

**RESEARCH TITLE**

**Tayyeb Tizini's Approach to the Quran From the Misconception of Textual Historicity to the Uncritical Adoption of Orientalist Suspicious**

**Author: DR. Sayd Obaydi<sup>[1]</sup>, Translator: Mohamed Amarir<sup>[2]</sup>**

<sup>[1]</sup> - Dr. Sayd Obaydi: A distinguished scholar and researcher specializing in interfaith dialogue and comparative religions. He holds a PhD in Semitic Studies and Comparative Religions from the prestigious Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah University in Fez. Dr. Abidi is an active member of the Laboratory of Religious Studies and Cognitive and Social Sciences, where he contributes his expertise to various research endeavours. Beyond his academic pursuits, Dr. Abidi is a dedicated community activist, recognized for his contributions to numerous literary and artistic seminars and conferences. His commitment to fostering understanding and bridging cultural divides has earned him widespread respect and admiration.

<sup>[2]</sup> – A Moroccan researcher and translator, PHD student, Ibn Zohr University, Agadir, Morocco.

Email: mohamarir82@gmail.com

HNSJ, 2024, 5(8); <https://doi.org/10.53796/hnsj58/8>

**Published at 01/08/2024**

**Accepted at 15/07/2024**

**Abstract**

This article criticizes interpretations of the Quran by Tayyeb Tizini, which resemble Orientalist views questioning the Quran's authenticity. The author defends the Quran's sanctity and warns against interpretations that undermine it.

The translation aims to Expose views that doubt the Quran, Advocate for traditional Islamic principles and Provide an accurate picture of Islam for English speakers. It combines literal and idiomatic translation while preserving the original text's essence and cultural context.

**Key Words:** Tayyeb Tizini, Quran, modernist reading, textual historicity, Orientalists suspicion.

## Introduction

This article presents a critical analysis of Tayyeb Tizini's<sup>[1]</sup> ideas in his book "The Quranic Text in the Face of the Problem of Structure and Reading"<sup>[2]</sup> regarding the Holy Quran, which are considered an extension of the Orientalist approach that seeks to undermine Islam by questioning the authenticity and integrity of the Quranic text.

Obaydi highlights that Tezini's ideas closely align with those of Orientalists who have long endeavoured to deconstruct the sanctity and historical accuracy of the Holy Quran. He warns against adopting such interpretations, which threaten to diminish the status of the Holy Quran as the infallible word of Allah and the cornerstone of Islamic religion.

Therefore, this translation aims to achieve three primary objectives:

- To raise awareness of Tizini's ideas and similar viewpoints that attempt to chip away at Islam from within by offering interpretations that question the Quran's truth and completeness.
- To promote adherence to genuine Islamic principles based on authentic sources, rejecting deviant ideologies that seek to undermine the Holy Quran's authority and sanctity.
- To present an accurate picture of Islam, especially the holy Quran, to English readers and thinkers through precise translations of works that defend Islamic beliefs.

The translation follows best practices for academic research. It combines literal and idiomatic translation while preserving the original text's spirit and cultural context. The text is presented in clear English, but Quranic verses remain in Arabic with English translations provided. Additionally, some Arabic scientific terms are transliterated into Latin script with brief explanations.

## Tayyeb Tizini's Approach to the Quran

### From the Misconception of Textual Historicity

### to the Uncritical Adoption of Orientalist Suspicions<sup>[3]</sup>

In the wake of the Arab defeat in the late 1960s and amidst the intensifying cultural rivalry between the Arab and Western worlds, "modernist intellectual" projects emerged. Advocates of these projects called for a re-evaluation of the Arab and Islamic heritage, aiming to unravel the causes of Arab decline and backwardness and to propose remedies. Among these thinkers, some advocated for the marginalization of the Quran, viewing it as a historical text confined to a particular era that should not be surpassed. Others contended for a contemporary

[1] – DR. Tayyeb Tizini 1934-2019: A Syrian thinker, professor of political science and philosophy at the University of Damascus, a supporter of nationalist Marxist thought. He was chosen as one of the hundred philosophers in the world for the twentieth century in 1998 by the German-French philosophical foundation Concordia. Born in the city of Homs, he left for Turkey after completing his primary education, then to Britain and then to Germany to complete his philosophy studies there and obtain a doctorate, then a professorship in philosophical sciences. His first book was published in German in 1972 under the title "Introduction to Medieval Arabic Philosophy", followed by his works in Arabic, the most important of which are: "Project for a New Vision of Arab Thought in the Middle Ages", "Roger Garaudy After Silence", "On a Proposed Theory on the Issue of Arab Heritage", "Arab Thought in Its Early Beginnings and Horizons", "From Yahweh to God", "The Qur'anic Text in the Face of the Problem of Structure and Reading", "From Theology to Medieval Arabic Philosophy", "On the Current Intellectual Debate", "Chapters in Arab Political Thought", "From Western Orientalism to Moroccan Occidentalism", "From the Trilogy of Corruption to Issues of Civil Society", "A Statement on Arab Renaissance and Enlightenment", "On the Problems of Revolution and Culture in the Third World", as well as publishing hundreds of research papers and studies on issues of Arab and world thought, and participated in many Arab regional and international conferences.

[2] - Tayyeb Tizini published his book in Arabic "النص القرآني أمام إشكالية البنية والقراءة" in 2003. This book is considered the fifth part in the series of his Project for a New Vision of Arab Thought, which Tizini initiated in the 1970s.

[3] - The original title of this article was: "طبيب تيزيني والقرآن الكريم: من وهم تاريخية النص الى اجترار شبهات المستشرقين"، دراسات. "طبيب تيزيني والقرآن الكريم: من وهم تاريخية النص الى اجترار شبهات المستشرقين"، دراسات. ع: 1، السنة الخامسة - ربيع 2018م 1439هـ استشرافية، ع: 1، السنة الخامسة - ربيع 2018م 1439هـ

reinterpretation of religious texts, an approach that, at best, sought to expunge the universal concepts from the religious text and deny its timeless and universal applicability. This endeavour aimed to circumvent the Quran's inherent universality by relegating it to the realm of history, perceiving it as a historical text bound by historical and circumstantial constraints that would fade with the passage of time. These approaches sought to anchor the Quran within the contexts of its revelation and restrict its interpretation through delving into issues such as the reasons for revelation, abrogation, Meccan and Medinan verses and other related matters.

Among these projects is that of Tayyeb Tizini, author of the book "The Quranic Text in the Face of the Problem of Structure and Reading" In this work, Tizini offers a critique of the mindset prevalent among Islamists, who often fail to adequately consider the profound impact of historical shifts. Consequently, they struggle to grasp the distinction between the status of the Islamic state and the sharia and legal rulings that were in effect at that time, and the realities of the contemporary world. As they strive to implement Islamic sharia law, they find themselves alienated and disillusioned with the modern world, inadvertently fuelling conspiracy theories. In response, Tizini champions the validity of both contemporary and historical readings of the Quran, particularly, and of sharia texts in general. He envisions such readings as a means of ensuring Islam's relevance in the modern world. However, as we will explore later in this study, this approach, in essence, involves manipulating sharia meanings, distorting texts, and interpreting them in a manner that deviates from their intended purpose. It merely echoes the efforts of Orientalists who have dedicated their lives to undermining this religion and dismantling its foundations. Tizini adamantly asserts the need to interpret the entire Quran in light of the historical circumstances surrounding its initial revelation. This, in his view, implies that the religious text: (Al-wahay: Quranic revelation) forfeits its capacity to generate rulings, as it becomes inextricably linked to a bygone era. Furthermore, it entails the perpetuation of dragging Islam into endorsing and legitimizing the current reality. However, this thinker overlooks the Quran's inherent capacity to accommodate diverse interpretations and (Ijtihad: independent reasoning), its compatibility with a wide range of (Al-madahib: sects) and philosophies, and its adaptability to evolving circumstances and conditions.

Tizini has unequivocally advocated, on multiple occasions, for a rereading and reinterpretation of the Quranic text in alignment with the contemporary age, even if this entails the temporary suspension of certain verses and rulings. He asserts: "A collection of Quranic precepts and edicts has been placed in abeyance for centuries. The rudimentary form of this suspension manifested as the doctrine of (Al-naskh: abrogation), when it became evident to the Prophet (Muhammad peace be upon him) that specific verses were no longer capable of addressing the prevailing realities of their time. This practice acquired a Quranic character, signifying that it was accepted as a definitive ruling. The question now presents itself: If the Prophet himself, through divine revelation, deemed it necessary to review certain verses, why is it not permissible for believers, who are subject to the continuous fluctuations of social change, to undertake such an endeavour, particularly – and here lies the profound implication – for those for whom the text was intended (all humanity)? The practice of (Al-mutaa: temporary marriage) and (Al-riq: the institution of slavery) have all been suspended, signifying – and continuing to signify – that the prevailing social context serves as the foundation for judgment in this matter, even if this is done subtly or indirectly"[4].

Along similar lines, Tizini contends that the Quran's inclusion of (al-muhkam : the clear verse) and (al-mutashabih: the ambiguous)" has paved the way and incentivized a widespread movement of re-examining and critiquing the Quranic text. He explains: "The issue of the

طبيب تيزيني، النصّ القرآني أمام إشكالية البنية والقراءة، دار البناييع للنشر والتوزيع، دمشق، ط 1، 1997، ص 363 – [4]

clear and the ambiguous emerged because the text explicitly addressed and acknowledged it, thus prompting individuals – driven by diverse ideological leanings and aspirations, equipped with a range of cognitive tools – to maintain an openness to an expanding process of scrutinizing, dissecting, analysing, criticizing and adapting the Quranic text. This endeavour aimed to discern what constitutes the clear and what falls under the ambiguous... Notably, this issue of the clear and the ambiguous will intensify into a significant and perilous political and ideological escalation following the Prophet's demise and the rise of the question of (the caliphate: Islamic governance). In this context, we recall, for instance, the (Saqifah meeting) and the tumultuous events that ensued, where all those involved, whether as leaders or supporters, wielded their own Quranic and legal justifications"<sup>[5]</sup>.

The text's acknowledgement of its own inherent ambiguity alongside its clear passages serves as a justification for interpretive interventions and diverse rereading. This notion is further affirmed by Tizini, who observes: "Indeed, the Qur'anic text itself explicitly recognizes that its content encompasses both the clear and the ambiguous. As a result, it engages in a profound intellectual exercise that culminates in what we can term 'consciousness of consciousness. With a clear awareness, stemming from its unique religious lexicon, of the problematic structure underlying its ideological framework... by leaving itself open to interpretive possibilities, it has exposed itself to an ongoing structural process of penetration, infiltration, and transgression that cannot be halted"<sup>[6]</sup>.

One of Tizini's profound insights in his Quranic studies is his challenge to the traditional understanding of the Prophet Muhammad's illiteracy as a cornerstone of (Idjaz: the Quran's miraculous nature). He argues: "We decisively question the prevailing notion, which emerged within the context of the development and subsequent solidification of Islamic thought after Muhammad, that the Quran's miraculous nature lies, in one of its key aspects, in the Prophet's illiteracy, meaning his inability to read or write. This interpretation of illiteracy, however, is inaccurate"<sup>[7]</sup>.

Upon closer examination, this claim reveals itself to be a mere echo of earlier Orientalist assertions, most notably those of (Montgomery Watt), who maintained that "traditional Islamic discourse portrays Muhammad as illiterate. However, this assertion is met with doubt by modern Western scholars. The underlying reason for this scepticism is that Muhammad's illiteracy is often invoked as a testament to the miraculous nature of the Quran's revelation. Paradoxically, many (Meccans: people living in Meka) were literate, leading to the logical inference that a successful merchant like Muhammad would have possessed some degree of literacy"<sup>[8]</sup>.

In essence, Tizini merely echoes the assertions of Orientalist scholars, claiming that the Quranic revelation is nothing more than a self-narrative of the Prophet. This eventually culminates in his assertion of the Quran's historicity, a notion that has been championed by various modern Quranic scholars. He explains: "The Quranic text embodies an open-ended structure, composed piecemeal in response to the events and circumstances that the Prophet encountered and actively engaged with, shaping his stance accordingly. This underscores the fact that the text revealed through divine inspiration maintains a direct and tangible connection to the realities of both believers and disbelievers, such that Muhammad was not detached from it... Taken as a whole, and situated within its historical and traditional context,

<sup>[5]</sup> – The same reference, p 239.

<sup>[6]</sup> - The same reference, p 241.

<sup>[7]</sup> - The same reference, p 295.

<sup>[8]</sup> – See : Jaafar Sheikh Idris, *المنظمة العربية للتربية والثقافة والعلوم 224. جعفر شيخ إدريس، مناهج المستشرقين في الدراسات العربية*، بتونس، 1985، ج 1، ص

the Quran emerges as a biography of the Prophet, chronicling the process of psychological, moral, religious and political development... that remarkably moulded his insightful personality. And this, in turn, gave rise to a compelling consequence of a group of Islamic jurists and writers embarked on an endeavour to extrapolate an order that they intended to serve as a legal position or a jurisprudential ruling. This order entails the principle that interpreting Quranic verses in light of the reasons for their revelation lends these verses a realistic dimension, ultimately establishing their historicity and necessitating their linkage to specific events. Consequently, the Quran should be interpreted according to the reasons for its revelation, not according to the generality of its wording"<sup>[9]</sup>.

Tizini's contention that connecting Quranic legal rulings to the circumstances of their revelation and limiting their applicability to those in connection with whom they were revealed is the epitome of accuracy. However, from our perspective, this entails the historicity of the content and the abrogation of the underlying concept in these verses, leaving the wording devoid of any function beyond its devotional purpose. Consequently, Quranic texts would be reduced to the status of "dead" and obsolete texts.

Tizini's exploration of the Quran extends beyond the association between Quranic rulings and their circumstances of revelation. He delves into the intricate tapestry of the Quranic text, uncovering significant contradictions and disparities within its verses and chapters, particularly between the Meccan and Medinan chapters. He observes: "The emphasis on freedom of the will that characterized the Meccan period transitioned to an increasingly absolute determinism following the migration... However, the issue becomes even more intricate... when we recognize that the evolution of Muhammad's personality did not follow a linear, unidimensional path. Consequently, it is inappropriate to view the two aforementioned phases (i.e. the Meccan and Medinan phases) as entirely consecutive historical periods, each independent of the other... For how are we to reconcile the existence of verses within the same phase that exhibit undeniable contradictions and inconsistencies, as apparent to anyone with a basic grasp of the Arabic language? Furthermore, how are we to address the presence of contradictory texts within the same chapter, or even within consecutive verses?"<sup>[10]</sup>.

Commenting on Tizini's remarks, it is crucial to note that they echo the doubts previously expressed by Orientalists who perceive the Quran as harbouring a multitude of contradictory and conflicting statements, and at times, even unreasonable ones. This, in their view, stems naturally from the Quran's human origin, which they associate with inherent weaknesses, imperfections and a susceptibility to error, along with other human characteristics"<sup>[11]</sup>.

Orientalist scholars have relentlessly endeavoured to prove the existence of contradictions within the Quran, seeking to substantiate their claim of the divine revelation's human authorship. (Goldziher), the most prominent figure among Orientalists, contends: "It is extremely difficult to derive a unified, harmonious and contradiction-free theological system from the Quran itself. The most critical and consequential religious knowledge that has been transmitted to us comprises only general outlines, and upon scrutinizing them in depth, we occasionally encounter conflicting teachings"<sup>[12]</sup>. The well-known "Encyclopaedia Britannica" echoes this sentiment, stating that "classifying the Quran's content poses a formidable challenge. Organizing it chronologically results in inconsistencies, as the subject

<sup>[9]</sup> - Tizini, previous reference, p 213-214.

<sup>[10]</sup> - The same reference, p 249-250.

<sup>[11]</sup> - Ahmed Muhamed Al-fadil, الاتجاه العلماني المعاصر في علوم القرآن: دراسة ونقد، مركز الناقد الثقافي، دمشق، ط 295. أحمد محمد الفاضل، الاتجاه العلماني المعاصر في علوم القرآن: دراسة ونقد، مركز الناقد الثقافي، دمشق، ط 295، ص 1، 2008، ص

<sup>[12]</sup> - Mahmoud Saad At-tablawi، الإسلام وجذور التحريف، مكتبة الأمانة، شبرا، ط 1، 1992، ص 89. محمود سعد الطبلوي، الإسلام وجذور التحريف، مكتبة الأمانة، شبرا، ط 1، 1992، ص 89.

matter addressed in certain passages varies depending on the historical period"<sup>[13]</sup>.

As alluded to earlier, Tizini's contribution is not characterized by originality but rather by a repetition of Orientalist rhetoric. These Orientalists have tirelessly endeavoured to raise doubts and cast aspersions upon the Quran. Their underlying motivation stems from the conviction that the Quran serves as the cornerstone of this faith; consequently, by sowing doubt and undermining its authority, they seek to dismantle the very edifice upon which the faith is built.

One of the conclusions Tizini draws in his Quranic study is the notion that the abrogation of verses and chapters occurs at the Prophet's discretion, independent of divine command. This concept is encapsulated in the phrase "the occurrence of abrogation within the Prophet's subjective realm". He explains: "There exists an exceptionally profound and intimate relationship between the concept of revelation and the Prophet's connection to it. This relationship is exemplified by the abrogation of a chapter taking place within the Prophet's subjective inner realm, without any direct external intervention. The underlying reason for this may be that the Prophet, as a social preacher and agent, discerns through his revelation that a particular chapter received from Allah does not adequately address the needs of the people to whom it is presented, and hence it is implicitly abrogated and rendered null and void"<sup>[14]</sup>.

The concept of revelation or abrogation originating from the self or psyche – suggesting that revelation is an internal psychological experience or intuition rather than an external command bestowed upon the recipient – is not exclusively espoused by Tizini. This notion finds resonance among many modernists<sup>[15]</sup>, particularly (Hichem Djait), who contends that "the great founders of religions shared this characteristic, at least in the sense that they devoted their lives to an inner compulsion and an internal calling"<sup>[16]</sup>. Djait further explains: "Revelation is essentially a sudden influx into the consciousness of words and meanings imbued with otherness. Revelation can also be inspired, implying that it is actively sought after and anticipated during the Medinan period. It was also conceivable that there was no divine vision or revelation, and that the Prophet spoke about Allah, His oneness, the order of the universe, the afterlife, worship and ethics from his own understanding, and he found followers who embraced his teachings. This was the case with (Mani), and to a lesser extent with (Zoroaster) and (Buddha)"<sup>[17]</sup>.

The concept of "psychological revelation or abrogation" or the notion that "the Quran is an effusion of Muhammad's thoughts or an imprint of his inspiration, implying that it is a product of his personal reflections, intellectual musings and spiritual contemplations" is a theory ascribed to the Orientalist (Montet) and further developed by (Emile Dermenghem). At its core, this theory proposes that revelation is an inspiration that originates from the soul of the prophet to whom it is revealed, not from an external source. This is because the lofty aspirations of his soul, his pure heart, his unwavering faith in Allah and the obligation to worship Him, and his renunciation of other forms of worship, such as idolatry and inherited traditions, collectively exert an influence that manifests in his mind and generates visions and spiritual states in his subconscious. Consequently, he perceives what he believes to be divine

[13] – Fadel Hassan Abbas, عمان، ط 1، 2000، ص 99. فضل حسن عباس، قضايا قرآنية في الموسوعة البريطانية، دار الفتح،

[14] - Tizini, previous reference, p 395-396.

[15] – See for example : Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd، نصر حامد أبو زيد، مفهوم النص، (71-70-67-65)،

حسن Hanafi Hassan Hanafi، الفكر الإسلامي: نقد واجتهاد، (99)، and محمد أركون، القرآن من التفسير بالموروث، (98-84)، Mohammed Arkoun، من العقيدة إلى الثورة، حنفي (4/233).

[16] – Hichem Djait، هشام جعيط، الوحي والقرآن والنبوة، دار الطليعة، بيروت، ط 2، 2000، ص 18،

[17] - Tizini, previous reference, p 69.

guidance descending upon him from heaven without any intermediary"[18].

Tayyeb Tizini's theory is essentially a rehash of what Orientalists and pre-Islamic Arabs have asserted regarding prophecy and revelation. However, Orientalist thought and modernist thought in general have repackaged this outdated notion in a modern, polished form, positing that men of revelation are individuals who have been deeply engrossed in contemplating their aspirations for decades, eventually perceiving them manifested within their imaginations and sensory hopes. This aligns with the Quran:

﴿بَلْ قَالُوا أَضْغَاتٌ أَحْلَامَ بَلٍ افْتَرَاهُ بَلْ هُوَ شَاعِرٌ فَلْيَأْتِنَا بِآيَةٍ كَمَا أُرْسِلَ الْأُولُونَ﴾ (5)

But they say, [The revelation is but] a mixture of false dreams; rather, he has invented it; rather, he is a poet. So let him bring us a sign just as the previous [messengers] were sent [with miracles]"(Al-Anbiya': 5).

Tizini repeatedly underscores the concept of psychological or subjective revelation or abrogation. However, he fails to recognize that the Prophet (peace be upon him) was incapable of adding or removing a single word, much less abrogating a verse or verses. How could he possibly engage in such an act when Allah Almighty has proclaimed:

﴿وَلَوْ تَقَوَّلَ عَلَيْنَا بَعْضَ الْأَقَاوِيلِ (44) لَأَخَذْنَا مِنْهُ بِالْيَمِينِ (45) ثُمَّ لَقَطَعْنَا مِنْهُ الْوَتِينَ (46) فَمَا مِنْكُمْ مِنْ أَحَدٍ عَنْهُ حَاجِزِينَ﴾ (47)

And if Muhammad had made up about Us some [false] sayings, We would have seized him by the right hand; Then We would have cut from him the aorta. And there is no one of you who could prevent [Us] from him."(Al-haqqah: 44-47).

In the context of revelation and abrogation, Tizini argues that the notion of the "eternality of the Quranic text" is untenable as it contradicts the phenomenon of abrogation, which encompasses both cancellation and modification. He asserts: "If all three forms of the abrogator and the abrogated (those verses whose ruling was abrogated but recitation remained, those whose recitation was abrogated but ruling remained, and those whose both recitation and ruling were abrogated) implicitly and explicitly challenge, or even reject, the eternity of the text, then the last form in particular casts doubt upon the credibility of the claim that the (Uthmanic Mushaf: the Quran written by Uthman) contains everything that the Prophet dictated to his scribes as Quran"[19]. In this regard, he advocates for a re-examination of Allah's statement:

﴿إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ﴾ (9)

Indeed, it is We who sent down the Qur'an and indeed, We will be its guardian."(Al-Hijr: 9), as the concept of preservation, according to him, is incompatible with the phenomenon of abrogation. He states: "If there is – as acknowledged by the text itself and consequently by Islamic thought – a well-defined problem, namely the issue (of the abrogator and the abrogated, the decisive and the ambiguous), does this not necessitate bringing the idea of 'And indeed, We will be its Guardian' as it is commonly understood in its direct concept to the forefront of discussion? Accordingly, the following complex question arises: If abrogation has indeed occurred, including the replacement of verses and the cancellation of others, how can we speak of a fixed and eternal text that transcends events and occurrences and has its eternal existence in the Preserved book? Moreover, if abrogation is acknowledged, what remains in the written Uthmanic Mushaf: the clear or the ambiguous?"[20].

[18] – Madi Mahmoud, دار الدعوة للطبع، ونقده، المنظور الاستثنائي في المنظور الاستثنائي ونقده، ص 123، ماضي محمود، الوحي القرآني في المنظور الاستثنائي ونقده، دار الدعوة للطبع، الإسكندرية، ط 1، 1996، ص 123.

[19] - Tizini, previous reference, p 254.

[20] - The same reference, p 254.

This approach of sowing doubt and raising suspicions mirrors the methodology employed by the modernist (Hassan Hanafi), who advocated for a re-evaluation of Allah's declaration in the previous verse from (Al-Hijr: 9). This led him to the conclusion that Allah Almighty did not assume the responsibility of preserving His magnificent Book. This is evident in his commentary on Spinoza's work "Treatise on Theology and Politics", which he translated and annotated: "Some individuals, primarily conservative theologians, go to great lengths in asserting that Allah has safeguarded His Book from modification and alteration, and that divine providence acts as the guardian of the texts. Consequently, there is no need to apply the principles of the historical method to religious texts or undertake historical criticism of the holy books. Is a purely theological concept that evades criticism and seeks refuge in divine authority. It bears resemblance to (Descartes)' concept of divine truth in relation to human knowledge. The verse's intended meaning could be the preservation of the essence and the practical application of the meaning, rather than the preservation of the literal written text. This is precisely what change, distortion, and alteration are considered to be, which the Quran accuses the People of the Book of, and which historical criticism of the holy books corroborates"[<sup>21</sup>].

Tizini's espousal of the historicity of the Quranic text led him to subscribe to the doctrine of Khalq: the createdness of the Quran, a controversial notion that surfaced in the third century of the Hijri era. The (Muatazilah school) of thought rejected all attributes of meanings, including the attribute of speech, and posited that Allah is knowledgeable without possessing the attribute of knowledge and capable without possessing the attribute of capability. Building upon this premise, they concluded that the Quran was created by Allah Almighty. This issue sparked intense debate during the (Abbasid Era), and proponents of contemporary Quranic studies have followed suit, emphasizing that the Muatazilah's underlying intention behind this assertion was to establish a connection between the Quran's verses and reality and align them with the flow of history. However, their position was met with strong opposition from most scholars, led by (Ahmad Ibn Hanbal), who upheld the view that the Quran is eternal and uncreated. This latter view, according to proponents of modern studies, severs the Quran's connection to reality and disassociates it from history.

Tizini's alignment with the Muatazilah view of the createdness of the Quran prompted him to underscore the imperative of re-examining the Quranic text through the lens of contemporary developments rather than confining oneself to its interpretation during the prophetic era. He asserts: "The Muatazilah movement's endeavour in that society to perceive the discourse (Quranic text) as created holds remarkable significance. This perspective empowers the researcher, the jurist, and the ordinary believer alike, each from their own vantage point and guided by their respective social, economic, cultural and other considerations, to engage with the aforementioned discourse as an open historical framework that is susceptible to the currents of change and transformation that manifest within those specific social contexts"[<sup>22</sup>].

In another passage, he poses the question: "If the Quran was revealed to the Prophet verse by verse, thereby establishing the essential alignment between it and the human reality it is intended for, how can we reconcile this with the notion that the Quran was revealed in its entirety to the earthly heaven, in a manner that deviates from the gradual revelation? Perhaps this inquiry redirects us to the issue of the relationship between the Quran and the Preserved Heaven Book. The foundation for reviewing this issue here lies in the fact that this

[<sup>21</sup>] – Baruch Spinoza, رسالة في اللاهوت والسياسة، translating and prefacing :Hassan Hanafi, 22 التتوير، دار الحنفي، ص للطباعة والنشر والتوزيع، بيروت، ط1، 2005، ص

[<sup>22</sup>] - Tizini, previous reference, p 298-299.



relationship is a subordinate one, in which the Quran is subservient to the Preserved Heaven Book. Consequently, the Quran becomes created rather than eternal, signifying that it has a human source, namely Muhammad. As mentioned in a previous context, this interpretive endeavour finds one of its primary sources in the Muatazilah"[<sup>23</sup>].

Tizini's insistence on and promotion of the doctrine of the createdness of the Quran mirrors the fallacies of the Muatazilah, who were driven to this belief by their characteristic tendency "to overburden the intellect beyond its capabilities in these matters, a path for which they are renowned. It is logically impossible for multiple ancient beings to exist, rather than multiple attributes of a single ancient being. Omniscience is merely the attribution of the attribute of knowledge itself to Allah, as there is no distinction between the one in need and the one needed. Sufficient evidence for this is that Allah Almighty has attributed the attribute of knowledge to Himself, declaring:

﴿وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ﴾

and they encompass not a thing of His knowledge except for what He wills."(Al-Baqarah: 255). It is natural for the intellect to infer by analogy that His other attributes are similar to this attribute, thus attributing to Him the attributes of life, power and hearing... "[<sup>24</sup>].

Tizini's engagement with Quranic studies has been marked by its radical tendencies. Having previously affirmed the historicity of the Quranic text and underscored the Muatazilah doctrine of the createdness of the Quran, he now ventures to suggest that the Quran borrowed from the scriptures of its predecessors, namely the Torah and the Gospels. He elaborates: "Approaching the Quranic text as an offshoot that unveils itself from the perspective of acknowledging that this text emerged to complete what came before it in the form of religious texts, reformist ideas, ethical, political, social and other concepts, originating from epochs that preceded it or perhaps coincided with it, then aside from the holy books and others, particularly epitomized by the Torah and the Gospels, even from the standpoint of the Quran's assertion that they were corrupted, there was much to be gleaned from the ethics of pre-Islamic Arabia that merited adoption and preservation"[<sup>25</sup>].

Tizini extends his claims to encompass the Quran's exposure to Greek, Persian, Indian and Chinese influences. He elaborates: "Greek Hellenistic, Persian, Indian and Chinese heritage, along with other influences, held a notable presence across the Arabian Peninsula, and perhaps particularly in Mecca, during the sixth and seventh centuries. Indeed, it is conceivable that the Quranic text itself was not immune to these influences"[<sup>26</sup>].

Tizini's claim that the Quran was influenced by the scriptures of those who came before him is not unique among Orientalist scholars. As the "Encyclopaedia Britannica" states: "Orientalists who have examined the content of the Quran have concluded that much of the narrative material and the individuals and events mentioned therein, while not originating from the Torah, are sourced from later Christian and Jewish sources. Similarly, the descriptions of the Day of Judgment and Paradise align with the teachings of the contemporary Syriac Church. Muhammad's use of this information was not verbatim, but rather he drew from oral traditions"[<sup>27</sup>].

Goldziher further remarks: "Muhammad's eschatological teachings were not original but rather a compilation of external sources that he deliberately employed. He drew upon the

[<sup>23</sup>] - The same reference, p 371.

[<sup>24</sup>] - Al-Fadil, previous reference, p 346.

[<sup>25</sup>] - Tizini, previous reference, p 154-155.

[<sup>26</sup>] - The same reference, p 80.

[<sup>27</sup>] - Abbass, previous reference, p 188.

narratives of the Old Testament prophets, often as cautionary tales, to illustrate the fate of previous nations who ridiculed their divinely sent messengers and obstructed their paths"<sup>[28]</sup>.

In closing this examination, it is worth noting that Tizini did not seek to stand apart from his modernist counterparts in their assessment of the Quran. Having voiced his view that the Quran is not without its flaws, as they have asserted, he now ventures to claim that the Quran's content has undergone significant additions and deletions. He even goes so far as to allege that its early scribes tampered with its final formulation. He elaborates: "The second outcome manifested in the major and minor textual gaps that afflicted the Quran, as its collection in written form commenced at various points in time. This becomes particularly evident when considering the substantial number of readers, narrators and memorizers who perished in the early battles between the Muslims and their adversaries, especially those fought against the apostates following Muhammad's demise. Of particular significance is the observation that the process of collecting the Quran, according to some Islamic writings, was subjected to textual intrusions from its inception or thereabouts, which may not have been incidental or inconsequential"<sup>[29]</sup>.

In another remark, he observes: "Yet, before delving into this matter, it is imperative that we, at the very least, become acquainted with, or at least gain an understanding of, the challenges and obstacles that beset the process of collecting, collating and authenticating the Quranic text. These processes served as channels that facilitated interference in the text, potentially at both profound and superficial levels"<sup>[30]</sup>.

One of the flaws or lacunae that Tizini attributes to the compilation of the Quran, according to his assertion, and which resulted in interpolations or omissions, is his interpretation of (Zaid Ibn Thabit's statement): "I sought out the entire Quran from parchments, shoulders, palm fronds and men's hearts until I found two verses from Surat Al-Tawbah with (Abu Khuzaimah Al-Ansari) that I did not discover with anyone else." Tizini remarks: "Zaid Ibn Thabit here openly acknowledges that he validated what he found with Abu Khuzaimah Al-Ansari from the Quran, even though he did not encounter it with anyone else. This implies that Zaid's approach was based on the possibility of granting documentary credence to a narrator, even in the absence of corroborating testimony. If this is indeed permissible, then why did Zaid reject Umar (Ibn Al-Khattab's version), namely the verse of Al-rajem: stoning, which Umar alone possessed?"<sup>[31]</sup>.

Tizini's assertion that political events and other similar factors directly intervened in the addition or deletion of entire Quranic chapters and verses is even more concerning. He elaborates: "While the instances of tampering with the Quranic text that we have examined thus far involve the omission of one verse or the addition of another, the matter assumes a graver and more extensive dimension when it pertains to the omission of one or more Quranic chapters and the addition of one or more Quranic chapters. This confronts the meticulous researcher with a paradigmatic case of obscured texts and the intricate, multifaceted backstories stemming from the conflicts between the prevailing political and religious trends, currents and sects at that time"<sup>[32]</sup>. He further underscores the interference of political authority in the compilation of the Quran, which led to the addition or omission of verses, stating: "The political, religious and ideological authority, spearheaded by Uthman, openly and unabashedly endeavoured to establish its textual legitimacy in addition to its social

<sup>[28]</sup> – Ujayl Jasim Al-nashami, المجلس الوطني للثقافة والفنون والآداب، الكويت، 32. عجيل جاسم النشمي، المستشرقون ومصادر التشريع الإسلامي، ط 1، 1984، ص

<sup>[29]</sup> - Tizini, previous reference, p 147.

<sup>[30]</sup> - The same reference, p 7.

<sup>[31]</sup> - The same reference, p 406.

<sup>[32]</sup> - The same reference, p 395.

legitimacy, by explicitly seizing control of the entire original religious text, thereby proclaiming an alignment between its social, economic and political hegemony, and its political, religious and ideological hegemony. If we now shift our focus from that historical context to the issue of Uthman's commission to collect the Quran, the problems arising from the abridgement and expansion of the Quran become, at least in some of their aspects, more comprehensible, as the political and financial rivalry morphed into an ideological formula that appeared to hold sway"<sup>[33]</sup>.

Tizini pushes the boundaries of doubt even further by asserting that Uthman's selection of Zaid Ibn Thabit to compile the Quran was driven by financial and economic considerations. He maintains that this was the underlying reason behind Uthman's marginalization of (Ibn Masaud). In this regard, he states: "When we consider the additional evidence that confirms the strong economic ties between Uthman and Zaid, and consequently their shared socio-economic status, the matter becomes even more revealing, shedding further light on the dynamics of the conflictual relationship between Uthman and Ibn Masaud. Now, if we juxtapose this socio-economic and financial background with the accompanying moral values, religious beliefs, and political ideologies that shaped the lives of the two aforementioned groups, we arrive at another clear and compelling point of intersection in the ongoing power and culture dialectic"<sup>[34]</sup>.

At the culmination of his examination of the Quran, Tizini asserts that "one should not assume that "the transcription of the Quran, undertaken at the command of caliph Uthman, has remained unaltered. He identifies three primary factors that contributed to these alterations: the mistakes committed by the scribes, the enduring lessons of the ancient sacred text preserved in the memories of professional readers and reciters, and the inherent limitations and ambiguities of Arabic script, where certain letters can be easily confounded"<sup>[35]</sup>.

Tizini has asserted that the Quranic text was tampered with through additions or omissions, driven by the whims of the prevailing political authority and the inclinations of the copyists and memorizers. In response to these claims, we can effectively counter with the observations of the orientalist (Lebloit), author of the work "The Quran and the Torah" "Le Cran et La Bible Hébraïque". Lebloit asserts that the Mushaf compiled by Uthman has been meticulously preserved and transmitted through the ages, reaching us without any substantial alterations. The meticulous care taken in safeguarding this sacred text has ensured its integrity, with virtually no noteworthy changes introduced. Indeed, one can confidently state that the countless copies circulating throughout the vast Islamic world have remained remarkably consistent with the original text. [...] Remarkably, there has been only one Quran recognized and accepted by all the diverse Islamic sects. This unanimous adoption and adherence to a single, universally accepted text over the centuries stands as the most compelling argument and definitive proof of the authenticity of the revealed text in our possession, which traces its origins back to the ill-fated Caliph Uthman, who met a tragic end by assassination"<sup>[36]</sup>.

Tizini's "intellectual endeavour" revolves around presenting what he perceives as a novel perspective or interpretation of the Quranic text. This approach is grounded in the conceptual framework of modern Western culture, which he imposes upon the foundational principles of this faith tradition. Delving into various topics within the discipline of Quranic sciences,

<sup>[33]</sup> - The same reference, p 401-402.

<sup>[34]</sup> - The same reference, p 400-401.

<sup>[35]</sup> - The same reference, p 63-64.

<sup>[36]</sup> – Mohamed Abdu Allah Darraz, محمد عبد الله دراز، مدخل إلى القرآن الكريم، محمد عبد العظيم علي، دار المعرفة الجامعية، الإسكندرية، 1990، ص40. translating :Muhamed Abdu Al-aadem Ali،

whose foundations have been firmly established and whose intricacies have been meticulously scrutinized, Tizini's ultimate objective is to unsettle the consensus among Muslim scholars by sowing seeds of doubt and scepticism. In essence, he merely echoes outdated Orientalist views that have already been comprehensively examined by scholars, who have meticulously unravelled any ambiguities or misconceptions surrounding them and have clearly elucidated the truth for those who earnestly seek it.

## bibliography

The Holy Quran, القرآن الكريم.

Translation of Quran's meaning, ترجمة صحيح الدولية (Sahih International)

Ahmed Muhamed Al-fadil, أحمد محمد الفاضل، الاتجاه العلماني المعاصر في علوم القرآن: دراسة ونقد، مركز الناقد الثقافي، دمشق، ط 1، 2008.

Baruch Spinoza, باروخ سبينوزا، رسالة في اللاهوت والسياسة،

translating and annotating : Hassan Hanafi, حسن حنفي، دار التنوير للطباعة والنشر والتوزيع، بيروت، ط 1، 2005.

Fadel Hassan Abbas, فضل حسن عباس، قضايا قرآنية في الموسوعة البريطانية، دار الفتح، عمان، ط 1، 2000.

Hassan Hanafi, حسن حنفي، من العقيدة إلى الثورة، دار التنوير للطباعة والنشر، 1988.

Hichem Djait, هشام جعيط، الوحي والقرآن والنبوة، دار الطليعة، بيروت، ط 2، 2000.

Jaafar Sheikh Idris, والإسلامية، المنظمة 1985 جعفر شيخ إدريس، مناهج المستشرقين في الدراسات العربية . العربية للتربية والثقافة والعلوم بتونس،

Madi Mahmoud, ماضي محمود، الوحي القرآني في المنظور الاستشراقي ونقده، دار الدعوة للطبع والنشر، الإسكندرية، ط 1، 1996.

Mahmoud Saad At-tablawi, محمود سعد الطبلاوي، الإسلام وجذور التحريف، مكتبة

الأمانة، شبرا، ط 1، 1992.

Mohammed Arkoun, محمد أركون، الفكر الإسلامي: نقد واجتهاد، ترجمة هشام صالح، دار النشر الساقى، 2007.

Mohammed Arkoun, محمد أركون، القرآن من التفسير الموروث إلى تحليل الخطاب الديني، ترجمة هشام صالح، دار الطليعة للطباعة والنشر، 2001.

Muhamed Abdu Allah Darraz, Muhamed Abdu Al-aadem محمد عبد الله دراز، مدخل إلى القرآن الكريم، محمد عبد العظيم علي، دار المعرفة الجامعية، الإسكندرية، 1990.

Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd, نصر حامد أبو زيد، مفهوم النص دراسة في علوم القرآن، المركز الثقافي العربي، 2005.

Tayyeb Tizini, طيب تيزيني، النصّ القرآني أمام إشكالية البنية والقراءة، دار الينابيع للنشر والتوزيع، دمشق، ط 1، 1997.

Ujayl Jasim Al-nashami, عجيل جاسم النشمي، المستشرقون ومصادر التشريع الإسلامي، المجلس الوطني للثقافة والفنون والآداب، الكويت، ط 1، 1984.