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The Occurrence Of Interrogative Pronoun Kayf-A (How) In Meccan Surahs: A Contextual Grammatical Study

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Abstract

This study tackles the occurrence of the interrogative pronoun kayf-a (how) in the Meccan Surahs in the Holy Quran as well as its function in grammatical constructions. This includes clarifying the meaning it denotes and how it transforms the literal meaning of a text. The study of texts in context is one of the most important modern linguistic approaches that have deep roots in the Arab thought, literature, and rhetoric. Particularly important in this area is al-Jarjany's composition theory, which he proposes in his book *Dala'il al-I'jaz* (Evidence of the Inimitability of the Quran). For this reason, the descriptive analytic approach is adopted in this study to make it possible to analyze syntactic patterns and the effect of the context of a word and a sentence on preserving meaning or altering and transforming it. The conclusions are as follows : It is known that kayf is used for interrogation. However, the contextual study of Quranic verses shows that it adds meaning to a text, an additional sense to the literal one. It does not express only interrogation, but may convey, depending on the context, exclamation, reproach, or deprecation. Kayf is most often used where the subject is consequences, contemplation, and reflection. It effectively directs attention toward the hows. In such verses, kayf most often co-occurs with the verb phrases 'see' and 'have you not seen/did you not see.

Keywords: Holy Quran, Meccan surrahs, Kayf, how, system theory, contextual grammatical study .

Introduction

What draws researchers to Quranic studies and makes them want to learn much about its various subfields is its close relation to the different branches of linguistics, each of which complements and serves the others.

As is known, most sciences in which our scholars excelled were specifically created to serve the study of Quranic texts. Examples are interpretation, the study of the areas of difficulty and ambiguity, the study of inflexions and syntactic roles, and semantics. They studied devices of meaning, giving detailed analyses of their implementations in the Holy Quran. They even distinguished between sounds or letters that have significance only when combined with others and those that have significance when they stand alone.

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The justification for choosing the topic:

The topic was chosen to bring to light the efforts of our scholars in studying devices, namely what these are, what they mean, and their use, particularly the use of *kayf* in the Holy Quran.

The study of the meaning of devices and their role in shaping the meaning of sentences was undertaken by scholars, linguists, grammarians, lexicographers, and interpreters in various times and places. Studying the use of devices and their role in expressing the hows and making meaning clear, as well as studying their implementations in the Holy Quran, creates the motivation to study relations and grammatical constructions that frequently occur in the Holy Quran.

Objectives of the study

This study aims to shed light on two important issues that will be discussed. It also aims to examine the role of context and rhetoric in them and its implications:

1) The role of interrogation in shaping sentences and meaning and the manifestations of this role.

It has been proven by canonical and modern books as well as social, political, and scholarly discourse that interrogation is one of the simplest yet most complex styles of composition. On the one hand, we use it to ask about something specific and clear. On the other hand, we may exert our minds and play with words masterfully to give it a different meaning. However, they have also proven that interrogation is one of the most important and most frequently employed styles of composition.

2) Explaining the grammarians' analysis of *kayf* and how it was developed by al-Jarjani and through Quranic usage.

This study will analyze *kayf*, namely whether it is a noun, adverb, or particle. The way *kayf* is analyzed has changed first through al-Jarjani's composition theory and then through Quranic usage. It depends on the role of this word in sentences and how it changes familiar meaning, which affects how we determine its syntactic role. It has been used in the Holy Quran for its ability to convey meaning, and it is the most prevalent interrogative word in both speech and writing.

The sample of the study:

To make sure that this study is not the target of skepticism and provides solid conclusions, it was an honor to choose the Holy Quran as the source of the sample, which is no wonder because it was the root of most of our ancient and modern sciences. However, the sample includes only the Meccan surahs, which constitute eighty-two of the hundred and fourteen surahs. The word *kayf* occurs in fifty-eight verses throughout the eighty-two surahs. One example of each grammatical role was taken to analyze and explain. A few examples may be mentioned merely as extra information.

The reasons that this study is limited to Meccan surahs:

The main reasons that this study includes Meccan surahs but not Madni ones are the following:

The first one is the difference between the Meccan and Madni environments; the Meccan environment was very different from that in stable states. Muslims were small groups that depended on the protection of their tribes or of fierce and courageous knights like Hamzah and Omar. On the other hand, the Madni environment was civil, governed by Islamic rules. Moreover, the goal of Muslims in al-Madina was to

expand the borders of the Islamic state and make it extend far and wide.

The second reason is that the topics of Meccan surahs differ greatly from Madni ones.

The third one is that the Meccan surahs were revealed first, which means there may have been a stylistic or semantic development of the word or device itself in the Quran by the time the Madni surahs were revealed.

The problem of the study:

Kayf occurs in fifty-eight verses from eighty-two surahs. The sample of the study was chosen from the Quran, namely, the Meccan surahs, to answer the following questions:

1. How was kayf analyzed in books by early grammarians?
2. How did al-Jarjani view grammatical constructions and their role in meaning?
3. What are the grammatical patterns of kayf in surahs?
4. What is the role of kayf in shaping meaning in Meccan surahs?

The methodology of the study:

The methodology adopted in the study is the descriptive analytical approach in order to analyze the grammatical-construction patterns and how the context of a device or sentence plays a role in whether a meaning holds or is modified.

References of the study:

The most important sources of the study were the Holy Quran, *Dala'il al-I'jaz* by al-Jarjani, *al-Tahreer wa-al-Tanweer* by Ibn 'Ashur, *Ham' al-Hawami'* by al-Suyuti, *Sharh al-Mufasssal* by al-Zamakhshari, *Lisan al-Arab* by Ibn Manzur, *Mughni al-Labib* by Ibn Hisham, and *Fawatih al-Suwar al-Quraniyyah al-mabdu'ah bi al-Istifham: Dirasah fi daw' Nahu al-Nass* by Muhammed al-Khalaf.

Previous studies:

I was not able to find separate previous studies about kayf, but I was able to find two about interrogation in the Holy Quran. They mention kayf only briefly, however, to support certain ideas.

The first one is *Asalib al-Istifham fi al-Baht al-Balaghi wa-Asraruha fi al-Quran al-Karim* by Ibrahim Muhammad Sharif al-Balkhi. He discusses rhetoric, its importance, and its role in changing the basic meaning of utterances. He also defines interrogation and states that it is one of the most common styles of composition in Arabic. In addition, he provides a list of the most important question words, including particles, adverbs, and nouns. He discusses their significance as well as their semantic and usage properties then talks about interrogation in general, in terms of grammar, rhetoric, and logic. After that, he gives a descriptive statistical analysis of interrogative nouns and particles and points out the main characteristics of interrogative-noun usage in the Holy Quran, giving an example of each question word. Moreover, he highlights the rhetorical potential of interrogative nouns and particles. However, he does not talk about the syntactic roles of kayf and how they can change literal meaning, neither does he talk about its connotations. Instead, he mentions the opinions of grammarians and interpreters regarding the meaning of verses as a whole, not what the usage of kayf conveys. Furthermore, most examples were of Madni surahs, not Meccan ones. In other words, the scope of his study is general, not specific.

The second study is *Fawatih al-Suwar al-Quraniyyah al-mabdu'ah bi al-Istifham: Dirasah fi daw' Nahu*

al-Nass by Muhammed Jasim Ahmad al-Khalaf. It resembles the previous one in some respects and differs from it in others. The author discusses the concept of interrogation as well as its devices and function. Then he delves deep into hidden meaning. While discussing grammar, he mentions the opening verses of surahs that start with hal, ma, and hamza. However, he does not mention kayf or its occurrence in the Holy Quran.

Significance of the study:

The study is significant for several reasons. The most prominent of them are:

- 1) The study is novel and unprecedented. I was not able to find similar studies about kayf, particularly its occurrence in the Holy Quran and how it modifies meaning.
- 2) The study discusses the notion of kayf and the ways it is analyzed in the books of early grammarians. Then it describes the development of this notion by al-Jarjani as well as its manifestations. In other words, it describes his composition theory, which states that composition is the result of the interaction of grammatical constituents and that this interaction depends on three things: purpose, context, and style or manner of expression.
- 3) This study combines two branches of linguistics, grammar and rhetoric; its scope includes grammatical constructions as well as style and its role in meaning.
- 4) It highlights the role of kayf in linking grammatical constituents, which helps to clarify meaning.
- 5) It connects theory with application, that is, conceptual rules with their manifestations. First, it details the opinions of grammarians regarding the notion of kayf and the rules that govern it. Second, it gives examples of actual usage of kayf from the Holy Quran because of its role in clarifying meaning and demonstrating the inimitability of the Quran.

Outline of the study:

The nature of the study requires dividing it into an introduction, prologue, body, and conclusion.

The introduction states the justifications and objectives of the study, the reason that the Meccan surahs, rather than the Madni ones, were chosen as the sample, the problem and methodology of the study, the main references used in it, the previous studies, and why the current one is significant.

The prologue discusses two main points: the analysis of kayf in the books of early grammarians and the development of its notion in al-Jarjani's composition theory, which states that composition is the product of the interaction of grammatical constituents.

The body is the core of the study and comprises the main content. It demonstrates the role of kayf in shaping meaning in the Holy Quran and shows that it occurs in the Quran in various grammatical, stylistic, and rhetorical patterns.

The conclusion section lists the main conclusions.

Conclusions:

The main conclusions of the study are the following:

First, kayf links grammatical constituents, which helps to clarify meaning.

Second, the use of kayf in interrogation fulfills rhetorical purposes, such as assertion, exclamation, reproach, deprecation, warning, and conveying manner.

Third, Kayf is most often used where the subject is consequence, contemplation, and reflection. It effectively directs attention toward the how.

Fourth, kayf most often co-occurs with the verb phrases ‘see’ and ‘have you not seen/did you not see.’

Prologue

This section will discuss two main topics: the analysis of kayf in early grammarian books and the al-Jarjani triad.

The analysis of kayf in early grammarian books:

Interrogation is one of the most important and most frequently used styles of composition. Kayf is especially important, in both writing and speech. It is used to demand understanding or knowledge about something that exists outside the realm of the mind. It is employed in Quran due to its ability to convey meaning to those addressed (al-Balkhi, 2007, P. 16). Grammarians have studied its boundaries, forms, and syntactic role, but they disagree on whether it is a noun or adverb. However, scholars and lexicographers have studied its senses with a focus on its purposes and advantages.

Its boundaries:

Kayf is a vague, indeclinable noun derived from kayfiyyah (manner; Ibn Manzur, 1968, vol. 9, p. 313). Although it is indeclinable, the short vowel [a], represented by an accent in Arabic orthography, is added at the end to prevent clusters of consonants. This vowel is called a fattha, and it is chosen instead of the other short ones because it is easier to pronounce when preceded by the letter yaa’, or [y] (al-Jawhari, 1990, vol. 4, p. 1425; Ibn Manzur, 1968, vol. 9, p. 313; al-Zubaidi, 1965, vol. 21, pp. 6112-6114; al-Ghalayeeni, 1993, vol. 1, p. 144). Whenever a different short vowel is added, it is considered either phonetical heaviness or the result of a phonetic rule specifying that certain sounds must follow others (Ibn al-Sarraj, 2010, vol. 2, p. 136; al-Jiyani, 1990, vol. 4, p. 105). Another form of kayf is kayy (Ibn Hisham, 1999, vol. 1, p. 214; al-Suyuti, 1966, vol. 4, p. 105).

Kayf can be used in two ways. The first one is as a conditional. In this case, it requires two verbs similar in form and meaning (al-Mubarrad, 2010, vol. 3, p. 193; Ibn Hisham, 1999, vol. 1, p. 313; Ibn al-Warraq, 1999, vol. 1, p. 224; al-Jawhari, 1990, vol. 4, p. 1425; Ibn Manzur, 1968, vol. 9, p. 313; al-Suyuti, 1998, vol. 2, p. 550; al-Zubaidi, 1965, vol. 21, pp. 6112-6114). The second use, which is more common, is as an interrogative, whether the question is literal or rhetorical (Ibn Hisham, 1999, vol. 1, p. 550; al-Jawhari, 1990, vol. 4, p. 1425; Ibn Manzur, 1968, vol. 9, p. 313; al-Zubaidi, 1965, vol. 21, pp. 6112-6114).

It is either a comment for what follows if the latter is essential and cannot be deleted (Sibawayh, 1988, vol. 3, p. 258; al-Mubarrad, 2010, vol. 3, p. 173; al-Jawhari, 1990, Vol. 4, p. 1425; Ibn Manzur, 1968, vol. 9, p. 313; al-Zubaidi, 1965, vol. 21, pp. 6112-6114) or an indirect object of the verb zann (thought) or its sisters, for it is fundamentally a comment: “Kayfa tazunnu al-’amra?” (What do you think of the matter?; al-Zujaji, 1984, vol. 1, p. 51; al-Farahidi, 1995, vol. 1, p. 150).

Kayf is used to ask about statuses and conditions, the possibilities of which are too many to obtain a comprehensive list of (al-Zamakhshari, 1993, vol. 1, p. 217; Ibn Ya’ish, 2001, vol. 3, p. 139; al-Balkhi, 2007, p. 90). Moreover, it can come in the accusative case as an absolute object. An example is the verse “Alam tara kayfa fa’ala rabbuka bi’asshabi ’l-fil” (“Have you not seen (O Prophet) how your Lord dealt

with the Army of the Elephant?”), in which “kayfa fa‘ala” literally stands for “the deed He did” (al-Bayati, 2005, vol. 1, p. 117). Ibn Hisham asserts that kayf is a conjunction when it follows negation (1999, vol. 3, p. 318). However, Sibawayh contends that this is a weak opinion not embraced by Arab scholars. Furthermore, Ibn Hayyan argues that since conjunctive prefixes can be attached to kayf, then the latter cannot be a conjunction as well (al-Suyuti, 1998, vol. 3, p. 219). Ibn Malik also refutes the claim that it is a conjunction, citing a poetic verse ending with “fa’kayfa al-aba‘idu” (al-Zubaidi, 1965, vol. 21, pp. 6112-6114), where “fa-” is a conjunctive prefix.

As for kayf’s being a noun, it is an undisputed fact (al-Balkhi, 2007, p. 17). The evidence for this comprises the following five points:

First, it falls within the boundaries of what constitutes nouns, as it signifies meaning on its own and this meaning is not associated with tense. Second, a kayf question is answered with a noun, and the word category of the answer must be identical with the question word’s category. For example, “kayfa Zaydun?” (How is Zayd?) may be answered with the noun ghanyy (rich) or faqeer (poor); that is, it inquires about status, so its answer conveys one. Third, it can be substituted with nouns, and a word cannot be replaced by another from a different category. For instance, the last question about Zayd may be rephrased as “A-sahihun Zaydun am mareedu?” (Is Zayd healthy or sick?), where the first word “sahihun” (healthy), preceded in the example by the interrogative hamza, is a noun that substitutes for kayf. Fourth, Arabic allows kayf to be the object of a preposition; Arabs would say, “‘Ala kayfa tabee‘u ‘l-ahmarayni?” where “‘ala” is a preposition (Ibn Hisham, 1999, p. 318). Fifth, the conclusion drawn from following the taxonomy and induction approach is that it is a noun (Ibn Ya‘ish, 2001, vol. 3, p. 139).

Grammarians argue against kayf being a verb for two reasons:

First, it does not by itself refer to an event or convey tense like verbs such as shariba (drank), fahima (understood), ta‘allama (learned), and mashaa (walked), nor does it convey only tense like kaan and most of its sisters.

Second, a verb follows it directly, “kayfa sana‘ta?” (How did you do?; al-‘Akbari, 1986, vol. 1, p. 132).

Grammarians disagree on whether kayf can occur as a conditional that gives two verbs the jussive-case marker Φ . The grammarians of Kufa argue that the answer is affirmative as kayf is similar to mataa, ‘ayna, and the like. All of them are question words as well: While kayf means “how,” mataa means “when,” and ‘ayna means “where” (al-Jawhari, 1990, vol. 4, p. 1425; al-Anbari, 2003, vol. 2, p. 529; Ibn Manzur, 1968, vol. 9, p. 313; al-Zubaidi, 1965, vol. 21, pp. 6112-6114).

The grammarians of Basra, on the other hand, argue against kayf, as well as kayfama, being jussive-marking conditionals for three reasons:

First, it is answered with an indefinite noun.

Second, it cannot have a comment as pronouns cannot refer to it.

Third, conditionals of this type are normally particles; nominal ones are irregularities brought about by linguistic necessity. There is no need to classify kayf as such (al-Suyuti, 1998, vol. 3, p. 219).

I agree with the argument of the grammarians of Basra. This is because with conditional mataa or ‘ayna, the first verb always entails the second. For example, if you say, “‘aynama takun ‘akun” (wherever you go I go), you leave no place for doubt that you will be with the addressee wherever he or she is. Similarly, if you say, “mataa takun ‘akun” (whenever you go I go), you confirm that you will accompany the addressee at any time. This is not the case with kayf (however), because one cannot know all the possible

conditions of the first verb (al-Anbari, 2003, vol. 2, p. 529).

However, nowadays *kayf* is used as a jussive-marking conditional when the verb of condition and the verb of result have a common root, especially when it is connected with the suffix *-ma*: for example, “*kayfama tu‘aamilu ’l-naasa yu‘aamiluka*” (however you treat people, they treat you the same) and “*kayfama tahtarimu ’l-naasa yahtarimuka*” (“how you show respect is how you receive respect”). This is the opinion of some linguists (al-Jawhari, 1990, vol. 4, p. 1425; Ibn Manzur, 1968, vol. 9, p. 313; al-Zubaidi, 1965, vol. 21, pp. 6112-6114).

In brief, *kayf* can be a jussive-marking conditional; an interrogative, adverbial noun in the accusative case; a comment or previously a comment in an earlier level of syntax; or a substitute for an absolute object (Ibn Hisham, 1999, vol. 1, p. 550).

2. Al-Jarjani’s triad:

Grammatical constituents play an important role in meaning. The sense of a word varies from sentence to sentence and from context to context, and a single constituent cannot convey an intended message; this is only achieved through combining words, each of them playing a role in the message (al-Jarjani, 1992, p. 44). For this reason, grammatical analysis alone, without reference to rhetoric, is not sufficient to accurately grasp the meaning of a text. Moreover, it does not give the opportunity to understand the connotations of grammatical structures, which cannot be readily seen on the surface level; one must refer to context for this purpose and see how an event relates to the style of expression.

According to al-Jarjani, composition is the product of the interaction of grammatical constituents, which depends on three factors, or a triad (al-Jarjani, 1992, pp. 44-56). The first is the intended meaning, on which depends the choice and arrangement of words (al-Jarjani, 1992, p. 364). According to Ibn Sinan al-Khafaji, the intended meaning of a text and its grammatical structure are interconnected (al-Khafaji, 2003, p. 82). The second factor is location, that is, the location of a grammatical constituent within a text: what precedes and what follows it. Location depends on the communicative purpose and the properties of the constituent: “This is the case as long as the composition is the same. When it changes, meaning always changes in turn, as mentioned in *Masa’ilu ’l-taqdeemi wa ’l-ta’kheeri*” (al-Jarjani, 1992, p. 265). The third factor is the phrasing, or the surface structure of the text. In this regard, the text’s overall meaning is deduced from the role that each constituent plays.

Meccan surahs are those that were revealed to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in Mecca before the hegira to al-Madina (al-Suyuti, 1974, vol. 1, p. 37). These surahs are characterized by the fact that they talk about the Islamic decree and denounce polytheism, asserting that Allah is the only god. They also recount stories of prophets as well as cautionary tales of past nations and warn about consequences. Moreover, their sentences tend to be short, terse, and strongly worded. I will not discuss Meccan surahs or their topics in detail as it is not within the scope of this study.

It is known that the number of surahs in Quran is 114. *Kayf* occurs in eighty of them. Throughout the fifty-two Meccan surahs, *kayf* occurs in fifty-eight verses.

Kayf occurs in Meccan surahs in various grammatical patterns. They will be examined alongside the role of *kayf* in meaning and the way it radically changes a text’s meaning for rhetorical purposes intended by Allah. In addition, it discusses the extent to which the addressee is aware of how figures of speech and various grammatical patterns are employed to convey meaning. After all, the Quran was revealed to an eloquent nation (Arabs). To avoid prolixity and repetitiveness, a single example for each pattern is analyzed, although sometimes others are mentioned. Patterns in which *kayf* is in the nominative case are

discussed first, followed by those in which kayf is in the accusative.

The following are some of the most important grammatical patterns of kayf in Meccan surahs:

1. Kayf as the accusative comment of a defective verb:

Many verses include kayf followed by kan and its topic. Examples are

“We poured upon them a rain (of brimstone). See what [or kayf] was the end of the wicked!” al-A‘raf, v. 84.

“and the residents of Midian. And Moses was denied (too). But I delayed (the fate of) the disbelievers (until their appointed time) then seized them. And how severe was My response!” al-Hajj, v. 44.

“See then what [or kayf] the consequences of their plan were: We (utterly) destroyed them and their people all together.” al-Naml, v. 51.

“(Other) messengers had already been ridiculed before you (O Prophet), but those who mocked them were overtaken by what they used to ridicule {10} Say, ‘Travel throughout the land and see [kayf, or how was] the fate of the deniers.’ {11}” al-An‘am, vv. 10-11.

These verses were chosen as examples to analyze for a few reasons. The most important are (1) they are ripe with materials to analyze and draw conclusions from, and they are representative of certain patterns and (2) they aim to console Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in the face of the enmity and hostility he suffered from those who mocked and tried to discourage him from inviting people to embrace Islam. These verses establish guidelines for reflection to help people correctly use logic to arrive at the conclusion that Allah is the only deity and has no partner. Allah orders Muhammad to continue inviting people to believe in Allah, believe that He is the only deity, and obey Him. Then He says that if they insist on blasphemy and remain infidels, they will suffer the same fate as their predecessors (al-Tabari, 2000, vol. 1, p. 271). In other words, their fate will be ruin, doom, humiliation, and shame in this life.

The verse “Say, ‘Travel throughout the land and see the fate of the deniers,’” which is about the consequence for deniers, consists of three clauses:

1. The demand and obligation clause “say, ‘Travel throughout the land’”
2. The reflection clause “and see”
3. The consequence clause “[how was] the fate of the deniers”

The core element of the first clause is “say,” which conveys an order from a higher entity, addressed to Prophet Muhammad, to tell the mocking deniers to travel through the land so that they learn about the fate of those who were exterminated. In other words, the purpose of traveling is to reflect and learn a lesson, not work, trade, study, recreate, or the like.

In the second clause, “and see” (“thumma ’nthuru”), the conjunction thumma, rather than the conjunctive prefix fa-, which also denotes subsequence, precedes the verb. This is because the latter indicates immediacy, while the former, thumma, indicates a big time gap between events. Therefore, thumma was used because traveling for the purpose of contemplation and meditation inherently takes time, for it is an action performed with the mind. The third clause talks about consequence. It is a comment that starts with the interrogative kayf (how was), which in turn is the comment of the defective verb kan. Comments usually follow topics. However, the comment, kayf, occurs first here because it belongs to the class of

nouns that are antecedents (al-Suyuti, 1983, p. 169). If we closely examine interrogation with *kayf* in Meccan surahs, we see clearly that it fulfills rhetorical purposes different from inquiry, or the literal meaning, for interrogation can be used to express exclamation, warning, threat, command, clarification, disapproval, sarcasm, belittlement, overstatement, exclusion, intimidation, improbability, and reproach. This verse expresses both interrogation and exclamation (al-Qazwini, 1993, pp. 16-141). *Kan* does not have the female gender inflection because the word for consequence in Arabic, ‘*aaqiba*, is not literally female, only grammatically so. In addition, the mention of consequence is last because it is the result of the deniers’ actions and their disbelief in the Prophets’ message, as can be seen from traveling and contemplation. Furthermore, they are referred to as “the deniers,” but not also as the mockers, although both words are true, to indicate that one of these traits is sufficient to merit punishment. This is an answer that invalidates and refutes their perversity, which resembles that of past nations who deserved punishment. To conclude, *kayf* is the core of the message and is one of the most important linguistic elements that play an effective role in communicating the fate of the deniers. This can be attributed to *kayf*’s strong connection to what precedes it, the verb “see,” and what follows, the phrase “the fate of the deniers,” in terms of grammar and meaning. This synergy between linguistic elements in shaping meaning is evidence that the text is an indivisible unit. In other words, linguistic units cannot be understood independently from one another. However, this does not contradict the fact that each constituent is a separate unit that has a specific meaning.

2. *Kayf* as the accusative comment of a delayed topic:

Kayf occurs as the comment of delayed topics in Meccan surahs: for example, “He is the One Who smoothed out the earth for you, so move about in its regions and eat from His provisions. And to Him is the resurrection (of all) {15} Do you feel secure that the One Who is in heaven will not cause the earth to swallow you up as it quakes violently? {16} Or do you feel secure that the One Who is in heaven will not unleash upon you a storm of stones. Only then would you know how (serious) My warning was! {17}” al-Mulk, vv. 15-17.

Al-Mulk is one of the surahs that highlight Allah’s omnipotence and the manifestation of His masterfulness in the design of the universe and the creation of the human race. In fact, it is called al-Mulk because it talks about Allah’s dominion in this world and the hereafter, which belong to only Him. Such dominion requires and entails omnipotence, for which there is evidence mentioned in the following verses: “Do you feel secure that the One Who is in heaven will not cause the earth to swallow you up as it quakes violently? {16} Or do you feel secure that the One Who is in heaven will not unleash upon you a storm of stones. Only then would you know how (serious) My warning was! {17}” al-Mulk, vv. 16-17. Upon contemplating these verses, one observes that Allah first talks about this world and its blessings and how it has all the means for people to work and sustain themselves. After that, He mentions the forms of punishment and doom for the ungrateful deniers, who are arrogant and too proud to declare servitude to Allah. These are the reasons that Allah addresses them in a style that is at once interrogative and disapproving, as well as expressing amazement by their lack of fear despite their deeds: “Do you feel secure that the One Who is in heaven will not cause the earth to swallow you up as it quakes violently?” al-Mulk, v. 16. The following verse uses the same style: “Or do you feel secure that the One Who is in heaven will not unleash upon you a storm of stones. Only then would you know how (serious) My warning was!” al-Mulk, v. 17. It contains three phrases:

- 1) the question to the infidels in “Or do you feel secure that the One Who is in heaven,”
- 2) the threat in “will not unleash upon you a storm of stones,”
- 3) the warning and consequence in “Only then would you know how (serious) My warning was!”

Allah starts the sentence with “or,” or ’am, which denotes the same thing as bal, that is, retraction of what was said previously. Similarly, the interrogative hamza denotes retracting the previous threat to introduce another one (al-Shafi‘I, 2001, vol. 3, p. 37). As for “the One Who is in heaven,” it is a figure of speech, as logical thinking yields the conclusion that He is not in a specific direction or area. Rather, the word “heaven” is an allusion to His heavenly kingdom, for “in heaven” is part of the relative clause “Who,” and it is followed by an understood pronoun huwa (it), which refers to the kingdom, and which is the topic of the prepositional phrase. The clause, therefore, is originally “the One Who is in heaven [His kingdom is].” His kingdom encompasses everything, but heaven in particular is mentioned because it is the home of the angels, His throne, His seat, and the preserved tablet. Moreover, the Holy books come from heaven, as well as His orders and forbiddance (al-Andalusi, 1993, p. 2015). Since He is omnipotent in both heaven and earth, true worship is His due (al-Qurtubi, 2006, vol. 1, p. 215).

In the phrase, “will not unleash upon you a storm of stones” (“an yursila ‘alaykum hasiba”), “An yursila” ([that He] will [not] unleash) is the inclusive substitution of “mann” (Who), and the purpose of this is to confirm the torment coming for these deniers, which is a storm that carries stones and pebbles and kills them. It was also sent to their foregoers Lut’s clan and the Army of the Elephant. Moreover, the threat of sinking them in earth precedes the other because it involves earth, which contains the blessings that Allah bestowed on them and that they deny and refuse to be thankful for. Therefore, the storm loaded with stones is their punishment. This is alluded to in the verse: “He is the One Who smoothed out the earth for you, so move about in its regions and eat from His provisions. And to Him is the resurrection (of all).” Al-Mulk, p. 15. In fact, food grows due to the rain that falls from the sky (Ibn ‘ashur, 1984, vol. 29, p. 35).

The clause “Only then would you know how (serious) My warning was!” (“fasata‘lamuna kayfa natheer”) is in the future tense. However, it does not convey certainty regarding whether the storm will happen, for it never happened and Allah never states anything false. Instead, it is a threat and warning, for they may believe and repent, and this will spare them. However, Allah meant the threat, so the interrogative kayf, the object of the verb “ta’lamoon” (“know”), was used to convey threat, warning, and intimidation. It is the comment of “natheer” (“warning”). The possessive marker of the latter was deleted for simplification.

The grammatical construction plays an important role in meaning. The opening, “Or do you feel secure,” is intended to deter the deniers and reproach them for their infidelity, so are the relative clause, “Who is in heaven,” the result of the condition, “Only then would you know,” and “how (serious) My warning was!” which highlights the consequence of infidelity.

3. Kayf as a verb object:

Kayf occurs in the Meccan surahs followed by a past-tense verb in many locations too many to include here. We will settle for the following three examples:

1) “Say, (O Prophet,) ‘Travel throughout the land and see how He originated the creation, then Allah will bring it into being one more time. Surely Allah is Most Capable of everything.’” al-‘ankabut, v. 20.

2) “See (O Prophet) how they call you names! So they have gone so (far) astray that they cannot find the (Right) Way.” al-Furqan, v. 9.

3) “Do you not see how Allah compares a good word to a good tree? Its root is firm and its branches reach the sky {24} (always) yielding its fruit in every season by the Will of its Lord. This is how Allah sets forth parables for the people, so perhaps they will be mindful {25} And the parable of an evil word is that of an evil tree, uprooted from the earth, having no stability {26}” Ibrahim, vv. 24-26.

Ibrahim is distinguished by its unified subject matter; the surah from start to finish immerses its reader in a consistent atmosphere and tackles a single topic. It does not digress from reproaches. Therefore, we will focus on the verses 24-26 of Ibrahim. The verses that come before them explain the conditions of the wretched and what they suffer in the hereafter of extreme torment in hell. They also explain the conditions of the fortunate righteous and their reward in heaven. After that, Allah provides a metaphor of the difference between the two groups to make it better understood (Hamood, 2009, p. 1775).

The verse includes three clauses:

- 1) Seeing in “Do you not see”
- 2) Exclamation in “how Allah compares”
- 3) Comparison in “a good word to a good tree? Its root is firm and its branches reach the sky . . .”

The first sentence urges Muhammad to see; moreover, confirming whether or not something is true must be followed by what is confirmed (al-Daqir, 1986, pp. 536-537). In Arabic, the opening, “‘alam tara” (“Do you not see”), begins with the interrogative hamza, prefixed to lam, a negating and jussive-marking particle. Tara is a present tense verb in the jussive case, which is marked by the omission of the long vowel ‘alif, or /a:/. The verb is originally tar’ayu, but the hamza is omitted for simplification and /y/ is substituted with /a:/ because of the preceding fattha and the following short vowel; however, in Arabic orthography the yaa’, /y/, is preserved in writing. The fattha, /a/, as a result of the modifications, immediately follows /r/. It can be omitted for simplification, as the past tense of tara: is ra’aytu, with a hamza. The infinitive is ru’ya. The one who performs the action is a ra’i (Ibn Khalawayh, 1941, p. 202). The seeing can be a mental activity, achieved by reflection and thinking, rather than a physical one performed with the eyes.

The second clause, “how Allah compares,” comes after the verb of seeing and begins with the interrogative noun that actually expresses exclamation rather than its original sense. It conveys wonder at the rhetoric of the comparison. The verb compares is past tense in Arabic, and it serves to increase anticipation of the comparison, which is one of many that Allah provides so that infidels reflect and think (Ibn ‘Ashur, 1984, vol. 29, p. 35).

The comparison is of “a good word to a good tree? Its root is firm and its branches reach the sky.” This type of comparison is manifold; it involves several aspects and provides a vivid image that gives a dramatic effect, motivates action, and incites reaction (Abu ‘Amsha, 1997, p. 69). A good word is compared to a fruitful, young tree. Just as the latter gives fruit that people relish the taste of, the former’s consequences are relished by its utterer and its listener. On the other hand, the image of a bad word is a contrast to the previous one. It is that of a calamity and disaster brought upon its utterer and listener by its source, an image of a bad tree, although trees are not bad in themselves. They are just like words, not sentient. However, the utterer, the sower of a seed, is so. He or she is responsible for the consequences. It is such a beautiful imagery, characterized by strength of expression and preciseness of word choice, which denotes rousing and intensity on one hand and reflection and contemplation on the other. Readers and contemplators may benefit if they compare the two images to arrive at an overall understanding of this world and the hereafter. The antitheses play a role in clarifying meaning, for example, root and branch are opposites. Good and bad are too, as the good word of tawhid is the opposite of the bad one of infidelity.

4. The occurrence of kayf as an adverb:

A considerable number of verses include kayf followed by a present tense verb. Examples are the following:

- 1) "Then We made you their successors in the land to see how you would act." Yunus, v. 14.
- 2) "So she pointed to the baby. They exclaimed, "How can we talk to someone who is an infant in the cradle?" Maryam, v. 29.

The story of Maryam follows that of Prophet Zakariah, Peace be upon him. It ranges from the sixteenth to the thirty-fourth verse of this blessed surah. The focus here will be on the interrogative noun *kayf*, or how in "So she pointed to the baby. They exclaimed, 'How can we talk to someone who is an infant in the cradle?'"

This verse describes Maryam's situation when she carried Isa, peace be upon him, to her people: "Then she returned to her people, carrying him" Maryam, v. 27. As a result, they were shocked and accused her of adultery: "They said (in shock), "O Mary! You have certainly done a horrible thing!" Maryam, v. 27. Then they add that none of her family ever committed this abomination, that her father was known as a good man, and her mother was no adulterer. The following verse describes what follows: "So she pointed to the baby. They exclaimed, 'How can we talk to someone who is an infant in the cradle?'"

This verse comprises three events, expressed by three clauses:

- 1) Pointing in "So she pointed to the baby"
- 2) Disapproval and exclamation in "They exclaimed, 'How can we talk'"
- 3) Wonder and underestimation in "to someone who is an infant in the cradle?"

In the first clause, Allah mentions a gesture to indicate that gestures are better than talk in some situations and to confirm that Maryam followed through her pledge to the Most Compassionate, that is, the obligation given to her in "So eat and drink, and put your heart at ease. But if you see any of the people, say, 'I have vowed silence to the Most Compassionate, so I am not talking to anyone today.'" Maryam, v. 26. Therefore, she remained silent and pointed to Isa, peace be upon him, so that they ask him. The prepositional phrase "to the baby," referring to Isa (PBUH), after the verb "pointed" is the best proof that she did not say a word; it was also so that they know her pregnancy was the will of Allah. The fact that pointing is done with the eyes, hand, or head is obvious (al-Sameen al-Halabi, 2005, vol. 7, p. 537). Therefore, this over-furnishing of details is to show that the baby understands body language and can express himself in words. Let us contemplate how this scene of silence fulfills its purpose perfectly; if Maryam had spoken, would she have an argument equal in strength to her son's speaking? Glorified Allah may be, He who made silence the wise choice and the winning argument.

The second clause, "How can we talk," is compositional; it cannot be classified as true or false, because it does not refer to an event that can take place. The type of composition here is request, or asking for something that does not exist at the moment of speaking, such as the ability to speak to an infant in the cradle. For this reason, *kayf* is used as an adverb preceding the present-tense verb to express exclamation and disapproval (al-Ali, 1995, p. 42). As is known, disapproval is the refusal to accept, for example, someone's request and a certain event. The aim is for listeners to become aware of their mistake as they reconsider their behavior, thus repenting, feeling shame, and realizing the truth (al-Jarjani, 1992, p. 297). In other words, the *kayf* interrogation by Maryam's people was to convey disapproval when she pointed to her child, Isa (PBUH), to signal for them to talk to him, which angered them. They wondered how they could speak to a child, much less ask him, since a child cannot talk to answer back (Ibn 'Ashur, 1984, vol. 16, p. 97). Therefore, *kayf* serves to make addressees contemplate and think about what is required of them.

In the third clause, "to someone who is an infant in the cradle?" ("mann kana fi 'lmahdi sabiyya"), we can

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observe movement of elements, namely, moving the prepositional phrase *fi 'Imahdi* (in the cradle) backward and the head of the noun phrase *sabiyya* (a boy) forward. The purpose is to convey importance and emphasis, as Allah never moves a word except when this perfectly serves the intended meaning. This relative clause is the complement of their question "How can we talk." The relative pronoun *mann* is the object of the verb. They did not say Isa's name either because they disapprove of her request or because they do not know what he will be named or who he will become. *Kan* (was) denotes an event that took place in the past, which makes *sabiyya* an adverb that modifies *fi 'Imahdi*. Moreover, *kan* cannot be a defective verb (al-Zuhayli, 2009, vol. 16, pp. 81-82).

5. *Kayf* as an absolute object:

As mentioned, *kayf* is followed by a past-tense verb in many locations. I will provide another example, but this time, it is of a verse in which *kayf* is an absolute object. This is because in such constructions, it plays an important role in clarifying meaning and showing the inimitability of the Quranic text.

Allah Almighty says, "Have you not seen (O Prophet) how your Lord dealt with the Army of the Elephant?" al-Phil, v. 1. This surah recounts the story of Abrahah al-Habashi, who set out to destroy the Ka'bah in the same year that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was born. It also mentions the punishment that befell him and his army. The verse above consists of three parts:

- 1) interrogation and seeing in "Have you not seen"
- 2) exclamation and intimidation (the complement) in "how your Lord dealt"
- 3) specification (the focal point) "with the Army of the Elephant?"

The first clause begins the verse with a question to the Prophet (PBUH). This question, however, serves to communicate information, for the surah is about the desire of Abrahah al-Habashi to destroy al-Ka'ba. Although he led a great army for this purpose, their fate, as mentioned in the surah, was defeat by Allah's warriors, whom no army, however strong and large, can defeat. Allah asks the Noble Prophet "Have you not seen," as if the latter was able to see them with his eyes, and this is to honor and exalt him. Moreover, this confirmatory interrogation plays a role in making this major idea clear (al-Suyuti, 1974, p. 222), as it is in the past tense, unrelated to the present; therefore, the seeing here is mental. It refers to knowing that is equally as clear as seeing, for the Prophet (PBUH) was born in the Year of the Elephant and did not see the army.

Kayf is essential in the exclamation and intimidation clause "how your Lord dealt" ("*kayfa fa'ala rabbuka*"), and including it makes the expression stronger than the alternative, which is "*'alam tara fi'la rabbika*" ("Have you not seen the way your Lord dealt"). Messengers sometimes feared the brute force of their enemy. Thus, they would wonder how these could be defeated, a legitimate question that they often asked themselves. It does not mean that their faith was weak or tainted with doubt, God forbid, but force is usually governed by purely physical laws. However, the story in al-Phil counteracts this by exemplifying Allah's universal law. The question conveys wonder at the story and draws attention to its great significance. Moreover, this incident was well-known among Arabs, so much that they used it in time references; they would say, "This happened in the Year of the Elephant," or "This happened two years before the Year of the Elephant." The surah, therefore, does not aim to familiarize Arabs with this incident but to remind them of what they already know. For this reason, *kayf* carries multiple layers of meaning here that match the seriousness of the subject matter.

Kayf is an interrogative noun that plays the role of an adverb or an absolute object in the accusative case. In Al-Mughni, Ibn Hisham argues that it is more likely an absolute object. He says, "I see that it is in this

type of expression an absolute object. Therefore, in “kayfa fa‘ala rabbuka [how your Lord dealt],” the meaning is “al-fi‘lu fi‘lu rabbika” [the deed your Lord did]” (Ibn Hisham, 1999, vol. 1, p. 318; Darweesh, 1992, vol. 8, p. 416).

It is also possible that kayf is not an interrogative here but simply a noun equivalent to “the way.” In this case, it is an object (Ibn ‘Ashur, 1984, vol. 30, p. 479).

The Great and Almighty uses the verb fa‘ala (did), instead of ‘amala, to denote that it is something that can happen at any time and place. In addition, its near synonym ‘amala, is used for humans and devils, while fa‘ala is used for Allah Almighty. Moreover, ‘amala stands for an action instigated by an order, while fa‘ala describes an action of one’s own accord. However, in Quranic usage, fa‘ala can refer to an action performed once with great speed (al-Khalaf, 2016, pp. 193-194).

The phrase “With the Army of the Elephant” (“bi’Asshabi ‘l-Phili”) refers to Abrahah Bin Sabah al-Ashram, king of Yemen, and his people. Referring to them this way serves to belittle them. First, the noun -’asshabi (owners) is an indefinite adnominal annexed to the genitive-marked definite one ‘l-Phili (of the elephant), which stands for a creature that is not conscious. In general, -’asshabi has positive connotations. However, that depends on the genitive-marked noun that it is annexed to. Both nouns usually refer to entities from the same category, and the inferior follows the superior. In other words, annexing -’asshabi to ‘l-Phili connotes mockery, as the former refers to intelligent beings and the latter refers to an animal. Therefore, it hints that they are inferior to elephants. Moreover, ‘l-Phili is singular, while -’asshabi is plural, even though there were many phils, or elephants, involved. The purpose is to make the animal a condensed symbol more significant than the many owners; that is, the purpose is to humiliate them. Indeed, humiliation was their fate. We can see that fa‘ala’s complement starts with the prepositional prefix bi-, which conveys a close relation to the verb. In other words, the prepositional phrase limits the verb to its referent and adds another layer of meaning to it.

Summary and main conclusions:

The study of kayf in Meccan surahs and of its role in grammatical constructions and shaping meaning yields the following results:

1. Kayf occurs in fifty-eight verses from the eighty-two Meccan surahs.
2. Most grammarians state that kayf is a noun rather than a particle, adverb, or verb. They cite several pieces of grammatical and linguistic evidence from actual usage by Arabs.
3. The study discusses the grammarians’ analysis of kayf and how it evolved in al-Jarjani’s composition theory, which focuses on constituent relations within a sentence in a text. Moreover, it explains what senses Quranic usage adds to kayf.
4. The Quranic usage of interrogative kayf provides proof that this word occurs in the accusative case. The main examples comprise its occurrence as the comment of a defective verb, the comment of a delayed topic, the object of a verb, an adverb, and an absolute object.
5. Interrogative kayf serves various rhetorical purposes such as confirmation, exclamation, reproach, disapproval, warning, discouragement, and conveying manner.
6. Kayf occurs in the verses of interest in several grammatical contexts such as being followed by what is originally a comment, by a past-tense verb, by a present-tense verb, etc.
7. Kayf most frequently occurs to talk about consequence, reflection, and contemplation. It effectively

directs addressees toward the hows.

8. Kayf is most frequently accompanied by the verb phrases see and have you not seen/did you not see.

9. Kayf provides a link between grammatical units and therefore helps clarify the intended meaning.

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Appendix

1. Kayf occurring in the accusative case as the comment of a defective verb:

“Say, ‘Travel throughout the land and see the fate of the deniers.’” *Al-An'am*, v. 11.

“We poured upon them a rain (of brimstone). See what was the end of the wicked!” *al-A'raf*, v. 84.

“And do not lie in ambush on every road—threatening and hindering those who believe in Allah from His Path and striving to make it (appear) crooked. Remember when you were few, then He increased you in number. And consider the fate of the corruptors!” *al-A'raf*, v. 86.

“Then after them We sent Moses with Our signs to Pharaoh and his chiefs, but they wrongfully rejected them. See what was the end of the corruptors!” *al-A'raf*, v. 103.

“In fact, they (hastily) rejected the Book without comprehending it and before the fulfilment of its warnings. Similarly, those before them were in denial. See then what was the end of the wrongdoers!” *Yunus*, v. 39.

“We only sent before you (O Prophet) men inspired by Us from among the people of each society. Have the deniers not travelled through the land to see what was the end of those (destroyed) before them? And surely the (eternal) Home of the Hereafter is far better for those mindful (of Allah). Will you not then understand?” Yusuf, v. 109.

“We surely sent a messenger to every community, saying, ‘Worship Allah and shun false gods.’ But some of them were guided by Allah, while others were destined to stray. So travel throughout the land and see the fate of the deniers!” An-Nahl, v. 36.

“And the residents of Midian. And Moses was denied (too). But I delayed (the fate of) the disbelievers (until their appointed time) then seized them. And how severe was My response!” Al-Hajj, v. 44.

“And, although their hearts were convinced the signs were true, they still denied them wrongfully and arrogantly. See then what was the end of the corruptors!” An-Naml, v. 14.

“See then what the consequences of their plan were: We (utterly) destroyed them and their people all together.” An-Naml, v. 51.

“Say, (O Prophet,) ‘Travel throughout the land and see the fate of the wicked.’” An-Naml, v. 69.

“So We seized him and his soldiers, casting them into the sea. See then what was the end of the wrongdoers!” Al-Qasas, v. 40.

“Have they not travelled throughout the land to see what was the end of those (destroyed) before them? They were far superior in might; they cultivated the land and developed it more than these (Meccans) ever have. Their messengers came to them with clear proofs. Allah would have never wronged them, but it was they who wronged themselves.” Ar-Rum, v. 9.

“Say, (O Prophet,) ‘Travel throughout the land and see what was the end of those (destroyed) before (you)—most of them were polytheists.’” Ar-Rum, v. 42.

“Those (destroyed) before them denied as well—and these (Meccans) have not attained even one-tenth of what We had given their predecessors. Yet (when) they denied My messengers, how severe was My response!” Saba, v. 45.

“If Allah were to punish people (immediately) for what they have committed, He would not have left a single living being on earth. But He delays them for an appointed term. And when their time arrives, then surely Allah is All-Seeing of His servants.” Fatir, v. 45.

“Have they not travelled throughout the land to see what was the end of those (destroyed) before them? They were far superior in might. But there is nothing that can escape Allah in the heavens or the earth. He is certainly All-Knowing, Most Capable.” Fatir, v. 44.

“See then what was the end of those who had been warned.” As-Saffat, v. 73.

“Before them, the people of Noah denied (the truth), as did (other) enemy forces afterwards. Every community plotted against its prophet to seize him, and argued in falsehood, (hoping) to discredit the truth with it. So I seized them. And how (horrible) was My punishment!” Ghafir, v. 5.

“Have they not travelled throughout the land to see what was the end of those (destroyed) before them? They were far superior in might and (richer in) monuments throughout the land. But Allah seized them for their sins, and they had no protector from Allah.” Ghafir, v. 21.

“Have they not travelled throughout the land to see what was the end of those who were (destroyed) before them? They were far superior in might and (richer in) monuments throughout the land, but their (worldly) gains were of no benefit to them.” Ghafir, v. 82.

“So We inflicted punishment upon them. See then what was the fate of the deniers!” Az-Zukhruf, v. 25.

“Then how (dreadful) were My punishment and warnings!” Al-Qamar, v. 16.

“Then how (dreadful) were My punishment and warnings!” Al-Qamar, v. 18.

“Then how (dreadful) were My punishment and warnings!” Al-Qamar, v. 21.

“And certainly those before them denied ‘as well’, then how severe was My response!” Al-Mulk, v. 18.

2. Kayf occurring as the comment of a delayed topic:

“Or do you feel secure that the One Who is in heaven will not unleash upon you a storm of stones. Only

then would you know how (serious) My warning was!” Al-Mulk, v. 17.

3. Kayf occurring in the accusative case as an object:

“See how they will lie about themselves and how those (gods) they fabricated will fail them!” Al-An‘am, v. 24.

“He turned away from them, saying, ‘O my people! Indeed, I have delivered to you the messages of my Lord and gave you (sincere) advice. How can I then grieve for those who chose to disbelieve?’” Al-A‘raf, v. 93.

“Do you not see how Allah compares a good word to a good tree? Its root is firm and its branches reach the sky.” Ibrahim, v. 24.

“You passed by the ruins of those (destroyed peoples) who had wronged themselves. It was made clear to you how We dealt with them, and We gave you (many) examples.” Ibrahim, v. 45.

“See how We have favoured some over others (in this life), but the Hereafter is certainly far greater in rank and in favour.” Al-Isra, v. 21.

“See how they call you names (O Prophet)! So they have gone so (far) astray that they cannot find the (Right) Way.” Al-Isra, v. 48.

“See (O Prophet) how they call you names! So they have gone so (far) astray that they cannot find the (Right) Way.” Al-Furqan, v. 9.

“Have you not seen how your Lord extends the shade—He could have simply made it (remain) still if He so willed—then We make the sun its guide.” Al-Furqan, v. 45.

“Say, (O Prophet,) ‘Travel throughout the land and see how He originated the creation, then Allah will bring it into being one more time. Surely Allah is Most Capable of everything.’” Al-‘Ankabut, v. 20.

“Have they not then looked at the sky above them: how We built it and adorned it (with stars), leaving it flawless?” Qaf, v. 6.

“Do you not see how Allah created seven heavens, one above the other,” Nuh, v. 15.

“Do they not ever reflect on camels—how they were (masterfully) created; and the sky—how it was raised (high); and the mountains—how they were firmly set up; and the earth—how it was levelled out?” Al-Ghashiyah, vv. 17-20.

4. Kayf occurring as an adverb:

“Ask (them, O Prophet), ‘Imagine if Allah were to take away your hearing or sight, or seal your hearts—who else other than Allah could restore it?’ See (O Prophet) how We vary the signs, yet they still turn away.” Al-An‘am, v. 46.

“Say, ‘He (alone) has the power to unleash upon you a torment from above or below you or split you into (conflicting) factions and make you taste the violence of one another.’ See how We vary the signs, so perhaps they will comprehend.” Al-An‘am, v. 65.

“And how should I fear your associate-gods, while you have no fear in associating (others) with Allah—a practice He has never authorized? Which side has more right to security? (Tell me) if you really know!” Al-An‘am, v. 81.

“Then We made you their successors in the land to see how you would act.” Yunus, v. 14.

“Ask (them, O Prophet), ‘Can any of your associate-gods originate creation and then resurrect it?’ Say, ‘(Only) Allah originates creation and then resurrects it. How can you then be deluded (from the truth)?’” Yunus, v. 34.

“So she pointed to the baby. They exclaimed, ‘How can we talk to someone who is an infant in the cradle?’” Maryam, v. 29.

“Have they not seen how Allah originates the creation then resurrects it? That is certainly easy for Allah.” Al-‘Ankabut, v. 19.

“It is Allah Who sends the winds, which then stir up (vapour, forming) clouds, which He then spreads out in the sky or piles up into masses as He wills, from which you see rain come forth. Then as soon as He causes it to fall on whoever He wills of His servants, they rejoice.” Ar-Rum, v. 48.

“See then the impact of Allah’s mercy: how He gives life to the earth after its death! Surely That (same God) can raise the dead. For He is Most Capable of everything.” Ar-Rum, v. 50.

“What is the matter with you? How do you judge?” Al-Qalam, v. 36.

“If you (pagans) persist in disbelief, then how will you guard yourselves against (the horrors of) a Day which will turn children’s hair grey?” al-Muzzammil, v. 17.

5. Kayf occurring as an absolute object:

“Did you not see how your Lord dealt with ‘Âd.” Al-Fajr, v. 6.

“Have you not seen (O Prophet) how your Lord dealt with the Army of the Elephant?” Al-Phil, v. 1.