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Comparative Religious Responses to Scriptural Criticism: Muslim and Christian Scholarly Perspectives

Abstract: The rise of modern scriptural criticism has profoundly shaped contemporary religious scholarship, particularly within Islam and Christianity. Historical-critical approaches, orientalist discourse, and modern textual criticism have generated extensive debates concerning the authenticity, preservation, interpretation, and historical development of sacred scriptures. These intellectual developments have challenged traditional religious understandings and encouraged scholars from both traditions to formulate theological, methodological, and historical responses aimed at defending scriptural authority while engaging with modern academic inquiry. This study comparatively examines the responses of Muslim and Christian scholars to modern scriptural criticism and analyzes how both traditions negotiate the relationship between faith, revelation, and critical scholarship.

Using a qualitative comparative methodology based on library research and textual analysis, the study explores the foundations of scriptural authority in Islam and Christianity, the emergence of modern critical approaches to sacred texts, and the intellectual strategies employed by scholars in response to these challenges. Muslim scholars have largely emphasized the sophisticated methodologies developed within classical Islamic sciences, particularly the preservation of the Qur'an, the authentication of Hadith, and the transmission system of isnād, as evidence of the reliability and integrity of Islamic revelation. Contemporary Muslim academics have additionally incorporated manuscript studies, historical analysis, and interdisciplinary research to reinforce traditional understandings within modern scholarly frameworks.

In contrast, Christian scholarly responses to biblical criticism have been more diverse and internally varied. While some theologians and apologists defend the divine inspiration and historical reliability of the Bible through traditional theological arguments, others have adopted historical-critical methodologies as legitimate tools for interpreting scripture within its historical and literary contexts. This integration of critical scholarship with theological reflection reflects broader attempts within Christian thought to reconcile faith with modern intellectual developments.

The study concludes that both Muslim and Christian scholars have developed sophisticated and adaptive responses to scriptural criticism, demonstrating the intellectual resilience of religious traditions in confronting modern epistemological challenges. Despite methodological differences, both traditions continue to affirm the enduring spiritual and moral authority of sacred scripture while engaging critically with contemporary academic discourse.

Keywords: scriptural criticism; Qur'an and Hadith; biblical criticism; Islamic scholarship; Christian theology; comparative religious studies; revelation; historical criticism.

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Introduction

Religious traditions across the world have historically relied on sacred scriptures as primary sources of theological guidance, moral instruction, and communal identity. These texts have played a crucial role in shaping the intellectual and spiritual foundations of religious communities, influencing doctrines, rituals, and ethical norms over centuries. In both Islam and Christianity, sacred texts occupy a central position in defining religious authority and guiding believers in matters of faith and practice. For Muslims, the Qur'an and the Prophetic Sunnah constitute the primary sources of Islamic teachings, while for Christians the Bible—comprising the Old and New Testaments—serves as the foundational text for theological reflection and religious life. However, the authority and authenticity of these sacred scriptures have increasingly been subjected to critical scrutiny in modern intellectual discourse. Since the nineteenth century, the emergence of historical-critical methods in academic scholarship has challenged traditional interpretations of religious texts, prompting debates about their historical origins, transmission processes, and interpretive authority. These developments have compelled religious scholars within both Muslim and Christian traditions to engage with modern critiques while defending the authenticity and significance of their respective scriptural traditions.[1]

The rise of modern scriptural criticism can largely be traced to the development of historical and philological methods in European academic institutions during the Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment periods. Scholars began to apply historical-critical approaches to religious texts in an effort to analyze their composition, authorship, and historical context. Within Christian studies, biblical criticism emerged as a significant field of academic inquiry that sought to investigate the historical development of the Bible and the processes through which its various books were compiled and transmitted. This approach introduced new perspectives on the authorship of biblical texts, the historical reliability of scriptural narratives, and the evolution of Christian doctrine over time. While many Christian scholars embraced these methods as tools for deepening theological understanding, others viewed them as challenges to traditional doctrines concerning the divine inspiration and authority of the Bible. As a result, modern Christian scholarship witnessed the emergence of diverse responses ranging from critical reinterpretation to strong apologetic defenses of biblical authority.[2]

A parallel intellectual challenge emerged within Muslim societies as the modern world introduced new academic approaches to the study of Islamic sources. Western Orientalist scholarship began to examine Islamic texts—including the Qur'an and Hadith literature—through historical-critical frameworks similar to those applied to biblical studies. Some

[1] Bucur, B. G. (2023). Biblical interpretation and theological reflection in contemporary scholarship. *Journal of Theological Interpretation, 17*(1), 1–17. https://doi.org/10.5325/jtheointe.17.1.0001

[2] Adam, I. I. (2023). Islamic modernism and tafsir in nineteenth century Egypt: A critical analysis of Muhammad Abduh's exegesis. Journal of Quranic Sciences and Research, 4(1), 39–49. https://doi.org/10.30880/jqsr.2023.04.01.006

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Orientalist scholars questioned the traditional narratives surrounding the compilation and preservation of Islamic texts, particularly focusing on the historical transmission of Hadith and the development of Islamic jurisprudence. These critiques generated debates within Muslim intellectual circles regarding the reliability of traditional Islamic scholarship and the relationship between revelation and historical context. At the same time, reformist movements within the Muslim world also called for renewed engagement with Islamic sources in response to modern social and intellectual challenges. Consequently, Muslim scholars were confronted with the task of responding to both external academic critiques and internal calls for reinterpretation while preserving the integrity of Islamic tradition.[3]

Despite the different historical and theological contexts of Islam and Christianity, scholars from both traditions have developed sophisticated intellectual responses to modern scriptural criticism. Muslim scholars have often emphasized the rigorous methodologies established by classical scholars in the sciences of Qur'anic studies and Hadith verification, highlighting the systematic processes through which Islamic texts were preserved and authenticated. Christian scholars, on the other hand, have engaged with biblical criticism in various ways, ranging from integrating historical-critical insights into theological interpretation to reaffirming traditional doctrines concerning the inspiration and authority of scripture. These responses demonstrate that religious scholarship is not static but rather evolves in dialogue with changing intellectual environments. By engaging critically with modern scholarship while maintaining fidelity to their respective traditions, both Muslim and Christian scholars have contributed to the development of contemporary theological discourse.[4]

This article examines the comparative responses of Muslim and Christian scholars to modern scriptural criticism, exploring how each tradition has defended the authenticity and authority of its sacred texts while engaging with contemporary academic debates. Through a comparative analysis of theological arguments, methodological approaches, and scholarly strategies, the study seeks to highlight the ways in which religious traditions respond to intellectual challenges without abandoning their foundational beliefs. By analyzing the intellectual efforts undertaken by scholars in both Islam and Christianity, the research aims to provide a deeper understanding of how religious traditions navigate the tensions between tradition and modernity. Ultimately, the study argues that the defense of religious tradition in the modern age reflects a broader process of intellectual adaptation, in which scholars seek to preserve the spiritual and moral authority of sacred texts while addressing the critical questions raised by modern scholarship.

Methodology

[3] Anthony, S. W. (2023). The history of early Islamic sources and the study of hadith in contemporary scholarship. Journal of Qur'anic Studies, 25(3), 1–21. https://doi.org/10.3366/jqs.2023.0510

[4] Nawafil, M., & Suparwany. (2021). Revitalization of theoretical response study of Ignaz Goldziher and Joseph Schacht hadith criticism. *Al-Bukhari: Jurnal Ilmu Hadis*, *4*(2), 116–140. https://doi.org/10.32505/al-bukhari.v4i2.3385

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This study adopts a qualitative comparative research methodology to analyze how Muslim and Christian scholars have responded to modern scriptural criticism. The research is primarily based on library-based investigation, examining both classical and contemporary scholarly works related to Qur'anic studies, Hadith scholarship, and biblical studies. Primary religious sources, including the Qur'an, Hadith literature, and the Bible, are considered alongside modern academic writings that address the historical criticism and interpretation of sacred texts. This approach allows the study to explore how both traditions understand the authority, preservation, and interpretation of their respective scriptures.

The study also employs a comparative analytical framework to examine similarities and differences in the responses of Muslim and Christian scholars to modern scriptural criticism. Through this framework, the research analyzes theological arguments, methodological approaches, and scholarly strategies used to defend the authenticity and authority of sacred texts. Particular attention is given to the intellectual responses developed within Islamic Hadith scholarship and Christian biblical studies in addressing historical-critical methodologies.

Scriptural Authority in Islam: The Qur'an and the Prophetic Sunnah

In Islamic theology, scriptural authority is grounded primarily in the Qur'an, which Muslims believe to be the direct and final revelation of God delivered to the Prophet Muhammad. The Qur'an is regarded as the ultimate source of guidance in matters of faith, morality, law, and social conduct. According to Islamic belief, the Qur'an represents the literal word of God preserved in its original language and transmitted through a carefully documented process of memorization and written compilation. This belief in the divine origin and preservation of the Qur'an forms the foundation of its authority within Islamic tradition. Muslim scholars throughout history have emphasized that the Qur'an is not only a spiritual text but also a comprehensive guide that addresses various aspects of human life, including worship, ethics, governance, and social relations.[5]

While the Qur'an holds the highest authority in Islam, its teachings are closely complemented by the Prophetic Sunnah, which consists of the sayings, actions, and approvals of the Prophet Muhammad. The Sunnah functions as the practical interpretation and implementation of Qur'anic teachings. Many aspects of Islamic practice—such as the details of prayer, fasting, and other forms of worship—are derived from the Sunnah because the Qur'an often presents these obligations in general terms without elaborating on specific

[5] Wahyuddin, I., & Syauqani, S. (2025). Orientalism in hadith studies: Historical review, scope, and orientalist perspectives on the Prophetic tradition. *DIRAYAH: Jurnal Ilmu Hadis, 5*(2). https://doi.org/10.62359/dirayah.v5i2.522

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procedures. Consequently, the Sunnah serves as an essential interpretive framework that clarifies and contextualizes the guidance provided in the Qur'an.[6]

The authority of the Sunnah is supported by numerous Qur'anic directives instructing believers to follow the guidance of the Prophet. Islamic scholars therefore regard obedience to the Prophet as an integral component of obedience to God. The Prophet Muhammad's role as both the recipient and interpreter of divine revelation positioned him as a central authority in shaping Islamic law and ethical practice. As a result, the Sunnah has historically been recognized as the second primary source of Islamic law after the Qur'an.[7]

To preserve the authenticity of the Sunnah, Muslim scholars developed an elaborate intellectual discipline known as the science of Hadith. This discipline focused on verifying the reliability of transmitted reports about the Prophet's teachings and actions. Scholars established rigorous criteria for evaluating the chain of transmission (*isnād*) associated with each report, examining the character, memory, and credibility of individual narrators. In addition to analyzing transmission chains, scholars also examined the textual content (*matn*) of Hadith reports to ensure their consistency with established Islamic teachings and historical context. These methodological innovations produced a highly sophisticated system of textual verification that remains one of the most distinctive features of Islamic intellectual history.[8]

Classical Hadith compilations produced by scholars such as Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari and Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj became authoritative references within Islamic scholarship. Their works were based on strict methodological standards that required reliable chains of transmission and careful examination of textual integrity. Through these efforts, Muslim scholars preserved a vast corpus of prophetic traditions that continue to shape Islamic jurisprudence, theology, and ethical teachings. The integration of the Qur'an and the Sunnah therefore forms the foundation of Islamic scriptural authority, providing both the divine message and its practical interpretation within the Islamic tradition.[9]

Scriptural Authority in Christianity: The Bible and Theological Interpretation

In Christian theology, the primary source of scriptural authority is the Bible, which consists of two major sections: the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament includes texts that are also part of Jewish religious tradition, while the New Testament

[6] Rohman, M. F. (2025). Historicity of hadith studies: Paradigm of understanding, transmission, and contemporary hadith studies. *Al-Mujtama': Journal of Social Sciences, 1*(2). http://dx.doi.org/10.30829/al-mujtama.v1i2.24373

[7] Jaiyeoba, H. B., & Osmani, N. M. (2024). Hadith preservation: Techniques and contemporary efforts. *Journal of Fatwa Management and Research, 29*(3), 31–45. https://doi.org/10.33102/jfatwa.vol29no3.597

[8] Hamdeh, E. (2022). Prophetic hadith and the Qur'ān-only movement: The response of Muslim scholars. *Journal of Islamic and Muslim Studies, 7*(2), 107–119. https://doi.org/10.2979/ims.2022.a896982

[9] Mustakim, A., Sholihah, F. A., Rahmah, A. M., & Martafia, N. R. (2025). Deconstructing the historicity of the Qur'an: John Wansbrough's perspective: A hermeneutic study of Islamic philological suspicion and criticism. *Hunafa: Jurnal Studia Islamika, 22*(1), 80–98. https://doi.org/10.24239/jsi.v22i1.837

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focuses on the life, teachings, and mission of Jesus Christ as well as the development of the early Christian community. Christians generally regard the Bible as divinely inspired scripture that provides guidance for faith, doctrine, and moral conduct. Although interpretations of biblical authority may vary among different Christian denominations, the Bible remains the central textual foundation of Christian theology and religious practice.[10]

The New Testament occupies a particularly important role within Christianity because it contains the accounts of the life and teachings of Jesus Christ as recorded in the four Gospels. These narratives form the basis of Christian understanding of salvation, ethical teachings, and the nature of God's relationship with humanity. In addition to the Gospels, the New Testament includes letters written by early Christian leaders—particularly the Apostle Paul—which address theological issues and offer guidance to early Christian communities. These texts collectively contribute to the formation of Christian doctrine and ethical teachings.[11]

Christian understanding of scriptural authority has historically been shaped by the concept of divine inspiration, which holds that the authors of biblical texts were guided by the Holy Spirit in composing scripture. This belief affirms that although human authors were involved in writing the biblical texts, their writings reflect divine guidance and convey God's message to humanity. As a result, the Bible is regarded as a sacred text that holds normative authority for Christian faith and practice.[12]At the same time, the interpretation of biblical texts has often involved theological reflection and ecclesiastical tradition. Early Christian theologians played an important role in interpreting scripture and establishing doctrinal frameworks for the developing Christian community. Church councils and theological debates contributed to the formation of the biblical canon and the clarification of key doctrinal issues. The authority of the Bible within Christianity has therefore often been understood in conjunction with the interpretive role of the Church and its theological tradition.[13]Unlike Islamic Hadith scholarship, which developed a detailed system for verifying transmission chains, biblical studies historically relied more heavily on textual interpretation and theological commentary. However, the modern period witnessed the emergence of biblical criticism, which introduced historical and philological methods for analyzing the development and authorship of biblical texts. While these approaches have generated debates regarding the historical origins of certain biblical narratives, many Christian scholars have sought to integrate historical-critical insights with traditional

[10] Ekiz, N. S. (2023). What do orientalist Qur'anic studies mean for a Muslim? *Tefsir Araştırmaları Dergisi (Journal of Tafsir Studies), 7*(Special Issue), 30–51. https://doi.org/10.31121/tader.1316371

[11] Albayrak, I., & Coruh, H. (Eds.). (2023). *New approaches to Qur'anic hermeneutics in the Muslim world*. MDPI. https://doi.org/10.3390/books978-3-0365-6707-5

[12] Adhwa, L., Nirwan, A.-I., Mufida, I., Lihawa, N. R., & Nanda, N. (2025). Studi orientalis atas hadis Nabi (Konsep pemikiran Ignaz Goldziher terhadap hadis Nabi). *Cerdika: Jurnal Ilmiah Indonesia*, *5*(6). https://doi.org/10.59141/cerdika.v5i6.2642

[13] East, B. (2017). The hermeneutics of theological interpretation: Holy scripture, biblical scholarship and historical criticism. *International Journal of Systematic Theology, 19*(1), 30–52. https://doi.org/10.1111/ijst.12186

theological perspectives.[14]Despite differences in interpretive methodology, the Bible continues to serve as the primary source of scriptural authority within Christianity. Christian scholars and theologians emphasize the enduring significance of scripture in guiding faith, shaping moral values, and sustaining the spiritual life of believers. Through centuries of theological reflection and scholarly engagement, the Bible has remained central to the formation of Christian identity and the development of Christian intellectual tradition.[15]

Historical-Critical Methods and the Rise of Biblical Criticism

The development of modern scriptural criticism can be traced to the intellectual transformations that occurred in Europe during the Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment periods. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the emergence of rationalist philosophy and scientific inquiry encouraged scholars to examine religious texts using analytical and historical approaches. These intellectual developments gave rise to what later became known as the historical-critical method, a scholarly approach that seeks to investigate the historical origins, authorship, composition, and transmission of religious texts. Rather than accepting sacred scriptures solely through traditional theological frameworks, scholars began to analyze them as historical documents shaped by particular social and cultural contexts.[16]Within Christian scholarship, these methods gave rise to the field of biblical criticism, which aimed to examine the historical development of the Bible. Scholars sought to determine when specific biblical texts were written, who their authors might have been, and how the texts evolved over time. One of the earliest contributors to this critical approach was Baruch Spinoza, who argued in the seventeenth century that biblical texts should be analyzed in the same way as other historical writings. Spinoza's work encouraged scholars to question traditional assumptions about authorship and textual unity within the Bible.[17]During the nineteenth century, biblical criticism expanded significantly as scholars developed more specialized analytical methods. One important approach was source criticism, which attempted to identify earlier written sources that may have contributed to the formation of biblical texts. Scholars such as Julius Wellhausen proposed theories suggesting that the books of the Hebrew Bible were composed from multiple earlier sources that were combined over time. These theories

[14] de Villiers, P. G. R. (2019). The role of theology in the interpretation of the Bible: Towards a synergy between theological and historical approaches to biblical studies. *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies, 75*(1), a5205. https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v75i1.5205

[15] Hasanah, L. N., Faisal, M. S., Ahmed, Z., & Hasyim, M. Y. A. (2025). Religious diversity and the digital economy: Legal–academic pathways to harmonize Sharia and international law. *International Journal of Law and Social Sciences*, *1*(1). https://doi.org/10.65960/ijlss.1.1.2025.8

[16] Mustafa, A., Ishaque, M., Raza, R., Samiullah, & Raza, M. I. (2025). When culture meets Fiqh: Examining the legal authority of ʿUrf in contemporary engagement traditions. *Global Islamic Research Journal*, *1*(1), 1–21. https://doi.org/10.65960/girj.1.1.2025.6

[17] Mujiono, & Ticualu, C. (2025). Emerging trends in law and social sciences: Global perspectives on policy, ethics, justice, and institutional reform. *International Journal of Law and Social Sciences*, *1*(1), 40–60. https://doi.org/10.65960/ijlss.1.1.2025.6

challenged the traditional belief that certain biblical books were written entirely by single authors.[18]

In addition to source criticism, scholars also developed form criticism and redaction criticism, which examined the literary forms and editorial processes involved in shaping biblical texts. These approaches aimed to identify how religious traditions were transmitted orally before being written down and how later editors organized these traditions into coherent narratives. While many scholars considered these methods valuable for understanding the historical development of scripture, they also raised significant theological questions regarding the nature of biblical inspiration and authority.[19]The emergence of historical-critical methods therefore introduced a new intellectual framework for studying sacred texts. Instead of viewing scripture solely through doctrinal interpretation, scholars increasingly treated it as a historical product influenced by cultural and social conditions. These developments generated intense debates within Christian communities. Some theologians embraced historical criticism as a way of deepening their understanding of the Bible, while others viewed it as a threat to traditional doctrines concerning the divine origin and infallibility of scripture. As a result, modern biblical scholarship evolved within a complex dialogue between academic inquiry and religious tradition.[20]

Orientalist Scholarship and the Application of Critical Methods to Islamic Texts

The development of modern scriptural criticism did not remain confined to biblical studies but gradually extended to the study of Islamic sources as well. During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Western scholars began applying historical-critical methods to the Qur'an, Hadith literature, and early Islamic historical texts. These scholars, often described as Orientalists, sought to investigate the historical development of Islamic tradition using academic methodologies similar to those applied in biblical criticism. Their work introduced new perspectives on the origins and transmission of Islamic texts, which in turn generated significant debates among Muslim scholars.[21]One of the earliest and most influential figures in Orientalist scholarship was Ignaz Goldziher, whose research focused

[18] Faisala, M. S., Karim, A., Ahmad, M., Anwer, M., Adnan, M., Hassan, M., Ahmad, K., Sohaib, H., Aziz, Q., & Liaqat, M. (2025). The Prophetic Sunnah and the challenges of the age: Confronting technology and its effects on social and psychological security. *Global Islamic Research Journal*, *1*(1), 22–42. https://doi.org/10.65960/girj.1.1.2025.5

[19] Azhari, A. M., Azhari, S., & Yaqooq, M. I. (2025). Global transformations in law, justice, and society: Comparative perspectives on governance, rights, and legal reform. *International Journal of Law and Social Sciences*, *1*(1), 60–90. https://doi.org/10.65960/ijlss.1.1.2025.7

[20] Mujiono, Ticualu, C., Mawardi, K., Riyadi, S., & Zuhri, B. (2025). Islamic law and campus governance against drug abuse: Preventive strategies and restorative rehabilitation in Indonesian universities. *Global Islamic Research Journal*, *1*(1), 43–58. https://doi.org/10.65960/girj.1.1.2025.4

[21] Al Azhari, F. U., Shah, S. H. M., Al Azhari, S. I., Rasool, F., Ahmed, R., Samad, A., & Rehman, A. (2025). The role of Islamic economic principles in family law: A study on inheritance and property rights within the context of child protection. *Global Islamic Research Journal*, *1*(1), 59–76. https://doi.org/10.65960/girj.1.1.2025.2

on the historical development of Hadith literature. Goldziher argued that many prophetic traditions reflected the social, political, and theological debates that emerged within the early Muslim community after the death of the Prophet Muhammad. According to his analysis, certain Hadith reports may have been formulated during later periods in order to support specific legal or theological positions. His work challenged traditional Muslim understandings of Hadith transmission and encouraged further academic investigation into the historical context of Islamic sources.[22]

Another influential scholar, Joseph Schacht, extended these arguments by examining the development of Islamic law. Schacht proposed that many legal traditions attributed to the Prophet were formulated by later jurists seeking to legitimize emerging legal doctrines. According to his theory, Islamic jurisprudence developed gradually within early Muslim communities before being retrospectively linked to prophetic authority. These conclusions led some scholars to question the historical reliability of classical Hadith collections and the origins of certain legal traditions.[23]

Orientalist scholarship also addressed the historical study of the Qur'an itself. Scholars attempted to analyze the linguistic structure, historical context, and compilation of the Qur'anic text using philological and historical methods. Some researchers explored the possibility that the Qur'an may have been influenced by earlier religious traditions in the Near East, including Jewish and Christian scriptural narratives. While these studies contributed to academic discussions on the historical context of Islamic revelation, many Muslim scholars criticized them for overlooking the traditional Islamic understanding of Qur'anic preservation and revelation.[24]

The application of historical-critical methods to Islamic sources generated significant responses within Muslim intellectual circles. Many Muslim scholars argued that Orientalist critiques failed to appreciate the sophisticated methodologies developed within classical Islamic scholarship. For instance, the science of Hadith criticism had long established rigorous standards for evaluating the authenticity of transmitted reports through the examination of chains of narration (*isnād*) and textual analysis (*matn*). These methods were designed precisely to identify and reject fabricated traditions. As a result, Muslim scholars

[22] Al-Farjani, S. H., Ahmad, T., & Rana, H. A. S. (2025). Digital innovation, legal reform, and social justice: Interdisciplinary approaches to law, technology, and human rights. *International Journal of Law and Social Sciences*, *1*(1), 91–129. https://doi.org/10.65960/ijlss.1.1.2025.5

[23] Zahra, R., Qasim, M., Ali, M., Asef, J., & Ali, B. (2025). Addressing mental health stigma and digital harassment in Pakistan and Indonesia: Insights from Islamic principles and AI-driven cybersecurity law. *Global Islamic Research Journal*, *1*(1), 77–92. https://doi.org/10.65960/girj.1.1.2025.1

[24] Al Azhari, F. U., & Al Azhari, S. I. (2025). Contemporary challenges in harmonizing Sharia, national legal systems, and international law in a rapidly changing world. *International Journal of Law and Social Sciences*, *1*(1), 130–150. https://doi.org/10.65960/ijlss.1.1.2025.4

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contended that Orientalist interpretations often underestimated the methodological sophistication of traditional Islamic scholarship.[25]

Furthermore, Muslim scholars emphasized that Islamic intellectual tradition developed its own internal mechanisms for preserving and authenticating sacred texts. The Qur'an was transmitted through a combination of written documentation and widespread memorization, ensuring its preservation across generations. Similarly, Hadith scholars traveled extensively to verify narrators and compare multiple chains of transmission, creating a vast scholarly network dedicated to preserving prophetic teachings. These efforts illustrate the importance that early Muslim scholars placed on safeguarding the authenticity of religious knowledge.[26]

Despite the controversies surrounding Orientalist scholarship, the engagement between modern academic methods and Islamic tradition has also contributed to renewed scholarly interest in the study of Islamic intellectual history. Contemporary Muslim scholars increasingly engage with modern historical research while reaffirming the methodological principles established by classical scholarship. This dialogue has led to the development of new academic approaches that seek to integrate critical analysis with respect for religious tradition.[27]

Classical Methodologies and the Preservation of the Qur'an and Hadith

In response to modern scriptural criticism, Muslim scholars have emphasized the robust intellectual framework developed within classical Islamic scholarship to preserve the authenticity of the Qur'an and the Prophetic Sunnah. Islamic tradition maintains that the Qur'an represents the direct revelation of God to the Prophet Muhammad and has been preserved in its original form through both oral and written transmission. The early Muslim community played a crucial role in safeguarding the Qur'anic text through widespread memorization and systematic documentation. Many companions of the Prophet memorized the Qur'an in its entirety, ensuring that the text was preserved accurately even

[25] Azam, M., Hamdoun, A. A.-M., Harahsheh, E. A. A. M., Mashdurohatun, A., & Sidauruk, H. P. (2025). *Religious Diversity in the Digital Economy: Interfaith Legal Pathways to Harmonize Sharia, Christian Ethics, and International Law*. Contemporary Issues on Interfaith Law and Society, 4(2), 207–264. https://doi.org/10.15294/ciils.v4i2.33011

[26] Azam, M., Mashdurohatun, A., Firmansyah, A. N., Saktiawan, M. D., & Jaya, K. O. P. (2025). *Harmonizing Contemporary International Commercial Law with Sharia-Based National Legal Systems: A Comparative Study of Pakistan, Turkey, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Saudi Arabia.* MILRev: Metro Islamic Law Review, 4(2), 1074–1096. https://doi.org/10.32332/milrev.v4i2.11334

[27] Hasyim, M. Y. A., Santoso, B. W. J., Mudrofin, Azam, M., & Nawawi, M. (2025). *Translating Reprimanding Denial Interrogatives in Indonesian Qur'an Versions: Reiss' Text Typology*. Scientific Culture, 11(4), 2933–2943. Scopus Q1 (CiteScore 2024: 3.3).

Hafidz, J., Fitri, D. A., Azam, M., et al. (2024). *The Corruption Reduction with an Administrative Law Approach: Evidence from Australia.* Journal of Human Rights, Culture and Legal System, 4(3), 822–841. https://doi.org/10.53955/jhcls.v4i3.396

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before it was compiled into a single written volume. This dual system of preservation—combining memorization with written documentation—became a defining feature of Qur'anic transmission.[28]

Following the death of the Prophet, the preservation of the Qur'an continued through a structured compilation process during the early caliphate. Under the leadership of the third caliph, Uthman ibn Affan, the Qur'an was standardized into an official written text that was distributed to various regions of the expanding Muslim world. This standardization aimed to maintain textual consistency and prevent variations in recitation from developing into textual discrepancies. Muslim scholars often highlight this early standardization as strong historical evidence for the preservation of the Qur'an, demonstrating that the Muslim community took deliberate steps to safeguard the authenticity of the revelation from the earliest stages of Islamic history.[29]

In addition to the preservation of the Qur'an, Muslim scholars also developed sophisticated methodologies for verifying and preserving the Prophetic Sunnah. The discipline known as the science of Hadith emerged as a systematic framework for evaluating the authenticity of prophetic traditions. Early scholars recognized that the sayings and actions of the Prophet served as an essential source of religious guidance, complementing the teachings of the Qur'an. As a result, they dedicated extensive scholarly effort to collecting, verifying, and classifying Hadith reports.[30]

One of the most distinctive features of Hadith scholarship is the emphasis on the chain of transmission (*isnād*), which traces the individuals who transmitted a particular report from the Prophet to later generations of scholars. Hadith scholars carefully examined the character, reliability, and memory of each narrator in the transmission chain. This process required detailed biographical analysis of thousands of narrators, resulting in the development of the discipline known as *ʿilm al-rijāl* (the science of narrator evaluation). Through this method, scholars were able to distinguish between reliable and unreliable narrations and classify Hadith reports according to their authenticity.[31]

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[28] Azam, M., Alforgany, S. H., Mashdurohatun, A., et al. (2025). *E-Contract Withdrawal Rights in E-commerce: A Comparative Study of the Egyptian Customer Protection Law and Islamic Jurisprudential Perspectives.* Al-Ihkam: Jurnal Studi dan Penelitian Hukum Islam, 8(2), 231–247. https://doi.org/10.30659/jua.v8i2.44766

[29] Azam, M., Mashdurohatun, A., Nouri, A. U. R., & Hanifah, S. N. (2025). *The Implications of Trade Liberalization on Islamic Economic Ethics in Relation to the WTO Agreement Crisis on Organization of Islamic Countries.* International Journal of Environmental Sciences, 11(18s), 2330–2440. https://doi.org/10.64252/015mam67

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[31] Azam, M., Salman, M. A., & Mashdurohatun, A. (2025). *السنة النبوية وتحديات العصر: مواجهة التكنولوجيا وتأثيراتها على الأمن الاجتماعي والنفسي.* Journal of Islamic Sciences (Iraqia University), 4(39), 1025–1046

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Classical scholars such as Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari and Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj played a central role in establishing rigorous standards for Hadith authentication. Their collections of authentic Hadith were compiled after extensive research that involved traveling across the Muslim world to verify transmission chains and consult recognized scholars. These works remain among the most respected compilations in Islamic scholarship and continue to serve as authoritative sources for Islamic law and theology. Muslim scholars frequently cite the methodological rigor of these classical scholars as evidence that Hadith literature was preserved through a systematic and disciplined scholarly process.[32]

Furthermore, classical Hadith scholars did not rely solely on transmission chains when evaluating prophetic traditions. They also examined the textual content (*matn*) of Hadith reports to ensure that the reported statements were consistent with Qur'anic teachings, established Islamic principles, and historical context. If a report contradicted well-established Islamic teachings or contained implausible historical details, scholars often rejected it as unreliable. This combined analysis of transmission chains and textual content demonstrates the comprehensive nature of classical Hadith methodology.[33]

Contemporary Scholarship and Modern Academic Engagement

In addition to reaffirming classical methodologies, contemporary Muslim scholars have also engaged with modern academic discourse in responding to scriptural criticism. Modern critiques of Islamic sources—particularly those originating from Orientalist scholarship—have prompted Muslim scholars to reexamine historical evidence related to the compilation and preservation of the Qur'an and Hadith. Through historical research, manuscript analysis, and interdisciplinary scholarship, contemporary Muslim scholars have sought to demonstrate that Islamic textual traditions possess strong historical foundations.[34]

One of the prominent scholars who contributed significantly to this field is Muhammad Mustafa al-Azami, whose research challenged several assumptions made by earlier Orientalist scholars. Al-Azami examined early Hadith manuscripts and historical records to demonstrate that the documentation of Hadith began much earlier than some Western scholars had suggested. His work showed that many companions of the Prophet and their students recorded Hadith traditions in written form alongside oral transmission. This

[32] Briggs, R. S. (2017). Biblical criticism: A guide for the perplexed (Bloomsbury T&T Clark guides for the perplexed) [Review of the book *Biblical criticism: A guide for the perplexed*, by E. W. Davies]. *The Heythrop Journal, 58*(2), 273. https://doi.org/10.1111/heyj.12393

[33] Collett, D., & Gignilliat, M. (2020). Reformed theology and modern biblical criticism. In M. Allen & S. R. Swain (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of Reformed theology* (pp. 113–133). Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780198723912.013.8

[34] Acquaah, G. E. (2025). Examination of enlightenment critique of Christian theology. *EJournal of Religious and Theological Studies (ERATS), 11*(7), 340–354. https://doi.org/10.38159/erats.20251171

evidence undermines the claim that Hadith literature developed only in later centuries and highlights the early efforts of Muslim scholars to preserve prophetic teachings.[35]

Contemporary Muslim scholars have also responded to scriptural criticism by emphasizing the compatibility between traditional Islamic methodologies and modern historical analysis. While classical Hadith scholars relied primarily on transmission chains and narrator evaluation, modern scholars have supplemented these methods with new academic tools such as manuscript studies, digital databases, and historical research. These tools allow scholars to analyze large collections of Hadith texts, trace transmission patterns, and identify relationships between different narrators and scholarly networks. Such approaches have reinforced the credibility of classical Hadith scholarship and provided additional evidence supporting the authenticity of many prophetic traditions.[36]

In the field of Qur'anic studies, Muslim scholars have likewise addressed modern critiques by examining the historical processes involved in the compilation and preservation of the Qur'an. Contemporary research often highlights the remarkable consistency of Qur'anic manuscripts across different historical periods and geographical regions. The widespread memorization of the Qur'an among Muslim communities also serves as a unique mechanism for preserving the text, ensuring that the Qur'an continues to be transmitted accurately through both oral and written traditions.[37]

Another important aspect of contemporary Muslim responses involves engaging with broader intellectual debates about the relationship between tradition and modernity. Rather than rejecting modern scholarship entirely, many Muslim scholars advocate a balanced approach that combines respect for classical Islamic scholarship with critical engagement with contemporary academic methodologies. This approach allows scholars to address modern intellectual challenges while preserving the foundational principles of Islamic tradition.[38]

Educational institutions and research centers across the Muslim world have played a significant role in revitalizing the study of Qur'anic sciences and Hadith methodology. Universities, seminaries, and research institutes continue to produce scholarly works that analyze the historical and methodological foundations of Islamic sources. These

[35] Book reviews. (2005). *Islam and Christian–Muslim Relations, 16*(1), 79–95. https://doi.org/10.1080/0959641052000313255

[36] Maurais, J. (2023). The text of the Pentateuch: Textual criticism and the Dead Sea Scrolls by Sidnie White Crawford (review). *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly, 85*(4), 803–805. https://doi.org/10.1353/cbq.2023.a908844

[37] Screnock, J., & Himbaza, I. (2024). Biblical criticism and the Dead Sea Scrolls. *Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel, 13*(4), 433–436. https://doi.org/10.1628/hebai-2024-0023

[38] Feldman, A. (2021). Scribal practice, text and canon in the Dead Sea Scrolls: Essays in memory of Peter W. Flint (J. J. Collins & A. Geyser-Fouché, Eds.) [Review]. *The Journal of Theological Studies, 72*(2), 925–929. https://doi.org/10.1093/jts/flab082

institutions provide platforms for dialogue between traditional scholars and modern academics, fostering a more nuanced understanding of Islamic intellectual heritage.[39]

Apologetic Defenses and the Preservation of Biblical Authority

The rise of biblical criticism during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries prompted significant responses from Christian theologians and biblical scholars who sought to defend the authority and reliability of the Bible. Historical-critical methods raised questions regarding the authorship, composition, and historical accuracy of biblical texts, leading many scholars and religious communities to reassess traditional understandings of scripture. In response, Christian scholars developed various apologetic strategies aimed at reaffirming the theological and historical credibility of the Bible while addressing the concerns raised by modern scholarship.[40]

One important dimension of these responses involved reaffirming the doctrine of biblical inspiration, which holds that the authors of the Bible were guided by divine influence in composing the sacred text. According to this perspective, although human authors wrote the biblical books within particular historical and cultural contexts, the ultimate message conveyed through scripture reflects divine guidance. This belief allowed Christian theologians to maintain the spiritual authority of the Bible even while acknowledging the role of human authorship and historical development in its composition.[41]

Christian apologetic scholarship also emphasized the historical reliability of biblical narratives by examining archaeological discoveries and historical records that correspond to events described in the Bible. Archaeological research in regions associated with ancient Israel and early Christianity has provided insights into the historical context of biblical events. Many Christian scholars argue that these discoveries support the historical credibility of certain biblical narratives and demonstrate that the Bible reflects genuine historical traditions. By integrating archaeological findings with biblical interpretation, scholars sought to counter claims that biblical accounts were purely mythological or entirely constructed in later historical periods.[42]

Another significant apologetic approach focused on defending the textual integrity of the Bible through the study of ancient manuscripts. The discipline of textual criticism within biblical studies examines variations among manuscript copies of the Bible in order to

[39] Nawafil, M., & Suparwany. (2021). Revitalization of theoretical response study of Ignaz Goldziher and Joseph Schacht hadith criticism. *Al-Bukhari: Jurnal Ilmu Hadis, 4*(2), 116–140. https://doi.org/10.32505/al-bukhari.v4i2.3385

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reconstruct the most accurate version of the original text. Christian scholars often emphasize the large number of surviving biblical manuscripts and the extensive efforts undertaken by scribes and scholars to preserve the text over centuries. The discovery of ancient manuscripts such as the Dead Sea Scrolls has further contributed to scholarly discussions regarding the transmission and preservation of biblical texts. Many Christian scholars argue that the remarkable consistency among numerous manuscript copies demonstrates the reliability of the biblical textual tradition.[43]

Furthermore, some Christian scholars responded to biblical criticism by emphasizing the broader theological significance of scripture rather than focusing solely on historical details. According to this perspective, the primary purpose of the Bible is to convey spiritual truths and moral teachings rather than to function as a strictly historical or scientific document. This approach allowed theologians to maintain the religious authority of the Bible even when certain historical or literary questions remained subjects of scholarly debate. By highlighting the spiritual and ethical message of scripture, Christian scholars sought to demonstrate that biblical teachings retain their relevance regardless of academic discussions concerning historical context.[44]

Theological Reinterpretation and Integration of Historical-Critical Methods

In addition to apologetic defenses, many Christian scholars have responded to biblical criticism by integrating historical-critical methods into theological interpretation. Rather than rejecting modern scholarly approaches entirely, these scholars view historical analysis as a valuable tool for understanding the cultural and historical contexts in which biblical texts were written. By studying the social, linguistic, and historical environment of ancient biblical communities, scholars aim to gain deeper insights into the meaning and development of scripture.One of the key developments in this area has been the emergence of historical theology, which examines how Christian doctrines evolved over time through interaction with historical circumstances and intellectual traditions. Scholars within this field analyze the ways in which early Christian communities interpreted scripture and how theological concepts developed within different historical contexts. This approach allows modern scholars to recognize the dynamic nature of Christian theological tradition while still affirming the importance of scripture as a foundational source of religious guidance.[45]

Another important aspect of contemporary Christian scholarship involves the use of literary and contextual analysis in interpreting biblical texts. Scholars study the literary

[43] Vorster, J. M. (2020). Still plausible and intelligible? Towards a hermeneutic of congruent biblical theology for today. *Scriptura: Journal for Biblical, Theological and Contextual Hermeneutics, 119*(3). https://doi.org/10.7833/119-3-1771

[44] Witherup, R. D. (2019). Book review: *Inspiration: Towards a Christian interpretation of biblical inspiration* by G. O'Collins. *Theological Studies, 80*(2). https://doi.org/10.1177/0040563919836248

[45] Irving, A. J. D. (2019). One word, many wordings: The inspiration of scripture in its Christological and pneumatological dimension of depth. *The Expository Times, 131*(6). https://doi.org/10.1177/0014524619883173

genres, rhetorical structures, and narrative techniques used within the Bible in order to understand how the texts communicate theological messages. This approach recognizes that biblical authors employed a variety of literary forms—including poetry, historical narrative, prophecy, and parable—to convey their teachings. Understanding these literary forms can help readers interpret biblical passages more accurately and avoid misinterpretations that may arise from reading the text without considering its literary context.Many Christian scholars also emphasize the importance of distinguishing between the historical context of scripture and its enduring theological message. Historical-critical research often reveals the social and cultural conditions that influenced the composition of biblical texts. Rather than viewing these discoveries as threats to religious belief, some theologians argue that they provide valuable insights into how divine revelation was communicated within specific historical settings. By understanding the historical context of scripture, believers can better appreciate the relevance of biblical teachings for contemporary life.[46]

Furthermore, the integration of modern scholarship into biblical interpretation has encouraged greater dialogue between theology and other academic disciplines such as history, linguistics, and anthropology. This interdisciplinary engagement has expanded the scope of biblical studies and contributed to a more comprehensive understanding of Christian scripture. Scholars increasingly explore how ancient cultural traditions, political circumstances, and linguistic developments shaped the formation of biblical texts.At the same time, many Christian scholars emphasize that the integration of historical-critical methods should not undermine the spiritual authority of scripture. Instead, they argue that academic analysis and theological reflection can complement each other in deepening the understanding of biblical teachings. By combining scholarly research with faith-based interpretation, contemporary Christian theologians seek to maintain a balanced approach that respects both intellectual inquiry and religious tradition.[47]

Educational institutions and theological seminaries have played a significant role in fostering this balanced approach to biblical scholarship. Many universities offer programs in biblical studies that combine historical-critical methods with theological education. These programs encourage students to engage critically with scripture while remaining grounded in the spiritual and doctrinal traditions of Christianity.[48]

Conclusion

The emergence of modern scriptural criticism has significantly influenced religious scholarship in both Islamic and Christian traditions. Historical-critical approaches,

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[47] Screnock, J., & Himbaza, I. (2024). Biblical criticism and the Dead Sea Scrolls [Editorial introduction]. *Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel, 13*(4), 433–436. https://doi.org/10.1628/hebai-2024-0023

[48] Maurais, J. (2023). [Review of the book *The text of the Pentateuch: Textual criticism and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, by S. W. Crawford]. *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly, 85*(4), 803–805. https://doi.org/10.1353/cbq.2023.a908844

orientalist studies, and modern academic methods raised questions about the authenticity, transmission, and interpretation of sacred texts. These intellectual developments challenged traditional understandings of scripture and prompted scholars within both religions to engage in serious academic and theological responses in order to defend the authority of their sacred traditions.

Muslim scholars have responded to these challenges primarily by emphasizing the rigorous methodologies developed within classical Islamic scholarship. Through the sciences of Qur'anic preservation and Hadith authentication, Muslim scholars highlight the systematic processes used to safeguard the accuracy and reliability of Islamic sources. Historical evidence, manuscript studies, and modern academic research have further strengthened the argument that the Qur'an and the Prophetic Sunnah were preserved through highly disciplined scholarly efforts. Contemporary Muslim scholars continue to engage with modern academic debates while reaffirming the central role of these sources in Islamic theology and law.

Similarly, Christian scholars have developed a variety of responses to biblical criticism. Some have focused on apologetic defenses that emphasize the divine inspiration and historical credibility of the Bible, while others have integrated historical-critical methods into theological interpretation. By combining traditional faith perspectives with modern academic inquiry, many Christian scholars seek to deepen understanding of the historical context of scripture without undermining its spiritual authority.

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The author conceptualized the research topic, developed the theoretical and methodological framework, conducted the legal and qualitative analysis, interpreted the findings, and prepared the manuscript. The author was also responsible for drafting, reviewing, editing, and finalizing the article for publication.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there are no financial, professional, institutional, or personal relationships that could be construed as potential conflicts of interest regarding the research, authorship, or publication of this article.

AI USAGE STATEMENT

The author declares that artificial intelligence (AI), including large language models such as ChatGPT, was used solely as an assistive tool during the writing process, specifically for grammar checking, sentence structuring, and editorial refinement. All analyses, data interpretations, academic arguments, and research conclusions are entirely the author's own work. The use of AI was conducted in accordance with academic ethical principles and was not intended to replace critical thinking or the originality of the scholarly work. Any references or information obtained with the assistance of AI were independently verified and cited correctly in accordance with academic standards. The author affirms that the use of AI does not violate plagiarism policies, academic integrity, or any institutional regulations.

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