Interpretation of Religious Texts and Its Impact on Coexistence with Others

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Abstract

The interpretation of religious texts is a fundamental issue affecting societal coexistence. This research was undertaken to explore how a comparative hermeneutical analysis of Western religious texts and the Quran can reveal differences in interpretative traditions and assess their impact on intercultural understanding. A close textual analysis was employed to examine key interpretative traditions, analyzing the historical and conceptual evolution of ta'wil and tafsir. Comparative methods were used to review Western hermeneutics alongside Islamic approaches. The study found that interpretation plays a crucial role in shaping relationships between cultures and religions. It revealed clear, objective differences between Western and Islamic interpretations and showed that an open and balanced approach to the Quran can enhance mutual understanding and tolerance. The findings suggest that adopting an interpretative framework that respects both traditional and modern critical methods can build bridges of communication and promote coexistence. Recommendations include fostering interdisciplinary dialogue to refine interpretative practices in religious studies.

Keywords: Interpretation, Hermeneutics, Religious Text, Sacred Discourse, Coexistence, Fundamentalist Methodology.

Introduction

Research Problem: Interpretation of religious texts is a fundamental factor shaping how communities relate to each other. Divergent interpretative approaches can lead to vastly different understandings of the same text, which in turn may either foster mutual understanding or fuel conflict. The research problem addressed by this study is the challenge of how differing hermeneutical traditions—especially between Western and Islamic contexts—impact the prospects for peaceful coexistence. This issue is significant because in today's interconnected world, interpretative disputes do not occur in isolation; a world characterized by rapid exchanges of knowledge and ideas demands interpretative approaches that bridge cultural divides.

Study Questions: In light of the above problem, this study is guided by several key questions:

- **Historical Evolution**: How have the core concepts of *ta'wil* (interpretation) and *tafsir* (exegesis) evolved within Islamic thought, and in what ways does this evolution compare to the development of interpretative principles in Western thought?

- **Comparative Approaches**: What are the key similarities and differences between Western hermeneutic approaches to sacred texts and Islamic interpretative approaches in understanding those texts?

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- **Impact on Coexistence**: How do these differing interpretations of sacred texts influence intercultural dialogue and the potential for coexistence between religious communities?

Objectives of the Study: To address these questions, the study pursues the following objectives:

- **Examine the Intellectual History:** Examine the conceptual evolution of *ta'wil* and *tafsir*, tracing these concepts from early Islamic scholarship to their engagement with contemporary hermeneutical theory.

- **Compare Interpretative Traditions:** Compare the hermeneutical approaches applied to Western religious texts with those used in interpreting the Quran, highlighting both commonalities and differences.

- **Bridge to Coexistence:** Analyze the practical implications of different interpretative methodologies for promoting intercultural dialogue and fostering coexistence, supported by specific examples and case studies.

Methods: This study employs a qualitative, comparative methodology. It involves close reading and textual analysis of primary sources – including the Quran and selected Western religious texts – alongside scholarly commentaries from both Islamic and Western traditions. The analysis integrates historical contextualization of key concepts (such as *ta'wil* and *tafsir*) and comparative examination of interpretative approaches. By examining concrete examples and case studies of interpretation in practice, the study evaluates how different hermeneutical methods can enhance or hinder mutual understanding and coexistence. Similarly, Islamic intellectual history offers a rich tradition of Quranic exegesis and interpretation. Foundational scholars like Imam al-Tabari and Abu Hamid al-Ghazali established systematic approaches to *tafsir* and *ta'wil* that integrate linguistic, legal, and theological analysis. In recent decades, some researchers have compared these Islamic approaches with Western methods; for example, Amara Nasser (2007) provides a comparative look at Western and Arab-Islamic interpretative perspectives. However, many prior studies address Western and Islamic hermeneutics separately, without exploring their direct interplay in fostering interfaith understanding. This study builds on the existing literature by linking these two realms and focusing on how differences in interpretative methodology can either build bridges of communication or create gaps, thereby directly affecting the potential for intercultural coexistence.

Interpretation of the Religious Text and the Problematic of Concept and History

Defining Interpretation: Conceptual Challenges

" *Awwala*," (أَوَّلَ) interpreted; "*al-awl*," (الأَوْل) the return; "*al-awwal*," (الأَوَّل) the outcome; and "*awwala al-kalam*," (أَوَّلَ الْكَلَامَ) he interpreted the speech, planned and estimated it. Early scholars often considered interpretation (*ta'wil*) and exegesis (*tafsir*) to be synonymous. (Ibn Manzur, 2005, pp. 193–194)However, in reality, these meanings are close in general indication, but they are problematic terms whether in themselves or in the attempt to link them. Interpretation is not historically exegesis, as the first term is mainly related to texts and ways of reading them, while the word 'exegesis' is linked to the effort that arose with the emergence of philosophy, which was often associated with attempts to explain the universe or existence in terms of origin and formation and the position of humans in it." (Ziyada et al., 1986, p. 290)

Understanding the term *ta'wil* (interpretation) independently of the term *tafsir* (exegesis) presents a challenge for researchers, particularly when seeking to differentiate between them, as the former inherently invokes the latter. As *Al-Jurjani* notes, "*Tafsir* usually relates to explaining

words and vocabulary, whereas *ta'wil* primarily focuses on sentences and meanings" (*Al-Jurjani, Dala'il al-I'jaz*). The technical meaning of interpretation involves "diverting the indication of the word from its literal meaning to a metaphorical meaning, without violating the customary figurative usage in the Arabic language. (Ibn Rushd, n.d., p. 35) Diverting the word from its literal meaning to a permissible meaning with conditions and restrictions does not guarantee reaching the truth, given the multiplicity of reading aspects, differing personal motives, and conflicting circumstances. This consideration creates a notable distinction between the two terms, leading to disagreement about the legitimacy of "interpretation," particularly within intellectual circles sensitive to sacred texts, where the sacred serves as a barrier between human opinion and transcendent truth. Consequently, the term *ta'wil* (interpretation), present in the Quranic text alongside *tafsir* (exegesis), was initially regarded by early scholars as synonymous with exegesis.

Therefore, interpretation is a term problematic in itself. Some do not consider it beyond the limit of exegesis, that is, clarifying the indications of words and their known meanings according to linguistic guidelines or custom. However, these meanings are restricted by the authority of the sacred, making these outcomes an imminent danger threatening the interpreter's faith. Thus, there is no longer justification for stating a strict equivalence between the terms "exegesis" and "interpretation." As Avicenna argues, exegesis involves clarifying words as closely as possible to their meanings with apparent indications, free from possibilities and probabilities, it is a type of strict determination of the meanings of words (Avicenna, Lexique de la Langue philosophique d'Ibn Sina). This aligns with the philosophical definition: "We say that the primary purpose in definition is to indicate by the word the essence of the thing." (Goichon, 1938, pp. 58–59).

Moreover, if it becomes impossible to attain knowledge of the essence of the thing, rational analogy pursued by logical inquiries becomes necessary, especially among philosophers who adopt formal logic. This leads to a type of exegesis that uncovers unknowns through demonstrative reasoning, As noted in Le Grand Larousse Illustré, "demonstrative syllogisms [are] composed of premises that must be accepted" (Le Grand Larousse Illustré). This approach is often rejected by scholars of *usul* (fundamentals) , such as those following the *Ash'ari* school, who favor inductive analogy as the safest path to comprehend the ruling.

All this overlap between the two terms refers to a distinction between exegesis and interpretation, emphasizing that their presence is necessary in dealing with any text. The first is a tool for clarifying the indications of words and their apparent meanings, while the second aims to search for the outcomes of the meanings of words not revealed by the apparent wording, requiring theoretical effort to understand the intended meaning through metaphor that allows for meaning or rational consideration that does not contradict the intended meaning.

In languages of Latin origin, the gap widens between the terms "exegesis" and "interpretation." The latter has undertaken the task of uncovering the secrets of religious texts that were subject to distortion, which posed a significant difficulty in the Arabic text that represents the Quran in its ideal form, where there is a firm belief among Muslims in its stability and preservation, protecting it from probabilistic references and historical possibilities, unlike ancient Western texts. Where "the word 'hermeneutics' initially referred to the interpretation of sacred and ancient texts, attempting to understand them and grasp hidden meanings starting from apparent meanings, considering the ambiguity, symbols, and contradictions (Al-Hayzam, 2009, p. 89) these texts carry on the surface." (Le Grand Larousse illustré, 2005, p. 1183) The phenomenon of interpretation has encompassed several fields such as philosophy, mythology, dreams, art,

and other areas. where "interpretation has been the common factor among them as a methodology for extracting hidden meanings according to the specificity of each field. It can be said that interpretation has embodied the human symbolic relationship with language and existence." (Al-Hayzam, 2009, p. 90)

This allows for expansive readings of a single text, but at the same time, there is a fear of straying from the intended meaning of the text and focusing on the subjectivity of the interpreter and their personal intentions. Consequently, the text is often exposed to deceptive readings that subject it to ideological directives, especially if these readings are based on external methodologies that do not originate from the cultural structure within which the text was established. This has led most Muslim thinkers to reject the term "hermeneutics," because it represents a methodological approach initially established to deal with texts that are historically and theoretically unstable, such as Jewish and Christian texts, whose own adherents acknowledge that their structural composition is a human work. This is contrary to the texts of the Holy Quran, where the sacred dimension aligns with the divinity of the text. Interpretation in this sense may represent a danger threatening the intended meaning of the text, as the meaning is not always what the interpreter perceives, but rather what is assumed based on what they see. (Al-Sharif, 2002, p. 144) This not only opens the text to hidden meanings but also refers the meaning itself to multiple interpretations. (Encyclopédia Universalis, n.d.)

Historical Development of Interpretation

When we talk about the history of interpretation, we are confronting heritage as well as human experiences in existence. Therefore, interpretation is not merely an explanation of texts, records, and documents; rather, it is a revelation of the self and a glimpse into reality through this self. A reality rich with knowledge from which interpretation draws its strength, such as theology, history, philosophy, and philology. It is also necessary, when discussing the history of interpretation, to consider it through its most significant intellectual turns and as a movement in time due to its relation to the trajectory of human thought development. This is so we can understand what concerns us in this research, namely the interpretation of the religious text and its impact on coexistence with others. This necessitates monitoring two paths in the history of interpretation: the first relates to how Muslims deal with their religious texts, and the second is the development of the Western hermeneutic concept, (herméneutique) which will have a direct impact on an important elite of Arab thinkers This will provoke a kind of acute confusion in dealing with the Islamic religious text as a sacred text that Muslims believe is free from distortion. Allah Almighty says: "Falsehood cannot approach it from before it or from behind it" (Quran Fussilat 41:42) , and He says: "Indeed, it is We who sent down the Qur'an and indeed, We will be its guardian" (Quran Al-Hijr 15: 9). As Al-Razi explains in his *Al-Tafsir Al-Kabir,* this means that it is protected from any deficiency (Al-Razi, Tafsir AlKabir) from before it, nor can anything be added to it so that falsehood comes to it from behind. The evidence is His saying: 'And indeed, we will be its guardian." (Al-Razi, 2015, p. 117) We will begin by tracing the historical problematic of Western hermeneutics.

Hermeneutics: Origin of the Term and Its Procedural Movement

Hermeneutics in Western thought is associated with the term "understanding," and thus it is not a branch or type of text explanation and interpretation but is the process of interpretation itself. In this sense, "hermeneutics (the theory of interpretation) is the specific study of the processes of understanding, especially concerning the interpretation of texts."(Mustafa, 2018, p. 9) ،The origin of the term goes back to Greek roots, where "the word 'hermeneutics' comes from the

Greek verb 'Hermeneuein,' meaning 'to interpret,' and the noun 'Hermeneia,' meaning 'interpretation.' It appears that both are related to the god Hermes, the swift-footed messenger of the Olympian gods, who, by virtue of his function, mastered the language of the gods, understood the thoughts of these immortal beings, and then translated their intentions. " (Mustafa, 2018, p. 15, Al-Saif, 2015, p. 73) Through this symbolic image attributed to the term, we find that the interpreter is a mediator between the text and the people, understanding its meanings and intentions, which are inherently obscure to the general audience, to convey them as Hermes does when he translates the words of the gods. In the Odyssey myth, we find this address he received from one of the Olympian gods: "Hermes, come, my son, to the blonde water nymph Calypso with my messages". (Homer, 2013, p. 59) This is the image that will appear more in the term "hermeneutics," where it will represent a methodology for manifestation and understanding what was hidden and concealed behind apparent words. In other words, hermeneutics is a method of explanation mediated by language, so "this word is said about what is symbolic." (Lalande, 2001, p. 555)

If the symbolic translation process carried out by Hermes is the first station for the emergence of hermeneutics, it has also been marked as one of the foundational texts of hermeneutics, in Greek philosophy, notably the Cynic school, and then Zeno the Stoic, who "interprets Zeus, the chief of the gods, as the Logos, the primary intellect that arranges everything." (Al-Saif, 2015, p. 75), But although the Greeks practiced the interpretative process in effect, perhaps in a way whose significant impact we find in today's hermeneutics, the term "hermeneutics" was not circulated to express the process itself until later. In Plato's "Phaedrus," we find the following statement: "There is at least an ancient tradition whose truth is known only to the ancients, but if we can discover the truth ourselves, does it matter to us what humanity previously believed?" (Plato, 2000, p. 109) This means that interpretation was strongly present despite the absence of the term. It has been well-known among researchers that the first to use this term "hermeneutics" in this form was Aristotle in the field of logic in his book "Organon," and he meant by it the science of semantics. (Al-Saif, 2015, p. 76)

Just as interpretation was strongly present in the philosophical corpus, it had a deeper impact on religious texts, where "the Torah represented for the ancient rabbis the original blueprint of creation, which existed before everything else. As for the actual writing in terms of the physical letters we read, we must consider it as the garment of the Torah, the garment of the text existing since ancient times." (Jasper, 2007, p. 47) And if the Torah text itself is nothing but a human expression of a divine truth, as they believe, and since this truth is infinite, multiple readings do not harm, because what concerns them in Torah readings is not obtaining meaning from the text as much as they desire to obtain blessing from it. (Jasper, 2007, p. 48) . As for interpretation in Christian texts, it realistically began with the entry of Greek philosophy into European culture in the medieval period, where Augustine tried to adapt reason to defend faith, and later Thomas Aquinas tried to affirm that the Holy Scripture belongs to a cognitive pattern that leads to truth and that they do not contradict each other. (Al-Saif, 2015, pp. 77–78)

The Protestant Reformation movement changed the direction of reading the religious text and explicitly called for denying the mediation of the Church between the Holy Scripture and the readers, which caused a significant transformation in the hermeneutic project that began to develop rapidly with every new scientific and intellectual development." "Wherever rules arose, judgments unfolded, and systems were established to explain texts, understand them, or decipher their codes, there was the science of interpretation, or 'hermeneutics.' Between 1720 and 1820, not a year passed without a new interpretive guide appearing to assist Protestant clergy in their

urgent new mission." (Mustafa, 2018, p. 40). Accordingly, the fields inaugurated by interpretive theory have multiplied, starting from the theological field and crossing through other cognitive and human fields. "If we accept the conceptual migration of the term, it can be read on several levels, starting with the conceptuality of the term, passing through its cognitive functions and teleological connections, and finally in its functional and procedural aspects." (Na'san, 2022, p. 33).

With the Age of Enlightenment, rational and logical reading of the Holy Scripture texts began, and early Christianity appeared as a literary adaptation of Old Testament prophecies (Jasper, 2007, p. 101). The hermeneutic field expanded with the advent of the Age of Science, where many scientific researches challenged the credibility of sacred texts, like Darwin's "Origin of Species." As Matthew Arnold wrote, expressing this sense of profound transition, "I wander between two worlds, one dead, the other unable to be born" (Arnold, "Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse").

In this poetic excerpt that appeared in 1855, the profound impact of science on levels of thought and its directions becomes apparent, which began to be characterized by intense skepticism towards all dogmatic thinking. ‹ (Jasper, 2007, p. 26) This led to subsequent developments in philosophical theories that began to incline towards literal reading related to the real issues of humans, forming a kind of philosophical readings open to multiple perspectives, which in some way aligns with contemporary hermeneutics. ‹Where "the creative text is always an open work. The specific role that language plays in creative texts, which is in some sense less translatable than its scientific counterpart, arises from the necessity of letting the outcome soar to obliterate the author's preconceived notions through the ambiguity of language and the imperceptible final meaning." (Eco, 1992, p. 173)

This remarkable development in reading texts, liberated from linguistic and even rational constraints, opens up to the subjectivity of individuals and their differences in levels of thinking and emotions. This makes the subjective aspect dominant in the hermeneutics of texts, where the religious text represents an attractive and present axis in most scholarly investigations. and in many fields, including philosophical, scientific, humanistic, legal, and others—all that interacts with human reality and the place of the religious in societies. The picture that expresses the reality of Western hermeneutics will be found to conflict in many of its orientations with the specificities of Eastern culture, which is more closely attached to the sacred. Especially with Islamic thought where the Quranic text represents the pole of identity and civilizational anchorage, with its texts enjoying the uniqueness of being free from distortion, considering that the Quran represents the last of the sacred books, which Allah has guaranteed to protect from human interference in its original texts.

Interpretation and the Historical Problematic

Separating history from the concept, becomes challenging when discussing the interpretation of Quranic texts, given the evolution of interpretation over time. In this context, interpretation is "synonymous with change, and thus the ratio between them is equality." This understanding is evident in the views of early scholars, such as *Mujahid* , who stated, "Scholars know its interpretation" (referring to the Quran), and Ibn Jarir , who remarked in his exegesis, "The statement in interpreting His saying, the Almighty: such and such... and the people of interpretation differed regarding this verse..." (Al-Zarqani, n.d., p. 10) This indicates that initially, ta'wil (interpretation) was synonymous with tafsir (exegesis). However, the concept evolved to differentiate between them based on generality and specificity. Exegesis is more

general and targets the meaning of the word absolutely, while interpretation became more specific, clarifying the meaning beyond its apparent sense. Thus, exegesis relied on determining the meaning of the word. Thus, the basis of the latter is transmission and narration, while interpretation drew upon reason and knowledge. (Al-Zarqani, n.d., p. 10)

The author of "*al-Dala'il*" characterized this understanding: "That you mention the word not intending its meaning but meaning what is synonymous or similar, thus using a metaphor in the word itself and in the expression". (Al-Jurjani, n.d., p. 293)

Accordingly, meanings expand in the text, and interpreters find themselves between the constraints of the word that belongs to the sacred context, on one hand, and the indications reached by the interpreter's understanding, on the other hand, which are broader and richer than the words. In this context, the author of *"Al-Dala'il"* says: "Know that if an observer considers the matter of meanings and words concerning the listener's state, and sees that meanings occur in his mind after the words reach his ear, he might think that meanings follow words in their arrangement. But what we have explained shows him the invalidity of this assumption (...). So when we saw that meanings could be altered without the words changing or moving from their places, we knew that words are the followers and meanings are the leaders.". (Al-Jurjani, n.d., p. 373)

If interpretation is primarily related to the nature of language, where the use of metaphor is expansive and opens up in rhetoric and eloquence to metaphors, metonymies, and others—as linguists and scholars have explained—it is also related to the endeavors of theologians, particularly the *Mu'tazilites*, who considered reason an authority in legal rulings. Rational contemplation led theologians to interpret many doctrinal rulings, resulting in significant disagreements.

Some theologians were excessive in interpretation, while others were deficient, barely going beyond the literal expressions. Others were moderate. *Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali* referred to all of them in his treatise titled "The Canon of Interpretation," where he divided the people of interpretation into five groups, explaining that the first four had violated the rules of consideration in this field, either due to affectation, negligence, or partial deficiency. ‹He explained that the fifth group "is the moderate group that combines the investigation of the rational and the transmitted, considering each as an important principle, denying the conflict between reason and Sharia, and its reality. Whoever denies reason denies Sharia, for through reason we know the truth of Sharia. Without the truth of rational evidence, we would not know the difference between a prophet and a pretender, or the truthful and the liar. How can reason be denied by Sharia when Sharia is established only through reason ? " (Al-Ghazali, n.d., p. 626) Based on this, reason is a tool for understanding Sharia but does not govern it. Regardless of its role in uncovering meanings, it remains fenced by the constraints and rulings of Sharia. Islamic philosophy will work to surpass this, especially with Ibn Rushd (Averroes), who strived to reconcile reason and transmission, but by adapting the latter to the former if a conflict appeared between them. ‹He says: "We are certain that whatever demonstrative proof leads to and is contradicted by the apparent meaning of Sharia, that apparent meaning accepts interpretation according to the rules of Arabic interpretation.". (Ibn Rushd, n.d., p. 36)

Philosophical thought did not stop interpreting with the ordeal of Ibn Rushd, nor did Islamic culture witness a philosophical funeral with his death and the migration of his ideas to European West. Instead, this philosophy took another direction, evolving conceptually with its interpretive production within a historical movement that broke the fence of rational logic, thus moving into

what is called gnosis interpretation or philosophical Sufism. From the outset, interpretation has been integral to the *Sufi* school and mystics, who believed that their knowledge possessed a unique , divinely-ordained character. They shared with the *Shiites* the belief that Imam *Ali ibn Abi Talib* (d. 661 CE) received from the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him esoteric, knowledge that should be gradually imparted only to select disciples.". (Moussa, 2018, pp. 123–124)، For example, some Sufi interpretations of the story of the People of the Town in Surah Yasin is view it as an esoteric image, suggesting that" the town is nothing but the body, and the three messengers are the spirit, the heart, and the mind. (Moussa, 2018, p. 125). However this type of interpretation represents only the beginning compared to later gnostic schools, such as that of *Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi (d. 1240 CE). For instance*, Ibn Arabi interprets the events preceding Moses' mission, peace be upon him, as revealing "the wisdom of killing the sons for the sake of Moses so that the life of everyone killed for his sake returns to him as support because he was killed as if he were Moses. (Ibn Arabi, 2016, p. 197)

(Ibn Arabi, Fusus al-Hikam) assigns to words, even letters, significations that transcend rational meanings, creating a state of harmony shaped by imagination between humans and existence. As he says in "Bezels of Wisdom in the Wisdom of Moses": "As for the ruling of casting him into the ark and throwing him into the river, the ark is his humanity, and the river is what he attained of knowledge through this body..." (Ibn Arabi, 2016, p. 198).

This gnostic interpretation also appeared in the East with *Al-Suhrawardi Al-Maqtul* (d. 1191 AD), and its influence persists to this day. ،It remains to point out that interpretation has two main dimensions: the first aims at understanding the meanings of the Quran and uncovering God's intent from it, and the second is ideological interpretation intended to champion a specific opinion or doctrine. (Moussa, 2018, p. 119)

Key Findings & Discussion: The evolution from a strict equivalence between ta'wil and tafsir to a nuanced differentiation highlights the intellectual progression in interpreting sacred texts. This shift underscores that while a literal approach may offer clarity, it can also restrict the exploration of deeper, contextual meanings essential for understanding cultural and religious diversity. By embracing both the literal and metaphorical dimensions, modern hermeneutical practices create a more flexible framework that can serve as a foundation for more effective intercultural dialogue.

• **Early Equivalence and Evolving Distinctions:** Early scholars often treated ta'wil (interpretation) and tafsir (exegesis) as synonymous. However, historical debates have clarified that while tafsir focuses on the literal meaning of texts, ta'wil seeks deeper, metaphorical insights.

• **Complexity and Ambiguity:** The evolution of interpretative methods has revealed inherent ambiguities in approaching sacred texts. This complexity underscores the challenges in delineating precise meanings and reflects an ongoing intellectual debate about the role of reason versus tradition.

• **Influential Intellectual Shifts:** Thinkers such as Avicenna and Al-Jurjani exemplify the transition from a strict literal approach to one embracing nuanced interpretation. Their contributions highlight how linguistic, cultural, and philosophical factors have reshaped the understanding of religious texts over time.

Western Hermeneutics and Coexistence

Interpretability and Openness in Western Religious Texts

The most significant institution where interpretation emerged is the religious institution, whether Western or Islamic. Notably, the phenomenon of interpreting religious texts poses a threat to Jewish and Christian scriptures due to the multiplicity of their versions and authors across time and place, as well as the differences in most of their contents. This inevitably leads to discovering the disorder and alteration that occurred within them. On the other hand, interpretation greatly serves these texts by enabling the approximation of viewpoints when the interpreter's authority dominates the reading. In this context, "the emergence of hermeneutics was linked to understanding the Christian religious text to achieve harmony and compatibility between the text and contemporary values, as well as bridging the gap between the text and its reader by removing the obscurity and ambiguity surrounding the significance of religious texts. (Benomar, 2017, p. 27)

The Holy Scriptures, whether in Judaism or Christianity, are human endeavors that addressed a religious origin. The continuous presence of the reader and their interpretive opinions bestow upon these texts meanings that transcend the closed religious expressions. Reason intervenes to organize ideas and approach them more rationally, as seen with (Augustine, 354–430 AD, pp. 25–28), who attempted to rationalize faith and the Trinity under the slogan "Believe so that you may understand" (Karam, 2014, pp. 30–31) significantly influenced by Platonic philosophy.

Approximately eight centuries after Augustine and the dominance of ecclesiastical thought, Thomas Aquinas emerged, influenced by the philosophy of Ibn Rushd (Averroes), albeit not explicitly stated. He adopted the Aristotelian method in explaining existence, starting from natural entities that are prior in our knowledge to reach their cause through rational proof. (Karam, 2014, p. 144) Hermeneutics of religious texts thus became an extension of the philosophical movement and a prelude to the religious reform movement that took the Holy Scriptures out of the church's confines and made them accessible outside. This was considered a humanization of religious discourse and "an epistemological rupture with theological centralism and its grand narratives represented in sacred literature, philosophy, theology, and Christian arts, such as the use of allegorical or mythical stories, rituals and ceremonies, sanctifying objects, symbolism, modification, and metaphorical methods." (Al-Wa'ili, 2018, pp. 121–122)

The religious reform movement began within the church itself in France and Germany. Universities then joined in advocating for this reform, and the Greek rationality was summoned again after being reformulated and crystallized in Islamic universities. "What material did these universities present to the West? Undoubtedly, it was Greek culture. Everyone acknowledged the Arabs' merit in conveying the works of ancient philosophers and scientists and their legacies to the modern world." (Hunke, 1993, p. 399) Thus, the openness of the religious text to other cultures was based on various interpretative processes, impacting positive communication with others, especially works that grew around the Western religious text, which was closed, conflicting, and difficult to understand except after arduous attempts at deconstruction.

When we read a religious book, whether Islamic or otherwise, and comply with its rulings, rituals, and relationships vertically and horizontally, we expand its reading and go beyond the realm of reason, which becomes narrow and incapable of broader perception. The body assumes a central role, as do the soul and conscience, through an understanding of existence provided by

the text and methods of worship. This aims to establish an ethical level that elevates the human self's value, transcending social boundaries and closed norms, opening up to reality and questioning it in philosophical, literary, and even scientific expressions that neither reject religion nor are rejected by it. Humans are composed of harmonious but non-homogeneous dimensions, and forcibly separating them creates a dilemma that prevents the self from communicating with others. If a person is fragmented within themselves, can they build bridges of communication with the other? Since existence comprises both apparent and hidden aspects, interpreting sacred texts—especially Western ones—as human compositions based on rational principles is more capable than literal interpretation of achieving harmony between the spiritual essence of humans and their reality, open to others with an ethical capacity to accept and coexist with them on the basis of shared humanity.

The Pitfalls of Fanatical Hermeneutics

If we ask why sacred books like the Torah and the Gospel have expanded, their versions multiplied, differed among themselves, and additional books like those representing the law by rabbis and priests were added, we find that all these additions resulted from forced interpretations of the original texts. The Torah is truth, just as the Gospel is truth, and Allah Almighty says, "He has sent down upon you the Book in truth, confirming what was before it. And He revealed the Torah and the Gospel" (Quran Al Imran 3:3) . However, the historical circumstances that these two books underwent made them susceptible to much distortion and errors. This led Spinoza to say: "We see that most theologians have been preoccupied with extracting their own heresies and arbitrary judgments from the sacred books by forcibly interpreting them and justifying these heresies and judgments with divine authority."(Spinoza, 2005, p. 233) This type of fanatical interpretation of the religious text makes its proponents closed-minded, contradictory to reason and empirical facts, "defending with their emotions irrational beliefs imposed upon them by their passions." (Spinoza, 2005, p. 234) ، This necessitates establishing a disciplined methodology for interpretation that protects the text from subjectivity and psychological tendencies and ensures it does not deviate from truths justified by reason. Spinoza called for setting necessary rules for interpretation, stating: "Similarly, in interpreting the Scripture, we must obtain precise historical knowledge, and after acquiring it—i.e., definitive data and principles—we can legitimately deduce the thought of the Scripture's authors. (Spinoza, 2005, p. 234) This did not occur throughout the Middle Ages, where interpretation was unidirectional, preventing the expansion of reason in dealing with the text, leading to self-isolation and hostility towards others, as happened in the Crusades, where churchmen mobilized warriors in the name of penitential pilgrimage to Jerusalem. "Significantly, contemporaries never distinguished between pilgrimage and the Crusade, as revealed in the accounts of Latin historians; the dividing line between them was extremely thin." (Qasim, 1990, p. 23) The unilateral interpretation of the sacred text by clergy alone was not the sole reason for the rupture with the culturally different other. It also extended harshly to dissenters within the same religion, evident in the violent confrontation by which clergy resisted the reformist tide. "The Inquisition was one of the means adopted by the Roman Church to combat its opponents whom it considered heretics or infidels because they differed with the fundamentalism it adhered to." (Al-Wa'ili, 2018, p. 131).

While the Church's monopolized unilateral interpretation of the Holy Scriptures was a reason for rupture with local opponents or violent confrontation with external adversaries, the advanced interpretations produced by the Enlightenment era and beyond had significant, profound, and varied impacts that often appear divergent. They transcended all red lines that previously fenced religious books with doctrinal and even ethical conceptions. "The Enlightenment brought many

challenges, reaching the point of confronting sacred texts in Christianity and Judaism in line with development and modernization. Methods of Biblical Criticism abolished the divine reference of scriptural texts in both the Old and New Testaments." (Benomar, 2017, p. 32) These new readings subjected the entire religious corpus to critical scrutiny like other literary, philosophical, and scientific texts, stripping them of their sacred specificity. They became subjects of cultural and historical contemplation, like any human production intertwined with social conditions and temporal processes. Attention focused on these texts for lacking objective supports qualifying them to withstand the European mind's openness to interpretation liberated from all external constraints. Religious texts were placed within a laboratory of doubt with the intent of humanizing religious expressions and viewing them as human experiences subject to critical evaluation. "On this basis, some universal concepts in the Holy Scriptures, such as evil, sin, or guilt, were viewed entirely differently from the classical perspective." (Al-Saif, 2015, p. 103) With this wave of criticism supported by a scientific interpretive movement of the universe, certainty was lifted from all intellectual corpora, even those of a sacred nature. This "forced ecclesiastical understanding to retreat in favor of the new reading of the Holy Scriptures and officially recognize Biblical criticism of religion in light of modern critical methods, after decrees of prohibition had been issued against it. (Al-Saif, 2015, p. 103) Thus, a cultural hermeneutics was established, open to coexistence with others and the geographical dissolution of social specificities. However, this excessive hermeneutical approach applied to Western religious texts had conflicting effects on the reading of the Holy Scriptures among Muslims—the Quran—which Western thinkers view similarly to their religious corpus, justifying the necessity of subjecting it to their critical methods that separate the text from its divine reference, despite the Quran's unique fixed texts and its immunity from the distortion characteristic of preceding religious corpora.

Key Findings & Discussion: The diversity of interpretations produced by Western hermeneutical methods reveals both the strength and potential pitfalls of such an approach. On one side, the openness inherent in these methods encourages multiple perspectives, which can foster rich intercultural exchanges. On the other, the resulting fragmentation can complicate efforts to establish a shared understanding. This discussion suggests that a balanced interpretative framework—one that integrates critical analysis with a respect for the unity of meaning—is essential for bridging cultural divides and promoting societal coexistence.

- **Multiplicity of Interpretations:** Western hermeneutical methods—rooted in deconstruction and critical analysis—tend to generate a range of interpretations, often leading to fragmented understandings of sacred texts.

- **Openness Versus Fragmentation:** While the inherent openness of Western approaches can foster intercultural dialogue by accommodating diverse perspectives, it may also challenge the establishment of a coherent, shared meaning that underpins societal coexistence.

- **Historical and Philosophical Influences:** The evolution of Western hermeneutics reflects shifts in philosophical thought and scientific inquiry. This diversity of interpretative outcomes suggests that, despite its benefits, a more balanced framework is necessary to support effective intercultural communication.

Quranic Interpretation and Coexistence

The Holy Quran has not been subjected to interpretation influenced by Western hermeneutical developments, nor is interpretation foreign to Islamic culture. The Arabic language, with its metaphors and expansive meanings of its words, both apparent and hidden, has the capacity to accept exegesis and interpretation. Both terms are included in Quranic verses, as Allah says: "And they do not come to you with an example except that We bring you the truth and the best explanation" (Quran Al-Furqan 25:33) , and "Give full measure when you measure, and weigh with an even balance. That is the best and fairest interpretation" (Quran Al-Isra 17:35) . ‹It was not unusual for scholars to engage in the exegesis and interpretation of the Quran, and they established rules and restrictions for both terms. While the meaning of exegesis (*tafsir*) refers to uncovering and clarifying the meanings of words, interpretation (*ta'wil*) "involves favoring one of the possible meanings of a word based on evidence. This preference relies on independent reasoning (*ijtihad*) and is achieved through understanding the individual words and their meanings in the Arabic language, their usage according to context, and knowledge of Arabic styles to derive meanings in all of that. (Al-Dhahabi, n.d., p. 18)

This opened horizons for contemplation in the Quran, becoming a field for derivation by jurists, theologians, mystics, philosophers, and other scholars. This facilitated openness to many sciences and cultures, as the Quran's call to reflection, seeking knowledge, and using reason was a sufficient reason for interpretation to become the key to uncovering hidden meanings. However, the path of interpretation was not unrestricted from the boundaries imposed by the sacred description surrounding the Quranic text and the rules of language that set limits for independent reasoning. This implies that the interpreter must adhere to two matters: "First, to demonstrate that the word can possibly bear the meaning he claims it to have. Second, to provide evidence that necessitates diverting the word from its apparent meaning to the less apparent one; otherwise, his interpretation would be invalid or a manipulation of the texts. (Al-Dhahabi, n.d., p. 15) With the significant leap witnessed in critical methodologies in Western culture, Islamic thought was influenced by these changes due to proximity and acculturation, especially with Orientalists studying and critiquing Islamic heritage, and cultural exchanges that increased with modern communication technologies.

This led to continuous attempts to liberate the interpretation of the Quranic texts from the constraints set by classical exegetes and to deal with them using the same methodology applied to Western religious and other texts. This skeptical methodology goes beyond the notion of consciousness to the meanings it conceals behind it. "The school of suspicion collectively focused on demonstrating the falsification of consciousness, asserting that apparent consciousness is merely a deception because the truth is not in direct consciousness. Instead, this consciousness must be eliminated and not trusted to reach the hidden meaning behind the apparent, false one. The task of interpretation lies in removing the apparent superficial meaning in favor of the hidden one." (Al-Saif, 2015, pp. 104–105) Most Muslim thinkers rejected this approach, considering that such hermeneutics withdraws the authority and reference of the text in favor of the interpreter's authority and psychological needs. Therefore, interpreting the Islamic religious text has dimensions related to coexistence with others—some positive, supporting intercultural communication, and others surrounded by caution for fear of losing the unique characteristics of the Quranic texts preserved from distortion.

Quranic Interpretation and Foundational Methodology

The entry of Greek philosophy had its impact on Islamic thought communities, whether through

acceptance or rejection. The significant point is that the Islamic cultural sphere accepted this intellectual debate and found in it an enrichment of scientific activity. The rational methodology in examining religious texts was the first issue faced by fundamental religious thought, which was primarily established on the transmitted methodology (*naqli*), and the derivative analogies from it, whose most prominent tasks were clarification and derivation.

One of the tools of fundamental analogy was the definition (*hadd*), intended to distinguish between things, while the Aristotelian definition sought to uncover the essence of things. Fundamentalists believed that what philosophers sought from the definition was impossible, as "their goal from the definition was to encompass the essential attributes. It was a condition for them that the description be specific, i.e., referring to the described entity's essence. Thus, the definition is the detailed statement that defines the essence. As for the fundamentalists—whose goal from the definition is merely distinction—the definition refers to the describer's statement... so nothing enters it that is not from it, nor does anything leave it that is within it (Al-Nashar, 2008, p. 76) Fundamentalists sought to know the rulings related to the evidences spread in the texts. They established analogy based on the laws of cause and regularity, affirming that every effect has a cause, and that a single cause, when found under similar circumstances, produces a similar effect—that is, the cause in the original case exists in the subsidiary case, (Al-Nashar, 2008, p. 86). This enables independent reasoning (ijtihad) that adheres to the fundamentals. Therefore, Muslims' rejection of the Aristotelian rational analogy based on logical premises and resultant conclusions within their sciences did not create a cultural rupture. A state of coexistence between sciences and their methodologies formed side by side٬. In the fifth century AH, we find those who would blend fundamental studies with Aristotelian logic, such as *Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali*, who said about logical sciences in the introduction to his book "*Al-Mustasfa min Ilm Al-Usul*": "Whoever does not encompass them, there is no trust in his knowledge at all. (Al-Ghazali, 2012, p. 20) He classified in it the book "Mihak Al-Nazar" (Touchstone of Reasoning), as well as "*Al-Qistas Al-Mustaqim*" (The Just Balance), in which he mentioned five measures for reasoning, all rational, (Al-Nashar, 2008, p. 140). All these methods are ways to interpret texts and extract their meanings and understandings. If the art of interpretation has allowed cultures to coexist, it is more appropriate for it to open wider avenues for coexistence among societies.

The expansion in independent reasoning and dealing with legal evidences, whether in the Quran or the Sunnah, through interpretation and derivation, established a jurisprudential corpus unparalleled in history in terms of breadth, discipline, and completeness. It addressed all aspects of human life, both general and specific. We can imagine a countable number in the Quranic text or authentic Sunnah, expanding into an uncountable number of writings and researches despite periods of stagnation. What distinguishes Islamic jurisprudence from other legal corpora is that it did not separate creed, acts of worship, and transactions, making them all included within a single moral domain that regulates internal relations and extends to include relationships with others—not only through a legal system restricted to apparent and situational transactions but also considering the general purpose of the Islamic message, which raised the slogan: "O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you" (Quran Al-Hujurat 49:13).

These general objectives enabled the Islamic jurisprudential system to develop naturally in line with the transformations of reality and the development of societies. Scholars engaged their minds with the words of the foundational texts, and the stability of these texts did not prevent

dealing with the evidences contained within them through interpretation and independent reasoning. "It is not denied that rulings change with the changing of times, as is well-known and famous, due to the change of customs, the change of people's interests, or consideration of necessity. (Al-Zuhayli, 1997, p. 139)

Islamic legislation developed thanks to jurisprudential interpretations, establishing the science of *Usul al-Fiqh* (Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence) between the schools of text and opinion. This allowed the extensive legal system to deal with both internal and external matters under the umbrella of an integrated systematic institution with its methodologies and mechanisms, continuously developing to keep pace with modern developments. This necessitates monitoring human changes. "Thus, Islamic legislation, as accurately reflected by the science of *Usul al-Fiqh*, is a high-level interpretive system. The jurist legislates in finding solutions that had no previous resolution up to that time by using interpretive tools set by jurisprudential theory. (Hallaq, 2007, p. 185) This enabled Islamic jurisprudence to be a fertile field for interpretation, as its evidences primarily consist of the text—linguistic expressions that include words with clear indications and others that are ambiguous, necessitating reason to favor the ruling closest to the truth. This is done "through interpreting the language to determine the meanings of the words used in the relevant texts, whether they are clear in indication or ambiguous, general or specific, literal or metaphorical." (Hallaq, 2007, p. 187) It is known that many of these issues are only understood through interpretation and relating some to others, provided the authenticity of these texts is guaranteed after undergoing rigorous tests that distinguish definitive from speculative. Therefore, reassurance in interpretation occurs when it adheres to the rules of language to gain acceptance from the majority of people.

Rational and Spiritual Interpretations and Coexistence

Although theological and philosophical schools, with their various interpretations, each claimed correctness and credibility, when we talk about interpretation as an art that expands the enrichment of meaning, we acknowledge that we are dealing with a set of possibilities and preferences that cannot be definitively said to be the intended truth of the text. Rather, they are only efforts that approach the truth to the extent that they adhere to the rules of language, the provisions of Sharia, and accepted customs, in addition to the faculty of interpretation. This means "interpretation is not a specific logic through which correct results can be obtained". (Nasser, 2007, p. 32) Interpretation is not a science in itself but an art that provides a technique for dealing with the text.

While interpretation found fertile ground between history and mythology in Western religious texts, its legitimacy in the Islamic text was formed within the text itself, where "the Quranic text declares itself a living text because the understanding related to it is not complete; rather, it critiques previous understandings of it, making it each time produce a text or marginal texts that, with the conditions of consciousness related to history, become central texts. Working on the symbolism of the text through interpretation only comes when the language anticipates itself— that is, when it is given as an inherent force in the act of understanding itself." (Nasser, 2007, p. 95) This paved the way for the rational movement that gained its place despite strong competition with the textual school.

The development of the rational philosophical and theological school, as well as the *Sufi* school, would not have occurred without this symbolic load of language within the structure of the religious text, where language can be a mediator between religious symbols and the human being situated with his consciousness in his reality. Because even though humans are present through

their daily issues, their existential questions continue to haunt them. "And because we can only understand in and through language, the approach of the unseen to human understanding was only possible by mediating linguistic symbols and activating metaphor within them to expand the circle of existential possibility. (Nasser, 2007, p. 95) This will allow interpretation to express its strong presence and open Muslims to others, especially through theology, Islamic philosophy, and Sufism.

Theological Interpretation and Its Impact on Communication with Others

The Quran opened the door for reflection and contemplation. Its verses include clear, manifest ones and ambiguous ones with hidden indications that require contemplation. In "*Al-Tahrir wa al-Tanwir*," it is stated: "The text and the apparent are the unequivocal (*muhkam*) due to the clarity of their indications, even if one of them—the apparent—has a weak probability. The ambiguous (*mutashabih*) includes the allegorical and the interpreted due to their hidden indications, even if one of them—the interpreted—indicates a less probable meaning opposed by another less probable meaning. (Ibn Ashur, n.d., p. 156) The author detailed them into ten levels, including the ambiguous like the conditions of the Hereafter and matters of divinity; those that can be borne on meanings like the disjointed letters and verses that imply anthropomorphism; those where language falls short of fully expressing them, like the attributes and their relation to the essence; the secrets of the universe; and other levels. (Ibn Ashur, n.d., pp. 158–160) ‹This opened a wide field for interpretation and rational contemplation. It is known that such questions did not appear only in the Islamic text but are among the debates filled in theological, philosophical, and logical corpora alike.

The Islamic question about the nature of existence, the position of humans within it, and their relationship with creed intersected with different viewpoints that flowed into the circle of Islamic thought, especially since many doctrines that clashed with the doctrine of monotheism were armed with methodologies of Greek philosophy. This later influenced theology and opened the door to interpretation that addressed the study of divinities as well as natural sciences. Despite the transgressions in these attempts adopted by some and rejected by others, they were an effective tool for civilizational convergence and a field for the exchange of knowledge, enabling Islamic countries to be a global center for civilizational coexistence.

The differences among Islamic theological schools in interpreting many issues, especially those of doctrinal origin, and some of them approaching the beliefs of other sects (anthropomorphism/abstraction), enabled the acceptance of difference within the Islamic cultural sphere. Had Muslims held a single opinion in reading the religious text without interpretation, accepting opposing ideas for debate and discussion would have been impossible. Some Islamic sects, in their conception of the divine essence, were closer to Jewish anthropomorphism, and some, due to their excessive abstraction, were closer to philosophical negation. Although the Quran's style in explaining creed was touching human nature and accessible to all groups, satisfying everyone's demands for faith, theologians leaned towards reason to prove doctrines due to cultural changes and the need for that, so they resorted to interpretation. It also served as a rational tool for cultural communication with other religions and sciences.

Interpreters relied on language, as did those who rejected interpretation. These two parties are represented by the *Mu'tazilites* and some sects who expanded metaphor to interpret what contradicted their doctrines, and the second party are the literalists who denied metaphor in language and relied on the apparent text to establish rulings. The *Ash'arites* mediated between

them in an attempt to reconcile transmission and reason, representing a cultural conflict between the rational and conservative schools and those in between. This intellectual disagreement would have its extension and impact on the structure of philosophical thinking, whether in Islamic countries or elsewhere. Even now, we find this conflict existing among various conservative and liberal schools in the East and West. What distinguishes the Islamic interpretive movement is that it absorbed within its sphere various intellectual and religious trends, forming a moral reference for coexistence among different cultures.

Philosophical Interpretation and the Meeting of Civilizations

Philosophers since *Al-Kindi* tried to reconcile wisdom and Sharia, but religious scholars rejected the philosophical methodology for a long time, remaining ostracized until the fifth century AH, when Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali, despite declaring hostility to philosophy, incorporated formal logic into the science of fundamentals (*usul*). He prefaced his book "*Al-Mustasfa*" with a logical introduction, paving the way for the presence of philosophy alongside the religious text. We also find *Ibn Rushd* (Averroes) making a bold attempt to reconcile Sharia and philosophy, saying: "We are certain that whatever demonstrative proof leads to, and the apparent meaning of Sharia contradicts it, then that apparent meaning accepts interpretation according to the rules of Arabic interpretation." (Ibn Rushd, n.d., p. 36) As we know, Abu Al-Walid was the greatest commentator on Aristotle, openly declaring his adoption of his philosophy. Therefore, Ibn Rushd's acceptance of dealing with Islamic texts through philosophical interpretation is the greatest attempt at explicit synthesis between philosophy and religion by "setting general rules for interpreting what must be interpreted from Sharia texts, to clarify when interpretation should be, for whom it should be, and to whom it should be disclosed". (Moussa, 2014, p. 28) Thus, we see that Ibn Rushd laid the foundation for coexistence among cultures and brought their methodologies closer. It is no surprise, as Ibn Rushd is a son of Cordoba, where European culture meets Islamic culture.

In another context, philosophical interpretation developed in the corpus of exegesis. We find *Fakhr Al-Din Al-Razi* relying heavily on it in "*Mafatih Al-Ghayb*" (Keys to the Unseen). "Philosophy occupied an important part of his understanding of the Quranic text; he even magnified it, saying: 'And their greatest—the philosophers—was Aristotle.'" (Nasser, 2007, p. 143) This allowed Al-Razi to benefit from interpretation at both its linguistic and philosophical levels, opening up to signs and symbols beyond the apparent boundaries of language, as the Quranic text is alive and can be sensed because it is pulsating with life, and interpretation represents the means to access it. "Thus, the primary carrier of the religious text is the state of faith, which establishes the interpretive state. This state, which *Al-Razi* establishes on three stations: the station of Sharia... the second is the station of the way... and the third is the station of reality. (Nasser, 2007, p. 144) These three levels in turn refer to a kind of coexistence among types of knowledge seekers, as what is required among people is not agreement on one opinion but to accommodate and accept the other.

Sufi Interpretation as a Realm of Tolerance Under the Canopy of Love

The interpretations of Sufis of the religious text were filled with tolerance and love, which are the most important conditions for coexistence between them and others. They viewed the human reality with their hearts, which represent the domain of divine love. Their criterion is not only determined by apparent rulings but by morals that encompass everyone. We find one of their statements in interpreting the verse: "And they repel evil with good; those will have the good consequence of [this] home" (Quran Ar-Ra'd 13:22) : "They associate with people with good

character, initiating fairness and not seeking retribution. If someone treats them harshly, they respond with loyalty. If people sin against them, they apologize to them. If they fall ill, they visit them." (Al-Qushayri, 2000, p. 227) In interpreting Allah's saying: "But if you pardon and overlook and forgive—then indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful" (Quran Fussilat 41:34) **:** **"**He resembles a devoted friend, but he has not become a sincere ally... This is among the aspects of good manners in servitude regarding your companionship with Allah: you are patient with His servants for His sake. Among the aspects of good character in companionship with creation is that you do not seek revenge for yourself and forgive your opponent." (Al-Qushayri, 2000, pp. 331–332) This transcendence to consider all creatures as deserving of forgiveness and pardon, and even that among the conditions of loving Allah is benevolence to His servants by attributing them to Him, thus narrowing the distance of difference between believers and others to unite them on the common ground of human nature and servitude to Allah.

Interpretation was the primary means adopted by Sufis in their epistemological methodology and progression in their revelatory stations. They saw that adhering to the apparent meanings of Sharia texts is a veil preventing access to the realities of matters and that outward knowledge involves conjecture and doubt, while witnessing removes conjecture and eliminates doubt" (Fattah, 1993, p. 79). The apparent forms of language and material elements were only tools of the senses and reason that limit unity centered on human humanity and encompassing divine love that gathers all humans under its canopy.

This led *Ibn Arabi* to explicitly call for the unity of religions and acceptance of the other despite "all apparent differences under the canopy of love," referring to Allah's saying: "So follow me; Allah will love you" (Quran Al Imran 3:31) (Ibn Arabi, 2005, p. 62) ، He says in "The Interpreter of Desires":

"My heart has become capable of every form: It is a pasture for gazelles and a monastery for monks, A temple for idols and the Kaaba of the pilgrim, The tables of the Torah and the book of the Quran. I follow the religion of love wherever its camels turn, This is my creed and faith." (Ibn Arabi, 2005, p. 62)

Thus, we find that interpretation among Sufis reaches a level of openness, becoming a call for coexistence with others without barriers, no matter how intense and varied their nature. It is a realm where thought transcends social and cultural specificities, approaching the dissolution of boundaries between selves, paralleling the contemporary Western hermeneutical school's call to transcend apparent consciousness and reveal what is hidden behind it. The difference lies in the purpose, as the goal is human truth, and each sees it from their perspective.

Just as humans have the right to defend their culture and identity represented by their cultural specificity, this does not justify preventing others from thinking and expressing this pattern of coexistence in response to an interpretive approach that respects thought and does not reject difference. The language of Sufism transcends those determinations and specific judgments that may accept some within its interpretive domain and exclude others. It is a language that moves through reality and interacts with the pure human consciousness of existence and culture.

This leads us to question these horizons that remain in the balance of Sufi thought and have not yet been revealed. If these dimensions enable us to engage in cognitive communication with the other based on humanity, it becomes difficult to conceive with objective knowledge bound by the conditions of apparent rulings and laws.

Sufi discourse differs from other discourses expressing the rest of the solid Islamic sciences,

such as jurisprudence, hadith, and exegesis. It is a taste-based discourse resulting from personal experience, not conditioned by legal constraints, governed by subjective emotions. The jurist, hadith scholar, or exegete has limits difficult to transcend—closed knowledge that denies what contradicts its rulings. This is not found in Sufi knowledge, which expresses divine love—that is, the love of the God who created all beings and all humans, believers and disbelievers alike. Thus, the term "disbelief" loses its meaning at its second level. Strict religious constraints at their judicial level exclude the disbeliever from positive presence in existence, while Sufi expressions permeate the legislative fence to a doctrinal concept whose ceiling is the unity of the Creator and the unity of the system attached to this source. The differences in laws are only differences in the manifestations of truth and its orientations for existence with changing conditions and times. This is also found in the saying of one of their sheikhs: "Allah Almighty does not repeat a manifestation to a single person, nor does He share it between two persons due to divine expansion." (Ibn Arabi, n.d., p. 280)

This existence is governed in its apparent aspect by laws that are manifestations of Allah to His creation according to the change of time and place. People may even share laws despite different times and places, as in His saying to Moses, peace be upon him: "And establish prayer for My remembrance" (Quran Ta-Ha 20:14) , and the necessity of Jesus's descent at the end of time to rule by the Sharia of Muhammad, peace be upon him. This brings us closer to understanding the second aspect of existence—the inner existence—that unites everyone under the canopy of the source and the unity of the system, as manifested in His saying: "He is the First and the Last, the Apparent and the Hidden" (Quran Al-Hadid 57:3) .

Thus, we can conceive the Sufi discourse's response to coexistence with the other despite cultural and religious differences and social diversity, which we do not find in other types of interpretive knowledge bound by scientific limits fenced by natural, rational, or transmitted rulings.

Therefore, interpretation remains a necessary element to benefit from the various possible readings of texts, (Affifi, 1939, pp. 183–184). But with caution against exceeding the boundaries that preserve the foundations of societies, such as the cognitive mixing we find in many sources of the philosophical Sufi school, where we find *Ibn Arabi*, for example, deriving his philosophy from contradictory references. The duty is to benefit from the human dimension of this thought but with an indication of the contradictions contained within it to avoid confusing people's beliefs. However, we must also be wary of the closure that confines a person within a closed cultural environment in the name of history or religion.

Key Findings & Discussion: Quranic interpretation demonstrates a balanced methodology that integrates traditional exegesis with contextual analysis. The strict adherence to linguistic and methodological rules ensures the preservation of the sacred message, while still allowing for a contextual understanding that adapts to contemporary issues. This regulated yet dynamic approach not only maintains textual integrity but also enhances mutual understanding and tolerance among different cultural groups. Such a model underscores the potential of integrative interpretative practices to foster sustainable intercultural communication.

- **Balanced Interpretative Framework:**

Quranic interpretation is characterized by a harmonious balance between literal exegesis and deeper, contextual analysis. This approach is tightly regulated by traditional rules and the linguistic precision of the Arabic language.

- **Promotion of Mutual Understanding:**

The regulated nature of Quranic interpretation helps preserve the integrity of the sacred message while allowing for contextual insights, thereby fostering tolerance and mutual understanding across cultural boundaries.

- **Model for Integrative Approaches:**

The methodological coherence found in Quranic interpretation—as practiced by jurists, theologians, and mystics—demonstrates the potential for integrating traditional wisdom with modern critical methods, offering a viable model for promoting intercultural dialogue and societal harmony.

Conclusion

The findings of this study underscore that the evolution of interpretative methods significantly influences intercultural understanding and social cohesion. The comparative analysis reveals that while Western hermeneutics—with its emphasis on critical deconstruction and the accommodation of pluralistic perspectives—engenders a rich diversity of interpretations, it may also produce fragmented understandings that complicate the formation of a cohesive cultural narrative. Conversely, the structured framework of Islamic exegesis and ta'wil, characterized by its rigorous adherence to linguistic precision and contextual analysis, offers a coherent and stable basis for interpreting sacred texts, thereby fostering enhanced mutual tolerance and constructive dialogue.

In light of these insights, the study advocates for an integrative interpretative approach that amalgamates the analytical rigor of Western methodologies with the disciplined clarity of Islamic interpretative traditions. Such a synthesis holds promise for bridging cultural divides and establishing a robust platform for intercultural dialogue, ultimately contributing to a more harmonious and integrated society. While the research is predominantly theoretical in scope, its implications extend to practical applications in academic, religious, and social contexts. Future empirical investigations are recommended to assess the efficacy of this integrative model in real-world settings and to explore its potential for reinforcing enduring societal harmony in an ever-evolving global landscape.

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