

Original Research

Received 28 May 2026

Revised 22 June 2026

Accepted 17 July 2026

Natural Resources for Human Health 2026, Vol. 6(9s): 1372–1399

KEYWORDS:

the formation of the Qur'anic text, the Torah–Gospel text, intertextuality, interactive intertextuality, Qur'anic narrative, confirmation and dominance, the relationship of transcendence.

The Formation of the Qur'anic Text: A Modern Critical Perspective

Abbas Hamad Abd Sultan¹, Prof. Dr. Zaki Faleh Hassan Al-Mousawi²

¹ Dhi Qar Education Directorate, Ministry of Education, Iraq

² University of Dhi Qar, Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Iraq

¹ Abbas.Abd.Seltean@utq.edu.iq, ² Dr.zaki.fleih.hasin@itutq.edu.iq

ABSTRACT: This research addresses the question of intertextuality between the Torah–Gospel text and the Qur'anic text. It presents the views of the proponents of the modernist reading, followed by the views of their critics, who hold that the resemblance found between the two texts confirms the unity of their source, and that the Qur'anic text worked to amend and to transcend the corrupted text found in the Torah–Gospel text. The artistic and cognitive dimension of the Qur'anic text likewise becomes apparent through this discussion. Both trends relied on modern linguistic studies.

INTRODUCTION

God Almighty sent His messengers to humankind to bring them out of darkness into light. Some of these messages were addressed to a particular nation, others to all of humanity, and among them was the final religion that came to seal all the divine laws that preceded it. Because of the unity of the divine religions, some resemblance among the heavenly scriptures of those religions was inevitable. Yet some of those scriptures were subjected to distortion and alteration — among them the Torah–Gospel text — while others God undertook to preserve from change, namely the text of the Noble Qur'an, which the Trustworthy Spirit brought down upon the breast of our noble Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family). The proponents of the modernist reading have seized upon this resemblance as a basis for steering their reading in the direction dictated by their intellectual presuppositions, relying on modern linguistic studies as a prop for this endeavor. They hold that the Most Noble Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) had a hand in shaping the Qur'anic text, since many of the stories and religious obligations it contains were already present in other religions. Yet this claim is not new: it was the earliest polytheists of the age of revelation who described the Qur'anic text as being among “the myths/tales of the ancients.” Critics have taken up the task of refuting the views advanced by the proponents of the modernist reading, finding that this resemblance is no longer a point against the Qur'an but rather a confirmation of the unity of these religious texts — a unity rooted in divine oneness. They further found that the Qur'anic text worked selectively to affirm the established facts and immutable norms that had not been exposed to human distortion and falsification, and indeed that the Qur'anic text worked to correct the human falsification found in those earlier texts. The researcher has adopted the descriptive-analytical method in this study, first presenting the views of the proponents of the modernist reading, then the views of their critics, and finally describing and analyzing the views of the critics of the modernist reading.

INTERTEXTUALITY IN THE ARABIC LANGUAGE AND IN TERMINOLOGY

The term *tanāṣṣ* (intertextuality) had no currency in the ancient lexicons, but its root is the word *naṣṣ* (text). *Lisān al-ʿArab* states: “*al-naṣṣ* is the doing of a thing; one says *naṣṣa al-ḥadīth*, *yanuṣṣuhū naṣṣan*, meaning he raised it up, and whatever is made manifest

has been *naṣṣa*... and *naṣṣa al-matā' naṣṣan* means he placed some of it upon some of it, i.e., *naṣṣa*.¹ Hence among its lexical meanings we find: elevation, manifestation, and the placing of one part upon another.

The meaning of *naṣṣ* subsequently developed, and its use expanded across the various religious sciences to denote an expression or sentence of specific meaning — especially in the science of *ḥadīth*, where it denotes the preservation of the prophetic reports, and in the science of legal theory (*uṣūl*), where it denotes an expression, whose meaning admits no alternative. This derives from the notion of manifestness in the linguistic signification of *naṣṣ* and of elevation, since what is raised up is stronger than what is beneath it.²

The use of the term *tanaṣṣ* became current in linguistic and literary studies. The letter *tā'* in this word denotes the root-sense of interaction between two or more texts, and then of setting them against one another to indicate either a shared origin in substance or a distinction between them. Thus, *tanaṣṣa* follows the pattern *tafā'ala*, i.e., participation among many things,³ so that the interaction between the two texts means the interaction and sharing between them, whereby one takes from the other.⁴

INTERTEXTUALITY IN TERMINOLOGY:

It is one of the modern linguistic concepts, to which Westerners have devoted considerable attention in critical studies, and only at a later stage did it receive comparable attention in Arabic studies, so as “to express a desire to derive any text from another text, while searching for the points of intersection and overlap between texts, so that it proceeds from a subjective desire on the part of the author of the text to share and to meet with others — something that occurs through repeated practices founded essentially on accumulation and gradual development.”⁵

Perhaps the most prominent figure to define *tanaṣṣ* is Marc Angenot, who defines intertextuality as: “every text that coexists in some fashion with other texts, thereby becoming a text within a text, that is, intertextuality.”⁶

Some researchers have transmitted a definition from Laurent Jenny, who defined intertextuality by saying: “a work of transformation, infiltration, absorption, and assimilation of several texts carried out by a central text, which retains the primary locus of meaning.”⁷

Roland Barthes holds that “every text is an intertext; texts appear within it at varying levels and in forms that are not, in one way or another, inaccessible to understanding, since the texts of past and present culture intersect within it — every text being merely a new text woven from prior points of reference.”⁸

Among the Arabs, Muhammad Miftah says: “It is the process of substituting other texts, for within the space of the text several utterances taken from other texts intersect.”⁹ ‘Abd al-Malik Murtāḍī, meanwhile, defines intertextuality as: “the reiteration of another’s speech in a different weave, without its being present in its full extent, so that one draws inspiration from it, opposes

¹ *Lisān al-‘Arab*, entry “*n-ṣ-ṣ*”: 7, 97.

² See: *Manhaj al-Tanaṣṣ bayna al-Qur’ān wa-l-Kitāb al-Muqaddas* (published research): 172.

³ See: *Adab al-Katib*: 456; and *al-Taṭbiq al-Ṣarfī*: 38.

⁴ See: *al-Naṣṣ al-Mafhūm, wa-Khuṣūṣiyyat al-Tawzīf fi al-Naṣṣ al-Mu’aṣir*: 12.

⁵ *Manhaj al-Tanaṣṣ bayna al-Qur’ān wa-l-Kitāb al-Muqaddas* (published research): 173.

⁶ *Fi Uṣūl al-Khiṭāb al-Naqdī al-Jadīd*: 461.

⁷ *al-Muṣṭalahāt al-Asāsiyya fi Lisāniyyāt al-Naṣṣ, wa-Taḥlīl al-Khiṭāb, Dirāsa Mu’jamiyya*: 101.

⁸ *al-Naṣṣ al-Gha’ib: Tajalliyāt al-Tanaṣṣ fi al-Shi’r al-‘Arabī*: 33.

⁹ *al-Tanaṣṣ: Muqāraba Ma’rifīyya fi Mabīyyatibi wa-Anwā’ibi wa-Anmāṭibi*: 33.

it, contests it, and summons it to mind or to the imagination in some form, so that it runs upon the tongue and becomes a text floating amid other texts, wandering in their space, a matter of which perhaps no one is aware at all.”¹⁰

Some researchers hold that intertextuality was already studied by the ancient men of letters, rhetoricians, and linguists, through their study of the relationship between earlier and later texts, but under other terms, among them *iqtibās* (citation) and *sariqat* (literary “thefts”) or their equivalents.¹¹

Some researchers divide intertextuality into two types: the first is *external intertextuality*, whereby a text draws upon texts that preceded it; the second is *internal intertextuality*, whereby the parts of a single book explain one another.¹² Our discussion in this section concerns external intertextuality between the Noble Qur’an and the heavenly texts that preceded it.

FIRST: INTERTEXTUALITY BETWEEN THE QUR’AN AND THE BIBLE

The proponents of the modernist reading hold that the formation of the Noble Qur’an was informed by texts that preceded it, such as the Torah and the Gospel, observing a resemblance and correspondence between the Noble Qur’an and the Bible, in both its Old and New Testaments — whether in style, narrative, phrasing, or vocabulary. The beginnings of this claim of intertextuality between the Noble Qur’an and the Bible, within modern scholarship, go back to the pronouncements of the orientalist in the mid-nineteenth century, by whom the Arab modernists were subsequently influenced.¹³

Although this claim has recently been raised in modernist garb, its roots are ancient: the polytheists accused the Most Noble Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) of this very charge, and the Noble Qur’an records this when God, exalted is He, says: **“And We certainly know that they say, ‘It is only a human being who teaches him.’ The tongue of the one they refer to is foreign, while this is a clear Arabic tongue”** (al-Naḥl 16:103). The polytheists used to accuse the Most Noble Messenger of learning from a young sword-maker in Mecca, and the Noble Qur’an refuted this charge with the foregoing verse; yet the orientalist and the modernists did not accept the Qur’an’s refutation.¹⁴

Hisham Djaït has spared no effort in affirming the Christian influence upon Meccan society, following the orientalist, saying: “He is among the most important of historians, such as Wellhausen and Tor Andrae, who affirm the strength of the Christian influence, and they are correct in this; the historical reality of the time bears witness to it, for Christianity surrounded Mecca on every side, whether that Christianity was Monophysite, Melkite Orthodox, or Nestorian.”¹⁵

Dr. Hakim al-Sultani holds that Hisham Djaït affirms that the intertextuality between the Noble Qur’an and the monotheistic heritage — especially from Christianity — operates at every level, including Qur’anic words taken from the Syriac and Nabataean spoken by the Christians alongside the Arabic they had constructed after their migration to the Hijaz and Mecca,¹⁶ as evidenced by Djaït’s statement: “Among the proofs is that the Syriac religious lexicon entered the language of the Qur’an far more extensively than the Hebrew lexicon... For example: the word *ṣalawāt* (prayers), of Syriac origin meaning genuflection, we find in the Qur’anic text written in a similar fashion (*ṣalamāth*), and in the plural form as *ṣalawāt*. We likewise find very closely corresponding expressions, for example:

Subḥānaka (Glory be to You) = *shubḥā lakb* in Syriac

Tabārakta (Blessed are You) = *brikb at* in Syriac

¹⁰ Ibid.: 40.

¹¹ See: *al-Tanāṣṣ fi al-Qur’ān al-Karīm: Dirāsa Taḥqīqiyya ‘alā al-Suwar al-Madaniyya*: 4.

¹² See *ibid.*: 6, 7.

¹³ See: *Qirā’a Naqdiyya fi (Ta’rikḥ al-Qur’ān) li-l-Mustashriq Nöldeke*: 191–192.

¹⁴ See: *Ru’ya Islāmiyya li-l-Istishrāq*: 35.

¹⁵ *Fi al-Sira al-Nabawiyya: Ta’rikḥiyyat al-Da’wa al-Muḥammadiyya fi Makka*: 163.

¹⁶ See: *al-Qirā’a al-Ḥadāthiyya li-l-Naṣṣ al-Qur’ānī fi Ḍaw’ Taḥlīl al-Khiṭāb*: 218.

Subḥānaka yā Allāh (Glory be to You, O God) = *shubḥā lakh alāhā*.¹⁷

Hisham Djāit therefore regards this as clear evidence of the influence of Syriac speakers upon the milieu in which the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) lived.¹⁸

Dr. Hakim al-Sultani, however, holds that Hisham Djāit's understanding of the question of intertextuality between the Noble Qur'an and the monotheistic heritage is "extremely simplistic and superficial: Djāit's insistence on establishing a historical link between Meccan society and the Christianity surrounding it, and a linguistic link between Arabic and Syriac and Nabataean, in order to establish the strength of Christian influence upon the Qur'an, is problematic, for even granting that this historical link is established, it never rose to the level of a general phenomenon, but was rather an influence at the level of individual *ḥunafā'* (pre-Islamic monotheists); and we are speaking of a language that was current, understood, and possessed of cultural points of reference well known to Meccan society. Moreover, the linguistic link was not confined to Syriac and Nabataean, for numerous Arabized terms entered from other languages as well."¹⁹

Al-Sultani bolstered his view with the findings of modern linguistic studies, for linguistic research has established that the practice of "selection" does not occur without "the spread of a particular cultural phenomenon, such that the currency of a particular linguistic style runs parallel to it, allowing the cultural phenomenon to spread and allowing a particular language to circulate; and the selection of a particular cultural phenomenon entails the choice of a particular style for expressing that phenomenon."²⁰

On this basis, it appears to al-Sultani that the Qur'anic text was not directly "selecting" from the Bible, but rather "practiced a process of intertextuality by linking the text to the monotheistic texts that preceded it, on the understanding that intertextuality is one of the criteria of textuality, and one of the means by which texts are produced and received — a process that presupposes that recipients have some general knowledge of the preceding texts."²¹

As for Hisham Djāit's insistence on the proximity of the Jewish and Christian communities to Mecca and their influence, and on the Most Noble Messenger's (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) use of concepts from the two religions in shaping the Qur'anic text, Dr. Hakim al-Sultani regards this as a mistaken view, since "Meccan society at that time was far removed from Jewish and Christian influence; the Noble Qur'an could not, therefore, have used Jewish and Christian elements directly in order to influence the Prophet's society. Rather, it dazzled them through its communicative strategies, founded on intertextual techniques of the highest creativity, by absorbing the old and producing a new creation that harmonized with their linguistic system and cognitive framework."²² It is for this reason that the Noble Qur'an affirms, following the story of Mary, that it belongs to the tidings of the unseen, God saying: **"That is from the news of the unseen which We reveal to you, [O Muhammad]. And you were not with them when they cast their pens as to which of them should be responsible for Mary, nor were you with them when they disputed"** (Āl 'Imrān 3:44). This same affirmation is repeated after the narration of the story of Joseph, where God says: **"That is from the news of the unseen which We reveal to you, [O Muhammad]. And you were not with them when they put together their plan while they conspired"** (Yūsuf 12:102). Indeed, of every account of the earlier prophets that the Noble Qur'an relates, it says: **"That is from the news of the unseen which We reveal to you, [O Muhammad]. Neither you nor your people knew it before this. So be patient; indeed, the [best] outcome is for the righteous"** (Hūd 11:49).

Accordingly, this insistence within the Qur'anic text on the unseen nature of these tidings and reports is clear evidence that the people of Mecca were ignorant of them; had they possessed such knowledge, they would have opposed the Most Noble

¹⁷ *Ta'rikhiyyat al-Da'wa al-Muḥammadiyya fī Makka*: 172.

¹⁸ See *ibid.*: 172.

¹⁹ *al-Qirā'a al-Ḥadāthiyya li-l-Naṣṣ al-Qur'ānī fī Ḍaw' Taḥlīl al-Khiṭāb*: 219.

²⁰ *Lisāniyyāt al-Khiṭāb wa-Anṣāq al-Thaqāfa*: 38, 39; and see: *al-Qirā'a al-Ḥadāthiyya li-l-Naṣṣ al-Qur'ānī fī Ḍaw' Taḥlīl al-Khiṭāb*: 220.

²¹ *al-Qirā'a al-Ḥadāthiyya li-l-Naṣṣ al-Qur'ānī fī Ḍaw' Taḥlīl al-Khiṭāb*: 217.

²² *Ibid.*: 218.

Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) by narrating them in whatever literary arts they commanded, in order to safeguard their religious and social standing. Add to this that the Jewish and Christian religions were not resident in Mecca but were based in Yathrib — Medina — while the first revelation of the Noble Qur'an occurred in Mecca. Furthermore, the Qur'anic text dismantled the erroneous and deviant notions introduced by the redactors of the two earlier texts; had there been a resemblance or direct borrowing from these two texts, the adherents of those two religions would have spared no effort in refuting and rejecting the new religion.

The truth that Dr. Hakim al-Sultani acknowledges is that “the relationship of the Qur'an to the Bible is not a relationship of citation but a relationship of intertextuality founded on affinity and re-creation — not the intertextuality claimed by the modernists, founded on identification and extraction, but the intertextuality founded on interaction between one text and another, leading to the unity of the divine source.”²³

There is no doubt that the languages Djāit mentions belong to the Semitic languages, of which our own Arabic is one, and there is no harm in these languages sharing certain lexical roots or terms even after undergoing semantic development. This is confirmed by the studies of scholars and researchers, ancient and modern alike, for it is stated in *al-Ṣaḥibī*: “Abū 'Ubayda said: the Qur'an was revealed in a clear Arabic tongue, and whoever claims that it contains anything other than Arabic has made a grave assertion, and whoever claims that such-and-such is Nabataean has likewise made a grave assertion. He said: a word may correspond to another word, or diverge from it, while their meaning is one, one of them being Arabic and the other Persian or otherwise... Examples of this include: *istabraq* in Arabic, which is thick brocade, and *al-firind*, which is *istabra* in Persian... The people of Mecca call the cloth in which grain merchants place wheat *al-balās*, which in Persian is *balās*; they Arabized it by inflection, so that Persian drew close to Arabic in both wording and meaning.”²⁴ We observe two things in this statement:

First: the affirmation of the Arabic character of the language of the Qur'anic text, and the absence of any admixture of other languages with Arabic within it.

Second: we detect a qualification of this affirmation, required by the reality of the Qur'anic text, which does contain vocabulary from other languages.

These items of vocabulary, moreover, were not unique to Arabic but had roots in the Semitic languages generally. Dr. Khalid Ismail states: “*sabḥ*: supplication, sanctification, and remembrance... in Hebrew *sb-b-ḥ*: to praise, to glorify; in Old Testament Aramaic *sb-b-ḥ*: to glorify; in Mandaic *sb-b-b*, *sb-b-'*: to glorify; in Ge'ez *sabḥa*: with the same meaning; the general sense: supplication and praise.”²⁵ He likewise states elsewhere: “*ṣallā*: performed the prayer... in Akkadian *ṣullū*: to entreat, to beseech... in Aramaic *ṣ-l-ā*: to pray, to supplicate; in Syriac *ṣ-l-ā*: to incline, to attend; in Mandaic *ṣalāt*: prayer; in Sabaic *ṣ-l-w*: prayer, supplication; in Ge'ez *ṣallaya*: to pray, to entreat, and *ṣalot*: prayer, supplication; likewise in Syriac *ṣlotā*: supplication, entreaty; the general sense: inclination and attentiveness.”²⁶ It seems to me that this fact does not reflect negatively on the language of the Qur'anic text; rather, it may be put to use in understanding the Qur'anic text in a manner more faithful to reality. For instance, and not exclusively, instead of understanding prayer (*ṣalāt*) merely as supplication, petition, and a juridical performance, it may be understood as inclination, attentiveness, and humble entreaty, together with an upright observance bounded by the moral formation of the self — thereby giving the term a broader and more beneficial signification.

Likewise, to affirm the existence of intertextuality within the Qur'anic text is not a point against it, for acknowledging this intertextuality does not mean that there are two texts by two different authors, one of which took from the other. Rather, it may be regarded as a third type of intertextuality alongside the external and the internal, which we may term “systemic intertextuality” (*al-tanaṣṣ al-manẓūmī*) — that is, intertextuality within the single divine system of revelation. On this

²³ Ibid.: 215.

²⁴ *al-Ṣaḥibī*: 43, 44.

²⁵ *al-Qāmūs al-Muqāran li-ʾAlfāz al-Qurʾān al-Karīm* (entry “*s-b-ḥ*”): 231, 232.

²⁶ Ibid.: 305.

understanding it may be regarded as internal intertextuality within the one divine message, and at the same time as external intertextuality between two or more books belonging to a single author, namely the divine source.

As for what al-Sultani says regarding the spread of the cultural phenomenon, this belongs to *interactive intertextuality*, which “is subject to epistemic and methodological-theoretical directives founded on generativity and productivity, whereby the producer draws upon his cognitive heritage according to known mechanisms.”²⁷ This claim tends toward asserting the human authorship of the Qur’anic text, since it removes the possibility that the Most Noble Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) was the producer of the Qur’anic text within a specific historical setting bound by the events available in the age in which the text was produced — for this would require the availability of cultural knowledge that must have been current to a certain degree in that age, in addition to precise specialist knowledge on the part of the person concerned, which in turn requires the production of a text intertextual with preceding texts and the interaction of the recipient with the new intertextual text — a state of affairs that was not available in either Meccan or Medinan society in the age of revelation.

CONFIRMATION AND DOMINANCE:

Dr. Hakim al-Sultani holds that the Noble Qur’an, notwithstanding its intertextuality with the Bible, does not thereby abrogate or dispense with the Bible; rather, it came confirming the Bible and having dominance (*muḥaymin*) over it,²⁸ as God says: **“And We have revealed to you, [O Muhammad], the Book in truth, confirming that which preceded it of the Scripture and as a criterion over it”** (al-Mā’idah 5:48).

The Noble Qur’an thus acknowledged and confirmed what the Bible contained: it confirmed the Ten Commandments given to the Prophet of God Moses (peace be upon him), as well as the exhortations given to the Prophet of God Jesus (peace be upon him) in the Gospel, and did so in a harmonious manner, balancing spirit and thought without allowing one dimension to overwhelm the other, unlike the Torah and the Gospel.²⁹

Al-Sultani has sought to strengthen his argument for the unity of source of the heavenly religions, since it is in the nature of the heavenly scriptures that each book bears witness to what preceded it and to what will come after it among the heavenly scriptures, as God says: **“And We sent, following in their footsteps, Jesus, the son of Mary, confirming that which came before him in the Torah”** (al-Mā’idah 5:46); likewise the heavenly religions foretold the prophets who would come after them, as God says: **“[Those who] follow the Messenger, the unlettered Prophet, whom they find written in what they have of the Torah and the Gospel, who enjoins upon them what is right and forbids them what is wrong and makes lawful for them the good things and prohibits for them the evil and relieves them of their burden and the shackles that were upon them. So they who have believed in him, honored him, supported him, and followed the light which was sent down with him — it is those who will be the successful”** (al-A’rāf 7:157). Al-Sultani therefore holds that all these proofs “do not indicate that the Qur’an cited the Bible (the Torah and the Gospel), so much as they indicate the unity of their divine source.”³⁰

As for dominance, the Noble Qur’an was granted a degree of dominance not granted to any other heavenly scripture, for it was distinguished by its inimitability (*i’jāz*), its universality, and its finality — attributes not granted to the Torah and the Gospel. The Prophet Moses’ (peace be upon him) miracle was not internal to the Torah nor bound up with its linguistic style and conceptual framework, but lay outside these; and this is perhaps due to the nature of the language in which the Bible was revealed, which had not yet attained a level of eloquence and rhetorical excellence such that it could become a locus of superiority and challenge, whereas the Arabic language was known to have reached the summit of eloquence in the age of

²⁷ *al-Tanāṣṣ al-Taḥā’uli: al-Muṣṭalah, al-Mafhūm, al-Anmāṭ*: 31.

²⁸ See: *al-Qirā’a al-Ḥadāthiyya li-l-Naṣṣ al-Qur’ānī fī Ḍaw’ Taḥlīl al-Khiṭāb*: 222.

²⁹ See *ibid.*: 222.

³⁰ *al-Qirā’a al-Ḥadāthiyya li-l-Naṣṣ al-Qur’ānī fī Ḍaw’ Taḥlīl al-Khiṭāb*: 222.

revelation. The Qur'an was thus among the loftiest and most eloquent expressions of Arabic, coming as a miracle in its wording, its composition, and its content.³¹

As for universality and finality, the Qur'an came for every nation and every age, God saying: **"Blessed is He who sent down the Criterion upon His Servant that he may be to the worlds a warner"** (al-Furqān 25:1). The Noble Qur'an affirmed this universality by repeatedly addressing the Children of Israel, who were people of a heavenly scripture, yet when the Noble Qur'an came it exercised dominance over their scripture. The attribute of finality required by the Noble Qur'an meant that God, exalted is He, deposited in it everything that qualified it to be the last of the heavenly scriptures, so that Islam, in its final form, became the everlasting religion that God (glorified and exalted is He) chose for all humankind.³²

From this it becomes clear that some form of intertextuality between the Noble Qur'an and the Bible was inevitable; for had this intertextuality not existed, the adherents of the earlier religions would have objected to the divine sourcing of the Noble Qur'an and accused it of being the fabrication of the Most Noble Messenger — yet we find no such objection recorded, nor does the Qur'anic text mention it. The intertextuality found in the Noble Qur'an, then, confirms that this text did not originate from the Most Noble Messenger himself, nor was it the utterance of poets or soothsayers as the polytheists of Quraysh claimed in the age of revelation. This intertextuality, moreover, came to correct many of the concepts that had been altered and distorted from their original Gospel and Torah form. By intertextuality here I do not mean that the two texts belong to two different authors; rather, the text proceeds from a single source, namely the sacred Divine Self, and this is precisely what confirms the unity of the heavenly religions.

As for al-Sultani's observation regarding the absence of linguistic inimitability in the Torah and Gospel texts, in contrast to the Qur'anic text's possession of this miraculous quality, this evidently derives from the wisdom of the Author of these texts, who confounds each people with what is prevalent among them: He turned the staff into a serpent because sorcery was prevalent among the people of Egypt, and He brought the dead to life at the hands of His prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) because medicine was widespread among the people of that age; and because the Arabic language had reached its aesthetic and formal perfection in the age of the revelation of the Qur'anic text, God, exalted is He, honored His beloved Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) with linguistic inimitability in the Qur'anic text, not to mention the other miracles. Yet the Qur'anic text remains inimitable to this day, owing to its particular linguistic constitution, which the Creator (glorified and exalted is He) chose for it.

What may be held against al-Sultani is that he confined himself to citing verses of the Qur'anic text to demonstrate that the Noble Qur'an confirmed and exercised dominance over the earlier books, whereas it would have been preferable for him to cite passages from the earlier books alongside the Qur'anic text, to demonstrate the existence of that intertextuality between the two texts and to clarify the points of difference between them. The Qur'anic text did refer to the Ten Commandments given on the tablets of Moses (peace be upon him),³³ God saying: **"And We made an appointment with Moses for thirty nights and perfected them by [the addition of] ten, so the term of his Lord was completed as forty nights. And Moses said to his brother Aaron, 'Take my place among my people, act rightly, and do not follow the way of the corrupters.' And when Moses arrived at Our appointed time and his Lord spoke to him, he said, 'My Lord, show me [Yourself] that I may look at You.' [Allah] said, 'You will not see Me, but look at the mountain; if it remains in place, then you will see Me.' But when his Lord appeared to the mountain, He rendered it level, and Moses fell unconscious. And when he awoke, he said, 'Exalted are You! I have repented to You, and I am the first of the believers.' [Allah] said, 'O Moses, I have chosen you over the people with My messages and My words [to you]. So take what I have given you and be among the grateful.' And We wrote for him on the tablets [something] of all things — instruction and explanation for all things, [saying], 'Take hold of them with determination and command your people to take the best of it. I will show you the home of the defiantly disobedient'"** (al-A'raf 7:142–145). The Book of Exodus records these commandments, namely: monotheism, kindness to parents, prohibition of killing, prohibition of adultery, prohibition of theft,

³¹ See *ibid.*: 223.

³² See: *al-Qirā'a al-Hadāthiyya li-l-Naṣṣ al-Qur'ānī fī Ḍaw' Taḥlīl al-Khiṭāb*: 223.

³³ See: *al-Waṣāyā al-'Ashr fī al-Yahūdiyya: Dirāsa Muqārana fī al-Maṣiḥiyya wa-l-Islām*: 27.

prohibition of false testimony, and so on, for it is stated in Exodus: “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage; you shall have no other god beside Me... Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land which the Lord your God gives you; you shall not kill; you shall not steal; you shall not commit adultery; you shall not bear false witness against your neighbor; you shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor any wealth, nor standing, nor anything that belongs to your neighbor.”³⁴

Monotheism appears in the Qur’anic text in numerous places and in various expressions, among them God’s saying: **“Worship Allah and associate nothing with Him”** (al-Nisā’ 4:36); and His saying: **“And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him”** (al-Isrā’ 17:23); and His saying: **“And We certainly sent into every nation a messenger, [saying], ‘Worship Allah’”** (al-Naḥl 16:36); and in many other places, including the two sūrahs al-Ḥamd (al-Fātiḥa) and al-Ikhlāṣ. Perhaps the wording of the verse of al-Naḥl settles the debate on this matter, for it makes clear that monotheism is the message of every messenger and prophet — a concept general to the heavenly religions, which every messenger or prophet conveyed to his nation. So too with kindness to parents, God saying: **“And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him, and to parents, good treatment. Whether one or both of them reach old age with you, say not to them [so much as], ‘uff,’ and do not repel them but speak to them a noble word”** (al-Isrā’ 17:23); and His saying: **“And We have enjoined upon man goodness to his parents, but if they endeavor to make you associate with Me that of which you have no knowledge, do not obey them. To Me is your return, and I will inform you about what you used to do”** (Luqmān 31:14–15); and His saying: **“And We have enjoined upon man [care] for his parents. His mother carried him, [increasing her] in weakness upon weakness, and his weaning is in two years. Be grateful to Me and to your parents; to Me is the [final] destination”** (Luqmān 31:14). It may be observed in these blessed verses that God, exalted is He, coupled His oneness with obedience to parents among the commands He gave; and regarding the prohibition of adultery, He said: **“And do not approach unlawful sexual intercourse. Indeed, it is ever an immorality and is evil as a way”** (al-Isrā’ 17:32); and regarding the prohibition of killing, He said: **“And do not kill the soul which Allah has forbidden, except by right”** (al-Isrā’ 17:33) — and there are other such verses besides. The difference between the two styles is very clear, resulting from the change of era, in addition to the fact that the language in which the Qur’anic text was revealed is the Arabic tongue, which had attained its glory in the era of the revelation of the Qur’anic text. And so the Noble Qur’an, alongside its confirmation of these concepts found in the earlier books, exercised dominance over those books because of its finality, and likewise because of its remoteness from distortion and its having been committed to writing from the very age of revelation, for it was preserved in both recitation and writing.

When the Qur’anic text gathered within its folds the essence of what the heavenly message had conveyed, it became dominant over that message by exposing the falsification present in the two earlier books. Nor did it stop at this, but added what suited the nation it addressed; it is therefore the most worthy of being followed, since it is the seal of these books and is in harmony with human nature.

TEXTUAL INTERWEAVING (*AL-TADĀKHULIYYA AL-TANĀṢṢIYYA*)

Muhammad Arkoun proposes, for the analysis of Qur’anic discourse, that one understand its textual interweaving or intertextuality, a concept for which he coined the term “textual interweaving” (*al-tadakhuliyya al-naṣṣaniyya*),³⁵ saying: “Here we wish to undertake a horizontal, historical reading of Qur’anic discourse, within the perspective of the *longue durée*, following the celebrated expression of the French historian Fernand Braudel. This very long duration will encompass not only the Torah and the Gospel — the two great textual corpora that enjoy a dense presence in the Qur’an, or in Qur’anic discourse — but must also encompass the collective religious-cultural memories of the ancient Middle East.”³⁶

³⁴ Book of Exodus: 186.

³⁵ See: *al-Qirā’a al-Ḥadāthiyya li-l-Naṣṣ al-Qur’ānī fī Ḍaw’ Taḥlīl al-Khiṭāb*: 223.

³⁶ *al-Qur’ān min al-Ta’bir al-Mawrūth ilā Taḥlīl al-Khiṭāb al-Ḥadīth*: 40.

Dr. Hakim al-Sultani holds that the orientalist influence is very clear in the modernist reading's orientation toward understanding the Qur'anic text, as reflected in what Arkoun states.³⁷ Indeed, they were not content with this but attempted to apply deconstructionist textual theories as well.³⁸

It appears clearly to al-Sultani that “this dense presence of the Torah and the Gospel within the Qur'an, which Arkoun emphasizes, and the interweaving with the texts that preceded it, is an attempt to draw attention to the influence of the Bible upon the Noble Qur'an. This kind of influence is bound up with casting doubt on the divine source of the Noble Qur'an and with talk of ‘thefts’ — a poor and reductive deployment of the term intertextuality.”³⁹

Al-Sultani thus holds that Arkoun misunderstood intertextuality, and indeed deployed the term poorly, reducing it, since “what Arkoun does through his horizontal historical reading of Qur'anic discourse — aiming thereby to study the influence of the Bible, in addition to the collective religious-cultural memories of the ancient Middle East, upon the Noble Qur'an — is not intertextuality in any sense.”⁴⁰

Intertextuality was understood at one stage “as the mere intersection of a number of texts and styles within a single text, and as the tracing of a text back to its ancient or contemporary cultural sources.”⁴¹

It is perhaps for this reason that Riffaterre was led to distinguish between the two terms “*intertexte*” and “*intertextualité*.” The intersection of texts (*intertexte*) means “the process one carries out when one brings a number of texts into proximity with a particular text one is studying or reflecting upon — a familiar procedure in historical criticism, known as the study of the history of literary influences, or what is called the search for sources.”⁴²

On this basis, al-Sultani holds that intertextuality is not “directed toward discovering the historical origins of those earlier texts, but rather toward understanding how they have come to acquire new roles within the structure of the present text; it is thus an answer to the question of what reactions readers take toward the structure of the new text. The signification of intertextuality thus aims to divert the course of research from excavation of the past toward understanding and interpreting the text.”⁴³

Al-Sultani goes further still, holding that Arkoun ought to have deployed the term intertextuality in a scholarly manner, since “his deployment of it on the basis that it is a horizontal historical reading of Qur'anic discourse, at the level of the presence of the two great textual corpora (the Torah and the Gospel) and the collective religious memories of the ancient Middle East within the Noble Qur'an, is a naive and superficial deployment — precisely what the orientalist did. If it is to be deployed on the understanding that it constitutes intertextuality, it must submit to the immense influence the Noble Qur'an produced in the souls of its earliest recipients upon its revelation, and to what it produced by way of culture and civilization; this is the essential process of intertextuality that Arkoun overlooked, or feigned to overlook.”⁴⁴

Nor was this claim of al-Sultani's without evidentiary support, for he adduced the findings of **modern linguistics**, which has attempted, through the concept of intertextuality, “to study the relationship between texts in order to understand and interpret the text, on the understanding that intertextuality is a feature of textuality and one of the ways in which a text is interlinked with

³⁷ See: *al-Qirā'a al-Ḥadāthiyya li-l-Naṣṣ al-Qur'āni fī Ḍaw' Taḥlīl al-Khiṭāb*: 223.

³⁸ See: *Balāghat al-Khiṭāb wa-'Ilm al-Naṣṣ*: 231.

³⁹ *al-Qirā'a al-Ḥadāthiyya li-l-Naṣṣ al-Qur'āni fī Ḍaw' Taḥlīl al-Khiṭāb*: 225.

⁴⁰ Ibid.: 225.

⁴¹ *al-Qirā'a wa-Tawlīd al-Dalāla*: 26.

⁴² Ibid.: 26.

⁴³ *al-Qirā'a al-Ḥadāthiyya li-l-Naṣṣ al-Qur'āni fī Ḍaw' Taḥlīl al-Khiṭāb*: 225.

⁴⁴ Ibid.: 226, 227.

the texts that preceded it.”⁴⁵ And if we return to the first theorist of intertextuality, Julia Kristeva, for her it means “grasping the reality of the interaction occurring within texts, in their retrieval or emulation of texts or parts of texts that preceded them.”⁴⁶

The two Italian scholars de Beaugrande and Dressler offered a definition of intertextuality in light of the process of production and reception, holding that intertextuality is “the interrelation between the production or reception of a given text and the knowledge that the participants in communication possess of other texts.”⁴⁷ On this basis al-Sultani holds that this meaning grants communication great importance in this field of study, since intertextuality is not “merely a retrieval of the cultural stock, or a recovery of cultural memory, or an interweaving of texts within a literary work devoid of any philosophy or aim; rather, it is a purposeful process directed toward certain goals, the most important of which is achieving successful literary communication between the creator and the reader.”⁴⁸

What lends further support to al-Sultani’s view is Hashim Salih’s observation that the influence of the Torah or Gospel text upon the Qur’anic text “does not mean imitation, as some imagine, but rather means interaction, absorption, and creative, generative fusion.”⁴⁹

Hashim Salih holds that there is interaction and reformulation, but in reality this confirms the unity of the source of these texts, for we frequently find that the authors of discursive texts alter their texts to suit the occasion; the recurrence of certain concepts or stories between the Bible and the Noble Qur’an does not diminish the standing of the Qur’anic text but rather establishes the divine character of the text, in both its wording and its content.

THE MECHANISM OF SELECTIVITY:

Naṣr Hamid Abu Zayd holds that “discourse — any discourse, every discourse — is not a closed discourse independent of other discourses within a particular cultural-civilizational context; however far the mechanisms of ‘exclusion’ and ‘marginalization’ that one discourse practices against another may escalate, the presence of that other discourse within the structure of the first discourse can be traced at the level of structure and narrative.”⁵⁰

He holds that the Qur’anic text, in its relationship with the other texts that preceded and were contemporary with it, “engaged in polemical relationships with those texts, and these polemical relationships relied on intertextual mechanisms of a high degree of complexity.”⁵¹ For example, the relationship of the Qur’anic text to religious texts relied on the mechanism of selectivity, a mechanism that performs a dual role simultaneously: the accepted portions are redeployed and reinterpreted to accord with the present context, while the rejected portions are classified as deviant texts. This task of the text (deployment and classification) is easily accomplished, given that it is a text proceeding from that same source, so that its task is to correct the deviation resulting from adherence to its earlier origins.⁵²

Dr. Hakim al-Sultani holds that Abu Zayd’s view “points to an ideological practice on the part of the text: what the text took was subjected to a process of deployment and interpretation, and what it rejected was classified as deviant text — something akin to intertextual betrayal on the part of the central text toward the culture of its age and its recipients.”⁵³

⁴⁵ *‘Ilm Luġbat al-Naṣṣ: al-Naẓariyya wa-l-Taṭbiq*: 74; and see: *al-Qirā’ a al-Ḥadāthiyya li-l-Naṣṣ al-Qur’ānī fī Ḍaw’ Taḥlīl al-Khiṭāb*: 225.

⁴⁶ *al-Tanaṣṣ Sabīlan ilā Dirāsāt al-Naṣṣ al-Sunnawī wa-Ghayrihi* (published research): 127.

⁴⁷ *‘Ilm Luġbat al-Naṣṣ: al-Naẓariyya wa-l-Taṭbiq*: 74.

⁴⁸ Ibid.: 14.

⁴⁹ *al-Qur’ān al-Karīm min al-Taḥsīn al-Mawrūth ilā Taḥlīl al-Khiṭāb al-Dīnī* (footnote): 40.

⁵⁰ *al-Khiṭāb wa-l-Ta’wīl*: 25.

⁵¹ *al-Naṣṣ, al-Sulṭa, al-Ḥaqīqa*: 100, 101.

⁵² See *ibid.*: 101.

⁵³ *al-Qirā’ a al-Ḥadāthiyya li-l-Naṣṣ al-Qur’ānī fī Ḍaw’ Taḥlīl al-Khiṭāb*: 227.

Al-Sultani rejects Abu Zayd's claim of selectivity; the truth, for al-Sultani, is that "the relationship existing between the central text and the preceding texts is not a relationship founded on selectivity, but a relationship of demolition and construction, of summoning and transformation, of interaction and fusion; for selectivity connotes ideological practice, whereas these other relationships indicate a comprehensive strategy of expression and transformation."⁵⁴ Indeed, even the enrichment of a text with material from other texts is likewise an enrichment of those other texts and a new reading of them,⁵⁵ and this occurs by the deliberate intent of the speaker, since intertextuality "does not summon all preceding events and experiences in accumulation and succession, but rather reconstructs and reorganizes them, foregrounding some elements and concealing others, according to the intent of both speaker and recipient."⁵⁶

Al-Sultani holds that cultural context plays an active role in the transformation of texts, since "cultural context is one of the factors contributing to the capacity to transform texts, and to understanding how people exchange meanings and how they interact with one another,"⁵⁷ and this occurs in light of the circulation of texts, so that the texts themselves oversee the process of interpretation by readers.

Dr. Hakim al-Sultani continues to bolster his critical view with the findings of modern linguistic studies, holding fast to the conclusions of Muhammad Miftah, who proposed "a graduated scale in keeping with the laws of language and the characteristics of Arab-Islamic culture; within this culture there are texts that reinforce one another, as we find in the deficiency of the texts of the Noble Qur'an relative to what is recorded in some of the heavenly scriptures, and as we find in the poetry of *naqā'id* (flying-poems)."⁵⁸

These degrees are: correspondence, interaction, overlap, alignment, and divergence, arranged along two poles — correspondence and estrangement — within the following diagram:⁵⁹

Correspondence — Divergence

Overlap — Alignment

Interaction — Estrangement

On this basis, al-Sultani holds that the relationship of "the Noble Qur'an to the Bible, at the level of the first pole, is a 'relationship of interaction,' since it is a process founded on a conscious and deliberate choice on the part of God, exalted is He; it is the texts of the Bible that were subjected to the choice of the Noble Qur'an in respect of deployment and purposes, for it is the Noble Qur'an that governed their use, not the reverse — the Qur'an was not itself subject to their influence through transmission and citation."⁶⁰

This is confirmed by Malek Bennabi, who says: "The Qur'an affirms, openly proclaiming, its connection to the Bible; it always seeks its place within the monotheistic cycle, and in this way affirms — deliberately — the resemblance between the Torah and the Gospel. It affirms this kinship explicitly, and conveyed it to the Prophet himself whenever the occasion arose (...) for this kinship gives the Qur'an its own particular character, since in many matters it appears to complement or correct the information found in the Bible."⁶¹

⁵⁴ Ibid.: 228.

⁵⁵ See *ibid.*: 228.

⁵⁶ *Taḥlīl al-Khiṭāb al-Nabawī (Istrāṭijīyyat al-Tanaṣṣ)*: 124.

⁵⁷ *al-Tanaṣṣ Sabīlan ilā Dirāsāt al-Naṣṣ al-Nabawī wa-Ghayrihi*: 133; and see: *al-Qirā'a al-Ḥadāthiyya li-l-Naṣṣ al-Qur'ānī fī Ḍaw' Taḥlīl al-Khiṭāb*: 228.

⁵⁸ *al-Qirā'a al-Ḥadāthiyya li-l-Naṣṣ al-Qur'ānī fī Ḍaw' Taḥlīl al-Khiṭāb*: 229; and see: *al-Mafāhīm: Ma'ālim naḥwa Ta'wīl Wāqī'ī*: 41.

⁵⁹ See: *al-Mafāhīm: Ma'ālim naḥwa Ta'wīl Wāqī'ī*: 43; and *al-Qirā'a al-Ḥadāthiyya li-l-Naṣṣ al-Qur'ānī fī Ḍaw' Taḥlīl al-Khiṭāb*: 229.

⁶⁰ *al-Qirā'a al-Ḥadāthiyya li-l-Naṣṣ al-Qur'ānī fī Ḍaw' Taḥlīl al-Khiṭāb*: 230.

⁶¹ *al-Zāhira al-Qur'āniyya*: 199.

As for the relationship of the Qur'anic text to the interpretations of the Bible, at the second level, al-Sultani regards it as a "relationship of estrangement,"⁶² and among the examples of this is the scene of the crossing of the Red Sea by the Children of Israel, in which Pharaoh drowned, as narrated in the Book of Exodus. The Qur'anic account, however, completes this presentation with an unexpected and equally unusual detail — namely, the bodily preservation of Pharaoh, who miraculously escaped drowning; yet scholars of Egyptology attack the biblical account, claiming that Egyptian history records no disappearance of a pharaoh contemporary with Moses (peace be upon him) in the Red Sea.⁶³ The Noble Qur'an, however, affirms this scene in God's statement: **"Now? And you had disobeyed [Him] before and were of the corrupters? So today We will save you in body that you may be to those who succeed you a sign. And indeed, many among the people, of Our signs, are heedless"** (Yūnus 10:91–92).

Among the further evidence of the Noble Qur'an's rejection of what circulated in biblical thought is the story of the crucifixion of Christ; for the Qur'anic account is entirely independent of the Jewish-Christian notion which regards the crucifixion of Christ — from various perspectives — as a historical fact. The Qur'an, however, affirms in this matter: **"And they did not kill him, nor did they crucify him; but [another] was made to resemble him to them"** (al-Nisā' 4:157). "This original account in the Qur'an accords with no Jewish or Christian document."⁶⁴ This is an ideological practice on the part of the text: what the text took was subjected to a process of deployment and interpretation, and what it rejected was classified among the deviant texts.

On this basis, al-Sultani holds that "the process of communication and comprehension in the Qur'anic text requires the conjunction of three fundamental elements — the speaker, the text, and the recipient — in order to achieve intertextuality. The speaker proceeds from a code shared between himself and the recipient, namely language, with its system and its familiar vocabulary; the language of the text and the culture of the recipient were both taken into account by the Speaker in the Qur'anic text. On the basis of the text, the Noble Qur'an was revealed in the tongue of the Arabic language, according to its character and styles; and on the basis of the recipient, the text came mindful of the recipient's culture, namely the general culture that shaped their cognitive system and their consciousness."⁶⁵ The process of producing the Qur'anic text is therefore not isolated from the historical circumstances of the content of the discourse, but is rather a conscious moment engaging with both past and present events, after digesting them and forging a new course.

Through these examples and evidences, the divine character of the Qur'anic text is confirmed, since "intertextuality within discourse does not negate the divinity of its source, nor does it diminish the Speaker's capacity to encompass all things in His knowledge, nor does it mean that He requires some prior example or ready-made model on which to build His speech. Rather, intertextuality pertains to the very nature of speech itself, which is communicative in character, aiming to convey a message or to produce a particular effect. This is not confined to the lexicon of the language and the rules of grammar, but encompasses the summoning of fields of meaning, frameworks of thought, and textual points of reference, which together frame the recipient's consciousness, mold his thinking, and determine the manner of his speech, his reception of speech, and his understanding of it."⁶⁶

The Qur'anic text is not closed off or removed from the cultural framework of the earlier — heavenly — religions; rather, the religion of God is one, and Islam came with the Qur'anic text to be the seal of the divine religions. Accordingly, the Qur'anic text, through the process of intertextuality, established its communication with the cultural environment within which it was revealed, and demonstrated its integration with the cognitive systems that framed the consciousness of that environment, through the presence of prior texts and sayings within the field of the Qur'anic text — all of which confirm that the Qur'anic text is a text connected to the space of texts and sayings surrounding it within its formative cultural field, notwithstanding the

⁶² See: *al-Qirā'a al-Ḥadāthiyya li-l-Naṣṣ al-Qur'ānī fī Ḍaw' Taḥlīl al-Khiṭāb*: 230.

⁶³ See: *al-Zāhira al-Qur'āniyya*: 262.

⁶⁴ *al-Zāhira al-Qur'āniyya*: 264, 265.

⁶⁵ *al-Qirā'a al-Ḥadāthiyya li-l-Naṣṣ al-Qur'ānī fī Ḍaw' Taḥlīl al-Khiṭāb*: 231.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*: 231; and see: *al-Naṣṣ al-Ḥadīthī fī al-Islām min al-Tafsīr ilā al-Mutalaqqā*: 399.

cognitive and stylistic shifts it introduced into that environment. It is thus not a closed or isolated text, cut off from the context of the monotheistic calls that preceded it.

It should also be noted that the idea of **intertextuality** has moved beyond being regarded as mere reproduction or theft of texts, becoming instead a deeper and more comprehensive idea; following the development of **modern linguistic scholarship**, it has been established that intertextuality has applied rules and foundations that place it among the systems of knowledge that rely on rules of comparison between texts, on knowledge of which of them is earlier, and on knowledge of the cognitive fields of the author of the text.⁶⁷ This concept of intertextuality confirms for the researcher that what is described as intertextuality between the Noble Qur'an and the Bible in fact establishes the truthfulness of the Muhammadan message to the Most Noble Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him and his family), since what is transmitted as intertextuality between it and the Bible confirms that the Qur'anic text belongs to the knowledge of the unseen that was not current within the cultural framework of the age of revelation — and what little of it did exist was not present in its true conceptual form. The Qur'anic text came to correct those errors that arose from the tampering of the copyists and redactors of the Bible, or from the mistakes committed by oral transmitters in passing it on.

It should also be noted that the claim of interactive intertextuality between the Noble Qur'an and the Bible does not entail equating these scriptures, since the Torah and the Gospel were distorted from their original condition, whereas the Qur'anic text is a text preserved by God (glorified and exalted is He), recorded and written down from the very first moments of revelation, as we have established in the first section.

It appears clearly that the claim, within the modernist reading, of intertextuality between the Qur'anic text and the Bible, made in order to negate the divine sourcing of the Qur'anic text and to establish its human sourcing, has in fact rebounded negatively upon its proponents, since intertextuality theory operates through two fundamental axes:

The first: summoning and transformation. From the intertextualists' point of view, a text is not shaped nor does its vision become complete through creative vision alone; rather, it is formed and then born through the summoning of other artistic texts, which means that intertextuality is formed from a set of extratextual summonings that are incorporated according to structural conditions governed by the new text.

The second: the incorporated text is, on the other hand, subjected to a transformative process, since intertextuality is not merely an ambiguous and curious accumulation of influences; within writing there occurs a highly complex process of smelting and dissolving the various texts and fields incorporated with the text being formed.⁶⁸

This confirms that the author of a text must possess a high degree of knowledge of the texts with which his new text is intertextual — something not known to have been current within the cultural framework of Meccan society, in which the Most Noble Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) lived; for it is not known that they adhered to either of the two religions — Judaism or Christianity — but rather the orientation of most of Mecca's inhabitants was toward trade and tribal affairs. Had what the Qur'anic text brought belonged to the culture prevailing in Meccan society, the Quraysh polytheists would have been the first to object to the Most Noble Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) that it belonged to their own cultural heritage. In addition, illiteracy was widespread in that society and education was not disseminated within it. All this refutes the claim of human sourcing for the Qur'anic text, and confirms without dispute that the intertextuality found within the Qur'anic text is evidence of a unity of divine origin.

CITING THE STATEMENTS OF SOME WESTERN RESEARCHERS REGARDING THE TORAH'S STATUS AS A SOURCE-REFERENCE FOR THE QUR'AN:

Among the critics is one who adduced evidence that the Most Noble Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) did not take the Qur'anic text from the Bible, adducing the statements of some Western researchers to this effect,⁶⁹

⁶⁷ See: *Manhaj al-Tanāṣṣ bayna al-Qur'ān al-Karīm wa-l-Kitāb al-Muqaddas* (published research): 175, 176.

⁶⁸ See: *Nazariyyat al-Tanāṣṣ wa-Khuṣūṣiyyat al-Naṣṣ al-Qur'ānī: Dirāsa fī al-Ijrā'āt al-Naqdiyya wa-Ishkālīyyāt al-Talaqqī*, 2050 [sic].

⁶⁹ See: *Ārā' Muḥammad Arkūn fī Miṣṣan al-Naqd*: 457.

wishing thereby to demonstrate to the proponents of the modernist reading that, just as they were influenced by the orientalists in claiming an intertextuality tantamount to theft and direct borrowing, so too are there statements by their own peers that refute this claim.

Among these is Count Henri de Castries, a French officer who spent a period in North Africa, who states: “We may observe a resemblance between the Qur’an and the Torah in certain places, yet the reason for this is readily discernible if we note that the Qur’an came to complete it, just as the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) is the seal of the prophets and messengers”⁷⁰ — that is, he completes the divine message, or completes what was deficient in the Torah.

Osgyefo [Oskin?] states: “Whatever the extent of Islam’s derivation from the religions that preceded it, this does not alter the further fact that the religious positions expressed by the Qur’an and conveyed by it to the people constitute a new and distinctive religious edifice.”⁷¹ This confirms interactive intertextuality.

Wensinck, a professor at the University of Basel [sic; Leiden], states: “Among the scholarly motives for studying history, and the availability of historical material in the Qur’an, is what drove its commentators to search for historical information with which to interpret what it contains; interest in this historical material has, over time, become one of the branches of knowledge that grew up in connection with the Qur’an. And even if the Prophet had heard certain historical reports and information, this does not justify the assumption that he had read historical sources such as the Torah in its Arabic translations; historical information appears in the Qur’an that differs from what the Jews claim exists in the Torah, and the Prophet stated that the Jews and Christians had distorted the Torah, and the Muslims held fast to what is stated in the Qur’an.”⁷² In this statement there is a remarkable observation regarding two matters:

The first: that the Qur’an resulted from the Most Noble Messenger’s (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) reading of the Bible is a mere assumption unsupported by evidence.

The second: that the Torah was not in the Arabic language but in Hebrew, as remains established to this day, and neither the linguistic nor the historical sources record that the Torah or the Gospel had been translated before, or during, the age of revelation.

Latins [?] states: “Insofar as the two religions of the Jews and Christians are known, I say that what Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) taught was not a citation but rather something ‘revealed to him,’ and there is no doubt of this so long as one believes that revelation has come to us from One dear to them. I say, with all respect and reverence, that if sincere advice for one’s own good, fidelity of purpose, sound and steadfast faith, penetrating and truthful insight, and the hidden nature of sin and error together with the use of the best means for their removal — if these are among the manifest signs indicating the prophethood of Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) and that revelation indeed came to him...”⁷³

What prompted the researcher to transmit these orientalists’ statements from certain critics is to cite the existence of some orientalists who show a measure of fairness toward the Qur’anic text; it would have been preferable for the proponents of the modernist reading to consider their statements and researches, so as to avoid the conceptual and methodological excesses into which they frequently fall in understanding the Qur’anic text. From this it appears to me that the process of influence by orientalism was not an unintentional process but rather a deliberate, selective one, whereby the proponents of the modernist readings choose what suits their intellectual orientations in order to incorporate it into their intellectual method for directing the understanding of the Qur’anic text. This demonstrates the inability of the pioneers of the modernist reading to free themselves of the intellectual presuppositions that partly resulted from study at Western universities, or from unreflective adherence to those methodologies; for these are explicit statements, which we have cited from a number of orientalists, that

⁷⁰ *Qālū ‘an al-Islām*: 62.

⁷¹ *Qālū ‘an al-Islām*: 80.

⁷² *Ibid.*: 65.

⁷³ *Qālū ‘an al-Islām*: 133, 134.

affirm the existence among them of a moderate outlook far removed from the hostile ideological currents directed against Islam.

THIRD: NARRATIVE (MYTHIC) INTERTEXTUALITY

QUR'ANIC NARRATIVE AND MYTH

Qur'anic narrative was, and remains, a focus of attention for the modernist readings of the Qur'anic text; a number of them have held that Qur'anic narrative is derived from the Bible — that is, that the Noble Qur'an is intertextual with the Bible — while some have gone so far as to claim intertextuality between the Noble Qur'an and popular tales and Greek and French literature. Some readings became known for describing Qur'anic narrative as legend, fantasy, and myth, and as removed from reality. Critics of the proponents of the modernist reading hold that this trend does not differ from the other trends within the modernist reading in being influenced by orientalist thought,⁷⁴ a trend that leads to the conclusion that the Qur'anic text is not free of human hands in its formation and composition — thereby stripping it of its sanctity and rendering it a historically bound phase confined to a particular period of time that it does not transcend.

It should be noted that myth remained for a long time undervalued, regarded as tantamount to legend, fabrication, and illusion, remaining bound up with the study of poetry and literature, and its scholarly worth was not appreciated until the nineteenth century, when it began to be studied as a sacred heritage and a point of reference for understanding rites and rituals.⁷⁵

Dr. Hakim al-Sultani accordingly holds that the modernist reading of the Qur'anic text proceeded from the new concept of myth in reading Qur'anic narrative, particularly Muhammad Arkoun's reading through the process of deconstructing the concept. For this reason, Arkoun initially wished to transfer the French word “*mythe*” as such into Arabic, i.e., “*mith*,” out of concern for the ambiguity and apprehension aroused by the word “*ustūra*” (myth/legend), since its modern sociological and anthropological meaning and concept had not yet crystallized in the Arabic language.⁷⁶

In his analysis of myth, Arkoun distinguishes between the ideal myth and the fabulous (legendary) myth: the former plays a fundamental role in producing the values that form the spiritual and moral backbone of the community or the nation, and it is strengthened and sustained through the continuous applications it receives in its practical existence — a matter not confined to ancient societies alone but encompassing modern societies as well.⁷⁷

On this basis al-Sultani holds “that the relationship between the ideal myth and the fabulous myth, for Arkoun, is a relationship of the fixed to the variable, and a relationship of essence to its various uses for various purposes by the social groups that invoke it according to particular requirements.”⁷⁸

QUR'ANIC NARRATIVE AND THE “MYTHS OF THE ANCIENTS” (A TRANSCENDING RELATIONSHIP)

Among the critics of the modernist reading are those who proceeded from modern linguistic foundations; thus Dr. Hakim al-Sultani proceeds from the premise that myth represents “an essential theme and an origin at the root of every socio-cultural discourse, such that no society can be conceived without myths or foundational symbols contributing to the shaping of its discourses.”⁷⁹

Does this apply to the Qur'anic text? That is, does the Qur'anic text possess a mythic structure, as Arkoun repeatedly maintains? From here al-Sultani proceeds to enumerate the occurrences of the word “*ustūra*” (myth) in the Noble Qur'an, finding that it

⁷⁴ See: *al-Qirā'at al-Ḥadāthiyya li-l-Naṣṣ al-Qur'ānī*. 256.

⁷⁵ See: *Anḥām al-Qirā'a al-Ḥadāthiyya: Dirāsa Taḥlīliyya Naqdiyya* (published research): 277.

⁷⁶ See: *al-Qirā'a al-Ḥadāthiyya li-l-Naṣṣ al-Qur'ānī fī Ḍaw' Taḥlīl al-Khiṭāb*: 233, 234.

⁷⁷ See: *Ma'ārik min Ajl al-Insāna fī al-Siyāqāt al-Islāmiyya*: 297; and *al-Qirā'a al-Ḥadāthiyya li-l-Naṣṣ al-Qur'ānī fī Ḍaw' Taḥlīl al-Khiṭāb*: 235, 236.

⁷⁸ *al-Qirā'a al-Ḥadāthiyya li-l-Naṣṣ al-Qur'ānī fī Ḍaw' Taḥlīl al-Khiṭāb*: 236.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*: 237.

occurs “in the plural form (*asāṭir*), coupled with the word ‘the ancients’ (*al-awwālīn*), seven times, contained within eight Meccan sūrahs, as in God’s saying: **‘Until, when they come to you arguing with you, those who disbelieve say, “This is not but legends of the former peoples”’** (al-An‘ām 6:25), and His saying: **‘And they say, “Legends of the former peoples which he has written down, and they are dictated to him morning and afternoon”’** (al-Furqān 25:5); and it occurs in a single Medinan sūrah, in His saying: **‘And when Our verses are recited to them, they say, “We have heard. If we willed, we could say [something] like this. This is not but legends of the former peoples”’** (al-Anfāl 8:31).⁸⁰

As for the other Meccan sūrahs, it occurs in: al-Mu‘minūn 23:83, al-Naḥl 16:24, al-Naml 27:68, al-Aḥqāf 46:17, al-Qalam 68:15, and al-Muṭaffifīn 83:13.

These verses were connected to the man known as “the devil of Quraysh” — that is, one of its shrewdest men — al-Nadr ibn al-Ḥārith [the text has “Ibn Shumayl,” but the sources identify him as al-Nadr ibn al-Ḥārith], who used to travel to the land of Persia and learned there the accounts of the Persian kings Rustam and Isfandiyar. When he returned he found that God had sent forth the Messenger of God, who was reciting the Qur’an to the people; whenever the Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) rose from a gathering, al-Nadr would sit in his place and address them, asking them: “Who tells better tales — I or Muhammad?” It was concerning him and those like him that God’s statement was revealed: **“And when Our verses are recited to them, they say, ‘We have heard. If we willed, we could say [something] like this. This is not but legends of the former peoples”’** (al-Anfāl 8:31).⁸¹

The claim of the mythic character of the Qur’anic text was, then, a position adopted by the first recipient — the polytheist of Quraysh in Mecca. On this basis Dr. al-Sultani holds “that the term ‘legends of the former peoples’ occurs on the tongue of the intellectual adversary; for when the Qur’an speaks of the tongue of this intellectual adversary by mentioning the word ‘legends,’ this is because the adversary believed that the new text derived from what preceded it and was an extension of it — a belief that released him from any obligation to affirm it as true.”⁸²

Whereas, al-Sultani holds, the Qur’anic text, in establishing itself, “discards the term ‘legends’ and instead employs the term ‘narrative’ (*al-qaṣaṣ*), the new foundational model that the Qur’an employed and made an objective equivalent to legends, with all the artistic style and intellectual substance it embodies.”⁸³

The intellectual adversary, in insisting on the term “legends,” “wished to establish that the Qur’an is an extension of legends, woven upon their pattern, with the aim of demeaning its sanctity and transcendence, and of establishing that it was a Muhammadan production that he had caused to be written down — a clear obstinacy and a manifest deception.”⁸⁴

Some critics hold that the difference between the Meccan and Medinan sūrahs in their mention of legends is attributable to writing versus orality; thus Saeed al-Ghanmi holds that “the Meccan verses focus on writing and the act of causing something to be written, whereas the Medinan verses came to focus on recitation and reading aloud; and it is perhaps this oral signification that caused the word ‘legends’ to acquire, in the age of the writing down [of ḥadīth and tafsīr], the meaning of falsehoods and lies that possess no order.”⁸⁵ That is, whatever was not written down was liable to distortion and infiltration, and became attached to many false and corrupted notions.

Al-Ghanmi holds that al-Ṭabarī (d. 310 AH), in his interpretation of “legends of the former peoples” in Sūrat al-An‘ām, “brings together, on a single level, the three meanings of the word: the Meccan meaning bound up with written contents and books,

⁸⁰ Ibid.: 238.

⁸¹ See: *Tabdhīb Sirat Ibn Hishām*: 69; and *al-Qirā’a al-Ḥadāthiyya li-l-Naṣṣ al-Qur’ānī fī Ḍaw’ Taḥlīl al-Khiṭāb*: 238.

⁸² *al-Qirā’a al-Ḥadāthiyya li-l-Naṣṣ al-Qur’ānī fī Ḍaw’ Taḥlīl al-Khiṭāb*: 238.

⁸³ Ibid.: 238.

⁸⁴ *al-Qirā’a al-Ḥadāthiyya li-l-Naṣṣ al-Qur’ānī fī Ḍaw’ Taḥlīl al-Khiṭāb*: 239.

⁸⁵ *al-‘Arab wa-l-Ghuṣn al-Dhababī: I‘ādat Bina’ al-Uṣṭūra al-‘Arabīyya*: 13.

the Medinan meaning bound up with reports and tales, and the meaning that arose in the age of the writing down [of tafsīr], when it came to mean fables, absurdities, and falsehoods.”⁸⁶

Those who came after al-Ghanmi did not accept his view of this staged sequence for the term “myth”; thus Dr. Hakim al-Sultani states: “In reality, ‘legends of the former peoples’ is not, as Saeed al-Ghanmi portrays it, a concept with three successive significations, such that the second signification (tales) contributed to the crystallization of the third signification (absurdities) — as though ‘legends of the former peoples’ in the Meccan and Medinan periods contained no absurdities or falsehoods, being merely written records and ancient reports circulated in the prophetic era, and only came to mean falsehoods in the age of the writing down [of tafsīr].”⁸⁷

On this basis, al-Sultani holds “that legends contain, in their internal structure, two dimensions: the first represents citation from the ancients, namely (written records and reports), and the second is the narrative mode in which these citations were formulated, being the narration of reality or unreality, which is what is expressed by the term (falsehoods). Accordingly, the signification of falsehoods is an inseparable part of the two preceding significations — the Meccan signification (written records) and the Medinan signification (reports) — for neither the earlier written records nor the earlier reports are free of falsehoods.”⁸⁸ There is no doubt about this, since nations compose tales and introduce into them a great deal of illusion for particular purposes, whether these accounts are transmitted orally or committed to writing.

As for al-Ghanmi’s view that al-Ṭabarī brought together the three significations on a single level, this is correct in al-Sultani’s assessment, “since when al-Ṭabarī mentioned the three meanings (written records, reports, and falsehoods), he intended them all collectively; he did not intend (written records and reports) apart from absurdities and falsehoods (the narration of reality and unreality), nor did he intend falsehoods apart from their subject matter, namely written records and reports.”⁸⁹

Al-Sultani adduced evidence for the correctness of al-Ghanmi’s statement from al-Ṭabarī’s interpretation of the relevant verses,⁹⁰ for al-Ṭabarī states, in his interpretation of the Meccan verse of al-Naḥl: “Concerning the interpretation of God’s statement, **‘And when it is said to them, “What has your Lord sent down?” they say, “Legends of the former peoples”’** (al-Naḥl 16:24): God, mention of Him be exalted, says: and when it is said to these disbelievers among the polytheists, who do not believe in the Hereafter, ‘What has your Lord sent down, what thing has your Lord sent down,’ they say: ‘What He has sent down is what the former peoples before us set down in writing, of falsehoods.’”⁹¹ This is a clear indication of the signification of falsehoods applied to what the former peoples had set down, whether in writing or in report.

Al-Ṭabarī likewise mentions, in his interpretation of God’s statement: “**(We have been promised this, we and our forefathers, before; this is not but legends of the former peoples)**” (al-Mu’minūn 23:83), stating: “What is this that you promise us of resurrection after death, **(but legends of the former peoples)**? He is saying: what the former peoples set down in their books of reports and accounts that have no soundness and no reality.”⁹² This text is clear in indicating the three meanings, and that they are not successive.

Al-Ṭabarī likewise mentions, in his interpretation of the Medinan verse of al-Anfāl, “**(And when Our verses are recited to them, they say, ‘We have heard. If we willed, we could say [something] like this. This is not but legends of the former peoples’)**” (al-Anfāl 8:31), saying: “What the polytheists meant by their statement, ‘This is not but legends of the former peoples,’ is that this Qur’an which you recite to us, O Muhammad, is nothing but what the former peoples set down and wrote

⁸⁶ Ibid.: 5.

⁸⁷ *al-Qirā’a al-Ḥadāthiyya li-l-Naṣṣ al-Qur’ānī fī Ḍaw’ Taḥlīl al-Khiṭāb*: 239.

⁸⁸ Ibid.: 239.

⁸⁹ Ibid.: 240.

⁹⁰ See: *al-Qirā’a al-Ḥadāthiyya li-l-Naṣṣ al-Qur’ānī fī Ḍaw’ Taḥlīl al-Khiṭāb*: 240.

⁹¹ *Jāmi’ al-Bayān*: 14/65.

⁹² Ibid.: 18/36.

of the reports of nations.”⁹³ Although the verse is Medinan, the meaning of writing-down was not excluded from its interpretation, nor was its indication of falsehoods.

Al-Sultani concludes that the concept of myth in the Qur’anic text embraces three attempted readings — that is, three views on the extent to which Qur’anic narrative drew upon the legends of the ancients.⁹⁴

The first: the official religious reading, which we may term the “differentiating” reading; not one of the exegetes held that a mythic story exists in the Qur’an, and we find rather an aversion to the word “myth” and to the claim that the Qur’an’s narratives amount to a recovery of ancient legends.

The second: we may term this the “approximating” reading, an attempt by Saeed al-Ghanmi, who holds that myth is distinguished by an internal split between what it pretends to say and what it seeks to smuggle in implicitly; it oscillates between an overt declaration in a disguised outer wrapping, and an inward message it seeks to convey. This outer wrapping seems, in itself, incredible — as when animals speak or stars descend to earth — yet at the same time it implicitly conveys a message about the founding of a community or the explanation of a phenomenon.

Accordingly, “there is, in terms of structural form, no difference between myth and narrative; rather, the difference between them lies in the ideological content or the moral or social message of each. While myth represents the ideological content of the pre-Islamic imaginary, narrative, from the standpoint of the newly arisen Islam, tends toward a liberated telling of what Islam wishes the community it founded to become.”⁹⁵

Al-Sultani, however, did not accept or concede this view of Saeed al-Ghanmi’s, since “Qur’anic narrative has no need to feign one thing while smuggling in another; and if we proceed from the premise that every literary genre has its own distinguishing structural characteristics — poetic texts being distinguished from other texts by meter, abundant figuration, and density of meaning — then just as the mythic text is distinguished from other texts by its internal split between what it narrates through the mythologizing of characters, events, and situations and what it wishes to convey to the recipient, so too Qur’anic narrative is distinguished from other texts by its narration of events in the manner of truth, and its reference to reality in the manner of investigation and inquiry.”⁹⁶

Qur’anic narratives are, then, realistic and not products of imagination, but an expression of a genuine reality; hence Dr. Husayn Ibrahim holds that the Qur’anic text itself affirms the realism of its narratives and their correspondence to reality,⁹⁷ adducing a number of blessed verses in support, among them God’s statement: **“We relate to you, [O Muhammad], the best of stories in what We have revealed to you of this Qur’an, although you were, before it, among the unaware”** (Yūsuf 12:3) — the verse containing a reminder of a favor granted after a state of unawareness, which does not sit well with the inauthenticity of the narrated matter. The same applies to the preceding verse, God’s statement: **“That is from the news of the unseen which We reveal to you, [O Muhammad]. And you were not with them when they cast their pens as to which of them should be responsible for Mary, nor were you with them when they disputed”** (Āl ‘Imrān 3:44), and God’s statement: **“There was certainly in their stories a lesson for those of understanding. Never was the Qur’an a narration invented, but a confirmation of what was before it and a detailed explanation of all things and guidance and mercy for a people who believe”** (Yūsuf 12:111) — the pronoun in “their stories” referring back to **“but men to whom We revealed”** (Yūsuf 12:109), i.e., to the prophets; the reference is thus general, not particular, and the account is a confirmation of what preceded it, not a

⁹³ *Jāmi‘ al-Bayān*: 9/151.

⁹⁴ *al-Qirā‘a al-Ḥadāthiyya li-l-Naṣṣ al-Qur’ānī fī Ḍaw‘ Taḥlīl al-Khiṭāb*: 241, 242.

⁹⁵ *al-‘Arab wa-l-Ghuṣn al-Dhababī: I‘ādat Binā’ al-Uṣṭūr al-‘Arabīyya*: 16.

⁹⁶ *al-Qirā‘a al-Ḥadāthiyya li-l-Naṣṣ al-Qur’ānī fī Ḍaw‘ Taḥlīl al-Khiṭāb*: 242.

⁹⁷ See: *Qirā‘āt Mu‘āṣira fī al-Naṣṣ al-Qur’ānī*: 242.

fabricated narration.⁹⁸ Qur'anic narrative is thus real narrative, while distinguishing clearly between historical narrative and the discipline of history.

The third reading, which we may term the “interweaving” reading, is the one that seeks to establish textual interweaving between Qur'anic narrative and the ancient legends. Arkoun states in more than one place that the Qur'an possesses a “mythic” structure, saying: “The biblical tales and Qur'anic discourse are two magnificent examples of constructed or mythic exegesis.”⁹⁹

In this regard Arkoun states: “It may be said that Sūrat al-Kahf constitutes a striking example of the phenomenon of the broad textual interweaving present or operative in Qur'anic discourse; for there are three stories — the People of the Cave, the epic of Gilgamesh, and the tale of Alexander the Great — all of which refer us to the shared and most ancient cultural imaginary of the ancient Middle East region, and all of which are blended or interwoven within a single sūrah of the Qur'an (Sūrat al-Kahf).”¹⁰⁰

Dr. Ahmad Fadil al-Sa'di regards what Arkoun maintains here as mistaken, for several reasons:¹⁰¹

First: even if these stories occur within the ancient heritage, this heritage does not possess exclusive rights to them; rather, they are events and occurrences witnessed by humankind, susceptible to alteration as the generations transmit them.

Second: the Qur'an's transmission of them is not on the basis that they are mere tales; there is rather an educative dimension that called for their mention.

Third: the Qur'an transmitted them in a form differing from what is found in the earlier sources, since what the Qur'an transmits is revelation.

Fourth: some of these stories do not occur in some of the ancient sources, such as the Torah and the Gospel — for example, the story of the People of the Cave.

Dr. 'Aqīd Khālīd al-'Azzāwī, after affirming that Arkoun was influenced by the orientalist in his claim of textual interweaving between the narratives of the Noble Qur'an and the narratives of the “Torah-Gospel,” holds “that the claim of reception rests on no genuine, explicit basis; this claim revolves around a partial correspondence found between the narratives of the ‘Torah-Gospel,’ particularly in the stories of the earlier prophets — a correspondence in the essential outline of the event and the story, but with great and manifest differences in the details, which no discerning person could fail to notice; and here the distinction and superiority of the Qur'an over these books becomes apparent.”¹⁰²

The relationship of the texts to the discourse, then, is one of general confirmation in the field of narrative; the Qur'an indicated this in God's statement: **“So if you are in doubt, [O Muhammad], about that which We have revealed to you, then ask those who have been reading the Scripture before you. The truth has certainly come to you from your Lord, so never be among the doubters”** (Yūnus 10:94).

On this basis al-'Azzāwī affirms: “The Noble Qur'an is dominant over the preceding scriptures, including the Torah and the Gospel, meaning that it restores many historical truths to their proper standing after they had been subjected to distortion, addition, and omission, and it reveals the correct account in every small and great matter among the events it narrates, with truthfulness, accuracy, and the utmost precision, since it is the speech of God, whose knowledge encompasses the past, the

⁹⁸ See *ibid.*: 243, 246.

⁹⁹ *al-Qur'ān min al-Tafsīr al-Mawrūth ilā Taḥlīl al-Khiṭāb al-Dīnī*. 40.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*: 40.

¹⁰¹ *al-Qirā'a al-Arkūniyya li-l-Qur'ān: Dirāsa Naqdiyya*. 494.

¹⁰² *al-Inḥirāfāt al-Tafsīriyya 'inda Muḥammad Arkūn* (published research): 32.

present, and the future: ‘And We have revealed to you the Book in truth, confirming that which preceded it of the Scripture and as a criterion over it’ (al-Mā’idah 5:48).¹⁰³

Dr. Hakim al-Sultani regards this attempt of Arkoun’s, in subjecting the Qur’anic text to textual interweaving, as “an extension of the method of historical criticism practiced upon the Bible, which reached its zenith in the nineteenth century after archaeology and the decipherment of the texts of the Egyptian, Sumerian, Assyrian, and Babylonian civilizations established the existence of kinship ties between the narratives of the Torah and the legends of the Middle East. Excavation of historical texts and archaeological digs then began, in order to ascertain the reality of what actually occurred, and to criticize what the texts of the Old and New Testaments record of those events.”¹⁰⁴

Al-Sultani accordingly holds that the existence of correspondence and resemblance between the Torah, which was written down at a later date, and the legends that existed in the Middle East — because they belong to the same cultural environment — does not mean “that Arkoun should rehash the research and establish a link between the Noble Qur’an and the legends of the Middle East, notwithstanding the fixity of the Qur’anic text as revealed, and the absence of any influence of these legends upon the society of the Arabian Peninsula.”¹⁰⁵

Naṣr Hamid Abu Zayd holds that religious texts have, without doubt, relied — like other texts — on the dialectic of the cognitive and the ideological in the formulation of their doctrines, for cognitive-historical elements necessarily invoke many mythic conceptions within the consciousness of the community to which they are addressed.¹⁰⁶

On this basis, Dr. Hakim al-Sultani holds that religious discourse (the Qur’an and Hadith), for Abu Zayd, is founded upon mythic conceptions operative within the consciousness of the community, since the Qur’an, when it wishes to address a group of people, employs the cognitive system familiar and influential among them, and myth is part of this consciousness; the Qur’anic text must accordingly refer to what these conceptions displayed, in order to achieve communicative connection.¹⁰⁷

There is a reading close to this reading, that of Muhammad Ahmad Khalaf Allah, who held “that the Qur’an does not deny the occurrence of legends within it, but rather denies that these legends should be regarded as originating from Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) rather than from God.”¹⁰⁸ If this is established, he does not hesitate to state that the Qur’an contains legends, holding that in doing so he is not making a statement that contradicts any verse of the Qur’an;¹⁰⁹ he thus holds that this reading “explains for us one aspect of the miraculous character of the Noble Qur’an, for it established a new tradition within Arabic literary life, namely the construction of religious narrative upon certain legends. In doing so it made Arabic literature precede the other world literatures in opening this door, and made the mythic tale a form of fine and elevated literature.”¹¹⁰

Accordingly, Khalaf Allah does not speak of a founding myth for the ground of the Qur’anic text and its human character, but rather of the founding of its scholarly and contemporary literary character, and hence of its inimitability;¹¹¹ and in order to preserve the doctrine of inimitability, Arkoun followed the same course, saying: “An Egyptian university professor had the boldness to approach the study of the Qur’an from the literary angle when he studied ‘The Narrative Art in the Qur’an,’ but

¹⁰³ Ibid.: 33.

¹⁰⁴ *al-Qirā’a al-Ḥadāthiyya li-l-Naṣṣ al-Qur’ānī fī Ḍaw’ Taḥlīl al-Khiṭāb*: 242, 243.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.: 243.

¹⁰⁶ *Ihdār al-Siyāq fī Ta’wīlāt al-Khiṭāb al-Dīnī*: 18.

¹⁰⁷ See: *al-Qirā’a al-Ḥadāthiyya li-l-Naṣṣ al-Qur’ānī fī Ḍaw’ Taḥlīl al-Khiṭāb*: 243.

¹⁰⁸ *al-Fann al-Qaṣaṣī fī al-Qur’ān*: 206.

¹⁰⁹ See *ibid.*: 207.

¹¹⁰ *al-Fann al-Qaṣaṣī fī al-Qur’ān al-Karīm*: 208.

¹¹¹ *al-Qirā’a al-Ḥadāthiyya li-l-Naṣṣ al-Qur’ānī fī Ḍaw’ Taḥlīl al-Khiṭāb*: 244.

his concern to observe the believing Islamic position, and his failure to offer significant concessions regarding the doctrine of inimitability...”¹¹² At a time when the narratives and reports in the Qur’an were viewed as historical facts, and there was accordingly a concern to establish the features of the narrative characters and their particular details, Khalaf Allah went on to say: “The reports contained in the Qur’an are exhortations, maxims, and parables set forth for the people, and hence it becomes the right of human reason to disregard their reportorial character, or to remain ignorant of it, or to contradict it, or to deny it.”¹¹³ Ahmida al-Nayfar explained Muhammad Ahmad Khalaf Allah’s approach to Qur’anic narrative through his regarding “the story in the Qur’anic text as possessing an educative dimension, and as being furthest removed from historical data, in addition to holding that its unity is psychological; this first proposition affirms the psychological relationship between the narrator and the listener, and that this relationship is governed by rules, in the manner of social laws — adopting these rules leads us to connect the narratives found in the Qur’an with the psychology of the Prophet and the circumstances of the Arabs, whether Muslim or polytheist.”¹¹⁴ Dr. Hakim al-Sultani accordingly holds that the modernist reading agrees with this understanding of the story in the Qur’an, since it is “further removed from historical fact, and accords with the social and psychological frameworks of knowledge that prevailed in the seventh century CE.”¹¹⁵

This view of Khalaf Allah’s, however, and of those who followed him, is subject to a great many difficulties in Dr. Hakim al-Sultani’s assessment, among them:

- There exists no demonstrative or archaeological (i.e., archaeological-scientific) evidence for the factual falsity of Qur’anic narrative; and if we proceed from the circle of faith, we must concede the historical truth of these narratives, and derive from them their educative lesson, since the attribute of “truth” (*al-ḥaqq*) with which the Qur’an describes its narratives is an attribute pertaining to reality and content.
- As for what Khalaf Allah cites from the sayings of the ancient exegetes, such as al-Rāzī’s statement: “Whenever they heard any of these narratives, they said: this book contains nothing but the legends of the ancients, and did not realize that what was intended by them was not the tale itself but other matters, differing from it,”¹¹⁶ al-Sultani holds that what al-Rāzī intended was not to deny the historical occurrence itself, but rather the utmost of what al-Rāzī denied was that the Qur’an should be a prophetic recounting of the narratives of the ancients corresponding exactly to what is recorded in the Torah and the Gospel; rather, the aim of the Qur’an is something greater than mere narration and storytelling — it is what lies beyond this narration, of admonition and lesson, as God says: **“There was certainly in their stories a lesson for those of understanding. Never was it a narration invented, but a confirmation of what was before it and a detailed explanation of all things and guidance and mercy for a people who believe”** (Yūsuf 12:111).¹¹⁷
- To claim the historical falsity of the narratives may become a prelude to claiming the falsity of the unseen concepts contained in the Qur’an, such as Paradise, Hellfire, and the angels... and others, and to claiming that these were introduced merely for intimidation or encouragement, in the manner of a narrative artistic device, rather than as a recounting of their actual reality — so that the claim of intimidation and encouragement in the Qur’an would come to entail data whose premise is the factual denial of what the Qur’an records under these two rhetorical modes.

What al-Sultani maintains regarding the absence of archaeological evidence negating Qur’anic narrative is the position closer to the truth, for modern studies have established the truthfulness of those narratives — perhaps the closest example being what the Qur’anic narrative recounts of Pharaoh’s bodily deliverance after his drowning in the sea, when he pursued the Prophet of God Moses (peace be upon him) and the Children of Israel with him in order to persecute them. Indeed, the intertextuality

¹¹² *al-Fikr al-Islāmī: Qirā’a ‘Ilmiyya*: 202, 203.

¹¹³ *al-Fann al-Qaṣaṣī fī al-Qur’ān*: 45.

¹¹⁴ *al-Insān wa-l-Qur’ān Wajban li-Wajb*: 128.

¹¹⁵ *al-Qirā’a al-Ḥadāthiyya li-l-Naṣṣ al-Qur’ānī fī Daw’ Taḥlīl al-Khiṭāb*: 244.

¹¹⁶ *Tafsīr al-Fakhr al-Rāzī*: 17/102.

¹¹⁷ See: *al-Qirā’a al-Ḥadāthiyya li-l-Naṣṣ al-Qur’ānī fī Daw’ Taḥlīl al-Khiṭāb*: 46.

occurring between Qur'anic narrative and the Torah-Gospel narrative confirms the truthfulness of the Qur'anic narrative, alongside the clear difference in expressive register and moral values in which Qur'anic narrative diverges. In addition, Qur'anic narrative differs from human narrative, for the former is distinguished by masterful depiction and precision in presenting facts — this being what renders it an inimitable style, in contrast to the human style, which is a deficient style, since it relies on the limitations of human reason. Qur'anic narrative is thus the true and truthful account that God, exalted is He, set forth for particular purposes and in a unique style, with the aim of drawing the addressee to follow it; nor are these narratives devoid of artistic depiction of events, persons, and dialogues, yet they never depart from the circle of truth and reality.

Perhaps the precision of the Qur'anic text in choosing the words suited to the story it narrates confirms the realism of those stories; we find these words chosen with a precision that suits the context and accords with the content conveyed, flowing smoothly with the intended meaning. If we pause at the dialogue that occurs in the story of the creation of Adam (peace be upon him) for the purpose of his appointment as vicegerent on earth, where God says: **“And [mention, O Muhammad], when your Lord said to the angels, ‘Indeed, I will make upon the earth a successive authority.’ They said, ‘Will You place upon it one who causes corruption therein and sheds blood, while we declare Your praise and sanctify You?’ He said, ‘Indeed, I know that which you do not know’”** (al-Baqarah 2:30), we find the Qur'anic text employing the active participle *“ja'ilun”* (one who will place/appoint) in the indefinite form, indicating continuity in the vicegerency of Adam and his progeny on earth; and the angels' response came fitted to this future continuity, employing the imperfect verbs *“yufsidu”* (causes corruption) and *“yasfiku”* (sheds), rather than the perfect tense — and it is clear from the general context that the angels spoke thus only after having witnessed a prior experience indicating the existence of creatures of some kind on the earth.

THE TRANSCENDING READING AND THE DIMENSIONS OF QUR'ANIC NARRATIVE:

Through his critical vision, al-Sultani holds that the reading of Khalaf Allah and those who followed him proceeded through the three readings (the differentiating, the approximating, and the interweaving), but he established a new reading of Qur'anic narrative that he termed “the transcending reading.” This reading “establishes neither rupture, nor approximation, nor connection, but establishes transcendence — by absorbing the earlier texts and sayings in order to produce a new creation.”¹¹⁸ This is the same meaning that al-Sultani affirms for intertextuality in more than one place: the understanding of earlier texts and their reproduction in a new form, for the sake of cognitive connection.

On the basis of this “transcending” reading, al-Sultani holds that Qur'anic narrative possesses, in terms of its structure, two dimensions:¹¹⁹

THE FIRST: THE COGNITIVE DIMENSION:

This is embodied in “tracing” (*al-iqtīṣāṣ*), meaning the following of traces; God says: **“So they returned, following their footsteps, retracing [their way]”** (al-Kahf 18:64). This tracing is founded upon conscious selection; God says: **“We relate to you the best of stories”** (Yūsuf 12:3), it being “the best of stories” for its inclusion of lessons, wisdom, and admonitions. These narratives are either already known within the Arab environment, in their events and details, or present in the collective memory in a general form; the Qur'anic story does not begin from a vacuum, nor could people understand its formulations, expressions, and lessons were it to come detached and independent of the structure of religious thought that preceded it. This new religious founding, embodied in the narrative, cannot ignore the prior consciousness, nor can it leap over its structure, systems, and texts in constructing its new paradigm; rather, it must necessarily pass through what people understand and are aware of concerning the conditions of the earlier prophets and nations, and proceed from their collective memory.

THE SECOND: THE ARTISTIC DIMENSION:

This is the rhetorical style that Qur'anic narrative required, a style founded on pure truth; Qur'anic narrative takes up the earlier narratives after redirecting them and drawing lessons from them, and therefore requires reflection, which is the essential

¹¹⁸ *al-Qirā' al-Ḥadāthiyya li-l-Naṣṣ al-Qur'ānī fī Daw' Taḥlīl al-Khiṭāb*: 245.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*: 245.

function deposited within it, so that the human being may search for solutions to all the existential, organizational, and behavioral difficulties that surround him.

Al-Sultani has illustrated this with the following diagram.¹²⁰

It is worth noting that al-Sultani holds that intertextuality of this kind is not accomplished through the repetition of what has already been said, nor through an arbitrary compilation of what is already known and current, “but rather through a process of transformation and reproduction of earlier texts, placing them within a new context and within a different intellectual framework.”¹²¹ For intertextuality does not seek rupture with the earlier texts, but rather relies upon them and reproduces them; it thus contains what preceded it as a preliminary step toward producing a new creation, and this is its essential function.

Al-Sultani holds that the two dimensions (the cognitive and the artistic) are likewise present in legends; as for the cognitive dimension within them, it is “citation from earlier texts and sayings, constituted by ‘written records and reports’ and the ‘social imaginary.’ This citation is subject to the authority of society and its dominant systems; it may point beyond history, or to what is non-temporal in human existence, while at the same time remaining operative within the imaginary and consciousness of society.”¹²²

As for the artistic dimension of legends, it is “the narrative pattern in which these citations are formulated, constituting the telling of reality or unreality — a telling governed by the mentality and dominant culture of the human being, who seeks, through mechanisms of symbolic expression, to emulate the cultural imaginary operative in their socio-cognitive milieu; it is not necessarily expressive of truth, but its aim (or function) is reconciliation between what currently exists (the prevailing culture) or an openness to the future.”¹²³

It appears that intertextuality “is a complex linguistic phenomenon that seeks regulation and codification; its identification depends on the recipient’s culture, breadth of knowledge, and capacity for weighing evidence, though there are indicators that cause intertextuality to disclose itself and guide one toward grasping it.”¹²⁴ The Noble Qur’an disclosed its relationship to intertextuality when God, exalted is He, said: **“And it was not [possible] for this Qur’an to be produced by other than Allah, but [it is] a confirmation of what was before it and a detailed explanation of the Scripture, about which there is no doubt, from the Lord of the worlds”** (Yūnus 10:37).

Nevertheless, the critical vision of the modernist reading tends almost unanimously to deny legends of the Qur’an, among which is Dr. Hakim al-Sultani’s statement: “The Qur’an has denied any connection to the legends of the ancients, or that it is an extension of them; rather, it wished to establish its transcendence of this earlier model, and to proceed from its own distinctiveness in shaping a paradigm consistent with its aspirations. The Qur’anic text wishes to create its own particular literariness, and thereby to create its own particular cognitive system, which exalts it above debasement and immanence and establishes it in transcendence and disjunction.”¹²⁵

This does not occur arbitrarily, or through conceptual confusion, but rather “results from the introduction of new concepts, proceeding from the very system of the dominant prevailing culture (the Arab environment and collective memory), and not proceeding from a culture of the ancient Middle East region and its imaginary — even though it carries within itself particularities that render it distinct from the rest of discourses.”¹²⁶

¹²⁰ *al-Qira’a al-Hadāthiyya li-l-Naṣṣ al-Qur’ānī fī Daw’ Taḥlīl al-Khiṭāb*. 245, 246.

¹²¹ Ibid.: 246.

¹²² Ibid.: 246.

¹²³ Ibid.: 246.

¹²⁴ *Taḥlīl al-Khiṭāb al-Shi’rī (Istrāṭijīyyat al-Tanāṣṣ)*: 1431 [sic].

¹²⁵ *al-Qira’a al-Hadāthiyya li-l-Naṣṣ al-Qur’ānī fī Daw’ Taḥlīl al-Khiṭāb*. 247.

¹²⁶ See *ibid.*: 248.

In this lies the difference, in literary genre, between narrative and legend; and even where there is some proximity between them in structural form, this does not mean that narrative is derived from the legends of the Middle East, but rather that its points of reference exist within the memory of the Arab environment.

This is supported by the findings of modern studies, for Jakobson, in his model and his account of the functions [of language], was concerned with the reality addressed by speech and message, which he termed “the referential function.” The process of communication, in his view, requires six elements, each element being accompanied by a function; “the function bound up with the referent is called the referential function, founded upon the subject spoken of; if we observe an incident and report on it, our speech is that incident, and thus the referential function operates on the basis of statement and transmission. This function constitutes the essential justification for the process of communication, for we speak with the aim of pointing to a particular content that we wish to convey to others.”¹²⁷

On this basis, the communicative process loses its value if reference is made to things outside the reality being spoken of.¹²⁸ Hence we find the story of the People of the Cave, the Prophet of God Moses (peace be upon him) and the righteous servant, and Dhū al-Qarnayn, to be real narratives referred to in the manner of truth, God saying: **“We relate to you their story in truth”** (al-Kahf 18:13), in addition to the use of the word “signs” (*āyāt*) coupled with the pronoun of majesty (“Our signs,” *āyātina*) in His statement: **“Or have you thought that the companions of the cave and the inscription were, among Our signs, a wonder?”** (al-Kahf 18:9).

This is clear evidence that this story is among the signs of God, exalted is He, and that the mythic imaginary has no bearing on it. In addition, the Noble Qur’an employed certain expressive formulations such as: **“We cast [a cover of sleep] over their ears”, “then We awakened them”, “and We increased them in guidance”, “and We fortified their hearts”, “and We turned them”, “thus did We awaken them”, and “thus did We reveal them”** — these being actions proceeding from God (glorified and exalted is He), and not products woven from the imagination of other cultures.¹²⁹

The same holds for the other two stories: in the story of Moses (peace be upon him) with the righteous servant, God (exalted is He) described the righteous servant whom Moses and his young companion encountered, saying: **“So they found a servant from among Our servants to whom We had given mercy from Us and had taught him from Us a [certain] knowledge”,** and likewise regarding the unfolding events, **“So your Lord intended that they reach maturity and extract their treasure, as a mercy from your Lord; and I did not do it upon my own command.”** The same holds for the story of Dhū al-Qarnayn, God saying: **“Indeed, We established him upon the earth, and We gave him to everything a means”, “Thus. And We had encompassed [all] that he had in knowledge”,** and he said, **“That in which my Lord has established me is better [than this]”,** and he said, **“This is a mercy from my Lord; but when the promise of my Lord comes, He will make it level, and ever is the promise of my Lord true.”** The common feature among these three matters is that they refer knowledge of the events back to God (glorified and exalted is He).¹³⁰

Al-Rāzī mentions, regarding the occasion of revelation, that Quraysh sent al-Nadr ibn al-Hārith and sent with him ‘Uqba ibn Abī Mu‘ayṭ to the Jewish rabbis in Medina, saying to them: “Ask them about Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) and his description, and inform them of what he says, for they are people of a scripture.” So the two of them set out until they arrived in Medina, and they asked the rabbis of the Jews about the affairs of the Messenger Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him and his family). The rabbis of the Jews said: “Ask him about three things: about young men who departed in ancient times — what became of them, for their story is wondrous; and about a man who traveled widely and

¹²⁷ *Taḥlīl al-Khiṭāb al-Shi‘rī (Istrāṭijīyyat al-Tanaṣṣ)*: 47.

¹²⁸ See *ibid.*: 248.

¹²⁹ See: *al-Qirā’a al-Ḥadāthiyya li-l-Naṣṣ al-Qur’ānī fī Daw’ Taḥlīl al-Khiṭāb*: 248.

¹³⁰ See: *al-Qirā’a al-Ḥadāthiyya li-l-Naṣṣ al-Qur’ānī fī Daw’ Taḥlīl al-Khiṭāb*: 249.

reached the easts and wests of the earth — what was his story; and ask him about the spirit, what it is. If he informs you [correctly], he is a prophet; otherwise, he is one who fabricates speech.”¹³¹

On this basis al-Sultani holds “that these stories are realistic, since it is not possible for a matter of pure myth to be posed as a challenge by people of a heavenly scripture; the criterion, then, for the truthfulness of his claim or its falsity lies in his detailed and precise answers concerning these stories, whereas their general gist was already known — the evidence for this being their disagreement over the number of the young men.”¹³²

Al-Sultani adduces two proofs of the precision of the Noble Qur’an in Qur’anic narrative:¹³³

1. That it did not disclose the actual number of these young men, saying: **“They will say there were three, the fourth of them being their dog; and they will say there were five, the sixth of them being their dog — guessing at the unseen; and they will say there were seven, and the eighth of them was their dog. Say, [O Muhammad], ‘My Lord is most knowing of their number. None knows them except a few. So do not argue about them except with an obvious argument and do not inquire about them among [the speculators] from anyone”** (al-Kahf 18:22).
2. That it did not assert with certainty the duration of their stay, saying: **“And they remained in their cave for three hundred years and exceeded by nine. Say, ‘Allah is most knowing of how long they remained. He has [knowledge of] the unseen [aspects] of the heavens and the earth. How Seeing is He and how Hearing! They have not besides Him any protector, and He shares not His legislation with anyone”** (al-Kahf 18:25–26).

As for the story of Dhū al-Qarnayn, claimed to have been derived from the story of Alexander of Macedon, several statements have been made regarding it:¹³⁴

1. That he was Alexander son of Philip the Greek.
2. That he was Abū Karib Shammar ibn ‘Ubayr ibn Afrīqish the Ḥimyarite.
3. That he was a righteous servant to whom God gave dominion over the earth and granted knowledge and wisdom and clothed him in majesty.
4. That he was an angel among the angels.

As for the first statement — that he was Alexander — Sayyid al-Ṭabāṭabā’ī denies it, since the Qur’an states “that Dhū al-Qarnayn was a believer in God and the Last Day, that is, in the religion of monotheism, whereas Alexander was a pagan of the Sabian [Zoroastrian?] persuasion... and it is not recorded in any of their histories that Alexander of Macedon built the barrier of Gog and Magog, as the Qur’an records.”¹³⁵

The story of Dhū al-Qarnayn was thus related because he enjoyed God’s support (glorified and exalted is He), not because he was a king; likewise the People of the Cave, because they were people of a [true] creed who had believed in their Lord; and likewise the story of the Prophet of God Moses (peace be upon him) and his exploratory journey in it — the summoning of these narratives was at the suggestion of the Jewish rabbis to the people of Mecca, and notwithstanding that it was the same story, it was more precise and profound in transmission and confirmation [in the Qur’anic account].¹³⁶

On the basis of the foregoing, Dr. Hakim al-Sultani observes “that intertextuality in Qur’anic narrative occurs precisely through the summoning of the earlier texts operative in the consciousness and culture of the recipient, and their reformulation in a

¹³¹ See: *Tafsīr al-Fakhr al-Rāzī*: 21/83.

¹³² *al-Qirā’a al-Ḥadāthiyya li-l-Naṣṣ al-Qur’ānī fī Daw’ Taḥlīl al-Khiṭāb*: 249.

¹³³ Ibid.: 249, 250.

¹³⁴ See: *Tafsīr al-Fakhr al-Rāzī*: 21/164, 166.

¹³⁵ *al-Mizān fī Tafsīr al-Qur’ān*: 13, 379.

¹³⁶ See: *al-Qirā’a al-Ḥadāthiyya li-l-Naṣṣ al-Qur’ānī fī Daw’ Taḥlīl al-Khiṭāb*: 250, 251.

manner consonant with its new aspirations, such that they possess new significations expressing the strategy of the Noble Qur'an in drawing its new foundational paradigm — not the intertextuality founded upon derivation from baseless legends. The Qur'an's insistence on referring to its sources thus springs from its continuous quest to attain the truth.”¹³⁷

The claim of intertextuality between the Qur'anic text and the Bible does not imply any deficiency in the Qur'anic text's capacity for creativity; rather, it is evidence of shared origin in a single source. Whereas intertextuality among human texts occurs after the cultural heritage of the author of the text has become absorbed into his mind, so that he produces his text intertextually with it for the sake of creativity and of producing what suits the cultural stage —

we may accordingly regard the “Torah-Gospel” text, or the actual Bible, as an *absent text*, owing to the alteration and distortion it underwent across the ages; and the Qur'anic text came to be intertextual with the Bible in order to direct these concepts correctly and to restore the absent concepts to their proper standing, in addition to the fact that the source is one, namely a divine source — and so the Qur'anic text is to be regarded as complementary to the earlier monotheistic texts, not departing from their cultural framework except as required by the new stage.

The Qur'anic text, in its cognitive dimension, does not cease attempting to harmonize with the earlier religious texts; yet this harmonization does not mean total submission to what is contained in those books — quite the contrary, for the Qur'anic text corrects the distortion present in the Torah-Gospel text, and likewise supplies what is deficient in it, given its exposure to distortion and its failure to remain in its original form. Thus, while something of these narratives existed in the collective memory of the Arab environment, the Qur'anic text came to correct and to direct this cognitive dimension.

On the artistic side, the Qur'anic text does not content itself with recounting the story in its true content but also employs the linguistic devices that distinguish the Arabic language, so as to render the scene of the story affecting to the recipient's soul. If we reflect upon the story of the Prophet of God Moses (peace be upon him) in God's statement: **“And draw in your hand to your side; it will come out white, without disease, another sign”** (Tāhā 20:22), we find the Qur'anic text borrowing the image of the “wing/side” (*janāḥ*) in a context indicating God's (glorified and exalted is He) support for His prophet; for the wing belongs to the bird, which cannot fly except by it, and its metaphorical application to the human being signifies the loftiness and elevation generated by flight. In this the Qur'anic text has achieved a remarkable creative feat in both its artistic and cognitive dimensions within Qur'anic narrative, and the resemblance found in the narratives, or the interactive intertextuality with the earlier scriptures, does it no harm.

RESULTS:

1. The resemblance found in certain places between the Torah-Gospel text and the Qur'anic text confirms the unity of the source of the two texts, and this resemblance cannot therefore be regarded as intertextuality [in the sense of derivation].
2. It cannot be affirmed that a human hand entered into the formation of the Qur'anic text, since the Torah-Gospel culture was not current on the Arabian Peninsula in the age of revelation, nor before it.
3. The Qur'anic text is distinguished by its confirmation of, and dominance over, the texts that preceded it: it confirmed what remained sound in the texts of the Torah and the Gospel, and likewise corrected what had been distorted in them.
4. The Qur'anic text worked to transcend the texts that preceded it, and this confirms the absence of intertextuality [in the derivative sense] between them.
5. The Qur'anic text was able to transcend the texts that preceded it in Qur'anic narrative, in both its artistic and cognitive dimensions.

¹³⁷ *al-Qirā'a al-Ḥadāthiyya li-l-Naṣṣ al-Qur'ānī fī Daw' Taḥlīl al-Khiṭāb*: 251.

REFERENCES

- [1] *Adab al-Katib*: Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd Allāh ibn Muslim ibn Qutayba al-Dīnawarī (d. 276 AH), annotated and edited by Prof. ‘Alī Nā‘ūr, Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, Beirut, Lebanon, 1st ed., 1408 AH/1988 CE.
- [2] *Balāghat al-Khiṭāb wa-‘Ilm al-Naṣṣ*: Ṣalāḥ Faḍl, ‘Ālam al-Ma‘rifa series, Kuwait, n.d., 1992 CE.
- [3] *Ta’rīkhiyyat al-Da‘wa al-Muḥammadiyya fī Makka, fī al-Sira al-Nabawiyya*: Hisham Djaīt, Dār al-Ṭalī‘a, Beirut, Lebanon, n.d.
- [4] *Taḥlīl al-Khiṭāb al-Shi‘ri (Istrāṭijīyyat al-Tanaṣṣ)*: Muḥammad Miftāḥ, al-Markaz al-Thaqāfī al-‘Arabī, Casablanca, Morocco, 4th ed., 2005 CE.
- [5] *al-Taṭbīq al-Ṣarfī*: Dr. ‘Abduh al-Rājiḥī, Dār al-Nahḍa al-‘Arabiyya li-l-Ṭibā‘a wa-l-Nashr, Beirut, Lebanon, n.d.
- [6] *al-Tanaṣṣ al-Tafā‘uli: al-Muṣṭalah, al-Mafḥūm, wa-l-Anmāṭ*: Asst. Prof. Dr. Aḥmad Ṣabīḥ al-Ka‘bī, Dār al-Farāhidī li-l-Ṭibā‘a wa-l-Nashr wa-l-Tawzī‘, Baghdad, Iraq, 1st ed., 2015 CE.
- [7] *al-Tanaṣṣ: Muqāraba Ma‘rifīyya fī Mahīyyatihi wa-Anwā‘ihi wa-Anmāṭihi*: Yaḥyā ibn Makhlūf, Dār Qāna, Batna, n.d., 2008 CE.
- [8] *Jāmi‘ al-Bayan fī Tafsīr al-Qur’ān*: Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, Dār al-Ma‘rifa, Beirut, Lebanon, 4th ed., 1980 CE.
- [9] *al-Khiṭāb wa-l-Ta’wīl*: Dr. Naṣr Ḥāmid Abū Zayd, al-Markaz al-Thaqāfī al-‘Arabī, Casablanca, Morocco, 3rd ed., 2008 CE.
- [10] *Ru‘ya Islāmiyya li-l-Istishrāq*: Aḥmad ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd Ghurāb, al-Muntadā al-Islāmī, London, n.d., 1411 AH.
- [11] Book of Exodus: General American Patriarchate, Holy Bible series, n.d.
- [12] *al-Sira al-Nabawiyya*: Ibn Hishām, edited, verified, annotated, and indexed by Muṣṭafā al-Saqqā, Ibrāhīm al-Abyārī, ‘Abd al-Ḥafīz Shalabī, n.d.
- [13] *al-Ṣaḥībi fī Fiqh al-Lughā al-‘Arabiyya wa-Masa‘ilihā wa-Sunan al-‘Arab fī Kalāmihā*: Abū al-Ḥasan Aḥmad ibn Fāris ibn Zakariyyā (d. 395 AH), ed. Aḥmad Ṣaqr, Maktabat wa-Maṭba‘at Dār Iḥyā’ al-Kutub al-‘Arabī, n.d.
- [14] *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣaḥāba*.
- [15] *al-Zahira al-Qur’āniyya*: Malek Bennabi, trans. ‘Abd al-Ṣabūr Shāhīn, foreword by Muḥammad ‘Abd Allāh Darrāz and Maḥmūd Muḥammad Shākir, supervised by the Malek Bennabi Symposium, Dār al-Fikr al-Mu‘āṣir, Damascus, Syria, 4th ed., 1978 CE; repr. 1420 AH/2000 CE.
- [16] *al-‘Arab wa-l-Ghuṣn al-Dhababī: I‘ādat Binā’ al-Uṣṭūra al-‘Arabiyya*: Jaroslav Stetkevych, trans. Saeed al-Ghanmi, al-Markaz al-Thaqāfī al-‘Arabī, Beirut, Lebanon, n.d., 2005 CE.
- [17] *‘Ilm Lughat al-Naṣṣ: al-Nazarīyya wa-l-Taṭbīq*: Dr. ‘Izza Shibl Muḥammad, foreword by Prof. Sulaymān al-‘Aṭṭār, Maktabat al-Ādāb, Cairo, n.d.
- [18] *al-Fann al-Qaṣaṣī fī al-Qur’ān al-Karīm*: Muḥammad Aḥmad Khalaf Allāh, Maktabat al-Nahḍa al-Miṣriyya, Cairo, Egypt, 1st ed., 1950 CE.
- [19] *Fī Uṣūl al-Khiṭāb al-Naqdī al-Jadīd*: Marc Angenot, trans. Aḥmad al-Madīnī, Dār al-Shu‘ūn al-Thaqāfiyya al-‘Āmma, Baghdad, 1987 CE.
- [20] *Fī al-Sira al-Nabawiyya: al-Wahy wa-l-Qur’ān wa-l-Nubunna*: Hisham Djaīt, Dār al-Ṭalī‘a, Beirut, 4th ed., 2008 CE.
- [21] *Fī al-Sira al-Nabawiyya: Ta’rīkhiyyat al-Da‘wa al-Muḥammadiyya fī Makka*: Hisham Djaīt, Dār al-Ṭalī‘a, Beirut, Lebanon, 3rd ed., 2013 CE.

- [22] *Qalū 'an al-Islām*: Dr. 'Imād al-Dīn Khalīl, al-Nadwa al-'Ālamiyya li-l-Shabāb al-Islāmī, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, 1st ed., 1412 AH/1992 CE.
- [23] *al-Qirā'at al-Ḥadāthiyya li-l-Naṣṣ al-Qur'ānī*: Dr. Muḥammad 'Abd al-Fattāḥ 'Ammār, Markaz Levant li-l-Dirāsāt al-Thaqāfiyya wa-l-Nashr, Egypt, 1st ed., 1442 AH/2021 CE.
- [24] *Qirā'at Mu'āṣira fī al-Naṣṣ al-Qur'ānī*: collective volume, Markaz al-Ḥaḍāra li-Tanmiyat al-Fikr al-Islāmī, Beirut, Lebanon, 1st ed., 2008 CE.
- [25] *al-Qirā'a wa-Tawḥid al-Dalāla*: Ḥamid Laḥmadānī, al-Markaz al-Thaqāfi al-'Arabī, Casablanca, 1st ed., 2003 CE.
- [26] *al-Qirā'a al-Arkūniyya li-l-Qur'ān: Dirāsa Naqdiyya*: Aḥmad Fāḍil al-Sa'dī, Markaz al-Ḥaḍāra li-Tanmiyat al-Fikr al-Islāmī, Beirut, Lebanon, 1st ed., 2012 CE.
- [27] *Qirā'a Naqdiyya fī (Ta'rīkh al-Qur'ān) li-l-Mustashriq Theodor Nöldeke*: Ḥasan 'Alī Ḥasan Maṭar al-Hāshimī, al-'Ataba al-'Abbāsiyya al-Muqaddasa, Dār al-Kaḥf li-l-Ṭibā'a wa-l-Nashr wa-l-Tawzī', 1st ed., 1435 AH/2014 CE.
- [28] *al-Qur'ān min al-Tafsīr al-Mawrūth ilā Taḥlīl al-Khiṭāb al-Ḥadīthī*: Muḥammad Arkoun, trans. and annotated by Hashim Salih, Dār al-Ṭalī'a li-l-Ṭibā'a wa-l-Nashr, Beirut, Lebanon, 1st ed., 2001 CE.
- [29] *al-Kitāba wa-l-Shafāfiyya fī Bidāyat al-Islām*: Gregor Schoeler, trans. Rashīd Bāzī, al-Markaz al-Thaqāfi li-l-Kitāb, Casablanca, Morocco, 1st ed., 2016 CE.
- [30] *Lisāniyyāt al-Khiṭāb wa-Anṣāq al-Thaqāfa: Falsafat al-Ma'nā bayna Niẓām al-Khiṭāb wa-Shurūṭ al-Thaqāfa*: 'Abd al-Fattāḥ Aḥmad Yūsuf, Manshūrāt al-Ikhtilāf, 1st ed., 2010 CE.
- [31] *al-Muṣṭalahāt al-Asāsiyya fī Lisāniyyāt al-Naṣṣ: Dirāsa Mu'jamiyya*: Dr. Nu'mān Būqurra, Jadār li-l-Kitāb al-'Ālamī li-l-Nashr wa-l-Tawzī', Amman, Jordan, 1st ed., 1429 AH/2009 CE.
- [32] *Ma'ārik min Ajl al-Insāna fī al-Siyāqāt al-Islāmiyya*: Muḥammad Arkoun, trans. Hashim Salih, Dār al-Sāqī, Beirut, Lebanon, 1st ed., 2001 CE.
- [33] *Mafāhim: Ma'alim nahwa Ta'wil Waqī'ī*: Muḥammad Miftāḥ, al-Markaz al-Thaqāfi al-'Arabī, Casablanca, Morocco, 1st ed., 1991 CE.
- [34] *Mawqif al-Fikr al-Ḥadāthī al-'Arabī min Uṣūl al-Istidlāl fī al-Islām: Dirāsa Taḥlīliyya Naqdiyya*: Dr. Muḥammad ibn Ḥajar al-Qarnī, publisher: *al-Bayān* magazine, 1st ed., 1434 AH.
- [35] *al-Naṣṣ al-Dīnī fī al-Islām min al-Tafsīr ilā al-Mutalaqqī*: Wajīh Qanṣūr, Dār al-Fārābī, Beirut, Lebanon, 1st ed., 2011 CE.
- [36] *al-Naṣṣ al-Gha'ib: Tajalliyāt al-Tanaṣṣ fī al-Shi'r al-'Arabī*: Muḥammad 'Azzām, Manshūrāt Ittiḥād al-Kuttāb al-'Arab, Damascus, 2001 CE.
- [37] Hamdulay N. A., (2026). Prompt Engineering as Rhetorical Practice: Redefining Literacy in AI-Mediated Education. International Journal of Education, Society and Policy, 1(1), 50-59. <https://ijesp.org/index.php/ijesp/article/view/18>
- [38] *al-Naṣṣ al-Qur'ānī amām Ishkāliyyat al-Bunya wa-l-Qirā'a*: Tayyib Tizīnī, Dār al-Yanābī', 2nd ed., 2008 CE.
- [39] *al-Naṣṣ, al-Sulṭa, al-Ḥaqīqa: al-Fikr al-Dīnī bayna Irādat al-Ma'rifa wa-Irādat al-Haymana*: Dr. Naṣr Ḥamid Abū Zayd, al-Markaz al-Thaqāfi al-'Arabī, Casablanca, Morocco, 1st ed., 1995 CE.
- [40] Usiere A. U., Akpan B. (2026). Digital communication, social media animations and the transformation of film industries: Views from Africa. International Journal of Education, Society and Policy, 1(1), 24–39. <https://ijesp.org/index.php/ijesp/article/view/8>
- [41] *al-Waṣāyā al-'Ashr fī al-Yahūdīyya: Dirāsa Muqārana fī al-Masḥūbiyya wa-l-Islām*: Dr. Rashād 'Abd Allāh al-Shāmī, publisher: Dār al-Zahrā' li-l-Nashr, n.d., 1414 AH/1993 CE.