

Integrating Semitic Rhetorical Analysis and Scientific Exegesis: A Structural Reading of Surah Al-Ṭāriq

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Abstract : This study investigates the integration of Semitic Rhetorical Analysis (SRA) and scientific exegesis to enhance the interpretation of Surah Al-Ṭāriq (Q. 86). Drawing on Michel Cuypers' SRA framework, the research explores how the Surah's rhetorical structure reveals thematic coherence and theological depth, particularly in its engagement with cosmological and natural phenomena. Focusing on key verses—such as verse 3 (the piercing star), verses 6–7 (human creation), verse 11 (atmospheric layers), and verse 12 (geological foundations)—the analysis demonstrates how SRA contextualizes scientific interpretations within the Surah's parallel structure. Analyses of scientific insights, including pulsars, embryological development, atmospheric regulation, and tectonic dynamics, reveal a significant consonance with Qur'anic descriptions, suggesting a close correspondence between scripture and modern scientific perspectives. SRA enriches this alignment by framing these phenomena as rhetorical devices that support the Surah's central eschatological themes—resurrection, divine omnipotence, and cosmic order. The synthesis of SRA and scientific exegesis thus bridges revelation with modern knowledge, affirming the Qur'an's layered communicative strategy and its enduring capacity to convey spiritual and intellectual meaning.

Keywords: *Semitic Rhetorical Analysis (SRA); Scientific Exegesis; Surah Al-Ṭāriq*

Abstrak : Studi ini menyelidiki integrasi antara *Semitic Rhetorical Analysis (SRA)* dan tafsir sains guna memperkaya penafsiran Surah Al-Ṭāriq (QS. 86). Dengan merujuk pada kerangka SRA yang dikembangkan oleh Michel Cuypers, penelitian ini mengungkap bagaimana struktur retorik surah tersebut menunjukkan koherensi tematik dan kedalaman teologis, khususnya dalam keterkaitannya dengan fenomena alam dan kosmologis. Berfokus pada ayat-ayat kunci—seperti ayat 3 (bintang yang menembus), ayat 6–7 (penciptaan manusia), ayat 11 (lapisan atmosfer), dan ayat 12 (fondasi geologis)—analisis ini menunjukkan bagaimana SRA mengontekstualisasikan tafsir ilmiah dalam struktur paralel Surah tersebut. Analisis terhadap wawasan saintifik, termasuk pulsar,

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perkembangan embrio, pengaturan atmosfer, dan dinamika tektonik, mengungkap adanya kesesuaian yang signifikan dengan deskripsi Al-Qur'an, yang menunjukkan adanya korespondensi erat antara wahyu dan perspektif ilmiah modern. SRA memperkaya keselarasan ini dengan membingkai fenomena-fenomena tersebut sebagai perangkat retorik yang mendukung tema-tema eskatologis utama Surah—kebangkitan, kemahakuasaan Ilahi, dan keteraturan kosmis. Sintesis antara SRA dan tafsir sains ini menjembatani wahyu dengan pengetahuan modern, menegaskan strategi komunikasi Al-Qur'an yang berlapis serta daya tahannya dalam menyampaikan makna spiritual dan intelektual lintas zaman.

Kata kunci: *Semitic Rhetorical Analysis (SRA); Tafsir Sains; Surah Al-Tāriq*

Introduction

Semitic Rhetorical Analysis (SRA), as pioneered by Michel Cuypers, is a method that has been used to investigate the structure and rhetorical patterns of the Qur'an, deriving its principles from approaches initially developed for Biblical texts.¹ This method emphasizes parataxis over hypotaxis, wherein ideas are presented in parallel statements rather than subordinated clauses, resulting in a concrete and involute style. Through the interplay of doubled form and content, semitic rhetoric principles uncover deeper meanings within the text.² For example, analyses of Biblical texts such as Psalm 63 and Psalm 34 demonstrate how their structures and thematic unity evoke profound spiritual reflections on divine transcendence and trust.³ The method identifies rhetorical devices like chiasmus and concentric arrangements, common in Semitic literature, to enhance thematic and emotional depth.⁴ Moreover, the binary principle—a hallmark of Semitic rhetoric—highlights the use of repetition and parallelism not merely for emphasis but to convey complex theological and moral insights.⁵

When applied to the Qur'an, SRA reveals the text's coherence and symmetry, often uncovering mirror or concentric structures that enhance interpretative clarity. Studies of Surah Al-Dharyyat and Surah Al-Mā'idah illustrate how SRA elucidates the structural and lexical cohesion of verses, even when they initially appear disjointed.⁶

¹ Michel Cuypers, 'Semitic Rhetoric as a Key to the Question of the Nazm of the Qur'anic Text', *Journal of Qur'anic Studies*, 13.1 (2011), pp. 1–24 (pp. 1–4), doi:10.3366/jqs.2011.0003.

² Jolanta Szarlej, 'On the Binary Principle of Biblical Texts Interpretation', *Między Oryginałem a Przekładem*, 28.4/58 (2022), pp. 157–81, art. 4/58 (pp. 158, 180), doi:10.12797/MOaP.28.2022.58.08.

³ W. Gonzaga and D.F. Belem, 'Blessed and Praised Be YHWH, the God Who Loves and Protects His Servants: A Semitic Biblical Rhetorical Analysis of Psalm 34 and Its Relationship with 1 Peter', *Cuestiones Teológicas*, 50.114 (2023), pp. 1–26, Scopus, doi:10.18566/cueteo.v50n114.a07; W. Gonzaga and F. da Silveira Siqueira, 'The Longing for God and the Trust in His Help: Ps 63(62) in the Light of Semitic Biblical Rhetoric Analysis', *Perseitas*, 12 (2024), pp. 140–69, Scopus, doi:10.21501/23461780.4765.

⁴ Gonzaga and Belem, 'Blessed and Praised Be YHWH, the God Who Loves and Protects His Servants: A Semitic Biblical Rhetorical Analysis of Psalm 34 and Its Relationship with 1 Peter', p. 2.

⁵ Szarlej, 'On the Binary Principle of Biblical Texts Interpretation', p. 180.

⁶ Aqdi Rofiq Asnawi, 'Investigating Cohesiveness of QS. Al-Mā'idah: A Review on Michel Cuypers Implementation of Semitic Rhetorical Analysis (SRA)', *Investigating Cohesiveness of QS. Al-Mā'idah: A Review on Michel Cuypers Implementation of Semitic Rhetorical Analysis (SRA)*, 23.1 (2022), pp. 49–68; Aqdi Rofiq Asnawi and others, 'The Coherence of Surah Al-Dzariyat in Perspective of Semitic Rhetoric', *Jurnal Ilmiah*

Despite its interpretive potential, the method has faced critiques for subjective text division and its limited focus on certain Qur'anic features, such as rhyme.⁷ Nevertheless, SRA contributes significantly to understanding the Qur'an's authenticity and coherence, emphasizing textual indicators and verse correlations.⁸ Its application to surahs such as Al-Fath and Al-Qiyamah further demonstrates the method's ability to uncover intricate symmetrical patterns and provide deeper insights into Qur'anic structures.⁹

Complementing this structural understanding, modern Qur'anic scholarship has increasingly explored scientific interpretations of verses addressing natural phenomena and human creation. Scholars such as Zaghoul El-Naggar and Tantawi Jawhari have advanced this approach by integrating contemporary scientific knowledge into Qur'anic exegesis, thereby illustrating the inherent compatibility between revelation and empirical observation.¹⁰ El-Naggar's work *Tafsīr al-Āyāt al-Kawniyyah fī al-Qur'ān al-Karīm* systematically employs data from cosmology, biology, geology, and health sciences to illuminate the meanings of verses related to the natural world.¹¹

These interpretations not only provide rational and progressive readings of the Qur'an but also emphasize its enduring relevance across different scientific paradigms. For example, Qur'anic descriptions of embryological development and the creation of the universe are interpreted as prescient insights that align with modern scientific discoveries.¹² Furthermore, the Qur'an's depiction of natural phenomena—such as rainfall, atmospheric functions, and human physiology—demonstrates an interpretive openness, using language that accommodates evolving scientific understanding.¹³

Al-Mu'ashirah: Media Kajian Al-Qur'an Dan Al-Hadits Multi Perspektif, 20.1 (2023), pp. 71–84, art. 1, doi:10.22373/jim.v20i1.16021; Michel Cuypers, *The Banquet: A Reading of the Fifth Sura of the Qur'an*, trans. by Patricia Kelly (Miami: Convivium Press, 2008).

⁷ Nicolai Sinai, 'Review Essay: "Going Round in Circles": Michel Cuypers, The Composition of the Qur'an: Rhetorical Analysis, and Raymond Farrin, Structure and Qur'anic Interpretation: A Study of Symmetry and Coherence in Islam's Holy Text', *Journal of Qur'anic Studies*, 19.2 (2017), pp. 106–22, art. 2, doi:10.3366/jqs.2017.0285.

⁸ Aqdi Rofiq Asnawi and Idri, 'Examining Semitic Rhetoric: A Qur'anic Sciences Perspective', *Jurnal Ushuluddin*, 28.2 (2020), pp. 127–39, art. 2, doi:10.24014/jush.v28i2.9898.

⁹ Zare Zardini Ahmad, Sahraei Ardakani Kamal, and Jannati Firouzabadi Sedighah, 'The Morphology of Surah Al-Mubarakah al-Fath in the Light of Semitic Rhetoric with the Focus on Quranic Division into 555 Thematic Units (Rouku'at)', *Linguistic Research in The Holy Qur'an*, 1 January 2021, pp. 1–18, doi:https://doi.org/10.22108/NRGS.2020.124200.1559; Aqdi Rofiq Asnawi, 'Penerapan Semitic Rhetorical Analysis (SRA) Pada Surah Al-Qiyamah', *Mutawatir*, 8.1 (2018), pp. 143–69, art. 1, doi:10.15642/mutawatir.2018.8.1.143-169.

¹⁰ Hulami Al-Amin and Abdul Rasyid Ridho, 'Keilmiahan Ayat-Ayat Penciptaan Manusia', *El-Umdah*, 2.2 (2019), pp. 133–70, doi:10.20414/el-umda.v2i2.1690; Selamat Bin Amir, Mohd Murshidi Mohd Noor, and Ahmad Bazli Ahmad Hilmi, 'Scientific Assimilation in The Interpretation of The Qur'an: An Approach to Zaghul El-Najjar's Work Entitled "Tafsir Al-Ayah Al-Kawniyyah Fi Al-Qur'an Al-Karim"', *Al-Bayan: Journal of Qur'an and Hadith Studies*, 10.2 (2012), pp. 49–67, doi:10.11136/jqh.1210.02.04.

¹¹ Amir, Noor, and Hilmi, 'Scientific Assimilation in The Interpretation of The Qur'an: An Approach to Zaghul El-Najjar's Work Entitled "Tafsir Al-Ayah Al-Kawniyyah Fi Al-Qur'an Al-Karim"', p. 49.

¹² Hadid Humaid Saifuddin and others, 'Creation of Human in Qur'an', *Journal of Ulumul Qur'an and Tafsir Studies*, 2.1 (2023), pp. 19–24, doi:10.54801/juquts.v2i1.171; Nosheen Zaheer and others, 'Unveiling The Mystery of Man's Origin and Creation: A Comparative Study of Quran and Science', *Humanities & Social Sciences Reviews*, 9.2 (2021), pp. 789–95, doi:10.18510/hssr.2021.9279.

¹³ A. Chauvet, 'Cosmographical Readings of the Qur'an', *American Journal of Islam and Society*, 40.1–2 (2023), pp. 8–38 (p. 8), Scopus, doi:10.35632/ajis.v40i1-2.3175; S. Latifah and others, 'Analysis of the Rain Occurrence Process in Perspective Al-Qur'an and Science with an Integrative Approach', in *AIP Conf.*

However, despite these efforts, many of these interpretations remain isolated from the Qur'an's literary and rhetorical structures, thus limiting their explanatory power within the holistic framework of the text.

This paper argues that combining Semitic Rhetorical Analysis (SRA) with scientific interpretations of Qur'anic verses related to natural phenomena and human creation can yield a more comprehensive understanding of the text by uncovering its layered rhetorical and empirical meanings. It addresses the gap between these two approaches by integrating them in the analysis of Surah Al-Ṭāriq (Q. 86). While classical *mufasssirūn* like Al-Ṭabarī,¹⁴ Ibn Kathīr,¹⁵ Al-Qurṭubī,¹⁶ and Ibn 'Āshūr¹⁷ emphasized its theological themes such as resurrection and divine surveillance, modern scholars have explored its scientific dimensions. Zaghlūl al-Najjār, for instance, interprets *al-ṭāriq* as a pulsar or quasar, aligning the verse with astrophysical findings.¹⁸ Toorawa highlights the surah's rhetorical power through poetic translation,¹⁹ and Michel Cuypers applies SRA to reveal its structural symmetry, though without integrating scientific interpretation.²⁰ This study fills that gap by combining both approaches to examine the surah's coherence and layered meanings.

The central problem this paper investigates is: How can Semitic Rhetorical Analysis (SRA) enhance the interpretation of scientific references in Surah Al-Ṭāriq, and what does this integration reveal about the Surah's theological and epistemological depth? Building on prior structural analyses of the Qur'an and contemporary scientific exegesis, this research proposes a novel synthesis that situates empirical phenomena within the Qur'an's rhetorical architecture.

Methodologically, it applies a qualitative textual approach that builds upon Cuypers' SRA of Surah Al-Ṭāriq by integrating scientific perspectives from fields such as astrophysics, embryology, atmospheric science, and geology. Key verses—verse 3 (*al-najm al-thāqib*), verses 6–7 (human creation), verse 11 (sky's returning function), and verse 12 (earth's splitting)—are analyzed both rhetorically and scientifically to demonstrate how their placement within the Surah's chiasmic structure reinforces its cosmological and eschatological claims. Qualitative methods are essential for understanding complex phenomena where context, meaning, and interpretation is crucial. These methods, widely used in disciplines like social sciences and public health, provide rich,

Proc., ed. by Saregar A. and others, no. 1 (American Institute of Physics, 2024), MMLLVIII, doi:10.1063/5.0203583; S. Tlili, 'Qur'anic Creation: Anthropocentric Readings and Ecocentric Possibilities', in *The Routledge Companion to the Qur'an* (Taylor and Francis, 2021), pp. 135–44, Scopus, doi:10.4324/9781315885360-15.

¹⁴ al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-Bayān 'an Ta'wīl Āy al-Qur'ān* (Cairo: Dār al-Hijr, 2001), xxiv, pp. 288–308.

¹⁵ Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān al-'Azīm* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1998), viii, pp. 367–69.

¹⁶ al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jāmi' Li-Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*, 2nd edn (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyyah, 1964), xx, pp. 1–12.

¹⁷ Ibn 'Āshūr, *Al-Tahrīr Wa al-Tamwīr* (Tunis: al-Dār al-Tūnisīyyah li al-Nashr, 1984), xxx, pp. 257–70.

¹⁸ Zaghlūl al-Najjār, *Tafsīr Al-Āyāt al-Kawmiyyah Fī al-Qur'ān al-Karīm*, 1st edn (Cairo: Maktabatu al-Syurūq al-Dauliyyah, 2007), iv, pp. 395–406.

¹⁹ Shawkat M. Toorawa, 'Sūrat Al-Ṭāriq (Q. 86) Translated into Cadenced, Rhyming English Prose', *Journal of Qur'anic Studies*, 15.1 (2013), pp. 147–49.

²⁰ Michel Cuypers, *A Qur'anic Apocalypse: A Reading of the Thirty-Three Last Sūrahs of the Qur'an*, trans. by Jerry Ryan, no. 1 (Atlanta: Lockwood Press, 2018), pp. 88–92.

contextually grounded data that offer deeper insights than quantitative approaches.²¹ This approach is particularly suited to studying Surah Al-Ṭāriq, as it allows for an in-depth exploration of its rhetorical patterns, thematic structures, and scientific references.

Result and Discussion

Interpretation of QS. Al-Ṭāriq: 1-4

Michel Cuypers divides Surah Al-Ṭāriq into two parallel parts, each with two pieces (AB/A'B'). Part one (verses 1-10) discusses the creation of mankind and their future resurrection. The rhyme, except verse 5, is in the *fā'il* of a plural with the same ending. The first piece in part one (verses 1-4) contains an oath (verse 1) and its apodosis (verse 4), framing a rhetorical question (verse 2) and its answer (verse 3). This structure aligns with concentric composition (A/x/A'). The central element – the rhetorical question and answer about the morning star – is framed by the oath and its apodosis. This creates a layered structure where the outer elements (oath and apodosis) enclose the inner element (rhetorical question and answer).²²

Table 1. The structure of the first piece in part 1

Symbol	No. Verse	English Translation
A	1	By the sky and the morning star!
X	2 and 3	And what will let you know. What is the morning star? It is the star piercing.
A'	4	There is no soul but over it has a guardian!

Instead of the morning star, the word *ṭāriq* in first and second verse can be translated as "knocking," derived from the Arabic verb *ṭaraqa-yatruqu*. This translation is rooted in the Arab custom where a traveller arriving at a camp after dark would knock on a stone or tent peg to signal to the host that a guest had arrived.²³ According to Zaghul Al-Najjār, the term "knocking" or "piercing" (*ṭāriq*) in this verse illustrates the nature of certain radiations that reach the Earth despite originating from vast distances. Verse 3, which describes "the star of piercing brightness" is often associated with astronomical phenomena such as pulsars and quasars. A pulsar is an ultra-dense neutron star that emits radio waves in regular pulses due to its rapid rotation, while a quasar is an extremely powerful source of electromagnetic radiation, typically representing a later stage in the life cycle of a star.²⁴

The description of the "piercing star" (*ṭāriq*) aligns with the scientific understanding of cosmic ray air showers. Cosmic rays, primarily composed of protons, interact with the Earth's atmosphere, generating secondary particles such as mesons, muons, and photons. This process, where high-energy particles penetrate the atmosphere and produce a cascade of secondary particles, mirrors the metaphor of "piercing" through space. The interaction of cosmic rays with materials, as demonstrated

²¹ N. Mack and others, *Qualitative Research Methods: A Data Collector's Field Guide* (North Carolina: Family Health International, 2005); Janice M. Morse, 'Qualitative Methods: The State of the Art', *Qualitative Health Research*, 9.3 (1999), pp. 393–406, doi:10.1177/104973299129121938.

²² Cuypers, *A Qur'anic Apocalypse*, p. 88.

²³ Ibn 'Ashūr, *Al-Taḥrīr Wa al-Tanwīr*, xxx, p. 258.

²⁴ al-Najjār, *Tafsīr Al-Āyāt al-Kawniyyah Fī al-Qur'ān al-Karīm*, IV, pp. 405–06.

by Bruno Rossi's experiments in the 1930s, further exemplifies this phenomenon. Rossi observed that the number of secondary particles increased with the thickness of metal sheets up to a point, after which it decreased, illustrating how cosmic rays lose energy and create multiple secondary particles during their interactions.²⁵

When juxtaposed with Zaghlul Al-Najjar's scientific interpretation, the SRA framework enriches the analysis by embedding the scientific insights into a broader rhetorical and theological structure. Scientific insights, such as the identification of the "piercing star" with phenomena like pulsars and cosmic rays, add empirical depth to the verse's metaphor. This synthesis not only aligns the text with modern scientific concepts but also underscores the Qur'an's enduring relevance in conveying spiritual and intellectual meanings across time, bridging theological and scientific perspectives.

Interpretation of QS. Al-Tāriq: 5-10

The scientific interpretation of QS. Al-Ṭāriq, verses 6–7, highlights the connection between the Qur'anic description of "gushing fluid" and the biological processes of human reproduction. These verses state that humans are created from gushing fluids of both men and women. Scientifically, the fluid in men refers to semen produced by the testes, reproductive glands that originate from the "reproductive ridge," located between the spine and the ribs during embryonic development. In women, the gushing fluid refers to the liquid surrounding the egg in the Graafian follicle, which is released into the fallopian tube during ovulation. This process reflects that the reproductive organs of men and women share the same embryonic origin, positioned between the spine and ribs, before migrating to their final locations in the body. Even after full development, these reproductive organs remain supplied by blood, lymphatic fluid, and nerves from their original position.²⁶

Many interpretations of the terms *aṣ-ṣulb* (loins) and *at-tarā'ib* (ribs) in verse 7 have varied, with some scholars associating *aṣ-ṣulb* with the backbone or tailbone, and *at-tarā'ib* with the chest or the area between the ribs. Modern scientific interpretations, however, suggest that *aṣ-ṣulb* and *at-tarā'ib* refer to the general regions of the lower back and ribs, respectively, with the "fluid ejected" referring to semen produced in the male reproductive organs. Some also interpret the verses cosmologically, suggesting they describe the origin of life from a primordial fluid. Linguistic studies propose a metaphorical understanding, where *aṣ-ṣulb* symbolizes the foundational structure of the body, and *at-tarā'ib* represents the entirety of human creation from a single fluid.²⁷

According to Cuypers' analysis by SRA, the second piece (verses 5-10) explores the themes of creation and resurrection. Verses 5-7 describe the creation of humanity from "a fluid ejected," while verses 8-10 address their re-creation on the Day of Resurrection. Cuypers notes the contrasting states of man: created from a simple fluid (verse 6) and resurrected with "neither strength nor helper" (verse 10). He describes verses 5-10 as following an AA'B pattern. This suggests a degree of parallelism between the first two segments (A and A'), both focusing on the creation of humanity. The third

²⁵ M. Arcani, D. Liguori, and A. Grana, 'Exploring the Interaction of Cosmic Rays with Water by Using an Old-Style Detector and Rossi's Method', *Particles*, 6.3 (2023), pp. 801–18 (p. 801), Scopus, doi:10.3390/particles6030051.

²⁶ al-Najjār, *Tafsīr Al-Āyāt al-Kawmiyyah Fī al-Qur'ān al-Karīm*, IV, pp. 412–15.

²⁷ R. Al-Balushi, 'On the Aṣ-Ṣulb and 'At-Tarā'ib: A Linguistic Perspective', *Quranica*, 13.2 (2021), pp. 1–28, Scopus.

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segment (B), addressing the Day of Resurrection, serves as a contrasting element, highlighting a different aspect of God's power.²⁸

Table 2. The structure of the second piece in part 1

Symbol	No. Verse	English Translation
A	5	Let man look at what he was created!
A'	6 and 7	He was created from a fluid ejected, which comes from between the loins and the ribs.
B	8-10	Surely, on his return He has power, the Day will be tested the secrets, and there will be for him neither strength nor helper.

The synonyms "soul" (verse 4) and "man" (verse 5a) connect the two pieces. Both final verses carry a similar meaning: facing the "guardian" angel and finding no "helper" on Judgement Day. This part seems to be a parallel composition (AB/A'B'). The cosmic imagery of the first verses establishes God's all-encompassing knowledge and power, while the subsequent verses highlight human dependence and vulnerability through the description of humanity's creation in verse 6. This interplay of themes reinforces the message of God's absolute authority and the importance of human humility and reliance on divine guidance. Verses 4 and 10 share a clear thematic link. Verse 4 introduces the concept of a "guardian" angel assigned to each soul, recording their deeds for the Day of Judgement. Verse 10 depicts the Day of Judgement, where individuals face a divine reckoning with "neither strength nor helper".²⁹

Table 3. The structure of part 1

Symbol	No. Verse	English Translation
A	1-3	By the sky and the morning star! And what will let you know. What is the morning star? It is the star piercing.
B	4	There is no soul but over it has a guardian!
A'	5-7	Let man look at what he was created! He was created from a fluid ejected, which comes from between the loins and the ribs.
B'	8-10	Surely, on his return He has power, the Day will be tested the secrets, and there will be for him neither strength nor helper.

Thus, this structural analysis enriches the scientific interpretation of verses 6 and 7 in *Sūrah Al-Ṭāriq* by uncovering the thematic and structural significance of the Qur'anic descriptions, which enhances their integration with modern embryological insights. Cuypers' analysis emphasizes the rhetorical focus on humanity's humble origins, drawing attention to the "fluid ejected" and its origin "between the loins and the ribs." This rhetorical emphasis serves to highlight the power and precision of divine creation, setting the stage for deeper reflection on human dependence on God. When integrated with scientific interpretations, these verses align remarkably with modern embryology, which explains that human reproductive organs originate from embryonic structures located between the spine and ribs, supporting the Qur'anic imagery.

²⁸ Cuypers, *A Qur'anic Apocalypse*, p. 89.

²⁹ Cuypers, *A Qur'anic Apocalypse*, p. 90.

Cuypers' analysis clarifies the meanings of *aṣ-ṣulb* (loins), *at-tarā'ib* (ribs), and "fluid ejected" in QS Al-Ṭāriq by highlighting the rhetorical structure that links human creation to divine power. This biological description not only addresses the physical process of human creation but also underscores the theme of divine order and knowledge. The depiction of creation is thus framed within a larger theological context, emphasizing human vulnerability and divine authority, especially in the context of resurrection and judgment. Furthermore, the shared embryonic origin of male and female reproductive systems underscores the coherence between the Qur'anic description and biological processes, such as the production of semen and ovulation. By contextualizing these scientific insights within the Qur'an's rhetorical and theological framework, SRA deepens the spiritual significance of the text, illustrating how divine wisdom encompasses both creation and revelation, while affirming the compatibility of the text with scientific discoveries.

Interpretation of QS. Al-Ṭāriq: 11-17

The phrase "By the sky that returns" in verse 11 is an intricate description of the Earth's atmosphere and its cyclical functions. The term "returns" (*raj'*) not only refers to the water cycle, where water evaporates, rises, condenses, and returns as rain, but also to several other scientific phenomena related to the atmosphere: it drives the water cycle by enabling evaporation, condensation, and precipitation; it shields the planet by deflecting or burning up meteoroids before they reach the surface; it protects against harmful solar winds via the magnetosphere, preserving Earth's protective layers; it reflects radio waves, particularly through the ionosphere, facilitating long-distance communication; and it regulates temperature by reflecting excessive heat during the day and retaining warmth at night, ensuring a stable and livable climate. These functions illustrate the protective and restorative role of the atmosphere, ensuring Earth's habitability.³⁰

From Semitic Rhetoric perspective, part two (verses 11-17) contains two pieces. The first piece in part two (verses 11-14) contains two segments. The first segment (verses 11-12) features two parallel oaths with the terms "sky" and "earth," both ending with similar grammatical constructions (*faṣl* and *hazl*). Cuypers interprets the "return" of heaven as a reference to the recurring rainy season or the sky's rebirth every morning. The earth "splitting" is seen as an image of resurrection, comparable to the earth splitting for vegetation. The second segment (verses 13-14) acts as the apodosis and presents an antithesis. The "decisive" word separates truth from falsehood and foreshadows the Day of Judgement, which separates the elect from the damned. Therefore, the composition of verses 11-14 in Sūrah Al-Ṭāriq is characterized by parallelism and antithesis, creating a powerful rhetorical structure that underscores the authority of the divine word and the consequences of disbelief.³¹

Table 4. The structure of the first piece in part 2

Symbol	No. Verse	English Translation
A	11	By the sky which returns! (<i>dhāti al-raj'</i>)
B	12	By the earth which splits! (<i>dhāti al-ṣad'</i>)

³⁰ Abdullāh bin 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Muṣliḥ, *Al-I'jāz al-'Ilmī Fī al-Qur'ān Wa al-Sunnah* (Mecca: al-Hay'ah al-Ālamiyyah li al-I'jāz al-'Ilmī fī al-Qur'ān wa al-Sunnah - Rābi'at al-Ālam al-Islāmī, 2014), pp. 114-116.

³¹ Cuypers, *A Qur'anic Apocalypse*, pp. 90-91.

A'	13	Verily it is a decisive Word, (<i>faṣl</i>)
B'	14	And is not a pleasantry. (<i>hazl</i>)

The scientific interpretation of QS. Al- Ṭāriq, verse 12, which refers to the Earth as having "cracks" (*wa al-arḍi dhāti aṣ-ṣad'*), aligns with modern geological discoveries about the Earth's structure and processes. The term "cracks" can be understood as referencing the Earth's fault lines, fractures, and tectonic plate boundaries. These geological features are critical to the dynamic processes of the planet and serve several significant functions: they form due to stress from tension, compression, or shearing forces, creating a network of displaced rock layers across the surface; they act as critical pathways for magma, gases, and minerals to move from the Earth's interior, driving volcanic eruptions, mountain formation, and soil enrichment; they facilitate tectonic plate movement, resulting in phenomena like seafloor spreading, earthquakes, and crust renewal; they are linked to the accumulation of valuable resources such as minerals, oil, and geothermal energy vital for industry and energy needs; and their continuous activity rejuvenates the Earth's crust, fostering fertile soil for vegetation and maintaining the planet's habitability.³²

Modern discoveries reveal that the Earth's surface is interwoven with a massive network of fault lines, including extensive underwater cracks that stretch across ocean floors. These faults and fractures are pervasive in the shallow crust and play a significant role in crustal dynamics and fluid migration.³³ These fault systems act as natural outlets for magma and heat, facilitating the distribution of minerals and aiding the Earth's geological renewal. For instance, the Piuquencillo fault system in Chile channels hydrothermal fluids and magma, demonstrating how fault systems can control the flow of these materials.³⁴

On the other hand, Cuypers' analysis emphasizes the connection between the imagery of the earth "splitting" (*dhāti'l-ṣad'i*) and the Qur'anic theme of resurrection, likening the earth's cracks to the way plants emerge after rainfall, symbolizing renewal and life.³⁵ SRA's focus on rhetorical structures, such as the bi-member oath connecting verse 12 with verse 11 ("By the sky that returns!"), integrates the scientific functions of the Earth's geological activity with the symbolic representation of divine power and renewal. By linking the earth's physical renewal through tectonic activity to the eschatological promise of resurrection, SRA creates a cohesive narrative that transcends mere scientific observation, situating geological phenomena within a divine purpose. This synthesis of rhetorical and scientific analysis not only deepens the appreciation of the Qur'anic text's literary artistry but also demonstrates its alignment with modern geological discoveries, reinforcing its timeless relevance.

The second pieces (verses 15-17) address the disbelievers who oppose the prophetic word. Cuypers divides verse 17 into two members to create two parallel bi-members with repeated terms: "plot a plot" (verses 15-16) and "respite" (verse 17). This

³² al-Muṣliḥ, *Al-I'jāz al-'Ilmī Fī al-Qur'ān Wa al-Sunnah*, pp. 136–41.

³³ B. Schwarz and C.M. Krawczyk, 'Coherent Diffraction Imaging for Enhanced Fault and Fracture Network Characterization', *Solid Earth*, 11.5 (2020), pp. 1891–907 (p. 1891), doi:10.5194/se-11-1891-2020.

³⁴ J. Piquer and others, 'The Piuquencillo Fault System: A Long-Lived, Andean-Transverse Fault System and Its Relationship with Magmatic and Hydrothermal Activity', *Solid Earth*, 12.1 (2021), pp. 253–73 (p. 253), doi:10.5194/se-12-253-2021.

³⁵ Cuypers, *A Qur'anic Apocalypse*, p. 91.

piece highlights the seriousness of God's message, which the disbelievers take lightly.³⁶
Table 5. The structure of the first piece in part 2

Symbol	No. Verse	English Translation
A	15	Verily, they plot a plot,
B	16	And I plot a plot.
A'	17a	So respite the disbelievers!
B'	17b	Give them respite for a while!

The oaths invoking the "heaven which returns" and the "earth which splits" (verses 11-12) serve as a powerful affirmation of God's power over natural phenomena, specifically those associated with renewal and resurrection. This cosmic backdrop sets the stage for the assertion of divine authority that follows in verses 13-14 and subsequently frames the human drama that unfolds in verses 15-17. Therefore, the second part of Sūrah Al-Ṭāriq (verses 11-17) exhibits a parallel structure, further divided into two pieces that mirror the structure of the first part (verses 1-10). Beyond the structural parallels (AB/A'B'), the two parts also exhibit thematic parallels, reinforcing the Sūrah's central message. Both parts begin with oaths referencing cosmic phenomena—the morning star in the first part and the heavens and the earth in the second.³⁷

The application of SRA to QS. Al-Ṭāriq enhances its scientific interpretation by revealing the thematic and rhetorical coherence of the text, thereby creating a structured framework that integrates modern scientific insights with Qur'anic exegesis. By framing several scientific phenomena within the rhetorical context of renewal and return, SRA situates the verse within the broader thematic structure of the Surah, particularly its emphasis on resurrection and divine control over creation.

Conclusion

The comprehensive analysis of QS. Al-Ṭāriq underscores the interplay between Semitic Rhetorical Analysis (SRA) and scientific interpretation, illustrating how SRA enhances the understanding of natural phenomena described in the Qur'an by integrating them into its broader theological and rhetorical framework. Through the examination of verses 3, 6-7, 11, and 12, SRA reveals the Qur'an's structural coherence and thematic depth, connecting the descriptions of cosmic and earthly processes with eschatological themes such as resurrection, renewal, and divine omnipotence.

Scientific insights, such as the identification of pulsars and quasars in verse 3, embryological development in verses 6-7, atmospheric functions in verse 11, and geological processes in verse 12, demonstrate remarkable alignment with the Qur'anic text. These interpretations highlight the Qur'an's prescient descriptions of complex natural phenomena, which modern science has only recently uncovered. SRA enriches these interpretations by framing them within the Surah's rhetorical structure, emphasizing their role in illustrating divine wisdom and reinforcing the central themes of the Surah.

This synthesis between SRA and scientific exegesis bridges the gap between ancient scripture and contemporary knowledge, showcasing the Qur'an's ability to convey profound truths through layered, interconnected imagery. It not only affirms the

³⁶ Cuypers, *A Qur'anic Apocalypse*, pp. 91-92.

³⁷ Cuypers, *A Qur'anic Apocalypse*, p. 92.

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compatibility of Qur'anic revelation with modern scientific understanding but also deepens the spiritual significance of the text by situating scientific details within its overarching narrative of divine creativity and control. Consequently, this approach highlights the Qur'an's timeless relevance and its enduring capacity to inspire both faith and intellectual inquiry.

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