

Ibrahim in the Qur'an: Source of the Monotheistic religion
– How does the audience coincide with the Abrahamic culture? –
Ibrahim dans le Coran: Source de la religion Monothéiste
– Comment l'auditoire coïncide-t-il avec la culture Abrahamique? –
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Abstract:

Anthropological and historical issues are at the origin of problematizing the Qur'an in both Orientalism and classical Islamic thought. Despite the difference between the two visions, since the first one desecrates the Qur'an, while the second makes it sacred; however, the two visions refer to redundant analyzes.

To overcome this epistemological crisis, we suggest focusing on Ibrahim's dialogue in the Qur'an, by which this character becomes religiously Monotheistic. Then he calls the other to Monotheism. Based on this dialogue, the current audience may identify itself with Ibrahim to worship God deeper and strengthening that worship.

Keywords: Monotheism; Ibrahim; Anthropology of religion; Dialogue in the Qur'an; Audience;

Résumé:

Les questions anthropologiques et historiques sont à l'origine de la problématisation du Coran dans l'Orientalisme et dans la pensée Islamique classique. Malgré la différence entre les deux visions, puisque la première profanise le Coran, tandis que la seconde le sacralise; cependant les deux visions renvoient à des analyses redondantes.

Pour surmonter cette crise épistémologique, nous suggérons de nous focaliser sur le dialogue d'Ibrahim dans le Coran, par lequel ce personnage devient religieusement Monothéiste. Puis, il appelle l'autre au Monothéisme. Sur la

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base de ce dialogue, l'auditoire actuel peut s'identifier avec Ibrahim pour adorer Dieu plus profondément et renforcer cette adoration.

Mots clés: Monothéisme; Ibrahim; Anthropologie de la religion; Dialogue dans le Coran; Auditoire;

Introduction

The field of Qur'anic studies is surrounded by a crisis. There is, on one hand, the Orientalist research which deals with the Qur'an by considering it as an anthropological text. In this extension, the Qur'an is studied as other human or sacred texts. This kind of research does not consider the Qur'an as a divine text. Quite the contrary, this text has to be disenchanting in the sense that it would not be an absolute text but rather a relative one. This outlook allows scholars to deal with the Qur'an by applying scientific objectivity to it. Consequently, the Qur'an can be studied by avoiding subjectivity and dismissing the sacred characteristic of the text mentioned. In this regard, Luxenberg, who represents the Orientalist discourse, pointed out the Syro-Aramaic origin of the word قرآن (Luxenberg, 2007). He also mentions that Ibrahim as ḥanīfā حنيفا reflects his religious state as he lived without religion even that his people were, anthropologically speaking, polytheistic.

On the other hand, we refer to Islamic research which is also studying the Qur'anic text through the anthropological and historical perspective but without dismissing the divine characteristic of the text mentioned. By this approach, the Qur'an would be considered as a lived text and at the same time a transcendent reference. That means, the Qur'an has to be studied including both its cultural specificity, mentioning its various historical implementations, and its holy characteristic, which must not be transgressed. In this regard, we refer to the Muslim scholar Mohammad Shahrour شحرور who studied the character of Ibrahim from the anthropological and historical perspectives. Shahrour stated that the story of Ibrahim, in the Qur'an, completes the various events historically experienced by this character in various cultures. Therefore, Ibrahim is portrayed by what is reported in the historical/civilizational texts preceding the revelation of the Qur'an, which completed the idea received from previous representations on the aforementioned character. (شحرور، 2012).

Having said this, Islamic research in Qur'anic studies led to sclerosis. That is to say, it is just describing and connecting between what can be found in the Qur'an and what can be read in various historical/cultural texts.

To overcome the epistemological situation mentioned we suggest focusing on Ibrahim's dialogue for oneself compared to Ibrahim's dialogue for the other in the Qur'an. More precisely, we will analyze how the character of Ibrahim in the Qur'an expresses both of the activities mentioned respectively with himself and with others (Nimrod, his father, etc.) starting to set up a new anthropological worldview based on the speech as the main symbolic tool by which culture is mediated (Sapir, 1985, Whorf, 2012) on how and why to believe in one God named in the Qur'an "Allah".

To interpret in new way Ibrahim's dialogue for oneself compared to Ibrahim's dialogue for the other could be a backdrop for the Hearer/Reader of this text to deal with the challenge of the lived faith during the current, both modern and postmodern era characterized by an eclectic cultural lifestyle that lacks authenticity. This will allow the self who is living the authentic faith mentioned to enhance effectiveness in dealing with the issue of how and why to believe in Allah, God in the Qur'an, from the discursive outlook. In this extension we can check the great value of dialogue for oneself compared to dialogue for the other as the main psychological tools (Vygotsky, 1978, 1986) in human life. From this perspective, appears the importance of the problematic of believing, as it represents nowadays, one of the most religious anthropological issues in our daily life interaction. The same problematic represents one of the main Qur'anic issues highlighted in this text, by the mediation of speaking.

I. The anthropological reading of Orientalism vis-à-vis the Qur'an

1 Orientalism dealing with the word Qur'ān (قرآن)

We refer here to the historical and cultural understanding of the Qur'anic text from the external borders of Islamic scholarship. In this extension, Orientalist discourse is a well-known academic discourse which is dealing with the Qur'anic corpus as a historical and anthropological text from which we can grasp various religious topics which constitutes a composite whole. In this case we understand "religion as a cultural system" (Geertz, 1993, p. 112). In this regard, Orientalist discourse considers the Qur'an as a text that appeared last fourteen centuries. From the same outlook, the Qur'an has to be understood taking into account other cultural landscapes and religious texts that existed during the same period. This means the Qur'an is an intertextual corpus influencing other symbolic visions and texts and being influenced by them. Consequently, within the orientaliste anthropological reading of the Qur'anic text, this corpus is not a divine text. That what can be understood from Luxenberg's book (2007). In his essay, the author made a

connection between the Arabic words contained in the Qur'an and the historical and anthropological origins of these words. The author mentioned that the Qur'anic text is the product of a writing that has lasted for generations. Luxenberg added that during the process of writing the Qur'anic corpus authors came back to the Aramaic and Syriac languages that inspired them to set up the Qur'anic text.

Luxenberg referred to some examples to give weight to his overall argument. Therewith, the author mentioned that the word Qur'ān (قرآن) refers to its Syro-Aramaic etymology. The meaning of this etymological root points out a book which is used in Christian sacred events "as a liturgical book containing excerpts from scripture to be read aloud during the service." (Luxenberg, 2007, p. 71). We understand from Luxenberg's quote that the Qur'anic text is not a pure and authentic divine text that was revealed directly to the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him. The author wrote that the Qur'anic text can be considered as one among other sacred texts that existed during the life of Muhammad, peace be upon him. In other words, the Qur'an is not "an independent *Scripture*" (Luxenberg, 2007, p. 104). By his reference to the example mentioned, Luxenberg challenged the commonly sacred idea spread out in Islamic world which refers to the authenticity of the Qur'anic text and its divine origin. In this extension, Luxenberg's attitude coincides with Durkheim's idea of religion. The French thinker wrote that religion is the product of society (Durkheim, 1968) which shares collective emotions during ceremonies and religious festivals. From these emotional experiences the entire society makes its members aware about this lived religious experience which results in sacralization of an external object that becomes idealized, highly respected and considered. Consequently, given Durkheim's view, the Qur'an is a social religious object and not a sacred divine text.

1.2 Critique of Luxenberg's historical-anthropological reading of the Qur'an

Luxenberg's standpoint could be criticized from two angles. In this regard, we come back to two different types of interpretation. We refer, on one hand, to the Orientalist interpretation. On the other hand, we mention the interpretation of the sciences of Arabic language and traditional Islamic thought. Both of them are from within the Arabic and Islamique cultures. That is to say, we are dealing, in this case, with the synchronic approach of both language and culture, in a sense that each linguistic or symbolic component is understood under the light of other components related to each other in

terms of opposition, complementarity, etc. (Saussure, 1972, Lévi-Strauss, 1958).

Having regard to what we pointed out, we mention that the Orientalist interpretation refers to the contribution of the British scholar Edward William Lane. This author wrote that the word قرآن refers to the idea of combining “I uttered [the words of] the Ḳur-án in a state of combination [or uninterruptedly]” (Lane, 1968, p. 2502). Lane’s contribution points out that the meaning of the Qur’anic word قرآن is understood from the synchronic outlook. In other words, what is at stake is not the historical context of the word قرآن, as Luxenberg wrote, but the challenge consists to come back to the semantic root of the word قرآن that is referring to the idea of combination.

On the other hand, we refer also to the critical view from the sciences of Arabic language. We mention here the Arabic etymology of the word قرآن. In this regard (ق ر ي) points out the meaning of “collection (...) and from that the Qur’an as if it was called that because it collects laws and stories, etc.” (بن فارس، 1979؛ ص. 78-79). We understand here that the linguistic point is related to the synchronic meaning of the word قرآن which remained within the limits of research related to sciences of Arabic language. In the same vein, we can reach the same academic result by coming back to what has been written by الراغب الأصفهاني. In this extension, this Muslim scholar mentioned that the meaning of the word قرآن refers, in Arabic language, to “reading (القراءة): Join letters and words together during the recitation” (الأصفهاني، 2013؛ ص. 445). We remark again that the synchronic interpretation of Arabic words in the Qur’anic text is not exceeding the anthropological Islamic outlook which refers to the local knowledge mentioning that the Islamic belief system fit with the idealization of the holy characteristic of the Qur’anic text. That is to say, from this angle, there is not an opposition between the root meaning of the word قرآن in Arabic language and the meaning in use of this word in the Qur’an. Based on that, we can say that the first meaning sheds light on the second one to make it better understandable. This step will prepare Muslim people to implement in a better way what has been grasped previously about various Qur’anic issues. Consequently, there is complementarity between the semantic content of Arabic language and what can be found as symbolic answers within the Qur’anic text. From this perspective, Qur’anic issues, as other cultural data, have to be thought, problematized and discussed from the horizon of the internal borders of the same culture rather than projecting exterior cultural clichés into it (Mead, 1935).

2 The Orientalist reading of Ibrahim challenging religion in the Qur'an

The orientalist discourse leads us once again to Luxenberg's book (2007) when the author discussed also Ibrahim's belief. Luxenberg refers to the Syro-Aramaic meaning of the Arabic word ḥanīfā حنيفا which refers to the cultural idea of being/living without religion. In other words, by his belief system, Ibrahim made a break with the anthropological environment in which he lived. According to the author, this is what characterizes Ibrahim's faith. In the same vein, Luxenberg considers Ibrahim in the Qur'an as a character who has no religion or as the author stated "Abraham as a *heathen*" (Luxenberg, 2007, p. 56). This Orientalist position runs counter to both the Arabic root of the word حنف and the exegetical works of Muslim scholars. In this regard, ابن فارس mentioned that the word cited means "inclination (...) Al-Hanif: who is inclined to the straight religion" (ص. 110، 1979). That is what characterizes the religion of Ibrahim, the father of the monotheistic religions. In the same vein, the Muslim exegete الطاهر ابن عاشور mentioned, in his exegetical work, that the word حنف refers to the tendency "to walk away from the usual way (...) because during the emergence of Ibrahim's religion, people were in a blind delusion, so Ibrahim's religion came tilting away from them, so Ibrahim was called the Hanif." (ص. 737، 1984). This is the source from where Islam emerged as the last monotheistic religion. Consequently, this one established a new anthropological vision on man and the world.

II. The Islamic understanding of the Qur'an and its character Ibrahim

1 Shahrour's interpretation of the word Qur'ān (قرآن)

We refer here again to the historical and anthropological understanding of the Qur'anic text but from the internal borders of Islamic culture. In this regard, we refer to Shahrour's standpoint (شحرور، 1990، 2012). First of all, Shahrour mentioned the morphological meaning of the word قرآن which refers to the idea of "combination and comparison" (ص. 93، 1990). After that Shahrour pointed out that the word قرآن includes historical stories that represent a great part of the Qur'anic text. The mentioned stories narrate various events, which reflect multiple cultural landscapes in human history (شحرور، 1990). In the same vein, Shahrour added that "the Qur'an is an absolute truth understood in relative terms." (ص. 90، 1990). That is to say, considering Shahrour's viewpoint, the meaning of the Qur'anic text changes from one particular historical period to another. The meaning mentioned also changes according to the relativity of each anthropological space which orients/influences, in one way or another, the meaning of the

Qur'an. At the same time, we should say, taking into account the Islamic religious tenets, that there is a complementarity between the absolute divine source of the Qur'an and its relative interpretation and understanding which are human.

2 Shahrour's contribution to the character of Ibrahim in the Qur'an

The thinker Shahrour mentioned also the importance of understanding the character of Ibrahim in the Qur'anic text from the historical-anthropological paradigm (شحرور، 2012). In other words, Shahrour wanted to say that Ibrahim is a historical character who has evolved over time and cross various civilizational contexts. In this regard, there is a difference between what is named, from the historical outlook, as a righteous personality compared to what the Qur'an referred to, mentioning the prophets. But at the same time, the author relativizes the difference cited by saying that in all cases the characters mentioned are good people. Therefore, from Shahrour's standpoint, each civilization or anthropological outlook focuses on particular meanings and interests, etc. At the same time each milieu completes another. From this perspective, Shahrour referred to the character of Ibrahim as he is mentioned in the Qur'anic text but also in other civilizations and religions, mainly in the Christian culture. In this regard, the author gives examples by referring to « Ibrahim » as it reflects the name that has been given by Allah, in the Qur'an, to the prophet who represents the father of monotheism. At the same time, the character cited is named in the Old Testament, as Shahrour wrote "Abrām" (شحرور، 2012؛ ص. 94). This coincides with what has been mentioned by scholars in both Jewish culture and the Christian tradition. In this particular point, the latter monotheistic religions highlighted the importance of the character of "Abram" who represents, from this angle, the "Father of a multitude of nations" (Werblowsky & Wigoder, 1997, p. 6). This means that "Abram" is seen, from various anthropological worldviews (Christian culture, Jewish culture, etc.), as a cosmopolitan person.

Shahrour referred also to what was done by Ibrahim with his son Ismail vis-à-vis the sacred house. "As Abraham and Ishmael built up the foundations of the House [they prayed] 'Our Lord, accept [this] from us. You are the All Hearing, the All Knowing.'" (Q. 2:127) **(1)**. In this regard, Shahrour questioned the traditional interpretation of this verse which focused on building the sacred house. Instead of that, the author mentioned that what was done by Ibrahim and Ismail vis-à-vis the sacred house is "restoration not construction" (شحرور، 2012؛ ص. 103). From this outlook, we understand that the author is using historical and anthropological academic background to

problematize (2) the character of Ibrahim in the Qur'an. At the same time, the author mentioned that there is no contradiction between what the Qur'anic text referred to about Ibrahim and what is mentioned from various historical cultures and civilizations about the same character. Shahrour clarified his standpoints by saying that the story of Abraham evolved taking into account various anthropological worldviews that are challenging and problematizing and interpreting the same story of Abraham during the different phases of human history.

Shahrour referred also to the importance of deification. In this regard, the author pointed out that humanity across its history moved from worshipping concrete and various deities, to worship one abstract God which is named, in the Qur'anic text, "Allah". In this context, the author mentioned that Ibrahim is an important character in the Qur'an because this text shows Ibrahim as he is "Searching for God (Allah) from the personified to the abstract" (شحرور، 2012؛ ص. 105). In other words, instead of worshipping physical gods, Ibrahim reflects one of the main Qur'anic characters who express the maturity of devotional activity. That is to say, Ibrahim is looking for a metaphysical God that is named "Allah" in the Qur'an. This is an evolving activity which reflects that Ibrahim is able to worship one God, Allah, in a sense that the former cannot represent the latter in a concrete way. Consequently, what we referred to about Ibrahim's way of believing maybe seen as a process to reach a new anthropological worldview on God, Allah in the Qur'an, that Ibrahim started to set up.

From the point mentioned the author concluded that the Qur'anic corpus brings back, from previous civilizations, the same character, pointing out here Ibrahim, by giving it a new religious values and characteristics. These reflect more than the historical and anthropological religious values that preceded the apparition of the Qur'an. This means that the Qur'an completed what can be grasped historically, in various cultures, about Ibrahim. In this extension, the Qur'an reflects the complete textual version of the identity of Ibrahim.

What is important to mention on Shahrour's contribution about the character of Ibrahim in the Qur'an, is that it does not attract the audience's attention in a sense that it does not challenge the audience in its lived anthropological experience. In other words, what makes sense for the current audience of the Qur'anic text to know about the character of Ibrahim? Or what is the added value of the character of Ibrahim in the Qur'an for the present Reader/Hearer who is living various Eastern and Western anthropological

challenges?

III. The importance of speaking in the Qur'anic text

1 Types of Dialogue in the Qur'anic text

First of all we mention the importance of the activity of speaking in the Qur'anic text. In this regard, the verb **قَالَ** in the Qur'anic text is « the most used verb in the Qur'an » (Azaiez, 2015, p. 8). In the same vein, various stories in the Qur'anic text highlight the verbal inter-influence mainly between two kinds of characters. We refer here to the anthropological dialogue between messengers and their people about the issue of worshipping one God and/or multiple deities, respectively from the view of the messengers and considering the view of their people. "O my people, worship Allah; you have no deity other than Him" (Q. 7:65; 7:73; 7:85); "Will you forbid us to worship what our fathers worshipped?" (Q. 11:62); "They said, 'We worship idols'" (Q. 26:71). The Qur'an shows also the dialogue between people who are belonging to the same faith and they are sharing the same religious principles, like the dialogue between Jacob and Joseph "My son, tell your brothers nothing of this dream" (Q. 12:5). In both kinds of the dialogues mentioned the issue consists that each speaker(s) aims to convince the other in order to adopt his own speech's content.

The Qur'anic text refers also to characters who perform dialogue for oneself. This activity allows the person dealing with its own issue to resolve it compared to the aforementioned dialogue through which the person tends to resolve the other's issue (Vygotsky, 1986, 1978). Dialogue for oneself in the Qur'an is performed by Moses for instance "My Lord, I am in dire need of whatever good thing You may send me" (Q. 28:24).

2 The audience in front of Ibrahim's dialogue in the Qur'an

All what we mentioned about the activity of speaking can be noticed in the story of Ibrahim in the Qur'anic text.

First of all, it is important to notice that before Ibrahim was able to speak with his father and his people, etc. he was tested by his Lord "When Abraham's Lord tested him with certain commandments, which he fulfilled, He said, 'I will make you a leader of people.'" (Q. 2:124). Consequently, the challenge mentioned transformed Ibrahim's status from being a simple person to becoming a leader in his anthropological milieu. Ibrahim's status is confirmed in the Qur'an as he was also chosen by his Lord (Q. 2:130). In the context of Ibrahim's Lord selection, he ordered Ibrahim to submit himself. Ibrahim accepted instantly the order "His Lord said to him, 'Devote yourself to Me.' Abraham replied, 'I devote myself to the Lord of the Universe,'" (Q.

2:231). Ibrahim is also chosen because he has right judgment (Q. 21:51). All these features transform the status of Ibrahim who becomes a leader. Among other things, the status of the leader consists to enhance awareness about his internal psychological life and the external social interactions (Priest & Middleton, 2016). This is what distinguish Ibrahim, in the Qur'an, and allows him to deal with the issue of worshiping God, internally, in various ways, by the dialogue for oneself, and externally, with multiple people, by the dialogue for the other, as we will see.

What we have mentioned from the Qur'anic outlook shows to the Reader/Hearer the importance of what is at stake in selecting Ibrahim as the leader of people. We refer here to Ibrahim's belief in Allah, the central Qur'anic topic (Izutsu, 2002) and that Ibrahim followed Allah's orders. At the same time, Ibrahim rejects other beliefs mainly polytheism, which is the shared anthropological worldview of both his father and community. This is the turning point that makes sense for the Reader/Hearer of the Qur'anic text to grasp the importance of Ibrahim in the Qur'an as a character who is distinguished by some characteristics that makes him a leader. That is to say Ibrahim, in the Qur'anic text, is a particular character. He is different compared to other Qur'anic characters who interact with the former. In this context, Ibrahim is able to be critical with respect to himself and to others about the issue of worshiping. This is the reason from which the Qur'an named Ibrahim ḥanīfā حنيفاً which means "to walk away from the habitual path" (ابن عاشور 1984؛ ص. 737). That makes Ibrahim challenging other belief systems within himself and those of others like Nimrod, who clames himself as God. In this context, Nimrod considered himself the center of the anthropological worldview of his people. Then Ibrahim takes one more step, challenging mainly and repeatedly a more complex anthropological worldview, referring to polytheism of his father and that of his community. In this extension, Ibrahim questioned all the belief systems mentioned via his speech, which is both dialogue for oneself and for the other.

3 Ibrahim in the Qur'an between dialogue for oneself and dialogue for the other

First of all, it is important to mention that after being selected as a leader, Ibrahim championed Nimrod, king of his day, who saw himself as a deity. In this regard, Ibrahim used dialogue for the other to convince Nimrod to make a shift from believing on himself to be monotheistic by believing in one God "Allah" (Q. 2:258). Firstly, Ibrahim argued that his Lord gives life and death. Nimrod replied "I give life and death". Then Ibrahim argued again

“Allah brings the sun from the east; so bring it from the west.’ But Nimrod was dumbfounded. This kind of dialogue reflects a tension not only between the interlocutors cited, but also inside each of them. In other words, each interlocutor is thinking/speaking by a type of discourse which is the opposite of the discourse of the other. At the same time, the discourse of each interlocutor is influenced by the discourse of the other (Marková, 2003). That is highly noticeable in the last Nimrod’s discourse, as he was “dumbfounded”. We do not know what happened to Nimrod after this religious event with Ibrahim. That is because the Qur’anic text do not narrate anything about the character mentioned. Having said this, we assume that Nimrod’s religious feeling and his attitude did not help him to overcome the crisis that he experienced. This prompts us to rethink the role of religion in human life from Malinowski’s view, who considers religion, and its ceremonies as anthropological practices that allow human being to deal with danger and to master uncertainties experienced in the various situations of existence (Malinowski, 1948). This is not the case of the Nimrod’s character as the Qur’an related him. On the other hand, the discursive tension in Ibrahim’s speech is noticeable just indirectly when Ibrahim moved from the first argument to the second one. We suppose that Ibrahim was influenced negatively by Nimrod’s discourse. Having said this, we cannot dismiss that Ibrahim’s discourse is containing a tension not yet resolved. In this regard, Ibrahim is continually concerned by the main lived issue pointing out “to worship one God”. The reason which brings Ibrahim to move from dialogue for the other to dialogue for oneself about resolving the issue mentioned by asking his Lord “how You give life to the dead” (Q. 2:260), it is not because he did not believe but to put his heart at rest. We understand, from what we mentioned that Ibrahim’s dialogue for oneself allows him to resolve the issue of worshiping God which was unresolved in Ibrahim’s dialogue for the other with Nimrod.

When the problematic of “worshiping Allah alone” related to the issue of giving life to dead was resolved in the dialogue for oneself, Ibrahim moved again to the dialogue for the other. In this regard, he started again challenging the most complex anthropological problematic of his community, referring to worshiping deities which is opposite to his belief on Allah alone. Ibrahim’s dialogue for the other, that started with his father, reflects what we are referring to “(...) when Abraham said to his father, Azar, ‘How can you take idols as gods? I see that you and your people have clearly gone astray.’” (Q. 6:74). During the previous dialogue for the other Ibrahim challenged just

Nimrod. In this regard, the issue of giving life to dead was still unresolved. This is why Ibrahim moved to dialogue for oneself with his Lord to resolve the unresolved. That makes Ibrahim's belief more powerful. From this moment, Ibrahim started challenging the most important anthropological reference of his community pointing out the polytheistic worldview of his father and his people. The strong attitude of Ibrahim is linguistically noticeable because he used what is named "*istifham inkari* in Arabic i.e. (...) expressing disapproval" (Abdel Haleem, 2005, p. 7) toward the worldview mentioned. In other words, Ibrahim's dialogue for oneself influenced positively his later dialogue for the other with his father. That is to say, Ibrahim's dialogue for oneself makes him more convinced to worship his Lord alone and confirms within himself the positive qualities of the latter. This is why Ibrahim's dialogue with his father was more vigorous by confirming to the latter that *indeed* he is with his people in clear error because they embrace a deviant anthropological worldview which is based on polytheism. Just after Ibrahim's enunciation, his father did not reply. Do not reply, convey meaning(s). In other words, instead of replying to Ibrahim's enunciation, the father rejected what his son said. That is because the former is attracted by the opposite enunciation that comes from The Generalized Other (Mead, 1934) which reflects the polytheistic worldview to which the father of Ibrahim is carefully listening. Ibrahim paid attention to his father's attitude. Then Ibrahim moved again to dialogue for oneself. In this extension, the Lord of Ibrahim showed to him "Kingdoms of the heavens and the earth that he would be among the certain" (Q. 6:75). We understand here that Ibrahim is living internal tension between believing on his Lord, the only God, and his father's silent reply which conveys implicitly his refusal of Ibrahim's call that revolves around monotheism. This is why the Lord of Ibrahim intervenes firmly to make the latter strengthening his belief in Allah. This is what we can understand by referring to the Qur'anic uses of "ملکوت" and "ليكون من الموقنين" which are emphasizing the meaning" (ابن ا؛ ص. 316 (عاشور، 1984) related to Ibrahim's monotheistic attitude. That is because Ibrahim is facing polytheism, the common anthropological belief of both his father, with whom he lives, and his community, in which he lives. At this moment Ibrahim moved again to dialogue for oneself and in a deeper way, to resolve, for himself, the issue of believing. In this regard, Ibrahim speaks aloud repeatedly "This is my Lord" (Q. 6:76-78) when he saw a start, but it set, then the moon, but it set, then the sun because greater but it set. We remark that Ibrahim used dialogue for oneself, crossed by critical

consciousness (Freire, 2005). That allowed him to be more firmly convinced to believe in one God. At this moment Ibrahim moved again to use dialogue for the other not only with his father but with all his people to express to them a firm conclusion which consists to reject their polytheistic worldview (Q. 6:78). At the same time, Ibrahim used dialogue for the other to emphasize his monotheistic attitude to be followed (Q. 6:79). Here he named himself ḥanīfًا حنيفًا strengthening the position of his identity as he is characterized by moving away from the habitual lifestyle that has been taken by his community. In other words, what is particular to Ibrahim is that his purpose consists to reach a new answer about why and how to believe and to live. This shows again Ibrahim as a leader compared to the rest of his community. In other words, and in this case, Ibrahim is “able to think and act creatively in non-routine situations” (Doyle & Smith, 2007, p. 7). That allows Ibrahim to go beyond what is commonly shared and accepted in his anthropological milieu. This is why the Qur’an shows Ibrahim using dialogue for oneself then using dialogue for the other and vice versa very critically and authentically to reach a new lifestyle based on being monotheistic. This confirms what characterizes Ibrahim’s identity which revolves, from the Qur’anic outlook, around being ḥanīfًا حنيفًا. The Qur’anic discourse confirms repeatedly this central Ibrahim’s characteristic, which is the cornerstone to be Muslim. This is opposed, taking into account the Qur’anic outlook, to be Christian or Jew or polytheistic.

What is interesting to mention here is that Ibrahim made the two kinds of dialogue: dialogue for oneself and dialogue for the other to intersect. Both activities mentioned are used by Ibrahim to resolve the issue of believing. From another angle, we notice a difference between the aforementioned kinds of dialogue. In this regard, the first activity is used by Ibrahim to confirm his monotheistic belief and to reject, from himself, the polytheistic worldview. While the second activity is used by Ibrahim with the other (Nimrod, his father and his people) to firmly convince them to reject their polytheistic worldview by believing just in one God, “Allah” in the Qur’anic text.

Referring again to dialogue for the other, Ibrahim tried several times to convince his father and his people to move from polytheism to monotheism (Q. 19:41-50; 21:51-73; 29:16-27; 37:83-101). In this regard, his people, including his father, rejected Ibrahim’s call. They wanted to stone him and/or to burn him. But Allah will intervene to save him from the bad plot of his people. What is interesting to mention here is that when Ibrahim’s people made a shift from using the same psychological tool, pointing out dialogue for the other, to wanting to use violence against Ibrahim, this one stopped not

only to use dialogue for the other but also to live inside his community. The Qur'an mentioned that Ibrahim emigrates (Q. 19:48; 21:71; 29:26; 37:99). In other words, Ibrahim moved from his community, the worst about Ibrahim's representation, to another geographical place "the blessed land" (Q. 21:71). At the same time, when Ibrahim left his people, and both their land and their polytheistic worldview Allah gave him children (Ismail, Isaac and Jacob) who were monotheistic, prophets, leaders, righteous people, doing good deeds, praying, giving Zakat, etc. (Q. 6:85; 19:49-50; 21:72-73; 29:27; 37:100-101). Here again Ibrahim reached this later purpose by making a shift from dialogue for the other to dialogue for oneself. Ibrahim's dialogue with his people, enables him neither to suppress polytheism nor to spread out monotheism. Conversely, Ibrahim's dialogue for oneself enables him to succeed to exemplify monotheism in his posterity (Q. 2:132; 14:35-40; 19:48-50; 37:100-101). In other words, Ibrahim's failure with his ascendant becomes Ibrahim's success with his descendant. The negative past events shared and experienced by Ibrahim with his community become positive future existence with his offspring.

After Ibrahim's emigration, he enhances dialogue for oneself to enrich the positive outcomes of monotheism within himself and his children and among people whom belong to the city where Ibrahim lives (Q. 2:126-129; 2:132; 14:35-41). In brief, Ibrahim's goal consists to set up a new Monotheistic Abrahamic culture.

IV. From Ibrahim in the Qur'an to the Abrahamic self

What we mentioned about Ibrahim's dialogue for oneself compared to Ibrahim's dialogue for the other in the Qur'an represents a pattern for the Reader/Hearer who wants to refigure the lifestyle of his identity (Ricœur, 1985). That is to say, it consists for the self to put aside his previous identity and to identify himself with the character of Ibrahim in the Qur'an. In this context, a leader of group, a head of organization or family, etc. are, potentially speaking, able to identify themselves with the character of Ibrahim. This kind of Reader/Hearer exemplifies within himself the character of Ibrahim. The latter becomes a pattern for the former who is experiencing challenge of belief and moral issues with others. Firstly, this requires, as Ibrahim was in real life, to be righteous. Then the Reader/Hearer prepares himself to develop the activity of speaking to oneself, to seek the guidance and the approval of Allah, the only Lord, instead of worshiping somebody or something. Then the Reader/Hearer moves to spread out the belief mentioned to others with whom s/he interacts. Then when the former faces obstacles

from the latter, that one enhances again dialogue for oneself in order to resolve the difficulties encountered. This is how the self can dialogue again positively with others. Having said this, when these people want to react beyond the use of discourse, the self must stop to interact in order to save within himself the monotheistic belief system and its derived values that can be spread out later and elsewhere with another/others.

V. CONCLUSION

We conclude that the heavy of cross-historical and cross-anthropological understanding of both Orientalist and Islamic approaches, about Ibrahim in the Qur'an, did not avoid leading to a sclerotic research. At the same time, this did not prevent us from understanding the character of Ibrahim in the Qur'an differently. We refer here to the quantitative and qualitative importance of speaking in the Qur'an which led us to highlight Ibrahim's belief in one God through the use of dialogue for oneself compared to using dialogue for the other. In this respect, each type of dialogue confirms the other which reinforce Ibrahim's monotheistic attitude. From this perspective, the Reader/Hearer of Ibrahim's dialogue in the Qur'an can think of a new way of approaching, understanding and living the issue of believing in one God in the Qur'an. This subject whose horizon of expectation consists in identifying himself with Ibrahim in the Qur'an will develop a particular self. Its lifestyle is concerned by speaking for himself and with others about being Monotheistic. This may lead to a new cultural meaning of becoming Abrahamic.

Finally, and broadly speaking, it is from this that we grasp the importance of discourse in the Qur'an. Therefore, thinking on the Qur'an by the discursive paradigm can give rise to a new understanding of the human subject. This one, by its identification with the various righteous Qur'anic characters, exemplified here by the model of Ibrahim, could construct a new identity which could be named "The Qur'anic Speaking Subject".

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VII. Citations

(1) The letter “Q” means the Qur’an. The number before the colon is the chapter from which the quote was taken. The number after the colon is the quote (verse) that was taken. On the other hand, we used Abdel Haleem’s translation of the Qur’an (2005) and that of Şaheeh International (2004).

(2) The concept of “Problematization” (Foucault, 1984, 1994, 2001) refers to the ability to reconsider what is commonly accepted and/or adopted in terms of ideas, behavior, etc. In other words, problematization aims to question what is unquestioned in this or that culture, etc.