Stylistic study of three Qur’anic chapters šād, Mary and Al A’rāf

1. Introduction

One strikingly common element seems to cohesively bind three different and far away placed chapters in the Qur’anic text: the letter Šād, which is prefixed to all the three chapters: Šād/38, M‘ary/19 and Al A’rāf/7 Suyuti (d.911.H) in his İtqan writes that chapters with prefixed letters have words formed of these letters initially, medially or finally. Noldeke (1860: 603-610) in the same spirit pointed out regarding Hameem ‘ain seen qāf, that three of the letters were embedded in the phrase from chapter Shura/17, la’alla sā’ata qarib, ‘may be the hour is nigh’. Rehman (2008) worked on these lines and discussed that there were significant patterns of ALM (alif lam mim) templates in the respective chapters. This article seeks to find out whether the templates found in these chapters are randomly placed or make semantic and stylistic patterns with letter Šād for the three Qur’anic chapters, mentioned above. It concentrates on the occurrence of this letter and the cohesive and coherent links that exist in these chapters with reference to the same. This article uses linguistic techniques of text analysis and is purely descriptive in nature. It also uses the ‘foregrounding’ concept of Leech and his tripartite model of anatomy of language (1980: 37) to describe the role of the letters. It is an attempt to revisit the Qur’anic text with modern tools of phonology, Kaye (1989) and morphology, Katamba (1989). Once the traces are found, they are linked through stylistic analysis to show the significance of these occurrences.

2 Background

In Arabic language, alphabets have a specific character. They not only embed the respective phonemes but also stand for different meanings. For example, alif (the first alphabet stands as a derivational source for ‘ulfa’ love, ‘alf thousand and “aleef” lover. Alif means ‘cow’ and it also stands for the number ‘one’. Similarly, noon stands for fish, and ‘ain stands for the chief of the tribe as well as the eye and water spring (see Ferozabadi d. 813). This characteristic was well known to Arab poets when they wrote poetry for example, the following verse plays on the special meaning of ‘qaf’.

Qultu laha qifi fa qalat li qaf
(I asked her to stop and she said I stopped)

The poet uses the letter/q/, the glottal, four times in the verse and every time with a difference. Such a line shows the command of a poet over the use of a sound/letter. It reflects the consciousness of the poet regarding the use of a single letter ‘qāf’ for poetic economy and beauty. Similarly, this article expands on the earlier existing phenomenon of the use of letters in different literary contexts and shows how the same phenomenon is repeated in three of the chapters, i.e. šād, Mary and Al A’rāf of the Holy Qur’an.

2.1 The letter šād (saad)

Arabic alphabets are basically divided into two linguistic categories; grammatical and lexical. Letters such as alif, lām and mim are lexical as well as grammatical; however, letters such as /Šād/ and /rā/ are purely lexical, i.e. they occur only in lexical words. This factor gives the latter a more limited role to play in the text as compared to their former counterparts.
Ibrahim (1994: 57) writes about the letter Șād that it is produced at the tip of the tongue which is light, raised and whistling sound with unvoiced quality. The sound of the letter ‘Șād’ by the structure offers an open vowel assonance pattern that is different from ‘mīm’ which contains a long close vowel; it is also different from ‘lām’ and ‘kāf’ which have different rhyme endings /m/ and /f/. A survey of the chapter Șād shows that a galaxy of words has been put together with /sā/ used initially, medially and finally rather than such alternatives that do not contain this phoneme. For example, ‘as baḥāl ‘aryq ‘the people of the forest’ has been used instead of ‘qawmī Shu’āyrb ‘the people of Shu’āyrb’ and ṣafīnāt has been used in place of ḫayl ‘for horses’. We can see that if these alternatives are not used the whole music of the chapter is disturbed and the specific assonance of this chapter is also lost. This gives a specific character to these words as they fit in the scheme of things more beautifully with respect to the rhyme, rhythm and other phonological effects of the chapter Șād. At the same time, these choices give a special identity to this chapter. Moreover, a closer look at the said chapters reveals that the words chosen do not just make a cohesive bundle, but contribute to the main themes of these chapters. Four main areas have thus been identified: first, contribution to the tone and rhythm, second, development of the main theme, third, the development of the narrative and fourth, the intra-contextual and inter-contextual links. First, we discuss the rhyme and assonance scheme in more details in the following section.

2.2 The Letter šād and Assonance of the Chapter šād

Long open vowel assonance has been developed throughout this sūrah. Line endings such as shiqāq, Manās, kazzāb, ‘Ujāb, Yūrād, Ikhtilāq, ‘azāb, Wā’hābābār 45, dār 46 akhyār 47, 48 and Aṣbāb provide good examples in this regard but yūrād 7, Sīrāt, Jiyād 31, aṣfād 38, naṣād 54, and mīhād 56 especially contribute to it for the dental consonant end rhyme. This chapter, then, presents a musical effect that is comprised of rising vowel plus dental plosives to give the end rhyme a peculiar effect. From verse number two till sixty six, this scheme is dominantly followed. For recitation, this scheme provides a sweet melody. Commenting on the selection of عجیب instead of عجب Rauf (2004) writes,

There is a shift from the morphological form of the adjective(عجیب)amazing) in Q11:72/ Q50:2 to the adjective(عجیب-curious) Q38:5. The adjective عجیب is on the pattern of (فعل)... similarly the adjective(عجیب) is on the pattern of (فعل) that has been employed in word-final co text sentences such as Q38:2:4, 6, like (شفق – dissension (مناص – escape ))’ (p. 61).

This research takes the stand that the alternative selection is in keeping with the rising rhyme assonance scheme of the letter (صل) /šād/: the open vowel assonance and this phenomenon have consistently been followed in the whole sūrah. This reminds us of the definition of parallelism where the writer ‘insists on a particular choice’ although other choices within the language are available and this continues till verse 66. Thus, the dominant music of the sūrah tallies with the assonance inherent in the letter šād, along with the dental plosive end rhyme i.e. 66 verses.

2.3 šād and the main theme of the sūrah (Semantic Implications)

The main theme of this sūrah seems to be patience and perseverance, ‘ṣabr’ as this is mentioned from different angles. For example the disbelievers say, wašbiru ‘ala ‘alihati-kum/6 stand by your gods. All the Prophets in this sūrah are known for their patience and perseverance, for example, the Prophet Ayyūb, Wajādābū sabīra/44, We found him patient. The prophet Mohammad is told, ‘ishīr ‘ala ma yaqūlūna /17 have patience in what they say and Ibrahim/Abraham, Ishāq/Isac, Ya’qūb/Jacob, Ismail,
Ishmail/yasa’a/Joshua and Zulkifli, /Dhul Kifl Kullum minal akhýar/47 all were the chosen ones. Thus, patience is emphasized not only in the theme of the text but also in the prefixed letter which is alliteratively tied to ṣabr, ‘patience’. In the next section, we see how Ṣâd (the letter) and dhikr (remembrance) are related. By implication this surah directs the addressee to remain steadfast in turbulent times. This is held by the historical facts i.e. the time of revelation.

2.4 (Ṣâd and dhikr ‘remembrance’)

There is also a marked occurrence of the word /dhikr/, the remembrance. It is striking as it occurs in the second and the penultimate verses. In the very first verse:Ṣâd wa/l Qur’an i dhikr/1Ṣâd and Qur’an the reminder; the disbelievers declare,’a unzila ‘alayhiz dhikra min bayninâ/4Does the reminder come to him amongst us?God says,\textit{Bal hum fi shakkim min dhikri!}\textit{Nay, but they are in doubt about my reminder. The Qur’an is called, Kitâbun ‘anzalnâhu mubârakân li-yaddhabbaru ‘ayâtibî wa li yatadhakkara ‘ulul ‘alb/29 Book revealed to you for the pondering of signs and remembrance of the people of wisdom. Haza dhikrun/49 This is a reminder. In huwa illa dhikrul lil ‘alamin./87 This is but a reminder for the worlds.}

This consistent occurrence and juxtaposition of dhikr compels one to look for links between the letter Ṣâd and dhikr. This relationship is expressed, ‘aqimissalata li dhikri ,Taha/14Establish prayer for my remembrance.Lâ niâdiya lissalati min yawmil jum’â fas’awiladhikrill huwa illa dhikrul lil ‘alamin/62:10When you are called for the prayer on Friday, hurry to the dhikr of Allah.Qad afla a man tazakka wadhakarasma rabbihi fâsallâ.87:15 Successful is the one who purified and remembering the name of his lord he prayed. This points to initial relationship between salâh and dhikr. In all these verses quoted we can see that salâh and dhikr seem to complement each other. In the verse from Ta ha salâh is established for dhikr, the example from surah Jum’a/62 you go to salâh for dhikr and in the last example from surah 87 juxtaposes dhikr and salâh together.

Coherent relationship between the letter Ṣâd, Salâh and dhikr can be seen if we have a look at the different important words that begin with the letter in the Holy Quran. For Example,

Table 2 words beginning with Ṣâd.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ṣâlâh</th>
<th>Prayer</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ṣâf</td>
<td>Lines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ṣirât</td>
<td>The way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ṣabr</td>
<td>Patience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ṣidq</td>
<td>Truth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ṣadr</td>
<td>The Chest, The heart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naṣîhâ</td>
<td>guidance</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Analysis of each of the above given words yields an overall communicative message that draws one to the remembrance of God, the consciousness of oneself and righteousness. For example, *salah* ‘prayer’, *saf* ‘line in the prayer’ and *dhikr* ‘remembering God’ are related cohesively as well as coherently and Quran itself is related to *salāh* and *dhikr*. Therefore, all these words are interrelated and interconnected semantically, thematically and phonologically. This creates a special communicative effect of the message leading very tacitly to the extreme form in *sajda of salāh*, (prostration in prayer) which is also present in verse 24 of this surah: when David (the prophet) is reminded of the teachings and he falls prostrate to ALLAH. The *sajda* of David is related to the first *sajda* of angels which declared man as the vicegerent on earth/73. The defiance by *Iblīs* ‘the disappointed’ on the other hand sent him asunder from the Divine forces which always obey and never dare to disobey. *Sajda* leads to prayer on the one hand and to other *Sajdas* (Prostrations) in the Holy Quran on the other. *Sajda* is the extreme physical; the per formative, form of submission and obedience and therefore links this surah to *Salāh* and *dhikr* both. A chain of reminding process is, therefore, set in here, the key of which lies in *ṣād*.

The theme of obedience is reinforced by Ibrāhīm’s obedience 37:107 which is unmatched on the earth. One after the other, all prophets mentioned in surah Ṣād are referred with the conjunctural verb wadā’khur/17, 41, 46, 47. Thus, the text is inter-knit with the theme of *dhikr*; obedience by the letter Ṣād. We note that there is an enhanced occurrence of the letter Ṣād. We also noted that *dhikr* is the component of the second verse of this surah after the letter Ṣād. It is also interesting to note that both the elements of the verse, Ṣād and *dhikr* have an enhanced occurrence. *dhikr* occurs 11 times in this surah while the common occurrence of *dhikr* in other surahs is far less, for example in surah 37, Saffāt a relatively longer one the word *dhikr* occurs only three times, and no occurrence in surah 36, a surah of almost equal length to this. This draws our attention to the connection between Ṣād and *dhikr* and we feel obliged to analyze *dhikr* further.

### Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>dhikr</th>
<th>and its meaning</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>dhikr</em></td>
<td>means remembrance in a spirit of reverence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>dhikr</em></td>
<td>is also used for recital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>dhikr</em></td>
<td>The celebration of the presence of Allah is also known dhikr</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>dhikr</em></td>
<td>It also has the meaning of</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>dhikr</em></td>
<td>Reminding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>dhikr</em></td>
<td>Teaching</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>dhikr</em></td>
<td>Admonition</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>dhikr</em></td>
<td>Warning</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>dhikr</em></td>
<td>Special meaning is Qur’anic revelation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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1 By alliteration
The above table shows that the initial juxtaposition of Շաֲד wal Qur’ani zizdbikr is not a random placing, but is supported by other parallel occurrences and deserves deeper analysis. It is therefore proposed that Շաֲد is thus semantically related to dbik. If this is the case, we may have support from other sûrah with Շաֲד prefixed. This leads us to the study of the other two sûrah where Շաֲד is one of the prefixed letters: Maryam and Al A’rāf. The study of the remaining two sûrah makes dbikr as the dominant theme. In the following section I shall discuss how this happens.

2.6 šād and the disputes ‘khasmān’

Dispute is one of the sub themes of this sûrah (Suyuti), and three narratives; the story of two brothers having a debate over distribution of wealth /21. The fight of the people of fire/64 and the fight of the high ups regarding the creation of man are reported and all these serve in the Qur’anic text as reminder; dbikrhere. All have the radical Շաֲד in them as a cohesive factor. 'Wa hal 'ataka nabi'ul khasmi/21Did the news of dispute reach you? Khasmani baghaaba'duna 'ala ba’d/22 and Inna zalika la Haqqun takhāsumu 'ablannār/64 The dispute between the people of the fire Ma kāna li min ‘ilmun iz yakhtāsimun/69 I have no news of the dispute of the high

2.6.1 Dhikr in the Maryam/ Mary

As discussed with reference to /dbikr/ in sûrah Շաֲד and al a ‘rāf, we note a very consistent use of dhikr with the narratives of the Prophets, The sûrah begins with the word /dbikr/ and continues in the following mentioned verses.

1. Dhikru rahmati rabbika ‘abdahū zakariyyā.
2. Wadhkur fil kitābi maryam.
3. Wadhkur fil kitābi ibrahīm.
4. Wadhkur fil kitābi ismāil.
5. Wadhkur fil kitābi.
6. Wadhkur fil kitābi maryam.

The above mentioned verses make/dbikr/ the fore-grounded feature of the chapter Maryam, ‘Mary’. As dhikr was also noted with reference to chapter Շաֲד, this is thus the inter-textual link in all the three chapters under discussion. We can now move to the element of dhikr in Al A ‘rāf.

2.6.2. dbikr in chapter Al A ‘rāf
On the other hand, in *Al Aʿrāf*, it occurs 16 times with different variations and also becomes part of the alternative word ‘*naṣaḥa*’ (good advice) which is coherently linked to the meaning of *dhikr* (to remind) and cohesively to *Ṣād* for its medial radical *Ṣād*. /na, ṣa ḥa/. All the Prophets in *Al Aʿrāf* are called *nāṣibūn* and *dhikr*, for example,

*Aw ʿajibum ʿan jāʾakum dhikrum min rabbikum* /43 Repeated in/69 by Ḥūd, and ṣāliḥ, wadhkurū/74 and fazkurū/74 The same tone continues in Lot and Shūʿayb’s addresses when they say,

*wadhkurū ʿdb kuntum qāṭilan* /86 Remember when you were few. The above examples establish the fact that /dhikr/ is the main theme of the two sūrah, *Maryam* and *Aʿrāf*. 
2.6.3 *dhikr* in the first verse: šād *Maryam* and *Al Aʿrāf*.

It is interesting to note that *dhikr* appears in the first verse of Šād all the threesūrah under discussion after the prefixed letters.

Remember the blessings of your Lord on His slave zakariyya. Kitabun unzila 'ilaika fa lā takun fi sadrika barajum minhu li tunzira bibi wa dhikrā lil mo'minin./Al aʿrāf/2. The book revealed to you so that there remains no doubt in your heart to warn and remind the believers. Just to remind the reader that the element šād was initially juxtaposed with /dhikr/ in the sūrahšād and from then it occurs consistently in all the three chapters with this letter. In this sūrah the word *dhikr* occurs 16 times. This theme of *dhikr* pervades these two sūrah just like the text of šād.

2.6.3.1 Foregrounding element in *Al Aʿrāf*

The foregrounding feature in this sūrah is the use of /na, sa, ḥa/.

To begin with the first story of Adam and Satan’s encounter, the word/ nasiḥa/ finds expression as the Satan says, *Irni lakumā la min an nāsiḥin*/21 Verily I am of those who wish you well indeed. The Prophet Noah said, *Wa ʾanṣaḥu lakum*/62 And I guided you; Hūd said, *ʾanā lakum nāşıḥunʾamin*/68 I am a good advisor for you. And when the Doom came and the people were destroyed he turned away and said, *Wa nasāḥtu lakum wa lákil la tubbūnān nāsiḥin. I guided you but you do not like good guides*. Similarly, *Šuʿāy拜 said, Wa nasabu lakum*/94 I gave you good advice.

The above given examples from *Al Aʿrāf* establish the foregrounding word/nasiḥa/ in different contexts reminding what Suyūtī said regarding the use of prefixed related words. This phenomenon is further supported by parallel uses of many other words which on the one hand supports the theme and on the other hand works as a cohesive link.

2.6.4 General use of šād in *Al Aʿrāf*

Šād occurs for the third time and in the fourth letter; alif lām mīm šād. A survey of this sūrah reveals how the collections of different variants from Arabic language that involve the /s/ phoneme have been put together.

For the making of man, the word *sawwar* ‘to make’ is used. The standard word in other sūrah is, jaʿala, ‘to make’ used in Baqara/30. The word sāghīr is used for Satan while he calls himself min an nāsiḥin, from good advisors. In other sūrah, the variable, rajīm, the cursed oneHijr/17, and iblīs, the desponent Baqara/34, are preferred. The word sāghīrin, humbled is used; All these variables make use of the Šād phoneme; initially or medially: creating cohesion through consonance and alliteration.

Prophets and their events carry the special feature of Šād factor. When Adam and Eve commit the sin, they begin to cover themselves, *Tafṣīq Yakhsafāni*/23. The Prophet tells the story (qiṣṣa), yaqūsūna ḥalikum ʿayāti (tell you stories) /35. The Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him) is called šāhibīm (their friend)/184, the normal title ‘rasūl’ is employed in other sūrah of the Quran. The name of Prophet ʿalih begins with Šād and matches the cohesive use of Šād very well. So does the vocative address, *Yāsāliḥ*/77. When the wrath came, they got turned, fāshāḥū.. ʿāsīmin (They got overturned/78). Salīh said to them, nasāḥtu lakum....la tubbūn nāsiḥin.(I gave you good advice, but you do not like reformers. This pattern is repeated with the narrative of all prophets. Lūṭ’s discourse
makes good use of Şâd, ‘do not create chaos after reforms’ (ba‘da islabiba/85, and do not stop the paths(sirāt)/86 or stop(taṣuddū/86 and ṣaḥbirū/87 , till the wrath came and ṣafbahū/ .. jāthin91(they became overturned ). He said to them nasahṭulakum/93( I gave you good advice). Allah says, ‘asabnāhum (I made them suffer)/100. We tell them the story, God says, (naqṣu/101. Moses threw his ‘āṣā (staff)/, 107,112 and that turned the magiciansṣāgbirīn (small) /112. When the magicians surrendered, Pharaoh said, la ‘usallibannakum/124, (I must crucify you) they asked for patience (ṣabr/126. Moses asked his people to do the same, ‘aṣbirū/128. The people of Pharaoh were caught by losses ‘naqs of fruit./130. When they were tested by (tusibhum)/131, but they failed.

Moses passed by a nation that worshipped ῥaṣnām (statues)/138. Moses said to Haroon ῥaṣlib (reform)/142. Moses went to see God and fell ᵈa‘qa (struck by lightning)/143. God said to Moses, ‘I chose you among people‘ /aṣṭafaṭuka/144 and gave everything with details (tafṣila/145

Other general descriptive statements also utilize the same Şâd letter; verses were explained ‘mufassilat’ and the Israelites were patient (Saḥib)/137. We (God) demolished all that Pharaoh built (kāna yasna‘a)/ /137and the proud will be turned away(ṣa‘aṣrīf) and ‘usibu(I put to test) whom I want. I will lessen the burdens (israbum)/157, of those who help the Prophet nasarūbū/157. In the earth, ṣaliḥīn (reformers and ḡhay-ṣaliḥīn (non reformers)/168 passed so muṣliḥīn’s deeds are not wasted. /170. (We explain the signs) Nufassilul ayāt /174, so faqṣuss ‘alaybinul qaṣaṣ(tell them the story /176. All kind of help, nasr is from Allah, /192. When Qur’an is recited people must anṣiṣṭu silent‘ /204. Similar word ṣumūt (silence) is used in /194.

The proud are the asḥābunnār(people of fire)and find their fate in the book of nasib /37. Evil is drawn from the sudūr ‘hearts of those who do ‘amilaṣāliha( good deeds). Seven times the noun ‘aṣḥāabunnār and ‘aṣḥābulJannah(people of fire and people of gardens) has been repeated. The book has been explained (fas ṣalnābu) /52 and people are not expected to create ‘fasād(chaos) after islab(reforms). Verses have often been repeated and explained (nusarrīfūlayāt),58. The Prophet is nāsib/68 and the people challenge him for truth (in kuntum ṣāadiqīn( if you are truthful )/70).

Thus, we can see how the šād element knits the whole surah. It occurs in the above variables initially, medially and finally. In fact, the whole story of the surah can be told with Şâd words only. Many other examples still remain to be quoted. It seems as if there is an inexhaustible source of the use of letter Şâd here which works as a cohesive force that binds the text together. Words for which other variables are available, however, the Şâd variables are preferred and thus the challenge of Qur’an is linguistically materialized which presents an unparalleled example of a serious text that binds itself by cohesive and coherent strings.

2.5.5 šâd in Maryam (Mary) 

If the foregrounded features of surah Şâd and Al A ‘rāf are ῥaṣr, patience, perseverance and nasīḥa, ‘well wishing’,Mary foregrounds the features of the sidq ‘truthfulness’ and sincerity /kbulūs/ of the Prophets, so it reminds us, wadbkur fil kitabi Ibrahim innabh kāna siddīqan nabiyyā/41, Call to mind through this Divine writ, Ibrāhim, he was a man of truth. About Isac and Jacob, Wa ja ‘alna lahum lisana sidqīn’aliyyā/ 50We granted them a lofty power to convey the truth and about Ismail/54Innabh kāna saadīqal wa‘dī wa kāna rasīlan nabiyyā/54 Call to mind through this Divine writ, Ishmael, he was always true to his promise and was an apostle of God. And Moses, Mukhlasan/51Moses was sincere.
Innahu kana mukblasan wa kana rasūlan nabiyya/51And Idrīs, Innahu kana siddiqan nabiyya/56 Behold he was a man of truth.

The above examples show that all the events are cohesively interlinked by the letter /Șād/. Thus, all the Prophets and events have been linked by their truth and sincerity and consonance with the Șād element in the text.

3. **Comparison of dhikr Distribution in sūrah Șād**

   **Mary (Maryam) and Al Aʿrāf**

Narratives of the prophets

In a sūrah after the necessary preface of hymn about the Creator, the holy Quran normally relates the stories of prophets. These stories make the main structure of the sūrah and go with the overall theme. The first of these verses normally reflects the basic identity of the style of the prefixed sūrah. For a stylistic study these lines would be certainly important as these introduce a new event. What is noteworthy, that these lines make a small unit of the text which itself makes a larger part of the holy Quran like a brick making a wall and the wall itself making a part of the whole structure.

These areas are especially noteworthy with respect to the style of the holy Quran in general and the style of the prefixed sūrahs in particular. An example from this sūrah will elaborate the above point further.

We note that every reference begins with *wadhkur’ remember*. The association was discussed with reference to Șād.( see 2.5.1) In the second sūrah under discussion every reference begins with *wadhkur fil kitab*, thus adding *kitab* to it. This is discussed below:

To remind our readers the examples from sūrah Șād are given below:

وادَكُرُ اًبْدَنَا اُوْبَ wadhkur ‘ábdana ‘awāb
وادَكُرُ اًبْدَنَا دَاوُدَ wadhkur ‘ábdana ‘awādūd
وادَكُرُ اًبْدَنَا اِبْرَاهِيمَ wadhkur ‘ábdana ‘ibrahiyim
وادَكُرُ اَسْمَاعِیلَ وَلْیُسَاعَ wadhkur ismā ‘il ‘wal yasa ‘a

The basic similarity between the two patterns i.e. the beginning with the imperative form of dhikr and referring to Prophets at the end of the lines, leads to confirm the above statement regarding Prophets’ stories. Both the patterns share this element of *dhikr* and both the sūrahs have the letter Șād prefixed. It can be concluded that the relation between Șād and dhikr already established (2.4) with reference to sūrah Șād seems to be holding here. A survey of Maryam (Mary) with reference to Șād gives many interesting facts about Șād which are discussed below:

3.1 **General elements of Șād in Maryam’ ‘Mary’**

Many words with Șād radical find their way in this sūrah that support the Șād, cohesion and consonance. Words like sabiyya, qasiyya, sirāti mustaṣiqin, jābbāran ‘asiyya, Sowma, Saliiyā, siddiqannabiyya, and adā’ussalāb provide a cohesive support throughout this sūrah working as intra-textual as well as inter-textual links.
If we look at this surah from the angle of Sād related words, we find that the similarity of theme is maintained. For example, the word *sidq* (truth) has been repeated in four lines, 41, 50, 54, 56 with reference to different prophets. In the same way the word *sirāt* (path) 36, 43 *sowm* (fasting) 26, *salāh* (prayer) 31, 55, 59 and *sālihāt* 96 bring this similarity forward. Other words, such as *sabīyā* 12, *Qasiyyā* 22, *‘asīyyā* 14, 44 and *saliyyā* 70, provide supporting homogenous environment for the *sād* phoneme. This provides cohesive links that exist between the letter Sād, in Sād and Mary.

The name Zakariyyā attracts dhikr for its phonological similarity. Although dhal and za in Arabic have a clear phonemic value, their similarity for stylistic purposes cannot be ignored. Both *dhikr* and zakaria are nouns; abstract and proper respectively. Both have historical, thematic and phonological relationship. Zakariyyā is known as highly God fearing praying and humble personality in the Bible and Qur’an. He is also quoted for the acceptance of his prayers of a son at an advanced age with an infertile wife. The very first line foregrounds *dhikr* and Zakariyyā to draw the reader’s attention to this status of Zakariyyā which is brought out in this surah.

4.1 Maryam

The surah Maryam/Mary’, begins with *Dhikr* and continues with the mentioning of different Prophets whose ‘*sidq*’ truthfulness is emphasized. It links the whole surah by *wadhkur fil kitabi* and then mentions the truthfulness and devotion accordingly.

4.2 Sād

The structure and organization of this surah can now better be understood. It begins with *dhikr* and ends with *dhikr*. It discusses different Prophets for their ‘*sabr*’ and *Dhikr*. It discusses the opponents of the Prophets for what they forgot of the remembrance of God and were reminded. Thus one can see that letter ‘Sād’ has a special role in the overall organization of the surah.

4.3 Al A‘rāf

The surah Al A‘rāf also opens with *dhikr* and different Prophets one by one. For the believers, the narrator of the story also mentions the story of the creation where Satan after being expelled from Paradise as ‘*Saghira*’ swears to them that he was from the well wishers, *nāsiḥin*

The story of Prophet Noah begins in verses (59-64). The Prophet warns them and emphasizes his role ‘*wa’ansaHta lakum*’. The story of Hūd is next who also warns the people in exactly similar fashion and tells them inni *lakum nāsiḥun amīn*. The people refuse to Noah’s advice who reminds them again saying, *Fazkr m ‘alā’Allāhi*. The same narrative template composing of five to six verses is repeated for different Prophets; ‘ād/65, Salih/73, Lot/80, Shu’ayb/85. All these narratives in this surah have a set pattern, whereby these follow a beginning of the reminding of the people by a certain Prophet, their refusal, their doom and the final address by the Prophet. After all these episodes comes the narrative of Moses in detail: from verse 59 to 64 a certain template of six verses is used which is repeated in 68 to 69 in the narrative of Hood, Salih,73-79, Lot *Sh’oib* -86-9. In all these extracts, one thing is common, every one begins with *nasiHa*, talks about *dhikr* and ends in the doom of the people. This gives a parallel structure to the whole surah and is the leading, foregrounding factor.

Thus the organization of the stories in the surah follows a very structured pattern in which the /dhikr/nasiHa have a very prominent role to play. As discussed earlier both are connected to the Sād
factors. We therefore have cohesive and coherent links in the text that lead to the role of Șād in the organization of the text. What is important to note is that all the three sūrahs show these links of structure of organization along with other factors already mentioned.

4.4 Prostrations

Every Muslim is aware of the relation between Șālāb (prayer) and sajda (Prostration). Șālāb is incomplete without sajda. We have already talked about the link between the consonant Șād, Șālāh and dhikr with regard to organization of these three chapters, one more striking feature is noticed: the presence of places called, Prostration, ‘sajda’. When a reader reads these areas, he immediately bows down or does so later. These areas are not many in the Qur’an, 14 or sixteen according to some traditions. This is a small number looking at the overall figure of one hundred and fourteen sūrahs in the Qur’an. However, in all these chapters mentioned there is a prostration place. This is indeed significant, as sajadas the main component of salāb and I have already pointed the alliterative as well as semantic links in early discussion between salāb and the letter Șād.

5. Conclusion

The above study shows that the Șād prefixed sūrahs use the radical in different manners which have stylistic implications in these three sūrahs. There is a certain affinity of Șād related words and phrases in these chapters which Rehman (2008) established with reference to Alif lam and meem in the six related chapters. There are thematic and rhythmic implications which ultimately relate to the study of style. The study also shows that all the three chapters mentioned above have a common theme of dhikr which is foregrounded. On the other hand, every chapter has an individual angle of dhikr such as sabr’ perseverance in chapter Șād, sidq ‘truthfulness in Maryam ‘Mary’ and well wishing characters, Al A’raf. Moreover, the prefixed letter Șād has a role in organization of the three chapters of great Prophets emphasized.

For a student of Qur’anic stylistics, it is an interesting study where one consonant provides cohesive as well as coherent links that bind three apparently different chapters. For translators or readers of the Qur’an, it is inevitably important to take stock of these factors and see how these can be conveyed into translational renderings as without these many of the cohesive links can not be accounted for and thus much of the beauty and the hidden message is missed out. This study, thus, leads to the significance of mentioning the letter Șād in the beginning which links the three chapters not only cohesively but also coherently providing an inimitable and untranslatable aspect of the Qur’anic text.