

The Prophetic Dream Theory: From Deconstruction to Discourse Construction: The Steady Speech

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Abstract

Throughout history, there have been various attempts to deconstruct the text of the Holy Quran. One of the more recent theories is Soroush's Prophetic Dream theory, which suggests that the Holy Prophet received and perceived the revelations in a dream-like state. The theory in question aims at deconstructing the nodal points of Islam such as revelation, prophet, and the Holy Text, as well as constructing a new discourse. This study aims to analyze the above theory using Laclau and Mouffe's theory of discourse, as well as Derrida's deconstruction. Discourse theory applies deconstruction in order to show how rival discourses strive to gain their voice. In this sense, the first step towards discourse-construction is to deconstruct the dominant discourse and then articulate a new one. The present study finds that the birth-place of the Prophetic Dream theory is the deconstruction by which Soroush will be able to put the moments in crisis and also to articulate the floating signifiers in the field of discursivity.

Keywords: Discourse, Deconstruction, Prophetic Dream Theory, Articulation, Abdolkarim Soroush.

Introduction

As proposed by Dr. Abdolkarim Soroush, the prophetic dream theory concerns the long-standing question of "how to interpret the Holy Quran." This theory seeks to construct an indistinguishable inhuman God who has left his creatures in a desperate loneliness and with whom even his supreme messenger communicates only in the realm of dream, a world strongly influenced by the unconscious mind over which man has the least control. Whatever they may be, it is the suppressed calamities experienced by an individual (Tyson 2006, 12-13). Freud believes that the dream does not represent reality but is a coded narrative that serves to fulfil the dreamer's

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desire (Freud 1977, 200-13). In this sense, the Prophetic Dream theory requires the role of the will and desires of the Holy Prophet in writing the Holy Quran and, accordingly, meaning will be lost due to the coding of the sentences, situations, and images in the dream world. Moreover, by accepting this, the way will be paved for the deconstruction of the sacred text. The present work demonstrates that the prophetic dream theory can be criticized based on Laclau and Mouffe's theory of discourse as well as Jacques Derrida's theory of deconstruction.

It was in the late 1980s that Soroush initiated his discussion on the theory of contraction and expansion, which was then published in the form of some articles in the intellectual journal *Kayhan Farhangi*. It seems that what Louise Montrose (1989) stated in his essay, "Professing the Renaissance: The Poetics and Politics of Culture," reverberated in the project Soroush started, a project known as *Expansion and Contraction of Religious Knowledge*. Montrose states that New Historicism proposes the textuality of history, referring to the constructed-ness and fictionality of history and the historicity of texts. This signifies the "cultural specificity, the social embedment, of all modes of writing" (Montrose 1989, 588). In other words, according to Montrose, texts are deeply rooted in socio-cultural, historical, and political modes of their production. Herein, it seems that, in his first phase of intellectual career (late 1980s), Soroush has followed the same line of thought: contending that religious texts, as pieces of writing, are situated in the socio-cultural context of their own production. In his book, *Expansion and Contraction of Religious Knowledge*, Soroush proposes that religious knowledge is both contingent and historical:

We should bear in mind that the arena of religious understanding is a playing field in which there are numerous contestants and that there is no such thing as a single-player contest and we should see the game as being contingent on this plurality. (Soroush 2009, 123)

This would signify Derrida's concept of "undecidability," namely the idea that key concepts and terms in philosophy, language, and culture are not fixed or clearly defined. Instead, they are contingent upon context and can be interpreted in various ways (Derrida 1981, 211). Deconstruction seeks to announce the multiplicity of meanings and interpretations inherent in these terms, highlighting their contingent nature. In this sense, Soroush's efforts involve creating a path for acknowledging diverse viewpoints within religion. He also advocates for valuing this variety of interpretations, aiming for it to become a highly desired quality. This approach challenges the traditionally held premodern understanding of Islam, often considered "orthodox" by most Muslims. It was in the early 1990s that he moved and took a step forward. This culminated in his *Expansion of Prophetic Experience* (2009), where he argues for his position regarding the contingency of the religion:

Islam is not a book or an aggregate of words; it is a historical movement and the history-incarnate of a mission. It is the historical extension of

a gradually-realized prophetic experience. The Prophet's personality is the core; it is everything that God has granted to the Muslim community. Religion is woven through and through with this personality. Religion is the Prophet's inward and outward experience. (Soroush 2009, 16)

In this sense, Soroush (2009) argues that the prophet has actively participated in writing and shaping the content of the Quran (Soroush 2009, xxv-xxvi). Finally, it was in the mid-2010s that he proposed his theory on revelation as a sort of prophetic dream. The Prophet is considered the author of the Holy Text, narrating from an omniscient point of view: different scenes are represented having a wide variety of details, concerning the characters, time, space, and even other-worldly beings. Moreover, herein, it is the author-prophet who articulates all that happens in the text, in which every moment or fixed signifier (Laclau and Mouffe 1985, 105) moves into the state of contingency. Soroush implicitly aims at deconstructing the foundations in order to suspend the transcendental signified entity in the Holy Text.

Derrida's deconstruction works against the foundations of structuralism, which aspires to construct meanings for the signs. As Laclau and Mouffee state, "Saussure's analysis of language considered it as a system of differences...; the central concept was that of value, according to which the meaning of a term was purely relational and determined only by its opposition to all the others" (Laclau and Mouffee 1985, 112-13). Accordingly, they believe that meaning construction in the social domain is a kind of struggle to fix meaning, just like that of the Saussurian struggle to find and fix meaning. The immediate outcome of this desire is the solidification of meaning as well as to lock the meaning of each sign into a specific predetermined relationship to the others. Laclau and Mouffé use Derrida's deconstruction and come to this understanding that the process of fixing meaning in the social domain is ultimately impossible because every fixation of the sign's meaning is contingent. It is from this point of contingency that Laclau and Mouffee start to devise their theory of discourse.

According to Laclau and Mouffe, the main aim of each and every discourse analysis is to show how social struggles strive to solidify/fix meaning and how these meaning fixations become so conventionalized that we think of them as natural. Nevertheless, attempts to fix meaning face the principle of contingency, which leads us to the terrain of undecidability and uncertainty:

The incomplete character of every totality necessarily leads us to abandon, as a terrain of analysis, the premise of society as a sutured and self-defined totality. Society is not a valid object of discourse. There is no single underlying principle fixing – and hence constituting – the whole field of differences. The irresolvable interiority/exteriority tension is the condition of any social practice: necessity only exists as the partial limitation of the field of contingency ... the social cannot

be reduced to the interiority of a fixed system of differences, pure exteriority is also impossible. (Laclau and Mouffee 1985, 111)

Soroush views the Holy Text as a social product constructed by a human being in his dreams, which would then imply the incompleteness of the Holy Text. In addition, Laclau and Mouffe emphasize the inherent incompleteness of all comprehensive systems, calling for the abandonment of perceiving society as a cohesive, self-contained entity. The absence of a singular foundational principle capable of defining and constituting the entirety of the spectrum of differences challenges conventional paradigms. Moreover, the inextricable tension between interiority and exteriority stands as a foundational aspect within any social practice, shaping the interplay of necessity and contingency. Furthermore, it underscores the elusive nature of states of absolute exteriority, further complicating the simplified interpretations of social dynamics.

Literature Review

The prophetic dream theory has been criticized by a wide variety of theoreticians. Abdolali Bazargan penned a critique following a debate with Dr. Soroush on the BBC program titled "Pargar." In his critique, Bazargan highlighted that, from an intra-religious standpoint, the aforementioned theory presents numerous conflicts with the sacred text. Specifically, he argued that the language employed within dreams is cryptic and ambiguous, even to the dreamer. Subsequently, he proceeded to raise ten fundamental objections, ultimately leading him to the conclusion that the language of dreams is inherently ambiguous, rendering it unintelligible to the dreamer themselves, let alone to others (Bazargan 2016, 3).

Ayatollah Jafar Sobhani has also directed his criticism towards the prophetic dream theory in his correspondence with Soroush. In his second letter (2004), Sobhani asserts that Soroush's ideas, as expressed in works such as *Expansion and Contraction of Religious Knowledge*, *Expansion of Prophetic Experience*, *The Word of Muhammad*, and *The Dream of Muhammad*, are in direct contradiction to the concept of *Khatamiyya* (Finality of Prophethood). Furthermore, Sobhani argues that Soroush's ideas fundamentally oppose specific verses of the Quran, such as 42:7, 12:2, 3:19, 20:114, and 7:3. Sobhani contends that since Sharia (Islamic law) remains fixed while understanding continually evolves, there can be no absolute certainty in Islamic teachings. Consequently, he arrives at the conclusion that the ideas derived from the Quran, Sunnah, reason, and wisdom are inherently precarious and subject to constant fluctuation as time progresses.

In his critique, Akbar Ganji has outlined fourteen significant flaws and ultimately asserted that Soroush intentionally employs ambiguous interpretations within his theory to evade providing clear explanations (Ganji 2016, 4). Moreover, Ganji further examines one of the ramifications that can arise from Soroush's theories, which is the

eradication of God's presence within the Quran. The deity portrayed by Soroush lacks any involvement in the spiritual realm of humanity or the natural world. According to Ganji, Soroush's conception of God is reduced to a mere title or label, leading Ganji to label it as the nominalistic God of Soroush (Ganji 2022, 1).

Furthermore, Khosrow Baqeri posits that the aforementioned theory could be deemed acceptable only if it "incorporates the interpretation of revelations by the Prophet himself." He maintains that the role of the Prophet in receiving revelation should be one of passivity. Additionally, this theory encounters inherent inconsistencies in its fundamental assumptions. On one hand, the theory pertains to prophecy, implying that an individual is entrusted with delivering a message of divine truth from God to humanity. However, on the other hand, this assumption is contradicted by the notion that the prophet, due to the constraints of his time and earthly limitations, did not fully comprehend all the divine truth (Baqeri 2016, 2-5).

If we were to regard the Holy Text as the dream of the Holy Prophet, it would create a precedent for others to claim that their own dreams are messages from God. Iain R. Edgar (2004) analyzes the impact of dreams on Al-Qaeda and Taliban leadership, contending that dreams have a profound impact on the leaders of those terrorist organizations. He asserts that pivotal figures within entities like Al-Qaeda and the Taliban tend to be impelled, invigorated, and directed by specific dream experiences. In this regard, his analysis "attempts to sketch an assessment as to whether some of the Al-Qaeda and Taliban leadership and its members are and have been motivated, inspired, and apparently guided by certain dreams" (Edgar 2004, 21). By underscoring the potency of dream-related influences, Edgar underscores the potential for these subconscious experiences to wield considerable sway over the decisions and courses of action undertaken by individuals at the helm of terrorist organizations. His exploration thus contributes to a multifaceted understanding of the intricate interplay between personal psychological dynamics, ideological convictions, and the manifestation of extremist activities within these groups.

Derrida's Deconstruction and Laclau's Discourse Theory

Laclau and Mouffe argue that discourse is an endeavor to establish differences that are articulated as moments in a stable structure (Laclau and Mouffe 1985, 96). The main purpose of constructing a discourse is to establish the required meaning, on the one hand, and to eliminate other destructive and harmful meanings, on the other hand. As signs can possess multiple meanings or signify various entities, discourses inherently select the amount of meaning that aligns with their semantic system, while disregarding and excluding the remaining interpretations. When individuals, institutions, objects, subjects, and other entities are assigned a singular meaning, it establishes a connection between them called "articulation" within discourse theory (Laclau and Mouffe 1985, 105). After the desired meaning (the element) was articulated, it will no longer be

considered a floating signifier and becomes a moment. The moments within a discourse are articulated elements around one or more nodal points (Laclau and Mouffe 1985, 112). Since a particular sign may have various meanings, destructive meanings must naturally be eliminated. Furthermore, the discarded meanings will not be obliterated but rather persist in a realm outside the discourse known as the field of discursivity. Additionally, the exiled meanings will continue to question the articulated ones, with the intention of deconstructing the entire system. Laclau and Mouffe believe that a discourse can be thought of as meaning fixation within a specific domain:

We will call articulation any practice establishing a relation among elements such that their identity is modified as a result of the articulatory practice. The structured totality resulting from the articulatory practice, we will call discourse. The differential positions, insofar as they appear articulated within a discourse, we will call moments. By contrast, we will call elements any difference that is not discursively articulated. (Laclau and Mouffe 1985, 105)

According to the above quotation, articulation refers to any kind of attempt to use elements, which are signs, whose meanings have not yet been fixed and limited to specific/knowable/familiar signs. It is worth mentioning that any attempt to suspend moments (or articulated/fixed elements) is called deconstruction.

For Derrida, deconstruction is, in fact, an attempt to question the reader's belief in the unity of the text's meaning. A critic who engages in deconstruction dismantles the centrality of the transcendental signified entity in the text and directs the reader's mind towards other meanings, making the text multidimensional. In other words, the main project of deconstruction can be seen as the unveiling of the text's logo-centrism. In this sense, Derrida launches a critique on what he calls logo-centrism: which is the orientation of much of modern western thought towards "an order of meaning—thought, truth, reason, logic, the Word—conceived as existing in itself, as foundation" (Culler 1983, 92). In fact, when something is destroyed by a deconstructive reading, what is destroyed is not the text, but the domination of one aspect of special signification over other aspects of signification (Johnson 1992, 5). As will be seen, this aspect of deconstruction will be of great interest to the prophetic dream theory.

One use of Derrida's deconstruction in Laclau and Mouffe's theory is the transformation of moments into floating signifiers. According to Derrida, "text is the inexhaustible texture of unfinished meanings and a weave of endless strings of things other than themselves" (Derrida 1979, 84). Thus, regarding the prophetic dream theory, it can be said that the signs in the Holy Text, under the pretext of solving the Quranic problems, lose their stability and become floating signifiers. As a result, anyone can attach his/her desired meaning to the floating signifiers to produce a specific meaning required by the counter-discourse. The practical result of such an approach is the localization of the sacred text and, consequently, countless interpretations. Derrida's

deconstruction removes the transcendental signified entity in the text, which is the coherence of the whole text and to which every word and sentence is returned. As a result, what remains are wandering signs of the text, which are ready to accept any outside/other meanings.

To illustrate Derrida's theory, in the Bible we read "In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God" (John 1:1), which means the same as the concept of metaphysics of presence. Based on what Derrida asserted, metaphysics is based on the assumption that meaning, in any sense, is always present, and that its ignorance is due to our inability to find the right way or to the wrong tool we have chosen (Ahmadi 2005, 483). Derrida calls the immediate presence of meaning, expressed by the Greek word Logos, metaphysics. In fact, the centrality of Logos in meaning is attacked by Derrida. According to Derrida, deconstruction is not particularly concerned with meaning and interpretation or even philosophy or ideology, but "especially and inseparably (of) meaningful frames, institutional structures, pedagogical or rhetorical norms, the possibility of law, of authority, of representation in terms of its very market (Derrida in Montefiore 1982, 44).

In his article "Rise up, The Thought Should Be Altered," Soroush invites Muslims to return to the pre-orthodox era, a time when, according to him, everything was fluid from geographical boundaries to the meaning of disbelief and faith, the limits of law and order, Halal and Haram constraints, the concept of monotheism, attributes and words of God, and so on" (Soroush 2015). The word fluidity directs readers towards Derrida's deconstruction: it is in fluidity that the unified meaning can be eliminated and, consequently, numerous meanings are born. His final prescription begins with the word "must" and ends with the word "fluidity": "We must go back to the pre-orthodox era and re-fluidize everything from infidelity and faith, Halal and Haram, revelation and prophecy, and right and duty and make jurisprudence and theology fluid" (Soroush 2015, 2). In fact, fluidizing the meanings/concepts, which is the starting point of deconstruction, can also be regarded as the first component in discourse construction in Laclau and Mouffe's theory of discourse.

The Deconstructive Agent of the Prophetic Dream Theory

In Derrida's deconstruction we are dealing with a kind of meaning dispersion, comparable to a dream where a single meaning is elusive. The prophetic dream theory implicitly denies having a single, independent, and ultimate meaning in dispersing innumerable meanings in the dream-like world of the Holy Text. Primarily, Soroush replaces the proposition "Quran, the Words of Allah" with the "Quran, Mustafa's dreams." Herein, the moments of "word" and "Allah" in the sacred text are replaced with the elements of "dream" and "Mustafa" and, thus, the reader's mind is ready to accept an utter deconstruction from the very beginning. In his first article (2016), Soroush says, "I want to say" that "the Quran is the dreams of Mustafa" and then he

adds that a prophet who is known as the creator of the Quran is an evolving figure, which is to say that, over time and by gaining more experience, he would be able to produce a better text (Soroush 2016, 1). He also states that:

The language of the Quran is the language of a human being, and the Quran is directly the composition, experience, and growth of the soul of Muhammad (PBUH), his language and his expression. Muhammad as a historical person on the path of evolution continuously becomes more and more prophetic as time passes. His life becomes more flourishing and his eyes become more acute, and he becomes sharper in his pursuit of meaning and knowledge. [...] Moreover, if he had lived longer, learned diving better, found a wider patience and a stronger digestion, perhaps he would have hunted better and larger pearls from the sea of truths, and would have made the Quran better and the world richer. (Soroush 2016, 2)

The articulated process reflects a deconstructive endeavor inherent within the prophetic dream theory, whether embraced voluntarily or subconsciously. This theoretical framework, by transmuting the sacred text into a terrestrial construct, embarks upon the ambitious enterprise of imbuing it with divergent interpretations that challenge conventional paradigms. Subsequently, the dream interpreters—guided by their individual cognitive frameworks—proceed to impose their personalized understanding upon the text. This progression unveils the intricate dynamics where the text, initially positioned as a transcendent source of meaning, undergoes a process of disintegration into mutable signifiers. Consequently, the theory's pursuit entails both the fragmentation of an established conceptual unity and the facilitation of multitudinous, often conflicting, readings. This dialectic encapsulates the evolving interaction between foundational sacredness and evolving human engagement. Ultimately, the prophetic dream theory catalyzes a complex interplay where the text's inherent transcendence converges with interpretive human agency, inevitably altering the discursive landscape and summoning questions about the boundaries of interpretation and the negotiated construction of meaning.

Fluidity of Concepts

In a Derridean fashion, Soroush initiates his argument through deconstruction, intending to suspend the dichotomy between the addresser and the addressee. In this sense, the prophet, who was previously the addressee and the informant, is now considered a narrator. In the resulting suspension, the concepts become fluid and ready to be articulated into the new discourse. Soroush writes, "Muhammad (PBUH) is the narrator; that is, he is not the addressee and informant [...] he] is the narrator of experiences and the observer of the scenes he has seen and there is a huge difference between the narrator and the audience of the news [...] they did not tell him to go and tell the people ... there is no speech, audience, news, informant, and speaker" (Soroush 2016, 10). At

this stage, the moments are broken again and new elements are ready to be fused into the new discourse: instead of the notion of "Allah as the narrator and Muhammad (PBUH) as the listener," now it is assumed that "Muhammad (PBUH) is both the observer and the narrator" (Soroush 2016, 12). In the constructed suspension and the created crisis, the reader's mind is ready to embrace other meanings that the author demands. In this sense, the author selects specific words and concepts, fusing them into the body of his discourse, and elements such as the "written dream," the "mysterious" and "foggy" nature of the sacred text, the "dream interpretation," and "dream" are summoned from the field of discursivity and become moments in the new discourse.

The author no longer believes in interpreting the Holy Text of the Quran and, instead, introduces the term "dream interpretation." In the new discourse, interpretation of the Holy Text is exiled to the field of discursivity. In Soroush's view, "altering dream interpretation with text interpretation requires a paradigm shift and a fundamental pattern shift" (Soroush 2016, 8). The resulting intertwined network forces the reader to create doubts in the sacred text and, consequently, relate words and statements—that are inconsistent with his ideological biases—to the prophet's dream and his unconscious. Another articulated element is Soroush's claim that the Prophet became unconscious when receiving revelations: "Did the Prophet (PBUH) not pass into unconsciousness when he received the revelation, did he not suffer from negligence? And did he not share what he saw and heard with his companions after his awakening? [...] These revelations were so private, inner, surprising, and dreamy that everything was different from the events of the waking world, including its language" (Soroush 2016, 15). At this stage, the elements of "unconsciousness" and "negligence" are also articulated to this network in order to establish the claim that "revelation is the same as a dream" and other signified entities are eliminated and rejected. In fact, this is the hegemonic pressure of discourse.

Soroush goes on and states that text interpretation causes falling into the "bottomless pit of tasks" that distorts the message of the text. In his second article, in order to prove the Text's dreaminess, he tries to claim that the Holy Text is confused/disorderly (Soroush 2016, 9). He criticizes the narrative structure of Quranic suras (chapters) and articulates it to the foggy structure of a dream. Soroush writes:

The storytelling of the Quran is also clear in a state dream. The narrative leaps, holes, and gaps in these stories are such that the reader feels that the narrator jumps over the events and does not see or say everything, and sometimes sees and says things that are not feasible in the waking state, and it bears a striking resemblance to dreams in which events change rapidly, are torn apart, run through time, and have spatial ruptures [...]. They go from the first person to the third person and vice versa, and of course, it is not possible to understand their meaning except with a dreaminess and non-historical look. (Soroush 2016, 14)

Soroush's understanding of the narration leads the reader to distinguish between pre-modern, modern, and postmodern narratives. In postmodern narratives, there are fragmentary events that must be seen/understood together. In fact, in the postmodern narratives, there are leaps and bounds in the narrative. In postmodern novels, too, events are torn apart, time is broken, and events are spatially fragmented. Moreover, in postmodern novels, the narrative structure is not linear. The critics of these novels do not find the postmodern text irrational, confused, foggy, and dreamy, but invite the reader to see the whole text as a collage. What is certain is that Soroush assumed the Holy Text to have a plot, a chronological order, and to be linear; otherwise, it must be a dream. The Holy Text is a living organism in which each verse is an inseparable part of its totality, while each has its own meaning and its own life.

Desacralizing Strategies

In "Prophetic Dream Theory 1," examples are given from the Holy Quran in which some specific scenes are found out to be devoid of having a speaker called God. The tense of the verbs in these verses is past and they change to future in the interpretations, which according to Soroush is a trick in order to know God as the speaker:

In the lively and attractive scenes above (Quran 5:112-120, 39:68-74, and so on), it is as if the speaker—God—is absent from the scene and the Prophet himself is present as the observer, reporter, and narrator [...] that is, Muhammad is not the addressee, but the observer and narrator of the scene of the dialogue between Jesus and God. The scene of the Day of Judgment is even more fascinating and eloquent. It is as if the Prophet was standing in an eventful scene and the prophets, martyrs, and angels were coming and going before his eyes and he watched and, then, narrated the book. (Soroush 2016, 10)

Two points should be noted here: In theatrical plays, the characters' speech is presented without interruption from an omniscient narrator, and this absence does not negate the existence of the omniscient narrator. In these particular scenes, akin to what is found in drama, each character delivers his/her lines. Moreover, the usage of past tense verbs does not substantially undermine the hypothesis of the prophet functioning as both the addressee and the informant. In the Arabic language, past tense verbs can be employed to indicate an action that is anticipated to take place in the future. Let us review some examples.

Following the examples from the Quran, a question is asked, which targets the heart of the dominant discourse: "Where did these observations take place?" (Soroush 2016, 10) and the answer is just one word, in a "dream." Herein, the dream discourse has found its ultimate meaning and is ready to be articulated with necessary elements.

As a result, in the fifth article (2016), Muhammad (PBUH) and his "reports" are centralized: "the centrality is with Muhammad (PBUH) and his dreams, experiences,

and reports" (Soroush 2016, 20). Accordingly, the sacred text becomes decentralized/earthly and the words of God become the dreams of Muhammad (PBUH). In this dream, which "is sometimes disorderly, sometimes poetic, sometimes has a scientific discovery, and sometimes presents a scientific error" (Soroush 2016, 20), a "divine" human being becomes the doer and the creator of the work—the Holy Text—who "sometimes occupies the heaven and sometimes does not see under his feet" (Soroush 2016, 17). The author has translated verse 18:110 as follows; "I am a human being just like you being afflicted with revelation" (Soroush 2016, 15). In Soroush's discourse, the word "afflicted," which can bring other meanings to the reader's mind, is articulated with revelation so that, due to the hegemonic pressure, other floating signifiers do not have the opportunity to be present in the reader's mind. After constructing the discourse, establishing the moments and nodal points, and hegemonizing the meanings and concepts, it is the time to expand the prophetic experience, because the work of the Prophet is "incomplete and limited" and that God still has words to say:

Muhammad (PBUH) is filled with God and God becomes the stature of Muhammad (PBUH) and the words are worthy of Muhammad's knowledge, not God's knowledge. [...] There is an effective shortcoming in the work and the defect of the author in the writing. Therefore, the Quran, as a writing of an innovative and lofty albeit imperfect and limited individual, cannot be complete in any way [...] Moreover, God still has words to be said, and it cannot be supposed that with the coming of the Quran and the last prophet, revelation and inspiration ended and there is no new word for God. Yes, much more still remains, and therefore, the expansion of the prophetic experience is possible. (Soroush 2014, 7)

Herein, the language of the Holy Quran, which is mysterious, dreamy, and foggy (Soroush 2014, 3), is not equivalent to the language of awakening, and thus, the words signify symbolic and mysterious entities. Moreover, the moment⁵ that is put in crisis is the dichotomy and distance between the speaker and the listener: "To become unconscious, to speak to oneself, to think of oneself as another, and to hear one's own words from another's mouth, and so on, these are wonders of the dream world" (Soroush 2014, 2). In the traditional discourse, the speaker is God and the listener is the Prophet, while in the discourse of the prophetic dream, the Prophet becomes the observer and narrator. Herein, the Prophet in his dreams "sometimes goes from himself to himself, takes the face of others, and sits in the place of other prophets" (Soroush 2014, 2). Soroush exiles revelation to the field of discursivity and instead articulates the moment of "inner experiences." The next moment is Gabriel, who must be deconstructed in such a way that it can have a place

5. Laclau and Mouffe explain that "the differential positions, insofar as they appear articulated within a discourse" are called moments (Laclau and Mouffe 1985, 105).

in the prophetic dream discourse: "Gabriel was the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) who appeared to him in a holy dream" (Soroush 2014, 4). Gabriel is no longer the messenger angel, but is a dimension of the Prophets' existence that speaks to himself. Finally, God must also be constructed in a way that is consistent with the new discourse: "in his dream, the Prophet would also sit in the place of God and speak instead of Him with his own language" (Soroush 2014, 4).

In his fifth article (2016), Soroush deconstructs the two moments of causality and time. According to him, time and causality do not have a fixed direction and clarity in the Holy Quran, and accordingly, he believes that the Text is contradictory, paradoxical, and conflicting. In this sense, he aims to put the traditional discourse in crisis, by which he is able to question, deconstruct, and ultimately, articulate the prophetic dream discourse. When the Holy Text is suspended, the words become elements in the hands of dream interpreters who take the suspended elements and articulate them into their own favored discourse. In this sense, the words/sentences of the sacred text will become hegemonic and would take a personal/partisan/political function.

In his second article (2014), Soroush, in a Freudian manner, proposes that in order to know the Prophet, one must know his dreams: "People can be understood through their dreams as it is the same with the prophets, it is in these dreams that a prophet is known" (Soroush 2014, 5). After reading the prophetic dream theory, the readers can claim that the Holy Text is just the manifest content and should be interpreted in order to find out what the Prophet did not remember or the latent content. Thus, she/he can interpret the words of the desacralized Text as she/he wishes, because the ultimate meaning (metaphysics of presence) has lost its validity as a transcendental signified entity. This perceptual shift triggers a paradigmatic transformation wherein the once assured presence of metaphysical meaning is dismantled, thereby subverting the traditional assurance of an unequivocal, fixed interpretation. The interpretative arena evolves into a realm of multiplicity, wherein the reader becomes an active agent, interweaving their subjective insights with the multifarious layers of interpretation. The reconfiguration of the Text from an object of reverence to an object of negotiable decipherment epitomizes the intricate interplay between the text's intrinsic significance and the reader's responsive agency. This nuanced dynamic ultimately challenges established conventions of textual apprehension and introduces a polyphony of perspectives in the ever-fluctuating landscape of interpretation.

One of the main goals of the prophetic dream theory, as its theorist acknowledges, is that in the future dream interpreters who are familiar with various sciences—humanities and natural sciences—will start interpreting the dreams of the Holy Quran. However, in order to just propose this, Soroush did not need to deconstruct the whole text (Soroush 2016, 10). For further proof, Soroush brings up some historical narrations (Soroush 2016, 10), which are human constructions based on the narrator's taste/orientation/insight, and thus, unreliable sources.

Revelation is a major nodal points that is attacked by Soroush. The message of God, which reaches his prophet through revelation, is deconstructed in this theory and is signified as a dream world. When the prophet is not the subject of revelation, but only observes a series of audio-visual images, it will pave the way for the articulation of a new discourse, in which the nodal points and moments of the traditional view of Islam come to have other meanings. The Prophetic Dream theory is the starting point of a movement in which a new discourse will be formed: bringing about a completely different definition of God, the prophet, the immaterial world, revelation, sin, Satan, and so on. Dream interpreters come to the text/dream having their own ideological assumptions that exist, as Louis Althusser once stated, in an apparatus, and its practice or practices (Althusser 1971, 112). Accordingly, it would result in an ideological understanding of the Holy Text. In other words, from this theory, ideological gods will be born.

Given the inclusive nature of this theory, where any critique can be invalidated by attributing it to the dream of the Prophet, it becomes challenging to criticize this theory. However, it can be argued that trying to create meaning by pursuing a theory that results in countless significations is ultimately futile. Moreover, the role of the dreamer's subconscious mind should not be left unnoticed in seeing and narrating dreams, which is the main source of repressed desires and bad memories. Thus, if we accept the theory, the sacred text will become a text like novel, having a wide variety of voices written by a man having some dreams. In this way, you can say how the theory will lead us to construct counter/alternative discourses.

As previously mentioned, Soroush claims that the Holy Quran is the words of Muhammad (PBUH) who witnessed and observed scenes in a dream-like world, and then, narrated them after returning to the material world. In this sense, the narration must be transmitted by a language that loses its effect over time and must be constantly refined to maintain its impact on the audience. In other words, the sacred text would have become like a literary work in which words and sentences must be constantly replaced by the author to become closer to that ideal form/content. Accordingly, the sacred text will be read, after becoming earthly/historicized, along with other texts, namely political, literary, economic, and other texts. Alternatively put, what in the nineteenth century England was known as the scientific study of the Bible (Abrams 2012, 1896). In these circumstances, the interpretation of the sacred text depends on historical and social situations, and the Holy Quran will practically become a literary text that will have something the size of a literary text to offer to modern man. Allah's words would become a narration like all other narrations that human beings have constructed about their relationship with God. Envision the consequences that will follow when the Holy Text is subjected to the reader response criticism, which regards that reader as an active agent who imparts "real existence" to the work and completes its meaning through interpretation.

In this theory, in which meaning is suspended, Soroush draws attention to this point: building a theory to solve Quranic problems. A theory by which the mind of the prophet-narrator can be psychoanalyzed to give birth to the meanings that one desires/seeks from the text. In fact, the psychoanalyst/dream interpreter also has an unconscious, which will affect the interpretation.

The dream narrator, who uses words to convey abstract images, begins to narrate according to what she/he remembers about the order of images. Accordingly, the narration is born, but the dreamer, with countless questions and assumptions in mind, keeps coming back to and refining it. This results in multiple copies of the Holy Quran or modified Qurans based on prophetic/visual dreams. In fact, if the Prophet narrated the images of his dreams, we would have to deal with a wide variety of interpretations narrated by the Prophet himself based on his dreams. In other words, he would bring about interpretations of his dreams rather than what we know today as the Holy Quran. Thus, on the one hand, this theory finds the sacred text in need of psychoanalysis, because the dream world, even if it is a prophetic dream, is influenced by the subconscious mind of the individual, and on the other hand, deconstructs the articulated words of the sacred text, then turning them into elements. In this sense, anyone who encounters a spiritual experience can construct his/her own discourse/religion by introducing special nodal points and then articulating elements to them.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the deconstruction of the sacred text has always been pursued in a wide variety of ways. Thus, there will never be an end to the process of deconstruction. In other words, meanings are constantly removed/rejected and articulated again by competing discourses in a continuous process, aiming to challenge the semantic stability using deconstruction. In fact, the deconstruction of the dominant discourse, as Soroush did, is the articulation of the exiled meanings into moments, and consequently, the construction of novel discourses. When we read in the Bible that "in the beginning was the word, and the word was with God," this is in fact the metaphysics of presence that Derrida initiated and then Soroush pursued to dismiss the Holy Text, resulting in the secularization of the sacred text. In this sense, floating signifiers can be attached to any other signified entities, having myriad other meanings or in fact having no fixed meaning at all.

If the commentators are unable to interpret some specific words, phrases, or sentences in the Quran, the Holy Text cannot rationally be reduced to dreams/prophetic-visual statements because, in this regard, multiple Qurans would be created, each having its own signification/interpretation of the Prophet's dream. In other words, there can be various narrations from a scene in a dream-like world signifying the unconscious anxieties of the dreamer. Undermining the stability of the words/phrases/

sentences of the Holy Quran and attaching them to myriad other significations can result in having different versions of the text. Moreover, considering the sacred text as a narrative of the Holy Prophet's dreams requires a poet-prophet who, in his solitude, thinks of substituting/constructing better words/sentence structures to find the right format for his narrative. However, it seems that one has to think of an alternative way to solve the Quranic problems, rather than deconstructing or considering it as a product of a prophetic dream.

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