

**THE SEMITIZATION OF ITIHASA:
INTERTEXTUALITY OF THE MAHABHARATA AND THE RAMAYANA
IN THE JUDAEO-ISLAMIC TEXTS**

**Semitisasi Sastra Itihasa: Intertekstualitas *Mahabharata* dan *Ramayana*
dalam Teks Judaeo-Islam**

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Abstrak: *Tulisan ini merupakan studi intertekstualitas teks Judaeo-Islam dengan teks Itihasa. Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi wacana teks rumpun Semit dan Arya yang terekam dalam artefak kebudayaan bertradisi Abrahamik dan Brahmanik yang meniscayakan pararelisasi pesan substantif. Pararelisasi pesan tidak hanya berpijak pada latar similaritas linguistik tetapi juga merujuk pada kesejajaran formula teologis yang melingkupi teks dalam rentetan tradisi yang melahirkan teksnya. Teks tidak dapat dipandang sebagai sebuah teks yang independen, tetapi harus dipahami melalui proses ‘pembacaan’ dalam konteksnya yang dapat dipastikan berkaitan erat dengan teks liyan. Teks hadir sebagai sebuah tenunan wacana yang melingkupi penjadian teks melalui proses adopsi, adaptasi, maupun reformulasi teks yang telah mapan dalam konteks rangkaian pewarisan tradisi. Kajian semiotika kultural yang terbaca tidak dimaksudkan untuk melanjutkannya secara vulgar yang teralienasi dari konteks hiperealitas teksnya, tetapi bertujuan untuk menjelaskan ‘penanda’ dalam teks yang melintas batas zaman, geografis, bahasa, maupun tradisi serumpun melalui sistem transmisinya. Artikel ini menggunakan teori semiotik yang dikemukakan oleh Julia Kristeva.*

Kata-Kata Kunci: *intertekstualitas, Ramayana, Mahabharata, Semit, Arya*

Abstract: *This article is an intertextual study of Judaeo-Islamic texts with the Itihasa. This research explores the discourse of Semitic and Aryan texts already canonized in cultural artifacts of Abrahamic and Brahmanic traditions which require a parallelization of substantive messages. It is not only depending on comparative linguistic similarities but also referring to the common theological formula surrounding the text in a chain of traditions which created the text. The text cannot be regarded as an independent text but have to be understood through the process of ‘reading’ in a context that can be ascertained to have a close relationship with other texts. It exists as a weave of discourses which are surrounding the text through the process of adoption, adaptation, and reformulation of the text that has been established in the context of a sequence of tradition inheritance. The study of cultural semiotics readable through the text is not intended to vulgarly expose the text that deviates from the hiperreality context of the text an sich. Instead, it aims to explain the ‘marker’ in the text across boundaries of times, geographies, languages, and common traditions through the system of transmission. This article uses a semiotic theory proposed by Julia Kristeva.*

Key Words: *intertextuality, Ramayana, Mahabharata, Semitic, Arya*

INTRODUCTION

In the Indic studies, many philologists and theologians are really familiar with the existence of the Hindu sacred texts, namely the *sāstrā* which announces about the Vedic manifesto. The Sanskrit term *sāstrā*, however, is associated with what is so-called the *Vedas* in many genres. There are the *Sruti* in four branches (*Rigveda*, *Yajurveda*, *Samaveda*, *Atharvaveda*, including the *Upanishāds*), the *Smṛti* (*Manava Dharmaśāstra*, *Paraśārā Dharmaśāstrā*), *Itihāsa* (the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*), the *Puranas* (the most important of them are *Agni Purana*, *Vayu Purana*, *Brahmanda Purana*, *Vishnu Purana*, *Shiva Purana*, *Bhāvisya Purana*, *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam Purana*, etc.), the *Āgama* such as the *Pancarātra* to the *Vaisnava*, the *Pratyabhijna* to the *Saiva*, and the *Mahānirvāna-Tantra* to the *Sakta* sects and other Vedic writings by all great *ācāryas* (spiritual masters). Meanwhile, the scholars never think about the roots of Vedic manifesto in the Semitic literary sources. Even, the Islamists never rethink the origins of Islamic texts are textually adopted, developed, crystallized, reformulated and recreated by the unthinkable author in the paradigm of the secretive imitation of the semitization of *Itihāsa* literature as a main source of Vedic sacred text through the process of making of Judaeo-Islamic text. In the paradigm of Vedic sacred texts, the term *Itihāsa* was early used in Sanskrit for writing about history. The *Itihāsa* itself refers particularly to the *Mahābhā-rata* but may also include other work, the *Rāmāyana* which is classed as poetry. The term is often paired with *Purāna* (Ancient Times) to include all writings about historical events of Hindu's *avatars* (Sullivan, 2003:99). Meanwhile, the Judaeo-Islamic texts as a form of

Indian imitation (*imitatio Indica*), represented the Vedic discourse which was literally adopted and reborn from the Brahmanic literary episteme in the context of its own societal understanding. The research of the Judaeo-Islamic texts are important to dig up and to rediscover the origins of islamization of the Vedic works through the arabization of Jewish Vedic sacred texts as the politico-theological message to proclaim the uniqueness and the otherness. Socio-historical background of the Islamic texts, however, represented a literary journey of Jewish Vedic stories which were scripturally inherited from Indic and Semitic ideas in the Arabian mind-set. Here the text occupies a new post in an academic mind of cross-cultural studies, especially for interfaith communities.

Studying the ancient Semitic texts relating to the Vedic literatures and the discourse of its textual influence, however, the scholars need an exegetical interpretation to elaborate a relation among the texts through the historical studies, comparative literatures and linguistic analysis. The influence of the *Vedas*, the Hindu scriptural genre in Arabia, and other Near Eastern territories, is historically a proven fact. This conclusion is also supported by many scholars. The Hindu academician, Swami Bhumananda, in his *Ecclesia Divina*, wrote about a beautiful poem of Lavi who has lived somewhere about 2350—2400 before Mohammad, i.e., not less than 17 centuries before Jesus, can be translated thus:

Oh blessed land of Hind (India), thou art worthy of reverence for in thee has God revealed true knowledge of Him. What a pure light do these four revealed books, the *Vedas*, afford to our mind's eyes like the charming and cool luster on the dawn. These four God

revealed unto His reshis, the prophets, in India. And He thus teaches all races of mankind that inhabit His earth: "Observe in your life the knowledge I have revealed in the Vedas, for surely God has revealed them. Those treasures are the *Samaveda* and the *Yajurveda* which God has published. O my brothers, revere these, for they tell us the good news of salvation. The next of these four, the *Rigveda*, and the *Atharvaveda* teach us the lessons of universal brotherhood. These two are the beacons that warn us to turn towards that goal universal brotherhood."

Other Hindu scholar, Basdeo Bisoodoyal, states that the Vedas are four in number, had left their imprint not only in Arabia, Lavi's fatherland, but also in the Phoenician land, which is then so-called the Promised Land of the Hebrews. In the opening years of the present century, Hugo Winckler, discovered certain inscriptions at an old site which are so-called *Boghazkoi*. The inscriptions which are supposed to have existed 1400 B.C., record the treaties between the kings of the Milani and the Hitties. What takes one's breath away is that the treaties were guaranteed by *Mitra*, *Varuna*, *Indra*, and the *Natasyas* (Bisoodoyal, 2001:3—4). These inscriptions, however, proved the existence of the Vedic knowledge in the Semitic literary artifacts as an archeology of the Brahmanic knowledge before the making process of Judaism. Furthermore, the *Rāmāyana* and the *Mahābhārata* texts as the *Itihāsa* genre of Hindu's scripture also deal with the Jewish texts. There is an influence of Vedic ascent idea (the one who ascended to the heaven) was textually found in the Jewish scripture as well as its narration in the Judaeo-Islamic texts which so-called the Quran.

To understand the influence of Vedic works in the Arabian literary

domain of the Semitic tradition as the Judaeo-Islamic texts, we find the Sanskrit listed as the religious language of Hindus, and the Hebrew as that of Jews. We find both Sanskrit words, *Harūta* and *Marūta* as the proper names of Islamic angels – *malak* – in Arabic script (Arabic language). Yet, both angels were already known as *Harūta* and *Marūta* as *deva* (gods) in the *Rig-veda* and we find both in the Devanagari script (Sanskrit language). However, the former is written in the ancient Sanskrit character, namely the Devanagari script, and the latter in the Arabic character; namely Kūfi script, but it is at first surprising to find that when one hears them spoken and pronounced the names of both angels, they sound very much alike, and both much like the "Hindustani." The explanation is to simplify the situation radically that Vedic angels is Hindustani filled out with borrowings from Sanskrit, while Islamic angels is Hindustani filled out with borrowings from Arabic – conforming to the religious orientation of the two nations, Aryans and Arabs. The political history of both nations, however, reflected the faith communities as an identity marker. The Hindus in India called the Indian Moslems and their Musalmani dialect to pronounce the names of Islamic angels as the real quasi-Hindustani, and the Hindu scholars (*pandits*) also called their language and their Islamic names of the angels as 'the Arabic gods.' It is as a pejorative expression for those who speak Musalmani-Hindi (the assimilative power of foreign language, Arabic) because this language is actually a product of foreigners (Arab Moslems). The Brahmins also called Musalmani-Hindi and the Islamic names of the Vedic angels as the Arabized Hindi's gods. It means that the Islamic angels, *Harūta* and *Marūta* are the forms of other Hindustani's names that have not been

Sanskritized, Aryanized or Hinduized by the Hindu scholars (*pandits*) as an attempt to come back to the sacred tradition of Brahminism which is related to the Vedantic culture. Therefore, in the episteme of Hindus, especially in the mind-set of Brahmins which is related to the religious politic, the names of Vedic angels (*deva*) are considered more superior than Islamic angels (*malak*), it is because of three reasons; (1) the use of Devanagari script as a *scripta sacra*, (2) the use of Sanskrit lexicon as *lingua sacra*, (3) to marginalize the arabization or semitization of Vedic episteme as the foreign message in the Brahmanic tradition through the power of Arabic loan-words. It means that the existence of Vedic angels in the Sanskrit is directly a main gate in reaction against the Islam, or a form of resistance to the Arab's faith.

THEORY

As in all poststructuralist theory, Julia Kristeva's work, a French semiotician, also demonstrates that all signifying systems—from table settings to poems—are constructed by the manner in which they transform earlier signifying systems. Any text, even, the sacred texts are 'constructed of a mosaic of quotations' and is 'the absorption and transformation of another (Kristeva, 1980:66). Hence, for her, a text is 'an ongoing process in which the writer confronts the ideological givens of different culture and subverts the linguistic signifiers in unanticipated ways (Davis and Schleifer, 1986:273). Concepts are nothing more than words, and signifier are words that refer to other words and never reach out to material objects and their interrelations. In effect, all meaning is textual and intertextual. Everything we can know is constructed through signs, governed by the rules of discourse for that area of knowledge, and related to other texts

through filiations, allusion and repetition. In this way, texts are marked by a surplus of meaning which results in differing readings of texts or sacred texts which are formed and conducted through mediating factors such as the present structures of discourse, the present concepts of the discourses structures of the time of the writing of the texts, the traditions of reading, and the suppositions which those traditions have made possible, of those particular texts.

When a text or sacred text is view in this way, it subverts the concept of the text as self-sufficient and dramatically blurs the outlines of the text and disperses its image of totality into a bounded, illimitable tissue of connections and associations, paraphrases and fragments, texts, and contexts. This view is reiterated by Roland Barthes when he argues that the text is 'unconscious or automatic quotations, given without quotations, and the text is also multidimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash. The text is tissue of quotations. The writer can only intimate a gesture that is always interior, never original. His only power is to mix writings, to counter the ones with others, in such a way as never to rest on any one of them (Barthes, 1977:146; 1981:39).

Starting from the theoretical framework of intertextuality, the interactive cultural texts in the Hinduism, Judaism and Islam were to strive to transcend conventionally accepted identity boundaries in order to replace linear and hierarchical paradigms of influence with a model of mutual interaction that allows for a more nuanced analysis of the dynamics of textual and intertextual practices. These texts basically rooted in the Vedas, Torah and the Quran, were extended to later

related texts, exegetical, theological and philosophical as well as literary texts.

The use of Kristeva's theory in this article, however, is important than other literary theories to rediscover a relation among the the sacred texts in the paradigm of *textus receptus* (accepted texts) among the interfaiths and to find the hypogram of the texts as an earlier signifying system. As Kristeva's point of view, the texts are 'constructed of a mosaic of quotations' so that why this theory is applied to portray its narrative texts of the various scriptures in its signifiers through mode of editing and transforming which are produced by the readers.

METHOD

This research uses qualitative methodology, a method of using the words or sentences in logical structure and of including analytic presentation of evidence that has been collected and interpreted in order to explain the relation of each of the concepts within the article. There are three components to arrange the technique of data collection in qualitative methodology; (i), determining the main data, the scriptures of three religions, (ii) collecting and classifying the main data, (iii) analyzing the data. These are the data as the main sources. As a study of literature, the primary data are the Quran, the Old Testament, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* which are studied as the texts in the paradigm of both intertext and intertextuality. This step is the first through reading and rereading the texts without the borders, to find the signifying systems and common messages of the scriptures. The second step is to collect and classify the narratives of the scriptures, even, to discover the collection sources of the original texts and the making of the new texts, the creative text of the first, and the

last, the analysis procedure or interpretation. However, collecting/classifying data and analyzing data are arranging all the data to be systematically collected and interpreted in order to explain the relation of each of the concepts within the article. At this step, Judaeo-Islamic texts which refer to the Quran and the Old Testament as the creative works through literary production will be analyzed and interpreted in the paradigm of philology so that the readers could reread its intertextuality and the relation of the texts with the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* as the Indic texts.

ANALYSIS

The *Mahabharata* in the Judaeo-Islamic Texts

The *Māhābharata* is the great epic of India and an important religious text for Hindus. The *Māhābharata*, written versions of which in the Sanskrit language run to some 180,000 lines, is often cited as the world's longest poem, it is eight times the size of the *Illiad* and the *Odyssey* put together. On the text as the Indian scholars know it today there is general agreement that the oldest portions date back to about the 4th century BC. It is the product of a long oral tradition of recitation and elaboration over centuries, a process which continues to the present day; the story is also known in regional vernacular languages in India and Southeast Asia. Its reputed author Mahārsi Vyāsa, also known as Krishna Dvaipāyana or Veda-Vyāsa, is depicted as a Brahmin sage who is also a prominent character in the story (Sullivan, 2003:123; Ratnakar, 1996:32).

In the work of Mahārsi Krishna Dvaipāyana Vyāsa, son of sage *Paraśārā*, namely the *Mahābhārata*, the eighteenth chapter, which is so-called the *Svargārohanika Parva*, there is a

miraculous story of Mahārāj Yudhisthira, one of the *Pandavas* (Bhīma, Arjuna, Nakula, Sahadeva), went up into the *svargā-rohana* (the world of heaven), by chariot of *devā Indra*. The Vedic terms *svargā-rohana*, etymologically derived from the Sanskrit words, *svargā* (lit. heaven) and *rohana* (lit. place upon), which is equivalent to *svargā-loka*, meaning 'the heavenly world', or 'situate in the heavenly light' (Lanman, 1955:231, 283). The text describes as follows:

“then Śakra, the god who reigns the whirlwind and the thunder appearing at the lonely place to welcome the arriving of the son of *Prtha*. Lord Indra orders Yudhisthira coming up to his chariot... Vaiśampāyana says: “listen what your forefathers did, Yudhisthira and his brothers after coming into the heaven, the place of the gods. Suddenly, by driving the chariot of *devatā*, the chariot of god *Indra*, Mahārāja Yudhisthira was carried into the heaven” (Maswinara, 1999:10—19).

This Indian miraculous story of Mahārāj Yudhisthira, however, has a common narrative with the Jewish saints, Enoch. According to the Old Testament, Enoch also went up to the *ha-shamāyīm*, the heaven (see the Bible, Genesis 5:24; cf. the Quran, chapter *Maryam* 19: 56—57), and other Jewish saint, Elijah went up to the heaven by chariot of the fire too. In the *Sefer II Melakhīm* (II Kings 2:11), the text states as follows:

“va yehī hemah holevīm halokh ve daver ve hinneh rekhev-esh ve sūsei esh va yavridū bein sheneihem va ya’alo Eliyahu bes’arah ha-shamāyīm ...”

As they were walking along, talking, suddenly a chariot of fire, drawn by horses of fire, appeared and drove

between them, separating them, and Elijah was carried by a whirlwind into heaven (Snaith, 1992:582).

Yudhisthira, Enoch and Elijah as three main figures of Indian and Semitic miraculous stories, however, represent the concept of immortal, untouchable souls by archangel of the dead, even, the symbolization of chariot of the stories narrate the common message without differences although both scriptures were originally born in the paradigm of different cultures. Yet, the miraculous story of Elijah in the Old Testament, in this context, is edited, adapted, adopted and transformed from the oldest text, the *Mahābhārata* as unconscious or automatic quotations, given without quotations. Here, there is an influence of ascent idea of Veda (the one who ascended to the heaven) which was textually found in the Jewish scripture. The Semitic author transformed this Vedic miraculous story through the process of making of the chosen nation, Israel and the Semitic author itself used the creative process of literature for signing an identity marker. The author literally changed the character of Vedic story which was referring to Yudhisthira to another figure, Elijah in his Hebrew work, but at the same time, to promote the same episteme. The readers could also identify this Vedic episteme in the use of both Sanskrit and Hebrew terms. The Sanskrit word *svargā* in the Vedic episteme represents the highest world as well as the Hebrew word *ha-shamāyīm* (lit. the heaven) in the Judaic episteme.¹ Both different terms, of course, narrate the parallel narrative story in the various contexts although both texts literally refer to different persons; Yudhisthira, Enoch and Elijah. Based on the texts, the Semitic author promotes an identity marker of Israel through the selected judgement from the

Vedic miraculous story as the hypogram of the text.

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The Ramayana in the Judaeo-Islamic Texts

The *Rāmāyana* is long poem attributed to the Brahmin sage, Valmiki. It is supposed to have been around 5th century BC., but it received its present form a century or two later. It seems likely that there was an oral tradition for some centuries before the written text appeared, oral and written versions have existed ever since. The story centers on the hero Rama, a prince of Ayodhya who married Lady Sita. The *Rāmāyana* is shorter than *Mahābhārata*, more elaborate in its poetry and more consistent in its theme. The *Rāmāyana* celebrates the life and exploits of Rama, said to be the 7th *avatara* of Lord Vishnu (Sullivan, 2003:176—177; Ratnakar, 1996:33). Meanwhile, the *Mahābhārata* itself celebrates the life and exploits of Krishna, said to be the 8th *avatara* of Lord Vishnu According the Bhagavad-gita, a part of *Mahābhārata*, Lord Krishna said that he was an *avatara* (incarnation of Lord Vishnu) to Arjun, brother of Yudhisthira. To understand the avataric episteme of the Veda, I have to quote the text from the Arabic and Sanskrit versions.

Yadā yadā hi dharmasya glānir bhavati Bhārata/ abhyutthānam adharmasya tadātmānam sṛjāmy aham// Paritrāṇāya sādḥūnam wināsāya ca duskṛtām dharmā-samsthāpanarthāya sambhawāmi yuge-yuge//

“Waar en wanneer ook maar de dienst van God in verval raakt, O telg van Bharata [Arjuna], en goddeloosheid de overhand neemt – daar en te dien tijde daal Ik Zelf neer. Om de toegewijden te bevrijden en de goddelozen te verdelgen en om de beginselen der godsdienst te herstellen, verschijn Ik Zelf in tijdperk na tijdperk. De Bhagavad-gita IV. 7—8.” (Prabhupada, 1976:215—217).

“Whenever there is a decline of righteousness and rise of unrighteousness, O Bharata [Arjuna], then I send forth create incarnate Myself. For the protection of the good, for the destruction of the wicked and for the establishment of the righteousness, I come into being from age to age.” The Bhagavad-Gita IV. 7—8 (Prabhupada, 1986:226—228).

The *Rāmāyana* is divided into seven *khandas* or sections and contains about 500,000 lines. The *Rāmāyana*, the work of sage *Valmiki*, was originally called Ratnakar, and on chapter *Rajya-Abhisheka*, there is a miraculous story of Shitā, the wife of Prince Rāmā. The text describes as follows

حيثما يوجد انحراف في الممارسات الدينية، يا سليل
بهرط، وازداد الالحاد، اهبط بنفسي. من اجل انتقاد
الابرار، ومن اجل اعادة اقامة شرعة الدين، اهبط
بنفسي دورة بعد اخرى. بهتفض غيطا بيدون
تصرف، (المعرفة التجاوزية؛ الفصل الرابع:
٨٧٢).

“She beckoned to Lakshmana and ordered, light a fire at once, on this very spot. Laskmana hesitated and looked at his brother, wondering whether he would countermand the order. But Rama seemed passive and acquiescent. Laksmana, ever the most unquestioning deputy, gathered faggots and got ready a roaring pyre within a short time. The entire crowd watched

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the proceedings, stunned by the turn of events. The flames rose to the height of a tree; still Rama made no comment. He watched. Shitā approached the fire, prostrated herself before it, and said, “O *Agni*, great god of fire, be my witness.” She jumped into the fire. From the heart of the flame rose the god of fire, bearing Sita, and presented her to Rama with words of blessing” (Narayan, 2003:167; Dutt, 1997:138).

This Vedic miraculous story was popular in India in ancient times. This story reflects the holiness, ability and submission to the Holy One and this Vedic episteme portrays the Truth in the paradigm of miracle, fire as a sign of its confirmation. Meanwhile, there is also a Hebraic miraculous story of three men, Sadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who were amazingly saved by *Elaha*, the God, from the fire of Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon. In the *Sefer Daniel* (the book of Daniel) 3:19—21, 24—27, the text describes as follows:

“bedayin Nevukhadnetzar hitmelī hemo utzlem anpohī esh-taniv ‘al Sadrakh Meishakh, ve ‘Abednego ‘aneh ve amar le-meze le-atuna had-shiv’ah ‘al dīy hazeh le-mezyeh. U leguvrīn gibarei hayil dīy ve hayleh amar le-khapatah le Sadrakh Meishakh ve ‘Abednego le-mirme le-atun nūra yaqirta. Bedayin guvraya illekh kefitu be-sarbaleyhon pathisheihon ve kharbelathon u-levusheyhon ūr-mīv legu atun nūra yaqidta...Edayin Nevukhednetzer malka tevah ve qam behitbehalah ‘aneh ve amar le-hadavrohī ha-laquvrīn telata remeina lego-nūra mekhaftīn ‘anayin ve amrin le-malka yatziva malka. ‘Aneh ve amar hu-anah hazeh guvrīn arba’ah sherayin mahlekhin begu-nūra va haval la-itay be-hon ve reveh dīy revī’aia dameh le bar-Elahin. Bedayin qerev Nevukhatnetzar litra’ atun nūra yaqidta ‘aneh ve amar Sadrakh Meshakh ve ‘Abednego ‘avdohi dīy Elaha ‘ilaya puqu

ve-eto bedayin nafqin Sadrakh Meshakh ve ‘Abednego min go nūra. U mitkanneshin ahashdareppenaya signaya u-pahafata u-hadafri malka hazayin le-guvraya illekh dīy la-sheleth nūra be-gushmehon u-se’ar reshhon la ritharakh u-sarbaleyhon la sheniy ve reiha nūr la ‘adat behon”

“Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, therefore he spoke, and commanded that they should heat the furnace one seven times more than it was wont to be heated. And he commanded the most mighty men that were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace. Then these men were bound in their coats, their hosen, and their hats, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace...Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, and spake, and said unto his counselors, did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, true, o king. He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the son of God. Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, and spake, and said, Sadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, ye servants of the Most High God, come forth, and come hither. Then Sadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, came forth of the midst of the fire. And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king’s councillors, being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them ...” (Snaith, 1992:1196—1197).

The book of *Midrash Rabba* on the *Sefer Bereshit*, para.38, also tells the

other Hebraic miraculous story about Abraham. In this version, Abraham, the servant of God, was also amazingly saved by *Elah*, the God, from the fire of Nimrod, the king of Babylon who reigned before Nebuchadnezzar. The *Midrash Rabba* text describes as follows *anī einī mishtahaveh elā la Ōr ha-reī anī mishlikhakh be-tokho ve yeva Elah sheattah mishtahaveh lo ve-yatztzilikha mim-menu yarad Avraham le-khevshan ha-esh ve nitzōl* – I worship the fire and will throw thee into it. The God whom thou dost worship may come and save thee out of it. Abraham was then thrown into a glowing furnace, but was saved from it (Geiger, 1970:96—98). I think both Hebraic stories are divinely transformed from Vedic revelation, and *Rāmāyana* text was being the hypogram of the Jewish text through the process of adopting, adapting and transforming and rejecting the figure of another culture. The Semitic author made an imitation of the sacred figure of Lady Sita in the mind-set of Judaism. As the Vedic episteme, the Vedic story reflects the role of feminist, the Lady Sita, but the Semitic author politically changed it into the otherness, Abraham, to support the position and the role of masculinist in the paradigm of Jewish tradition as the point of world view of the author although both texts used ‘the fire’ as the signifier to proclaim the holiness, ability and total submission to the Holy in the discourse of miraculous narrative texts.

In Vedic epic, the Lady Sita was amazingly saved by god *Agni* from the fire. Obviously, the Prince Rama, suddenly developed doubts about her loyalty and purity. She willingly submitted to a trial by fire, which burned her not, to prove her virginity and purity from Ravana’s touch, the king of Sri Lanka (Ceylon). Philologically, I think that the god *Agni* as personal name (*nomen*), in the *Rāmāyana* text, derived

from the Sanskrit word *agni* (lit. ‘fire’) in its own generic semantic (*numen*)³, similar to *genī* (fire) in the Avestic (Persian) word, as well as the Quranic Arabic terms, *jān*, *jin* or *jinnah* (spiritual being). And, the words *jān* and *jin* themselves are the Islamized-Arabic words which were linguistically adopted from the Arabicized-Hebrew words, *jān*, and *jin* (god of fire). Also, the words originally adopted from the Masoretic-Hebrew word, the *gan*, through the influence of Phoenician vocabulary, the *agnan* (fire). In this case, the term *gan* in the Hebrew word, has changed into an Arabic form, *jān* by which a consonant ‘g’ in Hebrew word through phonetic correspondence actually changed being consonant ‘j’, like other Hebrew vocabularies, such as *regel* (foot), *gamal* (camel), and *hag* (festival/pilgrimage), also changed into Arabic forms, *rijal*, *jamal*, and *haj*. Further, the *jinnah* deals with other pronunciation of the word into the Quranic Arabic, *jannah* and *jannāt* (the heaven). However, both theological semantics of Islamized-Arabic terms, *jannah* and *jannāt* prove that the origins of the words adopted from the primitive Arabic vocabularies, *jannah* and *jannāt* (lit. ‘garden’), and they were historical linguistically derived from the Hebrew words, *ginnah* or *gannah* (lit. ‘garden’).⁴ Arthur Jeffery, in his book “*the Foreign Vocabulary of the Quran*” (1938) also affirms and describes that the word, *jannah*, derived from a more primitive meaning, ‘enclosure’; the word may be a genuine Arabic inheritance from primitive Semitic stock, from the word is widespread in the Semitic area, e.g. the Akkadian, *gannatu*, the Hebrew *gannah*, the Aramaic *ginna*, or *ginnete*, the Syriac *gnata*, though perhaps it was a peculiar North Semitic development. The word in the sense of ‘garden’ occurs frequently in the old Arabic poetry, but in the sense of

'heaven' only in verses which have been influenced by the Quran itself (Jeffrey, 1938:103—104). In this case, Arthur Jeffery never explained the linguistic sources of the Hebrew word, the *gan* which was originally derived from the Phoenician, the *agnan* (fire). In any case in the meaning of 'fire' it is certainly a borrowing from the Sanskrit, the *agni* (fire) and in all probably from the Vedic Sanskrit, the *Agni* (the god of fire), where we find it specialized in this sense. Later, he also never described the etymological sources of the *jannah*. The word *jannah*, according to him, is a genuine Arabic word from primitive Semitic linguistic heritage, from the word is widespread in the Semitic area, so that why he never tracked it back to the original sources philologically. Yet, by rereading of the Arabic words in the light of the Quranic text (see *al-Baqarah* 2:30—36) we have a new interpretation that the origin of the highest place of the *jān*, is in the *jannah* ('heaven'), like Adam's place, so that why the *jān* who is so-called 'the heavenly spiritual being', has an important position in the Pagan Arabs world. Historically, in pre-Islamic times, the Arabs have regarded the *jān* or *jin* as a friend of men, a guest in every house with a hearth fire, further, worshiped him as the god of fire, a mediator between men and *Allah*, and the protector whose light and flames drive away demons, or the spirits of darkness (cf. the Quran, *al-Jin* 72:6). But, the Quran then forbids to worship the *jān*. Also, the *jān* or *jin*, in the Quranic text is originally created by *Allah* from the *nār*, fire (*al-Hijr* 15:27; cf. *al-Kahf* 18:50). In the Quran, chapter *al-A'raf* 7:12, the *jīn* said *khalaqtanī min nār* (Thou didst create me from fire). Meanwhile, the personal name of *Agni* itself, in the Vedic text, is also worshiped as the god of fire, as well as the *jān* or *jin*, among the Arabs. Meanwhile, in the Hebraic text, Nimrod,

the king of Babylon worshiped the *Ōr*, the god of fire, and the personal name of *Ōr* itself is derived from the Hebrew word *ōr* (lit. 'fire', similar to other Hebrew term, *nūra*, 'fire'), is equivalent to the Akkadian words *ōr* and *ūr* ('fire', cf. Arabic word *nār*). If we compare the Hebraic miraculous stories of Sadrach, Meshach, Abednego, and Abraham with the Vedic miraculous story of Lady Sita, of course, we will find the parallel narratives in both Abrahamic and Brahmanic episteme. Further, we will discover the similar idea of the symbolization of husband to God in both episteme. The drawing of God as a figure of husband, is so important in both Scriptures. In the Hindus Scripture, the *Manava Dharmaśāstra* text describes clearly as follows "anenopanayare'piprāpte viśemāha vaivāhiko vidhih strīnām samskāro vaidikah smrtah, patisevā gurau vāso grhartho'gni parikriyā – for the wife, the ritual of marriage is a manifestation of *samskara*, like the ritual of initiation as Veda said, to service the husband is also like to stay quietly in the *ashrama* of the spiritual teacher, and do the obligations of family is like the worship daily to the holy fire" (Pudja and Sudharta, 1977:82). Other text parables "*ācāryo Brahmano mūrtih pitā mūrtih Prajāpateh, mātā Prthivyā mūrtistu brhātā svo mūrti ātmanah* – the spiritual teacher is a manifestation of the *Brahman*, a father is a manifestation of *Prajapati*, a mother is a manifestation of *Prthivi* and a brother is a manifestation of self" (Pudja and Sudharta, 1977:126). Even, the *Rigveda*. X.43. also states: "*acchā ma Indram matayah svaividah sadhrīmcīr viśva uśatīr anūsata, pari svajante janayo yathā patim maryam na śundhyum maghavānam ūtaye* – o great god *Indra* in all beautiful praises which were presented to Thee, like the wife loves her husband, as a handsome man, we wish

the heavenly graces of Thee, o the Most Gracious” (Bose, 1999:86). These Hindu Scriptures, state indirectly that Rāmā, the king of Ayodhya, is symbolized as the God, the *Brahman*, or as the god *Indra*⁵ because Lady Shītā herself serviced him absolutely in all her life, so that why the god *Agni* directly saved her from the fire. This Vedic miracle story, however, is to prove the fidelity of Shītā as the wife, to her husband, Rāmā, the *avatar* (the incarnation of Lord *Vishnu*).

Meanwhile, in the Jewish Scripture, the *Sefer Neviem*, the book of Isaiah 54:5, the text parables as follows: “*kī vo’alayikh ‘osayikh Yehvah tzeba’ot shemo ve-goalekh qedosh Yisrael Elohei kol ha-aretz yiqare* – for your Creator will be your husband, *Yahveh* the Lord Almighty is his name; he is your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, the God of all the earth” (Snaith, 1992:692). This Jewish text parables that the people of Israel is regarded as the wife of the God, the *Yahveh*, and of course, Abraham, one of the Israelite Patriarchs, Sadrach, Meshach, and Abednego are also regarded as the wives of God in the paradigm of the Bible episteme, because in their life they always serviced Him absolutely, so that why He saved them from the fire. Thus, these Hebraic miraculous stories are also to prove the fidelity of four Jewish saints, Sadrach, Meshach, Abednego, and Abraham to their ‘husband’, *Yahveh*, *Elah* or *Elaha*, the Lord of Israel. Later, in the Quran, there is also the Hebraic miraculous story of Abraham whose God saved him from the fire of Nimrod in the Arabic version. In the Quran, *al-Anbiyā’* 21:68—68, the text describes “*qālū harriqūhu wa-anshurū ālihatakum in kunkum fā’ilīn, qulnā yā nāru kūnī bardan wa salāman ‘alā Ibrāhīm*” (they said, ‘burn him and protect your gods, if you do anything at all.’ We said, ‘o fire, be thou cool, and a means of safety for Abraham). The texts

with their Semitic and Indic backgrounds even though are revered sacred texts, yet they contain and are deeply rooted in the context they have been formulated. Their literary styles, the audience, and the historical periods are different but they are socio-theologically affiliated to each other. And, in this view, of course, the Hebraic miraculous stories can be regarded as the Semitized-Aryan texts. Also, by using philological study to analyze the scriptural words in the Sanskrit (*agni*), the Avestic (*genī*), the Phoenician (*agnan*), the Hebrew (*gan*, *gannah*, *ginnah*, *ōr*, and *nūra*), the Arabic (*jān*, *jannah*, *jannāt*, *jinnah*, and *nār*), later, the Akkadian (*ōr*, and *ūr*) in the various Scriptures, I have a conclusion that the words become the ‘golden bridge’ to understand the various revealed texts in the domain of religious traditions. Hence, the revelation itself is ‘unthinkable text.’ When this unthinkable text is view in this way, so this Quranic text, however, is an Islamized-Arabic miraculous story of Abraham through the Arabicized-Hebraic text in the process of revelation. In other words, the miraculous story of Abraham in the Quran is a revealed repetition as components in a continuum with close links of the Semitic intertextuality, and at the same time, to proclaim the hierarchic sacred texts of the Semitic common heritage.

Therefore, to understand the relation among the sacred texts, especially about the Vedic texts in Hebraic episteme, we must reread them in the paradigm of intertextuality and contextualization. Based on the study of literary criticism on both similar texts of Hindus and Jewish Books, and by tracing these Hebraic words back to their sources linguistically from the Vedas, and by studying these religious terms of the Jewish narratives in the Indian native literature, we then regard that these

Hebraic literary texts in the Jewish Holy Book are indifferent elements of the Vedic Indian ancient book which is so-called 'the Aryanic Library', in the Jewish episteme which speaks through the mouth of the Israelite prophets and the rabbis in the corpus of the Jewish Bible. In other words, both Hebraic stories are literally the Hebraicized-Vedic divine texts, and the Quranic miraculous story of Abraham *per se* is the revealed repetition from the Islamized-Judaic text via the evolution process of hierarchic revelations in the Abrahamic episteme. It also indicates that the Vedas were widely known outside India, especially in Hebrews' land, before the making of Jewish Scriptures, including the earlier rabbinic literary writings genre, especially about the rabbinical parables.

CONCLUSION

By rereading the scriptures via Kristeva's theory, in fact, there are many parallels of the various 'Holy Texts'. The Semitic author made an imitation of miraculous story and the sacred figure of Vedic epics in the mind-set of Judaism as a constructed of a mosaic of quotations and it represents a transformation of another. As the Vedic episteme, the Vedic story reflects the role of feminist, but the Semitic author politically changed it into the otherness, to support the position and the role of masculinist in the paradigm of Jewish tradition as the point of world view of the Semitic author to proclaim the holiness, ability and total submission to the Holy in the discourse of miraculous narrative texts. The Semitic author promotes an identity marker through the selected judgement from the Vedic miraculous story as the hypogram of the text.

By the literary method, we only describe the 'similar messages' in the Brahmanic – Abrahamic discourses, and the other, by the philological/ historical-

linguistic method we describe double materials; first, the discovery of common Semitic; second, the discovery of 'the similar messages' in the different Abrahamic faiths. Thus, the use of Arabic, Aramaic/ Syriac, Hebrew in Abrahamic faiths, or the use of Sanskrit and Pali vocabularies in Brahmanic faiths which is dealing with the heavenly languages in these Abrahamic and Brahmanic Scriptures through rereading of the texts, however, prove clearly the hierarchic revelation of Brahmanic to Abrahamic Scriptures diachronically. Not only that, this hierarchic revelation, also affirms the chain of divine transmitting system of various Scriptures in their historical own context to prove the continuum of the common heritage of divine textual monument in cross-linguistics, cross-cultures, and interfaith discourse. In other words, like Abraham Karickam said that different Holy Scriptures will have to be taken as components in a continuum with close links of intertextuality. Therefore, as a conclusion, the process of scriptural communication among different believers who received one revelation in many versions is a way out to understand 'the others.'

1. The Javanese word *surga* (lit. the beautiful place in the heaven), is lexically also derived from the Sanskrit word *svargā*, cf. the word in the Malay and Indonesian. Later, the Hebrew word *shamāyim* (lit. heavens/skies) is similar to the Syro-Aramaic word *shemāyā*, cf. in the Arabic, *shamāwāt* (skies).
2. A.C. Bhakti Vedanta Swami Prabupada, *Bhagavadh-Githa bi-Dūni Tasharruf: Ni'matuhu al-Rabbāniyah*, translated into Arabic by Rabaḥ Yunus (Tel Aviv: International Society for Krishna Consciousness, 1972), pp. 219—221; cf. A.C. Bhakti Vedanta Swami Prabupada, *Gītopanishad Śrīmad Bhagavadgītā – Hindi* (Mumbai: the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, 1990), pp. 151—153

3. The Sanskrit word *agni* means 'fire', esp. sacred fire; the god of fire, mediator between men and gods, messenger who carries the sacrifice to them, protector from the terrors and spirits of darkness, and keeper of house and hearth, see Lanman, A Sanskrit Reader, *op.cit.*, pp. 111—112. This Sanskrit word, *agni* has an etymological cousin English word, *ignite*, also in the Latin word *ignis* (fire), cf. the Javanese word *geni* (fire).
4. see the use of the Hebrew words, *gannah* and *ginnah* in the Bible, Num. 24:6, Job 8:16; Esth 1:5, Song 6:11
5. *Indra*, to whom about one fourth of the hymns of the *Rigveda* are addressed, appears primarily as the rain-bringing and drouth-dispelling power behind and in storms. As a protector of people, *Indra* became a god who helped ward off and defeat both human and spiritual enemies. He is personified as a gigantic bearded figure who rides to battle on a chariot, wielding his thunderbolts. However, the Sanskrit word, *Indra*, has an etymological cousin in English word, *Thunder*.

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