

Article

The Terms Trade (*Tijarah*) and Road (*Rihlah*) in Qur'anic Context: With Special References to the Trade of Prophet Muhammad in *Sirah*

Faruk Tuncer 

Faculty of Theology, Marmara University, İstanbul 34662, Turkey; faruktuncer@gmail.com

Abstract: The term *rihlah*, which means ‘commercial journey in summer and winter’ in Surah Quraysh, holds a special position in the vocabulary of the Qur’an. This term corresponds to a significant aspect of the real politics in the *sirah* of Prophet Muhammad, particularly in seventh-century Mecca. Although *rihlah*, literally meaning road and journey, is used in the context of commerce, it is also in alignment with a group of similar words such as *sabil*, *sirat*, and *ṭariq* in the Qur’an. For instance, the words *huda* (guidance) and *dalal* (misguidance), which are key concepts in the Qur’an, are closely associated with the notion of the *rihlah*. This correlation will be explored in the article, shedding light on the *sirah* of the Prophet. The close relationship between commerce and roads in the Qur’an constitutes a vast semantic field, which will be discussed from various perspectives. This discussion aims to elucidate how this relationship, briefly mentioned in Surah Quraysh, is reflected throughout the entirety of the Qur’an.

Keywords: exegesis; Qur’an; Quraysh; trade; rihlah; sabil



Citation: Tuncer, Faruk. 2023. The Terms Trade (*Tijarah*) and Road (*Rihlah*) in Qur'anic Context: With Special References to the Trade of Prophet Muhammad in *Sirah*. *Religions* 14: 1055. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel14081055>

Academic Editor: Suleyman Sertkaya

Received: 1 June 2023

Revised: 31 July 2023

Accepted: 8 August 2023

Published: 18 August 2023



Copyright: © 2023 by the author. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

1. Introduction

Establishing a state, utilizing writing materials, constructing a city, living freely, and engaging in trade are among the greatest inventions of the human mind throughout history. However, based on *sirah* materials from seventh-century Mecca, when Muhammad emerged as a prophet, these five human inventions, except for trade, were at a primitive stage. Geographically, with Mecca serving as the pivotal center, the vast region stretching from Yemen in the south to Syria in the north is interconnected by a network of land routes. In light of these facts, reflecting upon the Qur’an and *sirah* from this perspective is natural.

The Quraysh tribe, to which Muhammad belonged, was primarily known for its trade activities in the Hijaz region. This is mentioned in Surah al-Quraysh (106:1–4), emphasizing the significance of the Ka’ba and the commercial journeys (*rihlah*) and routes taken during summer and winter. It is also important to consider the trade activities of Prophet Muhammad in his early life before his prophethood. He spent a considerable part of his life engaged in commerce. The titles attributed to him, such as “a great statesman” and “a great military commander” are subject to debate. However, there is no debate when it comes to his status as a messenger and his involvement in the trade. The Prophet was involved in the trade for a significant period of time. At this point, it is worthwhile to ask: How does the fact that he spent a specific portion of his life in trade manifest in the Qur’an? The harmony between the Qur’anic portrayal of him and the sources of *sirah* is one of the issues that this article indirectly seeks to address. Without addressing this background, an analysis of trade concepts that frequently appear in the Qur’an and *sirah* sources would not do justice to the comprehensive exegesis of the Qur’an.

To comprehend the phenomenon of commerce depicted in Surah al-Quraysh during summer and winter, as well as the intricacies of Mecca’s political economy, it is essential to examine two historical figures from that era: Hashim and Qusayy. The history of

trade traces back to Hashim (d. 542?), who was Muhammad's great-grandfather. Prior to him, Qusayy (d. 480), Muhammad's fifth-generation grandfather, played a pivotal role in constructing Mecca, strengthening the Quraysh's position in the city, and maintaining and repairing the Ka'bah. He not only undertook the reorganization of the city of Mecca but also undertook the restoration and refurbishment of the Ka'bah, implementing various measures to establish it as a prominent center of worship.

According to *sīrah* sources, as one of the four sons of 'Abd Manaf, Hashim established political connections with states that dominated global trade during that period, particularly the Byzantines, Persians, and Abyssinians (Ibn Hisham 1990, vol. I, p. 57; Hamidullah 1962, p. 215). However, significant changes occurred in the region during the latter half of the sixth century. Ongoing conflicts between the Byzantines and the Persians and "the successive displacements of these routes determined the changes and revolutions in Arabian history" (Lewis 2002, p. 29). Trade activities, which had been thriving and expanding for two or three centuries prior to the revelation of the Qur'an, held immense significance for the region. The abundance of trade-related terms in the Qur'an reflects the crucial role of trade. Consequently, understanding the level of Mecca's political economy during the seventh century and the influence of the Prophet's commercial background on his prophethood becomes vital. It is also worth noting that despite its unsuitable soil for agriculture and farming, Mecca stood out amongst the cities of the Hijaz due to its strategic geopolitical location. The Quraysh's trade was primarily centered around the Ka'bah and the religious atmosphere it fostered.

The correlation referred to is the consistent mention of two distinct sets of terminology in the Qur'an: *tijarah* and *rihlah*. The primary objective of this article is to firstly demonstrate this correlation and then provide an explanation based on Qur'anic verses and *sīrah* materials. Additionally, the semantic field encompassing road and trade relations in the Qur'an will be examined within the context of the term *rihlah*. We wish to acknowledge that our study extensively relies on Toshihiko Izutsu (d. 1993)'s semantic analysis of terms related to the concept of the "road" in the Qur'an and significantly benefits from C. C. Torrey (d. 1956)'s work on "trade". Nevertheless, it is crucial to underscore that our research demonstrates significant deviations from the works of both scholars. We wish to explicitly point out that Izutsu's semantic analysis of terms related to the concept of "road" has not been addressed within the context we have established in this article. Izutsu focuses on the semantic analysis of terms related to the concept of "road" within the context of Islam and its contrasting *kufir* (disbelief) terms (Izutsu 2008, pp. 25–26). We posit that the focus term *rihlah* mentioned in Surah Quraysh is connected to trade-related concepts of the "road" in the Qur'an, a correlation that has not received substantial attention in the field of Qur'anic semantics. In Torrey's study (*Commercial Theological Terms in the Qur'an*), a limited number of words were addressed, with a particular focus on theological aspects of trade terms (For a detailed study on Torrey see in Albayrak 2001). In contrast, our research emphasized the existence of trade-related terminology in a secular context. We sought to demonstrate that such vocabulary is far more extensive than previously assumed. Torrey systematically divides the subject into five distinct groups (Torrey 1892, p. 8). While we acknowledge the importance and validity of this categorization, we believe it to be insufficient and incomplete. In our perspective, trade-related references in the Qur'an constitute a much broader semantic field, which we have identified as a group of ten. This topic will be examined within the context of Surah Quraysh and its historical background.

2. Trading Caravan/Journeys by Winter and Summer in the Surah Quraysh

According to *sīrah* sources, Surah al-Quraysh is believed to have been revealed at the beginning of the Meccan period, likely intended to address the backlash faced by Prophet Muhammad (Ibn Hisham 1990, vol. I, p. 69). The Qur'an mentions the Meccans in various verses and often alludes to them explicitly. While these implications are sometimes evident, they are never explicitly stated in such specific terms as in this Surah or any other verse.

The intertwining of the Quraysh, the Ka'bah, commerce, and Muhammad within a single surah is unique. Mecca and Muhammad are addressed with their distinct characteristics. However, the discussion in this Surah gains completeness and meaning when considered in conjunction with the preceding Surah.

The motive behind Abyssinian Governor Abraha's attack on Mecca (d. 570?) was to destroy the Ka'bah and divert commercial activity to his own territory. His fundamental purpose was commercial. The central theme of the previous chapter, Surah al-Fil (The Elephant) is the miraculous protection of the Ka'bah from Abraha's attack. As a result, these two Surahs were initially perceived as a single Surah during the early period (Zamakhshari 1998a; Razi 1981)¹. Since agriculture was never feasible in Mecca, the people had no choice but to engage in trade. The presence of the holy shrine (Ka'bah) in the city played a significant role in making Mecca a trade hub. Initially, the Meccans were involved in retail trade, with an average of two or three camel loads arriving in Mecca per week, as suggested by some scholars (Cheldhod 1992, p. 310).

They organized trade expeditions to various regions including Abyssinia, Yemen, and Byzantine and Persian lands. These journeys involved both the transportation of goods and the acquisition of goods (Lewis 1995, p. 46). They earned significant profits from these travels. The presence of barbaric desert nomads posed the biggest challenge to trade in the region. These nomads would disrupt trade routes, extort caravans, and loot their merchandise. There was no central authority or power to prevent these attacks by the tribes, except for Mecca and the Quraysh tribe. The perceived sanctity and divine protection of the Ka'bah, which was closely associated with Mecca, played a role in this. As the Quraysh resided in Mecca, they enjoyed this protection. In an environment where the desert was treacherous and roads were unsafe, the Quraysh had a significant advantage (Watt 1960, p. 11). People flocked to Mecca for pilgrimage, and trade flourished, allowing the city's nobles to amass wealth. One of the aims of the establishment of *khilf al-fudul*² and *al-dar al-nadwa*³ was to regulate the commercial circulation in Mecca (Ibn Habib 1985, p. 186; Javad Ali 1993, vol. VI, p. 370). Quraysh after the 'elephant incident'⁴ started the practice of *hums*⁵ and began to consider themselves as *ahl Allah* (men of God) and *jiran Allah* (neighbors of Allah) (Sühayli n.d., vol. I, p. 132). The Quraysh were skilled at intertwining their religious privileges with trade. They proudly proclaimed, "We are the descendants of Abraham. We are the chosen people of the sacred sanctuary. We are the ones entrusted with the service, protection, and shelter of the Ka'bah. No Arab tribe matches or can surpass us in this aspect" (Ibn Habib 1985, p. 127; Ibn Sa'd 2001, vol. I, p. 59).

Another crucial factor that greatly benefited the Quraysh merchants was the institution of the "sacred months" (*al-ashur al-hurum*)⁶ and the practice of *nasi*⁷ among the pre-Islamic Arabs for trade purposes. These practices served as the lifeline for the Quraysh merchants, providing them with favorable conditions and opportunities for trade. The sacred months brought peace and tranquility to the region, ensuring the safety of the roads and eliminating the risk of pirates plundering goods (Muir 1923, p. ci). Emphasized in the Qur'an (9:36–37), these practices attracted various Arab tribes to Mecca and provided a period of safety during the insecure desert environment, protecting it from activities such as looting, raiding, and plundering (Ibn Hisham 1990, vol. I, pp. 59–61). These two facts are closely related to the economic and political aspects of the region (Zamakhshari 1998a, vol. I, p. 424). It is worth recalling the verse al-Baqarah 2:198, in which Muslims considered it a sin to engage in trade during the pilgrimage season (Wahidi 1991, p. 64). Although the Qur'an is not a book solely about trade, words related to trade are used extensively. Most of these usages are always expressed in the context of religion and holiness. Some *sīrah* scholars suggest that the Prophet may have traveled by sea to different regions, such as Palestine, Yemen, Bahrain, and even Abyssinia, for trade, in addition to his well-known visit to Damascus (Hamidullah 1980, pp. 327–42).

These travels not only gave him important trade experience but also increased his knowledge and wisdom. He carried what he saw in foreign countries to Mecca in the name of culture and civilization, and he benefited from those experiences during his prophetic

mission. Since trade in Medina was monopolized by the Jews, Muhammad established a marketplace (*al-suq*) upon his arrival in Medina (Ibn Maja n.d., vol. II, p. 751, “Tijarah”, 40). On the other hand, the prohibition of interest (*riba*) was also an important practice. Considering that the transition from the stage of barter to the stage of buying and selling is a crucial step in the progress of civilization, one can understand the value of Muhammad’s pre-prophetic trade experience.

3. Semantic Field of Trade in the Qur’an

To fully comprehend the vocabulary of the Qur’an, it is necessary to accurately analyze three different stages of the Arabic language. The first stage is the pre-Qur’anic era known as the Age of Ignorance (*Jahiliyya*). The second stage is the period during which the Qur’an was revealed, and the third stage is the development process of the Arabic language after the Qur’an. In this study, we will primarily focus on the second stage while being connected to the first. At the conceptual level, no subject related to social life is as extensively addressed in the Qur’an as commerce. Torrey’s book consists of approximately twenty words. However, in our view, the scope extends far beyond that. We contend that the number of words used in the Qur’an for commercial purposes reaches thousands.

When Muhammad emigrated from Mecca to Madina, it should not be forgotten that one of his most significant initiatives was an attempt to establish a commercial market in Mecca. His decision not to impose taxes in this market could have created a competitive environment against the Jewish traders who held sway over Madina’s commerce, or it might have been related to his own commercial background. Scholars who extensively analyzed this endeavor suggest the following: “*There is no indication of the intention of the Prophet, but the principle to establish a new market without taxes may imply that the Prophet intended to adopt the practice of the market at Ukaj where taxes were not lived*” (Kistler 1965, p. 276). However, both trade in Mecca and Madina remained limited, not encompassing a vast market where all kinds of products were bought and sold. Nonetheless, based on the words reflected in the Qur’an, an estimation can be made. As evident in the table below, many products, especially luxury goods, were oriented toward foreign markets rather than the domestic markets of Mecca and Madina. The Surah al-Quraysh, which draws attention to the summer and winter trade caravans, also indicates the nature of trade in the region. Caravans traversing the entire region from Yaman to Damascus constituted the backbone of trade. The majority of these trade caravans were not geared toward the domestic market. It is well known that Mecca did not have a production-based trade; thus, the Quraysh tribe primarily acted as intermediaries for commercial goods brought in by caravans from the south and north. Donner points out that Mecca served as “*Mecca was a transfer-point in the long-distance trade network between India, Africa, and the Mediterranean*” (Donner 1977, p. 250). The presence of numerous words related to travel in the Qur’an, which will be addressed in the second part of our article, cannot be comprehended without considering these trade caravans. However, first, we will present a table of trade-related words in the Qur’an and then provide some assessments accordingly.

The first five groups of words in the Table 1 are derived from Torrey’s study. We have utilized the same set of words but modified the headings accordingly. The subsequent five groupings have been established based on our own classification. It is evident that our classification encompasses a greater number of words. Furthermore, it should be noted that trade-related terms in the Qur’an are not confined solely to those listed. For instance, the direct correlation between the sacred months (*al-ashur al-hurum*) and pilgrimage (*Hajj*) with trade has not been included in the present enumeration. The words in group 6 primarily pertain to concepts associated with the Madina period and likely reflect vestiges of Prophet Muhammad’s commercial background in Mecca. Group 7 encompasses terms commonly employed in commercial contracts, which are also recurrent in the Qur’an within the context of trade agreements. The lexicon featured in Group 8 frequently finds use in reference to trade itself. Group 9 chiefly concerns the commodities traded. While some of the food items in 9a may have originated from regions inhabited by the Jewish, they were also listed by

Meccan traders. For instance, it is not surprising at all that the words *zanjabil*, *kafur rayhan*, and *misk* appear in the Qur’an, as ginger was one of the most common products traded by merchants of Mecca (see particularly in Crone 1987, p. 76). On the other hand, items such as *asawir*, *yaqut*, *marjan*, *durriy*, and *lu’lu* in 9b are more oriented towards foreign markets and represent products handled by Meccan merchants. The luxury consumption goods in 9c are likely geared towards foreign markets rather than the local market in Mecca. In 9d, only the names of animals involved in the trade are listed, excluding all the animal names mentioned in the Qur’an. Group 9e comprises words pertaining to human trafficking for slavery in the Hijaz region. Words such as *mukataba* (24:33), signifying commercial correspondence, have been omitted from the list. The 10th group consists of other distinct words. Among them, the term *shuraka* is more commonly found in its singular form as *shirk* and *mushrik* in the Qur’an, implying the meaning of commercial partnerships. The word *kasad* in this category is synonymous with the term *khasira* in Torrey’s list, but we have included it here as it is used in a worldly context. The last words in the 10th group, such as *qawwarir*, *aniya*, *akwab*, *ka’s*, and *araiik* may be used in the context of paradise, but these products must have had their equivalents in Mecca and Madina.

Table 1. The table of trade concepts in the Qur’an.

Groups	Words	Verses
1. Group words (Calculation-weighing-measure)	<i>Hasiba</i> (account)	2:202 2:212, 3/19, 3:27, 5:4, 10:5, 13/18, 13:21, 13:40, 14:41, 17:12, 24:38, 38:16, 40:17, 40:27, 40:40, 68:8, 78:27
	<i>Hasa</i> (count)	72:28, 58:6, 18:49, 19:94, 26:12, 78:29, 73:20, 14:24, 16:18
	<i>Wazn</i> (weight)	7:8, 55:9, 18:105, 15:19, 17:25, 83:3, 26:182, 53:3
	<i>Thakal</i> (heavy)	73:5, 76:27, 13:12, 7:8, 7:187, 23:102, 101:6, 7:189, 35:18
2. Group words (Pay-fee):	<i>Jaza</i> (recompense)	76:12, 23:111, 6:146, 34:17, 2:18, 2:123, 3:145, 6:84, 6:157, 7:40–41–152, 10:12, 12:22–75, 20:127, 21:29, 28:14, 35:26, 37:80–105–110–121, 46:25, 54:35, 77:44, 16:96–97, 29:7, 44:27, 21:29
	<i>Thawb</i> (reward)	3:145, 3:148, 73:36, 4:134, 18:31, 28:80, 3:195
	<i>Waffa</i> (recompense)	53:37, 11:111, 3:57, 24:25, 35:30, 46:19, 3:25, 2:281
	<i>Ajr</i> (reward)	3:136–171–179, 5:9, 7:170, 8:28, 9:26–120, 10:76, 11:11–115, 12:56–57–90–104, 16:41, 18:30, 25:57, 26:109–145–180, 28:25, 29:58, 26:11, 38:86, 41:8, 49:3, 57:11, 67:12, 64:15, 84:25, 95:6, 4:40–67–74–95–114–141–146, 6:90, 7:113, 11:51, 17:9, 18:2, 26:41
	<i>Kasaba</i> (earn)	2:91, 52:21, 111:2, 5:38, 2:134–141–225–281, 3:25–155, 4:88, 6:70, 10:27, 14:18, 35:45, 39:48–51, 42:22, 45:10, 9:164, 13:42, 31:34, 10:52, 39:24, 4:111–112, 2:79, 9:82, 10:8, 36:65, 40:82, 45:14, 83:14, 10:28, 14:18, 18:58, 29:48–51, 42:22
3. Group words (Harm-cheating)	<i>Khasira</i> (loss)	4:119, 9:31–140, 10:45, 22:11, 40:78–85, 6:12–20, 7:9, 11:21, 23:103, 39:15, 42:45, 45:27, 55:9, 83:3, 103:2, 65:9, 2:27–121, 7:90–99–178, 8:37, 9:69, 12:24, 16:109, 23:34, 29:52, 39:63
	<i>Bakthth</i> (diminution)	7:85, 11:85, 72:13, 2:282, 11:15, 12:20
	<i>Zulm</i> (iniquity)	4:160, 6:82–131, 11:117, 22:25, 31:13, 40:17, 3:108, 4:10–30, 20:111, 20:112, 25:4, 40:31, 5:39, 42:41, 4:153, 13:6, 16:61, 4:75, 18:35, 25:27, 37:113, 11:102, 21:11, 22:45, 2:51–92–229
	<i>Alata</i> (reduce)	52:21, 49:14
	<i>Nakasa</i> (diminish)	50:4, 11:84, 13:46, 21:44, 9:4, 35:11, 73:3, 2:155, 7:130

Table 1. Cont.

Groups	Words	Verses
4. Group words (Shopping-profit)	<i>Shara</i> (purchase)	2:102, 12:20, 4:74, 2:207, 9:111, 2:102, 12:21, 2:16–41–86–79–90–175, 3:177–178, 9:9, 5:44, 16:95, 5:106, 3:77–187–199
	<i>Bay'</i> (traffic)	9:111, 60:12, 48:10–18, 60:12, 2:282–254–275, 14:31, 24:37, 62:9, 22:40
	<i>Tijarah</i> (trade)	2:282, 4:29, 9:24, 24:37, 35:29, 61:10, 62:11, 2:16
	<i>Thaman</i> (price)	2:41–79:174, 3:77–187–199, 5:44–106, 9:9, 16:95, 12:20
	<i>Rabh</i> (profit)	2:16
5. Group words (Debts-collateral)	<i>Qard</i> (loan)	57:11–18, 64:17, 5:12, 18:17, 2:245, 73:20, 64:17
	<i>Aslafa</i> (precedent)	10:30, 69:24, 43:56
	<i>Rahn</i> (pledge)	52:21, 74:38, 2:283
6. Group words (Value and taxes)	<i>Dinar</i> (coin)	3:75
	<i>Dirham</i> (coins)	12:20
	<i>Zakat</i> (the religious tax)	2:43–83–110–177–277, 4:77–162, 5:12–55, 7:156, 9:5–11–18–71, 18:81, 19:12–31–55, 21:73, 22:41–78, 23:5, 24:37–56, 30:39
	<i>Fay</i> (booty)	33:50, 59:6–7
	<i>Jizya</i> (pay the tribute)	9:29
	<i>Khums</i> (a fifth of the booty)	8:41
	<i>Ganimah</i> (spoils of war)	4:94, 8:41–69, 48:15–19–20
	<i>Kharaj</i> (payment)	18:94, 23:72
	<i>Anfal</i> (booty)	8:1, 17:79
<i>Sadaqa</i> (charity)	2:196–263–264–271, 4:4–114, 9:58–60–79–103–104, 58:12	
7. Group words (Commercial contract)	<i>Aqd</i> (contract)	5:1–89, 4:33, 2:235–237, 20:27
	<i>Ahd</i> (covenant)	3:77–80–100–183, 7:134, 43:48, 2:27–100–125, 20:115, 36:60, 9:75, 48:10, 8:56, 9:1–4–7, 16:91, 13:20, 16:91–95, 17:34, 20:86
8. Group words (Objects of trade)	<i>Amval</i> (properties)	2:155–188–279, 2:102–107–247–251–258, 3:26–189, 4:53, 5:17–18–40–120, 6:73, 4:2–5–6–10–24–38–95–161, 9:20–24–44–55–81–85–88–102–111, 17:6–64, 30:39, 57:20, 71:12, 9:69, 10:88, 34:35, 3:10–116–186, 61:11, 63:9, 11:87, 48:11, 33:27, 49:15, 51:19
	<i>Mata</i> (provision)	2:36–236–240–241, 5:96, 11:3, 16:80, 33:53, 36:44, 56:73, 79:33, 80:32, 12:1–65–79, 4:102, 3:14–185–197, 4:77, 7:24, 9:38
	<i>Bida</i> (merchandise)	12:19, 12:62–65–88
	<i>Rizq</i> (sustenance)	2:60, 7:32, 8:4–74, 10:59, 13:26, 16:71, 17:30, 18:19, 20:131, 22:50, 24:26, 28:82, 29:17–62, 30:37, 34:4–15–36–39, 37:41, 39:52, 42:12–27, 45:5, 51:57, 14:32, 16:67–73–75, 20:132, 22:58
	<i>Infraq</i> (bestow)	2:3–215–219–261–262–265–274–280, 3:92–117–134, 4:34–38–39, 8:3–36, 9:54–91–92–121, 22:35, 28:54, 32:16, 42:38, 8:36, 16:75, 65:7, 14:31, 13:23, 35:29, 57:10, 60:10–11, 47:38, 63:8

Table 1. Cont.

Groups	Words	Verses
9. Group words (Commercial goods) a. Food and beverage products	<i>Taam</i> (Food)	2:61–184–259, 3:93, 5:5–75–95, 12:37, 21:8, 25:7–20, 33:53, 44:44, 69:34–36, 76:8, 88:6, 89:18, 108:3, 18:19, 73:13
	<i>Khamr</i> (alcohol)	2:219, 5:90–91, 47:15, 12:36–4
	<i>Fakiha</i> (fruits)	36:57, 38:51, 43:73, 44:55, 55:11–52–68, 56:20, 80:31, 23:19, 37:42, 77:42
	<i>Thmar</i> (fruit)	2:25–22–126–155–266, 6:99, 141, 18:42, 36:35, 7:57
	<i>Baql</i> (herb)	2:61
	<i>Adasa</i> (lentil)	2:61
	<i>Basal</i> (onion)	2:61
	<i>Fum</i> (garlic)	2:61
	<i>Qiththa</i> (cucumber)	2:61
	<i>Zanjabil</i> (ginger)	76:17
	<i>Kafur</i> (camphor)	76:5
	<i>Reyhan</i> (scented plants)	55:12, 56:89
	<i>Misk</i> (musk)	83:26
	<i>Īnab</i> (grape)	17:91, 80:28, 2:266, 6:99, 13:4, 16:11, 18:32, 23:19
	<i>Nakhl</i> (palms)	6:99–141, 18:32, 20:71, 26:148, 50:10, 54:20, 55:11–68, 69/7, 80:29, 19:23–25, 2:266, 13:4, 16:11–67, 17:91, 23:19
	<i>Zaytun</i> (olive)	6:99–141, 16:11, 95:1, 80:29
	<i>Tin</i> (fig)	95:1
	<i>Rumman</i> (pomegranate)	6:99–141, 55:68
	<i>Laban</i> (milk)	47:15, 16:66
	<i>Qutuf</i> (fruit)	69:23, 76:14
<i>Talh</i> (banana)	56:29	
<i>Yaktin</i> (pumpkin)	37:146	
9. Group words (Commercial goods) b. Luxury goods	<i>Dhahab</i> (gold)	3:14–91, 9:34, 18:31, 22:23, 35:33, 43:53–71
	<i>Fidda</i> (silver)	3:14, 9:34, 43:33, 76:15–16–21
	<i>Lu'lu</i> (pearl)	22:23, 76:19, 55:22, 56:23, 52:24, 35:33
	<i>Durriy</i> (pearl)	24:35
	<i>Asawir</i> (bracelets)	18:31, 22:23, 35:33, 76:21, 43:53
	<i>Yaqut</i> (ruby)	55:58
	<i>Marjan</i> (small pearls)	55:58, 55:22
9. Group words (Commercial goods) c. Apparel goods	<i>Libas</i> (clothes)	2:187, 7:26, 16:112, 7:26, 25:47, 78:10, 22:23, 35:33, 21:80.
	<i>Thawb</i> (garments)	22:19, 76:21, 18:31, 74:4, 24:58, 11:5, 71:7, 24:60
	<i>Harir</i> (silk)	22:23, 35:33, 76:12
	<i>Īstabraq</i> (thick outer silk)	18:31, 44:53, 55:54, 76:21
	<i>Qamis</i> (shirt)	12:18–25–26–27–28–93
	<i>Sundus</i> (fine inner silk)	18:31, 44:53, 76:21
	<i>Jilbab</i> (outer garments)	33:59
<i>Sarabil</i> (garments)	14:50, 16:81	

Table 1. Cont.

Groups	Words	Verses
9. Group words (Commercial goods) d. Animals	<i>Baqara</i> (cow)	2:70–67–69–71, 6:144–146, 12:43–46
	<i>Jamal/Ibil/Bair/Damir/Naka</i> (camel)	6:73–77–144, 11:64, 12:65, 17:59, 22:36, 26:155, 54:27, 77:33, 81:7, 88:17, 7:40, 91:13
	<i>Khayl</i> (horses)	3:14, 8:60, 16:8, 59:6
	<i>Bighal</i> (mule)	16:8
	<i>Himar</i> (donkey)	62:5, 2:259, 16:8, 31:19
	<i>Hut</i> (fish)	18:63, 37:142, 68:48, 18:61, 7:162
	<i>Nahl/Asal</i> (bee/honey)	16:68, 47:15
	<i>Ma'z</i> (goat)	16:143
	<i>Ganam/Na'ja/Da'n</i> (sheep)	6:146, 21:78, 20:18, 16:143, 38:23
<i>An'am</i> (the cattle)	3:14, 4:119, 5:1, 6:136–138–139–142, 7:179, 10:24, 16:5–66–80, 22:28–30, 22:21, 25:44, 26:133, 35:28, 39:6, 40:79, 42:11, 43:12, 47:12, 25:49	
9. Group words (Commercial goods) e. Human trafficking	<i>Abd</i> (servant)	2:23–178–207–221, 19:30, 34:9, 38:30, 38:44, 43:59, 50:8, 72:19, 4:172, 17:3, 18:65, 19:93, 96:10, 8:41, 38:17, 38:41, 54:9, 17:1, 18:1, 19:2, 25:1, 39:36, 53:10, 57:9, 66:10
	<i>A'mat</i> (bondwoman)	2:221
	<i>Gulam</i> (boy)	3:40, 12:19, 15:53, 18:80, 19:7–8–20, 37:101, 51:28, 18:74, 19:19, 18:82, 52:24
10. Group words (Others)	<i>Rihlah</i> (journey)	106:2, 12:70–75–62
	<i>I'laf</i> (familiarity)	106:1–2
	<i>Mutaffif</i> (defraud)	83:1
	<i>Ma'un</i> (small kindnesses)	107:7
	<i>Riba</i> (usury)	2:275–276–278, 3:130, 4:161, 30:39
	<i>Fadl</i> (grace)	2:64–105–237–243–251, 3:73–74–152–171–174, 4:70–73–83–113–175, 5:54, 7:39, 8:29, 10:58–60, 11:3–27, 12:38, 24:10
	<i>Fawz</i> (success)	3:125, 6:16, 9:72–89–100–111, 10:64, 37:60, 40:9, 44:57, 45:30, 57:12, 61:12, 64:9, 85:11, 4:73, 33:71, 48:5
	<i>Kasad</i> (decline)	9:24
	<i>Garim</i> (debtor)	9:60
	<i>Dayn</i> (debt)	2:282, 4:11–12,
	<i>Shuraka</i> (partners)	4:12, 6:94, 7:190, 10:66, 13:16, 30:28, 34:27, 39:29, 42:21, 68:41, 7:195, 10:71, 28:64, 35:40, 16:86
	<i>Maash</i> (livelihood)	69:21, 101:7, 78:11, 20:124, 28:58, 43:32, 7:10, 15:20
	<i>Suwa</i> (the cup)	12:72
	<i>Akwab</i> (vessels)	76:15, 43:71, 56:18, 88:14
	<i>Aniya</i> (goblet)	76:15, 88:5
	<i>Qawarir</i> (crystal-clear)	76:16
	<i>Ka's</i> (cup)	37:45, 52:23, 56:18, 76:5–17
<i>Araik</i> (couches)	78:34	
<i>Abqar</i> (a kind of rich carpet)	18:31, 36:56, 76:13, 83:23, 55:76	

In Table 1, the words listed in the first five groups (Torrey's list) are predominantly utilized in the context of the hereafter, where everyone's accounts will be revealed, actions will be weighed on a scale, and each individual will receive their just rights without any deceit. While Torrey's selected words pertain to the "God and human" relationship, the words we have considered are used in the context of the "human-human" relationship. Torrey portrays God as an "ideal merchant" based on the chosen words. In contrast, our list emphasizes the prominence of the human figure (Muhammad). Furthermore, Torrey likens God to an "ideal merchant", but does not delve into the concept of prophets (such as Salih, Lot, Shuayb) "not seeking any payment" (26:109–145–180) for their divine messages. Notably, while Torrey places the term *ajr* in the second group, *thaman* is included in the fourth group; however, both terms should ideally be in the same category. Additionally, the word *kharja*, which we have included in the sixth group (in the context of the Dhu'l-Qarnayn story), should have been placed in the same category as well. The term *thaman* found in the verse "do not sell my signs for a small price" (2:41) appears to have a more worldly context rather than being exclusively linked to a hereafter-centered meaning. Likewise, it is considerably challenging to establish a direct association between some of the 20 words selected by Torrey and the usage of the verb *aslafa* in the fifth group, and the term *zulm* in the third group may raise doubts regarding their direct relevance to the commercial context. A similar expression of the word *zulm* is found in the Qur'an in the terms *batil* (wrongful) and *ithm* (sinful) mentioned in 2:188. Although there is no specific term in the Qur'an that directly corresponds to the concept of "corruption", some commentators interpret these subjective interpretations in the list. In addition, it is worth noting that in the fifth group, Torrey includes terms associated with borrowing, such as *qard* and *rahn*, but fails to include the prominent term *dayn*. Moreover, he contends that the term *shara* in the fourth group is predominantly used in a metaphorical sense in the Qur'an, whereas *bay'* is employed in its literal meaning. Nevertheless, he includes *bay'* in the list of usages related to the hereafter. The words in the first groups analyzed by Torrey are of Arabic origin. However, in our list, all the words are not exclusively of Arabic origin; many of them are of foreign origin. Among these, some words like *dirham*, *dinar*, *sundus*, *istabraq*, *qamis*, and *tin* can be traced back to Hebrew and Persian origins. The principal cause behind this trend can be ascribed to Mecca's arid geographical setting, which necessitated the substantial importation of commercial commodities from external origins in order to support and sustain the local trade.

The existence of numerous trade-based words in the Qur'an indicates the presence of a wide semantic field centered around the concept of trade. It is noteworthy that a book like the Qur'an contains such a substantial usage of commercial terms, imparting a distinct commercial flavor to the text as a whole. One possible meaning of this is that should be attributed to the Prophet's trade background and the extensive trade potential of the city of Mecca during the period when the Qur'an was revealed. Interestingly, we observe that in parallel with the Qur'an, the vocabulary related to trade is the same in the *sīrah*. This indicates that understanding the Qur'an necessitates taking into account Prophet Muhammad's commercial background, as he belonged to a tribe and city that had long been associated with commerce. August Müller (d. 1949), in his book *Der Islam im Morgen- und Abendland*, asserts that verses such as "the bankruptcy of the last day" (39/15) in the Qur'an are connected to Muhammad's commercial past (Müller 1886, p. 191). There is no commercial vocabulary related to the life of Moses or Jesus in contrast to the *sīrah* of the Prophet Muhammad. The word *tijarah* is repeated about ten times in the Qur'an. This word is used synonymously with the word *bay'* (Torrey 1892, p. 43). The words *bay'* (selling) and *ishtara* (purchase) are used interchangeably from time to time, in the sense of both buying and selling (Isfahanī n.d., p. 73; Zamakhshari 1998a, vol. I, p. 91; Ibn Manzur n.d., p. 420). The most important distinction between the words *tijarah*, *bay'*, and *ishtara* is that the first two are worldly, with profane meanings, while *ishtara* is more otherworldly and spiritual. In the Qur'an, it is said, "God has made buying and selling lawful and usury unlawful" (2/275). In this verse, *bay'* means trade. The word *bay'* is repeated about fourteen times in

the Qur'an. Half of these occurrences are in the context of trade (*bay'*), and the other half (*yubayi'un*) is in the sense of obedience, which comes from the same root. The expression *yubayi'un* implies obedience to the exchange of value between the people and the head of state (*khalifa*). The Arabs would shake hands and obey each other to formalize the contract of sale between them. This concept is used both in the sense of commerce and in a political and social sense (Ibn al-Jawzi 1984, vol. VII, p. 427). It is noteworthy that in the use of the word *ishtara*, almost all of the things purchased are religious subjects; for example, the purchase of guidance and misguidance, souls (*al-nafs*), goods (property), worldly life, afterlife, torment and forgiveness, belief, unbelief, God's signs, God's covenant, and empty words (*lahwa'l-hadith*) (31: 6). In the Qur'an, the word *ishtara* is used in the context of man as a seller and God as a buyer, implying an act of commerce.

Money or valuable assets are inevitably needed in every transaction for selling or buying. In the Qur'an, it is not surprising that words such as *dinars* and *dirhams* are directly used in exchange for money, and they are abundantly used as surplus value, along with concepts such as reward/wage (*thaman*) which signify the entitlement of trade (Erkal 1992, pp. 162–65).⁸ We also encounter similar usage in *sirah* narrations. Money was invented to facilitate exchange and trade. It became necessary to sell in order to buy, and after a while, to buy again for selling. Merchants had to buy cheap and sell expensive. In this circulation, money transformed from a tool to a goal (Thomson 1997, p. 216). That is why the place where the money originates is where trade is common. The observations that the words *dinar* and *dirham* in the Qur'an were translated from Greek, Latin, and Persian into Arabic are noteworthy in this regard (Jawaliki 1990, p. 290; Jeffery 2007, p. 133).

When we focus on the words *hasab* (account) and *tijarah* (trade), we find that the words *mizan* (balance), *kayl* (measure), *qistas* (balance), *wazn* (weigh), and *qintar* (wealth) form a wide semantic field (Jawaliki 1990, p. 506; Jeffery 2007, p. 243). *Mizan* is mostly used in the context of weighing deeds in the hereafter, *kayl* is used to measure grain-type products, and *wazn* is used in the context of weighing immaterial goodness on the trial scale. *Qistas* has a general usage. If there is an account (*hasaba*), there are also *suhuf* (paper) and *qalam* (pen) (3:44, 31:27, 68:1, 96:4, 6:7, 91), and with these, there should be commodities and goods (property) to be recorded. The Qur'an speaks of a "lack of goods" (2:155) and a "lack of produce" (7:130), condemns those who collect and count their property, and considers "those who eat the property of orphans" (4:10) to be committing a great sin (104:2). Where there is buying, selling, and money, the number of products bought and sold is endless. However, since we have records of what Mecca and Quraysh merchants bought and sold from historical sources, it is clear that the products bought and sold in Mecca, the majority of which are reflected in the Qur'an, belong to this wide semantic field. Human trafficking (as seen in the sale of Prophet Joseph) (12:20), food and beverages, clothing, fruits, vegetables, grains, and animals, along with everything related to trade, are reflected in the Qur'an. For example, although luxury consumer products such as *harir* (silk) and its types *sundus* (fine inner silk) and *istabraq* (thick outer silk) are referred to as clothing of paradise, it is clear that these products are intended for foreign markets rather than the domestic market of Mecca. The same is true for *dhahab* (gold), *fidda* (silver), *lu'lu*, *durriy* (pearl), *marjan* (coral), *yaqut*, and *asawir* (bracelet). Food products, clothing, and daily necessities are among the main products for the domestic market.

Most of the food and drink products in Mecca and the neighboring regions fall under the category of *rizq*. Among the food products mentioned in relation to the term *rizq*, which is used over a hundred times, are *baql* (beans), *qiththa* (cucumbers), *fum* (garlic), *adasa* (lentils), *basal* (onions), *inab* (grapes), *nakhl* (dates), *fakiha/fawakih* (fruits), *hudr* (vegetables), and other consumables that were the main products of trade and consumption. When commercial circulation is high, it is inevitable for the central authority to collect taxes. However, the issue is that despite the absence of a central authority in the seventh-century Hijaz region, it is known that tax-like practices were implemented by local tribal chieftains, albeit not in their present form. Therefore, the Qur'an does not refrain from referring to tax collectors (*amil*) (9:29) and booty (*anfal*, *khums*) and words such as *jizya* and *fay*, which remind us of

such commercial revenues. However, it should be noted that the words “tax”, *jizya*, and *fay* are used in a manner that had not yet been fully formed and were later extensively used in Islamic law (Najm al-Din 2019, pp. 7, 93–131). For this reason, we observe that these concepts take on a new form through the practices of the Qur’an and the Prophet (sīrah).

The words *mal/amwal* (wealth), *mulk* (property), *mata* (goods), and *bida’a* (commodities) are also frequently used as commercial commodities, although in some instances, the religious context emerges with qualifications such as “ornaments of the life of the world”. The terms *aqd* (contract) and *ahd* (agreement), meaning to bind two things together, are often synonymous terms that imply a commercial contract. There is a close relationship between the words *aqida* (belief) and *aqd* (commercial agreement). Both words derive from the same root (Razi 1981, vol. XXXII, p. 194; Tahir 1984, vol. XXX, p. 628). Although it is known that the Meccans and Arabs, who were unfamiliar with maritime culture, held this attitude (Hamidullah 1962, p. 218), the Qur’an mentions the sea (*bahr*), ships sailing in the sea (*fulk* or *aflak*), and seafood (*lahman tariyyan, hilya, marjan*; 6/14, 17/66, 30/46, 35/12, 45/12, 55/22). The term *riba*, which is used in the Qur’an as the opposite equivalent of the word *bay’* (selling), is one of the indispensable concepts of trade. In commercial transactions based on interest or usury, words such as lending and receiving money (*dayn, qard*), pledge (*rahn*), profit (*ribh, fadl*), and loss (*khusran, khasad*), as well as being a guarantor for someone or something (*zaim*: 12/72, 16/91, *kafil*: 16/91), are included in the semantic field of the word trade (Torrey 1892, pp. 30–31, 44, 46). The word *ribh* (profit) is more worldly and profane than the word *fadl* (bounty). Although the word *fadl* is frequently used in the Qur’an in the religious and moral sense of “virtue”, all its uses, especially *ibtagh al-fadl* (seek bounty), have been interpreted by commentators in the sense of trade and exchange (Qurtubi 2006, vol. III, p. 198; Razi 1981, vol. V, p. 184; Ibn al-Jawzi 1984, vol. I, p. 212). One interesting usage in the Qur’an is *qard hasan* (good loan) (2/245, 57/11, 64/17). The word *amn* (safety) is similar to this. The terms *iman* (faith), *mu’min* (believer), and *amniyyah* (safety) appear hundreds of times in the Qur’an, and the word *amanah* (trust), which comes from the same root, is important both in terms of the Qur’an and because it is directly related to the Prophet (*al-amin*, trustworthy) as the bearer of the revelation. The expression in Surah Quraysh, stating that trade caravans were “safe from fear”, is one of the indicators of this mindset.

As the sīrah sources make clear, the political economy of Mecca necessitated a combination of commerce and sacredness. This is also true of the Qur’an, as it has shifted most concepts of commerce from the profane and secular sphere to the religious and sacred sphere. Moreover, the Qur’an describes these phenomena, which were well-known to the people, in a different sense, incorporating religion into the spiritual realm and giving these concepts a brand new identity. For instance, words like *mizan* (measure), *kayl* (weight), and *wazn* (balance) are used in the context of weighing good deeds and sins recorded in the book of deeds on the Day of Judgment. The true losers are those who harm their hereafter, not the worldly life. This state is referred to as *khusran* (frustration), with the risk of either gaining one hundred percent or losing one hundred percent. The Qur’an takes this further by eliminating any possibility of loss and “saving from the torment of hell” (61/10). That is why the phrase *fawzun azimun* (great success) is repeated fourteen times (4/73, 33/71, 48/5). The word *fidya* (ransom), which originally means compensation for loss in trade, has acquired a religious and sacred meaning in Qur’anic terminology. It now signifies “the price for unfulfilled acts of worship” (2/184) or “the price given to escape the torment of hell” (5/36, 18, 11). Many luxury consumer goods are also discussed in the Qur’an in terms of the afterlife, rather than this worldly life, and have transitioned from the profane to the sacred in terms of their value (Güneş 2019).

Infaq (spending), which means disposing of money or property in short, is used to encompass all types of expenditures aimed at gaining God’s approval (Isfahanî n.d., p. 502; Zamakhshari 1998b, p. 298). However, the Qur’an does not view *infaq* as a means of consumption in the modern sense; it gives it a religious identity and employs it as a means of solidarity in spreading capital to the grassroots. Although *zakah* is seen as a form of property tax, in the Qur’an, it takes on a purely religious form.

4. Semantic Field of Road (*Rihlah*) in the Qur'an

The words *ilaf* and *rihlah* in Surah Quraysh are two significant and characteristic concepts that explain both the relationship between the Qur'an and commerce and the political economy of Mecca. The word *ilaf* appears twice in the surah, and *rihlah* is a versatile expression, both of which characterize the Quraysh. It is not without reason that these two words were chosen to describe the summer and winter trade journeys that occur twice a year. The word *ilaf*, which highlights the most prominent quality of the Quraysh, is interpreted by linguists based on the root (a-l-f) to mean friendship, treaty, commonwealth, and reconciliation. However, it is understood that the word implies a "contract and agreement" (Ibn Manzur n.d., p. 109; Jawhari 1956, V, p. 1331). The most suitable expression for this concept is a "non-aggression pact" (Kallek 2019, p. 149). According to this last meaning, the addressees of Quraysh should be the tribes near the center. On the other hand, the term *rihlah* refers to the periphery far from the center, namely Yemen, Damascus, Abyssinia, and all the routes leading there. This distinction between the words *ilaf* and *rihlah* is extremely important for our subject, as will be further elaborated upon shortly.

The words Quraysh and *ilaf* are not repeated elsewhere in the Qur'an. However, the term *rihlah* is mentioned four times in the Qur'an, three times in the chapter of Joseph, and once in the chapter of Quraysh. Although the term *rihlah* is not limited to these four occurrences, it forms an important semantic field with the key terms that revolve around it. *Rihlah*, which means migration, preparing the camel for the journey, setting off, and riding on the back of something (camel, donkey), is the focal word of the surah (Zabidi 2001, vol. 29, p. 54; Ibn Manzur n.d., p. 1609).

When we make *rihlah* the focal term, a large group of words occurs around it. *Sabil* (way), *sirat* (path), *ṭariq* (path), *shari'a* (law), *minhaj* (clear way), *sunna* (way), *iwaj* (crooked), *mustaqim* (straight), *hada* (guide), *rashad* (right path), *dalal* (astray), *ghawa* (erred), *ṭayh* (wander), etc. Why does the Qur'an use so many words related to roads? From *sirah* perspectives, it is no coincidence that they all use a long vocabulary that overlaps in some way with those related to the road and is closely related to geography and the actual situation. In the environment in which the Qur'an was revealed, people could not sleep comfortably at night anywhere in Arabia. They were in danger of being attacked at any moment. No one would dare to venture outside the borders of their tribe, because when you exited alone, it would not be possible to come back alive. There was always the danger of being killed or captured and enslaved by someone. No caravan was sure of the attack; on the way, one could be stopped at any moment, and their goods could be seized. Only by bribing could this road be passed safely. There was only one exception from this hectic situation, namely the tribe of Quraysh. They were safe from these dangers, as stated in the surah. There was no danger of enemy attack for them; they could move freely all over the country in large and small convoys. This point needs to be elaborated on for a better understanding of the subject.

History shows that there is a direct relationship between the emergence of cities and trade routes (Doğan 2008, p. 75). Decisive routes in world history, such as the Silk Road, Spice Road, King's Road, and Amber Road, have played a vital role in the development of civilizations. The Silk Road was not merely a trade route; it also laid the foundation for many developments in world history (Northrup 2005, pp. 829–30). The Roman roads constructed by Roman engineers were widely renowned (Hamilton 1993, p. 116). The King's Road was also a long route built by the Persians, facilitating transportation between the capital and the strap-shaped centers (Herodotos 2012, p. 53).

The fact that roads serve as veins of commerce (Boardman 1829, pp. 3–4), the expressions "in the beginning was the road" (Jacobson 1940, p. 9) or "in the beginning was the foot" (Anthony 2004, p. 20) allude to this reality. Those who embark on the road are the first to dominate the earth; thus, the history of humanity is also the history of the road from another perspective (Anthony 2004, p. 23). Sometimes roads would bring friends together, and other times they would bring enemies together. The process of constructing religions is also based on roads. The spread of Christianity, a religion of Middle Eastern origin, to

the West, was made possible due to the roads (Ramsay 1911, p. 10). Paul's missionary journeys were later undertaken by his followers, traversing early road routes across the world (Gündüz 2004, p. 66).

The meanings of the word "trade" in other languages should be closely related to the road (Herd 1975, pp. 29–58).⁹ The fact that one of the names of the sea is 'road' in Greek also shows why the word means this when considering that sea routes were the most important trade gate during the Middle Ages (Adams 1974, 15/3, p. 239). The English word 'trade' is an old Dutch and German term. In English, this word means 'path' (Bonnard 2004, vol. I, p. 31) or 'beaten track'. In modern-day German, it means 'treten' (to step, to set foot, to enter).¹⁰ Similarly, the Dutch word 'tred' means 'to set foot'. The word 'tread', which means 'to set foot' in English, shows that these words in related languages from the same root still retain their original meaning. Another word used for the word 'trade' is the word 'traffic'. The word means 'arrival, departure, traffic, means of navigation, shopping, and the number of passengers' (Hoad 1985, p. 500). The word 'Verkehr(m)', which can be the German equivalent of the word 'traffic', also means 'round trip, navigation, traffic; means of transportation, relationship, trade, release' (Qornrumpf 1993). Interestingly, it is argued that the word *sirat*, which means road in Arabic and is one of the dominant concepts in the Qur'an, comes from the Latin word 'strata', which means 'straight path', showing that words related to the road have a common usage area. Arthur Jeffery draws attention to the fact that the origin of the word 'sirat', which means path in Greek (στρατα), and the Latin word 'strata', originally passed into Aramaic and finally into Arabic (Jeffery 2007, pp. 195–96). Izutsu also makes the same claim (Izutsu 2008, p. 161). The word 'street', which means 'avenue' in English, derives from this (Lewis 1992, p. 16). In classical sources of exegesis, there are opinions that the word *sirat* means 'way' in Greek (Qurtubi 2006, vol. I, p. 228). For this reason, anthropologists and archaeologists state that people reach almost all parts of the world via roads to obtain the various products they need (Childe 1964, p. 93; Braude 1996, p. 86).

Is this relationship of trade with the road reflected in the Qur'an? In our opinion, the answer to this question is affirmative. The Qur'an uses many different terms related to the way and uses them frequently. One of the most frequently used words is *sabil*, mentioned over a hundred times in the Qur'an. It is used to mean the way that leads a person to a goal, whether it be good or bad. It is also used in the sense of obedience to God, adequacy, remedy, and a way out (4/15 and 98, 76/3, 25/57, 4/76, 2/261, 3/97, 17/48), as well as the known way (Isfahanî n.d., p. 223; Ibn Manzur n.d., p. 1930). *Sirat*, mentioned 46 times, is used both in terms of the road (7/86, 37/22–23) and religion (1/6). The word *tariq*, occurring in 11 places, is used in three different meanings: path, sect, and rank. The central term (focus term) in the Qur'an is not *tariq* but *sabil* and *sirat*. *Tariq* is not like that; it has a slightly more specific use. There are some differences between the three: *sirat* is the straight road without curves, *tariq* is the route used by the night traveler, and *sabil* is the frequently used road that becomes a habit to commute from *tariq* (Qafavî 1998, p. 513). *Sirat* and *sabil* are words used in a purely religious sense. According to Izutsu, *sirat* and its synonym *sabil* are focal words and the heads of a large family of words that contribute to the thought system of the Qur'an. Some words have meanings related to the nature of the road. The Qur'an looks at this issue from the point of view of whether the road is straight (*mustaqim*, *sawiyy*, etc.) or curved (*awaj*, *muawwaj*, etc.) (Izutsu 2008, p. 157).

The geography in which Muhammad lived was a desert. As we understand from his *sīrah*, the desert and the road held great importance in his life. He organized various expeditions to distant regions until the moment of his death. When considering this situation, words like *tariq*, *sabil*, *sirat*, and many others become more meaningful. In the Qur'an, *sabil* and *sirat* are synonyms for each other. These two words were used by poets in pre-Islamic times, but their usage was not religious. *Tariq al-mustaqim* passes like the *sirat al-mustaqim*. Both mean the 'straight path'. *Mustaqim* not only refers to the straight road but also signifies the path to reach the destination. The Qur'an uses the words *awaj* and *ajaj* to denote a 'curved path' for uneven and unrighteous roads. The use of *awaj* in the sense of

a road that does not lead to the goal can also be seen in the Jahiliyyah period. However, the main difference between the usage in Jahiliyyah and the Qur'an is that while it is used in a material and literal sense in Jahiliyyah, the Qur'an employs it in a metaphoric sense (Izutsu 2008, pp. 25, 154).

Al-Din, *al-sharia*, and *al-manhaj* are also words related to the road or the way. *Al-sharia*, with its different variants, is mentioned five times in the Qur'an in this sense. The word *sharia* means the path that God has bestowed upon people and that they follow for their benefit and for the sake of their country, and a path in the sense of religion that God has sent and commanded them to act according to His will (Isfahanî n.d., p. 258). Considering this meaning, the word *al-din*, which is used in the Qur'an and occurs nearly a hundred times, serves a similar purpose. The word *manhaj*, which is used in the Qur'an (al-Ma'idah 5/48), is another word that means way and method. Additionally, the word *sunnah* means 'the way to go', indicating the path that has been tried before by others and is considered true for those who come later. The right ways are usually the tried ways, while wrong ways are those that have not been tested and do not lead to the goal. Izutsu also connects the word *millah* with the road, suggesting that it is the way that leads to the shore of peace when considering the nation as a whole (Izutsu 2008, p. 250).

In order to explore the semantic field of the words related to the road, it is important to remember that the environment in which the Qur'an was revealed was a desert culture (Ball 2017, p. 264). As Watt points out, "the desert, inherently, plays a significant role in the phenomenon of Islam" (Watt 1960, p. 1). This is because traveling on a road and being in the desert are vastly different experiences. As we see in various history and *sīrah* works, finding one's way alone in the desert is nearly impossible. While nomadic tribes may have a better understanding of the desert compared to sedentary (*hadari*) people, they often find themselves helpless in its vastness. The desert is a path from which there is no chance of turning back. Once a light wind blows, the path just traversed can never be retraced.

The Qur'an and prophetic tradition together with the works of *sīrah* outline severe punishments for those who disrupt the road in the desert, as mentioned in Surah al-Maida 33–34. These verses describe a four-stage penal sanction, including harsh punishments such as killing, hanging, and exile, which may be difficult for modern individuals to comprehend. The most chilling punishment mentioned is the crossing of hands and feet. The verb used throughout the verse, which is translated as "those who corrupt the earth", has been interpreted by the majority of commentators as "banditry" (علي قطع الطريق) (Muqatil 2002, vol. I, p. 473; Tabari 2001, vol. VI, p. 362; Qurtubi 2006, vol. VII, p. 43). *Sīrah* practices and narrations regarding the revelation of the verse also support this interpretation (Suyûfi 2003, vol. V, p. 282). Muslim jurists have expressed the view that there should be no tolerance when it comes to the punishment for the crime of cutting the road, referred to as *al-hirabah* (banditry) or *al-qat' al-tariq* (road blocking) (Shaban 2002). This is evident from the fact that the funeral prayer is not performed for a person who commits the crime of *al-hirabah* (Mavsuât al-Fikhiyya 1989, vol. XVI, p. 34). However, what is crucial for us to understand is that the Qur'an regards this crime as an act of "declaring war against God and His Messenger" (5:33) and emphasizes that those who commit such acts will face even greater disgrace and punishment in the hereafter. It is significant for us to recognize the vital role of roads in the desert climate within the geographical context where the Qur'an was revealed.

For people living in the desert, knowing the way or getting lost in the vast sands, melting drop by drop under the hot sun, is a disastrous type of death. Therefore, the problem is not just barbarian pirates blocking roads and pillaging everything they find (Lindholm 2004, p. 65). What we learn from the *sīrah* works is that in those days, each tribe had a special territory. Knowing the right path in this small region may not have been of great importance, but when they went outside the boundaries of the region they were accustomed to, many were left helpless; the vast, wild, terrible sand desert was encountered. That is why the Jahiliyyah Arabs formed a thought web around the concepts of *hada* (guidance) and 'path'. This situation was reflected in the Qur'an and *sīrah* materials. The straightness and curvature of the road create a large semantic field in the Qur'an.

Izutsu also gives details on this subject; for example, he mentions the words *yahma* and *asafa* (Izutsu 2008, p. 156). The opposite of *hidaya* is *dalal* (misguidance, heresy). *Dalal* means deviating from the right path and entering the crooked path. *Dalal* is “the way of those who have been condemned [by Thee], or of those who go astray” (Asad 1980, p. 2). This is why the word *dallin* in Surah al-Fatiha is used to mean ‘those who go astray’.

The Prophet Muhammed made many long journeys for commercial reasons. It is known that he traveled to Damascus at least twice (Ibn Hisham 1990, vol. I, pp. 204, 213). A prophet is one who guides people so that they do not lose their way. Therefore, in addition to the use of the words *hada* and *dalal* in relation to the Prophet, there are verses where these words are used in connection with trade. In verse 7 of the Surah al-Duha is said: ‘And found thee lost on thy way and guided thee?’. In this verse, the word *dalal* is used for the Prophet, while in another verse (13/7) the word *hadin* is used in relation to the Prophet Muhammad (Muqatil 2002, vol. II, p. 328). There are also verses (2/16) in which the words *tijarah* and *ishtara* and the words *hada* and *dalal* are used together. The word misguidance also (23/74–76) means ‘straying from the right path’, and *taha* (5/26) means becoming lost in the desert and mistaking the way home. The words *ghawa/ghayy* (7/146) are also used to mean ‘deviation from the path’ (Izutsu 2008, pp. 26, 154). The vocabulary used on this subject has a weight that encompasses the entire Qur’an. The meaning area of the verb *dalla* is also related to the term *kufir* (disbelieve). For, considering that unbelief means ‘not believing in God’, and man’s ‘deviating from the right path and taking the wrong path’ and doing this necessarily, a new semantic field can be mentioned. The word faith, which is the opposite of the word blasphemy, with the meaning of ‘being safe and secure’ essentially implies the way. Why did the Qur’an mention so many words related to the path? Why is the path so important? The answer to this question is not intricate or complex; it is easy for everyone to understand: trade is also connected to the road.

5. Conclusions

This article aims to establish a correlation between the usage of the terms trade and road in the Qur’an with special references to the life of the Prophet. The frequent repetition of words related to both trade and road in the Qur’an aligns well with the political economy of Mecca. The Quraysh tribe also utilized their Ka’bah-centered religious beliefs to leverage trade advantages. There is a strong connection between the road and the trade relationship, as the Quraysh and Mecca predominantly relied on land routes for trade, excluding the use of sea routes. As is understood from the *sīrah* works, therefore, the road held vital importance. Hence, one of the reasons for the abundant use of road-related words in the Qur’an is their association with trade. The Prophet’s ancestors, Qusayy and Hashim, established Quraysh’s privileged position in trade among other Arab tribes, and this influence likely impacted Muhammad as well, reflecting in the Qur’an. This is evident in the Surahs Quraysh and Fil, revealed at the beginning of Muhammad’s prophethood. The Qur’an encompasses a wide range of consumer goods that were prevalent in Arabian commerce during the seventh century. While these words are used in a religious sense, they consistently revolve around trade-related concepts such as buying, selling, debt, money, interest, and taxation. Our study distinguishes itself from Torrey’s and Izutsu’s works. Izutsu’s work distinguishes itself through its notable correlation, specifically observed between the lexicons of *tijarah* and *rihlah*. We have analyzed a greater number of words, categorizing them into ten groups. Unlike Torrey, we also argue that words related to the road indirectly pertain to trade. A noteworthy aspect of the subject is the abundance and frequent use of road-related words in the Qur’an. Even words like *shari’ah*, *sunnah*, and *millah*, which have distinct meanings, are contextualized within the framework of the road. The prominence of path-centered terms underscores their relevance to the politics of Mecca and the Quraysh. This is particularly true for keywords like *huda* (guidance) and *dalal* (misguidance). *Huda* is synonymous with *Islam* and *iman* and signifies being on the right path, while *dalal* (heresy) means losing one’s way in the desert.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

Notes

- 1 This surah, which takes its name from the expression ‘Elephant Army’ in the first verse, refers to the expedition organized by the Abyssinians against Mecca in 570 AD (Watt 1960, p. 13).
- 2 The *al-khulf al-fudul* is a confederation of the righteous where the participants come together to correct the injustices that have occurred. For detailed information see (Ibn Hisham 1990, vol. I, p. 153).
- 3 The meeting place where the Quraysh tribe discussed and decided on important issues. The first person who built *al-Dar al-Nadwa* is Qusayy.
- 4 Desire to be destroyed by the Abyssinian army under the command of Abrahah, who marched on Mecca to destroy the Ka’bah.
- 5 Before Islam, some tribes who lived in Mecca and were in the service of the Ka’bah and some of their relatives and allies were called *homs*, the rest of them were called *hilla*.
- 6 Four months of the year were considered sacred, during this period war was unanimously suspended, hostile feelings were suppressed, and forgiveness reigned throughout Arabia.
- 7 The privilege of deciding when a month was to be intercalated into the lunar calendar to keep it in line with the solar year. For detailed information see (Ibn Hisham 1990, vol. I, pp. 59–61).
- 8 The first minting of coins by Muslims took place quite late, during the reign of Khaliph Abdulmalik. It is understood that the Byzantine dinar called ‘Rumi’ and the Iranian dirham called ‘Kisrevi’ were widely used in the Mecca trade (Erkal 1992, pp. 162–63).
- 9 W. Herd gives important information about trade routes in Arab countries in his book called Near East Trade History. For detailed information see (Herd 1975).
- 10 The words *patha* in old Persian, *path* in English, *patte* in French, *pfad* (footpath) in German, *pons* (bridge) in Latin, and *pati*, *patik*, *patika* in Turkish should be remembered. In ancient Greek, *pontos* means passage/corridor/gateway (*pontos* means god of the sea in mythology), *patikos* (πατικός) means ‘small shoe’ and *pateo* (πατεω) means ‘to walk’. For this reason, Aristotelians are called *peripatetikos* (περιπατητικός) meaning ‘walkers’ (See Nişanyan 2019).

References

- Adams, Robert McC. 1974. Anthropological Perspectives on Ancient Trade. *Current Anthropology* 15: 239–58.
- Albayrak, İsmail. 2001. Charles C. Torrey’s Concept of the Qur’an and Its Narratives. *S.U. İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 3: 137–50.
- Anthony, Joseph. 2004. *On Foot: A History of Walking*. New York: NYU Press.
- Asad, Muhammad. 1980. *The Meaning of the Qur’an*. Gibraltar: Dar al-Andalus.
- Ball, Warwick. 2017. *Arabistan’dan Öteye (Avrupa’daki Asya ve Batı’nın Şekillenışı I, Fenikeliler Araplar ve Avrupalının Keşfi)*. Translated by Ahmet A. Çağlayan. İstanbul: Ayrıntı.
- Boardman, Henry Augustus. 1829. *The Low Value Set upon Human Life in the United States: A Discourse Delivered on Thanksgiving Day*. Trenton: A. W. Philips.
- Bonnard, André. 2004. *Antik Yunan Uygarlığı (İtalya’dan Parthenon’a)*. çev. Kerem Kurtgözü: Evrensel Basım Yayın.
- Braude, Fernand. 1996. *Uygarlıkların Grameri*. Translated by M. Ali Kılıçbay. Ankara: İmge Kitabevi.
- Cheldhod, Joseph. 1992. Hicret Öncesi Mekke’de Kapitalizm. *Uludağ Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 4: 307–10.
- Childe, Gordon. 1964. *What Happened in History*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd.
- Crone, Patricia. 1987. *Meccan Trade and the Rise of Islam*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Doğan, Banu. 2008. *Tarih Öncesi Ticaret ve Değiş Tokuş*. İstanbul: Arkeoloji ve Sanat Yayınları.
- Donner, Fred McGraw. 1977. Mecca’s Food Supplies and Muhammad’s Boycott. *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 20: 249–66. [CrossRef]
- Erkal, Mehmet. 1992. *Madeni Para, Banknot ve Kağıt Para Mübadelesinde Faiz. (Para, Faiz ve İslam içinde)*. İstanbul: İslami Araştırmalar Vakfı Yayınları, pp. 162–65.
- Gündüz, Şinasi. 2004. *Pavlus: Hristiyanlığın Mimarı*. Ankara: Ankara Okulu Yayınları.
- Güneş, Cengiz. 2019. *Kavram ve Olgu Olarak Kur’an’da Ticaret*. Sivas: Cumhuriyet Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Doktora Tezi.
- Hamidullah, Muhammad. 1962. el-İ’laf veya İslam’dan Önce Mekke’nin İktisadi-Diplomatik Münasebetleri’. Translated by İsmail Cerrahoğlu. *AÜİFD* 9: 213–22.
- Hamidullah, Muhammad. 1980. Hz. Peygamberin İslam Öncesi Seyahatleri. Translated by Abdullah Aydemir. *AÜ İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 4: 327–42.
- Hamilton, Edith. 1993. *The Roman Way to Western Civilization*. New York: Norton.

- Herd, Wilhelm von. 1975. *Yakın Doğu Ticaret Tarihi*. Translated by Enver Ziya Karal. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu.
- Herodotos. 2012. *Tarih*. İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası.
- Hoad, Terry F. 1985. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary English Etymology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ibn al-Jawzi, Abû al-Farac. 1984. *Zad al-Masir fi Ilm al-Tafsir*. Beirut: Maktaba al-Islam.
- Ibn Habib, Muhammad. 1985. *al-Munammak fi Ahbar Quraysh*. Beirut: Âlam al-Kutub.
- Ibn Hisham. 1990. *al-Siret al-Nabawiyya*. Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi.
- Ibn Maja, Ebu Abdullah. n.d. *Sunen*. Kairo: Dar al-Ihya al-Kutub al-Arabiyya.
- Ibn Manzur. n.d. *Lisan al-Arab*. Beirut: Dar al-Maarif.
- Ibn Sa'd, Muhammad. 2001. *al-Tabaqat al-Kubra*. Cairo: Maktaba al-Khanji.
- Isfahanî, Râğîb. n.d. *al-Mufradat fi Gharib al-Qur'an*. Beirut: Dâr al-Marifa.
- Izutsu, Toshihiko. 2008. *God and Man in the Qur'an*. Kuala Lumpur: Islamic Book Trust.
- Jacobson, Herbert Reinhold. 1940. A History of Roads from Ancient Times to the Motor Age. Master's dissertation, Georgia School of Technology, Atlanta, GA, USA.
- Javad Ali. 1993. *Mufassal fi Tarikh al-Arab Qabl al-Islam*. Bagdat: Jamia Bagdat.
- Jawaliki, Ebu Mansûr. 1990. *al-Mu'arrab min Kalam al-A'jami ala Huruf al-Mu'jam*. Dimasq: Dar al-Kalam.
- Jawhari, Ismail. 1956. *al-Sihah Taj al-Lugat wa Sihah al-Arabiyya*. Beirut: Dar al-'Ilm li al-Malâyin.
- Jeffery, Arthur. 2007. *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur'an*. Leiden: Brill.
- Kallek, Cengiz. 2019. Cahiliyede ve Nebi Döneminde Hac ve Ticaret İlişkisi. In Hz. Peygamberin Veda Haccı Hutbeleri Sempozyum Tebliğleri. Edited by Suat Mertoğlu. İstanbul: Diyanet Yayınları.
- Kistler, Meir J. 1965. The Market of the Prophet. *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 8: 272–76. [CrossRef]
- Lewis, Bernard. 2002. *The Arabs in History*. New York: Oxford University Press Inc.
- Lewis, Bernard. 1995. *The Middle East*. New York: Scribner.
- Lewis, Bernard. 1992. *İslamın Siyasal Dili*. Translated by Fatih Taşar. İstanbul: Rey Yayıncılık.
- Lindholm, Charles. 2004. *İslami Ortadoğu*. Translated by Balkı Şafak. Ankara: İmge Kitabevi.
- Mavsuât al-Fikhiyya. 1989. Kuvayt: Vizarat al-Avkaf wa al-Şuun al-İslamiyya.
- Muir, Sir William. 1923. *The Life of Mohammad*. Edinburg: John Grant.
- Müller, August. 1886. *Der Islam im Morgen-und Abendland*. Berlin: Historischer Verlag Baumgärtel.
- Muqatil, b. Sulayman. 2002. *Tafsir Muqatil b. Sulayman*. Beirut: Müassasat al-Tarikh al-Arabi.
- Najm al-Din, Yousefi. 2019. Confusion and Consent: Land Tax (Kharaj) and the Construction of Judicial Authority in the Early Islamic Empire. *Sociology of Islam* 7: 93–131. [CrossRef]
- Nişanyan, Sevan. 2019. Nisanyan Sözlük, Çağdaş Türkçenin Etimolojisi. Available online: <https://www.nisanyansozluk.com/kelime/peripatetik> (accessed on 14 November 2019).
- Northrup, Cynthia Clark. 2005. *Encyclopedia of World Trade from Ancient Times to the Present*. New York: Routledge.
- Qafavî, Ebû'l-Bekâ. 1998. *al-Külliyat*. Beirut: Müassasat al-Risâla.
- Qornrumpf, Hans-Jurgen. 1993. *Langenscheidts Taschenwörterbuch der Türkischen und Deutschen Sprache, Teil II*. İstanbul: İnkılap Kitabevi.
- Qurtubi. 2006. *al-Jami li-Ahkam al-Qur'an*. Beirut: Muassasat al-Risala.
- Ramsay, William. 1911. *The Church in the Roman Empire before A. D. 170*. New York: The Knickerbocker Press.
- Razi. 1981. *Mafatih al-Ghayb*. Beirut: Dar al-Fikr.
- Shaban, Fekri M. E. M. 2002. *İslam Hukukunda Hirabe (Eşkiyalık) Suçu*. İstanbul: Marmara Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Doktora Tezi.
- Sühayli, Abdurrahman. n.d. *al-Ravdu'l-Unf fi Tefsir al-Siret al-Nabawiyya*. Beyrut: Dâru'l-Kütübü'l-İlmiyye.
- Suyûtî, Celâleddin. 2003. *al-Durr al-Manthur fi al-Tafsir al-Ma'thur*. Cairo: Markaz Hijr li al-Buhus wa al-Dirasat al-Arabiyya va al-Islamiyya.
- Tabari, Ibn Jarir. 2001. *Jami al-Bayan fi Ta'wil Ay al-Qur'an*. Cairo: Hicr.
- Tahir, b. Ashur. 1984. *al-Tahrir ve al-Tanvir*. Tunus: Dar al-Tunusiyya.
- Thomson, George. 1997. *İlk Filozoflar (Eski Yunan Toplumu Üzerine İncelemeler)*. Translated by Mehmet H. Doğan. İstanbul: Payel yayınevi.
- Torrey, Charles Cutler. 1892. *The Commercial-Theological Terms of the Koran*. Leyden: Brill.
- Wahidi. 1991. *Asbab al-Nuzul al-Qur'an*. Cairo: Dar al-Kütüb al-İlmiyya.
- Watt, William Montgomery. 1960. *Muhammad at Mecca*. Oxford: The University Press.
- Zabidi, Muhammad. 2001. *Taj al-Arus min Jevahir al-Qamus*. Kuvayt: Dar Sader.
- Zamakhshari, Carullah. 1998a. *al-Kashshaf an Haqa'iq Ghawamid al-Tanzil*. Riyad: Maktaba al-Arabi.
- Zamakhshari, Carullah. 1998b. *Asas al-Balaga*. Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-İlmiyya.

Disclaimer/Publisher's Note: The statements, opinions and data contained in all publications are solely those of the individual author(s) and contributor(s) and not of MDPI and/or the editor(s). MDPI and/or the editor(s) disclaim responsibility for any injury to people or property resulting from any ideas, methods, instructions or products referred to in the content.