

# RETHINKING THE SEMITIC TEXTS: A STUDY OF INTERTEXTUALITY

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## **Abstract:**

Artikel ini mengeksplorasi wacana teks-teks Semit dalam tradisi keagamaan Ibrahim yang memiliki paralelitas pesan. Tentu saja, anggitan paralelitas pesan itu tidak hanya berpijak pada latar kesamaan diksi yang digunakan, tetapi juga merujuk pada kemiripan formula teologis yang melingkupi teks tersebut. Pada ranah ini, teks tidak dipandang sebagai sebuah teks yang independen, tetapi teks itu sendiri 'dibaca' dalam konteksnya yang bisa dipastikan berkaitan erat dengan teks-teks liyan yang dipahami sebagai sebuah tenunan wacana yang melingkupi kelahiran teks tersebut melalui proses adopsi, adaptasi, maupun reformulasi teks yang mapan sebelumnya dalam konteks rangkaian pewarisan tradisi iman. Pada ranah ini pula, semiotika verbal yang 'terbaca' dalam teks tidak dimaksudkan untuk menelanjangi wacana teks suci secara liberal, tetapi bertujuan untuk menjelaskan 'penanda' dalam teks yang melintas batas geografis, bahasa maupun tradisi serumpun melalui sistem transmisinya.

**Keywords:** *transformation, discourse, paradosis, common heritage, common origin, transmitting system, paternoster.*

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Etymologically, each divine word within the worldly language and its concept in the discourse of Abrahamic texts has a history of its own. Also, the theoretical framework of rereading of different Scriptures in interactive cultural practices in the Semitic Scriptures in this case, is to strive to transcend conventionally accepted identity boundaries in order to replace linear and hierarchical paradigms of influence with a model of mutual interaction that allows for a more nuanced analysis of the dynamics of textual and intertextual practices. The issue of one word of God in many versions through rereading of different sacred texts on canonized terms is unique. It means that the Semitic linguistic analysis plays its key role. In the study of Abrahamic religions, a study of Semitic languages, especially the Hebrew, the Eastern Syriac dialect or the Western Syriac, and the Arabic becomes interesting issue. But, to explore this linguistic study, a scholar must be careful. In the West, Christoph Luxenberg, in his work *Die Syro-Aramäische Lesart Des Koran: Ein Beitrag Zur Entschlüsselung Der Koransprache* (Berlin, 2000), a controversial Western Christian scholar of ancient Semitic languages in German argues that the Quran has been misread, mistranslated and mistranscribed for centuries. In the domain of linguistic criticism, the conclusion of his thesis actually has a wicked *verstehen* although the elements of pre-existing Christian-Aramaic

texts or something like Syro-Aramaic words as the archeology of the knowledge of Syriac vocabularies should be received in the framework of Semitic languages.

This paper focuses on rereading the Semitic texts as the Abrahamic sacred texts to dig up the divine Semitic heritage as the common heritage, because of the canonized terms in the Qur'an and the Bible were originally derived from the Babel words through the divine tradition (Latin: *traditio*, cf. Greek:  $\pi\alpha\rho\alpha\delta\iota\sigma\iota\varsigma$  [Paradosis]), and at the same time, to discover the common legacy of Abrahamic Scriptures textually to research the essence of divine words through the study of intertextuality. Thus, the chain of transmitting system of the heavenly words among the Abrahamic texts is a proof of the common heritage, so that the similarities among the Semitic Scriptures are not only from borrowing but also proof of their common origin.

## 1. Texts and Intertextuality

The Bible, Gospel and the Quran which are so-called the Abrahamic Scriptures are an important to be used as a tool to dig up the divine Semitic heritage. These texts, however, have many evidences textually as the common heritage, because of the canonized terms in three Sacred Books; the Quran, the Torah, the Gospel/the Bible were originally derived and transmitted from the Abraham's revelation in the Babel words, the language of Abraham, through the divine oral traditions. Thus, the chain of transmitting system of the heavenly words among the Abrahamic faiths is a proof of the common heritage, so that the similarities among the textually Semitic Scriptures are not only from borrowing, adopting, adapting, and reformulating of the texts through the unthinkable divine quotation, but also proof of their common origin.

As in all poststructuralist theory, Julia Kristeva's work, a French semiotician, also demonstrates that all signifying systems – from table settings to poems – are constructed by the manner in which they transform earlier signifying systems. Any text or Sacred Text is 'constructed of a mosaic of quotations' and is 'the absorption and transformation of another.'<sup>1</sup> Hence, for her, a text is 'an ongoing process in which the writer confronts the ideological givens of different culture and subverts the linguistic signifiers in unanticipated ways.'<sup>2</sup> Concepts are nothing more than words, and signifier are words that refer to other words and never reach out to material objects and their interrelations. In effect, all meaning is textual and intertextual. Everything we can know is constructed through signs, governed by the rules of discourse for that area of knowledge, and related to other texts through filiations, allusion and repetition. In this way, texts are marked by a surplus of meaning which results in differing readings of texts or Sacred Texts which are

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<sup>1</sup> Julia Kristeva, "Word, Dialogue, and Novel", in Leon S. Roudiez (ed.), *Desire and Language*, trans., Thomas Gora et.al., New York: Columbia UP, 1980, 66

<sup>2</sup> Robert Con Davis & Ronald Schleifer, *Contemporary Literary Criticism: Literary and Cultural Studies*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, New York & London: Longman, 1986, 273

formed and conducted through mediating factors such as the present structures of discourse, the present concepts of the discourses structures of the time of the 'writing' of the texts, the traditions of reading, and the suppositions which those traditions have made possible, of those particular texts.

When a text or 'sacred text' is view in this way, it subverts the concept of the text as self-sufficient and dramatically blurs the outlines of the text and disperses its image of totality into an bounded, illimitable tissue of connections and associations, paraphrases and fragments, texts, and contexts. This view is reiterated by Roland Barthes when he argues that the text is 'unconscious or automatic quotations, given without quotations, and the text is also multidimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash. The text is tissue of quotations. The writer can only intimate a gesture that is always interior, never original. His only power is to mix writings, to counter the ones with others, in such a way as never to rest on any one of them.'<sup>3</sup>

## 2. The Judaeo-Christiana Texts in Islam

According to the Jews, there is a claim in the *Mishnah Abot* that the Torah, a revelation of God was directly received by many authoritative transmitters. Prof. Judah Goldin, a Talmudic scholar of Judaism, quoted the Talmudic statement from *Mishnah, tractate Pirqe Abot* (lit., "the Sayings of the Fathers"), chapter 1:1-18 as follows:

Moses received Torah from Him who revealed Himself at Sinai, and handed it on to Joshua, and Joshua to the Elders, and the Elders to the Prophets, and the Prophets handed it on to the Men of the Great Assembly.<sup>4</sup> Simeon the Righteous was one of the last numbers of the Great Assembly. Antigonus of Soko took over from Simoen the Righteous. Yose ben Joezer of Zeredah and Yose ben Jochanan of Jerusalem took over from Antigonus. Joshua ben Perahyah and Nittai the Arbelite took over from them. Shemaiah and Abtalyon took over from them. Hillel and Shammai took over from them. Rabban Jochanan ben Zakkai took over from Hillel and Shammai. He used to say Rabban Jochanan ben Zakkai had five disciples, and each of them used to say "and so the chain of tradition, beginning at Sinai, extends link by link down through

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<sup>3</sup> Roland Barthes, "Theory of the Text" in Robert Young (ed.), *Untying the Text*, London: Routledge, 1981, 39; cf. Roland Barthes, *Image-Music-Text*, London: Fontana, 1977, 146

<sup>4</sup> In the Hebrew Lexicography, the term *assembly*, literally means *kinûs*, see Haim Shachter, *The New Compact Dictionary*, 2004, 26; and *the great assembly* in the Talmudic context, refers to the the Mishnaic-Hebrew term, *kneset gedola* (lit., *the great assembly*). The Hebrew word *kneset* כנסת has many parallel words; *knushta* in the Syro-Aramaic, *kanisah* in Arabic, and *eklesia* in Greek. In this context, the parallel words do not refer to the Christianized word, the Church, but they refer to the Jewish temple, the Synagogue. Since about 57 BC, the *kneset gedola* was identified as the *sanhedrin* (lit., *the great assembly*), derived from the Greek word *synedria* although the Mishnaic-Hebrew term, in pre-Christian times, has been known by *soferim*.

the generations authorizing the teachers of the Law to expound the Torah and establish the right course.<sup>5</sup>

Based on the theory of Judaic transmitting system, however, we must understand that Islamic divine text is a progressive divine words and a fulfillment of the pre-Islamic Scriptures of the Semitic revelation as a manifestation of the heritage of Abrahamic faith tradition in the form of Arabic version. By using the literary criticism through the theory of intertextuality, there is a common heritage of Abrahamic texts between Judaism and Islam which is able to be related with the Judaic Scripture; the *Torah* and the *Tehilim/Mizmor* to the Quran, concerning the 'Mosaic Law' and the 'earth heritage' to the believers.

*Ve-im ason yihyeh ve-natata nefesh tahat nafesh,  
'ayin tahat 'ayin shen tahat shen yad tahat yad,  
regel tahat regel, keviyah tahat keviyah,  
petza' tahat patza' habura tahat habura.*

And if any mischief follow, than you shall give life for life,  
Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand,  
Foot for foot, burning for burning,  
wound for wound, stripe for stripe.  
(the Torah, chapter *Shemot Mishfatim* 21:23-25).<sup>6</sup>

*Wa katabna 'alaihim fiha anna al-nafsa bin nafsi,  
wal 'aina bil 'aini, wal anfa bil anfi,  
wal udzna bil udzni, was sinna bis sinni,  
wal jurukha qishosh.*

We ordained therein for them, life for life,  
eye for eye, nose for nose,  
ear for ear, tooth for tooth,  
and wounds equal for equal.  
(The Quran, chapter *al-Maidah* 5:45).

*Tzadiqim yireshu aretz  
ve yishkenu la'ad 'aleyha.*

The righteous themselves will possess the earth,  
And they will reside forever upon it.  
(the Psalms/*Tehilim* 37:29).<sup>7</sup>

*Wa laqad katabna fi al-Zabur  
min ba'di al-Dzikh,  
anna al-ardh yaritsuha 'ibadiya al-sholihin.*

Before this We wrote in the Psalms,  
after the message which was given to Moses,  
'My servants the righteous, shall inherit the earth.'  
(the Quran, chapter *al-Anbiya'* 21:105).

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<sup>5</sup> Judah Goldin, *The Living Talmud: the Wisdom of the Fathers*, New York: New American Library, 1960, 37

<sup>6</sup> Norman Henry Snaith, *Sefer Torah Neviem ve Ketuvim*: Hebrew Old Testament, London: the British and Foreign Bible Society, 1992, 119

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*, 973

The Quranic Arabic terms such as *nafs* (life), *'ain* (eye), and *sin* (tooth), show that the terms were originally adopted from the pre-Islamic Arabic words, and it seems that the Arabic vocabularies (including the Quranic Arabic) were equivalent of the Mosaic Hebrew terms, the Hebrew Torah, such as *nefesh* (life), *'ayin* (eye), and *shen* (tooth) which were originally the terms adopted from the pre-Judaic Hebrew words too. Meanwhile, the Davidic Hebrew terms; *zadiqim* (the righteous), *yireshu* (inherit), and *aretz* (earth) in the *Mizmor*, the Psalms which were equivalent with the Quranic terms; *sholihin* (the righteous), *yaritsu* (inherit), and *ardh* (earth) in the Quran text. These similar texts in the corpus of both Semitic Scriptures, in fact, represent the common revelation in the earthly languages, which were originally adopted from pre-Davidic Hebrew and pre-Islamic Arabic words, and the Quran itself is as a version of the Davidic Arabic revelation.

Linguistically, the pre-Islamic Arabic or pre-Judaic Hebrew vocabulary shows that the root is common Semitic, and 'the sacretive' within both Judaic-Islamic terms are the 'revelations' in a process of progression, transformation, and contextualization. In other words, we can say that the sacretive idea of the Quranic text is a revelation in the Arabic version, and in fact, a part of Quranic text itself which was textually relating to the Hebrew Torah is naturally regarded as the 'Judaic Arabic revelation.' It is also to reject a theory that the Quran is a copy of Judaism, and also to reject the Arabic words were directly borrowed from the Hebrew, although a few of the Arabic vocabularies, not at all, was linguistically adopted from the Hebrew or other Semitic languages, such as Syro-Aramaic, Coptic, and others, as well as the Hebrew Torah have transformed and adopted the pre-Mosaic Semitic revelation and other Semitic words from the Babylonian, Phoenician, and the Egyptian libraries.

So far, there are also many data to confirm the Jewish Rabbinical writings to Jesus' words in the Gospel, especially the spoken words and the teachings of Rabbi Hillel, Rabbi Hananiah ben Teradyon, Rabbi Halafta, and Rabbi Simeon ben Yohai who they are the authoritative Jewish religious leaders among the Jews before Jesus. About the concept of *Shekhinah*, in the *Mishnah* (the Jewish hadithic book), especially in the tractate *Abot* for example, Rabbi Hananiah ben Terodyon illustrates this Judaic *Shekhinah*. He speaks of the presence of the *Shekhinah* with any 'two or three who sit together and the words between them are of Torah then *Shekhinah* is their midst' (Hebrew: *k□ bem□q□m asher shenayim o tselosh□h neasaf□m le dev□rim ha-Torah sham Elohim Yahweh be-□t□m* [the *Mishnah. Abot* 3.2]).<sup>8</sup> In the Gospel of Matthew 18:20, Jesus also speaks of *Shekhinah* 'for where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in their midst' (Aramaic: *aik□ geir datrein au tl□t□ kn□sh□n be-shem□, taman an□ baynat-hon*; cf. Arabic: *fa ainam□ ijtama'a itsn□ni au tsal□tsah bi-ism□, kuntu hun□ka bayna-hum*).<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> The *Mishnah; Abot. 3,2b (3)*. Translation by J. Gordin, *The Living Talmud: the Wisdom of the Fathers*, New York: New American Library, 1957), 120-121. For further reading about the teachings of Rabbi Hillel *ha-Nasi*, a par excellent leader of *Sanhedrin*, see Yitzhak Buxbaum, *The Life and Teachings of Hillel*, London: Jason Aronson Inc., 1994

<sup>9</sup> The Aramaic Scriptures Research Society (ed.), *The New Testament: Peshitta Aramaic Text with a Hebrew Translation*, Jerusalem: the Bible Society, 1986, 25

By rereading of the Scriptures, the uttered words of Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew, however, is originally influenced by the rabbinical teachings, especially the sacred book of *Mishnah*. And, it indicates that Jesus substituted the role of 'the written text' (the *Torah*) to himself as 'the living text' and transformed the theological concept of *Rabbinical Shekhinah* into the theological concept of *Christian Shekhinah* through the transformation of Mishnaic-Hebrew into the Aramaic words in the era of Hellenic civilization of the Roman empire. There is also a continuum between the Hebraic *Midrash* (called *Pesher/Commentary*, cf. Arabic: *Tafsir*) and the New Testament, and of course, the possibility that a late *Midrash* similar to one found in the writings of Paul. We are not always as lucky in drawing parallels as in the case of Paul's words in Romans 12:15: "Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep them that weep. In the *Tosephta Berakhot* 1:21 we read "Rabbi Hillel ha-Nasi said: 'Do not appear to be laughing, and do not appear to be weeping, for it is written, 'a time to weep and a time to laugh.'" Hence this *Midrash* on Ecclesiastes 3:3 was already quoted by Rabbi Hillel, who was earlier than Paul.

Meanwhile, the common heritage of Abrahamic texts between Christianity and Islam is able to be related with the *Peshitta* (the Aramaic New Testament) and the Quran. The *Peshitta* say: "*Tuv dein amar ena lekhon, dadelil hu le-gamla le-me'al be-herora de-mehaththa aw 'atira dene'ol le-malkuta de-Alaha.*"<sup>10</sup> The text means "I say it again, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man enter the Kingdom of God" (Matthew 19:24). The Quran also say: "*Inna al-ladzina kadzdzabu bi-ayatina wastakbaru 'anha la tufattahu lahum abwaba al-samai wa la yadkhuluna al-jannata hatta yalija al-jamalu fi sammi al-hiyath*" (to those who reject Our signs and treat them with arrogance, no opening will there be of the gates of heaven, nor will they enter the Paradise of God, until the camel can pass through the eye of the needle).<sup>11</sup> In both Scriptures, there is the words of God in form of 'parable' to express the similar grand narrative on the difficulty of attaining Paradise of God (Arabic: *jannah*) or the Kingdom of God (Aramaic: *malkhuta de-Allaha*) in the various sacred texts which is literally symbolized as 'camel' entering the needle's eye. In the Gospel version, this parable is applied for 'the rich man', but in the Quran version, this one applied for 'those who reject the signs of God.' The Semitic terms, in both sacred parables, refer to the *jamal* in the Arabic, and the *gamla* in the Aramaic. Abraham Geiger, a Jewish scholar assumes that the Quranic *matsal* (Quranic parable), seems to be borrowed and adapted from the Christianity (partly because of the similarity of the figure, in that *jamal* is the metaphor used in the synoptic Gospel, the *gamla*. But, he also argues the word *ma'ila* (camel), as the fact in the *Talmud* (which the language of that Scripture was lexically written in form of the Hybrid-Hebrew of Aramaic, so-called the Mishnaic-Hebrew), a part of the *Torah she be-'alphe* (the Oral Torah), appeared consistently. This Mishnaic-Hebrew word *ma'ila*, which is an equivalent with the Masoretic Hebrew term *gamal* (camel)<sup>12</sup>, and the

<sup>10</sup> *ibid.*, 26

<sup>11</sup> Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *the Holy Quran*, Kuala Lumpur: Media Islami, 2003, 186

<sup>12</sup> Concerning about the word *camel*, the Masoretic Hebrew Bible used the word *gamal* (or *hebel*, the synonym of *gamal*), see the Hebrew Bible, Leviticus 11:4, Isa 21:7, Norman Henry Snaith, *Sefer Torah.*, *op.cit.*, 170, 654; cf., the *Peshitta* also use the Aramaic word *gamla*, see

other Mishanic-Hebrew word, the *mahtha* (needle) are always used to deliver the 'Rabbinical picture' in the Rabbinical teachings which so-called the *mashal* (parable, pl. *meshalim*), such as *kema de-ma'ila fila bequfi de-mahtha* (like the camel can pass through the eye of the needle).<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless, A. Geiger never mentions the identity of borrowing of the textual source of his quotation clearly, but I assume that this Talmudic *mashal* is the parable of the so-called Tannaitic period when Rabbi Judah ha-Nasi brought to a conclusion the codification of the *Torah she be-'alphe* in the document known as the *Mishnah*, and is perhaps uttered by Rabbi Meir in the *Talmud Babli* (the Babylonian Talmud) and in the *Mishnah* too. Traditionally, Rabbi Meir was regarded as a great teller of parables. The Babylonian Talmud itself says, "When Rabbi Meir used to deliver his public discourses, a third was *halakah* (legal statements), a third *hagadah* (narrative or homiletic statements), and a third *meshalim*, consisted parables" (B. *Sanhedrin* 38b-39a); and again "Rabbi Meir had three hundred parables of foxes, and we have only three left." In addition, the *Mishnah* says, "When Rabbi Meir died, there were no more makers of parables" (M. *Sotah* 9:5).<sup>14</sup> Traditionally, among the Jews, this famous Talmudic *mashal* was regarded and created by Rabbi Meir, the famous Jewish generation of Tannaim who came before Jesus. A. Geiger also describes a comparison of Jesus' parable with the rabbinic *mashal*, in fact, the similarity of the figure, in that 'camel' is the metaphor used in the earlier oral Jewish Hebrew parable too, such as "*gamal le-hikanes be-neqev ha-mahath*" (a camel to go through the eye of a needle). Ironically, he never describes the identity of borrowing of the textual source of his quotation. In the study of textual criticism, in fact, the *mashal* has a similar with Jesus' parable "*gamla le-me'al be-herora de-mehaththa*, as something like the *mashal* itself where Aramaic fragment of the parable use the Aramaic equivalent *matlah*, the meaning is simile, oration, discursive or vision. Here, we even say that the *matlah* of Jesus in the Syro-Aramaic is rereading, retranslating, adopting, and reformulating from the earlier religious parable of Judaism, that it is only a repetition *per se*.<sup>15</sup>

Certainly, on one hand, there is a *matlah* of Jesus which dealing with the Rabbinic *mashal*, and on the other hand, the *matsal* of Quran is also relating to the Jesus' *matlah*. Linguistically, we have to compare the Semitic words which were used in the parables of three Abrahamic faiths; (1) the Mishnaic-Hebrew; *ma'ila*, and *mahtha*, (2) the Masoretic Hebrew; *gamal* and *mahath*, (3) the Syro-Aramaic; *gamla* and *mehaththa*, and (4) the Quranic Arabic words; *jamal* and *hiyath*. However, those Semitic words refer to the same semantics;

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Matthew 19:24, 23:24, the Aramaic Scriptures, *The New Testament: Peshitta, op.cit.*, 25, cf. the Greek Gospel use the Greek term *kamelon*, and in the Latin Gospel, *camelum*. Augustinus, *Novum Testamentum, op.cit.*, 65.

<sup>13</sup> Abraham Geiger, *Judaism and Islam*, New York : KTAV Publishing House, 1970, 52-53.

<sup>14</sup> Harvey K. McArthur & Robert M. Johnston, *They Also Taught in Parables: Rabbinic Parables from the First Centuries of the Christian Era*, Michigan: Academie Books, 1990, 7-8

<sup>15</sup> For further information about the Jewish roots of Jesus parables, see Joachim Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus*, New York: Scribner, 1976, cf. David Flusser, "The Parables of Jesus and the Parables in Rabbinic Literature" (Hebrew) in *Yahadut Umekorot ha-Natsrut: Mehqarim Umasot*, Jewish Sources in Early Christianity: Studies and Essay, Tel Aviv: Workers Library, 1979

*ma'ila*, *gamal*, *gamla*, and *jamal* mean 'camel', and the others; *mahtha*, *mahath*, *mehaththa*, and *hiyath* mean 'needle.' Those words were originally derived from the common Semitic legacy, and the words were as possible then used to express the Semitic parables among the Hebrew Jews, the Arab Jews, the Syro-Aramaic Christians, the Arab Christians, the Arab Pagans, and later, the Arab Moslems.

If we analyze these Semitic parables, there are various assumptions. First, if the origins of oral Jewish *mashal* was probably quoted from a collection of Mishnaic or Talmudic sacred parables in the Tannaitic period (*ha-meshalim bitkufat ha-Tannaim*), we then regard that this *mashal* is automatically 'revelation' without reserve, as well as the written Jewish *mashal* in the *Torah she be-'alphe*, Jesus' *matlah* in the Gospel, or the Arabic *matsal* in the Quran. In other words, we have an assumption that all written parables on the metaphorical figure of 'camel-needle' in the Semitic Holy Books are the 'given revelations' in three different religious contextual versions. It also indicates that Jesus' *matlah* itself was a form of the Evangelized-Judaic *mashal* which was directly adopted and adapted from the *Mishnah* or from the *Talmud*, and other, the Quranic Arabic *matsal* was also a form of Islamized-Christian *matlah*, or a form of Islamized-Jewish *mashal*, or a form the Islamized Jewish-Christian *matsal*, or a form of Islamized-Arabic *matsal* which it was directly adopted from Ishmael's sacred library. Thus, both Christian and Islamic sacred parable texts *per se*, however, are unconscious or the heavenly automatic quotation, given without quotation marks. And, the Arabic *matsal* in the Quranic Arabic version, is a progressive *matsal* in order to announce the hierarchic revelation of the Semitic Sacred Texts; the *Torah*, the *Injil* and the *Qur'an* in the discourse of Abrahamitic culture. It means that God Himself has retold to the prophets in different languages, and in different background of their own cultures diachronically. In this regard, intertextuality of the Semitic Holy Texts can usually understood as deliberate extraction of a discourse or discursive element (decontextualisation) from one setting and its insertion into another (recontextualisation) within the totality of previous or diachronic sacred texts of which it was a transformation. Second, if the *matlah* of Jesus was originally derived from the oral Jewish *mashal* (not the written Jewish *mashal*), and the Quranic Arabic *matsal* was also derived from oral Jewish *mashal* in Arabic, or adopted from a 'literal translation' of the Syro-Aramaic *matlah* in the Arabic, we have to regard that both Gospel and Quranic parables, are also 'revelations' because of God's will to take over the profane Jewish *mashal* in both Gospel and Quran as well as the Arabic *matlah* itself in the Quran to reveal His message which it was adopted from the Arab episteme. In the light of the Gospel and the Quran, the oral Jewish parable as a form of an unsacred literary material discourse, obviously incarnated to be 'holy.' Also indirectly, in the Quranic perspective, the Arabic *matlah* which is not 'the original revelation, but 'the translated revelation' of the written Syro-Aramaic *matlah* is 'holy.' It means that the Arabic Jewish *mashal* which was already translated from the Hebrew and the Syro-Aramaic *matlah* which was also translated into Arabic by the Jewish Arabs or Aramaic Christians in both forms of spoken and written Arabic texts, are historically referring to a fragment of 'the earthly textual material' as the texts 'beyond revelation' (to the



Jewish *mashal*) and 'unoriginal/ translated revelation' (to the Aramaic *matlah*), but the Quran *an sich* then baptizes them as a part of the heavenly text, according to the corpus of the Quran. Therefore, to discuss about the Quranic *matsal* text, I have a conclusion that the Jewish *mashal* (a form of an unsacred literary material) or Christian *matlah* (a form of a translated sacred literary) in Arabic as the textual sources of the Quran in the form of the Arabic simile, is really not the 'divine words', but, the Quranic Arabic *matsal* text itself (in both spoken and written) in the corpus of the Quran *an sich* is 'a revelation' (although the roots of Quranic *matsal* related to the 'translations' of the spoken or written textual materials' of both different communities). In other words, only the unsacred texts and translated texts of pre-Islamic sacred texts within the Quranic holy text is 'taken for granted' as the revelation. Of course, not only that, the Arabic *matsal* in the form of Quraish dialect is not 'the sacred words', but the *matsal* in the Quranic Quraish dialect *per se* is only 'the divine words.' In this context, the making of Quranic Arabic *matsal* text is only 'a transformation' through the intertextuality of many tensions; profane-sacred or sacred-sacred textual phenomena of the Abrahamic texts linguistically.

Obviously, by rereading both Scriptures, we can not assume that the verse of *al-A'raf* 7:40 of the Quran is 'a copy', 'an imitation', or 'an Arabic quasi-text' of Matthew 19:24 because of the Quranic Arabic *matsal* identity is like Jesus' *matlah* in the Syro-Aramaic Gospel. Logically, if we regard like that, we must also claim that the verse of Matthew 19:24 is 'a copy', 'an imitation', or 'an Aramaic quasi Jewish text' because of Jesus' *matlah* which was literally adopted from the *Talmud* or the *Mishnah*. Therefore, we can not regard the Quranic verse as 'a quasi-revelation', but a 'repetition of original Syro-Aramaic revelation' as well as the verse in the Gospel of Matthew, a 'repetition of original Hebrew revelation' in the context of heavenly message evolution. Although both verses use indifferent parable (because of the similarity of the metaphor, 'camel-needle'), as a part of both texts in the form of hyperbolic literary formula, but the other part of those texts in the form of 'essential message formula' is different. Jesus spoke of the difficulty of attaining Paradise for 'rich man', and the Quran spoke of the difficulty of attaining Paradise for 'those who reject signs of God.' The different part of the Quranic verse which is different with Matthew version, proves that the making of the verse came from God. Meanwhile, the indifferent part of both texts was originally 'unsacred' and inherited from the common Semitic parable which then became 'sacred', according to both Holy Books *via* the process of revelation. But, we have to understand that the making of this indifferent part of both verses was originally 'a public literary discourse', created by Jews and Arabs before Jesus and Muhammad. Both prophets only uttered and used it again to be a literary medium as a part of 'revealed text.' Thus, we can understand that the similarity of the parable texts of both verses in those Semitic Scriptures, however, can be reread as a 'repetition' of 'original revelations which God himself has translated diachronically, and the origins of those parables were culturally borrowed, adopted, adapted by the same God from 'the mosaic of earthly popular literary thinking' of Israelite and Ishmaelite communities to reveal His heavenly message. Therefore, we

then rethink the identity of 'sacredness' of Jesus' *matlah*, and the Quranic *matsal* in the corpus of the written sacred texts, as 'taken for granted texts' can not be rejected as a medium of revelation. Also, the use of Syro-Aramaic words in the Quranic Arabic text or the use of 'something like' the Syro-Aramaic parable in the Quran by rereading of the Scriptures, however, prove clearly the continuum of the Semitic common heritage of 'Abrahamic textual monument' in cross-languages, cross-cultures, and interfaith.

However, to understand the 'common heritage' of textually evidences of both *Peshitta* and Quran about the similar issue, I will first investigate it through the concept of Abrahamic patron system, like the words of Bernard Lewis, a modern Jewish scholar, says as follows:

"There are indeed certain resemblances between the position of the ulama in Islamic life and that of the rabbinate in Jewish community. Neither the 'alim, the singular of 'ulama, nor the rabbi is an ordained priest; neither has any sacerdotal office. Neither Judaism nor Islam has sacraments, altars, ordination, or priestly mediation. There is no religious office that an 'alim or rabbi can perform that any ordinary adult male believer, possessing the necessary knowledge, can not perform equally well. They acquire their status through knowledge, learning, and recognition, which becomes a form of certification - the 'semicha'<sup>16</sup> of the rabbi closely resembling the 'ijazah for a new 'alim whose receives from his teacher."<sup>17</sup>

It means that when the divine Semitic knowledge of Judaism, the Jewish Christianity, including the Aramaic Christianity, and Islam; are textually transmitted by the rabbi, rahib, and 'alim as the Abrahamic teachers, the divine words can be transmitted and transformed to their disciples, as a new rabbi, an new rahib and a new 'alim. The Moslems consider 'alim as principally a religious patron, whose advice and exemplary lives are to be followed. The 'alim, therefore, has much authority in interpreting the teachings and the practice of Islam. People choose to follow him because they recognize certain qualities in him. In the *Abu Ishaq al-Shatibi's* words, "*al-mufti qaimun fil ummah maqama an-Nabiy. Fal awwalu yakunu fihi mubaligha, wast-tsanii yakunu fihi qaiman maqamahu fi anshu al-ahkam, wa inshu al-ahkam innama hurwa li-shari*". (the ulama or mufti stand before the Moslem community in the same place as the Prophet Mohammad stood. First, he has a position as a messenger/ bearer of news. Second, he stand in the same place of the Prophet in setting up the Law, and the Law establishment refers to the *Shari'ah*).<sup>18</sup> The Jews and Aramic Christians also regard that Rabbi Jesus or other rabbi(s) as a religious patron, whose the teachings and exemplary lives

<sup>16</sup> The tradition of *semicha* is a legal ceremony for transmitting and transforming the religious knowledge among the rabbis in Hebraic culture. But, in the New Testament, this tradition was also elaborated and practiced by early Father of the Church in other rituals. (see. Acts 9:12; I Timothy 5:22)

<sup>17</sup> Bernard Lewis, *The Jews of Islam*, Princeton-New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1987, 79.

<sup>18</sup> Abu Ishaq al-Shatibi, *Al-Muwafaqat fi Ushul As-Shari'ah*, vo.4, Beirut: Dar Kutub Ilmiyyah, 1997, 178

are to be followed. The *rabbi*, therefore, has much authority in explaining the whole *Mishnah Torah*, the *Midrashim*, and other rabbinical writings. The Jews and Aramaic Christians choose to follow the *rabbi* because they know certain qualities in him. In the words of Rabbi Jesus the Christ, “*ha-Soferim ve ha-Ferushim yoshevim ‘al kisse Moshe. Laken kol asher yomru lakhem ‘ashu ve shimru.*” (the Scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat. All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do).<sup>19</sup> The study of even purely legal matters is regarded in both religions as worship. The holy men of Judaism or Christianity as in Islam are not priests or monks, but the students of the divinely-revealed message. Thus, the *rabbi* occupy the same place and perform the same functions as do the *‘alim* among Moslems community. The position of *‘alim* or of *rabbi* is really natural because Islam like Judaism or Aramaic Christianity, is a religion of *halachah* (in Arabic, *shari’ah*) which regulates minutely all aspects of life; law, worship, ethics, and social etiquette. The relationship between the *halachah* and the *shari’ah* is the very essence and core of Abrahamic religions. Therefore, the religious teachings of Islam is then based on the Oral Tradition of Prophet Muhammad, the *Musnad*, and the Judaism or Hebraic Christianity is also based on the Oral Torah of Moses’ or Jesus’, the *Mishnah*. The *Mishnah* and *Musnad* or the *Pesher* of Jesus in the Gospel and the *Tafsir* of Muhammad the Prophet on the Quran are the form of symbolic acts *sunnah fi’liyyah* in Arabic or *ma’ashim* in Hebrew, and the sayings of the holy men, *sunnah qauliyyah* in Arabic or *devarim* in Hebrew.

However, as a form of transforming of spiritual heritage between Islam and Aramaic Christianity within the Quran and the Gospel, we are able to prove the existence of transmitting system of one revelation have resemblances *via* rereading of the Scriptures in many versions.

### 3. The Semitized Paternoster in the Abrahamic Texts

In the literary criticism of the Bible, in fact there are many data to confirm the intertextuality of the Ancient Near Eastern religious texts relating to the Old Testament, especially about the sacred stories of Biblical heroes, such as *Noah*, *Abraham*, etc. It means that the Biblical text has many parallels with the *Ras Shamra* (the Ugarit texts), the Ancient Canaan stories, and the *Hammurabi* texts. Also, there are many data to confirm the influence of the Jewish rabbinical writings to Jesus’ words. according to St. Mark, Jesus said on the Cross in Aramaic “*Eloi, eloi lama sabakhtani*” (Mark 15:34); it is a proof that Jesus was familiar with the reading text of Aramaic Psalm 22:2, a part of *Targum* (cf. Arab: *Tarjim*; the *TaNaKH* in Aramaic which was compiled before the life of Jesus), because the Aramaic text has actually been written in it. He was also perhaps familiar with the reading text of Hebrew Psalm 22:2, a part of *TaNaKH* (the Hebrew Scripture); because in the Hebrew Psalm has been written “*Eli, eli lama azvatani*”. In this context, we can interpret that the

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<sup>19</sup> *Sefry ha-Berit ha-Hadasha: Targum Hadash*, Jerusalem: United Bible Societies, 1976, 65. cf. *The Holy Bible: Authorized King James Version*, New York: The Gideon International, 1961, 873

Christian texts, however, have parallels within similarities and differences in the paradigm of intertextuality which rooted in the Jewish rabbinical text.

Meanwhile, the intertextuality between the Aramaic-Bible and the Quran or the *Musnad* (the Hadithic Books of Islam, cf. Hebrew: the *Mishnah*) also confirms many data; such as the stories of holy persons, sacred events, and especially about the imagery of “Christian Jesus” (Aramaic Jesus) in the fourfold Gospel with relating to the imagery of “Muslim Jesus” in both Islamic sources. In the *Musnad* of Imam Nasā'i (known as *Sunan Nasa'i*) and *Sunan Abu Dawud*, for example, there is the other Jesus' Prayer (Islamic version) which refers to “Muhammad's Prayer” (known as “*Shifa'iyyah*”) in the Arabic which has a parallel text with Christian version. This Islamic text, however, refers to the concept of sacred textual continuity from the languages of Christianized-Aramaic to Islamized-Arabic. And, this intertextuality, is not referring to the theory of “plagiarism”, but it is dealing with the concept of “contextualization” of the cultural text *per se* diachronically *via* the divine words of God.

In the history of Christianity, the principle denominations of Christians at the time, whether Jacobites, Melkites, Nestorians, or Copts, volubly expressed their ecclesial and cultural identities in the Western Aramaic dialect of Syriac, Greek, Eastern Aramaic dialect of Syriac, and Coptic; the principle languages of early Christianity in the East. However, in order to implement the Arabized-Aramaic ecclesial indigenization among the Arab Christians, Mar Yuhanna Abu Sedra II, the Patriarch of Syrian Orthodox (631-648 AD) also translated the New Testament into Arabic. But, the *Paternoster* text, a part of the New Testament itself was originally written in Aramaic words before Islam which was then called the text of *Avon de-Bashmaya*, in the compilation of the *Peshitta*. And, at that time, the Arab Christians usually also used the *Paternoster* orally in Arabic side by side with Aramaic to express the Aramaic ecclesial thought in Arabic culture. The question is, how to discover the intertextual chains between the *Shifa'iyyah* text and Aramaic *Paternoster* through the indigenous words of the Arabic *Paternoster* text? In this context, we have to compare both versions to dig up the intertextuality of the text in two levels; (i) the *Paternoster* from Aramaic (used by Syrians) to Arabic (used by Arab Christians), (ii) the *Paternoster* from Arabic (used by Arab Christians) to the Arabic *Shifa'iyyah* (used by Moslems).

## 1. The Paternoster in the Syro-Aramaic

*Obuh ti bismo*  
Our Father which art in the heaven  
*Yithqaddash eshmakh*  
Hallowed be Thy name  
*Yitel-e malkhutakh*  
Thy kingdom come  
*Yitkan-ti theba'eleh*  
Thy will be done  
*A-ar'a ukhmil bishmo*  
On earth as it is in the heaven

*Appleh lekhhmah imod yi'ayyennah yomah*  
 Give us this day our daily bread  
*Khufelerh htiyotah*  
 And forgive us our debts  
*Ukhmil anah makhfir lil-ti uh 'elayhun htiyotun*  
 As we forgive our debtors  
*La th'allilennah bithi-grebtha*  
 And lead us not into temptation  
*Bess has-slannah mbistha*  
 But deliver us from evil  
*Li'anne lekh molka e-we hayla*  
 For thine is the kingdom and the power  
*Ew'odimta hos wil 'olam il 'olam. Amen*  
 And the glory, forever and ever. Amen.<sup>20</sup>

## 2. The Paternoster in the Arabic.

*Abana-lladzi fis samawat*  
 Our Father who art in the heaven  
*Liyataqaddasa ismuk*  
 Hallowed be Thy name  
*Liya'ti malakutuk*  
 Thy kingdom come  
*Litakun mashi'atuk*  
 Thy will be done  
*Kama fis sama'i kadzalika 'ala al-ardh*  
 On earth as it is in the heaven  
*Khubsana kafafana a'tinal yaum*  
 Give us this day our daily bread  
*Wa aghfir lana dzunubana*  
 And forgive us our debts  
*Kama naghfiru nahnu aidhan lil mudznibina ilaina*  
 As we forgive our debtors  
*Wala tudkhillna fi tajribah*  
 And lead us not into temptation  
*Lakin najjina minash shirir*  
 But deliver us from evil  
*Li-anna laka al-mulka, wa al-quwwata*  
 For thine is the kingdom and the power  
*Wa tasbikhata ilal abad al-abadin. Amin.*  
 And the glory, forever, and ever. Amen.<sup>21</sup>

## 3. The Shifa'iyah in the Arabic

<sup>20</sup> Hanna Yoesef Francis, *The Spoken Aramaic of Ma'loula*, Damascus: Issam Hannan Francis, 2002, 16.

<sup>21</sup> Injil Mattay 6:9-13, quoted from the text of Van Dick, *Al-Injil Al-'Ahd al-Jadid*, Qahirah/Cairo: Dar al-Kitab al-Muqaddas fi al-Shariq al-Ausath, 1993

*Rabbuna-lladzi fis samawat*  
 Our Lord which art in the heaven  
*Wa taqaddasa ismuk*  
 And hallowed be Thy name  
*Amruka fis sama'i wa al-ardh*  
 Thy will be done in the heaven and earth  
*Kama rahmatuka fis sama'*  
 As Thy merciful in the heaven  
*Faj'al rahmataka fi al-ardh*  
 Thy merciful be done on the earth  
*Faghfir lana haubana wa khathayana*  
 Forgive us our debts and sins  
*Anta Rabbu al-thayyibin*  
 You are the Lord of Most Gracious  
*Anzil rahmatan min rahmatik*  
 Descend a mercy from Thy merciful  
*Wa shifa'an min shifa'ika 'ala hadza al-waj.*  
 And a healing from Thy healings to this illness.<sup>22</sup>

After reading the texts, word by word, phrase by phrase, or sentence by sentence in Aramaic and Arabic, critical readers (and not *ipse dixit* readers) will find a textual parallelism of divine prayer versions in the sacred books of Islam and Christianity, such as *shmo* (lit. 'sky', Aramaic), *sam□w□t* (cf. *sam□'* lit. 'sky', Arabic), *htiyotun* (lit. 'our sins', Aramaic), *khathayana* (lit. 'our sins', Arabic), *khufirleh* (lit. 'forgive us', Aramaic), *faghfir lana* (lit. 'forgive us', Arabic), *yithqaddash* (lit. 'hallowed', Aramaic), *taqaddasa* (lit. 'hallowed', Arabic), *eshmakh* (lit. 'Thy name', Aramaic), *ismuk* (lit. 'Thy name', Arabic), etc. These textual evidences indicate the chains of Semitic words diachronically, and at the same time, to identify how the religious culture of Arab Christians developed before Islam. Meanwhile, in the Semitic tradition, as far as I knew, the claim of three "divine prayer" originally rooted from the *Abrahamic faith*; the *Kaddish* (Judaism), the *Paternoster* (Christianity), and the *Shifa'iyyah* (Islam). In the *Siddur*, a book of Jewish prayer, there is the *Rabbi's Kaddish* which the text has a similarity with the *Paternoster*. In pre-Christian era, the *Rabbi's Kaddish* was already written in the Mishnaic Hebrew, a hybrid-Hebrew, which was influenced by the Aramaic vocabularies, and the Jews usually recited it in the synagogues in the presence of *minyán* (the Jewish congregation). Therefore, in order to get a clear description about the textual parallelism between the divine prayer of *Rabbi's Kaddish* and the *Paternoster*, I quote the text of *Rabbi's Kaddish*, which is derived from an authoritative rabbinical *Siddur* book, and transliterated with ashkenazic pronunciation:

<sup>22</sup> Quoted from Hafidz Bahtiar, *Risalah Doa Mujarab*, Surabaya: Apollo, 2001, 45. cf. Oddbjorn Leirvik, *Images of Jesus Christ in Islam*, Uppsala: Swedish Institute of Missionary Research, 1999, 51

#### 4. The Rabbi's Kaddish in the Mishnaic Hebrew

*Yisgadal ve yiskadash sh'mei rabbow*  
May His great Name grow exalted and sanctified  
*b'allmatw dee v'raw chir'usei*  
in the world that He created as He willed  
*V'yamlich malchusei, b'chayeichon*  
May he give reign to His kingship in your life times,  
*uv'yomeichon, uv'chayei d'chol beis Yisroel,*  
and in your days, the life times of the entire family of Israel,  
*ba'agawlaw u'vizman kawriv,*  
swiftly and soon,  
*V'imru: Amien.*  
Now respond: Amen.  
*Y'hei sh'mei rabbaw m'vatwah l'allam u'l'allmei allmayaw.*  
May His great Name be blessed forever and ever.<sup>23</sup>

Based on the rabbinical or biblical relationship and intertextual evidence, we can identify that the Jewish *Rabbi's Kaddish* is a prototype of Christian *Paternoster*, and in the corpus of ecclesial liturgy, it is able to be regarded as a distinctive identity. Meanwhile, based on the biblical, hadithic, and historical evidence, we can also identify that the *Paternoster* is a prototype of Islamic divine prayer, *Shifa'iyah*. Therefore, on the one hand, in the paradigm of intertextuality of Semitic Books, the divine transmitting system of sacred texts among Judaism, Christianity, and Islam is a natural relationship, so that why Islam states that Judaism and Christianity are categorized as *Ahl al-Kitab* (Scriptural Societies). On the other hand, it indicates that in the beginning, the text basically rooted from the archaic prayer of the Semitic Patriarch, Abraham, through the divine oral tradition of the archaic Semitic text beyond the text of the Hebrew *Bible*, and it precisely refers to the liturgical text of *Babel* (the Babylonian tradition) in the era of Abraham. Based on the archeology of biblical literary writings as an authoritative knowledge evidence of archeological texts, which so called the texts of *Babel* in Akkadian language, however, were actually extinct, as well as the Akkadian liturgical text of *tithe* (Hebrew: *ma'asher*, see Genesis 14:20 "*va yiten lo ma'asher mikol*" [and he gave him a tithe of all], cf. Leviticus 27:30; Numeri 18:21, 24; Deuteronomium 26:12), or *circumcision covenant* (Hebrew: *Berit ha-milah*), as a part of Abrahamic traditions. Both Abrahamic traditions; *Berit ha-milah* and *ma'asher*, in this context, however, are the elements of pre-existing Hebraic Jewish texts in the Bible, but, on the other hand, liturgical Abrahamic text of *Babel* about "something like Rabbi's Kaddish" becomes the Lost Abrahamic Prayer, or it is possible able to be called as the Semitic Prayer of Q (from *Quelle*, German for source); then through the process of rewriting, it became the prime foundation for the

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<sup>23</sup> Rabbi Meir Zlotowitz (ed.), *Siddur Ahabath Shalom*, Brooklyn: Mesorah Publications, Ltd., 1996, 52

Rabbi's Kaddish of the Judaism. It means that if the Prayer of Q which refers to the Akkadian prayer text of Abraham can be regarded as the Lost Semitic Prayer or the Lost Abrahamic Prayer, we can also claim that the Arabic Prayer text of Muhammad (the *Shifa'iyyah*) is able to be regarded as the Last Semitic Prayer or the Last Abrahamic Prayer. In other words, the *Quelle* Prayer refers to the "Lost Semitic Tradition, and the *Shifa'iyyah* Prayer refers to the "Last Semitic Tradition."

Therefore, we can also analyze that the *Paternoster* in the study of literary criticism is a "reformulation" of the Jewish *Kaddish*, as well as the *Shifa'iyyah* is a "reformulation" of the Christian *Paternoster* itself. Meanwhile, the *Kaddish per se* was basically derived from the elements of liturgical readings of the archaic prayer of the Jewish Patriarch, Abraham, in the Akkadian liturgy, which was diachronically inherited from one generation to the next generation in the cross-culture and cross-language. It also means that it is able to be related to the chain of transmitting system (Greek:  $\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square$  "*Paredosan*", cf. Latin: *tradiderunt*, dealing with the "*traditio*" in Latin, literally means "tradition") of the heavenly words among the *Abrahamic* religions. It is a proof of the common roots *via* translation (Latin: *traduttori*) from the source language to the target language or the replacement of textual material in one language by equivalent textual material in another, so that the textual similarities in the family of Semitic Scriptures linguistically do not refer to the textual borrowing *an sich*, but a proof of their common origin. In this context, the intertextuality of the reading texts of "Semitic Sacred Books" is a natural discourse in the domain of *Abrahamic* religious communities between Judaism and Christianity, as well as the textual relationship between Christianity & Islam.

#### 4. Conclusion

We can not deny that there are many similarities in the Semitic texts, mainly in the Abrahamic tradition. Through rereading the texts, and by using the theory of intertextuality, we find various Semitic words in the paradigm of Abrahamic theological formula. It is not only referring to the common origin, but also to prove the texts as the secretive continuum of Babel heritage in the sacred discourses of the Judaism, Christianity, and Islam itself.

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