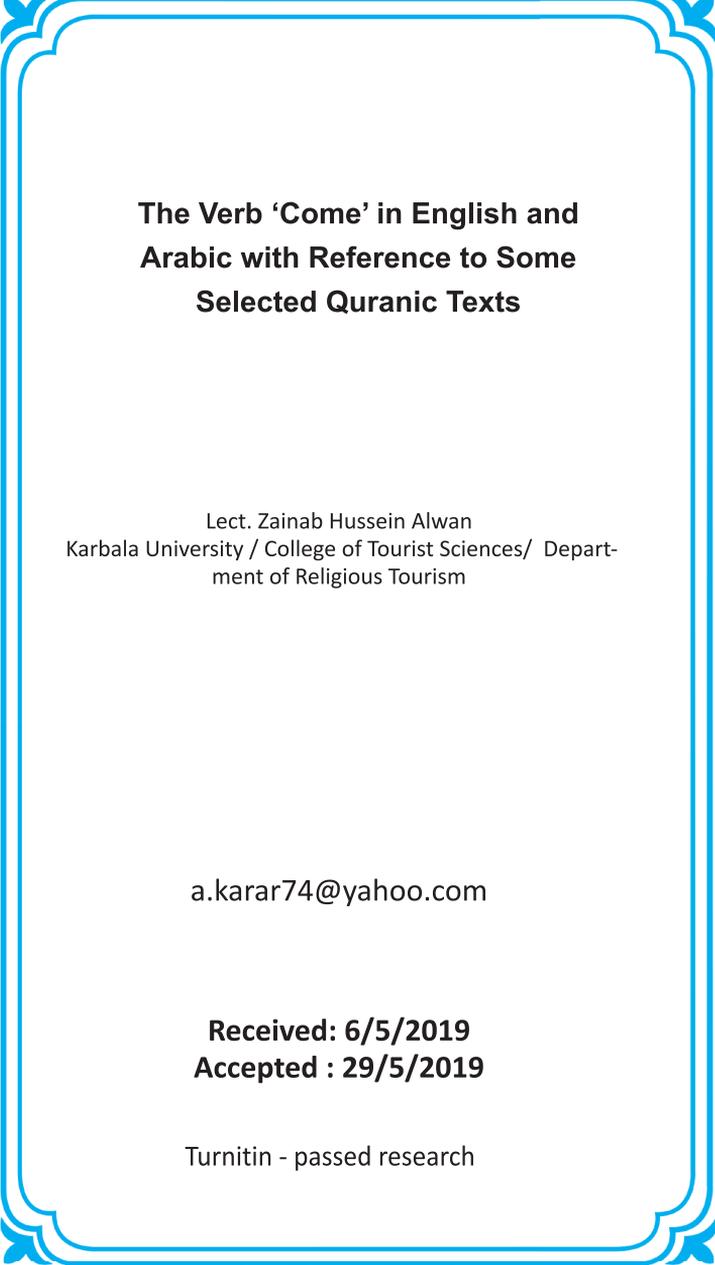


**The Verb 'Come' in English and  
Arabic with Reference to Some  
Selected Quranic Texts**

**Lect. Zainab Hussein Alwan**





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## Abstract

The verb 'come' is one of the multi-meaning verbs in English and Arabic which can be associated with different particles and expressions. The metaphorical extension of the verb 'come' is a problem to which the current study is devoted to. It also sheds light on the various indications of the verb 'come' in some selected Quranic texts. There is a harmony between the meaning intended and the context of the verse.

The current paper attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What are the most famous indications of the verb 'come' in English and Arabic?
2. Does the verb 'come' have different meanings in the Glorious Quran?

This paper aims at: 1. Outlining the multivarious uses of the verb 'come' in English and Arabic. 2. Investigating the semantic dimension of 'come' in some selected Quranic texts such as: showing intimacy, punishment, threat and euphemism.

It is hypothesized that: 1. The verb 'come' has several metaphorical meanings in English and Arabic. 2. It is expected that there is a close connection between the diversification of the verb 'come' and the topics discussed in some selected Quranic texts.

The findings of the investigation validate the hypotheses above.

**Keywords :** Quranic texts, metaphorical extension, diversification, semantic dimension



## 1. The Verb Come in English

### 1.1 The Verb Come: Preliminary Remarks

Having various meanings, the verb “come” has been defined differently by several scholars. Annamalai’s (1975) remarks that the verb come is a multi-meaning verb which should be treated contextually more than lexically since it has several semantic extensions ( cited in Wilkins and Hill, 1995: 212).

Biber (2000:17) and Brinton (2000: 181) agree that “come” is an intransitive verb that needs no object.

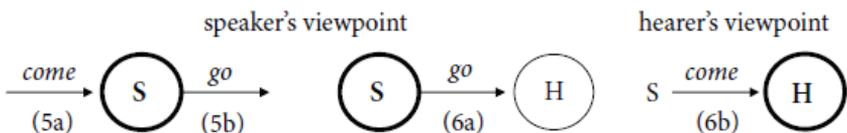
Fillmore (1997), cited in Oshima (2006:288), points out that “the English verb come indicates motion towards the speaker or the addressee”.

To be one of the movement verbs, come denotes basic movement with the whole body (Downing and Locke, 2006: 340)

By the same token, Radden and Dirven (2007:24) mention that come is one of the deictic verbs which depends on the speech situation (i.e. motion towards the speaker).

1) My parents are coming to my graduation.

They also add that the use of the verb come gives sense of politeness and sympathy. To summarize the main difference between come and go, Radden and Dirven (ibid:25) diagram the following figure:



Syntactically, Goddard (1997:156) states that the verb come is more intriguing than the verb go in the sense that there are certain



constraints on the use of the verb go. As far as the preference is concerned, the verb come is more flexible. Tense, mood, voice and aspect are general factors that play a vital role in the concept of acceptability. The choice between go and come is determined by the inherent features of each verb.

Pawley (2006:8) points out that the verb come is among those verbs that are compatible with other words.

Structurally, the verb come is immediately followed by a second verb (Bjorkman,2014:1).

1) I expected him to come visit again soon.

Norde (2009:140 ) Bjorkman (2014:3) state that the motion verb come can be used in subjunctives.

2) Birds will come play in your birdbath.

3) I wish he could come with us.

In perfect participle case, come cannot be followed by bare infinitive or by a regular verb(ibid:6).

4) \*Helen has come visit/visited her grandmother only twice.

5) \*Helen has come put the vase on the stand.

For showing sympathy and politeness, as Radden and Dirven (2007:24) see, the verb come is used substitutinally with the verb go.

6) I'm coming to your graduation

Come is also integrated with process verbs that demand changing of a state (ibid:274).

7) Our dreams have come true. [expected and pleasant change]

Rhetorically, come may be used in zero dimension (ibid:320). This means that it needs no motion at all.



8) Where has your birthday come from?

Langacker (2008 :68) differentiates between come and arrive in the sense that the former requires full motion, while the latter focuses on the point of reaching only.

One of the constrains of the verb come is that it cannot be constructed with more than two word sequences(ibid:403).

9) Come see this.

Another constrain is that it cannot be passivized once being combined with particles (Kim,2009:5).

10) He will come into a fortune (\* A fortune will be come into.)

Walker and Elsworth (2004:54) mention that the verb “come” is used to express a plan which is arranged previously. To generalize the idea, they add that it is preferable to use the verb come in present continuous.

11) He’s coming back in ten years.

Seaton and Mew (2007:140) affirm that come gives a sense of direct request.

12) Come back soon!

Downing and Locke (2006: 84,88) note that come is one of the verbs of occurrence which is followed by specific adjectives such as: unstuck, true, loose, open, right etc.

13) The label has come unstuck.

Structurally, come is a generic verb which can be compatible with another one (Pawley,2006:8).

14) I expected him to come visit again soon.



Pope (2015:41) notes that the verb come is widely common in spoken language than written one.

The verb come, as Nelson (2001:164) sees, is used in imperative structure.

15) Come in.

Having several names, come is one of the verbs of occurrence (Downing and Locke, 2006: 85).

Adverbs such as “up, down, in and deictics such as here, there and then are commonly followed by verbs of motion such as come” (ibid:231).

16) Here comes the bus.

17) Then came the Norman Conquest.

Swan (1995: 68) confirms that the verb “come” requires movement “to a place where the speaker was or will be.”

18) What time did I come to see you.

Imperatively, come can be employed to express invitation (Eastwood (2002: 22).

19) Come to lunch with us.

Formally or in literary style, dummy subjects such as: it and there can be the subject of the verb come ( ibid: 59).

20) It comes three persons.

In informal British English, “the form (come and) is used rather than (come to)” (ibid: 147).

21) Come and have a look at this.

The formulae ( come + active participle) is used “to talk about



some activities away from the home, especially leisure activities.” (ibid: 170).

22) Come cycling with us.

In a phrasal construction, come can be accompanied with the particles (up) to imply the meaning of suggestion (Murphy,1994: 288).

23) She is always coming up with new ideas.

With some outdoor activities, Biber et al. (2000:326) affirm that the verb come can be followed with ‘-ing’ form to indicate a sense of invitation.

24) Come dancing this evening.

Biber et al. (ibid:208) mention that come is one of the process verbs.

25) My shoelaces have come undone.



## 1.2 The Verb “Come” as a Phrasal Verb

Being combined with other words, expressions and idioms, the verb “come” is considered one of the phrasal verbs that has different meanings. The following table illustrates the most common words and expressions that can be associated with the verb come ( McCarthy and O’Dell, 2004:16).

Phrasal Verb	Meaning	Example
_come along	Arrive at a place	26. Few people came along and bought tickets.
_come apart	Separate into pieces	27. The antique picture frame just came apart in my hands.
_come around	To become conscious again	28. A nurse was with me when I came around after the operation.
_come out	To be given	29. When do your exam results come out?
--come about	To happen	30. I am not sure how that came about.
-come across	To meet by chance	31. I came across someone who has done identical study.
- come to	To make something	32. I have got to come to a decision.



## 2. The Verb "COME" in Arabic

الاحمدي ( 1979:7 ) states that (أتى) is a trilateral verb followed by an object.

خضير (2012: 677-8) mentions that the verb ( جاء ) is more comprehensive than the verb (أتى). He differentiates between the two verbs and in the sense that the former requires coming easily, while the latter carries the meaning of arriving with difficulty. He (ibid:679) also adds that the verb ( أتى ) means doing something willingly.

### 2.1 The Figurative Uses of the Verb "COME" in Arabic

Either positively or negatively, الاصفهاني (H.:9: ٥٠٢) points out that (أتى) is a voluntary verb. It has several metaphorical indications which can be summarized as follows:

#### 1-Reminding

﴿ وَلَئِن آتَيْتَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ بِكُلِّ آيَةٍ مَا تَبِعُوا قِبْلَتَكَ وَمَا أَنْتَ بِتَابِعٍ قِبْلَتَهُمْ ﴾  
( البقرة: ١٤٥ )

Even if thou wert to bring to the people of the Book all the Signs [together], they would not follow Thy Qibla; nor art thou going to follow their Qibla; (Ali,1987:10)

#### 2- Promise and Threat

34)

﴿ أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنْ تُدْخَلُوا الْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَأْتِكُمْ مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ مَسَّنَّهُمْ الْبَاسُ وَالضَّرَاءُ وَزُلْزِلُوا حَتَّى يَقُولَ الرَّسُولُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ مَتَى نَصُرُ اللَّهُ ﴾ ( البقرة: ٢١٤ )



Or do ye think that ye shall enter the Garden [of bliss] without such [trials] as came to those who passed away before you? they encountered suffering and adversity, and were so shaken in spirit that even the Messenger and those of faith who were with him cried: "When [will come] the help of Allah?" (Ali,1987:15)

3- Sexual Relationship (is used euphemistically to avoid embarrassment) :

﴿ نِسَاؤُكُمْ حَرْثٌ لَّكُمْ فَأَتُوا حَرْثَكُمْ أَنَّى شِئْتُمْ ﴾ (البقرة: ٢٢٣)

Your wives are as a tilth unto you; so approach your tilth when or how ye will; (Ali,1987:15)

4- Showing Challenge

﴿ تُمْ ادْعُهُنَّ يَأْتِيَنَّكَ سَعِيًّا ﴾ (البقرة: ٢٦٠)

Then call them back. They will come swiftly to you. (Ali,1987:19)

5- Glorification

﴿ وَآتَيْنَا عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ الْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَيَّدْنَاهُ بِرُوحِ الْقُدُسِ ﴾ (البقرة: ٨٧)

We gave Jesus the son of Mary Clear [Signs] and strengthened him with the holy spirit. (Ali,1987:6)

6- Irony

﴿ أَلَمْ تَر إِلَى الَّذِي حَاجَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ فِي رَبِّهِ أَنْ آتَاهُ اللَّهُ الْمُلْكَ ﴾ (البقرة: ٢٥٨)

Hast thou not Turned thy vision to one who disputed with Abraham About his Lord, because Allah had granted him power? (Ali,1987:19)

2.2 Verbs Denoting Coming in Arabic

There are some words which can be used interchangeably with the verb "أتى". Either implicitly or explicitly, خضير (2012:19) emphasizes that there are a group of words which carry the meaning of the verb



(أتى) with a slight difference in their indications as follows:

1- جاءَ: It demands coming without coercion. It also requires gradation in arriving.

﴿ وَإِذَا جَاءَكَ الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِآيَاتِنَا فَقُلْ سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ كَتَبَ رَبُّكُمْ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ الرَّحْمَةَ ﴾ (39)  
( الانعام : ٥٤ )

When those come to thee who believe in Our signs, Say: "Peace be on you: Your Lord hath inscribed for Himself [the rule of] mercy: (Ali,1987:59)

2- أَقْبَلَ: It is one of the verbs which indicates coming with intention.

﴿ فَأَقْبَلَ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ ﴾ ( الصافات : ٥٠ )

Then they will turn to one another and question one another. (Ali,1987:223)

3- إِفْتَحَمَ : It is an intense verb of reaching which means doing something with great difficulty.

﴿ فَلَا إِفْتَحَمَ الْعُقَبَةَ ﴾ ( البلد : ١١ )

But he hath made no haste on the path that is steep. (Ali,1987:318)

4- قَدَّمَ : It is another verb of coming which can be associated with either tangible or intangible issues.

﴿ وَلَنْ يَتَمَنَّوهُ أَبَدًا بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ ﴾ ( البقرة : ٩٥ )

But they will never seek for death, on account of the [sins] which their hands have sent on before them. (Ali,1987:6)

5- حَضَرَ : It indicates motion towards the location.



﴿ فَوَرَبِّكَ لَنَحْشُرَنَّهُمْ وَالشَّيَاطِينَ ثُمَّ لَنُحْضِرَنَّهُمْ حَوْلَ جَهَنَّمَ جِثِيًّا ﴾ ( مريم : ٦٨ ) ( 43 )

So, by thy Lord, without doubt, We shall gather them together, and [also]

the Evil Ones [with them]; then shall We bring them forth on their knees round about Hell; (Ali,1987:147)

6- وَرَدَ : It is used either voluntarily or involuntarily, the verb represents the final phase of reaching.

﴿ يَقْدُمُ قَوْمَهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فَأَوْرَدَهُمُ النَّارَ وَبِئْسَ الْوَرْدُ الْمَوْرُودُ ﴾ ( هود : ٩٨ ) ( 44 )

He will go before his people on the Day of Judgment, and lead them into the Fire [as cattle are led to water]: But woeful indeed will be the place to which they are led! (Ali,1987:105)

### 3. Analysis of the Verb ( أَدَّى ) in some Selected Quranic Texts

Relying on the forgoing discussion, it is worthy to mention that the researcher adopts (2012) خضير, (٥٠٢ H.) الاصفهاني and the interprets of the Glorious Quran, namely الطبري and السيوطي, الطباطبائي and other scholars in analyzing some selected verses. The the analysis of the present study illustrates the semantic level of the verb (أَدَّى).



Text -1-

﴿إِنِّي أَمْرُ اللَّهِ فَلَا تَسْتَعْجِلُوهُ سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ﴾ (النحل: ١)

(Inevitable) cometh (to pass) the Command of God: seek ye not then to hasten it: (Ali,1987:124)

Threatening people, the torture caused by separation from God is approaching. This scenario shows the dreadful event which is inevitable (الطباطبائي, 1997/Vol.12:223). Here, the verb (أَتَى) is compatible with horrible scene of the God's punishment which is painful and severe. Being strict in His punishment, such threat is employed to arouse the curiosity of the audience and make them aware of its actual existence.

Text -2-

﴿حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَتَوْا عَلَىٰ وَادِ النَّمْلِ﴾ (النمل: ١٨)

At length, when they came to a (lowly) valley of ants, (Ali,1987:186)

الانصاري (1992:754) comments on this verse stating that seeing the approaching army, an ant warns all the others in order not to be crushed by Solomon's army. Here, the verb (اتى) carries the meaning of passing and being spatially close. Explicitly, it imparts a sense of nearness. The verb (اتى) has its own physical indication in this particular text.



Text -3-

﴿ أَتَأْتُونَ الْفَاحِشَةَ مَا سَبَقَكُمْ بِهَا مِنْ أَحَدٍ مِّنَ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴾ ( الاعراف : ٨٠ )

“Do ye commit lewdness such as no people in creation (ever) committed before you? (Ali,1987:72)

To be used of doing lewdness, homosexuality destroys the harmony and the very social fabric of the society. Such sinfulness has been practiced by Lut’s group. Their misdeeds have been mentioned in the Quran euphemistically in order to mitigate the speech. To be condemned in all societies and religions, this act is strictly forbidden in every form (دادپو et al., 2018:56). Politely, the verb(أتى) is used to soften the meaning intended (i.e. certain shameful deeds). the verb ‘أتى’, her, is a compensation for removing the negative impact of impurity and negative deeds . In other words, it is employed to mitigate the speech.

Text -4-

﴿ قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَنَاكُمْ عَذَابُ اللَّهِ أَوْ أَتَتْكُمُ السَّاعَةُ أَغَيْرَ اللَّهِ تَدْعُونَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴾ ( الانعام : ٤٠ )

Say: “Think ye to yourselves, if there come upon you the wrath of Allah, or

the Hour [that ye dread], would ye then call upon other than Allah?- [reply] if

ye are truthful! (Ali,1987:58)

Without any delays, God’s punishment is about to come, this texts shows that there is still an opportunity for repentance (ابن كثير , 1998/Vol.3:228). In this current verse, the meaning of the word اتى includes God’s torment that comes upon the disobedience. One can manipulate his final decision after a course of meditation. Leaving no room for doubt, God’s punishment is about to come inevitably.



Text -5-

﴿ هَلْ أَتَاكَ حَدِيثُ مُوسَى ﴾ ( طه : ٩ )

Has the story of Moses reached thee? (Ali,1987:148)

According to السيوطي (2003:31) , the verb (أتى) here indicates hearing. The use of metaphor denotes God's blessing and bounties. To comfort His beloved Prophet, namely the Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه واله وسلم), God attempts to remind him of the previous prophets and their sufferings. Pharaoh's end reflects a transparency to the way of being destructed.

Text -6-

﴿ كَمْ آتَيْنَاهُمْ مِنْ آيَةٍ بَيِّنَةٍ وَمَنْ يُبَدِّلْ نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْهُ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴾ ( البقرة : ٢١١ )

How many clear (Signs) We have sent them. But if any one, after God's favour has come to him, substitutes (something else), God is strict in punishment. (Ali,1987:14)

God sends His signs to people so as to believe in Him. Seeing God's signs and ignoring them deliberately, here, people deserve God's punishment (الطبري,2001/Vol.3:616). One of the figurative uses of the verb (أتى) is seeing. There is no place for leniency in fulfilling God's laws. No next time, no second chance, the verse outlines that it is necessary for every person not to miss an opportunity of goodness. Otherwise, he must be punished accordingly.



Text -7-

﴿ وَالْقِيَٰمَٰتِ مَا فِي يَمِينِكَ تَلَقَّفَ مَا صَنَعُوا إِنَّمَا صَنَعُوا كَيْدٌ سَاجِرٌ وَلَا يُفْلِحُ السَّاجِرُ حَيْثُ أَتَىٰ ﴾  
( طه : ٦٩ )

“Throw that which is in thy right hand: Quickly will it swallow up that

which they have faked what they have faked is but a magician’s trick: and the

magician thrives not, [no matter] where he goes.” (Ali,1987:157)

Being supported divinely, the Prophet Musa is uplifted over the magicians of his time. All their magic acts are in vain. Their attempts are aimless.

In this particular verse, the verb ( أَتَىٰ ) has the sense of doing unacceptable deeds (دادپو et al., 2018:55). Actually, Prophet Musa longs for a heavenly help. God wants to handle the present moment and dull Musa’s fear.

Having unique signs, Prophet Musa is encouraged and he has become confident that God suffices him. Such rational evidence is used to rescuer the Prophet. To add a sense of eagerness, the Divine victory is yet to come.



Text -٨-

﴿ حَتَّىٰ آتَانَا الْيَقِينُ ﴾ ( المدثر: ١٧ )

“Until there came to us [the Hour] that is certain.”. (Ali,1987:302)

Unexpectedly, the verb ( آتَى ) here displays the meaning of coming suddenly ( دادپو et al., 2018:58). The verb is employed to arouse the curiosity of the audience and visualize the state of being confused. Here, the verb ( آتَى ) is compatible with horrible scenario of the death which leaves no room for retraction. The Quran emphasizes the sudden and unexpected arrival of death especially for those who are pursuing their heavenly interests.



## 5. Conclusions

The study ends up with the following conclusions:

1- Religiously, the figurative uses of the verb 'come' is problematic. This validates the hypothesis which says "The verb 'come' has several metaphorical meanings in English and Arabic."

2- In the light of the selected data, the verb (اتى) has a negative indication. This can be ascribed to the nature of the verb and its metaphorical extension which demands having the sense of coming that is compatible with sorrow, threat and punishment.

3- Euphemistically, the verb(اتى) is used to mitigate the speech. It is selected to mask the acting of some shameful deeds in some selected Quranic texts.

4- It is clear that there is a fluctuation between the surface and deep meaning of the verb(اتى). In other words, there is no clear-cut distinction between the real and the metaphorical indication of the verb(اتى).

5- The verb(اتى) has several figurative indications in the Quranic texts and the most common ones are: showing intimacy, punishment and hearing. Such implications fit the very idea of the Quranic text. This verifies the hypothesis which states "It is expected that there is a close connection between the diversification of the verb 'come' and the topics discussed in some selected Quranic texts."



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