

Truth and Figurative Meaning between Deduction of Legal Rulings and the Secrets of Eloquence

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Received: 06/01/2026 Accepted: 15/07/2026 Published: 21/09/2026

Introduction

The scholars of the principles of Islamic jurisprudence did not view words as rigid molds for formal meanings; rather, they viewed them as indications that invite the specialist to uncover the intended legal meaning. Thus, they made truth the basis and figurative meaning the branch that is intended when indicative contextual clues are present. This reveals the depth of their concern with meaning and their attention to it in deducing legal rulings. They believe that the word is an indication of thought and that meanings precede words. Abu Hamid al-Ghazali referred to this by saying: “Know that whoever seeks meanings from words is lost and ruined, and is like one who turns his back toward the west while seeking it; whereas whoever first establishes meanings in his mind and then follows those meanings with words has been guided.”[1]

Some scholars of the principles of jurisprudence adhered to the apparent meaning of the text in deducing legal rulings and regarded it as the foundation. They confined themselves to transmitted evidence and to considering words as they had been transmitted through successive transmission. Others searched for the indications behind figurative expressions, exercised their reason, and did not stop at the apparent wording. Their work thus resembled that of the scholars of rhetoric when they delve into the Qur’anic styles in search of the aspects of eloquence and the secret of the miraculous nature of the Qur’an.

Although the two disciplines—the discipline of jurisprudence and the discipline of rhetoric—shared a concern for meaning and did not stop at the literalness of the wording, they differ fundamentally in their objective and in the intellectual background that governed their consideration of truth and figurative meaning. The primary concern of the scholars of jurisprudence was to arrive at the deduction of legal rulings from the revealed texts. Their study of figurative meaning was therefore governed by a normative purpose intended to establish the intent of the Lawgiver and determine what may legitimately be used as evidence from verses and hadiths. As for the scholars of rhetoric, their objective was to uncover the aspects of expression and the sources of

eloquence in stylistic forms. They viewed figurative meaning as an aesthetic tool that enriches speech and reveals its eloquence through exploring purposes in general and Qur'anic inimitability in particular, without entailing adherence to a legal ruling or a devotional meaning. This intersection between the two fields through a single tool—figurative meaning—despite the difference in the purpose for which it is employed, makes the study of truth and figurative meaning a fertile gateway to understanding the relationship between wording and meaning in the entirety of the Arab-Islamic intellectual heritage.

In this article, we will first attempt to determine the nature of truth and figurative meaning among the scholars of the principles of jurisprudence. We will then present the debate over the occurrence of figurative meaning in the Holy Qur'an and the Noble Prophetic Hadith between the Mu'tazilites and the Zahirites. Finally, we will address figurative meaning in the rhetorical discipline and its concept among its leading scholars, the relationship between literal meaning and figurative meaning, and its artistic function in opening the text to multiple meanings.

Truth and Figurative Meaning – Conceptual Foundations among the Scholars of the .1 Principles of Jurisprudence

Concept of Truth ·

A. Linguistic Meaning

Al-Jurjani stated in *al-Ta'rifat* that truth is: “A name for that which is intended by what it was designated for; *fa'ilah* derived from *haqqa al-shay'* when something is established, meaning *fa'ilah*, i.e. *haqiq*; the feminine suffix *ta'* serves to transfer it from adjectival status to nominal status.”[2]

In *Al-Mu'jam al-Wasit*: “Truth: the thing that is certainly established. Among linguists, it is that which is used in its original meaning. The truth of a thing is its essence and substance; the truth of a matter is certainty regarding its condition; and the truth of a man is what he is required to preserve and defend.”[3] Al-Zabidi confirms this meaning in *Taj al-'Arus*, stating: “Truth is that which has been established in usage according to its original designation.”[4]

It is said: the truth of a thing, meaning its established and necessary essence. Hence His saying, Exalted is He: “But the word of punishment became due upon the disbelievers” (Al-Zumar: 68), meaning it became obligatory; and His saying, Exalted is He: “It is incumbent upon me that I should not say about Allah except the truth” (Al-A'raf: 105), meaning it is obligatory upon me.[5]

B. Terminological Meaning

The scholars of the principles of jurisprudence have defined it in several ways, all of which converge on one meaning. Among the most prominent are:

- Truth: its interpretation is what is intended by speech, namely what the one “who established the language designated speech for, because that is what is true of it according to its designation.”[6]
- Truth is a name for every word that was originally designated for a known “thing.”[7]

- It is the word used for what it was designated for, or for that to which it“ applies.”[8]
- It is the word used for what it was designated for according to the convention“ in which the communication took place, whether the communication was linguistic, legal, or customary.”[9] This last definition became established and .well known among the scholars of the principles of jurisprudence

A careful examination of these terminological definitions reveals the recurrent use of the word “designation,” which confirms that language is social and that an individual cannot create it independently. Likewise, the recurrent use of the word “used” indicates that speech cannot be judged as either literal or figurative until there is actual usage. The word “used” therefore excludes the neglected form and that which has been designated prior to use.[10]

Concept of Figurative Meaning ·

A. Linguistic Meaning

In *Al-Qamus al-Muhit*: “Figurative meaning: the road when it is crossed from one of its sides to the other, and the opposite of truth.”[11] Al-Jurjani said: “Figurative meaning is *maf'al* from *jaza al-shay' yajzuhu* when he passes beyond it. When a word is diverted from what the original language requires, it is described as figurative, in the sense that they have made it pass beyond its original place, or that it has passed beyond the place in which it was first established.”[12]

Perhaps the most comprehensive linguistic definition is that mentioned by Ibn Faris, who said: “As for figurative meaning, it is derived from *jaza yajuz* when one proceeds forward. You say: ‘So-and-so passed by us, and a horseman passed over us.’ This is the original basis. Then you say: ‘It is permissible for you to do such-and-such,’ meaning that it proceeds and is neither rejected nor prevented. You say: ‘We have white weighted dirhams, and others that pass as weighted ones,’ meaning that although these are not the weighted ones, they are accepted in their place because of their closeness to them. This is the interpretation of our statement ‘figurative meaning’: genuine speech proceeds according to its established course without objection, while something else may proceed in the same manner because of its closeness to it, except that it contains a comparison, metaphor, and omission that are not found in the former.”[13][14]

B. Terminological Meaning

Al-Amidi defines figurative meaning as follows: “It is the word agreed upon for use, or used for something other than that for which it was initially designated in the convention by which communication takes place, due to the relationship between the two.”[15]

It has also been said: Figurative meaning is that from which a word has been diverted from its literal meaning and which is used in something other than the meaning for which it was originally designated in the language.[16]

Al-Sarakhsi likewise defined it by saying: “Figurative meaning is a name for every word that is borrowed for something other than that for which it was designated.”[17]

Figurative Meaning in the Holy Qur'an and the Noble Prophetic Hadith between .2 Affirmation and Negation

The scholars of the principles of jurisprudence differ regarding the occurrence of figurative meaning in the Holy Qur'an and the Noble Prophetic Hadith. The majority of scholars affirm its occurrence,[18] while some deny it. The evidence of those who affirm it is that both were revealed and transmitted in clear Arabic, and figurative meaning is one of the styles that were widespread in Arab speech. Imam al-Shafi'i says: "Allah addressed the Arabs in His Book in their language according to the meanings they knew, and among the meanings they knew was the breadth of their language... and it is apparent from its context that what is intended is other than its apparent meaning." [19] Although he did not explicitly use the two terms "truth" and "figurative meaning" in this statement, its content indicates that speech, in his view, varies between literal and figurative meaning.

Those who affirm figurative meaning cited several verses, including His saying, Exalted is He: "There is nothing like unto Him" (Al-Shura: 11); His saying: "And ask the town in which we were and the caravan with which we arrived" (Yusuf: 82); and His saying: "And they found therein a wall wishing to collapse, so he restored it" (Al-Kahf: 77).

Figurative Meaning among the Mu'tazilites

The Mu'tazilites were perhaps the most prominent group in which engagement with the subject of truth and figurative meaning emerged, because of their need for it in their debates and responses to their opponents and critics. Their engagement was not an attempt to favor one over the other, nor was it motivated by an inclination toward the aesthetics of texts. Rather, it was an urgent need to interpret texts in accordance with their theological principles. They found in figurative meaning what they were seeking: whenever the apparent meaning of texts conflicted with meanings that they considered preferable through the exercise of reason, they resorted to figurative interpretation to explain and interpret them, giving rational contextual clues priority over others. "When the Mu'tazilites are unable to interpret the text on the basis of its linguistic structure, they resort to rational evidence, and both forms of evidence are, in their view, equal in interpreting the Qur'anic text." [20]

This does not mean that they eliminated the apparent meaning of the text or what the words conveyed. Rather, whatever conformed to their beliefs among the apparent meanings of the texts they considered literal, while whatever contradicted them they regarded as requiring interpretation. They categorically denied that God could be seen, on the basis that vision is only possible with bodies occupying space. They cited His saying, Exalted is He: "Vision does not perceive Him, but He perceives all vision" (Al-An'am: 103), and considered it among the decisive verses whose apparent meaning was to be understood literally. As for what contradicted their views, they considered it among the ambiguous verses that should be returned to figurative interpretation. Thus, when linguistic analysis was unable to explain the aspect of deviation in the expression,

the Mu‘tazilites relied upon the rational contextual clue, which they considered more indicative than the verbal contextual clue connected to the speech.[21]

Al-Zamakhshari, in interpreting His saying, Exalted is He: “He is the First and the Last, the Manifest and the Hidden” (Al-Hadid: 3), says: “He is the ‘First,’ the Eternal who existed before everything; the ‘Last,’ who remains after the destruction of everything; the ‘Manifest,’ through the proofs that indicate Him; and the ‘Hidden,’ because He is not perceived by the senses... He is the One whose existence continues throughout all past and future times, and throughout all of them He is Manifest and Hidden, combining manifestation through proofs and hiddenness, and therefore He is not perceived by the senses.”[22] Thus, he made “firstness” mean pre-eternity, “lastness” mean remaining after the destruction of everything, “manifestness” mean the indication of the cosmic proofs of Him, and “hiddenness” mean that He is not perceived by the senses. This is a form of *mursal* metaphor whose relationship is causality, and the contextual clue, according to them, is rational.

The denial of attributes from Allah, Exalted is He, was a firmly established doctrine among the Mu‘tazilites, based on the consideration that His attributes are His essence and that it is impermissible to liken the Creator to the created. Qadi Abd al-Jabbar says: “We have explained elsewhere that the application of the term ‘God’ encompasses only His essence, Exalted is He, and not the attributes that they claim.”[23] Therefore, they interpreted many of the verses concerning divine attributes, such as His saying, Exalted is He: “And your Lord came, and the angels, rank upon rank” (Al-Fajr: 22). They say: “Allah, Glorious and Exalted, came with His great signs at the scenes of the Resurrection... His saying ‘And your Lord came’ does not mean that He came from a place, nor that He departed or was obstructed, nor that He moved from one place to another.”[24]

“The effects of craftsmanship in the created being are evident, the signs of governance are established, incapacity is apparent, and need is inherent... Since this is the attribute of every created being, it is impermissible to attribute the attribute of the created being to the Creator, Glorious is His majesty.”[25]

It may be said that the Mu‘tazilites attempted to transcend the Divine Essence by distancing it from the ambiguities of anthropomorphism and corporealism. Thus, they judged some verses to be figurative rather than literal, distanced them from the apparent meanings of their words, and assigned them remote figurative interpretations. This was rejected by the Sunni scholars, such as Ibn Taymiyyah, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, and a group of the Zahirites, who regarded them as literal meanings that could not be denied or altered, considering engagement with them in such a manner to be a corruption of religious beliefs.

Their preference for their objectives and their defense of their doctrine became the decisive criterion in judging the classification of texts as literal or figurative. With respect to texts that agreed with their principles, they adhered to the apparent meanings of their words and did not go beyond them. When texts conflicted with their preferred interpretations, they sought to interpret them through figurative meaning and the

inference of rational contextual clues. Their reliance on figurative meaning and rational contextual clues represents a privileging of meaning at the expense of the apparent wording, so long as texts are adapted and interpreted according to objectives and beliefs. This may be acceptable in Arab poetry and prose because of the breadth of meaning they permit. However, when texts serve as evidentiary foundations upon which legal rulings are deduced and are used as proof in establishing beliefs, this is something that reason rejects and innate disposition refuses.

It is clear from the foregoing that the perspective of those who affirm figurative meaning toward texts, and their profound understanding of them, indicates that they give prominence to meanings and prioritize them, despite their work with words as the ground from which their analyses begin. The movement of words toward other meanings when indicative contextual clues are present is evidence that words are subordinate to meanings. This became apparent among the Mu‘tazilites, despite the fact that their efforts led them into interpretive errors that resulted in corruption in matters of belief, as we have seen in the verses concerning divine attributes. Nevertheless, when they enumerate the merits of figurative meaning, they emphasize that it is a manifestation of openness, among whose benefits are expansion of meanings and the fulfillment of the purposes of speech, such as glorification and disparagement. When they interpret His saying, Exalted is He: “And they found therein a wall wishing to collapse, so he restored it,” as figurative, they animate the inanimate and breathe life into lifeless matter. How could a wall possess a will? And how can we interpret this verse as literal?

Figurative Meaning among the Zahirites and Those Who Deny It ·

Those who deny figurative meaning were divided into two groups. One group denied the occurrence of figurative meaning altogether in the Qur’an, the Sunnah, and the Arabic language. At their head was Abu Ishaq al-Isfarayini (d. 406 AH). Their argument was that the contextual clue may remain hidden, resulting in ambiguity for the addressee, and this is improper for the Wise.[26]

A second group denied its occurrence specifically in the Holy Qur’an and the Noble Prophetic Hadith, such as the Zahirites,[27] with the exception of Ibn Hazm, who held that “when we become certain, through textual evidence, consensus, or natural disposition, that a name has been transferred from its linguistic designation to another meaning, it is obligatory to adhere to it.”[28] Likewise, the Sunni scholars, such as Ibn Taymiyyah, affirmed that every word found in the Book of Allah and in the words of His Messenger is restricted by what clarifies its meaning. Therefore, there is no figurative meaning in any of that; rather, all of it is literal.[29]

Among the arguments of those who deny figurative meaning is that figurative usage entails lying, which is impossible in the speech of Allah, Exalted is He. Furthermore, if figurative meaning were present in it, it would be permissible to describe it as figurative, which is impermissible: “The speaker only turns from truth to figurative meaning when the truth becomes insufficient for him, so he resorts to borrowing; and this is impossible with regard to Allah, Exalted is He.”[30]

In contrast, Ibn Jinni holds that the speaker departs from literal meaning to figurative meaning for three reasons: expansion, emphasis, and comparison. When these characteristics are absent, the expression is necessarily literal.[31] Thus, according to those who affirm it, figurative meaning is not a departure from the original without justification; rather, it is a departure for purposes and objectives, and it is more firmly established in the soul and stronger in effect.

Footnotes

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah devoted considerable attention to refuting the arguments of those who affirmed the existence of figurative expression, and his student Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyyah followed him in this regard. They considered the division of speech into an apparent meaning and an interpreted meaning, or into a literal meaning and a figurative meaning, to be unacceptable. Shaykh al-Islam states: “This is rationally impossible, for when the speaker intends a specific intention and his speech is eloquent, he does not intend by his speech in itself anything other than one meaning... Therefore, every statement of the Creator, Glorified and Exalted be He, mentioned in the Qur’an, or every statement of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, has, according to what Allah and His Messenger intended, one meaning. It is not correct to say that it has an apparent and an interpreted meaning, or that it has a literal and a figurative meaning. It is from such deviation that the innovations of the Bāṭiniyyah and others like them emerged.”[1]

As for the group that completely denied the occurrence of figurative expression in the Arabic language, they regarded it as one of its styles. Muhammad al-Amin al-Shinqiti states: “Among their—meaning the Arabs’—styles is the use of the word ‘lion’ for the known predatory animal... Among their styles is also its use for a courageous man when accompanied by something indicating this... Each of them is literal in its proper context, and apply this analogy to all types of figurative expressions.”[2] In reality, al-Shinqiti’s position acknowledges the occurrence of figurative expression in language; rather, he objects to applying the term “figurative expression” and calls it a style. Thus, he is closer to those who affirm figurative expression than to those who deny it, and his objection is terminological rather than substantive.

As for the second category of deniers, they are those who acknowledge the occurrence of figurative expression in language but deny its occurrence in the Qur’an and Hadith. Their argument is that it constitutes falsehood, which cannot be attributed either to Allah or to His Prophet. Some of them maintain that figurative expression is resorted to when the literal meaning proves insufficient, and this is impossible with regard to Allah. Al-Zarkashi states: “As for figurative expression, scholars differed concerning its occurrence in the Noble Qur’an. The majority maintain that it does occur, while a group denied it, including al-Qāṣṣ from among the Shafi‘i scholars and Ibn Khuwayz Mindād from among the Maliki scholars. It has also been reported from Dawud al-Zahiri, his son, and Abu Muslim al-Isfahani... This is false, for if the Qur’an were necessarily free of figurative expression, it would also necessarily be free of emphasis,

ellipsis, repetition of narratives, and other such features. If figurative expression were removed from the Qur'an, half of its beauty would be lost.”[3]

Ibn Hazm responds to those who regarded figurative expression as falsehood by stating: “If a name is applied to something named for a period of time or in a particular meaning, and that name is then transferred to another meaning, there is no falsehood in this, and falsehood has no place here.”[4]

Figurative Expression in Rhetorical Studies (Aesthetic Function and Textual .1 Openness)

The discussion of literal and figurative meaning constitutes a fundamental entry point for understanding the relationship between wording and meaning. Rhetoricians distinguished between the ordinary use of a word, which is literal, and its extraordinary use, which is figurative.

Al-Sakkaki defines figurative expression as follows: “As for figurative expression, it is a word used in other than that for which it was actually established, using it for another meaning in relation to the type of its literal meaning, with an indicator preventing the intention of its meaning in that particular type.”[5] He therefore assumes that a word has a primary, literal meaning and a secondary, figurative meaning. For him, figurative expression involves using the word to reach an implication of the meaning rather than the meaning itself.

Figurative expression also has another concept that appears in classical studies, namely style and manner of expression, which makes it a stylistic means through which speech becomes more expansive and the modes of expressing a single meaning become more varied. Ibn Qutaybah states: “The Arabs have figurative expressions in speech, and their meaning is the ways and approaches of expression. Among them are metaphor, exemplification, inversion, advancing and delaying, omission and repetition, concealment and disclosure, indirect expression and explicitness, metonymy and clarification, addressing the singular as plural and addressing the plural as singular... and intending a general meaning through a specific expression, and a specific meaning through a general expression.”[6]

Thus, if we say, “The lion came,” and intend the known animal, the relationship between the expression and its meaning is one of convention. But if we say, “The lion came,” while intending to describe the courage of Zayd or ‘Amr, then the word “lion” is being used figuratively.[7]

Applied Examples: Examples of Literal and Figurative Meaning

To clarify this distinction further, we present a number of examples illustrating literal and figurative meaning according to the rhetoricians:

Literal Meaning:

If we say, “I saw a lion devouring a gazelle in the forest,” the word “lion” is used here in its original meaning for which it was established, namely the predatory animal itself, without deviation or an indicator diverting it from that meaning. This is the literal use of the word.

- **Metaphor:** This is regarded by rhetoricians as one of the highest forms of figurative expression, and it is based on an implicit comparison whose elements have been omitted. An example of explicit metaphor is: “I saw a lion addressing the people.” Here, we compare the courageous man to a lion, then omit the thing being compared—the man—and explicitly mention the thing to which he is compared—the lion. The expression therefore indicates a figurative meaning through the indicator “addressing,” which prevents the literal meaning of the animal from being intended. An example of implicit metaphor is the statement :of Abu Dhu’ayb al-Hudhali

And when death has sunk its claws,
you will find that no talisman can avail.[8]

Here, death is compared to a predatory beast. The thing to which it is compared—the beast—is omitted, and reference is made to one of its characteristics, namely “claws.” The metaphor is therefore implicit, since the thing to which the comparison is made is not explicitly mentioned. An indicator is provided that calls for the secondary, figurative meaning, namely that death possesses claws with which it seizes.

- **Metonymic Figurative Expression:** This is figurative expression in which the relationship between the literal and figurative meanings is something other than “comparison, as in the Qur’anic verse: “And ask the town in which we were (Yusuf: 82). A town cannot literally be asked; rather, its inhabitants are intended. The annexed noun “inhabitants” is omitted and the annexing noun town” is put in its place. The relationship here is that of locality, namely“ mentioning the place while intending those who inhabit it. Another example is the statement: “The livestock grazed the rain,” where what is intended is the vegetation that grew because of the rain. Here, the relationship is causality .rather than locality
- **Metonymy:** This is an expression that is stated while its necessary implication is intended, while the original meaning may also legitimately be intended, as when it is said: “So-and-so has a long sword-belt,” as a metonymy for his tall stature. He may literally have a long sword-belt or may not, but the intention is to indicate his tall stature rather than the sword-belt itself. Similarly, the Arabs say: “So-and-so has much ash,” as a metonymy for generosity and the large .number of guests for whom fires are lit to prepare food

It can be observed in all these examples that the transition from the literal to the figurative was not arbitrary. Rather, it remained governed by a relationship connecting the figurative meaning to the original literal meaning—comparison in metaphor; causality, locality, or another relationship in metonymic figurative expression; and necessary implication in metonymy. This confirms that figurative expression, although it may appear to deviate from the original, is in reality an extension of it rather than something detached from it.

Deviation from the Literal Meaning to the Figurative Meaning

The deviation from literal to figurative meaning is one of the most prominent rhetorical phenomena revealing the secret of eloquence in the Arabic heritage. It is not merely a formal transfer from one expression to another, but rather a transformation in the very nature of signification. Literal meaning leads us directly to the meaning, whereas figurative expression opens the text onto broader horizons and gives it a greater capacity for suggestion and impact. Ibn Jinni established in *Al-Khaṣā'is* that the speaker deviates from the literal meaning only for three purposes: expansion, emphasis, and comparison,[9] which are rhetorical purposes that make deviation an artistic necessity rather than merely a form of linguistic embellishment.

This deviation is manifested in the Qur'anic text in its most beautiful forms, where figurative expression is employed to highlight and reinforce meaning. In the Qur'anic verse, "And they found therein a wall wanting to collapse" (al-Kahf: 77), the act of wanting is attributed to an inanimate object, namely the wall, in a metonymic figurative expression whose relationship is causality, as the intensity of its inclination toward falling made the expression describe it as though it "wanted" to fall. This deviation gives life to the inanimate object and makes the image more vivid in the mind of the recipient. In the verse, "And ask the town in which we were" (Yusuf: 82), the question is directed to the town itself rather than its inhabitants. This is a figurative expression based on locality, which condenses and intensifies the meaning and gives the text greater pictorial power. As for the verse, "There is nothing like Him" (al-Shura: 11), it constitutes a rhetorical deviation intended to negate resemblance absolutely. It is more emphatic than simply saying, "Nothing resembles Him," because it eliminates any possibility of comparison.

In Arabic poetry, deviation appears as a tool for artistic and symbolic representation. Al-Mutanabbi says:

If you venture toward a sought-after glory,
do not be content with anything beneath the stars.[10]

Here, "the stars" is used figuratively to express the ultimate goal and the highest rank, elevating the meaning from the material to the symbolic.

Abu Tammam also displays remarkable creativity when he speaks of the sword, saying:
The sword speaks more truthfully than books,
in its edge lies the distinction between seriousness and play.[11]

Here, the sword is made to speak of news, whereas in reality it is a means of action and decisive resolution. This is a figurative attribution that highlights the contrast between speech and action.

The deviation from literal to figurative meaning creates a contrast between what is expected and familiar and what is surprising and newly introduced. It therefore attracts the listener's attention, stimulates the imagination, and gives the text an expressive power that literal usage alone does not possess. For this reason, rhetoricians regarded literal and figurative expression as two complementary elements: literal expression establishes and clarifies the direct meaning, whereas figurative expression expands and deepens it. From this perspective, it can be said that this deviation constitutes the heart

of Arabic rhetoric, because it represents the moment of transition from limited signification to open-ended signification.

Linguists established conditions for transferring a word from its literal to its figurative meaning, including the existence of an affinity and relationship between the original designation and the new designation. Figurative expression is a transition from a previous semantic position (the literal meaning) to a newly established semantic position (the figurative meaning), provided that a relationship exists between the two. Scholars have referred to this concept, including Abd al-Qahir al-Jurjani in his book *Asrar al-Balaghah*, where he calls this relationship “consideration.” He states in defining figurative expression: “It is every word intended to mean other than that for which it was established by its originator, due to a consideration between the second and the first; therefore, it is figurative... because of a consideration between that toward which it is transferred and its original meaning for which it was established by its originator; therefore, it is figurative.”[12]

This relationship constitutes the channel connecting the two conventional meanings. It is what justifies the transition between the transferred meaning and the original meaning and makes it comprehensible and justified rather than arbitrary.

Figurative expression—as a rhetorical term—is an artistic means employed to escape narrowness of wording, broaden and deepen meaning, and give it a new form different from the one familiar in literal expression. For this reason, it received considerable attention from classical scholars, both legal theorists and rhetoricians, because of its artistic characteristics, the most important of which is the capacity to load an expression with newly developed meanings that cannot be accommodated within its original literal designation. Thus, rhetoricians and legal theorists alike distinguish between the primary and secondary meanings of expressions. The primary meanings are the linguistic significations before they developed or before writers began manipulating their uses, whereas the secondary meanings are connected to the psychological and social circumstances experienced by society or some of its members.[13]

Conclusion

It is evident from the foregoing that literal and figurative meaning constitutes a field shared by both legal-theoretical and rhetorical studies, although the perspective from which it is approached differs according to the purpose of each discipline. The legal theorists approached it from the perspective of deriving legal rulings and understanding the intention of the Lawgiver. They consequently divided into those who affirmed figurative expression and viewed it as an expansion of signification that serves interpretation—some of whom, such as the Mu‘tazilites, went too far in employing it for theological purposes until it led them into artificial interpretations—and those who denied it, fearing that affirming it might lead to ambiguity and distortion, and therefore insisted on adhering to the apparent meaning of the text in order to preserve the unity and stability of meaning. Rhetoricians, on the other hand, approached figurative expression from an aesthetic and artistic perspective, considering it a tool for expanding

meaning, diversifying modes of expression, and giving speech a vitality that cannot be achieved through literal wording alone.

Among the most important findings that we have reached are the following:

- Legal-theoretical scholarship remained governed by a normative objective aimed at regulating the intention of the Lawgiver and deriving legal rulings and doctrines, which made caution and consideration of strict contextual indicators ,governing factors in affirming or denying figurative expression. By contrast rhetorical scholarship proceeded from a communicative and miraculous objective aimed at uncovering the sources of beauty and generating “secondary meanings” through techniques of deviation such as attribution, metaphor, and .metonymy
- Legal-theoretical scholarship revealed a sharp methodological duality: the Mu‘tazilites employed figurative expression and rational indicators as an outlet for interpreting the text and declaring the transcendence of the Divine Essence in accordance with their intellectual principles, whereas the Zahirites and prominent Sunni scholars such as Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn al-Qayyim tended toward adherence to the apparent meaning of the text and rejected the use of figurative expression in the Qur’an and Sunnah, in order to protect the texts from ambiguity and distortion and preserve the stability of religious .signification
- The rhetorical and Qur’anic evidence demonstrated that figurative expression is not merely an emergency alternative resorted to when literal meaning proves insufficient. Rather, it is an intentional deviation that gives speech greater pictorial power, semantic expansiveness, and stylistic emphasis, thereby .bringing meaning to life in the mind of the recipient

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