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**Modernity's Impact on Muḥammad ʿĀbid al-Jābirī's Understanding
of Religion, the Qur'ān and Sunnah, and Legal Injunctions:
A Critical Analysis**

**Kesan Permodenan terhadap Pemahaman Muhammad ʿĀbid al-
Jābirī tentang Agama, Quran dan Sunnah, serta Undang-undang
Islam Analisis Kritikal**

Thameem Ushama *

Abstract

This paper critically analyzes the late Muḥammad ʿĀbid al-Jābirī's postmodernist influence on contemporary Muslims. The author qualitatively reviews the content of his historicist approach to the Qur'ān and Islam's heritage. Al-Jābirī questioned the Qur'ān's universal message in addition to its authenticity and validity. An Arab Muslim who sparked considerable controversy, he accused the holy book of omissions, fabrications, distortions and interpolations; he also deemed Islamic legal injunctions no longer valid. The author also examines his objection to injunctions he considered archaic and absolutely irrelevant to the present Muslim community.

Keywords: Controversy, distortion, historicism, modernity, orientalism.

Abstrak

Kertas kajian ini mengkaji secara kritikal pengaruh pasca moden Muhammad Abid al-Jabiri terhadap orang Islam pada masa kini. Penulis menggunakan kaedah kualitatif untuk mengkaji kandungan sejarah didalam Al-Qur'an dan warisan Islam, dimana, Muhammad Abid al-Jabiri mempersoalkan ajaran al-Qur'an yang berbentuk universal/ menyeluruh untuk menguji kesahihan dan kebenaran inti-pati Al-Qur'an. Sebagai seorang Arab Muslim, Muhammad Abid al-Jabiri mencetuskan kontroversi yang besar dengan mendakwa pengguguran, pemalsuan, penyelewengan, dan penambahan ayat-ayat telah berlaku dalam al-Qur'an; beliau juga menyifatkan undang-undang Islam sudah tidak relevan untuk diaplikasikan pada masa kini. Disamping itu, penulis juga mengkaji penolakan beliau terhadap undang-undang tersebut dimana beliau menyifatkan sebagai kuno dan tidak sesuai untuk masyarakat Islam masa kini.

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Kata Kunci: Kontroversi, Penyelewengan, Historisisme, Pemodenan, Orientalisma.

Introduction

Contemporary Muslims face unprecedented challenges, especially in education. Islamic scholars realize the current system must integrate its approach to better enable development on par with international communities. The existing system is compartmentalized and inspired by western philosophy and scientific worldviews and has failed to attain expected results. A resolution of the First World Conference on Islamic Education (1977 Mecca) drew attention to the implementation of an integrated system with Islamic revealed knowledge and various sciences. The process would keep Qur'ān and Sunnah as theoretical frameworks and phase out of the secular system that has proved such an inadequate match for the Islamic worldview.

This call for knowledge integration provided irrefutable evidence of the authenticity of both Qur'ān and Hadith literature. The consensus among Muslim academics admitted benefits were to be reaped from both sources when developing the new educational system where sciences would serve as alternatives to the status quo. This decision conveyed an absolute reliance on both repositories as sources of positive influences on the advance of contemporary Muslim culture while also sustaining peace and harmony.

As this ambitious project advanced, the Arab modernists suddenly started to pose question on the validity and relevance of classical Islamic thinking. They challenged the authenticity of both Qur'ān and Hadith literature, and raised much contention among educated and lay segments of the Muslim world. People began discussing these issues with not a little controversy. Modernity and postmodernity purviews do not endorse religion as a core social element, and Arab modernists want only developed numerous theories, concepts and methods that negated traditional spiritual influences in education and Muslim life ways. Among many Arab modernists, Muḥammad ʿĀbid al-Jābirī was one of the most controversial. He questioned the validity of Islam's heritage and the authenticity of its foundational sources, causing much debate and generating dissension and confusion.

A Moroccan philosopher, al-Jābirī authored historical-philosophical books ostensibly with a view to harmonize Islamic tradition and modernity in the contemporary Muslim world. He opined that, beginning with the middle Ages, a conflict prevented Arabs and Muslims

from harmoniously reconciling contemporary events with Islam's legacy (*turāth*). Politically, the problem worsened during centuries of dominion by super powers that had sanctified their tyranny and oppression. This situation worsened during colonialism and with 20th century dictatorships that fostered political immobility and stagnation in Arab-Islamic societies.

Al-Jābirī believed democracy was the only solution to the *impasse*, and said its principal foundations were found in the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth. Arguing that democracy with clear western characteristics is found in the Qur'ānic principle of the *shūrā* (consultation), he suggested that Muslims should embrace democracy by way of their cultural heritage and religious traditions. Al-Jābirī wanted Arab intellectuals to play an active role in harmonizing the modern world with Islamic tradition and believed the Arab-Islamic school had problems with the contemporary world rooted in a progressive loss of rational scientific thought. For him, although methodologically scientific philosophy of rationalist thinkers from Muslim Spain had advocated science's autonomy from religion, and had convinced preachers of the impossibility of applying human cognition to transcendence, they did not overcome an inclination towards Gnosticism and the spiritualist irrationalism that plagued Islamic philosophy in the East. In al-Jābirī's opinion, the rise of the latter had given rise to "irrational obscurantism" over the centuries, along with powers and cruel politics that exploited the *ummah* to their own advantage by distorting Islam's original message and preventing methodologically driven rigorous exegesis.

Our present study critically analyses al-Jābirī's proposal to harmonize Islamic tradition with modernity, a venture that caused him to reject several Islamic principles and legal injunctions. We also look into methods he used to study Islam's *turāth*, including the Qur'ān. A qualitative content analysis explores his occidental historicist approach, which allotted religious legal rulings solely to the past. The scope of our study is limited to al-Jābirī's writings in Arabic. Even so, we hope to unveil his positions on the Qur'ān, Prophetic Traditions, Islam's legal injunctions, etc. We oppose his assumption that the Qur'ān suffered omissions, fabrications, distortions and interpolations; and that Islamic legal injunctions are inappropriate for the present age and/or hold relevance only for Arabic societies.

Birth and Education- A Brief Profile

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Muhammad al-Jābirī, born 27 December 1935, was brought up by his maternal uncles on the western frontier of Morocco in Figuig, a city established by France between Morocco and Algeria. He enjoyed remarkable attention and affection from maternal and paternal relations. His maternal grandfather taught him a few short chapters of the Qur'ān with supplications and sent him to a Qur'ānic School. He became literate and memorized nearly one third of the Qur'ān then shifted to another book. At this time his mother was married to the founder of the Qur'ānic School who tutored him for a short period. His uncle later sent him to a French primary school for two years to study French. He did well in French and excelled in arithmetic.

The French schools of the day were antagonistic towards the homeland and Islam; hence, parents and guardians generally hid their children from French authorities and did not register them except when forced to do so.¹ In 1958, al-Jābirī travelled to Damascus for a degree in philosophy but returned to Morocco without completion to enter the Moroccan Youth University in 1964 where he received a bachelor degree in philosophy. In 1967, after research on the methodology of Moroccan historical writings, he obtained a Master's degree. Meanwhile, he had discovered Ibn Khaldūn and decided to pursue his doctoral thesis entitled, *al-ʿAṣabiyyah wa al-Dawlah*. He received his PhD in 1970. He worked at the primary level of the same institute and was eventually appointed professor of philosophy in Arab Islamic thought at the Faculty of Literature, Mohammed V University, Rabat. On 30 May 2010, after long suffering, he passed away while staying at al-Dār al-Baydā'.

His Approaches and Western Influence

Al-Jābirī's primary intellectual agenda and plan was to rationalize Arab thought. He relied on a threefold method to read and comprehend Islamic texts and immense Muslim legacy.²

Constructional Method

¹ ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Wahabī. Qirā'ah fi Fikr al-Duktūr Muḥammad ʿĀbid al-Jābirī, *Majallat al-Bayān*, No. 71.

² Jamīl Ḥamdāwī. *Manhajīyyat Muḥammad ʿĀbid al-Jābirī fī al-Taʿāmul maʿ al-Turāth al-ʿArabī al-Islāmī*. Online: < http://www.alukah.net/literature_language/0/41145/#ixzz3392GZFli >

First appearing in the 1920's, this method emphasized a mere textual meaning of a word; thus confining it. He advocated reading text while disregarding its author and his/her objectives as well as circumstantial contexts addressed in the text. Thus, the sole element of importance remaining is mere textual sense, as understood by the construction of a sentence and its components. Al-Jābirī simply adopted the methodology of contemporary French Constructionists (Alto Sir and Fuko).

Historical Method

This approach proposes that a text must be read within the context of a certain period without extending it to either past or future contingencies. As such, understanding is confined to certain historical and situational venues while also being tied to a number of modern philosophical schools such as existentialism, Marxism and modern linguistics. The historical methodology opened multiple avenues to textual interpretations.

Ideological Method

The Ideological method guides a researcher towards the semantics with contextually historical references. This internalizes comprehension and subjectively confines a researcher's perspective. Al-Jābirī contended that the ideological approach to reading Islam's heritage was the only way to make it contemporary.³ He adopted a three-stage analytical approach: internal constructional, external historical and ideological elucidation.

Lucien Goldman, a proponent of structuralism, greatly influenced al-Jābirī. Goldman relied on two sources for the interpretation of literature and sociological phenomena: understanding and exegesis; thus, he rendered inter-textual readings to infer structural indicators, and then engaged in exegesis based on political, economic, sociological and cultural data. Structuralists were inclined towards a world perspective on the basis of informed data. Although this notion is ideological speculation, al-Jābirī was also influenced by Paul Ricoeur who advocated combining internal structural doctrine with a semantic reading of texts in terms of existence, objectives and references. In short, al-Jābirī proposed indoctrin-

³ Al-Jābirī, *al-Khitāb al-ʿArabī al-Muʿāṣir* (al-Dār al-Baydāʾ: al-Markaz al-Thaqāfī al-ʿArabī, 1982), p. 86.

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nation by combining existence and subject with inner semantic motions and outer experience to inform his approach.⁴

Al-Jābirī's Position on the Qur'ān

Al-Jābirī believed the Qur'an does not contain all given revelations. He considered it so deficient even when Abu Bakr compiled it and ʿUthmān standardized it. All compilations were unified by the 25th Islamic calendar year and Zayd ibn Thābit added only a few verses that had been originally lost. But al-Jābirī claimed the Qur'an remained incomplete and that unknown verses remained, although, had they existed, Zayd ibn Thābit was among those who certainly would have known.⁵ Nonetheless, al-Jābirī's understanding of Qur'ānic history is filled with fiddles and confusion that lack foundation.⁶

Al-Jābirī said Muslim scholars even admitted his accusation and that his claims reflect commentaries of the Rafidites who reported that Qur'ānic and Sunnah texts had been distorted. But their claim that the Mahdi will emerge with a fully completed text of the Qur'ān is a grievous fabrication. Al-Jābirī's orientalist allies made the same claim. Blachere, for example, wrote that we rarely find oriental religious books more bewildering than the Qur'ān, which confounds standard intellectual premises.

Historicity of the Qur'ān

Al-Jābirī viewed the Qur'ān as a revelation that solely addressed people of a certain place and time. Although his claim did not attribute historicity to the text, his expressed understanding belies this. He argued the Qur'ān was revealed to a people of sixth century Arabia and emphasized the text must be understood only within this context. This he said it was revealed to provide spiritual, intellectual and social life for sixth century Arabs only. Hence, the Qur'ān should be considered as an address to them in their own language and culture.⁷ He similarly confined the histo-

⁴ Jamīl Ḥamdāwī. *Manhajīyyat Muḥammad ʿĀbid al-Jābirī fī al-Taʿāmūl ma al-Turāth al-ʿArabī*. Online (20May12) <http://www.alukah.net/literature_language/0/41145/#ixzz3392GZFli>

⁵ Muḥammad ʿĀbid al-Jābirī, *Madkhal ilā al-Qur'ān al-Karīm*, (Bayrūt: Markaz Dirāsāt al-Waḥdah al-ʿArabīyyah, 1st edn., 2006), p. 219.

⁶ Khālid Kabīr ʿAllal (n.d). *Abāṭīl wa Khurāfāt ḥawla al-Qur'ān al-Karīm wa al-Nabiyy Muḥammad*, pp. 99 and 114.

⁷ Al-Jābirī, *Madkhal ilā al-Qur'ān al-Karīm*, p. 27.

ricity of socio-legal issues; thus, the Qur'ān cannot be treated as relevant to present day.

Restoring the Structure of the Qur'ān

Al-Jābirī advocated the restoration of the Qur'ān as it was revealed, arguing that when we consider restoration of its real structure, we mean gradual reorganization per revelation. This implies understanding the formational track of Qur'ānic texts as a linear trajectory of prophetic *da'wah*.⁸ The argument is perplexing because he advocates altering its structure as determined by Allah, directed by Jibrīl, and organized under the command of Muḥammad (pbh), the final Messenger. In fact, al-Jābirī rejects the entire *ummatic* consensus regarding the Qur'an's concrete accuracy, authenticity and veracity as duly transmitted from the time of the Companions to successive generations without distortion or fabrication. In sum, accepting al-Jābirī's suggestions would *alter* the Revelation's structure, which is divine, miraculous and incomparable, rather than *restore* it.

Al-Jābirī's call for restoration in accord with chronology requires scholarly attention because the 'Ulamā' already debated the Qur'ān's arrangement as to whether it was occasional or discretionary. Hence, the present arrangement is necessarily accepted because it was determined by *ijmā'* (consensus, an accepted principle of Islamic jurisprudence) of the Prophet's immediate Companions. If Muslims consider any plea for reorganization or restructuring, it would surely lead to tribulation (*fitnah*). Ending any process of corruption and destruction, as well as protecting people from tribulation is mandatory, as ordained by *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*.

Equating Qur'ān with Torah and Gospels

Among al-Jābirī's several contrivances regarding the Qur'ān were equating it with both Torah and Gospel, as well as attributing its miracle to a literate man. He claims no distinction from Torah or Gospels and argued that all three scriptures are identical as to content and source; the only difference being the Qur'ān's revelation in Arabic.⁹ He also challenged the Qur'ānic miracle and matchless ellipticism by claiming Muḥammad (pbh) was literate. Practically speaking, this paves a way for

⁸ Muḥammad 'Ammārah (2013). *Radd 'alā Iftirā'āt al-Jābirī 'alā al-Qur'ān al-Karīm*. Online, (30Mar13) <<http://www.nama-center.com/ActivitieDatials.aspx?ID=220>

⁹ Khālīd Kabir 'Allal, *Abāṭīl wa Khurāfāt ḥawla al-Qur'ān al-Karīm wa al-Nabiyy Muḥammad*. p. 158

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unhealthy skeptics and adversaries to justify their claim that the Qur'ān was the product of an individual with expertise in the traditions and religions of mankind.¹⁰

Underestimating the Qur'ān's Story

Al-Jābirī believed the entire Qur'ān duplicated the Torah, especially numerous stories, which it also distorts, a claim that minimized the essence and lessons of these narrations. This parroting clearly demonstrated the influence of his orientalist mentors.¹¹

Divine Religions

Al-Jābirī assumed only three divine religions existed: Judaism, Christianity and Islam, and he marked the number three as their chief signifier in this regard.¹² He also said Muḥammad (pbh) had ushered a new era in human history with his striving for religious commitment, which in essence, was a form of Judeo-Christianity.¹³

Injīl was Oral

Al-Jābirī claimed that Jesus received no divine scripture from God Almighty and that his mission was strictly oral, claiming he travelled constantly in Palestine to offer spiritual lessons.¹⁴ Yet this is another parroted view sourced from Occidental historians who believed Jesus left no revealed text containing the Word of Allah (swt).

Al-Jābirī's Position on Ḥadīth

Al-Jābirī argued that Prophetic traditions have many levels of quality and while some are authentic others are forged or unreliable.¹⁵ He claimed many scholars were permitted to fabricate *aḥādīth* in fields of *targhīb*, *tarhīb* and morality, indicating a corpus filled with fabrications.¹⁶ His confusion between authentic, fabricated and less than authentic *aḥādīth* is apparent. Ḥadīth scholars allow narration of weak *aḥādīth*

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 167–69.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 142.

¹² Al-Jābirī, *Madkhal ilā al-Qur'ān al-Karīm*, p. 33.

¹³ Ibid., pp. 77, 149.

¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 39–40.

¹⁵ Ḥāfiz al-Miskawī. *Naqd Mawqif al-Jābirī bi Khuṣūṣ al-Ḥadīth al-Nabawiyy*. Online (02Feb10): <<http://www.hespress.com/opinions/18409.html>>

¹⁶ Muḥammad ʿĀbid al-Jābirī, *al-ʿAql al-Akhlāq al-ʿArabī*, (al-Dār al-Baydā': al-Markaz al-Thaqāfi al-ʿArabī, 2nd edn., 2010), p. 535.

but warn readers against accepting fabricated *ahadith*, which are not permitted.¹⁷

He claimed the only way to determine textual authenticity was via the chain of narration (*isnād*). Influenced by orientalist, he offered the controversial opinion that *ṣaḥīḥ*, according to *ḥadīth* scholars, implied a fulfillment of conditions *ḥadīth* collectors made compulsory. This may qualify a chain of narration but not content. Given that *Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* is authentic in terms of narration, and was compiled on these conditions, he opined that receiving these *aḥādīth* as so characterized applied to Imām Muslim as well.¹⁸

Al-Jābirī's understanding therefore led him to propose that only al-Bukhārī and Muslim are, to some extent, authentic in terms of narration chains but doubtful as to content. Consequently, all *Ḥadīth* books are unreliable. There exists, as he argued, no well-organized methodology or protective measures to filter the *Ḥadīth* corpus. This suggestion also proceeded from his orientalist mentors and merely added confusion without reasonable justification.¹⁹

Criticism of al-Jābirī's Approaches

Al-Jābirī did not follow correct academic methodology when approaching the Qur'ān. For instance, when explaining *Ummī* and *ummīyyun*, he followed neither the Qur'ān nor *Ḥadīth* methodology, nor the typology offered by the Companions as Islam's righteous ancestors. Although he admitted some Qur'ānic components, he did not affiliate himself with this doctrine but offered interpretations based on personal illumination to establish grounds for a predetermined bias, which completely deviated from traditional understanding and approaches. This inappropriate academic methodology boasts no objectivity.

On several occasions, al-Jābirī attempted to examine Qur'ān's authenticity but he did not refer to time-honored narrations from qualified Muslim scholars or exegetes to substantiate his arguments. He preferred to rely on fragmented compartmentalized perspectives of poor narrations. The loss of Qur'ānic verses, its equivalence with Torah and Gospels, as well as the Prophet's literacy are each one examples of nonacademic

¹⁷ Khālīd Kabīr °Allal. *al-Akḥṭā' al-Tārīkhiyyah wa al-Manḥajīyyah fī Mu'allafah Muḥammad Arkoun wa Muḥammad °Ābid al-Jābirī*, p. 423.

¹⁸ Muḥammad °Ābid al-Jābirī, *Fī Qadāya al-Fikr wa al-Dīn, Hiwār ma° Majallah Muqaddamat al-Maghribīyyah*. Executor: Muḥammad al-Sagīr Janjar, Online, <http://www.fikrwanakd.aljabriabed.net/n09_01jabiri.htm>

¹⁹ Ḥāfīz al-Miskawī. *Naqd Mawaqif al-Jābirī bi Khusuṣ al-Ḥadīth al-Nabawī*. Online (02Feb10). <<http://www.hespress.com/opinions/18409.html>>

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propositions. In each case, he should have followed established academic protocols to interpret and examine Islam's heritage and reach reasonable conclusions.²⁰ That he did not do so stemmed from the framework he utilized, which was not of Islamic epistemology but that of western secular modernity.

Al-Jābirī employed orientalist methods of analysis to the Qur'ān. This is especially apparent in his *Madkhal ilā al-Qur'ān al-Karīm*. Ensuing distortions were inevitable because of his reliance on weak or fabricated narrations that allowed him to cultivate a culture of duplicitous confusion that caused no small suspicion of Islam's legacy.²¹ His use of modern philosophical terms like existence, problem of cause, problem of evidence, time, moving time, understanding, Sufī doctrine, likening mechanism, epistemological and pedagogical questions, etc., caused no end of confusion among his readers. Nonetheless, his literary contortions failed to penetrate the Muslim mind and justify his intellectual merchandise.²²

Examples of al-Jābirī's Distorted Thinking

Fasting

According to al-Jābirī, fasting during Ramadān is no longer mandatory but optional. It was mandatory only for Arabs during the Qur'ān's revelation. Why? He opined that poverty was the cause so fasting was prescribed. Currently, food is in abundance, neither poverty nor famine exists, especially in urban areas, so there is no need for fasting, especially since supermarkets offer endless supplies of food stuffs; hence, the need for fasting does not arise.²³

Equal Shares for Men and Women

Al-Jābirī said the Qur'ānic verse on inheritance allocating a double portion for men must be understood in the 6th Century context of Arabian culture and thought where women were deemed incomplete humans and gender equality was duly rejected. The Qur'ān merely balanced the unequal equation with at least half a share. Now however, women

²⁰ Khālid Kabīr ʿAllal. *Abāṭil wa Khurāfaāt hawla al-Qur'ān al-Karīm wa al-Nabiyy Muhammad*, p. 198.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 199.

²² Id al-Duwayhis. *Al-ʿAlmāniyyah fī Mizān al-ʿAql* (np / nd), p. 172.

²³ Muḥammad Sāliḥ al-Munjid. *Al-Fahm al-Jadīd li al-Nuṣūṣ*. Online (24Jul08): <<http://www.alukah.net/shariah/10331/3033>

deserve the same exact share that her male counterpart receives because contemporary thought recognizes gender equality.²⁴

Waiting Period

Al-Jābirī proposed that a wife whose husband had died should not be asked to wait for four months and ten days to remarry but rather it is sufficient to determine she is not pregnant. He argued the waiting period should be understood in the context of a society that had no other means of determining her status. But this has since changed and it is sufficient to determine that her womb is vacant so she can proceed with a new marriage. Thus, the *‘iddah*’s determination should be changed to a more reasonable period according to contemporary medical science.²⁵

Adultery

In his book, *al-Ḥiwār Qawwām al-Dīn*, al-Jābirī said punishment for adultery was possible in the nomadic society of Arabia but not conceivable in contemporary civic society under Islamic juridical conditions.²⁶

Punishment for Theft

Al-Jābirī limited this verse of the Qur’ān to the context of sixth century Arabian conditions. He said the society was nomadic and desert based without possibility for incarceration or policing. Hence, chopping the hands of a thief was practical. But circumstances have changed and punishment by imprisonment for theft was now viable. So the verse must be understood in the context of differing societal conditions. Since a thief can now be kept in jail, no more cutting off hands.²⁷ He then called on democracy as an ideational reference, claiming it is the only solution for the challenges we face. In so doing, he can be likened to Islamists who claim Islam is the only solution, or communists who claim communism is the only solution.²⁸

²⁴ Muḥammad ‘Ābid al-Jābirī, *al-Turāth wa al-Ḥadāthah - Dirāsāt wa Munāqashāt* (Bayrūt: Markaz Dirāsāt al-Waḥdah al-‘Arabiyyah, 2nd edn., 1999), p. 54.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Muḥammad Sāliḥ al-Munjid, *al-Fahm al-Jadīd li al-Nuṣūṣ*. Online (24Jul08) <<http://www.alukah.net/shariah/10331/3033>; Sulaymān ibn Sāliḥ al-Kharashī, *Nazarāt Shar‘iyyah fī Fikr Munḥarif*, p. 273.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibrāhīm Muḥammad Tāhā Buwaydain, “al-Ta’wīl Bayān Dawābiṭ al-Uṣūliyyīn wa Qirā’āt al-Mu‘āshirun: Dirāsah Uṣūliyyah Fikriyyah Mu‘āshirah”, (Jāmi‘at al-Quds: Qism al-Dirāsāt al-Islāmiyyah, Risālat al- Mājistir, 2001, p. 238.

Doubting the Process of the Qur'ān's Collection and Collation

His first volume, *Madkhal ilā al-Qur'ān al-Karīm*, contains a section titled *jam' al-Qur'ān wa mas'alat al-ziyādah fīhi wa al-nuqsān*. Here he alleged that mistakes had been made in the collection of the Qur'ān prior to and during ʿUthmān's caliphate, basically because agents appointed to collect and compile the Qur'ān were subject to error. Qur'ānic literature, however, shows no hint of incompleteness in congruence with the verse "We have without doubt, sent down the Message; We will assuredly guard it from (corruption)."²⁹ But to al-Jābirī, even the Qur'ān admits the possibility of forgetfulness, alteration, omission and abrogation.

On the Qur'ān's Incompleteness

On page 231 of this book, al-Jābirī claimed *Sūrat barā'ah* and *Sūrat al-Aḥzāb* contained omissions. Al-Jābirī's analysis of both chapters admits internal criticism and reveals so-called "secrets". He claimed *Sūrat Barā'ah* provided content for which there is no homogeneous semantic consonance with other chapters. We do not agree that omitted portions from either chapter, if indeed omissions occurred, are related to this theme because remaining content bears unmitigated injunctions that are beyond imagination compared to reproaches uttered in other places of the Qur'ān. But al-Jābirī went even further to say that what might possibly be an omission was actually the first part of *Sūrat Barā'ah*, which contains covenants and treaties that had been concluded with *al-Mushrikūn*. His justification was that longer chapters of the Qur'ān usually offered similar introductions and contents that differed from shorter chapters in size and transition from one topic to another; thus functioning as a key foundation for longer chapters. He then suggested a portion thereof had been omitted from *Sūrat al-Aḥzāb*, which is an extreme supposition.³⁰

Tawḥīd as a Reflection of Meccan Custom

Al-Jābirī noted Arab traditions and customs during the age of revelation and maintains that Arab-centered monotheism spread throughout the Arabian Peninsula. He said it is therefore reasonable that

²⁹ Qur'ān, *al-Hijr*: 9.

³⁰ Nabīl Ghazal, *Mashārīf al-Jābirī fī Dirāsāt al-Qur'ān al-Hakīm: Baḥth ʿIlmi; Tashkīk fī Qalib al-Baḥth* Online (13Apr12). <<http://islamsselect.net/mat/85455>>

Muḥammad's monotheism was nothing new and that it reflected actual beliefs of Arab pagans in the entire Peninsula. This argument approaches the opinion of Tāhā Ḥusayn, as expressed in his *Fī al-Shi'ṛ al-Jāhili*, implying that the Qur'ān is a kind-of photograph that sketched a true picture of ignorance in the Arabian Peninsula with poetic license. Al-Jābirī's thought also echoed the voice of the orientalist, Gibb, for whom the Qur'ān simply reflected the Arabian milieu through the prophet's intellection.³¹

The Qur'ānic Story as a Maxim

Al-Jābirī assumed that because we do not question the authenticity of any story behind a simile or parable, so it is also with the Qur'ān's narrative. As such, veracity is not sought in terms of a story or personality aligning with factual historicity because truth navigates the imaginative thoughts of the audience. He therefore opined there is only one objective for all the parables and stories related in the Qur'ān. Hence, there might not be any Noah or peoples of 'Ād or Thamūd. These are little more than imaginations wrought by morality tales coined in the Qur'ān.

The Qur'ān and People of the Book

Al-Jābirī held that the Qur'ān was no different from either Torah or Gospels regarding source and content, except that it was revealed in Arabic. Its similarity and conformity with the Torah in terms of narratives and prophets was no different except in the method of presentation.³²

Islamic Movements

According to al-Jābirī, Islamic movements are major obstacles to modernization and development in Muslim countries. Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-'Isā wrote that secularism confuses Muslims and further claimed that Islamic movements are major barriers to progress because their ideologies concern values that cannot survive challenges and requirements presented by contemporary developments, economically, internationally or educationally. Much discussion on this is found in intellectual and cultural seminars and in the pages of their journals.³³

³¹ Ibid.

³² Muḥammad 'Ammārah. *Multaqā Ahl al-Tafsīr*, 'Ard li Kitāb Radd Iftirā'āt al-Jābirī 'alā al-Qur'ān al-Karīm <<http://www.tafsir.net/vb/tafsir25527>> retrieved on 15/4/2012.

³³ Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad 'Isā, "al-Islāmiyyun wa Qadāyā al-Tanmiyah", *Majallat al-Bayān*, published by al-Muntadā al-Islāmī, Issue 67.

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Al-Jābirī discussed stagnant Muslim thought via *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah* traditions that uncritically receive and follow religious ideals. At the same time, he criticized westernization. Thus compromised, but still thinking he was somehow unique, he established a new school with friends and students that promoted secular objectives and analytical approaches to definition and understanding. But pro-western bias, methods and instruments of epistemological research do not recognize religious precepts, or the Unseen, or *īmān* (faith), or the pillars of Islam's creed.³⁴

Defending Rationalization

Al-Jābirī adopted rationalization, defending it as a conceptual tool of valid criticism to promote changes from stagnate immobility to active ideological orientation. He argued rationalization is a dire necessity to demonstrate historicity with a more correct perspective; thus permitting conscious participation in the making of what is destined to last. Regarding the struggle for Arabic thought, he rationalized this was the correct path out of centuries of rubble. 'Our subject is intellect' he said, 'because our striving is for the rationalization of Arab thought'.³⁵ We do not argue that this is completely unreasonable.³⁶

Historicity of Islam

'How long have Muslims remained prisoners of a stagnant culture with desert-tailored comprehension tied to Qur'ānic and Sunnatic lines (?)' they ask. Can we not benefit from sociology, material economics and the systemic skepticism of Occidental mindsets? What is said is grievous and bitter. But is it really possible to seek assistance from historical texts in a splendid era of science that produced a nuclear era and its unseen cancer-causing sting? Is it really sensible to fly to the moon on wings of illusion? Allah says:

*"When it is said to them: Believe as the others believe: they say: shall we believe as the fools believe? Nay, of a surety they are the fools, but they do not know."*³⁷

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Al-Jābirī M. A, *Takwīn al-ʿAql al-ʿArabī*, (Bayrūt, Markaz Dirāsāt al-Waḥdah al-ʿArabiyyah, 3rd edn., 1988), 52.

³⁷ Qur'ān, *al-Baqarah*: 13.

Some claimed that Islam and Qur'ān were responses to the needs of an ignorant Arabian society. Proponents of the Qur'ān's historicity claim it is only a set of socio-economic and legal principles designed to solve intellectual, social and economic problems of that time and place. But such imaginations reflect myopic orientalist thinking, and are little more than satanic fabrications specifically applied to oppose the Qur'ān's divine origin and content. Arkoun, for example, said the Qur'ān is a text open to all meanings, so that it is not possible for any singular interpretation to lock it in and claim absolute clarification.³⁸

Al-Jābirī mentioned the doctrine of historicism in convoluted fashion. Apparently opposed to his secular colleagues, he similarly proposed to view historicity in circumstance and principle, frequently employing the term secularism rather than democracy; yet secularism is a sophisticated form of democracy, is it not?³⁹

Khālid ʿAllal rebutted al-Jābirī's approach saying it is erroneous and leads readers to a mistaken understanding of texts while twisting core messages and overruling Sharīʿah principles and standards. This is because optimized understanding of the Qur'ān is limited by knowledge of the Arabic language. As such, it is most appropriately understood through various orientations with clear implications that can be realized by all legislators and intellectuals with a natural comprehension for civilizational realities. In addition, Qur'ānic concepts and themes are not limited to any prescribed period. Such delimitation contradicts the universal and perpetual qualities of Islam. Secondly, al-Jābirī's claim that the Qur'ān only addresses Arabs is misleading and consequently distorts Sharīʿah, as it is well known Islam addresses all of humanity until the Last Day. In this regard, Allah says: "*We sent thee not, but as a mercy for all creatures.*"^{40, 41}

Al-Jābirī's Method of Dealing with Islam's Heritage

Al-Jābirī thought Arabian Islamic heritage peaked with ʿaqīdah, sharīʿah, language, literature, philosophy and Sufism, and then lapsed into a period of stagnation that saturated the Muslim folk soul. Without

³⁸ Akram Ziyā al-ʿUmrī, *al-Sīrah al-Nabawīyah al-Sahīhah: Muḥāwalah li taṭbīqī qawā'id al-Muḥaddithīn fī naqd Riwāyāt al-Sīrah al-Nabawīyah*, (al-Riyād: Maktabat al-ʿAbikān, 7th edn., 2007), Vol.1, pp. 37–38.

³⁹ Online: <<http://www.alukah.net/Culture/0/3329/#ixzz2IV27LY1Y>>

⁴⁰ Qur'ān, *al-Anbiyā'*:107.

⁴¹ Khalid Kabīr ʿAllal, *Abātil wa Khurāfāt hawla al-Qur'ān al-Karīm wa al-Nabiyy Muhammad: Dahdu Abātil ʿAbid al-Jābirī wa Khurāfat Hisham Jait Hawla al-Qur'an wa Nabiyy al-Islam*. (Dar al-Muhtasib): 144–45.

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critical evaluation, he accepted various opinions on where, when and how this decadence and stagnation set in. But our concern is for a unanimous understanding expressed by the ʿUlamāʾ, that Islam's heritage is a distinctive product of specific periods of human striving that addressed future problems and issues no matter how distant. During such periods, even the structure of these civilizational identities still offers solutions to contemporary challenges, including modern western civilization. Such a pluripotent notion caused austere difficulties for al-Jābirī.

Al-Jābirī believed Islam's heritage distinguished itself as an amalgam of fundamental beliefs, perceptions, rulings and ideas. In addition to language, it carries a framework of historical and epistemological structures that codified its advance across centuries until pausing during the Ottoman caliphate of the sixteenth century, even beginning a sluggish decent with the western renaissance. Internally, Islam's heritage appears to have dynamically awarded an ever-modern civilization that flourished and could even pose as a dominant figure in the twentieth century. It offered intellectual products with spiritual, moral and superb values. However, western civilization, fraught with materialism and elements of intellectualism, became counterintuitive to traditional Islamic values and attributions. Halted by this adverse culture, though not completely under its sway, it nonetheless influenced operative imaginations and effectively projected them. Hence, the more Muslim distanced themselves from its advance, the more disconnected from their own heritage they become as an inevitable praxis. The remoteness grew deep and expanded with romantic notions of the past, and at the same time, divorced itself from a completely sound heritage. Consequently, isolation at either pole drove Muslims away from a sober experience and exploration of the present.⁴²

The Prophetic Traditions (*Ahādīth*)

Al-Jābirī believed the *Sunnah* functioned to explain what is in the Qur'ān and not to bring new revelation or extra-textual legislation. He substantiated this deduction with the following verses:

*"We have sent down unto thee (also) the Message; that thou mayest explain clearly to men what is sent for them, and that they may give thought,"*⁴³ and *"Thy duty is to*

⁴² Muḥammad ʿĀbid al-Jābirī, *al-Khitāb al-ʿArabī al-Muʿāṣir*, (Bayrūt: al-Markaz al-Thaqāfāt al-ʿArabī, al-Dār al-Baydāʾ, Dār al-Talīʿah, 1982), pp. 37, 83–84.

⁴³ Qur'ān, *al-Naḥl*: 44.

make (the Message) reach them: it is our part to call them to account."⁴⁴

These verses indicate that the Sunnah helps to explain the Qur'ān on occasion and also provides for additional legal rulings. Yet al-Shāṭibī said all Qur'ānic proofs indicate that anything the Messenger presented as a ruling or command is included in rulings of the Qur'ān and at times even suggest an overruling of Qur'ānic verses.⁴⁵ Hence, these verses indicate that the Sunnah is either an interpreter of the Qur'ān when necessity arises or an authoritative legislature where the Qur'ān is silent on specific issues.

Some readers of al-Jābirī infer that he strongly believed different political factions and proponents of various sects that had emerged early on in Islamic history developed the Hadith corpus. Hence, he does not rely on the entire *Ḥadīth* corpus and only believes in the Qur'ān. Moreover, his position regarding *mu'jizah* (miracles) of the Prophet (pbh), as narrated in authentic *aḥādīth*, such as water from his fingers and the crying trunk, etc., are sensory, while events like *isrā'* and *mi'rāj* are dream-like but happened.

His view of *ʿIlm al-Ghayb* (knowledge of the unseen) was contrary. Sometimes he saw it as nonsense and at other time he sought reasoned grounds. He also believed that *Jannah* and *Jahannam* were imaginary and used as reminders; that sorcery has no basis;⁴⁶ and that punishment for adultery was strictly for a nomadic society and of no use to modern society.⁴⁷

Ummiyyah (Literacy) of the Prophet (pbh)

Al-Jābirī claimed that Muḥammad (pbh) learned from Warāqa ibn Nawfal; and from the priest, Buhaira; and from Jews in Mecca. But we know there were no Jews in Mecca and that he met Buhaira when he was twelve years old for no more than two hours. Furthermore, Torah and Gospels were not available in Arabic at the time, and were decades after the time of the holy Prophet. Even had they been available, he would not have benefited because he was illiterate.

Al-Jābirī knew word *ummī* indicated an illiterate individual who cannot read or write; and that 'People of the Book' generally at-

⁴⁴ Qur'ān, *al-Ra'd*: 40.

⁴⁵ Al-Shāṭibī, Vol. 4, 14.

⁴⁶ Ghāzī al-Tawbah. *Mawqif al-Jābirī min al-Mu'jizah wa al-Ghuyūb fī al-Islām: ʿArd wa Naqd*, Online (14Apr12): <<http://www.tafsir.net/vb/tafsir29087>>

⁴⁷ Mawqīʿ Fursān al-Sunnah: Qirā'ah fī Fikr al-Duktūr Muḥammad ʿĀbid al-Jābirī.

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tributed this term to idolaters, whether illiterate or not. The term appears in the verse:

Among the People of the Book are some who, if entrusted with a hoard of gold, will (readily) pay it back; others, who, if entrusted with a single silver coin, will not repay it unless thou constantly stoodest demanding, because, they say, 'there is no call on us (to keep faith) with these ignorant (Pagans),' but they tell a lie against Allah, and (well) they know it.'⁴⁸

'People of the Book' called pagans *Ummiyyīn*, so in no way can the argument be extended to mean that the Prophet (pbh) could read and write. The French orientalist, Barrey, in the Encyclopedia, made the same claim. Al-Jābirī and his colleagues also argued for this based on the following hadith recorded by al-Bukhārī:

When the Prophet did ʿUmrah in Dhu al-Qa'da (Hijrī, seventh year), the people of Mecca did not allow him to enter the Mecca, and finally came to a truce that he will stay there for three days. When they wrote the terms of the Agreement, the Muslims wrote, "This is what Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah, has agreed on." But the Meccans replied, "We did not accept this attribution for you, if we admitted you to be the Messenger of Allah, we would not prohibit you from anything; but (we know and admit that) you are Muhammad ibn Abdullah." In response, the Prophet said: "I am the Messenger of Allah and I am the son of Abdullah." And then he said to Ali, "Delete the term 'the Messenger of Allah.'" Ali responded, "By Allah! I will never delete it." Muhammad then took the Agreement, but he could not write well, and wrote, "This is what Muhammad the son of Abdullah has agreed on, that he will not enter Mecca with any sword except the shielded one."⁴⁹

Based on this *ḥadīth*, they claim that the text clearly shows that Muḥammad (pbh) knew how to write, which leaves no doubt he could read as well because reading is a branch of writing. This is their strong evidence showing that Muḥammad (pbh) was not *ummī*.

But Allah determined that His Prophet (pbh) would be *ummī* (unlettered), even if it amounted to one of his miracles. Possibly, the essence of his being *ummī* lies in the fact that if he could read and write, polytheists would gain opportunity to suspect his prophethood. But such is discounted in the Qur'ān when Allah says:

⁴⁸ Qur'ān, *Āl ʿImrān*: 75.

⁴⁹ Al-Bukhārī, *Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb al-Maghāzī, Bāb ʿUmrah al-Qadā'

“And thou was not (able) to recite a Book before this (Book came), nor art thou (able) to transcribe it with thy right hand: in that case, indeed, would the talkers of vanities have doubted.”⁵⁰

The Qur’ān as a Distorted Document

In an article entitled “mā qīla innahu rufī‘a aw suqita min al-Qur’ān,” al-Jābirī claimed there were distortions in the Qur’ān that *Sunni* scholars acknowledged.⁵¹ To substantiate this, he argued using a *hadīth* recorded by al-Qurtubī⁵² in which ‘Ā’ishah narrated that *Sūrat al-Aḥzāb* originally contained two hundred verses but when reduced to writing they did not all survive.⁵³ However, this *hadīth* is unreliable and cannot be authenticated or even attributed to ‘Ā’ishah because its transmission chain contains ‘Abd Allāh ibn Lihyā, an unreliable transmitter. With regard to this *hadīth*, al-Dhahabī remarked that ‘Abd Allāh ibn Lihyā’s transmission is treated as weak.⁵⁴ Hence, the *hadīth* cannot be used for such an argument.

More importantly, the *hadīth*’s content is illogical. Had the narration abrogated those verses it would have occurred when the Prophet lived and obtained directives from Allah via Jibrīl. So if the statement were true, it would have been reduced to its present form and commonly understood as such. But in no way during the time of ‘Uthmān was this known. Another narration claiming the Qur’an suffered omissions has also been invalidated vis-^{azza}vis a narration reported by al-Qurtubī from Husayn ibn Fahm:

I heard Yahya ibn Aktham say: ‘for Ma’mūn, when he was Head of the Abbasid khilafat, there was a monitoring assembly. One day a well-dressed, handsome and fine smelling Jewish man entered the gathering. He spoke eloquently with excellent grammar. When the assembly dispersed, Ma’mūn called him and asked: are you a Jew? He replied: yes.

⁵⁰ Qur’ān, *al-‘Ankabūt*: 48

⁵¹ Al-Jābirī MA, “Mā qīla innahu rufī‘a aw suqita min al-Qur’ān.” *Al-Ittiḥād*, Ramadān Issue (Oct), 2005.

⁵² Al-Jābirī, *Madkhal ilā al-Qur’ān al-Karīm fī al-Ta‘rīf bi al-Qur’ān*, (al-Maghrib: Dār al-Nashr al-Maghribiyyah, al-Dār al-Baydā’, 1st edn., 2006), vol. 1, p. 223.

⁵³ Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Abū Bakr ibn Farḥ al-Anṣārī al-Khazraj Shams al-Dīn al-Qurtubī, *al-Jami‘ li Ahkām al-Qur’ān*, authenticated by Aḥmad al-Bardūni wa Ibrāhīm Atfāyīsh (al-Qāhirah: Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyyah, 2nd edn., 1964), vol. 14, p. 113.

⁵⁴ Shams al-Dīn Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn ‘Uthmān ibn Qaymaz al-Dhahabī, *al-Kashf fī Ma‘rifah man lahu riwayatun fī al-Kutub al-Sittah*, Taḥqīq: Muḥammad Aḥmad Muḥammad Namīr al-Khatīb, (Jiddah: Dār al-Qiblah li al-Thaqāfah al-Islāmiyyah - Mu’assast ‘Ulūm al-Qur’ān, 1st edn., 1992), vol. 1, p. 59.

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Then Ma'mūn asked him to accept Islam and assured him that he will be well treated and that his scholarship would be honored. In response, the Jew said: "Did I leave the religion of my forefathers (?)," then went away. But next year that same man attended the session as a Muslim. He talked on Fiqh and gave well-reasoned proposals. Ma'mūn again called him after the assembly and asked him: "Are you not the man who came before as a Jew?" He answered: "yes. I am." Once again he asked: "What led you to accept Islam?" He replied: when I departed this assembly, I thought all these religions should be examined and so found a good scribe and started examining them. To this end I first took a copy of Tawrah and wrote out three different copies. In every copy, I either added something new or deleted some others. I brought them to a Church and all were sold without doubt or accusation. Then I took a copy of the Injil and did same, and brought the copies to a synagogue where all were accepted. But when I took a copy of the holy Qur'an and repeated the same thing and brought to the booksellers, they investigated each copy and found distortions and omissions and did not buy them. So I learned this is a protected Book. This is what led me to embrace Islam."⁵⁵

Yahya ibn Aktham said: that very year I did hajj. I met Sufian ibn Uaiyna and mentioned this story. He said this is something that is indicated in the holy Qur'an. I asked him: where (?) and he recited the following verse: "... for to them was entrusted the protection of God's Book"⁵⁶ The responsibility of recording and memorizing their scriptures had been assigned to Jews and Christians but they failed. Yet in terms of protecting the Qur'an, Allah Himself took responsibility, saying, "*We have, without doubt, sent down the Message; and We will assuredly guard it (from corruption)*"⁵⁷

The above narration offers clear evidence that the smallest possibility of distortion never occurred in authoritative quarters. The Qur'ān remains well protected and will continue so forever. Al-Jābirī should have done better research before concluding such rubbish. Instead, it seems he simply transmitted the views of his western mentors.

⁵⁵ Al-Qurtubī, *al-Jāmi' li Ahkām al-Qur'ān*, vol. 10, p. 5.

⁵⁶ Qur'ān, *al-Mā'idah*: 44.

⁵⁷ Qur'ān, *al-Hijr*: 9.

Al-Jābirī Claimed that Muḥammad (pbh) Drank Wine

For the record we assert and assure that Muḥammad's entire life, as genuinely recorded in Islamic tradition, was noble and of the highest regard. Even before his prophethood, he was known for his trustworthiness, reliability and remarkable character. Any unclean or evil attribution(s) or behavior(s) would easily have been made known to enemies who searched them out in vain. History records that no single person, including Islam's enemies, ever mentioned negative attributions or scandals attached to his blessed name. All believed the Prophet (pbh) to be completely trustworthy, honest, kind, compassionate and known for his commendable traits and praiseworthy character. God distanced him even from hearing songs and musical instruments, and he was almost always under surveillance due to his celebrity and reputation. With such being the case, how did al-Jābirī dare allege such an assertion and from where did he obtain this information? How dare he attribute corrupt behavior to the Prophet (pbh) by fabricating such slander!⁵⁸

Whoever wants to know the superb and commendable attributes of the Prophet (pbh) can search the *Ḥadīth* corpus to find how God protected him from all such destructive behavior. To cite an example:

It is narrated by Sa'īd ibn Musayyab, on authority of Abu Hurairah, the Prophet said, "When I was taken on the Night Journey I met Moses." The Prophet then described him: "He was a man," I think he said, "of average build and wavy hair, like the men of Shanua. And I met Isa," and the Prophet described him, "He was a man of medium build with a ruddy complexion, as if he had just come out of a Dimas, meaning a bathhouse. And I saw Ibrahim, and I was the one who most closely resembled him of his children." He said, "Then two vessels were brought to me; in one was milk and in the other was wine. It was said to me: take whichever you want. So I took milk, and he said: you have been guided to the *Fitrah* or you have attained the *Fitrah*. If you had taken wine, your *Ummah* would have been led astray."⁵⁹

This Tradition has been recorded by many *Ḥadīth* collectors and explicitly discloses that the Prophet (pbh) was not in the habit of drinking wine, ever. Claiming the Prophet (pbh) drank wine is nothing short of

⁵⁸ For more information, please see an article by Isma'īl al-Khatīb: Ala Ifirā'ī Muḥammad °Ābid al-Jābirī, *Majallat al-Nur*, no. 454, 1429 H.

⁵⁹ *Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb Aḥādīth al-Anbiyā', Ḥadīth 3394; 3437; 4709; 5576; 5603, vol. 4, p. 152; Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj Abū al-Ḥasan al-Qushayrī al-Nishāpurī, *Saḥīḥ Muslim*, Taḥqīq: Muḥammad Fu'ād °Abd al-Bāqī, (Bayrūt: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, Kitāb al-Imān, Bāb al-Isrā' bi Rasūl Allāh ilā al-Samāwāt wa Fard al-Salawāt, Ḥadīth 272, vol. 1, p. 154.

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character assassination. Had al-Jābirī been a trustworthy and properly educated researcher using the right methodology, or an objective scholar with academic integrity, he would have avoided such a claim. This grievous lapse indicates that al-Jābirī did not engage in academic discourse with intellectual acumen but rather acted like an irresponsible playboy taking no heed of the issue's sensitivity or verity.

Al-Jābirī argued that verse 67 of *Sūrat al-Naḥl* praises wine, saying it is one of Allah's signs, but his deduction is incorrect. The verse was revealed in Mecca and addressed polytheists in the context of their social traditions. Actually, the verse came in response to a question: "What is the result of rainfall from heaven?" But making wine from the dates and grapes does not indicate proper utilization of the blessing, especially in its semantic usage, where the verse relates that wine is man's creation. In this regard, one understands that certain beverages extracted from natural fruits are beloved by them. But there exists a clear indicator that attributes negativity to the wine compared to hygienic foods. Had wine been attributed as 'good' in the verse, it would not have been differentiated from that which is good.⁶⁰

Conclusion

Al-Jābirī interpreted the Qur'ān from a philosophical perspective without any acknowledgement or respect given for the exacting methods of his esteemed predecessors. His chief objective seemed to be to sift through Islam's legacy and cause confusion. Was he among the rightly guided, or someone with convoluted ideas, or a revitalizer of corrupt Rafīdites with views on philosophical and theological sects from early Islam? Most likely he is no different from Orientalists who engage both Sunnah and the Book of Allah with a fragmented decontextualized reduction that obliterates their refined heritage with fool's gold manufactured for modern dupes. Al-Jābirī absurdly neglected well-established doctrines, principles and methodologies only to unilaterally follow tailor-made western tools of uncompromising materialist pseudo-intellectuals. In a word, bunk.

Thus, we conclude our update on al-Jābirī's religious thinking by highlighting his roguish views on the Qur'ān regarding its authenticity, completeness and textual order. This study crucially underscored his perspectives on Islamic legal injunctions for Fasting, the *ʿiddah* period, the

⁶⁰ Online: <<http://www.alukah.net/Culture/0/3329/#ixzz2IV27LY1Y>>

law of descent and distribution of a legacy, of theft and adultery, etc. We included his conclusions that the Prophet (pbh) drank wine and was literate, which directly counter the consensus of Muslim scholars.

Our review suggests that the principal objective of his approach to modernity was to engage Muslims in the Middle East with western philosophy and its worldview, and then render secular outcomes regarding the Islamic sciences. Perhaps Orientalism initially made contact with the Middle East in the twelfth century, or the advent of Islam generated debate between Muslims and People of the Book. Some say the dialogue actually began with Islam's victory in Spain at the beginning of the eighth century; especially with translations of Arabic books into other languages.

In any case we infer Orientalists intended to subvert Islam's spirituality. Stagnation, frustration and disappointment were made possible by subjugating the Muslim mind to the artificial harshness of Orientalist perceptions, which created doubt as to the authenticity of Islam's legacy. Such influences divert Muslims from genuine Islamic thinking and life ways towards an alien secular culture and distances them from religion and monotheist precepts; thus rendering them susceptible to destructive activities.

Orientalists manifest in numerous ways. The foremost aim of their colonizers was to establish academic institutions that would function to study then suborn socio-legal frameworks of the occupied cultures. They organized conferences, discussed methods and strategies, and filled libraries in the west with a rich collection of Islamic literature; a great deal of which originated with the rigorous efforts of Muslim scholars in Spain, France, Sicily and Italy. European students attended institutions to study Eastern languages and mastered them to later enjoy livelihoods as tourist guides, traders or agents for colonizers in numerous countries.

Ironically, Arab people use the same strategy today. They learn western languages, equip themselves with scholarship, acquire research skills, and then fight against the Arabic language. Orientalists designed the scheme so if they failed to divert Muslims from the authentic teachings of the Qur'ān, they could at least contest the Arabic language. They falsely inspired students with the notion that Arabic is in need of renewal to advance science and culture, when their real aim was to weaken it and eventually corrupt their understanding of scripture.

Our discussion reveals that al-Jābirī was such a victim; one of unfiltered western modernity and typical Orientalist venom. Being greatly

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influenced by western civilization and culture, he can be counted among Orientalist loyalists whose study of Islam's heritage is thoroughly infused by their thoughts and perceptions. This victimhood caused him to criticize the authenticity of his own cultural legacy; of the Qur'ān, the Prophetic traditions, and Islam's legal injunctions. Hence, his study of the Arab-Islamic heritage is not the least bit objective. His deconstructive analysis is entirely based on textual internality, a reduced approach to historicity, and ideologically external references.

The important aspect of Islam's modernization, as propounded by Orientalists, is their call to restructure the Qur'ān by arranging its chapters in line with the chronology of revelation. Another is to promote doubt as to its authenticity as presently constituted. Treating the Qur'ān as a folktale or equating it with scripture followed by the People of the Book is a noticeable feature of al-Jābirī's misguided rational. Moreover, he considered Islamic revivalism a major impediment to modernization, rationalization and advancement in Muslim countries. By claiming the Qur'ān was distorted, and by attributing reduced historicity to Islam, he subtly twisted any gestalt purview of Islam's multiple realities.

Al-Jābirī clearly employed a philosophical perspective and he applied western secular-modern methods as he sifted through what had been transmitted by reliable Muslim scholars. Thus he attempted to disconnect the *ummah* from firmly based traditional scholarship. His grievous deception equated the Qur'ān to other scripture with attributions of justice, moderation and civilization, as presented in the Qur'ān. But it is well-established that the Qur'ān extends far beyond methodologies applied to these extrinsic legacies.

Having recapitulated several problematic issues with al-Jābirī's thought plus impacts of modernity and orientalism on his meager mentation, the author makes some recommendations. Foremost is that Muslim academics and scholars should be extremely careful when discussing his religious views in the classroom, and must first evaluate them in light of classical perspectives. Of import is to analyze his framework and methodological approach to interpreting Qur'ān, Sunnah and Sharī'ah. This will enable students and researchers to perceive the real objectives of modernist and post-modernist Orientalism. It is equally important to intellectually respond to each one of his propositions. The preservation of Islam in its original and undistorted form requires erudite, balanced and scientific responses to his numerous speculations and absurd assump-

tions. Mainstream Muslim scholars and intellectuals must safeguard the *ummah* from all such misleading interpreters and their misguided inductions.

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