

Examining the Capacity of Surah Al-Fatiha in Implementing the ‘Ihrāqiyyah’ Method

Seyed Mohammed Hossein Mirdamadi

Assistant Professor, University of Isfahan; Email: smhm751@yahoo.com

Mohsen Shiravand

Associate Professor, University of Isfahan (Corresponding Author); Email: m.shiravand23@gmail.com

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Introduction

This study addresses a critical gap in contemporary Islamic mystical literature by exploring the operational link between the ‘Ihrāqiyyah’ method mysticism and the Quran, specifically Surah Al-Fatiha (The Opening). The Ihrāqiyyah method is distinguished from gradual spiritual paths by its focus on ‘burning’ (ihrāq) the very roots of egoistic desires (anāniyyah) and existential greed (ṭama’). It proposes a swift path to achieving essential spiritual poverty (faqr) and annihilation in God (fanā’ fi Allāh) by leveraging a profound existential paradox: the recognition that one's inherent nature is both utterly greedy and fundamentally poor, leading to total surrender to the Divine Will.

While classical texts establish the theoretical foundations of Ihrāqiyyah, and Surah Al-Fatiha is revered as the quintessential summary of Quranic monotheism, a direct, practical model integrating the two for the modern seeker is absent. This research, therefore, seeks to answer two pivotal questions: Firstly, how can the profound teachings of Ihrāqiyyah be effectively implemented within the constraints of contemporary life? Secondly, can Surah Al-Fatiha serve as a practical and semantic bridge to facilitate this application?

Methodology

This research adopts an interdisciplinary and mixed-methods approach, bridging traditional Islamic hermeneutics with insights from modern science. The methodology unfolds in three primary stages:

Textual Analysis: The first stage involves a systematic analysis of key classical mystical texts from figures such as Ibn Arabi, Sadr al-Din al-Qunawi, and Imam Khomeini to extract and define the core concepts of the Ihrāqiyyah method, including ‘cutting greed,’ ‘existential poverty,’ and ‘annihilation’.

Normative Hermeneutics: In the second stage, these extracted concepts are contemporized and mapped onto the semantic field of Surah Al-Fatiha using a normative hermeneutical approach. This involves a verse-by-verse interpretation that reveals the Surah's inherent capacity to facilitate the stages of the Ihrāqiyyah path.

Scientific Corroboration: To substantiate the proposed mechanism, the study incorporates evidence from cognitive neuroscience. Findings from functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) and electroencephalography (EEG) studies are

cited, which show that focused Quranic recitation can reduce activity in the brain's Default Mode Network (DMN—linked to self-centered thought) and enhance alpha-theta wave synchrony, states associated with deep meditation and subconscious restructuring.

Findings

The research yields several significant findings:

Structural Alignment: A precise structural alignment was identified between the seven verses of Surah Al-Fatiha and the sequential stages of the Ihrāqiyyah path. Each verse was interpreted as a specific spiritual station:

Verses 1-4 (Al-Ḥamdu lillāh to Mālikī Yawm al-Dīn): These verses cultivate the foundational states of gratitude, hope, and fear, systematically dissolving the ego through the recognition of God's Lordship, Mercy, and absolute Ownership.

Verse 5 (Iyyāka na'budu wa iyyāka nasta'īn): This verse is the cornerstone of Ihrāqiyyah, representing pure servitude, sincere reliance (tawakkul), and ultimate delegation (tafwīd) to God—the catalytic act that 'burns' the root of self-sufficiency.

Verses 6-7 (Ihdinā al-Ṣirāṭ al-Mustaqīm to the end): These verses represent the stage of 'subsistence after annihilation' (baqā' ba'd al-fanā'), where the seeker, now purified of ego, continuously seeks and walks the straight path of divine guardianship (wilāyah).

Keywords: Ihrāqiyyah Method, Surah Al-Fatiha, Oneness of Existence, Annihilation of the Self, Spiritual Poverty, Existential Greed.