

## An Analytical Approach to the Issue of Distortion in the Holy Qur'an and the Testaments

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### رویکردی تحلیلی مندی به مسئله تحریف در قرآن کریم و عهدین

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#### Abstract:

One of the important principles when studying religious texts, and especially interpreting sacred texts, is to pay attention to the historical debates on whether or not the sacred text has been distorted in the course of history. In other words, to what extent are these texts valid? Shiite and Sunni scholars have raised the issue of the Qur'an's immunity from distortion and falsification in their interpretations, which is in opposite to the view of Western scholars on the issue of distortion in the Testaments. Based on a qualitative method with a content analytical approach, this research examined the reasons for the distortion or non-distortion of the Holy Qur'an and the Testaments, in line with an investigation into the issue of distortion and its dimensions. Findings show that the distortion of the Qur'an may be considered only in terms of meanings while it is completely different in the Testaments. In fact, the problem of making Testaments by humans and the historic disappearance of the *Torah* and the divine *Bible* prove that we should speak of their falsification, not distortion.

**Keywords:** Distortion, Analytical Approach, Holy Qur'an, The Testaments.

#### چکیده:

یکی از مبانی مهم در بررسی متون دینی و به‌ویژه تفسیر متون مقدس، توجه به این بحث تاریخی است، که آیا متن مقدس در گذر تاریخ دچار تحریف شده است؟ به بیان دیگر، این متون تا چه اندازه از اعتبار برخوردار هستند؟ مفسران شیعی و اهل سنت در عنایت به این نکته اساسی در تفاسیر خود، بحث سلامت قرآن از تحریف را مطرح کرده‌اند، که در نقطه مقابل نگاه محققان غربی به مسئله تحریف در عهدین است. در این پژوهش که به ابتدای روش کیفی و با رویکرد تحلیلی محتوا بررسی شد، با توجه به بررسی محتوایی مسئله تحریف و ابعاد و انواع آن، به بررسی دلایل تحریف‌پذیری یا تحریف‌ناپذیری قرآن کریم و عهدین پرداخته است، و این نتیجه حاصل شد که تحریف در قرآن تنها از حیث معنوی امکان‌پذیر است؛ اما تحریف در عهدین بحثی متمایز است؛ چرا که اساساً با توجه به بشری بودن و به‌اصطلاح دست‌ساز بودن عهدین و مفقود شدن تورات و انجیل الهی، به‌جای تحریف در عهدین فعلی باید قائل به جعل شد.

**کلمات کلیدی:** مسئله تحریف، رویکردی تحلیلی مندی، قرآن کریم، عهدین.

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## Introduction

After the revelation of the Holy Qur'an, which included the teachings and generalities of guidance and the Shari'a, as well as the Bi'thah of the Holy Prophet of Islam (PBUH) who called people to that Shari'a, and caused the expansion of religious teachings, which gradually went beyond the Islamic and international borders. In the meantime, and due to the extent of last religion, one of the ways to confront the religion of Islam, called distortion, was proposed.

In this research, an attempt is made to answer this general question, which: Has the Holy Qur'an, which was presented to humanity by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and performing its instructions has been considered the guarantor of the happiness and prosperity of all human beings in this world and the hereafter, has been distorted like the Testaments throughout history?

Accordingly, in this study, first the distortion or non-distortion of the Holy Qur'an in the original Islamic sources is examined; this issue is then addressed in the Testament - the Jewish and Christian Bible.

## 1. Generalities of Research

### 1-1. Lexicography of Taḥrīf

The word Taḥrīf i.e. distortion is derived from the root "ḥarf" meaning the side, corner and around of something (Ibn Fāris, 1404, v.2, p.42). In general, Taḥrīf is to incline, to take aside, to move away from one's position and to change (ibid. 43), and in other words, to deviate and incline it in another direction (Mustafawī, 1430, v.2, p. 199). According to a definition in this regard,

the Taḥrīf is taken from "Taḥarruf" and "Iḥtarafa", which means deviated from it. Thus, "distortion of the thing" means restoring the shape and form of something; as in "distortion of the pen", the meaning of shaving and deforming the pen is meant (Rāghib Isfahani, 1412, p.229). On the other hand, the "Muḥarraf" pen means a pen that is shaved in this way and has a crooked cross section (Khorramshahi, 1992, p.86). But "distortion of the word" means to put the word on a possible meaning; while it has two aspects and two meanings (Rāghib Isfahani: ibid); in other words, put it in a corner of probability; so that it can be carried in two ways, which is to bear the explicit word; that is, after the meaning of that word was known, he diverted it from its explicit meaning (Qarashī, 1992, v.2, p.121). The Holy Qur'an says:

"Are you then eager that they should believe you, though a part of them would hear the word of Allah and then they would distort it after they had understood it, and they knew [what they were doing]?" (Baqarah: 75)<sup>1</sup>

A group of them - the Jews - hear the word of God; then, after knowing and reasoning, they distort it from its rightful position. In other words, distortion in such cases is a change of meaning or interpretation of speech in a non-real meaning; but the place of speech is verbal or spiritual; in the sense that sometimes it is possible to change the concept and meaning by changing the word or moving it; as Allameh Ṭabrisī writes about the following verse: "Those who change words from their context..." (Nisā': 46)<sup>2</sup>

١. أَفَتَعْطَمُونَ أَنْ يُؤْمِنُوا لَكُمْ وَقَدْ كَانَ فَرِيقٌ مِنْهُمْ يَسْمَعُونَ كَلَامَ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ يُحَرِّفُونَهُ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا عَقَلُوهُ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ.

٢. «يُحَرِّفُونَ الْكَلِمَ عَنْ مَوَاضِعِهِ».

They interpret it on a concept other than what has been revealed, and change the attribute of the Prophet; therefore, the distorter distorted it in two ways:

1. with incorrect interpretation;
2. with change and transformation (Tabrisi, 1993, v.2, p.121). Accordingly, word distortion or speech distortion means changing the meaning by using addition and reduction, changing and shifting the appearance of words or changing the meaning by misinterpretation (Jawadi Amuli, 2005, p.17).

In general, distortion can be examined in two terms: lexical and idiomatic; Also, the term distortion includes verbal and spiritual distortion (Ma'refat, 2007, p.11-14), which is explained below.

## 1-2. Typology of Tahrif

In a general division, distortion can be divided into the following two types:

### 1-2-1. Verbal Tahrif

This distortion means interfering with the structure of the words and phrases of the Holy Qur'an, which Allameh Tabataba'i considers as changing the position of the words - meaning the beginning and ending or deleting and adding the word - (Tabataba'i, 1997, v.4, p.364).

The author of "Al-Manar" writes in a similar definition: The meaning of word distortion is to precede and end a word or to change one word into another word, or to hide it, or to increase or decrease the word (Rashid Reza, 1414, v.6, p.282).

### 1-2-2. Types of verbal Tahrif

There are different types of word distortion, one of which is as follows:

1. Distortion of Arabization (*harakat*)
2. Distortion in words
3. Distortion in verses
4. Distortion through adding
5. Distortion through deleting (Khoei, 1430, p.255).

Also, according to another classification, the following types are expressed for verbal distortion:

1. Local distortion
2. Distortion in Qur'an recitation
3. Distortion in the way words are pronounced
4. Distortion with the word conversion
5. Distortion through adding
6. Distortion through deleting (Ma'refat, 2007, p.11-14).

In general, in verbal distortion and its types, the focus is on "distortion through deleting" (Ibid., 2009, v.1, p.312) and "distortion through adding"; of course, no one denies the possibility of adding letters or changing some of the movements in the Qur'an; also, there is a difference in the way of reciting some verses to the extent that the recitations have reached seven or ten types (Khorramshahi, 1992, p.86); but such a situation does not mean harming the immunity of the Holy Qur'an; however, a group of Akhbārī narrators, the Shiite sect, such as the Muhaddith Nurī, as well as a Sunni sect called Hashwīyah<sup>1</sup>, consider this kind of distortion to be a real thing (Ibid, p.88).

<sup>1</sup> This sect, which is one of the Sunni extremist groups, considers the intellect invalid and heresy (Ibn Abi al-Hadīd, 1404, v.6, p.374). They

turned to fabricate hadiths for supporting their false beliefs, and then considered such hadiths a means to reach their goal. (Shoushtarī, 1988, p.109)

Regarding "distortion through adding", none of the Muslims - both Shiites and Sunnis – don't believe in adding to the words or verses of the Holy Qur'an (Ja'farian, 2003, p.11).

Of course, the addition of a word or words other than the Qur'an existed before the unification of the Maṣāḥif among the Maṣāḥif of the Aṣḥāb; but after the monotheism and unification of the Maṣāḥif and also the compilation of the Qur'an as it was popular among Muslims, this issue has not been raised (Khoi, 1430, p.199).

It is necessary to state that the Hashwīyah believe in "distortion through adding"; as narrated from Ibn Mas'ud Sahabi, that Surah Al-Fātiḥah and Mu'awwazatayn are not part of the Qur'an and are not included in his special Muṣḥaf, or 'Ajarida - a group of Khawārij - believe that Surah Yūsuf is not part of the Qur'an and it is not permissible for them to say such a love story is a part of divine revelation (Ma'refat, 2007, p.22). Such a thing is while if one claims that in the current Mus'haf, non-Qur'anic passages and man-made words have been found and are hidden among its main verses and surahs, it means that man has been able to make a speech similar to the Holy Qur'an, which is indistinguishable from other verses in terms of structure and content; as a result, the challenge of the Qur'an has been collapsed and its miracle cannot be understood.

Therefore, in view of such a limitation, someone who is familiar with the principles and teachings of the Qur'an, does not consider the possibility of the literal distortion of the Qur'an through adding some words or letters reasonable and does not accept it (Jawādī Āmulī, 2005, p.20).

### 1-2-3. Spiritual (semantic) Taḥrīf

This type of distortion means interpreting the opinion in an unreasonable way, or improper interpretation of the verses of the Qur'an in accordance with different views and opinions, which has occurred in the history of interpretation of the Qur'an by most theological and even jurisprudential schools (Khorramshahi, 1992, p.86). In this type of distortion, it is tried to misinterpret the main concept and the intended purpose of the speaker and deviate it from the correct path and towards a concept that is on the margins of the main meaning (Khoei, 1430, p.215).

This kind of distortion that has taken place about the Holy Qur'an is reflected in the Qur'an itself about the past book and has also been announced in the "Nahj al-Balāghah" of its occurrence in the time of Imam Ali (AS) and the future [Baqarah: 2; Nisā': 46] and (Nahj al-Balāghah, Sermon 17).

### 1-2-4. Evidences of spiritual Taḥrīf

Among the evidences that can be considered for the occurrence of spiritual distortion in the Holy Qur'an are the following:

1. The repeated warning of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) about the danger of interpreting upon one's opinion; including the following famous narration:

Whoever interprets the Qur'an according to his own opinion, has prepared himself for the fire. (Sadūq, 2006, v.2, p.198).

2. The order of Imam Ali (AS) to Ibn Abbas Sahabi; when Imam sent him to talk to the Khawārij, told him: Do not argue with them by the Qur'an; because the Qur'an has different aspects. You say something and they say something else

in response and it cannot be concluded; but argue with them through tradition, since they will no longer escape the tradition - due to its intercession and frankness. (Nahj al-Balāghah, a 77).

3. The frequency of claimants of interpretation based on the sensual desires of its commentators; also, Imam Bāqir (AS) blamed Qatādah - one of the general commentators and one of the followers - for adopting the same method (Kulaynī, 1986, v.8, p.485).

4. The difference of Muslims into seventy-three sects; most of these sects consider the base their beliefs on the verses of the Qur'an. The result is that the interpretation upon ones opinion, in spite of its condemnation and its losses, cannot damage the credibility of the Qur'an; because it is considered something outside the identity of the Qur'an; therefore, the writers of the holy Qur'an are always ready to protect its supreme and vital knowledge. (Jawādī Āmulī, 2005, p.19-18).

## 2. Evidences of the immunity of the Holy Qur'an from Tahrīf

### 2-1. Qur'anic reasons

Among the verses that explicitly indicate the soundness of the Holy Qur'an and its non-distortion, the following verses can be mentioned:

#### 2-1-1. Verse of Ḥifz (protection)

“Indeed, we have sent down the Qur'an and we "protect" it. (Ḥijr: 9)

In this verse, God Almighty has spoken of His protection and has declared it with sentences that are full of emphasis. This verse, which has been emphasized by our connected pronouns

of Wī, the emphasis L, the repetition of "Inna", the Khabar Ismīyyah and the precedence of the subject to the object, in order to reject the denial and mockery of the opponents protects the expression of the truth and stability of the Qur'an in various forms and aspects from distortion, conversion, excess and loss. In other words, the demons of jinn and humans cannot add any falsehood to it or diminish anything from truth (Hosseini Shah Abdolazim, 1984, v.7, p.86; Feyz Kashani, 1415, v.3, p.102); because in another verse, God Almighty says: “Falsehood cannot come at it from before it or from behind it. (It is) a revelation from the Wise, the Owner of Praise.” (Fussilat: 42)<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, the word "dhikr" means the Holy Qur'an; because in the Qur'an, truth and falsehood, happiness and cruelty, good and evil, obligatory and forbidden, the world and the hereafter and everything that needs to be mentioned are mentioned; in a way that human beings have been reminded of.

One of the evidences of this claim is a part of one of the Qur'anic verses, which says: “And We reveal the Scripture unto thee as an exposition of all things, and a guidance and a mercy and good tidings for those who have surrendered (to Allah).” (Nahl: 89)<sup>2</sup>

Since God - in this verse - has not placed any restrictions on the preservation of the Qur'an, it becomes clear that the divine holy essence is the guardian of the Qur'an in every way; also, since God is an infinite deity; therefore, the preservation of the Qur'an - in every way - will be endless (Najafi Khomeini, 2019, v.9, p.27).

١. «لَا يَأْتِيهِ الْبَاطِلُ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَلَا مِنْ خَلْفِهِ تَنْزِيلٌ مِنْ حَكِيمٍ حَمِيدٍ».

٢. «وَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ تَبْيَانًا لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً وَبُشْرَىٰ لِلْمُسْلِمِينَ».

### 2-1-2. The verse negating the false

“Lo! those who disbelieve in the Reminder when it cometh unto them (are guilty), for lo! it is an unassailable Scripture. falsehood cannot approach it, at present or in future, a [revelation gradually] sent down from One all-wise, all-laudable.” (Fussilat: 41-42)<sup>1</sup>

This verse, like the previous verse, states the argument for the non-distortion of the Holy Qur'an. In this verse, the word "book" is the same as the Qur'an, which is described by three descriptions: "Aziz", "no false in it" and "revealed from a Wise God". Accordingly, the first two descriptions - each - as follows point to the non-distortion of the Qur'an independently, because the word "Aziz" means invincible and impenetrable; while distortion is a kind of failure and permeability. Also, the word false - meaning the opposite of right - refers to something that is not stable and is prone to corruption and destruction; therefore, God says: "there is no false in the Qur'an." Therefore, it denies any change in the Qur'an.

The third description also indicates that the Holy Qur'an cannot be distorted and changed; for it is sent down from God, the Wise and the Praised; whose deeds are purposeful; therefore, if the Qur'an is distorted, it is inconsistent with Wisdom of God (Najarzadegan, 2005, p.24).

### 2-1-3. Verse of Raṣad

“(He is) the Knower of the Unseen, and He revealeth unto none His secret, Save unto every messenger whom He hath chosen, and then He maketh a guard to

go before him and a guard behind him. That He may know that they have indeed conveyed the messages of their Lord. He surroundeth all their doings, and He keepeth count of all things.” (Jinn: 26-28)<sup>2</sup>

This verse, like the previous verse, states the argument for the non-distortion of the Holy Qur'an. The phrase «فانه يسلك من بين يديه ومن خلفه رصدا» indicates that the divine revelation from the moment it is issued from the source of revelation until it reaches the people and also through its revelation until the recipient of the revelation, it is safe from any theft and change; but its immunity from the time of issuance until it reaches the Messenger of God, if there is no reason other than the phrase «من خلفه», this sentence is enough. Also the reason for the immunity of divine revelation when receiving it from the angel of revelation is so that he knows him and does not err in receiving revelation, and also his immunity in preserving divine revelation is in such a way that He preserves it as it was revealed and its immunity in conveying to the people is immune from any kind of seizure due to the phrase «ليعلم أن قد أبلغوا رسالات ربه» (Tabataba'i, 1997, v.20, p.57).

Therefore, the Holy Qur'an is under divine supervision and care from the stage of perception to the stage of communicating to all people - in all ages; therefore, the possibility of distortion in the Qur'an requires that this care has been done incompletely or outside of divine knowledge. It is impossible to assume such things about God the Wise (Jawādī Āmulī, 2005,

١. «إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِالذِّكْرِ لَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ وَإِنَّهُ لَكِتَابٌ عَزِيزٌ \* لَا يَأْتِيهِ الْبَاطِلُ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَلَا مِنْ خَلْفِهِ تَنْزِيلٌ مِنْ حَكِيمٍ حَمِيدٍ».

٢. «عَالِمُ الْغَيْبِ فَلَا يُظْهِرُ عَلَى غَيْبِهِ أَحَدًا \* إِلَّا مَنْ ارْتَضَى مِنْ رَسُولٍ فَإِنَّهُ يَسْلُكُ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَ مِنْ خَلْفِهِ رَصَدًا \* لِيَعْلَمَ أَنْ قَدْ أَلْفَوْا رَسُولَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ \* وَأَحَاطَ بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ وَأَحْصَى كُلَّ شَيْءٍ عَدَدًا».

p.73). As a result, the Holy Qur'an has been under divine supervision and care from the stage of receiving it until it was communicated to the people by the Prophet throughout the mission of the divine prophets, and its immunity is guaranteed by God.

## 2-2-. The verse of extinguishing the divine light

“They desire to put out the light of Allah with their mouths, but Allah will perfect His light though the faithless should be averse.” (Saff: 8)<sup>1</sup>

This verse can be considered to prove the sanctity of the Holy Qur'an from distortion; because God Almighty has introduced the Qur'an as "light" [Mā'idah: 15].

On the other hand, the meaning of the verse indicates the will of the malevolent towards the Holy Qur'an, which is one of the most prominent examples of the will of the malefactors about light of Qur'an is destroying the Qur'an, which has been pursued in various ways. At the same time, the Qur'an is the light that will illuminate the world transformed into another world even after the sun goes down; because the Hereafter, like the world, is clear with the truth of the Qur'an.

So this verse - on the one hand - states that the enemies of the Qur'an have sought to distort the Qur'an with the desire to increase or decrease it, and on the other hand, it proves that the demands arising from their desire will never be fulfilled; because God will protect his light - the Holy Qur'an - (Jawādī Āmulī, 2005, p.69-7).

## 2-3. Narrative reasons

Regarding the non-distortion of the Holy Qur'an, we can refer to several hadiths from the Prophet (PBUH) and the Ahl al-Bayt (AS), some of the most important of which are stated below:

### 2-3-1. Hadith Thaqalayn

The Holy Prophet of Islam (PBUH) says in a famous narration:

“I have left to precious things among you. If you hold them firmly, you will never be misled. They are the Book of Allah and my Family, Ahl al-Bayt. They do not separate from each other until they will come to me on the *Hawd* (of Paradise)”. (Sadūq, 1385, v.1, p.68)<sup>2</sup>

According to this noble hadith, adherence to the Qur'an and Ahl al-Bayt is considered obligatory; therefore, if the Qur'an is distorted, it is not possible to be sure that the Qur'an is a guide. Allameh Tabataba'i writes how to prove that this hadith has not been distorted: "Many news have been narrated from the Prophet, who refer to the Qur'an during seditions and problems, as well as the hadith of Thaqalayn, which has reached us through Shiites and Sunnis in succession; these two categories of news are the reason for the non-distortion of the Qur'an, because the matter of relying on a distorted book and denying misguidance to those who cling to it are not compatible with each other. ” (Tabataba'i, 1997, v.12, p.107)

Ayatollah Jawādī Āmulī, in emphasizing this theme and in the context of the points that can be deduced from this hadith, believe:

1. The Qur'an is Thiqal Akbar and this shows the high and important position

١. «يُرِيدُونَ لِيُطْفِئُوا نُورَ اللَّهِ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَاللَّهُ مُتِمُّ نُورِهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْكَافِرُونَ».

٢. «إِنِّي تَارِكٌ فِيكُمْ الثَّقَلَيْنِ مَا إِنْ تَمَسَّكْتُمْ بِهِمَا لَنْ تَضَلُّوا كِتَابَ اللَّهِ وَعَثَرَتِي أَهْلَ بَيْتِي وَإِنَّهُمَا لَنْ يَفْتَرِقَا حَتَّى يَرِدَا عَلَيَّ الْحَوْضَ».

of the Qur'an among the Islamic Ummah.

2. Considering that the address of this hadith covers the entire Islamic Ummah until the Day of Judgment, it is a proof of the legitimacy and eternal health of the Qur'an; because a distorted book cannot be cited.

3. Accompanying the Qur'an with Ahl al-Bayt - until the Day of Resurrection - and not separating them from each other until they enter the Prophet in the pool of Kuthar means that the Qur'an retains its originality and legitimacy, and despite such a feature, there is no room for the possibility of distortion in it (Jawādī Āmulī, 2005, p.98-99). Therefore, this hadith is a complete and conclusive proof on non-distortion of the Qur'an; as he proves, if the Qur'an is distorted, not only will the Qur'an be invalidated, but also the narrations of the Ahl al-Bayt (AS) cannot be relied upon; because according to this hadith, the Qur'an and Ahl al-Bayt (AS) are two related arguments, whose fall from the authority invalidates the other (Javan Arasteh, 2008, p.320).

### 2-3-2. Matching narrations with the Holy Qur'an

Other reasons for the soundness of the Qur'an and its non-distortion are the narrations that have introduced the Holy Qur'an as a measure of the validity of hadiths, to the extent that what is not in harmony with the Qur'an has been rejected. In this regard, the Holy Prophet of Islam (PBUH) says:

There is a truth for attaining any right that reveals that right, and to realize every right and truth, there is a light that guides it; so choose any hadiths that agrees with the Qur'an, and leave whatever disagrees with it. Accordingly,

the extent and criterion of the accuracy and inaccuracy of narrations and hadiths is to agree with the Holy Qur'an; therefore, if the Qur'an has been distorted, it cannot be the criterion and measure of the correctness and invalidity of narrations and hadiths; for the appearances of the Qur'an can be considered as evidence when, first, it is proved the verse, which is considered as a scale, belongs to Qur'an, and there is no possibility that the verse is other than God; Secondly, there is no possibility of deleting and abrogating the verses that are involved in the meaning and significance of the verses.

Therefore, such narrations indicates that according to the Infallible Imams (AS), the Qur'an in the hands of Muslims is the same Qur'an that was revealed to the Messenger of God (PBUH) and no distortion has been made in it; otherwise, it could not be a reference for distinguishing between true and false narrations for Muslims (Taheri Khorramabadi, 2006, p.129-130). In addition, doing so means invoking "no authority", which is - rationally - ugly (Jawādī Āmulī, 2005, p.102).

### 3. Hadiths denying Tahṛīf

Many narrations have been narrated from the infallible Imams (AS) that have approved the soundness of the Qur'an from distortion, either emphatically or implicitly; among the following narrations narrated by Ali ibn Salem from his father that in response to his question about the Holy Qur'an, Imam Ṣādiq (AS) said:

“Lo! those who disbelieve in the Reminder when it cometh unto them (are guilty), for lo! it is an unassailable Scripture. falsehood cannot approach it, at present or in future, a [revelation



gradually] sent down from One all-wise, all-laudable.” (Fussilat: 41-42)<sup>1</sup>

The question seems to be a doubt that has been raised in terms of increase and decrease in the Holy Qur'an; therefore, the answer of the Imam denies any change or distortion in the word of God (Taheri Khorramabadi, 2006, p.135).

### 3-1. Historical reasons

The concern of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) to preserve and record the Holy Qur'an is a historical fact; because when he received the revelation, he repeated the verses out of eagerness to learn them, and immediately after receiving the revelation, he called the scribes of the revelation and the revealed verses were written by them, and more than thirty of these scribes have been mentioned in historical documents. In addition to encouraging Muslims to write the Holy Qur'an, the Prophet (PBUH) also encouraged them to memorize the Qur'an, and the issuance of dozens of narrations and the existence of hundreds of memorizers of the Qur'an during his lifetime and even after his death proves this claim.

It is also necessary to state that the interpretation and explanation of the verses has been one of the other efforts of the Prophet in preserving and protecting the Holy Qur'an. On the other hand, in addition to the efforts of the Holy Prophet of Islam (PBUH) to memorize and record the Holy Qur'an, the deep efforts of Imam Ali (AS) in learning the interpretation of the revelation of the verses and the efforts of the Companions to preserve and

sanctify this divine book, is remarkable. (Jawādī Āmulī, 2005, p.119-120).

### 3-2. Rational reasons

The human intellect clearly states that the possibility of any change and transformation is far from the sacred realm of the Holy Qur'an; because it is a book that has been taken care of by a great and cultured nation since the first day, and it has always been considered sacred, and finally, it has been carefully and respectfully honored, and it has not been distorted. On the other hand, the Holy Qur'an is the first reference of Muslims in all aspects of life - from religious issues to political and social activities - (Ma'refat, 2007, p.125).

This assumption is also accepted by all believers, that God Almighty created all beings, including man, for a wise purpose - to achieve perfection. Also, human perfection is realized in the light of free will and consciousness, and the scientific and internal capital of human existence is not enough to achieve that ultimate goal; therefore, it needs a special guide called revelation; in such a way that if this path of knowledge is not opened before man, the divine purpose will not be realized and this is against the wisdom of God.

Therefore, God Almighty, in order to achieve the purpose of creation in the context of human life, has always sent special guides with a set of insights and behavioral knowledge so that humanity can reach a level of readiness and intellectual maturity, who can accept the complete guidance plan and general plan of his life. On the other hand, based on the completion of the Shari'a and the

<sup>1</sup> «إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِالذِّكْرِ لَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ وَإِنَّهُ لَكِتَابٌ عَزِيزٌ \* لَا يَأْتِيهِ الْبَاطِلُ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَلَا مِنْ خَلْفِهِ تَنْزِيلٌ مِنْ حَكِيمٍ حَمِيدٍ».

cessation of revelation and the finality of prophecy, and given that the religion of Islam is the culmination of the divine religions and there will be no prophet or book after that, we are committed to the non-distortion of the Qur'an, which is the essence of the divine message; because the requirement of divine grace and wisdom in human destiny is that the last divine book of guidance will be protected from distortions, just as the reason for sending revelation is appropriate to maintain it (Saeedi Roshan, 2000, p.201).

The result is:

1. God the Wise has sent the Qur'an to guide mankind.

2. This book is the last heavenly book and its bringer is the last messenger of God.

3. The Qur'an provides humans with a complete plan of guidance and the general plan of human life, and its distortion causes humanity to go astray.

4. This misguidance is incompatible with the divine essence of God and is contrary to the divine wisdom in guiding mankind; therefore, the non-distortion of the Qur'an is proved with the help of rational reasons (Shamkhi, 2011, p.84-100).

### 3-3. The reason for repetition

Another reason for the immunity of the Holy Qur'an from distortion is its repetition from previous generations to the present day. In general, Muslims agree that the current Qur'an is a definite revelation and has been passed down from previous generations to the next generations, and this transmission has been done in various forms, including memorizing the Qur'an, its continuous recitation, and writing. Based on this repetition, Muslims believe that the current Muṣḥaf has reached them from

the time of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) until today, and despite such a repetition, there is no room for suspicion of distortion (Jawādī Āmulī, 2005, p.106); Because the Qur'an is consistent in every word and letter. Therefore, what is said in the context of distortion that such a word or sentence has been changed in the Qur'an, because it is not acceptable by narratives mentioned in this regard and is also contrary to the principle of the necessity of the repetition of the Qur'an, so it is rejected (Ma'refat, 2002, p.449); as many Shiite and Sunni scholars have accepted such a view on the text of the Holy Qur'an (Khoei, 1430, p.123).

### 3-4. The reason for the miracle

The miracle of the Qur'an has various dimensions, one of which, and perhaps the most important, is eloquence and rhetoric, which depend entirely on the word and its meaning. On the other hand, the Holy Qur'an has challenged for its miracle and called the opponents to confront [Nisā': 82; Isrā': 88; Hūd: 42 and 13; Yūnus: 38], that this group of verses - with determination - confirms the revelation and transcendence of the appearance, interior, word and meaning of the Qur'an from human understanding (Javan Arasteh, 2008, p.135).

For this reason, this miracle contradicts any distortion; because distortion destroys the meanings of the Qur'an and disrupts the miraculous aspect of eloquence and rhetoric based on meanings and words; therefore, the miracle of the Qur'an, for which it has been challenged, is correct as long as it preserves its totality and integrity (Ma'refat, 2002, p.116).

The result is that, given the current eloquence and rhetoric and the novel order of the Holy Qur'an, the possibility

of any distortion is ruled out; because in this case, it loses its rhetorical and verbal miracle, which has always been considered by Muslim scholars (Ibid, p.450-453).

#### 4. Distortion in the Testaments

Before examining the issue, in order to be better acquainted with the Old and New Testaments, it is necessary to refer to an analytical explanation of the Testaments; because what is available are books that were written in later times and some of the teachings of the prophets are included in its contents (Ibid., 2007, p.351).

##### 4-1. The Old Testament

The Old Testament is a collection of 39 books, which are thematically divided into the following three sections:

1. Historical section: Contains 17 books, the first five of which are called the Torah or Pentateuch.

2. Wisdom, Prayers and Poetry Section: Contains 5 books.

3. The section of the prophecies of the prophets: includes 17 books (Tawfiqi, 2005, p.50).

The history of writing these works dates back to the tenth century to the end of the second century BC, which was almost five centuries after the death of Prophet Moses (PBUH) (Ma'refat, 2007, p.382). Accordingly, the Old Testament collection has been written over nine centuries based on popular anecdotes; also, the foundation of the five journeys attributed to Prophet Moses (PBUH) was compiled around the tenth century BC, then in later times some theology and traditions of the priests were added to it, and of course the compilation of books has continued for centuries (Bucaille, 1978, p.25-28).

On the other hand, in ancient times, people believed that Prophet Moses (PBUH) wrote the Torah; but new biblical studies show that the question of the origin of the Torah's journey is more difficult than initially thought; because the Torah has been created for generations; in other words, at first there were narrations, which the Jewish people transmitted orally to each other, then these narrations were written in several collections, some of which were about history and some about the rulings. Finally, in the fifth century BC, these collections were compiled into one book. However, there were many people who participated in this long and complex work and most of them have been forgotten by history (Shamkhi, 2011, p.84-100).

In general, biblical scholars cite four basic sources for the Torah:

1. Elohim
2. Yahweh
3. Kohen
4. Book of Deuteronomy.

This indicates that the present five passages of the Torah have been combined and written from four different sources at very distant times. (Michelle, 2012, p.32).

Also one of the most famous critiques of the Torah, which proves that the author of the Torah is not a divine prophet, is put forward by Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677), the Dutch rationalist philosopher, who in his book the "Theological-Political Treatise" doubts about the evidence that the Torah is attributed to Prophet Moses (PBUH); since he believes that the writing of the Torah must be years after Moses (Tawfiqi, 2005, p.82).

Therefore:

1. The present Torah is not the book of Moses.

2. This book was written in Canaan or Jerusalem, not in the time of Moses, when the Israelites dwelt in the wilderness.

3. This book was written after the reign of David and before the prophecy of Ezekiel; that is, it was done about 500 years after the death of Moses (Zibaeinejad, 2003, p.127).

It is necessary to state that the content of the Old Testament is of the same quality in the eyes of Muslim scholars; as Allameh Tabataba'i writes in a general summary: This Torah, which is valid among the Jews today, its document is not related to the time of Moses (PBUH) and its document was cut off in 50 years and leads to only one person and he is Ezra, whose character is unknown to us in the first place. Secondly, we do not know what the quality of his information, accuracy and contemplation was, thirdly, how reliable he was in quoting it, and fourthly, where he got what he collected in the name of Asfâr Torah, and what document he relied on to correct its mistakes. (Tabataba'i, 1997, p.3, p.485).

#### 4-2. The New Testament

A collection of New Testament books consisting of 27 books, which are thematically divided into the following four sections:

1. The Gospels: Consists of the four Gospels: Gospel of Matthew, Gospel of Mark, Gospel of Luke and Gospel of John, written by the Apostles - companions and followers - of Jesus (PBUH), in which they wrote the journey and words of the Prophet Jesus (PBUH).

2. Acts of the Apostles: Luke is the author of the third Gospel, which is

written in the biography of the apostles, especially Paul the Apostle.

3. Letters of the Apostles: Contains a large number of epistles or letters, many of which were written by Paul to the early Christian groups.

4. Kashf: This book promises the progress of Christianity, which is why it is so important to Christians; in other words, John, who according to Christians was a young apostle, describes his old age dream in this work (Tawfiqi, 2005, p.115-125).

Christian scholars generally agree that the purpose of these four writers was not to preserve the true life history of Jesus, but rather to propagate their religious beliefs; so they articulated what they found and gave themselves the right to change the content to suit their purpose; for this reason, the Gospel of Matthew and the Gospel of Luke have changed much of what they have taken from the Gospel of Mark, even the words of Christ. Therefore, this causes the Gospels to be considered unreliable in relation to the reports they give (Lufmark, 2006, p.70).

#### 4-3. Summary

From what has been passed down through history as the history of the Testament, it is concluded that the main source of the Testament has not been survived, and what is available is a subset of it, which is the translations and part of the religious teachings, which is included in the narration of historical events; therefore, it is not possible to accept that the nature of these works are heavenly and divine, but they are distorted and transformed by humans.

#### 5. Distortion of Testament from the perspective of the Holy Qur'an

Distortion means change, which according to Muslim scholars has taken place in the Testaments, and the authoritative proof of this claim is the verses of the Holy Qur'an, some of which are mentioned here:

"Have ye any hope that they will be true to you when a party of them used to listen to the word of Allah, then used to change it, after they had understood it, knowingly?" (Baqarah: 75)<sup>1</sup>

"Therefore woe be unto those who write the Scripture with their hands and then say, "This is from Allah," that they may purchase a small gain therewith. Woe unto them for that their hands have written, and woe unto them for that they earn thereby." (Baqarah: 79)<sup>2</sup>

"And lo! there is a party of them who distort the Scripture with their tongues, that ye may think that what they say is from the Scripture, when it is not from the Scripture. And they say: It is from Allah, when it is not from Allah; and they speak a lie concerning Allah knowingly." (Āli 'Imrān: 78)<sup>3</sup>

"Some of those who are Jews change words from their context and say: "We hear and disobey; hear thou as one who heareth not" and "Listen to us!" distorting with their tongues and slandering religion. If they had said: "We hear and we obey: hear thou, and look at us" it had been better for them,

and more upright. But Allah hath cursed them for their disbelief, so they believe not, save a few." (Nisā': 46)<sup>4</sup>

"And because of their breaking their covenant, We have cursed them and made hard their hearts. They change words from their context and forget a part of that whereof they were admonished. Thou wilt not cease to discover treachery from all save a few of them. But bear with them and pardon them. Lo! Allah loveth the kindly." (Mā'idah: 13)<sup>5</sup>

"And of the Jews: listeners for the sake of falsehood, listeners on behalf of other folk who come not unto thee, changing words from their context and saying: If this be given unto you, receive it, but if this be not given unto you, then beware!" (Mā'idah: 41).<sup>6</sup>

After observing this group of verses, each of which, of course, in order to be understood more and better, needs to refer to the following interpretations, the following general results are obtained:

1. Spiritual distortion has been found in both heavenly books - the Torah and the Bible.
2. The Holy Qur'an accuses the Israelites of distortion in six verses.
3. From verse 41 of Surah Mā'idah and with the help of the narrations that caused the revelation, it can be concluded that the Jewish people have

١. «أَفْتَتَمِعُونَ أَنْ يُؤْمِنُوا لَكُمْ وَقَدْ كَانَ فَرِيقٌ مِنْهُمْ يَسْمَعُونَ كَلَامَ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ يُحَرِّفُونَهُ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا عَقَلُوهُ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ».

٢. «قَوْلِ الَّذِينَ يُكْتَبُونَ الْكِتَابَ بِأَيْدِيهِمْ ثُمَّ يَقُولُونَ هَذَا مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ لِيَشْتَرُوا بِهِ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا قَوْلِ الَّذِينَ كَتَبْتُ بِأَيْدِيهِمْ وَوَيْلٌ لَهُمْ مِمَّا يَكْسِبُونَ».

٣. «وَإِنْ مِنْهُمْ لَفَرِيقٌ يَلْوُونَ أَلْسِنَتَهُمْ بِالْكِتَابِ لِتَحْسَبُوهُ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَمَا هُوَ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَيَقُولُونَ هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ وَمَا هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ وَيَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكُذِبَ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ».

٤. «مِنَ الَّذِينَ هَادُوا يُحَرِّفُونَ الْكَلِمَ عَنْ مَوَاضِعِهِ وَيَقُولُونَ سَمِعْنَا وَعَصَيْنَا وَأَسْمَعُ غَيْرَ مَسْمُوعٍ وَرَاعِنَا لَيًّا بِأَلْسِنَتِهِمْ وَطَعْنَا فِي الدِّينِ وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ قَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا

وَأَسْمَعُ وَأَنْظُرْنَا لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُمْ وَأَقْوَمَ وَلَكِنْ لَعَنَهُمُ اللَّهُ بِكُفْرِهِمْ فَلَا يُؤْمِنُونَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا».

٥. «فِيمَا نَقَضِهِمْ مِيثَاقَهُمْ لَعَانَهُمْ وَجَعَلْنَا قُلُوبَهُمْ قَاسِيَةً يُحَرِّفُونَ الْكَلِمَ عَنْ مَوَاضِعِهِ وَنَسُوا حَظًّا مِمَّا ذُكِّرُوا بِهِ وَلَا تَزَالُ تَطَّلِعُ عَلَى خَائِنَةٍ مِنْهُمْ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِنْهُمْ فَاعْفُ عَنْهُمْ وَاصْفَحْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ».

٦. «وَ مِنَ الَّذِينَ هَادُوا سَمَاعُونَ لِلْكَذِبِ سَمَاعُونَ لِقَوْمٍ آخِرِينَ لَمْ يَأْتُوكَ يُحَرِّفُونَ الْكَلِمَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَوَاضِعِهِ يَقُولُونَ إِنْ أُوتِيتُمْ هَذَا فَخُذُوهُ وَإِنْ لَمْ تَأْتُوهُ فَأَحْذَرُوا».

distorted the word of the Torah (Faryab, 2009, p.139-148).

## CONCLUSION

Distortion in the view of religions is a multifaceted category that needs to be studied with regard to these dimensions; also in the religion of Islam and according to rational and narrative arguments, there is no possibility of verbal distortion in the Holy Qur'an; but spiritual distortion is possible through interpretation.

On the other hand, according to the historical documents and sound evidence of Western scholars, the Old Testament and the existing New Testament were not written by the divine prophets, the occurrence of change is a proven issue, which shows that what the Bible says in the Western world - Judaism and Christianity - is far from the Torah and the original Bible sent to the two divine prophets; therefore, instead of distortion of the Testaments, given their humanity, they can be considered forged in comparison with the true Torah and Bible.

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