CHAPTER III
MODERNIST AND CLASSICAL METHODS OF EXEGESIS

3.1. PREAMBLE.

1. The modernist stake was not only founded upon combating the religious current and flouting its ideas and maxims. In particular, the descriptions of reactionary thought and backwardness were not merely to label the effective traditional (religious) players, but were also damning the teaching methodologies and traditions, which encompassed the whole past intellectual and jurisprudential legacy. The latter was a very instrumental factor that eventually nurtured an antagonistic conservative spirit. Such a spirit had severely embittered the majority of modernists, in that it was a stumbling block which hampered their course of development.

The tradition (past intellectual legacy) debate had forcibly imposed itself on the Arabian arena. It was a concurrent event with the 1967 setback. Commenting on the matter, Rif’at Salām says: “it (tradition) was the daily bread of Arab intellectuals”2. Ever since, the modernist stances had been varying according to their divergent subjective prospects, strategies, living environment, and the particular social class at which they targeted their intellectual discourse. As such, some modernists advocated bypassing the old

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teaching methodologies. Stressing this idea, 'Arkün states: “Our inaccurate traditional cognition should be brushed aside as recommended by Gaston Bashlar”\(^3\). Other modernists view no deterrent in embracing and adopting the past intellectual and legal heritage, or so-called “tradition” in a way that serves modernism in its all-liberalational, democratic, and socialist perspective\(^4\).

2. In spite of the apparent differences between the two aforementioned groups, they however come to terms with one objective, namely the relegation of “tradition” \((\text{Turāth})\) as being the main crutch that props up the religious current as stated by ‘Afī Ḥarb:

“The ‘Abū Zayd does not remain neutral towards what’s happening around; he does not differentiate between his academic tasks and political concerns; that’s why he is involved along with the secularists in the battle running in the Egyptian arena while he employed his intellectual efforts to debunk the claims and allegations of the Muslim Activists. He envisions that the intellectual’s primary task for the elite calling for enlightenment is to point out the inherent drawbacks of religious thought by subjecting it to scientific methods and empirical analysis in order to build up a scientific awareness about the limits and inadequacies of past Islamic heritage \((\text{Turāth})\). According to ‘Abū Zayd, such type of awareness will represent a viable tool to resist the fundamentalist project and thereby ensure the success of the resurgence and innovation project”\(^5\).

3. Based on the preceding postulation, the motive of the modernist project was then to counteract the Islamic stand and abolish their system of thought\(^6\). Thereupon, their occasional acceptance of “tradition” or “past scholarship heritage” is just for casual expediency rather than searching for intellectual benefits from the exuberant Arabian legacy. Al-Jābīrī lays bare this reality as


he discloses the nature of dealing with past intellectual heritage, whereby he attests: "The reality is that my solicitude about (tradition) before, and even now is still not intended for the sake of tradition itself, but it’s rather meant for a highly-sought after modernism"⁷. As a matter of fact, the modernist reconsideration of (tradition) is based on a clearing out (al-Takhliyah) and filling up (al-Tahliyah) process. Firstly, it is to empty and clear the minds of the Arab masses from all contaminations of tradition by means of showing the flaws and shortcomings of traditional methodologies that breed and nurture the conservative intellectual heritage. Thereafter, it is to elucidate the triviality and limitation of such decayed methodologies, and hence their incompatibility with the contemporary era. Secondly, it is to fill up the already-emptied Arab minds with the cutting edge tools of modern scientific methodology and scholarly research. This will inevitably help in the reinterpretation of the Qur'anic text in compliance with the nature and peculiarity of the living age and also with modernism. It is simply “practice towards the secularization of Islam”⁸.

In connection with the foregoing, we shall lay out the modernist opinions and criticisms of the methodological foundations enshrined by Muslim ancestors in the understanding of al-Qur'ān.

3.2. THE CONCEPT OF THE HOLY *QUR’ĀN*.

The modernists take their alleged call for a new understanding of *al-Qur’ān* too far. They not only round on the outdated methodologies of past Muslim scholars but they also dismiss the common conception of *al-Qur’ān* so as to suit their objectives. Thereby, the orthodox (well-known) and unanimous definition of *al-Qur’ān*: “The word of Allah revealed to his messenger (Muḥammad – peace be upon him), which is written in the holy book (*al-Muṣḥaf*), and conveyed (to the people) from the Messenger by recurrence (*Tawātūr*) and with no suspicion.” was arbitrarily altered on both the epistemic and structural levels.

3.2.1. The epistemic level:

On the epistemic level, the majority of modernists who cherish the historical methodology - whether explicitly mentioned or not – deny the “divine source” of the holy *Qur’ān* as they regard the holistic reality as a clear infringement of their positive scientific research methodology. Thus, in their opinion, the holy *Qur’ān* is a historical product yielded collectively by a set of political, economic, and social factors. In other words, the holy *Qur’ān* is an individual experience held by Muḥammad (peace be upon him) in a specific time-space context, wherein history played a substantial role in directing the individual’s thought (this means the Prophet!) and language as an expressional tool of history. This trilateral dialectic wording: history – thought – language, according to the modernists is seen, for instance, through the textual discrepancies between *Makkī* and *Maddānī* verses.

As claimed by ‘Arkūn, the historical phenomenon being disposed by its

10We shall discuss this type of methodology in detail in the coming chapter, which is assigned to examining the different methodologies used by the modernists to understand *al-Qur’ān*.
inherent decisive laws is the same fact for all religions. "Thus, neither Christians nor Jews or Muslims are apt to escape the historical, linguistic, and cultural restraint"\textsuperscript{12}.

In view of this historical materialism-based perspective, the holy Qur’ān is a human product despite what is presumed about the amount of divinity attached to it in the early Islamic propagation; thereupon, al-Qur’ān has passed through a stage of documentary ascertainment held in specific historical circumstances bound by the historian’s intention and his personal objective\textsuperscript{13}. 'Arkūn draws the distinction between the holy book, termed otherwise by him as the “Official Sealed Logbook”, and the Qur’ānic discourse, the verbal proclamation from the Prophet\textsuperscript{14}. Evidently, the nomenclature of “Official Sealed Logbook!” has its peculiar significance. That is, the term “logbook” implies human-made laws and legislation, which accede to historical factors, and human incidents, like oblivion, distortion, falsification, and distrust in conveying the genuine texts. “They (scriptural texts) won’t be all conveyed faithfully to the official sealed logbook”\textsuperscript{15}.

The use of the term “official” implies that the “sealed logbook” was actually an outcome of a set of decisions made by the dominating social clan, which conveyed nothing but all that serves its own objectives and political expediency\textsuperscript{16}.

As for the incorporation of the term “sealed”, this means that nobody is entitled to add to or deduct a shred of detail from the “official logbook”. As a result, believers being shorn of their active initiatives were deprived of the true


\textsuperscript{16}\textit{Ibid.}, p.57-58.
revelation, and subsequently were reluctant to persist in restricting themselves to only interpreting this sealed book instead of perpetuating any sort of add and drop to it\textsuperscript{17}.

If one were to scrutinize the above statements, one will unavoidably find out that the distinction made by 'Arkūn between the verbal proclamation and the sealed logbook would not absolve him of being cynical about the divine attribute of revelation. This is warranted from at least two perspectives:

1. Such a premature distinction gives the tacit impression that its author tentatively believes in the existence of revelation that was brought to the Prophet (peace and Allah's blessing be upon him) in the form of what is known to be "\textit{al-Qur'ān}". Nevertheless, the author expresses his objection and disenchantment with the way the Prophet's verbal proclamation was switched to a sealed book. The foregoing assertion is generally accepted, from the methodological perspective, for exclusively non-Muslim intellectuals. As such, and due to the roaring anti-tradition campaigns, beside the pre-assumed ideological belief and worldview wherefrom non-Muslim researchers mount up their inquiry about the (holy) book, it is definitely inevitable for these researchers to question the divine legitimacy of \textit{al-Qur'ān}, and deal with it with utmost irreverence. This has recurred many times throughout history\textsuperscript{18}. However, authors of such fallacies may admit the prose of revelation if they find who enlightens them with potent evidence that demonstrates the originality of \textit{al-Qur'ān}, and that it was revealed to the Prophet (peace and Allah's blessing be upon him) without any addition or deduction or distortion;

\textsuperscript{17}\textit{Ibid.}, p.58-59.
that is what has been indeed proven by (modern) scientific research, which backfired on those who established themselves as adversary scientists to *al-Qur'ān*. In doing so, 'Arkūn has incurred two serious drawbacks:

a. First, the above mentioned allegations – though holding the genuine intention of its author – are certainly not to be forwarded except from an outright ignorance of the simplest axioms of religion. Thus, it is highly unlikely for the one who appoints himself as an innovative thinker of his age, and highly erudite scholar to bungle over such a solemn and decisive matter. On the theological level, it is absolutely prohibited for someone to announce his religious belief and thereafter impugn the authenticity of its source. As for the scientific level, 'Arkūn was utterly unrealistic when he unleashed his pernicious prejudices, and bypassed all the substantial historical and scientific evidence, which resolutely left no room to admit delusive charges such as the addition, subtraction, or modification of the sacred book (*al-Qur'ān*). One of the most plausible pieces of historical evidence is that despite the rampant factional, and sectarian dissentions and political disputes associated with internal fighting among Muslims to the extent that a number of religious groups were to discredit each other’s tenets, since the early post-Prophet age, there was however not a single accusation from any dissenting faction that doubted the authenticity of the *Qur'ānic* text. Moreover, the holy *Qur'ān*

19See for example what Shawqi 'Abū Khaṣfīl had reported about one of the pastors who set himself up as an adversary to *al-Qur'ān*, and soon after converted to Islam after he got to know the truth. 'Abū Khaṣfīl, Shawqi (1995), *al'Isāf fī Khitāb al-Mustashriqīn*. Beirut: Dār al-Fikr al-Mu’āṣir, pp.61-65. Charles Cutler Torry (1967), *The Jews Foundation of Islam*. New York: KTAV Publishing House, Inc., pp.1-2. He said: "Its sacred book, the Qur'ān, was his own creation, and it lies before us practically unchanged from the form he himself gave it". The main point here is that the author admits that the Qur'ān with us is the same one was with the Prophet (peace be upon him).

was collected in one book under the patronage of Caliph Othman, who had many foes.\textsuperscript{21}

b. Second, the preceding discussion proceeds from a person who is well rounded in the knowledge of Islam, yet he shows no firm belief in it. Therefore, ‘Arkūn appeared inconsistent, and contradicted himself. While ‘Arkūn professed objectivity and scientific impartiality, he allegedly uses one part of religion to recant the other part. By corollary, it would have been better for ‘Arkūn, the infallible, objective and systematic scholar\textsuperscript{22}, to be unambiguous right from the very beginning, and declare that he actually believes in the human nature of the Qur‘ān\textsuperscript{23} instead of perpetuating this protracted intellectual delusion. Indeed, ‘Arkūn’s assertion contravenes the simplest maxims of scientific research of which he had long boasted, and which he considered (scientific research) the hidden secret that was unknown to the past scholars.\textsuperscript{24}

2. ‘Arkūn underscored the effect of the existential factor (i.e. facts and circumstances) in shaping one’s thoughts and selecting one’s language so as to adequately express the underlying facts. According to ‘Arkūn’s analogy, the Qur‘ān is not revealed from almighty Allah, but it is rather a product of the Prophet (peace be upon him) who had to rely on past facts and previous social inspirations.\textsuperscript{25} These inspirations, in ‘Arkūn’s opinion were couched in new

\textsuperscript{22}Arkūn, Muḥammad (1986), al-‘Istilām ‘Aṣālah wa Mumārasah. Khalīl ‘Ahmad (trans.) 1\textsuperscript{st} ed., p.29.
\textsuperscript{23}In his last book: \textit{al-Fikr al-‘Islāmī wa ‘Istihālah al-Ṭa‘ṣil} Arkoun states: “all these factors have collectively contributed to the nullification of the historicity of the Qur‘ānic discourse. As such, they (Moslems) present al-Qur‘ān for recitation, reading and living as though it is the eternal sayings revealed from an Almighty Lord...”. ‘Arkūn, Muḥammad (1999), \textit{al-Fikr al-‘Islāmī wa ‘Istihālah al-Ṭa‘ṣil}. Hāshim Şāliḥ (trans.), 1\textsuperscript{st} ed. Beirut & London: Dār al-Sāqī, p.146.
\textsuperscript{24}Arkūn (1996), Tārikhīyah, op. cit., p.9.
language that duly pertains to the happenings and circumstances in which the Prophet had to live. As such, the Prophet was able to explore countless opportunities that serve human existence\textsuperscript{26}. 'Arkūn believes that such a new concept of revelation has inevitably enriched the human experience in relation to holiness, in that it allows for all tenets and doctrines to redeem all forms of religious bigotry and fanaticism imposed by theologists since ancient times. Therefore, this blend of doctrines will be infused in a single tenet, and one integrated religious thought\textsuperscript{27}. The big question mark, here, is what was the motive behind the distorted judgments made by 'Arkūn and those who followed his path to transmit their intellectual project?

To answer this dangerous question, we need to evoke the reality that: for tactical reasons, modernists in their incessant battle with the religious activist groups, besides their conviction about the weirdness of their ideas, which happened to be very offensive, especially for the genuine feeling of the masses, who are not yet qualified to assimilate their illusionary and deceptive method to assimilate their discourse to large segments of the populace. In this respect, 'Arkūn, while disclosing his attitude to scholarship, states:

"Should you write something about these (religious-based) topics, you must then watch yourself. The fact that you are not entitled to say all what do you want, and you cannot address some issues due to the stringent censorship, which is sometimes subjective. As a lecturer, and researcher in the University, I would like to raise some questions as required by the conventional scientific inquiry, but I feel I cannot because I want to keep in touch with the Arabs...that's why although I enjoy my total freedom as a lecturer, here, in the Sorbonne (University), I still impose upon myself such a type of censorship (control) because I understand that the researcher is not allowed to hurt the feelings of those who are not yet ready to

\textsuperscript{26}We shall further discuss this issue in the coming chapter, particularly, in our discussion of the Myth Methodology.

understand and comprehend some problematic issues...there are taboos.28

With reference to the above reservations and restrictions, 'Arkūn appears to be a totally different person from the one whose opinions have been discussed earlier. At one time, 'Arkūn seems to have no sense of censorship whether external or subjective. He often does not care about the readers' feelings. He simply gives vent to his virulent judgments, and reaches very detrimental findings, and quite offensive conclusions that deeply tug at people's heartstrings. For instance, he questions the authenticity of the Qur'ānic verses, and believes in the human nature of al-Qur'ān, which are scientifically unfounded claims, as they have no basic reference other than the historical materialism-driven ideology. This ideology postulates that all religions are a human product, and hence every scriptural text is subject to alteration, modification, addition, and subtraction.29 At another time, 'Arkūn appears as a pragmatic thinker. He resorts to mean political maneuvers in an attempt to adapt to the overriding facts, though at the expense of scientific trust. He, therefore, takes the cue of the rule that states: "The end justifies the means". Such an attitude is very far away from the simplest cannons of scientific research, which require impartiality, neutrality, and presenting the research findings without any intervention or perversion.30

What value then has scientific research if it has to reckon with personal accounts and political intrigues? And what's the value and worthiness of acquaintance and familiarity with modern contemporary methodologies should

they fall short of the vivid and responsible conscience? That’s what we are waiting for 'Arkūn and his exponents to answer.

3.2.2. The structural level:

Content and reality – the modernists having espoused the historical perspective, their view of the Qur'ān is accordingly not different from any other text of literature, which is normally subject to scientific investigation and critical analysis, since it is deemed as a cultural product. For the modernists, this type of conception is regarded as an axiom, which requires no proof or evidence. In this context, one of the modernist theorists, 'Abū Zayd says, “The scriptural text, in essence, is a cultural product and a truism, which needs no demonstration”31. 'Abū Zayd sees that the fact and culture and their effective role in the formation of scriptural texts is the watershed between his own methodology and the traditional religious methodology. He goes too far in stating that the religious activists give utmost priority to discussing issues related to only Allah (swt) and his Prophet (peace be upon him), and thereafter they apply this discussion to the fact. Therefore, their teaching method is essentially a meditative and preaching based approach, which carries instant replies and misses out on the substantial role of fact, and history under the weight of the ideological confusion. According to 'Abū Zayd, these people (Islamists) play the role of wizards and witches who have no (noble) cause but to fascinate and enthrall the masses while they keep harping on the past scholars’ sayings32. It seems that the objective behind 'Abū Zayd’s contention is to lay bare the intellectual backwardness of the contemporary reactionist religious current33. Thereupon, the means used to fulfill this objective,

which is in turn a means that meets another objective, namely the domination of secularism in the Arab World, is to determine an objective concept of Islam. That is to neutralize and narrow down the scope of the concept, especially with regard to the religious classification of people. So, 'Abū Zayd’s opinion it is not right to categorize people and nations on the basis of their religious belief as believers, and non-believers, because that will inevitably lead to disunity and animosity among the citizens. Alternatively, the categorization criterion has to be on a cultural basis, namely Arabism, whereby Islam comes as one of its constituents. 'Abū Zayd contends that adopting culture as a basis of classification will dissipate the spurious illusion that dissociates Arabism and Islam. Such a fanciful fallacy — to 'Abū Zayd knowledge — stems from an idealistic mentality that claims the comprehension and globalization of Islam, which is a religion designed for the entire people around the globe, and not only for Arabs. By contrast, we can conceive that the contemporary nationalism is a secular movement with reference to the European experience, which is in 'Abū Zayd’s point of view a wrong analogy, because he allegedly argues that the contemporary national thought shows no denunciation of the role of religion\(^{34}\).

'Abū Zayd appears to have reaped what he did not actually sow since all his wearisome intellectual journey, strenuous speculative ways, and his dim views and ideas have all backfired on his stand, as his own early arguments set him to failure. To dot the i’s and cross the t’s, let’s present the following two issues as a sample of the intellectual bankruptcy of modernism:

1. The transfer of Islam from a denominating framework to a subordinate detail has not solved the intricacy of what has been called by 'Abū Zayd the

\(^{34}\textit{Ibid.}, \text{pp.19-23.}\)
"theological assortment", which in his opinion will nurture spurious conflicts among the citizens of the same country. On the contrary, 'Abū Zayd himself makes a systematic contribution to this conflict and that is seen from two essential standpoints:

a. The theoretical prospect: 'Abū Zayd subjects Islam to the Arabian Culture – and we do not know what he exactly means by culture – which means the abolition of the entire civilizational dimensions of Islam, and substantiating merely one dimension, namely the religious belief (tenet). This is itself a pure denominational assortment which 'Abū Zayd wards off. Stating that Islam is an Arabic religion and one of the most important constituents of Arabism would imply that there is one sect called Muslims, which neighbors other sects like Christians, Jews and Pagans. Of course, these denominations are not motionless islands, which can be easily crossbred, integrated and entrenched just with culture! They are active social masses, which tend to jostle for precedence and domination. Even the modernists' behavior testifies, on the one hand, to their feudal stand towards the Islamic religious groups, apart from their ceaseless efforts to stick up for the secularist groups, particularly, the nationalist current\(^\text{35}\). On the other hand, 'Abū Zayd's objection to the theological categorization – that is he rejects the division of society into Muslims and non-Muslims – which he labeled a reactionary form, is eventually rejecting the Qur'ānic text, which is considered (according to 'Abū Zayd) a subset of culture, the all-inclusive framework. Thereby, it is unequivocal from the preceding that 'Abū Zayd dismisses a clear fact from the Qur'ān, which draws a

\(^{35}\text{Ibid.}, \text{pp.20-23.}\)
parallel between Muslims and non-Muslims. Hence, 'Abū Zayd opposes his own proposed framework since al-Qur‘ān is a major component of culture\textsuperscript{36}. As such, 'Abū Zayd was actually caught in a vicious circle. He either resolutely admits the Qur‘ānic text, and then concedes its legal division (into Muslims and non-Muslims) or just rejects this legal ascertainment (from al-Qur‘ān). In the instance of admission, 'Abū Zayd will eventually come to terms with those whom he once called reactionists. Whereas, upon refusal, he will then repudiate the Qur‘ānic text, and by corollary deny one part of the culture. This will certainly testify to his bias and selectivity. It is widely learnt that admitting logical premises while rejecting their outcomes is indeed none other than fanaticism, backwardness, and reactionism. 'Abū Zayd has once again borne witness on himself of being blasphemous in dealing with the Qur‘ānic text. He irreverently points to the human nature of revelation when he discusses the political, and socio-economic circumstances, and the historical background that preceded the advent of Islam. In this respect, he says: "Why (particularly) revert to the religion of Abraham? Why isn't there in Judaism or Christianity that which could suffice to answer the puzzling questions that have largely haunted the minds of Arab intellectuals? In reality, these questions were not just Sufi outcries to embrace absolutism"\textsuperscript{37}. If not, monotheism (showing no partner with Allah) is the ultimate objective behind these questions; so what type of objective can it

\textsuperscript{36}Ibid., p.95. He, himself, mentioned that the scriptural text (al-Qur'an) has divided people into believers and disbelievers: "the Qur‘ānic text contributes to the escalation of the conflict between believers and disbelievers; a conflict where the dominance was for disbelievers in the Mecca period"

\textsuperscript{37}Ibid. p.63.
be then? 'Abū Zayd retorts: "(These questions) were an expression of sensing the fact-crisis, which needs to be changed. Hence, the questions were just like a search for an ideology of change."38. But did the change occur upon discovering a new ideology? No! "This search was not to transcend the epistemological horizons of the historical system. These horizons are disposed by the social and economic structures of this system."39.

'Abū Zayd carries on his Marxist analysis while stressing the economic impact on the religion industry. "The quest of the Abrahamic Religion is, in essence, a quest for the peculiar identity of Arabs. This identity is endangered by several threats, the most serious of which was the economic threat that proceeded from the limitation of economic resources."40. Therefore, in accordance with the law of competition, and "amidst these threats, there was a feeling that revealed the necessity of unity. Unity at the internal level was in order to ensure the persistence of life amid perilous economic conditions, and also unity for the purpose of facing the external threat, which was about to hush up their identity."41. In order to ensure an outright response that is capable of withstanding challenges, and tackling the threats besetting the Arabs, and subsequently bringing them to unity, we need an ideology that is able to fulfill two objectives: "Facing the internal conflicts...and the external threats, particularly, the enemies of Arabs, Persians and Romans."42.

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38 Ibid.
39 Ibid.
40 Ibid.
41 Ibid., p.64.
42 Ibid.
Christianity or Judaism? 'Abū Zayd attempts to answer the question in utmost simplicity, and says: “Because Christianity was an aggression based religion...and Judaism was an enclosed, and race-based religion, which does not accept newcomers”\textsuperscript{43}.

Therefore, what’s the ideology that fulfills these two objectives?

“Islam is the religion designed to meet these objectives. It is not a sort of intellectual exegesis if we were to state that Islam as a religion dated back to Abraham Ḥanafiyyah’s teaching was a natural outcome of its interaction with the needs of fact. \textit{Aḥnaf} exhibited this need including the Prophet (peace be upon him) as a member of the Abraham Ḥanafiyyah group. Thus, the Prophet was not just the first receiver of scriptural text, but also an individual, who acted in a group thereof he substantiated its hankerings. So he (the Prophet) does not present an autonomic entity that is left apart from the fact of motion, but rather he is a person who reflects whole-heartedly the longing of the present and the dreams of the future”\textsuperscript{44}.

\textsuperscript{43}Ibid. This, itself, is the ideological division, and we can stretch his methodological line to its limits, and then say: “Every Arab man, who embraces Christianity or Judaism is an agent either for Christianity since it is the religion of the colonial West that shows contempt for the Arabs or (an agent) for Judaism since the biggest enemy of the Arabs, today, are the Jews who are occupying Palestine and wounding the dignity of the Arabs day and night; even 'Abū Zayd himself becomes an agent for he is one of most staunch advocates of Modernism, which is a product of the West that is humiliating and enslaving the Arab people.”

\textsuperscript{44}Ibid., p.65.
As clearly stated by 'Abū Zayd, Islam is not a religion from Allah, but rather it is natural result of the past social accumulations and sufferings of the Arabs driven by internal and external challenges, and that the Prophet Muḥammad (peace and Allah’s blessing be upon Him) is a man who comprehended such circumstances, and visualized them within his spirit and longing aspirations, and then managed, with his tactfulness and acquaintance with the surrounding fact, to become the right person to rescue his folk from what they had been inflicted with, and thereafter unite them in one peculiar ideology. In doing so, 'Abū Zayd not only agrees with the Orientalists, but also he categorically circulates what they had been harping on a long time before he, himself, came into the world. Nonetheless, these sayings had lost their credibility and echoed within their authors themselves, and had no relevance except in the thoughts of 'Abū Zayd and his modernists fellows.

45It is worthwhile to mention, in this regard, the comparison made by 'Abū Zayd between Zayd 'Ibin 'Amr, one of Ḥanafiyyah believers before the advent of Islam, and the Prophet (peace and Allah’s blessings be upon him). He clearly states in his book (Maḥfūẓ al-Naṣṣ) page: 62 and 63: “Zayd 'Ibin 'Amr was too exaggerate when he broke away from his folk to search for the religion of 'Ībrāhīm, and Mohammad though he was also a searcher for the religion of the ‘Ībrāhīm - Ḥanafiyyah doctrine – he was not of the same degree as Zayd's obstinacy and vehemence in condemning his environment and fact... his rejection of the fact’s values and customs was not reflected in his personal behavior towards individuals. Moreover, was it possible for (the tribe of) Qurayish people, when they disagreed about whom should be given the honor of placing the black stone in its place in the holy house (Ka'bah), to consent to the arbitrage of a man like Zayd 'Ibin 'Amr, who berated their deities, reproached his people and went into quasi-isolation from them to the extent he was akin to a priest though he did not embrace Christianity”. Therefore, according to 'Abū Zayd’s perception, the reason why Zayd 'Ibin 'Amr was deprived of this prestigious post was his rigidity, stubborness and lack of tactfulness; by contrast, what enabled the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to have such an honor was his tactfulness and acquaintance with the surrounding environment wherein he used to live, beside his ability to monitor his conduct, and keep silent about his secrets and afflictions since his early childhood until he came to avail himself of that irresistible opportunity. On page 65 of the same source, 'Abu Zayd had this to say: “The orphan Mohammad did not to ignore the critical social conditions in his society. He tasted the sorriness of orphanage in a society that gives supremacy to tribal solidarity ('asabiyah). If both the toughness of orphanage and poverty were to be gathered in the (social) conditions of Mohammad, then there is no doubt that his consciousness was shaped in a way that gave rise to certain questions, which are not to be disclosed in this particular society”.

b. On the practical level, the malicious campaign fiercely mounted by 'Abū Zayd and leveled against the largest social class\textsuperscript{47}, who had to put up with a spate of afflictions and suspicions about the holy \textit{Qur'ān} by harping on the hackneyed statements of the Orientalists; all that is itself a pure intellectual, ideological and sectarian fanaticism in its modern fashion. Such a campaign certainly jeopardizes the national unity besides giving enemies an optimum chance to thrust their noses into our internal affairs. Isn’t libeling others with descriptions such as reactionary, narrow minded, treason, and trading with religion itself a flagrant drawback in the ideological analysis for which ’Abū Zayd claimed his immunity, as he is supposedly always acquainted with and aware of it\textsuperscript{48}. Moreover, if the Islamists (Muslim activists), as claimed by ’Abū Zayd, have divided society into two sections: Muslims and non-Muslims, and such a religious segregation was deemed by the author as a real threat to the nation’s security and unity. Then ’Abū Zayd himself even distinguishes several categories in the social strata of society, from Islamist terrorists, secularists, the ruling reactionist elite to pragmatist Shaykhs, who have no

\textsuperscript{47}Abū Zayd, Naṣr Hāmid, \textit{op. cit.}, pp.17, 20.

\textsuperscript{48}\textit{Ibid.}, p.23. In this regard the author says: “It is needless to say that the researcher is aware of the threat of the ideological confusion that stems from his peculiar environment wherein he lives and to which he reacts as being a citizen, who apprehends that he must reduce the effect of this threat as much as he can. Such awareness is good enough to spare the researcher the virulent drawbacks of the ideological analysis. Thus, those who step into the chasms of ideological confusions are those who deny this awareness and claim for themselves devotion, objectivity, and impartiality that fit only the absolute and downright truth, which falls beyond our mental potential”. In doing so ’Abū Zayd attempts to fulfill two objectives. Firstly, when he realized that he was caught by a scurrilous intellectual bigotry and exaggeration, he then tried to fool the reader that he was fully aware of the effect of subjectivity threat on the scientific research as he skillfully marshaled the use of methodological tools to validate his allegedly subjectivity-free conclusions. Secondly, the author tried to condemn Muslim activists (Islamists) for their gross subjectivity, and immersion into the chasms of ideological analysis. This is indeed a cunning way that reveals a smartness and artfulness of the author.
concern but to trade with religion and justify the atrocities of the reactionist rulers, the nation and its subject traitors⁴⁹.

2. Misleading terminology and undisciplined methodology. For instance, the term “secularism”, which has been used by 'Abū Zayd as a synonym of “science” in a context reveals that the Islamists are simply anti-science! And they themselves give rise to a fanciful conflict between religion and science due to their limited and distorted understanding. In this respect, 'Abū Zayd attests:

“Is the researcher able to overlook that growing weed, which tends to discuss outdated issues considered as an ancient heritage. This is seen through the positioning of religion as a counter to science in several debates, seminars, and writings about Islam and secularism whereby Muslim clergymen embark upon warding off secularism, and the secularists, in turn, set to stand up for their secularism⁵⁰.”

As such, 'Abū Zayd drops all denotations and key meanings that underline the concept of “Islam versus secularism”. Such misleading terminology is conspicuous even for a layman, not to mention a professional, who claims for himself “scientific sufficiency”! Therefore, the current debate held between the secularists and Muslim activists (Islamists), to 'Abū Zayd’s true knowledge, is not an abyss between religion and science, but rather between two different civilization orders. It is a conflict between Islam with all its underlying meanings and secularism, which seeks to dismiss the former, and confine it only to formal rituals, which in the best likelihood, do not go beyond the doorstep of the mosque. What we want to emphasize in this regard is 'Abū Zayd’s self contradiction and methodological inconsistency caused by

⁴⁹Ibid., p.20. Personally, I admit that there exist such type of rulers and some of pro-regimes Sheikhs.
⁵⁰Ibid., p.20.
his ideological fanaticism. To prove this, let’s expound on his other usage of the “secularism” concept. In one statement, ’Abū Zayd shows an outright denial of secularism, which he considered as an anti-religion European product:

“The second supposition is that the modern national movement is a secularist racial movement...these are only temporary expressions, which have deeper roots in the motion of thought and society. Thereby we cannot explain away this phenomenon with a similar experience in the history of Europe. The thought of the Arabian national was not accompanied, to our knowledge, by any form of denial of the role of religion”.

Despite his intellectual efforts to absolve the Arabian nationalism from the disgraceful stigma of secularism, ’Abū Zayd unintentionally unveils his belief and view of religion as a subordinate element to nationalism. This is in fact, the crux of the dissension between the Islamists who take religion as an all-inclusive way of life, and the secularists who shear the comprehensive role of religion and restrict it to the individual’s ritual worship.

According to the historical materialist perspective, the holy Qur’ān is simply a set of Arabs’ aspirations and feelings which the days had conceived, and exhausted their sagacious people until the Prophet Muḥammad (s.a.w) came to appear with his exquisite sense, rich experience and wisdom, matchless genius and prolific vision to interpret such a normative social structure in a magnificent piece of literature that is liable to scientific probe and criticism. As such ’Abū Zayd repudiates the fact that the holy Qur’ān is unequivocally complete and perfect, and it is ante-fact, which almighty Allah

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51 Ibid., p.23.
52 Ibid., p.63.
54 Ibid., p.49.
55 Ibid., p.69.
56 Ibid., pp.18-19.
sent down to the people without (soliciting) their will. “This conception makes the (scriptural) text an ante-fact by virtue of a divine force that falls beyond human capabilities. Such a conception led gradually to set apart the (scriptural) text from the reality. That is because the linguistic nature of the (legal) text, which purports just a sacred object was actually transformed into a holy book whose saintliness is derived, simply, from its existence to represent its distant root that lies in the world of spirits and values. Based on the foregoing assertion, the holy Qurʾān is thought to be just a fine succinct piece of literature, which can be even compared with poetry. Ascertaining this reality, ‘Afi Ḥarb had this to say: “Indeed, this is (al-Qurʾān) a very fine piece of literature, and magnificent artistic feat whereby this can be compared with poetry.”

Hence, should this be the case for the modernists’ understanding of the primary legal source, namely, al-Qurʾān. What would be then their perception of the tools of interpretation of al-Qurʾān as understood by the early Muslim scholars?

3.3. AL-SUNNAH (PROPHETIC TRADITION)

Modernists espouse various approaches to deal with al-Sunnah due to their diverse spectrums of thought. Nevertheless, all these approaches come to terms with one target, namely, relegating the status of al-Sunnah, and nullifying its hermeneutic role to understand the holy Qurʾān.

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57 Ibid., p.67.
3.3.1. Modernists’ Concept of al-Sunnah:
In this vein, the conventional conception of al-Sunnah does not please most modernists, who maintain that the orthodox definition of al-Sunnah was the major cause to play down the esteem of Islam: “As such, the fallacious definition arose by admitting that al-Sunnah is all that was delivered by the Prophet, whether by word of mouth, deed, prescription, proscription, or attestation...this definition actually, resulted in mummifying Islam”\(^{59}\). Thus, in the modernists’ opinion, the sound definition that suits the contemporary era is: “Al-Sunnah is the prophet’s personal reasoning (ʻIjtihād) in executing the injunctions of the holy book, namely, penalties (Ḥudūd), worships, ethics while reckoning for the realistic (objective) world wherein he lives\(^{60}\). The term “ʻIjtihād” discards the peculiarity of the true concept of al-Sunnah. Thereby, al-Sunnah becomes just a mental speculation similar to other human’s reasoning that succumbs to the objective fact. This fact was to be yielded within a specific space-time factor that comprehends the economic, social, and political circumstances of the Arab peninsula in the seventh century. Thus, al-Sunnah is only an initial response of Islam to a very primitive environment that completely differs from our contemporary age.\(^{61}\) Moreover, from a functional perspective, al-Sunnah appeared to be a crucial factor in the early time of Islam; “the vivid relation, and the effective meddling between the realities of the Qur’ānic awareness in its absolute sense, and the conceptions of human awareness in its historical proportion”\(^{62}\). So,


\(^{60}\) Ibid., p.553.


\(^{62}\) Ibid., p.68.
according to the modernists perception, *al-Qur‘ān* had emerged within an environment of animism, which lacks the characteristics of "Direct dealing, and conspicuous feasibility of the *Qur‘ānic* methodology through analysis". From such a perspective, *al-Sunnah* had effectively acquired its historical worthiness. As asserted by the modernists, who claimed that the leading role of the Prophet arose mainly because "he is the role model, and the practical example whom the Arabs are to follow in the instance of the theoretical absence of the methodological awareness". Therefore, in order for *al-Sunnah* to take a modernist dimension as an element to offset the traditional trend, it has been transformed, for some modernist advocates, into a dictionary of the Arabic Revolution in the seventh century. This revolution had met the three causative requirements of Revolution: objective conditions that allow for revolutionary change, apprehension of these conditions, and formation of the revolutionary tool. The aforementioned dictionary consists of thirty-four (34) articles, which start out by outlining the comprehensive ideological and philosophical conception of the universe, life, and human beings. Thereafter, it carries on underlining the transition process of revolution from the stage of negative struggle to the stage of positive struggle, which was based on the civil war led by the Prophet (peace be upon him), and which embraced the whole Arabian peninsula. Then, it shows the beginning of the radical shift in the mode of production. This, indeed, seemed to be a turning point in the revolutionary and economic behavior on the level of relations and means of production. The Arab Revolution dictionary ends up by drawing a Conceptual Blend of Islamic and Arab nationalist notions, while assigning full jurisdiction and clout to the leadership when it comes to decision-

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63 Ibid.
64 Ibid.
making. Despite the great efforts of modernists to fortify their position by using misleading equivocations and delusive metaphorical expressions just to marginalize their foes, and ease the process of penetration into the masses’ consciousness, there is however, a clear indication for every intellectual who had made a perusal of the modernists’ works that the eminent Sunnah is not suitable for our modern time. In this regard, the modernists contend that al-Sunnah is eventually the Prophet’s personal reasoning in a very particular space and time, and by corollary, those who came after the Prophet are not bound to adhere to it. “The big fallacy is that we want to understand Islam by shifting our way of thinking from the 20th century to the seventh century. That is we want to think as they (Muslim ancestors), themselves, used to think, and this is impossible. Then, after that we (want to) leap back from the 7th century in order to present Islam of that (distant) age in the 20th century.”

According to the modernists’ perception, the orthodox definition of al-Sunnah, as acknowledged by Muslim scholars in the past and the contemporary era, is basically a clear distortion of history and development and leaping over the space-time dimension, as well as being a stroke of illusion that disregards the reality of the facts and concrete life.

Hence, in their opinion, and particularly in Shuhrur’s view, the solution is: “We must be confident and trust ourselves, and then we should say that we are in the 20th century capable of transforming al-Qur’an from an absolute state to a relative one like our Prophet had done; but not what he had literally done.”

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67 Shuhrur (1990), op. cit., p.566.
68 Ibid.
69 Ibid., p.567.
statement signifies that the modernists put themselves on an equal footing with the past prominent Muslim scholars, and they even rate themselves to be at par with the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself. Yet the modernists enunciate that their understanding is superior to the Prophet’s understanding, who had to live in a pastoral age that consisted of very primitive means of production compared to the modernists who belong to the cutting edge technology and computer era; it is the age of the second globalization. In other words, due to the tremendous scientific advances achieved by man in the 20th century, both on the technical and epistemic levels, al-Sunnah has accordingly lost its expository role in dealing with al-Qur‘ān. Such an explanatory role came to an end with the demise of that traditional hermeneutic mentality that emphasizes only the surface (of the reality), and looks at a great multitude of figures without being capable of analyzing them. What is remarkable here is not the modernists’ denial of the authority of al-Sunnah as a source of evidence since this matter had been already addressed by a number of adventurist thinkers both in the past and nowadays; but what’s more striking, and regrettable is indeed the flagrant methodological inconsistency, and intellectual restlessness that distinguish the modernists writings on the issue of al-Sunnah. They, presently make strenuous efforts to affirm one reality, then in no time they totally come out with an opposite assertion to the preceding one. To elucidate this intellectual disturbance and discrepancy, we lay out the two following examples:

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3.3.2. Muḥammad Shuḥrūr:

Muḥammad Shuḥrūr says: “Thereby, we may say that what is conventionally termed al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah (Prophetic Tradition) is exclusively the life of the Prophet (peace be upon him). As a Prophet and human entity, who lived in the depth of the fact and not in a fantasy world”\(^{73}\). So, to him, al-Sunnah is just a human experience, which is limited and bound by its environmental, geographic, economic, political, and intellectual conditions, and thus we are not obliged to follow al-Sunnah since it means and represents only: “The first likelihood of the reaction of Islam towards a particular historical stage, (this reaction) is not the sole one, and it won’t be the last one”\(^{74}\). All these affirmations about the irrelevance of al-Sunnah to our contemporary age were soon contradicted by his saying: “Based on this analogy, we must set aside those Ḥadīths (Prophet’s sayings) which deal with penalties (Ḥudūd), worship, and ethics (‘Akhlāq), that’s to say, Ḥadīths of the straight path”\(^{75}\). Why? (These Ḥadīths) must be observed because they fall under the Joined Obedience, namely:

“And obey Allah and the Messenger; that ye may obtain mercy”

Sūrah ʾĀl ʿImrān: 132

“All who obey Allah and the Messenger are in the Company of those on whom is the Grace of Allah”

Sūrah al-Nisāʾ: 69

Since almighty Allah is The Everlasting and He integrates his obedience with the one of His Messenger; then under such circumstances, the integrated obedience becomes binding exclusively in the field of penalties, worship, and ethics (straight-path)\(^{76}\). Therefore, it is unequivocal from the foregoing discussion that

\(^{73}\) Shuḥrūr (1990), op. cit., p.546.

\(^{74}\) Ibid., p.549.

\(^{75}\) Ibid., p.553.

\(^{76}\) Shuḥrūr (1990), op. cit., p.550.
there is a clear formal contradiction in Shuḥrūr’s analysis. Moreover, the internal structure of his analysis testifies also to a further methodological inconsistency and arbitrariness in understanding the (scriptural) texts, which are eventually to be employed for the sake of his intellectual doctrine. The above two verses that were adduced as evidence for what was termed by Shuḥrūr “joint obedience” were actually unfounded inferences since there is no scientific foundation to claim that the two verses are confined to a very specific and definite meaning. Thus, neither their explicit significance nor the general textual context restrict the verses’ meaning to only penalties, ethics, and worship while excluding, for instance, the affairs of politics, military combat, and business dealings. The first verse comes in the overall textual context that discusses the issue of fighting (verses: 121-129) whilst verse 130 dwells on the issue of usury (Rība). However, in Shuḥrūr’s opinion, this kind of issue falls rather under the “disjoined obedience”, which is not binding, and only regards the Arabs’ customs. Thereafter, came verse 131, which has been invoked earlier by the author, then the succeeding verses 132-138, which all urge for good deeds and manifest the attributes of the good-doers and their rewards, besides the lessons that can be learnt from the underlying verses. After that, the text reverts to discussing new matters of war and fighting until verse 174. Hence, this is clear evidence that the obedience of the Prophet (peace be upon him) is by no means confined to particular aspects of religion in that it is general and all-inclusive. Likewise, the textual context that precedes the second verse addresses the obligatory status of obeying the decision of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and consenting to abide by his judgment, then enunciates the benefits and rewards of obeying the Prophet. After that comes the verse adduced

77Ibid., p.552.
by the author, which ordains the obedience of the Prophet (peace be upon him). The following verses 71-104, overall, discuss the issue of fighting. Therefore, from where does the author derive his allegation? The author’s indecisiveness continues to be apparent on other occasions, for instance, he says: “The Prophet (peace be upon him) has put a maximum ceiling (limit) for cases that appeared in the holy book, with a minimum limit”.

For example, verse 31 of Sūrah al-Nūr states the minimum limit on the dress code for women, which is conventionally known as underwear. In this regard, the Prophet (peace be upon him) put the maximum limit on women’s legitimate attire by saying:

“All the woman’s body is a private part (to be obligatorily covered) except for her face and palms”. Apparently, the legal potency of this Ḥadīth is indeed tantamount to the above verses, in that both are resolutely executable. It follows that if the woman gets down to the street totally naked, she will evidently encroach upon Allah’s boundaries set on the dress code. Likewise, if she comes out fully veiled including her face and palms, then she must have also transgressed the prophet’s limits”.

So vehemently does the author dismiss any counterargument to his above reasoning, which, in reality, abounds with lucid legal infringements that he thereby simply prejudges his opponents as narrow minded, stating that they lack the acquaintance with the sound methodology from which he derives his modern theory. In fact, it is needless to put forward external critics to the author’s conclusions, as we perceive that his writings are replete with elements of self-inconsistency, some of which can be illustrated as follows:

78 Ibid., op. cit., pp.550-551.
1. The author affirms a rule, which purports that the Prophet (peace be upon him) was accorded the authority to set the maximum limit on the woman’s attire. Therefore, besides the foregoing verse, the Hadith of the prophet that comprehends this limit must be equally observed. Soon after, the author adduces a totally conflicting statement: “Here, we must be careful, that almighty Allah had not given to anyone the right to set perpetual legislative limits that are effective until dooms day, in that the legal limits are basically called Allah’s limits (or boundaries):

“But those who disobey Allah and His Messenger and transgress His limits will be admitted to a Fire, to abide therein: and they shall have a humiliating punishment.”

Sūrah al-Nisā’: 14

The author, here, argues that the Arabic pronoun (ha’) referred to only Allah; thereby, should almighty Allah acknowledge the legal limits set by his prophet, He (Allah) would then have indicated the limits in the plural form (in Arabic: duality form)⁸⁰. Hence, the author appears to be intellectually indecisive and faltering, as we cannot find out which opinion he exclusively cherishes?

2. His previous saying: “Beside the foregoing verse that addresses the woman’s attire code, the prophet’s hadith, in this regard, must be equally observed”. This means that we must adhere to the Prophet’s sayings during and after his lifetime. The latter opinion is even supported by another statement of the author: “The prophetic message should be broken down into hadiths that are legally binding by text and content, and those which are

⁸⁰ Shuhrūr (1990), op. cit., p.553.
binding by only (deduced) methodology. However, in no time he contradicts the two aforementioned statements by saying: “Hadīth is a (casual) historical stage, and Sunnah (overall) is not exactly the same as the sayings of the Prophet (peace be upon him)”\(^{82}\). In the first opinion, the author stressed the perpetual validity of Hadīth for all times and places, and these Hadīth must be literally obeyed. Nonetheless, in the second opinion, he emphasized the history-bound nature of Hadīth, and rejects the conformity of the Sunnah to some sayings of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

3. As we have previously mentioned, Muḥammad Shuḥrūr condemns the conventional definition of Sunnah as agreed upon by the majority of scholars:

> “Based on this analogy, the wrong definition of Sunnah came forward as being visualized in all that has been raised by the prophet (peace be upon him) be it a saying, an act, prescription, proscription or affirmation, or... this definition was a significant cause of enervating and mummifying the religion of Islam. We (the author) do admit that the core foundations of Islamic legislation are namely, al-Qur'ān and al-Sunnah, but certainly not the holy book and hadith.\(^ {83}\)

Nevertheless, the author expressed anew a contradictory view to what had been said earlier, and under the heading of “The Sunnah of the message” he says: “In this case, the Prophet (peace be upon him) has set the maximum limit on women’s dress code as he enunciates that all the woman’s body is a private part (not to be exposed) except her face and palms, thereby obedience to this hadith is authentically tantamount to obedience to the verse.\(^ {84}\) He further

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\(^{81}\)Ibid., p.571.
\(^{82}\)Ibid., p.548.
\(^{84}\)Shuḥrūr (1990), op. cit., p.550.
says, “Based on this analogy, we must set apart those hadiths that regard
penalties, worship, and ethics, which are namely hadiths of the straight
path”85. Yet again and even more so, the author goes too far with perceiving
the Prophetic biography as being exactly the same as al-Sunnah though from a
Marxist perspective, which was manifested under the heading of: “The second
branch, the Prophetic Sunnah in the revolutionary work and establishment of
the state”86, whereby he provides a cursory account of the sayings, directives,
military expeditions, and attributes of the Prophet (peace be upon him). For
instance, he says of the Prophet: “Flexibility in discussion and argument,
tactics, political stances, Ḥudaybiyyah peace treaty but with extremely
inalienable theological stands”87 and “capitalizing on the Arab’s positive
virtues like munificence, succoring the destitute, bravery...all the positive
aspects of the Arab nationalism had been, by far, invested for the sake of the
prophetic message: (You find people (seem) like metals, the best among them
in the pre-Islamic epoch are (still) the best in the Islamic times should they
have sound apprehension)- narrated by the authority of Imam Muslim,
vol.(iv). P: 195888. The author inconsistently pointed out the importance of
hadith, which is an essentially indispensable element to Islamic laws. This is
elucidated by the fact that almighty Allah had singled out the minimum limit
while His Prophet set the maximum limit as in the case of the woman’s
legitimate attire. It is also understood that when almighty Allah set the
maximum limit, His Prophet (peace be upon him) then determined the
minimum limit. For example, on the issue of Zakāt: “The prophet (peace be

85Ibid., p.553.
86Ibid., p.555.
87Ibid., p.560.
88Ibid., p.561.
upon him) prescribed the minimum limit for *Zakāt*, which is 2.5%, and hence the obedience to the Prophet in this respect comes on par with the obedience to Allah⁸⁹. However, the author on occasions questions the authenticity of *hadith*, and even impugns the credibility of its narrators and reporters as he considered all their scholarly efforts as a plain impeachment of the personality of the Prophet (peace be upon him):

"But with the inherited traditional concept of *al-Sunnah*, the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) became the divine testimony beside the (holy) book. Practically, the *hadith* even turned out to be more reliable than the book on some occasions. Thus, should this be the case, we will then unintentionally accuse the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) of negligence and default in propagating the message of his Lord⁹⁰.

Furthermore, Shuḥrūr accuses the prophet's companions, particularly, 'Abī Hurayrah and his successors of fabricating lies and false statements on the Prophet (peace be upon him) just to serve their own political expediency and theological school of thought⁹¹. Thus, if this is his prominent stand on *hadith* and its outstanding narrators, how could he then depend on such *hadiths* to authenticate certain legal issues and penalties whose absence leads eventually to a loss of the half of the religion?

It seems that the mystery which lies behind the author's contradictions and inconsistent inferences and his condemnation of notable scholars is indeed his utter ignorance of the legal legacy (*Turāth*) and its mechanisms. This is revealed by his arbitrary judgment about the *hadiths* on penalties, ethics and worship, which had all been unanimously reported by successive groups of

narrators (Tawātūr). "Holding into account that prophetic hadīths about penalties, worship, and ethics –straight path- had all been conveyed to us by tawātūr". Therefore, according to Shuhrūr’s doctrine, half of the Sunnah has the status of “tawātūr” since penalties, worship and ethics make up, in fact, this proportion of the Sunnah. Nonetheless, the author’s above saying is basically contradicted by the hadīth, which he invoked earlier to demonstrate the maximum limit for the woman’s Islamic attire. The hadīth is actually reported merely by one narrator (‘Abd not tawātūr), namely, ‘Abū Dāwūd, and even the authenticity of this hadīth is questionable, in that ‘Abū Dāwūd attests that the hadīth reporter, Khālid bin Durayk did not come to existence at the time of the noble ‘Ā’ishah from whom he conveyed the hadīth. By contrast, Shuhrūr often contests the legal authenticity, and legitimacy of hadīth that are unanimously authenticated. For instance, the hadīth: “Halāl is evident and Haram is (also) evident”. In reality, the author does not recognize al-Sunnah and even detracts from its self-esteem as he clearly impugned the historical record process that enlists the prophetic hadīths, and allegedly argues that the actual amount of hadīth is simply a falsehood and aspersions cast by the political and doctrinal conflicts:

“As such, the desperate need for the science of hadīth came to appear, whereby it emerged in the midst of this battle...As for

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92Ibid., p.547.
93Abādī, Muhammad Shams al-Dīn (1990), ‘Awn al-Ma’būd fi Sharh Sunan ‘Abī Dāwūd, vol. 2, 1st ed. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, p.108, Hadīth no. 4098. ‘Abū Dāwūd reported from Ya’kub al-‘Antāki and Mu’ammal ‘Ibn al-Fadl al-Ḥarrānī from al-Walid from Bashīr from Qatādah from Khālid from Ya’qūb ‘Ibn Durayk from ‘Ā’ishah, who said: “that ‘Asmā’ Binti ‘Abū Bakr (once) came to the messenger of Allah (Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him), who then said (to her): “O! Asma’, should the woman reach maturity (start having her period), she would not be then allowed to show any part (of her body) but this, and this, while he pointed to his palm and face”. Abu Daud said this is a Mursil hadīth.
the mere political reason, every political denomination, Shi‘ism, Sunnis, Khawārij...etc was in dire need of an intellectual and theological platform in order to woo more partisans, and preserve its continuity in the course of time. Thereby, the apparent reliance on *hadith* was inevitably the intellectual reference for these political sects.”

3.3.3. Muḥammad ’Abū al-Qāsim Ḥāj Ḥamad:

“It is just the search for the concordance requirements between the text of the prophetic *hadith* and connotations of the Qur‘ānic terms that are based on methodological and epistemic restraints, which will definitely lead to the search for the relation between Sunnah and Qur‘ān. Our foregoing saying did by no means invalidate al-Sunnah; but on the contrary it emphasizes the necessity of observing the sound reference of al-Sunnah without ambiguity or confusion. This is mainly because of the crucial factor that regards the monitoring of the personal legal reasoning (*‘ijtihād*) of the Ummah, and its scholars and thinkers in respect to what they imbibe from the methodology of *al-Qur‘ān*”.

The above saying presents the author as if he admits the binding legitimacy of the Sunnah and its expository role in understanding the holy Qur‘ān. However, his statement was contradicted from a number of aspects, which can be summed as follows:

1. The author cherishes an unprecedented methodology to ascertain the legal authenticity of *hadith*. Obviously, should we abide by this methodology, we would definitely invalidate and disprove even the holiness of the Qur‘ān. As an evidence, Ḥāj Ḥamad rejects the *hadith*: “All of you are guardians (*rā‘īn*) and every guardian is responsible for his/her subject(s)”. He alleges that this *hadith* is not consistent with two verses of the holy Qur‘ān: “I also emphasize the perfect harmony and consistency between the discourse of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the discourse of *al-Qur‘ān* whereby there is no clash

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95 Shuhrūr (1990), *op. cit.* p.569.
or discrepancy in their meanings and significances. Thereby, I adduce the above hadith, which is untruthfully ascribed to the Prophet, as an example of a conspicuous clash with the following two verses:

"O ye of Faith! Say not (to the Prophet) (Rā‘īnā), words of ambiguous import, but words of respect ('Unzurnā); and hearken (to him): to those without Faith is a grievous punishment".

Sūrah al-Baqarah: 104

and also:

"Of the Jews there are those who displace words from their (right) places, And says: “We hear and we disobey”; And “Here, may you not Hear” and “Rā‘īnā” with a twist of their tongues and a slander to faith”

Sūrah al-Nisā': 46

The author argues that the purport and significance of the word “Rā‘īnā” that has been denounced twice by almighty Allah, who (the almighty) replaced it by the word “'unzurnā”, are indeed of great seriousness. The term “Rā‘īnā” detracts from the people’s self-esteem by turning them into “Ra‘iyali”, which (in Arabic) is derived from the word “Mar‘ā”, which means cattle being led by the cowherd with his stick97. The latter argument has utterly dragged the author into a countless number of paradoxes and complications, and thus, we can easily debunk his suspicious statement from several perspectives:

a. The hadith, which was contested by the author, has reached the status of meaning Tawātur, as it is reported by the most accurate and prominent narrators, namely, al-Bukhārī and Muslim in so much as sixteen different reports, which all mention the term “Ra‘ā”, and its derivatives. Besides, all unanimously, relate to the notion of care and responsibility.

97 Ibid.
b. Even if we assume, for the sake of argument, that the test of hadith (all of you are guardians (Rā‘īn)...) clashes with the two aforementioned verses, what should then be our conception of the following verse?

"Those who faithfully observe their trusts and their covenants"
Sūrah al-Mu’minūn: 8

"And those who respect their trusts and covenants"
Sūrah al-Ma‘ārij: 32

“But the Monasticism which they invented for themselves, We did not prescribe for them: (We commanded) only the seeking for the Good Pleasure of Allah; but that they did not foster as they should have done”
Sūrah al-Ḥadid: 27

For the former two verses, it is indeed clear that almighty Allah has praised the caring responsible persons, who honor their trusts. As for the third verse, it is also evident that the stated criticism was basically leveled against the monks (monastics), and not against the notion of care and responsibility, in that they are highly required and recommended. By corollary, if the monks were caring and responsible, they would not have been criticised. Now, are we going to reject these verses because they include the terms care and responsibility (Ri‘āyah), which was the major reason for rejecting the foregoing hadith (by the author)? Or what?

c. According to the author’s methodology, everything conceived by mental reasoning, as humiliation to the human being is definitely inadmissible. Thereby, the worship rituals led by the regular prayers will be highly susceptible to (legal) rejection since the apparent movements of prayers shows a clear humiliation and contempt for the human. Hence, it is truly paradoxical to admit Allah’s saying in al-Qur‘ān.

“We have honoured the sons of Adam”
Sūrah al-‘Isrā’: 70
And simultaneously we accept *hadiths* that direct humans to be subservient by kneeling, and slipping their (honored) faces into the dust. Are not there in these movement people’s humility and detraction from their own dignity, according to the author’s methodology? ...Thereafter, the author and his modernist fellows overstep all limits in apprehending the genuine (legal) terminology, and thus as a delusive way to resolve the paradoxes drawn by the above verse, they will try to fool us by saying that prayer (*Ṣalāt*) is eventually the absolute God’s supplication, and Zakāt signifies growth and increment, while Ḥaj (pilgrimage) means one’s devoted intention, and so on until we dispense with the legal meanings in favor of literal meanings, and ultimately repudiate the legitimacy of *al-Sunnah*, and Islamic teachings as a whole.

2. Another piece of damning evidence to the author for his denial of the binding legitimacy of *al-Sunnah*, is his prejudicial judgement about the prophet’s companions (May Allah be pleased with them) -the conveyors of the *Sunnah*—by describing them as “*al-Iḥyā’iyyah*” and “*al-’Anīmiyyah*”, which implies “mental plainness” in its worst aspect. In this regard, the author states the following:

“It is that the Arabian in its “*’Anīmiyyah*” stage experienced a state of Bedouin livelihood that spread over the rocky desert and barren spaces, and I mean exactly the natural – geographic environment, wherein Arabs had to live amidst the (desert) peninsula. Those Arabs represented, by then, the demographic container of Islam. This stage of rational intellect was characterized by the static outlook for the motion of natural phenomena disposed by the order of recurrence and succession... everything was found in a completed form since the very beginning, then it reoccurs anew in a consecutive, persistent, repeated, and alternative routine...sun and moon... day and night...expansion and narrowness... increase and

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decrease... in the context of "'Ihyāʾ" understanding of the (natural) phenomena itself.98

In another place, while labeling the prophet’s companions with "'Ihyāʾiyyah", the author asserts:

“They were amid a (historical mentality state) that deal, by nature, with objects in their multitude and plurality. This is what is called the "'Anīmiyyah mentality" in the course of human thought evolution, which is essentially a historical mentality with limited intellectual features, the most important of which is dealing with the phenomena of nature as though they possess a special life ('Ihyāʾiyyah) beside dealing with them in their interdependent being... that is why this mentality remained expository and shallow as it deals extensively with plurality without being able to contain it by (thorough) analysis. For this reason, the orthodox scholars of exegesis failed to take the prophet’s cue, when he (the Prophet) rearranged the order of the Qurʾānic verses in a different way from the prescribed forms of revelation".99

It might also be the reason why Muslims divert their solicitude and efforts towards ascertaining the chain of narrators while showing a flagrant apathy towards the textual meaning and implied methodology. This reality had been very instrumental for the Jews to twist and fabricate a score of hadiths that contravene the general prophetic teaching mentioned in the holy Qurʾān, the impetus which spelled out a sheer disaster that is still inflicted upon us up to the present.100 The main reason for that is mainly due to the fact that "Arabs were illiterate, Means not people of Book, thereby they started out seeking details from the Jews about what had been generalized by the holy book, and also to redeem their (Arabs) marked lack of the legacy previsions".101 With such malign accusation, the author opened the holy Qurʾān to slander and

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100 Ibid., vol.1, pp.65-66.
impugnation since the people that conveyed these allegedly fabricated and twisted *hadīths* are the same as those who conveyed the holy *Qur’ān*.

Upon deliberating over the work of the “second Internationalization” one can readily wonder how the author’s drastic methodology spared the personality of the Prophet (peace be upon him) in the above mentioned historical stage (*Ihya‘iyyah*), even though the same methodology was applied to the other prophets!\(^{102}\).

3. Among the reasons that make the author firmly believe that the “second internationalization” does not recognize the binding legitimacy of the *Sunnah*, as it is apparently deemed as a transitory Arabic experience\(^ {103}\), is basically his own critical comparison between the first, and second internationalization, which is demonstrated in the chart below:

**Comparison between the two Internationalizations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The first Islamic Internationalization</th>
<th>The second Islamic Internationalization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. The prophetic role model (<em>al-Sunnah</em>)</td>
<td>2. The methodology(^ {104}) (combination between the understanding of the fact and understanding of the scriptural text).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Implementation within a framework of local specifications.</td>
<td>3. Global specifications “philosophy and scientific evolution”(^ {105}).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


\(^{103}\) Haj Hamad (1996), *Al-‘Alamiyyah, op.cit.*, vol. 2, pp.77-79, 142.


\(^{105}\) *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p.68.
It is abundantly clear that the above comparison favors the use of "methodology" as a blend of fact and text instead of the term "prophetic role model", which has been arbitrarily dropped. As a result, this is potent evidence of repudiating the legitimacy of the prophetic Sunnah by the author's conception of internationalization that appears to be in dispense with the legal authenticity of the prophet's hadiths.\(^{106}\)

3.4. LEGAL ABROGATION OF THE TEXT (NASKH)

The issue of naskh is malignantly exploited by the modernists as one of the most cardinal lines of argument designed to support their views and opinions. For instance, they use naskh to demonstrate the "historicity" of al-Qur'ān, and invalidity of its old hermeneutic methods. However, the more they delve into explaining the issue of naskh in favor of their pre-assumed beliefs, the more they are exposed to a gross intellectual perturbation whereby they often put themselves in a blatant methodological paradox without least discomfiture.

3.4.1. Naṣr Ḥāmid ʿAbū Zayd:

To some modernists, naskh is cogent evidence for the "historicity" of al-Qur'ān. It follows that al-Qur'ān in its emergence and formation yield to the influence of the fact as asserted, for instance, by Naṣr Ḥāmid ʿAbū Zayd: "The phenomenon of Naskh, the existence of which in the (scriptural) text is acknowledged by scholars, is (indeed) the strongest evidence for the dialectic relation between revelation and fact.\(^{107}\)". In a cunning way, ʿAbū Zayd attempts to coax the reader round to his

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\(^{106}\)Ibid., vol. 2, p.332.

belief while presenting the issue of *naskh* according to its orthodox setting in the ancient seminal books. In doing so, the author aims to fulfill two objectives:

- To show the historicity of *al-Qur’an*, and
- Shallowness of traditional and modern religious thought, which is scientifically not compatible (in 'Abū Zayd opinion) with thorough analysis and critical examination.

"Although the revelation methodology, here, is (adequately) articulate, particularly, in respect to its strong relation with the human fact, it has, however, failed to materialize in the contemporary official religious thought, yet such non-presence (of revelation methodology) is even more alarming when it comes to Muslim activists, who allegedly advocate the implementation of *shari‘ah* laws. This is because they want to leap over the laws of nature (fact) by force and coercion and by committing outrageous violence. In this conceptual framework of the *naskh* phenomenon, the past Muslim scholars were also not spared from the inevitable mistake that steamed from their firm consciousness of not pursuing any critical stand towards the science of *naskh*, and thereby relying merely on redocumenting their ancestors’ works and trying to reconcile the different opinions, *ijtihād* and (riwāyah)"\(^{108}\).

Refuting such unrestricted generalizations, it is sufficiently convincing to show that:

1. 'Ibn al Jawzī, for example, had indeed and explicitly called upon a critical examination of the past sayings in the field of *naskh* while discerning the ill-founded views from the sound ones:

"Then I saw those who had fair works in exegesis, they however came up with what’s ever hideous, which (really) hurt me, it is about discussing the issue of *Nāsikh wa al-Mansūkh* (Abrogator and Abrogated texts). They embarked upon viewing and then categorized this science; they even abrogated (texts) which are actually not abrogated. It is clearly known that to admit *naskh* of something is to invalidate its ruling, hence the (arbitrary) invalidation of a verse is (indeed) a great audacity"\(^{109}\).

\(^{108}\)ibid., p.125.

Furthermore, early Muslim scholars did not unanimously have the same stand on *naskh*. Among them were those who even denied the legitimacy of *naskh* in its totality. Therefore, by which analogy did the author envelop all the scholars in one parcel?

2. In reality, the author advanced his judgments and conclusions not because of his short acquaintance with the legacy of Islamic jurisprudence. The fact that his writings reveal his strong command of the legacy sciences, besides the sayings (in the like of 'Ibn al-Jawzī), is not scantily documented and by corollary, does not require a strenuous effort to single out. Hence, what justifies the author’s generalizations is rather his lurking negative stand on the Islamic legacy (*Turāḥ*) apart from his intellectual partiality, and longing to eradicate his ideological foes, as he clearly professed to do in different passages throughout his compilations.

3.4.2. Sayyid Muḥammad al-Qimnī:

Nonetheless, it seems that even the formal acknowledgement of the traditional Islamic methodology is not desirable for serving the cause of modernism. In this regard, Sayyid Muḥammad al-Qimnī objects on 'Abū Zayd for his recognition of the past scholars’ categorization of *Naskh*.

“In respect to the interplacement of that outlook with the ancient molds, the professor did not stretch the string to its ultimate end, or rather to the possible limits as they would have been normally reachable had did not postulated beforehand the acknowledgement of the traditional categorization of the *naskh* phenomenon in the holy *Qur’ān*.”

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1. Sayyid al-Qimmi showed his utter disenchantment with 'Abū Zayd over two points:

   a. 'Abū Zayd approaches the matter of naskh in its decaying costume even though this was aimed at eventually tearing up this costume.

   b. And he was inclined not to give any clear or explicit indications besides elaborating on the premises without explicitly drawing on the ensuing conclusions and findings. He did not provide much detail about the abrogation of texts along with their surrounding factual conditions. Neither did he vehemently carp at past and contemporary scholars, who failed to comprehend the historical dimensions of the issue of Naskh. Thus, overall, 'Abū Zayd was not sufficiently explicit on the foregoing matter compared to his resolute decisiveness on certain occasions related to the "historicity" of al-Qur'ān and its interrelations with the facts that generate it:

   "Despite his indication to link this text (Qur'ān) to the inherent fact of the Arab peninsula of the time when the text was collectively (tawātur) circulated by virtue of revelation; such an indication, however, did not practically unveil its essence in a more conspicuous and palpable way on the topic of naskh."¹¹³

2. The most significant issue, and the crux of all matters, which Sayyid al-Qimmi wanted to underscore, while taking his cue from 'Arkūn, was his implausible assertion about the Qur'ān being a human product of the prophet's companions (sahabah):

   "Whereas we find – with a scrutinized look – through some reports that signify that there existed new incidents and circumstances with which revelation had to react, this in addition to a number of incidents which occurred after (completion of) the revelation, and that was during the process of assembling al-Qur'ān, all that led ultimately to the final

¹¹³Ibid.
setting of *al-Qur'ān*, which represents the book we have today (the 'Uthmān book in reference to 'Uthmān bin 'Affān). However, apart from a slight indication expert scholars did not reckon with the inclusion of these incidents upon dealing with the phenomenon of naskh, and that was a result of their (firm) determination to deal with the holy *Qur'ān* as an everlasting (eternal) text"\textsuperscript{114}.

Thereby, his tenacious adherence to admitting the impact of fact in shaping (the holy) *Qur'ān* during and after the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him), in addition to his repudiation of the eternal nature of *al-Qur'ān*, will inevitably contradict his next statements: "Islam had reached its (utter) perfection and stability during the lifetime of the Prophet (peace be upon him)"\textsuperscript{115}.

3. Therefore, how could the author then reconcile the saying that acknowledges the impact of historical circumstances, especially after the death of the Prophet (peace be upon him), in the formation of *al-Qur'ān*, which reveals or at least is a logical inference for such a premise that envisions the Prophet's companions as major players in the formation process of *al-Qur'ān* by means of (biased) selection, deletion, and addition, which all depends on the dictation of facts and the totally opposite statement that admits the perfection of Islam during the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him)? And also how could one construe the historicity and human - nature of *al-Qur'ān*,\textsuperscript{116} while holding that it is a revelation from almighty Allah? It is plainly conceivable that the main reason behind such methodological

\textsuperscript{114} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{115} Ibid., p.276.
\textsuperscript{116} The author attempted to prove this saying through his book: "al-'Uṣūrah wa al-Turāth". He even set about discrediting what had been reported by the holy Qur'an, accusing it, in a sneering way, of shallowness and fabricated reports. See, for example: his comments about the story of Sulaymān (peace be upon him), pp.193-210, and also the story of 'Ibrāhīm (peace be upon him), pp. 237-240. We shall, later, proceed to discuss his comments in detail in the next but one chapter.
wavering and inconsistency is not an innocent lack of due awareness, but instead a bitter intellectual war directed by al-Qimnī against his foes, including all that this war may require such as camouflage and deception just to put the enemy to rout; “the scientific study of this ancient (thinking), might be the most drastic weapon in today’s intellectual conflict”.

3.4.3. ‘Abū al-Qāsim Ḥāj Ḥamad and Muḥammad Shuḥrūr:

For the former he opines that the fact of acknowledging *Naskh* (legal invalidation of the text) is definitely an act of acknowledging the contradiction and inconsistency of *al-Qurʿān*.

“However, the one who contrived the science of *Naskh* was (surely) trying to solve his own problem with *al-Qurʿān* when he was unclear about its (*al-Qurʿān*) macro-methodology that disposes the (epistemic) tools, which, to him appeared to be conflicting or incongruous or even sometimes contradicting each other. He, thereupon, devised the science of *Naskh*, which signifies nothing but professing the state of discrepancy in the structure and content of *al-Qurʿān* Thus, he thought that by just admitting *Naskh* in *al-Qurʿān* he would resolve the problem. However he failed to realize that he had grossly impugned the Almighty, who sent down *al-Qurʿān*”.

The author’s statement comes in line with John Burton’s conclusion stated in his book: *The Sources of Islamic Law, Islamic Theories of abrogation*, in which he views that the source of *Naskh* does not bear on the structure of the holy *Qurʿān* itself, but is essentially due to the differences of the scholars of exegesis themselves. Secondly, Muḥammad Shuḥrūr perceives *Naskh* as a positive

119 John Burton (1990), *The Sources of Islamic Law, Islamic Theories of Abrogation*. London: Edinburgh University Press, p.208. He said: “For we have exposed the origins of the theories in gradual developments arising from the attempts of exegetes and ‘Uṣūls to resolve the painful problems posed by the conflicts they themselves noted between the contents of the Fīḥah and those of the Maṣḥif. But the ‘conflict’ we have seen was actually between different exegeses of the kurʿānic passages”.

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feature that is distinguished in al-Qur‘ān. “Almighty Allah makes Naskh and Mansūkh (abrogator text and abrogated text) as a teaching to guide us in developing (Islamic) legislation within its (permissible) bounds”\textsuperscript{120}. The difference between the above two views is apparently owing to the pre-assumed belief of each. The first one (Abū al-Qāsim) believes that al-Qur‘ān is a structure unity, whereby if a letter of it is disordered; the whole edifice will fall into disarray\textsuperscript{121}. As for the second thinker (Shuhrūr), the imputations that induce him to acknowledge the existence of Naskh is his inherent belief of considering the doctrine of Ḥanafīyah (bending) as an alternative to integrity (straightness) as the former means bending and swinging between the lower and upper limit; thereby Naskh came as a precept for us to explain the way of 'Ijtihād (one’s personal reasoning) according to the dialectic law between two antitheses: Ḥanafīyah and 'Istiqāmah (Integrity)\textsuperscript{122}. Nonetheless, neither the structural nor the dialectic theory is able to keep the authors from falling into the throes of self-contradiction.

1. The structural theory has ultimately proven its self invalidation and the inconsistency of its underlying constituents, as its author went a long way in denying Naskh, and after lengthy deliberation of nearly one thousand pages he ended by stating the opposite, and acknowledged the existence of Naskh. His disapproval statement was drawn forth in the thirty-fourth page of the first volume, which comprises more than five hundred pages, whereas his acknowledgement was drawn in the first two pages after the fifth hundred page of the second volume, whereby he attests:

“...and in order to emphasize this (type of) Internationalization came away from the effect of any local element, the divine directive came to enjoin facing Jerusalem (bayt al-Maqdis) when praying

\textsuperscript{120}Shuhrūr (1990), op. cit., p.476.
\textsuperscript{121}Haj Ḥamad (1991), op.cit., p.68.
\textsuperscript{122} Shuhrūr (1990), op. cit., pp.447-452.
(Ṣalāḥ) ...and the divine directive came to establish Ṣalāḥ as nightly prayer as stated in “Sūrah al-Muzzammil”, then it (the directive) changed back the Qiblah (the direction of prayer) to Ka‘bah in a later stage, beside, Ṣalāḥ was evenly distributed during the day following the sun’s movement, and nightly prayer (Ṣalāḥ) was set as a supererogatory performance and not an obligation. This commencement (of legislation), which has been later relinquished, carried (in itself) clear indication for the Qur‘ān’s inclination towards such particular (historical) stages, and its (al-Qur‘ān) emphasis on the relative relations between the fact and the unseen world according to the characteristics of the fact itself. Evidently, Allah the Omniscient had, by no means, to enjoin a directive then abrogate it because of his limited knowledge about the future! – That is the Jews’ rejection of Islam as some people think – but, rather the (divine) directive is fashioned in this way for the purpose of guiding us towards the vision of this relativity (fact and unseen world) in the religious edifice...”123.

2. The inconsistency of dialectic theory is simply evidenced by holding “Naskh of naskh” (abrogation of the legal abrogation); that is the author, Shuḥrūr, upon demonstrating the legitimacy of Naskh had eventually applied it practically on his own ideas. The author recognizes the legitimacy of Naskh in his book: “Al-Kitāb wa al-Qur‘ān”; However, in no time, he invalidates his former admission of Naskh in his book: “Dirāsat 'īlāmiyyah Mu‘āṣirah”, wherein he perceives Naskh as one of the bearings of (political) tyranny:

“There is another effect of tyranny on the sciences of al-Qur‘ān, namely, the topic of Naskh in the holy Qur‘ān ...the impact of political autocracy is manifest through its countenance to the conception of the occurrence of Naskh in the holy Qur‘ān ...such autocracy had to put an end to the fierce internal opposition and civil wars (at that time); By corollary, it was highly necessary to find a way out from the revelation itself and the verbal prophetic tradition. Political tyranny was firmly established starting from the time of ‘Uthmān Ibn ‘Affān upon his saying (I don’t put off a cloth, which Allah has dressed me with)... In conclusion, we find out that the science of Naskh, as a part of the sciences of al-Qur‘ān, as stated in the literature of (Islamic) jurisprudential legacy, is (only) an illusion from the very beginning to the end.124,”

Here, both authors not only stick to their methodological paradoxes, but also have the cheek and audacity to discredit and relegate all the canons of scientific research, and then relentlessly malign Muslim scholars, who were prejudicially to be associated with inconsistency, illusion, limited understanding, inertia, and other low descriptions of contempt, sneering, and sarcasm. It is learnt, however, that both authors purport to have mastered the modern scientific methodology, and spent as much as two decades in the elaboration of their allegedly scholarly treasures\(^{125}\); Thereby such an intellectual product is supposed to meet all the due requirements of scientific research, whereof it is highly unlikely to be affected by even simple formal mistakes. But, if such mistakes are as much a grievous as a methodological discrepancy, as in the case of our two fellow thinkers; then it has no warranty but intellectual fanaticism.

3.5. LANGUAGE

The modernists reckon that the Arabic language, which had come to us through scores of dictionaries, is actually a primitive, barren, stagnant and vague language, which is incapable of keeping abreast with the latest terms and meanings\(^{126}\).

3.5.1. Al-Jābīrī:

In al-Jābīrī’s opinion, the lower esteem in which Arabic language is held is essentially based on two principles, namely, its (i) disjointedness and (ii) supernatural contingency.

1. The Principle of disjointedness: that is to say, the thought generated by this language is best described by logical incoherence. Such a thought views that universal phenomena are divergent and dissociated from each other, in that

\(^{125}\) Muḥammad (1990), \textit{op. cit.}, pp.46-47. Ḥaj Ḥamad (1996), \textit{op. cit.}, vol. 1, pp.23, 30.

they are seen as independent unities. That was owing to the geographical, social and intellectual peculiarity of the existential setting (environment), wherein the Arabians had to live.

a. Geographic setting: the space surrounding the Arab Bedouins was basically a desert, whose grains of sand, gravel, stones and all its constituting substances and entities are independent unities separated from each other, and which are disposed by the law of adjoinment and not interlacement. As such, the plants of the desert (Saharah) are apparently dispersed here and there, as are its animals, which are living within independent unities, though some of them live in groups; still every member feels lonely in the very spacious desert.

b. Social setting: man by nature is certainly not anomalous to his environment in which he is used to living; the Arabian population density, to all intents and purposes, edged to zero habitat. The Bedouin’s shelter was simply a roving tent that follows his regular travels, whereas the tribe was no more than a group of individuals, who were actually overwhelmed by the spirit of individualism. Overall, Arab society was a pastoral community based on dissociation and disjunction.

c. Intellectual setting: the intellectual vision tacitly carried by the Arabic language is, undoubtedly, a natural outcome of its peculiar geographical and social atmosphere. The scarcity of living objects in the very vast land and air space of the desert make the resident’s conception of the space factor related, either by existence or defunct, to the visual occurrence of the event in that particular space, thereby, the Arabian’s conception of space is distorted, in that the notion of space comes into the Arabian’s
consciousness respectively with the presence of the event happening in that space; likewise, such a notion is not to be materialized upon the absence of visualizing the occurrence of the event. The concept of time is also unduly perceived; it is characterized by monotony and stagnation with no independent value; but rather it is subject to the Arabian’s feeling that is contingent upon the distinct occurrence of the events in that particular time. The interim time between two events, according to the Arabian’s perception, is only one time no matter how long it goes since it derives its value from the first event, and as long as there is no other event that will annul the prior event. Thus, time is the time of the overriding event; for instance, Arabs used to have time references like the year of “the heat”, the year of “the elephant”...In short, the Arabian’s mentality views time as a subset of unrelated time unities in the same way as events and respective places.

2. The Principle of supernatural contingency: the desert atmosphere indeed strengthens the principle of disjointedness and the element of monotony. In addition, the abrupt climatic fluctuations, like irregular and intermittent rains, wind storms and desert tornados that show no sign of happening, besides all the disturbing factors of the desert environment had collectively infused the principle of supernatural contingency into the Arabian mentality. In other words, everything happen not with the principle of causation or determinism and logical succession; but rather with breakable succession that obeys the unexpected vicissitudes of nature and supernatural happenings. These irregular natural incidents that often surprise the human as they might harm or benefit him, make the Arabian believe that there is a “force majeure” (supreme force)
called Allah (the Lord), which is entitled to do whatever, whenever and
howsoever it wants. In a nutshell, it is the desert environment that consolidates
the dual principles of disjoinededness and supernatural contingency in the
Arabian unconsciousness\textsuperscript{127}.

3.5.2. Assessment:

Nevertheless, the primordially important significance of the preceding argument is
not founded upon demonstrating the very lucid contradictions and paradoxes of
the author, which are deemed as mere metaphysical conceptions\textsuperscript{128} that surely
infringe the axioms of scientific research besides the underlying fact at study.
Very dense tropical forests\textsuperscript{129} have not, in fact, enabled their inhabitants to acquire
the language that accords them the logical interrelated causative thinking, as most
of them are still living on the fringes of history, like those indigenous settlers of
the luxuriant jungles of Africa. Let’s ask Mr. al-Jābirī why his theory exempted
the people of al-Shām (now consisting of Palestine, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan), Iraq
and Iran who, despite their geographical environment being quite fertile, boasting
four seasons and consisting of various lush forests and such luxuriant greenery,
have not been instilled with the spirit of empiricism instead of being normative

\textsuperscript{127}Al-Jābirī, Muhammad ‘Ābid (1992), \textit{Bunyah al-‘Aql al-‘Arabī}, 4\textsuperscript{th} ed. Beirut: Center of

\textsuperscript{128}This can be referred to what Sarter has said through his message sent to Guaroudi, whereby he
described the Marxist assumption about the existence of Dialectic in nature as a solely
metaphysical illusion. See: Ja‘far, ‘Abd al- Wahhāb, \textit{Al-Bunyawiyyah fi al-Anthrūpūlūgīyā wa

\textsuperscript{129}The author says: “Plants in the desert are independent unities separated from each other, (they
are) scattered and discerned… and the animals (in such an environment) do not live in forests
wherein they lose their selfhood amid the interlaced branches and lush grass as there are no forests
in the desert, wherein animals, rather, live in the open air, in a countryside where everything exists
in a singular state as an independent unity… so is the state of the human being (in this desert
millieu), he is (of course) an individual”, \textit{Bunyat al-‘Aql al-‘Arabī}, op. cit. p.241. The explicit
meaning of the author is that the man, who lives in forest, is a social man with sound thought
disposed by universal determinism and logical succession.
people tossed about by superstitions and legends. But the most important aspect of the above argument is his clear indication, besides other indications and supporting presumptions, about the true and ultimate aim of the authors’ intellectual struggle, namely, catering for the modernism in its Marxist costume, and that was carried out over two levels:

1. Striving to persuade Modernist thinkers not to delve into discussing the “theological critique that addresses issues of religion,” because he opines that at present, the Arab world “cannot endure what can be termed as a theological critique” given the fact that those matters are embedded in the people’s group consciousness. Thus, any attempt to approach or explicitly and critically examine these (sensible) issues, in the present time, will be to no avail but will increase the Arabian’s conservatism and his self-seclusion in the cultural heritage from which we seek to free him.

2. An attempt, through his historical materialist view, to convert the constant of religion into a variable, the absolute into relative, and non-historical into historical, would not be achieved except by “undertaking the

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130 Al-Jābīrī in his book: “Bunyatu al-‘Aql al-‘Arabī” divides the Muslim mind into three categories: 1) Expository and rhetorical: This represents scholars of jurisprudence and theology, linguists, beside Sunnī and Mu’azzilah scholars engaged in scholasticism. This type of thought was a product and continuation of the pre-Islamic Arab mentality, which was produced by the Arabian and desert environment. 2) Mental speculation: It stands for sufīs and shī‘īs, who had been influenced by orientalist philosophies. Such types of people are called by the author “resigned minds”, who eluded their fact and surrendered to fancy and subsurface speculations. 3) Empirical: It embraces some of Maghribī scholars; the advocates of Aristotle’s philosophy, of the like of Ibn Rushd. The “Empirical mind” is viewed by al-Jābīrī as the “scientific mind” that is built on causation and logical coherence; thereby he tried to emphasize such a type as being a “traditional model”, and then exploit it as a historical warranty and legal pretext to hype the modernist project in its socialist and Marxist apparel.


133 Ibid.

134 Ibid., pp.16-17.

135 Ibid., p.108.
epistemological critical examination; critique of the tools and foundations of epistemology"^{136} whereon the cultural (legal) heritage is based on one of the most important constituents of this heritage which is the Arabic Language^{137}, which is a significant factor that shields *al-Qurʾān* and helps in "the continuity of dealing with it (*al-Qurʾān*) in a direct (formal) way whether in understanding or exegesis"^{138}, and consequently restrains the Arabian mind in an inadequate, impoverished, shallow, and arid Bedouin world^{139}.

3.5.3. Ḥasan Ḥanafī:

As for Ḥasan Ḥanafī, he views that the traditional language is, indeed, the cause of our failure^{140}. Thus, to relinquish this language in favor of a modern language is a linguistic and intellectual necessity. The latter has been dictated by the circumstances and requirements of the contemporary era, which the traditional language has failed to meet due to its very impotency and many inadequacies, which can be summed up in the following:

1. It (traditional language) is a theological language, whose terms cluster around the word "Allah" though it comes with several denotations, which follow the context wherein it is mentioned. Allah means the "(supreme) Legislator" to the scholar of theology; "the Wise" to the expert in scholasticism; "the First Existent" to the philosopher, and "the One (God)" to the Sufis. In short, the term Allah contains internal discrepancies due to the following considerations:

^{136}Ibid., pp.131, 260.
^{137}Ibid., pp.17-19, 47-48, 131.
^{138}Ibid., p.143.
^{139}Ibid., p.145.
^{140}Hanafi (1987), op.cit., p.111.
a. The term “Allah” is more likely to indicate something missing than something real that can be conceived and described. In other words, it is like a psychological feeling and is not intended for its self-meaning. Allah commands our mentality. Thus, Allah turns out to be a substitute for every thing missing; He is (always) present with us, and stands behind all of our glamorous experiences, even when one of us wants to assure something he readily mentions Allah. However, Allah is not confined only to screams of pain and cries of felicity. It is a term whose purport and structure vary according to the change of geographical location, living age, and the social strata of societies. The word “Allah” means bread-winning for hungry mouths; freedom for persecuted citizens; self-satisfaction for suppressed people; it is also science versus superstition; development versus backwardness. In brief, such a term has a very ramified meaning, which varies according to the vicissitudes of need, space and time; and thereupon it is impossible to convey any definite meaning in respect to this term, as it comprises conflicting nuances. For one group, the term “Allah” signifies “the Everlasting, the Eternal” while for another group it refers to “The relative and the partial”; the third group perceives it as “The vital stimulus and emotion”; as for the fourth group it has the meaning of “historical upshot”. All that is due to the fact that this term does not reflect a factual existence but rather it is simply a mental assumption based merely on unconditional surrender and submission.

b. It is certainly impossible for a term like “Allah”, which is limited in its letters and contextual position, to encompass meanings such as the Eternal, the Absolute, and other alleged descriptions. It is, indeed, a
vitiated faithfulness and unfounded allegation when someone contends that the term “Allah” has a well-defined and specified meaning. Perhaps the most illustrative example is:

Firstly, the incapability of the scholars of faith and theology to agree upon a unanimous and clear-cut meaning for this term;

Secondly, revelation appeared in a specified space and time context, but soon it turned into a subjective human concept that differs from one to another.

c. In reality, all definitions are based on determination and specification and not on generalization; that is to departmentalize a part of the fact and then describe it and later visualize it. Since the meaning of Allah is unbounded and not definite, under no circumstances, can it be envisioned or described by a language, which is essentially based on conception.

2. It is such a religious language that it has failed to perfect its functions in today’s era, simply because it is replete with pure religious topics, like: religion, messenger, miracle, prophethood, etc. The word “religion” has, in fact, lost its legitimacy and effectiveness; thus it must be replaced by the term “ideology”. Also the word “Islam” has to be succeeded by the term “freedom” as both terms (ideology and freedom) are more suitable and compatible with the spirit of our contemporary era, beside being more expressive about the afflictions of hardworking employees.

3. It is a historical language that is inclined to describe historical events more than to interpret ideas. In other words, its terms indicate persons, events, and
geographical locations and do not lend themselves to due emphasis on ideas, and independent scientific concepts.

4. It is a metaphysic language and has no concrete reflection in sensation, fact, and experience. By corollary, its meanings cannot be reconciled or adjusted in the instance of clash and discrepancy, and that is because of the lack of fact, which is seen as a substantial benchmark or reference. Indeed, the words: “jinn”, “angels”, “devils”, “doomsday”, “resurrection day” are all terms that go beyond sight and sensation, and accordingly they cannot be utilized as they have no indication to the facts\[141\].

3.5.4. Assessment:

In reality, the negative stand of the author towards the Arabic language does not, to all intents and purposes, stem from scientific convictions, but it is effectively a product of a pre-postulated ideological belief. It is unequivocal from the preceding that the author is a sheer advocate of materialist philosophy, in that, he only admits what is susceptible to the senses and experience. Since we shall later draw on the details of materialist philosophy and its outlook on language; here, we will just introduce two general remarks that easily detect the aspects of intellectual muddling and methodological paradox that arise from the author’s statements:

1. The first question that strikes the mind of any reader is, inevitably, the concept of deity (godhood). In this respect, the author seems not to recognize the existence of Allah (the Lord) according to the conventional orthodox concept that unanimously reflects the common belief of all Muslims. Such a distorted opinion is actually justified by the following points:

a. The author went too far in arguing about the impotence of Arabic language as it abounds with many legal terms, like, "Allah" and its attributes, which are, in the author's opinion, void and irrational words unable to convey any purport because such language has no emphasis on the facts, and even strives to carry (fact) away.\textsuperscript{142} To this end, the author says: "As for the language that expresses non-human dictums like (Allah)... Satan, and angels is only an idiomatic and theological language"\textsuperscript{143}.

b. The author claims that the names and attributes of Allah are old-fashioned words, which have turned out to be useless and purposeless in our contemporary era, and thus they must be substituted by the term (the perfect man)\textsuperscript{144}. He plainly states: "the all the 99 virtuous names of Allah mean the human's hopes and ends which he strives to fulfill. (The perfect man) is more expressive and accurate than the term "Allah"\textsuperscript{145}. As such, should we concede the author's above argument, we will eventually find ourselves compelled even to change the words of the holy Qur'an for it abounds with the names and attributes of Allah besides other words related to the unseen world, like angels, jinn, paradise, fire... even the entire Qur'an would not be spared from such an undermining process of alteration, as from the very beginning of the first Sūrah to the last one, all the verses address the topic of Allah's attributes, and belief in the unseen world.

\textsuperscript{142}Ibid., p.104.
\textsuperscript{143}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{144}Ibid., p.105
\textsuperscript{145}Ibid.
2. The second remark that, surely, relegates the significance of the author’s assertion, and drags him in to the throes of intellectual parasitism is his methodological antithesis. He often propounds a theory, and in no time, he invalidates it, for instance, while promulgating, so to speak, his new compatible language, the author says:

“It must be purely on Arabic Language, and not Arabized or newly adopted through vocal transfer of foreign terms and languages, under the pretext of the inadequacy and impotency of Arabic language to cater for modern concepts that reflect the spirit of the contemporary age. Indeed, our Maghribī and Middle East brothers have prejudicially used such censured terms under the pretence of modernization...?146”.

Paradoxically, the author who resolutely sets the constraints of his new language and vehemently shows his indignation towards those who break these constraints; was himself the first one to violate the rule by saying:

“When the term (dīn) falls short of conveying the meaning; the term (ideology) was more expressive than (dīn), which underlines Islam... and this is due to believers, who constitute the pioneering party, or in the modern sense, the proletarian party, which undertakes to effectuate ideology in the course of history”147.

Undoubtedly, both “ideology” and “proletarian” terms are denounced (linguistically hybridized); yet the author has frequently used them. Therefore, he is more deserving to shoulder the blame for not observing the constraints of his, allegedly, new language. Nonetheless, this is not a freak occurrence for those, who make the masses their scientific benchmark as to whether to accept or reject a particular term. In this respect, the author states:

“Only those terms, which are acknowledged by the contemporary era, can be used; even the contemporary age consists of terms that spread in society like fire spreads through

146 Ibid., p.104.
147 Ibid., pp.97-98.
straw; for example: ideology, modernity, justice, all of which have a psychological stock (echo) in the masses’\textsuperscript{148}.

This was a brief account of the modernists’ outlook towards the most important conventional methodological expository tools; their reservations, and excuses for forsaking such unbreakable genuine tools. Having done so, we shall, next, come to examine the modernists’ methodology in comprehending the holy Qur’ān.

\textsuperscript{148}Ibid., p.101. For further information about the author’s inconsistencies, you may refer to: George Ṭarābīshī (1991), \textit{al-Muthaqqafūn al-‘Arab wa al-Turāth}: al-Taḥffīl al-Nafṣī li ‘Uṣāb Jamā‘ī, 1\textsuperscript{st} ed. London: Riyād al-Rayīs for books and publication. The author, in his book has examined most of the writings of Hasan Ḥanafi and tracked therein his paradoxes over more than hundred pages.