

Authenticity and the modern dimension of the Qur'anic text,

Abu Ya'arub Al-Marzouqi

الأصالة والبعدا الحداثي للنص القرآني أبو يعرب المرزوقي

Mhamdi mohammed* محمدي محمد

amhammedi88@gmail.com

philosophy

University of Oran2/ Algeria

Zaoui Omar الزاوي عمر

zaouimar@gmail.com

philosophy

University of Oran2/ Algeria

Received: 30-01-2025

Accepted: 08-05-2025

Published: 17-05-2025

Abstract:

Abu Ya'arub Al-Marzouqi believes that it is possible, from several perspectives of the religious phenomenon, to re-read the Quranic text with a strict philosophical methodology that observes the general contexts of religion, thus dismantling its most significant issues and raising the contemporary questions faced by religions in general and Islam in particular. This is evident in several important and serious attempts on his part to establish a philosophy of religion in Islamic thought. Despite the requirement of the process of philosophy in religion to refrain from taking a preconceived stance, Al-Marzouqi did not renounce his beliefs nor did he leave the Islamic sphere; instead, he transcended the ready-made cognitive models that have constrained the Muslim mind to present a post-modern view of Islam based on doctrinal affiliation and philosophical depth.

Keywords: Quranic text; interpretation; epistemology; contemporary Hanafism; modernity.

ملخص:

يرى أبو يعرب المرزوقي أنه يمكن، من عدة جوانب للظاهرة الدينية، إعادة قراءة النص القرآني بمنهجية فلسفية صارمة تراعي السياقات العامة للدين، وبالتالي تفكيك أهم قضاياها وإعلاء شأنه.

* Corresponding author: amhammedi88@gmail.com .

الأسئلة المعاصرة التي تواجهها الأديان بشكل عام والإسلام بشكل خاص. ويتجلى ذلك في عدة محاولات مهمة وجادة من جانبه لتأسيس فلسفة الدين في الفكر الإسلامي. ورغم ما تتطلبه عملية الفلسفة في الدين من الامتناع عن اتخاذ موقف مسبق، إلا أن المرزوقي لم يتخلّى عن معتقداته ولم يخرج من المجال الإسلامي؛ بل تجاوز النماذج المعرفية الجاهزة التي قيدت العقل المسلم ليقدم رؤية ما بعد حداثة للإسلام مبنية على الانتماء العقائدي والعمق الفلسفي.

الكلمات المفتاحية: النص القرآني؛ التفسير؛ نظرية المعرفة؛ الجنفية المعاصرة؛ الحداثة؛

Introduction:

Although the philosophy of religion, as a branch of philosophical inquiry, implicitly or explicitly assumes a certain philosophical religion, it is quite different from it; rather, it is one of the branches of its subject matter and is not the subject itself. This is because the philosophy of religion examines all religions, including philosophical religions that are typically considered topics at the pinnacle of metaphysics. Therefore, our philosophers have regarded it as part of what they call theology. However, this philosophical religion often simultaneously serves as the perspective through which the philosopher views the philosophy of religion and the goal that they believe the religious phenomenon is directed towards in its formative emergence, especially if they speak of something akin to the natural evolution of religious consciousness in humanity. The issue relates to a modern perspective on understanding the Quranic text from a philosophical point of view that believes in reason and its great capacities to reconcile reason, law, and wisdom or, at the very least, to interpret the Quranic text using the tools and mechanisms of rational logic that are based on reason itself and what human nature accepts and aligns with.

The problem: It relates to the nature of rational understanding of the Quranic text within the framework of the modern philosophical project advocated by Al-Marzouki, who acknowledges the authenticity of the Quranic text and its creative capabilities to engage in the arena of modernity, while praising the primacy of Islamic thought in many of the modern philosophical propositions. To answer this problem, the following questions can be raised: Is it possible to reach a modern thought through the rational understanding of the Quranic text?

How can we reconcile the historical and cultural dimensions of the Quranic text in light of the issues of interpretation and the exceeding of the traditional jurisprudential understanding of the Holy Quran?

Study Hypotheses:

- Reason is the way to understand and interpret the Quranic text correctly and scientifically.
- We cannot overcome backwardness unless we believe in and practice the philosophical interpretation of the Quranic text .

All the text of the article is in Times New Roman, size 12 and 1 line spacing.

**Modernity in the study of the Qur'anic text
nature of the Qur'anic text**

The Quranic text has been a vehicle for Arab-Islamic thought in terms of renewing the mind and aligning with Western modernity. Its interpretation has occupied the attention of many Arab and Muslim thinkers for years and has posed a real dilemma for Arab thought amid the development of Western thought and the backwardness of its Arab counterpart, as well as the failure to benefit from the legacy of Arab-Islamic civilization in our contemporary reality. Abu Ya'rub Al-Marzouki states, "The crisis of Islamic civilization encompasses all its dimensions as it manifests in the components of every human existence—the original determinant or philosophy of religion from which all indicative aspects branch out in determining the historical destinies of nations, and all these branched aspects are subject to..."

Levels of identifiable human action in light of the paths of ducal values, that is, beauty, and financial values, that is, wealth, and theoretical aspects, that is, inquiry, and practical aspects, that is, magnificence, and existential aspects, that is transcendence, In a related context,¹ "Muhammad Abed al-Jabri" believes that the main driving force for the modern Arab self to assert itself in this manner is well-known and acknowledged by everyone. It is related to the civilizational challenge posed by the West in all its forms and dimensions. As always, whether on an individual or societal level, the process of self-assertion has taken on a regression towards backward positions for protection and defense based on them². There

¹ Abu Ya'rub Al-Marzouqi, *Philosophy of Religion and New Theology*, Dar Al-Huda for Printing, Publishing, and Distribution, Beirut - Lebanon, 1st edition 2006, p. 05

² Mohamed Abed Al-Jabri, *Contemporary Readings in Our Philosophical Heritage, We and the Heritage*, Arab Cultural Center, Casablanca, Morocco, 4th edition 1985, p. 12

were no signs of a genuine confrontation with the West; rather, there were signs of a return to the past and clinging to it at the expense of the present Arab-Islamic reality.

"Al-Marzouqi" sees that modernity in the study of the Quran in its external context refers to the historical and cultural context in which the Quran was revealed, and the relationship of the Quranic text to the preceding texts in the religions of the region at that time. Al-Marzouqi aimed to raise the claim of the modernity of this method and its ideological and epistemological implications. The ideological implication, according to "Al-Jabri," means that the Salafi current in modern and contemporary Arab thought is the current that has preoccupied itself more than others with heritage, reviving it, and investing in it within a framework of overt ideological reading. In "Al-Jabri's" words, it is based on projecting the desired future, the ideological future, onto the past and then demonstrating, based on this projection, that what occurred in the past can be achieved in the future. It is evident and clear that the present cannot be reverted to the future because the circumstances of the future are not the same as those of the present, and the structure of society differs completely between the two times; hence, the process is not logically valid.

The Salafi current has donned the guise of a religious and political reformative movement that is open, akin to the movement led by Al-Afghani and Muhammad Abduh, which called for renewal and abandoning traditionalism. Here, abandoning traditionalism gains a special meaning: it signifies the cancellation of the intellectual, methodological, and conceptual heritage that emanated from the era of decline while simultaneously being wary of falling prey to Western thought. Renewal, on the other hand, means constructing a new understanding of religion in terms of doctrine and law, directly based on the origins¹, and working to improve it, meaning making it contemporary and a foundation for our renaissance and initiation. In other words, Al-Jabri, in agreement with Al-Marzouqi, affirms the authenticity of the Arab-Islamic heritage, including the Quranic text, and its capacity to progress towards modernity, emphasizing that modernity does not imply abandoning the heritage and trampling on it while invoking Western concepts that do not align with our values. The text discusses the perspectives of Afghan thinkers and supporters of renewal, particularly in the context of Merzouki's view regarding the contexts of the revelation of the

¹ Ibid, p.13

Quranic text and its relationship to previous religious laws. Merzouki believes this relationship is influenced by remnants of medieval doubts about the originality of the Quran. He emphasizes that he refrains from elaborating too much on this matter to avoid giving any ground to skeptics who might question the authenticity of the Quran and the unique nature of Islam as a religion that does not merely imitate prior beliefs. Instead, he settles on indicating two primary points:

1. That these studies are more backward than interpretations based on transmission¹
2. That their incompatibility with modern thought obscures the true nature of the Quran.

How is that?

First: What is the epistemological obstacle preventing these studies from aligning with modern thought?

Its proponents believe that thought is a mirror reflecting what they call reality, and the inversion of thought and reality assumes two illusions that modern thought has dismissed:

- Knowledge is a product of the mind receiving what comes to it from the outside world, which they categorize as reality in two forms. Merzouki explains that these forms are the cultural-historical context and earlier texts that address the same or similar issues, sharing the label of religious texts in this context. The inversion of thought, by receiving external inputs, represents knowledge reflected in the mirror of thought when what is in the mind corresponds to what is before the eyes, which is what they call reality. Their primitive reasoning assumes that theological idealism aligned with absolute realism constitutes an additional form of realism, since divine knowledge—which is ideal—does not precede God's knowledge but follows it.

Additionally, existence without selfhood is real relative to human beings, as it exists outside of their minds in both the sense of being in the knowledge of God and in its essence²

.obstacles to critiquing the quranic text

¹ Abu Ya'rob Al-Marzouqi, "Qur'anic Studies: Its Reality and the Authenticity of the Noble Qur'an," Journal of Awareness of the Nation's Issues, Tunisia, 10-10-1438 / 05-07-2017, date accessed 12-12-2023.

² Abu Ya'rob Al-Marzouqi, "The Mind in Arab Philosophy from the Realism of Aristotle and Plato to the Nominalism of Ibn Taimiyyah and Ibn Khaldun," Center for Arab Unity Studies, Beirut, Lebanon, 1st edition 1994, 2nd edition 1996, p. 74.

Merzouki confirms that the epistemological obstacle is compounded by the following:

1. The magical character of the influence of the historical context and prior texts through linking interpretations with a halo of historical sanctity that hinders understanding the historical trajectory and circumstances of the revelation of those Quranic texts, which, in turn, obstructs conditions for objective understanding.
2. The theory of practical knowledge through correspondence with the mind and the senses or unaided sight, which denotes a scientific regression, as it contradicts the foundations of modern science that rely on experience and objective criticism.¹

He believes in epistemology and criticism to reach the truth and considers that "Al-Marzouqi" views the Quranic text as a non-cognitive text because it has not undergone modern critical scientific study. Proving this requires two steps:

1. How can creative thought be liberated from the context of historical and cultural circumstances as well as from the supposed intertextuality?

The answer is scientific and artistic; there can be no creativity in science without an axiomatic foundation that frees itself from prior knowledge based on subjectivity and sanctification. The text must stem from reality, which defines the "scientific reality" that differs from the general appearance linked to emotion. Moreover, there is no artistic creativity without the creativity of the subject of the art itself and the style of expressing it. This is a crucial characteristic of the arts, especially poetry, which both innovate their reality. Therefore, it is essential to address the Quranic phenomenon based on objective scientific foundations that rely on reality and experience, free from the preconceived judgments expressed by the immense aura surrounding our Arab heritage, which prevents its criticism and, consequently, creativity in reaching new knowledge and significant truths about the Quranic text, thereby liberating thought and reason from reactionary attitudes .

The historicle and ethical aspects in the science of the quranic text

The scientific method and its relation to the Quranic text:

The presence of historical and cultural circumstances and textual precedents in both science and art calls to mind that they affect it rather than it being active within them; that is the originality of the Quran. However, the claimants of modern Quranic reading, in the context of historical and cultural settings, reverse the relationship of Quranic creativity with them

¹ Ibid. p. 74.

through the use of scientific and artistic creative methods. The scientific creativity method in the Quran relies on rational argumentation within a conceptual framework that reflects the active reality, and through that, they analyze their reality, which becomes reactive. The artistic creativity method in the Quran is the innovation of exemplars, through which the Quran expresses scenes resembling theatrical representations that personify meanings in the conduct of characters¹. This means that the scientific method of the Quran does not rely solely on scientific truth but rather on experiences and examples from real life, interspersed with many differences and extraordinary occurrences that challenge the foundations of experimental science itself. An example is the scene of Adam's succession—what is the true reality that the Quran innovates to be effective in the paradigms of scientific and artistic creativity, thus studying the reactive false reality? That is the originality of the Quran. Obviously, texts from earlier religions and historical context are present in the Quran, but not as active elements within it; rather, they are reactive to it²: it makes them subjects of study according to what it innovated. The Quranic stories portray numerous situations and judgments that carry rational meanings that can be accepted, along with others that are irrational.

In terms of the historical and cultural aspects of the Quranic text:

it is important to note that the Quran expressed its intent through storytelling, as it resonates with emotions before intellect, given that its primary goal is a faith-based and spiritual one. Al-Marzouqi states, "These stories evoke emotional responses and speak to the hearts, and the Quran is explicit in this intent, as evidenced by the methodology it employs in this presentation; it engages them through a method of affirmation and dominance, meaning it tests them to retain the truthful and to invalidate the false. The invalidation comes from two natures: the distortion of the text and the distortion of the religious behaviors that follow, in both moral and political dimensions. Thus, distortion mixes the religious aspect with its political employment³. The matter relates to the direction of the Quranic text and who manipulates it. We know that throughout our Arab-Islamic history, Quranic texts have been

¹ Ibid. p. 74. .

² Ibid. p. 74.

³ Ibid. p. 74.

employed in many conflicts and disputes through political interpretation. Al-Marzouqi has confined the distortion occurring between religion—the essence of Islam and the focal point of human nature—to five historical forms in pilgrimage: Judaism, Christianity, Sabeanism, Zoroastrianism, and polytheism. Their presence in the Quran is neither mere intertextuality nor plagiarism; rather, it is intentional, with the aim of providing a deconstructive and critical presentation of what affects the religious aspect in terms of its references and utilizations of distortion.

Most importantly, the Quran builds these two liberating creations of the existing reality and the elevated reality on a principal science that is post-ethical. The relationship of this principal science—architectonic—to religious sciences, most notably Quranic studies and its core, exegesis, is analogous to the relationship of metaphysics to philosophical sciences. The Quranic text bases its judgments on what is ethical in its analysis of historical events to rectify culture and reality for its followers. Al-Marzouqi emphasizes that the Quran is meta-ethical; for this reason, the Prophet stated that the essence of nations is moral, and here, morality does not refer to the subjective moral judgments in an individual's mind, but to objective morality. Objective morality is the essence of politics, education, and governance. Education nurtures the conscience through the historical specification of values, and governance realizes their effects in human life, considering that the Quranic text addresses the historical context of pre-Islamic Arab society and praises the moral values contained therein, which can serve as a foundation for Islamic values in alignment with it. Consequently, the message was universal for all humanity. Thus, the religious dimension encompasses the philosophy of beliefs

and the philosophy of laws—the former is understanding the truth and acting accordingly, while the latter is the system that realizes the conditions for humans to reach it. The study of distortion in every religion is the subject of the critical section within the Quranic creativity, both in a argumentative and allegorical manner, and the second section is the project of education and governance to avoid distortion. In this sense: The Quran is a philosophy of religion and a philosophy of history. The former has its roots in faith or religious knowledge according to God - Islam - and the latter has its roots in Sharia or the practice of it. The question posed is: what is the discourse in this interpretation?

The discourse is epistemological¹ and axiological, where reason creates its reality and the method of its treatment according to the believer in the divine source of the Quran or according to the denier. The believer is more coherent than the denier: he does not contradict himself when he believes that doctrines and laws have a transcendent source that truly creates them, and thus he considers them to be transcendent over his intellect. However, the non-believer is forced to attribute this creativity to the human mind, which is why many atheists may deny the divine source but cannot deny what has been realized for Muhammad. To avoid contradiction, they seek to prove that Muhammad borrowed his knowledge from Jewish and Christian texts, claiming that the Quran is a fabrication with no originality, and they do not see the nature of the presence of what they perceive as stolen. It is true that Judaism, Christianity, Sabeanism, Zoroastrianism, and polytheism are all subjects of the Quran, but they are presented to be studied according to a criterion that validates what is at hand and dominates it. This is the essence of modern discourse for every reality, as it is evident from the reality that it presents to the truth of reality, which is neither what exists in objects nor what exists in minds, but rather the ideal. Here, Al-Marzouqi tries to illustrate the modern face of the Quranic text through his critical study of the sects preceding it and to clarify the doubts within them that do not align with reason and to mention the accounts of previous nations as they truly are.

The interpretations of the results

The Qur'anic Text between Reason and Tradition

From the above, Al-Marzouqi attributed the skepticism about the authenticity of the Qur'anic text to Western thought, as it relates to historical and cultural contexts, asserting that earlier texts dealt with the same issues or similar ones. The West has questioned the veracity of those events by subjecting them to an objective scientific method and to reason alone, without considering other factors. However, we can argue that despite Al-Marzouqi's acknowledgment of the authenticity of the Qur'anic text and its freedom from distortion based on rational evidence, he overlooked the nature of the Qur'anic text and the Sharia, which differ from preceding scriptures. The Qur'an possesses a nature that encompasses

¹ Ibid. p. 74

rational, mystical, and even sensory and experimental meanings. It is a book that addresses hearts, minds, and souls as a whole, not just the intellect alone. Therefore, subjecting it solely to the standard of reason leads to a scientific and methodological fallacy that results in contradictions, which is exactly what happened with Al-Marzouqi. His reading of the Qur'anic text was a philosophical interpretation based on the principles of logical reasoning, especially the principle of non-contradiction, which is not valid at all. He stated in one of his works, "What human reason encounters as contradictions in Sharia regarding freedom and necessity, and in nature concerning the existence of evil or what seems contrary to wisdom, renders the principle of Mutazilite justice superficial and necessitates that we deny the contradictory data when reason governs it or that we reject the governance of this reason, and not deny to overcome these contradictions that no rational person can dismiss when applying reason¹ to them." Thus, subjecting the Qur'anic text to reason alone does not align with proper understanding, considering that the Qur'an has multiple interpretations and meanings.

The Qur'anic text does not have a single meaning; rather, it is multifaceted

The philosophical direction of Al-Marzouqi in addressing the modernity of the Qur'anic text seems to have fallen into a methodological and intellectual contradiction that does not take into account the nature of the Qur'anic text, which is based on diversity and multiplicity. "The pioneer Al-Suhrawardi" states that when we contemplate Al-Marzouqi's statement, we find it to be a rational contradiction that no sane person can deny, and it contains a foolish certainty as Al-Marzouqi generalizes his judgment to all human intellect without restricting it to his own mind. Here, Al-Suhrawardi mocks Al-Marzouqi's understanding and emphasizes his rejection of it, saying that in the Qur'an, "If it had been from other than God, they would have found therein much contradiction." Thus, difference constitutes contradiction and confusion. He supports this by referencing Ibn Taymiyyah, who says that the term "difference" in the Qur'an refers to opposition and contradiction², considering that the Qur'an's criterion for its truthfulness is its freedom from contradiction. Therefore, the law of non-contradiction is a measure of its validity, which is contrary to what Al-Marzouqi claims: that the originality and truth of the Qur'anic text depend on its realism and the conformity of

¹ Raed al-Suhrawardi, "The Refutation of Abu Yahrab al-Marzouqi and His Nominalist Ideology and Claims Against Ibn Taymiyya and the Imams of Islam," no publishing house, no edition, p. 81.

² Ibid, p. 82

historical facts accepted by human perception alone. However, when we observe the Qur'anic narratives and their historical content, we find they are not credible by reason alone but rather through the heart—that is, faith, or "iman," as expressed by the Islamic thinker Abdul Wahab Al-Masiri. Al-Suhrawardi affirms that any contradiction in the Qur'anic text, if present, is evidence of its truth rather than evidence of its contradiction. Hence, it is impossible to attribute the understanding of the Qur'an solely to logic or reasoning, as Al-Marzouqi claimed in all cases. Moreover, it can be said that the matter of determining the value of something and judging it as good or bad does not reside within it but is external, considering that ethics, for example, are not established by society—whether by reason, an individual, or the state—but rather by God, who grants the moral legitimacy of actions¹. This means that reason cannot assume the authority to judge all matters due to its limited understanding, a fact that the philosopher of the Arabs, Al-Kindi, confirmed when he acknowledged the limitations of human perception.

Conclusion:

In response to the questions posed in the introduction, it can be said that aesthetic experience is the type of experience that achieves a kind of harmony between the pathway of our thoughts and the pathway of nature, in the sense of compatibility and accord between the mind and the senses.

It can also be stated that beauty is the guarantor of the soul's alignment with nature through the language of aesthetic taste, thus creating a beautiful work of art.

From what has been presented in this summary regarding Santayana's philosophical positions in aesthetics, we can conclude the following:

- Santayana was able to provide a significant answer to this aesthetic problem, emphasizing the importance of the self as it represents the sense of beauty, aesthetic taste, and the source of aesthetic value, and the importance of the object, whatever it may be, in the aesthetic process and in achieving aesthetic awareness from another perspective.

¹ A group of Arab academics, *Utopia and the Philosophy of Unachieved Reality and Achievable Happiness*, Diffusion Publications, Algeria, Dhiyaa Publications, Rabat, Morocco, Mo'min Quraish Library, 1st edition 2014, p. 140

- The new approach that Santayana proposed in his aesthetic studies centered around the importance of the aesthetic dimension, which lies in our level of knowledge and awareness of aesthetic consciousness, indicating a feeling for aesthetic values as they are independent of morals, economics, religion, politics, or any of the usual associations.
- This trend expresses a fundamental idea, which is the importance of the individual's value and personal achievement, and the superiority of all this within the comprehensive aesthetic, through the feeling of beauty.

Recommendations:

- The culture of beauty must be present in our material world and in our relationships with each other as an aesthetic education.
- Aesthetic education constitutes a human dimension in light of the savagery we suffer from, so it is essential to activate the role of art in society.

Sources and References List

Compulsory terms:

- 01- Jabri, Mohammed Abed, Contemporary Readings in Our Philosophical Heritage, We and the Heritage, Arab Cultural Center, Casablanca, Morocco, 4th edition 1985.
- 02- Al-Marzouqi, Abu Ya'arab, Quranic Studies and the Authenticity of the Holy Quran, Journal of Awareness of National Issues, Tunisia, 10-10-1438- 05-07-2017.
- 03- Al-Marzouqi, Abu Ya'arab, Reason in Arabic Philosophy from the Realism of Aristotle and Plato to the Nominalism of Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Khaldun, Center for Arab Unity Studies, Beirut, Lebanon, 1st edition 1994, 2nd edition 1996.
- 04- Al-Marzouqi, Abu Ya'arab, Philosophy of Religion and New Theology, Al-Huda Publishing, Beirut, Lebanon, 1st edition 2006.
- 05- Najah Al-Jada, Najwan, Philosophy of Religion, Ain Center for Contemporary Studies and Research, 1st edition 1438 AH, 2016 CE.
- 06- Al-Suhrawardi, Raed, The Refutation of Abu Ya'arab Al-Marzouqi and his Nominalist Ideology and Claims Against Ibn Taymiyya and the Imams of Islam, No Publishing House, undated, unpublished.
- 07- A Group of Arab Academics, Utopia and Philosophy: The Unachieved Reality and the Happiness of Achievement, Difaf Publications, Algeria, Diffaf Publications, Rabat, Morocco, Mo'men Quraish Library, 1st edition 2014.