

Criticism and analysis of Wim Raven's viewpoint on the semantics of the word "shahīd" in The Qur'an

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Abstract

Due to the important status of martyrdom in the context of Islam and Muslim thoughts, especially Shiites, some orientalists such as Wim Raven have sought to write works in this field. Throughout an article published as "Martyr" in the Encyclopedia of the Qur'an, Raven has explored the meaning of martyrdom and its genealogy, using the books and articles by other western scholars, especially Goldziher and Wensinck. According to them, he believes that "martyr" in The Qur'an means "witness" and "hearer of confession", and that reference of the term to the concept of "being killed in the path of Allah" is the result of a semantic transformation that occurs in the Old Testament and the use of "shahīd" in the sense of martyr owes to hadith literature. Orientalists believe that the term "shahīd" in the sense of martyr is a loan and post-Qur'anic word whose root is derived from the Syriac origin of Sahda. In the present article, with a descriptive-analytical approach, after examining Raven's semantics discussions and outlining his viewpoints and sources, we have considered the semantics of "martyrs" in lexical and Islamic books and then analyzed Orientalists' viewpoints in this regard. According to the historical analysis of the usage of the word "shahīd" in the sense of "the killed", its application is traced back to the outward contiguity of the concept of the killed with the basic meaning of the word "shahīd" (witness and presence). That is to say, due to the adjacency of the presence some of the killed on the battlefield and their practical witness to the faith of God and the Prophet, the concept of "being killed" is linked to "the presence", and gradually, this contiguity has led to the independent usage of the word "shahīd" in the sense of "the killed".

Keywords: The Qur'an, Martyrs, Semantics, genealogy, Raven, Goldziher, Wensinck.

Introduction

The range of Islamic and The Qur'anic studies of the orientalists increases and diversity of their subjects of study enhances every day. The subject of jihad and martyrdom has also been at the focus of their studies. It's because, the history of the early days of Islam has been linked to jihad and martyrdom and its reflection in The Qur'an and hadith seems natural. In the contemporary era, of course, the culture of seeking martyrdom among Islamic movements, especially among Muslims in Iran, Lebanon, and Palestine,

has motivated Orientalists to conduct researches around martyrdom and its aims. The genealogy and semantics of the word "martyr" have also been considered in examining the category of martyrdom. Many Orientalists such as Goldziher, Wensinck, etc. Have studied Jihad and martyrdom in their Islamic and The Qur'anic studies and subsequently referred to the genealogy of the word martyr and included it in between the loan words. One of the articles in the Encyclopedia of The Qur'an is also dedicated to the subject of martyrdom. Dr. Wim Raven is the author

of the entrance "martyr" in encyclopedia of The Qur'an; The present research seeks to criticize and analyze Wim Raven's viewpoint about the meaning of the word "shahīd" in The Qur'an. Wim Raven is explicitly dealing with the meaning of the word "shahīd" in a part of his article, but yet it can be said that he intends to present the concept and meaning of martyrdom to his readers throughout the entry. Therefore, we first take a look at the structure of the article and after explaining Raven's function in the genealogy and semantics of the word "shahīd"; we will go through the article's criticism and analysis. Criticizing and analyzing such works will undoubtedly enrich the work and will open new horizons toward Muslim orientalist and scholars.

1. Reviewing the article of "Martyr" and its 11 titles

Wim Raven has divided this article into 11 sections with the following titles:

1. Introduction and general definition of martyrdom
2. The rooting of the word "martyr"
3. The idea of The Qur'an (around the martyrdom)
4. The commentaries and hadiths about the martyrdom
5. Historical discussion (narratives in the context of history)
6. The blessings granted to the martyr
7. Heavenly Hour
8. Some other narrations (about the martyrdom)
9. Martyrdom in the modern age
10. Martyrdom in Iran
11. Martyrdom in Lebanon and Palestine. (Raven, Encyclopedia of The Qur'an, Vol 3, p281-287)

Before going through the semantic discussion of the entry of "martyr", two things are important to remember:

A. Although many of the topics in the article seem to be unrelated to the semantics of martyrs, it should be noted that a clear meaning of a word will only be possible after examining all its conceptual

¹ The words in parenthesis are not part of the author's words of the article "Martyr" and have been added to clarify the title.

dimensions. In other words, the meaning of a word can be understood after examining all of the usages of the word in a culture and discourse, and even the course of its conceptual alternations and semantic evolution determined through history. With this look, it is essential to look through the entire article of Wim Raven. In this way, Raven's attempt to convey the meaning of the Islamic and The Qur'anic word "martyr" is testified to the readers of the Encyclopedia of The Qur'an. Is not it the fact that the Encyclopedia is committed to familiarizing its readers with the meanings of The Qur'anic terms?

B. Unfortunately, the titles of the article contain structural defects. We know that Title is the disciplined compression of text contents (Horry, 2009, p. 14). In Wim Raven's essay, the titles like "Martyrs" and "Historical Discussion", in addition to the title's insufficiency, have nothing to do with any of the topics listed below. For example, in the subject titled "martyrs", the most central issue under consideration is the genealogy and the semantics of the word "martyr", while the title is very general. In addition, titles such as "Other Hadiths" and "Later Times" though somewhat outline the related contents, but it doesn't have the terms of a good title, such as being expressive, lack of ambiguity and being well-defined.

Also in each division, the types must be bound to each other exclusively, and none of them should interfere with the other² (Khānsāri, 2009, p. 168), while some of the Raven's divisions completely overlap. For example, his two titles, "The belief of The Qur'an about martyrdom" and "Hadith and commentary on martyrdom" are not different; therefore, it would be better to bring the commentary topics under the title of "The Qur'an's Perspective on Martyrdom" and bring the Hadith topics separately. The next problem is that there are conflicts in the titles of "Blessings

² For more information see [.http://faraed.com/fa](http://faraed.com/fa)

Granted to the Martyr" and "Houri", regarding the point that Houri is one of the blessings of Paradise given to martyrs. If the author was willing to examine the blessing of Houri in a separate and detailed division, this should be considered as one of the subscripts of the first title namely "Heavenly blessings".

The divisions in a text must be comprehensive of all related sorts and obstructive of non-related sorts³. This means that this division includes all related components and topics (Khānsāri, 2009, p. 174). That is, to mention all cases of division and to avoid naming unrelated cases. In this article, the writer has described the heavenly blessings in nine episodes according to narrative, but he has only mentioned the blessing of Houri in a separated title. Since he has not discussed 8 other blessings separately too, so his division is not comprehensive.

2. The Genealogy and Semantics of the word "shahīd"

In the introduction of the article, Wim Raven has said: "The martyrs are those who die because of their faith and by others. In the Sunnite Islamic context, the martyrs are primordially those who fought against the infidels for the sake of the progress of Islam and sacrificed their lives for this purpose." (Encyclopedia of Leiden, vol. 3, P. 281) Disregarding the fact that Raven has not paid any attention to the definition of Shiite from "martyrdom", his definition of "martyr" has three components: Death for the faith and progress of Islam; martyrdom means the death caused by others; and death during a war with the infidels.

"The Martyrdom in Islam is markedly different from the position of the Christian martyrs in its earliest age," says Wim Raven, after presenting the definition. "Christians were martyred voluntarily and as a result of their testimony to accept

religion and refrain from denying religion. Christian martyrs were killed by ruthless people when their religion did not have any terrestrial successes, while Sunni martyrs fought in the early days of Islam when military wars were generally successful. Martyrdom in the Shiite has its own kind. It was formed by the highest form of martyrdom, the martyrdom of Hussein bin Ali (peace be upon him), who was murdered in Karbala during a heroic but anticipated war against Muslims. The Martyrdom to the Shiites, like Christians, is a spiritual victory against the universal victory. In addition, Shiites usually emphasize the wisdom of martyrdom (Imam) Hussein (peace be upon him), while the Sunni martyrdom plays a marginal role." (Encyclopedia of Leiden, vol. 3, P. 281)

In contrast to "the conditions of Christians in the beginning of their faith in the religion of Christianity," and "the condition of the Muslims after passing the critical period of religious expression," Raven has miscalculated. All the believers in the religion of their Prophet, at first, were in dire straits and difficulties. At the outset, Muslims also suffered from torture, mourning and misery. As the parents of Ammar - Yasser and Sumayah - died under torture (Amin, 1403, vol. 13, p. 28). Therefore, the comparison of the beginning of a matter with the middle of another matter is not logical and it is considered as a comparison of incommensurables

Then, Raven deals with the genealogy and semantics of the word "martyr". He says: The common Arabic word for martyr is *shahīd*, pl. *shūhadā*, a term that abounds in Islamic literatures from tradition literature onwards. *Shahīd* occurs frequently in the Qur'an, but at first glance it means only "confessor." Under the influence of early Christian usage, however, traditionalists and occasionally did interpret the qur'anic *shahīd* as "martyr." The Greek *martys* and Syriac *sāhdā* had similarly developed

³ ibid

semantically from "witness" via "confessor, testifier to the faith" to "martyr". (Encyclopedia of The Qur'an, vol. 3, p. 282).

This part of Raven's article is the main purpose of this research. The above phrases have a lot to say despite to its brevity. Here are some claims:

First, the word "martyr" owes its popularity to the hadith literature;

Second, the meaning of the word "martyr" in The Qur'an is in the sense of "witness" or "hearer of confession";

Third, traditionalists and commentators are influenced by early Christian literature and this way a semantic transformation has been developed in The Qur'anic word "shahīd" and they interpreted it as "killed in the path of God".

Fourth, before The Qur'anic word "shahīd", the Greek word "Martus" and the Syriac word "Sahda" have undergone the same semantic transformation;

His semantic result obtained is that the original meaning of the word "shahīd" meant "witness" or "hearer of confession", but the traditionalists and commentators modeled and borrowed from the early Christian literature. So, they changed the meaning of the word and implemented the same semantic transformation that had taken place in Christianity. This way, the word "shahīd" in the sense of martyr became a frequent word in the Islamic source.

Further, Raven provides evidence for the semantic transformation of the word "shahīd" in The Qur'an from traditions and commentaries. Verse 140 of Āl Imran, verse 69 of Nisa and verse 19 of Hadid constitute Raven's evidence. Among commentaries of the mentioned verses, Tabari (d. 310) and Magātil (d. 150) have introduced the transformative meaning of "killed in the path of God". Raven writes: "The comments on the *shahīd*-verses in early Sunnī exegetical works (sing. *tafsīr*) are generally meager: the verses about those who were killed in battle generated

much more exegesis." (Encyclopedia of The Qur'an, vol. 3, p. 282)

As Raven has stated, there is not much and enough evidence for "being killed in the path of God" from the meanings of the word "shahīd", and only the war-related verses have the background and context necessary for the semantic transformation of the word "shahīd". In Surat āl-Imran, the word "martyrs" is mentioned after the explanation of mutual injuries between two groups in the battle of Ohod. "If a wound should touch you - there has already touched the [opposing] people a wound similar to it. And these days [of varying conditions] We alternate among the people so that Allah may make evident those who believe and [may] take to Himself from among you martyrs - and Allah does not like the wrongdoers -" (āl-Imran/ v. 140) Also in verse 69 of Surat An'nisa' the word 'al-shūhada" proceeds the war-related verses, but in verse 19 of surat al'Hadid there is no clear proof of war in neighboring verses, Unless we consider the similarity of this verse to the mentioned verse of nisa' as the reason for similar interpretation given to them by scholars. In both verses the words "Siddiq" and "shahīd" are juxtaposed

Raven further writes: In connection with the qur'anic verses mentioned above, the state and whereabouts of the martyrs and their reward in the hereafter are discussed in the biographies of the Prophet, in commentaries on the Qur'an (sing. *tafsīr*, see exegesis of The Qur'an: classical and medieval) and in tradition literature. In the early *tafsīr* works, the material is distributed throughout the discussions of a number of qur'anic verses rather randomly, and in Hadīth collections it is also scattered over many different places. Here, therefore, a thematic arrangement seems more appropriate than a verse-by-verse treatment. Some large clusters of relevant ahadīth and *commentaries* are to be found in tabarī, *Tafsīr*, ad q 2:154 (ed. Shākir, iii, 214-9); ad q 3:169 (ed. Shākir, vii, 384-

95); ad q 47:4-6 (ed. Shākir, xxvi, 26 f.), and in Abd al-Razzāq (d. 211/827), *Musannaf*, v, 263-6, no. 9553-62." (Encyclopedia of The Qur'an, vol. 3, p. 284)

After examining the concept of martyrdom in The Qur'an, hadiths and commentaries, and specifying the privileges granted to the martyr, Raven has examined "martyrdom in later times" at the end of his entry. As mentioned earlier, this section of the entry seems alien to the subject of the present research, but in fact, Raven is trying to examine the concept of martyrdom in the context of Muslim societies and to show the evolution of this concept. Raven briefly explores the relationship of martyrdom with jihad in this section too. In times and places where jihād was militarily revived, the idea of martyrdom was reactivated as well. During the Ottoman conquests in Europe, and during rebellions against European colonial powers, Muslim soldiers who fell in battle could rightly be called martyrs (see rebellion). In writings about jihād, there was not always an interest in martyrdom. Ibn Teymiyya, for instance, a major source of inspiration for Islamists in our days, eagerly expands on jihād, but hardly ever refers to martyrdom. " (Encyclopedia of The Qur'an, vol. 3, p. 285)

Referring to Hassan al-Banna and his role in the promotion of martyrdom, Raven has explored the concept of martyrdom in the writings of Muslim Brothers and touched on another point, albeit implicitly and briefly. Hassan al-Banna's followers consider him as a martyr even though Hassan al-Banna was killed by secret police. Even the executions of the Nasser regime in the fifties and sixties are also referred to as martyrs. Calling these people as martyr shows the evolution of the meaning of "shahīd", because Raven has previously stated that In a Sunnī Islamic context, martyrs are primarily those who fight unbelievers for the advancement of Islam, and sacrifice their lives for this."

(Encyclopedia of The Qur'an, vol. 3, p. 281)

Although Raven did not pay any attention to Shiite and Shiite sources in the initial examination of the concept of martyrdom, but he failed to ignore Shiite in his study on the concept of martyrdom due to the privileged position of Iran and Lebanon in the course of evolution. He writes: In traditional Shia, there was no clear relation between jihad and martyrdom. Hussein ibn Ali (AS) (d. 61) is highly respected not because of his military appearance, but because of the immense suffering he suffered. In fact, Raven attempts to show that the Shi'a martyrdom is incompatible with the semantic components of the martyrdom in its early sense and it is different from The Qur'anic and hadith literature. Raven believes that from the 1960 onwards a new, activist and reformist type of jihād was propagated, combined with a tendency towards active martyrdom. Leading figures in this movement were the sociology professor Alī Shari'atī, and the Ayatollah tāleqānī and Mutahharī. Raven's statement about the Iran-Iraq war is very strange. He says: "During the war with Iraq in the 1980, masses of soldiers and child-soldiers were encouraged to seek martyrdom as cannon fodder and in mine fields, the "key of paradise" hanging around their necks." (Encyclopedia of The Qur'an, vol. 3, p. 286)

In examining the martyrdom situation in Lebanon and Palestine, Raven takes on a completely Western face, and writes: from 1982 on, the Shīī, Iranian-guided faction hizbullāh (lit. "party of God") organized suicide squads in Lebanon against Israel and the United States, motivated by the certainty that they would die as martyrs. (the same, p. 282) without referring to the reasons of the Lebanese-Palestinian struggle with Israel, he calls seeking martyrdom as suicide bombing operations and he says that the issue of "martyrdom" is controversial among Sunni religious

scholars. Finally, he writes: "traditions on martyrdom that slumbered for centuries have turned out to inspire modern militants, who only thirty years ago would still have fought under secular banners" (the same, p.286) This statement suggests the reader that hadiths have become a political tool for the military to legitimize their struggle and encourage teenagers to seek for martyrdom. Albeit, because of the freedom of Western expression, Raven can never look the other way, especially when Israel and Zionism are concerned!

So, from the semantic point of view, Raven has first acknowledged the basic meaning of the martyr in The Qur'an as a witness or hearer of confession, and then recalled the semantic evolution of the word "Martus" and the Syriac word "Sahda" and considered the Islamic traditionalists and Commentators affected by the Christian model. Gradually, the new meaning of the word "shahīd" - killed in the path of God - replaced the original and The Qur'anic meaning to the point where they also used some new meaning in the interpretation of The Qur'anic verses. Eventually, with the change of the state of war and jihad, the concept of martyrdom underwent further changes, and by considering the concepts of martyrdom in contemporary Islamic movements, its conceptual components were explained. The last point of this section is that Raven has argued for justifying the development in the samples of martyrdom. "Since, after the expansionist first century of Islam, gradually, fewer and fewer battles against unbelievers were fought, there was less chance to take part in war, and hence to be killed in action. Therefore, and also to enable as many believers as possible to share in the blessing of martyrdom, the term *shahīd* was given a wider interpretation and was understood to encompass every sacrifice (q.v.) for God's cause, or any difficult act of whatever nature (see trial). According to prophetic traditions, one could become a martyr by

dying abroad, in an epidemic, in childbirth, by pleurisy or by drowning (q.v.), or by being killed in defense of one's family or one's property (q.v.; Kohlberg, *Shahīd*). And, last but not least, "the ink of the scholars is of more value than the blood of the martyrs". (Encyclopedia of The Qur'an, vol. 3, p. 285)

3. The Critique and Analysis of Raven's Perspective

According to the passage in the main part of Raven's article dealing with the genealogy and semantics of the word martyr, there were several claims. In reviewing and analyzing Raven's perspective, we will examine all of them.

3.1 The Qur'anic meaning of martyr

Raven has called The Qur'anic meaning of the martyr "a witness" or a "listener of confession." The word "martyr" and its derivatives has been used in The Qur'an more than fifty times. Here, it seems, Raven sees no difference between the literal meaning of the word and its Qur'anic meaning. Thus, regardless of genealogy and etymology, the word martyr is used in its original sense in the Qur'an which is the literal and authentic Arabic sense. So we have to look at lexical dictionaries to get the original meaning of the word, although Raven himself did not take the action and provided no documentation for The Qur'anic meaning.

Among the lexical dictionaries, only some explicitly state the original meaning or the so-called definition. So according to Muhammad ibn Fares ibn Zakaria (d. 395 A) in *al-Maqāyes al-Lughah*: the main meaning of the root (ش.ه.د: sh.h.d) is the presence and consciousness (*al-Maqāyes al-Lughah*, v. 3, p: 221) This meaning must exist in all derivatives of the word "shahīd" (see: Sobhi Saleh, *Derāsāt fi Fiqh Al-Lughah*, p. 175). Therefore, one should pay attention to the semantics of the word "shahīd" in The Qur'anic verses. Such as:

قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لِمَ تَكْفُرُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ شَهِيدٌ عَلَى

ما تَعْمَلُونَ (آل عمران : ٩٨) In some verses the discussion is on the prophets: مَا قُلْتُ لَهُمْ إِلَّا مَا أَمَرْتَنِي بِهِ أَنْ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ رَبِّي وَرَبَّكُمْ وَ كُنْتُ عَلَيْهِمْ شَهِيداً ما دُمْتُ فِيهِمْ (المائدة : ١١٧) And sometimes it's concerned with legal and financial issues:

وَأَسْتَشْهِدُوا شَهِيدَيْنِ مِنْ رِجَالِكُمْ (البقرة: ٢٨٢) And sometimes it's about witnessing in the hereafter: وَ جَاءَتْ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَعَهَا سَائِقٌ وَ (ق : ٢١)

The word "shahīd" has been used in some verses as attribute of God, so we can say that in all uses of the word "shahīd" – singular and plural - there is the basic meaning of presence and awareness. But why has Raven added the "Listener of Confession" in the original sense of the martyr? Apparently, this meaning is not attributable to the martyr, and it is a part of the same meaning of witness. Raven seems to be making a mistake here. In the semantics of the word "martyr", Goldziher has only referred to the meaning of witness, and has defined "shahīd" in the Qur'an as righteous witnesses. (Goldziher, 1921, vol.2, p.351) Wensinck also believes that "shahīd" is used in the sense of witness and for three beings: God as the supervisor of actions, Angels, Prophets and Believers. (wensinck, 1971, p. 147) However, Rippin was also interested in reminding two meanings for "shahīd". He writes: There are two main senses of witnessing in the Qur'an. One relates to matters of faith and the other, to various legal matters. (Encyclopedia of The Qur'an, vol. 5, P. 490)

Like Raven, Rippin expresses two instances of the original meaning of the word "shahīd", while the original meaning of the word is the same witness in The Qur'an, this testimony may be raised in matters such as faith or in legal and legislative matters. It seems that the main meaning of the martyr in the Qur'anic definitions is the witness. Of course, we can elaborate on this testimony and its degrees and instances, but they all share the main concept of a testimony. It should

be said that in some verses mentioned earlier, some of the commentators defined "shahīd" as the murdered that Raven also referred to.

Interestingly, dictionaries have also explained this meaning. Ibn Anbari has accepted the use of the word "shahīd" for the meaning of the murdered. (Ibn Anbari, Lesān al-Arab, vol. 3, p. 242)

Ibn Fares (born. 395 AH) has also mentioned two justifications for attributing the title "shahīd" to the one who was killed in the way of God (Mu'jam Maqāyes al-Lughah, vol. 3, p. 221). However, it is difficult to accept the meaning of the murdered in The Qur'an. Allamah Tabatabaī has denied the meaning of the murdered in any of the three verses discussed by Raven.

Allamah writes under the verse 140 of surah Al-Imran: "Shūhada is not used in the sense of martyrs in The Qur'an and it's one of the transformed Islamic words". (Tabatabaī, 1417, vol. 4, p. 29)

He also writes under verse 69 of surah An-Nisa: "In this verse Shūhada means those who are witness of deeds, but not the killed in battlefield." (the same, vol. 4, p. 407)

And finally he has written under verse 19 of surah Al-Hadid: "Here Shūhada are the witness of deeds, not the martyrs." (the same, vol. 19, p. 163)

According to the word of Allamah, it is clear that the first and main definition for the word "shahīd" is witness because he knew the meaning of murder as the secondary meaning. Therefore, we cannot define the word "shahīd" as the murdered. It can even be said that in doubtful cases, the meaning of the witness is again victorious because when we doubt, we define the word based on its original meaning. So, we can only say that Raven's serious idea is semantics is adding the meaning as the listener's confession. This sense is an example of the same sense of witness, as the earlier Orientalists had said.

3-2-The martyr's semantic transformation based on the Christian model

Raven made another important claim in the genealogy and semantics of the word "shahīd". In his view, the traditionalists and the Commentators changed the meaning of The Qur'anic word by modeling and borrowing from early Christian literature. (Raven, encyclopedia of The Qur'an, vol.3, p. 282) In reviewing and analyzing this claim, one should pay attention to Raven's documentation. As Raven himself has documented in his citation, this claim is taken from Goldziher's book titled "Muslim studies". Goldziher writes: Doubtless this is a pure Arabic word; but its application to one who witnesses for his faith by the sacrifice of his life was derived from its use among Christians (the Syriac *sahdti*, which is he invariable equivalent of the New Testament *p.6.f'TVs*) (Goldziher, 1921, vol. 2, p. 351) He also says: "Muhammed paraphrases the idea 'martyr' with a relative clause: 'those who are killed in the way of Allah (3:163) The Christian influence, through which the meaning of the word *shahīd* was extended from 'witness' and 'confessor' to 'martyr,' made itself felt at a later date, and then the latter meaning soon became very general. But it is remarkable that the meaning of the word *shahīd* received an extension which is scarcely to be reconciled with the warlike tendency of Islam. To the Prophet is ascribed the [388] saying' that not only those who are slain for the faith are to be regarded as martyrs. Seven other causes of death are enumerated which make the sufferers worthy of the honorable title of a "*shahīd*", and these are mainly calamitous or pathological causes, which have nothing to do with voluntary self-sacrifice for a great cause." (The same.)

Wensinck explains the words of Goldziher in his article (titled "the oriental doctrine of the martyrs") and says: the

technical term designating the martyr, *shahīd*, does not yet occur as such in the Qur'an, as it has been pointed out by Goldziher. It is worth stating that "*shahīd*", in its ordinary meaning of witness, is applied in The Qur'an to three beings or classes of beings. It denotes God, as the witness of man's deeds: „Allāh is witness of what he has revealed to thee; he revealed it with his knowledge; the angels also are witnesses thereof; but Allah is a sufficient witness" He continues: "The admiration of the martyrs expressed in Allah's Book, is developed into a doctrine by tradition and dogmatic, a doctrine the center of which is the close relation between martyrdom and paradise." (Wensinck, 1971, p 148)

In fact, Raven has collected and quoted the views of prominent previous Orientalists here. That is why it is necessary to refer to the main sources of Raven. It seems that the main source of Orientalists in the genealogy and semantics of the word martyr is Goldziher.

As mentioned earlier, Goldziher has accepted that in the Qur'an the word "shahīd" is used only in the sense of a witness, and here Goldziher has used the term murdered as the Qur'anic meaning. Now the question is why "the murdered" has been considered as the Qur'anic meaning? Why has God avoided the Christian meaning of the word martyr in The Qur'an? Why has God in The Qur'an used other interpretations, such as the killed or murdered for expressing being killed in the path of God in Christian?

(Al-Imran: ١٦) Is voluntary death for great purposes exclusively for Christian? Has there been no such death since the birth of humans? Is death for great purposes only for religions? Aren't the unbelievers also sacrificing their lives for their aspirations? Prejudice and a kind of "Reductionism", which is too much in Goldziher's works, seems to have prevented him from looking at the subject freely.

Goldziher's scientific haste has led to a

wrong generalization, and he believes that "shahīd" in The Qur'an never means martyrdom, while at least on three occasions, Raven showed that Goldziher's word is wrong.

On the other hand, there is another question here. Now that God has used the word martyr in the Qur'an to describe the idiomatic meaning of witness, why should Muhammad rewrite the idea of martyrdom and make a verbal sharing between his own word-Sunnah and the Qur'an's word?⁴ God defines the martyr as the witness and his prophet defines the word martyr as the murdered! What documentary is there for such storytelling? Except for the presuppositions such as Goldziher's need made by himself and he has gone astray among the documentation. Goldziher, who is pessimistic about the authenticity of the tradition, says somewhere: We put the question of its validity or its oldness (hadith) after the fact that the hadith has been as a mirror of the constant efforts of the Muslim people themselves. And we find this meaning from many issues that were not in the Qur'an. (Goldziher, 1979, p.347) In the word of Goldziher, "need" can be considered as the most important factor in fabricating a hadith. The new demands of the Islamic world by expanding conquests, confronting the Umayyad with political and religious opposition by means of religion, and increasing the importance of hadith in the time of the Abbasids are manifestations of the "need" at different stages of the history of Islam. (nafisi, orientalist and hadith, 125-128) Perhaps also here, since the martyr has not been expressed as murdered, the Prophet and the militant Muslims have gone to Christian literature for their own purposes.

The truth is that in The Qur'an, the meaning of the killed or murdered cannot be taken from the word "shahīd". On the other hand, in the hadiths, we are faced

with the semantic development of the word martyr. By the way, the word martyr in Arabic is similar to the Syriac word of Sahda in genealogy and etymology. So what can we conclude? Especially when Goldziher believes that Islam's teaching of Christianity is a fact that even Muslim theologians themselves have admitted. There are many examples in the hadith literature that indicate that the founders of Islam were borrowing from Christianity. (Goldziher, 1921, p. 347) Here Wensink's word can clarify Goldziher's word and answer the question of writing. Wensink believes the dual use of the word martyr is due to the dual application of the same term in the New Testament and ancient Christian literature. He writes: "The twofold use of the term shahīd, proves to be a reflex of the use of the term fjicépru in the New Testament on the one hand, and in the old Christian literature on the other. The latter uses the word in its technical sense, whereas the former — just as The Qur'an does — applies it to God as a witness of the deeds of men, to Christ and the apostles as God's witnesses. It is to be observed, that this Christian terminology goes back to the Old Testament, where it is again God who is a witness of the deeds of men 5), and the pious who are God's witnesses." (Wensinck, 1971, 156)

"With this explanation, semantic transformation in Christianity has been occurred exactly and with the same characteristics in The Qur'an and the Prophetic tradition", Wensink writes. So this duality in the act of God and the Prophet is not surprising. It must be said that this answer adds to the difficulty of the matter, as such a gross copying of the covenants would easily and quickly accuse the Prophet and the Muslims and call the authenticity of the prophecy into question. It's while there are no reports of confessions of Islamic supporters or opponents. If Goldziher's view on Islam's learning from Christianity is true that even

⁴ This is Goldziher's claim that is wrong.

Muslim theologians themselves have confessed, why do we have no confession in this regard? Although Muslim scholars have clearly written compilations on entered vocabularies and they have also referred to them in dictionaries. (For ex: see Ibn Darid, 321, vol. 3, p. 1324) Why has no body mentioned it in any of the sources of the Islamic opposition? Goldziher's conclusion seems to be nothing more than speculation and probability.

It goes without saying that proving the lexical relationship between Christian literature and the Arabic word "shahīd" has nothing to do with proving or rejecting prophecy. Assuming that linguistics, with adequate and conclusive documents, can prove the relationship of these words and the course of evolution in any context and environment, no harm will befall the Qur'an and the Sunnah because the commonalities of religions are more than just a source of revelation that Absolutism in inter-ethnicity or inferiority to one's ancestry and roots can cast doubt on its authenticity. In short, what Goldziher said about borrowing the Prophet from the Christian model of murder is uncertain and faces serious flaws. Hence, Raven's word will be also questioned in the entry of the martyr, which is based on the words of Goldziher and Wensink. Raven seems to have only compiled scattered brochures in the entry of martyr without adding anything new to the martyr's semantics. He has even deprived readers from the historical points of Goldziher and Wensink.

Hypotheses in the semantics of the word "shahīd"

In the semantics of the word "shahīd", orientalists believed that the semantic transformation of this word from the meaning of the witness in The Qur'an meant killed in the hadiths was influenced by the pattern of evolution in Christian literature. There are several hypotheses in the speech analysis of Orientalists:

1- The word "shahīd" has entered from abroad to Peninsula and the Arabs before Islam and the revelation of The Qur'an have been familiar with this word in the literal sense of witness and killed.

2- Transformation took place before Islam in the Peninsula, but The Qur'an did not use the word in the transformative sense of the killed, but rather the meaning of transformation has been common with the help of hadith literature.

3. The semantic evolution of the word has been occurred after Islam and the descendant of the Qur'an and it has been the reason for the evolution of being affected by Christian culture.

4- The semantic change occurred after Islam and the descendant of The Qur'an, but it has been the reason for the evolution of the Qur'anic verses and culture.

According to the criticisms of the semantics of the word "shahīd", it can be said that the first and second hypotheses have no evidence, and this usage is not found in the pre-Islamic works. In particular, the second hypothesis requires a certain time frame for the new meaning to become popular. Explanation is that in semantic evolution, the word is used in a new sense for some time together with the symmetric to find the word in the new meaning and make the audience familiar with the new meaning. Even if we define the word as deterministic, we still need information and repetition; while we lack documentation and evidence for such hypotheses. In addition, the reasons for not using the transformative meaning in the Qur'an are unclear.

The third hypothesis is also very complicated. How to accept a word in an alien culture pass the way of evolution and as Wensinck interpret, has a dual literal use - but when it enters another linguistic space like the peninsula, return to the first station and follow the path of transformation again?! If the term was a literal one and used in two different ways in ancient literature and in the New Testament,

language users would not need to plan and rewrite this idea. Unless we imagine linguistic developments to be complexly organized; for example, those who are aware of Christian literature will gradually familiar those unaware of the meaning of the vocabulary with the two uses of vocabulary and consolidate a meaning in the Qur'an. And according to tradition, based on the previous program, over time, the latter have been taught in the Islamic community. Indeed, the notion of such a system in linguistic evolutions - in spite of its theological drawbacks - is highly sophisticated and complex and incompatible with the essence of language.

Only the fourth hypothesis can be partially true. Thus, the traditionalists and Commentators have not only been influenced by Christian literature, but also they themselves helped in semantic transformation because of the meaning relationship existing among the primitive meaning of the word "shahīd" and the killed. The explanation is that the position of "shahīd" in the sense of witness included some people who had also reached the position of martyrdom. Hamzah ibn Abd al-Mūtlleb is one of the prominent figures in this regard who has been described in hadith with words such as Sayyid al-Shūhada (some scholars, 1423, p. 266) and Afzhal al-Shūhada (Koleyni, 1407, vol. 1, p. 450). The evidence is that some traditions have emphasized the Qur'anic meaning of "shahīd" (such as those mentioned in chapter al-Mu'min al-Sediq al-"shahīd" of the Book of al-Mahāsen: see al-Mahāsen, vol. 1, p. 163), while in others the Qur'anic verses including the word "shahīd", the meaning of the killed people like Hamza Ja'far has been paralyzed by commentators. (Kafi, vol. 1, p. 450)

This view can also answer misunderstandings of hadiths. For example, Allamah first quoted a narration from al-Dur al-Mansour that Ibn Abi Hatam narrated from Abu al-Dhahi, who

said when this verse was revealed, seventy Muslims were killed that day, four of them were the Emigrants, Namely, Hamza ibn Abdul Mutalleb, and Mos'ab ibn Amir and Shamas ibn 'Uthman Makhzumi, and Abdullah ibn Jahsh Asadi, and the rest were from Ansār (al-Dur al-Mansour fi Tafsir al-Mansour, vol. 2, p. 79).

Allamah believes that according to the tradition, the narrator, Abu al-Dhahi, defined the word "shūhada" in the verse as those killed in the battle and most commentators followed him. But since Allamah considers "shahīd" in the Qur'an as the witness of action, he does not accept the tradition (Tabatabāi, 1417, vol. 4, p. 102), it is possible to combine these two meanings. The Qur'anic meaning of "shahīd" is the same witness, but the witness has also attained the status of martyrdom, namely the killed in war. Therefore, the narrative does not seek to explain the Qur'anic meaning and merely describes the story of that day, although it has used the meaning of evolved in expressing the story.

It is worth noting that the fourth hypothesis considers the original meaning of the word "shahīd" as witness, but believes that the semantic transformation took place in the same period of Islam. It is difficult to accurately date the transformation, but it can be attributed to Islamic literature.

Conclusion

In the present article, it has been demonstrated that Wim Raven's perspective on the semantics of the word "shahīd" is derived from earlier Orientalists, and Raven has in fact provided a new formulation of earlier scholars' viewpoints. Orientalists believe that the Qur'anic meaning of the word "shahīd" is witness, and referring of the meaning martyr to the word "shahīd" is derived from Christian literature. The present study indicates that Raven's reasoning as that of the earlier Orientalists has serious ambiguities and deficiencies,

and this claim cannot be proved merely by the literal similarity. Particularly that this claim tries to emphasize on the similarity of the biography, the miracles and statements of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and the content of that of Jesus (P.B.U.H). Apparently the presumption of Islam's comprehensive imitation of the Old and New Testaments, which includes vocabulary and idioms too, promotes the hypothesis of the abundance of Syriac, Aramaic, and Greek vocabulary in The Qur'an, on various occasions. On the other hand, since The Qur'an does not use the word "shahīd" in the sense of martyr, and the pre-Islamic Arabic texts do not indicate such a background, and also because its basic meaning (present and witness) is compatible to such a person as being present in the battlefield, it can be said that the likelihood of the semantic transformation after the time of revelation is increased.

Some evidence also supports this claim. There is a point in Imam Ali's letter to Mu'awiyah by which we may estimate the date of transformation. Imam(AS) said: **أَلَا تَرَىٰ غَيْرَ مُخْبِرٍ لِّكَ وَ لَكِنَّ بِنِعْمَةِ اللَّهِ أَحَدْتُ أَنْ قَوْمًا اسْتَشْهَدُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَىٰ مِنَ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ وَ الْأَنْصَارِ وَ لِكُلِّ فَضْلٍ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا اسْتَشْهَدَ شَهِدْنَا قِيلَ سَيِّدُ الشُّهَدَاءِ وَ حَصَّهُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ص بِسَبْعِينَ تَكْبِيرَةً عِنْدَ صَلَاتِهِ عَلَيْهِ**. (Nahjul'balāghah, Subhi Salih, p. 386)

As it is stated in the text of the letter, the phrase «إِذَا اسْتَشْهَدَ شَهِدْنَا قِيلَ سَيِّدُ الشُّهَدَاءِ» well indicates that the word "shahīd" was used at that time in the sense of "the killed." The companionship of the verb "استشهد" with the subject "شَهِدْنَا" and also Imam's attempt to prove the high status of Hamzah among the martyrs all indicate that talking about shahādat means "being killed". Now in this kind of space, the prophet (p.b.u.h) calls Hamzah as Sayyed al-Shūhada'. In a syntactic sense, the word "إِذَا" is a timeline for the verb "قِيلَ". So it can be said that Sayyid al-Shūhada means Sayyed al-Maqtulin or at least it is used in this sense. Hesān ibn Thābet Ansāri (d. 54) has used the word "shahīd" in some of his

poems. For example, about the death of Hamzah in war he says: **ما لشهيد بين أرماحكم** Or in complementing Sa'd ibn. Ma'azh who was killed in the battle of khandaq he writes: **قتيل ثوى في معرك** فجعته به * عيون ذواري الدمع دائمة الوجد مع الشهداء وفدها * على ملة الرحمن وارث جنة. These verses appear to have been composed around the time of the battle. So it can be said that at the very beginning of Islam, semantic transformation has happened. The preferred hypothesis of this paper is that the semantic transformation of the word "shahīd" occurred in the context of Islamic society and consequently influenced by The Qur'anic culture.

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