

**An Introduction to the Methods based on Ancient Oratory  
in the Rhetorical Criticism of the Holy Book and the Challenges  
Facing their Application in Studies on the *Epistle to the Hebrews***

Mohammad Ahmadi<sup>1</sup>  
Dr. Taghi Pournamdarian<sup>2</sup>

Received: 2017/9/3

Accepted: 2017/11/5

In the recent decades, rhetorical criticism has been recognized as a method for the assessment of the letters in the Holy Book and many critics have applied this critical approach in studying Christian epistles. Apart from the communicative structure of the epistles – which is, naturally, fit for rhetorical analysis – another reason for the application of rhetorical criticism in studying the letters seems to be the fact that in their composition, the Christian epistles have been influenced by the principles of ancient oratory. Nowadays, some scholars believe that due to the influence of the instructions of oratory teachers, the principles of letter-writing in the ancient times were regulated in a special style and this has caused similarities between orations and letters in ancient times. Even though this view is not completely accepted in academic circles, it has motivated some scholars to attempt rhetorical analyses of the epistles of the Holy Book following the principles of ancient oratory. The present article first introduces the most important methods that, based on the principles of ancient oratory, have emerged in the rhetorical criticism of the Holy Book and, then, assesses the existing challenges in applying these methods in studies on the rhetorical criticism of the *Epistle to the Hebrews*.

**Key words:** Rhetorical Criticism, Rhetoric, Oratory, The Holy Book, Letter-writing, *Epistle to the Hebrews*.

---

1. PhD Candidate in Persian Language and Literature, University of Tehran

Mohammad.ahmadi1368@yahoo.com

2. Professor of Persian Language and Literature, University of Tehran and Institute for Humanities and Cultural Studies