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Explaining the Purposiveness of the Stories of the Divine Prophets in the Qur'an and the Old Testament

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Abstract

The stories of the Prophets (*Qaṣaṣ al-Anbīyā'*) in the Qur'an and the Old Testament (OT), while seemingly narrating shared figures, reflect two distinct conceptual frameworks at the level of structure, function, and message. This article employs a comparative approach to examine the fundamental differences between these two texts in narrating the Prophets' stories. It demonstrates that the Qur'an presents these narratives as a tool for individual spiritual development, social reform, and the realization of Divine Laws (Sunan Ilahi) in history. In contrast, these stories in the OT are predominantly ethnocentric, historical, and confined to the fate of the Israelites. In the Qur'an, the Prophets are universal models for combating oppression, inviting to Monotheism, and establishing a Monotheistic Nation; whereas in the OT, they often function as tribal leaders or local advisors. These differences have profound implications in the educational, theological, and civilizational spheres, such that the Qur'anic stories have served as a civilizational and epistemic pillar of the Islamic world, shaping the Ummah system and its universal values. Conversely, the OT's perspective on these stories largely serves to establish ethnic and territorial identity. The present article uses a descriptive-analytical method, analyzing the content of the Holy

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Qur'an and the Old Testament, to investigate this distinction and its functions across social, historical, and doctrinal dimensions.

Keywords: Stories of the Prophets, Holy Qur'an, Old Testament, Social Function of Religious Narratives.

Introduction

The stories of the Prophets have always been a crucial platform for the transmission of religious, educational, and social concepts in the sacred texts of the Abrahamic religions. Both the Holy Qur'an and the Old Testament extensively address the stories of the Prophets, but a comparative look at the two texts reveals that their narratives of the Prophets belong to two entirely distinct frameworks. The Qur'an uses the stories of the Prophets not merely as an account of historical events, but as tools for individual guidance, social reform, confrontation with tyranny, and explanation of Divine laws in human history. These narratives, especially in the Qur'anic framework, emphasize the spiritual development of the monotheistic human, moral role-modeling, and the construction of a society based on Tawhid and justice.

In contrast, in the Old Testament, the Prophets' stories are predominantly narrated within the historical context of the Israelite people, and their primary function is to preserve ethnic identity, explain the history of salvation, and solidify the covenant relationship between God and a specific people. The Prophets in these narratives appear more as local leaders, tribal advisors, and guardians of the law rather than universal role models for humanity. This difference in approach has led to significant consequences in the fields of theology, religious education, collective identity formation, and

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even the civilizational foundations of the two traditions (Qur'anic and Testamental).

The present study aims to conduct a comparative study of the two approaches—Qur'anic and Old Testamental—to analyze the purposiveness (goal-orientation) of the stories of the Prophets through central concepts such as Tawhid, anti-tyranny, deriving lessons, moral guidance, and Ummah-building, and to investigate its educational, social, and civilizational consequences.

Research main question is 'What are the objectives and orientations with which the stories of the Prophets in the Qur'an and the Old Testament are narrated, and how have they shaped two different theological and social frameworks through themes such as Tawhid, deriving lessons, anti-tyranny, moral guidance, and Ummah-building?'

Hypothesis is that the stories of the Prophets in the Qur'an, unlike the approach of the Old Testament, transcend the boundaries of ethnic history and local experience, and assume a universal mission for the spiritual development of the monotheistic human and the construction of the Monotheistic Nation within the framework of comprehensive Divine traditions; whereas the Old Testament, by focusing on the people of Israel, has mostly represented the Prophets in their historical and ethnic roles.

Significance and Novelty; the significance and novelty of the research lie in its use of a comparative and analytical approach to examine one of the most fundamental elements of the sacred texts—the stories of the Prophets—from a fresh perspective; a perspective that focuses on the social, theological, and civilizational functions of these narratives, rather than merely focusing on narrative similarities or linguistic differences, offering a

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novel explanation of the relationship between religious narrative and civilizational structure. This approach can open new horizons in comparative religious studies and the civilizational understanding of sacred texts.

1. Literature Review

Previous studies on the prophetic narratives can be categorized at three levels:

At the first level, numerous general studies have examined the prophetic stories in the Qur'an. These works have primarily focused on rhetorical, historical, exegetical, or educational aspects of the narratives, without necessarily engaging in comparison with other sacred texts such as the Old Testament. A prominent example of this category is *al-Qaṣaṣ al-Qurʾānī: ʿArḍ wa-Taḥlīl* by Ṣalāḥ ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ al-Khālidī, which offers a comprehensive analysis of the structure and objectives of the Qur'anic narratives. In addition, several works have been published with a focus on the monotheistic messages and educational functions of these stories.

At the second level, a number of studies have comparatively analyzed the narratives of the prophets in the Qur'an and the Old Testament. These works have generally concentrated on narrative, linguistic, or historical differences, while paying less attention to the functional, civilizational, or purpose-oriented dimensions of the stories. For instance, "A Comparative Study of Stories in the Qur'an and the Old Testament" by Abbas Ashrafi undertakes a comparative review of several shared narratives, analyzing their similarities and differences in content. Likewise, "Biblical Prophets in the Qur'an and Muslim Literature" by Roberto Tottoli (2002), adopting a historical-literary

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and secular approach, investigates the representation of Old Testament prophets in the Qur'an and their reception in the Islamic tradition, particularly in exegetical works and *Qaṣaṣ al-Anbiyā'*.

In addition, "The Stories of the Prophets in the Torah, Talmud, Gospel, and Qur'an and Their Reflection in Persian Literature" by Mohammad Hamid Yazdanparast Larijani seeks to compare the narratives of the prophets across religious texts and to demonstrate their impact on Persian literature, although its primary focus is on literary and intertextual aspects rather than on civilizational or educational functions.

Furthermore, the article "The Expansion of the Exploratory Method of the Prophets for the Transmission of Religious Concepts in the Qur'an and the Old Testament," by Abbas Yusefi Tazakandi, Morteza Sazjini, and Salim Pahlusay (published in Journal of New Research in the Teachings of the Qur'an and Sunnah, 2018 AD/1397 SH), examines one of the shared educational dimensions in the narratives of the prophets from the perspective of the exploratory method.

Despite the scholarly value of the aforementioned works, their primary focus has been on the comparison of narratives and modes of expression in the Qur'an and the Old Testament, with comparatively little attention paid to the conceptual, social, or functional analysis of prophetic narratives. In particular, the role of these narratives in shaping religious identity, Ummah-building, and theological-civilizational frameworks has seldom been placed at the center of previous research.

At the third level, to the best of current research, no independent and analytical study has yet been conducted that compares the prophetic narratives in the Qur'an and the Old Testament with a focus on their

purposefulness, social, justice-centered, and civilizational functions. In particular, the emphasis on the Qur'an's universal outlook in contrast to the ethnocentrism of the Old Testament—and the analysis of the theological, educational, and community-building consequences of these two approaches—constitute a gap that the present study seeks to address. This approach may open new horizons for interreligious studies and for analyzing the civilization-building dimensions of the Qur'anic narratives.

2. The Centrality of Monotheism in the Prophets Stories: A Comparison between the Qur'an and the Old Testament

One of the fundamental differences between the Qur'an and the Old Testament in narrating the prophetic stories is the treatment of the concept of monotheism and its place in the prophets' mission. In the Qur'an, nearly all prophets begin with an explicit call to "Worship Allah" and to "Avoid the tyranny," with monotheism presented as the cornerstone of their mission:

"Indeed, We sent to every nation a messenger [saying], "Worship Allah and avoid the tyranny." (al-Naḥl: 36)

The prophets' call in the Qur'an is clearly centered on rejecting polytheism, denying illegitimate authority, and returning to the worship of the one true God. This message is repeated in the stories of *Nūḥ, Hūd, Ṣāliḥ, Shuʿayb, Ibrāhīm, Mūsā*, and others (cf. al-Aʿrāf: 59, 65, 73; Hūd: 25–26, 50, 61). It shows that the prophetic narratives are not merely historical accounts, but rather instruments for instilling the centrality of monotheism in the minds and hearts of the audience.

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For instance, Abraham in the Qur'an appears as the very embodiment of a monotheist, who, with logic and clarity, warns his people against idol worship:

"When he said to his father and his people, "What are these statues to which you are devoted?" (al-Anbīyā': 52)

He then goes on to declare his faith in "the Lord who created the heavens and the earth." (al-Anbīyā': 56)

All divine religions share three fundamental principles—monotheism, prophethood, and the afterlife—with particular emphasis on monotheism, and this commonality is clearly reflected in the narratives of the Holy Qur'an. Thus, one of the primary aims of the Qur'anic narratives is to elucidate the place and importance of religious beliefs and faith. Through recounting historical accounts, the Qur'an reveals the reality that all the prophets of God preached and called on the basis of shared principles, possessed unity in their message, and carried out a mission founded upon a single truth—the very message that has been reiterated throughout history and across generations, encapsulated in the phrase "*Lā Ilāha illā Allāh*" (there is no god but Allah).

These verses demonstrate that, while recounting the stories of the prophets, the Qur'an places special emphasis on the common core of their call, which is monotheism and devotion to the one true God.

Sayyid Quṭb, in his analysis of the Qurʾānic narratives, emphasizes that although these stories possess remarkable artistic qualities and are narrated in a "Pictorial" style employing literary and artistic techniques, their primary and ultimate orientation lies in the realization of religious objectives and the divine call. He states that this artistic quality operates in the service of the

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Qurʾān's supreme aim—namely, religious exhortation—and that all Qurʾānic stories depict examples of human characters who, beyond being historical individuals, are presented as pedagogical human models. From this perspective, the narratives of the Qurʾān are not merely historical or artistic accounts, but instruments for fulfilling religious purposes (Quṭb, 1995 AD/1416 AH: 200).

Even in surahs that do not explicitly assume a narrative form, the Qurʾānic mode of expression serves the establishment of proof for monotheism, negating polytheism through dialogue, the most courteous disputation, and rational demonstration (Javadi Amoli, 1996 AD/1375 SH: 3).

The approximately 2,700 occurrences of the word *Allāh* in the Qurʾān (Rūḥānī, 1994 AD/1414 AH: 2, 244–272)—which may be regarded as the most central term in the Qurʾānic conception of monotheism—together with the diversity of affirmative and negative expressions underscoring God's oneness, highlight the foundational and indispensable position of monotheism within Islamic teachings.

In contrast, in the Old Testament, the figure of Abraham is depicted primarily within the framework of a covenant with a particular people. In the Book of Genesis, God promises Abraham that a great nation will arise from him and that a specific land will be granted to him:

"I will make of you a great nation… and to your descendants I will give this land." (Genesis 12:2–7, NRSV)

Furthermore, Abraham is presented as the father of the people of Israel and the bearer of God's promise concerning the Israelites (Genesis 17:4–8). In these narratives, the call to monotheism is not articulated as explicitly and

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universally as it is in the Qurʾān. Indeed, no expression equivalent to *Lā Ilāha illā Allāh* appears in the story of Abraham in the Old Testament. What is emphasized instead is ethnic election, the genealogical lineage of the prophets, and the focus on territorial inheritance (Levenson, 2012 AD: 34–45).

This divergence in approach is also evident in the accounts of other prophets. In the Qurʾān, *Shuʿayb* addresses his people as follows:

"O! My people worship Allah; you have no deity other than Him". (Hūd: 84)

Similarly, *Hūd* is commissioned with the same message in his mission to reform the people of *ʿĀd* (al-Aʿrāf: 65).

By contrast, in the Book of Exodus, Moses is commanded to go to Pharaoh and demand the release of the Israelites, rather than to proclaim a universal message of monotheism:

"Let my people go, so that they may hold a festival to me in the wilderness." (Exodus 5:1, NRSV)

Here the goal is the liberation of an ethnic community and the performance of rituals in the wilderness, not a theological invitation extended to all humanity.

Indeed, in certain accounts such as Elijah's struggle against idolatry in his confrontation with the priests of Baal, traces of opposition to polytheism can be observed. Yet even these examples in the Old Testament are local and limited in scope (1 Kings 18:21–40), usually narrated with the purpose of internal reform within Israel rather than serving as a universal call to guidance.

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In Jewish exegesis of the Book of Genesis, the promise to Abraham is explicitly national in character and is associated with concepts such as progeny, land, and a conditional covenant, rather than a universal mission:

"God's promise to Abraham is fundamentally national: It involves progeny, land, and a conditional covenant, not a universal religious mission." (Berlin & Brettler, 2014 AD: 31)

Similarly, in Rashi's commentary, God's promise to Abraham concerning the nation of Israel consistently bears an ethnic, linguistic, and territorial dimension. He emphasizes that the phrase "Make you into a great nation" refers not only to Abraham's descendants but also highlights his special role in the formation of the people of Israel (Rashi, Gen. 12:2).

The analysis of Old Testament exegetical sources also confirms this perspective. Walter Brueggemann, one of the leading Christian commentators, in his interpretation of the Book of Genesis, explains that the structure and content of the Abraham narrative in the Torah focus primarily on the formation of Abraham's family and the people of Israel as the bearers of the divine promise. In his view, the biblical narrative in this section is constructed in such a way that Abraham is presented as the founder of the chosen people, thereby establishing the historical and divine legitimacy of this nation (Brueggemann, 1982 AD: 120).

As a result, in this narrative the primary emphasis is placed on the Israelites as the bearers of the divine promise, rather than on Abraham as a model and messenger of monotheism for all humanity. Accordingly, the main purpose of recounting Abraham's life in the Torah is the "Establishment of the historical legitimacy of the people of Israel," not the presentation of a theological doctrine for all humankind.

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One of the central themes in Walter Brueggemann's commentary "Genesis: Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching" is the role of the Genesis narratives—especially the story of Abraham—in shaping the historical and ethnic identity of the Israelites. In his view, these narratives are less about conveying universal teachings than about articulating the identity of a particular nation (Brueggemann, 1982 AD: 120).

Brueggemann states that God's covenant with Abraham is founded upon three elements: the promise of land, the multiplication of descendants, and blessing—components that form the foundation of Israelite society (Brueggemann, 1982 AD: 129–132). These stories are not merely about the personal relationship of a believer with God, but about the "Formation of a particular political community" whose identity is shaped by inherited faith, territory, and salvation history (Brueggemann, 1982 AD: 137). He stresses that the text, contrary to broad theological readings, focuses on Abraham's historical role in structuring the people of Israel rather than on universal moral teachings (Brueggemann, 1982 AD: 135).

Even concepts such as faith and blessing, within this context, acquire an ethnic meaning: Abraham's faith is portrayed as a model for collective fidelity to God's promises, rather than merely an individual example. Thus, according to Brueggemann, the story of Abraham plays a key role in "Establishing the historical and theological legitimacy of the people of Israel," not in delivering a universal message for all humanity.

It should be noted that although Walter Brueggemann's analyses contribute significantly to this study, his views, alongside other Jewish and Christian interpretations such as those of Kugel, Levenson, and Fishbane,

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constitute part of a broader exegetical framework within the Old Testament tradition, in which each has re-read the structure and function of the prophetic narratives from a particular perspective.

Jon Levenson, in his book *Inheriting Abraham*, likewise emphasizes that in the Jewish tradition, Abraham is not regarded as a universal prophet but as the founder of a specific bloodline, whose role is confined to Israel (Levenson, 2012 AD: 21–40).

Overall, the Old Testament depicts the prophets primarily within historical, ethnic, and political frameworks, whereas the Holy Qurʾān considers their mission to extend beyond the establishment of social justice or political liberties, designating the ultimate goal as the liberation of human beings from carnal enslavements and their guidance toward monotheism and spiritual freedom. This movement, in the words of Mutahhari, is the passage from the "Lower self" to the "Higher self," which constitutes the ultimate aim of prophetic missions (Muṭahharī, 2020 AD/1399 SH: 23, 454).

By repeatedly emphasizing the monotheistic call in the words of the prophets, the Qurʾān presents a theological and universal vision of their mission, while the Old Testament focuses more heavily on their ethnic and historical identity. This distinction is among the most prominent indicators of the Qurʾān's theological intentionality in its prophetic narratives, in contrast to the ethnocentric orientation of the Old Testament.

3. Depicting the Hardships of the Prophets' Struggle against Tyrants

One of the distinguishing features of the prophetic narratives in the Qurʾān is their educational and inspirational treatment of the prophets' struggles against the powers of oppression and rebellion. In these accounts, the

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confrontation of prophets with tyrants is not merely a report of a historical event, but rather a manifestation of the divine tradition of faithful resistance against injustice, aimed at inner purification, the strengthening of faith, and the reinforcement of collective will. By contrast, while the Old Testament does recount some of these struggles, it often presents them as historical or ethnic reports, with less emphasis on pedagogical modeling or universal guidance.

In the Qurʾān, the story of Moses constitutes one of the most comprehensive examples of the struggle against tyranny. God commands Moses and Aaron:

"Go, both of you, to Pharaoh, for indeed he has transgressed." (20:43)

And He continues:

"And speak to him with gentle speech, that perhaps he may take heed or fear." (20:44)

This confrontation with Pharaoh is not only a historical mission but also a vivid scene of faith confronting arrogance, patience facing threats, and trust in God opposing oppressive power. Throughout surahs *Ṭāhā*, *al-Aʿrāf*, *al-Shuʿarāʾ*,
al-Qaṣaṣ, and others, the stages of this encounter are narrated with precision and profound educational purpose. Moses is presented not merely as an ethnic leader but as an enduring model of resistance against injustice:

"He said, "No indeed! My Lord is with me, He will guide me." (26:62)

By contrast, the Old Testament also recounts the story of Moses' confrontation with Pharaoh in the Book of Exodus (Exodus 5–12). Moses is commanded to say to Pharaoh:

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"Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, "Let my people go, so that they may celebrate a festival to me in the wilderness". (Exodus 5:1, NRSV)

Here, the primary goal is presented as the liberation of the Israelites for the sake of worship, not a universal call to monotheism or a moral critique of tyranny. Subsequently, the ten plagues are inflicted upon Egypt (Exodus 7–12) to compel Pharaoh's submission. Yet these punishments, rather than forming part of a pedagogical system addressed to humanity at large, function chiefly as signs of God's power aimed at securing the ethnic liberation of the Israelites.

From the perspective of certain commentators, including Walter Brueggemann, this narrative can be understood within the broader theological framework of the Old Testament, which emphasizes the reestablishment of divine order in the face of human disorder. In his commentary on Genesis (Genesis 5–9), Brueggemann shows that the foundational narratives of the Old Testament, including the story of Noah, herald the possibility of a new beginning, the restoration of Yahweh's sovereignty, and the emergence of new social and ethical relations between God and humankind. Within this framework, narratives such as the Exodus—although treated by Brueggemann in another context—may also be seen as reflecting a divine effort to move a people from a state of bondage to one grounded in covenant, justice, and trust in the divine promise. In other words, the principal function of these narratives lies not in individual role-modeling, but in the reconstruction of collective order, the reaffirmation of God's sovereignty, and the shaping of the people's religious identity (Brueggemann, Genesis, 1982 AD: 70–73).

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Another example in the Qurʾān is the story of Noah, one of the earliest prophets of God, who contends with his rebellious people:

"He said, "My Lord, indeed I invited my people night and day." (71:5) "But they denied him, so We saved him and those who were with him in the Ark, and We drowned those who denied Our signs. Indeed, they were a blind people." (7:64)

Here, Noah's confrontation with his people is depicted within the framework of the divine tradition of continuous calling, patience in the face of rebellion, and, ultimately, the descent of divine punishment (7:59–64). Although the story takes place within a historical and ethnic setting, in the Qurʾān the narrative of the flood is not confined to the history or fate of a particular people. Rather, it represents a universal divine tradition in human history—a tradition that warns that the end of denying the prophets is the destruction of oppressive civilizations.

In other words, the Qurʾān transcends ethnic frameworks to deliver a global, pedagogical, and civilization-building message. This same story of Noah is repeatedly presented in various verses not only as a lesson for the community of Muḥammad (PBUH) but also for all human societies. By contrast, in the Old Testament Noah is more closely tied to the genealogy of humankind and serves as a prelude to the history of the people of Israel, with its universal pedagogical function largely relegated to the margins.

In Genesis, chapters 6–9, the story of Noah is narrated as follows:

"I have determined to make an end of all flesh, for the earth is filled with violence because of them." (Genesis 6:13, NRSV)

Although this account likewise emphasizes the corruption, violence, and widespread injustice of humankind on earth, Noah in this section of the Old

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Testament is portrayed merely as an obedient, righteous man, "Blameless in his generation," who is commanded to build an ark and save his family (Genesis 6:9; 6:14–22). There is no indication here of a call to faith, dialogue with his people, or a religious and cultural confrontation between Noah and his community. In other words, in the Old Testament Noah appears more as an executor of God's command than as a prophet engaged in active invitation. By contrast, the Holy Qurʾān—especially in surah *Nūḥ*—presents Noah as a complete model of patience, faithful struggle, and tireless effort to guide his people.

In the First Book of Kings, chapter 18, one of the few explicit examples of a prophet's confrontation with idolatry in the Old Testament is recounted. In this narrative, Elijah stands against 450 priests of Baal and challenges them in order to prove the power of the true God:

"How long will you go limping with two different opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him." (1 Kings 18:21, NRSV)

Elijah decisively places the people of Israel before the choice of "Following God or Baal," and by the descent of fire upon the sacrifice, demonstrates the power of Yahweh (vv. 36–39). For a moment, the people turn back to God, after which the priests of Baal are slain (v. 40).

Despite the monotheistic thrust of this account, it must be noted that the entire audience of this call is the people of Israel, and its central aim is the return of a deviant community to its covenantal God. In this narrative, unlike the Qurʾānic stories, there is no trace of a pedagogical system designed for all humanity, no gradual invitation, and no application of patience or faith-based disputation with opponents. The focus lies in demonstrating God's power to a particular people, presented in the form of a

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swift and punitive display, rather than as an educational model with universal dimensions (1 Kings 18:21–40).

Michael Walzer, in *Exodus and Revolution*, emphasizes that the story of the Exodus in Judaism is understood primarily as a paradigm for political nation-building rather than as a universal struggle against oppression (Walzer, 1986 AD: 1–30, 131–152).

Walter Brueggemann likewise shows in his works that the Exodus narrative is not merely a theological text but part of the collective memory and ethnic narrative tradition that played a central role in shaping the religious and social identity of the Israelites. In his view, this narrative, through its repeated retellings and within the lived experience of the believing community, is reconstructed not in pursuit of establishing an absolute truth but in conveying a particular historical experience (Brueggemann, 1991 AD: 3–6).

For example, in Exodus chapter 12, the account of the final night before deliverance is accompanied by a special emphasis on the ordinances of the Passover:

"This day shall be a day of remembrance for you. You shall celebrate it as a festival to the Lord… throughout your generations you shall observe it as a perpetual ordinance." (Exodus 12:14, NRSV).

Brueggemann, in his exegetical works, does not regard the Exodus narrative as merely a historical report, but identifies it as a reflection of the collective memory and ethnic narrative tradition of the people of Israel—a memory that, through rituals such as Passover, is reconstructed across successive generations and shapes the religious identity of this people (Brueggemann, 1991 AD: 3–6; Exodus 12:14).

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In the introduction to his commentary on Genesis, he likewise maintains that this book, like other parts of the Old Testament, constitutes a body of identity-forming literature for the people of Israel, preserving the concepts of "Promise," "Memory," and "Identity" through its narratives (Brueggemann, 1982 AD: 1–5).

Nevertheless, Brueggemann's analysis is less concerned with the internal textual structure of the Old Testament than with reinterpreting the social and spiritual functions of these texts in the contemporary context. As a modern commentator, he seeks to understand these narratives—not through a fundamentalist or strictly historical lens—but as inspiring resources for the renewal of collective faith and morality in today's world.

Although interpreters such as Brueggemann have attempted to reread Old Testament narratives in light of contemporary spiritual needs, the internal textual structure of these stories remains oriented toward the consolidation of ethnic identity and the reflection of Israel's particular historical experience.

4. Moral Instruction and Ethical Guidance in the Stories of the Prophets

A defining feature of the Qur'anic narratives of the prophets is their consistent emphasis on moral instruction, reflection on the fate of earlier nations, and ethical guidance for future generations. These narratives, particularly through expressions such as: "Indeed, in their stories there is a lesson," (12:111) "So take warning, O! People of vision", (59:2) and "that they might reflect," (59:21) function not merely as reports of the past, but as

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an ongoing framework for teaching faith, morality, and monotheism across all eras.

By contrast, while the Old Testament also recounts narratives of divine punishment upon the sinful—such as the stories of the Flood, Sodom and Gomorrah, or the plagues of Egypt—many of these accounts are framed primarily within the ethnic history of Israel. Their admonitory function is thus often confined to the collective memory of Israel, the particular covenant with Yahweh, or internal communal reform, rather than being structured as universal models for all humanity.

The Qur'an presents the story of Noah with special focus on his persistent call to his people, their continued resistance, and their eventual destruction due to rebellion:

"But they denied him, so We saved him and those who were with him in the Ark, and We drowned those who denied Our signs. Indeed, they were a blind people." (7:64)

"And recite to them the story of Noah… so that they might reflect." (10:71)

Through such formulations, the Qur'an summons its audience to contemplate divine traditions and to draw lessons from the destinies of past peoples. Noah is portrayed not only as a prophet, but also as a moral educator and model of patience and unrelenting admonition.

In the Old Testament, the story of Noah appears in Genesis 6–9. There, after witnessing the corruption of humankind, God decides to destroy all living beings:

"I have determined to make an end of all flesh, for the earth is filled with violence because of them." (Gen 6:13, NRSV)

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The forty-day rain then comes, and only Noah and those with him are saved (Gen 7:23).

In this narrative, the element of moral instruction for future generations is not explicitly articulated. Noah does not engage in extended dialogue with his people, nor is the content of his message or the rationale for his salvation explained beyond his individual obedience. As Jon D. Levenson observes in his analysis, the flood narrative in the Old Testament represents a manifestation of divine wrath in its pure form, presented without a broader pedagogical or universal moral framework (Levenson, 1988: 21–22).

In the Qur'an, the stories of divine punishment upon rebellious peoples—such as the people of Lot—are consistently narrated with an explicit call to reflection and moral instruction:

"And We rained upon them a rain [of stones]. Then see how was the end of the criminals." (7:84)

These verses do not merely recount the destruction of one community but rather serve as a perpetual warning to humankind throughout history to learn from the fate of wrongdoers.

By contrast, in the Old Testament the account of Sodom and Gomorrah is found in Genesis 19. The angels warn Lot to take his family out of the city, and then it is written:

"Then the Lord rained on Sodom and Gomorrah sulfur and fire from the Lord out of heaven." (Gen 19:24–25, NRSV)

Here again, no sustained dialogue between Lot and the people is reported, nor is there any explicit reference to a universal moral or pedagogical purpose. The narrative functions primarily as a punitive episode, meaningful within the framework of Israelite history.

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Other Qur'anic examples include the stories of *ʿĀd* and *Thamūd* (7:65–72) and Pharaoh (79:25–26). In all these accounts, the emphasis is placed on understanding, admonition, fear of God, and repentance. The Qur'anic *Qaṣaṣ al-Anbiyāʾ* are thus consistently designed to provide ethical guidance, to elucidate divine traditionss, and to cultivate human souls. Expressions such as lesson, *Tadhkira*, *Tafakkur*, *Tadabbur*, and *Khashyah* create a distinct atmosphere of moral introspection and historical insight.

By contrast, even in cases like Noah or Sodom in the Old Testament, the moral message remains implicit and ambiguous, leaving the reader primarily with a wrath-centered, retributive, and ethnocentric narrative.

5. The Elucidation of Divine Traditions and Immutable Laws

In the Qur'an, one of the most prominent features of the prophetic narratives is their emphasis on divine traditions—that is, decisive, immutable, and universal laws that govern the relationship between God and humankind at individual, social, and historical levels. These traditions, established on the basis of divine justice and wisdom, transcend any accidental or deterministic perspective, and instead explain the course of human developments in a purposeful and law-governed manner (Zaydān, 1992 AD/1413 AH: 7–17; Ṣadr, 2007 AD/1386 SH: 58, 78–79, 83–90).

In contrast to the Old Testament—where the disobedience or faith of communities is mainly presented as particular and ethnic events—the Qur'an, in a law-oriented manner, presents the divine traditions as recurrent rules that can be applied to the whole of human history. These traditions, like divine laws governing society and nature, serve both explanatory and

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pedagogical-guiding functions (Misbah Yazdi, 2022 AD/1401 AH: 470–502).

Verses such as "So each We seized for his sin" (29:40) and "You will never find any change in the way of Allah" (33:62) demonstrate that, in the Qur'an, human history moves along the axis of traditions such as the reward of the believers, the destruction of the oppressors, and the deliverance of the oppressed. This pattern is particularly evident in the stories of the peoples of *ʿĀd*, *Thamūd*, Noah, Pharaoh, and Lot, and is structured around the sequence: invitation → arrogance → completion of proof → punishment or salvation.

According to Misbah Yazdi, these divine traditions are not only standards for understanding history and for a scientific analysis of societies, but they also provide an ethical-spiritual framework for the guidance of both the individual and the community. Recognizing and adhering to them is regarded as the key factor in the endurance and true progress of nations, and as a safeguard against moral and political decline (Misbah Yazdi, 2012 AD/1391 SH: 469–470).

In contrast, in the Old Testament, the consequences of disobedience are confined to the historical context of the people of Israel. In the Book of Numbers, chapter 14, when the Israelites refuse to enter the Promised Land and show distrust toward God, Moses reports:

"Your children shall be shepherds in the wilderness for forty years… until the last of your dead bodies lies in the wilderness." (Numbers 14:33, NRSV)

Here, divine punishment is imposed solely for a particular act of disobedience by a specific people in a specific historical setting. Although a

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kind of causal relationship is evident, it is not expressed as a "Fixed divine tradition applicable to other peoples and times." Such punishments in the Old Testament are often defined within the framework of "The covenant between the people of Israel and Yahweh," rather than as universal moral and historical laws.

The same approach is found in the Book of Deuteronomy, where divine promises are conditional upon the obedience of the Israelites:

"If you obey the Lord your God… then the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations." (Deut. 28:1)

But if they disobey:

"The Lord will send on you curses, confusion, and frustration in all that you undertake to do." (Deut. 28:20)

As Michael Fishbane demonstrates in his analysis, the verses of Deuteronomy 28 have a covenantal structure in which the fulfillment of divine promises is contingent upon Israel's obedience, and in the case of disobedience, divine punishments await them. Fishbane considers this conditional pattern of reward and punishment part of a specific legal framework limited to the covenantal order of the people of Israel, rather than a universal paradigm applicable to all humanity (Fishbane, 1989: 231–235).

In sum, in the Qur'an, divine traditions are narrated as universal, immutable, and admonitory laws that apply to all human beings across all times; whereas in the Old Testament, divine promises and punishments are primarily framed within the particular covenant between God and the people of Israel, and are interpreted in response to the historical actions of that community, not as universally binding laws.

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6. Providing Exemplary Models for Human Life and Guidance

One of the important approaches of the Qur'an in presenting the prophetic narratives is the depiction of the prophets as educational, moral, and spiritual exemplars for all humankind. The Qur'an portrays the prophets not merely as human beings with divine missions, but also as models of patience, piety, reliance upon God, crisis management, forgiveness, and resistance against temptations. In these narratives, the objective is not simply to recount historical events, but rather to construct a universal pedagogical system grounded in the lived experiences of the prophets.

By contrast, while the Old Testament also recounts the figures of Joseph, Moses, David, Solomon, and others, in many cases the focus of the narratives lies on their historical, ethnic, or personal roles, and their weaknesses and faults are highlighted without consideration for their exemplary function. Thus, the prophets in the Torah are at times depicted more as human characters with mixed or "Gray" actions than as complete spiritual role models.

For instance, in the Holy Qur'an, the story of Prophet Joseph is narrated with remarkable rhetorical subtlety and a unique literary structure in an entire independent surah entitled *Yūsuf*. Beyond its literary beauty, this narrative conveys profound messages and ethical-social teachings, such as patience in the face of injustice during his wrongful imprisonment, resistance against temptation in the episode of the wife of the Egyptian governor, reliance upon God in times of crisis, and wisdom, prudence, and forgiveness at the height of political power. The verse "Indeed, whoever fears Allah and is patient, then indeed, Allah does not allow to be lost the

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reward of those who do good" (12:90) encapsulates these lessons, elevating the narrative from the level of an individual episode to that of a universal divine tradition.

As Allamah *Ṭabāṭabāʾī* emphasizes in *al-Mīzān* (11:237), verse 90 of surah *Yūsuf* is an articulation of a general divine principle: that the reward of beneficence is contingent upon piety and patience. This divine tradition manifests itself concretely and morally within the story of Joseph.

In the Book of Genesis (chapters 37–50), the story of Joseph is also recounted in considerable detail. He is sold by his brothers, taken into the house of Potiphar, cast into prison, interprets Pharaoh's dream, and ultimately becomes the ruler of Egypt. In the end, he brings his family to Egypt, thereby saving the Israelites from famine:

"And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt." (Genesis 41:41, NRSV)

"Then Joseph brought in his father Jacob and set him before Pharaoh." (Genesis 47:7)

While this story is indeed rich in literary qualities, its main focus is on Joseph's political role in delivering his people. Joseph is portrayed as an intelligent figure loyal to the people of Israel, yet the narrative does not provide a universal moral or spiritual model. Even the episode of resisting the wife of Potiphar is narrated only briefly, with the primary emphasis placed on its social consequences and the salvation of the Israelite community (Genesis 39:7–20).

As Jon D. Levenson observes the story of Joseph in the Old Testament forms part of the ethnic-historical narrative of the Israelites, with its central aim being the consolidation of the Israelites' presence in Egypt, rather than

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the presentation of a general moral or spiritual lesson (Levenson, 2012: 56–59).

In sum, through its carefully structured account of the story of Joseph, the Qur'an presents a comprehensive model of faith, chastity, patience, wisdom, and forgiveness—an exemplar that guides the reader along the path of spiritual growth. In the Old Testament, however, Joseph is depicted primarily as a political leader and national deliverer. This contrast reflects two divergent approaches: moral-exemplary modeling in the Qur'an versus ethnic-historical narration in the Old Testament.

As James Kugel demonstrates in "How to Read the Bible," the authors of the Old Testament depict figures such as Joseph and Abraham within the framework of historical promises to the people of Israel, rather than as universal moral exemplars. He terms this approach a "historical reading," distinguishing it from later inspirational and ethical interpretations (Kugel, 2008: 9, 36, 89–91, 234, and 663).

7. Emphasis on Social Struggles and Community-Building

One of the distinctive aspects of the prophetic narratives in the Qur'an is their emphasis on social guidance, resistance against structural corruption, and the building of communities upon the foundation of divine justice. In this perspective, the mission of the prophets is not confined to the reform of individuals or the articulation of moral injunctions; rather, they are entrusted with the establishment of economic, political, and social justice within society. The Qur'anic vision of the prophets thus portrays them not merely as private admonishers but as leaders of transformative, civilization-building movements.

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By contrast, in the Old Testament, although prophets such as Amos, Isaiah, and Jeremiah deliver powerful critiques of social injustice, these calls largely remain within an intra-ethnic framework, limited to the people of Israel, and seldom highlight their universal, structural, or civilizational dimensions.

For example, Prophet *Shuʿayb* is presented in the Qur'an as a prophet entrusted with reforming economic relations and confronting oppressive social structures. He appears before a people corrupted by fraudulent trade, shortchanging in measures, injustice in weighing, and distortions of economic justice. His call is explicit:

"Give full measure and do not be of those who cause loss." (26:181) "Do not diminish people's goods, and do not act wickedly on earth, spreading corruption." (26:183)

Through these statements, *Shuʿayb* not only denounces economic corruption but also summons society to structural justice, respect for the rights of others, and abstention from corrupting the social order. Most importantly, this message in the Qur'an is presented as a universal paradigm, not confined to a single people.

An Old Testament example of this theme can be seen in the story of Amos and his social critique within the community of Israel. In the Book of Amos, an Israelite prophet of the eighth century BCE, strong criticisms are directed against economic corruption and social injustice among his people:

"Hear this, you who trample on the needy, and bring to ruin the poor of the land…" (Amos 8:4, NRSV)

"Buying the poor for silver and the needy for a pair of sandals…" (Amos 8:6)

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Amos also elsewhere warns the people against dishonest trade practices:

"You shall have honest weights and measures, so that you may live long in the land…" (Deuteronomy 25:15)

These passages are socially powerful and constitute one of the most significant examples of moral protest against structural injustice and economic inequality in the prophetic literature of the Old Testament. Yet, these calls remain embedded within the particular framework of the people of Israel, in the Promised Land, and on the basis of the covenantal relationship with this specific nation. For this reason, the universal and paradigmatic dimension of social justice is far less emphasized in these narratives.

As Michael Walzer notes in "The Prophets: Essays on Religion and Politics," the prophets of the Old Testament—such as Amos—delivered sharp critiques of social injustice; yet these critiques were articulated primarily in moral-covenantal terms, within the framework of Israel's breach of its covenant with Yahweh, rather than on the basis of universal principles of justice (Walzer, 2012: 35–38).

In sum, while social justice is indeed a central value in the Old Testament, it is understood within the framework of Mosaic law and fidelity to the particular covenant with the people of Israel, and thus remains confined to a religious-ethnic community. By contrast, the Qur'an presents justice as a universal objective and as part of God's overarching divine traditions. As seen in the stories of *Shuʿayb* and Moses, and in verses such as "So that mankind may uphold justice," (57:25) justice is articulated as a principle for all people across all times.

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8. Universalism versus Ethnic Particularism

One of the fundamental differences between the Qur'an and the Old Testament lies in the scope of the prophetic mission. The Qur'an presents the prophets as figures whose mission transcends ethnic and geographical boundaries, and whose narratives serve as guidance for all humankind throughout history. Accordingly, the prophets in the Qur'an embody universal divine traditions, and their call—to monotheism, justice, and resistance against tyranny—is articulated as a transnational and universal message.

In the Qur'an, numerous verses affirm the global scope of the prophetic mission. Among them are:

"We have not sent you except comprehensively to all mankind, as a bringer of good tidings and a warner." (34:28)

"Indeed, the earth belongs to Allah; He causes it to be inherited by whom He wills of His servants." (7:128)

In the story of Moses, these words are attributed to the prophet himself, who promises his people that the earth will belong to those who remain steadfast in faith and perseverance along the divine path. This verse clearly articulates the divine tradition of victory as a general and universal law, meaning that triumph does not belong to any particular nation but to every community that adheres to truth and resists oppression.

Moreover, while many prophets in the Qur'an are described as being sent "To their people," the content of their mission—monotheism, justice, and resistance against tyranny—remains universal and transnational in nature. Abraham (peace be upon him), for instance, is introduced in the Qur'an as

"An imam for all people" (2:124), not merely as the father of a particular nation.

By contrast, in the Book of Exodus, God declares to Moses:

"Now therefore, if you obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession out of all the peoples… you shall be for me a priestly kingdom and a holy nation." (Exodus 19:5–6, NRSV)

These verses constitute some of the clearest Old Testament affirmations of Israel's election as God's chosen nation. The basis of this election is not a universal paradigm but a particular covenant between God and a specific people within a specific land.

This same perspective recurs throughout the Torah and the prophetic books. For example:

- In Deuteronomy 7:6, it is stated that God has "Chosen you [Israel] out of all the peoples on earth."
- In Malachi 1:2–3, divine love for Jacob (Israel) is repeatedly emphasized in contrast to Esau (Edom).

As Jon D. Levenson points out, this approach constitutes the foundation of the "Theology of ethnic election" in Judaism, where the relationship with God is defined primarily in terms of ethnicity, lineage, and fidelity to a particular law (Levenson, 1987: 54–59).

Thus, the difference in the scope of the prophetic mission between the Qur'an and the Old Testament is one of the key distinctions between these two sacred texts. In the Qur'an, prophets are sent for the guidance of all humankind, the establishment of justice, and the expansion of divine knowledge. Even when a prophet is sent to a specific community, the content of his message transcends time and place and assumes universal and

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civilizational dimensions. The ultimate goal of these missions is the formation of a global community of believers, as emphasized in the verse: "Indeed this community of yours is one community." (21:92)

By contrast, in the Old Testament, prophets are depicted primarily as intra-ethnic reformers. Their calls are typically linked to the political, religious, and social issues of the people of Israel, and their mission is defined within the boundaries of ethnic and territorial identity. Even in cases such as the Book of Jonah, which addresses Nineveh—a non-Israelite city—the main focus remains on the personal experience of the Jewish prophet and his reaction, rather than on a universal message of monotheism or the establishment of a global community of believers.

In conclusion, the Qur'an, through its narratives of prophets such as Abraham, Moses, *Shuʿayb*, and Noah, presents a model of universal prophecy grounded in immutable divine traditions applicable to all humanity. The prophets in the Qur'an are portrayed not merely as tribal leaders, but as moral educators, heralds of monotheism, and founders of divinely guided communities. By contrast, the Old Testament adopts an ethnic-centered perspective, in which the prophets are sent to preserve, guide, and reform a particular people, with their messages generally remaining confined within ethnic and territorial boundaries.

Walter Brueggemann conceives of Old Testament theology not as a closed doctrinal system but as a living, dynamic, and multilayered dialogue between God and the people of Israel. He identifies three key concepts as its foundation: testimony (expressions of loyalty and praise of God by the believing community), dispute (complaints, protests, and confrontational dialogues with God found in texts such as Psalms and Job), and advocacy

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(efforts to justify divine justice and calls for return to Yahweh, particularly in the prophetic books) (Brueggemann, 2012: 1–35).

Within this framework, the prophets are not merely divine messengers but also active social and religious actors who, within history, critique oppressive systems and redefine the relationship between God and humanity. Although this approach still remains within the ethnocentric framework of the Hebrew Bible, Brueggemann's emphasis on the social, critical, and activist dimension of prophecy is comparable to the Qur'anic view of prophetic mission.

The crucial difference, however, lies in the Qur'an's presentation of this message within a monotheistic, universal, and ethically grounded paradigm, rather than as a means of reconstructing ethnic identity. Thus, while Brueggemann's perspective underscores the intra-communal dynamism and polyphony of Israel's covenantal discourse, the Qur'an presents the prophets as guides for all humanity and bearers of divine traditions that transcend both time and ethnicity.

9. Confrontation with Tyranny and Inspiration for Resistance

One of the central aims of the prophetic narratives in the Qur'an is to inspire resistance against oppression, tyranny, and corrupt structures of power. The stories of the prophets in the Qur'an are presented not merely as accounts of the past but as paradigms for social reform, moral courage, and active confrontation with unjust systems. In this sacred text, the prophets stand as enduring symbols of perseverance, reliance upon God, and opposition to human domination. By contrast, while the Old Testament also alludes to some of these struggles, its primary focus often remains on national

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deliverance and the historical restoration of the Israelites, with less emphasis on universal moral inspiration and pedagogy.

In the Qur'an, the story of Moses and Pharaoh serves as the quintessential example of the prophets' confrontation with tyranny and oppressive regimes. The mission of Moses is clearly articulated: "Go to Pharaoh, for indeed he has transgressed." (20:24) Pharaoh emerges as the classic symbol of arrogance, self-deification, and human exploitation, declaring: "I am your lord most high." (79:24)

In contrast, Moses—relying upon God and unafraid of Pharaoh's worldly might—delivers the divine message, confronts threats, and with patience and trust in God, leads his people to salvation: "No! Indeed, with me is my Lord; He will guide me." (26:62)

This story, repeated across multiple surahs such as *Ṭāhā*, *al-Aʿrāf*, *Yūnus*, and *al-Shuʿarāʾ*, is consistently coupled with themes such as divine support for the oppressed, confrontation with tyranny, and the divine law that guarantees the victory of truth: "And We desired to favor those who were oppressed in the land…" (28:5)

From the Qur'anic perspective, this narrative provides a paradigm for all times: faith, patience, and uprising against oppression.

In the Old Testament, the story of Moses and his confrontation with Pharaoh is narrated in detail in the Book of Exodus. God commands Moses:

"Go to Pharaoh and say to him, "Thus says the Lord: Let my people go, so that they may worship me." (Exodus 5:1, NRSV)

Subsequently, Moses confronts Pharaoh with miracles such as the staff and the ten plagues (Exodus 7–12). Pharaoh resists until, after the death of

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Egypt's firstborn, he finally yields and allows the Israelites to depart (Exodus 12:29–32).

Although this story is of great religious and cultural importance, its structure focuses primarily on national liberation, the fulfillment of God's promise to Israel, and the Exodus as the foundational moment of Jewish nation-building. In this account, Moses is portrayed chiefly as the deliverer of a particular nation rather than as a universal model of resistance against oppression.

As Michael Walzer analyzes in "Exodus and Revolution," this narrative has been employed in Jewish tradition as a source for political theology and the nation-building of Israel, rather than as a general paradigm of divine resistance against global tyranny (Walzer, 1986: 8–12).

By contrast, in the Qur'an, Moses is portrayed as a universal figure of resistance against oppression and tyranny. His story is not merely a historical report but a transhistorical and transnational paradigm for believing communities and for all seekers of freedom throughout the world—a paradigm that illustrates the divine tradition of truth's victory over falsehood: "So observe how was the end of the wrongdoers." (27:69) In the Qur'an, these narratives serve as pedagogical tools for strengthening faith, perseverance, and social willpower.

In the Old Testament, however, Moses' struggle is primarily explained within the framework of Israel's deliverance from Egyptian bondage. The central focus is on the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham and the national liberation of a people from Pharaoh's domination. The crossing of the Red Sea becomes the symbol of collective emancipation and the starting point of Jewish nation-building. The educational and moral message of this

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story remains largely bound to the history and destiny of a particular people, rather than being articulated as a universal model for humanity.

In this regard, Walter Brueggemann, in "The Prophetic Imagination," (2001) depicts the Hebrew prophets as religious-political actors who, through the use of "Prophetic imagination," challenge oppressive structures such as Pharaoh. For Brueggemann, Moses marks the beginning of a tradition in which prophecy functions as a project of critiquing royal order and reconstructing communal memory and identity (Brueggemann, 2001: 3–36).

Despite the ethnocentric framework of this perspective, points of convergence exist between Brueggemann's view and the Qur'anic outlook: "Both regard the prophets as critics of tyrannical systems." Yet the fundamental difference lies in the horizon of their mission: "In the Qur'an, prophecy is part of the divine tradition of guiding humanity and establishing justice, whereas in Brueggemann's reading, the ultimate aim is the restoration of Israel's communal identity in opposition to Pharaonic power." This distinction provides a fertile ground for comparative analysis of the social function of prophets in the two texts.

Conclusion

The comparative study of the prophetic narratives in the Qur'an and the Old Testament demonstrates that, despite their shared prophetic figures, the two texts follow fundamentally different conceptual frameworks and narrative purposes. In the Qur'an, the prophetic stories are structured with a purposeful design, centered on monotheism, universal mission, moral exemplarity, the cultivation of the believing individual, community-

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building, and the articulation of immutable divine traditions. The prophets are portrayed not merely as historical characters but as teachers of monotheism, critics of oppressive systems, and sources of ethical inspiration for all generations.

By contrast, the narratives of the prophets in the Old Testament are primarily situated within the ethnic-historical context of the people of Israel, aimed at consolidating a particular religious identity and affirming loyalty to the covenant with Yahweh. The main focus of these accounts lies in the prophets' roles as national leaders or reformers, while their universal and exemplary functions remain largely marginal.

The findings of this research confirm the central hypothesis: Qur'anic narratives, far beyond ethnic historiography or communal identity construction, are embedded in a theological-pedagogical framework that engages in dialogue with a universal audience. The Old Testament, however, by concentrating on the specific experience of the Israelites, situates its narratives within an ethnic and historical framework.

From a methodological perspective, this article has sought to move beyond a mere comparison of stories and to provide a comprehensive analysis of their social, theological, moral, and civilizational functions. Such an approach contributes to a deeper understanding of the relationship between religion and civilization and highlights the potential of sacred texts in shaping pedagogical and social systems across different religious traditions.

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Explaining the Purposiveness of the Stories of the Divine Prophets in the Qur'an and the Old Testament

Prophetic Narratives in the Old Testament	Prophetic Narratives in the Qur'an	Axis of Comparison
Representation of Israelite history, consolidation of ethnic identity, and instruction in loyalty to the specific Jewish law	Global guidance, nurturing of the monotheistic human being, community-building, and articulation of divine traditions	**Main Purpose of the Narratives**
Ethnic leaders, social reformers within the framework of particular history and land	Exemplary figures, transhistorical, models of faith, morality, and resistance	**View of the Prophets**
Report-oriented, historical, lacking a universal paradigm	Systematic, purposeful, with a paradigm of (invitation → rejection → punishment or salvation)	**Narrative Structure**
Loyalty to Yahweh within the covenantal framework; no explicit universal call to monotheism	The central theme of all prophetic missions; explicit articulation of monotheism for all humankind	**Concept of Monotheism**
Limited to specific historical and ethnic contexts; often confined to internal oppression within Israel	A fundamental principle; opposition to domination, polytheism, and structural corruption with a universal message	**Struggle against Tyranny**
Implicit, secondary, and largely in service of preserving communal memory and identity	Explicit, universal, and calling for reflection and remembrance across all ages	**Moral Exhortation and Guidance**
Promises and punishments conditional on ethnic loyalty and situated in specific historical contexts	Immutable, recurrent, and universally applicable laws of history	**Divine Traditions**

Restricted to internal social reforms of Israel and preservation of its religious-ethical order	Engineering of a monotheistic community; call to justice and equity on a global scale	**Social Function of Narratives**
Reinforcing ethnic, territorial, and law-centered identity of Israel	Building a global community founded on monotheism, ethics, and justice	**Civilizational Vision**
Ethnocentric, focused on lineage, language, and the specific land of Israel	Universal, inclusive, addressing all of humanity across time	**Universalism vs. Ethnocentrism**
Prophets depicted with human flaws and weaknesses, without emphasis on universal exemplarity	Prophets as complete role models of chastity, patience, trust in God, and insight	**Prophetic Exemplarity**

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