden), none knows them but He. And He knows whatever there is in (or on) the earth and in the sea; not a leaf falls, but he knows it. There is not a grain in the darkness of neither the earth nor anything fresh or dry, but is written in a Clear Record.”

(Al-Quran, al- An'am 6: 59)

This verse verifies the absolute perfect knowledge of Allah SWT, which encompasses all things that exist in (or on) the earth and in the sea. Also *al-habbah* (a grain including wheat and barley) refers to something which is really small (al-Razi 1992).

Al-Zamakhshari says that the verse *وَلَا حَبَّةٍ وَلَا رَطْبٍ وَلَا يَابِسٍ* : is the 'athaf of the word *waraqah* as if it means nothing of these things falls/happens, but He knows it. The verse *إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ* : is considered as a repetition of the saying: *إِلَّا يَعْلَمُهَا* as they have the same meaning. The words: *al-kitab al-mubin* signifies the absolute perfect knowledge

of Allah SWT, which resembles the word *al-lawh* (sheet/table). In addition, al-Zamakhshari (2009) informs that the verse has been also recited with *al-raf'* : *وَلَا حَبَّةٌ ، وَلَا رَطْبٌ ، وَلَا يَابِسٌ* . This implies two grammatical matters; firstly, it is the 'athaf of *من* *وَرَقَةٍ* and secondly, it the *ibtida'* as shown by the *raf'* and the *khavar* as in the saying: *إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ* as well as the saying: *لَا رَجُلَ مِنْهُمْ وَلَا امْرَأَةً إِلَّا فِي الدَّارِ* (neither man nor woman but in the house).

Ibn Asyur (2000) views that the verse: *وَلَا حَبَّةٍ* is the 'athaf of *ibtida'* due to the repetition of the letter of *al-nafy* (refutation). The verse: *فِي ظِلْمَاتِ الْأَرْضِ* is the *sifah* (attribute) of *حَبَّةٍ* which means there is not a grain of plant seed covered in the layers of the earth. Therefore, *حَبَّةٍ* could not be the *ma'mul* of the word *تَسْقُطُ* *حَبَّةٍ* (the grain-seed) as that fall is not similar to the fall into the darkness of the earth.

In his commentary, Tantawi (2007) asserts the fact that Allah SWT has comprehensive knowledge and is acquainted with all things general and specific. He further states that the verse clarifies some of the areas of His knowledge. This includes absolute and perfect knowing of the fall of a leaf from a tree, the existence of grains under the ground also in its hollows, fresh and dry fruits, and others as all the details have been recorded and preserved in the definite divine knowledge of Allah SWT.

CONCLUSION

In a nutshell, Allah SWT uses only inclusive terms like *habb*, *habba*, and *habbah* which implicitly refer to grains. As a result, interpreters of the Quran as well as translators testify to the diverse yet all-encompassing interpretations and translations of the inclusive terms. For example, Ibn Kathir in his commentary on the verse cites a report from Ibn Abbas that the verse: “And also corn (grain), with (its) leaves and stalks for fodder, and sweet-scented plants” (Al-Quran. Al-Rahman 55: 12) refer to the husks of corn or grain. In addition, Tantawi proposes that grains like wheat, barley, and others are surrounded by husks and have spikes which could be seen by the naked eye. With regards to the characteristics of barley, it is a plant that is harvested with its roots and flour is derived from the seed-grains. It is regarded as a wholesome food for humans and cattle. It is known by its stalks that contain grains used as food, grows when watered with water, and has no nuclei. It is very small in size and its seed-grains are together in the spike.

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