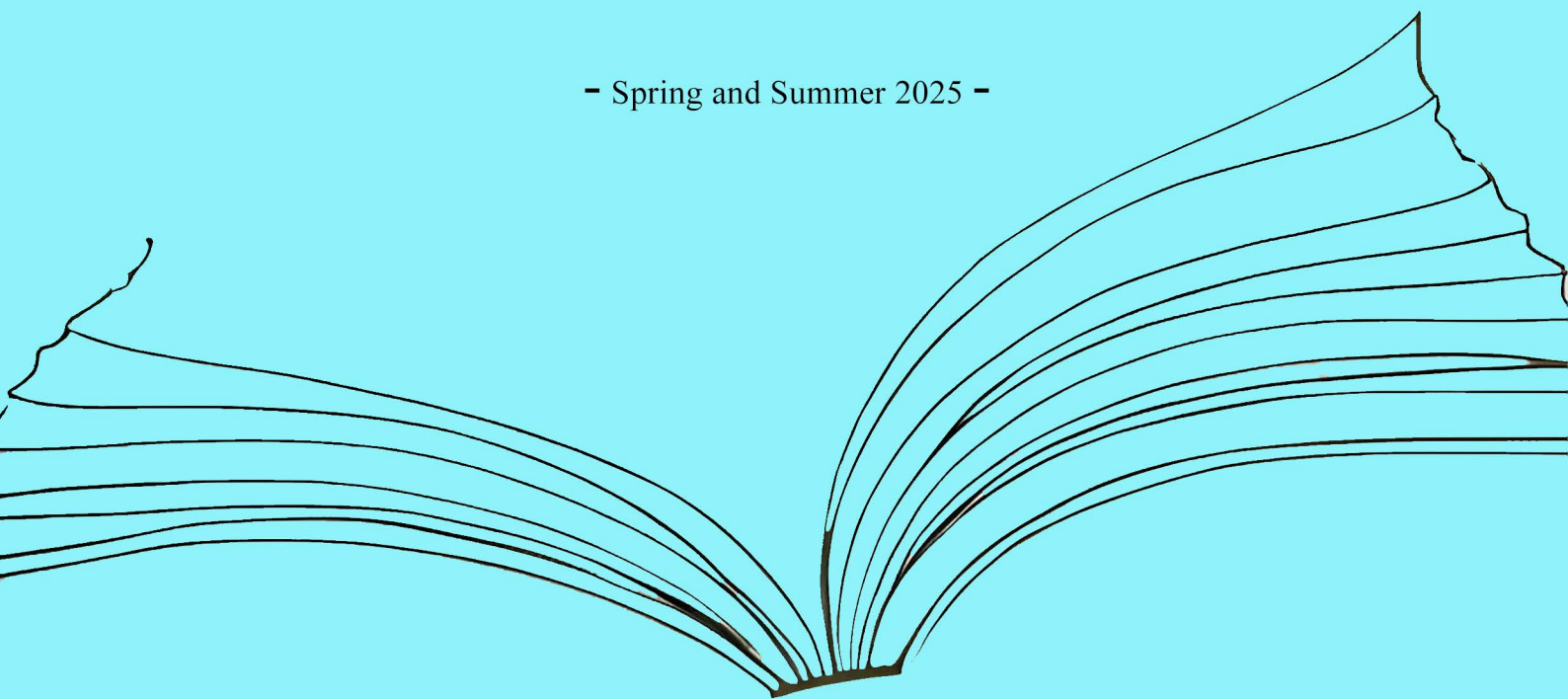


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Table of Contents

- **Animal Rights in Wartime: A Comparative Study of Islamic and Christian Teachings** 1-30
Seyyed Mohammad Mousavi Moghaddam; Hasan Delavari; Seyyedeh Fatemeh Banifatemeh
- **Comparative Analysis of the Obligatory Prayer (Ṣalāt) in Islam and Judaism** 31-64
Alireza Kavand; Sayed Mohammad Esmaeili
- **Contentment and Submission in the Theology of the Abrahamic Religions: An Aesthetic Approach** 65-91
Hamideh Fatehipekani
- **Explaining the Purposiveness of the Stories of the Divine Prophets in the Qur'an and the Old Testament** 92-131
Elahe Hadian Rasanani; Nafiseh Shirmahi
- **The Thematic Domain of Human Succession from God: A Comparative Study of the Views of the Qur'an and the Bible** 132-171
Hamid Aryan; Mojtaba Mmostashreq
- **Imagination in Bible: What It means the Concept for Christian vs. Islamic Philosophy** 172-188
Nadia Maftouni
- **Jewish Ethics: Deontological or Teleological?** 189-226
Seyyed Akbar Hosseini Ghal'eh Bahman; Fatemeh Moradalizadeh
- **The Representation of Joseph and Zulaikha's Privacy in Abrahamic Traditions and Its Reflection in Painting Art** 227-260
Mohsen Badreh; Saleheh Khodadadi
- **The Scattered Nature of the Text and its Divine Origin: A Necessary Connection or Not? (A Case Study of the Quran and the Testaments)** 261-296
Hadi Gholamrezaii; javad Baghbani Arani
- **The Theology of Health in the Three Abrahamic Religions: A Brief Historical Overview** 297-331
Amirhosein Farasati

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Animal Rights in Wartime: A Comparative Study of Islamic and Christian Teachings

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Seyyedeh Fatemeh Banifatemeh³ 

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Abstract

The present study aims to examine the ethical and jurisprudential aspects of animal rights in the context of war according to Islamic and Christian doctrines. This topic holds a significant ethical and legal position within traditions, reflecting different historical and cultural backgrounds as well as varied approaches to the issue. The primary research question is to analyze and critically compare Islamic and Christian perspectives on respecting animal rights during armed conflict, while also examining the related intellectual developments. The study aims to delineate the theoretical and practical frameworks of both religions in this field and to extract their points of convergence and divergence. The research methodology is based on a content analysis of sacred texts, jurisprudential and theological literature, and a descriptive-analytical review of the viewpoints of prominent thinkers from both religious schools. The findings indicate that within Islam, the killing and abuse of animals during war are strictly limited and only permitted in cases of necessity,

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Animal Rights in Wartime: A Comparative Study of Islamic and Christian Teachings

with adherence to ethical principles. These teachings have demonstrated remarkable stability and continuity from the inception of Islam to the present. In contrast, Christian teachings have historically legitimized and, at times, mandated the killing of animals during wartime. Until the late twentieth century, the dominant Christian stance was not strongly protective of animal rights. However, contemporary philosophical and cultural transformations within Christianity have led to a fundamental reassessment and orientation towards the preservation and protection of animal rights in armed conflict. This study demonstrates that while Islam maintains a consistent theoretical and practical position, Christianity has undergone a significant historical evolution in its attitude towards animal rights during wartime.

Keywords: Animal Rights, War, Islam, Christianity.

Introduction

In today's world, the issue of animal rights has become one of the key and global topics. Environmental degradation caused by pollution and ecological crises, which reach their peak especially during wartime, are considered serious threats to living beings. Wars not only endanger human lives but also cause distress to domestic animals. In such situations, attention to ethical principles, particularly concerning animal rights, increases significantly.

Islam and Christianity, as two major world religions, each have teachings regarding animal rights. These teachings can be applicable during times of peace and tranquility, but they may face serious challenges during wartime when humanitarian and environmental crises peak. This research attempts to examine whether Islamic and Christian teachings also emphasize the

**Seyyed Mohammad Mousavi Moghaddam, Hasan Delavari, Seyyede
Fatemeh Banifateme**

preservation of animal rights during times of war or if these fundamental principles are neglected under such harsh circumstances.

This study aims to provide a better understanding of the application of religious teachings in crisis and wartime conditions and to propose practical solutions for protecting animal rights during such crises. Therefore, a comparative review of Islamic and Christian views on animal rights during wartime is of great importance not only from a religious standpoint but also from social and cultural perspectives.

Animal rights have been significant topics in religious texts, especially in Islam and Christianity. In Islam, diverse jurisprudential texts have addressed these issues extensively. For instance, in works such as "*Jawāhir al-Kalām*" authored by *Muhammad Hasan Najafi*, detailed discussions concerning the rights of animals and the conditions for their use are presented. Similarly, in hadith collections like "*al-Kāfi*" by *Shaykh Kulaynī*, many narrations from the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and the Ahl al-Bayt (AS) emphasize respect for animals and forbidding their harm. These hadiths and teachings underscore the importance of humane and ethical conduct with living beings, especially in situations where wars and crises could impose destructive effects on animals.

In Christian teachings, beyond biblical instructions, ethical principles related to respect for animals have been expressed particularly in various religious and philosophical works. Specifically, in the book "*Ethics of War*" by Reichberg, topics such as human responsibility towards living creatures during wartime have been examined. Reichberg analyzes human behavior towards animals in times of crisis and presents this issue through the lens of

Animal Rights in Wartime: A Comparative Study of Islamic and Christian Teachings

how ethical principles during war can contribute effectively to the preservation of animal rights.

To date, comparative scholarly research specifically focusing on Islamic and Christian teachings about animal rights during war remains limited. Most existing studies investigate animal rights and environmental principles in peaceful circumstances and usually approach wartime issues mainly from a humanitarian perspective, while the impact of wars on animal rights and interreligious interaction on this matter have been less studied.

Wars typically bring heavily negative impacts on living beings. The use of chemical weapons, bombs, and destruction of natural resources cause widespread unrest and harm to animals and ecosystems. In these crisis conditions, ‘Can the teachings of Islam and Christianity concerning animal rights be effectively applied?’ ‘Do the fundamental religious ethical principles maintain their significance in respecting animal rights during wartime?’ ‘And how can these principles be practically implemented in war conditions?’

This study strives to answer these questions through a comparative method, examining the Islamic and Christian viewpoints on animal rights during wartime. Additionally, it addresses the challenges that may arise in enforcing religious principles during war and suggests strategies to strengthen these principles under crisis conditions.

The article is organized into five main sections. The first section introduces the necessity and background of research on animal rights in Islam and Christianity. The second section examines animal rights in Islamic teachings, with emphasis on Quranic verses, prophetic and Ahl al-Bayt traditions, and jurisprudential texts. The third section analyzes Christian

**Seyyed Mohammad Mousavi Moghaddam, Hasan Delavari, Seyyedeh
Fatemeh Banifatemeh**

teachings on animal rights, focusing especially on biblical teachings and Christian philosophical works related to the protection of animal rights. The fourth section comparatively analyzes Islamic and Christian perspectives on animal rights during war and investigates how these teachings operate during crises. Finally, the fifth section summarizes the research findings and offers recommendations to strengthen religious perspectives on animal rights in wartime.

1. Conceptualization

This section briefly introduces the religions of Islam and Christianity to provide context for the examination of key concepts and subsequent comparisons.

1.1. Christianity

Christianity, with a history spanning over two thousand years, has undergone many changes and developments throughout different periods. The term "Christian" was first used around 35 to 40 AD in Antioch, Syria. It was applied to a religious group whose followers included both Jewish and non-Jewish individuals, distinguished primarily by their direct connection to "Christos." "Christos" is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew word "Messiah," which the Jews used to refer to the awaited savior (Hinnels, 2012: 142).

The roots of Christianity go back to the region of Palestine, especially Judea and Jerusalem. Christianity initially regarded itself as the continuation of Jewish traditions. At first, it spread in areas previously influenced by Judaism, with Palestine holding particular significance. However, through

Animal Rights in Wartime: A Comparative Study of Islamic and Christian Teachings

the active missionary work of figures such as Paul of Tarsus, Christianity quickly expanded into other regions as well (McGrath, 2013: 45).

The commonly used name for the sacred scriptures of Christianity is the "Bible," which is composed of two major parts: the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Bible is our primary source for understanding the foundational principles of Christianity. The Old Testament, also called the Hebrew Bible, narrates the history of the Israelites from the beginning until around the 4th century BCE. The New Testament specifically focuses on the life and teachings of Jesus Christ and their impact on the early churches (Van Voorst, 2014: 40).

Since every religious text requires interpretation, the Bible is no exception. Consequently, the history of Christian theology can primarily be viewed as the history of biblical interpretation (McGrath, 2013: 265). Accordingly, the theological system refers to the scientific and profound study of a religion aimed at understanding its inner essence as well as propagating its teachings (Van Voorst, 2014: 36).

The theological system addresses various topics, among the most important of which are theologies, Christology, and Christian ethics (Rasoulzadeh and Baghbani, 2017: 158). In this study, our main sources include the sacred scriptures and some theological texts that discuss ethics in war and its relation to nature and animal rights.

1.2. Islam

Islam fundamentally means voluntary submission to God (Izutsu, 1994: 256). Islam is recognized simultaneously as a religion and a civilization. On one hand, Islam introduces itself as a set of religious beliefs that include specific religious rites and ceremonies. On the other hand, Islam provides

**Seyyed Mohammad Mousavi Moghaddam, Hasan Delavari, Seyyedeh
Fatemeh Banifatemeh**

special behavioral models for human society concerning family life, civil and criminal laws, commerce, social manners, and even personal hygiene (Hinnels, 2012: 336).

The primary sources for deriving Islamic rulings and teachings include the Quran, Sunnah, and reason. The Quran, the divine book of Muslims, is not limited to religious issues alone but also contains political and social directives (Léonard, 1955: 128). The Quran, as the main source, influences the Sunnah, and the Sunnah functions to clarify and explain it (Jizani, 2006: 68). For most Muslims, the Sunnah encompasses the sayings, actions, and tacit approvals of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) (Shawkani, 1998: 95). Among the Shia (Imami) school, the Sunnah also includes the sayings, actions, and approvals of the Imams (AS) (Fazel Qaeni Najafi, 1997: 23). These traditions are reflected in various hadith collections such as "*al-Kāfi*," "*Tahdhīb al-Aḥkām*," and "*Man Lā Yaḥḍuruhū al-Faqīh*" within the Imami school, and "*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*" and "*Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*" within Sunni Islam.

In addition to the narrations, numerous analytical works exist that provide more precise and analytical expositions of Quranic and hadith texts. These works are often written in the form of jurisprudential books within the two main schools of Imami and Sunni thought. This study, based on Islamic sources (Quran and Hadith) and reliable jurisprudential texts, will examine Islam's perspective on animal rights and environmental protection, especially under wartime conditions.

1.3. Definition of Animal

The word "Animal" is derived linguistically from the root "*Ḥayy*" meaning life or living (Ibn Fāris, 1978 AD/1399 AH: 2, 122). A living being referred to as "Animal" encompasses all living creatures, including humans and non-

Animal Rights in Wartime: A Comparative Study of Islamic and Christian Teachings

humans; however, the common and general usage of this term applies to non-human living beings, which is the intended meaning here. In many jurisprudential discussions, animals are subject to various rulings. Animals are categorized by type into marine and terrestrial, avian and non-avian, blooded and bloodless. From the perspective of legal rulings, they are further classified as lawful (halal) or unlawful (haram) for consumption, pure or impure, and capable or incapable of ritual purification (Hashemi Shahroudi, 2005 AD/1426 AH: 3, 407).

1.4. Concept of Right

The term "Right (*Ḥaqq*)" is a trilateral root verb derived from the form "*Ḥaqq*" and its meaning is the opposite of falsehood (Fayyūmī, 2007 AD/1428 AH: 1, 143). Conformity to reality is a defining attribute inherent in all derivatives of the word "Right" (Muṣṭafawī, 1989 AD/1368 SH: 2, 262). Islamic scholars, including philosophers, jurists, and theologians have provided multiple definitions of the concept of right (Ramazani, 2011 AD/1390 SH: 91). A definition relevant to this study is that a right constitutes the entitlement or eligibility that an entity possesses in relation to something (Talebi, 2014 AD/1393 SH: 72). The definition of having a right applies to animals, and Islamic teachings recognize such rights for animals. In this regard, the prominent text "Bihar al-Anwar" includes a chapter entitled "The Right of the Animal upon its Owner," which elaborates on all such rights within religious teachings (Majlisī, 1982 AD/1403 AH: 64, 201).

2. Examination of Animal Rights in Islamic Teachings

Islam, as a comprehensive religion, pays special attention not only to human rights but also to the rights of other creatures, including animals. Islamic teachings emphasize the preservation and observance of the rights of all

**Seyyed Mohammad Mousavi Moghaddam, Hasan Delavari, Seyyedeh
Fatemeh Banifatemeh**

living beings and the environment. Muslims are enjoined to engage in just and compassionate behavior toward nature and animals. This section explores the rights of animals and the environment in Islam to clarify the role of these teachings in maintaining ecological and ethical balance.

2.1. Animal Rights

In the legal systems that prevailed in various societies and nations before Islam, animals had no recognized rights; where regulations existed either before or after Islam in some tribes up until recent centuries, their motivation was primarily respect for human feelings. However, in Islam, any animal that does not harm humans is respected, and this respect forms the basis for legal rulings concerning animals (Ja'farī, 1996 AD/1417 AH: 115). The Holy Quran explicitly condemns cruel and unjust behaviors toward animals that were common in pre-Islamic times, describing them as satanic acts. The Quran, in various verses including verse 119 of Surah *al-Nisā'*¹, considers cruelty toward animals a despicable behavior contrary to the spirit of Islam. These teachings underscore the importance of humane treatment of living creatures and emphasize the necessity to uphold animal rights and protect them from any kind of harm and oppression, particularly in the contemporary world.

In Islamic culture, providing water to animals carries immense reward, especially on the Day of Judgment. Specifically, a narration states that watering an animal on the Day of Resurrection grants the person shelter

1. "And surely I will mislead them and instill in them vain and distant hopes, and compel them to split the ears of livestock [as a sign forbidding their use], and command them to alter the creation of God [by reversing male to female and female to male, thereby elevating their pure nature to polytheism, and turning their natural, spiritual, and physical beauties into ugliness]. Whoever takes Satan as his guardian and helper instead of God has certainly suffered an evident loss." (119).

Animal Rights in Wartime: A Comparative Study of Islamic and Christian Teachings

under God's Throne¹ (Şadūq, 1992 AD/1413 AH: 2, 64). This narration not only highlights the importance of attention to animals but also reflects the significance of such acts before God. Causing harm to animals is clearly forbidden in Islam. Islamic jurisprudence states that if an individual entrusts an animal to another and instructs the custodian not to provide food or water, the custodian must not comply; rather, they are duty-bound to care for the animal humanely and avoid any mistreatment. Such conduct is considered an ethical and legal obligation, expressly emphasized within discussions on trustworthiness (Najafi Jawaheri, 1983: 27, 111).

Jurists and scholars have explicitly affirmed that if someone witnesses another person mistreating animals, they are religiously obligated to prevent such behavior and, where possible, stop the oppression, for the sake of preserving the dignity of animals and preventing cruelty. According to some jurists, immediate action must be taken upon witnessing inhumane treatment of animals to prevent further harm (Khaṭīb Sharabīnī, 1997 AD/1418 AH: 5, 528; Zuhaylī, n.d.: 6, 4850).

Islam enacts specific legal provisions against those who neglect to provide water and fodder to their animals. Should a person intentionally evade this duty, legal authorities must intervene. In such cases, the animal's owner must either sell the animal or assume responsibility for its sustenance. If unable to provide these necessities, under special circumstances, slaughter of the animal may be permitted, but never abuse or cruelty. The owner must always attend to the animal's needs and never allow it to suffer from hunger

1. Whoever quenches the burning sorrow of a liver—whether from an animal or otherwise—God will provide for them a shade beneath His Throne on the Day when there is no shade except His.

Seyyed Mohammad Mousavi Moghaddam, Hasan Delavari, Seyyedeh**Fatemeh Banifatemeh**

or thirst (Mousavi Khomeini, 2013: 2, 248). Some scholars have posited that humankind has been placed as a temporary steward and vicegerent on earth as a test, thus being responsible and accountable for any misuse of Earth's life forms or natural resources (Haque and Masri, 2011: 6, 165).

In wartime conditions, the protection of animal rights assumes jurisprudential necessity. Even when Muslims have seized animals as spoils from non-believers, if there is a possibility that enemies will reclaim these animals, Muslims are forbidden from mutilating or cruelly killing any part of the animals. This rule is based on a consensus among Imami scholars, first presented by *Shaykh Tūsī* (Tūsī, 1986 AD/1407 AH: 5, 518). Necessity can be an exception to this law (Ibn Barrāj, 1985 AD/1406 AH: 1, 316). Further, it is asserted that in the absence of war and military necessity, killing animals to provoke enemy anger is impermissible, as animals hold sanctity and intrinsic value that must be respected (Allama Ḥillī, 1991 AD/1412 AH: 14, 91).

Therefore, from Islamic teachings it is evident that Islam not only prohibits cruelty and oppression of animals but also emphasizes the preservation of their dignity and rights. This sacred religion consistently underscores, even under the most difficult circumstances such as war or economic hardship, the necessity of respecting and caring for animals as sentient living beings. Based on these principles, human conduct toward animals must be grounded in ethics, dignity, and mutual respect. Any mistreatment of animals is religiously forbidden and socially condemned as inhumane behavior. Consequently, promoting these teachings can foster a society founded on humanity and peaceful coexistence between humans and other living beings

Animal Rights in Wartime: A Comparative Study of Islamic and Christian Teachings

3. Analysis of Christian Teachings Regarding Animal Rights

Christian teachings explore human responsibility toward animal rights and offer various principles for interacting with living beings and protecting the environment. The following section reviews the concept of animal rights within Christian doctrine.

3.1. Animal Rights

The Bible never explicitly ascribes specific rights to animals nor directly asserts that animals possess inherent life rights similar to humans. Unlike humans, who are uniquely created by God, animals are regarded as part of creation but occupy a lower status. Humans, recognized as the noblest of God's creatures, possess special faculties that distinguish them from other beings. The Bible states that God granted humans dominion over animals and appointed them to govern and control them (Genesis 1:20–31). Furthermore, God sanctioned the use of animals for human sustenance (Genesis 9:1–3; Leviticus 11:2–3). Since animals hold a lower value than humans, they are not entitled to human rights, and human life should not be sacrificed for animal preservation.

However, the Bible acknowledges that humans are obligated to treat animals with kindness and mercy. Although animals lack the equal value of humans, they are still God's creatures with inherent worth, as God declared them "Good" (Genesis 1:20–25). Consequently, within the supervisory role God gave humans, causing harm to animals or inflicting suffering upon them is prohibited. The Bible uses the same term for the breath of life given to animals as is used for humans (Genesis 2:7), indicating that animals too are endowed with life-force (Genesis 1:20–21, 24, 30). While animals possess life, humans uniquely possess self-awareness, logical reasoning,

**Seyyed Mohammad Mousavi Moghaddam, Hasan Delavari, Seyyede
Fateme Banifateme**

foresight, free will, moral responsibility, and the capacity for communion with God. Even animal sacrifice, which signifies their recognized value, is present in biblical texts (Leviticus 4–6; Hebrews 9:11–28).

Attention to animal suffering is therefore warranted because the Bible exhorts care and consideration toward these creatures (Genesis 7:2–4; Psalm 104:10–30; 147:7–9; 148:7–10; Matthew 6:26; Luke 12:6–7, 24); although post-flood God permitted humans to use animals for food (Genesis 9:1–3), this alteration in dietary laws may be understood as a consequence of human sinfulness. In Eden, humans were strictly herbivorous (Genesis 1:29–30; 2:16). Additionally, prophetic anticipations in the book of Isaiah depict a future era when wild animals will coexist peacefully (Isaiah 11:6–8), implying that meat consumption was not originally central to God's plan.

The Bible repeatedly instructs fair and just treatment of animals. Mosaic Law forbids cruelty even toward birds, promising longevity to those who refrain from harming animals (Deuteronomy 22:6–7), and legislates for improving the living conditions of farm animals (Deuteronomy 22:1; 4:10; 25:4). Fair treatment of animals is a fundamental aspect of righteous living in the Bible (Proverbs 12:10).

Nevertheless, there are passages that depict unfavorable treatment of animals. For example, Genesis 9:5 states that God demands reckoning for human blood from animals; Exodus 21:28–30 prescribes stoning a bull that gores someone and the responsibility of the owner. Mark 5:13 records Jesus permitting unclean spirits to enter a herd of pigs, which are subsequently drowned—an episode illustrating the permissibility of animal death under divine authority. Augustine argued that Christ's example of permitting the killing of pigs via demon expulsion signals that abstaining from killing

Animal Rights in Wartime: A Comparative Study of Islamic and Christian Teachings

animals reflects superstition and delusion rather than moral virtue (Augustinett, 2017: 102).

Thus, a thorough reading of biblical teachings reveals that while there is significant emphasis on kindness and care towards animals in some parts, overall the biblical view situates animals as creatures of lesser value compared to humans. Although many verses stress avoiding cruelty and respecting basic animal rights, in numerous contexts animal life is subordinate to divine plans or human needs and can be sacrificed or used. This perspective indicates that in the biblical worldview, animal rights are framed mainly within human benefit and necessity, not as independent entitlements grounded in intrinsic dignity.

Ethicist Peter Singer in "Animal Liberation" critiques the New Testament for lacking explicit prohibitions against animal cruelty (Singer, 2017: 370). However, this judgment may not fully account for instances in the New Testament that convey kindness toward animals (Exodus 23:2–3). Among great Christian thinkers like Augustine, it was commonly held that because animals lack rational souls, worry about their suffering is unnecessary, and thus they hold no rights. Historical records show that the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) urged Pope Pius IX (1846–1878) to defend animal rights and stop cruelty, but he declined, stating humans have no duties toward inferior animals and that cruelty to animals is not sinful (Muhammad Sarwar, 2021: 5).

4. Comparative Examination of Islamic and Christian Perspectives on Animal Rights during Wartime

A comparative study of Islamic and Christian views regarding the rights of animals and nature during wartime reveals that Islam places special

Seyyed Mohammad Mousavi Moghaddam, Hasan Delavari, Seyyedeh

Fatemeh Banifatemeh

emphasis on the preservation of nature and the rights of living beings under the conditions of war, whereas these issues are not similarly addressed in Christianity. In this context, analyzing the religious teachings of both faiths can elucidate how Islamic and Christian doctrines approach the treatment of animals and nature in wartime.

4.1. Animal Rights in Wartime from the Perspective of Islamic Teachings

The prohibition of harming animals and violating their rights is a fundamental principle in Islamic teachings.

4.1.1. The Right to Life of Animals

The right to life of animals is respected in Islam. *Shaykh Ṭūsī* states that if a person owns any animal, the obligation to provide for that animal's sustenance rests upon them due to the sanctity of the animal (Ṭūsī, 1967 AD/1387 AH: 6, 47). Just as providing food for the preservation of human life is obligatory, so it is necessary to preserve the life of animals, even if the animal does not belong to the individual (Shahīd Thānī, 1992 AD/1413 AH: 12, 120). Unrestrained killing of animals is considered undesirable. The Prophet Muhammad clearly emphasized this point. He commanded military and combat personnel to abstain from harming animals and instructed that permissible (*Ḥalāl*) animals be slaughtered only in quantities necessary for consumption]¹ (Majlisī, 1982 AD/1403 AH: 19, 179). Useless killing of animals is among those acts that will be subject to complaint on the Resurrection]² (Ibn Ḥibbān, 1993 AD/1414 AH: 13, 214). This directive

1. When the Prophet of God (PBUH) sent a commander to lead an army, he instructed him to perform these actions... and to refrain from killing animals whose meat is eaten, except when it is necessary to consume them.

2. I heard the Messenger of God (PBUH) say: On the Day of Resurrection, a sparrow will be brought forward, crying out that so-and-so killed it without cause and without benefit.

Animal Rights in Wartime: A Comparative Study of Islamic and Christian Teachings

clearly demonstrates the importance Islam attributes to the life and dignity of animals and stresses the necessity to uphold their rights. Moreover, one who engages in hunting for mere amusement commits an unlawful act (Najafi Jawahiri, 1983 AD/1362 SH: 14, 262). A narration states that such a journey is vain and does not shorten prayers¹ (Kulaynī, 1986 AD/1407 AH: 3, 437).

Imam Reza (AS), in response to a question about the prohibition of eating donkey meat, stated that the reason was the fear of extinction of the species and the preservation of their lives; otherwise, eating their meat is not objectionable (Ṣadūq, 1965 AD/1385 AH: 2, 563). When Prophet Noah was instructing the survivors to board the Ark, the divine command came: "And We said: Take aboard each species a pair, a male and a female," (Hud/40) to ensure that no species perished during the flood (Makarem, 1995 AD/1374 SH: 9, 97).

Some Sunni scholars have mentioned that there is no report of the Prophet Muhammad ever killing an animal (Ibn Rushd, 1995: 1, 310). In wartime, the preservation of animal rights is also a jurisprudential necessity; for example, even when Muslims acquire animals from polytheists as spoils, if there is a possibility of reclaiming these animals by the enemy, it is not permitted to mutilate or kill them cruelly. This rule is based on a consensus among Imami scholars (Ṭūsī, 1986 AD/1407 AH: 5, 518). However, exceptional circumstances of necessity are excluded from this law (Ibn Barāj, 1985 AD/1406 AH: 1, 316).

4.1.2. Destruction of Animals as an Act of the Oppressors

1. "Travel hunting is invalid, and the prayer during it is not performed as shortened (*Qaṣr*). Travel hunting is invalid, and during it, the prayer is not shortened (*Qaṣr*).

**Seyyed Mohammad Mousavi Moghaddam, Hasan Delavari, Seyyedeh
Fatemeh Banifatemeh**

One of the issues that the Holy Qur'an addresses is that when tyrannical humans come to power, they resort to destroying crops and progeny. The noble verse states:

"And when he turns away, he strives upon the earth to cause corruption therein and destroy crops and animals." (al-Baqarah: 205)

The occasion of the revelation of this verse is attributed to *Akhnas ibn Sharīq*, who, upon pledging sincere Islam to the Prophet (PBUH), later set fire to the Muslims' crops and drove away their animals (Wāḥidī, 1990 AD/1411 AH: 1, 66). The term "*Tawallā*" in the verse may be translated as "Turning Away" or "Assuming Power." Among the early Shia commentators, the late *Ṭabrisī* interprets "Progeny" as any possessing a spirit (*Ṭabrisī*, 1994 AD/1415 AH: 2, 54), while the late Kashani explains "Progeny" as referring to quadrupeds (Kashani, 1956 AD/1336 SH: 1, 444). Contemporary commentators, such as Javadi Amoli in *Tafsir Tasnim*, view the term "Progeny" in a general sense, including animals (Javadi Amoli, 2011 AD/1390 SH: 10, 224). Among classical Sunni commentators, *Ibn Qutaybah* explicitly stated that "Progeny" refers to quadrupeds (Ibn Qutaybah, 1977 AD/1398 AH: 1, 80), corroborated by *Ṭabarī*, who extends the interpretation to any person who kills animals unjustly (*Ṭabarī*, 1959 AD/1379 AH: 3, 583). Other Sunni commentaries including *al-Durr al-Manthūr* (Suyūṭī, 1993 AD/1414 AH: 1, 574), *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān* (Tha'ālabī, 1997 AD/1418 AH: 1, 426), and *al-Tafsir al-Farīd Lil Quran al-Majīd* (Muna'im, n.d.: 1, 193) share similar viewpoints.

Animal Rights in Wartime: A Comparative Study of Islamic and Christian Teachings

According to the preceding verse]¹ (al-Baqarah: 204), such conduct toward animals characterizes a contentious person. A hadith recorded in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* describes such an individual as the most hated before God] (Bukhārī, 2001 AD/1422 AH: 3, 131).

4.1.3. Prohibition of Cruel Killing of Animals

In addition, burning animals is strongly forbidden in prohibition narrations and is considered a reprehensible act]² (Ṣadūq, 1992 AD/1413 AH: 4, 5). Killing with torment, an act involving cruelty, is explicitly forbidden even for birds in Prophetic traditions]³ (Sijistānī, 1999 AD/1420 AH: 3, 60). Interestingly, even burning ants is prohibited]⁴ (Qurṭubī, 1964 AD/1384 AH: 13, 174; Qarrī, 2001 AD/1422 AH: 7, 2672). While some Islamic jurists permit burning carcasses after slaughter as a means to demoralize the enemy, they categorically prohibit burning or tormenting living animals (‘Aynī, 1999 AD/1420 AH: 7, 138). Mutilation, even of biting dogs, is considered inappropriate]⁵ (Sharī Raḍī, 1986 AD/1407 AH: 421). This reflects Islam’s sensitivity toward all living beings and underscores the importance of respecting animal rights, even in the smallest scales. This approach essentially expresses that every living being plays a role within the ecosystem and must be treated with respect and kindness.

1. "And among the people is he whose speech in this worldly life pleases you, and [in order to make it appear as if his tongue is in harmony with his heart] he calls God to witness what is in his heart, while indeed he is one of the fiercest enemies."

2. The Prophet of God (PBUH) forbade burning any part of animals with fire.

3. I heard that the Prophet of God (PBUH) forbade killing animals in a manner involving patience (i.e., causing them pain or torture). By God, if there were a bird being killed in such a way, I would not tolerate it.

4. The Prophet of God (PBUH) forbade inflicting torment with fire.

5. "Beware of mutilation, even if it is done to a biting dog."

**Seyyed Mohammad Mousavi Moghaddam, Hasan Delavari, Seyyede
Fatemeh Banifatemeh**

A narration states that if an animal, due to circumstances, cannot return to Muslim lands and remains in enemy territory, it should not be chased or have its legs cut off; if necessary, it should be slaughtered to prevent suffering]¹ (Kulaynī, 1986 AD/1407 AH: 5, 49).

These teachings remind us that animal rights must be vigilantly observed under all conditions and testify to our own ethics and humanity. Respecting animals and attending to their needs, especially during war and crisis, can contribute to building a sustainable and compassionate society.

This approach not only helps protect the environment but also promotes a culture of peaceful coexistence between humans and other creatures. Furthermore, these principles can aid in shaping a better and more just future for all living beings. By adhering to these teachings, we can create a world where all creatures—humans and animals alike—live with mutual respect and cooperation, thereby contributing to the flourishing and stability of our ecosystem. Ultimately, attention to animal rights reminds us that as intelligent beings, we bear ethical and social responsibilities toward the world around us.

4.2. Treatment of Animals during War from the Perspective of Christian Teachings

Throughout the history of warfare, animals have played a significant role. One essential question that arises in examining Christian teachings and sacred texts is which behaviors toward animals in wartime are permissible and which are forbidden.

1. It is narrated from Imam *Ṣādiq* (AS) that the Messenger of God (peace be upon him) said: When an animal in the enemy's land or on the path of God becomes immobile, it must be slaughtered, and one should refrain from cutting its Achilles tendon.

Animal Rights in Wartime: A Comparative Study of Islamic and Christian Teachings

4.2.1. Views of the Sacred Texts on Animal Rights in War

In the Bible, especially the Old Testament, it is observed that God at times commands the destruction of all living beings in wars. One such command is found in the book of Deuteronomy, where God orders the Israelites: "But of the cities of these peoples, which the Lord your God gives you for an inheritance, you shall save alive nothing that breathes" (Deuteronomy 20:10-18). This decree explicitly mentions creatures possessing breath (including animals) and commands their complete destruction. Animals are therefore included under this order and are to be annihilated.

After the era of Moses and Joshua, when God crowned Saul through Samuel, He commanded him: "Now go and strike Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and do not spare them. Kill man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey." (1 Samuel 15:3) This instruction commands the killing of humans and animals alike. During Joshua's and the Israelites' attack on Jericho, besides the slaughter of all men, women, and children, all animals including oxen, sheep, and donkeys were killed (Joshua 6:20). Similar actions took place in other battles among Israelite tribes where all animals in the cities were also killed; as narrated in Judges: "The men of Israel turned back against the Benjamites and struck them down with the edge of the sword, utterly destroying the whole population of the towns, including the animals, everything they found." (Judges 20:48) These accounts indicate that in those times, warfare and animal slaughter were part of divine and religious military commands.

Another issue in wartime treatment of animals is the mutilation of enemy animals. The sacred texts, particularly in the book of Joshua, recount God instructing Joshua to chase the enemy horses and burn their chariots: "Do

**Seyyed Mohammad Mousavi Moghaddam, Hasan Delavari, Seyyedeh
Fatemeh Banifatemeh**

not be afraid of them, for tomorrow I will deliver all of them slain before Israel, and you shall hamstring their horses and burn their chariots with fire." (Joshua 11:1-23) This command indicates that mutilating enemy animals and even severing the tendons of cavalry horses was permissible in certain wartime contexts. Additionally, when King David defeated Hadadezer son of Rehob, he ordered all enemy horses to be hamstrung except for one hundred chariots kept for himself (2 Samuel 8:3-4; 1 Chronicles 18:3-4). This further illustrates that in some wars, hamstringing horses and other war animals was considered a legitimate military tactic.

Perhaps the only passage that can be argued to support the right to life of animals in the Bible is the story of Noah's Ark, which states: "Of every living thing of all flesh, you shall bring two of every sort into the ark, to keep them alive with you; male and female shall they be." (Genesis 6:19) However, this event does not pertain to wartime but rather the preservation of animal lineage during the flood. Nonetheless, it can be viewed as affirming the general principle of life in animals, paralleling the Qur'anic concept of animal life mentioned earlier in this study.

4.2.2. Views of Post-Biblical Christian Thinkers

Christian thinkers have offered some limited reflections on animal rights in war. Some scholars suggest that over the centuries, few Christians have actively engaged with the issue of animal rights. Notable figures such as Saint Basil and Isaac of Syria provided some teachings on compassion toward animals, but the dominant Christian thought did not significantly evolve on this matter. Christianity failed not only to moderate the harsh Roman attitudes toward animals but also extinguished the spark of

Animal Rights in Wartime: A Comparative Study of Islamic and Christian Teachings

compassion that few held in those periods over the long term (Singer, 2017: 372).

For example, Thomas Aquinas], following Augustine], argued that by divine command, the lives of animals and plants are preserved not for their own sake but for human benefit. Thus, according to the just mandate of the Creator, their life and death depend on human use (Aquinas, 1947/1954).

However, it should be noted that some instances do reflect respect for animal rights during war. Specifically, the Treaty of Narbonne], issued on August 25, 1054 CE, explicitly provided that sheep and their shepherds while grazing must be granted truce and protected from harm or slaughter. This decree marks a shift in attitude towards animals in war, emphasizing their protection (Reichberg, 2011: 172). Nevertheless, the prevailing Christian thought remained aligned with Aquinas's instrumentalist view well into the twentieth century (Singer, 2017: 376).

In contrast to Singer's critical views of Christianity, David Onnekink, in a valuable article titled "Religious Evangelists and Their Views on Animals" robustly defends Christian perspectives on animal rights. He interprets biblical texts in support of animal protection and portrays Christian thought as an advocate for animal rights.

It can be concluded based on biblical texts and Christian thinkers' reflections that although there are elements within Christian scripture and theology that encourage kindness toward animals, the Bible does not recognize animal rights in wartime and often portrays animals as lacking rights when measured against human objectives.

5. Comparative Study of Islamic and Christian Perspectives on Animal Rights during Wartime

**Seyyed Mohammad Mousavi Moghaddam, Hasan Delavari, Seyyedeh
Fatemeh Banifatemeh**

Based on the teachings of Islam and Christianity, the points of agreement and divergence regarding animal rights in wartime can be summarized as follows:

5.1. Points of Agreement

5.1.1. Importance of Animal Protection in War

Both faiths emphasize the necessity of respecting animal rights during wartime. Islamic texts record the Prophet Muhammad's explicit command to avoid harming animals, and while Christian texts include commands to slaughter animals in some wars, there are cases where animals were protected from harm and slaughter.

5.1.2. Ethical Teachings in Both Religions

Both religions stress certain ethical and humane principles in dealing with animals. Islam views respect for animals as part of human moral responsibility, while Christianity's views have evolved over time toward greater respect for animal rights even in war.

5.1.3. Attention to Environmental Preservation

Both traditions indirectly acknowledge the importance of preserving the environment and protecting ecosystems. Islam explicitly emphasizes the protection of living creatures, and Christianity, through evolving attitudes, increasingly advocates for animal protection in wartime.

5.2. Points of Divergence

5.2.1. Religious Views on Animal Killing in War

Islamic teachings prohibit the killing of animals in war except when necessary and under ethical constraints. Conversely, Christian scriptures, especially the Old Testament, include divine commands for the slaughter of

Animal Rights in Wartime: A Comparative Study of Islamic and Christian Teachings

animals in wartime. Some biblical narratives describe outright destruction of animals during Israelite wars.

5.2.2. Differences in Wartime Animal Treatment

Islam forbids burning animals and inflicting cruel deaths, extending care even to the smallest creatures such as ants, while Christianity historically permitted targeting enemy animals as war spoils or to harm the enemy, despite some modern protective stances.

5.2.3. Changing Attitudes in Christianity

Islamic principles have consistently emphasized animal rights through history, whereas Christianity, despite earlier permissiveness regarding wartime animal slaughter, has witnessed a gradual shift toward protecting animal rights in modern times—particularly after milestones such as the Narbonne Truce.

5.2.4. Historical Development and Evolution of Views

Islamic teachings on respecting animals during war have remained stable from the Prophet's time till today. Christian views have evolved from endorsing wartime slaughter toward animal protection, evidencing a historical progression not paralleled in Islamic doctrine.

Conclusion

- Necessity of Protecting Animal Rights in War

Wars pose serious threats not only to human life but also cause widespread destruction to wildlife and ecosystems. Environmental degradation, pollution, and destructive weaponry during conflicts harm animal habitats and increase their suffering. Hence, emphasizing animal rights and ethical treatment in religious texts is natural and unavoidable.

**Seyyed Mohammad Mousavi Moghaddam, Hasan Delavari, Seyyede
Fatemeh Banifatemeh**

A. Islamic Teachings: Islam unequivocally stresses respect for animal rights. Its doctrines consistently highlight humane ethical behavior toward living beings. The Prophet Muhammad and the Imams have strictly prohibited animal cruelty. These values apply equally in wartime, reflecting a comprehensive ethical and environmental approach founded on human dignity and social responsibility.

B. Christian Teachings: Although animals are generally considered of lesser value than humans in Christianity, biblical teachings and Christian philosophy advocate kindness toward animals. Despite historic injunctions permitting animal slaughter in wars, contemporary Christian thought increasingly supports animal rights and the need to preserve their dignity during conflict.

C. Comparative Conclusion: Comparative analysis indicates Islamic animal rights principles have persisted without major change since the Prophet's era, while Christian attitudes have gradually shifted toward animal protection in wartime—though disparities remain in the degree of recognition and emphasis on animal rights.

- Practical Challenges and Solutions

Implementing animal rights principles during war faces obstacles like human conflicts, economic hardships, and neglect of animal needs amid crises. This study proposes effective strategies to reinforce respect for animal rights during crises and wars, including religious and ethical education to elevate public awareness and inspire positive behavioral change.

- Role of Humanity and Social Responsibility

Animal Rights in Wartime: A Comparative Study of Islamic and Christian Teachings

Ultimately, animal rights observance must be regarded as a religious, social, and ethical duty. Promoting these theological and moral teachings fosters societies rooted in humanity, justice, and peaceful coexistence between humans and other life forms. Such an approach not only conserves natural ecosystems and biodiversity but also enhances a culture of respect, compassion, and accountability within human communities.

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Comparative Analysis of the Obligatory Prayer (Ṣalāt) in Islam and Judaism

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Abstract

Prayer (*Ṣalāt*) is one of the pillars of Islam. This research aims to introduce prayer in Judaism and Islam, compare them, and articulate the similarities and differences. A descriptive-inductive method was employed, examining the Torah texts related to the features of prayer in Judaism. Furthermore, contemporary practices of prayer among Jews were collected and compared with the features of prayer in Islam. The findings show that prayer in Judaism does not derive its legitimacy from the Holy Scriptures but has undergone changes over time and remains subject to further modification. Also, the form of prayer in Judaism differs from that in Islam; Islam's prayer includes standing (*Qīyām*), bowing (*Rukūʿ*), prostration (*Sujūd*), ritual purity (*Tahārah*), and a direction of prayer (*Qiblah*), while Judaism has no fixed form. Although bowing is more common among Jews, it is entirely optional, and a condition like ritual purity before prayer, which is essential in Islam, does not exist in Judaism.

Keywords: Prayer (Ṣalāt), Judaism, Islam, Bowing (Rukūʿ), Prostration (Sujūd).

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Comparative Analysis of the Obligatory Prayer (Ṣalāt) in Islam and Judaism

Introduction

Prayer (*Ṣalāt*) is a sign of worshipping the Almighty Lord, demonstrating humility, awe, and submission before Him. This concept exists in the heavenly books that mention prayer, its purpose, and its features. However, these books have suffered distortion, additions, and deletions, as the Almighty God states: "Some of the Jews distort the [Divine] word from its [original] context and say: "We hear and disobey!" and [say:] "Hear what you do not hear!" and [say:] "*Rā'inā* [tend to us]," [and they utter these words] twisting their tongues and disparaging the religion..." (Quran, al-Nisā': 46).

Only the Holy Qur'an has remained immune from any distortion, as God Himself has guaranteed its preservation, stating: "Indeed, it is We who sent down the Reminder [the Qur'an], and indeed, We will be its guardian." (Quran, al-Hijr: 9) Consequently, the forms of prayer mentioned in previous heavenly books—which were subjected to distortion—differ from what contemporary Jews practice; this is because the ritual has been influenced by the personal desires of priests and monks. In contrast, the Islamic *Sharī'ah*, including prayer, has remained fixed and stable due to the preservation of the Holy Qur'an and the authentic prophetic *Sunnah*, continuing to rest upon the method and guidance of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

The present study aims to examine the features of Jewish prayer based on their religious books and texts, identify the common form of prayer among contemporary Jews, and then articulate the features of prayer in Islam, so that the differences between Jewish and Muslim prayer become apparent,

and the importance of adhering to the Divine *Sharī'ah* and the Prophet's *Sunnah* is highlighted.

1. Prayer in Judaism

Investigating the origins of the legislation of prayer in Judaism is a difficult and complex task, surrounded by considerable ambiguity. A researcher in this field encounters a boundless, long, variable, and evolving history (Mūhī, 2001: 74), making it challenging to provide a clear picture of prayer across all ages and generations; this is because prayer among Jews has been constantly changing and evolving, reaching endless complexities. This can be attributed to the fact that the Torah and the prophets of the Old Testament did not specify the nature of prayer before the Babylonian captivity, and this worship remains subject to factors of innovation and change. Consequently, the researcher struggles to grasp its original and unified state.

Discussion about acts of worship and their sanctity must be based on religious texts, and these texts are not explicitly and clearly available in the Old Testament, as they have suffered distortion and alteration. As a result, Jewish acts of worship have taken forms that make understanding their true essence difficult. Nevertheless, we will attempt to clarify this worship as much as possible by relying on the Old Testament texts.

1.1. The Meaning of the Word "*Ṣalāt*" in Jewish Sources

The word "*Ṣalāt*" (prayer) is originally derived from the Aramaic language, with its root (*Ṣ L A*) *Ṣala* meaning to bow or bend. This word was used to refer to prayer in its religious sense at the time and was subsequently adopted by the Jews. It later became a term in Aramaic-Hebrew. Jews have

Comparative Analysis of the Obligatory Prayer (Ṣalāt) in Islam and Judaism

used terms like "*Ṣalwatah*," "*Salūta*," and "*Ṣalwatu*" to refer to a specific meaning of worship (ibid: 74).

1.2. Jewish Prayer in Linguistic Texts

In linguistic books, the word "*Ṣalwat*" among Jews is used to mean their synagogues (ibid: 73). Additionally, Hebrew terms used for supplication and worship indicate the nature of prayer among Jews.

One of the most famous terms associated with prayer in Hebrew is "Tephillah." The Hungarian orientalist, Goldziher, translated this word as "supplication to God as the sovereign and submission to Him." Jewish scholars have cited a text from the Book of Deuteronomy to legitimize prayer: "And you shall love Him (God) and worship your Lord with all your heart and soul." (Deuteronomy 10:12).

They consider supplication to be equivalent to worship and even regard it as worship itself. Jews view prayer as the revival of Judaism and believe that the legislation of prayer coincided with the beginning of the creation of the world. They claim that Judaism is the first monotheistic religion with a revealed book. Furthermore, Jews considered reading unselected sections (as a form of divination) of the Torah a type of prayer outside the prescribed times (Mūhī, 2001: 76).

By examining the Holy Scriptures regarding the use of the word prayer, its legislation, or its concept, we find that Moses referred to it in four instances. These are mentioned in the books of Exodus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. These passages are presented below for examination, as they are considered sacred texts by the Jews:

1. "Then Moses pleaded with the Lord his God and said, "Lord, why does your wrath burn hot against your people, whom you brought

Alireza Kavand, Sayed Mohammad Esmaeili

out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? "

(Exodus 32:11)

2. "And all the people saw the pillar of cloud stand at the tent door, and all the people rose and worshipped each at his tent door." (Exodus 33:10)
3. "And when the Ark [of the Covenant] set out, Moses said, "Arise, O Lord, and let your enemies be scattered, and let those who hate you flee before you." And when the Ark rested, he said, "Return, O Lord, to the tens of thousands of Israel." (Numbers 10:35-36)
4. "And I pleaded with the Lord at that time, saying, "O Lord God, you have begun..." (Deuteronomy 3:23)

Although the sacred texts about prayer in the Bible show that Moses spoke to God, pleaded with Him, and sought help, a closer examination reveals that these texts are not consistent with the prayer of a prophet to his Lord. Also, there is no sign of the Israelites joining Moses in prayer in these texts, and no obligation to perform prayer is mentioned among them. Nevertheless, these texts have been cited to discuss the times of prayer, its place, and its degree of sanctity.

1.3. Contradiction in the Torah Texts Regarding Worship and Prayer

One of the strange things in the Pentateuch attributed to Moses is that these texts elaborate on some subjects that they consider acts of worship, including the Tent of Meeting, the Holy of Holies, the clothes of Aaron and the priests, their colors, and the type of fabric, as well as the sacrifices and their related rules. However, these texts provide no explanation about prayer, its form, its requirements, and its rulings! Nevertheless, Jews attribute these books to Moses and call them the Torah.

Comparative Analysis of the Obligatory Prayer (Ṣalāt) in Islam and Judaism

Even the text regarding prostration in the Book of Exodus lacks the necessary details: "You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them, for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God." (Exodus 20:3-5) But how is this prostration performed? Where is it done? What are its details? These are not explained! In contrast, these texts place great emphasis on material matters while neglecting spiritual and devotional matters like prayer.

In contrast to this situation in Judaism, in the Holy Qur'an, God says about Moses: "Indeed, I am God. There is no deity except Me, so worship Me and establish prayer for My remembrance." (Ṭāhā: 14) This verse shows that in Islam, prayer was introduced as a clear and definite obligation from the beginning.

In Judaism, prayer is intertwined with sacrifice, and they even considered reading certain texts of the Torah at unspecified times a form of prayer (Mūḥī, 2002: 2, 66; Mūḥī, 2001: 76). This indicates that prayer in Judaism had no fixed time or obligation, but was mostly performed as extemporaneous and personal supplications (Zāzā, 1971: 142).

In their prayer, Jews have intertwined supplication with prayer to the extent that supplication has dominated prayer in both form and content. This issue intensified particularly during the Babylonian captivity, when the Persians restricted the performance of Jewish prayer because they observed that Jewish prayers mostly included supplications for the destruction and ruin of other nations. In response to the imposed restrictions, Jews introduced music into their prayers and tried to make it appear natural by

composing specific melodies and tunes for each prayer. When the Persians forbade them from performing such acts, the Jews claimed they were reciting laments and dirges for themselves, and thus managed to continue their prayer (Mūhī, 2001: 76).

Prayer, in its general sense, had not departed from the concept of supplication (*Du'ā*), and only from the time of Daniel and Ezra did it move towards the committed performance of the movements of standing, kneeling, bowing, and prostration. Furthermore, David's bowing is considered the oldest reference to bowing, as God says: "And David was certain that We had tested him, so he asked forgiveness of his Lord and fell down bowing [in *Rukū'*] and repented." (Ṣād: 24)

For this reason, the reformist segment among Jews paid special attention to music in worship, choosing specific melodies and tunes for each prayer so that this act of worship would have a deeper and more penetrating effect on the soul (Zāzā, 1971: 144; al-Bāsh, 2002: 2, 369; Darwīsh, 2006, 93). Consequently, the inclusion of singing and music in prayer has caused great damage to one of the most important goals and purposes of prayer, as it has emptied it of its soul, which is humility (*Khushū'*).

1.4. Preparation for Prayer in Judaism

Prayer in Judaism requires preparation and readiness to be performed correctly, as they view prayer as a meeting with God, and just as every meeting requires its own preparation (Saḥmarānī, 2000: 122), the meeting with God also requires essential prerequisites. The Book of Amos states: "This is what I will do to you, Israel, because of what I will do to you, therefore, prepare to meet your God." (Amos 4:12).

Comparative Analysis of the Obligatory Prayer (Ṣalāt) in Islam and Judaism

Based on the Israelite command for preparation before prayer, Jews performed specific preparations before prayer. Ancient righteous people would prepare for a full hour before prayer, and one of the most important things they did was the purification of the body and clothes (Zāzā, 1971: 144). Given that purity and impurity are closely related to acts of worship, Jews have divided purity into two types: "Minor Purity and Major Purity."

1.4.1. Major Purity

Major purity is performed by a man or woman immersing them three times. This is done after sexual intercourse or the emission of semen from a man or the cessation of menstrual bleeding, and also in the case of childbirth for a woman, or touching a dead body, or leprosy for an individual.

The Book of Leviticus states: "If a man lies with his wife, they must both wash themselves and will be unclean until evening." It also states: "If a man has an emission of semen, he must wash his whole body with water and will be unclean till evening, and if a man lies with a woman and there is an emission of semen, both must wash themselves with water and will be unclean till evening." (Leviticus 6: 5-8)

Regarding a woman's purification from menstruation, the Book of Leviticus also states: "When a woman has her regular flow of blood, she will be in her menstrual impurity for seven days, and anyone who touches her will be unclean till evening. Anything she lies on or sits on during her period will be unclean, and whoever touches her bed must wash their clothes and bathe in water, and will be unclean till evening, and if a man lies with her and her menstrual discharge touches him, he will be unclean for seven days." (Leviticus 19:15-30).

Regarding post-natal bleeding (*Nifās*), the Book of Leviticus states: "And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to the people of Israel," saying, "If a woman conceives and bears a male child, then she shall be unclean for seven days, as in the days of her menstrual impurity. And on the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised. Then she shall continue for thirty-three days in the blood of her purifying. But if she bears a female child, then she shall be unclean for two weeks, as in her menstruation, and she shall continue for sixty-six days in the blood of her purifying. And when the days of her purifying are completed, whether for a son or for a daughter, she shall bring a lamb a year old for a burnt offering... and the priest shall make atonement for her, and she shall be clean." (Leviticus 12:1-7)

Also, anyone who touches a dead human body becomes unclean, as the Book of Numbers states: "Whoever touches the body of anyone who has died will be unclean for seven days, and must purify him on the third and seventh day with the water of purification. If he does not purify himself on the seventh day... he must be cut off from the community, because he is unclean."¹

More surprisingly, Jewish law considers a person afflicted with leprosy unclean until cured. Consequently, such a person is excluded from performing rituals and acts of worship like prayer, fasting, and other devotions. They state this ruling by citing what is in the Book of Leviticus: "The person with the leprous disease shall wear torn clothes and let the hair of his head hang loose, and he shall cover his upper lip and cry out,

¹. Reference Numbers, chapter 19, verses 1 to 5, which contain the laws regarding purification through sacrifice and holy water. This section of the Torah outlines precise instructions for purification from uncleanness resulting from contact with a dead body.

Comparative Analysis of the Obligatory Prayer (Ṣalāt) in Islam and Judaism

"Unclean, unclean!": He shall remain unclean as long as he has the disease. He shall live alone; his dwelling shall be outside the camp." (Leviticus 13:45-46)

Thus, we understand from the above that the rulings regarding impurity and purity in the Torah are very complex and strict, obligating many Jews to purify themselves for their acts of worship; because prayer and fasting are only accepted from them when the person is in a state of purity.

1.4.2. Minor Purity

As for minor purity, the Jew performs it daily before every prayer, and this act resembles ablution in Islam. The method of performance is as follows: The Jew takes a liter of pure water; the sign of the water's purity is that it is drinkable. Therefore, sea water and salt water are not suitable for purification (Mūḥī, 2001: 81). He then washes his hands three times before dipping them in the water container. Then he washes his face. Then he rinses his mouth. Then he dries his face with a towel or cloth. Then he washes his feet (Mūḥī, 2002: 2, 68), and finally, he recites a supplication to God, thanking Him for providing clean water (Mūḥī, 2001: 81). In the past, Jews used to wash their feet as well, but today they suffice with washing their hands, justifying this by saying: "In the past, they washed their feet because they stood barefoot before the Lord; but today, the feet are always clean and do not need to be washed." (Mūḥī, 2002: 2, 68)

They also stipulate that the place of prayer must be clean from any impurity and free from pictures and statues, as they consider themselves followers of Monotheism. Therefore, they do not pray in Christian churches, as they consider the belief in the Trinity to be contrary to Monotheism. Furthermore, prayer is not permissible in cemeteries, unclean places, or

places like dumps or deserted houses. If a Jew touches a dead body, or has contact with insects, menstrual blood, or pork, major ritual bath (*Ghusl*) becomes mandatory (Sāmūk, 2004: 225–226; Mūḥī, 2001: 77). If water is not available, one must purify with clean dust by rubbing one's hands with it (Mūḥī, 2002: 2, 68).

1.5. Qiblah (Direction of Prayer) and Announcing the Time of Prayer

In the past, Jews would announce the time of prayer by blowing trumpets made of ram's horn or metal. Today, however, they use a bell (*Nāqūs*) to announce the time of prayer (Sāmūk, 2004: 225; Mūḥī, 2002: 2, 68).

Their Qiblah is towards the West, i.e., towards Jerusalem, where the Temple (*Haykal*) is located and considered their Qiblah. This direction (West) is still followed by Jews today, and they cite the Book of 1 Kings to support it: "If your people go out to war against their enemy, to whatever place you send them, and they pray to the Lord toward the city that you have chosen and the temple that I have built for your Name..." (1 Kings 8:44).

It is for this reason that among Jews, the Samaritan sect considers Mount Gerizim holy; this mountain is currently located to the right of the city of Nablus. However, the Hebrews (mainstream Jews) consider Mount Zion holy; the hill upon which the Temple in Jerusalem (today's Al-Quds) was built ('Abd al-Razzāq Ṭāhā, 1985: 97).

The Holy Qur'an also refers to the Jews' Qiblah, stating: "And you, [O Muḥammad], were not on the western side [of the mount] when We revealed to Moses the command, and you were not among the witnesses [to that]." (al-Qaṣaṣ: 44) This verse is stated in the context of the change of the Muslim Qiblah from Jerusalem towards the Ka'bah (The House of God in Mecca).

Comparative Analysis of the Obligatory Prayer (Ṣalāt) in Islam and Judaism

The choice of the West as the Qiblah by the Jews is due to several factors:

1. Adherence to the Torah's command that "peace be established in the heart" (referring to a spiritual state during worship in that direction).
2. Idol worshippers usually built their temples and palaces on the highest points, especially on mountains; and Abraham chose Mount Moriah, which was to the west of the polytheists' temples in the east, for worship.
3. That place is considered the ultimate and perfection of the *Sharī'ah* on Earth (Sāmūk, 2004: 225; Mūḥī, 2002: 2, 69; Mūḥī, 2001: 82).

What is said and observed in Jewish prayer: "Before performing the prayer, the worshipper brings the intention (called "Kavvanah" in Hebrew) to their heart, and must be standing during the recitation of the supplication (which they call "Tephillah")." Jews require full and respectful covering for prayer, and the head must be covered with a cloth called "Khiliyah." Also, when mentioning the name of God, they raise their bodies and stand on the tips of their toes for a moment (Sāmūk, 2004: 226; Mūḥī, 2001: 82; 2002: 2, 72; Zāzā, 1971: 15).

However, the language used in Jewish prayers is primarily Hebrew, although some prayers exist in Chaldean and Arabic, and from the sixteenth century onwards, these prayers were translated into all European languages (al-Bāsh: 344; Zāzā, 1971: 145; Mūḥī, 2001: 88–89).

Regarding what is said in Jewish prayer, many sayings are recited during prayer; some of them are taken from the Torah, and some from the Talmud, but most are adopted from the Talmud. When a Jew intends to pray, they must recite the "Shema" prayer. "Shema" means "Hear," and this word is the

first word of the Monotheism text in Judaism. Its text is: "Hear, O! Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one." (Deuteronomy 6:4). The "Shema" prayer is divided into three sections:

1. Reciting the verse of Monotheism, then speaking about the love of God and its necessity, and keeping His commandments (Mūḥī, 2001: 88–89; Mūḥī, 2002: 2, 75–76; Al-Bāsh: 344; Zāzā, 1971: 146).
2. Recalling God's promise of reward and longevity, and that if sin occurs and God becomes angry, God must discipline the people of Israel.
3. Recalling the necessity of obedience to God, and remembering the exodus of the people of Israel from Egypt.

After the "Shema" prayer, another prayer called "Shemoneh Esrei" (i.e., Eighteen Blessings) is recited, which includes: a) Hymns and praises to glorify God. b) Supplications and requests. c) Gratitude to God (Zāzā, 1971: 147; al-Bāsh, 2002: 2, 24). It can be said that these recitations are not fixed and permanent but change according to the type of prayer and different circumstances.

The head must be covered during prayer as a sign of respect, especially when the Jew reads the sacred texts (al-Bāsh, 2002: 2, 248). Jewish prayers are of two types:

- Personal and Extemporaneous Prayer; which is recited according to individual circumstances and needs, and is not connected to rituals, timings, or religious ceremonies; such as the prayers of Abraham, Jacob, Moses, and Joshua bin Nun. These prayers can be performed at any time and place (Mūḥī, 2001: 86; Mūḥī, 2002: 2, 74; Sāmūk, 2004: 227).

Comparative Analysis of the Obligatory Prayer (Ṣalāt) in Islam and Judaism

- Communal Prayer; which is held publicly in specific places and times and is obligatory for men and women, provided that a minimum of ten adult individuals are present. After the prophets following Moses, additions and amendments were made to the communal prayer (Mūhī, 2002: 2, 72). They also wear a shawl over their shoulders, made of white cloth, with a tassel and eight strands of thread at each corner: four white threads symbolizing the dawn and four other threads in varying shades of blue. This shawl has two types: "A small shawl used for individual prayers, and a large shawl used for communal prayers such as Sabbaths and holidays." The threads of the shawl serve as a rosary for the worshipper, and the deceased are usually shrouded with the large shawl. They consider the shawl the "Spiritual covering" that encompasses their soul during prayer, presenting them as pure angels chosen by God due to His care and attention (Zāzā, 1971: 152; Nadwi, 2006: 67).

1.6. Prayer Times

The Jew prays three times a day, inferring this from the Book of Daniel: "He got down on his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he had done previously." (Daniel 6:10) In the text above, we read that Daniel prayed three times as was his custom: "And threats and pressures should not prevent your prayer, for prayer is the lifeline that connects man to God." (Master Media Company, 1997: 1696; Sāmūk, 2004: 226) In Psalm 55, the times of prayer are mentioned: "As for me, I call upon God, and the Lord saves me. Evening and morning and at noon I utter my complaint and moan, and he hears my voice." (Psalms 55:16–17) Based on these texts, it is determined that Jews pray three times a day.

1.6.1. Morning Prayer:

The Morning Prayer in Judaism is called "Shacharit," and its time is from sunrise until the day is well advanced. As stated: "To you, O! Lord, I cry for help; in the morning I pray to you, O Lord, and you hear my voice." (Psalms 5:2–3) And also: "O God, my God, I seek you early in the morning" (Psalms 63:1). The worshipper must wear the prayer shawl and bind the Tefillin.¹ The Morning Prayer consists of four *Rak'ahs* (cycles), with supplications and recitations of praise to Monotheism between each *Rak'ah*. In it, God is thanked for making him a Jew and a descendant of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. There is no prostration (*Sujūd*) in this prayer, but bowing and bending occur as a sign of humility (Mūhī, 2001: 86; Mūhī, 2002: 2, 74; Sāmūk, 2004: 227; Zāzā, 1971: 151–152; al-Farhān, 1985: 53).

Religious texts also indicate this; as in the Book of Kings: "When Solomon finished his prayer and supplication to the Lord, he rose from before the altar of the Lord, where he had been kneeling with his hands spread toward heaven." (1 Kings 8:55) And in the Book of Ezra: "Then I arose from my humiliation, with my garment and my cloak torn, and fell upon my knees and spread out my hands to the Lord my God." (Ezra 9:4–5) And in the Book of 1 Kings: "But Elijah went up to the top of Mount Carmel; and he bowed himself down upon the earth and put his face between his knees." (1 Kings 18:42) These texts show that Jewish prayer includes bowing but no prostration.

1. They are two pieces of paper, each with a portion of the Torah scrolls written on it (such as the "Hear, O! Israel"), and placed in two small leather boxes. One is fastened to the arm and forearm with seven turns of a leather strap and then wrapped around the hand, and the other is fastened to the forehead, opposite the brain, and its strap is wrapped around the middle finger. It is required that there be no separation between the tefillin and the body.

Comparative Analysis of the Obligatory Prayer (Ṣalāt) in Islam and Judaism

1.6.2. Noon Prayer

In Hebrew, it is called "Mincha," and its time is from the sun's decline from the zenith until twenty minutes before sunset. This prayer consists of four *Rak'ahs*, with supplications, recitations, and sections from the Psalms read between each *Rak'ah*. The supplications for this prayer are chosen to be appropriate for the noon time, and it is believed that David performed this prayer for the first time (Sāmūk, 2004: 272; Mūḥī, 2002: 2, 74; Mūḥī, 2001: 88; Zāzā, 1971: 152).

1.6.3. Evening Prayer

In Hebrew, it is called "Arvit," and its time is from sunset until complete darkness. On regular days, they are permitted to pray it an hour before the official time, but on Saturday, it must be performed twenty minutes after sunset. This prayer also consists of four *Rak'ahs*, with supplications and recitations between each *Rak'ah*, in which they seek forgiveness from God and emphasize Monotheism. Reciting the Torah and religious hymns is encouraged in this prayer. It is stipulated that the reciter must have a pleasant voice and be a descendant of Levi. The two main components of the evening prayer are the "Eighteen Blessings" and the "Shema" (Mūḥī, 2001: 88; Mūḥī, 2002: 2, 76; Zāzā, 1971: 152; Sāmūk, 2004: 228).

1.6.4. Sabbath Prayer

The Sabbath prayer holds special significance for Jews; the man leading the prayer stands on a relatively high platform, and the worshippers sit on two facing benches. He begins with praise to God and recites the prayer: "Our God and God of our fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the mighty gatekeeper whose kindness is upon the world..." He then descends from the platform and, along with another worshipper, brings out the Torah from its

storage place. During this, a section of the Torah is read: "Hear, O! Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one, for the Lord our God is holy." Then, the Torah in its ark is carried, and both return to the prayer platform. When the Torah is brought out of the ark, the congregation stands respectfully, and with humility, heads are raised, some prayers are recited, and it is said: "Blessed is the Lord, the source of blessings, the Lord the source of every blessing, enduring and eternal, the Lord the King of the world who chose us from among all the nations and gave us the Torah, so blessed are You, O Lord, the giver of the Torah." Then the Torah is raised, and it is said: "This is the Torah that Moses placed before Israel, this is the Torah that God gave us through Moses." (Mūḥī, 2002: 2, 75; Sāmūk, 2004: 228; Zāzā, 1971: 166; al-Farhān, 1985: 54; Shalabi, 1988: 304; Sahmarani, 2000: 157; Hammou, 2003: 167)

They consider the Sabbath their weekly festival, and its most important ritual is the complete abstinence from all work and activity. Anyone who performs work on this day has violated its sanctity and defiled it, thus committing a sin, as this day is the day of God's rest (Mūḥī, 2001: 84; Mūḥī, 2002: 2, 75). As stated in the fifth chapter of Deuteronomy: "Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, as the Lord your God commanded you. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, or your male servant or your female servant, or your ox or your donkey or any of your livestock." (Deuteronomy 5:12–14)

1.6.5. Supererogatory Prayers

In addition to the obligatory prayers, Jews established many supererogatory prayers after Moses, including: 1) The Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur)

Comparative Analysis of the Obligatory Prayer (Ṣalāt) in Islam and Judaism

Prayer; 2) The Kol Nidre Prayer; 3) The Prayer of the Moon (*Ṣalāt al-Qamar*); and 4) The Sukkot Feast Prayer.

1. Prayers of the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur)

This day is the Day of Atonement and forgiveness of sins. It is the tenth day of the month of "Tishrei" (the first Hebrew month). This holiday begins at sunset on the ninth day and lasts until sunset on the tenth day. On this day, one must fast day and night and refrain from any work other than worship. It seems that the main purpose of this day is self-reflection and reviewing past actions. A Jew is obliged to spend the entire day in worship. This day is a prelude to the seven days called "Days of the Torah." In this ceremony, the priest serving the temple, along with two other priests, begins the prayer, which begins with a prayer (Zāzā, 1971: p. 128, Samuk, 2004: p. 229, Mūhī, 2001: 91, *ibid.*, 2002: 2, 80).

2. Evening Prayer Special for the Day of Atonement (Great Day), known as "Kol Nidre"

This prayer is for seeking forgiveness from God for vows and promises that a Jew has made and has not been able to fulfill. The origin of this prayer dates back to periods when Jews were persecuted and tortured (Mūhī, 2002: 2, 76; Samuk, 2004: 229; Zāzā, 1971: 169).

3. Prayer of the Month (Salah al-Qamar)

This prayer is recited on one of the nights of the second week of each Hebrew month. In this ceremony, Jews speak to the moon and repeat three times: "May the new moon be a blessed promise for us and for all Israelites. Blessed be your creator, blessed be your maker." Then the worshipers stand and jump up as if they want to touch the moon and say: "Just as we try to reach you but cannot, may those who stand before us and intend to harm us

not be able to touch us." The prayer of the month among Jews has special rituals that are recited when the crescent moon is seen (Mūhī, 2001: 92; ibid: 2002: 2, 8).

4. Prayer of the Feast of Tabernacles

The special prayer for the Feast of Tabernacles is held on the fifteenth day of the Hebrew month of "Tishri." This feast is called "Sukkot" (סוכות) in Hebrew. On this occasion, tree leaves and palm branches are used to build a shelter resembling a gazebo, and people sit or sleep under it for a full day. The root of this feast is an agricultural celebration in which the year's food crops were stored. However, today, Jews only mark the place of prayer and worship by erecting a symbolic shelter in their homes. This prayer is among the recommended prayers related to holidays (Mūhī, 2001: 91; idem, 2002: 2, 80, Sāmūk, 2004: 229, Zāzā, 1971: 169; Master Media Company, 1997: 200).

1.7. The Manner of Prayer in Contemporary Judaism

Prayer in Judaism begins with washing the hands. Then the worshipper places a small shawl on their shoulders, and in communal prayers, a large shawl is wrapped around the neck. The prayer leader wears a black cloak and a hat, as covering the head during prayer is a sign of respect for the sacred Torah texts.

Jews stand facing Jerusalem during prayer. In the past, their prayer included bowing and prostration, and some still pray in this manner, but the majority today pray while seated on chairs, like Christians. They place their hands on their chests and slightly bend their heads, as a sign of humility and respect, like a servant standing before their master.

Comparative Analysis of the Obligatory Prayer (Ṣalāt) in Islam and Judaism

Although there are minor differences in prayer rituals among different Jewish sects, these differences are limited to hymns and peripheral additions, and there is no disagreement on the fundamentals of the prayer and the blessings (supplications). Jewish prayers are divided into two categories:

- **Individual Prayers;** which are extemporaneous and recited according to personal needs, and are not dependent on a specific time, season, or ritual.
- **Communal Prayers;** which are held publicly with a group of people at specific times and places, according to the religious rituals set by rabbis and priests.

In these prayers, sections of the Torah are read from the sacred scrolls, which are kept in a special place. After the recitation ends, the scrolls are closed. Sometimes the prayer ends here, or it may be followed by a short sermon, a religious hymn, or supplications, and finally concludes with the recitation of the blessing (Tebrik) before the temple is vacated. Before the end of the ceremony, a Quddas (Eucharist) or a blessing may also take place, in which each worshipper is given a cup of wine and two consecrated loaves of bread (Messiri, 1999: 14, 110).

2. Prayer in Islam

Only one who recognizes the unique and unparalleled bond between the servant and their Lord can truly understand the position of prayer and humanity's need for it. This bond, which cannot be compared to any other relationship between two parties in this world, is only understood by one who knows the attributes of the Almighty Lord and the attributes of the

servant. This is because no relationship between two parties can be correctly defined without knowing the characteristics of each and the extent of one's need for the other; the relationship is contingent upon and stems from the attributes.

For this reason, the heavenly books first stated the attributes (of God and man) and then legislated prayer and worship. Consequently, the call of all prophets was based on the Monotheism of God and His correct description. These books also explained the human condition, describing man as a weak, incapable, and needy being. The Almighty God says: "Indeed, We offered the Trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, and they declined to bear it and feared it; but man [undertook to] bear it. Indeed, he was unjust and ignorant." (al-Aḥzāb: 72) Because man possesses such attributes, he is in dire need of constant bowing and prostration before the Creator and true Lord; and it is for this reason that prayer was legislated.

Ṣalāt in linguistics means supplication, seeking forgiveness, and mercy (Ibn Manẓūr, n.d.: 14, 464). For example, in the verse: "And invoke [Allāh's blessings] upon them. Indeed, your invocations are reassurance for them," (al-Tawbah: 103) it means: supplicate for them. Or in the verse: "Indeed, Allāh confers blessing upon the Prophet, and His angels [ask Him to do so]," (al-Aḥzāb: 56) prayer from God means mercy, and from the angels it means seeking forgiveness and supplication. Also, in the verse: "Those are the ones upon whom are blessings from their Lord and mercy," (al-Baqarah: 157) prayer means mercy.

Ṣalāt in religious terminology is an act of worship consisting of specific words and actions, which begins with the *Takbīr* (saying "Allāhu Akbar")

Comparative Analysis of the Obligatory Prayer (Ṣalāt) in Islam and Judaism

and ends with the *Salām* (salutation), and has specific conditions (‘Aṭā’ī Iṣfahānī, 2007 AD/1386 SH: 15; Mardāwī, 1998 AD/1419 AH: 1, 276).

2.1. The Position and Ruling of Prayer in Islam

Prayer holds an immense position in Islam that no other act of worship can match; it is the pillar of the religion upon which the faith is established. The Almighty God has made it obligatory upon every sane, adult Muslim. For this reason, the Prophet made prayer the main sign of adherence to the covenant of faith and the boundary between Muslim and disbeliever, and it is the first matter the believer will be questioned about on the Day of Resurrection.

The Qur'an refers to prayer in the supplication of "My Lord, make me an establisher of prayer, and [many] from my descendants." (Ibrāhīm: 40) God praised Ishmael for commanding his family to establish prayer, saying: "And he used to enjoin on his people prayer and *Zakāh* and was to his Lord pleasing [i.e., accepted by Him]." (Maryam: 55) God also commanded Moses to pray, and this was the first command given to him at the moment of revelation: "And I have chosen you, so listen to what is revealed [to you]. Indeed, I am Allāh. There is no deity except Me, so worship Me and establish prayer for My remembrance." (Ṭāhā: 13–14) And Jesus also referred to this command in the cradle: "And has enjoined upon me prayer and *Zakāh* as long as I remain alive." (Maryam: 31)

Such is the position of prayer in Islam; for this reason, prayer is a fundamental characteristic of the pious (*Muttaqīn*) mentioned after faith in the unseen. God says: This is the Book about which there is no doubt, a guidance for those conscious of Allāh; Who believe in the unseen, establish

prayer, and spend out of what We have provided for them." (al-Baqarah: 2–3).

Due to this high status, prayer was the first act of worship made obligatory upon Muslims, and that was in Mecca, approximately three years before the *Hijra* (migration). The manner of its obligation also shows its importance in the presence of God; while all other acts of worship were ordained on Earth, prayer is the only one that was ordained upon the Prophet in the heavens on the Night of *Mi'rāj* (Ascension); and this is eloquent proof of the high rank of prayer in the sight of God (Maḥmūd, 1998: 149). Prayer is a spiritual ascension for the believer, in which their soul ascends daily five times from the material world towards the realm of purity and transcendence, the world of the unseen kingdom. Thus, prayer was the "Coolness of the eyes" of the Prophet.

2.2. The Manner of Obligation and Time of Prayer

It is established in the prophetic tradition that prayer was made obligatory on the Night of *Mi'rāj*. In the hadith of *Anas ibn Mālik*, the Prophet said: "God obligated fifty prayers upon my Ummah. I returned with that until I met Moses. He asked: What did your Lord obligate upon your Ummah? I said: Fifty prayers. He said: Go back to your Lord, for your Ummah cannot bear that. So I returned, and God removed half of it. I returned to Moses and said: He reduced it by half. He said: Go back to your Lord, for your Ummah cannot bear that. So I returned, and He removed another half. I returned to Him. He said: Go back to your Lord, for your Ummah cannot bear that. I returned, and God said: "They are five, and they are fifty, the word does not change with Me. I returned to Moses, he said: "Go back to your Lord, I said: "I am ashamed of my Lord." (Bukhārī, 1987 AD/1407 AH: 1, 135, Hadith

Comparative Analysis of the Obligatory Prayer (Ṣalāt) in Islam and Judaism

no. 342; Also in Shia sources without mentioning its details: Shaykh Ṣadūq, 1992 AD/1413 AH: 1, 197)

In this matter lies a profound wisdom that combines gradualism and ease. Prayer was first obligated as fifty times on the Night of *Mi'rāj*, then God reduced it to five prayers; so that the Muslim knows that God deemed him worthy of this great burden and fit for it. This affects his soul and creates self-confidence, so that he does not underestimate or find these five prayers heavy, but feels that he would have been able to perform them if they had remained fifty. However, God gave a reduction and made it five, whose reward is like fifty; to be a source of encouragement and motivation for high ambition and excellence in worship.

All this and more indicates that prayer was made obligatory on the Night of *Mi'rāj*. If so, did the Prophet and Muslims pray before its obligation? And what was that prayer? The reality is that verses from the Qur'an were revealed before the *Mi'rāj* that refer to prayer and encourage it. Such as verse 19 of *al-'Alaq*, 14 of *al-A'lā*, 2 of *al-Kawthar*, and 18 of *Fāṭir*. Furthermore, verses revealed before the *Mi'rāj* even referred to specific prayer times, such as: "So be patient, [O! Muḥammad], over what they say and exalt [Allāh] with praise of your Lord before the rising of the sun and before its setting, and [in part] of the night exalt Him and after prostration [i.e., prayer]." (Qāf: 39–40)

This leads to three possibilities:

- 1) That the *Mi'rāj* occurred at the beginning of the prophecy, but evidence does not support this;
- 2) That the intended meaning of prayer in the previous verses was supererogatory (optional) prayer, not obligatory prayer;

Alireza Kavand, Sayed Mohammad Esmaeili

but the words used in these verses are in the form of commands, and a command implies obligation (Rūmī, 1989: 20);

- 3) That the intended meaning of these verses was obligatory prayers, but not the five daily prayers that were ordained on the Night of *Mi'rāj*; and perhaps this is what Ibn Kathir intended in his commentary on the verse: "When we have died and have become dust, [we will return to life]? That is a distant [i.e., unlikely] return," (Qāf: 3) where he said: "The obligatory prayer before the *Mi'rāj* consisted of two prayers: one before sunrise (Fajr prayer) and the other before sunset ('Aṣr prayer), and the night vigil was also obligatory, then God abrogated all this with the five prayers on the Night of *Mi'rāj*, but the Fajr and 'Aṣr prayers remained among these five prayers, because one occurs before sunrise and the other before sunset." (Ibn Kathīr, 1999: 7, 409)

2.3. Times of Prayer in Islam

Prayer has specified times in which it must be performed, as the Almighty God said: "Indeed, prayer has been decreed upon the believers a decree of specified times." (al-Nisā': 103). The Qur'an referred to these times, as He said: "And establish prayer at the two ends of the day and at the approach of the night. Indeed, good deeds do away with misdeeds. That is a reminder for those who remember" (Hūd: 114) Also, verse 78 of *al-Isrā'* and 130 of *Tāhā*. It is clear from the previous verses that the Holy Qur'an referred to the five prayer times, and the Prophet of God explained them as follows: "The time for *Zuhr* (noon) prayer is from the sun's decline until a person's shadow

Comparative Analysis of the Obligatory Prayer (Ṣalāt) in Islam and Judaism

is the same length as his height, as long as the time for 'Aṣr (afternoon) has not arrived. And the time for 'Aṣr prayer is until the sun turns yellow. And the time for *Maghrib* (sunset) prayer is until the twilight disappears. And the time for 'Ishā (night) prayer is until midnight. And the time for *Fajr* (dawn) prayer is from the break of dawn until the sun rises. So when the sun rises, refrain from prayer, for the sun rises between the two horns of Satan." (Majlisī, 1983 AD/1403 AH: 80, 74; Muslim, n.d.: 2, 105, Hadith no. 1419)

Thus, the prayer times are *Tawqifi* (fixed by divine decree), and no human has any role in determining them; they are all a pure legislation from God with their own purposes.

2.4. The Purpose of the Five Daily Prayers

The Almighty God set specific times and *Rak'ahs* for the five daily prayers, ordaining them as spiritual duties and therapeutic doses legislated by the All-Knowing Creator: "*Fajr* prayer is when a person wakes up to start their day with worship." *Zuhr* prayer is when a Muslim is about to have lunch, to remind them that the body also needs spiritual nourishment. 'Aṣr prayer is when a person returns tired from the day's work, to find peace and reassurance. *Maghrib* prayer is the sign of the end of the day and the beginning of the night, a time when hearts are purified. 'Ishā prayer is before sleeping, so that a person ends their day with worship (Ṭabbāra, 1978: 112–113).

The repetition and succession of prayer throughout the day and night hold great wisdom and indicate that the soul is like the body; just as the body needs daily food, the soul, which sustains the body, also needs spiritual food that renews its will and removes sorrow and grief (Rūmī, 1989: 33). Furthermore, man constantly falls short of God's rights and commits sins

and disobedience, so he needs stations throughout the day and night where he can turn to God and seek forgiveness and mercy. The repetition of prayer after prayer brings mercy and forgiveness and cleanses those sins. God says: "Indeed, good deeds do away with misdeeds." (Hūd: 114) Prayer is like a spiritual bath with which the believer cleanses himself from the heart's heedlessness and the contamination of sins; for this reason, the Prophet said: "Do you not see if one of you were to bathe five times every day, would any dirt remain on his body? The five daily prayers are like that, they erase sins." (Muslim, n.d.: 2, 131, Hadith no. 1554)

The position of prayer in Islam becomes clearer when we consider the related matters, as these matters create an atmosphere of reverence and exaltation for this obligation that is unmatched by any other act of worship. Among the obligatory matters upon a Muslim before entering prayer are the following:

2.5. The Call to Prayer (*Adhān*)

Adhān literally means announcement and notification (Ibn Manzūr, n.d.: 13, 9; Ibn Nujaym Ḥanafī, n.d.: 1, 268). God Almighty said: "Then say, "I have announced to [all of] you equally," (al-Anbīyā': 109) "So say, "I have warned you equally," and He also said: "And [it is] an announcement from Allāh and His Messenger to the people," (al-Tawbah: 3) "And a proclamation from God and His Messenger to the people."

Religiously, *Adhān* is the announcement of the start of the prayer time with specific phrases that invite to the congregation and display the rituals of Islam (Ibn Nujaym Ḥanafī, n.d.: 1, 268; Buhūtī, n.d.: 1, 53). Since the five daily prayers are held at specific times and performing them before those times is not permissible, and many people did not know the start time

Comparative Analysis of the Obligatory Prayer (Ṣalāt) in Islam and Judaism

of the prayer or might be busy and not notice the time's arrival; God legislated the *Adhān* to announce the entry of the prayer time (Ibn Fawzān, 2002 AD/1423 AH: 1, 98). The reason for the legislation of *Adhān* is that when knowing the prayer time was difficult for people, they consulted to set a sign for it; 'Abdullāh ibn Zayd saw this *Adhān* in a dream, and its revelation was confirmed (ibid.).

Despite its brevity, *Adhan* encompasses matters of faith; it begins with "*Allāhu Akbar*" which includes God's existence and perfection, then it bears witness to Monotheism and the negation of polytheism, then bears witness to the Prophethood of Muhammad, then an invitation to specific obedience (prayer) which is the pillar of Islam, and it is mentioned after the testimony of the prophethood because prayer is only known through the Prophet, then an invitation to salvation and attaining God's pleasure, and finally, the *Takbīr* and glorification of God and the word of sincerity which is one of the best and highest recitations. All these factors cause the Muslim, upon hearing the *Adhān*, to turn to prayer with motivation and eagerness because the fruit of prayer is for man and it is the path to salvation (Mūhī, 2001: 245; Ibn Fawzān, 2002: 1, 98).

This call legislated for prayer has not only revealed the purposes and meanings of prayer, but also clearly, eloquently, and briefly shown the purposes of Islam and the spirit of the religion. This call, which is announced publicly five times a day, is like an invitation to Islam and an introduction to its purposes, and it may also affect the hearts of many non-Muslims; thus, the *Adhān* announced publicly is a reminder for Muslims, an awakening for the heedless, and an invitation for the disbelievers (Rūmī, 1989: 25). If we look at the means of announcing the prayer time among

Jews and Christians, we see that Jews use the Shofar (horn) and Christians use the Nāqūs (bell), neither of which has a spiritual semantic load, while the *Adhān* contains the complete principles of the Islamic creed.

2.6. Ritual Purity

Ablution is a water purification related to the face, hands, head, and feet, and its legitimacy is established in the Qur'an and Sunnah. God says: "O! You, who have believed, when you rise to [perform] prayer, wash your faces and your forearms to the elbows and wipe over your heads and wash your feet to the ankles. And if you are in a state of Janābah, then purify yourselves. But if you are ill or on a journey or one of you comes from the place of relieving himself or you have contacted women and do not find water, then seek clean earth and wipe over your faces and hands with it." (al-Mā'idah: 6). In the Prophet's Sunnah, it is stated: "Prayer without Wudu' is not accepted." (Majlisī, 1983: 8, 238; Bukhārī, 1987: 1, 63, Hadith no. 135) *Wudu'* is also emphasized as a condition for the validity of prayer. If water cannot be used due to illness, travel, or lack of water, *Tayammum* (dry ablution) is its substitute.

If the wisdom of *Adhān* was not only notification, *Wudu'* is also not only for outward cleanliness, but has a higher purpose, which is the purification of the heart from spiritual contamination, sins, and impurities (Rūmī, 1989: 27). This is confirmed by the Prophet's hadith: "When the Muslim (or believing) servant performs *Wuḍu* and washes his face, all sins of his eyes that he looked at leave with the water. When he washes his hands, all sins he committed with his hands leave. When he washes his feet, the sins of his steps also leave with the water until he comes out pure from sin." (Muslim, n.d.: 1, 148, Hadith no. 600)

Comparative Analysis of the Obligatory Prayer (Ṣalāt) in Islam and Judaism

This hadith shows that *Wudu'* is not just washing the exterior of the limbs, but spiritual purity and invites souls to self-monitoring and continuous repentance. *Wudu'* has other benefits, including psychological readiness for the worshipper and preparing him to stand before the Almighty God; the essence of prayer is that man imagines himself standing before the Creator. For the human mind to be ready for this state and freed from the many distractions of life, *Wudu'* has been made obligatory. *Wudu'* interrupts prior thoughts so that man can turn to another type of thinking and make his mind clear and calm and his heart cheerful; therefore, *Wudu'* is the key to entering prayer (Ṭabbāra, 1978: 80-83).

2.7. Qiblah

The Muslim is commanded to face the *Qiblah* during prayer, which is the old and sacred House dedicated solely to God's worship. This House became the symbol and Qiblah of Muslims, as God says: "Indeed, the first House [of worship] established for mankind was that at Bakkah [i.e., Makkah] - blessed and guidance for the worlds." (Āli 'Imrān: 96) The Qiblah is the direction towards which they turn, and in the Islamic *Sharī'ah*, the Ka'bah is called the "*Qiblah* of the Muslims" (Ṭabbāra, ibid, 121) towards which Muslims must face in prayer.

The purpose of facing the *Qiblah* in prayer is to emphasize Monotheism and declare alignment with the creed and call of Abraham and his Qiblah. The turning of Muslims around the world towards one *Qiblah* is one of the most important factors of unity among them, unlike the Jews who do not have a unified *Qiblah*. Since the direction of the heart is an internal and hidden matter, it is necessary for the face to be directed towards the Ka'bah, which is one of the rites of God, so that mental concentration increases,

humility is created, and the presence of the heart before God becomes closer, as humility is only achieved in a state of calmness and focus (Ṭabbāra, 1978: p. 121).

Conclusion

1. Prayer (*Ṣalāt*) also exists in Judaism, as mentioned in the Holy Qur'an about Moses.
2. The Holy Qur'an indicates that prayer in Judaism also included bowing (*Rukū'*).
3. The Holy Qur'an also refers to their *Qiblah*.
4. Prayer in Judaism does not derive its legitimacy from the Holy Scriptures but has changed over time, and its content has been altered in accordance with historical events and political developments.
5. The form of prayer in Judaism is different from that in Islam; while prayer in Islam includes standing, bowing, prostration, ritual purity, and facing the *Qiblah*, Judaism does not have such a fixed structure. Although bowing is common in it, it is optional, and performing ritual purity before prayer is not mandatory as it is in Islam.
6. The features of prayer in Islam are stated through fixed religious texts that the Muslim Ummah has consensus on accepting. This structure is unchangeable, and no addition or deletion is permissible in it.

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Contentment and Submission in the Theology of the Abrahamic Religions: An Aesthetic Approach

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Abstract

This present study aims to examine the concepts of contentment (*Ridā*) and submission (*Taslīm*) within the religious traditions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Employing an aesthetic-theological approach, it seeks to elucidate the role of these concepts in human spiritual experience. The research focuses on the analysis of sacred texts, commentaries, and relevant intellectual sources from these three religions, demonstrating that contentment and submission possess not only ethical and devotional dimensions but also shape an aesthetic and theological experience within human relationships with God and the world. The article explicates the commonalities and differences in the perspectives of these three religious traditions regarding contentment and submission, showing that an aesthetic understanding of these concepts can provide a deeper and more comprehensive comprehension of spiritual experience. The study's findings can provide a theoretical foundation for future interdisciplinary research in the field of aesthetic theology and demonstrate the intimate and reciprocal relationship between beauty and spiritual experience in the Abrahamic religions.

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Contentment and Submission in the Theology of the Abrahamic Religions: An Aesthetic Approach

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Introduction

The concepts of contentment and submission are among the most fundamental concepts in religious traditions, playing a central role in shaping the spiritual and ethical experience of the faithful. In the Abrahamic religions, these two concepts are presented not only as ethical injunctions and devotional obligations but are also profoundly linked to the relationship between humanity and God and the manner of perceiving the divine presence in the world. In the Qur'an, submission to God is introduced as the foundation of faith, and divine contentment is regarded as the ultimate goal of the believer's spiritual journey: "Allah is pleased with them, and they are pleased with Him." (al-Mā'idah: 119) In Jewish texts, particularly in the Old Testament, obedience to divine law and acceptance of God's will are considered the essence of servitude, and contentment with divine decree is the criterion of true faith. In the Christian tradition, too, submission to the divine will holds a special place in the teachings of Jesus Christ and the writings of the New Testament, to the extent that suffering and the cross have become symbols of the pinnacle of contentment and submission to God's will.

Despite the importance of these concepts in the three Abrahamic traditions, most existing research has focused on their ethical, legal, or psychological dimensions. Consequently, the aesthetic and theological dimension of contentment and submission has received less attention.

Hamideh Fatehipeykani

However, studying these concepts from an aesthetic perspective can open a new horizon in understanding the relationship between humanity and God. An aesthetic understanding of contentment and submission entails attention to the harmony, consonance, and sacred manifestation that these concepts produce in spiritual life. In other words, when a person attains contentment and submission, they rediscover an experience of divine beauty in their life—an experience that grants them peace, integrity, and deeper meaning.

The necessity of this research can be explained from two aspects: "First, from a theological perspective, which seeks to explain the place of contentment and submission in the sacred texts of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam; and second, from an aesthetic perspective, which attempts to demonstrate the connection of these concepts with the experience of beauty and sanctity." This combination can both fill a gap in comparative studies between the Qur'an and the Testaments and provide a foundation for the expansion of aesthetic theology in the contemporary intellectual sphere.

Furthermore, attention to the aesthetic dimension of contentment and submission can play a significant role in interfaith dialogue. All three Abrahamic religions emphasize the value of accepting the divine will and finding peace under the shadow of contentment. This commonality can serve as a point of synergy and strengthened coexistence among the followers of these religions.

Simultaneously, the present paper clearly defines its scope: the research focuses solely on theological and aesthetic analysis and avoids entering into psychological discussions or educational and social applications. Thus, its primary objective is to clarify the place of contentment and submission in

Contentment and Submission in the Theology of the Abrahamic Religions: An Aesthetic Approach

the theology of the Abrahamic religions, with an emphasis on the aesthetic manifestations of these concepts.

Accordingly, the main research question of the article is as follows: 'How can contentment and submission be understood as aesthetic-theological concepts in the Jewish, Christian, and Islamic traditions, and what commonalities and differences exist in the perspectives of these religions towards them?'

1. Research Background

The study of contentment and submission (yielding to the divine will) from the perspective of the Abrahamic religions is an engaging interdisciplinary field between theology and religious aesthetics. In the Islamic tradition, contentment and submission hold a foundational place in mysticism, ethics, and even theology. "*Riḍā*" is introduced as one of the highest stations in the mystical path (Qushayri, 2001 AD/1380 SH: 362), and "*Taslīm*" is emphasized in the Qur'an as the essential identity of a Muslim (al-Baqarah: 131). In Persian mystical literature, aesthetic concepts such as the "Sweetness of Contentment" or the "Beauty of Submission" are frequently encountered (Jami, 1991 AD/1370 SH: 225).

In the Christian tradition, the idea of submission to God's will is often known by the concept of "Surrender to the divine will" or "Spiritual submission" and is described in mystical texts, such as the writings of Teresa of Ávila or Jean Vanier, with the language of love and spiritual beauty (Vanier, 1998: 112).

In Judaism, too, submission, as "Accepting the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven,"¹ holds a deeply rooted place in religious literature and in the Talmud and the mystical writings of Kabbalah, an aesthetic connection has been established between servitude, contentment, and spiritual pleasure (Green, 2004: 96). However, a comparative study of these concepts from an aesthetic approach has not yet been conducted systematically, and the present research seeks to address this gap.

2. The Conceptualization of Contentment and Submission in the Abrahamic Religions

In the Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam), contentment and submission (surrendering to the divine will) are key concepts in the relationship between humanity and God. These concepts, within sacred texts and religious traditions, are explained through teachings concerning trust in God, acceptance of His will, and finding peace in divine providence. Despite commonalities, each of these religions offers a specific interpretation of these concepts.

In Judaism, the concept of "Bittachon" (בְּטָחוֹן) signifies deep trust in God and acceptance of His wisdom. This concept is particularly emphasized in the Book of Psalms:

"Cast your burden on the Lord, and He will sustain you." (Psalms 55:22)

"Bittachon" is connected to the concept of "Emunah" (אֱמוּנָה), or steadfast faith in God. In Jewish thought, contentment and submission find meaning when a person traverses the path of life with faith and trust in God, even without understanding the divine reasons (Kellner, 2006: 87).

¹. קבלת עול מלכות שמים.

Contentment and Submission in the Theology of the Abrahamic Religions: An Aesthetic Approach

In Christianity, the concept of submission is often presented in the form of faith in divine grace and wisdom. One of the most significant moments expressing submission in the Bible is the statement of the Virgin Mary during the Annunciation by the Angel Gabriel:

"Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." (Luke 1:38)

In the Pauline tradition, too, submission to God's will is interpreted as acceptance of divine grace and liberation from worldly anxieties. The Apostle Paul writes in his Letter to the Romans:

"And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good." (Romans 8:28)

In Christian thought, contentment signifies the harmony of the human will with divine providence, which ultimately leads to inner peace (Murray, 2008: 134).

In Islam, however, contentment and submission are fundamental principles of faith. In the Qur'an, submission to God is introduced as the path to tranquility:

"Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah hearts are assured." (al-Ra'd: 28)

The concept of "*Tafwīḍ*" (entrusting matters to God) and accepting His wisdom is also a key aspect of submission in Islam. Imam Ali (AS) states in *Nahj al-Balāghah*:

"The best life is that in which you are content with divine decree." (Nahj al-Balāghah, Wisdom 228)

Hamideh Fatehipeykani

Islamic mystics also emphasize that true submission does not mean passivity but rather a conscious and loving acceptance of the divine will, accompanied by patience and gratitude (Nasr, 2007: 245).

Therefore, in the Abrahamic religions, *Riḍā* and *Taslīm* are concepts related to trust, faith, and acceptance of the divine will. In Judaism, "Bittachon" signifies active trust in God; in Christianity, submission signifies harmony with divine grace; and in Islam, *Riḍā* and *Tafwīd* indicate the path to attaining spiritual peace. These commonalities and differences show that these concepts have been interpreted within specific theological contexts in different religions.

3. Examples of Submission and Acceptance in Sacred Texts

In the sacred texts of the Abrahamic religions, submission and acceptance of divine providence are among the most important themes expressed through stories of prophets, ethical teachings, and mystical prayers. These concepts are not only introduced as a path to achieving spiritual peace but also indicate the profound relationship between humanity and God. Below, examples of submission and acceptance in the Torah, the Gospel, and the Qur'an are examined.

3.1. Judaism: The Submission of Job and Abraham

In Judaism, Job is one of the most prominent figures demonstrating submission and acceptance of the divine will. In the Book of Job, he faces numerous tribulations, such as the loss of his children, wealth, and health, yet he does not lose his faith and ultimately says:

"The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." (Job 1:21)

Contentment and Submission in the Theology of the Abrahamic Religions: An Aesthetic Approach

This verse represents the pinnacle of acceptance and trust in God, recognized in the Jewish tradition as a prime example of "Bittachon" (trust and submission) (Kellner, 2006: 95).

Furthermore, the story of Abraham and the binding of his son (Akedah) is another example of conscious submission to God's command (Genesis 22:2-12). This narrative reinforces the concept of trust in divine wisdom in Judaism.

3.2. Christianity: The Submission of Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane

In the New Testament, one of the most profound moments of submission and acceptance occurs in the Garden of Gethsemane¹, where Jesus Christ prays on the night of his arrest:

"My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will." (Matthew 26:39)

This statement of Christ demonstrates the pinnacle of "Fiat"² or acceptance of God's will. Christ, despite being aware of the suffering ahead, prioritizes the divine will over his personal desire (Murray, 2008: 156).

1. The Garden of Gethsemane is a garden located on the slopes of the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem and is recognized as a holy site in the Christian tradition. According to the Gospel accounts, this is the garden where Jesus Christ (PBUH) prayed and meditated on the night before his arrest, experiencing the difficult moments of surrendering to the Divine will. Gethsemane is a symbol of surrender, suffering, and faith in Divine providence and is portrayed in Christian art as a place filled with sorrow, yet imbued with spiritual peace.

2. "Let it be" or "Let it be done"

In Christian theology – particularly in the Catholic tradition – *Fiat* refers to the acceptance of the Divine will, most notably in the "Fiat of Mary," which refers to the response of the Virgin Mary (PBUH) to the Angel Gabriel at the Annunciation of the birth of Christ (PBUH):

"Fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum" ("Let it be done to me according to your word").

This statement represents surrender and contentment (*Rida*) in the face of the Divine will.

Hamideh Fatehipeykani

Additionally, in the Pauline epistles, the concept of submission to divine grace is emphasized:

"For my power is made perfect in weakness." (2 Corinthians 12:9)

This verse shows that accepting human limitations and relying on divine power is a fundamental principle of Christian faith.

3.3. Islam: The Submission of Prophet Abraham and the Acceptance of Divine Will in the Qur'an

In the Qur'an, Prophet Abraham is presented as a paragon of submission and acceptance of God's will. When he sees a dream about sacrificing his son, he submits to the divine command:

"O! My son! I have seen in a dream that I [must] sacrifice you. So tell me what you think." He said, "O! My father! Do as you are commanded. You will find me, if God wills, of the steadfast." (al-Ṣāffāt: 102-103)

This story exemplifies absolute faith in God and acceptance of His wisdom, which is considered in Islam to be one of the signs of true servitude (Nasr, 2007: 267).

Furthermore, the concept of contentment is emphasized in the Qur'an:

"And of the people is he who sells himself, seeking the pleasure *Riḍwān* of God; and God is kind to [His] servants." (al-Baqarah: 207)

This verse indicates that acceptance of the divine will brings a person closer to divine peace and love. In all Abrahamic religions, these examples illustrate that the conscious acceptance of divine providence, rather than being passive, is a path to strengthening faith and achieving inner peace.

4. The Views of Abrahamic Religious Thinkers on Submission and Contentment

Contentment and Submission in the Theology of the Abrahamic Religions: An Aesthetic Approach

Submission and contentment in the Jewish tradition are deeply connected to faith, trust in God, and acceptance of divine providence. Jewish philosophers throughout history have addressed this issue, offering diverse perspectives on the relationship between human will, free choice, and submission to the divine will.

Philo of Alexandria (20 BCE – 50 CE), influenced by Platonic and Stoic philosophy, interprets the concept of submission as harmony with the divine order. In his work "On Providence," he states:

"The wise man is he who aligns his will with the divine will, for this harmony is the greatest happiness and true salvation." (Philo, 2001: 342)

Philo believed that submission in Judaism should not signify passivity, but rather the voluntary acceptance of the divine order and the alignment of one's life with it.

Sadia Gaon (882-942 CE), a Jewish philosopher and theologian, argues in his book "The Book of Beliefs and Opinions" that submission and contentment before God should not be mistaken for determinism. He emphasizes:

"God has granted man free will, but has asked him to align his will with divine providence in the light of reason and revelation." (Sadia Gaon, 1976: 185)

He believed that accepting divine commandments is not only a sign of submission but also a sign of a deeper recognition and understanding of the divine order. In this view, submission is a conscious and rational process.

Mūsā ibn Maymūn (1135-1204 CE), known as Rambam or Maimonides, one of the greatest Jewish philosophers, explores the relationship between

Hamideh Fatehipeykani

free will, divine providence, and submission in his "Guide for the Perplexed." He states:

"The more a person's knowledge of God increases, the more peace they will have in the face of divine providence, for they understand that what God has decreed is the epitome of wisdom." (Rambam, 1995: 3, 231)

He views submission as the result of true knowledge of God and believes that a person attains true contentment when they comprehend the divine system. In this view, submission means not uncritical acceptance, but a rational submission to divine wisdom.

Yehuda Halevi (1075-1141 CE), an Andalusian Jewish poet and philosopher, describes submission in his book "Kuzari" as a loving relationship between humanity and God. He says:

"A person who lives with love for God accepts divine decree with joy, rather than fearing it." (Helvi, 2002: 198)

He believed that true submission is achieved when an individual connects with God wholeheartedly and places their life on His path. In this view, submission is a dynamic, loving, and passionate state.

Jewish philosophers have interpreted the concept of submission and contentment in different ways, but in all these views, submission is regarded as a conscious, rational, and in many cases, loving process. Philo of Alexandria saw submission as harmony with the divine order; Sadia Gaon described it as a rational decision to accept God's will; Rambam saw it as the result of knowledge of God; and Judah Helvi interpreted it as a divine love. Overall, in Jewish philosophy, submission and contentment are introduced not as passivity, but as a conscious and positive choice to accept divine wisdom.

Contentment and Submission in the Theology of the Abrahamic Religions: An Aesthetic Approach

In Christianity, "Saint Augustine" (354-430 CE) is one of the most important thinkers whose views on divine grace, free will, and submission had a profound influence on Western theology. In his works, he examines the relationship between human will and divine grace, stating that humanity requires God's grace for salvation, but this grace operates in a way that does not nullify human will; rather, it guides it toward the good.

In "Confessions," Augustine states that humans possess free will, but this will was weakened after Original Sin. He believed that after the Fall of Adam, humans cannot attain true happiness without the aid of divine grace (Augustine, 1991: 278).

In "The City of God," Augustine emphasizes:

"After the first sin, the human will is no longer capable of choosing the good by itself; rather, it can only move toward salvation with the guidance of divine grace." (Augustine, 2003: 12, 453)

This means that a person only attains true peace and contentment by submitting to the divine will and benefiting from His grace.

Thus, Augustine sees contentment as the heartfelt and conscious acceptance of divine grace. In his treatise "On Grace and Free Will," he explains that although humans have free will, this will is only beneficial on the path to salvation when it is aligned with divine grace. He believed that only submission to divine grace can liberate humanity from the bondage of sin and suffering (Augustine, 1998: 152).

Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274 CE), one of the most prominent philosophers and theologians of the Middle Ages, established a philosophical-theological system based on the ideas of Aristotle and

Hamideh Fatehipeykani

Augustine. In his "Summa Theologiae," he examines the relationship between reason, free will, and submission to God's will.

Aquinas sees reason as the instrument for knowing divine truth. He believed that by using reason, humans can understand the divine will and, by acting upon it, achieve perfection (Aquinas, 1981: 1, 423). Therefore, submission to the divine will should not be out of compulsion or coercion but should be the result of a rational and conscious process.

In his discussion on divine providence, he states:

"When a human being apprehends the truth with their reason and submits to the divine will, they attain true contentment." (Aquinas, 1981: 2, 531)

In Aquinas's view, human free will is not in opposition to the divine will; rather, divine grace enables humans to choose the good freely. He believed that through their free will, humans can choose the path of good, but this choice is ultimately guided by divine grace (Aquinas, 1981: 3, 287).

Contentment in Christian theology is closely linked to the concept of salvation. Christianity teaches that faith, grace, and contentment with divine providence are three key elements on the path to salvation. The Apostle Paul says in his Letter to the Romans:

"And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose." (Romans 8: 28)

This indicates that conscious acceptance and submission to the divine will lead to true peace and happiness.

A major debate in Christian theology concerns the relationship between divine predestination and human free will. Both Augustine and Aquinas believed that God has a plan for the world from eternity, but this

Contentment and Submission in the Theology of the Abrahamic Religions: An Aesthetic Approach

predestination does not mean the elimination of human free will; rather, it guides it toward the good.

The views of Augustine and Aquinas on submission and contentment have greatly influenced Christian theology. Augustine saw submission as the conscious acceptance of divine grace, believing that humans cannot achieve salvation without this grace. Aquinas links reason and free will with the acceptance of the divine will, emphasizing that submission must be conscious and based on reasoning. These views show that in the Christian tradition, submission and contentment mean not passivity, but the active acceptance of divine grace and harmony with God's will.

Submission and contentment are fundamental concepts in Islamic mysticism and theology, playing a significant role in human spiritual education and psychological peace. Submission means entrusting matters to God with complete trust in His wisdom, while contentment is a state of heartfelt acceptance of divine decree without complaint or dissatisfaction. These two concepts are emphasized in Qur'anic teachings and the narrations of the Ahl al-Bayt (AS), and Islamic scholars have considered them among the stages of spiritual perfection. On the mystical path, reaching the station of contentment is considered higher than submission, as it indicates the union of the human will with the divine will.

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said in a hadith:

"Islam is that you submit your face to God and purify your heart for Him." (Biḥār al-Anwār: 68, 278)

Imam Ali (AS) also stated regarding the importance of submission:

"The essence of religion is submission to God." (Ghurar al-Ḥikam, Hadith 324)

Hamideh Fatehipeykani

Contentment in Islam means heartfelt satisfaction with the divine will and accepting what God has decreed without objection. This state is considered among the highest degrees of faith and leads to peace of soul and proximity to God.

Imam *Ṣādiq* (AS) also emphasized the lofty status of contentment, stating:

"Whoever attains the station of contentment has reached the highest levels." (al-Kāfī: 2, 64)

In Islamic narrations, submission and contentment are always mentioned together. Submission means accepting the divine will, and contentment is a higher stage where the human heart is content with divine decree. Imam Ali (AS) said in this regard:

"Indeed, contentment and submission are the light of the heart and the lamp of the intellect." (Ghurar al-Ḥikam, Hadith 358)

These concepts are introduced in the *Sīrah* of the Prophet (PBUH) and the Ahl al-Bayt (AS) as a way to free oneself from anxiety and attain happiness. In the thought of Islamic philosophers, submission and contentment also hold a central place and have been examined in connection with ontology, epistemology, and human felicity. *Fārābī*, *Ibn Sīnā* (Avicenna), and *Mullā Ṣadrā* with their philosophical approach, interpreted submission not merely as passivity, but as a conscious harmony with the divine system. Thus, submission and contentment play a key role not only in the individual sphere but also in the intellectual and social system of Islam.

Fārābī (d. 339 AH) in his philosophy depicts the world based on a rational and hierarchical system in which every level of existence is a

Contentment and Submission in the Theology of the Abrahamic Religions: An Aesthetic Approach

reflection of the Active Intellect. He believed that human happiness lies in harmonizing oneself with this order and gaining a correct understanding of one's place in existence.

In "The Opinions of the People of the Virtuous City," *Fārābī* states that the individual who reaches the highest degree of happiness is one who, through theoretical intellect, comprehends the truth and lives in accordance with it in practice (*Fārābī*, 1969 AD/1389 SH: 108). This harmony with the rational order is considered a form of conscious submission, which, unlike passive submission, requires knowledge and reasoning. In other words, the acceptance of the divine order must be based on a philosophical understanding of it, not on imitation or determinism.

Avicenna (d. 428 AH), also influenced by Neoplatonic teachings, sees happiness in connection with the intellectual knowledge of God and the acceptance of His providence. In his book "*al-Ishārāt wa al-Tanbīhāt*," he states that the perfect individual is one who reaches the stage of conscious contentment and submission, for in this state; their soul is freed from material attachments and joins the rank of the Active Intellect (Avicenna, 1982 AD/1403 AH: 3, 358).

Avicenna also introduces the concept of contentment as the acceptance of divine wisdom in all life circumstances. In *al-Shifā*, he explains that a rational person must accept that all events in the world are in line with the overall order of good, even if they appear unpleasant to the individual (Avicenna, 1965 AD/1385 AH: 219). This view is similar to the Stoic doctrine in Greek philosophy, which emphasizes that contentment with one's fate leads to inner peace.

Hamideh Fatehipeykani

Furthermore, *Mullā Ṣadrā* (d. 1050 AH), by presenting the theory of Substantial Motion, introduced a new perspective on the relationship between humans and God. He believes that the entire existence is in motion and evolution, and this motion is guided towards the absolute good, which is God. Within this framework, submission and contentment mean accepting this evolutionary motion and harmonizing with divine wisdom.

In *al-Hikmat al-Muta'ālīyah fī al-Asfār al-Arba'ah* (The Transcendent Philosophy of the Four Journeys), *Mullā Ṣadrā* states:

"Everything in this world, even pain and suffering, is part of the most excellent system which ultimately leads to good and perfection. Therefore, contentment and submission are not surrender to determinism, but a conscious acceptance of divine wisdom." (*Mullā Ṣadrā*, 1963 AD/1383 AH: 7, 325)

This view shows that, from *Mullā Ṣadrā*'s perspective, passive acceptance and submission are worthless, but if this submission is based on an intellectual understanding of divine wisdom, it can lead to human spiritual growth and true happiness.

In the thought of Islamic philosophers, submission and contentment are interpreted not as passivity, but as a conscious harmony with the rational order of the world and the acceptance of divine wisdom. *Fārābī* emphasizes harmony with the Active Intellect, Avicenna sees submission as a path to attaining happiness, and *Mullā Ṣadrā*, with his theory of Substantial Motion, introduces the acceptance of divine wisdom as a path for human evolution. These views show that in Islamic philosophy, submission and contentment are valuable when they are based on knowledge and reasoning, not on determinism or passivity.

**Contentment and Submission in the Theology of the Abrahamic
Religions: An Aesthetic Approach**

5. The Aesthetics of Submission and Contentment in Christian Art

The aesthetics of submission and contentment in Christian art, particularly in paintings, sculptures, and religious music, demonstrate the manifestation of inner peace and the acceptance of the divine will.

5.1. Religious Paintings: Depicting the Moment of Submission and Liberation in Renaissance Works

The Renaissance was a period in which Christian art flourished, and divine concepts such as submission and contentment were portrayed artistically in paintings. Artists of this period used light, composition, and facial expressions to display moments of peak faith and submission. A prominent example of this approach is the painting "The Crucifixion of Christ" by El Greco. In this work, Christ is seen on the cross in a calm and luminous state, representing His conscious contentment and submission to the divine will (Gombrich, 1995: 227).

Furthermore, Leonardo da Vinci, in his painting "The Last Supper," depicts the moment Christ announces His acceptance of His fate. His calm gaze contrasted with the excitement and anxiety of His disciples displays the contrast between faith and doubt, submission and resistance (Hall, 2011: 189).

5.2. Paintings with the Theme of Christ's Crucifixion and the Concept of Contentment

Another prominent painter who well depicted the concept of submission and contentment is Rembrandt. In his work "The Descent from the Cross," he portrays the lifeless body of Christ being lowered from the cross with

serenity. The lighting in this work emphasizes Christ's face, displaying a state of spiritual peace and acceptance (Hoekstra, H, 1990:88-91).

In the painting "The Descent from the Cross" by Peter Paul Rubens, Christ's submission to the divine will is seen in the gesture of His arm and eyes gazing towards heaven. These paintings not only show the dramatic aspect of the event but also depict a profound manifestation of peace and acceptance amidst suffering (Warner, 2013: 314).

5.3. The Quran and the Aesthetics of Contentment and Submission

In the Holy Quran, the concept of contentment and submission is repeatedly mentioned as a characteristic of God's chosen ones. A key verse in this context is from Surah *al-Fajr*:

"O! Reassured soul, Return to your Lord, well-pleased and pleasing [to Him]."

(*al-Fajr*: 27-28)

This verse presents an image of spiritual beauty in which a reassured soul that has submitted to God returns to its Lord with complete contentment. This indicates that in the Islamic tradition, submission to divine providence and acceptance of divine decree are not only a religious virtue but also an element of aesthetics. Accordingly, the concepts of contentment and submission in the sacred texts of the Abrahamic religions are presented as fundamental principles that not only bring spiritual peace but also possess aesthetic aspects. In the Torah, trust in God is a form of liberation from anxiety and an entry into spiritual beauty. In the Gospel, submission to divine providence is introduced as a source of peace and divine love, and in the Quran, acceptance of God's will is a path to attaining the reassured soul and spiritual perfection.

**Contentment and Submission in the Theology of the Abrahamic
Religions: An Aesthetic Approach**

6. The Aesthetics of Submission and Contentment in Islamic Art

Islamic art is one of the richest contexts for reflecting spiritual concepts, including submission and contentment. These concepts, which hold a fundamental place in Islamic theology and mysticism, are manifested aesthetically in architecture, calligraphy, and artistic ornamentation; Geometric order in architecture, balance in calligraphy, and the use of symbolic forms express human acceptance before the divine order and the manifestation of monotheistic concepts in art.

6.1. Islamic Architecture: Geometric Patterns and Order as Symbols of Accepting the Divine Order

Islamic architecture, with its emphasis on geometry, symmetry, and repeating patterns, offers a reflection of the cosmic order and submission to the divine will. According to many scholars of Islamic art, this order in architecture signifies the acceptance of God's will and harmony with the universe (Burckhardt, 1976: 91).

In Islamic religious buildings, geometric patterns and continuously repeating arabesque motifs indicate the infiniteness of God and human acceptance of His order. For example, in the Complex Mosque of Isfahan and the Alhambra Palace in Andalusia, the repetition of geometric shapes like octagons and circles are signs of God's oneness and submission to His will (Critchlow, 1976: 57).

One of the most prominent aspects of Islamic architecture is the use of arches and domes. These elements are not only structurally important but also symbolically refer to the movement from multiplicity to divine unity.

Hamideh Fatehipeykani

In the Sultan Ahmed Mosque in Istanbul, successive and interconnected domes guide the eye towards the center and the apex, symbolizing human movement towards submission and unity with the Creator (Necipoğlu, 1995: 188). This concept is also evident in Iranian architecture, where in the Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque; the light entering from the openings in the dome is designed to induce a state of mysticism and peace (Grabar, 1987: 144).

6.2. Calligraphy and Submission to the Revealed Word

Calligraphy in Islamic art is the most important visual manifestation of the revealed word. Calligraphy is not only an art but also considered a form of worship and submission to the divine word. The Quranic script, designed in the most beautiful form possible, demonstrates complete submission to the revealed word and an effort to display transcendent beauty (Blair, 2006: 49). In Islamic calligraphy, order and harmony in composition are signs of submission and acceptance of divine unity. One important style is Kufic script, which, due to its simplicity and solidity, expresses monotheism and the divine order in the universe. Particularly in ancient Qurans, verses related to submission and contentment are emphasized with Kufic script (Déroche, 1992: 83).

In contrast, *Naskh* script, which has flexibility and a fluid flow, was used more for writing Qurans in the medieval period. This script, with its soft curves and balanced composition, expresses peace and acceptance of the divine will (Safadi, 1978: 112). In Ottoman and Safavid mosques, Quranic inscriptions in Thuluth script are also seen, representing grandeur and conscious submission to the Divine Essence.

From this perspective, Islamic art, both in architecture and calligraphy, has symbolically and intuitively reflected the aesthetics of submission and

Contentment and Submission in the Theology of the Abrahamic Religions: An Aesthetic Approach

contentment. Islamic architecture, through symmetry and geometric patterns, shows the path of movement from multiplicity to unity, and calligraphy, through the grandeur of Quranic words, expresses submission to the revealed word. These artistic manifestations indicate the deep connection between Islamic theology and art and provide a way to directly experience spiritual beauty and the peace resulting from submission.

7. Theological and Aesthetic Analysis of Contentment and Submission in the Abrahamic Religions

In all three Abrahamic religions, contentment and submission are seen not only as an ethical duty or a requirement of faith but also as an aesthetic experience that leads the person towards union with the transcendent. In the Islamic tradition, contentment is a state in which the individual has no objection to divine decree, and in this acceptance, reaches a peace that mystics call the "Beauty of submission." Imam Ali (AS) said, "Whoever is content with God's decree has tasted the flavor of faith." (Nahj al-Balagha, Wisdom 328) This "Tasting" of contentment with decree is not only a sign of faith but also a manifestation of inner peace and a heartfelt presence before the divine will.

In the Christian tradition, Teresa of Ávila writes in "The Interior Castle": "The soul, upon submitting to God, sees within itself a gentle and sweet light that is more beautiful than all worldly pleasures." (Teresa of Ávila, 2007: 88) Such descriptions indicate a link between submission and aesthetic experience.

In Judaism, narratives from Rabbi Nachman of Breslov describe the moment of accepting God's will as "a moment of endless illumination."

Hamideh Fatehipeykani

(Green, 2004: 101) In these narratives, the moment of submission is accompanied by a feeling of pleasure and transcendence, which directly relates to the realm of religious aesthetics.

The semantic system of Islamic mysticism also considers this peace not merely a psychological state but a divine and sacred experience; so much so that in mystical literature, the peace resulting from contentment is depicted like a flower blooming in the garden of proximity to God (Suhrawardi, 2003 AD/1382 SH: 75). In the modern era, the concept of beauty is often linked to visual appearances, but the Abrahamic religions have shown that beauty can be a spiritual and inner experience. The beauty of submission is the beauty of accepting truth unconditionally. Hans Urs von Balthasar writes in "The Glory of the Lord": "True beauty is revealed not in victory, but in sacrifice and submission." (Balthasar, 1982: 1, 34)

This perspective on beauty, especially in today's world where humanity is amidst crisis and despair, provides an opportunity to rethink beauty as a spiritual refuge. In these three religions, the moment of submission is not only the end of human resistance against the divine will but also the beginning of a new observation of reality; an observation experienced from within and from the perspective of the heart. In Islamic mysticism, submission is accompanied by seeing with the eye of the heart. Suhrawardi writes in "*Mūnis al-'Ushshāq*": The lover, in the station of contentment, "Transitions from the darkness of nature to the light of innate disposition, and from the light of innate disposition to the divine radiance." (Suhrawardi, 2003 AD/1382 SH: 112) This language is explicitly aesthetic and utilizes words like "Light" and "Illumination."

Contentment and Submission in the Theology of the Abrahamic Religions: An Aesthetic Approach

In the Christian tradition, the concept of the "Vision Beatific" is also linked to beauty. Balthasar sees submission as "A window towards seeing the absolutely beautiful." (Balthasar, 1982: 1, 67) From this perspective, beauty is the quality of the relationship between humans and God. In Judaism, "Shalom" symbolizes inner peace and connection to God, described with words like sweetness and gentleness. Thus, contentment and submission are experiences filled with an inner beauty harmonious with the whole of existence; a beauty of the kind of peace, sacrifice, and the ecstasy of presence in the transcendent.

The concept of "Contentment and Submission" in the Abrahamic religions is not merely an ethical principle or religious duty, but a profound and sacred experience that brings humans closer to the realm of divine presence. This experience is inherently aesthetic in nature; because in contentment and submission, the believer finds a harmony between their own will and the divine will, and this harmony is a manifestation of sacred beauty and harmony.

In the Holy Quran, submission is introduced as the foundation of faith, and "Islam" – meaning complete acceptance of the Divine will – is a gateway to entering peace and witnessing Divine beauty. "Contentment," in the Islamic tradition, is expressed by mystics as the blossoming of a flower in the garden of Divine proximity; a state in which the human, with the eye of the heart, gazes upon the light of truth and experiences beauty not in appearances, but in the acceptance of God's will.

In the Christian tradition as well, Jesus Christ, through his complete submission to the will of the Heavenly Father, reveals the beauty of faith in the moment of sacrifice and self-transcendence. Saints like Teresa of Ávila

Hamideh Fatehipeykani

considered this submission to be the source of a gentle light and an experience higher than any worldly pleasure. Such an experience is a sign of the connection between truth, beauty, and faith in Christianity.

In Judaism, submission to God's will is linked with the concept of "Shalom" – a sacred peace described by Jewish mystics as "A moment of endless illumination." This expression shows that contentment is not merely accepting the status quo, but rather a presence within the Divine light and a discovery of absolute beauty.

From a theological perspective, all three Abrahamic traditions emphasize the truth that contentment and submission are a sacred and aesthetic experience that transports a person beyond their own limitations and places them within the embrace of the Divine will. This experience is not the end of the path, but rather the beginning of a new perspective on existence; a perspective in which absolute beauty is revealed through acceptance and sacrifice. Thus, "Contentment and Submission" is a bridge between faith, beauty, and spirituality, and at its core, bears witness to the eternal connection between humanity and the transcendent.

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**Contentment and Submission in the Theology of the Abrahamic
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Hamideh Fatehipeykani

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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

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

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

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-Qur'ānī: 'Arḍ wa-Tahlīl* by Ṣalāḥ 'Abd al-Fattāḥ al-Khālīdī, 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

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

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-Nahl: 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*, *Shu'ayb*, *Ibrāhīm*, *Mūsā*, and others (cf. al-A'rāf: 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.

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

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 Qutb, in his analysis of the Qur'anic 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

Qur'ān's supreme aim—namely, religious exhortation—and that all Qur'ānic stories depict examples of human characters who, beyond being historical individuals, are presented as pedagogical human models. From this perspective, the narratives of the Qur'ān 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 Qur'ānic 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 Qur'ān (Rūḥānī, 1994 AD/1414 AH: 2, 244–272)—which may be regarded as the most central term in the Qur'ānic 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

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

universally as it is in the Qur'ān. 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 Qur'ān, *Shu'ayb* 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 'Ād (al-A'rāf: 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.

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.

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

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,

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 Qur'ān 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 (Mutahharī, 2020 AD/1399 SH: 23, 454).

By repeatedly emphasizing the monotheistic call in the words of the prophets, the Qur'ān 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 Qur'ān'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 Qur'ān is their educational and inspirational treatment of the prophets' struggles against the powers of oppression and rebellion. In these accounts, the

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

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 Qur'ān, 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-A'raf*, *al-Shu'arā'*,

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:

"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).

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

Another example in the Qur'ān 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 Qur'ān 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 Qur'ān 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

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 Qur'ān—especially in surah *Nūh*—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 Qur'ānic 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

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

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).

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

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

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)

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.

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

Other Qur'anic examples include the stories of *Ād* 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-Anbiyā'* are thus consistently designed to provide ethical guidance, to elucidate divine traditions, 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

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 *ʿAd*, *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

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

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.

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

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

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 *Ṭabāṭabā'ī* 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

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.

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

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 *Shu'ayb* 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, *Shu'ayb* 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)

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 *Shu'ayb* 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.

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

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

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

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, *Shu'ayb*, 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

(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

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

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-A'raf*, *Yūnus*, and *al-Shu'arā'*, 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

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

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

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-

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.

**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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The Thematic Domain of Human Succession from God: A Comparative Study of the Views of the Qur'an and the Bible

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Abstract

The succession of humans from God is generally accepted in the Abrahamic religions. The present study aims to examine the thematic domain of human succession from God from the perspectives of the Qur'an and the Bible through a comparative approach; it also aims to understand and define the mission of humans as successors of God in the world based on the teachings of the Abrahamic religions, which can assist in reconciling the views of the followers of these religions in fulfilling human responsibilities in the contemporary world. To this aim was used a library-based approach for data collection and uses a descriptive-interpretive method with a comparative focus to address the issues. The findings indicate that the Qur'an explicitly affirms the principle of human succession from God, considering humans as successors of God in both existential and legislative matters, supported by evidence such as the generality of verse 30 of Surah Al-Baqarah in appointing humans as successors and the compatibility of the successor with the one succeeded upon in attributes. However, in the Bible, the succession of humans from God is implicitly mentioned. In the

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Old Testament, humans are introduced as representatives of God on earth, with the responsibility of cultivating the earth and governing its inhabitants. This indicates a form of succession in legislative matters. From the *New Testament*, a concept similar to the Qur'anic view (succession in all matters) can be inferred, which is certainly built around the centrality of the personality and succession of Jesus Christ (peace be upon him).

Keywords: Human succession from God, *Khalīfatullāh*, *Mustakhlafun fīh*, the Qur'an and the Bible, Christianity, Judaism.

Introduction

Humans, like other creatures in the universe, occupy a specific position within the creation system. Understanding this position significantly impacts their stature and status in relation to God and other beings, as well as the responsibilities arising from that during human existence. For this reason, defining the place of humans in the creation system is considered a fundamental issue in religious anthropology. In the Qur'an, this position is referred to as succession. During the creation of Prophet Adam (peace be upon him) as the ancestor of the current human generation, God explicitly introduced humans as "Successors": "And when your Lord said to the angels, "Indeed, I will make upon the earth a successive authority." (Q 2:30) In this verse and the two subsequent verses, not only is the principle of human succession mentioned, but also the criteria and rationale for this succession and various other aspects associated with it are addressed. Therefore, numerous questions regarding the issue of human succession have been raised in Quranic studies for a long time, with a focus on the following key inquiries:

**The Thematic Domain of Human Succession from God: A Comparative
Study of the Views of the Qur'an and the Bible**

- Who is the successor of whom?
- What are the examples of this successor?
- What criteria were used to choose humans as successors?
- In what matters and topics does humanity exercise succession from their predecessor?
- What is the scope of human succession in the matters of succession?
- And so on...

Many commentators of the Qur'an have addressed these inquiries within the framework of diverse interpretive opinions regarding verses 30-34 of Surah Al-Baqarah.

This paper is based on the established premise that "According to the Qur'an, humans are the successors of God," (cf. Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 2009 AD/1430 AH: 1, 115; Javadi Amoli, 2010 AD/1389 SH: 3, 57-62; Misbah Yazdi, 1989 AD/1368 SH: 364-365; Mousavi Kani and Aryan, 2024 AD/1403 SH: 49-61) and focuses specifically on the examination of the fourth question, that is, the issue of the matters and topics of human succession from God. The scope of this research extends beyond the Qur'anic viewpoint, incorporating the Two Testaments. Thus, the topic is explored from the perspective of the sacred texts of Abrahamic religions (the Qur'an and the Two Testaments) and is analyzed and examined comparatively.

The question of 'In what matters does humanity have succession and representation from God?' has received less attention from commentators of the sacred texts of divine religions. Sometimes, this issue is referred to in Qur'anic interpretative literature by the term "What is succeeded in," (cf. Andalusī, 1999 AD/1420 AH: 1, 227; Misbah Yazdi, 1989 AD/1368 SH: 362), meaning in what matters and issues is humanity chosen for succession

Hamid Aryan, Mojtaba Mostashreq

by God and what responsibilities and missions do they hold. 'Does being a successor of God imply merely a moral mission in the realm of individual human existence, or do they also have a representation and mission from God in organizing social life?' 'Is this succession limited to legislative matters, or does it also persist in existential affairs?' Answering these questions clarifies the nature and dimensions of this succession and the responsibilities derived from it. In other words, it delineates the thematic domain of succession from God and consequently determines the various spheres of responsibility and mission for humanity in this succession.

If the domain of human succession from God encompasses all existential and legislative aspects of human life, then the notion of restricting religion and its teachings to individual matters and performing rituals in corners of temples, mosques, and personal retreats would be contrary and incompatible with this mission and the arising responsibilities. Instead, emphasizing the social role of religion and its teachings in guiding and managing various aspects of human life will become very pronounced. This point, especially in today's materially burdened world, which faces a widespread crisis of meaning in life and a decline in spirituality, can be very insightful, hope-inducing, and effective. It enhances the responsibility of scholars, religious thinkers, and theologians of divine religions in understanding and analyzing these crises, encouraging official authorities of religious institutions to promote collaboration and cooperation. It encourages them to take joint action in facing and solving the spiritual, ethical, and social crises of contemporary societies.

The least benefit of such interreligious comparative studies is that, in general, it can assist thinkers of the heavenly religions in gaining a deeper

**The Thematic Domain of Human Succession from God: A Comparative
Study of the Views of the Qur'an and the Bible**

understanding of the human position in the system of existence and their responsibilities towards God and creation. Specifically, it can at least expand and enhance awareness among the followers of the Abrahamic religions, who constitute half of the world's population, regarding the fundamental teachings of the Qur'an and the Bible concerning the succession and representation of humanity from God and the common human responsibilities arising from it. This article aims to take a step towards achieving these stated objectives by re-examining the teachings outlined in the Qur'an and the Bible that relate to divine succession and the associated responsibilities.

It is noteworthy to mention in the introduction regarding the texts of the Abrahamic religions that, based on rational and textual evidence, the Holy Qur'an is the only heavenly book that is preserved from verbal distortion (cf. Misbah Yazdi, 2007 AD/1386 SH: 271-274; idem: 1999 AD/1378 SH: 310-396). However, this claim cannot be maintained regarding the Two Testaments, as the existing text does not necessarily correspond to its original text, and there is historical and religious evidence indicating its non-conformity with the original text (Spinoza, 1951: chap. 8; Wayment, 2019: The full article). Nevertheless, since the current the Bible are considered valid by their believers and followers, in interreligious dialogues with an approximate approach, the credibility of each of the religious texts according to the perspectives of their adherents is emphasized. Considering the importance of highlighting the commonalities of the Abrahamic religions in such studies, objections to the authenticity of religious texts may be overlooked, and their credibility from the perspective of their adherents will be taken into account.

1. Review and Evaluation of Background

Regarding the background of the research, based on the conducted search, no specific work has been found that comparatively examines the views of the Qur'an and the Bible on the matters and aspects concerning the succession of humans from God. The only reference is in the book "Recognition of the Qur'an and the Two Testaments," where the author briefly discusses the Qur'anic views on human succession and its aspects before mentioning the issue of human succession in the Bible (Baghbani Arani, 2021 AD/1400 SH: 275 and 278). However, these general references pertain solely to the principle of humans being successors, not the matters and aspects of that succession from God. Moreover, no work specifically addressing the views of the Bible on the matters of human succession from God was found by the authors of this article.

Although the Quran commentators have generally shown attention to the topic of human succession from God under verses 30 to 34 of Surah *al-Baqarah* and occasionally in the interpretation of verse 26 of Surah *Şād*, the findings reveal that only a few of them have addressed the matters and aspects below or in detail regarding human succession from God, while most interpretations either did not acknowledge this issue at all or merely provided brief references to it. Among the works that more clearly address the issue discussed in this article are "*Anwār al-Tanzīl*" (Bayḍāwī, 1997 AD/1418 AH: 1, 68), "*Rūḥ Al-Ma'ānī*" (Ālūsī, 1994 AD/1415 AH: 1, 222), and "*al-Mīzān*" (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 2009 AD/1430 AH: 1, 115), while "Tasnim" has elaborated on aspects of this issue in greater detail (Jawadi Amoli, 2010 AD/1389 SH: 3, 62–127).

The Thematic Domain of Human Succession from God: A Comparative Study of the Views of the Qur'an and the Bible

A review of the content of the mentioned interpretations concerning the issue discussed shows that, apart from the two interpretations "al-Mīzān" and "Tasnīm," other interpretations have limited themselves to a few wordings or, at most, one-line mentions on this topic, merely listing the titles of the matters concerning succession without providing any analysis or explanation. However, "al-Mīzān" addresses the relationship of these matters with the status of the successor and the one succeeded, while "Tasnīm" offers a broader discussion on this connection. Another issue seems to be that many past commentators did not seriously consider what responsibilities the successor bears and in which matters they hold succession, passing over this subject without any discussion or opinion.

In addition to the interpretative books, some other writings occasionally contain weak entries on the discussed topic (matters of human succession from God). In two articles, "A Study of the Semantics and Interpretation of the Verse of God's Succession" (Bagheri et al., 2012 AD/1391 SH) and "Examining the Concept of *Khalīfatullāh* in the Verse of Succession," (Kavand, 2009 AD/1388 SH), there are hints regarding the aspects of human succession from God in the analysis of Adam's succession story in the Qur'an; however, these references are brief and lack the necessary reasoning and analysis. An article titled "Divine Succession; Emphasizing the View of Ayatollah Jawadi Amoli" (Sayyidinia, 2007 AD/1386 SH) briefly compiles the author of "Tasnīm's" viewpoints under three titles: "The Limits of Divine Successorship," "The Scope of Divine Successorship," and "Degrees and Ranks of Successorship," which contains no new points or analyses, merely summarizing "Tasnīm's" content.

Hamid Aryan, Mojtaba Mostashreq

In summary, the discussions regarding the background indicate that, despite addressing the fundamental topic of human succession in the Qur'an, first, all aspects of it, including the issue of "Matters and contexts of human succession from God," have been given less attention in these works. Secondly, most who have indeed paid some attention have not seriously and thoroughly elucidated its facets or their connection to the status and rank of the successor and the one succeeded. Thirdly, to our knowledge, no specific research has yet been conducted analyzing the views of the texts of the other Abrahamic religions (the Bible) on this topic. Fourthly, no comparative study has been carried out between the views of the Qur'an and the Bible in this regard. Therefore, we believe that addressing the aforementioned research gaps and considering the goals previously outlined for such studies, researching the discussed issue with a comparative approach based on the views of the Abrahamic religions is both appropriate and necessary.

This article employs a library research method, gathering foundational data from primary sources, namely the texts of the Qur'an and the Bible. In the next step, the necessary information was collected through references to recognized interpretations of the Qur'an and the Bible. Then, with an analytical-interpretive method, this data was processed. In the information processing stage, the authors' fundamental reliance in deriving the meaning and intent of the texts of the Qur'an and the Bible is based on general principles and logic of understanding texts and specific criteria for comprehending and interpreting sacred texts.

Thus, following references to some general concepts of the research, we will organize and pursue the main body of the discussion in three areas:

The Thematic Domain of Human Succession from God: A Comparative Study of the Views of the Qur'an and the Bible

stating the Qur'anic view on the issue, stating the views of the Bible on the issue, and finally, comparing and assessing the two.

2. Conceptualization

2.1. Succession and Successor

The root "*Kh L F*" originally means the coming of something after another (Ibn Fāris, 1983 AD/1404 AH: Root "*Kh L F*"; Ibn Athīr, 1947 AD/1367 AH: Root "*Kh L F*"). "*Khilāfah*" is the verbal noun (Ibn Durayd, 1988: Root "*Kh L F*") derived from "*Kh L F*" meaning representation (Farāhīdī, 1988 AD/1409 AH: Root "*Kh L F*"), agency (Rāghib, 1991 AD/1412 AH: Root "*Kh L F*"), and substitution (Moein, 2007 AD/1386 SH: Entry "Agency") for another, and the person who represents or succeeds is called "*Khalīfah*" (Farāhīdī, 1988 AD/1409 AH: Root "*Kh L F*"; Azharī, 2000 AD/1421 AH: Root "*Kh L F*"), where the "*Hā*" indicates emphasis (Fayyūmī, 1993 AD/1414 AH: Root "*Kh L F*").

In Islamic theology, the political apparatus replacing the government of the Prophet of Islam (PBUH) is termed succession, and its rulers are referred to as successors (Kasnizani, 2005 AD/1426 AH: 7, 266). In mysticism, the term successorship is applied to the rank of the perfect human (Sajadi, 2000 AD/1379 SH: 226), which is a position where a person, purified from base desires, connects to the holy realm to the extent that the light of truth flows into them without intermediaries, thereby becoming a manifestation of divine names, a channel of God's governance in matters beyond Him, and an intermediary of grace (Doghaym, 2004: 1, 408-409).

Considering that the term "*Khalīfah*" and other derivatives from the root "*Kh L F*" have all been used in connection to human succession in religious texts in their literal and non-technical meanings, this research will also refer

to the literal meanings of these terms, and none of the technical meanings of succession and successor are intended.

2.2. *Mustakhlafun fih* and *Mustakhlafun 'anh*

If a person other than the successor himself appoints him to the position of succession, this act is termed "*Istikhlaḥ*." (Jawharī, 1983 AD/1404 AH: Root "*Kh L F*") In this case, the person who has chosen the successor is called "*Mustakhlaf*," and the individual for whom the successor has become a representative is termed "*Mustakhlafun 'anh*." (cf. Saḥāb, 1993 AD/1414 AH: Root "*Kh L F*") In anthropological discussions, the place or tasks and matters that are subject to succession are referred to as "*Mustakhlafun fih*," (Misbah Yazdi, 1989 AD/1368 SH: 362) meaning matters in which the successor has become the representative of the one succeeded to perform on their behalf or in alignment with their will.

3. The Qur'anic Perspective on Matters and Aspects of Succession from God

Initially, it is important to note that since the nature of the matters and topics concerning the succession of humans "*Mustakhlafun fih*" is directly related to the identity of the one succeeded "*Mustakhlafun 'anh*" (the one whom the successor has replaced), the differing opinions of commentators regarding the identity of the one succeeded contribute to varied perspectives on the nature of the matters of succession. As mentioned in the introduction of this article, the premise of the present research is that, from the Qur'anic perspective, humans are successors and representatives of God, not other beings. Therefore, the views of interpreters who believe that, according to the Qur'an, humans are successors of the previous inhabitants of the earth

The Thematic Domain of Human Succession from God: A Comparative Study of the Views of the Qur'an and the Bible

(including other humans, Neanderthals, jinn, and angels) (for example, cf. Sadeqi Tehrani, 2011 AD/1432 AH: 1, 280-285) fall outside the scope of this article and will not be addressed. Only those interpretative perspectives based on the premise of human succession from God will be discussed.

The term "*Mustakhlaḥfun fīh*" or the matters in which humans hold succession from God are addressed in two verses: 30 of Surah *al-Baqarah* and 26 of Surah *Ṣād*. The first verse relates to Prophet Adam, and its generality can be utilized in this regard. The second verse expresses a strong near-explicit instance of the realm of succession of Prophet David from God. We do not have many narrations to clarify and explain this matter. This lack has led to differences among commentators regarding the principle and manner in which these verses indicate the scope of human succession from God. Some ancient commentators have conveyed only two interpretative opinions (Abū Ḥayyān Andalusī, 1999 AD/1420 AH: 1, 227). However, it seems that all interpretative opinions regarding the nature of the matters and topics for which humans are successors from God "*Mustakhlaḥfun fīh*" can be categorized into four main perspectives:

3.1. First Perspective: The Judgment of Right and Justice among Creatures

Some commentators believe that the succession of humans from God mentioned in verse 30 of Surah *Al-Baqarah* is solely related to ruling and judging among people based on truth (cf. Ṭabrisī, 1952 AD/1372 AH: 1, 176). *Shaykh Ṭūsī* has attributed this view to Ibn Mas'ud, stating: "I meant that I am making a successor in the land to judge among creatures." (Ṭūsī, n.d.: 1, 131) *Abū Ḥayyān* also referenced this as one of the two interpretations concerning the matter: "One of them is ruling justly and

fairly." (Abū Ḥayyān Andālūsī, 1999 AD/1420 AH: ibid) This interpretation appears to rely on the meaning of the noble verse "O! David, indeed We have made you a successor upon the earth, so judge between the people in truth," (Ṣād: 26) where the act of judging justly among the people (*Faḥkum Bayn al-Nās bil Ḥaqq*) is linked explicitly to the status of David as God's successor. According to some commentators, the ambiguity of the matters of human succession in verse 30 of Surah *al-Baqarah* is clarified and emphasized by the statement of the matters of David's succession in verse 26 of Surah *Ṣād* (judging and ruling justly among people) (for instance, cf. Nizām al-‘Araj, 1995 AD/1416 AH: 1, 216).

3.2. Second Perspective: The Cultivation of the Earth

Some Islamic commentators assert that humans hold succession from God to serve the purpose of cultivating the earth (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr, 2000: 1, 385). This opinion has occasionally been expressed in different terms by various commentators. For example, some have stated that humans have been appointed by God to take command of earthly matters and discover its resources and wealth for utilization (cf. Mughnīyyah, 1952 AD/1372 AH: 1, 80). *Shaykh Ṭūsī* (without mentioning any specific person or group) reports an interpretative opinion that limits the matters of succession to the cultivation of the earth and the utilization of its resources, such as agriculture, production of goods, and the establishment of irrigation canals (cf. Ṭūsī, n.d.: ibid). *Abū Ḥayyān* also referred to this view as the second opinion regarding what is considered "*Mustakhlafun fīh*": "The second is the development of the earth, where one plants and harvests, builds, and runs rivers." (Abū Ḥayyān Andalusī, 1999 AD/1420 AH: 1, 227)

The Thematic Domain of Human Succession from God: A Comparative Study of the Views of the Qur'an and the Bible

In this view, the phrase "*Fil Ard*" (in the earth) is emphasized, as the earth besides being the location of human succession, also has significance in the mission of the divine successor. This perspective may stem from earlier commentaries in the first two centuries, as discussed in the interpretation of Ṭabarī (for instance, cf. Ṭabarī, 2001 AD/1422 AH: 1, 477).

3.3. Third Perspective: Establishing Justice, Cultivating the Earth, Managing People's Affairs, Perfecting Souls, Implementing Divine Commands

A number of other commentators believe that humans are chosen as successors of God to fulfill four tasks: establishing justice, cultivating the earth, managing people's affairs, and perfecting souls. Commentators such as *Bayḍāwī* (cf. Bayḍāwī, 1997 AD/1418 AH: 1, 168) have stated that humans hold succession from God in all these matters, with some commentators following *Bayḍāwī* listing these four as the matters of succession (cf. Ālūsī, 2000 AD/1421 AH: 1, 222). Others among them have referred to some of these tasks specifically as the tasks of human succession. *Zuhaylī* views the role of the successor as the cultivation of the earth, settling in it, and implementing divine commands (Zuhaylī, 1997 AD/1418 AH: 1, 125). In the interpretation of *Jalālayn*, the responsibility of the successor is also noted as implementing divine commands on earth (Muḥallā, 1995 AD/1416 AH: 1, 8) which encompasses all these various tasks within the four-fold mission articulated by *Bayḍāwī* for God's successor. Generally, these commentators have not provided a rationale for this interpretation, but it can be suggested that it is similar to some assumptions made in justifying the second perspective.

3.4. Fourth Perspective: All Existential Aspects of the One Succeeded, Including Existential and Legislative Matters

Another group of contemporary commentators has expressed a fourth interpretative view based on the characteristics of the one succeeded "*Mustakhlafun 'anh*." This interpretation posits that what encompasses the matter of succession "*Mustakhlafun fih*" includes all aspects and matters that pertain to the one succeeded, whether in the realm of creation or legislation (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 2009 AD/1430 AH: 1, 115; Misbah Yazdi, 1982 AD/1361 SH: Session 37, Part 2; Jawadi Amoli, 2010 AD/1389 AH: 3, 62-63; 92-95; 116-118; 125-127). Unlike the previous three perspectives, this view analyzes the matters of human succession from God based on the relationship between the successor and the one succeeded. There is ample evidence indicating that the matters and aspects in which humans hold succession on behalf of God (or what is termed as *Mustakhlafun fih*) are not confined to specific duties such as adjudication or the cultivation of the earth, mentioned in the prior views; instead, they encompass all existential and legislative aspects.

Several reasons and pieces of evidence support this view, of which we will mention some:

3.4.1. The Generality of the Verse on Human Succession in Surah *al-Baqarah*

Among the verses of the Qur'an, only two verses clearly pertain to human succession from God. One of these verses refers specifically to the succession of Prophet David, which explicitly defines his domain of succession as "Judging and ruling justly among the people." In contrast, the other verse articulates human succession from God with the expression

The Thematic Domain of Human Succession from God: A Comparative Study of the Views of the Qur'an and the Bible

"*Innī Jā'ilun fil Arḍi Khalīfah*" (Q 2:30) in a broad and unrestricted manner. The context of the verse supports the understanding that the intended meaning of succession here is absolute (cf. Jawadi Amoli, 2010 AD/1389 SH: 92). Thus, according to the second verse, since human succession from God is stated in an unrestricted manner and not limited to certain legislative aspects or merely legislative matters, the scope of this succession encompasses all existential and legislative domains (see: Jawadi Amoli, 1389 SH, vol. 3, pp. 92-93).

3.4.2. The Necessity of Congruence Between the Successor and the One Succeeded in Attributes

Another reason for including the matters of succession with all existential and legislative aspects is that the successor acts as the representative and substitute for the one succeeded, thus reflecting and embodying all existential aspects, effects, judgments, and strategies of the one succeeded (cf. Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 2009 AD/1430 AH: 1, 115). Humanity is appointed as a successor to God to perform divine tasks, except for what solely belongs to God's majestic essence, which, based on rational and textual evidence, is outside the existential capacity of any being other than God.

Some other commentators have suggested that, based on the assumption that the rank of succession is exclusive to perfect humans; the successor in this verse is the absolute successor of God, not a relative one. This implies that just as God is "Encompassing of all things" (Q 41:54) and "A witness over all things," (Q 41:53) the successor must also encompass all creation with His permission and be a manifestation of His divine names. Nothing in the world exists in the name of the action and grace of God except that the successor possesses the perfection and capability to perform it; in other

Hamid Aryan, Mojtaba Mostashreq

words, the successor is like a mirror reflecting all the attributes of the one succeeded "*Mustakhlafun 'anh*" and the possessor of the form, thus being a "Comprehensive being." (Jawadi Amoli, 2010 AD/1389 SH: 3, 62-63) Therefore, "*Mustakhlafun fih*" presents a very broad scope, encompassing both existential and legislative matters.

The second reasoning can also be articulated anew for the inclusion of "*Mustakhlafun fih*" in both existential and legislative domains as follows:

Divine succession has multiple levels, as God has diverse manifestations. What is presented in the discussed verse (Q 2:30) represents the complete and perfect succession that enables the divine activities to be carried out through humans' actions in all aspects of the world. This means that since God is inherently knowledgeable and powerful, the perfect human also represents the full manifestation of that knowledge and power, possessing divine knowledge and power, embodying divine ethics, and having the domains of existence limited for him in the same way a human's body limits their actions. With God's permission, such a human can perform any action they will; this perfection belongs to both the essence (in the philosophical sense) and the inherent and actual attributes of God. The essence and attributes of the perfect human serve as God's successor, while their actions and effects are successors to God's actions and effects. That is, in all four aspects, the perfect human embodies God without possessing anything from them, and such a rank is unique to the perfect human, not even angels possess it (Jawadi Amoli, 2010 AD/1389 SH: 3, 93). The necessity of such succession in four directions ensures that "*Mustakhlafun fih*" encompasses all existential and legislative domains.

The Thematic Domain of Human Succession from God: A Comparative Study of the Views of the Qur'an and the Bible

A final summary of the interpretative arguments concerning the extent of "*Mustakhlaḥfun fīh*" has been articulated by one of its proponents:

"The successor of God is the responsible manager of an organized chain within the system of potential existence. Accordingly, he has comprehensive knowledge of the details and characteristics of material entities, transforming their potential benefits into actuality, thus deriving various crafts and inventing tools. Consequently, many skills and crafts, including sciences and traditions, may have emerged through the prophets or under their guidance. Furthermore, he takes on the role of guiding the entire potential existence (both material and spiritual) and leads all beings by the permission of God, as he embodies all the beautiful names and attributes of God. He represents the "Hand of God," the "Eye of God," the "Ear of God," and so forth. Additionally, the legislative guidance of humans, admonition and preaching, detailing and explaining lawful and unlawful actions, implementing divine limits, protecting religious sanctuaries, and, in summary, establishing a just heavenly government is also his responsibility." (Jawadi Amoli, 2010 AD/1389 SH: 125-126)

It appears that the fourth interpretative perspective is stronger and preferred for two reasons:

First, the fourth perspective elaborately argues for its claims based on the verses, while the other perspectives have almost none that provide reasoning from the verses, narrations, or rational arguments to support their claims concerning what "*Mustakhlaḥfun fīh*" refers to in the interpreted verses.

Second, the fourth interpretative view outlines the scope of human succession from God in a manner that encompasses the claims of the other perspectives, making the fourth perspective somewhat a synthesis of the

previous views. Thus, accepting the fourth perspective does not negate the other views; however, the reverse is not true, as accepting one of the other three views would be seen as a negation of the fourth.

4. The Perspective of the Old Testament on Human Succession from God

The Old Testament, as the primary religious source for Judaism, does not explicitly discuss the succession of humans from God. However, one can extract concepts and evidence regarding human succession from God from various passages, thus allowing for a general outline of the Old Testament's view on the matters of human succession from God and its implications.

In the first chapter of *the book of Genesis*, it states that Adam was created in the image of God: "And God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness... So, God created man in his own image; in the image of God created he him.'" (*Genesis*, 1:26-27)

The Jewish commentaries on the *Old Testament* interpret the creation of man in God's image as follows: "It signifies that humans have received a divine spirit (soul) that endows them with the capacity for thought and choice. This aspect grants humans a high status, albeit limited to a human form (*Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin*, 38b). This "image" reflects the power and dignity granted to humanity, enabling them to have dominion over the world." (*Midrash Genesis Rabbah*, 8:12)

Accordingly, Adam was created in the closest existential rank to God compared to other creatures. This existential distinction sets humans apart from other beings and grants them a unique status. Such existential suitability in the creation of humans cannot be random or aimless, and

The Thematic Domain of Human Succession from God: A Comparative Study of the Views of the Qur'an and the Bible

certainly, the Wise God must have had an intention and purpose for this creation. The necessity of existential harmony with God also implies congruence in actions, reinforcing the notion that humans are created in the likeness of God. The rational implication of God's actions suggests that human deeds should bear a divine quality, or in other terms, should reflect divine attributes. This characteristic can align closely with the capacity for succession and representation of humanity from God.

However, the *Old Testament* articulates the goal of this creation as follows: "...to have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth" (*Genesis*, 1:26). It further emphasizes this role of governance by saying: "And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth." (*Genesis*, 1:28)

Thus, the *Old Testament* clearly states that the purpose of creating Adam and humans is to dominate the earth and govern earthly creatures, indicating that this purpose is not limited to worldly matters but is also dedicated to the cultivation of the earth and governance over it. The mention of creatures such as the fish of the sea, birds of the heavens, and other beings in verse 26 is not intended to limit governance to these beings; rather, it serves as an example since verse 28 broadens this to include "Fish of the sea, birds of the heavens, and every living thing that creeps on the earth." Furthermore, in the same verse (26), it generalizes it to "Over all the earth," indicating dominion over all life forms." (cf. Cuthbert A. Simpson, in: *The Interpreter's Bible*, 1952: 1, 483)

Hamid Aryan, Mojtaba Mostashreq

This theme is also echoed in the Psalms, where the status of humanity in relation to God and the angels is articulated, reminding us of their worthiness of governance over all creatures on earth:

"What is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him? Yet you have made him a little lower than God, and crowned him with glory and honor. You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the sea." (Psalm 8:4-8)

In *the book of Genesis*, at times, the responsibility of humans is limited to the protection of a part of the earth: "The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and keep it." (*Genesis*, 2:15) This limitation seems to pertain specifically to a particular event in the life of Adam and his wife before their fall, without questioning the previously stated generality. Regarding the location of the "Garden of Eden," based on various interpretations, it can be concluded that this garden was part of this very earth, considered the best place for human habitation due to its favorable living conditions. The pristine nature of this area provided an excellent opportunity for spiritual self-cultivation for humans; hence, to poetically express it: "God walked in the garden." This figurative expression suggests that divine presence in that location was comprehensible and continuous (cf. Walter Russell Bowie, in: *The Interpreter's Bible*, 1952: 1, 492-495).

Furthermore, in elucidating this mission of humanity, the book of Judges states, in reference to the prophet Judah after the death of Joshua: "The Lord said, "Judah shall go up; behold, I have given the land into his hand."

The Thematic Domain of Human Succession from God: A Comparative Study of the Views of the Qur'an and the Bible

(Judges 1:2) Additionally, in the book of Ezra, it is mentioned: "Cyrus, king of Persia, says: "Yahweh, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah." (*Ezra*, 1:2)

In the book of Jeremiah, it is also stated: "See, I have appointed you this day over nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant." (*Jeremiah*, 1:10) God fulfilled this mission by teaching His word to Jeremiah: "Then the Lord put out his hand and touched my mouth. And the Lord said to me, "Behold, I have put my words in your mouth." (*Jeremiah*, 1:9) Thus, this word possesses inherent power and has an existential effect; it has the capability to encompass that power and acts on behalf of God, carrying a divine responsibility (cf. Stanley Romaine Hopper, in: *The Interpreter's Bible*, 1952: 5, 804-805).

From these passages in the Old Testament, one can derive the following conclusions:

First, although the Torah does not explicitly mention the succession of humans, some passages indirectly convey something about the mission and responsibilities of humans, from which concepts similar to those of human succession or roles akin to those of a caliph in the Qur'anic sense can be inferred.

Second, these passages suggest that humans, as representatives of God on earth, are tasked with cultivating the earth and ruling over its creatures.

Third, humanity's representation from God began with the creation of Adam and has been transmitted to other humans, including the prophets like Judah, Jeremiah, and others.

Hamid Aryan, Mojtaba Mostashreq

Fourth, from the perspective of the Torah, this succession is not only limited to earthly domains without an independent otherworldly aspect, but it also encapsulates the cultivation of the earth and its inhabitants. Naturally, this succession is primarily duty-oriented and, regarding divine elects, also status-oriented. In reality, humans, as successors of God, are obligated to fulfill their role in the cultivation of the earth and governance over it in every age.

5. The Perspective of the *New Testament* on Human Succession from God

In the *New Testament*, there is no explicit mention of the term or expression "Human succession from God." However, this part of the Scripture presents Jesus Christ in such a way that He holds superiority over all creatures, including angels, and performs divine works:

"God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they." (Epistle of Paul to the Hebrews, 1: 1-5).

According to the interpretation of the Two Testaments, these passages illustrate the unparalleled status of Christ within the system of creation. On one hand, He is described as a reflection of divine glory and the complete

The Thematic Domain of Human Succession from God: A Comparative Study of the Views of the Qur'an and the Bible

manifestation of God's essence; while on the other hand, He is introduced as the agent of creation and inheritor of all things (cf. Alexander C. Purdy, in: *The Interpreter's Bible*, 1952: 11, 600-601). The key point is that while angels share certain divine attributes with Christ, His superiority over the angels' lies in His bearing a name that is greater than theirs. This name is the one by which God called Jesus His son, granting Him an existence that others are deprived of (cf. *ibid*: 603-604).

The *New Testament* further elaborates on this superiority: "But to which of the angels did He ever say: "Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool?" (Epistle of Paul to the Hebrews, 1: 13)

Among these passages, there is also a mention of Adam, where God commands angels to worship (prostrate) him at the time of his creation: "But when He brings the firstborn into the world, He says, "Let all the angels of God worship Him." (Epistle of Paul to the Hebrews, 1: 6).

Some Christian commentators have attributed the title "Firstborn" to Jesus (cf. *Bible Societies in the East*, 1988: 695; Thomas Hale & Stephen Thorson, 1997: 891). However, this attribution is inconsistent with the context of the surrounding passages. For instance, in the previous verse, Jesus is introduced as "The Son of God." (cf. Epistle of Paul to the Hebrews, 1: 1-5) Yet, in this verse, the phrase suddenly changes to "Firstborn," and in subsequent passages, the term "Son of God" is again used to refer to Jesus (cf. *ibid.*, 1: 8). Furthermore, this passage first discusses angels and then returns to the subject of Jesus. In other words, it begins by talking about the creation of Adam, then mentions angels, and finally refers to Jesus.

Therefore, if "Firstborn" were intended to refer to Jesus, this sudden shift in terminology would lack logical justification. On the other hand, given the

Hamid Aryan, Mojtaba Mostashreq

semantic closeness between these passages and the story of the creation of the first human in *the Qur'an* (Q 2:30-34) as well as other sacred texts like the *Kenza Rabbah* (cf. *Kenza Rabbah Yamin*, Book One and Two), this interpretation is supported.

Additionally, Paul, in a letter to the Corinthians, states: "Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are" (*First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians*, 3: 16-17). One of the authors of "The New Testament Practical Commentary" interprets the defilement of the temple of God as sin and distraction by worldly matters, such as gossip, false teachings, and quarrels (cf. Thomas Hale & Stephen Thorson, 1997: 636).

This passage emphasizes the divine aspect of humanity through the expression of God's Spirit dwelling within humans. This expression is used only for humans, as there is no similar mention regarding other beings, suggesting a unique status for humanity among creations. In this regard, one could argue that these statements align with the notion of human succession from Almighty God.

According to the *New Testament* text, God Almighty addresses Jesus Christ as "Lord," stating: "You, Lord, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands" (Epistle of Paul to the Hebrews, 1: 10). However, in another context, the goal of Jesus' succession is described as the establishment of justice: "Behold My servant whom I have chosen, My beloved in whom My soul is well pleased! I will put My Spirit upon Him, and He will declare justice to the Gentiles." (Matthew, 12: 18)

The Thematic Domain of Human Succession from God: A Comparative Study of the Views of the Qur'an and the Bible

Yet, when considering the verses preceding and following this passage, it becomes clear that the mission of Jesus is not limited to establishing justice; rather, it pertains to organizing the affairs of all humanity and guiding them, as it also speaks of healing people and attending to their needs (for example, cf. Matthew, 12: 10-13, 15, 22, and 31-37).

The *Gospels* also recount a conversation Jesus (peace be upon him) had with His disciples, where He, while providing moral guidance, states: "The Father has committed all things to Me..." (Matthew, 11: 27) In the *Gospel of John*, this same idea is mentioned by John the Baptist: "The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand." (John, 3: 35)

Some Bible commentators explain this passage simply as referring to the responsibilities mentioned in Jewish tradition; that is, those responsibilities and teachings which had previously been assigned to humanity have this time been entrusted to Jesus (peace be upon him) (cf. Sherman E. Johnson, in: *The Interpreter's Bible*, 1952: 7, 389). Others, with more detail, consider the scope of this delegation to be so extensive that it encompasses the kingdom and its mysteries (cf. *Bible Societies in the East*, 1988: 68). Some others believe that this phrase signifies the delegation of all power, wisdom, and authority of God to Christ (cf. Thomas Hale & Stephen Thorson, 1997: 201).

Moreover, Jesus, in response to the amazement of the Jews regarding His miracles, states:

"The Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel. For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son

Hamid Aryan, Mojtaba Mostashreq

gives life to whom He will. For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son." (John, 5: 20-21)

According to some teachings from the Bible, this succession is not limited to Jesus Christ or the first human but extends to other humans as well, such that Christ grants some of the roles He holds for Himself to Peter:

"When Jesus came into the regions of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, "Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" So they said, "Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus answered and said to him, 'Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock, I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.'" (Matthew, 16: 13-19)

The expression "The keys of the kingdom of heaven" signifies his dominion and authority over the kingdom of heaven and its matters. As the *New Testament* records in a passage from Jesus speaking to the Galilean women after His resurrection: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me." (Matthew, 28: 18) With such a bestowal, this great mission becomes possible (cf. George A. Buttrick, in: *The Interpreter's Bible*, 1952: 7, 622), and it becomes evident that the matters of Christ's succession transcend earthly issues and encompass the kingdom of heaven as well. Furthermore, the transfer of this mission to another person (Peter)

**The Thematic Domain of Human Succession from God: A Comparative
Study of the Views of the Qur'an and the Bible**

indicates that other humans also possess the capacity to hold the position of divine representation in these same matters, but its actualization requires the mediation and essence of Christ.

New Testament commentators regard the purpose of human creation as this very mission. Although they do not use the terms "Vicegerent" or "Vicegerency," (ibid.) the *New Testament* refers to the idea in other passages, emphasizing that every human has the potential to attain a position where they can exercise authority over all matters besides God. When the disciples of Jesus asked why they were unable to heal, He responded:

"Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, "Move from here to there," and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting." (Matthew, 17:20-21)

Paul also states in a letter to the Corinthians: "Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? ... Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life?" (1 Corinthians, 6:2-3)

Jesus promises His disciples that they will judge among the Children of Israel in the end times after His return to the throne of glory and sovereignty: "Assuredly, I say to you, that you who have followed Me will, in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." (Matthew, 19:28) This passage seems to hint at the return of the apostles alongside Jesus in the future and their governance.

In the first letter of Paul, this judgment is extended to encompass both humans and angels: "Do you not know that the saints will judge the

world? ... Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life?" (1 Corinthians, 6:2-3)

Furthermore, commentators on the *Gospel* note that Jesus Christ, in the position of God's vicegerent, never claims independence or independent power but rather receives all His authority and abilities from the Lord. He follows the divine model and realizes God's objectives. According to these commentators, God, by granting powers to Christ, has given him the right to grant life and existence to chosen individuals. However, this authority does not imply arbitrary use of power; Christ is obliged to act solely within the framework of divine will and in the name of God, doing only those things that God has commanded him to do (cf. Howard, in: *The Interpreter's Bible*, 1952: 8, 546).

From the above passages in the New Testament, one can gather that humanity is the vicegerent of Almighty God in this world, and the scope of their vicegerency includes both natural matters such as raising the dead, moving mountains, and possessing all affairs besides God, as well as legislative matters like judgment and arbitration, etc. However, this vicegerency is fundamentally centered on the figure of Jesus, and it is through his existence that this status is transferred to his followers.

6. Comparison of the Views of the Quran and the Bible on Matters of Human Vicegerency from God

Comparative studies primarily reveal the similarities and differences surrounding the subject under examination. Based on what has been presented in previous sections of the article regarding the viewpoints of the Quran and the Bible on this matter, it can be summarized that their

The Thematic Domain of Human Succession from God: A Comparative Study of the Views of the Qur'an and the Bible

commonalities are rooted in the singular divine origin of these texts, while the existing differences stem from the theological and anthropological foundations of their teachings.

The teachings of the Quran are centered on monotheism, underpinned by the belief in the pure nature of every human being at birth, the inherent dignity, and the voluntary, acquired virtues of each individual through faith, righteous deeds, and servitude to God. The vicegerency of humans from God is also based on this understanding. Although the theology of the Old Testament is monotheistic, it carries a racial connotation (the superiority of the chosen people) and is focused on material life and the dominance of the chosen people, shaping its view of human vicegerency and its nature and scope accordingly.

Christian theology, grounded in the Trinity (Father, Son, Holy Spirit), emphasizes the divine sonship of Jesus Christ, with its anthropological perspective focused on original sin and humanity's purification and salvation through Christ and His sacrifice. However, since the main subject of this discussion does not delve into the foundational anthropological principles of the viewpoints of religions and sacred texts, this brief mention suffices to highlight the differences in perspectives among these texts.

6.1. Commonalities

6.1.1. The Superiority of Humans Among Beings and Their Representation by God

Both the Quran and the Bible agree on the superior status of humans in relation to other creatures, explicitly or implicitly stating that humans hold a form of representation and vicegerency from God within the order of existence. The Quran clearly states in verses 30 to 34 of Surah *al-Baqarah*

Hamid Aryan, Mojtaba Mostashreq

and in verse 11 of Surah *al-A'raf* that God has granted humans the status of vicegerency and has elevated them over creation through the teaching of names.

Similarly, the Old Testament emphasizes the unique status of humans by explicitly stating that they were created in the "Image of God" among all other beings, assigning them the mission of governance and dominion over the earth and its creatures (Genesis, 1:26-28). According to the teachings of the New Testament, Christ is described as a being superior to the angels (Letter to the Hebrews, 1:4-5), through whom God created the worlds (Hebrews 1:2), the earth, and the heavens (Hebrews 1:10), entrusting all matters of the cosmos to Him (Matthew, 11:27; *John*, 3:35). He was tasked with establishing justice and fairness in the world on behalf of God (Matthew 12:18), and His disciples are also said to have the potential to attain this status (Matthew 16:13-19; 17:20-21).

6.1.2. Governance of the Earth and Its Cultivation

Despite the differing perspectives of the Abrahamic religions and their sacred texts regarding the nature of the affairs over which humans serve as vicegerents of God, the teachings of the Quran and the Bible share a common consensus that humans are at least entrusted by God with the governance of the earth and its cultivation. Therefore, according to all three texts, the responsibility and mission of humanity is to strive for the cultivation of the earth and to implement divine objectives among its inhabitants by organizing society and governance.

In the Old Testament, the limit of human mission and responsibility aligns with this shared understanding and does not extend beyond it, even though Jewish theology, distinct from the Old Testament theology, has taken

The Thematic Domain of Human Succession from God: A Comparative Study of the Views of the Qur'an and the Bible

on a strongly racial and earthly hue. However, in the New Testament, the scope of vicegerency is somewhat broader, emphasizing justice and fairness, which presents a more comprehensive understanding of governance. The Quran, transcending the horizons of the Testaments, envisions the establishment of governance in a more expansive manner, considering both the material and spiritual dimensions of social life. Thus, there is a consensus among all three texts regarding the establishment of a governing principle that is in some way attributed to God.

6.2. Differences

6.2.1. Difference in the Perception of Human Status and the Scope of the Vicegerent's Mission

In the Quran, human vicegerency is a status granted by God in an ontological and inherent manner, signifying the existential superiority of humans over other creatures. Indications such as the use of the term "Vicegerent" in verse 30 of Surah *al-Baqarah*, knowledge of divine names, the incapacity of angels to access knowledge of those names, and the similarity and shared attributes between the vicegerent and the one being represented, all suggest that the mission and vicegerency of humans from God surpass material contexts and the realms of worldly life; rather, they encompass various natural and legislative matters across both the physical and metaphysical domains.

In contrast, the Old Testament primarily views the scope of the vicegerent's mission within the realm of earthly order and practical governance, limiting it to dominion over creatures and the cultivation of the earth (Genesis, 1:26–28; 2:15). Even in cases such as the prophecy of Jeremiah, spiritual aspects are aligned with social reform, warning

Hamid Aryan, Mojtaba Mostashreq

authorities to serve this same purpose (Jeremiah 1:9-10). Consequently, from the perspective of the Old Testament, vicegerency is considered more of an executive duty rather than a human status arising from the potentialities and actualities of human existence, and stemming from the similarity between the vicegerent and the one being represented in attributes.

The New Testament, while primarily focusing on the role of Jesus Christ in vicegerency from God, expands the mission of humans as divine representatives to both heavenly and earthly realms, relating it to all associated worlds (Letter to the Hebrews 1:1–5; Matthew 16:19; 28:18). Therefore, the New Testament offers a perspective that is closer to the Quran's view and does not confine vicegerency solely to earthly matters.

6.2.2. Differences in the Implications of Human Vicegerency

The Quran regards human vicegerency as a form of absolute representation from God, which entails involvement in all aspects of the universe, ranging from the physical realm to the metaphysical, encompassing all legislative matters, including ethical and practical laws, from the organization of individual affairs to the establishment of justice and equity in society. In contrast, the Old Testament views this responsibility as predominantly earthly, necessitating efforts to cultivate the material aspects of the earth, utilize its resources, and create the necessary framework for governance over its inhabitants and creatures. However, in the New Testament, where vicegerency is primarily established for Christ and consequently for His specific followers (Matthew, 16:19), it is not limited to the earth and material affairs; rather, it requires engagement in natural matters by the

The Thematic Domain of Human Succession from God: A Comparative Study of the Views of the Qur'an and the Bible

vicegerent and attention to the legislative affairs of both humans and even supersensual beings, such as judging angels.

Conclusion

From the comparative examination and perspectives of the Quran and the Old and New Testaments regarding the affairs and matters where humans act as vicegerents of God, the following conclusions can be drawn:

In the Quran, the vicegerency of humans from God is clearly and explicitly stated, but without limiting it to any specific area or domain. This broad interpretation indicates that the matters subject to human vicegerency, according to the Quran, are extensive and encompass both natural and legislative affairs. Furthermore, the nature of the vicegerent in relation to the Vicegerent's source (God) implies that humans should be manifestations of the existential perfections, attributes, and beautiful names of the Vicegerent's source. Therefore, the divine vicegerent is tasked with carrying out divine work in all respects, whether in natural or legislative matters.

The viewpoint of commentators who restrict the vicegerency of humans from God to the cultivation of the earth, or to ruling and judging fairly among people, or to those two subjects plus establishing rights and managing people's affairs, is incompatible with the broad and contextual nature of verse 30 of Surah *al-Baqarah*, and lacks valid support from verses and traditions.

In the Old Testament, the vicegerency of humans from God is implied and indirectly stated. According to the description in the Old Testament, God created only humans in His image, which means He endowed them with divine spirit (soul) and the capacity for thought, choice, and will, thus

Hamid Aryan, Mojtaba Mostashreq

granting them the ability to dominate the earth and its creatures. The necessity of this capability entails acting in a manner that reflects divine pleasure, which is framed within a mission to cultivate the earth and rule over its inhabitants.

In the New Testament, human vicegerency from God is articulated with a focus on the nature and status of Jesus Christ, and it is depicted around His existence. This status is transmitted to His followers. According to New Testament teachings, the scope of human vicegerency from God is broad, including natural affairs such as resurrecting the dead and possessing all matters besides God, as well as legislative matters like judging and arbitrating among people and even judging angels.

A comparison of the teachings of the Quran and the Testaments regarding human vicegerency from God reveals that both sacred texts agree on the superiority of humans among beings and their qualification for vicegerency and representation of God on earth. Despite existing differences in the views of the Quran and the Testaments regarding the scope and examples of vicegerent affairs (matters subject to vicegerency) and the manner of its realization, rooted in the theological and anthropological foundations of these texts, there is consensus on the principle that cultivating the earth and governing its inhabitants falls within the mission of the divine vicegerent.

Regarding the differences between the views of the Quran and the Testaments, it can be said that the subject of matters related to human vicegerency from God is depicted more clearly in the Quran than in the Testaments. The Quran regards the vicegerency of humans from God as a form of absolute representation that encompasses management of all affairs of the universe, both material and metaphysical, and the establishment of

The Thematic Domain of Human Succession from God: A Comparative Study of the Views of the Qur'an and the Bible

justice. Meanwhile, the *Old Testament* considers vicegerency primarily a material and earthly matter. However, in the New Testament, similar to the Quran, vicegerency is extended to all realms.

The Quran, with a comprehensive and monotheistic perspective, expands human vicegerency to encompass all material and spiritual, natural and legislative aspects, applying divine agency to the vicegerent except in matters exclusive to God's essence.

In the Old Testament, the affairs subject to human vicegerency from God are mainly related to organizing the superficial and material aspects of human life and are limited to matters such as cultivating the earth and ruling over its inhabitants, with less focus on spiritual and metaphysical dimensions.

The New Testament presents human vicegerency more expansively than the Old Testament, including both heavenly and earthly realms. Therefore, the New Testament offers a perspective on human vicegerency that is closer to the Quran. Nonetheless, its primary focus remains on the person of Jesus Christ.

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Imagination in Bible: What It Means the Concept for Christian vs. Islamic Philosophy

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Abstract

(Genesis 11:6): "And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do; and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have *imagined* to do." Imagination for Bible as a gift permits us to see beyond the here and now and visualize a future shaped by faith. However, one might ask basically what the nature or conception of imagination is. I'll focus on the vantage points of Farabi and Hegel as two avatars of the traditions of Christian thinkers and Muslim philosophers. Imagination, Farabi believes, may well be defined by its three most notable activities of preserving the sensible forms, combining and separating the sensible forms to make new images, and representing sensible beings as well as the intelligible affairs and beings by sensible forms of two former kinds of images, that is, preserved forms in imagination and the forms created by imagination via combining and separating the sensible forms. Imagination keeps forms of a horse, a stone, a wing, a smell, etc. Imagination also makes a horse with two wings, or a stone that is crying, or a wall that is singing. Imagination gets the image of the horse from nature, and the image of the wings from nature too, and then produces a new form by joining them. Imagination represents, for example, the vice of damaging environment by drawing a row of crying trees in a painting. Three stages of imagination

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according to Hegel include the first stage as reproductive imagination, the second stage as the productive and associative imagination, and third stage as the sign-making fantasy. Three stages mentioned by Hegel very well correspond three activities pointed out in Farabi's theory of imagination.

Keywords: Christian Philosophy, Muslim Philosophers, Reproductive Imagination, Associative Imagination, Sign-making Fantasy.

1. Issues

Through imagination, as to the Bible, we can line up our dreams with God's commandments, turning prospects into actuality. Imagination may inspire creativity and lead us to set up and devise with wisdom. Indicating the notion, I will put forward as instance two verses of the Bible:

(Genesis 11:6): "And the Lord said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have *imagined* to do."

And (Corinthians 10:5): "Casting down *imaginings*, and every high thing that exalted itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

So the position of imagination in the Bible sounds obvious, serving to illustrate a pivotal notion. However, the concept of imagination should be found amongst the outlooks of philosophers; because theories of imagination, as the most basic precept in aesthetics and philosophy of art, are discussed with different approaches amongst continental and analytical philosophers. To expatiate on the issue, it should be noticed that in the analytic philosophy, truth and meaning are thought to be represented by the

Imagination in Bible: What It Means the Concept for Christian vs. Islamic Philosophy

formal structures of language, logic, and science. However, in continental tradition the role of representing meaning and truth is mostly on the shoulders of art (Schacht, 1973: 297–313). So art in itself is deemed a philosophical activity. Then imagination plays, as one of the permanent elements of art, a basic role in continental philosophy and literature. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831) as one of the most influential figures of continental tradition and a hero for many philosophers developed a theory of imagination on which this research is focused. But then, Farabi's theory of imagination seems corresponding to the Hegel's. Or in reverse, Hegel's theory of imagination is compatible with Farabi's one.

2. On Method

Some believe that the notion of "Imagination" in Hegel's work is much more complex than simply confronting it.

I believe also that Hegel's work is indeed complex. But perhaps critics of my method of simplification have overlooked the central idea that imagination is fundamentally intertwined with the awareness of our own perception. We cannot separate our sense of perception from imagination.

Some simply think that my interpretation might benefit from additional sources, perhaps. Not all of us are fortunate enough to read Hegel in the original German. However, Hegel's literature in English seems a field of research in itself.

Moreover I believe it's worth remembering that interpretation, in philosophy, is never about rigid answers. It's about asking the right questions. Developing Farabi's theory on imagination is precisely because of the Western tradition that I am questioning it and its roots.

May one grasp the core of Hegel's philosophy, or do they berate popular postmodern sentiments? As per myself, I don't take in completely Hegel's philosophy. But the point of my paper is not to repeat the Western tradition—it's to challenge it. We've accepted these ideas for so long that we've stopped questioning them. My paper offers a new way of thinking about imagination, one that includes voices often left out of the conversation. It's about expanding the dialogue. Not just reaffirming what we already know.

Philosophy, after all, isn't about preserving tradition for tradition's sake. It's about pushing boundaries, even if that means challenging the very foundations that others have taken for granted.

3. Imagination for Farabi

Farabi defines imagination by enumerating its properties and functions. He states three activities for imagination: "Preserving the sensible forms, for instance, form of a flower, a smell, music, a taste ... Combining and separating the sensible forms and making new forms, for example, to make a horse with two wings, or a stone that is crying, or a wall that is singing. People take the image of the horse from nature, and image of the wings from nature too, then their imagination produces a new form by joining them. Representing sensible beings and the intelligible by sensible forms of two groups mentioned above: preserved forms in imagination and the forms created by imagination." (Farabi, 2000: 154, 177, 196, and 197)

The third activity of imagination had not been emphasized before Farabi in Aristotle's (321-383BC) writings and even after Farabi in Avicenna's (980-1037) books. Farabi based on this activity, gives imagination the

Imagination in Bible: What It Means the Concept for Christian vs. Islamic Philosophy

ability of comprehension of the intelligible. Imagination can create an image to represent an intelligible as it can represent the other sensible. For instance, the rational pleasure can be likened to a pleasant smell or sight, and the sensible pleasure resulting of smelling an apple can be described with another pleasant smell. So, imagination is a creative perception.

For Farabi, the theory of imagination is embedded in definition of art. Art is a kind of taste that operates based on imaginations is created in soul (Farabi, 1996: 13). This definition inserts two results into philosophy of Farabi: "One is related to the connection between art and knowledge, and another is about art and ethics the first of which will be discussed here. The latter will remain beyond the scope of current research. For further research, Farabi's view about the ethics of art may well be compared and contrasted with Hegel's notion in the same field. As Bates put it, "since time is central to all the discussions of the imagination in the *Philosophy of Spirit* lectures, I conclude with a discussion of the time of the Concept. Since time, history, our intentions, and our actions are not separable, for Hegel comprehension of the Concept makes possible the highest form of ethical life." (Bates, 2004: 14-xiii)

4. The Relation between Imagination and Knowledge According to Farabi

First let us mention the relation between art and knowledge in Farabi's work after which we will continue with the connection between imagination and knowledge for Farabi. Farabi considers the arts as a source of knowledge. The arts have a great potential to learn. All things that might be subject of

knowledge might be the subject of poem and even music (Farabi, 1996: 561).

Farabi says the subjects of the knowledge include voluntary affairs and involuntary things. In other words, these are the contents of practicable knowledge and theoretical knowledge. All of these contents can be represented by poem and music. Of course, poem and music can deal with the other subjects too (Farabi, 1996: 561-562).

This capacity of art is because of the ability of imagination. Farabi defines art based on imagination: Art is a sort of taste and talent dependent on the imaginations created in soul (Farabi, 1996:13) and imagination is able to represent sensible and intellectual affairs. It means that imagination can embody insensible concepts by creating images and sensible forms. Thus, the faculty of imagination can image contents of knowledge, although they might be insensible and intellectual.

This way is the only practical and useful way for teaching public. Farabi states two ways for understanding affairs and things: one is understanding essence and nature of something and the other is imagining the illustrations and examples and images of something (Farabi, 1997: 225; 2000, 254; 2005, 68). A lot of affairs can be learned only by imagining them because human has no way to intellect them (Farabi 2005, 55). Yet until the details of insensible knowledge such as soul, intellect, hyle and all intellectual beings somehow do not come into imagination, neither we can speak about them nor we can actualize them. But as it is not possible to imagine these affairs through feeling them, we must choose another way which brings us to imagining and this way is called comparison or resemblance (Farabi, 1996: 43).

Imagination in Bible: What It Means the Concept for Christian vs. Islamic Philosophy

It should be additionally mentioned here that hyle is an Aristotelian concept might well be introduced as the principle that "Correlates with shape and this can be demonstrated in the way the philosopher described hyle, saying it is that which receives form or definiteness, that which is formed." (Smith, 2017: 201; Leclerc, 2018: 76)

Also about other affairs that it is not impossible to intellect them, majority of people do not have the ability of intellection because of their nature or addict (Farabi, 1997: 225). Soul is attracted to imagination and imagination has domination on it. Soul has trust in the sensible inasmuch as it denies the existence of intellectuals and considers them as unfounded fanciful and imaginary. Thus the method of teaching these affairs to public is transmitting the images, examples and illustrations to their mind and imagination (Farabi, 1997: 225).

Farabi elsewhere says about this issue: Although source and origin of knowledge is the knowledge which represents beings rationally and with positive demonstrations, for teaching people and nations and citizens some other knowledge are useable, knowledges that take the reasonable information and convert them into corporeal information (Farabi, 2005: 64).

In Farabi's view the exclusive way of getting happiness for people is embodying intellectual knowledge and rational happiness in their imaginations.

Understanding real happiness is hard for public. Therefore real happiness should be embodied with affairs that according to their belief are happiness. To imagine beings without time and place is hard or even impossible for people and therefore it should be embodied in their imagination with beings related to time and place, and hereby approximate

them to truth (Farabi, 2005: 70-71). Thereupon Farabi counts the creativity of imagination a means for embodying intellectual affairs and teaching them to public and he believes embodying them as the only way for attainment of people to happiness.

5. Imagination for Hegel

The nature and role of the imagination in Hegel's work, according to Vieweg is believed about that, "One can speak of a new founding of a modern theory of imagination, one that, of course, connects up with *individual* ideas presented by other modern philosophers, Hume, Kant, and Schelling, for example, but nevertheless outlines the fundamental positions of a wholly independent, original conception of the imagination that has not been superseded even today." (Vieweg, 2011: 87-88) However, in spite of all innovations of modern philosophers, when scrutinizing Farabi's theory of imagination, you're entitled to doubt a wholly independent, original conception of the imagination in the whole of modern philosophy.

As we're supposed to, after analyzing Farabi's notions on imagination we'll continue with Hegel's sayings about imagination. Despite of all differences in interpretations of Hegel's work and his words, three stages of imagination could be seen in his writings.

The first stage of imagination is called the stage of representation. Related to this first stage, the faculty of imagination is presented as an indispensable transition or middle ground in the self-constitution of finite subjectivity (Düsing, 1991: 311-312; Vieweg, 2011: 90). Two statements "My vision is blue" and "There is a blue object" seem to be the same. "As Vieweg points it out, in intuition the effect of both propositions is posited as

**Imagination in Bible: What It Means the Concept for Christian vs.
Islamic Philosophy**

one. The one that sees and the one seen, hearing and making sound, mind and world, are taken as identical." (Vieweg, 2011: 91) He continues, "Pure intuition as well as pure representation is mere appearance or semblance that proves it to be such; intuition and the faculty of imagination are infected by thought from the very beginning. Intuition is sensual *and* intellectual, natural *and* rational at the same time," and akin to Schelling's view, "That which produces and the product join together in a unity." (Schelling, 1985: 528)

The faculty of imagination, according to Vieweg's reading of Hegel, could be reached from remembrance. That is the way of transition to the stage of representation, "to *inner presencing, inner representation*, by positing *the inner present of the image*, the overcoming of the existent, the past." (Vieweg, 2011, 94)

What Hegel posits about shapes without mass help us to initiate a comparison study with Suhrawardi's fourth archangelic world, i.e. fourth ontological world of images, (Suhrawardi, 2002: 232-234; Marcotte, 2024) the initial creations of the faculty of imagination also appear as a world of spatio-temporally unformed shapes, shapes without mass, positings by which the unconscious picture can be thoroughly displaced; in principle there follows a subsuming, for example, the sensation blue or sorrow under a universal form—blueness, sorrowfulness." Although it goes beyond the reach of current research, it still could be mentioned here to help who are interested in the issue. Kant as a source of Hegel to a certain extent speaks of the active capacity of the synthesis of the manifold, "The imagination must bring the manifold of intuition into an *image*; it must therefore antecedently take up the impressions into its activity, so previously it must

record the impressions in their activity, that is, and apprehend them". (Kant, 1977 (a): 176; Vieweg, 2011: 94)

Hegel posits that the pure faculty of imagination without thought is just a deception; however that is most often represented and hypostatized, principally by artists. The presentation, for him, is essentially infected and determined by thought. Imagination locates itself in the intermundane, that is, existing between worlds, "World of intuition and thinking as the hinge, as the universalization of the sensual, that is, the particular, and as the sensualization or particularization of the universal, the universality of intuition and the making-intuitive of the universal." (Hegel, 1827: 10: 266; Vieweg, 2011: 95)

Following this analysis, which is required for the apprehension of what is coming, we now focus back again on the subject of the faculty of imagination in Hegel's work. The faculty of imagination is one which determines *the* images and makes the genuine passage from finding to inventing, from the passive findings to the active findings. The part of active imagination is called fantasy for Hegel, on which we will focus on the second stage of imagination. As Vieweg asserts, "here lies the cornerstone of Hegel's theory of symbolic forms, his logic of signs, which elevated him, according to Derrida, to the status of founder of modern semiology (semiotics)." (Vieweg, 2011: 95)

We were saying that in Hegel's theory of imagination we can grasp three stages of imagination the first of which is reproductive imagination. This is what Hegel himself stressed on, "Images are internally re-presented. Intellect places these before itself in a new space-time in which the original spatio-temporal concretion is dissolved. On the basis of this abstraction and

**Imagination in Bible: What It Means the Concept for Christian vs.
Islamic Philosophy**

the coming-to-be of universal representations, there occurs a contingent and arbitrary reproduction of the content. This supposed occurrence in succession, the coordination between similar images, remains an act accomplished by intellect itself, which subordinates singular intuitions under the internally constituted picture and thus gives itself universality, presenting the universal as something common, re-presenting it." (Hegel, 1827: 10: 266) However, intellect may upraise a particular quality of a thing to the status of the universal, or it may lend fixed form to a concrete universal (Vieweg, 2011: 95).

After analyzing the first stage of imagination, it comes to the second stage, that is, the productive and associative imagination or fantasy.

The faculty of imagination in the second stage strikes as not controlled and unbridled picture-giving power, and "The untiring and active inner picture-maker, as free play with possibilities." (Vieweg, 2011: 96-97)

Hume believes that there is nothing more worthy of wonder than the readiness with which the imagination assembles its representations, "Hurrying from one end of the universe to the other to assemble the representations that belong to the object." (Hume, 1969: 38) These lines exactly appear in Suhrawardi's description on imagination (Maftouni, 2018: 17-28).

And this ability of the faculty of imagination does not differ from what Kant regards as an "Unpredictable field of related representations" in which the content, a determined concept, could "Be aesthetically extended in an unlimited way." (Kant, 1977 (b): 251; Vieweg, 2021: 97)

So the faculty of imagination in the second stage, which might well be called the creative imagination, is capable of spreading and circulating itself in a never-ending manner in its own outcomes.

As Hegel contends, the universal foundation of art and formal side of art is actually this very play of fantasy, presenting the true universal in the form of the singular image (Hegel, 1827: 10, 267). However, as Vieweg nicely explains,

"The play of fantasy has a double aspect: being restless and without rules, the form of representation implies an indifferent external arrangement of the multiform images with their many meanings. Creativity, activity, and restlessness always remain ambivalent qualities; they do not in themselves guarantee a successful product. Non-creativity, tranquility, passivity, and simple letting-be are by no means to be devalued from the outset, for they are the very foundation of the faculty of imagination. Fantasy is able to create the human and the inhuman, to build heaven and hell, and thus to demonstrate its power as well as its deficiency." (Vieweg, 2011: 97)

After explaining the first and second stages of the faculty of imagination, according to Hegel's opinion, we will turn to its third stage. Hegel calls this third stage of the faculty of imagination sign-making fantasy.

The creation of fantasy which occurs in the second stage of imagination first appears just inward and subjective, that is, the images in the second stage remain merely particular and stay subjectively capable of intuition. But those images are not external or objectified, according to Vieweg's reading, "Still absent is the moment of being, the externalization, creating the present in the external, external neo-representation as a step toward objectification (Vieweg, 2011: 98).

Imagination in Bible: What It Means the Concept for Christian vs. Islamic Philosophy

Mostly in artistic works, what is produced in inner intuition and the pure synthesis of concept and intuition, the entirely internal and subjective, would be established as an external object and an independent being.

When establishing this external object and independent being, intellect constructs new intuitions at the higher level and therefore, this would be the return to the point of departure of intuition. So while sign-making and setting sign-making fantasy off, "In the sign (*Zeichen*) actual vividness (*Anschaulichkeit*) is added to the self-constituted representation." (Vieweg, 2011: 98) As Hegel posits, the intellect makes itself into an external object in which simply particular subjectivity is trespassed. The fundamental characteristics of Hegel's semiotics make themselves conspicuous in the former passage. Also here, Hegel's philosophical linguistic signs and the concept of language vividly appear. Upon this notion, Hegel could be deemed as one of the initiators of the modern philosophy of language.

6. Knowledge and Imagination for Hegel

The issue of the relation of Knowledge and Imagination for Hegel might well be analyzed considering the same writings of Hegel about imagination. Some researchers believe that since the imagination is located between intuition and thought, imagination cannot reach "The perfect identity of self-relation and self-determination in the form of thought thinking itself. The true iconoclasm of conceptual thought, as Hegel conceives it, remains beyond the reach of the imagination." (Vieweg, 2011: 99) However, for some researchers, imagination is the only way to grasp knowledge. As Bates interprets Hegel, "Cognition of the concept occurs only with the inception of

imagination. ... Imagination is the *sine qua non* of our knowledge of the concept in nature and us." (Bates, 2004: 14-xiii)

It recalls Farabi's theory according to which also imagination is the only path to reach intellectual knowledge among public and normal people.

As Bates asserts, "The lower levels of conscious experience are largely unconscious dialectical reverberations. We, as speculative observers, can follow the logic of those reverberations, but the consciousness experiencing them cannot. But as consciousness develops up the levels of dialectical object-formation, from intuitions to recollections to reproductions in symbols and then signs, consciousness emerges from the night of the mind into the light of communication." (Bates, 2004: 15-xiv)

Bates's phrase means, as I figure it out, that awareness goes to the stage of creating, in some way or another, manifestations of knowledge like art works to communicate you with your audience.

Discussion and Conclusion

Corinthians 10:5

"Casting down *imaginations*, and every high thing that exalted itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

Since according to Bible, imagination guides us to innovate with wisdom, by nurturing imagination, one might open their heart to God's will. So follows details of imagination for two major philosophers belonging in the two major traditions of Islam and Christianity.

Farabi and Hegel, in spite of all distinctions and differences, may well be compared in the theory of imagination, concerning its nature as well as its

**Imagination in Bible: What It Means the Concept for Christian vs.
Islamic Philosophy**

role. According to both Farabi and Hegel, the faculty of imagination has three activities and works in three levels. These three, for Farabi, are preserving the sensory images, separating and combining the sensory images to make new images, and representing the sensory beings as well as the intelligible beings by the sensory images of the former kinds of images related to the level one and the level two.

The first stage of imagination, as Hegel argued, is called the stage of representation which corresponds to the first activity of imagination in Farabi's theory. The second stage of Hegel's imagination is the productive and associative imagination, also called fantasy, which corresponds to the second activity of imagination in Farabi's writings. And the third stage of Hegel's imagination is the sign-making fantasy which corresponds with the third level of Farabi's imagination.

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**Imagination in Bible: What It Means the Concept for Christian vs.
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Jewish Ethics: Deontological or Teleological?

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Abstract

Every ethical system possesses at least six core elements: a theory of moral value, fundamental moral principles, rules of inference, incentives for adhering to ethical principles and rules, enforcement mechanisms for those principles and rules, and a justification for the necessity of being moral and for the validity of the said ethical system. This system is constructed and refined based on sources of moral knowledge and ethical foundations and is presented to its target society. Within this system, the theory of moral value is recognized as the principal element, upon which all other elements rely in some manner. Within Jewish ethical systems, two distinct theories are observed concerning the theory of moral value: "A deontological perspective and a teleological perspective. Some scholars currently argue that Jewish ethics is deontological and present reasoning for this position." This paper, with reference to the Tanakh (the Old Testament) and the foundations of ethics in Judaism, emphasizes the teleological viewpoint and critiques the arguments put forth by deontologists. The difference between these two perspectives has been notably evident in the conduct of the Zionist regime and its supporters over the past two years. From a deontological viewpoint, it is sufficient for a religious scholar to justify, based on their own interpretation, the massacre of the people of Gaza, Lebanon, Yemen, and Iran by

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Jewish Ethics: Deontological or Teleological?

citing a divine command; in this scenario, no rational, empirical or even emotional argument can prevent such crimes.

Keywords: Ethical System, Theory of Moral Value, Foundations of Ethics, Jewish Ethics, Moral Teleology, Moral Deontology.

Introduction

Judaism is a religion that traces its roots to two thousand years before the Common Era, to the time of the Prophet Abraham. Accordingly, Jews believe Judaism to be one of the world's living and advanced religions (Kertzer, 1993: xxiv). Throughout its history, this religion has experienced numerous and extensive vicissitudes, undergoing significant transformations across various spheres. Ethics, as one of the elements of the Jewish religion, is no exception and has it undergone notable developments. Consequently, ethics within this faith has traversed at least four intellectual periods: the Biblical period, the Rabbinic period, the Medieval-Philosophical period, and the Contemporary period.

This article seeks to determine which theory of value—deontological, teleological, or virtue-based—has been adopted by the ethics based on the Holy Scriptures, which form the foundation of most Jewish ethical teachings, from the perspective of moral value theory.

Naturally, the adoption of any one of these viewpoints profoundly impacts their resulting ethical system. For instance, adopting a teleological perspective directs Jewish ethics toward achieving a specific end, which, primarily, is acting as God's surrogate on earth, with the loftier goal being the recognition of the divine manifestation and knowledge of God

Almighty—an achievement attainable only by humans among earthly beings.

However, accepting a deontological approach, particularly one based on the Divine Command Theory, implies that a command from Yahweh must be executed merely by virtue of its divine origin, even at the cost of the slaughter of all people on earth. In other words, if a Jewish scholar, based on their interpretation of the Scriptures or other sources of Jewish knowledge, concludes that all Muslims worldwide must be massacred, this decree becomes a morally obligatory divine command for all Jews, and anyone who acts upon it is considered truly devout. Under this interpretation of moral value theory, an individual who drops a bomb on a building, killing all its inhabitants at once, is not a criminal and would instead receive favor and affection from Jewish religious leaders—a phenomenon manifest in the actions of the aforementioned regime.

The virtue-based perspective also has its own requirements, aiming for Jews to achieve perfection and prepare a virtuous life for themselves through actions and behaviors consistent with humanity and justice.

Arriving at the correct and accurate viewpoint in this matter depends on a proper understanding of the epistemological foundations of ethics and the ethical foundations within this faith. Adopting an erroneous viewpoint stems from disregarding these foundations and principles based on the Jewish religion.

This paper endeavors to demonstrate that the correct and accurate perspective within Jewish ethics, based on the foundations of the Jewish ethical system, is teleological. It argues that ethical deontology within this faith is erroneous and incorrect based on the foundations of Jewish ethics,

Jewish Ethics: Deontological or Teleological?

and it is upon this flawed interpretation that the aforementioned regime has relied, refraining from no criminal action and likely continuing to do so in the future, potentially to an even greater extent.

The conclusion of this analysis, through examining the arguments of both sides and the foundations of Jewish ethics, is to reveal the fact that, based on properly-founded Jewish ethics, the savage crimes of the Zionist regime in killing and displacing innocent Palestinian people, along with their other crimes, are erroneous even according to their own ethical teachings.

To obtain an answer, it is necessary first to attend to the definition of ethics, then to consider the sources of moral knowledge, subsequently extract the foundations of Jewish ethics from the Holy Scriptures, and finally, derive the theory of moral value within this faith.

It is important and significant to note that the era for the acceptance and authority of the Jewish religion has concluded; with the advent of Islam and the final religion, acceptance of Judaism no longer holds a position for belief.

1. What is Ethics?

Numerous and varied definitions have been provided for ethics. For example, *Abū Ali Miskawayh Rāzī* writes: "Indeed, ethics is a state of the soul that impels it to its actions without thought or deliberation...." (Miskawayh, 2001 AD/1422 AH: 85) *Fayḍ Kāshānī* defines the phenomenon of ethics thus: "*al-Khulq* is an expression for a firm disposition within the soul from which actions emanate with ease and facility without the need for thought and deliberation." (Fayḍ Kāshānī, 2002 AD/1423 AH: 5, 13) *Allamah Majlisī* also states: "*al-khulq* (with a *Ḍammah* on the *Lām*) is

Seyyed Akbar Hosseini Ghal'eh Bahman, Fatemeh Moradalizadeh

a stable property of the soul from which action emanates with ease."
(Majlisī, 1982 AD/1403 AH: 67, 372, Chapter 59, under Hadith 18)

Bustānī, quoting scholars of ethics, says: "*al-Khulq*, in the custom of scholars, is a stable property through which the soul [acts] without prior thought, deliberation, or affectation." (Bustānī, 1870: 251)

Bernard Rollin, in his book *Science and Ethics*, states: Ethics is a set of principles or beliefs that guide our vision of right and wrong, good and bad, fairness and unfairness, justice and injustice (Rollin, 2015: 35). Elsewhere, ethics has been defined as follows: An ethical system is a framework that governs its adherents and directs and organizes their behavior within four relationships (the relationship of humans with God, with themselves, with others, and with nature) in a specific direction (Hosseini Ghal'eh Bahman, 2015 AD/1394 SH: 115).

Here, the intended meaning of "Ethics" is the ethical system operative within a society, culture, religion, group, etc. An ethical system in this sense comprises elements that must be considered when describing the system.

These elements include:

- **Articulating the theory of moral value** (i.e., What is the criterion for good and bad, right and wrong, obligatory and impermissible, and moral duty? Is teleology the correct path, or virtue-centricity, or deontology, or rights-based ethics?).
- **Articulating foundational and primary moral principles** (i.e., principles that serve as the basis for moral judgments, upon which these judgments are built).
- **Articulating inferential and derivative rules** (i.e., secondary judgments derived and issued based on foundational principles).

Jewish Ethics: Deontological or Teleological?

- **Articulating motivational elements** that encourage adherence to moral precepts (i.e., incentives granted to individuals who observe moral precepts).
- **Articulating enforcement mechanisms for moral precepts** (i.e., penalties envisaged for violators of moral precepts).
- **Articulating the purpose of ethics**, or more precisely, the **moral justification** (i.e., Why should humans live morally at all? What is the goal of being moral? And why is adhering to a specific ethical system correct and justified?) (Hosseini Ghal'eh Bahman, 2015 AD/1394 SH: 117-118).

Scholars of ethics worldwide, across various religions and cultures including Judaism, have endeavored to prepare a complete and precise ethical system, coherent in its elements, for themselves and their societies.

In this article, the term "ethics" refers to the ethical system described in the last definition, and the effort is aimed at discovering the theory of moral value within the Jewish faith.

2. The Sources of Jewish Ethics

The primary question that arises in the ethical teachings of any religion or creed pertains to the foundations of its ethical doctrines and commandments. In other words, what are the religious sources within that faith? This question is equally pertinent to Judaism and the Jewish faith. The sources of Jewish teachings and ethics are divided into two categories: written and non-written sources. Although the Tanakh, Talmud, Baraita, and compilations of legal codes and commentaries are considered the titles of

the written sources of Jewish teachings; however, according to Jewish belief,

"All definitions and interpretations concerning Judaism are inspired by a single, fixed, and fundamental source, which is the body of Jewish literature, laws, traditions, and customs referred to as "Torah." This term encompasses both the Written Torah (revealed to Moses at Mount Sinai) and the Oral Torah. The Oral Torah, in turn, includes the Mishnah, the Talmud and all its commentaries, the legal rulings of Halakha, the Shulchan Aruch, and all the customs and traditions that have been inherited generationally and form an integral part of Jewish life. No segment of the Jewish people, no movement in Jewish history (regardless of its religious, philosophical, or ideological basis) has any source or authority other than the Torah." (Amir, 1977: 31)

From this perspective, the principal and most significant source concerning Judaism and Jewish ethics is the Old Testament, which Jews refer to as the Covenant, the Tanakh, or the Hebrew Scriptures. The term Tanakh is an acronym formed from the initial letters of three words: *Torah* (the Law or the Pentateuch), *Nevi'im* (the Prophets), and *Ketuvim* (the Writings or Hagiographa), which together constitute the sacred scriptures of the Jewish people. According to Jewish tradition and belief, the books and scrolls compiled in the Tanakh originate from a source of divine sanctity and were assembled by the members of the *Knesset HaGedolah* (the Great Assembly)¹ (unlike other religious texts known

1. The Great Assembly (Knesset HaGedolah) was a Jewish legislative body that was active in Jerusalem from the early period of the Second Temple. The 120 members of this assembly were those who connected the era of the Prophets (Nevi'im) in Jewish history to the era of the Tannaim (the sages of the Mishnah, who lived from the 1st century CE to the

Jewish Ethics: Deontological or Teleological?

as *Sefarim Chitzonim* [external books], which lack divine sanctity) (Amir, 1977: 129). The Old Testament comprises 39 books compiled over many years. The original language of the Old Testament is Hebrew, with a small portion in Chaldean, both of which are Semitic languages. There also exists a version of the Old Testament in Greek, translated from the Hebrew text, known as the Septuagint. It is said that this translation was undertaken by 72 Jewish scholars around 258 BCE at the command of Ptolemy II Philadelphus, King of Egypt. The Greek version differs from the original Hebrew; most notably, it contains sections not found in the extant Hebrew version. These sections are called the Apocrypha (hidden writings), and their authenticity has been questioned since ancient times. Around 100 CE, the leaders of the Jewish council, the *Knesset HaGedolah*, canonized the 39 books of the Hebrew version and rejected the others (cf. Tofghi, 2000 AD/1379 SH: 97-100).

It is noteworthy that for obtaining Jewish religious and ethical teachings, in addition to the Tanakh, three other sources are considered significant: the Talmud, which is considered a continuation and commentary on the Tanakh (Amir, 1977: 126–128); the Baraita (Braitot), known as the external teachings for Jewish instruction (Cohen, 2011 AD/1390 SH: 21); and compilations of legal codes and commentaries formulated on prior texts, particularly the Talmud, such as the Mishneh Torah, the Shulchan Aruch, the Arba'ah Turim, and the Code of Asher for discerning ethical precepts in Judaism.

3rd century CE). This assembly established the customs and regulations concerning sacrifices and prayers, and also reorganized the Tanakh. (From: *Dictionary of Jewish Culture*, Translation Editor: Menashe Amir, Jerusalem, 1977: 203)

Ethical scholars and jurists, utilizing these written sources as well as non-written sources such as Midrash (a method of interpreting texts and written sources), Takkanah and Gezerah (rulings derived based on current benefits and detriments in Jewish life), Ma'aseh (the precedent and conduct of scholars), Minhag (custom), and Chokmah (wisdom/reason), engage in the discovery and systematization of ethical principles, rules, and the ethical system within Judaism, placing the product of their efforts at the disposal of the Jewish community.

Now, with consideration of the sources of Jewish ethics, emphasizing the ethics derived from the Tanakh, we shall examine the ethical system of the Jewish faith and endeavor to demonstrate which theory of moral value is prevalent in Jewish ethics based on the Hebrew Bible.

3. The Foundations of Jewish Ethics

The ethical system of the Jewish faith, like other ethical systems, is constructed upon specific bases and foundations. Below, we will refer to the most important and relevant of these foundations.

3.1. Theological Foundations

The God of Israel is the most important reality and concept within the concepts and truths of the Bible, encountered throughout all parts and books of the Tanakh, except for the two books of Esther and the Song of Solomon. This concept is introduced with numerous and varied names; terms such as Yahweh, El, Elohim, etc.

3.1.1. Proof of God's Existence

The Torah and the Old Testament, which begin with the phrase, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," and in the first of the Ten

Jewish Ethics: Deontological or Teleological?

Commandments—the centerpiece of divine commandments in that book—state: "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage," (Exodus 20:2) yet no direct argument for proving God's existence is observed therein. Even where it states, "The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God"...", (Psalms 14:1) the fool, in reality, doubts God's moral authority, not His fundamental existence.

3.1.2. Attributes of God

- **Oneness of God:** Undoubtedly, the God of contemporary Judaism is One, and essential monotheism is ascribed to Him. In Deuteronomy 6:4–16 we read:

"Hear, O! Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength... then beware, lest you forget the Lord who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. You shall fear the Lord your God and serve Him, and shall take oaths in His name. You shall not go after other gods, the gods of the peoples who are all around you (for the Lord your God is a jealous God among you), lest the anger of the Lord your God be aroused against you and destroy you from the face of the earth."

- **Self-Existence:** One of the attributes ascribed to God in the Old Testament is His self-existence. In the book of the prophet Isaiah, it is stated: "Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts: "I am the First and I am the Last; Besides Me there is no God." (Isaiah 44:6) This passage explicitly refers to the primacy and ultimacy of Yahweh, and that there is no God besides Him. Being first and last signifies that Yahweh has no need for another in His existence.

Seyyed Akbar Hosseini Ghal'eh Bahman, Fatemeh Moradalizadeh

- **Sustainer (*al-Qayyūm*):** The sustenance provided by God Almighty means that the subsistence of everything other than Him is dependent upon Him; meaning, besides the Divine Essence, everything that has taken form in the world has been realized by relying on that Essence, and in addition to coming into existence, it remains in need of that Essence for the continuation of its existence. Thus, sustenance implies the creation and perpetuation of contingent beings, or in other words, moment-by-moment creation. The attribute of sustenance can be observed in the opening passages of the Book of Genesis (Genesis 1:1-31).
- **Eternality:** According to the sacred texts, Yahweh has neither beginning nor end (Dan Cohn-Sherbok, 2003: 357). This concept is indicated by the expressions of primacy and ultimacy. The expression of primacy and ultimacy is interpreted in theological discussions as eternality (See also: Isaiah 9:6). It is narrated from the book of the prophet Isaiah that Yahweh says: "I am the First and I am the Last; Besides Me there is no God." (Isaiah 44:6).
- **Omnipotence:** In the Book of Exodus, it is stated: "And God spoke to Moses and said to him: I am the Lord. I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty, but by My name Lord I was not known to them." (Exodus 6:2-3) In Jewish theology, God is the cause of all events in the world, and there is nothing beyond His power. This meaning also alludes to a form of unity in actions (*Tawḥīd al-Af'ālī*). This power, in the context of God's supervision and determination of behavior, is discussed under the term *Hashgacha* (Providence) (Amir, 1977: 243). In Psalms, Psalm

Jewish Ethics: Deontological or Teleological?

33, verses 14-15, it is stated: "From the place of His dwelling He looks. On all the inhabitants of the earth; He fashions their hearts individually."

- **Omniscience:** Omniscience means having complete knowledge of all things, even the existence of other gods (if they were to exist). In the first book of Samuel, it is stated: "Talk no more so very proudly; Let no arrogance come from your mouth, For the Lord is the God of knowledge; and by Him actions are weighed." (1 Samuel 2:3)
- **Omnipresence:** Another attribute of God in the Old Testament is His omnipresence. In other words, there is no place in the world where God is not present (Psalms 139: 5-11). Certainly, if God Almighty is aware of all matters of the world and, on the other hand, is capable of every possible action, He is pervasive throughout the entire universe; not a single particle of reality is separate from His existence, nor can it be absent from Him.
- **Perfect Goodness:** From this viewpoint, God Almighty is morally perfectly good. In the Psalms of David, God is described thus: "The Lord is gracious and full of compassion, Slow to anger and great in mercy. The Lord is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works." (Psalms 145: 8-9)

According to the Old Testament, He possesses all the characteristics and qualities that constitute the moral perfection of a being; for example, God is kind: "Teach me to do Your will, For You are my God; Your Spirit is good. Lead me in the land of uprightness" (Psalms 143:10). God is compassionate and gracious: "The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in mercy." (Psalms 103:8) God is just: "...And there is no other

Seyyed Akbar Hosseini Ghal'eh Bahman, Fatemeh Moradalizadeh

God besides Me, A just God and a Savior; There is none besides Me."

(Isaiah 45: 21)

- **Justice and Mercy:** God's justice necessitates that each person is responsible for their own deeds and accountable for their actions; however, God created the world based on His "Justice and mercy." Based on this belief, if God had created the world solely with His attribute of justice, nothing would have been saved from His wrath; but He placed His mercy alongside His justice so that a balance would be achieved in the world under the auspices of these two attributes.
- **Fatherhood:** God holds a paternal relationship with the people of Israel. He addresses the Israelites, saying: "When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called My son." (Book of the Prophet Hosea, 11: 1) However, the fact that the Israelites are called the sons of God signifies that they are so cherished that they are like a son to God, and because God breathed His spirit into humanity, they have become sons of God (Cohen, 2011 AD/1390 SH: 45).
- **Holiness and Perfection:** Every good attribute belongs to God, and every bad attribute is distant from Him. In other words, on one hand, attributes of perfection are ascribed to God, and on the other hand, attributes of imperfection are negated from Him. Attributes like wrath, etc., which are mentioned for God, are also interpreted (Cohen, 2011 AD/1390 SH: 44).

3.2. Anthropological Foundations

Humanity and the beliefs of various religions and creeds concerning it contain a multitude of subjects and teachings whose examination requires

Jewish Ethics: Deontological or Teleological?

substantial and independent opportunity. In this context, we will briefly study the anthropological teachings of Judaism to the extent that they directly influence Jewish ethics.

3.2.1. The Status of Humanity Among Other Creatures

In the view of the Tanakh, humanity is placed slightly lower than the angels and is crowned with glory and honor.

"What is man that You are mindful of him, And the son of man that You visit him? For You have made him a little lower than the angels, And You have crowned him with glory and honor." (Psalms 8: 4-5)

In this interpretation of humanity's place among the creatures of the world, humanity is neither so high as to be above the divine angels, nor so worthless as to be considered subordinate to other creatures. They are slightly lower than the angels and are the ruler and governor of other creatures in the world.

3.2.2. The Choosiness of the Jewish People

However, it is necessary to mention this very important point in the anthropological foundations of Judaism: traditional Judaism, based on the Tanakh, maintains that God chose Abraham, Sarah, and their descendants for a specific service in the world. According to this interpretation, the Children of Israel were chosen to uphold and respect God's law and to spread the divine heritage throughout the world. In Deuteronomy, chapter 14, verses 1-2, it is stated:

"You are the children of the Lord your God... For you are a holy people to the Lord your God, and the Lord has chosen you to be a people for Him, a special treasure above all the peoples who are on the face of the earth."

Seyyed Akbar Hosseini Ghal'eh Bahman, Fatemeh Moradalizadeh

Based on this text, firstly, the Children of Israel are of such esteem and proximity to Yahweh that they are titled the children of God; secondly, this people is holy; and thirdly, God has chosen this people from among all the nations on earth as His own special and particular people. Yahweh God has also given this chosen people of His the guarantee that He will not replace them with another people.¹

3.2.3. The Existential Dimensions of Humanity

In Judaism, as in other Abrahamic faiths, it is believed that humans possess two existential dimensions: a body fashioned from the dust of the earth, and a spirit, which is the divine breath blown into his frame. In the Book of Genesis, it is stated:

"And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being." (Genesis 2:7)

3.2.4. The Relationship Between Soul and Body

In Judaism, since humanity is the valuable and "Very good" pinnacle of God's creation, there exists a positive view of the body as the instrument of the soul. From this perspective, a physical body is necessary for the soul to master the physical world; it is through the instrumentality of this very body that the soul interacts with the world and brings it under its dominion. Nevertheless, it is imperative to prevent the body from rebelling and to obstruct its inclination toward transgression and impiety.

1. It is good to know that preferring one people over others, without regard to their conduct in the past, present, or future, is far from the wisdom and rationality of a wise and thoughtful being—even if this act were to be carried out by God Almighty. Furthermore, according to Quranic teachings, God Almighty has not favored any people over another and has deemed the most noble among them to be the most righteous. Accordingly, the doctrine of the chosenness of the Jewish people is incompatible with divine wisdom, and the verses of the Holy Quran refute it.

Jewish Ethics: Deontological or Teleological?

But what relationship is considered to exist between the soul and the body in Judaism? Jewish theology has not provided clear-cut views on the connection between the soul and body, or even on the nature and essence of the soul itself. Apart from the philosophical and Kabbalistic literature on the soul, the primary sources for delineating Jewish religious teachings are Midrashic texts (i.e., texts compiled by Jewish religious scholars interpreting the Tanakh and the Old Testament) and the Talmud. According to the Rabbis and Talmudic authors, the soul, in some of its meanings, is clearly distinguishable from the body; for God blew the soul into Adam's body (Genesis 2: 7) (Talmud, Ta'anit, 22b).

During sleep, the soul separates from the body and receives spiritual vitality and refreshment from the upper world. The soul separates from the body at death and is only reunited with the body upon resurrection (Talmud, Sanhedrin, 90b–91a). Midrashic interpretations of Scripture have ambiguously addressed the life of the soul without a body, stating that the body does not endure without the soul, nor does the soul endure without the body (Tanh. Va-Yikra 11). Although one view presented here is that the soul enters a quiescent state after death (Talmud, Shabbath, 152b), the predominant view appears to be that the soul can lead a fully conscious existence when it is disembodied (cf. Ket. 77b; Ber. 18b–19a). It has even been suggested that the soul existed prior to its attachment to the body; however, the interpretation of this view is often fraught with difficulty because many stories and descriptions of the soul in a disembodied state are presented in terms of a corporealized soul, attributing to it a physical manifestation. In these interpretations, one might assume that a celestial and ethereal body is associated with the soul, enabling it to perform its most

crucial functions of an embodied state in parallel while in a disembodied, non-material state (Ivry, 1972: 4, 30). In this manner, the soul would essentially be meaningless without a body, an unjustifiable assumption; for the Rabbis were not primarily concerned with creating conceptual coherence and consistency in their theological thought. In their view, the anthropomorphism of the human being served a homiletic function rather than a philosophical or intellectual one. In other words, from a functional perspective of Rabbinic teachings, the soul is a guest in the body on earth (Lev. R. 34:3), and for this reason, the body must be respected and honored for its hospitality (Ivry, 1972: 4, 30).

3.2.5. The Nature of Humanity

In Judaism, firstly, humanity is not conceived as lacking an inherent nature. Human beings enter and live in the world endowed with a specific nature. Furthermore, according to this faith, particularly Judaism influenced by Rabbinic literature, a human is created morally neutral at birth, while possessing an inclination toward both good and evil (Karesh and Mitchell, 2009: 563). Humanity possesses an internal conflict. On one hand, it has an attraction and tendency toward good, and on the other, it inclines toward evil and wickedness. In other words, Judaism holds that human existence is composed of two natures, referred to as the *yetser hara* [YAY-tser hah-RAH] and the *yetser hatov* [YAY-tser hah-Tove]. Literally translated, these two natures mean the "Evil Inclination" and the "Good Inclination." From the perspective of this faith, humans are granted free will to follow and submit to the effects and endowments of one of these two opposing characteristics. In an ancient Midrashic depiction, when Cain killed his brother and was brought before God for this matter, he said, "O God, do not

Jewish Ethics: Deontological or Teleological?

punish me for killing my brother; if I have committed an error, this error is from You; for it was You who created me thus." However, God rejected Cain's argument. Cain possessed free will and was autonomous; he should have moved toward and chosen his positive inclinations based on his own volition (Kertzer, 1993: 115).

3.2.6. Humanity as a Free Agent

In Judaism, humanity possesses an internal conflict. On one hand, it has an attraction and tendency toward good, and on the other, it inclines toward evil and wickedness. In other words, Judaism holds that human existence is composed of two natures, the "Evil Inclination" and the "Good Inclination." From the perspective of this faith, humans are granted free will to follow and submit to the effects and endowments of one of these two opposing characteristics. In an ancient Midrashic depiction, when Cain killed his brother and was brought before God, he said that God should not punish him for the murder of his brother, arguing that if he had sinned, the fault lay with God for creating him with such an inclination. However, God deemed Cain's argument insufficient because Cain possessed free will and was autonomous; he should have moved toward and chosen his positive inclinations based on his own volition (Kertzer, 1993: 115).

3.2.7. The Purpose of Human Creation

At first glance, based on the Old Testament, the creation of humanity is for humans to be God's vicegerent and deputy on earth. According to the Old Testament, humanity was created to manage and administer the creatures on earth. Humans were created to rule over earthly creatures and govern them. Psalm 8 states:

Seyyed Akbar Hosseini Ghal'eh Bahman, Fatemeh Moradalizadeh

"4 what is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them? 5 You have made them a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honor. 6 You made them rulers over the works of your hands; you put everything under their feet; 7 all flocks and herds, and the animals of the wild, 8 the birds in the sky, and the fish in the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas." (Psalms 8: 4–8)

A similar theme is seen in the first chapter of Genesis:

"27 So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. 28 God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground." (Genesis 1: 27–28)

This passage refers both to the purpose of human creation and to the means and prerequisites for achieving that purpose. The goal is dominion over the earth and rule over its creatures, and its prerequisite is the power and ability to exercise this dominion and rule. These prerequisites are realized through being created in the image of God and receiving His blessing.

It is noteworthy that being created in the image of God (Hebrew: *צֶלֶם אֱלֹהִים*, romanized: *tzelem Elohim*; Latin: *Imago Dei*) means bearing a resemblance to God; a resemblance in the sense of being able, like God, to exert dominion over other creatures and rule them. Thus, being like God entails possessing sufficient knowledge, power, perception, and intellect to administer the world. Undoubtedly, this phrase employs symbolic language and does not intend to suggest that God has a physical body like humans;

Jewish Ethics: Deontological or Teleological?

rather, the meaning and intent is that God created humans to be similar to Him in terms of certain attributes.

In any case, regarding the purpose of human creation, the first point derived from the Tanakh is that humanity was created to be God's deputy on earth and to rule over its creatures. Being God's vicegerent and having sovereignty over earthly creatures, of course, necessitates human responsibility before God (Bradshaw, 2010: 114)

In a general understanding of the purpose of human creation, it can be said that the primary purpose is for humanity to be God's deputy on earth, and the higher purpose is the recognition of the divine manifestation and the knowledge of God Almighty, which, among earthly beings, can only be realized by humans.

3.2.8. Humanity and Life in the World (Responsibilities and Duties)

As mentioned earlier, regarding the purpose of human creation, the first point derived from the Tanakh is that humanity was created to be God's deputy on earth and to rule over its creatures. Being God's vicegerent and having sovereignty over earthly creatures requires, at the very least, human responsibility before God (Bradshaw, 2010: 114)

In light of the above, within Judaism, humanity is placed on a specific path, and all its responsibilities and duties are shaped within this path. From this perspective, the most significant events in the life cycle of a Jew are: birth, circumcision, naming, coming of age (Bar/Bat Mitzvah), marriage, and death. In Judaism, a ceremony and celebration are held for each of these events, thereby depicting the individual's entry into these responsibilities.

Certainly, when duty and responsibility are discussed, reward and punishment also gain heightened value and importance. But what is the

Seyyed Akbar Hosseini Ghal'eh Bahman, Fatemeh Moradalizadeh

narrative of reward and punishment for human actions and behaviors consequent upon their being obligated?

There are various views concerning the reward and punishment of human actions. The Old Testament states that God placed Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2: 15). This garden was a geographical region located in this earthly world. The Garden of Eden is equivalent to the Hebrew term *Gan Eden*. The concept of the Garden of Eden, along with other concepts of Jewish eschatology, evolved. With the emergence of the themes of resurrection and individual reward and punishment, the Garden of Eden was also transformed into a garden in the hereafter. (Peters, 2013 AD/1392 SH: 3, 477–479).

The Old Testament mentions a place called Sheol (*Sheol*) and Hades (*Havveh*). The Hebrew word Sheol is used as a proper noun. This word refers to a place where the dead reside. Sheol is considered a neutral place and is not a site of reward or punishment. In Sheol, slaves and masters, the righteous and the wicked, the poor and the rich are equal and Sheol is merely a place of interment. Sheol has also been referred to by the names "Dust" and "Grave." Phrases such as "Abode," "Nether regions" and "Dark land" also refer to the land of the dead. Sheol is situated underground, under the sea, or at the base of mountains. Sometimes Sheol is depicted as a fearsome dragon (Rasulzadeh, 2010 AD/1389 SH: 67–96).

To provide further explanation regarding Sheol, it must be said that Sheol is the closest equivalent in the Bible to the concept of hell. The Book of Numbers in the Tanakh, the Hebrew Bible, states that Sheol is a "Dark and Deep" region, a place to which humans descend after their death. The Books of Ecclesiastes and Job both state that Sheol is a land to which all the dead

Jewish Ethics: Deontological or Teleological?

are sent. In fact, some have interpreted Sheol as oblivion itself; a place where all the dead face a similar fate of non-existence and nothingness. However, Sheol may simply be the place that ancient Israelites imagined—a place where all spirits resides together. What later Rabbinic interpretation depicts of Sheol is the netherworld; a place where souls separated from God live together eternally in Limbo (Karesh and Mitchell, 2009: 472)

3.2.9. Afterlife

The Hebrew Bible, the Tanakh, does not in itself contain direct teachings about the afterlife or the concepts of heaven and hell. However, Rabbinic doctrine posits the existence of an *Olam Ha-Ba* (the World to Come); while *Olam Ha-Ba* is often described as akin to the heavenly Garden of Eden, the Jewish tradition views Gehenna (Hell) as a place where a person is judged before being permitted entry into *Olam Ha-Ba*. The spirits of the truly wicked, who have not manifested the divine will, will remain eternally in Sheol, in a state of Limbo (Karesh and Mitchell M. 2009: 472)

3.2.10. The Resurrection of the Dead

The belief in resurrection is one of the foundational principles of the Jewish faith, and its denial is considered a grave sin (Ghasemi Qomi, 2008 AD/1387 SH: 158).

"Whoever does not believe in the resurrection of the dead and denies it will have no share in the resurrection and will not be revived." (Sanhedrin, 95 a)

Jewish sages made the belief in resurrection the subject of one of the eighteen benedictions (*Shemoneh Esreh*), which constitutes a crucial part of the daily prayers (*Tefillah* in Hebrew, תפילה). This prayer states:

Seyyed Akbar Hosseini Ghal'eh Bahman, Fatemeh Moradalizadeh

"You are mighty forever, my Lord; You are the One Who revives the dead... Who is like You, O! King, Who causes death and restores life, and causes salvation to flourish? And You are faithful to revive the dead. Blessed are You, O Lord, Who revives the dead."

In response to the deniers of the afterlife, it was established that at the conclusion of the prayers in the *Beit HaMikdash* (Temple), one should say: "From this world to the World to Come." (Mishnah Berakhot, 5: 9)

4. The Jewish Ethical System

Thus far, we have examined the most important foundations of the Jewish ethical system. In this section, we will, within the available scope, investigate the ethical system of this religion and note its primary pillars. It is important to mention that our examination focuses on the stronger and more prevalent views, leaving divergent opinions to more specialized forums. As in previous chapters, the discussions on the Jewish ethical system will be examined within the framework of the elements and pillars of an ethical system; consequently, we will commence with the theory of moral value.

4.1. Theory of Moral Value

As stated, for any issue to be deemed right or wrong, there must be a criterion and standard by which to judge its correctness or error. The theory of value is, in fact, the scale and criterion for determining moral right and wrong within various ethical systems.

It was also noted that the theory of value is the most fundamental element in any ethical system. Ethical principles and rules are constructed based on a theory of value, and ethical challenges and conflicts are resolved using it.

Jewish Ethics: Deontological or Teleological?

Normative theories are commonly divided into three categories: "Consequentialist, Deontological, and Virtue-Based" theories (cf. Williams, 2003 AD/1382 SH: 13). Some ethicists have added a "Rights-Based" theory to these three (cf. Omid, 2002 AD/1381 SH: 313).

To elaborate, a Consequentialist is one who sets a specific goal for life and measures human voluntary actions and traits against that goal. If they fulfill that goal, they are deemed morally obligatory and good; if not, they are considered morally bad and vicious. Accordingly, an action is morally right if it produces good results; hence, in Consequentialism, attention to the result and consequence of an action takes precedence over the action itself. Consequentialism includes perfectionism and utilitarianism. Perfectionists define that goal in terms of the actualization of human potential, while utilitarian place the goal in the benefit, utility, or pleasure that accrues to humans. In Jeremy Bentham's hedonistic utilitarianism—the most famous form of consequentialism—the only intrinsic good in the world is pleasure, and an action is right if it creates the greatest amount of pleasure compared to any other action (cf. Atrak, 2010 AD/1389 SH: 28).

In ethical hedonism, a subset of consequentialism, happiness and pleasure are intrinsically good; the goodness of happiness and pleasure is not from a moral perspective per se, but from the viewpoint of hedonism, and the pursuit of pleasure may occur without regard for moral considerations.

Virtue ethics is a theory and branch of normative ethics. Its emergence dates back to ancient Greece. History considers Socrates the primary initiator of this arduous path because, by engaging with groups of young people and questioning them on how to live, he attempted to clarify ethical

Seyyed Akbar Hosseini Ghal'eh Bahman, Fatemeh Moradalizadeh

concepts for them in his own manner. He also sought to influence them by displaying his own virtues and spoke of a life centered on virtue, aiming to establish ethics among the people (Khazaei, 2011 AD/1390 SH: 20–21).

In Deontological Ethics, the criterion for the rightness or wrongness of a voluntary trait or action is neither its conformity with the purpose of life nor its human or animal origin; rather, the criterion lies within the trait or action itself. In other words, by considering human voluntary traits and actions themselves, one can perceive goodness and badness, rightness and wrongness in them, independent of their product or their source. By looking at truth-telling itself, its goodness is observable, and by looking at lying, its badness is visible. Deontologists can be divided into two groups: followers of the Divine Command Theory and adherents of Kantian Ethical Deontology. Followers of the Kantian theory maintain that the goodness and badness, rightness and wrongness, and obligatoriness and impermissibility of a voluntary trait or action are ontologically inherent in those ethical actions and traits themselves, and a rational being can, by considering that trait or action, at least in its very manifest instances, observe and comprehend that goodness or badness and rightness or wrongness.

However, proponents of the Divine Command Theory believe that voluntary actions and traits are, in themselves, neutral with respect to goodness and badness, rightness and wrongness. It is the divine will and, subsequently, divine command and prohibition—or better stated, divine legislation—that imparts the color and character of goodness or badness, rightness or wrongness, and obligatoriness or impermissibility to that behavior or trait. In this case, humans must seek to discover God's command or prohibition through various means to become aware of the moral ruling

Jewish Ethics: Deontological or Teleological?

of a trait or behavior. Once this divine ruling and view is ascertained, no consequence can change it.

Finally, Rights-Based theory interprets the criterion of right and wrong as the observance of the rights of humans and beings possessing moral status. In this view, one must first identify beings with moral standing; then, extract the rights we hold towards these beings with moral status; and finally, acknowledge that any voluntary action or trait that safeguards the rights of beings with moral status is morally good, and any behavior that disregards their rights is morally bad.

The primary question in this section is: Which of these theories of moral value does Jewish ethics, particularly ethics based on the Hebrew Bible, follow? Consequentialism? Virtue ethics? Deontology? Or Rights-Based theory?

Considering the Hebrew sacred texts and the foundations of the Jewish ethical system, Jewish ethics can be interpreted both as a perfectionist Consequentialist ethics and as a Deontological ethics.

4.2. Deontology in Jewish Ethics

Some, like Michael J. Harris, believe that Jewish ethics is a deontological ethics, specifically interpreted through the Divine Command Theory. According to this group, the rightness and wrongness of human voluntary actions and traits are subject to divine command and prohibition, and even divine will. Without this will, desire, and command/prohibition, no moral ruling is obtained (Harris, 2003: 5).

If the killing of an innocent human is to be wrong and erroneous in Jewish ethics, this must necessarily be subject to divine will and desire. If divine will and desire have not been directed against the wrongness of

Seyyed Akbar Hosseini Ghal'eh Bahman, Fatemeh Moradalizadeh

killing an innocent human, this act is considered neutral in itself. (Something we witness today in the occupied territories and other countries of West Asia).

However, a very important question exists in this realm: How is the divine will and desire revealed to humans?

Michael J. Harris states on this matter:

"It is therefore useful to distinguish between three different types of [awareness of] divine will or desire concerning human ethical behavior. These three types are: 1. Desires and wills that God has explicitly revealed in the Torah; 2. Desires and wills that are not explicitly commanded in the Torah, but which God communicates to us through other means; and 3. Desires and wills related to human ethical behavior that God does not make known to us at all, neither through revelation in the Torah nor through other means." (Harris, 2003: 5)

He applies the term "God's revealed Torah command" to the first type and calls the second and third types "God's unrevealed will." (Harris, 2003: 7)

Those who believe in deontology in Jewish ethics often rely on three reasons: First, the abundance of ethical and non-ethical (e.g., ritual) commandments and obligations in Jewish sacred texts; Second, the prevalence of an imperative tone, whether as command or prohibition, in Jewish sacred texts; and Third, the existence of very strange commandments addressed to Jews that are utterly irreconcilable with Consequentialist, Virtue-Based, or Rights-Based understandings.

To elaborate, the Tanakh, considered the primary sacred text of Jews, contains 613 commandments (*mitzvot*), encompassing ethical, creedal, and

Jewish Ethics: Deontological or Teleological?

legal (halakhic) injunctions, with the Ten Commandments being the most prominent among them. The multitude of ethical commandments, both positive and negative, suggests one thing: that the criterion of moral value is these very divine commands, prohibitions, and injunctions, and nothing beyond them.

Of course, it is evident that the articulation of this number of commands and prohibitions, at least in the realm of ethics, can have a revelatory function regarding ethical values. In other words, moral rulings and values, based on any ethical theory—be it Consequentialism or Deontology—are expressed in two forms and modalities: in the form of value judgments, such as the statement “truth-telling is good,” and in the form of obligatory rulings, such as the injunction “one must tell the truth” or “tell the truth!” The crucial point about these two forms is their unified content, which strives to direct humans toward performing good deeds and refraining from ethically ugly actions. Therefore, both modalities and forms are two sides of the same coin. Accordingly, in any sacred text or ethical source, the prevalence of one form does not necessarily indicate the theory of value endorsed by that text and source. Thus, the abundance of obligations in the Hebrew Bible does not necessarily signify the primacy of deontology. The presence of commands and prohibitions in sacred texts is sometimes to aid other human faculties in identifying values and does not point to the creation or establishment of moral values in the manner proposed by the Divine Command Theory.

The second point is that a strongly imperative and obligatory tone is highly prominent in Jewish sacred texts, including the Tanakh, with few sections devoid of it. This tone could indicate the dominance of deontology

Seyyed Akbar Hosseini Ghal'eh Bahman, Fatemeh Moradalizadeh

over rival approaches in ethical theory, imposing the dismissal of those theories.

In response to this perception, it suffices to say, as mentioned, that ethical rulings are referred to in two forms—value and obligation—both of which essentially indicate the same reality and are two sides of the same coin. For example, to express the ethical desirability of truth-telling, one can state: "Truth-telling is good" or say: "One must tell the truth." But in reality, both refer to the desirability of truth-telling and seek the same reality. The imperative and commanding tone should not be taken as a sign of deontology.

Furthermore, the existence of some very strange and unbelievable commandments in the Tanakh or other Hebrew sacred texts could be seen as evidence that these commands and prohibitions themselves constitute the criterion of value, steering us toward the Divine Command Theory and narrowing the space for rival ethical perspectives like Consequentialism, Virtue Ethics, or Rights-Based theories. For instance, in 1 Samuel, chapter 15, it is stated:

"Samuel said to Saul, "The Lord sent me to anoint you king over his people Israel; now therefore listen to the words of the Lord. 2 Thus says the Lord of hosts: "I will punish what Amalek did to Israel in opposing them on the way when they came up out of Egypt. 3 Now go and strike Amalek and devote to destruction all that they have. Do not spare them, but kill man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey."

In this passage, Yahweh commands the slaughter and destruction of the Amalekites and forbids any mercy. This action, which is ostensibly highly unethical, becomes ethical through this command. In this analysis, Saul is

Jewish Ethics: Deontological or Teleological?

considered a servant and slave of Yahweh and must therefore carry out all His commands, regardless of their nature.

In analyzing the aforementioned biblical passage, it can be pointed out that this command and similar injunctions could represent the resolution of a specific challenge or dilemma, not the expression of a general view on the theory of moral value. In other words, when dealing with rebellious and disobedient peoples, severe measures are sometimes deemed necessary, and these measures do not signify the disregard for criteria of moral value such as Consequentialism or Virtue Ethics.

Moreover, this command falls within the realm of Jewish law (*Halakha*), and adherents of that religion must address the apparent conflict between this legal ruling and ethical values and somehow justify this contradiction.

In any case, it seems that deontology, especially with a Divine Command reading, lacks sufficient evidence, and Jewish theorists who advocate this view need to provide stronger evidence and arguments for their position.

Of course, it is clear that deontology, irrespective of the evidence for its confirmation, carries with it difficult consequences and results, which are worth noting:

1. The Primacy of Duty over Consequence. In deontology, a moral action does not necessarily have to have desirable consequences; it must merely conform to the divine command or moral rule. For example: "Truth-telling is obligatory even if it harms the individual, because it is a moral duty." Conversely, killing an innocent person could be deemed good if it is determined to be commanded based on certain criteria.

Seyyed Akbar Hosseini Ghal'eh Bahman, Fatemeh Moradalizadeh

2. Inability to Justify Behaviors, Traits, and Voluntary States Based on Results. By accepting deontology, one can no longer justify an action merely based on its utility or good outcomes (e.g., arguing that a white lie told to save a human life is justified and right becomes unacceptable).
3. Lack of a Clear Perspective in Cases of Conflicting Duties. If two moral duties conflict—for instance, saving a person's life requires lying—deontology does not provide a clear answer for resolving the conflict.
4. Accepting deontology necessitates moral rigorism, inflexibility, and adherence to duties that can sometimes have very dire consequences, such as the killing of innocent people, children, and the elderly based solely on the perception of a moral duty, even though an unreliable means—as has been seen in recent years with the Zionist regime.

4.3. Moral Teleology in Jewish Ethics

In the definition of moral teleology, it was stated that a teleologist is one who establishes a purpose for life and measures human voluntary behaviors and traits against that purpose. If they fulfill that purpose, they are deemed morally obligatory and virtuous; if not, they are deemed morally wrong and vicious. Accordingly, an action is morally right if it yields good results; hence, in teleology, consideration of the outcome and consequence of an action takes precedence over the action itself.

5. Explication of Moral Teleology Based on the Foundations of the Jewish Ethical System

Jewish Ethics: Deontological or Teleological?

1. Based on the theological foundations of Judaism, God Almighty possesses all attributes of perfection, and His existence is complete in every respect. Among these attributes, His state of pure goodness, in its lordship over humanity, delineates a path for human perfection and the attainment of a specific ultimate purpose (*telos*), which is realizable through the performance of duties and human accountability in this capacity.
2. Based on the anthropological foundations of Jewish ethics, humanity and its life, from a Jewish perspective, have a definite and specific purpose. Within the anthropological foundations of this religion, it was indicated that, in a general understanding of the purpose of human creation, it can be said that the primary purpose of human creation is to be God's deputy on earth, and the higher purpose is the cognition of the divine manifestation and the knowledge of God Almighty, which, among earthly beings, is achievable only by humans. These objectives precisely guide humanity toward teleology in ethics.
3. The existence of inclinations toward good and evil lacks specific justification for Jewish thinkers and scholars without considering a *telos* for human life. Fundamentally, good and evil derive their meaning from the positive or negative relationship of human behaviors, voluntary traits, and conditions with the aim and *telos* of human life. Without considering one or several ultimate purposes, positive and negative inclination has no locus; this constitutes moral teleology.

Seyyed Akbar Hosseini Ghal'eh Bahman, Fatemeh Moradalizadeh

4. Considering the resurrection of the dead, neglecting a *telos* for life and ethics seems hardly justifiable. If the purpose of life is to attain a meaningful resurrection, then one must strive to achieve it, which is itself a form of teleology.

In light of the above, moral teleology appears to be the more precise and serious value theory within the Jewish tradition.

It should be clarified that all ethical commandments in Judaism are oriented toward a clear horizon in the moral development of the individual adhering to them. The *telos* of the commandments and tenets of Jewish ethics is encapsulated in this Torah verse: "And God created man in His own image." (Genesis 1: 27) This indicates that the highest possible degree of perfection and self-knowledge for a human being consists of making oneself resemble God to the greatest extent possible. Considering this teleological value theory, this statement can be regarded as the basis and foundation of the most important and unique ethical principle of the Torah: the imitation of God (*Imitatio Dei*) (Menachem Kellner, 2003 AD/1382 SH: 241).

Based on this analysis, the ethical imperative from a Jewish perspective comprises an individual's behaviors aimed at achieving the ultimate purpose of perfection, which is resemblance to God. The nature of ethics is interpreted precisely along these lines. That is, the ethical commandments, derived from religious texts, instruct us on how and by what path the creation may draw closer to its Creator and attain the supreme model, which is the manifestation of God (for further study, cf. Khavas and Saleh, 2013 AD/1392 SH: 67). In other words, in Jewish ethics, life has a specific and definite purpose toward which humans must progress through their voluntary behaviors and attributes. The criterion of value, rightness, and

Jewish Ethics: Deontological or Teleological?

wrongness is established precisely in this point, and this statement is itself moral teleology, specifically of a perfectionist type.

Summary and Conclusion

1. The primary question of this treatise was to determine the value theory within Jewish ethics. That is, is the Jewish ethical system a teleological or a deontological system?
2. The selection of either of these two perspectives entails specific implications and consequences that cannot be overlooked.
3. The teleological perspective seeks to achieve a perfect human who is God's deputy on earth and exerts all effort toward building a prosperous world for humanity, irrespective of any ethnicity or race.
4. The theory of moral deontology, by stipulating that whatever Yahweh commands must be carried out without any rational, emotional, or empirical evaluation, and by finding the divine command through the interpretation of Jewish scholars, paves the way for any crime against humanity.
5. To arrive at the correct perspective, it is necessary to examine the arguments of both sides, as well as the foundations of Jewish ethics.
6. Accordingly, in this treatise, ethics was first considered as a system governing humanity, and it was stated that an ethical system is a framework that governs its adherents and directs and organizes their behavior within four relationships (the relationship of humans with God, with themselves, with others, and with nature) in a specific direction. Subsequently, the sources of ethical knowledge in the Jewish tradition were briefly examined, and it was noted that the

sources of Jewish teachings and ethics are divided into two categories: written and unwritten sources. Although the Tanakh, Talmud, Baraita, and collections of legal codes and commentaries are titles of the written sources of Jewish teachings, the Tanakh is recognized as the most important source of Jewish ethical knowledge. Following this, the theological and anthropological foundations of the Jewish ethical system were mentioned, and then special attention was paid to the value theory within this system. Concerning the value theory in Jewish ethics, two perspectives were proposable: "The deontological view and the teleological view. The arguments for the deontological view were examined, and the teleological perspective was emphasized."

7. In this treatise, the implications of deontology were also analyzed to the extent the opportunity allowed.
8. Finally, we emphasize that fundamentally, the period of validity of the Jewish tradition has concluded, and with the advent of the final religion (*Din-e Khatam*), there remains no grounds for its acceptance.

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Jewish Ethics: Deontological or Teleological?

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The Representation of Joseph and Zulaikha's Privacy in Abrahamic Traditions and Its Reflection in Painting Art

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Abstract

The story of Joseph and Zulaikha is one of the most frequent stories in Muslim culture, and to a lesser extent, among Jews and Christians. This article uses a comparative analysis method, first presenting the story as narrated in the Old Testament, then examining the additions and embellishments made by Jews. Following that, it reviews the Quranic narrative and subsequent retellings by authors of the *Qaṣaṣ al-Quran* (Stories of the Quran) and some commentators. The two narratives, specifically the Torah and Quranic versions, and more broadly, the Jewish and Islamic ones, are then briefly compared. Next, the representation of Zulaikha's character and her adventures with Joseph in Jewish-Christian and Muslim art are analyzed comparatively using an iconological approach. In the works of Western painters, the focus is primarily on Joseph's rejection of Zulaikha's advances, and the inspiration from the Torah narrative is clearly evident. In Muslim miniatures, two events, Joseph's escape from Zulaikha and Zulaikha's banquet to change the judgment of the Egyptian women, have received more attention than other events. Although other

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The Representation of Joseph and Zulaikha's Privacy in Abrahamic Traditions and Its Reflection in Painting Art

events, such as the reunion of Joseph and Zulaikha, have also been a focus for some Islamic artists, these events are inspired by the poems of Persian poets, especially Jami.

Keywords: Zulaikha in Judaism, Zulaikha in Islam, Zulaikha in art, Joseph and Zulaikha

Introduction

Due to the widespread misogyny in many human cultures, women are sometimes considered secondary, subordinate, evil, generally lacking human virtues, and inferior to men. Naturally, the representation of the female image in visual arts, especially painting, has been significantly negative. Specifically, misogynistic concepts in the two Abrahamic traditions of Judaism and Christianity have been linked to a kind of Pandora-like image from Greek myths, and Eve has become the representation of an intermediary of evil in art. This, along with some influences of *Isra'iliyyat* (stories and traditions of Jewish origin) on Islamic culture has led Western Orientalist feminism or Westernized Orientalist feminism in the East to equate the image of women in the Islamic Abrahamic tradition with the Jewish-Christian image of femininity, considering it secondary, evil, and inferior.

Of course, this view is not uncommon among some Muslim groups who, in their reading of the status of women in Islam, do not center the themes of the Quran. The same issue makes it necessary to comparatively analyze female characters shared in Abrahamic traditions and cultures, clarifying the similarities and differences in the portrayal of each, and the textual source of their characteristics in these traditions. The story of Joseph and Zulaikha

may be one of the most widely recounted stories in Muslim culture, and perhaps also in the culture of the People of the Book. This story has also been widely reflected in the literature and art of these two cultures and has influenced popular culture for centuries.

In this article, the story as it appears in the Old Testament is first briefly narrated. Then, the embellishments and additions of Jewish religious literature are examined, followed by the Quranic narrative of the event. Subsequently, the retellings by authors of the

Qaṣaṣ al-Quran and some commentators are reviewed. The two narratives, specifically the Torah and Quranic ones, and more broadly, the Jewish and Islamic ones, are then briefly compared. Finally, the representation of Zulaikha's character and her adventures with Joseph (PBUH) in Jewish-Christian and Muslim art are analyzed comparatively.

1. Methodology

The research method is a comparative study, and data was collected by searching library documents, books, and art collections. It is divided into two main parts. In the first part of each chapter, the events related to the lives of the mentioned characters in the two main sources—the Quran and the Old and New Testaments—are explored and analyzed at a micro-comparative manner. This is because the issue of this research in both sources belongs to a larger structure, and there are fundamental similarities between the structure's composition and the functions of its elements (Pakatchi, 2011: 110). The existence of a common root in the main sources of this study in the first part (the main books of the Abrahamic religions) means that the comparison made is of a genealogical type (ibid: 112).

The Representation of Joseph and Zulaikha's Privacy in Abrahamic Traditions and Its Reflection in Painting Art

For the second part of each section, which involves defining the relative scope of the mentioned sources in interpretive and literary books and artistic works, the comparative study is asymmetrical. This is because the information of the authors in each of these fields is not at the same level. While the comparative study conducted in the first part was symmetrical, the goal was to reach the main objective, which is to determine the position of each of the women in each of the two mentioned sources, despite abstracting the common aspects in the main events of the stories in the two main sources: the Quran and the Old and New Testaments (ibid: 127). Additionally, for the artistic section of the article, an iconological approach—a hermeneutical knowledge linked to the fields of psychology, philosophy, and theology and used in art history studies—is also utilized in the interpretation of the artistic works (Nasri, 2017: 10).

2. Background

Among the works that have compared the Quranic and Torah narratives of Joseph and Zulaikha, one can mention the book *Pain of Zulaikha's Love*, written by Jalal Sattari (1994), which paid more attention to this than other existing works. During the research, a number of significant research articles were found on the comparative study of poets' works with each other and the extent of their inspiration from the Quranic and Torah narratives, but they were not referenced because they were outside the scope of the present research. However, in the field of research articles on miniatures and painting, no work was found that examined the works of Western artists.

However, some case studies on certain works of Islamic miniaturists were found, as follows:

"Interdisciplinary Research in Art with a Hirschian Hermeneutical Approach (Case Study: Analysis of the Miniature Painting of Joseph and Zulaikha)" by Jabbar Rahmani and Sepideh Nainee in 2015, "An Analysis of a Historical Fantasy: The Image of Joseph and Zulaikha" by Hassan Zein al-Salehin and other colleagues in 2022, and "Comparative Pictorial Decoration of the Painting of Joseph and Zulaikha with a Poem from Saadi's Bustan" by Zeinab Mozaffarikhah in 2010. These studies only examined the famous work attributed to Behzad in the narrative of Joseph's escape from Zulaikha. In addition, the "Comparative Study of the Joseph Narrative in Sacred Texts, Persian Literature, and Iranian Miniature Painting" by Marzieh Golabgir Isfahani and Zahra Fanaei in 2021 was used to introduce some of the works of those miniaturists.

Ultimately, among the existing research, no separate work was found that independently examined the story of Joseph and Zulaikha with a comparative Quranic and Torah narrative, along with the works of both Western and Muslim artists. Therefore, the present research is innovative because it addresses the narrative of this event in the two religious traditions of Judaism and Islam as part of a comparative iconology of Islamic and Western miniatures of Joseph and Zulaikha's private moments.

3. Zulaikha in the Old Testament

Regarding the representation of this character in Jewish tradition, we first present Chapter 39 of Genesis from the Old Testament, then proceed to more detailed descriptions in other Jewish texts. Chapter 39 of Genesis

The Representation of Joseph and Zulaikha's Privacy in Abrahamic Traditions and Its Reflection in Painting Art

recounts what happened after Joseph was bought by Potiphar and honored in his house:¹

"His master's wife looked at Joseph, saying, lie with me."

"8: And although she spoke to Joseph every day, he did not listen to her...

11: And it came to pass one day that he came into the house to do his work, and none of the men of the house were there."

"12: So she took his garment, saying, lie with me."

"But he left his garment in her hand and fled and went outside."

"13: And when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand and fled out of the house, 14: she called to the men of her house and spoke to them, saying, see, he has brought in a Hebrew man to mock us; he came in to me to lie with me, and I cried out with a loud voice, 15: and when he heard that I cried out with a loud voice, he left his garment with me, and fled and went outside."

"16: So she kept his garment by her until his master came home."

"17: And she told him this story, saying, the Hebrew servant whom you brought to us came to me to mock me, 18: and as I cried out with a loud voice, he left his garment with me and fled outside."

4. Jewish Stories

The story of Joseph and Potiphar's wife is narrated based on Jewish texts in the second volume of the collection "Ages and Characters of the Bible from

1. <https://www.bible.com/fa/bible/136/GEN.39.POV-FAS>

Joseph to Exodus.¹" Adamo (2013) has summarized this narrative, which is presented in a Persian translation below:

Although Potiphar's wife is not named in the Old Testament, Jewish literature has given her the name Zulaikha. The medieval commentary *Sefer HaYashar* gave her this name in its commentary on the Torah. According to Jewish legends, because Zulaikha had no son, she pretended she wanted to adopt Joseph as a son and would go to him at night, trying to persuade him and showing her infatuation. When Joseph finally understood her trick, he prayed to God to turn his attention away from her.

...Every day, she would pursue Joseph with loving and seductive words. She would send luxurious and expensive gifts to Joseph. But Joseph would not agree to lie with her. When she saw that Joseph would not give in, she threatened to accuse him to her husband. Zulaikha took Joseph to a room and covered a statue of an idol so that Joseph would not see it. But Joseph saw it and said that nothing could prevent God's eye from seeing. She openly told Joseph what she wanted, and Joseph again refused. Zulaikha asked Joseph, "Why don't you fulfill my wish?"

...During the festival of the Nile, when everyone had gone to celebrate, Zulaikha feigned illness and did not go. When Joseph returned from the fields, he found himself alone in the house with Zulaikha. Zulaikha had almost convinced Joseph when suddenly, the image of Joseph's mother, Rachel, his aunt Leah, and his father Jacob appeared to him. They told him,

1. Jewish texts, including the **Mishnah** (Oral Torah or Jewish traditions), **Talmud** (Jewish law and theology), and **Midrash** (Jewish commentaries), are very detailed, and studying one story element across all of them is beyond the scope of this research. However, a source can be used here that has compiled Jewish stories based on a detailed study of these sources. This source, called *The Legends of the Jews*, was compiled in seven volumes in German by a rabbi named Louis Ginzberg and was then translated into English.

The Representation of Joseph and Zulaikha's Privacy in Abrahamic Traditions and Its Reflection in Painting Art

"Do you want to throw away this honor with this sinful act? Now, in this association with harlots, he is corrupting his essence." Joseph immediately fled the house. But he returned to Zulaikha again, and this time, God Himself appeared and said these words: "If you touch her, I will cast away this rock on which the earth is built, and the world will fall and be destroyed." ...But Joseph put on his garment and escaped from her grasp. When the people returned from the festival, Zulaikha told the people and her husband that Joseph had been after her and requested that he be punished. Potiphar ordered Joseph to be mercilessly flogged. Joseph cried out to God, and God caused Zulaikha's eleven-month-old infant to speak. This child said to the men who were beating Joseph: "...My mother is lying."

5. Zulaikha in the Holy Quran

First, we quote the verses from the "Most Beautiful Story" in the Holy Quran, in the Surah of Yusuf, which deals with the story of the Aziz's wife:

"And she, in whose house he was, sought to have him yield to her desire. She locked the doors and said, "Come, I am yours." He said, "I seek refuge in God. He is my lord; he has made my stay good. Indeed, the wrongdoers will not succeed." (23)

"And she certainly desired him, and he would have desired her if he had not seen the proof of his Lord. Thus, it was to avert from him evil and indecency. Indeed, he was one of Our sincere servants." (24)

"And they both raced to the door..." (25)

"So when he [her husband] saw his shirt torn from the back, he said, "Indeed, this is from the deceit of you women. Your deceit is great." (28)

6. Zulaikha in the *Qaṣaṣ al-Anbīyā'* (Stories of the Prophets)

Since the story of Joseph and Zulaikha in Muslim culture is not entirely confined to its Quranic narration, we also explore the tradition of writing stories of the Quran based on historical sequence. The stories of the prophets have been one of the most important religious and literary traditions, serving as a source for literary and popular elaborations of the stories of the prophets among Muslims. Many books have been written under the title *Qaṣaṣ al-Anbīyā'* in the history of Islam, the oldest of which, according to reports, is *Qaṣaṣ al-Anbīyā'* by *Wahb ibn Munabbih* (34 AH - 114 AH), which has not reached us except for some excerpts by people like *Tabari* and *Ibn Ishāq*.

6.1. Kisā'ī

The oldest *Qaṣaṣ al-Anbīyā'* that has reached us almost completely is the book *Qaṣaṣ al-Anbīyā'* by *Abū al-Ḥasan al-Kisā'ī al-Kūfī* (119 AH - 189 AH). In the story of Joseph, *al-Kisā'ī* quotes from three people; *Ka'b al-Aḥbār*, *Ibn 'Abbās*, and *Wahb ibn Munabbih*. He wrote: "*Wahb [ibn Munabbih] said... Zulaikha said, 'O Joseph, I am in love with you, and you must love me!'*" (Kisā'ī, 1922: 162)

Joseph refuses, and she once again decorates a house, adorns herself, and insists on having a relationship with Joseph. When Joseph again refuses, Zulaikha says: "If you do not do what I say, I will kill myself... Zulaikha threw herself on Joseph and loosened the seven knots of his trousers one by one, and she desired him and he desired her [Zulaikha intended Joseph, and Joseph also intended Zulaikha]. Then Gabriel descended and appeared in the form of his father Jacob, who was biting his fingers. When Joseph looked at

The Representation of Joseph and Zulaikha's Privacy in Abrahamic Traditions and Its Reflection in Painting Art

the proof, he went toward the door, and Zulaikha went out behind him and grabbed his garment from the back and tore it." (ibid: 163)

And after Joseph's innocence was proven in the Pharaoh's palace and he was released from prison and became a minister ... Zulaikha, who had become poor, one day goes to Joseph and tells him of her need for food. When Joseph asks her name and recognizes her, he returns all her possessions to her and marries her in the presence of the king and other Egyptian nobles. "When Joseph went to her bed, he found her a virgin; so Zulaikha said to him, By God, I have not seen any man, and my husband Potiphar was unable to have intercourse with me." (ibid: 168)

6.2. Tha'ālabī

Another ancient work in *Qaṣaṣ al-Anbiyā'* is *'Arā'is al-Majālis* by 'Abd al-Malik ibn Muhammad ibn Ismā'īl (350 AH - 429 AH), known as *Tha'ālabī Nīshābūrī*, which was written in Arabic. Tha'ālabī presents various interpretations of the meaning of "proof," whose chain of narrators reaches Ibn 'Abbās. For example, he narrates that "Jacob appeared to him and struck his chest with his hand". In another report, he quotes from *Ibn 'Abbās* that "*Rā'īl* [Zulaikha] intended Joseph and Joseph also intended her, at which point a single palm, which had neither a wrist nor a forearm appeared between them. Written on it was, "Over you are guardian angels, noble scribes who write down everything you two do," and "Joseph stood up to flee, and when the fear left him, he returned". This report mentions the appearance of this palm two more times between them, each time with a verse written on it, and each time Joseph returns until the event ends (ibid: 132).

6.3. Sūrābādī

Another source well-known for its focus on the stories of the prophets is the commentary of *Abū Bakr 'Atīq Nīshābūrī*, a scholar of the fifth century AH, famous as *Sūrābādī*'s commentary. At the beginning of the story of Yusuf and Zulaikha, *Sūrābādī* states that there was no woman in all of Egypt as beautiful as Zulaikha, and that "She was a virgin who had not been touched by Aziz." (Nīshābūrī, 2002: 2, 1121)

After Yusuf had been in Zulaikha's house for seven years, "...Zulaikha was melting away from her love for him." Zulaikha confided her secret to her wet nurse, asking for a trick to make Yusuf look at her. The wet nurse suggested, "The trick is to build a house of bright white marble, and within that house, on all its walls, you should paint a picture of yourself and him together, with your arms around each other and sitting together." Zulaikha did this, and with the help of her wet nurse, they led Yusuf into the seven-chambered house they had prepared, and as they entered each room, "Zulaikha fastened the door with a nail." (ibid: 1125-1126)

"Zulaikha reached out and unfastened one of the ties of Yusuf's trousers. A hand appeared and wrote on the wall of that house: "Yusuf, throw you to the ground." Zulaikha unfastened another tie, and another inscription appeared on the wall: "And indeed, there are over you guardians". [al-Infīṭār: 10] And Zulaikha continued to tempt him, until he unfastened a third tie. Yusuf said, "I seek refuge in God from committing a sin by seeing her." Zulaikha persisted in tempting him, and Yusuf's eyes fell upon her beauty, adornments, and jewels... Gabriel called out to Yusuf from the air, and his lust left him. He jumped up and headed for the door." (ibid: 1128).

After recounting the other details of the story, *Sūrābādī* concludes by narrating that Yusuf married Zulaikha, and God restored her youth and sight,

The Representation of Joseph and Zulaikha's Privacy in Abrahamic Traditions and Its Reflection in Painting Art

and she returned to her former beauty. Yusuf also fell in love with Zulaikha with the same intensity that she had once loved him. "Yusuf asked her, why did you torment me so much in those days?" Zulaikha replied, "Don't be surprised, for I was in love with you with a thousand hearts. And at that time, I did not know the Lord. Now that I have come to know Him and become close to Him, it would be a sin to have any love in my heart other than the love of Him." (ibid: 1154)

6.4. Quṭb Rāwandī

Another work of this kind is *Qaṣaṣ al-Anbīyā'* (Stories of the Prophets) by *Quṭb al-Dīn Rāwandī* (d. 573 AH), a sixth-century Shi'a scholar and a student of *Shaykh Ṭūsī*, the author of the commentary *Majma' al-Bayān*. *Quṭb Rāwandī* narrates that when the wife of Aziz asked Yusuf to be intimate with her, "Yusuf said: "I seek refuge in God, we are from a household that does not commit adultery." (al-Rāwandī, 1956: 127)

He also quotes Imam Ṣādiq (AS) as saying that when Yusuf married Zulaikha, he asked her: "Why did you do that?" She replied: "There were three qualities; youth, wealth, and the fact that I had no partner," meaning Aziz was impotent (ibid: 136).

6.5. Ibn Kathīr

Another *Qaṣaṣ al-Anbīyā'* was written by *Abū al-Fidā' Ismā'īl ibn Kathīr* (701-774 AH), a Sunni scholar. In the story of the king's question to the women of Egypt and the interpretation of God's saying, "That he may know that I did not betray him in his absence and that Allah does not guide the plot of the betrayers," he says, "It has been said that this is Yusuf's statement, meaning: I wanted the truth of this matter to become clear so that Aziz would know that I did not betray him in his absence. And it has also

been said that this is Zulaikha's statement, meaning: "I confessed to this matter so that my husband would know that no betrayal had actually taken place on my part, but rather an attempt at intimacy that did not, in fact, lead to that very vile act." He also says, in his interpretation of God's saying, "And I do not acquit myself. Indeed, the soul is a persistent enjoiner of evil, except for what my Lord has mercy upon. Indeed, my Lord is Forgiving and Merciful," (Yūsuf: 53) "It has been said that this is Yusuf's statement, and it has also been mentioned that this is Zulaikha's statement, and here, as in the previous case, it is more apparent that it is a continuation of Zulaikha's speech. And God knows best." (Ibn Kathīr, 1968: 1, 321)

7. Differences in the Narratives of the Torah, Jewish Traditions, the Quran, and *Qaṣas al-Quran*

It can perhaps be said that the theme of Zulaikha's love for Yusuf is more prominent in the Quranic narrative compared to the Bible (Abdullahi, 2020). Also, since the story of the banquet of the women of Egypt and their cutting their hands is mentioned in the Holy Quran but is absent from the Torah (Genesis, chapter 39), it might be said that, if we only examine the story in these two holy texts, Zulaikha's sin is represented as more serious in the Torah. According to verse 26 of Surah Yusuf, a witness from the woman's family testifies to Yusuf's innocence, but according to the verses of the Torah, there is no such witness.

Sattari says, "The Torah narrative is dry and devoid of gentleness and tenderness." "The Quranic narrative, by mentioning the fact that Zulaikha confesses her sin, paves the way for the forgiveness of the repentant woman. And in their storytelling and fantasies, people seem to regret that all that

The Representation of Joseph and Zulaikha's Privacy in Abrahamic Traditions and Its Reflection in Painting Art

love and sincerity from Zulaikha went unrequited; therefore, they do not want Zulaikha to be unjustly disappointed, but rather to reach union with Yusuf (the one with the flowery shirt)." (Sattari, 1994: 10)

Story of Yusuf and Zulaikha	Narrative of the Quran	Narrative of the Torah	Narrative of Muslim Miniaturists	Narrative of Western Painters
Zulaikha's three dreams about Yusuf	-	-	+	-
Yusuf's invitation to Zulaikha to Egypt in the third dream	-	-	+	-
Yusuf's promise of union in Zulaikha's third dream	-	-	+	-
Zulaikha's maids' attempts to tempt Yusuf	-	-	+	-
Zulaikha's invitation to an illicit relationship	+	+	+	+
Yusuf's refusal of Zulaikha's request for an illicit relationship	+	+	+	+
Zulaikha tearing	+	-	-	-

Yusuf's shirt from the back				
Yusuf's shirt falling to the ground with Zulaikha	-	+	-	+
A witness behind the palace testifying to Yusuf's innocence	+	-	+	-
Zulaikha hosting a banquet and the women of Egypt losing control of themselves	+	-	+	-
The women of Egypt siding with Zulaikha	+	-	-	-
The women of Egypt confessing Yusuf's innocence	+	-	-	-
Zulaikha confessing Yusuf's innocence	+	-	-	-
Yusuf's prayer for Zulaikha's youth and beauty to be restored	-	-	-	-
The marriage and union of Yusuf and	-	-	+	-

**The Representation of Joseph and Zulaikha's Privacy in Abrahamic
Traditions and Its Reflection in Painting Art**

Zulaikha				
Zulaikha's impatience at Yusuf's death	-	-	-	-

Table: A comparison of the narratives of the Quran, the Torah, poets, Muslim painters, and Western painters regarding the story of Zulaikha and Joseph

Explanation: Regarding miniaturists and painters, it should be said that this negation or affirmation does not mean that each group has absolutely and without exception done so, but rather the intention is to find evidence of this matter.

8. Israeliyat in the Story of Joseph and Zulaikha

Muhammad Abū Shahbah says that various *Israeliyat* (tales of Israel) and diverse narratives have entered the story of Yusuf, which are considered fabrications (Abū Shahbah, 1987: 219). He provides a comprehensive critique of these *Israeliyat*, an excerpt of which is translated into Persian below (Abū Shahbah, 1987: 220-227).

Among the fabricated *Israeliyat* concerning "And she certainly desired him, and he would have desired her had he not seen the proof of his Lord" (Yūsuf: 24) is what *Ibn Jarīr Ṭabarī* in his commentary, *Jalāl al-Dīn Suyūṭī* in *al-Durr al-Manthūr*, and others have narrated, saying things that contradict the infallibility of the prophets and are too shameful to write.

It has been narrated from *Ibn 'Abbās* that when he was asked how far Joseph had gone, he replied: "He took off his trousers and sat between her legs. A cry was heard over his head, "O! Joseph, do not be like a bird whose

wings for flying are cut off because of adultery, and it is no longer able to fly." And regarding the proof he saw, without which he would have fallen into that vile act, it has been narrated that a call was made to him: "Your name is written among the prophets, are you doing the work of fools?" It has also been said that he saw the image of his father, Jacob, on the wall, and it has been said that he saw this image on the ceiling of the room, on the door, while he was biting his thumb. The fabricators of these false

Israeliyat have gone to such an extreme that they have said that when he saw the image of his father Jacob biting his thumb, he still did not stop. His father hit him, and his lust came out from his fingers.

The source of all these reports are the Israelites and the lies they have fabricated about God and His prophets, which were then transmitted to some of the Companions and their followers. How can we reconcile what has been fabricated about the Prophet Yusuf with the words of God, who, after mentioning the "Desire," said, "Thus, that We might avert from him evil and indecency. Indeed, he was one of Our chosen servants?" (Yūsuf: 24) Is this praise befitting someone who would unfasten his trousers and sit between a woman's legs? How can we reconcile what has been narrated with the words of God from the lips of Zulaikha, who is the main character in this pursuit of intimacy: "I sought to seduce him, and indeed, he is of the truthful?" (Yūsuf: 51) This is a clear confession from Zulaikha that she used every trick in her quiver, but it was not successful.

However, the correct interpretation of "And she certainly desired him, and he would have desired her" (Yūsuf: 24) is that the sentence ends at "And she certainly desired him," and there is no doubt that Zulaikha's desire or intention was a vile act. And in "and he would have desired her had he

The Representation of Joseph and Zulaikha's Privacy in Abrahamic Traditions and Its Reflection in Painting Art

not seen the proof of his Lord," the matter is a case of fronting and postposition, and in a simple form, it is like this: "And had he not seen the proof of his Lord, he would have desired her." Some have also said that the nature of Yusuf's and Zulaikha's "Desire" was different. Zulaikha's "Desire" was for the act of adultery, while Yusuf's "Desire" was to flee or even to fight back, meaning he was thinking of escaping from Zulaikha or getting into a struggle with her (Sattari, 1994: 109-112).

9. The Representation of Zulaikha in Painting

This section of the article deals with the theme of Yusuf's escape from Zulaikha from the perspective of Christian and Muslim artists. The subject of the banquet is also significant because it is found exclusively in the Quran among the first-hand sources of the Abrahamic religions, and because Western artists, drawing from the Torah, which lacks this story, do not depict it.

9.1. Yusuf and Zulaikha in Christian Paintings



Yusuf and Potiphar's Wife, Bartolomé Esteban Murillo, c. 1640-1645,

Mohsen Badreh, Saleh Khodadadi

Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Kassel, Germany¹

In the Torah, it is said that as Yusuf was fleeing from Potiphar's wife, his robe fell to the ground because Zulaikha pulled it. Therefore, in Western works inspired by the Torah, Yusuf's robe is either shown falling or, in some works, completely on the ground. Yusuf and Zulaikha are both depicted as two young and beautiful individuals, one fleeing and the other pleading for union. In the painting above, there are traces of anger towards each other on both their faces, a feature not clearly visible in other paintings, where other emotions such as depression, despair, and affection can sometimes be interpreted from the faces of these two characters.

Zulaikha is still in a bed. Her being partially undressed and a red cloak or fabric wrapped around her lower body all suggests her readiness for intimacy. She is suddenly faced with Yusuf's refusal and rejection of her request. With bare feet and without prior readiness, she tries to forcibly pull Yusuf back to the bed. This is met with his strong refusal, and it is this reaction that has provoked her anger. The painter also attempts to more seriously represent Zulaikha's troubled state of mind by showing the disarray of the bed.

1. <https://altmeister.museum-kassel.de/33711/0/0/147/s1/0/100/objekt.html>

**The Representation of Joseph and Zulaikha's Privacy in Abrahamic
Traditions and Its Reflection in Painting Art**



Yusuf and Potiphar's Wife, Guido Reni, 1625-1626, Fitzwilliam Museum, no. PD.53-1993,
Cambridge, England¹

1. <https://artuk.org/discover/artworks/joseph-and-potiphars-wife-5601>

In contrast to the previous painting, there is no sign of Zulaikha's plea or forceful attempt to be intimate with Yusuf. Instead, Zulaikha, with a sad and hopeless face, is making her last attempt to bring Yusuf back to the bed. To show Zulaikha's despair and depression, the painter has depicted her body in a drooping posture, so that it is clear that Zulaikha's spine is bent, and her body and face are in a state of hopeless supplication for a sexual relationship. Although Zulaikha is pulling Yusuf's robe with her left hand, which generally has less energy than the right, her right hand is released dejectedly by her side. Zulaikha's attire is also complete in this painting, which is another reason for her confidence in Yusuf's rejection of her request. Despite this, the thick red cloak on Zulaikha's shoulder suggests her previous attempts to persuade Yusuf. Zulaikha has tilted her neck to the left side of her body, which can indicate her humiliation and also her despair of union with Yusuf. Perhaps the viewer can imagine that this hopelessness suggests that she had made requests to Yusuf before, and each time he had rejected them.

Yusuf, with a slight effort in the opposite direction of Zulaikha's body, tries to move out of the frame. His inner shirt is blue, indicating his sexual purity throughout his life.

**The Representation of Joseph and Zulaikha's Privacy in Abrahamic
Traditions and Its Reflection in Painting Art**



Yusuf and Potiphar's Wife, attributed to Jean Baptiste de Bartolomé (1631-1681),
Princeton University Art Museum, no. y1987-68¹

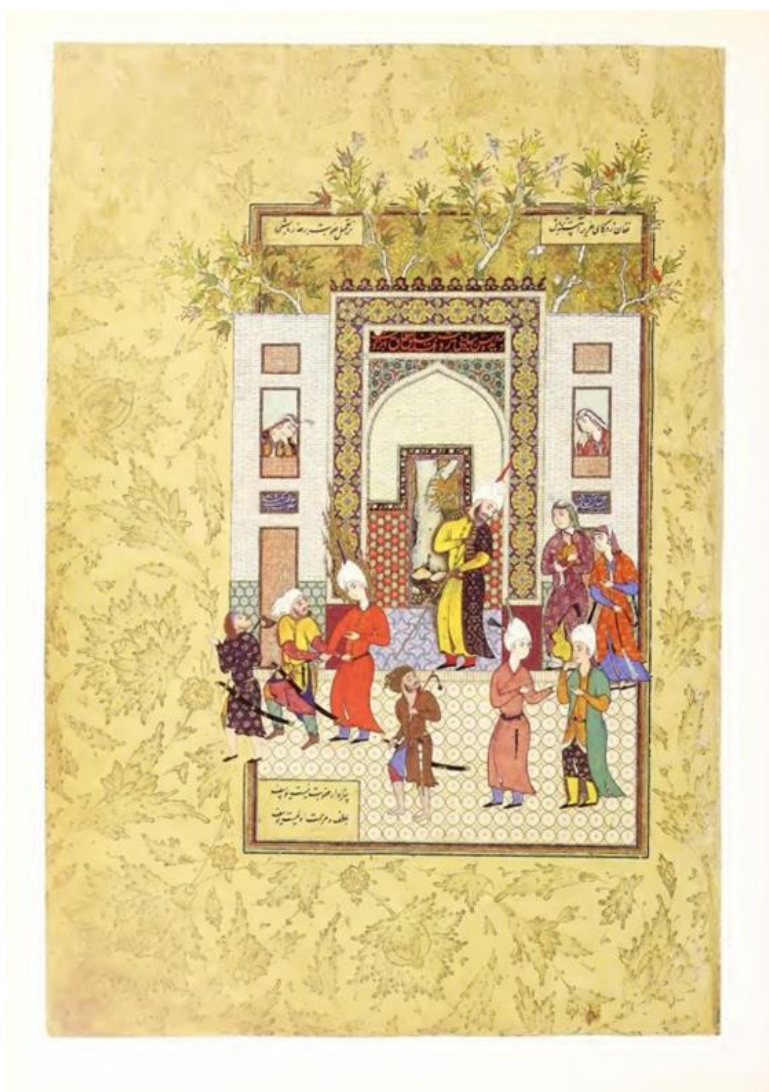
In many paintings depicting the moment of Zulaikha's sexual demand from Yusuf, contrary to the common expectation of Zulaikha wearing or using red attire, in this painting, and in a significant number of other works, it is Yusuf who is depicted in red attire. In some works, Zulaikha even appears in a blue shirt and with a relatively innocent expression while

1. <https://artmuseum.princeton.edu/collections/objects/32189>

Mohsen Badreh, Saleh Khodadadi

requesting a sexual relationship. In these works, the painter, by depicting Yusuf in red attire, attempts to show his sexual attractiveness, a characteristic that was the reason for Zulaikha's request for intimacy. However, in all these works, Yusuf, regardless of his attire, is depicted as rejecting Zulaikha's request.

9.2. Joseph and Zulaikha in Islamic Miniaturism



The Representation of Joseph and Zulaikha's Privacy in Abrahamic Traditions and Its Reflection in Painting Art

Aziz and Yusuf's Punishment, *Haft Awrang* (Seven Thrones) manuscript, Sultan Ibrahim Mirza, 963-973 AH, Mashhad, Iran, located in the Freer Gallery of Art, Washington (Simpson; Farhad and Freer Gallery of Art, 1997, 138)

In this work, the painter has tried to depict all the narrative elements mentioned in the Quranic verses and stories. Aziz is placed at the center of the work in front of the open door of the room as the main subject of the story. In addition to his central placement, the verses written in the corners of the painting, which address Aziz, show the importance of his position in this part of the story. Aziz stands with a bent neck, which indicates his sadness at witnessing the event, and holds a long staff in his hand. The presence of this staff can have a disciplinary or vengeful purpose.

Zulaikha stands next to a woman who is in front of her on the right side of the painting, holding her left hand in a way that suggests she is still trying to justify and explain the incident in her favor. The woman next to her is holding a child, who, according to the stories in

Qaṣaṣ al-Quran is the very child who testifies to Yusuf's innocence. A noteworthy point in this work is the intactness of Yusuf's shirt. Given the painter's attention to the details of the story, this cannot be attributed to a lack of care on his part. Yusuf's red shirt also signifies his sexual attractiveness to Zulaikha, which recalls this verse by Hafez:

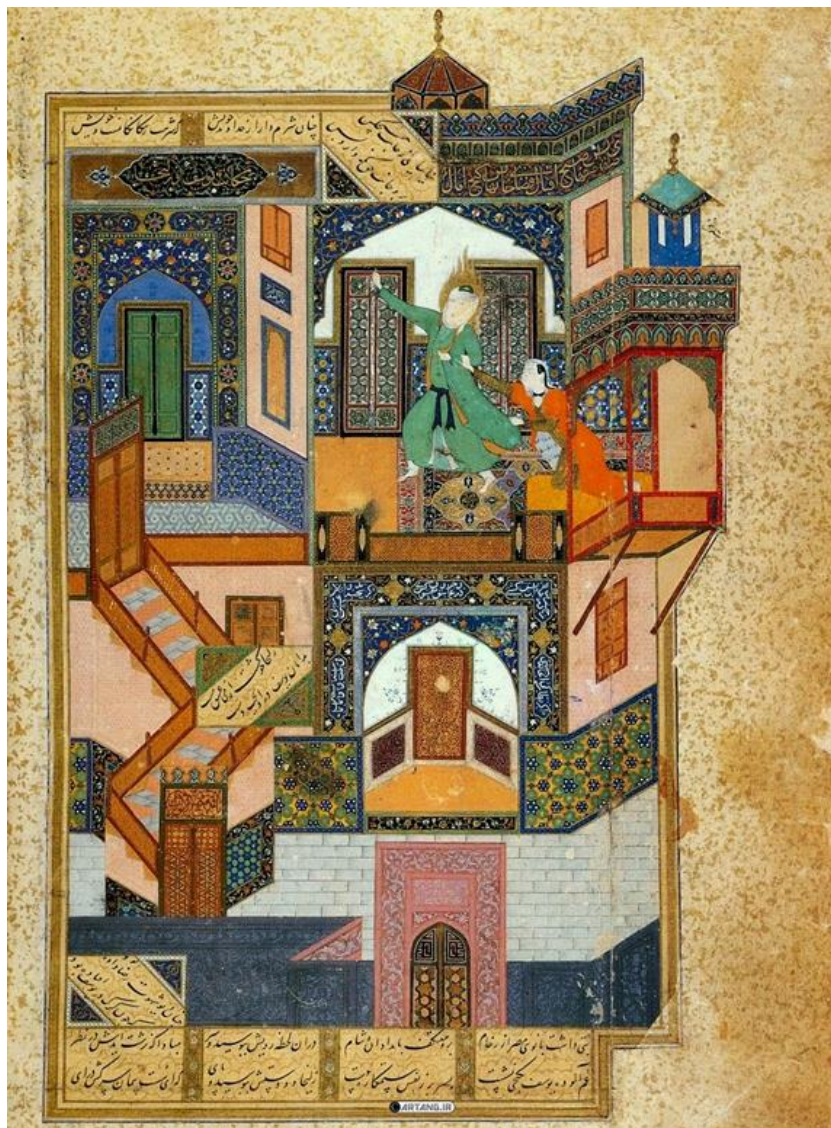
From the ever-increasing beauty that Yusuf possessed, I knew

That love would bring Zulaikha out from behind the veil of chastity
(Hafez, 1968).

The faces of the two women who have their heads in the window at the top of the painting represent the women of Egypt who criticized Zulaikha. These are the women who, at Zulaikha's banquet, will reverse their previous

Mohsen Badreh, Saleheh Khodadadi

judgment and blame. The finger that they are now biting in the painting as a sign of blame for Zulaikha is the same one they will cut at her banquet.



Yusuf's Escape from Zulaikha, by Behzad, a miniature in the *Bustan of Sa'di* manuscript, Herat, 1488 AD, located in the Cairo Library, Persian Literature Section¹

1. https://brill.com/view/journals/mcmw/2/1-2/article-p55_4.xml?language=en

The Representation of Joseph and Zulaikha's Privacy in Abrahamic Traditions and Its Reflection in Painting Art

The miniature of Yusuf and Zulaikha's escape by Behzad for Sa'di's *Bustan* was painted in Herat for Sultan Hussein Bayqara during the years 893-894 AH and is currently held in the Cairo Library (Rahmani and Zafari, 2015). In his work, Behzad has depicted a palace with seven nested rooms, each represented by a door, and the seventh room is the place for intimacy. The painter has used seven doors instead of seven rooms to show the subject (Yusuf) being lured in a stepwise manner to the "Woman-Zulaikha-stepmother". The house is a feminine symbol with the concept of a sanctuary, a mother, and a mother's breast.

Freud believed that in dreams, nested and empty rooms are usually symbols of women, and stairs, ladders, and going up and down them can be representations of the sexual act. In this work, the poetry of two poets, Sa'di and Jami, is also visible. The verses of Jami, which are in the body of the painting, convey a sexual and inciting message to the subject, Yusuf, with keywords such as "Purity of the platform," "Treasure of hopes," "Longing," and "Mouthwatering". In the outer frame of the work, Sa'di's verses address the subject like an "Other (father)" and define moral do's and don'ts for him, since the theme of these verses is negation and rejection and is the source of the subject's anxiety. Sa'di's verses are in tablets in the work that surround it from above, below, and in the middle, but with a different background. And because they are in the margins of the main painting, they are distinct like a bulletin board and a warning, while Jami's verses are faded into the patterns and decorations of the surfaces (Zeinolsalehin et al., 2020).

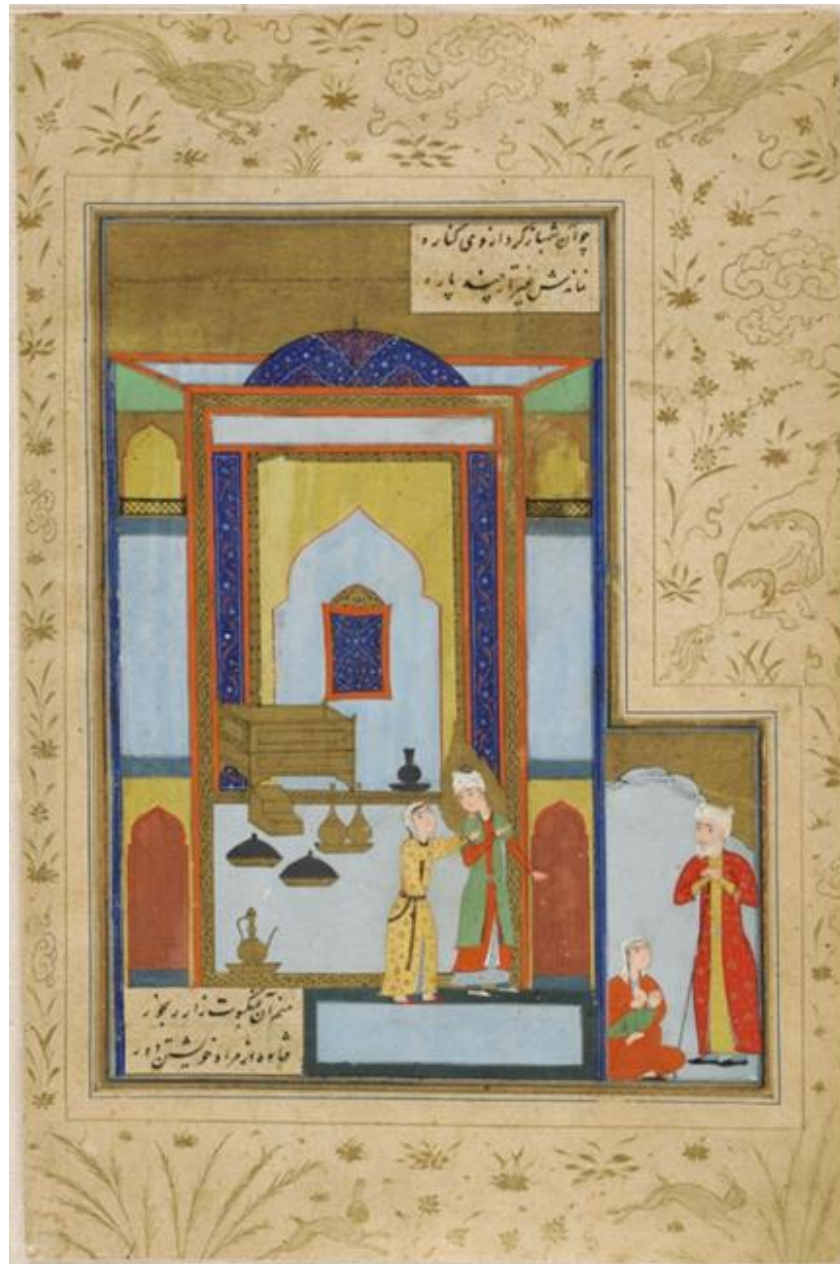
In other words, the walls of the palace are blended with Jami's longed-for words, so that the work is full of sexual attractions and invitations to intimacy, all surrounded by Sa'di's warnings.

In terms of the colors used in the work, the emerald blue and lapis lazuli blue in Behzad's work represent the celestial atmosphere of the court.

The green color of Yusuf's shirt also signifies his faith and belief, and also shows his turning away from worldly pleasures. On the other hand, the redness of Zulaikha's clothing, as the only warm color in the work, represents worldly pleasures and expresses excitement and satanic lust (Mozafarikhah, 2010).

In general, the color red in artworks has two separate meanings; it means both an invitation to a sexual act and also suggests a prohibition and warning against a forbidden act. In Behzad's painting, the red color of Zulaikha's shirt also includes both concepts; a kind of psychological dialectic of "Desire and anxiety" or "Attraction and repulsion." (Zeinolsalehin et al., 2022)

**The Representation of Joseph and Zulaikha's Privacy in Abrahamic
Traditions and Its Reflection in Painting Art**



Zulaikha's Temptation, a miniature in the *Yusuf and Zulaikha* manuscript by Jami, Bukhara, Shaybanid Era, 1575 AD, located in the Harvard Museum, no. 1998.15.19¹

In this work, the painter has depicted Yusuf with a warm-colored shirt and a halo of sanctity around his head. He has also drawn a green cloak to establish his chastity at all times, even when sin is possible. At the same moment, Zulaikha is depicted requesting intimacy from her servant. Also, in this work, unlike the majority of existing works, there is no sign of Yusuf's flight and fear, or Zulaikha's thirst for a sexual relationship. In this respect, it is similar to some Western works in which Yusuf calmly walks past Zulaikha's request. Also, in this work, Aziz is in the form of an old man, accompanied by a woman holding a baby in her arms, behind the last door of the nested rooms.

A feature of Iranian miniatures is the depiction of the remaining parts of a story in parallel frames next to the main frame of the work, and also the mention of verses around the work to provide a brief explanation of the miniature. In this work, two verses from Jami's poems have also been calligraphed:

When that falcon left her

Nothing was left but a few worn threads

I am that weary, weak spider

Fallen far from my own desire (Jami, 1999; Golab-Gir Isfahani & Fanai, 2022).

1. <https://harvardartmuseums.org/collections/object/211341>

**The Representation of Joseph and Zulaikha's Privacy in Abrahamic
Traditions and Its Reflection in Painting Art**



The Chaste One, by Farshchian, 2001 AD

Twenty-seven years after his first painting of Yusuf in 1974, Farshchian painted his second narrative in 2001, titled "The Chaste One," and this time shows Yusuf and Zulaikha in the seclusion that Zulaikha has arranged. In

this miniature, Zulaikha is at the center of the image, holding the back of Yusuf's shirt. Yusuf is in a Mihrab-shaped frame, wearing a white shirt, standing with his back to Zulaikha, and moving towards the outside of the frame. The elements in the image, according to Jami's narrative, include images of intimacy, suggested by the wet nurse to arouse Yusuf, in a gallery of romantic and sensual pictures; the veiled idol on Zulaikha's face, which takes up almost the top third of the page, angels above the image, one of whom has covered his eyes as a sign of modesty, and a room full of curtains, serving utensils, musical instruments, and so on.

This scene, in which a highly charged and extremely rich atmosphere is depicted, takes place in a secluded room that in every way revives the atmosphere of life in Pharaonic Egypt. In this painting, the artist has used Egyptian symbols such as the snake, the falcon, the Eye of Horus, the lotus flower, etc., and has even shown Zulaikha in the style of Egyptian women's makeup, which shows the depth and precision of the painter (Golab-Gir Isfahani & Fanai, 2022).

Conclusion

Although the character of Zulaikha and her story with Yusuf have found a serious reflection in the cultures and arts of both the Jewish-Christian and Islamic sides, it can be said that in a general view, in terms of the volume of religious, narrative, and lyrical literature that this story has received in Muslim culture, and consequently, the reflection of these themes in Islamic art, Muslims, especially the Persian-speaking world, have given Zulaikha a very important place. This importance is due not only to the repeated and profound portrayals of her character and her stories with Yusuf, but also to

The Representation of Joseph and Zulaikha's Privacy in Abrahamic Traditions and Its Reflection in Painting Art

her happy ending in most of the Muslim narratives and the fact that her love and passion for this prophet were not in vain.

Furthermore, in the works of Western painters, the part related to Yusuf's rejection of the illicit relationship request has been the focus of their attention. By examining this group of works, the indebtedness of the creators of these works to the Torah narrative is clearly evident. However, among Islamic miniaturists, unlike Western artists, other parts of the story of Yusuf and Zulaikha are also of greater importance. Among the works of Muslim artists, two subjects, Yusuf's escape from Zulaikha and Zulaikha's famous banquet to change the judgment of the women of Egypt, have received more attention than other events. Although the remaining events, such as the union of Yusuf and Zulaikha, have also been the focus of some Islamic miniaturists, this group of events has been inspired by the poems of Persian poets, especially Jami.

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The Scattered Nature of the Text and its Divine Origin: A Necessary Connection or Not? (A Case Study of the Quran and the Testaments)

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Abstract

The Noble Quran and the Testaments share the common feature of being composed of various parts or chapters. These chapters are called "Surahs" in the Quran and "Books" in the Testaments. Unlike the Testaments, whose content mostly possesses a linear order similar to human books, with each book usually centered on a specific or general topic, the Surahs of the Quran—with the exception of the shorter Surahs and some collectively-revealed ones—typically lack a specific topic and order, appearing as if diverse and varied subjects are scattered throughout them (the "Scattered" nature of the Quran). Some believe the human-like order of the Testaments indicates their human origin, while the non-human order of the verses in the Quran's Surahs is a sign of its divine origin. However, according to this research, conducted using library resources and critical analysis method, neither the structure of the Testaments and their similarity to human books is proof of their non-divine origin, nor is the scattered structure of most long Quranic Surahs and their dissimilarity to the order found in most human books proof of its divine origin.

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The Scattered Nature of the Text and its Divine Origin: A Necessary Connection or Not? (A Case Study of the Quran and the Testaments)

Keywords: Quran, Testaments, Arrangement of Verses, Linear Order of the Bible, Coherence and Order of Verses, Scattering of Verses, Interrelation of Verses.

Introduction

Numerous signs have been presented for the divine origin of the Quran. The challenge of the Quran (*Tahaddī*) and the inability to produce its like, its unique eloquence and rhetoric, its singular rhythm and harmony, the illiteracy of its bringer, the absence of discrepancy and contradiction, reports of the unseen, scientific miracles, and others are some of these signs (Najjarzadegan, 2018 AD/1397 SH: 68-146). Some, like *Farid Wajdi*, believe that one of the signs of a divine book is the difference in the order and arrangement of its content compared to human books. The Surahs of the Quran, instead of each being about a single, sequential topic or story, often contain various verses on different subjects. For example, verses about the Resurrection are spread throughout the Quran's Surahs and are not all in one Surah. In his belief, if the Quran had presented its content with categorized topics like human books, it could not have been divine and celestial (Farid Wajdi, 1942 AD/1321 SH: 125-126; Hejazi, 2011 AD/1390 SH: 14). Khorramshahi has also considered the scattered and non-sequential nature of the Quran's content as evidence of its miraculous nature (Khorramshahi, 2011 AD/1390 SH: 79). This paper was formed to examine the validity of this belief and aims to answer this question:

- Is there a necessary connection between a book being divine and its content being scattered, or does no such connection exist, meaning

the content of a divine book can also have a linear order¹ like most human books?

The subject's relation to the Quran and the necessity of investigating its divine origin or lack thereof is sufficient for its importance. Although numerous works have been written on the order of the Quran, the interrelation of verses within Surahs, and the scattered nature of its content, etc., no research was found that examines and critiques the claim of the necessity for a divine book to differ from human books in presenting content in a linear order; therefore, this research is the first step in its subject.

1. Coherence of the Content in the Testaments

The Testaments are formed from the compilation of numerous books written by different individuals in different times and places. Each book consists of various chapters, and each chapter consists of numerous verses; although the division of each book into chapters and each chapter into verses is a later development. Stephen Langton divided the books into chapters in 1226 AD, and Robert Estienne numbered and versified those chapters in 1551 AD (Baghbani, 2021 AD/1400 SH: 42). A "Book"² in the Testaments is roughly equivalent to a "Surah" in the Quran, and the verses of each book are similar to the verses of each Surah. In the Quran, there is nothing equivalent to a "Chapter" in the Testaments, unless we loosely equate it with a "Unit of Revelation." The books of the Testaments are usually arranged sequentially

1. In linear narrative, we observe the presentation of content in a sequential, chained, and continuous manner. Each part is dependent on the previous one based on temporal or logical sequence, and characters and details progress continuously and systematically from beginning to end.

2. Although "Sefer" in Hebrew means "Book," in Persian terminology, it refers only to the Pentateuch.

The Scattered Nature of the Text and its Divine Origin: A Necessary Connection or Not? (A Case Study of the Quran and the Testaments)

based on the historical chronology of their content (not their date of writing), from the beginning of creation to the end of the world, from ancient to recent. The Testaments are largely a historical book with details (Baghbani, 2021 AD/1400 SH: 71). The reader, while studying this book, does not feel that the speaker is God and has the sensation of reading a historical book (Asadi, 2017 AD/1396 SH: 38). Some have even speculated, due to this historical style, that its authors were also historians (Ashrafi, 2011 AD/1390 SH: 75).¹

The first book of the Old Testament, Genesis, begins with the story of the beginning of creation, continues with the story of the creation of Adam and Eve, proceeds with the story of Prophet Noah, and finally ends with the story of Prophet Jacob and the death of Joseph in Egypt. The Book of Exodus begins with the story of Prophet Moses, continues by mentioning the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt, their forced stay in the Sinai desert, and the revelation of the Torah, and concludes with the story of the worship of the calf. The Book of Leviticus is about the commandments God revealed to Prophet Moses on Mount Sinai. The Book of Numbers begins with the divine command to Prophets Moses and Aaron in the Sinai desert to census the Israelites, continues with the genealogy of the Israelites, and after stating commandments, the story of the Israelites' exodus from Sinai and entry into Kadesh and then Moab is mentioned, ending again with some commandments. Deuteronomy, the last of the five books, is about Prophet

¹. Whether the authors of the Old Testament books are individuals accepted by Jews and Christians, or an individual or individuals who were also historians, does not change anything in our discussion. What is important is that the content of the Old Testament books usually has a linear order and historical sequence alongside a specific or general subject.

Moses's farewell to the Israelites, the laws of the covenant, and entrusting the Torah to Joshua, ending with Moses's death in Moab. The sixth book, the Book of Joshua, begins by recounting the leadership of Joshua, the successor of Prophet Moses, and after describing the entry of the Israelites into the Promised Land (Canaan) and the division of the land among the Israelites, ends with Joshua's speech and his death. The next book concerns the Judges or leaders after Joshua, covering a 350-year period of Israelite history involving a repetitive cycle of the people's idolatry, repentance, and the appointment of a judge. The subsequent books, 1 and 2 Samuel are about the last and greatest judge, Prophet Samuel. With the end of the era of Judges, the time of the Kings, namely Prophets David and Solomon, begins, and the history of the Israelites continues in this chronological order until the end of the Old Testament, which is about Ezra and the rebuilding of the temple and ends with Malachi's prophecy of the coming of Prophet Elijah. Sometimes, in addition to the linear narration of content, we also see their categorization. For example, the Septuagint version of the Old Testament, accepted by Catholics and Orthodox Christians and which has additions and appendices compared to the Hebrew version accepted by Jews and Protestants, is divided into three sections: Historical Books, Books of Wisdom, Supplication, and Poetry, and Books of Prophecy (Asadi, 2017 AD/1396 SH: 38-39).

In the New Testament, as in the Old Testament, we mostly witness a linear and historical order of content. It begins with the narration of the birth of Jesus Christ, his emergence, and the conversion of the apostles. The four Gospels conclude with the story of the crucifixion of Jesus, his resurrection from the dead, and his ascension to heaven. The fifth book, the Acts of the

The Scattered Nature of the Text and its Divine Origin: A Necessary Connection or Not? (A Case Study of the Quran and the Testaments)

Apostles, deals with the account of the apostles and their preaching of Christianity, the conversion of Paul, etc. The remaining books consist of letters and epistles from Paul and the apostles to Christians in general or to specific churches in particular, and this Testament also concludes with the Book of Revelation, which prophesies the second coming of Jesus Christ at the end of the world.

Of course, not all books of the Testaments have a single topic, follow a chronological order, or possess a linear-historical progression. In some of them, such as the Book of Deuteronomy, the content is mentioned without historical order. The Psalms are neither categorized by topic nor do they have a chronological order; for example, the Psalms of David are mentioned before Psalm 90, attributed to Moses. In the Book of Proverbs of Solomon, although a single topic is sometimes followed, each proverb is not necessarily related to the one before or after it. In the New Testament, for instance, the order of content in the Gospel of Matthew is based on thematic importance, not chronological order (Michel, 2016 AD/1395 SH: 46). Similarly, some of the apostles' epistles also cover various topics, and their content is in response to the problems of churches in different cities or their questions; thus, there is not necessarily a unity within the content of one epistle, except for its connection to a specific church. Another issue is that the current order of the books of the Testaments does not necessarily correspond to their chronological order of writing. For example, Paul's epistles, although situated within this Testament, are its oldest parts, or the Gospel of Mark, although it is the second gospel, is believed by some to have been written earlier than the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. Similarly, Paul's epistles are also ordered not based on chronological sequence but by

length, from longest to shortest (Sayyar, 2008 AD/1387 SH: 89-90, 96, and 744).¹

2. Disjointedness of the Quran's Content

The Quran, in contrast to the Testaments, generally lacks a linear order, both in terms of its Surahs and their content. Not only are the Surahs and their content not based on the historical chronology of their subjects, but they are not even in accordance with their own order of revelation; for this reason, Meccan Surahs are mostly at the end and Medinan Surahs are at the beginning. The only order observed among the Surahs is their arrangement mostly based on length, from longest to shortest—an order which is violated by the short Surah *al-Fātiḥah* at the beginning and by the non-observance of length for a few other Surahs (Suyūṭī, 2000 AD/1421 AH: 1, 223; Ṭāḥā Ḥussein, 2009 AD/1388 SH: 158), and consequently, there is no comprehensive criterion in this regard.

Another point is that not only do the names of the Surahs usually have no direct connection to their topics (Bell, 2003 AD/1382 SH: 97) and are based on the slightest pretext (Ma'refat, 2002 AD/1381 SH: 99), but with the exception of some short Meccan Surahs or collectively-revealed Surahs like *al-Fātiḥah*, *al-An'ām*, *al-Ṣaff*, *al-Mursalāt*, *al-Ḍuḥā*, *al-Bayyinah*, *al-Ādīyāt*, *al-Kawthar*, *al-Kāfirūn*, *al-Naṣr*, *al-Tabbat*, *al-Ikhlāṣ*, *al-Falaq*, and

1. Although the books of the Old and New Testaments usually cover different subjects, firstly, these different subjects are usually under a common theme, such as the story of the people of Israel at a specific point in history; secondly, for a text to be disjointed, the lack of one of the two things—a unified subject or linear order—is sufficient, and unlike the Old and New Testaments, whose contents mostly have a linear order, the Quran usually lacks this kind of order.

**The Scattered Nature of the Text and its Divine Origin: A Necessary
Connection or Not? (A Case Study of the Quran and the Testaments)**

al-Nās, which were revealed all at once (Suyūṭī, 2000 AD/1421 AH: 1, 145-146), or some long Surahs like Surah *Yūsuf*, the remaining Quranic Surahs—at least at a preliminary and simple glance, without complex and sometimes far-fetched analyses (Ayazi, 2001 AD/1380 SH: 160)—generally lack a specific topic. Sometimes, not only is the topic of each verse completely different from the topics of the verses before and after it, but even a direct and tangible connection between them is not seen. For example, Ṭāhā Hussein said about Surah *al-Baqarah*: "The topics of Surah *al-Baqarah* are very numerous and alien to each other." (Ṭāhā Hussein, 2009 AD/1388 SH: 187-188)

Ṭabāṭabā'ī, who accepted the theory of the unity of verses within Surahs and strives to identify a single purpose for each Surah before beginning its interpretation (Ayazi, 2001 AD/1380 SH: 145), said about Surah *al-Baqarah*: "Since this Surah was revealed gradually and in separate parts, it does not have a single purpose encompassing all its verses." (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 2011 AD/1390 SH: 1, 43)

3. Orientalists' View on the Order of the Quran

Most Western Quranic scholars consider the Quran to be a fragmented text whose parts were placed together throughout history without any clear connection or reason. In their view, the face of the Quran is chaotic, and discerning its order is difficult, if not impossible (Tavakoli and Makvand, 2019 AD/1398 SH: 98), and it is hard to find signs of unity of speech in a long passage (Qaytouri, 2006 AD/1385 SH: 17). According to Richard Bell, "The scattered nature of the Quran's content is an authentic feature of its style; therefore, throughout a major part of a Surah, semantic consistency

and cohesion are rarely seen." In his conjecture, errors in rewriting and the misplacement of some pages during compilation are the cause of this! Arthur John Arberry believes: "The Quran is devoid of any kind of logical coherence, even coherence related to the order of revelation, and the reader of the Quran is bewildered and discouraged by the apparently disordered state of many Surahs." (Khorramshahi, 2011 AD/1390 SH: 76-78; Khamegar, 2007 AD/1386 SH: 31-34)

From the perspective of Régis Blachère, the style of the Quran is disjointed, fragmented, and full of tedious repetitions (Blachère, 1995 AD/1374 SH: 301). Frithjof Schuon believes that if viewed from the outside, the Quran is an anthology of more or less unrelated and incoherent sayings or stories (Schuon, 1983 AD/1362 SH: 52). According to Charles Joseph Adams, the Quran lacks logical structure, jumps from one topic to another without reason, and makes no effort to present material in a systematic way and gather all material related to a single topic in one place (Qaytouri, 2006 AD/1385 SH: 17). The Encyclopedia Britannica also states under the title Quran: "The reader of the Quran, upon observing the scattered nature of the content in its long Surahs and their thematic differences, feels that the verses of the Surahs have been gathered together without any calculated plan and randomly." (Abbas, 2000 AD/1421 AH: 73)

Although Orientalists agree that the constant change of topics in the verses is evidence of the Quran's incoherence, they disagree on the reason for the lack of semantic connection between the verses of the Surahs. According to Frithjof Schuon:

"It is as if the wretched and broken language of mortal man, under the dominion and pressure of the sublime celestial speech, has been shattered

The Scattered Nature of the Text and its Divine Origin: A Necessary Connection or Not? (A Case Study of the Quran and the Testaments)

into thousands of pieces, or as if God, in order to express thousands of truths, had nothing but a handful of words at His disposal and was compelled to use allusions and implications brimming with meaning, shifts of attention, changes of tone and address, conciseness, brevity, and metaphorical expressions." (Schuon, 1983 AD/1362 SH: 53; Khorramshahi, 2011 AD/1390 SH: 81)

Regarding the primary cause of these disorders, most point the finger of blame at the Companions, considering the disjointedness of the Quran's content to result from errors by the scribes of revelation and the collection and compilation of the Quran by the Companions after the Prophet of God (peace be upon him and his progeny) during the time of *Abū Bakr* and *Uthmān*; because, according to Orientalists, the ordering of verses and their arrangement into Surahs was done by the Companions, and their inability to perform this task correctly brought about the dispersion and confusion of the Noble Quran. Some, like John Wansbrough, also believe that the Quran is the product of narratives that came together over a long period; hence, they consider the form and structure of the Quran to be a matter of chance (Ma'refat, 1994 AD/1373 SH: 34; Feqhizadeh, 1995 AD/1374 SH: 145; Tavakoli and Makvand, 2019 AD/1398 SH: 100). The heavy emphasis on the disorder of the Quranic verses has led to the formation of the belief that the Quran has not remained immune from human tampering, and the agents of the Quran's collection, by changing their order, disrupted the coherence and connection of topics and turned it into a collection of various and unrelated materials (Khamegar, 2007 AD/1386 SH: 34).

Orientalists like Richard Bell have considered the disharmony of the verses as the cause for not correctly understanding Quranic concepts and

have proposed solutions such as the necessity of rearranging verses and organizing the Quran in a new style. In most cases, the rearrangement of verses was only within a Surah; for example, they believe that verses 48 to 50 of Surah *Yāsīn* should be placed after verse 28. But sometimes, applying this solution leads to moving one or several verses from one Surah to another. For instance, Theodor Nöldeke, Friedrich Schwally, and Goldziher believe that the introduction to verse 61 of Surah *al-Nūr* has been mistaken for verse 17 of Surah *al-Fath*! (Blachère, 1995 AD/1374 SH: 217)

Of course, not all Orientalists think this way. Some of them, like Angelika Neuwirth, emphasize the semantic connection between verses, opposing the fragmentation approach, and are determined to discover it. In this view, each Quranic Surah has a specific literary totality (Tavakoli and Makvand, 2019 AD/1398 SH: 107). Some also believe that despite the scattered nature of the Quran's content, "the variety and dispersion of topics in the Surahs reduces reader weariness and prevents disgust, and the literary unity of the Surahs and their rhythmic order compensates for the shortcoming of the lack of cohesion between verses." (Shahat, 1976: 5)

4. The Muslim Perspective on the Order of the Quran

Most Muslims, particularly the early scholars and prior to the Orientalists' doubts concerning the disjointedness of the Quran's content, not only did not and do not have a problem with the Quran's apparent disorder and do not oppose its non-linear arrangement, nor do they see it as a sign of incoherence (Qaytouri, 2006 AD/1385 SH: 18); rather, they have articulated various benefits for it.

The Scattered Nature of the Text and its Divine Origin: A Necessary Connection or Not? (A Case Study of the Quran and the Testaments)

For instance, according to *Abul Qāsim Khu'ī*, the Quran is a book of guidance, revealed to lead humanity to felicity; it is not a book of jurisprudence, history, or ethics that would dedicate separate chapters to each topic and present its content in a categorized manner. Even from the Muslim perspective, the Quran's current structure more effectively serves its goal of guidance and impact. In this format, by studying a single surah, the reader can, in a short time and without difficulty, become acquainted with a wide range of this book's teachings and objectives. The dispersion of verses ensures that each surah covers various aspects instead of focusing on one specific topic. On one hand, the Origin and the Resurrection are recalled, and on the other, the history of past nations is examined so that lessons may be drawn from their experiences. Furthermore, while learning the rulings and commandments of the Quran in individual, social, material, and spiritual spheres, the reader also benefits from its ethical teachings. If the Quran were organized in systematic and orderly chapters, a reader could only become acquainted with all these subjects by reciting the entire Quran (Khu'ī, n.d.: 94-95).

From this viewpoint, the Quran is like a garden where the gardener, instead of planting different fruit trees in separate orchards, has planted them scattered throughout; thus, anyone walking in any part of this garden will find various fruits within reach (Shaltut, 2000 AD/1421 AH: 487). Similarly, the change of topics in the verses creates variety, thereby preventing fatigue for the reader of the Quran and encouraging more recitation. In the analogy above, if a person entering the garden only saw apple trees, they would gradually become weary; but if they constantly encountered different trees and colorful fruits, they would tire less quickly

and spend more and better time in the garden. Just as in nature—God's created book—great diversity is seen, and a soul-refreshing collection of various objects, colors, flavors, and phenomena are placed side by side (where everything is good in its place), the same principle governs the verses and Surahs of the Quran. If the Quran's diverse topics had been compiled in separate chapters and sections instead of its current structure, we would today be dealing with an unattractive 'compendium of rules' devoid of the beauty, vitality, simplicity, and grace present in the Quran's miraculous and current structure (Khorramshahi, 2011 AD/1390 SH: 79). Therefore, the Quran is not a scientific book; it is a book for guiding humanity. Guiding humanity depends on knowing various matters, and this is not achieved one-dimensionally; hence, although God could have commanded the categorization of the Quran's verses, He willed that His servant, upon each visit to the Quran, would encounter various teachings, each playing a role in their guidance.

Although Muslims do not consider the Quran's current style to be incompatible with its divine origin and view it as an advantage and merit, they hold differing opinions on whether the verses within Surahs are truly as scattered and without order as the Orientalists claim (Ma'refat, 1994 AD/1373 SH: 11; Feqhizadeh, 1995 AD/1374 SH: 79-80).

Some, while accepting the disjointedness of content in most Quranic Surahs, consider it a necessary consequence of the Quran's gradual revelation. They believe that since the verses of each surah were revealed in different revelation units, they need not necessarily be thematically connected, and the coherence and connection of verses within each revelation unit suffice; because the circumstances of revelation for each unit

The Scattered Nature of the Text and its Divine Origin: A Necessary Connection or Not? (A Case Study of the Quran and the Testaments)

differed from those before and after it. From this group's perspective, if the verses of a surah were revealed, for example, in five stages, there are five different types of connections between them. Even if a verse was revealed alone, it necessarily has no semantic connection to the verses before and after it (Khomeini, 2007 AD/1386 SH: 14). This group believes this very characteristic allows long Surahs to typically be divided into separate sections without affecting the surah's overall atmosphere. Of course, adherents of this view do not necessarily interpret the lack of thematic proportion and the variety of topics in the Surahs as an absolute lack of connection; because even if there is no thematic or spiritual link between these sections, there is usually a kind of shared language and common space—especially since all the Quran's verses seek to secure and realize a specific goal and purpose, such as human guidance and felicity, and this alone suffices for the coherence of the verses, the non-fragmentation of the Quran, and its having a connected form (Feghizadeh, 1995 AD/1374 SH: 146).

As *Khaṭṭābī* said, although promise and threat, warning and glad tidings are inherently opposites, because they all ultimately pertain to one goal, God has placed them together. He also considers the testing of servants another purpose for the dispersed revelation and arrangement of the Quran's verses (*Khaṭṭābī*, 2008: 53).

Another group of Muslims, indeed some contemporary exegetes, believe that despite the variety of topics and the dispersion of content in its Surahs, the Quran possesses an astonishing internal coherence and connection. "Its sentences are arranged alongside each other like precious pearls strung together with a specific harmony," and this feature gives the Quranic text a

unique beauty and freshness (Khu'ī, n.d., pp. 94-95). In this view, the Surahs are not collections of scattered verses placed together by chance; rather, there is an overarching unity in most Surahs that indicates the connectedness of their verses (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 2011 AD/1390 SH: 1, 16)—a unity referred to as the "Thematic Unity" or "Contextual Unity" of each surah (Ma'refat, 2002 AD/1381 SH: 409). Of course, this unity cannot be grasped with a superficial look and requires the contemplation to which the Quran calls its readers (cf. Quran 38: 24).

Adherents of this view can be divided into two distinct categories. One group believes that although the verses were revealed in a seemingly chaotic and unsystematic manner, they were later arranged into the current Surahs under the guidance of the Prophet of God or through the ijtihad of the Companions. From this group's perspective, the dispersed revelation of the Quran based on various events not only does not mean a lack of proportion between the verses of the Surahs, but the verses of each surah, due to their divinely mandated order based on wisdom, possess a astonishing, even miraculous, order and style (Khamegar, 2007 AD/1386 SH: 14). However, another group believes in the natural order of each surah and the connected revelation of Surahs. In this view, the revelation of each surah began with the *Basmalah*, and the revelation of verses continued consecutively until the revelation of a new *Basmalah* indicated the end of the previous surah and the start of a new one (cf. Shariati and Sha'banpur, 2017 AD/1396 SH). From this group's perspective, the integral, logical, and literary unity of the verses in the Quran's Surahs—despite their revelation being the product of varied and diverse circumstances—is nothing short of a miracle (Ma'refat, 1994 AD/1373 SH: 34-35).

The Scattered Nature of the Text and its Divine Origin: A Necessary Connection or Not? (A Case Study of the Quran and the Testaments)

A question that arises here is: if there is proportion and connection between the verses of the Quranic Surahs, 'Why do Orientalists see the Quran as fragmented and chaotic?' From the perspective of those who affirm the proportionality of verses, the perception of the Quran as chaotic stems from various reasons, including a failure to distinguish the oral system from the written one:

1) The Quran is an oral text revealed verbally; relying on contextual and textual clues, and was written down to be preserved. Muslims, having typically grown up in an Islamic environment from childhood, are subconsciously aware of many of these clues, and thus hardly notice the absence of these contextual indicators;

2) In the past, Orientalists mostly dealt with translations of the Quran, and translation is usually incapable of conveying the beauties of literary texts like the Quran; consequently, the disjointedness of the Quran's content becomes more apparent to the reader;

3) Western Quranic scholars have approached and evaluated the Quran using the criteria of the order and arrangement found in human books, even the Bible, and it is natural that they cannot accept the Quran's difference from such books and thus comment on determining the actual placement of verses;

4) Unfamiliarity with Arabic literature and matters such as conciseness (*Ījāz*), ellipsis, metonymy, etc., on one hand, and literal translations and atomistic interpretations on the other, are other factors that have led to perceiving the Quranic verses as disconnected—disconnections that Muslims, with their knowledge of Islamic history and the interpretive tradition, feel less acutely.

In addition to these points, the Quran has chosen an interwoven method for expressing sensitive matters that might have led to its distortion, and for this reason, it has expressed its intent within the framework of parenthetical clauses in various instances (Feqhizadeh, 1995 AD/1374 SH: 147, 148, 153, 154, 158; Shaker, 2019 AD/1398 SH: 156-159).

5. The Relationship between A Divine Book and A Scattered Nature

Some believe that the linear order of the phrases in the Testaments indicates their human origin, while the non-linear and scattered order of the verses in the Quran's Surahs indicates its divine origin. For example, according to the Egyptian author Muhammad Farid Wajdi (d. 1954), "It is not an issue to say that the Quran did not follow the conventions of human books; because if it had wanted to arrange topics orderly, chapter and section them, and place each topic in its own chapter and section, it would no longer be the Quran and a celestial book. It would become a book like one of the compositions of humans. The utmost difference this book would have had was a kind of divine superiority; whereas the status of God's speech is higher than to be compared with human books and for such arrangements to be expected from the Quran." (Farid Wajdi, 1942 AD/1321 SH: 125-126; Hejazi, 2011 AD/1390 SH: 14; Ayazi, 2001 AD/1380 SH: 139-140)

According to this view, a necessary condition for a book's divine and celestial nature is that it should not resemble human books in matters such as the categorization and order of content; therefore, if we witness categorized content and linear order in a book, that book cannot be divine!

However, this claim is not complete; for when divine speech is presented in the form of human words – "And We did not send any messenger except

The Scattered Nature of the Text and its Divine Origin: A Necessary Connection or Not? (A Case Study of the Quran and the Testaments)

in the language of his people" (Quran 14: 4) – and this is not incompatible with divine status, why would presenting these very words in the form of human books be incompatible with being divine?

In other words, just as the human nature of the language of revelation does not conflict with the Quran's divinity, a linear order does not conflict with the divinity of this celestial book. 'Do the short Surahs of the Quran, the collectively-revealed Surahs, or Surah Yusuf, for instance, all of which have a linear, human-like order and concern one or several specific topics, conflict with divine status?' According to Farid Wajdi's view, the fact that the story of Prophet Yusuf is told linearly only once, in one surah, conflicts with its divinity, and it absolutely must come scattered and separate across different Surahs—like the story of Prophet Moses in Surahs *al-Baqarah*, *al-A'rāf*, *Ṭāhā*, *al-Shu'arā'*, *al-Qaṣaṣ*, etc.—in order to be divine! A proposition which even he himself is not willing to accept.

Furthermore, we know of books which, in terms of the order of their content, are similar to the Quran but are not divine. For example, consider this statement:

"The present book is extraordinarily complex and unnecessarily difficult, its structure has become incomprehensible, and a frequently unintelligible thread of thoughts is visible in it. This book is intelligent and insightful, yet the presentation and organization of its material is accompanied by a strange ambiguity [...] The reader is constantly confused by material that more resembles a parenthetical clause and a digression from the topic [...] Obtaining an overview of the entire book or any of its chapters requires continuous reading and re-reading it. The reader gains the feeling that many separate sections in the book's chapters have probably been placed together

randomly [...] It is hard to believe that Oxford University Press bothered to—editor aside—even ask a reader to review the book's manuscript before publication." (Graham, 2013 AD/1392 SH: 222-223)

At first glance, one might think this is another of the Orientalists' opinions about the Quran; but it is not. It is, in fact, about a work by one of the critics of the Quran. The statement above is William Albert Graham's opinion about John Wansbrough's book "Quranic Studies," and Wansbrough himself is one of those who finds fault with the order of the Quranic verses. Through a literary analysis of the Quran, Wansbrough claimed that matters such as its dispersion indicate that this book took its current form over time, through various people, in the late second or early third century AH—a view which, of course, has numerous flaws both in its method and its application (Nilsaz, 2009 AD/1388 SH: 151).

Similarly, the "Divan of Hafez" is considered analogous to, and indeed influenced by, the Quran in its appearance of disjointedness and the lack of apparent order and cohesion between the verses of its Ghazals. The content of both books seems disordered and scattered at first glance, a characteristic that has been challenging since ancient times, leading some to deny their eloquence on this very pretext. Interestingly, some believe that the scribes of Hafez's Divan destroyed the order and sequence of its verses, and the disjointed appearance of the verses stems from this! (Khorramshahi, 2011 AD/1390 SH: 82) Just as some Orientalists like Goldziher and Richard Bell consider the error of the Companions during the Quran's compilation to be the cause of the scattered nature of its verses! (Tavakoli and Makvand, 2019 AD/1398 SH: 99-100)

The Scattered Nature of the Text and its Divine Origin: A Necessary Connection or Not? (A Case Study of the Quran and the Testaments)

Therefore, the method of presenting content in the Quran is neither always different from human books nor even unique to it. Furthermore, it is unlikely that the order of content in the original Torah was as piecemeal and scattered as the Quran, because it was revealed on tablets (*Alwāḥ*) and all at once (Exodus 24:12, 31:18, 32:15, etc.; Quran 7:145, 150, 154. Regarding the nature of the revealed Torah and Gospel, cf. Soleimani Ardestani, 2017 AD/1396 SH: 420-427).

Another point is that mere variety of topics and the lack of a logical order between the materials of a book cannot be an aspect of its *I'jāz*; because all books that present their content in a miscellany-like manner, without a direct connection between their materials, are like this. For example, one can point to the books of Psalms, Proverbs of Solomon, the Gospel of Matthew, and even the books of Leviticus and Numbers. Contrary to common perception, not all books of the Testaments have a single topic, and there are many books like Leviticus whose topic changes continuously, with no common denominator between those topics. Or in the Book of Numbers, besides historical material and the exposition of rulings, we also see various poems. Similarly, although the Bible has expressed its content in an orderly fashion in terms of historical chronology, in other respects it is no different from the Quran, and its content is not presented with categorization and chapter divisions. For instance, if someone wants to know this book's view on the role of works alongside faith in achieving human felicity, no specific section of this book is dedicated to this category, and they have no choice but to collect, categorize, and summarize the verses related to this topic from across the entire Bible. To facilitate this task, we see the composition of books like Bible concordances or verse finders, in which the phrases of the

Testaments are divided thematically. Interestingly, even this current Bible, each of whose books has its own specific author, origin, and history, is considered, despite its apparent multiplicity, to possess a kind of thematic unity and an integrated effect (Sayyar, 2014 AD/1393 SH: 1, 18).

Of course, one should not think that the non-uniqueness of the Quran's arrangement of content means denying its order or its inimitability in this regard; because from the perspective of early scholars, order meant the correct delivery of speech by meticulously observing morphological, syntactic, and rhetorical principles, and placing words in their proper position, thus correctly conveying the intended meaning. However, after objections were raised concerning the lack of meaningful coherence in the Quran, a new approach to order based on the semantic unity of Surahs emerged (Alizadeh, 2017 AD/1396 SH: 31, 45-46).

For example, *Bāqillānī* (d. 403 AH) said about the order of the Quran:

"The order of the Quran is outside all conventional arrangements and the prevalent stylistic methods of speech of its time, and it is for this reason that it is considered a miracle. The Quran is not poetry, not rhymed prose without rhyme, not balanced, rhymed prose, not balanced, rhythmic prose without rhyme. The Quran is none of these, and in this respect, it is outside the custom of that time, and for this reason, it is considered a miracle." (*Bāqillānī*, 1987 AD/1408 AH: 53)

According to *Qāḍī 'Ayāḍ* (d. 544 AH), the second type of the Quran's inimitability is its wondrous order and amazing style, which is different from the styles of Arab speech and their common methods of poetry and prose, and has no parallel before or after it (*Qāḍī 'Ayāḍ*, 1986 AD/1407 AH: 1, 511).

The Scattered Nature of the Text and its Divine Origin: A Necessary Connection or Not? (A Case Study of the Quran and the Testaments)

Therefore, not accepting the proportionality of verses within a surah does not necessarily mean denying the Quran's miraculous order; just as the *I'jāz* of the Quran is agreed upon, not its specific aspect.

Perhaps it will be said, "God has no need for the conventional categorizations of humans and utilizes a distinct method that had not occurred to the human mind until then." But firstly, can it not be said: God has no need, but humans, for understanding the material, need it to be presented in the form of conventional categorization? And secondly, some parts of the Quran conform to the usual human order. Just as some parts of the Testaments are also scattered like the Quran.

6. The Scattered Nature as a Consequence of Gradual Revelation

The Quran was revealed gradually, in interaction with its initial audience (Quran 17: 106, 25: 32). The process of forming the written Quran was such that after a portion of the Quran (a revelation unit) was revealed, the Prophet of God would ask one of the scribes of the Quran to write it down (Ramyar, 2021 AD/1400 SH: 257). The Surahs of the Quran can be categorized into two groups: those revealed all at once, termed collectively-revealed Surahs, and those revealed gradually, over several units. The verses of the first group are typically related to one or several specific topics. However, usually (Suyūṭī, 2000 AD/1421 AH: 1, 145), the Quranic Surahs were revealed gradually, sometimes verse by verse, and sometimes in sets of three, four, or five verses (Nekounam, 2001 AD/1380 SH: 266). The Quran was revealed in sets of ten verses in some instances, such as the incident of *Ifk* (the slander) and the first ten verses of Surah al-Mu'minun (Ramyar, 2021 AD/1400 SH: 201). Sometimes only a part of a verse was revealed.

For example, verses like the Verse of Purification (*Taṭhīr*) and the Verse of *Ikmāl al-Dīn* (perfection of religion), although they are only parts of verses, were revealed independently of their context, according to the testimony of both Shi'a and Sunni narrations and also the evidence of the context. Sometimes even just a few words of a verse were revealed. For instance, one can point to verse 95 of Surah *al-Nisā'* and the separate revelation of the phrase "Other than those who are disabled." (Wāḥidī, 1998 AD/1419 AH: 1, 179)

Whenever the Quranic revelation began with "In the name of God," it indicated the start of a new surah, and this surah would continue until the revelation of the next *Bismillah*, which signaled the end of the previous surah and the beginning of a new one ('Ayyāshī, 1960 AD/1380 AH: 1, 19). Another point is that most Quranic verses do not have a specific cause of revelation and were revealed not in response to a question or an event; however, a portion of the Quranic verses do have causes of revelation (Zurqānī, 1989 AD/1368 SH: 1, 99). The important point is that when verses were revealed consecutively, whether they had a cause or not, they were typically written down consecutively in the Quran as well.¹

Claims such as scribal errors, mistakes in rewriting, or pages being misplaced during the compilation of the Quran are neither acceptable to Muslims from a doctrinal perspective (cf. Quran 15: 9) nor are they confirmed by historical evidence and indicators; they are merely conjectures, and of a pessimistic and simplistic kind at that. Especially

¹. However, at times, for specific considerations, the Prophet (peace be upon him) would instruct the scribes of the Quran to write verses in a place other than where they [chronologically] should have been written. It is for this reason that, for example, some Medinan verses are found within Meccan surahs (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 2011 AD/1390 SH: 5, 167).

The Scattered Nature of the Text and its Divine Origin: A Necessary Connection or Not? (A Case Study of the Quran and the Testaments)

since, firstly, a significant number of the Companions were memorizers of the Quran (cf. Muḥaysan, 1991 AD/1412 AH), and the alleged errors pertain to scribes, not memorizers. Moreover, the identical error of all the memorizers together in a specific case is highly improbable. Assuming some made a mistake, others would have pointed it out and the error would have been corrected. Secondly, although the transmission of the Quran from the very beginning was based on two methods—memorization and writing—the primary method was oral transmission and the memory of Muslims, not written transmission. Writing served more as a reminder for the memorizers of the Quran. Thirdly, the existence of ancient Quranic manuscripts like the Birmingham manuscript, which based on carbon-14 dating belongs to the first half of the first century AH and shows no difference from the current Quran, indicates that, contrary to the claims of some Orientalists like Wansbrough, the current text of the Quran was formed much earlier than their claimed timeframe.

More importantly, the Quran was not indifferent to the circumstances of its time, and for this very reason, it took shape gradually through interaction with the society and people of its era. Consequently, although the revealed verses were delivered at different times, the fact that they were placed consecutively from one *Bismillah* to the next means it is not strange at all to encounter various topics within a single surah, sometimes changing from one verse to the next. This is because the preceding verse, for instance, might have been revealed a month earlier on the occasion of an event, while the following verse was revealed a month later in response to a question.

In addition to the gradual revelation of the verses, the disjointedness of verses within a surah can also stem from addressing different topics within a

single revelation unit and digressing from one subject to another. In reality, it is not the case that each instance of revelation necessarily had a single topic; rather, in numerous cases, a single revelation addressed various topics that were needed by the community (Nekounam, 2017 AD/1396 SH: 212).

Although the current order of verses within the Surahs is, according to the well-known view, divine and not based on the scholarly effort of the Companions, given that some verses in each surah have specific causes of revelation, and these causes are different from each other—and more importantly, were unplanned human events and questions—one cannot claim that the current order of verses in non-collectively revealed Surahs is necessarily based on a divine wisdom¹ (Jawaheri, 2019 AD/1398 SH: 105-106). Imagine ten verses were revealed without a specific cause, then a question was raised, and three verses were revealed in response to this question, followed again by six verses revealed without a cause, but then five verses were revealed concerning an event. Therefore, one might argue that by removing the verses with specific causes, the order of the verses without causes could possess wisdom, but the combined set of verses with and without causes cannot necessarily be based on a single wisdom. Hence, insisting on the thematic unity of every surah or determining a specific

1. *Tawqīf* means that the current order of the verses was established by the command of the Prophet of God, and it is not the case that the Companions arranged the verses in this manner after his passing.

Possessing Divine Wisdom means that God revealed these verses consecutively for a specific purpose.

However, *Tawqīf* (being divinely ordained) and possessing divine wisdom are not necessarily concomitant. This is because the purpose behind the revelation of the verses was, in numerous instances, the questions and events that occasioned their revelation (i.e., their *Asbāb al-Nuzūl*). Since these occasions of revelation occurred in this specific sequence, the content consequently adopted this order.

The Scattered Nature of the Text and its Divine Origin: A Necessary Connection or Not? (A Case Study of the Quran and the Testaments)

purpose for all the verses of all Surahs has, in not a few cases, led to forced and far-fetched interpretations (Ayazi, 2001 AD/1380 SH: 160). The disagreement among proponents of this theory is also noteworthy. For example, *Sayyid Quṭb* considered the main theme of Surah *Hūd* to be giving comfort to the Prophet, *Biqā'ī* considered it to be establishing rulings and providing details, *Ṭabāṭabā'ī* considered it to be monotheism, Bazargan considered it to be the fate of sinful nations, and Said Hawwa considered it to be worship!¹ (Qamarzadeh and Teymouri, 2022 AD/1401 SH: 68)

The important point is that neither the connection and cohesion of all the verses of a surah revealed gradually, from beginning to end, signifies its divinity, nor does the lack of connection between the verses of a surah signify its non-divinity. This is because the content of a book does not necessarily have to be categorized, and even if categorized, the items within each category do not necessarily have to be connected to each other. What matters is the connection of all of them to the main objective the author had for writing that book or chapter. Just as a criterion is necessary for the content not to be scattered, that criterion does not necessarily have to be the topic; it could be the chronological order of revelation and the consecutive revelation of verses. For example, the books in a library do not necessarily have to be categorized by topic for the library to be organized; they could be arranged based on criteria such as date of authorship, author, language, etc. The Quran is like a diary: although its entries occur consecutively in time and all relate to a single person, the content regarding the events is usually

1. Given that if the Quran had an order, such a multitude of diverse interpretations and contemplations would not have emerged, some believe that perhaps one of the wisdoms behind the Quran's apparent lack of coherence is precisely this.

not interconnected, and each page pertains to a good or bad event and different people who are either present from start to finish or come today or leave tomorrow. Has anyone ever seen someone categorize the content of their diary? The only conceivable categorization in such notebooks is chronological, for instance, recording each year in a separate notebook. In such a case, the mere fact that all the various and numerous entries in the notebook belong to one year is sufficient for them to be placed together.¹

The verses of the Quranic Surahs, according to the view about each surah beginning and ending with the *Bismillah*, belong precisely to a specific time period. Just as all diaries belong to a single person, they all connect with each other. Similarly, the Surahs of the Quran, because they all belong to Islam and its specific guidance, are connected and thus coherent in this manner.

Another analogy is different styles of painting.² The Torah and the Gospel are usually like the style of Realism,³ but the Quran bears more resemblance to Cubism,⁴ Abstract art,⁵ or even Suprematism.¹ The Realist

1. In an analogy, the compared object is not similar to the object it is compared to in all respects; rather, the similarity is intended only in the specific aspect of comparison—in this case, the lack of topical categorization and classification.

2. In an analogy, one must pay attention to the *point of similarity*. The intention is not that the compared object is similar to the object of comparison in all aspects and dimensions.

3. The Realism style focuses on the precise and truthful depiction of the surrounding world. Realist paintings are rendered in such a way that they appear inseparable from reality, much like an image seen in a photograph. According to the worldview of this style, reality must be depicted exactly as it is seen.

4. In the Cubism style, various and differing perspectives of diverse subjects are brought together within a single image, resulting in works that appear fragmented. According to the belief and worldview of this style, a single, one-sided perspective is insufficient.

5. In the Abstract style, the artist uses colors, lines, and shapes to express emotions or concepts, instead of depicting things that are clear and identifiable. What you see may be entirely dependent on your own perception. Works in this style are admired for their own sake, not for their narrative quality or for depicting something else. The worldview of Abstract art is that art need not necessarily be a representation of observable reality.

The Scattered Nature of the Text and its Divine Origin: A Necessary Connection or Not? (A Case Study of the Quran and the Testaments)

style is more easily understood but does not engage the mind deeply, whereas modern styles have more appeal and compel one to contemplate.² Another point is that in a style like Cubism or Suprematism, although the components are usually understandable individually, the whole formed from these components is often not comprehensible and is simply beautiful! Of course, the painter usually provides an interpretation of the whole, which others would not understand unless the painter explains it themselves.

Another point that must not be forgotten is that the Quran, unlike the Old Testament (Tanakh), which is the history of the Children of Israel aimed at showing their chosen status, and also unlike the New Testament, which is the history of Jesus Christ and his apostles aimed at identifying him as the promised Messiah of Israel, was never intended to narrate history or the stories of the prophets "Per se," such that it would need to tell them all at once and in one place. Rather, the Quran's goal was to guide its audience, and sometimes, to achieve or facilitate this goal, it engaged in purposeful and selective storytelling, mentioning a story appropriately and only to the extent necessary (Sadr, 2002 AD/1381 SH: 77). Similarly, since this goal sometimes depended on stating a religious commandment, an Islamic belief, or a noble human character trait, it mentioned rulings, beliefs, and ethics; otherwise, the Quran is not even a book of rulings, beliefs, and ethics.

1. This style is based on the use of simple geometric forms, such as squares, circles, and lines. The primary goal of Suprematism is to focus on the purity of emotion and art, independent of real-world imagery. The worldview of Suprematism is founded on the principle that art should transcend physical reality and engage with pure and simple human emotions.

2. Perhaps one of the wisdoms behind the non-sequential nature of the Quranic verses is to encourage contemplation upon them—a matter on which the Quran itself emphatically insists.

Perhaps the reason why the verses of each revelation unit were not presented as independent Surahs—so that it would be clear today with which verse each revelation of Gabriel began and ended, similar to the Psalms where each Psalm is independent of the others—is precisely this. Considering this point, one can no longer say that the Quran is incoherent because all verses related to a single topic are not gathered in one surah; for the main topic of all Quranic verses is guidance. One could even say that since the divine purpose behind verses that seem thematically similar is different, we simply do not have similar verses whose scattering would lead to the Quran's incoherence. This is like the verse "So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?" (*Fa bi Ayyi Ālā'i Rabbikumā Tukaththibān*) which, although repeated thirty-one times in Surah *al-Raḥmān*, cannot be considered repetitive because each time it is connected to a specific blessing. The constant change of topic also ceases to be problematic because, although the topic changes constantly, a single purpose is sufficient to prevent it from being considered merely scattered.

The benefits cited for the scattered nature of the Quran's content are usually correct, but they are not necessarily proof of its divinity, as this feature is commonly observed in miscellanies as well. However, the claim that the Quran's scattered nature results from the inability of human speech to convey divine meanings is, firstly, usually presented as evidence for the similarity of the allegorical verses, specifically on certain topics like the Origin and the Resurrection (Ma'refat, 2002 AD/1381 SH: 247; As'adi, 2011 AD/1390 SH: 134, 136), not as an explanation for why the verses within Quranic Surahs are scattered. Secondly, this reasoning is neither acceptable, neither in our discussion nor even in the discussion of *Mutashābih* verses;

The Scattered Nature of the Text and its Divine Origin: A Necessary Connection or Not? (A Case Study of the Quran and the Testaments)

for is the problem with the capacity of the agent or the capacity of the recipient? Was God incapable of expressing His sublime matters in a human-like order, or is human order incapable of receiving God's sublime matters? The capacity of the agent is not in question. Regarding the capacity of the recipient, it must be said: Why is this capacity usually present in the short Surahs but not in the long ones? Are the meanings of the short Surahs or even long Surahs like that of Prophet Yusuf, not sublime?

Another inference can be drawn from this discussion: "If the Quran, as claimed by some Orientalists, were fabricated by the Prophet himself, and he wanted to create a book for his followers like the books of the People of the Scripture, thus distinguishing his religion from theirs after the Jews opposed him, then naturally this book should have been like the books of the Jews and Christians." The very fact that the Quran's style contradicts that of the Testaments is strong evidence that it is not of human origin or borrowed. Of course, one could counter-argue: "Firstly, the Prophet was unlettered, and secondly, he was in an environment where the books of other religions were not accessible, and he had only heard some of their stories orally; therefore, he was simply unaware of their order and structure to be able to author a book like them." In response to this doubt, it can be said: "Assuming this claim is true; the Prophet became aware of this difference between the Quran and their books at some point." It is narrated from *Ibn 'Abbās* that a group of Jews came to the Prophet and said: "How can we follow you when the book you have brought does not have coherence like the coherence of the Torah? We too can bring something like it: "Indeed, we do not see this [book] you have brought as coherent like the coherence of the Torah. So reveal to us a book we recognize, otherwise we will bring you something

like what you bring." (Ṭabarī, 1992 AD/1412 AH: 15, 106-107; Enayah: 260)

In response to this claim, God revealed verse 88 of Surah *al-Isrā'*, saying: "Say, "If mankind and the jinn gathered together to produce the like of this Quran, they could not produce the like of it, even if they assisted one another."

Given that no difference appeared in the Quran before and after this meeting, it becomes clear that the Quran's style was not a result of ignorance but was intentional and deliberate. As careful attention to the phrase above shows, the Jews were not denying any form of coherence in the Quran; rather, they did not see in it coherence "Like the coherence of the Torah."

Conclusion

Orientalists have approached the Quran using the criteria of order and arrangement found in human books, such as the Bible. Consequently, they have perceived it as fragmented and chaotic, claiming this is the product of the Quran's compilation by the Companions after the Prophet. Muslims, however, while believing in the divinely-mandated nature of the verse order within Surahs, not only do not consider the scattered nature of the Quran's content a flaw but also cite advantages for it, such as enabling familiarity with a vast body of teachings in a short time and providing variety, thereby reducing reader fatigue.

Regardless of whether the verses of each surah have a single topic or purpose or not, firstly, the current order of verses in the Quran's Surahs merely indicates its gradual revelation, its formation through interaction with its audience, and its addressing of various topics within a single

**The Scattered Nature of the Text and its Divine Origin: A Necessary
Connection or Not? (A Case Study of the Quran and the Testaments)**

revelation unit. Secondly, some books of the Testaments also possess a kind of scattered in their content, similar to the Quranic Surahs even though they differ in quantity and quality.

Therefore, a scattered nature is not necessarily an indicator of divine origin, nor does a linear order and the absence of a scattered nature conflict with being divine.¹

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1. Some believe that "the fact that an unlettered (*ummi*) and untutored individual could arrange such a vast amount of material without [a conventional, linear] order, and for the final product to be, in its totality, coherent and free of contradiction, is undoubtedly one of the aspects of the Quran's *I'jāz* and a sign of its divine origin." It is recommended that, for the continuation of this research, the foundational principles and evidence supporting this theory be examined.

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The Theology of Health in the Three Abrahamic Religions: A Brief Historical Overview

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Abstract

The theology of health is a nascent field that emerged from Western academia a few decades ago and has since entered the Islamic and Eastern worlds. While this area of knowledge primarily focuses on the relationship between religion and the various dimensions of human health, it has deep roots in celestial religions and is not confined to contemporary research. A historical review spanning many centuries reveals a widespread belief in the strong connection between religion and human well-being, as well as the use of religious guidance to seek healing from illnesses. Moreover, healing was often considered one of the roles and duties of religious scholars, and in their view, recovery was dependent on supernatural forces. This study provides a brief historical account of the interaction between the three religions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—and the dimensions of health from their beginnings to the present. The aim is to make the legacy of the past accessible to contemporaries and to serve as a guide for deeper, future research. Using a descriptive-analytical method and drawing on library resources, this study demonstrates that the theology of health in the Abrahamic religions shared a relatively common historical background. Religious guidance was used to maintain and improve health, and religious

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The Theology of Health in the Three Abrahamic Religions: A Brief Historical Overview

figures were engaged in healing matters. However, this connection was severed during the Renaissance and was only re-established in the last half-century.

Keywords: Theology of Health, Theology of Abrahamic Religions, Religion and Health, Comparative Study of Religions.

Introduction

Over the last few decades, a new connection has formed between health and religion within the framework of biblical theology, leading to a large body of scientific literature on the subject. In recent years, studies on the theology of health have also found their way into Islamic academic circles, with widespread efforts to utilize Quranic and narrative sources to improve public health. This has become even more apparent with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, where human and Islamic science specialists, in addition to medical and healthcare professionals, have sought prevention and treatment methods. This has also prompted groups advocating for "Islamic medicine" to offer their own solutions.

The theology of health, which is expanding today and is considered an applied branch of theology, has a long history in both celestial and even terrestrial religions. The belief in the mutual influence of religion and health has been prevalent among people for thousands of years and was accepted by Jews, Christians, and Muslims. Although this belief was almost forgotten during a period of history marked by the rise of secularism, which pitted empirical science against the Christian faith and led to negative growth in

parts of the world, it re-emerged with the clinical trials of a group of researchers, giving rise to the current nascent literature.

Despite the numerous studies on the connection between various religious concepts and different dimensions of human health, and the assessment of their mutual effects, there remains an urgent need for a historical overview of this scientific field. A more precise understanding of its history can help us access the legacy left by our predecessors and benefit from it for future research. A search of academic databases indicates a scarcity of relevant articles. Writings such as "A Comparative Study of Faith in Islam and Christianity and its Effect on Health" by Alireza Azhdar and Mohammad Mahdi Ahmadi Faraz (2013 AD/1392 SH), which only addresses a single doctrine, or "Hamedan's Jewish Physicians and Their Role in the Development of Medicine in This City: From the Late Qajar to the End of the Pahlavi Era" by Reza Karami (2021 AD/1400 SH), which is limited to a short timeframe, are rare examples that have provided a historical overview of the theology of health.

Nonetheless, this article is innovative because it focuses on the history of health in the three Abrahamic religions. It aims to bridge parts of the similar histories of these religions to pave the way for comparative studies and advance further research in the field of the theology of health in religions. This research seeks to answer the following questions and briefly explain them in three separate sections:

1. What is the history of the theology of health in Judaism?
2. What have been the interactions of Christians with their religion from the past to the present?

The Theology of Health in the Three Abrahamic Religions: A Brief Historical Overview

3. What is the history of medicine in the Islamic world and what has its journey been?

This research, using a descriptive method and relying on library resources, attempts to answer these questions and provides a short analysis of this comparative study at the end.

1. Jewish Theology of Health

This section of the study provides an overview of the Jewish theology of health. This title refers to the historical relationship between the Jewish religion and healthcare, and the intersection between Jewish religious scholars and the health of their people. The following is based on the works and writings of Western (mainly Jewish) scholars and researchers, and does not necessarily imply the author's definitive acceptance of their views.

Throughout Jewish history, the followers of this religion have always been in favor of medicine. The dominant trend in this tradition has placed special value on human life and health, encouraging people to maintain them and promoting authentic medical treatment alongside faith in the Almighty. It has also rejected any kind of duality or competition between the body and the soul, emphasizing that the elevation of the soul is possible only with a healthy body. Thus, the study of Judaism and medicine is not a contemporary phenomenon; the history of traditional Jewish medicine dates back to Mount Sinai [the revelation to Prophet Moses] and is still followed by its adherents (Rosner, 2013: 35).

According to some researchers, most Jews—based on their religious teachings—have a positive view of medical treatments. For example, the Torah states that the cost of treating an injured person must be borne by the

one who caused the injury (Exodus 21:19), and self-care is recommended (Deuteronomy 4:15). Therefore, opponents who, citing certain verses (Exodus 15:26), believe that healing is exclusively God's domain, have been a minority group (Silberman, 2017). Furthermore, the two sections of **Tazria**¹ (Leviticus, chapters 12 and 13) and **1 M'tzora**² (Leviticus, chapters 14 and 15) from the Torah are among the most prominent examples that reveal the connection between Judaism and medicine, attributing certain skin diseases to people's sins. They also propose religious solutions for purification from certain physical impurities, such as offering sacrifices and seeking the help of a priest, which indicates a close link between religion and the physical health of Jews.

It must also be emphasized that healing (מִרְפֵּא / marpeh) in the Bible is achieved through the fear of God (Proverbs 3:7-8) and obedience to the Almighty God (Proverbs 4:20-22). And while the profession of a physician (רֹפֵא / rophe) was known in that era, this word was used more as a metaphor for the power of God than to give a worldly, literal meaning (Hezser, 2023: 1).

Generally, it can be said that in Jewish thought, every illness is, in fact, a reflection of a spiritual ailment. Therefore, a spiritual diagnosis focuses more on the missing element in a person's well-being than on the patient's possessions (Kestenbaum, 1997: 210). Perhaps this is why some historians believe that in Judaism, everything from food to treatment and personal hygiene had a religious aspect. For example, the Book of Leviticus pays special attention to setting laws regarding the treatment of sexually

1. Parashat Tazria = פְּרִשַׁת תַּזְרִיעַ

2. Parashat M'tzora = פְּרִשַׁת מִצְרָע.

The Theology of Health in the Three Abrahamic Religions: A Brief Historical Overview

transmitted diseases and provides strict recommendations in this regard (Durant, 1958 AD/1337 SH: 1, 386). Although ancient Jews are known as the founders of disease prevention laws (Garrison, 1929: 67), they knew nothing of surgery except for circumcision. This religious tradition—which was common among early Egyptians and later Semites—was not just a sacrifice to God or a requirement to show racial loyalty, but above all, a command to prevent diseases related to sexual organs (Durant, 1958 AD/1337 SH: 1, 386).

Most of the knowledge related to traditional Jewish medicine is said to come from one of the two parts of the Talmud,¹ namely the Babylonian and Palestinian Gemara, which were written in the late fourth and early fifth centuries AD. This means that no Hebrew medical text from the biblical era has survived; although the medical recommendations of the Torah regarding diseases are a unique case from 2500 years ago (Dubovsky, 1989 (a): 27). However, the Talmud provides a broader picture of Hebrew medicine. One of its recurring principles is physical cleanliness as a religious duty that leads to spiritual purity. Other examples include recommendations for washing hands before eating, dividing the stomach's capacity into three parts for food, water, and air, and eating two meals a day (cf. Cohen, 1949: 238-246). In a sense, Jews followed the rule of the Talmud, and the Talmud gives so much importance to medicine that it forbids living in a city without a doctor (Efron, 2004: 140).

But returning to the Old Testament, it is worth noting that the equivalent of the word health in it, bari'ut (בריאות), (from the root ברא) appears only

1. Gemara = גמרא

twice in this book, and that too is related to Pharaoh's [dream] (Genesis 14:5 and 18). From here, it seems that health was related to the natural state of humans, while for the ancestors of the Israelites, the word shalom (שלום), (meaning well-being), referred to a suitable physical (and spiritual) state (Genesis 29:6). Therefore, the restoration of divine well-being was related to a time in the afterlife (Isaiah 58:8).

In addition to the above, Jewish scholars believe that the religious canon of this religion contains much information about anatomy, physiology, and the etiology of diseases; as the Torah, Talmud, and Midrash contain recommendations on longevity, the danger and prevention of diseases, mental health, well-being, and healing. This collection, which forms "Hebraic medicine," is a parallel to the Chinese, Islamic, and Indian medical traditions. On the other hand, a number of Torah commentators in the Middle Ages were physicians, and the prominent medical figures of that time—who wrote from both religious and secular perspectives—were known to have had high Jewish education (Levin & Prince, 2011: 768).

In Jewish history, the diagnosticians of both mental and physical illnesses were originally the same—the priest. However, over time, this separation occurred, and they were divided into two categories: physicians and rabbis. The most famous of these dual figures in the Talmud are Mar Samuel and the physician Todos. In the Middle Ages, a number of prominent rabbinic physicians such as Moses Maimonides and his son Abraham, Nachmanides, and Judah Halevi lived. Furthermore, the reason many Jews were engaged in medicine was that almost all other professions were closed to them by papal decree or due to antisemitism, and only in the last two or three

The Theology of Health in the Three Abrahamic Religions: A Brief**Historical Overview**

centuries did banking and trade also become available to them (Rosner, 2013: 35-36).

It must be added that special attention to medicine, as well as to physical health and well-being, was one of the most common topics in Jewish texts of the Hellenistic era. In fact, since the time of Plato and Aristotle and later when Greek thinkers discussed at length topics such as health, its importance for happiness and contemplation, and ways to promote it, despite their completely different understanding of this concept (Hezser, 2023: 3-4), the Greek medical and philosophical tradition, alongside the principles of the Old Testament, formed the basis of discussions related to health in the Jewish texts of that era and beyond. An example of this can be seen in the works of Philo of Alexandria, a Jewish thinker of that era (Hezser, 2023: 8).

After the ancient era, another period in the history of Jewish religious medicine can be mentioned, which is between the Islamic conquests and the Renaissance in Europe. According to Jewish historians, Jewish medicine experienced a brilliant period in the Islamic world. Jewish physicians, who were knowledgeable in the scientific languages of the time—namely Latin, Arabic, Greek, and Hebrew—were the main transmitters of Greek medicine to Muslims and Arabic (Islamic) medicine to Europe during their migrations. During this period, some Jewish physicians served European kings and high-ranking church officials. But in the thirteenth century AD, a great effort was made to prevent Jews from learning medicine by issuing church decrees, and they could not even seek advice from Christians on this matter. However, after the sixteenth century, when the Church gradually lost its power, Jews were able to return to academia after several centuries and,

with the help of Greek and Roman sciences, gain a prominent scientific position in medieval Europe (Dubovsky, 1989 (a): 28).

It was during this medieval period that a new medical literature known as the "Regimen Sanitatis" emerged. An example of this is a book by Ibn Maimun on the subject, which was authored at the request of the then king of Egypt, *Afḍal Nūr al-Dīn Ali*, in the twelfth century AD, and was translated into Hebrew several times a century later. As a Jewish philosopher and physician, he tried to build a bridge between the world of medicine and Talmudic studies. Of course, the focus of such works was not on healing the sick, but on preserving health, and their history dated back to the famous Persian physician, Ibn Sina, who considered medicine and hygiene as complementary to each other. Another notable example on this topic is a similar book by Ibn Zuhr, which can be indicative of the close [scientific] relationship between Muslim and Jewish doctors in the Middle Ages (Hezser, 2023: 11-12). It is noteworthy that this book was translated into a Roman language by a Jewish physician and read to a Christian surgeon so that he could write it in Latin (McVaugh, Bos, & Shatzmiller, 2019: vii).

But moving beyond the Middle Ages and with the emergence of a free scientific environment in the Enlightenment era, European universities opened their doors to Jews, but they were limited to fields that were usually not attractive to non-Jews—such as dermatology, psychiatry, neurology, pediatrics, and venereology. Despite this, they specialized in these fields and made discoveries that sometimes earned them a Nobel Prize (Dubovsky, 1989 (b): 67). In any case, what is important regarding the theology of health in the contemporary Jewish context is a brief review of the approaches and achievements in this field, which is as follows.

The Theology of Health in the Three Abrahamic Religions: A Brief Historical Overview

Contemporary Jewish works on health and healing emphasize various topics, some of which relate to non-religious matters from a theological, ethical, and sacred text perspective. Some believe that the rediscovered legacy of Jews regarding health and healing is built on the Jewish tradition but is highlighted by a new feature that has emerged as a result of the exploration of individual and specialized spirituality, demographic changes, and the feminist movement. These works specifically revolve around four main axes:

1. A considerable and well-established body of literature examines the relationship between Halakha (Jewish law) and bioethics, looking at the dimensions of Halakha in the field of healthcare and healing from an awareness-building perspective for clinical decision-making.
2. There are continuous dialogues about care by Jewish clergy and public health services. Also, academic works on topics related to Jewish health in the fields of Jewish spirituality and geriatric diseases have increased with the establishment of those fields, which include descriptions of spiritually-based clinical approaches for adults.
3. Jewish aging is one of the topics that has seen rapid growth in attention, such as studies including interpretive and epidemiological analysis and research in the areas of public services, social demography, and theological ethics.
4. A growing body of literature focuses on Jewish approaches to health and well-being and includes books that deal with spiritual growth, mindfulness, and meditation. This axis also includes academic

research on healing, theological and practical guidance for rabbis on meditation as a means of gaining spiritual insight and deepening devotional life, as well as the perspective of Kabbalah (Jewish mysticism) on psychology and healing (Levin & Prince, 2011: 768-769).

At the end of this section, a practical example of the movements related to the theology of health in Judaism is mentioned. In the early 1990s, the Jewish Healing Movement was formed under the leadership of non-clerical specialists and leaders who acknowledged that many Jews no longer had proper access to the spiritual and public support that had protected previous generations from illness and death. They benefited from Jewish intellectual sources that speak of religious tradition and the origin of peace and comfort. Following this movement, Jewish healing centers emerged in America. The programs of these centers spread to monasteries, which had a special emphasis on teaching health-related matters (such as bioethics and Jewish meditation) in various formats (such as classes and workshops), and many people attended them for healing prayers. This movement then expanded to include services and resources to combat the alienation from spirituality caused by the increasing fascination with technophilia and materialism in society. Of course, this movement, which was supported by both Jewish clergy and non-clergy, also faced the challenge of whether its [healing] initiatives were compatible with Halakha and considered Kashrut (Levin & Prince, 2011: 769-770).

As a prime example of the achievements of the mentioned movement, one can point to the Kalsman Institute on Judaism and Health, which was founded in 2000 by Rabbi William Cutter. It conducts research related to

The Theology of Health in the Three Abrahamic Religions: A Brief Historical Overview

this field and strives to provide a scientific basis for creating a community of researchers and promoting theoretical and practical research in the said field (Levin & Prince, 2011: 711).

2. Christian Theology of Health

The same as what happened in the Jewish theology of health also occurred in the context of Christianity. This means that a close connection existed between this celestial religion and health and healing from the perspective of its followers, and many interactions have taken place between the two throughout history. What follows is taken from the book "Handbook of Religion and Health," which has been considered the most important scientific work in this field to date and has received the most citations (Koenig, King, & Carson, 2012: 15-34).

After the authors of this book discuss the relationship between religion and health from the earliest times of the presence of Homo sapiens on this planet to the Greek era and refer to religion-oriented medicine, they arrive at the time of the emergence of Jesus Christ and write: After that period, Christ (PBUH) focused on the doctrine of suffering and healing for all humanity but did not make a clear distinction between healing the body and the mind. Early Christians considered illness, whether it was a product of sin or not, to be treatable with prayer (James 5:14). They were enemies of physicians, especially since they had witnessed the healing miracles of Jesus Christ (PBUH) and his disciples who healed by laying on hands or anointing with oil.

Furthermore, before the Christian era, Jewish support for physicians was declining due to religious distrust. Patients were treated by specialized physicians called "Rophe" who were not respected because of their

involvement with magic. In any case, physical healing was not widespread among Christians until the fourth or fifth century AD. Until the third century, most of them (Christian physicians) only promised to care for the sick—and not to heal them [and they sought healing from God]. During this period, the Christian Church provided [medical and treatment] services to both Christians and non-Christians.

Around 150 to 250 AD, some Church Fathers emphasized that God teaches the art of healing to humans and that medical skills are a grace from God. However, in the late part of this period, the practices of physicians were regulated by the government of the time. Then, in the period from 150 to 300 AD, patients would spend one or two nights in the church to receive the favor of the clergy and be healed. In the late part of this period, two physician brothers were beheaded for practicing magical healing. Then, from 200 to 400 AD, medicine was generally considered a private business and was not available to the masses. Before the Christian era [i.e., the official recognition of this religion in Rome], there was no hospital building for the care and treatment of the general public in the Western world. But in the late part of this period, the first public hospital for the needy and the elderly was founded.

Religion [previously] had a profound influence on science, and between the third and eighteenth centuries AD, mental illnesses were known by terms related to demonic possession. Therefore, their treatment was carried out through exorcism. But around 370 to 550 AD, medicine was considered a material witness to divine love and mercy in the face of human suffering. But it was in the late part of this period that St. Benedict of Nursia set a rule

The Theology of Health in the Three Abrahamic Religions: A Brief Historical Overview

by which monks and nuns of the Church were obliged to show love to the sick. This rule became a central law in the West in the eighth century AD.

After this, in the period from 500 to 1200 AD, i.e., in the first half of the Middle Ages, medicine was taught under the supervision of the Church, which was called "Monastic medicine." Medical knowledge was taught in the twelfth century AD as part of the education of [Christian] clergy in medical schools, which were based on the teachings of Hippocrates and Galen. Also, from the sixth century onwards, many mental patients were admitted to monasteries under the supervision of the Church. However, a number of bishops expressed their opposition to the idea that the devil causes mental illnesses.

In the eleventh century AD, a Christian monk who had studied Greek and Arabic medicine founded a large medical school that separated [new] physicians from the healers of that time, as their teachings were mainly based on the theories of Galen. But during the Crusades in Jerusalem, monks were active in hospitals, and their monasteries were the main healing centers. In other words, medieval hospitals were usually associated with a church or monastery. However, due to the [increase in] non-clerical physicians from the sixth century AD [and later], medical training centers were mostly moved to monasteries and universities affiliated with the Church.

In the middle of the thirteenth century, a Franciscan monk named Bartholomaeus Anglicus wrote an encyclopedia that sought the causes of mental illnesses in natural phenomena. In fact, medieval medicine was strongly influenced by Christian myths and teachings, but it was not limited to demonology.

In the period from 1200 to 1400 AD, despite the end of monastic medicine around the thirteenth century, the Church's influence on medicine continued. The monastery was replaced by the university, and the era of "Scholastic medicine" began, although some physicians were still trained in monasteries until the fifteenth century. Alongside university medical centers in the 14th and 15th centuries, which were under the supervision of Church members, secular medical schools were run by faculties of arts and law. It was during this period that the battle between science and the Church began, and the Church's condemnation of Aristotelian empiricism intensified greatly in the first half of the thirteenth century.

Another fundamental change occurred when the Church, through a decree, requested the clergy—some of whom were heavily engaged in medicine at the time—to focus on theological subjects more than on medicine and surgery. [As a result], in the early thirteenth century, senior clergy ranks were forbidden from performing surgery, and only lower ranks were allowed to do so. [However], Christian clergy were allowed to practice medicine, but not for profit. [In any case], the former law reached a point in the second half of the fifteenth century where clergy who participated in medical courses were threatened with excommunication. Therefore, medicine and surgery moved further away from religious influence.

In the thirteenth century, when the Inquisition was founded to combat heresy, it did not make a clear distinction between heresy and mental illnesses. As a result, many mental patients were abandoned in the streets and were considered a threat themselves. Then, in the period from 1400 to 1700 AD, the Black Death (plague) swept across Europe and killed a quarter of its population. In this same fifteenth century, a movement was also

The Theology of Health in the Three Abrahamic Religions: A Brief Historical Overview

[launched] to destroy witches—who were at that time mistaken for the growing population of mental patients—which presented the cure for [mental illnesses] as exorcism or stoning (Leviticus 20:27).

From 1400 to 1550 AD, the gap between religion and medicine widened even further; as a pious Protestant physician effectively argued against the Galenic view of anatomy in orthodox medicine, humoral pathology, and herbal treatment and proposed a chemistry-based theory. Although he believed that for medicine to be effective, the relationship between the body and the soul must be rediscovered.

In the period from 1550 to 1600 AD, John Calvin launched a reform movement according to which deacons took on the responsibility of providing spiritual comfort and physical care. Calvin also denied any miraculous healing power. But at the same time, psychology, as the science of human behavior, was born. Then, in the period from 1600 to 1700 AD, Francis Bacon, one of the founders of modern science, advocated for [the method of] experimentation, revision, and proof to remove authority and prejudice from scientific thought. He considered experience and observation to be the only cure for bias and error. [In addition to Bacon's efforts], René Descartes dissected animal bodies to show that human and animal life could be explained by physiological processes. In other words, natural theories at this time replaced religious explanations, and his followers reduced the [concept of] the eternal soul to consciousness or thought. Others, however, supported both physical and spiritual models for mental illnesses. Despite this, in the first half of the seventeenth century, the "Sisters of Charity" [association] was founded, in which Catholic nuns served in religious and secular hospitals.

From 1650 to 1700 AD, John Locke, the philosopher and founder of empiricism in England, claimed that all knowledge is derived from experience and is the result of examination with the sensory organs. As the scientific revolution accelerated, a wall was built between religion, science, and medicine. The Enlightenment era began in France, and traditional religious beliefs and values were transformed. Science became equal to the way to fully explain the world, and there was no longer a need for God!

In the period from 1700 to 1800 AD, works were authored and published that presented humans as completely material and lacking a soul, which was a characteristic of the Enlightenment era. In the late eighteenth century, the French Revolution had a profound effect on medicine; almost all former medical schools were closed, and now anyone could buy a medical license and practice medicine. Thus, medicine came more under government supervision.

In the period from 1800 to 1850 AD, the treatment of mental patients was accompanied by violence and imprisonment in a deplorable environment. But blood-letting and enemas were still the main forms of treating illnesses in America. In the early part of this period, the first official nursing school was built by the Catholic Sisters of Charity in America, and three decades later, another nursing school was established in Germany by a Lutheran clergyman to train women to care for the sick.

The Second Great Awakening occurred with the revival of Protestantism, and the belief in predestination gave way to free will; that is, humans can affect their spiritual state by doing good and voluntary deeds. This movement created a powerful social force for a new treatment against mental illnesses. In this regard, some believed that a pure medical approach

The Theology of Health in the Three Abrahamic Religions: A Brief**Historical Overview**

could treat mental patients who needed psychological and therapeutic compassion. By rejecting the violent methods of the past, they proposed moral treatment, which became the first forms of psychology. As a result, in contrast to the idea of mental illness as the devil's dominance [over the patient], these illnesses were recognized as a type of physical illness that required compassion and humane treatment.

In the mid-nineteenth century AD, Bernadette Soubirous, [a Christian nun], reported a revelation [of seeing the Virgin Mary], and the city of Lourdes in France became a healing pilgrimage site that millions visit annually. But in the 1860s, Florence Nightingale, who had received nursing training at the Deaconesses' Institute, founded her own nursing school in London. Then, in the second half of the nineteenth century, some biologists were staunch supporters of Darwin's theory of evolution and were opposed to religion, and it was at this time that the explicit conflict between religious tradition and modern medicine began. However, during this period, others claimed that the mind is capable of physical healing through prayer, and their efforts ultimately led to the publication of the Christian Science Monitor in the early twentieth century.

But after the discovery of the germ theory of disease by Louis Pasteur, organic causes for mental illnesses were sought, although they were only identifiable in limited cases. But at the same time, religious healing was also gaining new life. After this, from 1890 to 1915 AD, some sociological and psychological studies of religion emphasized its effect on health and healing, and movements began to link religion and medicine. Also, from 1950 to 1980 AD, separate studies on the relationship between religion and health emerged, although the study of religion was rejected by the dominant

stream of scientists—especially psychologists. However, the "Journal of Religion and Health" was launched in the early 1960s.

Finally, from 1990 to 2000 AD, curricula and research centers for religion and health began to operate at a number of American universities. In addition, studies on religion, spirituality, and health were increasingly published in behavioral science and medical journals. Also, by the end of this century, almost half of the American universities were offering courses related to religion, spirituality, and medicine, a number that reached ninety percent of these centers within a ten-year period.

In conclusion, it can be said that in the mid-1980s, special attention to the relationship between religion or spirituality and health became apparent, and articles related to this topic saw a growing increase (Koenig, 2005: 3875). Although the progress of medical and psychiatric knowledge led to sharp and confrontational encounters with religion at a certain period of history—especially in the twentieth century AD—studies and research conducted to measure the effect of religion or spirituality on mental and physical health proved the positive effect of religion and spirituality [on mental and physical health] and convinced some opponents to admit this fact (Marashi, 2004 AD/1383 SH).

3. Islamic Theology of Health

Like the two Jewish and Christian religions, Islam was not a stranger to health and healing. In fact, throughout history, a clear connection has been established between its followers and the issue of their health. One of the proofs of this claim is the high volume of medical narratives and works attributed to the Prophet's household (Ahl al-Bayt) (AS), which shows that

The Theology of Health in the Three Abrahamic Religions: A Brief**Historical Overview**

the health of human society and the treatment of individuals was undoubtedly not unimportant to them, but rather, it seems that health and healing were considered one of the roles of the religion of Islam. Similarly, Muslims also had a similar perception of this issue and would often resort to the saints of the religion for the healing of their illnesses. In any case, this section of the research deals with the subject of the Islamic theology of health and provides a brief overview of the history of medicine in the Islamic world.

Regardless of what some historians have provided about medicine before the advent of Islam (cf. Ali, 2001 AD/1422 AH: 16, 14-52), translation played a fundamental role in the formation of the Islamic medical tradition. This was so widespread that by the third century AH, all available Greek medical texts had been translated into Arabic. Thus, Islamic medicine was mainly the continuation and development of the Greek medical tradition. In fact, the influence of Greek medicine on Islamic medicine was very significant, and examples of it can be found not only in the works of physicians like Razi and Ibn Sina but also in the treatises known as the Prophet's Medicine (Pormann & Savage-Smith, 2007: 23).

Translation, which was scarce and limited before the second half of the second century, became more available during the reign of Ma'mun and the establishment of the "House of Wisdom," and individuals such as *Hunayn ibn Ishāq* and his son *Ishāq* and his son *Hubaysh* were engaged in translating medical texts. These efforts not only enriched scientific terms in the Arabic language but also led to its development and transformation into a scientific language (Ullmann, 1978: 8-10).

It is noteworthy that although Greek medical theory provided the ground for the growth of Islamic medicine, other traditions were not without influence on this path. For example, in the first centuries, Syriac and Pahlavi medical texts were also of special importance. In fact, just as Syriac was a medium for translating Greek texts into Arabic, the Pahlavi language played a similar role in the Arabization of Indian medical texts. In addition, a number of Chinese medical texts were also translated into Arabic at a later time (Pormann & Savage-Smith, 2007: 35).

Based on this data, some consider Islamic medicine to be the same medical science that was established as a result of the translation of Greek works and continued to grow with the critique and completion of Muslim scholars and was expanding until before the Mongol invasion. But others consider Islamic medicine to be the few verses and many narratives that they believe are capable of being organized into a complete medical system (Masoudi, 2019 AD/1398 SH: 86). Of course, it should also be noted that due to the prevalence of the Arabic language in Islamic lands, many scholars wrote their works in this language. Therefore, the term "Islamic medicine" is not confined to the works of Muslims alone (Pormann & Savage-Smith, 2007: 2); it also includes the works of non-Muslim physicians and healers who wrote in Arabic.

In addition to these, one of the important aspects of the history of Islamic medicine is its influence on Europe, which formed the roots of modern Western medicine. Just as the scientific medical sources of Rome and Greece nurtured the body of Islamic medicine, this medicine itself became the core of medical education in the late Middle Ages and the early era of modernism in Europe. Of course, contrary to the traditional stereotype,

The Theology of Health in the Three Abrahamic Religions: A Brief Historical Overview

medieval Islamic medicine was not a mere channel for the transfer of Greek knowledge [to modern Europe] but a medium for innovation and transformation. Of course, the period of Islamic medicine, which spanned about nine centuries from Spain in the west to India in the east of the Islamic world, saw many changes and was not always the same. Rather, many factors influenced Islamic medicine and the public health of Muslims, including the rulings on food and fasting, various climatic conditions, different types of lives, the economic status of individuals, the volume of travels and pilgrimages, the care of slaves, war injuries and traumas, and the plague and other pandemics (Pormann & Savage-Smith, 2007: 1-2).

But apart from the medical knowledge derived from non-religious texts and developed based on human experiences, a part of the Islamic sacred texts—like the Jewish and Christian teachings—also includes matters related to human health and his treatment. As the most honorable and valuable Islamic text, the Holy Quran generally contains some discussions related to human health. For example, verses such as: "Forbidden to you are carrion, and blood, and the flesh of swine" (al-Mā'idah: 3) warn against forbidden foods. Verses like: "And it is He who subjected the sea for you to eat from it tender flesh" (al-Nahl: 14) recommend a category of foods whose properties are proven in laboratory research (Masoudi, 2019 AD/1398 SH: 88-90). In addition, one can mention verses like: "Indeed, the hearing, the sight, and the heart - about those entire one, will be questioned" (al-Isrā': 36) which mention human anatomy; or verses that refer to some physical illnesses like: "And my wife was barren" (Maryam: 5) or mental ones like: "And they say: "He is indeed a madman!" (al-Qalam: 51). Furthermore, in several verses such as: "Then We created the sperm-drop

into a clinging clot, and We created the clinging clot into a lump of flesh, and We created from that lump of flesh bones" (al-Mu'minūn: 14) it discusses the stages of fetal creation; or there are verses that use terms related to health and healing such as: "They said: "By Allah! You will not cease to remember Yusuf until you become thin from grief or become of the decrepit" (Yūsuf: 85) (Parvizi, Zarei, & Jaladat, 2018 AD/1397 SH: 200-203).

In addition to the few holy verses of the Quran that are seen in medical literature, there is a vast number of hadiths attributed to the Messenger of God (PBUH) and the impeccable Imams (AS) that are considered a great legacy of Islamic medicine. These hadiths, which are referred to as medical narratives, are generally divided into two categories: medicine of the body and medicine of the soul (Nasiri, 2008 AD/1387 SH: 95) and are mostly categorized into six groups based on their content (Masoudi, 2019 AD/1398 SH: 93-96):

1. Etiquette of life: Such as this hadith: "When one of you sits down to eat, let him sit like a servant..." (Barqī, 1951 AD/1371 AH: 2, 442) which refers to the manners of sitting at the table.
2. Hygiene: Such as the hadith: "He who washes his hands before and after eating shall live in comfort..." (Ibn Qutayba, 1997 AD/1407 AH: 3, 263; Kulaynī, 1987 AD/1407 AH: 6, 290) which is an acceptable recommendation even with some weakness in its chain of transmission.
3. Prevention: Such as the hadith: "Eating when full causes leprosy" (Ibn Bābawayh, 1956 AD/1376 AH: 543; Makkī, 2005 AD/1426 AH: 2, 283) which warns against overeating.

The Theology of Health in the Three Abrahamic Religions: A Brief Historical Overview

4. Anatomy and Physiology: Narratives that describe the organs and their functions in the human body; such as: "Hair was placed on top of him [the head] so that fats could reach the brain through it." (Ibn Bābawayh, 1942 AD/1362 AH: 2, 512).
5. Properties of foods: Narratives that speak of the benefits of various foods; such as: "You must have milk, for it grows flesh..." (Barqī, 1951 AD/1371 AH: 2, 249)
6. Treatment: A number of medical narratives recommend the consumption of certain foods for the treatment of diseases; such as: "Indeed, fresh plums extinguish heat..." (Kulaynī, 1987 AD/1407 AH: 6, 359)

In addition to these six categories, other narratives are also related to medical and health issues but do not fall into the category of health and treatment. Such as narratives related to medical rights which determine the physician's responsibility and have a jurisprudential aspect, not a healing one. Or narratives related to medical ethics which deal with the etiquette of medicine and speak of the way a physician interacts with a patient; also, narratives that explain the rewards of illness (the rewards of enduring sickness) and explain the rewards of patients, nurses, and visitors (Bagheri, 2019 AD/1398 SH: 169-170). These narratives are also accompanied by medical terms, although they do not enter the field of health and treatment.

Regarding medical narratives, it should be noted that a large part of them is dedicated to supernatural and metaphysical treatments. This matter, which emphasizes the importance of this type of treatment from the perspective of the religious leaders, can be introduced in three categories: First, supplications and litanies that have been recommended by the impeccable

Imams (AS) for the prevention or treatment of diseases; second, amulets, charms, and incantations that have a religious theme and are carried by individuals in the form of writings to become their healer. Third, the recommendation of righteous deeds such as sacrifice, charity, or other ritual acts of worship those are called healers of physical illnesses and are sometimes accompanied by material treatments (Mirhosseini, 2017 AD/1396 SH: 61-63).

Medical hadiths, coinciding with the process of hadith compilation in the Islamic world—from the second century AH—found their way into narrative collections and dedicated chapters to themselves in the most important Shiite and Sunni works (cf. Mehrizi, 2006 AD/1385 SH: 37-44). Based on the results of historical studies, the focus on medical hadiths occurred during the prevalence of *Akhhbārī* movements. In other words, in the third to fifth centuries, when the companions of hadith were able to gain power in academic circles, medical works such as "*Nawādir al-Ṭibb*" by Shaykh Ṣadūq and "*Ṭibb al-Nabīy* (PBUH)" by *Mustaghfirī* were created. This was while the *Uṣūlī* (rationalist) scholars refrained from entering the topic of medicine and did not consider a field like jurisprudence to be a suitable ground for it. But with the renewed dominance of the *Akhhbārīs* in the late Safavid era, we see the authorship of narrative medical works such as "*Abwāb al-Ṭibb*" in the great collection of *Biḥār al-Anwār* by ‘Allāmah *Majlisī* (Pakatchi, 2017 AD/1396 SH: 20-21).

But finally, in the contemporary era, various encounters with the three categories of modern, traditional, and Islamic medicine are seen. These encounters can be divided into at least six general approaches (Arzaei & Gerami, 2018 AD/1397 SH: 2, 459-477):

The Theology of Health in the Three Abrahamic Religions: A Brief Historical Overview

1. The movement opposing traditional and Islamic medicine: This group sees no interaction between religion and medicine and considers only modern medicine, which proceeds by the evidence-based medicine method, to be valid.
2. The Islamic/narrative medicine movement: The followers of this group are fiercely hostile to modern medicine and seek medicine only in the narratives attributed to the Ahl al-Bayt (AS). They have a special inclination toward *Akhbārism* and believe in the existence of a complete medical system in the works known as "*Tibb al-Nabīy* (PBUH)" and "*Tibb al-A'imma* (AS)."
3. The movements inclined toward Islamic medicine: Four categories can be mentioned here:

The first group is the Islamic-Traditional medicine movement, which is pessimistic about modern medicine. They consider traditional medicine to be the legacy of the great prophets (AS) and use it to complete Islamic medicine where it does not conflict with the statements of the Messenger of God (PBUH) and the Imams (AS).

The second group is the Islamic-Modern medicine movement, but they are pessimistic about traditional medicine. They are mostly university-educated in medical fields and try to purify modern medicine from Western culture with the help of Islamic teachings.

The third group, unlike the second, is optimistic about traditional medicine. They consider all three mentioned categories to have capacities for human health and do not deny the need to refine and purify them.

The fourth group accepts Islamic medicine with an emphasis on the holy verses of the Quran and prescribes for the health and treatment of individuals from the Book of Allah.

4. The movement inclined toward traditional medicine with an emphasis on Islamic teachings: This group can be considered followers of the views of Muslim sages and physicians who believe that they also used Islamic narratives for matters related to human health. Of course, some of them call Islamic medicine the same as Iranian traditional medicine and emphasize the influence of Iranian physicians on this medicine.
5. The eclectic movement of scientific miracles: Although this group has no role in medical practice, they emphasize Quranic or narrative teachings that are consistent with a number of contemporary researches in the field of health and healing and consider them a confirmation of the correctness of religious knowledge.
6. Interdisciplinary studies of medicine and religion: Although this group is still at the beginning of its path and has not become an independent scientific movement, it emphasizes foundational and methodological discussions on the current topic. The characteristics of this approach include special attention to epistemological discussions, systematic comparative-clinical studies, and attention to the authenticity of religious reports. Therefore, the followers of this movement seek to explain the relationship between Islam and medicine based on religious sciences and epistemology and to achieve a model for the interaction of these two fields.

The Theology of Health in the Three Abrahamic Religions: A Brief Historical Overview

The works of the latter approach—which have a longer history in the Western world before entering Iranian academic circles—fall into three main categories. The beginning of this approach can be seen in the research conducted on the topic of health in Judaism and Christianity, which studied the health propositions of the two Testaments through historical and phenomenological investigations and wrote them down in religion-centric encyclopedias. After this, a number of research journals entered the field of religion and health and continued their activities with a positive view of the matter. The third category sometimes critically examines the dimensions of religion and health studies and delves into their complexities (Ba‘azm, 2019 AD/1398 SH: 13-15).

4. Health Theology of Abrahamic Religions at a Glance

What was discussed earlier was a brief overview of the history of the relationship of the three celestial religions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—with the health of their followers. In short, an unbreakable bond can be observed between religion and health, as numerous historical, literary, and medical sources attest to it (Hatami, 2015 AD/1394 SH: 3). Even more, a similar relationship can be witnessed in early tribes and religions; they did not distinguish between a priest and a healer and considered a similar function for both (Spencer, 1896: 185-186). Even in ancient Iran, the connection between health and the Zoroastrian religion has been reported (cf. Gignoux, 2003). The fact that the word "Pezeshk" (physician) in ancient Persian is derived from the meaning of chanting and performing a special ritual is another proof of this claim (Pakatchi, 2022 AD/1401 SH).

Based on this, it can be said that the belief in divine intervention in human health has been present among all religions and beliefs and has less to do with their theological views—i.e., monotheism, dualism, trinity, or pluralism (Hezser, 2023: 7). As reported earlier, such a belief has been evident throughout human history, and medicine has never been separated from the category of religion. However, the Renaissance era caused a rift between these two fields and after the French Revolution at the end of the eighteenth century, medical science moved further away from the influence of religion. Although many hospitals in Europe and America maintained their dependence on the support of religious institutions, with the expansion of knowledge in the second half of the nineteenth century, the separation between medicine and religion became definitive, and religion was considered irrelevant to the scientific field of healthcare and even its enemy (Koenig, 2005: 3875).

What can be stated in the end is that today, modern Western societies are witnessing a new approach to the two fields of religion and health and are trying to rebuild their weakened connection and benefit from this auspicious bond. Therefore, they have engaged in laboratory studies on the effects of religion and spirituality on physical and mental health and are publishing their findings in reputable scientific journals to gain acceptance in academia and contribute to the advancement of the interdisciplinary field of the theology of health. This research field, which has a not-so-long history in Western academic circles, has gradually entered the context of Islamic countries and is leading them toward similar studies.

Conclusion

The Theology of Health in the Three Abrahamic Religions: A Brief Historical Overview

The present research was an attempt to study the theology of health in the Abrahamic religions, which showed that:

- Jewish scholars believe in a close relationship between their religion and human health. In their view, according to the teachings of the Talmud, medicine has always held a special place among the followers of this religion, and it is this attention to medical recommendations that has preserved this small population throughout history. On the other hand, many Jewish clergy have been engaged in the medical profession and have authored numerous works on Jewish medicine.
- Early Christians sought healing in prayer and other religious rituals and looked to the disciples of Jesus Christ for healing. Hospitals and medical training centers were initially established by the Church, and no one but the Christian clergy was engaged in medicine. This trend continued until the sixth century AD when some Christians, with the help of ancient Greek medicine, began to oppose religious medical teachings, and their conflict with the Church escalated. They were finally able to remove religion from the field of health during the Enlightenment and replace it with secular medicine.
- Despite the fact that the beginning of medicine in the Islamic world is attributed to the translation of mainly Greek and Syriac works in the second century AH, a counter-current known as Islamic medicine can always be observed throughout Islamic history, either in opposition to or in interaction with the secular medical movement. The main source of the former current is the high volume of medical narratives attributed to the religious leaders. The acceptance or

rejection of these narratives has led to many discussions among Muslim scholars and has attracted various groups of followers today.

- A study of the history of human religions indicates that people have always seen a close connection between the two categories of religion and health. In other words, the belief in the dependence of an individual's well-being on divine matters can be observed in almost all human traditions. However, the Renaissance era caused this connection to weaken and be forgotten, although in the last half-century, a renewed return to the study of the relationship between religion and health has emerged in Western academia, forming a new body of literature called the theology of health.

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**The Theology of Health in the Three Abrahamic Religions: A Brief
Historical Overview**

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Historical Overview**

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