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Whether the Sign of Prostration in the Face of Believers is Real? the Qur'an's Victory Verses and Its Biblical Reference

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Abstract

This article attempts to understand the meaning of the sign of prostration in surah 48.29. What is the exact meaning of *athar al-sujūd* sign of prostration? The Intertextuality approach is used in this paper. The phrase *athar al-sujūd* mentioned only once in the Qur'an. Ibn Manẓūr (d. 1311) says that the word *athar* means the traces of a thing al-Aṣḫānī (d. 1109) adds that the word signifies an effect which is represented by an existence, whether abstract or material. Often, the word is oriented to the past. The word also means the influence or honour of the human soul and morality in which it is abstract. The word *athar* refers to something material, especially concerning the story of Moses. The story of the people in Moses' time in surah 40.21 illustrates that they have powers (*ashadda minhum quwwa*) and traces on earth (*ātharan fī al-arḍ*). In surah 18.64, the word *athar* refers to the trail of Moses' journey with a young man (*āthārihimā qaṣaṣa*) while looking for a place where two seas meet (*majma' al-baḥrayn*). The Muslim Scholar interprets the phrase sign of prostration in verse in an abstract context. Muqātil b. Sulaymān interprets it as a good guide and path (*al-hudā wa al-simt al-ḥasan*). It is similar to al-Thabarī and Ibn Kathīr, who interpret it as devoutness (*khushū'*). Al-Qāsimī

has two interpretations: First, that is a good path or devoutness, as the early commentators say. Second, the traces of the soil (*tharā al-ard*) on the face. The Qur'an chooses the word *sujūd* to represent devoutness and modesty in worship.

Keywords: *Athar al-sujūd*; Devoutness; Intertextuality; a Sign of Prostration.

Abstrak

Artikel ini mencoba mencoba memaknai tanda sujud pada surat 48.29. Apa arti sebenarnya dari tanda sujud *athar al-sujūd*? Pendekatan Intertekstualitas digunakan dalam makalah ini. Ungkapan *athar al-sujūd* hanya disebutkan satu kali dalam Al-Qur'an. Ibnu Manẓūr (w. 1311) mengatakan bahwa kata *athar* berarti jejak-jejak sesuatu, al-Aṣfahānī (w. 1109) menambahkan bahwa kata tersebut menyulut suatu akibat yang diwakili oleh suatu wujud baik abstrak maupun material. Sering kali, kata itu berorientasi ke masa lalu. Kata itu juga berarti pengaruh atau kehormatan jiwa manusia dan moralitas yang di dalamnya bersifat abstrak. Kata *athar* mengacu pada sesuatu yang bersifat material, khususnya yang berkaitan dengan kisah Musa. Kisah umat pada zaman Musa dalam surat 40.21 menggambarkan bahwa mereka memiliki kekuatan (*ashadda minhum quwwa*) dan jejak di bumi (*ātharan fī al-ard*). Dalam surat 18.64, kata *athar* mengacu pada jejak perjalanan Musa dengan seorang pemuda (*āthārihimā qaṣaṣa*) saat mencari tempat bertemunya dua lautan (*majma' al-baḥrayn*). Ulama Muslim menafsirkan frase yang menandakan sujud dalam ayat tersebut dalam konteks abstrak. Muqatil b. Sulaymān mengartikannya sebagai petunjuk dan jalan yang baik (*al-hudā wa al-simt al-ḥasan*). Hal ini senada dengan al-Thabarī dan Ibn Kathīr yang mengartikannya sebagai ketakwaan (*khushū'*). Al-Qāsimī memiliki dua tafsir: Pertama, itu adalah jalan yang baik atau kesalehan seperti yang dikatakan para mufassir awal. Kedua, bekas tanah (*tharā al-ard*) di wajah. kata *sujūd* dipilih oleh Al-Qur'an untuk mewakili kesalehan dan kesopanan dalam beribadah.

Kata Kunci: *Athar al-sujūd*; Intertekstualitas; Kesalehan; Tanda sujud.

Introduction

Surah 48.29 describes the assertiveness of the Prophet Muhammad and his followers against the unbelievers, but on the other hand, they were gentle amongst each other. Besides being described as people who do bow and prostrate (*sujjada*) in hoping for the excellence and excellence from God, the community around Prophet is also depicted as having signs of prostration on their faces (*sīmāhum fī wujūhihim min athar al-sujūd*). This description is followed by a sentence that shows references to the Torah (*dhālika mathaluhum fī al-tawhrāt*) and the Gospel (*wa mathaluhum fī al-injīl*).

Certainly, since the birth of the Islamic exegesis tradition, Muslim interpreters, especially from the Sunni circle, have sought to interpret and explain the difficulties of understanding the verse. They interpreted that the people who described having signed prostration on their faces referred to the Companions of the Prophet. However, some of them proposed that it might refer to all believers. Some interpreters also determined that sign of prostration should be understood as devoutness in the allegorical or abstract realm, although they also did not deny the effects of piety might be identified in the concrete realm (al-Thabarī, 2001, 21: 321; al-Rāzī, 1981, 28: 108; al-Qurthubī, 2006, 19: 340; Ibn Kathīr, 2000, 13: 132).

Contrary to the Sunni Muslim circle, the interpretation of the sign of prostration in the concrete realm or realist meaning was quite fertile among the Shi'a exegesis tradition, especially since the 11th century. To the best of my knowledge, Muḥammad B. al-Ḥasan al-Thūsī (d. 1068) (9: 336) was the first person who declared traces appeared on the face as the only meaning of the sign of prostration in verse. A stronger affirmation than given by al-Fayḍ al-Kāshānī (d. 1679) (1953, 5: 45), who offers to interpret *athar al-sujūd* as a sign on the forehead (*jibāh*) caused by prostrate activity, or as a result of many prostrations in the prayer (al-Janābidhī, 1988, 4: 99).

Other Muslim interpreters also tried to collect information from biblical references to complement their interpretation of the verse (Junaidi & Rahman, 2022). They have tried to trace and distinguish which parable was mentioned in the Torah and which was mentioned in the Gospel (Sulaymān, 2002, 4: 78; al-Thabarī, 21: 321; al-Thabarsī, 2006, 9: 162-163), while some others indicate an unclear attitude by saying it might be possible that the Torah and the Gospel convey the same or might also different parables, although some of them even only emphasize that the parable has been described in the Torah and the Gospel without correspondence (al-Zamakhshārī, 1998, 5: 550; al-Qurthubī, 19: 340; al-Rāzī, 28: 108; Ibn Kathīr, 13: 132).

As briefly described above, Muslim interpreters have sought to interpret the verse, although they may not necessarily give sufficient attention to biblical references. As noted by J.D. McAuliffe, it is because the Qur'an itself suggests a negative attitude developed further by Muslim intellectuals. Therefore, they perceive that the scriptures are not authentic, in which many parts are hidden, altered or misinterpreted, although

McAuliffe also notes that they often affirm the biblical sources (McAuliffe, 1996, pp. 141–158).

This article then attempts to rediscover the meaning of the sign of prostration in surah 48.29. It would also try to collect available biblical sources related to the matter and examine how far Muslim interpreters appreciated that information in their tafsir works. This article, therefore, would also be intended to expand the implementation of intertextuality research, which not only suggested and initiated by Western scholarship but also had been practised by Muslim scholars since the 9th century (David Thomas, 1996, 7, 1: 29-38), to remove what McAuliffe (1996, 7, 2: 141-158) calls as hermeneutical quandary in modern developments of the Qur'anic scholarship (Syamsuddin, 2021). In doing so, it will analyze the structure of the verse and how the words are used in the Qur'an while considering the historical setting (Ikhwan, 2010). This article will also describe how Muslim interpreters appreciate biblical references in their tafsir works. We will begin by observing how the verse's position is in the Victory verses' structure.

Theoretical Review

Alfian Rokhmansyah said that Intertextual is an approach to understanding a text as an addition to another text. Intertextuality is also understood as a process of connecting past texts with present texts. A text is understood to stand with others. A text is compiled from quotations or other text sources. The person who developed this approach is Julia Kristeva. This intertextuality theory assumes that other texts must influence texts to be analogous to the text having a dialogue with one another, which eventually becomes continuous. The intertextual approach assumes that a text does not stand alone; there are at least two reasons related to this. The first is that a text writer is a reader of previous texts. Therefore he will influence previous texts. Second, because a text that is present is the result of a search process from much textual material (Rokhmansyah, 2014. p. 119).

Method

The method used in this study is a descriptive analysis using the theory of intertextuality. Intertextualism itself is an approach in the study of the history of

literature which views the text as an inseparable part of its history and influences it from various interconnected sources, in this case, namely, the presence of certain interpretations. is not understanding that stands alone, and in this case, knowing the intertextual interpretation of an interpretive text will open up many different sources that can be explored and explained. Therefore the study in this paper aims to explain the formal object and material object of this discussion and then analyze the findings obtained using relevant theories.

Result

Structure and Story Behind the Victory Verses

There are at least 20 verses about victory in the Qur'an, which can be seen in (surah Al-Fath: 1, 18, 27, Al-Maa'idah: 23, 52, 56, an-Nashr: 1, An-Nisaa ': 141, As-Sajdah: 28-29, Ash-Shaff: 13, Ibrahim: 15, Al-A'raaf: 113, Al-Anbiya': 44, Al-Anfaal: 48, Al-Mujaadilah: 21, Al -Qashash: 54, Ar-Ruum: 3, Ash-Shaaffaat: 116, 173. The victory studied in this article is found in Surat al-Fath. Surat al-Fath consists of 29 verses discussing important events in the history of Muslims in obtaining victory. In surah al-Fath Victory has three fragments.

At least the Victory verses have three fragments. The first fragment put Muhammad as an interlocutor. It is seen through the description at the beginning of the verses, such as: "We have granted thee a manifest Victory" (*fatahnā laka*), "help thee" (*yanṣuraka*) and "sent the" (*arsalnāka*). The fragment then speaks to a wider interlocutor, to believers (*al-mu'minīn, al-mu'mināt*), hypocrites (*al-munāfiqīn, al-munāfiqāt*), polytheists (*wa al-mushrikīn wa al-mushrikāt*) and unbelievers (*al-kāfirīn*). The key position of the Prophet in the narrative is as a witness (*shāhida*), a bearer of glad tidings (*mubashshira*) and a warner (*nadhīra*). The believers are promised heaven and victory (*fawz*), while the hypocrites, polytheists and infidels will be tortured (*yu'adhdhibuhhum*), cursed (*la'anahum*) and put into hell (*a'adda lahum Jahannam*).

The fragment opens the story described in the long narrative of the tenth to the twenty-seventh verses. Muslim sources, as recorded by al-Wāḥidī (Al-Wahidi, 1991, p. 397) (d. 1076) and al-Ṣuyūthī (As-Suyuthy, 2002) (d. 1505), show that the second fragment of the verses is related to the Ḥudaybiya event (a place between Mecca and

Medina) that occurred at the end of the sixth after the hijra. Western scholars like Theodor Nöldeke, Gustav Weil, Regis Blachère, William Muir and Hubert Grimme (Amal, 2001) do not reject that opinion.

The story begins with the Prophet's plan, along with his fourteen hundred followers, to pilgrimage ('*umra*) from Madinah to Makkah. Ibn Ishāq (d. 768) illustrates that the journey was full of fear against the Quraysh people who might be confronting them, even though the Prophet and his followers were not aiming for war (Ishaq & Aḥmad Farīd al-Mazīdī (ed), 2002). Before entering Makkah, the Prophet repeatedly sent a messenger to negotiate with the Quraysh people. But they did not budge and instead sent fifty men to stone the Prophet's troupe. The Prophet then sent 'Uthmān b. 'Affān (d. 656) to meet Abū Sufyān (d. 652) and the Quraysh leaders ('*uzamā*'). Unfortunately, he was arrested, so there was a rumour among the believers that 'Uthmān had been killed. In response, the Prophet gathered all his followers (al-except Jad b Qays) to pledge the faithful (*bay'at al-riḍwān*) that took place under a tree (*shajarat samurat*).

In this situation, a group of people (*al-a'rāb*) refused to be faithful to the Prophet. They are described as hypocrites who refuse to follow the Prophet by dodging (*yaqūlūn bi alsinatihim mā laysa fī qulūbihim*) that they have property (*amwāl*) and family (*ahlū*) to be protected. They also said that would follow later (*dharūnā, nattabi'kum*). They dodged because they thought that the Prophet and the believers would not survive the power of the Quraysh. Therefore, the sixteenth verse states that believers invite them to battle with a community of great power (*qawm ūlī ba's shadīd*). The choice is to fight (*tuqātilūnahum*) or make them give up (*yuslimūn*).

Muslim sources state that the story ended with negotiations between the Prophet and Suhayl B. 'Amrū, who represents the Quraysh. The negotiations resulted in an agreement that believers and Quraysh people would stop the war for ten years. Everyone was also released to fellowship with one of the two groups. In addition, believers are allowed to make pilgrimages in the following year. Unfortunately, the agreement did not last long because of a conflict between Banū Bakr, who allied with the believers, and Khuzā'a, who allied themselves with the Quraysh people. Two years later, it became the way for the victory of the believers in the conquest (*fath*) of Makkah, which took place

in the eighth year after the hijra (Ishaq & Aḥmad Farīd al-Mazīdī (ed), 2002). The victory proves the Prophet's dream described in the twentieth verse.

The long story then closes with the last two verses reaffirming Muhammad's prophetic position as a messenger. In this last verse, the character of Muhammad's followers with signs of prostration is mentioned. On the other hand, it also shows references to biblical tradition:

Muhammad is Allah's apostle, and those with him are strong against unbelievers, (but) compassionate amongst each other. Thou wilt see them bow and prostrate themselves (in prayer), seeking Grace from Allah and (His) Good Pleasure. On their faces are their marks, (being) the traces of their prostration. This is their similitude in the Taurat, and their similitude in the Gospel is: like a seed which sends forth its blade, then makes it strong; it then becomes thick, and it stands on its stem, (filling) the sowers with wonder and delight. As a result, it fills the unbelievers with rage at them. Allah has promised those among them who believe and do righteous deeds forgiveness and a great Reward (Q 48.29).

At this point, this verse describes the authentic character of Muhammad's followers and serves as a critique of unfaithful people. Nevertheless, we still need an adequate explanation of the sign of prostration narrated in the last verse. The following points will explore how the Qur'an uses *athar* and *sujūd*. Nevertheless, it is important to analyze the word's meaning linguistically to give a broader picture.

Discussion

Sign of Prostration in the Qur'an

The phrase *athar al-sujūd* mentioned only once in the Qur'an. Ibn Manẓūr (d. 1311) says that the word *athar* means the traces of a thing (*baqiyyat al-shay'*) (Manẓūr, n.d., p. 25). al-Aṣḥāhānī (d. 1109) adds that the word *athar al-shay'* signifies an effect that is represented by an existence (*ḥuṣūl mā yadullu 'alā wujūdiḥ*), whether abstract or material. Often, the word is oriented to the past. The word also means the influence or honour of the human soul and morality in which it is abstract (Al-Aṣḥāhānī, n.d., pp. 4–5).

In the Qur'an, twenty verses use the derivation of the word *athar*. Some of them are used to denote something abstract. For example, to criticize the disbelievers who give priority (*āthara, tu'thirūn*) to worldly life (*al-ḥayāt al-dunyā*) (surah 79.38; 87.16). Some refer to magic (*siḥr yuthar*) (surah 74.24), natural knowledge (*athārat min 'ilm*) (surah 46.4) or God's compassion (*āthār raḥmat Allāh*) (surah 30.50), though the latter relates to animate earth (*yuḥyī al-arḍ*) with a connotation of material. Some other uses refer to pre-Islamic teachings or religions. The polytheists in surah 43.22, for example, are depicted following the teachings of their ancestors (*innā wajadnā ābā'anā 'alā ummatin, wa innā 'alā āthārihim muhtadūn*). So is the story of Sāmiriyy distorting the teachings of messengers (*athar al-rasūl*) (surah 20.96). Interestingly, we can find traces of past religions or teachings related to Jesus. There are at least three verses (surah 5.46, 18.6 & 57.27) that put Jesus and the Gospel as a past trace (*āthārihim*) that justifies (*muṣaddiqa*) the scriptures and preceding teachings. The word *athar* in surah 18.6 does not refer to Jesus clearly, but through a warning narrative for those who believe that God had a child (*qālū ittakhadha Allāhu walada*) in the previous verse, we can guess that the verse talks about Jesus.

However, some other uses indicate that the word *athar* refers to something material, especially concerning the story of Moses. The story of the people in Moses' time in surah 40.21 illustrates that they have powers (*ashadda minhum quwwa*) and traces on earth (*ātharan fī al-arḍ*). In surah 18.64, the word *athar* refers to the trail of Moses' journey with a young man (*āthārihimā qaṣaṣa*) while looking for a place where two seas meet (*majma' al-baḥrayn*).

While related to the word prostration (*sujūd*), many Western scholars have traced how the word is used in three scriptures. Therefore, I will use Roberto Tottoli's findings relevant to this study. He said that Western scholars, such as H. Hirschfeld, Nöldeke, F. Schwally, and A. Jeffery, have discussed that the word has roots in Hebrew, Syriac, and Aramaic traditions. Similar research was also conducted recently by Andrew C. Smith (2016). Using literary, semiotic, and ritual analysis, he compared the terms rooted in the Arabic word *sajada* in the Qur'an and *hištaḥāwah* founded in the Hebrew Bible, in which both terms had an almost similar meaning. Their observations of the Old Testament, the Gospel and the pre-Islamic Arabic poems (*mu'allaqat*) also said that

prostration had been known and practised by Jews and Christians in the Middle East, from Babylon to Egypt. In the pre-Islamic tradition, they argue, not all prostrations are done in the context of worship since there is a prostration in the context of submission and respect for the king or something else (secular prostration).

Interestingly, although the Arab community at that time had known such practices, they were seen to reject prostration, which became a rite among Muslims. Tottoli quotes M. J. Kister, who said that the rejection is their reluctance to humble themselves to God they do not know, as described in surah 25.60. It is similar to surah 68.43, in which narrates that they are invited to prostrate (*yad'ūn ilā al-sujūd*), but they refuse (*wa hum sālimūn*) (Tottoli, 1998, pp. 5–34); (Smith, 2016).

At this point, it is important to note that the Qur'an deliberately uses the word *sujūd* to remind the people around the Prophet against the familiar teachings. However, we cannot determine whether a sign of prostration mentioned in surah 48.29 are used in an abstract or material context since the Qur'an affirms all possibilities. Therefore, we will trace the biblical references suggested by the verse itself.

Surah 48.29 and Its Biblical Reference

We are indebted to the Corpus Coranicum project established in Berlin in 2007. Through their observations of texts adjacent to the Qur'an, we can find that some of the narratives in surah 48.29 are similar to Matthew 13: 3-9 & 19 -23, Mark 4: 2-9 & 14-20, and Luke 8: 5-8 & 11-15. All of them describe the same parable, one of which is as follows:

Then He (Jesus) said many things to them in parables: "Behold, a sower went out to sow. "And as he sowed, some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them. "Some fell on stony places, where they did not have much earth, and they immediately sprang up because they had no depth of earth. "But when the sun was up, they were scorched, and they withered away because they had no root. "And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them. "But others fell on good ground and yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. "He who has ears to hear, let him hear! (Matthew 13: 3-9).

Therefore, hear the parable of the sower: "When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away

what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside. “But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; “yet he has no root in himself but endures only for a while. When tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, he immediately stumbles. “Now he who received seed among the thorns hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful. “But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty” (Matthew 13: 19-23).

As quoted above, Jesus conveyed a parable to the community around him. The parable narrates the story of a sower who dropped the seeds he brought in several places: on the sidewalk, rocky ground, thorns and fertile soil. All the seeds die except those that grow in the fertile soil, where it grows and produces abundant and multiplied fruits. In the next section, it is explained that the seeds represent the word of God. The fertile land describes those who hear the word by ignoring the temptations of the devil, trials and lusts.

Although the description has many different elements from the Qur'an, related to surah 48.29, we can expect that the Torah and the Gospels convey a different parable. We can also suppose that the parable of the character of the followers of the Prophet Muhammad described in verse, In addition to what was described at the beginning of the verse, that the loyal followers of the Prophet Muhammad are those who have a firm attitude towards unbelievers and are gentle towards others. It is included in the sign of the loyal followers of the Prophet Muhammad, including those who have signs of prostration, but it is not described in the Gospels. Therefore, perhaps we can find it in the Torah. Unfortunately, we do not have enough information for it. At this point, it should be admitted that we need to appreciate the intertextuality of the Qur'an through other scriptures to remove the hermeneutical quandary, as McAuliffe points out (McAuliffe, 1996, pp. 142–143).

So how do Muslim intellectuals respond to this case? Not many Muslims observe it directly from the source. Some interpreters, such as Muqātil b. Sulaymān (d. 767) (Sulaymān, 2002, p. 78), al-Thabarī (d. 922) (Al-Thabarī, 2001, p. 321), al-Thabarsī (d. 1153) (Al-Thabarsī, 2006, pp. 162–163) and Sayyid Quthb (d. 1966) (Quthb, 2003, p.

3332) have tried to distinguish the parables mentioned in the Torah and the Gospel. Unfortunately, other commentators such as al-Qurthubī (d. 1272) show an unequivocal attitude by saying that you can understand that the Torah and the Gospels convey the same or different parables (Al-Qurthubī, 2006, p. 340). Even Ibn 'Abbas (d. 687) (Ābadī, 1992, pp. 546–547), (Al-Zamakhshārī, 1998, p. 550) (d. 1143), al-Rāzī (d. 1209) (Al-Rāzī, 1981, p. 108), Ibn Kathīr (Kathīr, 2000) (d. 1372), al-Qāsimī (d. 1914) (Al-Qāsimī, 1957, p. 5433) and almost all the figures in Shi'a circles only emphasize that the parable has been described in the Torah and the Gospel, without correspondence.

Only Sa'īd Ḥawwā (d. 1989) tried to find the equivalent of the verse in the Torah and the Gospel, although he still showed a negative attitude. He said that the Torah and the Gospel we find today have changed because it is not revealed to Moses and Jesus. However, he states that the phrase "strong against unbelievers, (but) compassionate amongst each other" (*ashiddā' 'alā al-kuffār ruḥamā' baynahum*) written in the Qur'an is similar to the description in the Torah. Similarly, the description of the mustard seeds (*ḥabbat khardal*) is found in the Gospels (Ḥawwā, n.d., p. 5397).

Muslim Interpretation of the Sign of Prostration

At the end of this article, we will see how the difficulties faced by interpreters in understanding the sign of prostration in verse. The early commentators agreed that the verse describes the character possessed by the Companions of the Prophet. However, al-Rāzī (Al-Rāzī, 1981, p. 108), al-Qurthubī (Al-Qurthubī, 2006, p. 340) and Ibn Kathīr (Kathīr, 2000, p. 132) argue that the verse also shows the character of believers. They interpret the phrase sign of prostration in verse in an abstract context. Muqātil b. Sulaymān, for example, interprets it as a good guide and path (*al-hudā wa al-simt al-ḥasan*) (Sulaymān, 2002, p. 78). It is similar to al-Thabarī (Al-Thabarī, 2001, p. 321) and Ibn Kathīr (Kathīr, 2000, p. 132), who interpret it as devoutness (*khushū*).

Only Ibn 'Abbās said that the person described as having the sign of prostration in verse is Bilāl and Ṣuhayb. He even described the special privileges of the Companions in that verse: those who with the Prophet (*walladhīna ma'ah*) refer to Abū Bakr (d. 634); those who are strong against the unbelievers (*ashiddā' 'alā al-kuffār*) refer to 'Umar (d. 644); those who love the neighbour (*ruḥamā' baynahum*) refer to 'Uthmān; those who

are bowing and prostrating (*rukka'a sujjada*) refer to 'Alī b. Abī Thālib (d. 661); and those who seek God's virtue and willingness (*yabtaghūna faḍla min Allāh wa riḍwāna*) refer to Thalhah and al-Zubayr (Ābadī, 1992, pp. 546–547).

However, they do not deny that the effects of piety are often physically identifiable. Al-Rāzī considers the description of the light (*nūruhum yas'ā*) and white faces (*tabyaḍḍu wujūh*) of believers on the Day of Judgment. Both are described in surah 66.8 and surah 3.106 (Al-Rāzī, 1981, p. 108). While al-Qurthubī quotes the Prophet's statement, that: "A man who has many prayers at night, his face will be beautiful in the day" (*man kathurat ṣalātuh bi al-layl, ḥasuna wajhuh bi al-nahār*) (Al-Qurthubī, 2006, p. 340). Therefore, al-Thabarī (Al-Thabarī, 2001, p. 321), al-Rāzī (Al-Rāzī, 1981, p. 108), al-Qurthubī (Al-Qurthubī, 2006, p. 340) and Ibn Kathīr (Kathīr, 2000, p. 132) state that piety sometimes seen through droopy marks (*'alāmat al-sahar*) or glowing faces (*nūr fī wujūh*), though they also said that perhaps the sign can only be seen on the Day of Resurrection.

We can also find that from the first generation, there has been a mockery directed at people who have marks between the eyes (*athar yakūn bayn 'aynay al-rajul*), where it is said to be like a goat's knee (*mithl rukbat al-'anz*), like a stone (*aqsā qalba min al-ḥijāra*) or like a hard heart (*aqsā qalba min fir'awn*). As quoted by al-Thabarī (Al-Thabarī, 2001, p. 321), al-Qurthubī (Al-Qurthubī, 2006, p. 340), and Ibn Kathīr (Kathīr, 2000, p. 132), the information came from Mujāhid.

Al-Zamakhsharī deplores the negative attitude. He relied on the story of 'Alī b. al-Ḥasan Zayn al-'Ābidīn and 'Alī b. 'Abdullāh b. 'Abbās al-Amlāk, in which both are nicknamed as having hard camel legs (*dhū al-thafināt*). The nickname was given because both are known to prostrate often, so it appears on their face. In his explanation, al-Zamakhsharī is seen debating an anonymous argument that declares the Prophet's command is not to mark their face (*lā ta'labū ṣuwarakum*). He said the Hadith is directed only to hypocritical people (*nifāq*) who are not sincere in the prostration of God. That is why al-Zamakhsharī does not physically reject the sign of prostration (Al-Zamakhsharī, 1998, p. 550).

In the modern era, interpreters are still seen trying to explain the true meaning of the sign of prostration. Al-Qāsimī, for example, states two meanings recognized by

the Salafists. First, as the early commentators say, that is a good path of devoutness. Second, the traces of the soil (*tharā al-ard*) on the face. However, concerning the latter, he explained that it was because, in the time of the Prophet, a mosque had no ground except the soil (*turāb*) and gravel (*ḥaṣbā*) (Al-Qāsimī, 1957, p. 5433). In the modern context, surely he will reject the literal interpretation of the sign of prostration. Quthb even refused that the sign of prostration was a black mark (*naktah*) on the face. He said that the purpose of the sign of prostration is the traces of worship (*athar al-'ibādāt*). According to him, the Qur'an chooses the word *sujūd* to represent devoutness and modesty in worship (Quthb, 2003, p. 3332).

On the other hand, we can also find that the interpretation of the sign of prostration in the real meaning is quite fertile among the Shi'a. However, the idea did not emerge from the beginning because Ibrāhīm al-Qummī (at the beginning of the fourth century after the hijra) did not discuss the meaning of the prostration in that verse (Al-Qummī, 2014, p. 995). Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Thūsī (d. 1068) was the first person in which he declares the meaning of traces of prayer that appeared on the face (*athar ṣalātihim fī wujūhihim*) (Al-Thūsī, n.d., p. 336), though not explicitly. A stronger affirmation is given by al-Fayḍ al-Kāshānī (d. 1679). He offers only one meaning that *athar al-sujūd* is a sign (*al-simah*) on the forehead (*jibāh*) caused by prostrate activity (Al-Kashānī, 1953, p. 45) or as a result of many prostrations in the prayer (*min kathrat al-sujūd fī al-ṣalāt*) as stated by Muḥammad al-Janābidhī (al-Janābidhī, 1988, p. 99). A more subtle affirmation is expressed by Hāshim al-Baḥrānī (d. 1695) by revealing information from Ibn Babawayh derived from al-*Ṣādiq* that *athar al-sujūd* means a lethargic face (*al-sahar*) (Al-Baḥrānī, 2006, p. 248). Similarly, al-Thabāthabā'ī (d. 1981) agrees with the meaning of a lethargic face, although he also suggests the meaning of traces of the soil (*athar al-turāb*) caused by the prayers established on the ground (Al-Thabāthabā'ī, 1997, pp. 302–304).

Conclusion

At the end of this article, we still cannot state exactly what the sign of prostration means in the Qur'an. We can only find that the phrase is laid out in a structure depicting the authentic character of Muhammad's followers in believing in teachings that are not new to Arab society. It needs to be clarified whether signs of prostration are abstract or

real since the Qur'an and other historical sources accommodate these two possibilities. Through the findings of the Corpus Coranicum project, we can state that the description of the sign of prostration is not found in the Gospels. Therefore, we can suppose that the description can be found in the Torah, even though we have no further information. Theoretically, we can use extra-Qur'an sources like the Old Testament and the Gospel to gain an adequate understanding, though both are often deemed not authentic theologically. We should be able to develop more open and appreciative theories of the intertextuality of other scriptures. As seen in the exegetical works produced among Muslim intellectuals, exclusivity will only produce hermeneutical difficulties.

For the writer, from reading the sign of prostration, it can be physical or abstract, physically as in the description of the verse *nuruhum yas'a* or abstractly interpreted as piety and piety.

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