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Structural–Functional Comparison of the Doctrine of Humility in the Qur'an and the New Testament

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Abstract

Humility holds a special status in the religious ethics of both Muslims and Christians, elevating it beyond a merely commendable virtue. The present study aims to comparatively examine the doctrine of humility in the Qur'an and the New Testament, systematically analyzing their similarities and differences within these two sacred texts. A comparative presentation of these models can contribute to interfaith dialogue by reinforcing a universal outlook on this ethical virtue. Qur'anic verses and New Testament passages are analyzed using a descriptive-analytical and comparative method. The findings indicate that humility in both traditions is a central virtue and a sign of faith, yet its theological foundations differ. In the Qur'an, humility is rooted in essential monotheism and absolute servitude to God, whereas the New Testament emphasizes emulating Christ's humility and salvific grace. In terms of practical manifestations, the Qur'an presents a comprehensive and balanced

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framework by outlining a hierarchy of humility (before God, parents, believers, and even the ignorant) and linking it to social justice. In contrast, the New Testament focuses on humility within the church community and service as an expression of love. From an educational perspective, the Qur'an adopts a gradual and indirect approach, while the New Testament offers a positive model alongside direct exhortation. With a community-building, gradual, and monotheism-centered outlook, the Qur'an places humility in the service of constructing a just community. The New Testament, with a soteriological, individual-centered, and Christ-centered outlook, regards humility as a path toward union with Christ and the unity of the Church.

Keywords: Humility, Qur'an, New Testament, Comparative Ethics, Islam and Christianity.

Introduction

Humility, as one of the foundational virtues in the moral systems of the Abrahamic religions, plays a central role in shaping religious identity and regulating human relationships. Broadly defined as "Lowering oneself and viewing others through a lens of empathy and respect," this virtue is not only a criterion for assessing an individual's moral health but also a cornerstone for realizing a just society grounded in mutual dignity.

In the Islamic tradition, although the doctrine of humility is not expressed in the Qur'an through a single term, a rich network of related concepts, such as *Khushū'* (reverent humility), *Khudū'* (submission), *Ikhbāt* (devout lowliness), *Dhillah* (gentle humility), and metaphorical expressions like "Lowering the wing" (*khafḍ al-janāḥ*), articulates its meaning across different dimensions of human existence. These concepts elevate humility beyond a mere ethical recommendation, grounding it in firm theological and anthropological

foundations, such that humility before the Creator becomes the source and model for humility toward creation. The Qur'an even praises the humility of certain Christians (al-Baqarah: 62; al-Mā'idah: 82),¹ indicating that this virtue can function as a trans-religious criterion for rapprochement among believers. On the other hand, the New Testament places humility at the heart of Christian theology and ethics. In this tradition, humility is not only a moral command but the concrete manifestation of Christ himself and the essence of the believer's life. Counted among the fruits of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22), humility is a necessary condition for imitating Christ (Matt. 11:29), realizing active love (1 Cor. 13:4), and belonging to the "Body of Christ." (1 Cor. 12) Rituals such as the Eucharist and symbols like the washing of feet move humility from theory into lived practice and communal worship.

Previous scholarship on humility can be divided into intra-religious studies and a limited number of comparative works. Within Islamic studies, works such as the thesis "Arrogance and Humility in the Qur'an and Hadith" (Pahlavan and Babouste, 2014 AD/1393 SH) and the article "Tracing the Gradual Development of the Doctrine of Humility in the Qur'an According to the Order of Revelation" (Moti' and Aghdusti, 2021 AD/1400 SH) are

1. According to Morteza Motahhari:

"If you look at this much distorted form of Christianity and travel through villages and towns, is every priest you see a corrupt and immoral person? By God, among them seventy to eighty percent are people with a sense of faith, piety, and sincerity, who, speaking in the name of Jesus and Mary, have brought truthfulness, piety, and purity to the people. They are not at fault; they will go to Paradise, and their priest will also go to Paradise. Therefore, the corrupt ruling Christian clergy and the popes must be judged separately from the majority of the preachers and followers of Christ."

(Motahhari, *The Battle Between Truth and Falsehood*, n.d.: 46. See also: Haji Akbari, Fatemeh, et al., "The Positive Image of Christians in the Qur'an.")

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notable. While rich in intra-Islamic analysis, these studies do not adopt a comparative perspective.

Regarding the New Testament, broader studies on Christian ethics include "The Origins of Christian Ethics in the New Testament," (Emadi, 2015 AD/1394 SH) "Core Virtues and Vices in Christian Ethics," (Fazel and Sheykhi, 2021 AD/1400 SH) and "Foundations and Teachings of Christian Ethics." (Shanazari and Zare'iyān, 2011 AD/1390 SH) Among them, "The Scope and Foundations of Humility in the New Testament" (Haji Akbari and Heydari, 2024 AD/1403 SH) specifically examines humility's bases and instances in the New Testament. However, these works remain confined to Christianity and lack a comparative engagement with Islam.

Some comparative research exists, such as 'Abd al-Amīr's thesis (2023 AD/1402 SH), "Humility and Arrogance in the Qur'an and the Gospels." Although useful in identifying relevant passages, it differs from the present study in two ways: first, it limits its scope to the Gospels rather than the entire New Testament; second, it offers a less systematic theological and teleological analysis of humility as a central virtue.

Thus, despite valuable independent studies, a clear gap remains for a systematic comparative study using a unified framework to analyze the foundations, manifestations, and implications of this shared doctrine. The main question is: 'Although both traditions share the ultimate aim of cultivating humble individuals, are their conceptual frameworks, theological foundations, pedagogical priorities, and scope of humility identical or different?' 'What accounts for these similarities or differences, and what implications do they hold for ethical theory and interfaith dialogue?'

Using a descriptive-analytical and comparative method, this study seeks to address the following questions based on Qur'anic verses and relevant New Testament passages:

1. What are the ontological and anthropological foundations of humility in the Qur'an and the New Testament, and what structural differences exist between them?
2. How are the practical manifestations and behavioral expressions of humility formulated in both traditions?
3. Can we speak of distinctive "Added values" or notable differences in each ethical system's explanation of humility?

Beyond enriching interdisciplinary scholarship, the results of this comparison can help clarify points of convergence and divergence, contributing to deeper interfaith dialogue and offering a balanced approach to rethinking a universal virtue in today's challenging world.

1. Conceptualization and Conceptual Framework of Humility in the Qur'an and the New Testament

The concept of humility, which occupies a central place in Islamic ethics, is not presented in the Qur'an as a single technical term but rather through a rich network of words and expressions with complementary meanings. The root (*w-d-*) conveys the sense of "Placing" or "Lowering," and in the reflexive form implies the voluntary act of lowering oneself (Ibn Fāris, n.d.: 6, 117; Ibn Manzūr, n.d.: 8, 396). Terminologically, humility refers to the disposition of self-effacement that restrains a person from claiming superiority and leads to

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respect for others in speech and action. It has also been defined as contentment with a position lower than one's due (Islam Encyclopedia, n.d.: 8, 359).

Although the specific term humility does not occur in the Qur'an, the scripture expresses this virtue through a coherent set of related concepts, each highlighting a particular dimension:

1) Concepts denoting inner and spiritual states:

- *Khushū'*: A state of humble attentiveness and presence of heart, especially in worship (Alladhīna hum fī Ṣalātihim Khāshi'ūn: al-Mu'minūn: 2);
- *Khashya*: Reverential fear grounded in knowledge, which gives rise to humility before divine majesty (Fāṭir: 28);
- *Ikhbāt*: The heart's submissive turning toward truth with inner tranquility (al-Ḥajj: 54).

2) Concepts denoting outward behavior and action

- *Khafḍ al-Janāḥ* (lowering the wing): A vivid metaphor meaning gentleness, affection, and tenderness in conduct (al-Isrā': 24; al-Shu'arā': 215; al-Ḥijr: 88), transforming humility from an inner state into a relational and emotional pattern;
- *Hūn*: Calmness and dignity in movement and behavior, contrasted with arrogant swagger (al-Furqān: 63);
- *Dhull*: In the Qur'anic sense, not blameworthy humiliation, but voluntary softness and kindness toward parents and believers (al-Isrā': 24).

The Noble Qur'an, in order to internalize this virtue, often employs the method of contrast by exposing the fate of the opposing vice, namely arrogance and self-exaltation. The explicit condemnation of arrogance in verses such as *al-Isrā'*: 37, *Maryam*: 14 and *Luqmān*: 18 in fact delineate the logical necessity of humility. Through this approach, humility is presented not merely as an ethical recommendation but as a faith-based and rational necessity in opposition to rebellious self-assertion.

As Toshihiko Izutsu explains in his analysis of Qur'anic ethico-religious concepts, notions such as humility and arrogance are situated within a coherent semantic network organized around key axes such as faith and unbelief. From this perspective, humility and arrogance are not simply two separate moral traits; rather, they are outward indicators and existential manifestations of two fundamental human states in relation to divine truth. Thus, in the non-religious context of the pre-Islamic ignorance era, humility and submission were considered degrading and shameful traits, signs of weakness and low character, while pride and defiance were viewed as symbols of honor and nobility. With the advent of Islam, this scale of values was completely transformed, and within Islam's purely monotheistic framework, humility before God became one of the highest virtues (Izutsu, 1999 AD/1378 SH: 45).

This semantic network is fully embodied in the theoretical and practical conduct of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and the Imams. In hadith literature, humility is presented as a defining characteristic of believers and Shi'a. For example, in the Sermon of the God-wary (*Khuṭbat al-Muttaqīn*) in *Nahj al-Balāghah*, humility is listed among the traits of the pious (Raḍī, Sermon 193). Likewise, Imam *Bāqir* describes humility and submissiveness

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as primary signs of a true Shi'a (Ṭabrisī, n.d.: 121; Majlisī, n.d.: 75, 175). These emphases show that within the Islamic worldview, humility is an identity-forming and community-defining trait distinguishing the community of believers from arrogant societies.

A noteworthy aspect of the Qur'anic approach is its supra-religious attention to concrete instances of humility. The Qur'an fairly praises the humility of certain Christians (*Naṣārā*) and regards it as a positive characteristic. Verses commending their reverence before God (Āli 'Imrān: 199), moderation and avoidance of excess (al-Mā'idah: 65-66), and especially their lack of arrogance and closeness in affection to the believers (al-Mā'idah: 82) demonstrate that the Qur'an views humility as a universal virtue that can appear in other religious traditions and serve as a means of nearness to God. This perspective provides common ground for interreligious dialogue centered on ethics.

The conceptual network of humility in the New Testament forms an interconnected system that begins with the Christological model in Philippians 2:5–11, is grounded in anthropological realism (sin and grace) (Romans 3:23), is manifested in a life of service (Mark 10:45), is reinforced through worship practices (e.g., Matthew 23:12; 1 Peter 5:6), and is completed with the promise of divine glory. Thus, Christian humility is not merely "Good morality" but the fundamental mode of faithful existence; without it, neither relationship with God is possible, nor the unity of the Church preserved, nor discipleship of Christ realized. It constitutes the beating heart of Christian ethics.

In the Christian moral tradition influenced by the New Testament, pride stands at the head of the list of the seven deadly sins. This contrast shows that pride is not merely an ethical error but the root and mother of many other sins (such as envy, anger, and lust). Humility is the antidote to this spiritual disease that can destroy the entire moral system of a person.

2. Theological and Anthropological Foundations of Humility: A Comparison of Two Intellectual Systems

2.1. Qur'anic Foundations

According to Qur'anic teachings, humility is grounded in the recognition of the servant-Lord relationship. The human being is essentially poor, receiving all existence and perfections from the Absolutely Rich God (Fāṭir: 15). This awareness nullifies any claim of independence or superiority. At the same time, the Qur'an emphasizes human inherent dignity (al-Isrā': 70) and responsibility for justice, distinguishing humility from blameworthy humiliation.

Faith in the monotheism is the core of the Qur'anic worldview, offering a foundational understanding of humanity's place in existence that inherently requires humility.

- 1) Knowledge of God's attributes, His greatness, power, knowledge, and wisdom, leads humans to recognize their intrinsic poverty. Any sense of self-sufficiency or superiority stems from ignorance of these divine attributes. The verse "O! Humankind, you are the poor in need of God, while God is the Rich, the Praiseworthy" (Fāṭir: 15) reveals this ontological relationship. Thus, humility in the Qur'an, before being an ethical choice, is the logical and emotional result of true knowledge

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of God. Arrogance, in this framework, is a form of subtle shirk (associating partners with God) and a denial of the real boundaries between Creator and creature.

- 2) **The human as Servant:** The frequent Qur'anic title servant defines human moral destiny. A servant is owned, dependent, and needy, receiving all existence and capacities from the Master. This identity nullifies any claim to independence. Humility is sincerity in servanthood, accepting this existential position and acting accordingly. Arrogance, by contrast, is rebellion against this identity and a claim to lordship, akin to taking one's desires as a god (al-Furqān: 43).

These two pillars, knowledge of God and knowledge of oneself as servant, form a constructive dialectic. Knowing God's greatness deepens true servanthood, and true servanthood deepens knowledge of God. Humility is the fruit of this epistemic dialectic. This framework distinguishes Qur'anic humility from imposed or degrading subservience. It is a humility rooted in the honor of servitude to God (al-Munāfiqūn: 8), which does not negate human dignity (al-Isrā': 70) or social responsibility for justice. Thus, Qur'anic humility is an active and conscious servitude manifest both before God and in responsible engagement with society.

The Qur'an, in order to give concrete expression to the virtue of humility, manifests it across a wide range of individuals and groups. These examples show that humility is not exclusive to any particular class or status; rather, it

encompasses everyone, from the angels to the prophets, from leaders to ordinary believers, and even members of other religious communities:

- Superhuman level: Angels (al-A'rāf: 206) and the near ones (al-Anbīyā': 19);
- Leaders and prophets: Prophet Muhammad (al-An'ām: 54), Moses as a learner (al-Kahf: 66), Joseph and Jacob's family (Yūsuf: 99-100);
- Ideal believing community: *Ibād al-Rahmān* (al-Furqān: 63) and believers generally (al-Sajdah: 15);
- Followers of other religions: Humble Christians (al-Mā'idah: 82-84).

This classification shows that, in the Qur'anic perspective, humility is a universal trait that can be realized at every level of existence, from angels to ordinary human beings, and even within other religious traditions. This inclusive outlook, in contrast to certain exclusivist interpretations, presents humility as a shared heritage of all seekers of truth.

2.2. New Testament Foundations

2.2.1. Original Sin and Need for Grace

According to the statements of the New Testament, all human beings are sinful by nature (Romans 3:10–12). The first man and woman committed sin (Genesis 3:1–6), and from that time until now every man, woman, and child has sinned (Romans 3:23). Elsewhere a similar statement appears: "All human beings are born sinful" (Isaiah 6:3–5; Luke 5:8). The correction of this sinfulness is possible only through humility: "Brothers, if someone is caught in a fault, you who are spiritual should restore such a person in a spirit of

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humility." (Paul's Letter to the Corinthians 6:1) In fact, considering one sinful and being a servant to all is among the fundamental teachings of the New Testament.

In the story of the woman accused of adultery, when the people asked Jesus to stone her according to the Law of Moses, Jesus lowered his head and wrote with his finger on the ground. But when the people continued to question him, he said to them: "Let the one among you who is without sin be the first to cast a stone at her," and again he bowed his head. Upon hearing this, they left one by one, beginning with the elders, until Jesus was left alone. Jesus said to the woman: "I do not condemn you either. Go, and sin no more." (John 8:2)

2.2.2. Christ's Humility as Model

In Christian literature, humility is considered a special attribute of Christ himself and, consequently, of Christian individuals. "Though I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more." (1 Corinthians 9:19) According to what is stated in the Gospel of Matthew, all those who wish to become like Christ must acquire humility (Matthew 11:28–29): "Learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls." (Matthew 11:29). Since humility is one of Christ's characteristics, together with humility he himself dwells in the spirit of a Christian; or rather, humility will rule in the spirit only when Christ is formed within it: "Until Christ is formed in you." (Galatians 4:19)

A comparative examination of the foundations of humility in the Qur'an and the New Testament reveals a fundamental structural distinction in the origin and inner logic of this virtue. In the Qur'anic system, humility rests upon an ontological-monotheistic foundation that arises from the fixed reality of the

relationship between the "Intrinsic poverty of the creature" and the "Absolute self-sufficiency of the Creator." (Fāṭir: 15) Within this framework, humility is the manifestation of truthfulness in servitude and the acceptance of the human identity as a "Servant." Therefore, arrogance is not merely a moral vice but a form of "Subtle shirk" (associating partners with God) and a denial of ontological boundaries.

By contrast, in the New Testament system, humility is grounded in a relational-soteriological basis centered on the historical condition of human sinfulness and the event of salvation in Christ. Here, humility primarily means acknowledging one's sinfulness and urgent need for grace, followed by imitation of Christ's kenosis (self-emptying) (Philippians 2:5–8) as a liberating model. Thus, whereas Qur'anic humility represents the alignment of ethics with an ever-present and enduring metaphysical truth, humility in the New Testament regulates the individual's relationship with a historical salvific event and the following of the person of the Savior. This difference in origin, in turn, directly affects the emotional quality (gratitude versus confession of sin), the motivational dimension (realization of one's true nature versus receiving grace and the promise of glory), and even the social scope of humility (the Ummah versus the Church as the body of Christ) in the two traditions (see Table 1).

Component of Comparison	Qur'an (Ontological Origin)	New Testament (Salvific-Relational Origin)
Logic of Obligation	Ontological logic: Humility is truthfulness in accordance with the human being's existential reality as a poor <i>servant</i>	Soteriological logic: Humility is confession of a sinful condition and necessary acceptance of

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	before the rich Lord.	grace through the model of Christ.
Point of Departure	The fixed condition of the Creator–creature relationship (essential poverty).	The historical condition of a broken relationship due to sin (the Fall) and the event of redemption (the atonement of Christ).
Function of Humility	Realization of true identity (servanthood) and avoidance of hidden shirk (arrogance).	Prerequisite for receiving grace means of conformity to Christ, and mechanism of unity in the Church.
Relationship Between Dignity and Humility	Dignity is the presupposition of humility: the humility of a servant endowed with granted dignity.	Dignity is the result and promise of humility: the humility of a sinner awaiting glory.
Role of Knowledge	Central: humility is the fruit of knowledge of God and self.	Instrumental: knowledge of sin and grace becomes a motive for humility.

Table 1

This fundamental distinction shows that in the Qur'an humility is primarily an ethical alignment with ontological truth, whereas in the New Testament humility is more a regulation of relationship with the source of salvation. This difference directly affects the emotional, motivational, and even social character of humility in the two traditions.

3. Manifestations and Behavioral Expressions of Humility

3.1. From Model to Practice

In the Qur'an, the highest manifestation of humility before God appears in the concepts of *Khushū'* (inner reverent humility with presence of heart) and *Sujūd* (the utmost bodily prostration). These acts are direct scenes of the servant-Lord relationship.

- The humble in prayer: The description of true believers as "Those who are humble in their prayers" (al-Mu'minūn: 2) shows that Qur'anic humility in rituals such as prayer is tied to an inner spiritual quality (*khushū'*). This state manifests awareness of existential poverty.
- Prostration of all beings: Verses such as "To God prostrates whoever is in the heavens and the earth" (al-Ra'd: 15) and the prostration of angels (al-A'rāf: 206) present humility (prostration) as the very nature of the cosmos and the natural response of all beings to their Lord.
- Prostration of believers: Prostration is a sign of accepting divine signs (al-Sajdah: 15). It is both inward confession and bodily embodiment of humility before God's word. The relationship here is direct between the individual and God.

In the New Testament, baptism and the Eucharist are central sacraments. Palamas states that salvation depends on these two: "In baptism the Holy Spirit renews human nature; in the Eucharist the likeness to God is realized. Participation in the Eucharist brings true union with divine grace." (Mohammadzadeh, 2009 AD/1388 SH: 83)

In the Eucharistic rite of the Catholic Church, the bread and wine, which are consecrated and blessed by saints and priests, are regarded as the real body

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and blood of Christ. Through this transformation (the change of one substance into another), elements such as bread and wine lose their original nature, because according to Catholic theology these elements are, in the literal sense, transformed into another substance.

From the perspective of Orthodox Christianity, the Eucharist is not merely "One of the seven sacraments," but one of the fundamental matters of Christian faith and worship (Houshangi, 2013 AD/1392 SH: 99). What is noteworthy in the Eucharistic rite is the bringing down of the transcendence of Jesus Christ and the creation of a sense of union with Christ among Christians.

Christians acknowledge that by gazing upon icons of Jesus, the sufferings and hardships of Jesus Christ in the final days of his life are often recalled for them, and through worship and reverence before these sacred icons they attain forgiveness and salvation (Houshangi, 2013 AD/1392 SH: 115).

According to traditional Christian thought, salvation is possible only through belief in the lordship of Jesus Christ, and it is through this very faith that a person participates in the redemptive sacrifice of the Son of God. Correct belief is therefore a necessary condition for salvation (Legenhausen, 1997: 93).

At the practical and symbolic level, Jesus' washing of the disciples' feet (John 13), an act normally associated with the lowest rank of servants, became a foundational and instructive model. This act broke the boundaries of social status and dignity and defined humble service as the authentic sign of discipleship and the lifestyle of the "Kingdom of God." This model has continued particularly in monastic traditions and in symbolic actions of

church leaders (such as washing the feet of prisoners) as a practice for the embodied realization of humility. Thus, in Christianity, humility, through commemorative rituals (the Eucharist) and foundational practical models (the washing of feet), moves beyond a mere moral recommendation and becomes a ritual-existential structure for shaping collective identity and relationships within the community of believers.

Based on what has been stated, in encountering the transcendent, the Qur'an emphasizes the inner state of reverent humility and the individual and collective act of prostration as the highest expression of existential humility. These acts are direct and oriented toward the divine essence without mediation. In contrast, the New Testament seeks the supreme manifestation of humility in a collective ritual centered on the person and work of Christ as the mediator of salvation. Here humility is realized more through participation in remembrance and union with a historical model (Christ) and the reception of grace from him. Thus, on one side stands direct inward submission, and on the other side indirect ritual union through imitation, as the principal ways of manifesting humility before God.

3.2. Humility Toward Others

The manner in which humility is manifested toward other human beings is one of the clearest arenas in which the difference between the Qur'anic and Christian perspectives becomes visible. This difference can be observed in the contrast between the hierarchical and responsibility based system in the Qur'an and the horizontal model of brotherhood and ritual service in the New Testament.

3.2.1. The Qur'an: A Responsible and Wisdom Based Hierarchy

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The Qur'an portrays humility toward others within an ordered and wise hierarchical framework that reflects the divine order in social relations. This hierarchy is not based on inherent superiority but on differing rights and responsibilities, and humility at each level takes on a form appropriate to that context:

- 1) Toward parents (al-Isrā': 24): The peak of emotional and respectful humility expressed in the metaphorical phrase, "Lower to them the wing of humility out of mercy." This humility represents gratitude and the humbling of the self before the source of one's life and upbringing.
- 2) Toward the teacher and the wise (al-Kahf: 66): Moses says to *Khiḍr*, "May I follow you so that you may teach me from what you have been taught of right guidance?" Here humility takes the form of epistemic humility, the willingness to become a student and acknowledge superior knowledge.
- 3) Toward believers (al-Hijr: 88): the command, "Lower your wing to the believers." This humility fosters the internal cohesion of the community (Ummah) and creates an atmosphere of affection and mutual support.
- 4) Toward the ignorant (al-Furqān: 63): Describing the servants of the Most Merciful: "And when the ignorant address them, they say: "Peace." This humility signifies forbearance and self-restraint rather than humiliation; it preserves one's dignity while avoiding fruitless conflict.

This hierarchy shows that Qur'anic humility is wise, purposeful, and multifaceted. Its ultimate aim is the strengthening of a just and stable network of social relationships.

In the New Testament, the primary emphasis is on humility within the framework of the new community of faith (the body of Christ, or the Church). This framework creates a horizontal reality that transforms conventional hierarchies. Humility here means accepting the mutual interdependence of members within this single body (Ephesians 4: 2, 25). The teaching of humility is translated into self-lowliness and the diminishing of one's own status, which appears both in general instructions such as "Do not think of yourselves as wiser than others" (Romans 12:16) and in the foundational principle: "Whoever among you is greatest must be your servant." (Matthew 23:11) This principle is completed by the divine law of reversal: "Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted." (Matthew 23:12) This trans-religious wisdom is also reflected in the heritage of Persian mystical literature (Sa'adi, n.d.: 264).

- 1) Members of one body: The call to humility and forbearance is immediately accompanied by the explanation that "We are members of one another." (Ephesians 4:25) Here humility means accepting the mutual interdependence of members within a single organism. Arrogance would be like one part of the body considering itself superior to another, even though all parts depend on each other. This model rejects rivalry and the pursuit of superiority within the community of believers.

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- 2) Washing of the feet (John 13:14): This symbolic act of Christ became the foundational model of humility in the Church. He, the Master and Lord, performed a task that was normally reserved for the lowest servant. He then said: "If I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet." This act transforms humility into a sacred intra-ecclesial practice that demonstrates radical equality in discipleship and the priority of service over authority. The aim is not the attraction of outsiders but the reproduction of Christ's model within the community of brotherhood.

By outlining a hierarchical moral map in relation to other people, the Qur'an presents humility as a regulator of relationships within an ordered society, in which the rights of parents, teachers, believers, and even the ignorant are observed in a balanced way. This perspective seeks to strengthen existing social structures on the basis of justice and wisdom. In contrast, the New Testament, by creating a new sphere of "Brotherhood in Christ," presents humility as the primary mechanism of interaction within this novel community. This humility is directed primarily toward the internal life of the faith community (the Church) and, through symbolic acts such as the washing of feet, challenges older social boundaries and replaces them with an egalitarian and service-oriented model. Thus, on the one hand humility functions as a component within the orderly structure of society, and on the other as the cement that binds together a newly emerging spiritual family.

3.3. Humility in Speech and Conduct

The manifestation of humility at the level of behavioral and verbal details also reveals meaningful differences between the two traditions, rooted in their broader aims. The Qur'an emphasizes outward manners connected to social wisdom, while the New Testament focuses on inner dispositions related to cohesion within the faith community.

In the Qur'an, embodying social wisdom in outward etiquette, humility in everyday character is translated into visible and concrete behavioral guidelines. These are not merely moral niceties but practical wisdom for regulating social relations and preventing discord:

- **Humility in speech:**

"Lower your voice; indeed, the most unpleasant of sounds is the braying of donkeys." (Luqmān: 19) This command refers explicitly to an audible sign. A raised voice may signal arrogance or domination; lowering it trains self-control and respect in public space.

- **Humility in movement and behavior:**

"Do not walk upon the earth exultantly; you will never tear the earth apart nor reach the mountains in height." (al-Isrā': 37) This verse condemns arrogant gait. The manner of walking in public expresses inner disposition and shapes social atmosphere. Walking with calm dignity (al-Furqān: 63) aligns with this ethic.

These outward etiquettes aim to create a public sphere marked by calm, respect, and absence of ostentation, forming the ground for a cohesive society free of conflict.

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In the New Testament, inner dispositions for community unity, the emphasis is less on specific outward etiquettes and more on cultivating inner attitudes that regulate relations within the Church:

- **Humility as foundational mindset:**

"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves." (Phil. 2:3) This is an internal criterion guiding all speech and action.

- **Humility clothing power relations:**

"Clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." (1 Pet. 5:5) The aim is preventing conflict and preserving unity.

Thus, the focus on inner traits like "Considering others superior" strengthens the internal cohesion of the "Body of Christ."

The Qur'an, through concrete behavioral directives (voice, walking), turns humility into a social lifestyle that institutionalizes order and mutual respect in the broader community. The New Testament, through general inward principles, uses humility as a tool for managing relationships and unity within a specific faith community. In essence, a gradual, indirect Qur'anic method contrasts with a direct, model-centered New Testament approach.

4. Consequences and Effects of Humility: Worldly and Otherworldly Reward

Examining promised outcomes further reflects each tradition's broader goals and ontological differences.

4.1. Consequences of Humility in the Qur'an

In the Qur'an, the consequences of humility are designed in such a way that they both ensure the cohesion and elevation of collective life in this world and secure individual and communal happiness in the Hereafter.

4.1.1. Worldly Effects: Preparing the Ground for Acceptance of Truth and Social Cohesion

The Qur'an presents humility as a key to opening hearts and strengthening social bonds. The praise of humble Christians in the well-known verse of *al-Mā'idah*: 82 (You will surely find the nearest of them in affection to the believers those who say, "We are Christians." That is because among them are priests and monks and because they are not arrogant) shows that humility can attract affection and create bonds even with those of other faiths. This outcome is distinctly functional and socially oriented: a society founded on humility is less prone to conflict and division, becomes receptive to truth (as the same verse indicates), and attains moral and social elevation. Humility thus functions as a form of social capital for advancing the religious message and realizing the ideal of the "Middle community."

4.1.2. Otherworldly Effects: Entrance into the Gardens and Chambers of Paradise

The ultimate reward of humility in the Qur'an is entry into Paradise and attainment of its higher ranks. This reward is often described collectively and accompanied by depictions of both material and spiritual blessings: "Their reward with their Lord will be Gardens of perpetual residence beneath which rivers flow; they will abide therein forever." (*al-Mā'idah*: 85) The specific

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mention of "Lofty chambers" for the humble servants of the Most Merciful (al-Furqān: 75) also indicates a special rank in Paradise. These rewards, consistent with the Qur'anic worldview, signify both divine approval and the final perfection of the ideal community whose foundations were laid in this world.

4.2. Consequences of Humility in the New Testament: Inner Transformation and the Promise of Glory

In the New Testament, the consequences of humility are directed more toward the transformation of the inner state of the believer and a future promise centered on the relationship with Christ.

4.2.1. Worldly Effects: Inner Peace and Perception of the Kingdom

The first effect of humility is inner peace: "Learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart,¹ and you will find rest for your souls." (Matthew 11:29) This peace results from being freed from the burden of the self and relying on Christ. Another effect is the ability to perceive spiritual truths: "Truly I tell you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 18:3) Childlike humility is thus the condition for recognizing and entering the kingdom of God even in the present. These

1. The Greek word *ταπεινός* (*tapeinos*) in the phrase "Humble in heart" (Matthew 11:29) is the root of the term "Humility" (*ταπεινοφροσύνη*–*tapeinophrosynē*) and, within the context of the New Testament and its authoritative translations, clearly denotes the concept of humility and lowliness of heart.

The adjective "Gentle" (*πραῦς* – *praus*) conveys a distinct but complementary meaning. Therefore, the literal translation of the phrase "*ταπεινός τῆ καρδίᾳ*" is precisely "Humble in heart" or "Lowly in heart." The Persian rendering (افتادمدل) is an accurate literary and interpretive equivalent for conveying this same concept.

effects are individual and spiritual qualities that ensure the inner well-being of the believer.

4.2.2. Otherworldly Effects: Exaltation and Great Reward

The final consequence is defined according to the principle of the "Divine reversal": "For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." (Luke 14:11) This "Exaltation" or glorification is clearly linked to resurrection and the life to come. It signifies not merely a place (such as a garden), but participation in the glory of Christ and divine affirmation of a life lived in humility. The reward is to become "Great in the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 18:4)

Comparing these two systems of reward reveals a clear distinction. The Qur'an emphasizes objective and communal consequences. Its worldly effects (social cohesion and acceptance of truth) are directly related to strengthening the community, and its otherworldly reward, gardens and lofty chambers, represents the continuation and perfection of that well-ordered social life established in this world. Humility thus becomes a resource for building a divinely guided civilization in both this world and the next.

The New Testament, by contrast, focuses on subjective and individual consequences. Its worldly effects (inner peace and perception of the kingdom) are inward and spiritual qualities that strengthen the individual's relationship with God. Its otherworldly reward (glorification) likewise points more to a transformation in the status of the individual believer, from humiliation to glory, and to closeness with Christ, rather than to the description of an ideal society. Humility therefore functions primarily as a solution to the inner crisis of the sinful individual and as a means to personal salvation.

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This difference once again shows that in the Qur'an humility is a society-forming virtue with a dual orientation toward both worlds (this life and the Hereafter), whereas in the New Testament humility is a salvific virtue primarily oriented toward the redemption of the individual and the transformation of the person's relationship with God.

Conclusion

A comparative study of the doctrine of humility in the Qur'an and the New Testament shows that, alongside fundamental commonalities, the Qur'an offers a more systematic and comprehensive framework that carries several forms of structural "Added value."

First, the Qur'an's theological foundation of pure monotheism grounds humility in recognition of the ontological relationship between the creature's essential poverty and the Creator's absolute richness. By contrast, the New Testament's foundations focus more on imitation of Christ and confession of sinfulness.

Second, by outlining a wise and balanced hierarchy (from God and parents to believers and even the ignorant), the Qur'an makes the scope of humility at once universal and ordered, safeguarding it from the pitfalls of humiliation or exclusivism. In contrast, the practical emphasis of the New Testament is directed primarily toward the internal sphere of the faith community (the Church).

Third, the Qur'an moves humility beyond the sphere of individual morality and organically links it with social responsibility and the duty of enjoining

good, whereas New Testament teachings have at times been interpreted in a more passive or intra-communal sense of humility.

Methodologically, the difference is also clear: the Qur'an, through a gradual and indirect approach grounded in social formation and through concrete, operational instructions (such as moderating one's voice and manner of walking), cultivates humility as a civilizational project aimed at establishing a just society. In contrast, the New Testament, with its model-centered, direct, and faith-inviting method, treats humility more as an immediate call to personal imitation of Christ and unity within the Church. These distinctions reflect the differing missions of the two texts: the Qur'an as a "Guardian" and program for guiding society, and the New Testament as "Good news" and a call to join a Savior.

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