Qaulan Maysūra Ethical Communication Framework: A Tafsir Analysis and Conceptual Implications for Rajāʾ in Rabbani Motivation

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DOI: https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2026.1013COM0051

Received: 25 October 2026; Accepted: 30 October 2026; Published: 06 November 2026

ABSTRACT

Qaulan maysūra in Qurʾān 17:28 concerns the ethical responsibility to respond graciously when assistance cannot be provided. This study develops the Qaulan Maysūra Ethical Communication Framework (QM-ECF) and examines its conceptual implications for rajāʾ in Rabbani Motivation. It combines qualitative document analysis, directed content analysis and conceptual synthesis to examine the Arabic passages. Across the corpus, ease and gentleness emerge as central qualities of qaulan maysūra. The commentaries also discuss respect for those seeking help, promises of assistance, supplication, explanations of inability and the preservation of hope. The study synthesises these insights into six interrelated components, abbreviated as GEPDAH: Gentleness, Ethical Propriety, Promise of Good, Duʿāʾ, Acknowledgement of Inability and Hope. Hope encompasses anticipated provision, future assistance and relief from hardship. A promise creates a moral responsibility to fulfil the stated commitment within one's means and under the specified conditions, while supplication expresses hope and reliance on Allah. Ibn al-Qayyim's discussion in Madārij al-Sālikīn provides a conceptual basis for relating such hope to rajāʾ when it is directed towards Allah and accompanied by effort, trust and responsibility. Communication of this kind may encourage people to persevere through hardship without losing hope. The speaker's orientation, the hope conveyed and the recipient's response are analytically distinct. Whether reassuring speech supports Rabbani Motivation in recipients remains an empirical question. The framework clarifies the ethics of communicating hope when resources are limited and identifies avenues for studying psychospiritual support and its possible application in Islamic psychotherapy.

Keywords: Qaulan Maysūra; Islamic communication ethics; tafsir analysis; GEPDAH; rajāʾ; Rabbani Motivation

INTRODUCTION

An inability to provide assistance does not remove the responsibility to respond respectfully. A person explaining limited resources must consider both the substance of the answer and its implications for someone seeking help. This situation raises an ethical question: how can a response acknowledge genuine constraints while preserving dignity and communicating hope responsibly?

Qurʾān 17:28 addresses this question within a passage concerning material assistance and social obligations:

وَإِمَّا تُعْرِضَنَّ عَنْهُمُ ابْتِغَاءَ رَحْمَةٍ مِنْ رَبِّكَ تَرْجُوهَا فَقُلْ لَهُمْ قَوْلًا مَيْسُورًا

"If you turn away from them while seeking mercy from your Lord for which you hope, then speak to them gently" (Qurʾān, al-Isrāʾ 17:28).

The surrounding verses concern the rights of relatives, people in poverty and travellers, alongside restraint in expenditure (17:26–30). Within this setting, qaulan maysūra concerns the response given when assistance is unavailable. Al-Ṭabarī (2001, vol. 14, p. 569) connects it with gentle speech and a gracious promise while awaiting provision from Allah. Al-Qurṭubī (1964, vol. 10, pp. 248–249) discusses limited means, prayer and a

commitment to help when circumstances permit. The responsibility for speech thus arises within an existing responsibility towards those seeking assistance.

Related studies examine Qurʾānic communication through different expressions and settings. Khairuddin et al. (2023) discuss qawlan maʿrūfa in relation to communication ethics, while Firdaus et al. (2025) examine qaulan maysūra in Gus Iqdam's sermons through al-Shaʿrāwī's tafsir. The present study asks how selected explanations of 17:28 can be organised into a coherent account of responding under material constraints. Its focus is the relationship among manner of speech, commitments, prayer and the hope conveyed, together with the ethical considerations that govern them.

The QM-ECF brings together the core meaning of gentleness and the further explanations offered in eight selected commentaries. The study traces each GEPDAH component to its textual basis, explains how the components function together and compares the resulting account of hope with rajāʾ. Provision, assistance and relief retain their practical significance within that comparison.

The comparison considers how communicating hope in Allah might encourage perseverance through hardship. It distinguishes the speaker's orientation, the hope expressed in the response and the recipient's experience. This distinction allows the potential relevance of Rabbani Motivation to be examined while leaving the recipient's inner response open to empirical study.

The objectives are to identify the communication principles expressed in eight selected commentaries, explain their relationships within QM-ECF, and examine how the hope they describe may relate to rajāʾ through a comparison with Ibn al-Qayyim's Madārij al-Sālikīn.

Conceptual Background

Qaulan Maysūra and Islamic communication ethics

Khairuddin et al. (2023, pp. 2461–2471) examine qawlan maʿrūfa through library research on Qurʾānic communication. Their attention to appropriate speech, audiences and circumstances provides a point of comparison for ethical responsibility. Firdaus et al. (2025) relate gentle speech to contemporary daʿwah through an analysis of recorded sermons. This article returns to the exegetical explanations of qaulan maysūra to examine how its communicative functions relate to limited means and anticipated assistance.

Al-Rāzī (1420 AH, vol. 20, p. 329) and al-Ṣābūnī (1997, vol. 2, p. 146) explain the expression through gentle wording and a gracious promise. Ease is therefore examined through how an answer is delivered and what it commits the speaker to. The ethical quality of the response also depends on the treatment of the person seeking help. A gentle tone, an explanation of inability and a promise have different functions even when they occur in the same utterance.

The analysis treats gentleness as the core meaning of qaulan maysūra and draws on the commentaries' further explanations to identify related communicative functions. GEPDAH is the researchers' synthesis. The overall pattern concerns the selected corpus, whose authors differ in emphasis.

Rajāʾ and the role of Rabbani Motivation

Ibn al-Qayyim (1996, vol. 2, pp. 36–37) situates rajāʾ within the believer's relationship with Allah and distinguishes it from wishful thinking by linking it to effort and trust. Bahmani et al. (2018, pp. 57–71) examine hope and fear in Islamic thought and their implications for spiritual health. Together, these discussions invite attention to what is hoped for, where hope is directed and what action accompanies it.

The object of hope is the good anticipated, such as provision or relief. Its orientation concerns the person's relationship with Allah in seeking that good. These distinctions are used here as analytical questions. They permit a worldly object and religious meaning to coexist within one expression of hope without establishing the recipient's inward disposition.

Rabbani Motivation is used here to describe motivation grounded in faith and directed towards Allah's pleasure. The study focuses on rajāʾ as a conceptual basis for persevering through hardship when hope in Allah is accompanied by effort and trust. For the speaker, this orientation bears on the responsibility to explain limitations honestly and honour commitments within the stated conditions and available means. The tafsir analysis grounds the communication components. The comparison with Madārij al-Sālikīn examines the relationship between hope in Allah and the conduct that accompanies it. The comparison is confined to rajāʾ within the wider relationship among rajāʾ, khawf and maḥabbah.

A person may hope for financial assistance and seek it in reliance on Allah. The practical object of hope and its spiritual orientation can therefore coexist. Assessing that orientation requires attention to reliance and action. How a listener experiences a reference to Allah remains a separate question.

METHODOLOGY

Design and corpus selection

The study combines qualitative document analysis, directed content analysis and conceptual synthesis. Bowen (2009) informs the use of documents as sources of meaning and context. Hsieh and Shannon (2005, pp. 1277–1288) distinguish conventional, directed and summative approaches to content analysis. Here, the directed stage refers to a review guided by working categories developed during the researchers' initial reading. The procedure therefore moves from category development grounded in the passages to focused review and refinement. Jabareen (2009) informs the examination of relationships among concepts.

The corpus consists of explanations of Qurʾān 17:28 in eight purposively selected commentaries. Inclusion required a directly relevant Arabic passage, identifiable edition details and a textual location that could be checked. The selection also enables comparison across different forms of explanation. Yaḥyā ibn Sallām and al-Ṭabarī preserve attributed reports; Ibn Kathīr summarises explanations of a future promise; al-Qurṭubī and al-Rāzī develop contextual and ethical discussion; al-Tafsīr al-Wasīṭ and al-Ṣābūnī offer concise formulations; and al-Shaʿrāwī discusses the interpersonal circumstances of the encounter. These descriptions concern the selected passages, rather than exclusive classifications of each work.

Al-Maktabah al-Shāmilah provided Arabic texts and edition records. The verse-indexed reproductions at al-Bāḥith al-Qurʾānī (tafsir.app) served as comparison texts. For al-Shaʿrāwī, the passage was checked against Quranpedia's reproduction of volume 14, page 8478, because the corresponding al-Shāmilah page was inaccessible during the review. The edition details come from al-Shāmilah's catalogue. The corpus supports comparison within a defined set of texts. Shared wording and transmitted reports were treated as related evidence. Table 1 identifies the editions and locations, and Table 4 records each commentary's contribution.

Table 1. Tafsir corpus and textual locations

Source and work	Edition	Textual location
Yaḥyā ibn Sallām — Tafsīr Yaḥyā ibn Sallām	2004	Vol. 1, p. 130
Al-Ṭabarī — Jāmiʿ al-bayān ʿan taʾwīl āy al-Qurʾān	2001	Vol. 14, p. 569 (commentary on 17:28)
Al-Qurṭubī — Al-Jāmiʿ li-aḥkām al-Qurʾān	1964	Vol. 10, pp. 248–249
Al-Rāzī — Mafātīḥ al-ghayb	1420 AH	Vol. 20, p. 329
Ibn Kathīr — Tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-ʿaẓīm	1999	Vol. 5, p. 69
Majmaʿ al-Buḥūth al-Islāmiyyah — Al-Tafsīr al-wasīṭ li-l-Qurʾān al-karīm	1973–1993	Vol. 5, p. 748

Al-Shaʿrāwī — Tafsīr al-Shaʿrāwī — al-Khawāṭir	1997	Vol. 14, p. 8478
Al-Ṣābūnī — Ṣafwat al-tafāsīr	1997	Vol. 2, p. 146

Volume and page references follow the editions listed in the references. Numbers at the ends of al-Shāmilah URLs are digital identifiers. The year 1420 AH follows the edition record for al-Rāzī, and 1973–1993 is the publication period of the multivolume al-Tafsīr al-Wasīṭ. The additional primary source is the 1996 Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī edition of Madārij al-Sālikīn, particularly volume 2, pages 36–37.

Preliminary matrix and analytical responsibility

The researchers developed the preliminary matrix through an initial reading of the Arabic commentaries on verse 17:28, recording translations and provisional thematic labels. The six working categories came from this reading and were refined during the analysis. They grouped passages concerning gentle wording, ethical propriety, promises of good, supplication, explanations of limited means and hope. The matrix supported retrieval and comparison of passages. The labels served as working interpretations.

Entries relevant to the eight selected works were checked in their Arabic contexts. The evidence record links each source and location with the Arabic expression, attribution, English rendering, provisional category and reason for retaining or qualifying the interpretation. Tables 2 and 4 document these decisions. The unit of analysis was a phrase or passage concerning the circumstances of a request, the treatment of the person seeking help or the recommended response.

The authors were responsible for source selection, attribution, translation and conceptual interpretation. The matrix records their interpretive decisions. The study used author review of the passages, and independent coding and adjudication remain outside the reported procedure. Table 2 documents selected refinements made in the present analysis.

Comparison and category refinement

Each selected passage was read within its discussion before expressions were assigned to a category. Three distinctions guided this comparison: whether wording explicitly describes a response, whether its meaning depends on the immediate context, and whether the analytical claim extends beyond that explanation. Attribution was retained when a commentator reported an earlier authority or presented an alternative view. An omitted theme was not interpreted as rejection of that theme.

The labels were refined according to function. Gentleness concerns delivery; acknowledgement explains a limitation; a promise commits the speaker to future action; and duʿāʾ addresses Allah. Ethical Propriety concerns the normative assessment of the response, while Hope identifies the anticipated good communicated through these forms. The categories can overlap because their functions differ. Their arrangement as GEPDAH is mnemonic and does not establish sequence, weighting or empirical dimensions.

Table 2. Interpretive Decisions and Category Refinement in Selected Passages

Textual case	**Interpretation considered**	**Decision and textual warrant**
Ibn Kathīr, 1999, vol. 5, p. 69: a promise conditional on provision	Read the religious wording as both promise and prayer	Retain P directly. “Allah willing” qualifies the commitment; this phrase is not itself a request addressed to Allah. D requires a prayer expression.
Yaḥyā ibn Sallām, 2004, 1:130: “May Allah provide for us and for you”	Treat prayer and hope as interchangeable	Retain D as an explicit prayer. H is an associated communicative meaning; the recipient’s rajāʾ is not established by the wording.

Al-Qurṭubī, 1964, 10:248–249: prohibition of contempt and explanation of inability	Place all considerate wording under gentleness	Distinguish G as manner, E as ethical responsibility and A as explanation. A gentle delivery does not exhaust the obligation to respect the recipient.
Ibn Zayd's view reported by al-Ṭabarī, on 17:28	Treat a reported ground for withholding help as al-Ṭabarī's position	Preserve Ibn Zayd's attribution and al-Ṭabarī's criticism of its fit with the apparent meaning. Retain limited means as the framework's principal context.

A separate conceptual comparison then examined the hoped-for object, orientation towards Allah and relationship with effort and trust in Madārij al-Sālikīn. These questions concern the possible implications for rajāʾ, after the communication categories have been established.

Translation and interpretive checks

English renderings were checked against the Arabic passages and their context, with attention to the speaker, addressee, conditions and attribution. Table 4 provides the Arabic excerpts and locations and identifies where a translation depends on context. The English renderings are the authors' translations. Arabic vowel marks were retained or supplied to aid reading. The review focused on wording, context and attribution. Transmitted reports were examined as exegetical material. Section 6 describes the limits of independent review and validation.

FINDINGS

Assistance and the circumstances of the response

Al-Rāzī (1420 AH, vol. 20, p. 329) explains the response in relation to poverty, limited means and embarrassment at explicitly refusing a request. Ibn Kathīr (1999, vol. 5, p. 69) presents a gracious promise of assistance when provision becomes available. Al-Qurṭubī (1964, vol. 10, p. 248) distinguishes inability from a contemptuous turning away despite wealth and capacity. The shared ethical problem is how to respond when material assistance is presently constrained while retaining responsibility towards the person seeking it.

Al-Ṭabarī transmits Ibn Zayd's view that assistance may be withheld if it could facilitate wrongdoing, then questions how closely that reading fits the apparent meaning of the verse (2001, Jāmiʿ al-bayān, commentary on 17:28, as reproduced at tafsir.app/tabari/17/28). This attribution preserves the difference between the reported view and al-Ṭabarī's assessment. Limited means remain the primary context for the framework. Extending it to other grounds for withholding assistance requires further contextual analysis.

In the reading examined here, tarjūhā concerns the Qurʾānic addressee's hope for mercy or provision from Allah. That addressee becomes the speaker in the encounter with those seeking help. The wording does not directly describe the recipient's spiritual state. Hope conveyed through the response is therefore distinguished from the recipient's interpretation of it.

The corpus broadly associates qaulan maysūra with speech that is easy, gentle and gracious. Al-Rāzī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, al-Tafsīr al-Wasīṭ and al-Ṣābūnī offer direct support. Al-Shaʿrāwī elaborates the propriety expected when declining a request, and Yaḥyā ibn Sallām foregrounds a supplication. These differences in emphasis inform the synthesis.

Al-Rāzī describes such speech in Mafātīḥ al-ghayb (1420 AH, vol. 20, p. 329) as follows.

سَهْلًا لَيِّنًا

"Easy and gentle."

Al-Qurṭubī describes it in Al-Jāmiʿ li-aḥkām al-Qurʾān (1964, vol. 10, p. 249) as follows.

لَيِّنًا لَطِيفًا طَيِّبًا

"Gentle, considerate and kind."

This core meaning concerns how the response is delivered. The explanations of promises, supplication and inability show what a speaker might communicate in that manner. GEPDAH brings these aspects together while distinguishing their functions.

The GEPDAH components

The researchers synthesised the core meaning and further explanations into six interrelated components with distinct analytical functions. Table 3 defines them. Four concern how a response is delivered or what it communicates. Ethical Propriety governs the assessment of the response, while Hope concerns the good anticipated and conveyed. The classification reflects the study's synthesis of the selected passages.

Table 3. Components and their analytical functions

Component	Function within QM-ECF	Definition and boundary
G — Gentleness	Manner of delivery	Gentle and accessible wording, compatible with declining a request.
E — Ethical Propriety	Normative consideration across the response	Respect for dignity and responsibility; courteous wording cannot justify deception or evasion.
P — Promise of Good	Commitment to future action	Assistance or another good promised within genuine capacity and stated conditions.
D — Duʿāʾ	Request addressed to Allah	Prayer for good, distinct from a prediction or guaranteed outcome.
A — Acknowledgement of Inability	Explanation of the present situation	A truthful and considerate explanation of limitations, without fabricated excuses or humiliating disclosure.
H — Hope	Anticipated good communicated	Provision, future assistance or relief kept in view; the wording alone does not establish the recipient's rajāʾ.

Gentleness

Al-Rāzī explains qaulan maysūra through sahl and layyin, indicating ease and gentleness (1420 AH, vol. 20, p. 329). Al-Ṣābūnī similarly associates gentle words with a gracious promise (1997, vol. 2, p. 146). Gentleness concerns how an answer is expressed, allowing a limitation to be conveyed without unnecessary harshness.

Ethical Propriety

Al-Qurṭubī's own opening explanation prohibits turning away with contempt despite wealth and capacity (1964, vol. 10, p. 248). Ethical Propriety summarises the concern for dignity and responsibility expressed in that passage. Its analytical function extends across the response: a misleading promise remains problematic even when delivered gently. The broader normative label is the article's synthesis, rather than a six-part taxonomy supplied by al-Qurṭubī.

Promise of Good

Ibn Kathīr explains the response as a gentle promise of assistance upon the arrival of provision, and associates the interpretation through promising with several earlier authorities, including Mujāhid and ʿIkrimah (1999, vol.

5, p. 69). Al-Tafsīr al-Wasīṭ also mentions giving when circumstances permit (Majmaʿ al-Buḥūth al-Islāmiyyah, 1973–1993, vol. 5, p. 748). Promise of Good identifies a commitment whose content and conditions should remain intelligible to the recipient.

Duʿāʾ

Yaḥyā ibn Sallām introduces the explanation "May Allah provide for us and for you" with the report formula wa-balaghanī, "it has reached me" (2004, vol. 1, p. 130). The phrase is thus cited as an explanation he transmits, without assigning it to an unnamed earlier speaker. Al-Qurṭubī also discusses prayer for increased provision (1964, vol. 10, p. 249). These expressions address a worldly need through a request to Allah.

Acknowledgement of Inability

In an interpretation introduced by wa-qīla, "it has been said," al-Qurṭubī includes wa-bsuṭ al-ʿudhr, an instruction to explain the excuse in the context of limited resources (1964, vol. 10, p. 249). Al-Rāzī more explicitly identifies the excuse as lack of means and money (1420 AH, vol. 20, p. 329). Acknowledgement of Inability names this contextual function. It need not entail unnecessary disclosure of private circumstances.

Hope

Ibn Kathīr's promise concerns assistance that may become possible when provision arrives (1999, vol. 5, p. 69). Al-Ṭabarī's own explanation links awaiting provision with not causing those seeking help to lose hope (2001, vol. 14, p. 569). These passages give Hope a practical object within an encounter shaped by material need. Al-Shaʿrāwī adds an interpersonal account of turning to Allah for what meets the needs of both parties (1997, vol. 14, p. 8478). The category therefore accommodates worldly expectations and the religious orientation through which they may be expressed.

Contribution of the eight commentaries

Table 4 presents a representative Arabic anchor from each commentary, with its attribution and contribution. These extracts support particular functions, rather than marking every source as endorsing all six components. Labels indicate the present analysis; the English renderings and contextual descriptions should be read with the cited passages.

Table 4. Arabic evidence and contribution of each commentary

Source and attribution	Arabic anchor and English rendering	Contribution to the analysis
Yaḥyā ibn Sallām, Tafsīr Yaḥyā ibn Sallām, 2004, 1:130; explanation introduced by wa-balaghanī	رَزَقَنَا اللَّهُ وَإِيَّاكَ — May Allah provide for us and for you.	Explicit D. Shows a worldly object within prayer; H is an associated interpretation.
Al-Ṭabarī, Jāmiʿ al-bayān, 2001, 14:569; commentator's own exposition	فَلَا تُؤَيِّسْهُمْ — Do not cause them to lose hope.	Explicit concern for preserving H, in the context of anticipated provision.
Al-Qurṭubī, Al-Jāmiʿ li-aḥkām al-Qurʾān, 1964, 10:248; commentator's own exposition	لَا تُعْرِضُ عَنْهُمْ إِعْرَاضَ مُسْتَهِينٍ — Do not turn away from them with contempt.	Textual warrant for E, beyond tone alone.
Al-Rāzī, Mafātīḥ al-ghayb, 1420 H, 20:329; commentator's explanation	وَتَذْكُرُ لَهُمُ الْعُذْرَ — Explain the excuse to them.	Context specifies lack of means, supporting A; the surrounding discussion also addresses G and P.

Ibn Kathīr, Tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-ʿaẓīm, 1999, 5:69; exposition followed by attribution of the promise reading to earlier authorities	إِذَا جَاءَ رِزْقُ اللَّهِ فَسَنَصِلُكُمْ إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ — When provision from Allah comes, we will assist you, Allah willing.	Explicit conditional P; neither a guaranteed date nor a prayer formula.
Majmaʿ al-Buḥūth al-Islāmiyyah, Al-Tafsīr al-wasīṭ, 1973–1993, 5:748; collective commentary	وَعْدِهِمْ بِالْعَطَاءِ عِنْدَ الْيُسْرِ أَوِ الِاعْتِذَارِ لَهُمْ — By promising to give when circumstances permit, or explaining one's inability to them.	P and A are presented as alternatives appropriate to circumstances. The rendering of iʿtidhār follows the stated lack of resources.
Al-Shaʿrāwī, Tafsīr al-Shaʿrāwī, 1997, 14:8478; commentator's illustrative explanation	وَتَطْلُبُ مِنْهُ مَا يَسُدُّ حَاجَتَكَ وَحَاجَةَ سَائِلِكَ — And ask Him for what meets your need and the need of the person asking you.	Connects worldly need with a request to Allah; supports the interpretation of D and religiously oriented H.
Al-Ṣābūnī, Ṣafwat al-tafāsīr, 1997, 2:146; commentator's concise explanation	قَوْلًا سَهْلًا لَيِّنًا وَعِدْهُمْ وَعْدًا جَمِيلًا — Gentle and easy words, and give them a gracious promise.	Concise linkage of G and P; other components are not inferred from silence.

The categories overlap because they answer different questions. A prayer identifies whom the speaker addresses; Hope concerns the good anticipated; and Ethical Propriety concerns the responsibility of making that response. An explanation of inability may accompany a conditional promise, while a context with no reasonable basis for promising may call for an explanation and prayer alone.

Worldly concerns and religious orientation

Al-Qurṭubī connects hoping that Allah will open a way to good with the possibility of assisting the person in need (1964, vol. 10, p. 248). The interpretation he includes on the following page combines an explanation of limited means, prayer for increased provision and assistance when resources become available (vol. 10, p. 249). The good anticipated is worldly, while its possibility is located within dependence on Allah.

The alternative formulation in al-Tafsīr al-Wasīṭ preserves the practical expectation of future assistance without determining the recipient's inward state (Majmaʿ al-Buḥūth al-Islāmiyyah, 1973–1993, vol. 5, p. 748). The comparison therefore supports Hope as an inclusive communication category. Its relationship with rajāʾ concerns orientation and conduct, examined next, rather than a replacement of worldly concerns with exclusively otherworldly objects.

Rajāʾ in Madārij al-Sālikīn

Ibn al-Qayyim (1996, vol. 2, pp. 36–37) discusses rajāʾ in relation to Allah and the hereafter, distinguishing it from tamannī, or wishful thinking, through action:

وَالرَّجَاءُ يَكُونُ مَعَ بَذْلِ الْجُهْدِ وَحُسْنِ التَّوَكُّلِ

"Rajāʾ is accompanied by exerting effort and sound trust in Allah" (Ibn al-Qayyim, 1996, vol. 2, p. 37).

His cultivation analogy contrasts merely wishing for land and its produce with preparing soil, planting and hoping for a harvest. The anticipated result is connected with appropriate action. On the same page, he cites Shāh al-Kirmānī:

عَلَامَةُ صِحَّةِ الرَّجَاءِ حُسْنُ الطَّاعَةِ

"The sign of genuine rajāʾ is sound obedience" (Shāh al-Kirmānī, as cited in Ibn al-Qayyim, 1996, vol. 2, p. 37).

These passages provide grounds for examining orientation towards Allah and responsible action within hopeful communication. The desired benefit alone does not settle the spiritual character of hope. Reading these texts alongside the tafsir findings is the article's conceptual comparison; it is not a claim that Ibn al-Qayyim formulated QM-ECF.

DISCUSSION

Relationships among the components

The six components are related without occupying a single conceptual level. Gentleness describes delivery, while Acknowledgement of Inability, Promise of Good and Duʿāʾ identify kinds of content or communicative acts. Ethical Propriety provides a normative consideration for assessing all of them. Hope identifies what remains possible or anticipated through the response. This arrangement explains why a gentle false promise fails ethically and why a prayer can carry hope without becoming a commitment to provide money.

Figure 1 makes these roles visible. The groupings organise the interpretation; they are not statistically established higher-order dimensions. A response does not have to display every component. Context determines which acts are appropriate, while respect and responsibility apply throughout the encounter.

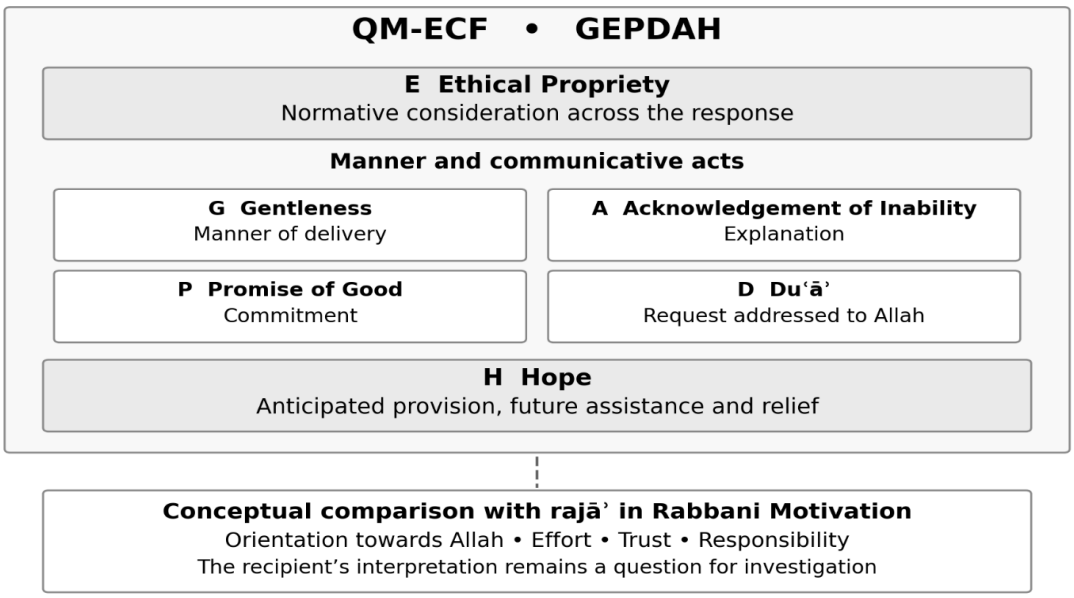


Figure 1. Analytical relationships within QM-ECF and implications for rajāʾ

Source: Authors' synthesis of the selected tafsir passages and the discussion of rajāʾ in Madārij al-Sālikīn. Boxes identify analytical roles; the dashed connector links the communication framework with a separate conceptual comparison.

The anticipated good can be provision, assistance or relief. The comparison with rajāʾ then asks how the hope is directed towards Allah and related to effort, trust and responsibility. Figure 1 represents these questions rather than a sequence of spiritual development or an assumed change in the recipient.

Propositions and their purposes

The propositions have distinct purposes. P1 and P2 are normative claims about an ethically appropriate response. P3 is a conceptual claim about the relationship with rajāʾ. P4 identifies a question for reception research; it is not an empirical finding of this study.

P1 — Normative. A response should combine respectful delivery with a truthful explanation of limitations and should not use reassuring language to evade assistance that is genuinely possible or obligatory.

P2 — Normative. A promise should state a commitment consistent with capacity and conditions, while a prayer should be expressed without presenting it as a guarantee of a particular outcome.

P3. Conceptual. Hope for worldly provision, assistance or relief may be understood in relation to rajāʾ when directed towards Allah and accompanied by effort, trust and responsibility. This relationship provides a basis for examining perseverance through hardship. The worldly object of hope alone leaves its religious orientation open.

P4. Reception-oriented. Future research can examine whether recipients understand a response as practical reassurance or as an expression of religious hope, and whether their interpretation is associated with a willingness to persevere.

Responsibility for the hope conveyed

The synthesis places ethical responsibility in the relationship between wording, circumstances and commitment. Gentleness can reduce unnecessary harshness, but responsibility also concerns what the recipient is led to expect. A conditional promise needs an intelligible condition and an identifiable act. An honest explanation makes the speaker's present capacity understandable without shifting blame to the person seeking help.

The commentaries differ in detail and transmission. Al-Ṣābūnī gives a concise connection between gentle wording and a gracious promise (1997, vol. 2, p. 146), whereas al-Qurṭubī includes several explanations concerning prayer and inability (1964, vol. 10, pp. 248–249). Such differences make source-specific interpretation more informative than counting apparent agreement. The framework retains the different contributions while examining their ethical relationship.

What Rabbani Motivation adds

The tafsir findings already explain how to respond when assistance is unavailable. The additional MR perspective concerns why and how an orientation towards Allah might sustain responsibility within that limitation. It makes the relationship between inward hope and outward conduct available for analysis. A speaker may hope for Allah's provision while remaining attentive to another person, communicating honestly and honouring a commitment when its conditions are met.

Ibn al-Qayyim's relationship between effort and trust (1996, vol. 2, p. 37) provides an interpretive criterion here. It directs attention to conduct accompanying hope, rather than treating religious wording as sufficient evidence of motivation. The verse's reference to the speaker's hope supports this inquiry more directly than an inference about the recipient's spiritual disposition. The recipient may understand the same response as practical reassurance, religious hope or an inadequate answer to an urgent need. This distinction identifies what a later study of reception would need to examine.

Al-Ṭabarī's instruction to avoid causing people to lose hope (Jāmiʿ al-bayān, 2001, vol. 14, p. 569) grounds the communicative aim of keeping the possibility of assistance open. Ibn al-Qayyim's account of effort and trust offers a way to understand perseverance as part of hope in Allah. Read together, the two discussions suggest that honest communication grounded in hope in Allah may encourage continued efforts to find a way forward.

For the speaker, hope in Allah may sustain efforts to find the means to help and fulfil commitments. For the listener, respectful speech and supplication may offer support in facing hardship. The latter possibility calls for research into recipients' interpretations, beliefs and experiences.

Application and the limits of a promise

A conditional promise of assistance might be expressed as follows: "I cannot provide financial help today. If I receive funds that I can make available for this purpose, I will contribute towards your need. May Allah ease your difficulty." This is an illustrative formulation, not a quotation from tafsir. It identifies the promised act and its condition, and is appropriate only where the speaker has a reasonable basis for making that commitment. If the condition is met, the commitment calls for follow-through.

A different response is: "I cannot provide financial help today. I can check the available assistance and update you by Friday. May Allah ease your difficulty." The promise here concerns checking and reporting back. It must not be described as a promise to provide financial assistance. It can be examined as a contemporary extension of a commitment to some good, while the tafsir formulations in Table 4 concern the provision of assistance more directly. A speaker who cannot responsibly promise either action can explain the limitation and offer an appropriate prayer without adding a commitment.

Respectful speech should accompany practical assistance when it can be provided. Qurʾān 17:28 follows the instruction to give those in need their due (17:26), and al-Qurṭubī distinguishes genuine inability from contemptuous refusal despite having the means (1964, vol. 10, p. 248). In education and daʿwah, an appropriate response takes account of the resources available, the speaker's responsibilities and the urgency of the request.

A definite promise creates a moral responsibility to deliver what was promised. The recipient may reasonably ask the speaker to fulfil it. This is the ethical sense in which the commitment can be likened to a moral debt. Whether a promise creates an enforceable financial debt is a separate question. Where a promise is conditional, the speaker's responsibility to act follows the terms stated and the means available.

In Ibn Kathīr's example, إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ accompanies a promise to help once provision becomes available (Tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-ʿaẓīm, 1999, vol. 5, p. 69). The wording connects the commitment to anticipated provision and expresses reliance on Allah's will. The ethical implication is that such reliance should accompany candour about one's means and clarity about what is being promised.

Limitations and Future Research

The corpus concerns one verse in eight selected commentaries and cannot represent the full exegetical tradition. Provisional categories may have directed attention towards expected meanings. The matrix and source-specific evidence make the interpretation assessable but do not establish coding reliability. The English renderings have not undergone independent specialist review, and QM-ECF has not undergone expert validation, measurement testing or assessment with recipients. These limits apply to the analysis as a whole.

Further textual research should examine alternative categories, additional commentaries and the overlapping functions of adab, gentleness, prayer, promises and hope. Specialist review of Arabic interpretation and translation would strengthen the textual record. Reception studies could then distinguish expectations of practical help, perceptions of respectful treatment and religious meaning in actual encounters. Such work would provide grounds for evaluating an instrument or communication rubric without assuming that six conceptual components must emerge as six empirical factors.

Future reception studies could examine whether listeners associate such responses with being treated with dignity, hope in Allah and willingness to seek help or persevere. Possible applications in Islamic psychotherapy would require a separate programme of research, including intervention development with qualified practitioners and evaluation of suitability and effectiveness.

CONCLUSION

Across the eight selected commentaries, qaulan maysūra is associated with speech that is easy, gentle and gracious. The study synthesises further explanations of ethical propriety, promises, supplication, limited means and the preservation of hope into the six GEPDAH components. Gentleness concerns delivery. Acknowledgement, promise and supplication concern the content or act. Ethical Propriety governs the response as a whole, and Hope identifies the good anticipated.

That good may consist of provision, future assistance or relief from worldly hardship. A promise of assistance carries a moral responsibility within the speaker's means and the conditions stated. Courtesy and supplication accompany the practical responsibility to help whenever assistance is possible or due.

Comparison with Madārij al-Sālikīn links this hope with rajāʾ when it is directed towards Allah and accompanied by effort, trust and responsibility. Within Rabbani Motivation, the comparison clarifies how communication might encourage perseverance through hardship. The speaker's orientation, the hope conveyed and the recipient's response remain distinct. Empirical research is needed to understand the recipient's experience. Psychospiritual support and possible applications in Islamic psychotherapy are avenues for further investigation.

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