A(Critical Review on Gabriel Sawma's View about the Verse Al-Baqarah, 116: "Wa Qālūt takhadhal lāhu Waladāan Subĥānahu"

Mohammad Ali Hemati[1], Mohammad Kazem Shaker[2] and Mehdi Abdollahipuor[3]

[1] Assistant Arofessor of the Faculty of Sciences of the Qur'an, Shiraz, Iran
mohammadalihemati@gmail.com.
[2] Professor, Department of the Qur'an and Hadith, Allameh Tabataba'i University, Tehran, Iran
mk_shaker@yahoo.com.
[3] Assistant Professor of the Faculty of Sciences of the Qur'an, Qum, Iran
abdollahipour@yahoo.com

Abstract

The book "*The The Qur'an Misinterpreted, Mistranslated, and Misread: the Aramaic Language of the The Qur'an*" was published in 2006 by Gabriel Sawma. The author has claimed that the language of the Qur'an is the Syro-Aramaic, and most of its teachings are derived from Jewish-Christian sources. Among his claims, he alleges that Muslims have misunderstood the verse 116 of Surah al-Baqarah: *"And they say Allah has taken to Himself a son Glory be to Him…"* (Wa Qālūt takhadhal lāhu Waladāan Subĥānahu). He regards the word 'اتَّخَـذ' (Has taken) as a distortion of the Syriac «اتَّحـدَ» (has united) happened by the Qur'anic scribers. According to this recitation, the meaning of the verse is "They said that God is united with the Son". This meaning is in accordance with the New Testament doctrine of the incarnation of God through the Son. In this paper, Gabriel Sawma's viewpoint is reviewed and criticized by two intra-religious aspects including the Qur'an and Arabic literature and extra-religious features including linguistic historical-comparative in some branches of Sami languages and interfaith research. The authors conclude that the textual and linguistic evidence prove contrary to the Sawma's claim.

Keywords: Gabriel Sawma, the foreign vocabulary of the Qur'an, the verse 116 of Surah al-Baqarah, the Qur'an and orientalists.

1. Introduction

Linguistic knowledge, and especially historical-comparative linguistics is an important technique which can sometimes help in understanding the verses of the Holy Qur'an. This issue has been welcomed by non-Muslim and Western Qur'anic scholars in recent decades, and it has been accepted by Muslims in the last two decades. The appropriate use of this branch of knowledge along with other cognitive techniques can be helpful in understanding some verses of the Qur'an. However, although the mere reliance on linguistic knowledge in Qur'anic studies may be useful, it is not sufficient. Thus Muslims' heritage of tradition, the Qur'anic interpretation and Arabic philology should not be ignored in the process of understanding the Qur'anic verses. However, linguistics as a new branch of knowledge should be considered. Gabriel Sawma is one of those authors who has studied the verses of the Qur'an with a comparative historical linguistic method in his book entitled "***The Qur'an Misinterpreted, Mistranslated, And Misread: the Aramaic Language of the The Qur'an.***

Gabriel M. Sawma was born in Beirut, Lebanon; he graduated from the Lebanese University School of Law. He practiced law in Lebanon and supervised commercial contracts throughout the

Middle East including Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Kuwait, the Persian Gulf region, Europe, and North America. During the war of 1975, he immigrated to the United States. He taught the following courses at Dickinson University: Arabic, Middle East Constitutional Law, Islamic Sharia and Arab Culture and Civilization. Currently, he is teaching Islamic banking and finance at the University of Liverpool in the United Kingdom. As well as being a consultant on the Islamic divorce in the United States and Canada, he is a lecturer on the Aramaic language influence on other Semitic Languages. (https://www.amazon.com).

His book consists of four chapters. The first chapter introduces the Semitic languages and its branches; the second chapter discusses the language and origin of the Qur'an; and the third chapter introduces the Syriac language. In this chapter, the author attempts to show that the Arabic language in the emergence of Islam is a borrower of Syriac or Aramaic language. In the fourth chapter, the author examins some of the vocabulary of the Surahs of the Qur'an in order to show that the Qur'an has borrowed some vocabulary of Syriac language (See: Sawma, 2006, pp. 24-430). The author believes that the Syriac language wonderfully casts its shadow over the verses of the Qur'an; thus, without sufficient knowledge of Syro-Aramaic languag[1], it becomes difficult to understand some verses of the Qur'an. According to him, the factors that contribute to this influence include: the dominance of the Syriac language over most of the Near East and the Middle East in the early days of Islam, the existence of Syriac books in the Ka'bah quoted by Ibn Hisham through Ibn Ishaq, the Prophet's command to Zaid bin Sabet to learn the

Syriac language, lack of the Arabic script in the era of the Qur'an revelation, writing Arabic texts by the Syriac script, and adaptation of Arabic script and symbols from Syriac script (Sawma, 2006, pp. 102, 116). Gabriel Sawma says "the meaning of a significant portion of Qur'anic verses is found in Syro–Aramaic literature, and many other verses are a mere copy of them" (Sawma, 2006, p. 100). Therefore, for non-Syriac or Aramaic speakers, it is difficult to understand many of Qur'anic verses; instead, the Aramaic and Syriac speakers could understand, read and interpret them well (Sawma, 2006, p. 100). In the fourth chapter, the author examines the vocabulary of 52 chapters that make nearly a three-quarter of the book. He identifies all the vocabulary with the Syriac, Aramaic, Hebrew, Habashian, Palmiri, and Akkadian contexts but his main emphasis is on Syriac - Aramaic texts and in confirming his idea regarding the borrowing of the Syro-Aramic vocabulary, he provides evidence of the Old Testament and ultimately he translates the related verses based on the Syro-Aramaic recitation. As far as we have examined, the Sawma's views have not been reviewed and criticized yet. In this paper, we review one of the verses that Sawma has examined. Alphonse Mingana and Christoph Luxenberg, like Gabriel Sawma, have previously made similar claims. Alphonse Mingana, in his book "*Syriac Influence on the Style of the Koran*" tries to show that the Qur'an style is influenced by the Syriac language; however, in his book little evidence has been provided (Reynolds, 2007, p. 96). Mingana believes that 70% of the Qur'anic style and vocabulary should be traced in Syriac language (Reynolds, 2007, p. 96). He considers that not only the keywords and religious terms of the Qur'an are influenced by the Syriac language but also the syntactic structures are affected by it (Mingana, 1927, pp. 77-98). But Christoph Luxenberg claims that a quarter of

---

[1] . **Syriac** is the dialect of **Aramaic** that was spoken in Edessa (today Şanlıurfa in southern Turkey) which was an important center of Christianity in the first centuries AD. ... The other is the modern Assyrian language, also known as Assyrian Neo-**Aramaic**. It is a form of **Aramaic** spoken by the modern Assyrian people.

Qur'anic verses is ambiguous and the only way of decoding them is to refer to the Syriac language. Sawma is a follower of this idea and sometimes has gone further.

2. Gabriel Sawma's view about the verse 116 of Al-Baqarah

One of the verses that Gabriel Sawma believes Muslims have not understood correctly is the verse 116 of Al-Baqarah: "Wa Qālūt takhadhal lāhu Waladāan Subĥānahu"((وَ قالُوا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ وَلَداً سُبْحانَه...))"

Sawma first brings up the three translations of Yusuf Ali, Sher Ali, and Picktall who translate the verse as follows: "And they said, God has taken a son for himself, he is glorified." In the following, he brings up Youssef Ali's viewpoint about the verse that says: "Believing in a child to God is one of the tenets of Christianity, while it is a disbelief and an insult to God and it requires the incarnation of God and the most optimistic imagination is that we are all children of God and all creatures glorify His greatness. Therefore, the above verse is aimed at refuting this claim[2] (Sawma, 2006, p.164). Sawma regards Yusuf Ali's comment as a clear example of a distorted interpretation offered by Islamic commentators of the verse (Sawma, 2006, p. 165).

Sawma believes that the Qur'an does not say in this verse "They said that God has chosen a son for Himself", rather the Qur'an says, "God has been united with the Son." The cause of the Muslims' mistake is their lack of awareness of the word «إتَّخَـذَ»"ettakhadha". His further explanation is that the Arabic word «اتَّخَذَ»"ettakhdha" is taken from the Syrian «إتَّخَدَ» "ettahada". In the Syriac language, "itawhad" means to unite in one and its root is "Had". In this language, "had" and "ahd" mean one or unify and its evidence has come in Exodus 17:12[3]; Isaiah 27:12[4]; Ezekiel 33:30[5]. The Arabic letter /h -ח/ changes to /kh -خ / by placing one dot on the top of the former. Early Qur'anic manuscripts did not have the diacritical or vowel signs. A scribal error changed Syriac "etehad" to Arabic "ettakhadha". Therefore, the verse does not reject the doctrine of Christianity as the Islamic commentators say, but it says God became one with the Son (Sawma, 2006, p. 165). Since the doctrine of the Trinity is important to Sawma, he tries to find a background for it in the Scriptures; thus, with serious reference to the Old Testament, the Apocrypha and the New Testament raise the question of the "Son of the God" and they cite the following pieces of evidence: Daniel 3:25; Job 1: 6; 2: 1; Exodus 4:22, 23; 2 Samuel 7:14; Mark 1: 1; 9: 7; Luke 1: 32,33; 12:32; Matthew 8: 29; 16: 16; 26:63.

Eventually, he concludes that the subject of the "Son of God" had been raised in the sacred texts a few centuries before the Qur'an, and the Qur'an has repeated it, but Islamic commentators by a misinterpretation of the verse regard what was stablished and became well-known seven centuries before the birth of Muhammad as blasphemy (Sawma, 2006, p.165-166) .

---

[2] . This is the comment of Yusuf Ali under the verse "Al-Baqara 116": It is a derogation from the glory of Allah-in fact it is blasphemy — to say that Allah begets sons, like a man or an animal. The Christian doctrine is here emphatically repudiated. If words have any meaning, it would mean an attribution to Allah of a material nature, and of the lower animal functions of sex. (Yusuf Ali, P.17); Under verse 4 of chapter 39, he says: It is blasphemy to say that Allah begot a son. If that were true, He should have had a wife (6:101), and His son would have been of the same kind as Himself; whereas Allah is One, with no one else like unto Him (112:4). Begetting is an animal act which goes with sex. How can it be consistent with our conception of One who is above all Creatures? If such a blasphemous thought were possible, as that Allah wanted some one else to help Him, He could have chosen the best of His creatures instead of lowering Himself to an animal act. But glory to Allah! He is above such things! His Unity is the first thing that we have to learn about Him. As He is Omnipotent, He requires no creatures to help Him or bring other creatures to Him. (Ibid, P.323)

---

[3] וִידֵי מֹשֶׁה כְּבֵדִים, וַיִּקְחוּ-אֶבֶן וַיָּשִׂימוּ תַחְתָּיו וַיֵּשֶׁב עָלֶיהָ; וְאַהֲרֹן וְחוּר תָּמְכוּ בְיָדָיו, מִזֶּה אֶחָד וּמִזֶּה אֶחָד, וַיְהִי יָדָיו אֱמוּנָה, עַד-בֹּא הַשָּׁמֶשׁ.

[4] וְהָיָה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יַחְבֹּט יְהוָה מִשִּׁבֹּלֶת הַנָּהָר עַד-נַחַל מִצְרָיִם וְאַתֶּם תְּלֻקְּטוּ לְאַחַד אֶחָד בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל ס

[5] וְאַתָּה בֶן-אָדָם בְּנֵי עַמְּךָ הַנִּדְבָּרִים בְּךָ אֵצֶל הַקִּירוֹת וּבְפִתְחֵי הַבָּתִּים וְדִבֶּר-חַד אֶת-אַחַד אִישׁ אֶת-אָחִיו לֵאמֹר בֹּאוּ-נָא וְשִׁמְעוּ מָה הַדָּבָר הַיּוֹצֵא מֵאֵת יְהוָה

2. 1. Review and critic of Sawma's viewpoint

Gabriel Sawma's viewpoint can be disputed in both intra-religious and extra-religious aspects. The intra-religious aspect is based on Qur'anic verses and Arabic literature and the extra-religious aspect is based on some linguistic interfaith issues and biblical evidence. First, we will mention Islamic commentators' views concerning the verse "*Wa Qālūt takhadhal lāhu Waladāan Subhˆānahu*" and then criticize Sawma's idea.

3.Islamic commentators' views about "Wa Qālūt takhadhal lāhu Waladāan Subhˆānahu"

Some commentators interpret this verse as the rejection against the Christians who considered Jesus as the son of God (Tabari, 1412, p. 1, p. 403; Mughatel bin Suleiman, 1423, I, p. 133). Some have considered the verses to be related to the Jews (Tabarsi, 1372, Vol. 1, p. 365). This goes back to Ibn 'Abbas (Ibn Jawzi, 1422, vol. 1, p. 104). Sheikh al-Tusi considering Zajjaj's words, regards Christians and polytheists as the addressees, because the polytheists considered angels as daughters of God and Christians considered Jesus as the Son of God (Tusi, Bi, vol. 1, p. 426). Allameh Tabatabai says: According to the preceding verses which talk about Judaism and Christianity, the speakers of this speech are Jews and Christians, because the Jews said 'Ozair is the son of God, and Christians said Jesus is the Son of God (Tabatabai, 1417, vol. 1, p. 261). Commentators have a consensus that in the era of the Prophet of Islam (PBUH), a group believed that God have children, so this verse came down to reject their beliefs.

4. Intra-religious reasons for rejecting Sawma's claim

4. 1. The Qur'anic verses: There are many verses in the Qur'an indicating contrary to what Sawma claims. These verses are divided into two categories:

4.1.1. Verses that deny God's unity with man

There are some Qur'anic evidences that clearly deny God's unity with man such as the following verses:

The First evidence

لَقَدْ كَفَرَ الَّذِينَ قالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْمَ (يحُ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ.

Laqad Kafara Al-Ladhīna Qālū 'Inna Allāha Huwa Al-Masīh̆u Abnu Maryam.

Surely, they are disbelievers those who said:" Jesus, son of Maryam is God." (Al-Maidah, 17)

There is disagreement among commentators about those who said that. Some commentators attribute this to the three Christian sects: *(1) Nasthuriyah (2) Malkaniyah* and *(3) Ya'qubiyah*. (See: Abouhyan, ٢٠٠٠, Vol. ٤, p. ٩٩٩; Ibn Ashur, Vol. ٥, p. ٩٩). However, whatever the denomination of Christians were, they clearly professed God's incarnation in man (Ibn Ajib, ١٩٩٩, vol. ٢, p. ١١) and their purpose was the mingling of the divine truth in the essence of Jesus (Ibn Ashur, 2008, vol. ٥, p. ٩٩).

The Second evidence

لَقَدْ كَفَرَ الَّذِينَ قالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ ثالِثُ ثَلاثَةٍ وَ مـ ـمِنْ إِلـهٍ إِلاَّ إِلهٌ واحِدٌ

Laqad Kafara Al-Ladhīna Qālū 'Inna Allāha Thālithu Thalāthatin Wa Mā Min 'Ilahin 'Illā 'Ilahun Wāh̆idun

"Surely, they are disbelievers those who said:" Allah is one of the three [gods], since there is no God but Allah "(Al-Ma'idah, 73)

This verse refers to the issue of the incarnation of God in man. According to the commentators, in this verse Christians also say God is one of triple (Tabari, 1412, v. 6, p. 202; Qurtobi, 1364, v. 6, p. 246; Razi, 1420, v. 12, p. 408; al-Tusi, b., v. 3, p. 602). The commentators disagree with the intended meaning of three (ثَلاثَـة). Some believed that the word (ثَلاثَـة) refers to God, Jesus and Mary (Alusi, 1415, v. 3, p. 372; Baghavi, 1420, v. 2, p. 71; Jalalayn, 1416,

v. 1, p. 123). This group confirm their idea by Soddi's narrative as one of followers (Tābiʻin). Another group of commentators have assumed that the verse talks about the doctrine of Trinity. However, they disagreed on specifying its persons. Some have regarded the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit as triple (Tabataba'i, 1417, v. 6, p. 70; Qurtubi, 1364, v. 6, p. 246). That means the word "God" corresponds with each of these three things and from the union of the Father with the Son, Jesus became God (Ibn Ashur, 1420, vol. 5, p. 171). Anyway, the two verses above have called those who believed in the unity of God with man infidels. Here a question is raised: what is intended by the word "Infidel" (kafir) and why the Qur'an calls them infidels? Literally, the word "kafir" comes from the root "k-f-r". Its root in Arabic means to cover (Raghib, 1412, p. 714). The night is described as "kafir" because people are not known at night and are concealed (Ibid); also, one who conceals the truth is called a "kafir" (Ibid). The word "kofr" means covering something whether it is right or wrong and denying it. This meaning for the word "kofr" is used in the Hebrew and Syriac languages and also in the Bible. In Hebrew, the word כָּפַר (kāfar) is equivalent to Arabic "كفه -" (kofr) meaning "to conceal everything" (Gesenius, 1882, p. 458). It is even used for the forgiveness of sin, because the sin is covered by forgiveness of God (Ibid). This meaning has also been used by the Old Testament (Psalm 78:38). In the Syriac language, the word "ܟܦܪ" (k-f-r) is equivalent to Arabic "كفه -" (kofr), meaning denial (Costaz, p. 160). In the New Testament, the word also means denial (Matthew 27:70).With these explanations, it became evident that in the Semitic languages, the word "كفه -" means "to hide or deny". Thus, in the above two verses, (Maryam: 17; Ma'idah: 73) the word "كَفَرَ"(kafar) refers to those who concealed and denied a truth which based on "*InnaAllāha Thālithu Thalāthatin*" and

"*Inna Allāha Huwa Al-Masīĥu*", it was denial of the uniqueness of God.

The Qur'an not only disapproves God's union with the Son but also the main spirit of the concepts of the the Qur'an is monotheism and the rejection of any idolatry. Thus, Sawma's claim is unfounded.

4.1.2. The verses indicating not possessing of a child by God

The best Qurʾanic reason for rejecting Sawma's claim is the following verses:

وَ قَالُوا اتَّخَذَ الرَّحْمنُ وَلَداً ٭لَقَدْ جِئْـتُمْ شَـيْئاً إِدًّا ٭تَكـادُ السَّماواتُ يَتَفَطَّرْنَ مِنْهُ وَ تَنْشَقُّ الْـأَرْضُ وَ تَخِـرُّ الْجِبـالُ هَـدًّا ٭أَنْ دَعَوْا لِلرَّحْمنِ وَلَداً ٭وَ ما يَنْبَغى لِلرَّحْمنِ أَنْ يَتَّخِذَ وَلَدا»

Wa Qālū Attakhadha Ar-Raĥmānu Waladāan * Laqad Ji'tum Shay'āan 'Iddāan * Takādu As-Samāwātu Yatafaţţarna Minhu Wa Tanshaqqu Al-'Arđu Wa Takhirru Al-Jibālu Haddāan * 'An Da`aw Lilrraĥmani Waladāan * Wa Mā Yanbaghī Lilrraĥmani 'An Yattakhidha Waladāan.

And they say: The Beneficent hath taken unto Himself a son * Assuredly ye utter a disastrous thing * Whereby almost the heavens are torn, and the earth is split asunder and the mountains fall in ruins, * That ye ascribe unto the Beneficent a son, * When it is not meet for (the Majesty of) the Beneficent that He should choose a son. (Q, Maryam: 88-92)

Surprisingly, when Sawma examines the chapter of Maryam, he does not mention the above verses (Sawma, 2006, p. 330) while the first verse (Maryam: 88) is exactly in accordance with the verse claimed by Sawma (Al-Baghara: 116). According to Sawma's claim in this verse (Maryam: 88), the word "ettahada" should be replaced by the word "ettakhadha"! Interestingly, according to the next verse (Maryam: 89), it makes no difference whether in verse 88, the word "ettakhadha" or "ettahada" is used. In other words, if the verse has been translated "and they said God took a son" or "God became one with

a son" in any case, the next verse blames this idea and it says because of this irrelevant speech, it is about the heavens to have been burst and the Earth split asunder and the mountains fall down crashing (Maryam: 92). On the other hand, the verse "Wa Mā Yanbaghī Lilrraĥmani 'An Yattakhidha Waladāan" (Maryam: 92) states it is not worthy for God to have a child. The adoption of God results in his defect, which is not worthy for God (al-Zuhayli, 1422, vol. 2, p. 1505). Or having children depends on the marriage and requires lust that God is pure of all (Tabari, 1412, vol. 16, p. 99).

Moreover, the verses below clearly testify against what Sawma claims:

وَ قُلِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي لَمْ يَتَّخِذْ وَلَداً

Wa Quli Al-Ĥamdu Lillāhi Al-Ladhī Lam Yattakhidh Waladāan

And say: Praise be to Allah, Who hath not taken unto Himself a son, (Al-Isra, 111)

وَ أَنَّهُ تَعَالَى جَدُّ رَبِّنَا مَا اتَّخَذَ صاحِبَةً وَ لا وَلَدا

Wa 'Annahu Ta`ālá Jaddu Rabbinā Mā Attakhadha Şāĥibatan Wa Lā Waladāan

And (we believe) that He - exalted be the glory of our Lord! - hath taken neither wife nor son, (Al-Jinn, 3)

These verses openly indicate that God did not take any son. According to Sawma's claim when we read these two verses, we should read "yattahid" and "ettahda" instead of "Yattakhidh" and "ettakhadha". Since the verbs are used in a negative structure, they lead to the contrary of what sawma claims. The first verse means: "Praise be to one who has not been united with one son" and the second verse means: "God has not been united with one wife and one son". These meanings are in accordance with the Muslims' view based on not taking God any son. Given that Sawma has studied all the Qur'anic chapters and examined the words which, he says, have been adapted from other languages, the question is how he did not notice such verses. This could be a deliberate or an inadvertent event.

Anyhow, the verses of the Qur'an prove the contrary to Sawma's claim.

Furthermore, in the chapter *Tawhid* the Qur'an asserts that God is One and self-subsistent, and that 'He neither begets nor is begotten' (*Q*112.3). Probably it is as a deliberate counterblast to the fourth-century Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, which is still frequently recited in Christian services, affirms that Jesus Christ is

the only-begotten Son of God,

begotten of the Father before all worlds.

Likewise, the Qur'an repeatedly remarks Jesus 'Son of Mary', never Son of God, for 'it is far removed from His transcendent majesty that He should have a son' (*Q*4.171) (See: Robinson, 2005, P.156).

4. 2. Arabic Literature

Arabic literature also disputes Sawma's claim because of the existence of two roots[ح]](*a-h-d*) and[خ]][(*a-kh-dh*) in the Arabic language. Arab lexicographers bring the root of [خ]][(*a-kh-dh*) in meaning "getting" (Farahidi, 1410, vol. 4, p. 298; Ragheb, 1412, p. 67; Ibn manzor, 1414, vol. 3, p. 472). Some have defined إتّـخـاذ (*ettekhadh*) "Getting Careful" (Mostafavi, 1360, vol. 1, p. 42). The root is also found in the Arabic literature at the Age of Ignorance in poems of poets such as Ţarafah ibn al-'Abd :

فـأَتَى أَغْواهمـا زَلَمَـه ** أَخَـذَ الأَزْلامَ مُقْتَسِماً

(Tarafah,2000,p.86)

Akhadha al-azlam muqtasiman ** faata aghwahuma zalama

Likewise, in the Arabic lexicon, the word «أَـحَد» (*ahad*) means one. In some poems belonging to the Age of Ignorance, the word is used extensively, e.g., :

نُدَخِّنُ بِالنَّهَارِ لِتُبصِـرينَا ** وَلا نَخْفَى عَلـى أَحَدٍ بَغَانَا

(Al-A'sha, vol.2, p.31)

Nudakhkhinu binnhari litubsaruna ** wa la nakhfa 'Ala ahadin baghana

In the Arabic lexicon, the two roots ح]]((ددا-*a-h-d*) and [خ]][(*a-kh-dh*) come in two entries with their own special meanings. Evidences from the Age of Ignorance

indicate that pre-Islamic Arabs had a good understanding of these two roots. In the Qur'an, [خ]](*akhdh*) and its derivatives are used more than 140 times and the word [ح](*ahd*) is used nearly 80 times. In the Qur'an, إتَّخَذَ (*ettakhadha*) with its various derivatives are mentioned over 80 times, but إتَّحَدَ (*ettahad*) and its derivatives are not used at all. The frequent use of the structure "إتَّخَذَ" in the Qur'an indicates that Arabs had sufficient understanding of this structure and its meaning. On the other hand, in writing the early Qur'an, the principle was based on "Qira'at" (recitation) rather than "ketābat" (writing). Therefore, "ketābat" (writing) was based on "Qira'at" (recitation), and not reading, even "Shaz"(*rare*) has not been reported that someone would have recited إتَّ- (*ettahad)* instead of إتَّ- (*ettakhadha*) (see: Ali ibn Muhammad, 1997, 139; Ibn Zanjalah, 1982, 110).

5- Extra-religious evidence in disproving of Sawma's claim

It was mentioned earlier that Sawma claims that إتَّ-- *"ettakhadha"* has originally been the Syriac word "إتَّ-", and إتَّ-- *"ettahad"* is from ح-*"had"* and اا-- "*ahad*". To assess the validity of his claim, we also examine his views, both in Syriac language and the New Testament as well as in Hebrew language and the Old Testament, and try to answer the following questions: 1. What does the root ح- "*had*" and اا- "*ahad*" mean in Syriac language?; 2. Does «إتَّ-» *"ettahad*" in Syriac language and Christian theology mean that God is united with the Son?; 3. If in the Syriac language there is a root of أ- «*a-kh-dh*» and its derivatives, then is it possible to accept that إتَّ- *"ettahada''* has been changed to أتَّ- «*ettakhadh*»?; 4. What do the words ح- "*had*" and اا- "*ahad*" mean in the Hebrew language and Jewish theology?; and 5. To what extent does biblical evidence confirm Sawma's claim?

5.1. Examination of the root »حـد« حـد (*had*) in Syriac and the New Testament

In the Syriac lexicon, the root حـد «حـ» (*had*) means one, the first, each, anyone, personal, everyone and no one (Pin Smith, p. 126; Costaz 96; Manna, 243). Regarding the above meanings, the terms 'one' and 'the first' are most commonly used (Costaz 96). For example, the word "khums" is made from the combination of ܚܕ ܡܢ ܚܡܫܐ (*had men khamshā*), or eleven is a combination of two numbers حـد حمـز (*had asara*). In all Syriac dictionaries, this root could be found in the entry "ـد" (*ḥ*) (Pin Smith, p. 126; Costaz 96; Manna, 243). The derivatives of this root occurr about 500 times in the New Testament and all of them, somehow, imply number one. For example, "And whosoever shall compel thee to go one mile, go with him two" (Matthew 5:41) and also (Mark 10: 8; Luke 4:40; John 1:40; Acts 11:28). Therefore, the meaning of "one" for حـد (*had*) is the consensus of Syriac lexicographers. This corresponds with Sawma's point, but a question arises here: has "Ethpeal" form of this root is used in Syriac language? The answer is "No". Because there is no evidence in any Syriac dictionary of the word حـد (*had*) in the form of "Ethpeal" to make the word "إتَّ-" (*ettahad*) meaning that God was united with the Son. (See: Manna, 243; Castaz, 96; Pin Smith, 126; Jennings, 69). Likewise, there is no evidence in the New Testament. In the New Testament, all of the verses related to the unity of the God with the son are from the root حـد (*had*) not in the form of "*ettahad*", for example "the Father and I are one[6]" (John 10:30). In this phrase, the word حـد (*had*) is used. Therefore, the claim that it is due to the Qur'an scibes' error in changing "إتَّحَدَ" (*ettahad*) to " "إتَّخَذَ" (*ettakhdha*) is unacceptable. In addition, Sawma claims that both حـد-"حـد" (*had*) and – أ "ܚܕܐ"

---

6. ܐܢܐ ܘܐܒܐ ܚܕ ܚܢܢ.

mean "one". ((Sawma, 2006, p. 165). In this regard, it should be noted that in the Syriac dictionaries, there is not any entry for - أَ (ahad) meaning "one". Of course ـ هم (ء= ܐ) (Hamza) in some Hebrew and Syriac words is sometimes pronounced half-vowel and sometimes omitted (O'leary, 1923, p40). And probably Sawma, due to this reason considered ܚܕ (had) and ܐܚܕ (ahad) identical. The above explanation was with the aim of answering the first two questions.

5. 1.1. Examination of the root "ܐܚܕ" (ahad) in Syriac language and the New Testament

In the Syriac language, the root ܐܚܕ (aḥd) (a-kh-dh) means "to take" (Costazo, p. 5). The following explanations are necessary regarding the structure of this term. In the Syriac language, the letter ܚ is pronounced softly (ḥ) and strongly (kh)() The letter ܕ is also pronounced in the Syriac language strongly (d) and softly (dh) (Al-Lomah Al-Shahiha, p. 33). Therefore, the word ܐܚܕ has two recitations: 1. (aḥd) and 2. (akhdh); both with the meaning of 'taking'. Therefore, the word is equivalent to the Arabic word - أَ (a-kh-dh) which has the same meaning and is similar in terms of the structure. From this root, the word ܐܬܬܚܕ (ettehed) in the form "Ethpeal" has come to the meaning "taken" (Pin Smith, p. 10) equivalent to the Arabic أُتُخِذَ "ottokhedha" meaning "was taken". In the New Testament, it often comes from the root ܐܚܕ (a-kh-dh) meaning "to take", such as Matthew 14: 3; Mark 5:41 and Luke 7:16. The form "Ethpeal" is mentioned in John, 8: 3: "And the scribesi and the Pharisees bring a woman taken in adultery; and having set her in the midst".

The evidence in this phrase is the word "ܐܬܬܚܕܬ" (ettahdat = ettakhdhat) that is equivalent to the Arabic verb . إتُخِذَ (ottokhedhat) meaning "was taken". The above evidence clearly shows that the verb

إتخذ (ettakhdha) in the verse " …اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ وَ قَالُوا وَلَدا" (Baqarah:116) has not been changed to إتحد (ettahad) and in the Syriac language, there is an equivalent similar to the Qur'anic meaning. Therefore, the problem of Qur'an scribes' error and changing the letter ح to خ is not valid. By the above explanation, the third question is also answered.

5. 2. The Evidence from the Hebrew literature and the Old Testament in rejecting Sawma's claim

There is also evidence in the Hebrew language and the Old Testament rejecting Sawma's claim. As mentioned, he claims that the word إتَّخَذَ (ettakhadha) is originally Syriac, but he brings the evidence from the Old Testament, while the Old Testament was originally written in Hebrew, and it was necessary to refer to the Syriac version of the New Testament (*Peshitta*). There are two roots in the Hebrew language like Syriac and Arabic which will be explained below.

5.1.2. אֶחָד (ekhad) means one, once, every, everyone, first. (Gesenius, 1882, pp. 31-33) The meaning of the word is the same in Syriac and Arabic and it has the pronunciation similar to Arabic ((ـأَ Ahah). The word appears in the Old Testament about 950 times and 687 times in the meaning of "one". The other cases do not have the meaning Sawma says (Merging, i.e uniting God with the Son). The unity of the God in the Old Testament has come with derivatives of אֶחָד (ekhad). For example, "Hear, O Israel: Jehovah our God is one Jehovah" (Deuteronomy 6: 4). In this phrase, the combination of יְהֹוָה אֶחָד (yehwa ekhad) is used meaning the One God. In Zechariah (14: 9), the same word אֶחָד (ekhad) is used twice to describe God." And Jehovah shall be King over all the earth: in that day shall Jehovah be one, and his name one"(Zechariah 14: 9; also see Job, 23:13; 31:15). These Old Testament phrases are in accordance with many verses in the

Qur'an describing God "one and the only one". For example, "'Innamā Allāhu 'Ilahun Wāĥidun Subĥānahu 'An Yakūna Lahu Waladun" for Allah is One God, Glory be to Him". (AL-Nisa: 171). In this verse, after God forbids People of the Book (Jews and Christians) from exaggerating in religion, God is described as the One and is pure from having son. And also in the verse, "Qul Huwa Allāhu 'Aĥadun" it is said: the God is Unique" (Al-Ikhlas:1)

5. 2.2. The Hebrew word אָחַז (ākhaz) is the equivalent to the Arabic word " أَـ (akhdh)" meaning "to take" and "to keep". It is used about 70 times in the Old Testament. Most of such occurrences refer to 'holding' and 'taking'. The only difference between the Hebrew word and its Arabic equivalent is that the last character in Hebrew is ז (z) while in Arabic it isذ (dh). In this respect, it should be noted that the character ذ (dh) is exclusive to the Arabic language (Wright, 1890, p.55). Its equivalent in Aramaic is ד (d) and in Hebrew is ז (z). (Moscati, 1980, p. 28). For the phoneme change in this root, we could bring another example from the Old Testament and the Qur'an.

In the story of throwing the rod by Moses and becoming a dragon, God commanded Moses: "Stretch out your hand and take its tail. Moses stretched out his hand and took it, and then the serpent became a rod again (Exodus 4: 4). In this phrase, the word אֱחֹז (ekhoz) is the imperative mood meaning "catch ". And the Qur'an says:

قَالَ خُذْها وَلا تَخَفْ سَنُعيدُها سيرَتَهَا الْأُولى

Qāla Khudh/hā Wa Lā Takhaf Sanu`īduhā Sīratahā Al-'Ūlá

He said: Pick it up, and do not be afraid, we shall return it to its original shape" (Taha: 21).

Therefore, the two verbs אֱחֹז (ekhoz) and خُذْ (khodh) by changing the phoneme ذ (dh) and ז (z) from the age of Moses to the Prophet of Islam (PBUH) in the sense of "getting" had been well-known. Thus it

could be said that the abundance of this root in the Old Testament and the Qur'an makes the scribes of the Qur'an not confuse the word "ettadhadha" with the word "ettahada".

Conclusions

1. The analysis of Sami linguistic system along with some biblical evidence shows that the structure of "ettakhadha" from "a-kh-dh" meaning "took" is used in the Syriac language and is also applied in the New Testament. Therefore, this structure is not exclusive to the Qur'anic use of this word or Arabic occurrences. Moreover, applying some other derivations from the root "Akhadha" meaning 'taking' and the root "Ahaddaa" meaning 'one' in the Old Testament and the Qur'an indicates that the Semitic speakers had the same understanding of these two roots and their derivatives.

2. The existence of the root "Akhadha" meaning 'taking', and the root "Ahadda" meaning 'one' in the ignorant Arab age literature suggests that these words and their derivations were familiar to the early Arab Muslims and they had a correct and distinctive understanding of each of them; therefore, the probability of distortion in the Qur'an as "Ettahedda" to "Ettakhadha" is rejected and there is not even a single weak qiraah (recitation) in this field.

3. The core of the Qur'an is monotheism, and in many Qur'anic verses, the issues of the Trinity, God incarnate and God's authority to have a child are rejected. Thus the verse "Wa Qālūt takhadhal lāhu Waladāan Subĥānahu" (وَ قالُوا اتَّخَذَ اللهُ وَلَداً سُبْحانَه) clearly refuses the belief that God has a child as his only son. Therefore, the verse does not confirm Christian doctrine about Jesus Christ; rather, it obviously rejects it.

Bibliography

The Qur'an.

The Holy Bible.(1901). Containing the Old and the New Testaments: American

Standard Version. Thomas Nelson & Sons.

Al-A'sha. (2010). Divan She'r. Qatar: Wizarat al- Thaqāfah wa-al Funūn wa-al-Turāth.

Abū Ḥayyān. M. (1420). al-Baḥr al-Muḥīt. Beirut: Dar al-Fekr.

Al-Baghawi. Ḥ. (1420). Ma'alim al-Tanzil. Beirut: Dar Ihyā al-Turāth al-Arabi.

Ali Ibn Mohammad. (1997). Jamal ol-Qorra' va Kamal ol-Eqra'. Damascus: Dar al-Ma'mun.

Aloussi, M. (1415). Ruh Al-Ma'ani fi Tafsir Al-Qur'an Al-'Adhim wa Al-Sab' Al-Mathani . Beirut: Dar Al-Kotob Al-al-ilmiyah.

Al-Rāghib. Ḥ. (1412). Al-Mufradat fi Gharib al-Qur'an. Tehran. Mortazavi.

costaz, l. (2002). Syriac-English Dictionary. Beirut: Dar el-Mashreq.

Farhidi, KH. (1383) Kitab al-'Ayn. Qom: Osveh.

Gesenius, W. (1882). A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament. Boston,: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

Ibn 'Ajiba, A. (1419). Al-Bahr al-Madid fi Al-Tafsir Al-Qur'an Al-Majid. Cairo: Doctor Hasan 'Abas Zaki.

Ibn 'Āshūr. M. (1985). al-Taḥrīr va al-Tanvīr. Beirut.

Ibn Fars. A. (1979). Mu'jam Maqayis al-lughah. Beirut: Dar al-Fekr al-Tab'a.

Ibn Manẓūr. M. Lisān al-ʿArab. (1414). Beirut: Dārosáder.

Ibn Qoyyim, J. (1422). Zadul Masir fi Ielmi al-Tafsir. Beirut: Dār al-Kitab al-'Arabi.

Ibn Zanjala, 'A. (1982). Hojjat Al-Qira'at. Beirut: Mo'assesah Al-resalah.

Jastrow, M. (1903). A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushlami, and the Midrashic Literature. London.

Jeffrey. A. (1386). The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qurʾān. Translated by: Fereydoon . Tehran: Toos.

Jennings, W.(1926). Lexicon to the Syriac New Testament (Peshitta), London:

Oxford at the Clarendon Press.

Maḥalli, J & Suyuti, J. (1416). Tafsīr al-Jalālayn. Beirut: Moassese al- Noor Lel-matbū'āt.

Manna, J. (1975). Chaldean(Aramaic)-Arabic Dictionary. Mosul.

Margoliouth, M.R.S. (1903). A Compendius syriac of R.payne Smith. London: Oxford at the clarendon press.

Mingana, A. (1927). Syriac influence on the Style of the Koran. Bulletin of the John Rylands Library,(11), 77–98.

Moghatel. (1423). Tafsir Moghatel Ibn Soleiman. Beirut: Dar Ihyā al-Turāth al-Arabi.

Moscati, S. (1980). An Introduction to the Comparative Grammar of the Semitic Languages. Wiesbaden: Otto. Harrassowitz.

Mostafavi, H. (1368). Al-Tahghigh fi Kalemat Al- Qur'an Al- Karim. Tehran: Vezarate Farhangh va Ershad.

Oleary, D. L.(1923). Comparative Grammar of the Semitic Languages. London: Kegan Paul.

Qurtubi, M. (1364). al-Jami li Ahkam al-The Qur'an. Tehran: Naser Khosrow.

Razi. H. (1408). Rawḍ al-Jinān wa Rawḥ al-Janān fī Tafsīr al-Qurʾān. Mashhad: Astan Quds Razavi. Bonyad-e Pazhouhesh-ha-ye Eslami.

Razi. M. (1420). Mafatih Al-Ghayb. Beirut: Dār Ihyā al-Turāth al-Arabi.

Reynolds, G. S. (2007). The Qurʾān in Its Historical Context. London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis.

Robinson. Neal (2005). Jesus in the Qurʾan, the Historical Jesus and the Myth of God Incarnation, Haft Aasman, No. 24, Qom.

Sawma, G. (2006). The the Qurʾan Misinterpreted, Mistranslated, And Misread, the Aramaic Language of the The Qurʾan. Adi Books.

Strong, J. (1890). A concise Dictionary in the Hebrew Bible, with their renderings in the Authorized English version. Nashville: Abingdon Press.

Ṭabarī, M. J. (1412). Jami' al-bayan 'an

ta'wtl ay al-Qur'an. Beirut: Dar al-Ma'refat.

ṬabarĪ, A. J. (1992). Jami al-Bayan. Beirut: Dar al-Ma'rifah.

Ṭabāṭabāʾī, M. Ḥ. (1373). Al-Mizan Fi Tafsir Al-The Qur'an. Translated by Mohammad Bagher Mousavi. Qom: Daftar Entesharat Eslami.

Ṭabāṭabāʾī, M. Ḥ. (1417). Al-Mizan Fi Tafsir Al-The Qur'an. Translated by Mohammad Bagher Mousavi. Qom: Daftar Entesharat Eslami.

Ṭarafah ibn al-'Abd. (2000). Diyan She'r. explanated by: Al A'lam Ashshantamari. Beirut: al musawah al Arabiya led-Derasat van-Nashr.

Tusi, M. (n.d). Al-Tibyān fī tafsīr al-Qurʾān. Beirut: Dar Ihyā al-Turāth al-Arabi.

Wright, W. (1890). Lectures on the Comparative Grammar of the Semitic Languages. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Yuosof, D. E. (1789). Al-Lom'at Al-shahiya fi Nave Al- Loghat Al-seryaniya. Mosul: dayr Al- ʾAba –Al-Doskein.

Yusuf Ali, A. (2012). The Meaning of the Glorious Qur'an Text, Translation & Commentry, Elmhurst, N.Y: Tahrike Tarsile Qur'an.

Zamakhshari, M. (1407). Al-Kashshāf 'an Hāqā'iq at-Tanzil. Beirut: Dār al-Kitab al-'Arabi.

http://www.dukhrana.com

http://www.qbible.com

https://www.amazon.com