

## ***Intertextual Analysis of Quranic and Biblical Versions: A Study of the Moses Story***

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### **Abstract**

*The comparative study of Qur'anic and Biblical narratives has been a popular practice in the last two decades. The story of Musa (Moses) as a more inspiring story has been extensively explored from a variety of perspectives. This article is a step forward in the direction of juxtaposing Qur'anic and Biblical versions of this story to find out the points on which textual affinities exist. For this purpose, the model of intertextual study promoted by Charles Bazerman has been followed. Intertextuality according to Bazerman is the explicit and implicit relations that a text or utterance has to prior, contemporary, and potential future texts. This approach has wide scope for being based on practical grounds. The significance of this study is evident from the fact that, it highlights necessary points on which the readers of Qur'anic and Biblical text or the followers of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are in total agreement. The study has confirmed the applicability of intertextuality on the texts based on almost conflicting ideologies. It has opened new avenues for exploring common grounds in other stories contained in the Holy Qur'an and the Bible through applying the same technique.*

**Keywords:** Story, Musa, Intertextuality, Qur'anic, Biblical

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this article is to examine the story of Hazrat Musa (Salam be upon him). It is a comparative analysis of the Qur'anic and Biblical versions of this narrative through following the technique of intertextuality. The significance of this study can be evaluated from the increasing number of studies focused on juxtaposing the Qur'anic and Biblical narratives. It comes under the purview of comparative literature, comparative religions, and a combination of linguistic and literary research. An overview of both texts shows that the Holy Qur'an shares with the Bible the stories of the prophets



like Hazrat Nuh (Noah) Hazrat Ibrahim (Abraham), Hazrat Yusuf (Joseph), Hazrat Ilyas (Elias), Hazrat Yunus (Jonah), Hazrat Musa (Moses), Hazrat Dawood (David), Hazrat Sulaiman (Solomon), and Hazrat Esa (Jesus). The story of Hazrat Musa (sbuh) is however, of much interest equally for the Jews, Christians, and Muslims.

The general tendency of the Qur'anic stories is to concentrate more on the moral significance of events than their details. Biblical stories on the other hand, have variety of sources and authors, and thus, the events are narrated with maximum details. The story of Musa (Moses) is in different chapters (Surahs) and their specific verses (ayat) including, al-Baqarah, al-A'raf, Yunus, al-Isra, Taha, Ash-Shu'ara, An-Naml, Al-Qasas, Ghafir, Az-Zukhruf, Ad-Dukhan, and An-Nazi'at. In the Bible, the story of Musa (Moses) is contained in different books like Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, but mostly in Exodus.

Through evaluating the main points of intertextuality and locating them in both texts simultaneously, the extent to which the technique of intertextuality (Bazerman 2004) is applicable to both versions of the story of Hazrat Musa (Moses) can be confirmed. Intertextual analysis may provide necessary material or information to conclude that on certain points or events, a total agreement exists between both texts, and two versions of a single story. It may also reflect similarity between the views of readers who follow different religious convictions i.e., the Jews, Christians, and Muslims.

### **Review of Literature**

The current article is based on existing scholarship on the subject available in bulk. It is neither possible nor the scope of this article to discuss all or even majority of scholars who explored Qur'anic and Biblical literature. The study of such writers' works not only helps to understand the subject-matter but also to develop a new form of literature through combining literature from the Qur'anic and Biblical texts. An umbrella term, "Scriptural Literature" may be appropriate for it. An overview of the works, more relevant, may help to comprehend the root of research on juxtaposing two versions of a scriptural narrative.

Maurice Bucaille<sup>1</sup> offers comparative study of the Biblical and Qur'anic narrations of the story of Moses and Pharaoh. In doing so, he carefully avoids speculative views just for the sake of presenting historical facts. He presents the Holy Scriptures of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam in their historical context to find out the common points, on which, the followers of these religions can be united. As literature is supposed to have necessary capacity to accommodate contrary views, Bucaille's efforts to discuss Holy Scriptures as literature are really applaudable. Moses, who is a symbol of Monotheism rose up against Pharaoh, the symbol of polytheism, and thus, the story of Moses in Qur'an and Bible commonly appeals to all followers of Abrahamic religions. Before offering comparison between the Biblical and Qur'anic Narration

(p.213), he presents necessary details about the birth and exile of Moses, the mission of Moses, dialogues between Moses and Pharaoh and magicians, the cataclysms, and the cause of pursuers' death.

Waleed F. S. Ahmed,<sup>2</sup> examines Intertextuality, as an overarching concept concerning the interrelations between texts. He defines intertextuality as the ways in which texts refer to and build on other texts. His research is focused on the Qur'anic narratives. The narratives are analyzed through indirect reference or allusions as a measuring rod. Intertextual allusions are analyzed with reference to the stories of the biblical Prophet Jonah, the creation account on the sin of the first human couple, Adam and Eve, and of God teaching Adam the names of everything. However, the allusions in the story of "the laughter of Sarah", the wife of Abraham, and the story of Abraham's intercession for Lot's People explored by Waleed F. S. Ahmed provide necessary material for intertextual study of almost all Qur'anic narratives.

Faraan Alamgir Sayed<sup>3</sup> examines the technique of repetition as a purposeful tool to analyse literary coherence. The work is primarily focused on the story of Moses. Specific examples from the Qur'anic version of story provide necessary material for intertextual analysis of repeated texts. The whole discussion is surrounding coherence in the Qur'anic text in the light of classical scholarship on the subject of repetition. For this purpose, the scholars well-known for their work on repetition have been extensively quoted. Among these writers, Mahmud ibn Hamza al-Kirmani, and Muhammad bin Bahadur al-Zarkashi are known among the circles of scholars on Qur'anic studies. Through using examples of repetition, the conclusion has been drawn that the repetition helps to ensure macro-textual coherence, phonetic compatibility, rhetorical irony, and thematic emphasis.

Michael E. Pregill<sup>4</sup> evaluates the biblical tradition and general perception of western scholars about biblical borrowings. He examines different approaches adopted by the critics of the Qur'anic text. The presence of biblical stories in Qur'an is first point on which their arguments are based. However, the ignorance of such people is confirmed who claim that the prophet Muhammad (pbuh) had been under the influence of Jewish teachers which resulted in the form of an overarching Jewish influence on Islam. He categorically declares that, in recent years, a few scholars have sought to develop more constructive approaches to Quranic narrative in general and a full-scale reconsideration of the basic problem but still their Orientalist tradition is still an impediment on the way of Qur'anic truth to be widely recognized.

John Kaltner and Younus Y. Mirza<sup>5</sup> discuss a comprehensive list of biblical figures in the text of Holy Qur'an. In a book with more than forty chapters, almost all figures have interpreted with necessary details. Principal focus centers on the similarities and differences between the presentations of these characters in the two texts, with special emphasis placed on how they

appear in the Islamic text. However, Chapter No. 37 (Moses/Musa) is more important. It mentions the name of the most frequently cited person in the Qur'an. Much attention is devoted to him than to any other biblical figure. While the versions of this story are apparently similar, but the details are considerably different from each other. The Qur'an contains multiple versions because the story is spread out across more than thirty chapters, and the longest section that tells his story is nearly ninety verses in length (20:9-97). They conclude that extensive coverage of Moses/Musa in the Qur'an makes a comprehensive treatment of the story impossible. The study of Musa's story from a variety of angles provides necessary space for an intertextual analysis of its Qur'anic and Biblical versions.

### **Intertextual Analysis**

The current article is focused on the events of the story of Musa (Moses) in the Holy Qur'an and their conceptual similarity with the events of Biblical narrative. Intertextuality as an umbrella term, has been interpreted from a variety of angles. However, the comparison of Qur'anic and Biblical versions needs to follow the model of intertextuality put forward by Charles Bazerman (2004). This model has necessary capacity to establish intertextual relation of both versions of Hazrat Musa's story. Bazerman Intertextuality as "the explicit and implicit relations that a text or utterance has to prior, contemporary, and potential future texts. Through such relations a text evokes a representation of the discourse situation, the textual resources that bear on the situation, and how the current text positions itself and draws on other texts."<sup>6</sup>

The basic principles of intertextual analysis as indicated by Bazerman<sup>7</sup> are practical suggestions to be followed while looking for a link of one text to another. These principles include, (1) "The text may draw on prior texts as a source of meanings to be used at face value. This occurs whenever one text takes statements from another source as authoritative and then repeats that authoritative information or statement for the purposes of the new text"<sup>8</sup> (2) "the text may rely on beliefs, issues, ideas, statements generally circulated and likely familiar to the readers, whether they would attribute the material to a specific source or would just understand as common knowledge"<sup>9</sup>, and (3) "a text relies on the available resources of language without calling particular attention to the intertext. Every text, all the time, relies on the available language of the period, and is part of the cultural world of the times."<sup>10</sup>

In the light of general principles of intertextuality suggested by Bazerman, it can be stated that the comparison of both versions of one story is possible. The textual information of previously revealed texts is endorsed by the text of the Holy Qur'an (excluding controversial information). The people of Arabia were previously familiar to ideas, beliefs, and issues discussed in the Holy Qur'an as a part of their common knowledge. The names of major characters in the story are similar in both versions. The cultural values of the people of Qur'an and the Bible are similar. The language of the Holy Qur'an is Arabic, the language of Arabs including Egyptians, and Palestinians

(canaanians). Similarly, the language of the Bible (primarily Hebrew) has been the language of the people of Palestine (canaan).

Keeping in view the principles of intertextuality, the information about the events of story narrated in the Holy Qur'an have been explored in the Bible. The outcomes of this exploratory practice show that the Qur'anic description of events is complemented by the information contained in the Bible. In this way, the intertextual relation of both versions of the story of Musa (Moses) has been logically established. Necessary details of the narrative of Musa (Moses) are presented in the succeeding paragraphs.

### **Firhon (Pharaoh)**

Firhon (Pharaoh) is one of the major characters in the story of Musa (Moses). The name of Pharaoh is not mentioned in the Holy Qur'an. His portrayal as an oppressor of Israelites is frequently presented in the sacred text. Forced labour and assassination of male children of Bani Israel are two major actions particularly associated to the character of Pharaoh. The Qur'an states, "And We caused the people who had been oppressed to inherit the eastern regions of the land and the western ones, which We had blessed. And the good word of your Lord was fulfilled for the Children of Israel because of what they had patiently endured. And We destroyed that Pharaoh and his people were producing and what they had been building. And when We saved you from the people of Pharaoh, afflicting you with the worst torment, killing your sons and keeping your women alive. And in that was a great trial from your Lord." <sup>11</sup>

The Qur'anic description of Pharaoh as an oppressor of Israelites is in the same way mentioned in the text of the Bible. The Biblical text affirms, "Therefore, they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh supply cities, Pithom and Raamses. But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And they were in dread of the children of Israel. So, the Egyptians made the children of Israel serve with rigor. And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage-in mortar, in brick, and in all manner of service in the field. All their service in which they made them serve *was* with rigor." <sup>12</sup> Although the names of cities are not mentioned in Qur'an but still an overwhelming textual similarity exists which establishes link of both versions.

### **Musa (Moses) in Pharaoh's House (First Phase)**

The Qur'anic version of the story in the house of Pharaoh, has two episodes. The first episode is focused on His arrival in the house, and the other narrates the experiences of his upbringing. Regarding the first episode the Holy Qur'an asserts, "And We inspired to the mother of Moses, "Suckle him; but when you fear for him, cast him into the river and do not fear and do not grieve. Indeed, we will return him to you and will make him one of the messengers." And the family of Pharaoh picked him up (out of the river) so that he would become to them an enemy and (a cause of) grief. Indeed,

Pharaoh and Haman and their soldiers were deliberate sinners. And the wife of Pharaoh said, "(He will be) a comfort of the eye for me and for you. Do not kill him; perhaps he may benefit us, or we may adopt him as a son." And they perceived not."<sup>13</sup>

The Biblical text also offers a similar description excluding minor differences like family(in Qur'an) and daughter(in Bible), "And when she could no longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein; and she laid it in the flags by the river's brink. And his sister stood afar off, to wit what would be done to him. And the daughter of Pharaoh came down to wash herself at the river; and her maidens walked along by the river's side; and when she saw the ark among the flags, she sent her maid to fetch it. And when she had opened it, she saw the child: and, behold, the babe wept. And she had compassion on him, and said, this is one of the Hebrews' children."<sup>14</sup>

In the second phase, according to Holy Qur'an, the mother of Musa (Moses) sent her daughter to follow Him, with an intention to look for an opportunity to establish link of mother to son. Qur'an explains, "And she said to his sister, "Follow him"; so, she watched him from a distance while they perceived not. And We had prevented from him wet nurses before, so she said, "Shall I direct you to a household that will be responsible for him for you while they are to him sincere?" So, we restored him to his mother that she might be content and not grieve and that she would know that the promise of Allah is true. But most of the people do not know. And when he attained his full strength and was mature, We bestowed upon him judgement and knowledge. And thus, do We reward the doers of good."<sup>15</sup>

A similar picture in the Bible shows direct reference of the Qur'anic narration in the Biblical narrative. The verses of Bible point out, "Then said his sister to Pharaoh's daughter, Shall I go and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee? And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, Go. And the maid went and called the child's mother. And Pharaoh's daughter said unto her, take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages. And the woman took the child and nursed it. And the child grew, and she brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. And she called his name Moses: and she said, Because I drew him out of the water."<sup>16</sup> The Muslim tradition differs that, it was Pharaoh's wife Asiya instead of his daughter, who took care of Musa (Moses).

### **Emigration to Madyan (Midian)**

At this stage, the narrative of Musa (Moses) is shifted to practical events of his life. The story of migration to Madyan (Midian) is divided into three phases, i.e., the background, the journey to Madyan and marriage, and journey to the sacred Valley of Tuwa.

#### **The Background**

The events and circumstances which paved the way for his emigration

to Madyan are the part of common knowledge both for the readers of Qur'anic and Biblical versions of this story. The Qur'anic version narrates as, "And he entered the city at a time of inattention by its people and found therein two men fighting: one from his faction and one from among his enemy. And the one from his faction called for help to him against the one from his enemy, so Moses struck him and killed him. Moses said, "This is from the work of Satan. Indeed, he is a manifest, misleading enemy." <sup>17</sup> According to Qur'anic verses (28:18-19), the very next day, Musa (Moses) found the same person crying for help. When he intended to strike the man who was enemy, he said to Musa, are you going to kill me as you did yesterday? Musa was suddenly alerted by the voice of another man, "And a man came from the farthest end of the city, running. He said, "O Moses, indeed the eminent ones are conferring over you to kill you, so leave (the city); indeed, I am to you of the sincere advisors." <sup>18</sup>

As a common knowledge the reference of Qur'anic description is available in the text of the Bible. "And it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens: and he spied an Egyptian smiting an Hebrew, one of his brethren. And he looked this way and that way, and when he saw that there was no man, he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand. And when he went out the second day, behold, two men of the Hebrews strove together: and he said to him that did the wrong, Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow? And he said, who made thee a prince and a judge over us? intendest thou to kill me, as thou killed the Egyptian? And Moses feared, and said, surely this thing is known." <sup>19</sup>

### **The Journey to Madyan (Midian)**

Keeping in view the imminent danger to his life, Musa (Moses) decided to travel to Madyan, a comparatively better place to live. The Holy Qur'an narrates, "And when he came to the well of Madyan, he found there a crowd of people watering, and he found aside from them two women driving back (their flocks). He said, "What is your circumstance?" They said, "We do not water until the shepherds dispatch (their flocks); and our father is an old man." So he watered for them; then he went back to the shade and said, "My Lord, indeed I am, for whatever good You would send down to me, in need."<sup>20</sup> Similarly, the Biblical text relates, "Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh, and dwelt in the land of Midian: and he sat down by a well. Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters: and they came and drew water and filled the troughs to water their father's flock. And the shepherds came and drove them away: but Moses stood up and helped them and watered their flock." <sup>21</sup>

### **The Marriage of Musa (Moses)**

The Qur'anic version of the story relates the marriage of Musa to the

daughter of Prophet Shoaib as, "Then one of the two women came to him walking with shyness. She said, "Indeed, my father invites you that he may reward you for having watered for us." So, when he came to him and related to him the story, he said, Fear not. You have escaped from the wrongdoing people. He said, "Indeed, I wish to wed you one of these, my two daughters, on that you serve me for eight years; but if you complete ten, it will be from you. And I do not wish to put you in difficulty. You will find me, if Allah wills, from among the righteous." <sup>22</sup> The Biblical text also offers similar narration, however, in Bible, the name of married girl is mentioned, "And when they came to Reuel their father, he said, How is it that ye are come so soon to day? And they said, An Egyptian delivered us out of the hand of the shepherds, and also drew water enough for us, and watered the flock. And he said unto his daughters, And, where is he? why is it that ye have left the man? call him, that he may eat bread. And Moses was content to dwell with the man: and he gave Moses Zipporah his daughter." <sup>23</sup>

### **The Journey to the Sacred Valley of Tuwa.**

The journey to the Sacred Valley of Tuwa is a turning point in the story of Hazrat Musa (Moses). Now the role of Musa (sbuh) is going to be changed. Heavy responsibilities of Prophethood are going to fall on his shoulders. His presence on this point is mentioned in the Holy Quran, "Indeed, I am your Lord, so remove your sandals. Indeed, you are in the sacred valley of Tuwa." <sup>24</sup> In Biblical narration, the term, "mountain of God" is used for the valley of Tuwa. Remaining details are similar. Biblical text states, "Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro (Biblical name of Prophet Shoaib) his father in law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb." <sup>25</sup>

### **Prophethood**

The narration of Prophethood may be divided into two stages. At first, God introduced Himself and declared Musa (Moses) to be His messenger. The text of the Holy Qur'an states, "And when Moses had completed the term and was traveling with his family, he perceived from the direction of the mount a fire. He said to his family, "Stay here; indeed, I have perceived a fire. Perhaps I will bring you from there information or burning wood from the fire that you may warm yourselves." But when he came to it, he was called from the right side of the valley in a blessed spot - from the tree, "O Moses, indeed I am Allah, Lord of the worlds." <sup>26</sup> Similar description is available in the Bible, "And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, here am I. Moreover, he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." <sup>27</sup>

In the second stage, Hazrat Musa (Moses) was endowed with miracles like, Staff turned to snake, and His hand turned white. Qur'anic text confirms both miracles, "And (he was told), "Throw down your staff." But when he saw it writhing as if it was a snake, he turned in flight and did not return. (Allah said), "O Moses, approach and fear not. Indeed, you are of the secure. Insert your hand into the opening of your garment; it will come out white, without disease. And draw in your arm close to you from fear, for those are two proofs from your Lord to Pharaoh and his establishment. Indeed, they have been a people defiantly disobedient." <sup>28</sup>

The text of the Bible offers a similar explanation of miracles bestowed on Hazrat Musa (Moses). The Biblical version is almost similar, "And the Lord said unto him, what is that in thine hand? And he said, A rod. And he said, Cast it on the ground. And he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from before it. And the Lord said unto Moses, Put forth thine hand, and take it by the tail. And he put forth his hand, and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand: And the Lord said furthermore unto him, Put now thine hand into thy bosom. And he put his hand into his bosom: and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous as snow. And he said, Put thine hand into thy bosom again. And he put his hand into his bosom again; and plucked it out of his bosom, and, behold, it was turned again as his other flesh." <sup>29</sup>

### **Musa in Pharaoh's Palace (Second Phase)**

Hazrat Musa (Moses) entered the palace where he stayed as a child for many years. When Musa introduced himself as a messenger of God, Pharaoh refused to accept the existence of God. In the text of the Holy Qur'an Pharaoh is described who claims, "O eminent ones, I have not known you to have a god other than me. Then ignite for me, O Haman, (a fire) upon the clay and make for me a tower that I may look at the God of Moses. And indeed, I do think he is among the liars." <sup>30</sup> A similar narration in the Bible is presented with minor differences, "And Pharaoh said, Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go." <sup>31</sup> The affinity of description shows that, it is a part of common knowledge for the readers of both texts.

### **Musa (Moses) and the Magicians**

The meeting of Musa with sorcerers was organized on a proper time. The Magicians came after getting completely ready with all necessary tools of magical practices. The ropes and necessary chemicals were provided to them to show their skills as perfectly as possible. On the other side, Musa was alone, totally depending on God's help. According to Holy Qur'an, Musa (Moses) asked them, "Throw, and when they threw, they bewitched the eyes of the people and struck terror into them, and they presented a great (feat of) magic. And We inspired to Moses, "Throw your staff," and at once it devoured what they were falsifying." <sup>32</sup>

Biblical description of sorcerers in general is more in detail but along with Moses, it is only focused on being pale into insignificance by Moses. In the text of Bible, it is stated that, "Then Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers: now the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments. For they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents: but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods." <sup>33</sup> The scene has affinity in both versions of story, however, in Biblical version, Aaron (the brother of Moses) has thrown the rod instead of Moses. Still the textual idea is compatible to that of Qur'anic version.

### **The Plagues of Egypt**

The people of Pharaoh had to suffer from plagues for breaking their promises again and again. Pharaoh and his people refused to send Israelites with Muse out of Egypt for which they were punished with five plagues as the Qur'an says, "So We sent upon them the flood and locusts and lice and frogs and blood as distinct signs, but they were arrogant and were a criminal people." <sup>34</sup> On the other hand, Biblical version suggests that the people of Pharaoh were punished for breaking their promises one after the other. The Bible however, mentions ten plagues discussed in Exodus 8:6,8,17,24, Exodus 9:6,10,24, Exodus 10:14,22, Exodus 12:29. Other than five mentioned in Qur'an, Bible mentions however, five more plagues like, hail, swarms of flies, boils, gnats darkness, death of the first born and of cattle. In spite of some difference of number, the events coincide with each other.

### **The death of Pharaoh**

The death of Firhon (Pharaoh) is narrated in several chapters of the Holy Qur'an including chapter 7(al-A'raf), chapter 20(Taha), Chapter 26 (ash-Shu'ara), and chapter 28(al-Qasas) etc. Allah Almighty in the Qur'anic text clearly declares, "So We took retribution from them, and We drowned them in the sea because they denied Our signs and were heedless of them." <sup>35</sup> In another chapter Qur'an says, "Pharaoh pursued them with his hosts, but they were fully overwhelmed by the sea." <sup>36</sup> The picture of Pharaoh being drowned is really inspiring and offers a lesson for the people of similar character.

The description of Pharaoh's death in the Bible is almost similar to that of Qur'an. In the Biblical text it is stated that, "And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left. And the Egyptians pursued, and went in after them to the midst of the sea, even all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. And the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them; there remained not so much as one of them." <sup>37</sup> In this way, the narrative shows link of both versions.

### **Musa on Mount Sinai (Jabal-e-Musa)**

Hazrat Musa Along with seventy followers to obey the order of God travelled to Mount Sinai (Jabal-e-Musa). As he was ordered to stay for forty nights, he advised his brother Harun (Aaron) to take his place. At Mount Sinai, Musa (Moses) expressed his desire to see God. As stated in the Qur'anic verse, "And when Moses arrived at Our appointed time and his Lord spoke to him, he said, "My Lord, show me that I may look at You." (Allah) said, "You will not see Me, but look at the mountain; if it should remain in place, then you will see Me." But when his Lord appeared to the mountain, He rendered it level, and Moses fell unconscious. And when he awoke, he said, "Exalted are You! I have repented to You, and I am the first of the believers." <sup>38</sup>

A partially similar episode exists in the Bible. The prophet Musa (Moses) brought forth the people from the camp to the mount of God. The Bible narrates the events, "And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him by a voice. And the LORD came down upon mount Sinai, on the top of the mount: and the LORD called Moses up to the top of the mount; and Moses went up." <sup>39</sup>

### **The Calf Worship**

The story of Calf worship is the climax of the narrative of Musa (Moses). Without making any judgement about the motivating force behind it, the common perception is that it reflected volatile character of Israelites. The Holy Qur'an says, "And the people of Moses made, after (his departure), from their ornaments a calf - an image having a lowing sound. Did they not see that it could neither speak to them nor guide them to a way? They took it (for worship), and they were wrongdoers." <sup>40</sup> It resulted in Musa's serious anger for his people. He also snubbed his brother through pulling him to himself by hair.

A contrasting story is presented with similar theme in the Bible. In this story Hazrat Harun (Aaron), the brother of Musa has been shown responsible for calf worship which is in contrast to that of Qur'anic version. However, the Israelites are mentioned as stiff-necked people. When Musa delayed his arrival, they came to Aaron and asked him to make gods. The Bible says, "And all the people brake off the golden earrings which were in their ears and brought them unto Aaron. And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, Tomorrow is a feast to the LORD. (God said), They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said,

These be thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.”<sup>41</sup> In spite of differences on (Samri Jadugar/ Aaron), conceptually the texts show visible connection.

### Conclusion

Although the Qur’anic and Biblical versions of the narrative of Musa (Moses) differ on majority of the points including names of persons and places, number of Pharaohs, details of Musa’s age, the number of his followers, preservation of Pharaoh’s body, and the episode of Musa and Khizr. However, through following the technique of intertextuality, some common points have been highlighted which help to understand literary affinities in the texts based on even totally conflicting ideologies. Whereas the stories mentioned in the Holy Qur’an have more moral significance, the stories in the Bible have historical importance.

In the light of above-mentioned examples, it can be safely concluded that, Intertextuality is an appropriate technique to juxtapose the texts for analyzing their common features, their mutual connections in the form of inspiration, borrowings, quotations, direct references, or allusions. The intertextual relation of the Qur’anic and the Biblical version of the narrative of Musa (Moses) has been established. The readers of both versions can equally learn from the story. The study focused on ten common points may help to promote mutual understanding of the readers from the religions like Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.



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